



Executive Board

**Thursday, 24 September 2009 2.00 p.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building**

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

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

Item	Page No
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
3. LEADERS PORTFOLIO	
(A) WORLD EXPO SHANGHAI	1 - 3
(B) IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATLANTIC GATEWAY IN HALTON	4 - 68

Please contact for further information.

The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 15 October 2009

Item	Page No
4. PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO	
(A) RESIDENTS-ONLY PARKING SCHEMES	69 - 74
(B) RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN	75 - 141
5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO	
(A) SECONDARY RE-ORGANISATION - RUNCORN - KEY DECISION	142 - 157
6. CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO	
(A) HEALTH & COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008-09/CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009-10	158 - 163
7. COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO	
(A) EXTRA CARE HOUSING - DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS AND RESOURCING	164 - 168
(B) HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - KEY DECISION	169 - 284
ITEMS CONTAINING "EXEMPT" INFORMATION FALLING WITHIN SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
<p>In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public but, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is RECOMMENDED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
8. CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO	
(A) ACCOMMODATION	285 - 290

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

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: World EXPO Shanghai - 2010

WARD(S): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

- 1.1 The World Expo in Shanghai runs between May 1 and October 31 and will attract around 70 million visitors. It is regarded as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to consolidate existing and forge new relationships in the world's emerging markets and is predicted to deliver up to £50m in benefits to Liverpool and the North West over the next decade.
- 1.2 Liverpool is the only UK city except London to have a dedicated Pavilion at the event. Its presence is being led by Liverpool Vision in partnership with Liverpool City Council, the Liverpool-Shanghai Partnership and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).
- 1.3 A number of themes will be addressed by Liverpool's Pavilion during the Expo. They are:
- Urban regeneration, energy, sustainability and the environment
 - Advanced technology and science
 - Culture, health and sport
 - The Knowledge Sector
 - Professional services
 - Liverpool: the gateway to the North West (ports, airports and property development)
- 1.4 Pavilion sponsorship opportunities, which start at £6,000 for individual organisations, include a package of professional business support that includes:
- meetings with Shanghai government officials
 - identification of and introduction to business prospects
 - translation services
 - the processing of visa applications
 - provision of meeting venues
 - targeted publicity
 - complete Shanghai side care package

- 1.5 Peel Holdings is to be the lead sponsor of the Liverpool Pavilion at the Expo. Peel is investing more than £100,000 in the deal to be the headline sponsor for the Pavilion during the six-month event and more sponsors are expected to be announced in coming weeks
- 1.6 The Liverpool City Region authorities have been invited to take a Platinum sponsorship package – costing £18,000 – so they can be involved in the event.
- 1.7 St Helens, Wirral, Sefton and Knowsley are all committed to a Platinum Sponsorship Package
- 1.8 Members are invited to consider whether Halton wishes to commit to a Platinum Sponsorship Package

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Halton commit to a Platinum Sponsorship Package

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 3.1 DVD Presentation to be made to the meeting

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 One – off cost implication of £18000

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Committing to the Shanghai EXPO will support the Councils economic regeneration policies and enhance opportunities for inward investment creating jobs and employment within the Borough and for Borough residents.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Failure to realise the increased inward investment and additional jobs associated with the spend commitment
- 7.2 Failure to support the Shanghai EXPO may leave Halton isolated from its Liverpool City Region colleagues who are all supporting Liverpool in this venture, this may result in future consequences for partnership working

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Committing to the Shanghai EXPO will support the Councils equalities agenda

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

9.1 N/A

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24th September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Environment

SUBJECT: Implications of the Atlantic Gateway in Halton

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report aims to summarise the “Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework Options Paper”, published by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) in terms of its implications for Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The implications of the implementation of the “Atlantic Gateway” Options in Halton are noted and its potential impacts on policy development are discussed; and**
- (2) The Council respond to the Options proposed within the “Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework Options Paper” in the manner outlined within this paper.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The “Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework Options Paper” (the Options Paper) was prepared by the consultants Ekosgen on behalf of the NWDA, and was published in August 2009 for a period of stakeholder consultation. The Options Paper seeks the views of partners on the options for interventions associated with the implementation of “Atlantic Gateway”, across a series of themes. The Options Paper is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

What is “Atlantic Gateway”?

3.2 The Atlantic Gateway is the spatial area anchored by the cities of Liverpool and Manchester and the corridor between them, including Warrington, Halton and parts of Cheshire. The Atlantic Gateway concept seeks to join together the disparate elements of this large sub-region, linking initiatives and interventions, including physical sites and infrastructure, and also social, environmental and most significantly economic policy approaches.

- 3.3 The Options Paper is primarily based upon themes of intervention, creating a high level economic and spatial framework. This methodology looks to establish what the Atlantic Gateway should aim to become rather than assessing the potential contribution of individual development sites in the first instance. However, the Atlantic Gateway is influenced by Peel Holdings' "Ocean Gateway" investment strategy, which was based on the development of Peel's portfolio of sites in the North West, and shares some of the same themes, aims and goals.
- 3.4 In policy terms, the Atlantic Gateway seeks to build upon the government initiatives to focus economic development on strong regions and sub-regions, and seeks to overcome potential problems with city region insularity by ensuring that both Manchester and Liverpool look outwards as well as inwards. This means that there is an opportunity for Halton, over and above its role in the Liverpool City Region, to play an important part in this larger sub-regional area.

What is the Options Paper seeking to achieve?

- 3.5 The Options Paper builds upon a series of Foundation Reports assessing the Atlantic Gateway in a number of ways, including: economic assets, physical assets, sustainable resources, connectivity, housing, landscape, deprivation, and future trends and international experience.
- 3.6 The Options Paper sets out a number of areas in which it is anticipated that organising, planning, advocacy and prioritisation at the spatial level of the Atlantic Gateway has some merit. The paper also recognises that in some areas, a more localised, informal approach to capitalising on opportunities may be more appropriate. The key areas identified are:
- accelerating innovation;
 - key sector / cluster focus;
 - digital infrastructure;
 - external connections;
 - sustainable transport;
 - energy generation and a low carbon economy;
 - adapting the landscape;
 - Manchester / Liverpool marketing offer;
 - addressing deprivation; and
 - approaches to housing.
- 3.7 The Options Paper focuses on a number of underlying principles guiding the Atlantic Gateway. These include: sustainable development; existing city region plans and other proposals; limitations on the areas in which Atlantic Gateway will intervene; priority of ensuring that the Atlantic Gateway is the most important economic growth zone in the UK after Thames Gateway; a focus on adapting the landscape to focus

productivity; governance which is light of touch and fit for purpose; delivery and implementation arrangements that reflect available capacity.

- 3.8 The Options Paper states that it is not the intention for the Atlantic Gateway to subsume current arrangements or to take over the role of the city regions and sub-regional partnerships; rather, there will be a focus on key areas of added value.

What Options are presented in the Paper?

- 3.9 The Options Paper presents the key areas outlined above in terms of the pertinent issues, why the key area presents an opportunity for the Atlantic Gateway, and the potential options for dealing with the key area within the Atlantic Gateway remit. In most cases, there are around three options presented, based on varying levels of intervention, ranging from no or little intervention (i.e. leaving existing mechanisms to deal with issues), to a high level or radical invention (i.e. substantial change in approach implemented across Atlantic Gateway area).
- 3.10 A summary of the issues and options presented for each of the key areas, along with suggestions of potential implications for Halton, is attached to this report at Appendix 2.

Spatial Implications

- 3.11 As stated above, the Atlantic Gateway covers the cities of Manchester and Liverpool, and the belt in between these two cities. While Halton is part of the Liverpool City Region, its position towards the eastern periphery of the city region means that it is located in a fairly central position in the Atlantic Gateway area. Halton also has excellent links to the main west to east transport arteries in the Gateway area, including the M62 and M56, Liverpool to Manchester railway line and the Manchester Ship Canal.
- 3.12 The Options Paper does include a map of “candidate” development sites which could be included as part of the Atlantic Gateway in later stages of its development. These are the Peel Holdings “Ocean Gateway” sites, with the addition of further sites promoted by other private landowners and developers, alongside Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Strategic Sites, Economic Regional Development Fund (ERDF) strategic sites, Government Office for the North West (GONW) “Call for Sites”, nominations by individual Local Authorities and those identified in the “Adapting the Landscape” NWDA study. In Halton, sites identified include: Ditton (3MG); Daresbury; Ineos Chlor; Runcorn Waterfront; and Mersey Gateway Port. This map can be viewed on page 37 of the Options Paper, attached at Appendix 1.

How could Atlantic Gateway Impact on Halton?

- 3.13 Being in a central position within the Atlantic Gateway Area, the implementation of the options proposed within the Options Paper will have an impact upon Halton. Depending on the degree, type and level of intervention which form the preferred options, these impacts will range from relatively minor to potentially extremely large. Summaries of the potential impacts on Halton of the Options proposed are contained within the table attached at Appendix 2. The most significant of these impacts are summarised below, with consideration being given to the opportunities afforded by the Atlantic Gateway for Halton, as well as the areas of the Options Paper which could be altered or improved to better reflect Halton's needs and aspirations.

Opportunities for Halton

- 3.14 **An Integrated Approach:** In general terms, the proposals of the Options Paper with regard to linking together policy approaches, focussing on key sectors and bringing together the sub-regional approaches to infrastructure provision, would be positive for Halton. This would help to cement the Borough's role within the Atlantic Gateway area in terms of connectivity, economies of scale and joint working. In addition, there could be an important role for the Borough's major employment sites to play in a wider, integrated Atlantic Gateway area, including Daresbury, Runcorn Docklands, Mersey Gateway Port, 3MG and Ineos, alongside the Borough's important cross-Gateway physical infrastructure, including road, rail and waterway links, hence cementing physical as well as policy integration across the area. Overall, there is a significant opportunity for meaningful and effective agglomeration to be achieved across the Atlantic Gateway area.
- 3.15 **Innovation:** Focussing on innovation as a central tenet of Atlantic Gateway policy is positive for Halton. Linking with cutting-edge and innovative Atlantic Gateway initiatives, such as those associated with key sectors, has the potential to deliver benefits for those living and working in Halton, as well as businesses and agencies based in the Borough. A particular opportunity would be associated with the established Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and its planned expansion.
- 3.16 **Digital Infrastructure:** The option which proposes to focus the provision of new next-generation digital infrastructure in the Atlantic Gateway area would deliver significant benefits for those living and working in Halton. There would be opportunities for Halton to be part of major sub-regional infrastructure delivery, increasing the competitiveness of the Borough for ICT and information-led business investment.
- 3.17 **Logistics and Connectivity:** Due to its position towards the Atlantic Gateway area, there will be opportunity to capitalise on Halton's locational advantages in terms of transportation infrastructure. This includes the motorway network (M62 and M56), rail network (West

Coast Main Line and other regional routes), waterway network (Manchester Ship Canal, its ports in Halton, and other waterways) and air transport links (via Liverpool John Lennon Airport). This also includes the important role that the Mersey Gateway Bridge will play in supporting sub-regional road accessibility. This physical connectivity will also be important for emphasising the important role of Halton's freight and logistics infrastructure within the wider Atlantic Gateway Area.

Areas for Increased Emphasis or Change

- 3.18 **City Centre Focus:** There is a possibility that Atlantic Gateway interventions could be overly focussed on city and major town centres, including Liverpool, Manchester and Warrington, leading to Halton potentially being on the periphery of the intervention areas.
- 3.19 **Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus:** Key sector focuses include “digital and creative”, “life sciences / health”, “advanced materials”, “new and renewable energy”, “transport and logistics”, but do not include a specific category which would cater for the expansion of the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. It would therefore be of greater benefit to include another key sector within the Atlantic Gateway intervention, based on “science and innovation”, which would account for this internationally significant asset.
- 3.20 **“Leveraging Legacy Investment”:** Suggestions that the “re-use of redundant big pharma or chemical industry labs to grow a biotech cluster” (Options Paper page 9), be pursued. Although investment in Halton would be welcome, the use of the Heath for these purposes would not necessarily be compatible with the site owners own intentions.
- 3.21 **Lack of Policy Focus:** Having many key areas within the scope of the Atlantic Gateway intervention could lead to there being a diluted policy focus on the key areas for improvement. It would be more beneficial for Halton if the key areas were narrowed down to those in which the Atlantic Gateway could have the most meaningful impact, for example on priorities such as economic development policy, shared infrastructure provision, and interventions centred on physical and digital connectivity.
- 3.22 **Deprivation and Housing Issues:** It could be interpreted that due to the great range of policy areas included within the Options Paper, important issues like deprivation and housing growth have not been given sufficient consideration, particularly considering their relative importance for Halton. In addition, proposals for accelerating housing growth on greenfield and even Green Belt sites, if employed, either in Halton or elsewhere, could detract from the Borough's focus on regeneration and brownfield development.

- 3.23 ***Lack of Clarity on Resource Issues:*** The Options Paper is not clear about what resources would be provided as part of the Atlantic Gateway initiative. For example, it is not clear whether the interventions would be coordinated at the city-region level, by the city region cabinet, or at the local authority level. In addition, it is not clear whether the NWDA, or another organisation, will be providing full time staff or consultants to oversee policy development. This matter will require clarification in subsequent Atlantic Gateway policy development.

Responding to the Options Paper

- 3.24 As the Options Paper is a stakeholder consultation document, there is scope for Halton's wishes and preferred options to be shared with the NWDA and taken into consideration in the drafting of further Atlantic Gateway policy. It is therefore recommended that a formal response be made to the Options Paper consultation on behalf of the Council. In submitting this response, it will be important to consider the response submitted by The Mersey Partnership (TMP), in order to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across the Liverpool City Region. The TMP response is appended to this report at Appendix 3. There will be scope to add more Halton-specific comments in the Council's own response.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Depending on how the approaches presented in the Options Paper progress, Atlantic Gateway could be a significant policy influence for the Council in various areas. This includes how the Council interacts with regional and sub-regional policy, particularly that at the level of the Liverpool City Region. If some of the more radical options proposed in the Options Paper are adopted by a wide range of partners within the Atlantic Gateway, this could lead to pressure to adapt or change regional policy to better reflect Atlantic Gateway priorities. It should be borne in mind that the Atlantic Gateway initiative will need extensive political agreement to take forwards some of these radical interventions, and that some are so radical that they are unlikely to be popular with local and regional authorities.
- 4.2 Within the Council, a range of policy functions could be affected, to varying degrees, by the potential measures outlined in the Options Paper. For example, planning policy could be affected and there could be scope for the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) to consider implications of the Atlantic Gateway on forthcoming Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. Similarly, transport policy, at the Council and the Merseyside level, could be affected by proposals to link sustainable transport functions across the Atlantic Gateway area. In addition, there could be scope for the Council's economic development policies and regeneration initiatives to have regard to Atlantic Gateway objectives,

particularly where these are focussed on sites which have been identified as “key sites” or as potential parts of key sectors or clusters within Atlantic Gateway documentation.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

5.1 A Healthy Halton

The “Adapting the Landscape” key area proposes to support and expand the Green Infrastructure network across the Atlantic Gateway area. Depending on the option chosen and hence the degree of intervention proposed, and along with support at the local level, there are potential positive impacts on the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure in Halton, which will impact on the provision of healthy environments and healthy lifestyle options. Similarly, a focus on sustainable transport across the Atlantic Gateway, including sub-regional connectivity, will support the use of healthy modes, including walking and cycling. Another Atlantic Gateway key area is “Addressing Deprivation”. Again, depending on the level of intervention chosen, opportunities to address the causes of deprivation, including poor health, could be capitalised upon in Halton as part of the wider Atlantic Gateway area.

5.2 Halton’s Urban Renewal

Urban regeneration and renewal is central in a number of the Atlantic Gateway key areas and hence, the proposals included in the initiative could impact upon renewal in Halton. This includes the proposed “economies of scale” resulting from the potential joining together of regeneration programmes, funding applications and delivery mechanisms across a wider sub-regional area. The Atlantic Gateway options also include plans to support housing-led regeneration across the area, although there are some options proposed to re-focus housing delivery on green field areas, which could undermine Halton’s focus on brownfield land development.

5.3 Children and Young People in Halton

The Atlantic Gateway proposals do not impact on children and young people in any direct way, although there will be implications for children and young people if some of the options are chosen, including through addressing deprivation and diversifying employment opportunities, which could impact upon the number of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Halton.

5.4 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

This Council priority is central within the Atlantic Gateway proposals, mainly due to their general focus on economic growth and development across the Atlantic Gateway area. Key areas identified include key sector and cluster focus on particular industries and areas of research, external connections to national and global economic markets, internal connectivity for commuting, and marketing of the wider sub-regional

area for investment purposes. Again depending on the options chosen, the Atlantic Gateway initiative could offer support for major employers in Halton, such as 3MG, Ineos and Daresbury SIC, helping them to integrate with and draw benefits from the Atlantic Gateway. Creating a knowledge-based cluster in Halton, linked to a wider sub-regional collection of businesses, could support learning and skill-development in the Borough. It should be noted that proposals include support for existing economic development strategies.

5.5 A Safer Halton

Safety concerns do not feature centrally within the Atlantic Gateway options, although safety is mentioned in relation to sustainable transport.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The Atlantic Gateway document is an Options paper, and so development of Atlantic Gateway policy is still at an early stage. It is difficult to determine, without Preferred Options having been published, the degree of intervention, which will be involved in the delivery of Atlantic Gateway proposals. Many of the options proposed, if implemented, will deliver significant benefits in Halton; however, some of the proposals outlined in the Options Paper, would, if adopted, across the Atlantic Gateway, cause problems for the effective implementation of existing policy. It is therefore of importance that the Council effectively engage with the Atlantic Gateway proposals, to ensure that their implementation in Halton reaps wholly positive results for the Borough.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The Options Paper does not directly address equality and diversity issues in Halton or across the wider Atlantic Gateway area; however, some of the proposals contained within the document could have secondary impacts for equality and quality of life for residents in Halton, including through increasing employment levels and addressing deprivation problems.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework Options Paper (NWDA, 2009)	Planning and Policy Division, Rutland House, Halton Lea	Tim Gibbs / Rachel Apter
Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework Foundation Reports (NWDA, 2009)	Planning and Policy Division, Rutland House, Halton Lea	Rachel Apter
Ocean Gateway Brochure (Peel Holdings, 2008)	Planning and Policy Division, Rutland House, Halton Lea	Rachel Apter

Name of Board: Executive Board

Date of Meeting: 25th September 2009

Report Title: Implications of Atlantic Gateway in Halton

Author: Rachel Apter

Appendix 1

Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework – Options Paper

Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework

Options Paper

August 2009



**Atlantic Gateway Spatio-Economic Framework
Options Paper**

A Report for NWDA

ekosgen
BDP
AECOM
Urban Strategies
Adroit
URS Corporation

August 2009

ekosgen
Lawrence Building
2 Mount Street
Manchester, M2 5WQ



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	ACCELERATING INNOVATION	6
3	KEY SECTOR FOCUS	9
4	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE.....	12
5	EXTERNAL CONNECTIONS	15
6	SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT	18
7	ENERGY GENERATION AND A LOW CARBON ECONOMY.....	21
8	ADAPTING THE LANDSCAPE	24
9	MANCHESTER / LIVERPOOL MARKETING OFFER.....	27
10	ADDRESSING DEPRIVATION.....	30
11	A NEW APPROACH TO HOUSING	33
12	SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS	36
13	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	38
	APPENDIX 1 – STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS.....	40

1 Introduction

Context

- 1.1 Anchored by the two cities of Liverpool and Manchester, the Atlantic Gateway corridor not only offers a strong global presence but represents an economy of over £70bn. Clustered in this area, world class research-led industry sits cheek by jowl with a thriving and renewed creative and digital sector, and a globally renowned sporting and cultural offer and heritage.
- 1.2 This is an area with an international calibre, capable, if we make best use of the assets and drive connectivity, to achieve a larger proportion of global economic growth which even in these tough times is set to double over the coming 20 years.
- 1.3 Previous work looking into the Manchester Liverpool corridor reported that economic linkages across the corridor geography were weak, and there was limited evidence of agglomeration. At one level, this is not surprising given the distinctive economic histories of the two Cities Regions and the tendency for many businesses to operate in a local sub regional market context. On the other hand the numbers commuting between the City Regions and the shared dependency of key infrastructure such as road and rail makes for a shared agenda on many key issues relevant to economic growth and prosperity.
- 1.4 While the two Cities have an extensive economic hinterland, there are strong local connections between parts of the two City Regions and Cheshire & Warrington. Boundaries have become blurred and Manchester's recent employment growth has led to an increase in its labour market catchment, a process is likely to continue given the growth projections for the City Region. At the same time, new investment in Liverpool building on the city's '08 renaissance are likely to lead to a significant increase in employment at the Merseyside core, and again labour catchment areas are likely to widen.
- 1.5 In essence a number of trends will increase economic linkages and inter-dependencies and many of the challenges in delivering sustainable economic growth are shared across the geography.
- 1.6 The question which follows on is the extent to which the Atlantic Gateway as a concept offers the cores of the two City regions as well as Cheshire & Warrington the opportunity to address constraints and accelerate opportunities more effectively than operating as separate entities. This study will seek to identify interventions where there will be clear shared benefits across the Gateway and, where possible, quantify the scale and pace of growth which greater interconnection across the area would deliver.

Potential Themes and Strands

- 1.7 The government's preferred mode of planning for growth through economic development is one of strong regions supported by City Regions and sub regions. More recently, City Regions have been identified as key drivers of growth, but insularity is a risk, and ministers are increasingly concerned with ensuring that the City Regions look outwards as well as inwards. There are a number of areas where organising, planning, advocacy and prioritisation at the Atlantic Gateway level has some merit. In others there is a less compelling case, and informal networking or collaboration around issues and opportunities will be developed informally. The main areas where a substantive and value added role has potential are:
 - In terms of sectors, creative industries; logistics and distribution; life sciences / biotech / well being, new embryonic opportunity of new and renewable and wider low carbon supply chain are areas of considerable opportunity for an Atlantic

Gateway perspective, while others such as professional services are best left at the City Region and sub regional level.

- Innovation, one of the key drivers of economic growth and one where the traditional approach of University spin-outs has delivered modest results in the North West and a fundamental change of approach is required to deliver the scale of economic growth required – potentially including support for business led investment.
- The Low Carbon Economy and Adapted Landscapes – one of the major challenges of the next twenty years, with congestion threatening economic growth in key locations, the imperative of legislation to reduce carbon outputs and the potential opportunities of moving to a low carbon economy, again offering potential actions and policies at a gateway level. A mosaic of productive landscapes from Liverpool to Manchester can provide the critical green infrastructure to enable a new economic model to emerge.
- Transport and connectivity – where key infrastructure serves a wider geography and acts as a benefit to the region – Super Port, Manchester International Airport - or where constraints are addressed and solutions secured at the Gateway level – digital infrastructure, Manchester Hub, rail electrification such as recently announced Chat Moss line.
- Housing and Place – where there is considerable uncertainty over the ability to deliver the revised RSS housing numbers and concern over the type and quality of new development. At the Atlantic Gateway level, the quality of the land supply, the design and standards of new housing, the greening of the urban core are all issues where a Gateway approach has a strong rationale.
- Critical Economic Infrastructure – water, energy, renewable energy, waste management, digital connectivity are critical to a successful and competitive economy, and where constraints and solutions may be best served through an Atlantic Gateway perspective, taking account of market demand, spatial issues, the scale of investment and the potential for public improvement benefits.

Principles

- 1.8 All of the stakeholders (see Appendix 1 for list of Stakeholders consulted to date) have well developed plans in terms of economic development, transport and housing. These have been developed from a strong evidence base and many key initiatives are now being taken forward. It is important that this momentum is not interrupted.
- 1.9 There are a number of underlying principles which should guide the Atlantic Gateway. These are:
- Sustainable development – ensuring that the environmental, economic and social implications of growth are given careful consideration, and that opportunities to address critical issues such as climate change are embedded.
 - The two City Region Plans and the proposals developed for Warrington and Cheshire underpin the economic rationale for the Atlantic Gateway. These will be adapted over time to take account of market conditions and new opportunities.
 - The Atlantic Gateway should take a leading role, under the direction of stakeholders, in a number of agreed areas only, where there is clear added value. This list of themes or strands will need to be reviewed periodically. Other areas for intervention and action will continue to be taken forward by City Regions and sub regional partnerships.
 - The Atlantic Gateway should be used to position the two City Regions and Warrington/Cheshire as the most important economic growth zone/pole in the UK

after the Thames Gateway. The goal will be to make the case for the prioritisation of the Gateway for public and private sector investment. 'Wellbeing' of the area will be a key theme from a variety of perspectives to ensure fit with this key Central Government requirement.

- Atlantic Gateway will pioneer a new approach to adapting the landscape to create a mosaic of productive land – for economic development, housing, tourism, food, energy, and leisure - within, around and from one great city to the other, embracing the geography from the coast and the Mersey Estuary to the foothills of the Pennines.
 - Governance will be light touch and fit for purpose, and will reflect the themes and strands and the level of sign off needed to take forward key priorities. Where appropriate these will be bespoke to the subject matter.
 - Delivery and implementation arrangements will reflect the capacity already available with the Gateway and the benefits of combined research and actions, the short term pooling of resources and the use of task and finish groups and secondments to take forward priorities. The Gateway in effect should operate with a small and flexible secretariat.
- 1.10 It is not the intention for the Atlantic Gateway to subsume current arrangements or to take over the role being played by City Regions and sub regional partnerships. Not everything needs to or should be aggregated up to or report to an Atlantic Gateway level. The focus on key areas of added value and the testing over time of the success of themes and strands will determine the long term development of the Gateway.

2 Accelerating Innovation

What is the issue?

- 2.1 The global literature suggests that if we have to look at one thing regarding regional economic transformation, it is innovation. It is the extent to which the business base in the region can generate, access, absorb and apply innovation. This, more than any other set of factors, explains why some economies are more competitive than others and why they grow faster and hold onto their growth.
- 2.2 The recent creation of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) puts innovation at the heart of UK economy policy. DBIS' aim is to make sure that Britain *is the best place in the world to run an innovative business or service – recognising that this is critical to the UK's future prosperity, our quality of life and future job prospects. Innovation is also seen as central to economic recovery - boosting and focusing investment in innovation in areas where the UK has strength and potential future competitive advantage must be a key element of Government action during the downturn to ensure a successful recovery.*
- 2.3 By innovation, we do not mean the traditional narrow definition of innovation that focused on science and technology commercialisation and 'hi-tech' clusters. These are important, but the global literature's current understanding of innovation is that it is a process that applies to the whole economy, to all firms and actors in the economy, and to business processes and practices as much as to science and technology.
- 2.4 Importantly, we see there being an important role for the business community in driving innovation and improved performance, rather than this being a process which is always led by universities and research departments. Innovation should extend to how businesses are organised, their collaborators, their links to external organisations and the markets they work within.
- 2.5 The National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts (NESTA) adopts a wide interpretation and definition of innovation, which suggests that innovation policy is at the heart of economic development policy. It embraces all sectors and sections of the economy, and addresses the majority of factors that influence productivity, competitiveness and growth.
- 2.6 A number of other themes running through this options report will clearly be linked to improving innovation – in particular the retention and attraction of talent which is linked to the quality of life and housing offer across the area.

What is the Big Idea?

- 2.7 The global literature now also refers to the importance of an 'innovation system', rather than to just the process of innovation. International experience suggests that innovation is best supported, in a country or a region, by a coherent joined up innovation system, rather than by a range of discrete interventions. Human networking lies at the heart of the innovation system, bringing the key actors – the research base, the business base, and intermediaries – together to share knowledge, ideas and align interests. Human networking both personal and impersonal is best enabled by a professional, dedicated secretariat that includes people able to cross the boundaries between the three communities (the triple helix).
- 2.8 Much of the innovation community literature focuses on ways of commercialising a region's knowledge base (commonly the knowledge generated by its universities). Contrary to popular perception, the most effective routes are not through university or company spin-outs and traditional technology transfer routes (which have a relatively small scale and impact even amongst the largest and most dynamic universities in

leading regions); but instead is through increasing the number of students taking local jobs and through increasing generic graduate start-ups.

- 2.9 In addition, international experience suggests there are a number of powerful drivers of innovation. These include high ICT adoption and exploitation, high rates of start-ups and the creation of a SME base, and the growth of specialist clusters.
- 2.10 International experience also suggests that innovation depends on enabling support, particularly access to finance, increasing enterprise, entrepreneurship, business management, leadership and innovation skills, and on provision of bespoke workspace and competitive broadband access.

Why is it an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 2.11 The Atlantic Gateway is already host to the bulk of the North West's innovation assets, including some of the leading assets of the UK economy as a whole, such as Daresbury. Innovation is already a central policy theme, for both constituent city-regions, including Manchester's status as a Science City, and within regional policy. The Atlantic Gateway's Universities are amongst the best in the UK and are already actively involved in a number of innovation support projects. NESTA were closely involved in the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) and NWDA launched the Innovation Vouchers scheme in October 2008.
- 2.12 Why, therefore, is there a need for the Atlantic Gateway to consider innovation? Put simply, it is the need for interconnected and critical mass. Whilst the interconnections between Universities and other knowledge assets within the city-regions has improved in recent years, including initiatives such as the G8 network across the Northern Way, there still remains too little connectivity between the institutions across the whole of the Atlantic Gateway, despite their strong standings and individual, and potentially complementary, strengths. If the North West is to match the international prestige and standing of innovation hubs elsewhere, such as Oxbridge and London (and the corridors that run between them) in the UK, then it needs to bring together and integrate the world-class strengths that are spread across the Atlantic Gateway – a relatively small geographical area in the context of international innovation regions.
- 2.13 A range of policy opportunities to generate a stronger innovation system across the Atlantic Gateway include the following:
- Networking – the Atlantic Gateway already hosts a variety of networks – the mission now is to join this up with a network of networks and to facilitate inter-network networking, supply chain networking, cross sectoral networking and sectoral networking, drawing on global best practice techniques found in Ireland, Finland, Canada and closer to home. Manchester is in the process of creating a network of networks....these can be extended across the entire AG
 - Knowledge transfer (HEI-B) – one of the most promising and significant opportunities is to increase graduate retention by enabling more Atlantic Gateway firms to employ more local graduates – Manchester is piloting some innovation NESTA programmes and there is opportunity to scale these up and draw on other international best practice. Another promising opportunity is to help Atlantic Gateway firms access global knowledge in leading global institutions
 - Access to finance – firms still find the arrange of offers confusing, complex and difficult to deal with – there is an opportunity to find ways of making even simpler and of helping firms to apply for seed corn and early stage venture funding
 - Technical infrastructure and support – the region already has a number of specialist centres providing infrastructure, equipment and technical teams, to help firms pioneer new materials, new technologies, new processes and to provide space to develop prototypes and to pilot scale up production. There is an

opportunity for more of these, especially in new fast growth fields such as around low carbon technologies

What are the Options?

2.14 The options range from putting in place a relatively small secretariat and budget to coordinate and promote the existing strengths within the Atlantic Gateway, through to the creation of a holistic 'innovation system' encompassing the central aspects of economic development. Therefore, in reality, the options comprise the various components that could sit within this innovation system – some of these components already exist, and therefore the issue is the extent to which there is a benefit in bringing them into an integrated system allowing them to be better coordinated and better promoted for the benefit of the whole Atlantic Gateway. Options include:

- Option 1: Maximising Critical Mass: develop the most sophisticated innovation system in the UK - establish an innovation secretariat and specialist advisors able to span the boundaries between the knowledge and business bases; develop Gateway wide human networking; develop large-scale graduate placement programmes; develop funding exercise and major venture capital fund.
- Option 2: City Region Innovation Networking: develop core components of networking, student placements and funding at the City Region level, through existing partnerships, such as the Manchester based 'Corridor Partnership' developing innovation with assets and institutions on the Oxford Road.
- Options 3: Accelerating Current Plans: strengthen current focus of existing plans including University spin out, overall business and entrepreneurship support, including the provision of specialist workspace.

3 Key sector focus

What is the issue?

- 3.1 A common regional economic policy tool, stemming from Porter's work on clusters, is to focus support on selected sectors/ clusters. Since the DTI's knowledge economy white paper, key sector policy has become common place with most regional, sub regional and city region strategies including a focus on selected key sectors / clusters. The NW RES includes a key sector focus as do the city region plans of Manchester and Liverpool.
- 3.2 It is also clear from the global literature that some regions / sub regions have developed strong 'specialised' clusters, particularly in high growth global markets such as life sciences, digital technologies and advanced engineering/ manufacturing (serving automotives and aerospace for example). The clusters take different geographic shapes but all can be characterised in terms of a set of common features: critical mass of activity and skills; education and research infrastructure; presence of global companies; proximity to strategic transport infrastructure.
- 3.3 A key question is: *why some areas develop strong clusters and others do not?* The international literature along with research Adroit has undertaken looking at around 50 international case studies suggests one or more of four principal sources of competitive advantage are essential (but are not a guarantee):
- **Natural resource advantage** - particularly relevant for energy (both fossil fuel but also new and renewable energy (wind, wave, tidal, bio-waste))
 - **Leveraging legacy investment** in expensive infrastructure and skills - for example, re-use of redundant big pharma or chemical industry labs to grow a biotech cluster (the Heath, Warrington, Nottingham Bio City), evolution of traditional textiles and chemicals industries into an advanced flexible materials cluster (Lancashire), re-use of dockyard facilities to service off-shore wind (NaREC, Blyth, Northumberland)
 - **Leveraging the knowledge base** (universities, governmental research and teaching hospitals - the classic here is Cambridge and one of the largest international examples is Medicon Valley (the Oresund region that spans Denmark and Sweden)
 - **Creation or attraction of a leading global corporate** which stimulates a wider supply chain and supporting infrastructure - the most quoted examples are Kista in Stockholm which evolved around the successful diversification and growth of Ericson and Nokia in Espoo, near to Helsinki, Finland
- 3.4 The North West and the Atlantic Gateway area in particular offer strong competitive advantage, under these headings, to a number of key sectors.
- 3.5 Doubts have been raised on the effectiveness of sectors and clusters and MIER sets out a case for cross sectoral networking as a key element of a dynamic economy. Other research makes a case that sectors and cluster approaches can be successful, for example based on evidence from PWC's recent evaluation of the region cluster programme:
- "The regional cluster development programme for 2002-06 was evaluated in 2008 by PricewaterhouseCoopers as part of BERR's Impact Evaluation Framework. The overall conclusion was that the programme has been successful. Direct net impacts generated by the Programme are significant at around £13 million to £32 million GVA. The "value for money" ratio of the Programme (i.e. cost to benefits)

was reported as likely to be high, within a range of 1 to 2 and 1 to 27." - Clusters Programme Evaluation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, August 2008.

- "This would seem to indicate that not only were all outputs under the programme achieved, but also that there is a high level of importance attached by those businesses assisted to the many aspects of the Merseyside Sector Development Programme. Each sector had its own specific concerns and outputs; however what clearly emerges from all the conversations and surveys is the high profile and benefit of enabling networks. " - England's Northwest Research Service (ENWRS) independent evaluation of the Merseyside Sector Development Programme conducted via TMP from April 2007 to December 2008
- 3.6 The team's experience is that whilst not all cluster policy necessarily works that 'the right policy does' and moreover is essential if regions and sub regions are to exploit their competitive advantage in a globally competitive market. It is now understood that effective cluster policy needs to consider the full range of issues, from networking and collaboration, through to ensuring finance is available to provision of sites, premises and infrastructure, and to focus effort on the points at which blockages occur. Cluster policy dovetails with innovation policy and could be seen as a focus for innovation policy.
- 3.7 We would suggest however that the Atlantic Gateway does not pursue cluster policy at the expense of wider economic and innovation policy and that the ideas put forward in MEIR should be further developed. There is a need for a whole economy approach through developing a strong innovation system, but with a cross cutting focus on the specific needs/ addressing the specific barriers/ market failures to selected key sectors.

What is the Big Idea?

- 3.8 Identify no more than four to five key sectors, identify their growth potential, the consequent impact on the region, the key barriers/ hurdles/ obstacles blocking growth and a targeted set of policy solutions designed to address these. This will tie in with NWDA's wider regional approach. The agency is just starting to look at how the cluster development programme will evolve over the next few years, including how it might link together the more traditional market driven sectors (aerospace, chemicals, food & drink etc) with a number of strong cross-cutting themes such as low carbon/sustainability, advance materials, design, well-being etc. Other topics which are increasingly important to clusters/sectors are new business models, changing behaviour (e.g. public attitude to renewable energy, recycling etc) and the image of the cluster/sector.
- 3.9 Choice of key sectors for the Atlantic Gateway should reflect:
- High growth global sectors, offering strong domestic demand/need coupled with strong export potential,
 - In which the Atlantic Gateway (and wider region) offers (or can offer) one or more genuine sources of global competitive advantage, and
 - Where a worthwhile proportion of growth will occur within the Atlantic Gateway, rather than in the US, Germany, China, India etc.

Why is it an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 3.10 The key sectors that offer the most potential, against the above criteria, we would suggest are:
- **Digital and creative.** Leveraging media city, Manchester's position as 2nd national peering point (after London Docklands) and proposals to accelerate deployment of FttP (including strong focus on design within digital & creative which covers the full range of industrial design and whole life cycle design)

- **Life sciences/ health/ (and potentially wellbeing)**...leveraging Manchester's and Liverpool's critical mass of university and teaching hospital research, Astra Zeneca and other pharma plus historically strong chemicals (speciality chemicals in particular) and supporting lab infrastructure and massive public spend on health and potential for industrial base to diversify (more) into medical appliances/ aging and health
- **Advanced Materials** – based on considerable strengths in chemicals and advanced flexible materials (technical textiles) with applications in aerospace, automotive, renewable energy, printable electronics, medical devices/healthcare, performance clothing, sustainable construction, smart packaging etc. There is world class expertise in the universities, e.g. the new Knowledge Centre for Materials, the Materials Discovery Centre (Liverpool) and CoEBio3 (Manchester) etc. Chemicals NW have just had a mapping study of Science & Technology for the Chemistry Using Industry done, which contains a considerable amount of useful information
- New embryonic opportunity of **new and renewable energy** and wider low carbon supply chain including vehicles (cars, trucks and planes), fuel and a whole life cycle approach to manufacturing, leveraging traditional strengths in fossil fuels, chemical processing, automotives and a supporting advanced manufacturing supply chain – but also seeking to build the beginnings of a supply chain in bio-energy and continue building on initial strengths in on and off shore wind
- **Transport and logistics.** Building on the Gateway's already strategically significant transport infrastructure – the two airports of Manchester and LJM, on the port of Liverpool and potential re-use of the ship canal, the rail and motorway system – with the objectives of providing better, more competitive and lower carbon logistics for Atlantic Gateway and wider region (particularly important to the competitiveness of NW manufacturing) and strengthen the region's national logistics role

What are the options?

3.11 The options range from

- **Option 1: Prioritising Atlantic Gateway Key Sectors:** agree key sectors where Atlantic Gateway level innovation adds value and apply new approach – creative and digital industries; life sciences/health, advanced materials, renewable energy/ wider low carbon and transport and logistics
- **Option 2: City Region Innovation Networking:** focus on the existing city region key sectors - develop and apply core components of a strong innovation system (i.e. networking, student placements, funding, and technical infrastructure) at the City Region level to City Region key sectors.
- **Options 3: Accelerating Current Plans:** strengthen Agency's current focus on key sectors.

4 Digital Infrastructure

What is the issue?

- 4.1 High levels of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) adoption and usage are synonymous with high levels of innovation. There is now a substantial body of literature globally that links ICT adoption and usage with productivity gains. Recent research estimates an average of 3%–4% productivity driven GVA uplifts across a typical region, with much higher impacts for particular sectors and individual companies. Moreover, the literature reports a strong symbiotic relationship between ICT adoption and innovation – the two are inextricably linked.
- 4.2 Innovative firms with innovative management are more likely to adopt ICTs, particularly more advanced ICTs; conversely, adoption of ICTs tends to drive innovation in firms – not just product and service innovation but process, management, marketing, customer and supplier relationship innovation. Moreover, ICTs also make it easier to start-up, to start several businesses at once, to immediately reach global markets and to pioneer new business models. Thus ICTs also tend to drive new firm formation. It is now very clear that increasing the level of ICT adoption in a region's business base will result in increased innovation. It is also clear that investing in these types of technology can significantly reduce the need for business travel and commuting, which will be vital for any region with ambitions of a low carbon economy.
- 4.3 However, despite strong 'standard' broadband rollout, the UK currently lags behind the leading countries and regions of the world in the provision of 'next-generation' ICT infrastructure – the development of very-high bandwidth fibre-optic infrastructure to homes and business premises discussed in the recent Digital Britain report. The Government's current preference is that private sector should deliver the majority of next-generation networks, but acknowledges that this will take time and that the rollout will be uneven - the resulting 'patch-work' is unlikely to optimise consumer choice, competition, competitive pricing, innovation and resilience.

What is the Big Idea?

- 4.4 In this context, Digital Britain confirms a role for public intervention to help support and facilitate the private sector deliver next-generation access to ensure services reach out to all areas, including rural areas and deprived communities. Without this next-generation infrastructure, the UK will soon fall behind its competitor nations and regions that already have such services and are beginning to develop the next-generation of ICT services that can exploit this much improved infrastructure.
- 4.5 Therefore, areas that take an early lead in developing such infrastructure will offer clear locational advantages for businesses and investors, particularly in innovative sectors, and create opportunities to be at the cutting edge of the development and piloting of new products and services, for both public and private sectors. These advantages may prove relatively short-lived in the context of traditional product lifecycles, but may entrench crucial early adopter benefits for an innovative region in the context of the fast-moving ICT environment. This has certainly been the case for some early adopters (the Nordics and Korea for example).
- 4.6 Any investment in infrastructure cannot be done in isolation however – it would be like building a motorway before the invention of the car or without teaching people to drive. It has to be intrinsically linked to the wider innovation support described in the option above, encouraging and promoting the usage of ICTs amongst businesses and residents, providing training in the skills required, and supporting the development of new products and services. The public sector can take a lead across all these fields – by aggregating and coordinating its infrastructure and service expenditure to underwrite

the investment required, through its business support processes, and by working with regional businesses to develop and pilot new ways of delivering services (such as remote health provision, fully interactive distance learning, and so on).

Why is it an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 4.7 ICT infrastructure has long been recognised as a priority at both regional and city-region level. Manchester is already the most connected location outside of Greater London, and the pilot project by Manchester Digital is explicitly mentioned in the Digital Britain report.
- 4.8 However, this strong picture is not consistent across the whole of the Atlantic Gateway. The city-regions' hinterlands have lower population and business densities which make the business case for investment weaker. In particular, this limits the interconnectivity of the city-regions with those key knowledge and economic assets located outside the city cores (paralleling the lack of connectivity in innovation support also highlighted in the option above). Even within the core urban areas, high levels of deprivation make many neighbourhoods unattractive for private investment.
- 4.9 Coordinating action at the Atlantic Gateway level, therefore, offers the opportunity to create greater economies of scale (in terms of aggregate public purchasing power and the ability to cross-subsidise the weaker areas), the opportunity to interconnect a critical mass of knowledge and economic assets, and underpinning the overall innovation system (above) and key sectors dispersed across the sub-region, such as creative & digital industries, advanced manufacturing, etc. Acting at this level increases the weight of the case and the opportunity to make a real step change in provision, helping to support investment, both private and public, including the proposed subsidies within Digital Britain report.
- 4.10 The view has also been put forward that the Gateway level also offers a sufficient critical mass of customers to make it feasible for the main service providers to explore offering services. The area is of sufficient scale to offer a feasible NGA pilot area and test bed, much as the four cities of South Yorkshire do for the Digital Cities deployment.
- 4.11 Moreover, one of the major barriers to deployment of NGA is expected to be the capacity (and cost) of backhaul. The Atlantic Gateway is in a truly unique position in this regard in that Manchester is the UK's 2nd peering point, after London Docklands, offering unparalleled international connectivity. This fact alone suggests that the Atlantic Gateway should be one of the first areas in the regions to deploy NGA. It can't be right that Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley, Dundee, Bournemouth, Durham, and closer to home, the North Wales coastal area (through fibre speed) and others take the lead
- 4.12 In conclusion, the Atlantic Gateway geography offers a real advantage regarding early deployment of NGA.

What are the options?

- 4.13 The options are:
- Option 1: Set a standard based on next-generation infrastructure to provide the levels of connectivity seen in countries such as South Korea (very high bandwidth) focus the proposition on the major centres of Liverpool, Manchester and Warrington, with a long term plan for roll out; to be taken forward by a working group with officers currently involved in leading development in the City Regions, secure private sector and Whitehall involvement, allocate substantial development budget.

- Option 2: Aggregate existing public sector demand to improve and better leverage the purchasing opportunities this offers, through to full-scale rollout of fibre-to-the premises. Convene a short term group to establish if this is feasible at the Atlantic Gateway level or best pursued at the City Region and sub regional level. Alternatively, a first phase pilot initiative may be developed with subsequent roll out across the Atlantic Gateway.
 - Option 3: Implement and accelerate current City Region and local authoritative plans, and incorporate the provision of infrastructure ducting in to all new residential, commercial and industrial development.
- 4.14 Within this spectrum includes a number of actions that could be developed at the Atlantic Gateway area, including:
- Projects to exploit the digital infrastructure created, including the development and piloting of new products and services – this again can be facilitated through public procurement
 - Virtual networking to support and interconnect clusters – for example linkages between creative & digital industries and science industries across the sub-region
 - The provision of infrastructure ducting in advance of development to facilitate strategic sites across the sub-region and their promotion
- 4.15 Whatever the option, the Atlantic Gateway needs to deploy technology that will compete with the best globally. It is not just about deploying dark fibre to premises, however, this is essential because nothing else can happen without this, but it is not enough on its own. FttP deployment needs to be accompanied by other policy measures:
- Demand-stimulation,
 - Services and content innovation,
 - Supporting infrastructure...such as regional content storage and distribution (data centres and other distributed modes),
 - ICT super hubs, and
 - the other main themes in a typical regional high impact ICT strategy, business support, IT supply chain development and ICT user and professional skills.

5 External Connections

What is the issue?

- 5.1 The world is a globally connected environment, not just via the use of IT and merging cultures but in respect of the way it manages goods and travel. While the use and continual improvement in effectiveness of IT, increasing scarcity (and therefore cost) of natural resources and other environmental concerns mean that there is pressure to 'reduce major movements' external connections to and from key markets and resource centres will be continually needed at national, European and global levels in order to be seen as a place in which to do business. To not be connected into such markets would mean missing out on the opportunities they present.
- 5.2 This is particularly important in relation to:
- The Atlantic Gateway has a substantial 'offer' to make to the external market – not just in terms of freight but also in terms of factors such as tourism and commerce. The connectivity between the area's air, sea and rail assets make them of international significance.
 - The potential of the Airports to act at European level in particular, and in the case of Manchester Airport globally.
 - The need to be connected to the European Freight Market and make Liverpool a first landing point for Global markets into the UK and Europe – something that needs to be addressed in respect of substantial competition.
 - The need to ensure that the passenger and freight rail offers are seen as fundamental parts of the national and therefore feeders into the European offers.
 - The scale of competition and the need to ensure the area acts as one to lobby for funding – raising itself higher up in both National and European priorities.

What is the big idea?

- 5.3 The big idea is to build upon current key assets and opportunities by making the Atlantic Gateway an attractive, multi-dimensional hub in respect of Air, Rail and Sea access – something that many regions cannot offer. The infrastructure required to do this could create substantial employment opportunities and correlate with emerging 'indigenous' industries under the 'research and creative' banners. Being at the forefront of future global markets, in the same way that the area was at the forefront of the industrial revolution and manufacturing will help keep it economically buoyant. This however relies on being connected physically.
- 5.4 The idea is;
- To attract early implementation of improvements to national rail for both passenger and freight – in particular high speed lines to the continental networks
 - To ensure that the significant offer that the Super Port, Mersey Ship Canal and combined port and airport offer can provide in relation to the changing face of freight is maximised.
 - To make sure that potential for other offers, such as the leisure markets, are complemented by ease of access and that in order to retain the best talent access from here to other markets is continually improved.

The primary reason for this is:

- To ensure that the area has exemplar connections for business in both a national and international context, since commerce is no longer regional or national, it is global.

Why is this an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

5.5 The region has substantial existing assets upon which to develop, in particular;

- The Port of Liverpool and Liverpool/Manchester Airport in relation to freight. There are few locations that could provide these assets in relatively close proximity and in potentially complementary manner.
- The size of its own market – something emphasised by the amount internal freight movement, but something that adds value to the issue of providing ‘backflow’ of goods and passengers to make routes more economically viable.
- The existing attraction in relation to its attractiveness as a distribution hub. The area already operates to act as a manufacturing and distribution centre for certain core goods and has key connections already operating.
- Its geographical location at the western boundary of the continent (hence the ‘Atlantic Gateway’ name). The Port of Liverpool and subsequently the Manchester Ship Canal grew in relation to the North American facing market. A good seaport relies on both good facilities at its location but also in relation to onward connections.
- The existence of core infrastructure upon which to expand and better (for example in relation to areas such as the Manchester hub). The presence of Trans European Routes through the area represents a major asset to be used more fully.
- Current government interest and European Realisation of high speed rail networks and the ability to supply substantial inputs / justification for such in the UK.

What are the Options?

5.6 There are several key priorities:

- Strengthen the Airport offers – the Atlantic Gateway has two major Airports which provides a level of competition which is to the advantage of business and leisure travellers. The major priorities are strengthening the freight services, and John Lennon Airport’s links to the Super Port offer new opportunities; increasing the international scheduled services (United States, Far East, Asia), with Manchester Airport a viable alternative to Heathrow and Gatwick removing the need for time consuming journeys to the South; and the development of associated business parks and other secondary opportunities linked to international airports as business locations
- Port Access and Improvements – the Port of Liverpool’s aims for Post-Panamax terminal allows it to continue to operate at the top end of the global scale, however the container traffic that feeds into and out of this has to be taken through the wider system in complementary manner. Improvements to the cross-regional rail freight network, intermodal freight exchange networks and immediate road access to the port should be a priority in this respect.
- High Speed Passenger Rail – to agree the Atlantic Gateway offer(s) to the national market, in particular London. This ‘HS’ offer has to align with the internal aim of a highly connected single integrated network for the region. Additionally, securing such a route and one across the Pennines towards Leeds and the North East/Hull

could enable better use of existing lines for freight movements – allowing better pathing of trains and therefore more attractive timeslot availabilities and point to point journey times.

6 Sustainable Transport

What is the issue?

- 6.1 The key issue is that there is substantial demand for movement across the Atlantic Gateway area, both passenger and freight, but also within the major urban areas and between them. Only within the central urban areas is non-car transport a really attractive option in terms of access to employment in particular. Outside core hours availability and accessibility is poor without a car. The concept of 'places' is key to embrace, with people living, working and learning within a relatively local area building stronger communities and being sustainable in transport terms, however in order to be successful an area needs to be connected, both physically and mentally to the outside world. The Atlantic Gateway has to achieve this 'balance in tensions' between internal and external movement requirements. This section primarily explores the former of these, with the next section exploring external movement matters.
- 6.2 Many journeys are made across the region by car, wasting resource and increasing pressure at key points on the motorway network. It is unlikely that further substantial road building will be politically or environmentally acceptable on a large scale in the future and therefore making better use of this key asset will be critical, especially if we are to accommodate new development and growth. The Atlantic Gateway is not isolated in this respect since what happens outside the area in terms of growth affects core corridors through the area.
- 6.3 A major barrier to movement for many is the real or perceived cost of public transport versus use of the car. This leads to situations where people spend substantial proportions of their salary on maintaining and operating a car when if public transport were able to be operated more appropriately such a need would be reduced. Public transport in particular has changed by becoming more commercially operated and therefore there is a need to help shape the offer to one which is both suitable for communities it serves, but also commercially viable into the future.
- 6.4 While reducing the propensity for movement, for example through increased use of IT, using local suppliers and changing lifestyles can make a big difference there will still be demand for travel, particularly in an economic upturn. Making better use of key resources that the region has to reduce dependency on external supplies – for example reducing dependency on petrol and fossil fuels will help make the region more self-sustainable. The key Central Government programme 'DaSTS' (Delivering a Sustainable Transport System) is critical to link into to ensure access to future funding streams. The Atlantic Gateway has many assets to enable this to be successfully achieved, not least the ability to interlink modes through tools such as strategic park and ride, busways and 'intermediate' modes between bus and rail. Reducing carbon footprints of travel will be critical – the Atlantic Gateway has many of the core assets to help achieve this – what is needed is upgrading and improved linkages.
- 6.5 A particular issue for many is the ability to make journeys from outside the city centres to another place in the Atlantic Gateway quicker and more cost effectively by public transport than by car. The motorway network will not continue to cope with combinations of long and shorter distance movement (a feature of this area), while the rail offer in particular still relates to that of 'industrial revolution' land use patterns not ones of the present or future. Very few major developments from the past 40 years (either housing or employment) have excellent public transport accessibility or new infrastructure, very few have really considered in depth the direct link between type of property provided with transport impacts.

What is the big idea?

6.6 There are two key elements of the sustainable transport theme:

- Firstly to strengthen the urban transport offers, primarily within the two major cities (including areas their sphere of influence has expanded to such as Chester and Ellesmere Port), but also within each of the key towns of the area, creating networks that allow day-to-day lives to be lived without the need for a car (or in families) the need for a second or third car. The urban networks in the two major cities are substantial but need further strengthening – for example in relation to orbital travel or network gaps. Significantly improving the networks for daily journeys means that longer distance journeys are less likely to be needed to be made by car. Modes such as tram, stronger bus routes and cross-urban area rail routes need to be strengthened. Innovation in modes will need to be combined with ‘localised behavioural change’ and ‘very low carbon modes’ namely walking and cycling initiatives’ to ensure total journey reliability, safety and convenience.
- Secondly, to strengthen the core inter-urban offers of the region, including linking to key assets and major trip generators/attractors such as the two airports. Clearly announcements over rail electrification between Liverpool and Manchester via Newton Le Willows are a good example of improvement, however the nature of the region whereby the motorway network has encouraged substantial numbers of cross-regional trips but not always in large point to point volumes, means that a stronger network is needed – with core lines of travel and stronger hubs at key locations. The network of the region needs to reflect the ‘tube style’ networks of the major global conurbations – not just in infrastructure but also in relation to matters such as frequency and importantly ticketing. In summary intermodal connectivity across the region and to local networks will be key, as will be helping users understand the impact of their movement choices.

Why is this an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 6.7 This is an Atlantic Gateway opportunity since what happens in one urban area within the region clearly influences and interacts with the other urban areas. There are currently two key PTE’s that have made significant inroads into modern public transport offers, however there are few PTE’s in such close proximity and where numbers of people in between have potential to gain from a linked approach. The region often operates across boundary and many users have potential to gain beyond their immediate ‘political’ boundaries.
- 6.8 Atlantic Gateway offers the opportunity to undertake more strategic assessment of proposed developments and to explore their regional transport implications. Freight journeys to airports is one example of this, causing major issues for transport networks in Manchester and Liverpool. Atlantic Gateway may offer the opportunity to look at integrated solutions to these issues.
- 6.9 Improved journey speeds and linkages between core points in the urban areas (not just the city centres) will encourage outside movement into the cities to do so in a sustainable manner. A good example is in relation to the airports, where stronger links from Merseyside to Manchester Airport and vice versa help support the use of non-car modes both for inward visitors and outward trips. There are signs (for example increasing use of coach based transport from the City’s Airports to the other City Centre that there is increasing demand for better public transport as the region grows.
- 6.10 A critical asset of the region is the ability to provide backflow on public transport to make it more commercially viable. Few other areas can do this – since the region is relatively small geographically. For example the West Midlands has one primary centre, therefore a ‘tidal’ flow into Birmingham City Centre will always dominate, whereas in the

Atlantic Gateway getting the offer right in land use terms can also aid effective public transport (and vice versa) being supplied commercially.

- 6.11 Additionally public transport does not have to mean exclusion of the car – indeed for many journeys strategic placing of park and ride (rail or bus based) could be part of the integrated offer.

What are the Options?

- 6.12 Given the scale of the transport challenges and the limited resources available the options are:

- Option 1: Strengthen transport within conurbations and major urban centres only – focus investment in tackling current and future levels of congestion future levels of congestion on the major employment centres of Manchester (regional centre), Liverpool and Warrington. Priority for tram systems, local rail, park and ride and priority bus routes.
- Option 2: Strengthen inter urban only – substantially reduce the journey times between Manchester, Liverpool and Warrington to a level which transforms perceptions of distance and generates much greater level of business connectivity and leisure journeys. Such an approach will need to be phased carefully to attract funding.
- Option 3: Accelerate and gain more from Local Transport Plans: make the case for the provision of additional resources to accelerate plans agreed in Local Transport Plans, but go further since now is the time to be influencing longer term programmes of key organisations such as the DfT, Highways Agency and 4NW, in particular in relation to the key DaSTS goals.

7 Energy Generation and a Low Carbon Economy

What is the issue?

- 7.1 Manchester and Liverpool were two cornerstones of the industrial revolution, which drove the economic growth of the region. This growth was largely based upon the burning of fossil fuels, and today the area still faces major challenges if it is to meet its obligations to reduce CO₂ emissions to sustainable levels. The UK has committed to an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions on 1990 levels by 2050
- 7.2 Now that we are fully aware of the climate change issue, both locally and globally, it seems only fitting that the north west should be at the forefront of a 'green revolution', meaning a full circle has been drawn through knowledge and experience. It is clear a new approach is required if economic development and approaches to tackle climate change are to co-exist. The aspiration should be to not just meet our (CO₂) obligations, but to become a world leader and precedent setter in green technologies.
- 7.3 Given the highly urbanised environment of the Atlantic Gateway, and the scale of the challenge to deliver a zero carbon region, it will be vital to explore the potential for off-site renewables. It will not be practical for all businesses and households to generate electricity on-site, and so these opportunities for generating power off-site through the national grid should be explored.
- 7.4 The area has significant advantages and growth opportunities in a range of niche sectors within the ETS sector including building technologies, contaminated land, water treatment, and recycling and recovery. Understanding these opportunities, and helping to link these companies with wider opportunities such as housing growth points, there is clearly the opportunity to develop a distinctive profile for the ETS sector, and a move toward a zero carbon economy.
- 7.5 This will have many benefits in terms of quality of life, attractiveness for inward investment, branding, education etc as well as contributing to global sustainability and creating local economic opportunity.

What is the big idea?

- 7.6 So what is a Green Revolution? It is of course more than the odd windmill or recycling bin. It is a complete step change to how society functions. It manifests itself not only in the management of sustainable resources and the shaping of our built and natural environments but also in a complete step change in behaviour. For this to happen it has to be led from the top down by our leaders and governance structures fed into all walks of life, including existing communities and certainly including future communities where it would be nurtured from the grass roots.
- 7.7 Within the Atlantic Gateway, there are clear examples of both physical and behavioural change related projects and policies being delivered in the pipeline, such as the Mersey Tidal Barrage, various wind farm and waste processing projects and emerging policy framework. The big idea has to be a sub-regional Green Revolution. Whilst the Green Revolution is in itself a big idea it can only be delivered through the cumulative impact of many different projects, both physical and behavioural related at a small and often very localised scale. The transformations that would feature most prominently in 'Green Revolution' strategy for the Atlantic Gateway include:
- Transformation of the Gateway's high energy consuming, polluting industrial practices into exemplar 'heavy' green infrastructure. This process is already under way and has a large potential growth for the region.

- Commitment to the growth of Environmental Technologies and Services sector to support the development of large infrastructure projects but also the growth of green collar jobs in the markets for renewable energy, energy management, waste management, recycling and environmental consultancy. Improved waste processing and recycling appears to be a big potential growth sector that will fit well within the Atlantic Gateway.

Why is it an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 7.8 A new approach is required if economic development and approaches to tackle climate change are to co-exist. It is clear that changes to the current model are needed if this is to be achieved. Existing research shows increasing pressure on natural resources and built infrastructure. The project will ultimately provide a means by which existing technologies and activities can be utilised and better co-ordinated to achieve these goals.
- 7.9 Both nuclear and renewable energy sources have emerged as part of the solution to deal with the challenge of low carbon energy, and securing supply. Energy Coast already embodies the North West region's leading role in the development of the country's nuclear power industry. Similarly the study area can position the region at the cutting edge of the renewables sector through investments including the Mersey barrage. The Gateway offers the potential to generate power from a wide range of tidal, wind, waste, biomass and other renewable sources. Many of these solutions lie outside the urban core areas of Manchester and Liverpool, and as such it may be appropriate to make connections across the Gateway area.
- 7.10 Taking the lead on climate change and renewable energy generation, and creating a low / zero carbon region can put Atlantic Gateway ahead of the UK, and reposition itself on an international scale. Branding the Atlantic Gateway as the first zero carbon region could reposition the northwest strongly in terms of investment and external perceptions.
- 7.11 The road, rail and shipping links across the corridor are vital for the opportunity of sustainable transport of bulk goods such as bio-mass or waste, while the connectiveness of the corridor is also ideal for nurturing clusters of environmental technologies and services.
- 7.12 Other existing infrastructure links along the Mersey Valley such as electricity, gas, water and sewage also facilitate a corridor approach to the green revolution in infrastructure hardware to serve both city regions and hinterland between.
- 7.13 Finally, it is not just an opportunity but an obligation, particularly when considering the heritage of the area and its associations with growth, new ideas and innovation.

What are the options?

- 7.14 There are three main options as follows:
- **Green Industrial Revolution:** This scenario builds upon the success of the corridor in the field of energy generation, waste processing, the use of non-productive lands for bio-mass production, petro-chemical industries, glass manufacture etc and looks to bring about transformation of these industries to zero carbon / low environmental impact practices. This transformation is likely to focus on the Mersey / Manchester Ship Canal corridor between Liverpool and Warrington, where already this transformation is beginning to take place
 - **Innovation Axis Green Technologies:** This scenario envisages the growth of the environmental technologies and services sector – largely through research / innovation partnerships and SME's. This model would require support and

investment into research partnerships between the academic centres of excellence and business.

- **A Bottom-up Transformation:** A network of new 'urban eco communities'. This aspiration could be rolled out in the new communities created in order to meet housing need, as well as working with the established existing communities to achieve similar outcomes. Achieving transformation of existing communities is vital if the north-west is to deliver on its carbon targets, as most people will be living and working in buildings that are built today. We therefore need to drive transformation of the way these facilities are managed and operated now to effect change.

8 Adapting the Landscape

What is the issue?

- 8.1 NWDA has commissioned the 'Adapting the Landscape' study to inform the 'green infrastructure' component of the Atlantic Gateway study. The study has identified the range and quality of assets across the area, as well as many of the proposed developments. Adapting the Landscape provides a perspective of the role and value of green infrastructure across the Mersey Basin.
- 8.2 Atlantic Gateway is a highly urbanised part of the UK, but with significant green infrastructure remaining. Much of the non-urban land within the study area is protected by green belt designations around Liverpool and Manchester, with the exception of the central belt around Warrington.
- 8.3 The corridor contains a range of former industrial sites, coalfields, and chemical plants – many of which are in the process of being restored to open space and are becoming a recreational resource in their own right. Initiatives such as Greenheart Regional Park and the Weaver Valley Initiative are beginning to capitalise upon these 'reclaimed' resources and recognise the strategic significance of these reclaimed landscapes in terms of their scale and quality.
- 8.4 Much of the landscape is underutilised and uninteresting. There are large swathes of urban fringe land that could be exploited. At the same time there are clear drivers to become more self-sufficient and have greater security of supply in terms of energy generation, and food production. Using this land for local 'green' production is an obvious win.
- 8.5 There is a growing sense of localism and desires for people to live in places that are more integrated with open space and their surroundings. The development of a more productive landscape is consistent with these trends and impressions of a quality living environment.
- 8.6 With much of the area's growth planned to take place within the core of the two city regions, there is a disconnection between some of these emerging strategic open space resources and the area's expanding population. Within this context, the role for programme of 'greening' the urban core may be worthy of consideration. Such an approach could help to create the environment and setting for future phases of development, whilst also acting as a valuable resource in its own right.

What is the Big Idea?

- 8.7 The Adapting the Landscape study identifies and organises the benefits and opportunities for green infrastructure in a compelling conceptual framework. Many benefits of green infrastructure are recognised. In addition to the obvious health and well-being effects green infrastructure has a role to play:
 - In mitigating and adapting to climate change;
 - Placing the region at the forefront of environmental technology innovation;
 - Continuing the regeneration of Liverpool and Manchester;
 - Providing significant new direct enterprise and employment value for the region;
 - Repositioning the region in terms of inward investment;
 - Bringing social benefits, which could enhance quality of life in communities through new recreational opportunities; and

- Developing travel networks to encourage sustainable transport modes.
- 8.8 The idea is a unique adaptation of the landscape, using green infrastructure to transform under utilised land and create a new gateway to the North West. Harnessing the potential of the region's landscape and, green infrastructure specifically, to close the productivity gap between the region and the UK average, and become a leading international region.
- 8.9 The natural environment underpins our community well-being and quality of life, and ultimately our economic potential. The value of the environment is placed alongside economic considerations. We understand the full life costs of goods and services, and understand economic issues in relation to environmental values. The vision for the project is driven by the landscape rather than from a purely economic standpoint.

Why is this an Atlantic Gateway opportunity?

- 8.10 There may be benefits to the Urban Core areas of Atlantic Gateway in attracting resources for a strategic greening programme as a mechanism to support future growth and development, though delivery is likely to be best achieved at the local level.
- 8.11 The Adapting the Landscape concept is a useful organising principle for the necessary co-ordination of infrastructure development and planning activity. In particular, there are clear benefits in maximising the potential for renewable energy generation, flood alleviation planning, landscape management and sustainable travel networks.
- 8.12 The study area has the potential to start producing more of it's own food both through small and large scale interventions ranging from allotments and local food schemes to increasing production on larger tracts of high quality agricultural land. This will not only help reduce the climate change impacts of food consumption and waste production but can help to boost and secure local employment and retain greater amounts of spend within the economy.
- 8.13 One of the clear messages from the research is an increasing interest and emphasis on local action and localism. The research to date shows there is already significant activity at the neighbourhood and community level and much of the emphasis for Adapting the Landscape is to provide the framework to co-ordinate this activity. It also places people at the heart of the work by ensuring investment is primarily about producing benefits to people and society.
- 8.14 The area benefits from the key assets of the Mersey River, the Ship Canal, Bridgewater, and Sankey Canals. Harnessing their potential as a core component of the region's green infrastructure can deliver significant benefits for our communities and economy.
- 8.15 In recent years, the area has seen a series of large-scale artworks set in the landscape, from the Dream to Anthony Gormley's figures at Crosby. This area could become a field for experimentation for the arts and cultural scenes of Manchester and Liverpool.

What are the options?

- 8.16 Building upon the 'big idea' outlined above, it would appear that the following options may be appropriate for consideration:
- **The Mersey Bioregion** – better utilising the landscape between Manchester and Liverpool to establish increased self-sufficiency, in terms of both energy and food supply. More specifically, this could take a long term view of protecting the green infrastructure until the urban core cannot absorb further development. It could de-

designates development sites outside the urban cores for 'green use' for the short-medium term e.g. food production, new water bodies, or biomass crops.;

- **Mersey Innovation Axis** - a green connection between Manchester and Liverpool bounded by the M62 and M56. Using the economic value of the region to facilitate zero carbon development, attracting environmental technologies businesses. The scenario delivers benefits to both city regions by delivering enhanced environments for business, research and development activity, and importantly more efficient housing stock for families. There is continued economic and housing growth, but it is high quality, and zero carbon. It makes more of existing investments;
- **Mersey Playgrounds** – this would utilise the cultural connections and tensions between Manchester and Liverpool, the industrial heritage of the region, the rivers and canals, and forest park developments to transform the placeless, underutilised area into a vibrant gateway to the North West. It also greens the grey – invests in quality improvements in our urban cores; and
- **Do nothing** – Adhere to planning policy, allowing for growth around Warrington and focusing on strategic sites. Under this option the green infrastructure is focused on the main waterways and regional parks.

9 Manchester / Liverpool Marketing Offer

What is the Issue?

- 9.1 With the exception of the capital city, Manchester and Liverpool are arguably the two UK cities with the strongest global impact, with their sporting and cultural heritage placing them a distance ahead of many comparator locations. Atlantic Gateway offers the potential to bring together the complementary offer of the two cities, to emphasise the close physical connections between these two cities, the strength of their combined economic base, their combined pool of skills and resources.
- 9.2 As international competitiveness intensifies to attract the most knowledgeable and creative workforce and the employment opportunities they seek, regions around the world are attempting to distinguish themselves on the strength of their economic assets, cultural and geographic assets – from quality of life to transport infrastructure. The use of a brand or identity with global reach has for many regions provided a new basis for re-imagining an area not previously seen as “a place” but rather as a series of individual locations. Encapsulating and communicating what the new place is and what it is about – its “big idea” – can lead it to being thought about in a new way; Copenhagen and Malmö as the Øresund Science Region for example.
- 9.3 In the Atlantic Gateway, place-specific institutional structures for branding and marketing its many cities and towns are well-established. From the local up to the regional level, substantial investments have been made by a number of organisations to market the North West and its constituent areas as attractive places to invest, live and visit. Even at the national level, UK Trade and Investment “takes it [the UK] to the world” and assists international firms interested in locating in the UK. As the Regional Development Agency for the North West, the NWDA promotes the area and aims to stimulate economic growth, as it does for the entire region. Both MIDAS and The Mersey Partnership, the City Region’s inward investment agencies, have very successful and known names in promoting their respective cities. In addition, there are the numerous tourism agencies and brands associated with the UK, the North West and the Gateway’s partners.
- 9.4 With all this activity, and the extensive nature of the marketing and branding already taking place and the investments made in creating and sustaining the related infrastructure, how can a new idea – the Atlantic Gateway – be branded and promoted? To show value added to the existing marketing infrastructure, a big branding idea will be essential.
- 9.5 One question which may be discussed is whether the benefit to the two City Regions and the North West as a whole is best served through the current approach, or whether better value could be delivered through a more coordinated approach.
- 9.6 Depending upon a decision regarding the final geographic definition of Atlantic Gateway, it may be appropriate to consider the inclusion of Chester, with its strong heritage, tourism and cultural offer, as a further dimension of the Atlantic Gateway brand.

What is the Big Idea?

- 9.7 The Atlantic Gateway is to be a nationally and internationally significant growth zone which will drive enhanced economic activity and growth in the North of England and help to narrow the economic gap between the North West region and the rest of the UK. The big idea (the objectives, assets and geography of the overall Gateway concept) that defines the Gateway and gives it a unique identity, placing it on the global map of attractive places to live, work and invest, has yet to be developed; however, the

final compelling idea will need to be communicated to investors, potential new residents and visitors, accompanied by an implementing marketing strategy.

- 9.8 The strategy will need to identify the geographies most appropriate for communicating the big idea and the opportunities which will most benefit from a Gateway-wide initiative and those best dealt with by existing city and town-based marketing capabilities. It must fill an unmet need rather than add another layer of organisation to what is already a strong branding and marketing engine.

Why is it an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 9.9 The concept of the Atlantic Gateway itself presents an opportunity to explore how the area within its boundary functions and what the interrelationships within that boundary are – and to think about the two City Regions and their neighbours in a new way. Thinking about this level of geography – the sub-region – presents the opportunity to question how the Gateway could best fulfil certain functions. The concept of a gateway does present opportunities for including branding and marketing as an activity appropriate for Gateway-level action:

- **Shared infrastructure** – road and rail connections, two airports
- **Potential to reach new markets** – the opportunity to explore new markets and attract investors for whom the wider area may be of interest
- **Expanding the tourism offer** – the potential to market the entire Gateway as a package with a critical mass of tourism attractions
- **Attracting top talent** – who may look at the wider area's offer in making a (re)location decision and not focus just one on city or town

What are the Options?

- 9.10 The ideal option for branding and marketing, and whether different approaches for inward investment and tourism are needed, are ultimately dependent on what the big idea is for the structure of the Gateway concept as a whole. Some early options for how promotional activities and resources could be structured are:

- **“The Gateway”** – A common Atlantic Gateway platform would be the basis for branding and marketing. This approach is about organising the area to implement initiatives/ strategies at a Gateway-scale while providing the space for each city and town to focus on its own assets and what it wants to promote. In this way, individual city and town-based promotion would take place as a subset of the wider Gateway-wide initiative. It could provide a structure for inward investment, knowledge attraction and tourism marketing, though this approach would need to be detailed further once the big idea for the Gateway is agreed to understand how it can best be structured given the particular scale and geography of the big idea. However, with the Atlantic Gateway as the overarching concept, joint marketing or targeting marketing (in particular geographies or of certain markets) by partner cities and town under the Atlantic Gateway “banner” could be undertaken.
- **“Two Big Cities”** – Building on the success of the Atlantic Gateway's two City Regions, this approach assists Manchester and Liverpool to continue their branding and marketing efforts by promoting the area as one with two cities full of opportunities and assets. Essentially, the Gateway would be defined by its two core cities with strong marketing for each. The two could undertake joint initiatives when appropriate, for example when exploring new markets or for sharing expenses and efforts for major offshore promotional events where a joint message could be strong.

- **“Each city and town for itself”** – Each place continues to market itself independently with any Gateway-wide resources going towards reinforcing individual promotional efforts. There would be no Atlantic Gateway brand promoted through this approach.

10 Addressing Deprivation

What is the Issue?

- 10.1 Atlantic Gateway is subject to particularly high levels of deprivation. Around half of the population of both Manchester and Liverpool live in areas that are within the worst 10% nationally according to the IMD 2007. The study area also has a disproportionately large share of national deprivation; of the total number of people in the country that live in the 2% most deprived areas, 40% live in Atlantic Gateway.
- 10.2 Worklessness levels are around twice the national average in Liverpool and 30% above in Manchester. The rate across Atlantic Gateway is 3.5 percentage points above the national average. The cost to the Exchequer in benefit terms alone is extremely high and there will also be substantial costs for increased service provision to mitigate associated deprivation. There will also be a longer term impact on many children and young people. Nationally, over a quarter of young people NEET are from households where no one works. For 16 to 24 year olds the figure is 38%.
- 10.3 Although the number of people out of work is increasing as a result of the recession, high levels of worklessness pre-date the current situation. Incapacity Benefit (IB) numbers typically exceed Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) numbers. Although IB numbers have fallen in recent years, and continuing to do so, they still account for 151,450 individuals across Atlantic Gateway which equates to 58% of all those classed as 'workless'. Of these, 89% have been on IB for over a year which is just over half of the total workless population. Although worklessness is a long term and entrenched problem, it will be exacerbated by the recession and the size of the challenge will increase considerably. The last recession saw an increase in the claimant rate from which it took seven years to recover. On that basis, it would take until at least 2016 for the lag effect to work through.
- 10.4 The Freud Review (2007) observes that efforts to address economic inactivity have generally been successful throughout the country and there is also evidence that programme to improve opportunities for children (though Sure Start and school interventions) are beginning to have a real impact. There are also local examples of success including Manchester's programme to reduce the number of young people NEET. However, despite some success in achieving policy objectives, the scale of the problem remains large and will be significantly compounded by the recession. An important consideration going forward will be the balance between addressing long term worklessness and recession related unemployment.
- 10.5 The issue of worklessness is draws upon issues of low skill levels and limited travel horizons of individuals. In terms of delivering effective solutions, therefore, locally based strategies are being employed which seek to put in place processes with key players (LSC, JobCentre Plus etc) to deliver more efficient services and improved outcomes. It is anticipated that delivery will remain at this local level, however, there may be benefits in sharing best practice across the Gateway, and also in making the case for strategic investments of funding support.

What is the Big Idea?

- 10.6 For regeneration, the focus of the work is on reducing worklessness and increasing economic activity. The rationale follows the MIER findings that the appropriate emphasis should be on the individual rather than neighbourhoods. Although policy at the Atlantic Gateway level would represent spatial policy it would not be concerned with neighbourhood conditions as such.

- 10.7 The Big Idea is to achieve recognition of Atlantic Gateway as a national priority for reduction of deprivation and worklessness and to pilot radical new welfare reform within it.

Why is this an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 10.8 The opportunity here is not about developing a new local approach to tackle deprivation, but one about maximising the priority for investment in tackling worklessness across the area. This strategic case making would centre upon the connection between need and opportunity across the Gateway, and may well have real merit in making the case for increased levels of investment during times of declining public funds.
- 10.9 There are a series of strategies and plans in place to address worklessness and deprivation which will continue to be implemented in any event. There are clear social and financial arguments for addressing the problem but it has been necessary to consider what value could be added by taking action as part of the Atlantic Gateway Plan.
- 10.10 Framing the problem at the Atlantic Gateway geography has shown a clear spatial concentration of the most severe deprivation in the country. Coupled with the area's potential for economic growth, there is a strong argument for promoting it as a national priority.
- 10.11 The concentration and scale of the problem presents an opportunity for targeting additional resources thereby achieving economies of scale in programme delivery and supporting other regeneration efforts. This is a common justification for spatially based policies. Another is that they provide the opportunity to test new policies and Atlantic Gateway could be used as a pilot for new approaches to increasing economic activity.
- 10.12 There is a strong argument for addressing worklessness / deprivation to support other elements of the Plan. The sizeable workless population represents a potential labour force which could further support economic growth in the Gateway if it were effectively mobilised. The Plan will also involve measures to improve and promote the quality of life within Atlantic Gateway. Deprivation on the scale that exists will undermine these efforts.
- 10.13 There is not a strong case for intervention that addresses the problem of deprivation and worklessness at the Atlantic Gateway scale. It is possible, and probably more effective, to use existing structures and partnerships to exchange information and organise joint delivery work where it is appropriate. Both Manchester and Liverpool are City Employment Strategy pilots with employment strategies that have a city regional focus and Greater Manchester is a Future Jobs Fund pilot.

What are the Options?

- 'Do nothing' - would involve the delivery of existing programmes and implementation of new local and national measures.
- Scale up existing interventions - with emphasis on using evaluation evidence on what has been working well to refine activity across the gateway and roll out good practice. This could involve joint working on a voluntary basis.
- High Impact - use Atlantic Gateway as a pilot area for a radical new approach/s to reducing benefit dependency and increasing economic activity. This could involve major welfare reform and the intention would be to significantly reduce deprivation levels and achieve significant improvement in economic circumstances and opportunities for Atlantic Gateway's disadvantaged residents.

10.14 With regard to regeneration in areas with very high levels of multiple deprivation, the potential options are:

- Encourage Local Authorities to continue to prioritise these neighbourhoods for regeneration activities and discretionary spending, in addition to current plans.
- Use Total Place and other efficiency and effectiveness reviews of public sector investment to identify additional resources within existing budgets to channel into regeneration plans in existing priority neighbourhoods.
- Develop a highly targeted fund, aimed at the worst 2% or 5% IMD, with CLG and HCA to continue actions which address neighbourhood conditions and housing market renewal.

10.15 The extent to which the measures suggested here will affect the spatial development of the Gateway plan is more limited than for other proposals. The main consideration is that a lack of a spatial focus on areas of very high level of multiple deprivation, dealing with housing market failure and neighbourhood conditions, may increase social and economic polarisation.

11 A New Approach to Housing

What is the Issue?

- 11.1 Providing housing of the right scale, range and quality to meet the aspirations of new and existing residents will be critical to allowing Atlantic Gateway to achieve its full economic potential. As a key component of the area's 'quality of life' offer, a strong housing offer can act to support economic growth.
- 11.2 The Gateway benefits from the presence of some successful housing areas, established public sector housing programmes and some strong public private partnerships. Prior to the recent economic downturn, the level of house building reached levels not achieved since the 1960s and there has been some success in addressing issues of population decline in inner urban areas.
- 11.3 There are a number of ambitious schemes and plans for future housing led regeneration across the Gateway. Despite this, the corridor suffers from a range of housing issues which are impacting upon its ability to provide the right amount, type and tenure of housing to support its growth ambitions. These can be summarised as follows:
- Future forecast require unprecedented housing numbers, which have never been reached even in time of sustained economic growth;
 - The current policy focus on brownfield and inner urban areas (including the three HMR areas and core components of the area's Growth Points) would yield clear sustainability and regeneration benefits (including a reduced need to travel as many of these areas are well connected to core infrastructure and services), however it also involves difficult and expensive sites, often in less attractive areas;
 - The Green Belt and planning policy in some successful areas acts as a constraint to the market – there is a mismatch between demand and supply locations;
 - There is a (probably) short term finance problem both for home owners and developers, placing an increasing strain on public sector resources;
 - The apartment market in the cities (which comprises 50% of recent new build completions) has stalled and there is an unresolved challenge to deliver a quality housing product, successful family housing model and the right amount of affordable housing;
 - There are often tensions between authorities within the Gateway on housing matters and a lack of consideration for how development in one area may impact on another;
 - A significant proportion of the more attractive existing stock is located outside of the urban cores, in areas which are often poorly served by public transport.

What is the Big Idea?

- 11.4 In the context of housing, the key challenge faced across Atlantic Gateway relates to a recognition of the scale of challenge faced in meeting current housing targets and the need to consider new approaches which can effectively meet these goals.
- 11.5 The first, and perhaps most ambitious component, involves a change in housing policy within the Gateway. This recognises the challenges of delivering the right quantity and type of homes in the most sustainable and attractive locations to support the City Regions' economic ambitions.

- 11.6 An alternative policy approach, championed by the Gateway, and a re-focusing of priorities and activities may be required to meet the scale of the housing challenge. There are a series of other linked components to this new approach, summarised in the options section.

Why is it an Atlantic Gateway Opportunity?

- 11.7 Housing is already a crowded arena in terms of policy, programmes and actors. The consultation process has received a mixed response with regards to the usefulness of considering housing interventions and policy at this level, although there was a recognition of the challenge in meeting housing plans. There are however some reasons why an Atlantic Gateway approach may be beneficial:
- It is far from certain that current policy within the Gateway will achieve the necessary outcomes and desired levels of private sector investment;
 - There is a pressing need to provide the right numbers, type and location of new housing to support Atlantic Gateway's economic growth plans, and the focus on brownfield land impacts of the ability to deliver on this agenda;
 - There are significant impacts felt across authorities within the Gateway – what happens in one area affects another – and currently housing is an issue with particular tensions and scepticism;
 - Housing is central to many other Atlantic Gateway issues – for example transport, regeneration and sustainability; and
 - There is an opportunity to better link the economy, planning and housing sectors.
- 11.8 While there is a need to decide the extent to which housing features within the final Framework, its importance to both the regeneration and economic growth of the Gateway means that the issue is of prime importance.

What are the Options?

- 11.9 We have summarised the four broad policy options which may be available to partners within the Gateway:
- **Do Nothing Option: Continue Current Policy** – This would involve pursuing the current policy focus under existing structures and programmes. The benefits would include the current focus on brownfield and regeneration areas being maintained, and the potential benefits which can result. This would give a consistent message to national Government and the private sector regarding long term direction and would not involve a major overhaul of existing policy, land use plans or major sites. In addition, current policy ticks many of the boxes required to access related funding.
 - **Further Funding for Regeneration Areas** – This would involve focusing even greater efforts on securing investment and funding for core regeneration areas, such as North and East Manchester, parts of Central Salford and North Liverpool. There could be a potential lobbying role for the Atlantic Gateway body in terms of making the case for additional investment in such locations. The benefits of this approach could include greater funding and investment in Brownfield sites with major constraints, as well as the social benefits which this approach would bring in terms of neighbourhood renewal and meeting the objectives of the sustainable communities agenda.
 - **Greater Focus on Successful Areas** – A third radical option is to re-focus policy to favour those locations which are most attractive to the market. This may include the release of the Green Belt and a re-think about the distribution of regional

housing numbers. This would represent the shift from a supply led plan to a pure market and demand led plan, as suggested in one of the MIER papers as a mechanism to retain talent, boost innovation and improve productivity. The benefits of this approach would be to release the full potential of some of the more successful housing market areas and provide the market with a more attractive portfolio of sites. The option would fundamentally re-write existing policy and would also potentially conflict with national guidance to the Green Belt and brownfield land.

- **Rebalanced Growth and Regeneration** – The final option would involve a dual approach, which would accept some of the limitations of current policy and enable some selective release of sustainable Green Belt sites and encourage greater development in more successful housing areas for particular types of housing. Whilst the focus on brownfield land development and regeneration areas would continue, this may include a policy of ‘greening the urban core’ which, would help offset the loss of green belt also make these areas more attractive for development in the longer term. The approach would have potential benefits for both regeneration and growth areas help meet targets in terms of both numbers and quality.

11.10 There are some time implications, and a further option would be to phase the approach over the longer term to ensure minimal disruption to current housing programmes and policy. It is also important to avoid duplicating work already being undertaken by the Homes and Communities Agency to kickstart the market. The Gateway should focus on the medium and long term, and other options which the Gateway could pursue regardless of the overall policy option agreed. These include:

- Co-coordinating actions, research and the dissemination of information on new methods of private sector engagement, pursuing new investment vehicles, encouraging more institutional investment in the private rented sector to improve quality;
- Co-coordinating actions, research and the dissemination on construction costs, treatment of remediation, materials and methods which reduce the costs of house building and/or provide more suitable, environmentally friendly homes;
- Setting targets and standards for a step change in the quality of both existing and new housing stock in the Gateway, particularly with regard to design and space standards for apartments which all Local Authorities would apply;
- A lobbying role for the Gateway to access further public and private sector funding.

11.11 It is recognised that a radical new policy focus in housing would have significant spatial implications for the gateway, impacting on the priority given to both growth and regeneration areas. There would need to be a clearly defined role and remit for the Gateway in housing terms and any responsibilities are likely to be on a voluntary basis. A more radical option with greater powers in areas such as planning and funding would be disruptive, over a long period, and unlikely to find support amongst the majority of stakeholders.

12 Spatial Implications

Extent of the Corridor

- 12.1 The study area which the team have been considering for the purpose of this study comprises the whole of the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions – albeit that the main focus for projects and interventions are likely to lie within the core of the two city centres and the corridor between.
- 12.2 In considering the Gateway area, we have assumed that Warrington falls within both Liverpool and Manchester City Regions – as it clearly has a relationship with both cities in addition to its importance as an economic destination in its own right.
- 12.3 Following this rationale, and reflecting its economic interdependencies with Ellesmere Port and the Wirral, it may be appropriate for Atlantic Gateway to include Chester within its scope, along with northern parts of both East and West Cheshire.
- 12.4 Views of the Steering Group on the geographic extent of the Gateway would be welcome.

Developing a Spatial Framework

- 12.5 In developing the Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework, we are adopting a methodology which firstly focuses on establishing the high level economic and spatial framework before considering specific development opportunity sites.
- 12.6 The methodology seeks to establish what Atlantic Gateway should aim to become before considering the contribution which can be made towards this vision by individual development sites. We do not feel it is an appropriate to start with a list of sites, identify potential roles for them and build them up to form a development programme.
- 12.7 By following this approach, we will seek to build upon existing Regional and City Regional Strategies, considering where development can contribute or add value to existing plans and programmes. Through the process, however, we feel it is appropriate to challenge and test current policy and practice, where appropriate examining whether there may be more effective approaches or strategies in order to meet future challenges.
- 12.8 One of the Foundation Reports reviews existing planning policies and development allocations across the corridor. It also maps out the range of ‘candidate’ development sites which will be considered as part of the Atlantic Gateway framework through later stages of the study. This list of sites has been drawn from:
- RSS Strategic Sites & ERDF strategic sites
 - Sites promoted by private landowners and developers – including those Peel sites identified in Ocean Gateway
 - GONW ‘Call for Sites’
 - Nominations by individual Local Authorities
 - The Adapting the Landscape Study
- 12.9 A plan of these sites is set out overleaf.
- 12.10 The Study team would like to emphasise that at this stage, this represents a long list of candidate sites which may or may not be considered suitable for development. The suitability of individual sites, and interventions, will be tested and appraised through later stages of the study against a range of criteria agreed by the Leaders Group.

Atlantic Gateway: Mapping of Key Sites

Regional Strategic Sites

- Liverpool**
- Liverpool North Docks (1)
 - Liverpool Pall Mall (2)
 - Liverpool Science Park, Edge Lane (3)
 - Liverpool University Edge (Liverpool Knowledge Quarter) (4)
 - Estuary, Liverpool (10)

- Sefton**
- Dunningbridge, Sefton (Port of Liverpool Economic Corridor) (12)

- Wirral**
- Birkenhead Docks, Wirral (13)
 - Wirral International Business Park (14)

- Chester & Cheshire West**
- Central Chester (27)

- Halton**
- Ditton Widnes (28)
 - Daresbury, Runcorn (29)

- Tameside**
- Ashton Moss, Tameside (62)

- Rochdale**
- Kingsway, Rochdale (63)

- Bolton**
- Central Bolton (64)

- Warrington**
- Central Warrington (35)
 - Omega Site (37)

- Cheshire East**
- Alderley Park (Astra Zeneca) (39)
 - Basford, Crewe (38)

- St Helens**
- Parkside, Newton-le-Willows, St Helens (36)

- Salford**
- Barton (Port Salford) (45)
 - Salford Quays/Irwell Corridor (46)

- Manchester**
- Manchester Piccadilly Basin/Oxford Road Area (60)
 - Central Park (61)

- Wigan**
- Wigan South Central Area (65)

Ocean Gateway Projects

- Liverpool**
- Liverpool International Business Park (5)
 - Speke Garston Coastal Reserve (6)
 - John Lennon Airport (7) / Surface Access and airport expansion
 - Liverpool Waters (8) / North Liverpool Docks and River Terminal
 - Princes Dock & Cruise Terminal (9)
 - Mersey Tidal Power (21)

- Sefton**
- Switch Island (11)

- Wirral**
- Wirral Waters (15)
 - Woodside (16)
 - Cammell Laird (17)
 - Bromborough Recovery Facility (18)
 - Eastham Waste Management & biofuel (19)
 - Port Wirral (20)

- Chester & Cheshire West**
- Pioneer Business Park (22)
 - Ellesmere Quays (23)
 - Ince Resource Recovery park (24)
 - Frodsham Deposit Grounds (25)

- Halton**
- Runcorn Waterfront (26)

- Warrington**
- Port Warrington (30)
 - Arpley Landfill (31)
 - Arpley Meadows (32)
 - Warrington Quays (33)
 - Woolston Deposit Ground (34)

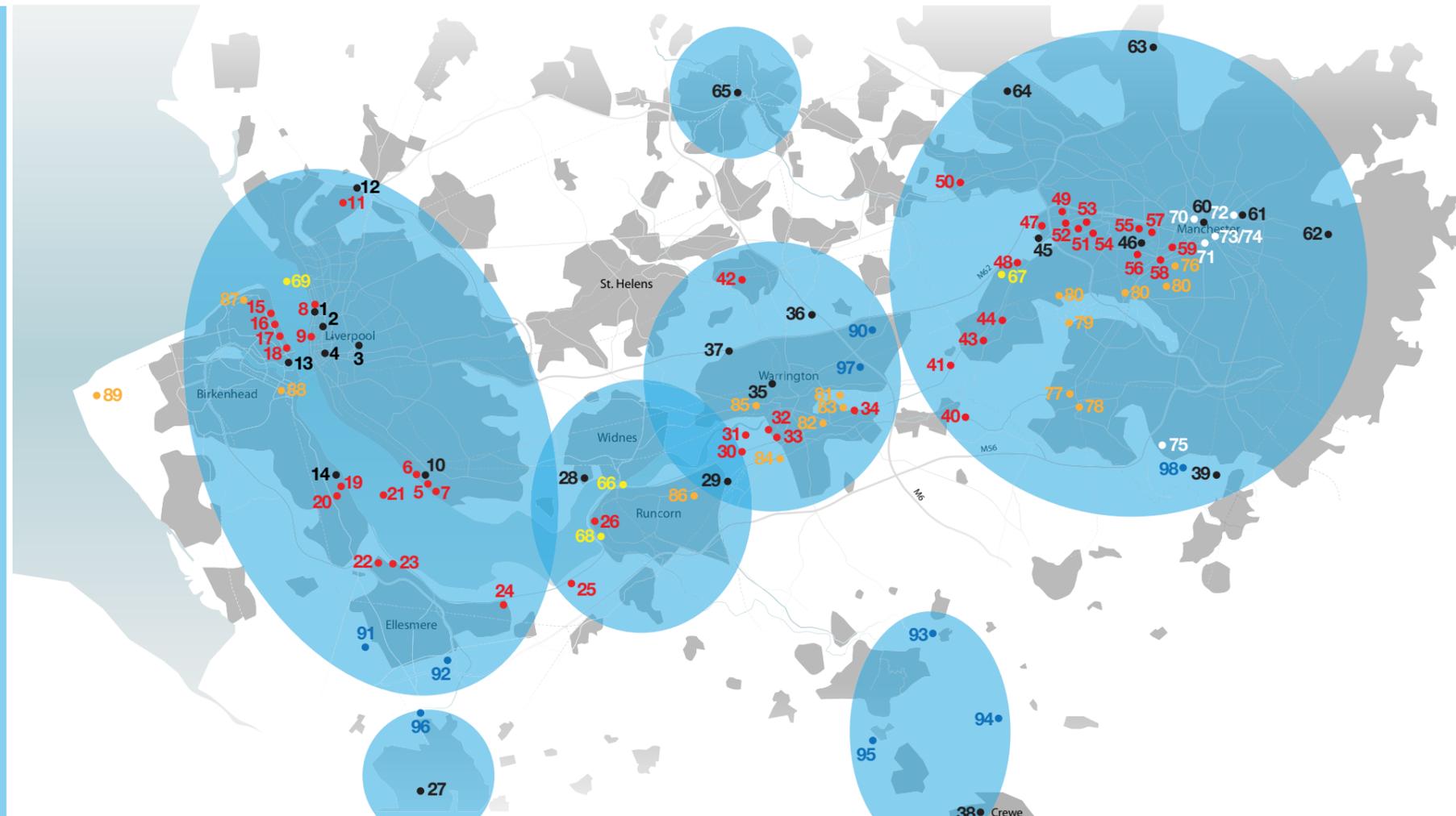
- Cheshire East**
- Bridgewater Canal & Way (40)

- St Helens**
- Haydock Park (42)

- Trafford**
- Manchester Ship Canal (41)
 - Partington Village (43)
 - Carrington Wharfside (44)
 - Trafford Quays (53)
 - Trafford Centre Rectangle (54)
 - Trafford Wharfside (56)
 - Cornbrook Pomona (58)

- Salford**
- Port Salford (47)
 - City Airport (Manchester) (48)
 - Salford Forest Park (49)
 - Salford West & Wigan (50)
 - Sports Village & City Reds (51)
 - Western Gateway Infrastructure Scheme (52)
 - Media City UK (55)
 - Salford Quays (57)

- Manchester**
- St Georges & Castlefield (59)



GONW Sites (work in progress)

- Mersey Multi-Modal Gateway [3MG] and Mersey Gateway Port [MGP] (66)
- Carrington Power Station (67)
- Ineos Chlor (68)
- Royal Seaforth and Post Panamax Container Terminal (69)

Sites already shown:
Liverpool Waters (8)
Wirral Waters (15)
Ince Resource Recovery Park (24)
Port Salford (45,47)
Liverpool John Lennon Airport (7)
Ellesmere Port Waterfront (23)
Runcorn Waterfront (26)
Partington Village (43)
Arpley Meadows (32)
Salford West & Wigan (50)
Trafford Quays (53)
Salford Forest Park (49)
Mersey Tidal Barrage (21)
Port Wirral (20)

Commission for new economy sites

- Manchester Central (70)
- The Corridor (71)
- The Irwell/Ship Canal Corridor (46)
- Sport City (72)
- Regional Centre (73)
- Manchester Hub (74)
- Airport City (75)

Miscellaneous

- Lancashire CCC, Stretford (76)
- Woodfield Road, Altrincham (77)
- Altrincham/Altair - Altrincham Town Centre (78)
- Carrington, Manchester Road (79)
- Trafford Housing Trust (80)
- Warrington Waterfront Regeneration, River Mersey Corridor (81)
- Victoria Park Regeneration (82)
- New World Regeneration Project (83)
- Walton Hall Improvement (84)
- Sankey Valley & St Helens Canal (85)
- Sandymoor, East Runcorn (86)
- Brand New Brighton, Wirral (87)
- Birkenhead Business & Enterprise Zone (88)
- West Wirral Coastal Zone (89)

Cheshire & Warrington - as identified in ELS

- Birchwood Park, Parcel 7, Warrington (90)
- Capenhurst, Chester (91)
- Cheshire Oaks, Ellesmere Port (92)
- Lostock Triangle, Northwich (93)
- Midpoint 18, Middlewich (94)
- South Bostock Road, Winsford (95)
- The Countess of Chester Hospital, Chester (96)
- Woolston Grange, Warrington (97)
- 61MU Site, Handforth (98)

13 Conclusions and Next Steps

Conclusions

13.1 This Options Paper highlights nine thematic areas where partners may consider collaboration to accelerate and add value to the future growth potential of the Atlantic Gateway. The work has been the result of the evidence base developed as part of the Foundation Reports and the consultations with key partners from across the Gateway. In developing these themes, we have been conscious of the criteria developed by the Leaders and their focus on prioritising assets to drive faster, more sustainable growth across the whole Atlantic Gateway “corridor”. These criteria are as follows:

- Add clear regional value and contribute to the vision for the area;
- Will deliver additional economic performance benefit for the area on top of the existing plans and strategies;
- Are consistent with City Regional Strategies;
- Contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the whole of the North West – including addressing climate change and improving our self sufficiency;
- Contribute to the global competitiveness of the North West;
- Represent an opportunity for transformational change both in the area and the North West; and
- Have a particular relationship to the geographic corridor that is Atlantic Gateway.

13.2 Once the thematic areas have been agreed with the Steering Group, these proposals and the list of candidate development sites will be fully tested and appraised against this criteria.

Next Steps

13.3 Copies of the Foundation Reports will be available for the Steering Group to download from

www.ekosgen.co.uk/partnerships/AtlanticGatewaySpatio-EconomicMasterplanFoundationReports.html

Password - [ekos172135](#)

13.4 The Options Paper will be used as the basis for a structured Workshop discussion with the Atlantic Gateway Steering Group at its meeting on 10th August 2009. Specific issues to be considered during this session are:

- Whether the list of nine themes outlined are relevant for further development as part of the Atlantic Gateway concept?
- Whether other themes should be added to the scope of the programme?
- What specific options or proposals are considered appropriate under each theme?
- What are the overall priorities for activity and action?
- How will these interventions be delivered?

13.5 The 10th August Steering Group will be held at the Warrington Wolves Halliwell Jones Stadium and will take the following format:

1 Introduction to the Day – NWDA (5 mins)

2 Consultants Presentation – Consultant Team including URS (25 mins)

- Scope of the Work and Progress
- Foundation Reports – Key findings
- Options Report – Principles, Themes and Strands of Activity
- Aims and Objectives of the Day

3 Workshop Sessions - 2 x 30 min Break Out Groups (1 hour) from the following:

- Economy – Innovation, Digital Infrastructure, Marketing & Tourism
- Transport - Sustainable Transport & External Connections
- Regeneration and Housing
- Sustainability – Green Infrastructure and Low / Zero Carbon

4 Discussion - including Governance, Q&A, Next Steps (30 mins)

13.6 Following the Steering Group Workshop on the 10th August, a draft Spatio Economic Framework will be prepared by the consultant team. This will be considered at a meeting of the Steering Group during the first week in September.

13.7 If you have any queries regarding this paper or would like to discuss any aspect of the study in further detail in advance of the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact Damien Bourke from the client side on 07768 830 012 / damien.bourke@nwda.co.uk or Steve Potter who is leading the consultancy team from ekosgen on 0845 644 3023 / steve.potter@ekosgen.co.uk.

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Consultations

The following people have been consulted as part of the development of this options paper.

Organisation	Consultee
Wirral Council	Jim Wilkie - Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services
Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance	David Horstead – Director of Strategy and Intelligence
St Helens Council	Aidan Manley - Head of Regeneration
Homes and Communities Agency	Pete Bailey – Interim Head of Strategy and Dave Chilton – Area Director
Warrington BC	Andy Farrell - Strategic Director, Environment & Regeneration
The Mersey Partnership	Dave Moorcroft – Director of Economics and Investment
Cheshire West and Chester	Charlie Seward - Director of Regeneration and Culture Steve Robinson
Peel	Peter Nears and Louise Morrissey
Halton BC	David Parr - Chief Executive and Dick Tregear
Manchester City Council	Sir Howard Bernstein – Chief Executive Steve Mycio - Deputy Chief Executive Nick Gerrard - Commission for the New Economy Mike Emmerich - Commission for the New Economy Sara Todd – Head of Regeneration Eddie Smith – Chief Executive New East Manchester
Trafford Council	Paul Harvey - Director of Environment
Knowsley MBC	Barry Fawcett - Head of Business Liaison & Investment Plus others
Wigan Council	Stephen Normington - Service Director Development
GONW	Jo Lappin - Deputy Regional Director of Housing, Planning and Transport and Liz Meek
Sefton Council	Margaret Carney and Andy Wallis
Liverpool City Council	John Kelly - Executive Director - Regeneration and Colin Hilton CBE
Salford City Council	Paul Walker - Director for Sustainable Regeneration
4NW	Steve Barwick - Director of Strategy Phil Robinson - Chief Executive (meeting arranged but yet to occur)
Cheshire East	John Nicholson and Caroline Simpson (meeting arranged but yet to occur)
NWDA	Damien Bourke - Policy and Partnerships Manager Chris Koral - Policy and Partnerships Manager Richard Tracey - Senior Regeneration Executive Simon Nokes - Director of Strategy and Planning Ian Wray – Head of Planning Dave Harrison - Director of Partnerships Nick Brookes-Sykes – Tourism Director Steve Broomhead – Chief Executive Dave Greenhalgh – Cluster Manager Dave Sanderson – Science Policy Manager Andrew Halliwell – Acting Head of ICT Policy
Highways Agency	Ruth Moynihan - Regional Planning Manager John McTaggart - Regional Manager Plus others
Merseytravel	Neil Scales
GMPTE	David Leather & Ruth Moynahan
TMI	Adam Buckley

Appendix 2

Atlantic Gateway Spatio Economic Framework – Options Paper

Summary of Issues Presented, Options Proposed and Potential Implications for Halton

Area – Accelerating Innovation		
Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation is a key factor in economic growth and sustainability – it explains why some economies are more competitive than others, why they grow faster and hold on to their growth. • Applies to the wider economy, not just science and technology and commercialising university output – should be at the heart of economic development policy • Important role for the business community in driving innovation forwards, including enabling support for entrepreneurship • Focus on graduates taking up local jobs, SME start-ups, innovative use of ICT • “Innovation systems” to join up interventions, involves inter-sector networking, potential role for Atlantic Gateway Secretariat in bringing key actors together • Potential for increased interconnectivity between key institutions across the Atlantic Gateway area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising Critical Mass – development of sophisticated innovation system, secretariat and advisors, networking, placement programmes for graduates, funding bids and venture capital fund • City-Region Innovation Networking – core components of networking developed, city-region level interventions and funding bids, use of existing partnerships • Accelerating Current Plans – strengthen existing interventions, overall support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role for Atlantic Gateway in ensuring innovation in Halton is considered as part of the critical mass of innovation assets across the wider sub-region • Creation of an innovation hub to rival London and Oxbridge through networking, knowledge transfer, access to business finance, infrastructure support including Liverpool and Manchester • Potential role for Daresbury SIC and Daresbury Park, the Heath, 3MG, Ineos, and various other businesses • Potential to increase efficiency of networking activities, shared infrastructure and ability to access funding • Potential to improve the skill base of the Borough through the attraction and retention of local graduates

Area – Key Sector Focus		
Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important focus of national, regional and sub-regional policy is key sectors / clusters: some regions and sub-regions have already developed strong “specialised” clusters. • Competitive advantages for cluster development: natural resources, leveraging legacy investment, leveraging knowledge base, creation or attraction of leading global corporation. Need the right policies to make key sectors / clusters work. • Cluster policy useful in the exploitation of competitive advantage, dovetails and can be seen as a focus for innovation policy. • There are a number of key sectors / clusters in Atlantic Gateway area, best approach would identify four or five key sectors, identify growth potential, impacts on the region, key barriers and policy solutions. Suggest: Digital and Creative; Life Science and Health; Advanced Materials; New and Renewable Energy; Transport and Logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising Atlantic Gateway Key Sectors – joint agreement of key sectors where Atlantic Gateway can add value and apply a new approach. • City Region Innovation Networking – focus on existing key sectors, developing city region level interventions (networking student placements, funding, technical infrastructure) • Accelerating Current Plans – strengthen existing NWDA focus on key sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed identification of 4/5 sectors with policy to encourage growth and overcome obstacles – both traditional market-driven sectors (e.g. chemicals, aerospace) and cross-cutting sectors (e.g. low carbon, quality design) • Potential for Halton’s businesses to feed into proposed Atlantic Gateway key sectors, particularly Advanced Materials (Ineos and Daresbury) and Transport and Logistics (Mersey Gateway Project, 3MG, Mersey Gateway Port / Manchester Ship Canal) • Scope for a more specific “science and innovation” key sector to be included, which would specifically refer to the role of the internationally significant Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. • The Heath should not be considered to be a candidate for “re-use of redundant big pharma or chemical industry labs” as part of leveraging legacy investment (Options Paper page 9) as the site is still in full use.

Area – Digital Infrastructure

Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of ICT adoption and usage are synonymous with high levels of innovation and productivity gains • ICT facilitates business start-up, expansion and access to new markets, pioneering new business models • UK lagging behind Europe in terms of “next generation” ICT infrastructure and rollout is likely to be uneven. Potential competitive disadvantages without this infrastructure • New infrastructure will offer locational advantages for business and investors, particularly innovative sectors • Need for public intervention to help support and facilitate private-sector led infrastructure development • Digital infrastructure must be linked to other innovation interventions, including ICT usage among businesses • Opportunities to build “economies of scale” in terms of infrastructure provision, including critical mass of ICT customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set standard for next-generation infrastructure, focussed on centres of Warrington, Liverpool and Manchester, with a long term plan for extensive roll out, to be taken forward by a working group with public and private sector involvement • Aggregate existing public sector demand, leveraging of purchasing opportunities, potential small-scale pilot, delivered through short term working group establishing most appropriate geographic level. • Implement and accelerate existing plans, incorporating digital infrastructure to all new development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed role for public sector in leading the way, underwriting investment • Method by which Halton could better link to Liverpool core area and also the Manchester City Region • Opportunities for economies of scale and exploitation of Atlantic Gateway area’s critical mass for investment / pilot schemes for Next Generation Access • Potential to increase the attractiveness of Halton for business investment due to cutting-edge digital connectivity, particularly within the Daresbury area. • Risk of Halton being overlooked if strategy focuses to a great extent on the city centres.

Area – External Connections		
Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall need to reduce major movements while maintaining physical connections to major markets, both national and international • Atlantic Gateway has a substantial “offer” to external markets, including air, rail and sea assets, both commerce and also tourism • Need to ensure that area acts as one to lobby for funding and raise national and international profile • Need to ensure infrastructure is improved, including accommodating changes in freight technology, high speed rail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Airport Offers - at both Manchester and Liverpool, improve competitiveness in terms of business and leisure. Priorities to improve freight services, including Port links, increase international scheduled services, ensure Manchester is a viable alternative to Gatwick / Heathrow. • Port Access and Improvements – Including post-Panamax developments at Liverpool, improvements to cross-regional rail, inter-modal freight exchange networks and road access to ports • High Speed Passenger Rail – secure connections cross-Pennine and to London, increasing Atlantic Gateway offer to the national markets, enabling more efficient use of existing infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to attract early implementation of improvements to infrastructure – role for 3MG, Mersey Gateway Project, ports, etc • Role for airports, including Liverpool, in terms of freight handling; role for improved high-speed rail links, potentially including stations in Halton (cross-Pennine and West Coast Main Line to London) • Efforts to accommodate changes in freight and logistics technology could be focussed on the Borough’s freight facilities and infrastructure, including 3MG and the Manchester Ship Canal and its ports. • Potential to capitalise on international links (including long haul) from Manchester Airport. • Recognition of onward connections to global markets from Halton, by variety of modes: air, water, rail, road, hence increasing the attractiveness of the Borough for business investment. • Potential to increase the attractiveness of Halton for new residents, due to the emphasis placed on its locational assets and excellent connectivity.

Area – Sustainable Transport		
Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major demand for movement across Atlantic Gateway area, both passenger and freight • Poor non-car based connectivity outside of the core city areas, lack of viability of public transport use, perceived cost of public transport vs. car use • Need to maintain balance between internal and external movement requirements within Atlantic Gateway area – need to strengthen both intra- and inter-urban connectivity • Reducing reliance on external supplies with increase sustainability and self-sufficiency within Atlantic Gateway Area • Overcome likely political and environmental resistance to increased road-building • Recognition that Atlantic Gateway is not isolated, and its transport corridors play an important role in a much wider area • There are some measures that can reduce need to travel, but demand for movement will never go away, particularly during an economic up-turn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen transport within conurbations and urban centres only – focus on tackling current and future congestion in major employment centres. Priority for tram systems, local rail, park and ride and priority bus routes. • Strengthen inter-urban only, reducing journey times between Liverpool, Warrington, and Manchester, creating connectivity for business and leisure purposes. • Accelerate and gain more from LTPs, influencing larger organisations (e.g. Highways Agency, 4NW, DfT) particularly in relation to DaSTS goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential gains from linking two PTEs (relevant for Halton’s LTP3 with Merseyside) • Need for links to be established to core points in the urban areas (centres, airports) – this could benefit Halton by emphasising the need for better sustainable transport connections to Liverpool and Manchester (for example supporting the Mersey Gateway Project and West Coast Main Line improvements). • Potential for Strategic Park and Ride facilities to be located in Halton with links to the city centres (e.g. Daresbury) • Potential to increase the attractiveness of Halton for new residents, due to the emphasis placed on its locational assets and excellent sustainable transport links. • Potential risk for Halton of being overlooked if option to focus on major centres is chosen.

Area – Energy Generation and a Low Carbon Economy

Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential role for Atlantic Gateway to be at the forefront of a “green revolution”, coming full circle from the Industrial Revolution, meeting and exceeding carbon obligations • Need to secure off-site renewables, due to urban nature of Atlantic Gateway, it will not be possible for all businesses and households to develop on-site electricity • Advantages and growth opportunities in Energy and Environmental Technology Services sector, including business technologies, contaminated land, water treatment, recycling and recovery, and hence could develop a distinctive profile and attract inward investment • Within Atlantic Gateway area, there are clear examples of both physical and behavioural change related projects and policies, both planned and in the pipeline, e.g. tidal barrage, wind farms, waste processing projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Industrial Revolution – building on existing successes in Atlantic Gateway area, building zero-carbon corridor focussed on corridor between Liverpool and Warrington (Mersey / Manchester Ship Canal corridor) • Innovation Axis Green Technologies – growth in environmental technologies and services sector, through research, innovation partnerships, SMEs, support from academic centres • Bottom-up Transformation – network of new urban eco-communities, meeting housing needs. Also working with established existing communities to transform the way facilities are managed and operated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions to low / zero carbon region through road, rail and shipping links, capitalising on locational and geographic advantages of the Borough • Potential to be part of first “zero carbon” sub-region or region with interventions at different spatial levels. • Potential for exemplar developments in Halton, for example as part of Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus, 3MG or growth point housing developments.

Area – Adapting the Landscape

Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed by “Adapting the Landscape” (NWDA study), role of Green Infrastructure across the Mersey Basin / Atlantic Gateway Corridor • Recognition of Green Belt assets and reclamation of disused landscapes (e.g. quarries), but important role for exploiting urban fringe and creating a more productive landscape • Potential programme for “greening” the urban core and coordination of landscape activities at various spatial levels • Various benefits of Green Infrastructure recognised, including improving health and well-being, climate change mitigation, continuing regeneration, adding enterprise and employment value, social benefits, attracting inward investment, developing sustainable travel networks. • Recognise benefits of “blue infrastructure assets”, including the Mersey and the canals • Potential for further implementation of large-scale public art and cultural events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mersey Bioregion – utilising landscape for self sufficiency for energy and food supply; protecting Green Infrastructure until urban core cannot absorb more development • Mersey Innovation Axis – creation of a green axis between Manchester and Liverpool bounded by the M56 and M62, enhanced environments for employment and housing (high quality and zero carbon) • Mersey Playgrounds – utilising cultural connections between Manchester and Liverpool to transform physical connections and “green the grey areas”. • Do nothing – adhere to planning policy, focus Green Infrastructure on waterways and regional parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role for Halton’s Green Infrastructure in Atlantic Gateway framework, including waterways as blue infrastructure • Adapting the Landscape could be a useful organising principle in coordinating infrastructure development and planning – flood alleviation, energy generation, sustainable travel – at the local level, but would need more policy detail • Harnessing of Halton’s “blue infrastructure” assets including Manchester Ship Canal, Bridgewater Canal, River Mersey, Sankey Canal • Recognition that Green Infrastructure is not bounded by local authority areas, capitalising on assets adjacent to and near to Halton as part of the wider Atlantic Gateway area.

Area – Manchester / Liverpool Marketing Offer

Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool and Manchester are arguably the two UK cities outside of London with the strongest global impact due to sporting and cultural heritages. • Need to bring together complementary offers of Manchester and Liverpool, emphasising physical connections and their combined economic and population / skills bases, increasing international competitiveness • Need for a compelling idea to bring the different places within the Atlantic Gateway and their existing (successful and well established) marketing strategies together, including the identification of appropriate geographies of place promotion • Gateway-level action could include a focus on: shared infrastructure; potential to reach new markets; expanding the tourism offer; attracting top talent • Gateway-level intervention will need to fill an unmet need rather than add another layer to what is already a strong marketing and branding engine across the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Gateway” – organising the area to implement initiatives and strategies at the Gateway-scale while providing a basis for individual city / town-based promotion • “Two Big Cities” – building on success of Liverpool and Manchester’s strategies, assisting the cities in their branding and marketing efforts, and with the Gateway being defined by these two cities • “Each City and Town for Itself” – Gateway-wide resources go towards supporting and reinforcing individual promotion efforts, with no Atlantic Gateway branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to fit Halton’s marketing with other marketing geographies, including the city-region level and the Gateway-level • Halton could be part of major national brand, rivalling the capital and clearly important for attracting investment to the North West • Risk that existing strong brands, particularly at the city region level, could lose some of their impetus, depending on the level of intervention associated with the Atlantic Gateway.

Area – Addressing Deprivation		
Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Gateway is subject to high levels of deprivation, high levels of worklessness (including young people NEET) and high benefit claimant levels. • Existing interventions have had some success, but problems remain • Solutions are best delivered at the local level, but potential benefits of sharing approaches across the Gateway area • Potential to achieve recognition of Atlantic Gateway as a national priority for reduction of deprivation and to pilot radical new welfare reform within it, including leverage of investment to tackle problems, hence achieving economies of scale. • Addressing worklessness and deprivation will provide a new workforce and hence aid economic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Nothing – involve the delivery of existing programmes and ad hoc implementation of new measures • Scale-up Existing Interventions – emphasis on use of Gateway-wide evidence to roll out good practice, including voluntary joint working • High Impact – use Atlantic Gateway as a pilot area for radical new approaches • Localised Options – in areas of very high deprivation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage LAs to continue to prioritise these neighbourhoods ○ Use efficiency and effectiveness reviews of public sector activity to channel budgets in priority areas ○ Develop a highly targeted fund, aimed at the worst 2% or 5% IMD, with continued CLG and HCA action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that Halton is part of a highly deprived Atlantic Gateway geography, although there is a possibility that if a highly targeted approach, interventions would be focussed in Liverpool and Manchester rather than Halton • Continued use of existing structures, partnerships and interventions at the local level, as part of a larger whole, could benefit Halton. • Meaningful interventions to tackle deprivation will require an increased level of detail and policy emphasis, and hence could be better left outside of the Atlantic Gateway remit.

Area – A New Approach to Housing

Summary of Issues Presented	Summary of Options Proposed	Potential Implications for Halton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting housing needs and aspirations will support economic growth and improve quality of life • Prior to recession, the Gateway had a number of successful housing areas, include public- and private-lead schemes • Range of ambitious housing schemes are planned, but there are a number of housing issues impacting on ability to provide the right amount, type and tenure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ambitious government plans for delivery of numbers ○ Expense and attractiveness problems with brownfield focus ○ Green Belt and planning policy constrain market demand in some areas ○ Finance problems for buyers / developers, stalling apartment market ○ Tensions between local authorities about priority locations ○ Attractive stock poorly served by public transport • Need for recognition of scale of challenge, need to consider new approaches and a re-focusing of priorities and activities – Atlantic Gateway could provide this • Important to avoid duplicating work of HCA and CLG, Gateway intervention could focus on medium- and long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Nothing – continue current policy, continued focus on brownfield regeneration • Further Funding for Regeneration Areas – focus on securing funding and investment in core areas, potential lobbying role for Atlantic Gateway • Greater Focus on Successful Areas – radical re-focus of policy on locations most attractive to the market, including potential release of Green Belt land • Rebalanced Growth and Regeneration – accept some of the limitations of current policy, enable selective release of sustainable Green Belt sites with continuing focus on brownfield land development and regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential role for Halton housing provision within Atlantic Gateway, supporting existing plans for housing delivery. • Could link proposals for larger aspirational-type housing in Halton (e.g. Sandymoor, Daresbury) with Atlantic Gateway Interventions); but potential for brownfield residential development to be overlooked

Appendix 3

The Mersey Partnership (TMP) Response to the Options Paper

TMP Response to Atlantic Gateway Options Paper

(Aug 09)

General Comment

The strength of the Atlantic Gateway Strategy will be its capacity to address those themes that add genuine agglomeration to the North West and in particular extenuate the partnership between Liverpool and Manchester through their relative strengths.

Ultimately I think we should end up with about five or six themes for consideration as any more and it becomes unmanageable and indistinguishable from focus of the RS2010.

The core criteria for selecting the themes should be: -

- Does it stimulate agglomeration benefits across the region as a whole not just 1+1=2?
- Does the issue create a genuine differentiator for the region against other regions?
- Is there a reason why it would be in Atlantic Gateway as opposed to simply being part of RS2010?

For each option not all the sub-options are mutually exclusive and the strategy can consider part of each or one or two independently.

Themes / Options

1 Accelerating Innovation

Do the learning institutions need (or indeed want) to be connected within the Atlantic Gateway spatial area considering some are internationally renowned and their network operates globally with fellow learning institutions and business communities not simply North West-wide? Networking is a positive aspect, but a question is why the strategy should exclude other NW colleges such as Lancaster? And further, why not leave it to the institutions themselves who do it to the levels they each want and when the needs require?

Additionally innovation as an economic development driver is about stimulating transformation in business and this is being addressed by Business Link across the North West with its innovation programme.

It is not clear where Atlantic Gateway would create added value on this theme over and above the work that has already been developed by the NWDA.

2 Key Sector Focus

Although clusters tend to be managed regionally at present some key sectors are concentrated within the corridor from Manchester to Liverpool and would create genuine differentiators for Atlantic Gateway spatial area. The key sectors identified that reflect the sectoral strengths of the Liverpool City Region leveraged to benefits the whole corridor include Transport & Logistics which encompasses much of Liverpool SuperPort and Renewable energy.

Option 1 developed around the above sectors seems the most effective approach.

3 Digital Infrastructure

The Atlantic Gateway area provides the scale of high value businesses that should make it an attractive proposition for a variety of private sector operators to become involved in provision of fibre into the office. A concern is that a single operator (such as BT) could command an unassailable position in the market through contracting with the constituent local authorities within Atlantic Gateway as a single spatial area to the detriment of competition and ultimately the business community across the area.

Subject to the above caveat Option 2, examining the options, should be pursued as an assessment of need is probably required at all spatial levels before we can move forward. The initiative needs to be demand driven not simply provision of dark fibre.

4 Manchester / Liverpool Marketing Offer

In reality only Option 3 (Each city and town for itself) would be acceptable.

Liverpool in particular has worked hard in maintaining its very strong brand presence internationally and the idea of an Atlantic Gateway brand would be at best diluting of significant strengths that indeed each city has, and at worst highly detrimental and confusing. Also need to consider the issue that most of the Atlantic Gateway is nowhere near the actual Atlantic Ocean!

5 External Connections

This theme is consistent with the Liverpool SuperPort strategy and Peel Group's Ocean Gateway strategy and is therefore a strong proposition for consideration as a theme for Atlantic Gateway. This, however, has to be subject to the branding issues connected to Liverpool SuperPort and Ocean Gateway with further confused branding unacceptable to the development of both these strategies.

All the options outlined should be included for consideration. It should be noted though that SuperPort does not just refer to the maritime operations (as suggested in this section) but to the combined synergies of port, airport and logistics.

6 Sustainable Transport

If Atlantic Gateway is to have any chance of success as a concept it needs to ensure efficient transit between the two major cities as a bare minimum. To this end Option 2 seems the obvious choice with Options 1 and 3 largely concerns for the individual city regions.

7 Addressing Deprivation

Although the high level options outlined in this theme have merit in tackling deprivation they do not seem to need to align themselves necessarily to the Atlantic Gateway spatial area and should be addressed as part of the RS2010 and encompass the whole of the North West to gain maximum effectiveness.

8 A New Approach to Housing

As with the deprivation theme this seems like a agenda item for the whole of the North West and would not benefit from being restricted to the boundaries of Atlantic Gateway. It should be addressed as part of RS2010.

9 Energy Generation and a Low Carbon Economy

With its geographical opportunities for energy generation (i.e. Mersey and coastal area) and the majority of demand largely within the Atlantic Gateway spatial area it does seem sensible for this to be addressed by this strategy and could create a genuine differentiator for the North West region.

All three options outlined could be considered.

10 Adapting the Landscape

Cannot see the obvious benefits of geographically bounding this theme around Atlantic Gateway and would suggest it would be better managed as part of the RS2010 strategy.

REPORT: Executive Board

DATE: 24 September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Residents-Only Parking Schemes

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To review Council policy in relation to residents-only parking schemes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That it is recommended that residents-only parking schemes should not be introduced at the present time.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Parking in Halton

3.1.1 The increasing numbers of vehicles on our roads is creating more and more pressure on parking space on the highway. The problems are at their worst adjacent to schools, shops, transport hubs and other key destinations, but there is also a growing problem within residential areas, partly due to multiple car ownership in some households. In other towns and cities where there is pressure on parking space in residential areas this has been compounded by commuter or shopping parking, but these situations are rare in Halton being limited to the areas around Runcorn and Widnes North (Farnworth) rail stations. In Victoria Avenue (Widnes North rail station), where most residents have off-road parking facilities, the problem has been largely solved by the use of parking restrictions.

3.1.2 Parking on Halton's roads is free and open to all highway users on an equal basis, provided their vehicles are street legal. It is an uncomfortable truth that nobody has an absolute right to expect to park on the highway directly outside or even near their own home. Owning and running a car is a lifestyle choice that residents make and, therefore, it is their responsibility to ensure they can legally park their vehicle when not in use. The highway is for the passing and re-passing of traffic and not for parking.

3.1.3 In Halton, there is no charge levied for the use of the limited number of Council owned car parks and thus there is no income from these facilities: indeed they are a financial liability to the Council, due to their ongoing maintenance costs. Most parking provision associated with the town centre and supermarket shopping is in private ownership and again carries no charge, currently. However, there is charging by the owners of car parks at some locations such as the hospital and at

Runcorn mainline railway station. It should be noted, however, that the Council has commissioned parking studies in Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres and in Halton Lea. These studies provide the base data and analysis to enable consideration by the Council, in conjunction with private car park operators, of future car parking management policy. The initial report on these studies is considered elsewhere on this agenda.

- 3.1.4 Enforcement of on-highway parking restrictions is the responsibility of Cheshire Police.

3.2 Civil Parking Enforcement

- 3.2.1 Cheshire Police have been consulted to ascertain if they would be prepared to enforce a Residents Only Parking (ROPS) scheme in Halton, if one were introduced. This request has been declined as the Police have indicated that the "Force's position on residents only parking is that it is solely a local authority issue....." Extensive internet research and contact with other local authorities confirms that this Force's view is consistent with those of other Forces in the country. The Police were also not prepared to enforce ROPS, even if the funding was provided by the Council to enable officers to work overtime.
- 3.2.2 Using powers introduced by the Road Traffic Act 2004, it would be possible for Halton to take on responsibility for enforcing on-street parking restrictions instead of the Police, including any ROPS. These Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers would mean that the majority of parking offences, including parking on yellow lines and misusing disabled person parking bays, would no longer be criminal offences. A total of 247 local authorities have taken on CPE powers to March 2009, freeing some Police resources to tackle more serious crime.
- 3.2.3 The case for introducing CPE in Halton is in the process of being considered and will include an assessment of the financial implications as well as any enforcement benefits. However, should Halton subsequently decide to adopt CPE powers it would be able to keep the income from any parking tickets issued under the initiative. This income would then have to be used to cover all operational costs including funding parking attendants (called Civil Enforcement Officers), who would replace police staff for enforcement, and also the management and administrative systems associated with collecting fines and pursuing defaulters. The operational costs would be dependent on the areas covered and the times of operation. If the income from any parking charges issued did not cover operational costs, any shortfall would have to be met from other Council resources. It follows that there is a direct relationship between the number of parking tickets issued and the level of parking enforcement that could be resourced.

- 3.2.4 Previous requirements for CPE to be self-financing were lifted by the Road Traffic Act 2004, but any extra income after the costs of administration and enforcement have been deducted must be used specifically for improving local transport. This includes improving parking, traffic management, better public transport and facilities for pedestrians or cyclists.
- 3.2.5 As indicated above, there is no charging regime in place either 'on street' or in the limited number of 'off street' car parks, which are operated by the Council. Therefore the Council has no parking income against which it could offset the cost of a ROPS within a CPE regime. Without wishing to pre-judge the outcome of the Council's feasibility study into CPE, its ability to fund a ROPS could be limited.

3.3 Residents Only Parking Schemes

- 3.3.1 Within Halton, there have been intermittent requests over the years for ROPS to be introduced in individual streets in the Borough; usually triggered by residents being unable to park immediately outside their homes. However, even taking into consideration the town centres and other areas subject to high levels of often transitory demand for parking space, it is clear that the area around Runcorn mainline rail station is the one most under pressure, with Holloway being the main focus of attention. This is due to the 'on-street' parking by rail users, who wish to avoid paying the daily parking charges at the station's car parks and the practical difficulties facing householders in constructing 'off-road' parking, due to the height of their front gardens relative to the carriageway of Holloway.
- 3.3.2 The situation has been much worse over the past few months as construction of a new multi-storey car park at the station required the temporary closure of the main car park. A large proportion of the usual parking demand was displaced onto the surrounding streets and following the opening of the multi storey car park, drivers are now reluctant to pay for parking. Instead, they are continuing to park in surrounding roads, wherever possible, with some leaving cars outside resident's homes for days on end.
- 3.3.3 Many of Holloway's residents see the introduction of ROPS as a simple solution provided that the restrictions are enforced robustly. However, based on the reported experiences of other local authorities such schemes have a number of associated problems and impacts that must be considered:
- Permits to park would only be supplied to residents and essential visitors, at a cost, and would be vehicle-specific. When a vehicle is changed, a new licence would have to be issued indicating the correct registration number, as permits would not be transferable. In addition, licences could not be provided for relatives or friends, due to the limited road space available. The whole process would therefore require a high degree of administrative support;

- Parking would still be on a first come, first served basis between permit holders, as a permit would neither reserve a specific space nor guarantee a space within the designated parking zone;
- Parking problems can merely be displaced into adjoining areas, requiring the ROP scheme to be extended further to protect a wider area of residential properties;
- Casual visitors would not be allowed to park in the area, though essential visitors such as carers could be provided with licences if arranged in advance, though such arrangements would have to be fairly rigid to avoid abuse;
- Introduction of ROPS requires the Council to take responsibility for the safe siting of parking spaces to ensure that access can be maintained. Therefore, amongst other things, consideration would have to be given to the access requirements for ambulances and fire vehicles, meaning that for many terraced or estate roads, parking could only be permitted on one side of the road, due to the width needed for 'official' parking places. This could lead to ROPS reducing parking capacity and causing a worsening of the parking problems; and
- Due to Cheshire Police's refusal to enforce ROPS, any scheme in Halton could only operate under the umbrella of a wider CPE regime. As indicated above, the cost implications and enforcement advantages of Halton adopting CPE powers are currently in the process of being evaluated, but given the potential cost implications to the Council, it is likely that the cost of implementing, administering and enforcing a ROPS would have to be borne by the holders of the parking permits.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The issues covered in this report have been reported to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, and any comments from that Board will be reported at the meeting.
- 4.2 It can be seen from the above that the Council's ability to introduce Residents Only Parking Schemes within the Borough at this time is dependent on the viability of it adopting Civil Parking Enforcement powers. However, notwithstanding this fundamental issue, there remains a substantial number of disadvantages to agreeing to the introduction of Residents Only Parking Schemes within the Borough associated with: inflexibility in the provision of licenses and parking spaces; inability to guarantee parking spaces for individual residents; inconvenience to residents and visitors; displacement of parking problems; potential reductions in the availability of parking space; and costs. It is therefore considered inappropriate to introduce Residents Only Parking Schemes in the Borough at this time.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The introduction of ROPS was previously considered and refused by both the former Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee in 1993 and the Planning, Transportation and Development Policy & Performance Board in 2003.

5.2 The Council has a policy of free parking throughout the Borough and charging for on-street parking for residents would be inconsistent with that policy.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct social inclusion, sustainability, best value, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.

7.1 Children & Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Healthy Halton' priority.

7.4 A Safer Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Safer Halton' priority.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal' priority.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 There are no direct risks associated with this report

9.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.

9.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer

Background information Traffic Section, Rutland House Steve Johnson

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Rights of Way Improvement Plan

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the adoption of Halton's first Rights of Way Improvement Plan following a 12 week consultation with other local authorities, user groups and outside agencies.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approves the adoption of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, subject to any minor amendments and inclusion of photographs that may be required prior to its publication, being delegated to the Strategic Director, Environment, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration & Renewal.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a requirement that all highway authorities in England and Wales prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

Rights of Way Improvement Plans are not about rights of way in isolation, they are intended to deliver an integrated network of routes in and between town and country. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan must assess:

- The extent to which the local rights of way network meets the present and likely future needs of the public;
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area; and
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind and partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.

3.2 The Plan must also contain a 'Statement of Actions' that the highway authority intends to carry out in order to improve its network, with particular regard to issues identified within the assessment. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has issued guidance to local authorities on how they should approach the

preparation of a ROWIP, which has been followed in the preparation of this Plan.

- 3.3 The rights of way network is undoubtedly a major means of accessing the countryside and key services, but on its own does not show the full picture. There are many other routes and sites that are used by the general public for informal countryside access and every day journeys that are not legally recorded as definitive public rights of way. With this in mind, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Halton considers the whole network of access routes, public open spaces and sites, as well as definitive rights of way and highways. It also assesses the whole spectrum of users and journey purposes, from disabled access needs to routes to open access land.
- 3.4 Once the ROWIP is published, the Council is required to make a new assessment and review it within 10 years. Thereafter, they are required to review the plan at not more than ten year intervals.
- 3.5 The ROWIP is a strategic document and will form a distinct strand of Halton's next Local Transport Plan (LTP), which is being prepared on a joint basis with Merseytravel and the five Merseyside districts. This is Halton's first full 10 year Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 3.6 A copy of Halton's Rights of Way Improvement Plan Summary document is shown in Appendix 1, however, a copy of the full Rights of Way Improvement Plan will also be made available at the meeting and is available for inspection in the Member's Rooms.
- 3.7 The Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been used as the basis for a 12 week consultation with a wide range of users and stakeholders to enable their views to be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final document.

Although only 14 formal written responses were received, these responses, along with discussions with other consultees, were found to be positive. In addition, twenty seven questionnaires on the ROWIP were also returned. On the whole, the document was well received and strongly supported. Summaries of the results of the questionnaire survey and the written responses, together with Halton's officers' comments are shown in Appendices 2 & 3.

- 3.8 The Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan was also considered by the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board at its meeting on 17th June 2009, when it resolved that the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan be forwarded to the Executive Board for consideration.
- 3.9 Under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, there is a requirement to undertake

a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) on certain plans and programmes, such as the ROWIP.

3.10 The SA/SEA process seeks to ensure that the environmental, social and economic effects of implementing a plan are considered. This process has shown that implementation of Halton's ROWIP and associated policies will have significant positive effects on social inclusion, accessibility, health, tourism, landscape and air quality. The process has also acted as a checking mechanism to ensure the effects of the proposed ROWIP policies are considered in a robust manner. In addition, the SA/SEA process has assisted in the preparation of a framework for monitoring the Plan and indicators have been developed, which will be used to assess progress. Finally, it was recommended that additional policies be added to the Halton ROWIP, to further increase the sustainability performance of the Plan. These are detailed, as policy numbers R18 (M5) and R19 (M6) in the ROWIP Summary document, attached as Appendix 1. Further details of the recommendations resulting from the SA/SEA can be found in Appendix B of the main ROWIP document.

3.11 The ROWIP has also been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment, which, identified that:

- the Plan aims to deliver safe and sustainable access on PRowWs, cycleways, bridleways and other access routes, available for use by all residents especially those on low income and visitors to Halton, regardless of race, sexual orientation, age and religion; and
- Halton through the ROWIP will be improving accessibility to people with disabilities. Such improvements in accessibility for people with disabilities have wider benefits for all users.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 In developing the ROWIP, a broad range of local, regional and national policies have been assessed, to help identify the future needs and demands of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. In order to address these requirements, the Plan proposes an extensive list of rights of way policies and a detailed action plan, the implementation of which will be dependent on resources.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications resulting from this report. However, the Action Plan, contained within the ROWIP, gives a broad assessment of the requirements of the proposed actions, both in terms of staff and funding, should the Plan be approved. Current resources enable an ongoing programme of improvement and maintenance to existing Public Rights of Way. Further clarification on how the Plan is to be implemented is provided in Section 5 of the ROWIP.

Whilst there is a statutory requirement to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, there is no requirement on local authorities to implement the plan. Specific funding has not been allocated by Central Government to deliver the improvements, so local authorities will have to secure additional funding to secure any proposed improvements, which cannot be funded through available capital and revenue resources.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans are meant to be aspirational and ambitious in identifying potential improvements to the network. Therefore the net has been cast wide when considering ways to improve the network, whilst recognising that it would not be possible to implement them all immediately.

It therefore follows that the Council will need to work in partnership with a range of organisations in order to deliver many of the proposed actions.

5.2 Social Inclusion Implications

The development of the rights of way network and other access routes will provide a fair and inclusive network that will help all sections of the community access opportunities.

5.3 Sustainability Checklist

The ROWIP will help to address sustainability issues by improving the quality and sustainability of the environment and improving sustainable access to the countryside and to key services.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The ROWIP will assist in providing a safe and sustainable transport network that will provide access to schools (including those in the Building Schools for the Future initiative), colleges, recreational and social facilities. It is thus supportive of the 'Children and Young People in Halton' priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan and Halton's Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The ROWIP will assist in providing safe and sustainable access to employment and training opportunities and as such will help to address worklessness, which is a priority of the Council's Corporate Plan, the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement and the Liverpool City Region's Multi Area Agreement.

The maintenance and improvement of the Rights of Way network also has the ability to facilitate/support the Council's Supported Employment Scheme.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The ROWIP will assist in encouraging more people to take exercise through walking, cycling and horse riding and thereby help to address health issues associated with obesity. Indeed, one of the ROWIP's Strategic aims is to 'Promote the health benefits of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier lifestyles'. The ROWIP is therefore supportive of the health priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan and Halton's Local Strategic Partnership's Community Plan and Local Area Agreement.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The ROWIP will assist in providing for safer travel to key services and recreational activities. One of the Strategic Aims identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is to 'Improve the Safety and Attractiveness of Routes Affected by the Transport Network'.

This Aim is supported by the proposed ROWIP policy R10 (Imp2) 'Improving Network Safety'. It can therefore be seen that the ROWIP is supportive of the 'Safer Halton' priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan and Halton's Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The development of public rights of way network and other routes can be a key element in the regeneration process, by providing safe sustainable access to employment, education, health, retail shopping, social and tourism opportunities. The ROWIP is therefore supportive of the 'Urban Renewal' priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Strategy and Halton's Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no inherent risks, associated with the recommendations made within this report. However, the development of an effective ROWIP will help to address those risks identified in the network assessment, which impact on the achievement of a fully inclusive rights of way network and other access routes.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan	Rutland House	Janet Whelan ext 3008
Halton Bridleway Study – Groundwork Merseyside	Rutland House	Janet Whelan ext 3008
Halton Rights of Way User Survey 2007/08) – Mott Macdonald	Rutland House	Janet Whelan ext 3008

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SUMMARY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are a fundamental element of an integrated transport system. Halton's current Local Transport Plan covering the period 2006/07 to 2010/11 acknowledges that PRoW help to address all four shared transport priorities and all seven of the Quality of Life issues. These contributions are summarised as follows:

- Tackling Congestion – by providing routes remote from motorised traffic that cater for sustainable transport modes;
- Delivering Accessibility – by providing and maintaining routes that give access to local facilities and employment;
- Safer Roads – by providing routes for otherwise vulnerable road users that are remote from motorised traffic;
- Better Air Quality – by encouraging less polluting modes of transport;
- Sustainable and Prosperous Communities – by providing opportunities for walking and cycling, the plan offers affordable travel to those who do not have access to a car;
- Enhancing 'People Friendly' Places – by creating a network of routes that are safe and which increase accessibility to the countryside;
- Protection and Enhancement of Landscapes and Biodiversity – by ensuring that routes are maintained in ways that protect the needs of plants and animals;
- Enhanced Personal Security – by designing walking and cycling routes to maximise personal security;
- Healthier Communities – by providing and promoting a comprehensive network of attractive routes, where people can exercise through walking and cycling, which in turn can assist in promoting general well being along with reducing obesity and diseases such as coronary heart disease, strokes and diabetes;
- Fewer Transport Related Noise Problems – by providing convenient alternatives to car based travel for short journeys; and
- Progress Towards Climate Change Objectives – by providing walking and cycling facilities that reduce dependence on motorised traffic and thereby carbon emissions.

1.2 Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a requirement that all highway authorities in England and Wales prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

1.3 Rights of Way Improvement Plans are not about rights of way in isolation, they are intended to deliver an integrated network of routes in and between town and country. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan must assess:

- The extent to which the local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area; and
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind and partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.

- 1.4 The plan must contain a Statement of Actions that the highway authority intends to carry out in order to improve its network with particular regard to issues identified within the assessment. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has issued guidance to local authorities on how it should approach the preparation of its Plan and we have followed this guidance.
- 1.5 The Rights of Way network is undoubtedly a major element of facilitating access to the countryside and to services, but this on its own does not show the full picture, as they are also a major recreational and transport resource. In addition, there are many other routes and sites that are used by the general public for informal countryside access and every day journeys that are not legally recorded as definitive public rights of way.
- 1.6 With this in mind the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Halton considers the whole network of other access routes¹, public open spaces and sites, including the potential of 'Open Country', as well as definitive rights of way and highways. It also looks at the whole spectrum of users and journey purposes, from disabled access needs to routes to open access land.
- 1.7 Once the ROWIP is published the Council is required to make a new assessment and review it within 10 years. Thereafter, it is required to review the plan at not more than ten-year intervals. This is Halton's first full 10 year Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The ROWIP is a strategic document and will eventually form a distinct strand of Halton's Local Transport Plan (LTP). It is also supportive of the Council's Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.

- 1.8 Under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a requirement to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) on certain plans and programmes such as the ROWIP. Consultants were commissioned by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to undertake an integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Halton Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and SEA Directive respectively. The methodology for undertaking the SA/SEA followed the SEA Directive requirements and the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Guidance 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' (November 2005) which sets out the SA process as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 - 1.8.1 The SA/SEA process seeks to ensure that the environmental, social and economic effects of implementing a plan are considered. The SA/SEA process has shown that implementation of Halton's ROWIP and associated policies will have significant positive effects on social inclusion, accessibility, health, tourism, landscape and air quality. The process has also acted as a checking mechanism to ensure the effects of proposed ROWIP policies are considered in a robust manner. The SA/SEA process has assisted in developing a framework for monitoring. Indicators have been developed which will be used to monitor the implementation of the Halton ROWIP, to check that the policies are effective in delivering their predicted benefits.

¹ Other Access Routes – Routes for non-motorised traffic that are not definitive public rights of way e.g. Cycleways, amenity/leisure paths, independent footpaths etc

As a result of the SA/SEA process a number of recommendations have been developed by the consultants, which have been considered in the finalising of the ROWIP. Included in these recommendations were additional policies to further increase the sustainability performance of the Plan. These are described in Section 7 (Policies 18 &19)

:

1.8.2 The ROWIP has also been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which, identified that:

- The Plan aims to deliver safe and sustainable access on PROW's, cycleways, bridleways and other access routes, available for use by all residents especially those on low income and visitors to Halton, regardless of race, sexual orientation, age and religion; and
- Halton, through the ROWIP, will be improving accessibility to people with disabilities. Such improvements will have wider benefits for all users.

2.0 Geographical Context

2.1 The Rights of Way Improvement covers the whole of the borough of Halton.

2.2 Halton is a largely urban area with a current population of 119,500 people. Its two biggest settlements, Widnes and Runcorn, face each other across the Mersey, ten miles upstream from Liverpool and are linked by the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). It shares boundaries with Liverpool, Knowsley, Warrington, St Helens and Cheshire West and Chester Councils. The Borough is made up of the towns of Widnes and Runcorn together with the villages of Hale, Moore, Daresbury and Preston Brook, which are set in attractive countryside.

3.0 Vision Statement and Strategic Aims

3.1 The Vision Statement for Halton's PRow is as follows:

Halton Borough Council aims to develop, promote and protect a local rights of way network that meets the needs and likely future needs of the public for outdoor recreation, exercise and access to services. Through the preparation and implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) the Council will evaluate and improve access to local rights of way and other access routes, the countryside, and services within and around Halton for residents and visitors.

3.2 In order to achieve this vision ten Strategic Aims have been derived following a network assessment and also an assessment of user needs and demands. These form the foundation of the ROWIP and are as follows:

1. To improve standards of maintenance across the network;
2. To maintain an accurate and up to date Definitive Map and Statement;
3. To promote the health benefits of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier lifestyles;

4. To improve accessibility by improving and developing routes that cater for the needs of people with disabilities;
5. To increase the use of the network for sustainable transport and utility trips;
6. To improve the safety and attractiveness of routes affected by other parts of the transport network;
7. To support the rural economy, local businesses countryside, and tourist sites through the promotion of Halton's PRow network and other access routes, to residents and visitors;
8. To seek opportunities to enhance the network through the planning process, and through the various plans and strategies developed by the Council;
9. To improve connectivity of the Network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians; and
10. To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the public rights of way network and other access routes through cross boundary working.

These ten strategic aims are derived in Chapter 9 of the ROWIP.

4.0 The Process

4.1 The process of developing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been influenced by a number of factors, including the statutory ROWIP guidance, Halton's statutory Highway duties and powers, the Countryside Agency's advice (now Natural England) and wide ranging stakeholder consultations with the Merseyside Local Access Forum, Cheshire and Warrington Local Access Forum, statutory agencies, path user groups, landowners and parish councils.

4.2 In order to develop a sound basis for its ROWIP, Halton identified and evaluated the needs of various users and assessed the current levels of public rights of way and other access provision. Some of the key issues identified in the assessment were:

- There is no effective bridleway network as such available to horse riders and there is currently no provision to cross the River Mersey on horse back ;
- With proper provision the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) has the potential to provide the only suitable sustainable river crossing and to be the gateway for all north/south long distance routes;
- The footpath and cycle track networks are both fragmented in parts;
- There is the opportunity through cross boundary working to extend the network across the borough boundary into a wider network for all users;
- There are very few circular routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders;
- Some routes are severed by busy roads and railway lines; and
- More links are required to create greater connectivity of the public rights of way network and other access routes and to connect with strategic routes and initiatives.

4.3 In addition to this work, users were asked to identify those improvements they would like to see happen. The views expressed included:

- Create more off road routes for all users;
- Improved/better maintenance of routes;
- Provide more information about access i.e suitability for prams/push chairs/wheelchairs/visually impaired etc;
- Improve signing and way marking (including distance and destinations);

- Create additional linkages and circular routes to provide a connected network;
- Provide improved/safer road crossings;
- Provide better lighting of routes;
- Increase/Improve publicity and access to it;
- Remove physical obstructions/obstacles from paths;
- Improve access for all;
- Upgrade paths to provide more multi-user routes;
- Remove stiles and replace with kissing gates;
- More surfaced routes;
- Improve paths surfaces;
- Educate motorists with regards to other users in particular cyclists and horse riders; and
- Provide an updated record of PRow's and other access routes.

4.4 The information gained from both the network and user needs assessments have been carefully considered and distilled into the 10 Strategic Aims, identified in section 3 above, which provide guidance and a focus for all improvement measures contained within the Plan.

4.5 The core of the Plan is a 'Statement of Action', which outlines the work the authority proposes to undertake to secure an improved network of local rights and access opportunities. Halton's 'Action Plan' has been developed to address the issues identified in the:

- Assessment of needs and demands; and
- Opportunities provided by the network;

It also assesses the links to the wider public benefits and local key strategies. It then addresses the issues through the development of a broad range of measures and initiatives, which are focused on achieving the 10 Strategic Aims of the Plan.

5.0 The Action Plan

5.1 This section describes the proposals contained within the Action Plan, which are shown in Table 1. The following provides a key explaining the table headings and symbols used within the Action Plan.

Ref: A unique reference number that identifies the proposed Action

Action: What we are proposing to do in order to achieve the Strategic Aim

Resources: Whether the proposed Action can be carried out by existing staff and budget or whether additional resources will be required.

The following symbols are used to denote the resources required:

Staff Time

- ☺ Existing HBC Staff
- ☺☺ Partnership with others
- ♀ Additional Staff resource required

Funding

£	Within existing budgets
££	Small increase in funding required
£££	Moderate increase in funding required
££££	Major funding required

Timescales: The timescales will need to be flexible in order to make use of opportunities as they arise to maximise public benefit.

Partners: A list of key partners and stakeholders

Links: Links to other actions within the Action Plan

Links to Local Transport Plan: This denotes those actions that support the Council's Primary Transport Strategies (PTS)

- PTS 3 – Cycling
- PTS 7 – Highway Maintenance
- PTS 10 – Provision for people with disabilities
- PTS 11 – Public Rights of Way and Greenways
- PTS 12 – Quality Transport Corridors
- PTS 17 – Travel Plans
- PTS 18 – Walking

Benefits: This provides an assessment of those groups identified as benefitting from the proposed actions

Table 1: Action Plan

Strategic Aim 1: Improve standards of maintenance across the Network										
Evidence of Need:										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Users would like to see better maintenance of routes; ➤ Poor path condition and infrastructure deters users; ➤ Poor condition of routes e.g dog fouling and litter are a deterrent to users; ➤ Current users stated that they wanted better maintenance of routes, more/better signing/way marking, better lighting and more physical improvements such as more/better surfaced routes; and ➤ Well way marked routes increases confidence of users and assists land managers. 										
Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
M1	Continue to conduct an annual condition survey of the whole public rights of way network	☺	££	Ongoing			All Users, Landowners	HBC, Groundwork Merseyside	M2	PTS 7, 10, 11, 18
M2	Continue to maintain a fully signed and way marked network through the annual works programme using data obtained from the annual survey and user reports	☺	££	Ongoing			All Users, Landowners	HBC	M1, H5	PTS 7, 10, 11, 18
M3	Where appropriate increase seasonal vegetation clearance and maintenance levels on rights of way and other access routes e.g. The Mersey Way increased to 3 cuts per year and 12 safety inspections (1 per month)	☺	££	√			All Users, Landowners	HBC	M8,H5	PTS 7, 11, 18
M4	Conduct a Bi-annual condition survey of all cycle tracks	☺	£	√			All Users	HBC	M5, M6	PTS 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
M5	Using the information gathered in the survey to review the inspection and maintenance programme - develop a vegetation management plan and cleansing regime	☺	££	√			All Users	HBC	M4	PTS 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
M6	Identify signing and stencilling requirements and draw up an implementation programme	☺	£	√			All Users	HBC, Users	M4	PTS 3, 7, 18
M7	Continue to upgrade and improve path surfaces and facilities to ensure that they are in keeping with their environment and suitable for their expected use	☺	£			√	All Users	HBC, Other Organisations, Developers	M2, M5	PTS 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
M8	Develop a management strategy for the control of ragwort on the rights of way network, other access routes and road side verges. Publicise the procedure for reporting ragwort 'hot spots'	☺	££		√		Environment, All Users, Landowners	HBC	M3, M5	PTS 7

Strategic Aim 2: To maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement

Evidence of Need:

- There is a statutory duty to update and maintain the Definitive Maps and Statements;
- There is a need for a more accurate and up to date Definitive Map and Statement that, is more accessible. This will remove uncertainty over the correct alignment and status of paths, and increase general awareness of the access network. In some cases this can have the same effect as creating new paths, as people are made aware of paths that they never knew existed;
- There is potential for the Lost Ways Project to add/upgrade certain identified routes to improve the connectivity of the network;
- To discover the true extent of public access there is a need to map existing routes with no legal status that link the Public Rights of Way and other access route networks and seek to formalise and add them to the definitive map and statement where possible;
- Users are keen to protect routes without legal status;
- In the past claims for potential Public Rights of Way have not been pursued to completion due to the current process being difficult for members of the public; and.
- The network assessment has identified gaps in the access network.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
L1	Continue to review the Definitive Map and Statement and publish a new up-to-date Map and Statement that covers the area managed by Halton, by 2010	☺	££	√		√	All Users, Landowners	HBC, Users, Landowners, LAF, Parish Councils	L2, L3, L5, L6, L8	PT: 11,
L2	Distribute copies of the new Definitive Map to all Council Direct Links, Local Libraries and Parish Councils	☺	£	√			All Users, Landowners	HBC	L1	PT: 11, 18
L3	Make a digital version of the new Definitive Map available on the Council's website	☺	£	√			All Users, Landowners, Developers	HBC	L1,T10	PT: 11, ..., 18
L4	Develop a recording system (similar to that used for Public Rights of Way) for cycle tracks, permissive routes and other access routes using CAM's and make the information available to the public	☺	£			√	All Users	HBC	L5	PTS 3, 7, 10, 11,12,17, 18
L5	Seek to formalise and record all those routes identified as having no legal status or status unknown during the desk top assessment	☺	££	√			Walkers, Cyclists and Equestrians	HBC, Landowners, Users, Parish Councils, LAF	L1, L4	PTS 7, 10, 11, 17, 18
L6	Identify all cross boundary routes and work to ensure consistency of status and alignment.	☺ ☺	££		√		Landowners, All Users	HBC, Neighbouring Authorities	L1,L8	PTS 3, 7, 10, 11, 17, 18
L7	Develop and maintain such digital registers as are required by legislation, incorporating such additional information as may be deemed appropriate.	☺	£		√			HBC		PTS 7, 11
L8	Continue to catalogue existing Definitive Map anomalies, determine preferred actions and seek implementation.	☺	£££		√		Landowners, All Users	HBC, Users, Landowners	L1, L6	PTS 11, 18

Strategic Aim 3: To promote the health benefits of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier lifestyles

Evidence of Need:

- There are clear health benefits associated with outdoor activity;
- There is a lack of awareness of the potential health benefits of using the public rights of way and other access routes;
- The Public Rights of Way and other access routes can assist partners trying to improve the health of Halton residents by providing opportunities for exercise and recreation; and
- The number of people in Halton with long term illness is higher than the national average.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
H1	Establish links with other Council officers, plans and strategies involving health issues.	☺	£		√			HBC		PTS 3, 10, 11, 17, 18
H2	Establish links with the Primary Care Trust and other Health Organisations.	☺ ☺	£		√			HBC, PCT, Disabled User Groups, The Mersey Forest	H3, H4, H6	PT: 10, 17,
H3	Work in partnership to promote the health and well being associated with using the PRoW network and other access routes.	☺ ☺	££		Ongoing		All Users	HBC, PCT, The Mersey Forest	H2,H7,H8	PT: 10, 17,
H4	Use the PRoW network and other access routes to support existing health initiatives such as 'Walking the Way to Health'.	☺ ☺	££		Ongoing		Walkers	HBC, PCT	H2	PTS 3, 10, 11, 17, 18
H5	Establish a 'Green Gym' programme to assist with the maintenance and improvements of the rights of way network and other access routes.	☺ ☺	££		√		All Users	BTCV, Groundwork Merseyside, HBC	M2,M3	PTS 3, 7,18
H6	Seek to establish links with Doctors Surgeries, Dentists, Health Centres etc to distribute information on the access network.	☺	£	√			All Users	HBC, Others	H2	PTS 3, 10, 11
H7	Identify and develop circular and linear routes that can be used to encourage walking, cycling and horse riding for health.	☺	£		√		Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, Groundwork Merseyside, Users, Disabled Groups	H3	PTS 3, 11, 18
H8	Promote these routes accordingly e.g short starter routes.	☺	££	Ongoing			Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, PCT	H3	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18

Strategic Aim 4: To improve accessibility by improving and developing routes that cater for the needs of people with disabilities.

Evidence of Need:

- Too many physical barriers on the access network, deters use;
- There is a need to make the access network more accessible by removing unnecessary barriers and improving key routes;
- Fewer barriers on routes will increase use;
- People with limited mobility require a range of routes of varying length and terrain;
- There is a lack of promotion material specifically catering for mobility impaired users and equestrians; and
- Need to publicise barrier free routes.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5 +				
A1	Undertake an accessibility audit of the whole PProW and minor highways network.	☺	£££	√			All Users	HBC, Disabled Access Groups, Groundwork Merseyside	A2	PTS 10
A2	Using the information provided by the accessibility audit identify where new routes can be developed or improvements can be made to make the network more accessible to people with restricted mobility, utilising all appropriate modes of travel, and develop an appropriate programme of works/projects.	☺	££££			√		HBC	A1	PT: 10,
A3	Establish links with Disabled Access Groups and other groups/organisations that represent people with disabilities.	☺	£	√				HBC, Disabled Access Groups, Groundwork Merseyside	A1, A4, A5	PT:
A4	Work in partnership with mobility impaired people to assist in developing a more accessible network.	☺ ☺	£		√			HBC, Disabled Access Groups, Groundwork Merseyside	A1, A3, A5,A7	PTS 10
A5	Work in partnership with visually impaired people to develop improvements to the network that will make it more accessible to them. Seek to provide opportunities for users to enjoy sensory experiences where possible.	☺ ☺	Not Known		√			HBC, Disabled User Groups	A1, A3, A4, A7	PTS 10
A6	Ensure that all new and improved routes comply with the DDA and the British Telecom 'Countryside for all' Design Standards where reasonable and practical to do so.	☺	£	Ongoing				HBC, Developers	A7	PTS 3, 7, 10, 12, 18
A7	Promote new and existing routes that are barrier free.	☺	££		√		All Users	HBC	A4, A5, A6, A8, A9	PTS 10
A8	Continue to implement the principles of the least restrictive option when authorising new structures.	☺	£	Ongoing			All Users	HBC, Landowners	A2, A7,	PTS 10
A9	Continue to encourage landowners to allow the Council to install gates in place of existing stiles that require repair or replacement.	☺ ☺	£	Ongoing			Walkers, Disabled, Users	HBC, Landowners	A7, A8	PTS 10

Strategic Aim 5: To increase the use of the Network for sustainable transport and utility trips

Evidence of Need:

- Public Rights of Way and other access routes can make a positive contribution to addressing accessibility to jobs, education, health, shopping and other quality of life issues for socially excluded people in Halton;
- The Transport and Access networks could be better integrated;
- Improving infrastructure in urban areas is likely to increase levels of walking and cycling;
- Whilst promotional materials are well received, non-users are unaware of the existence and potential benefits that the local access network can have for the community;
- Potential users lack confidence using rights of way and other access routes;
- Subtle messaging, language and pictures are key to empowering people to have confidence in using the network. Information needs to be appropriate and inclusive to people's needs to allow them to make their own decisions about their ability to use a route;
- Marketing and promotion needs to be improved; and
- Publicise barrier free routes.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
ST1	Continue to identify and improve off-road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services.	☺	£			√	Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, User Groups, Schools, Colleges, Employers	ST3, ST12, SA1	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
ST2	Improve enforcement and management of the urban public footpaths and other access routes to combat litter, fly-tipping and dog fouling.	☺	££		√		All Users	HBC, User Groups		PTS 7
ST3	Continue to seek improvements for non-motorised travel in proposals for new developments. Seek to secure funding from developer contributions.	☺ ☺	£			√	All Users	HBC, User Groups, Developers	ST1	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
ST4	Develop walking and cycling routes from public transport interchanges.	☺ ☺	£		√		Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, Transport Providers	ST5, ST7, ST10, ST11, T11	PTS 3, 12, 18
ST5	Promote the use of public transport on leaflets and website.	☺	££			√	All Users	HBC	ST5, ST9	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17,

										18
ST6	Publish rights of way guidance for developers.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC		PTS 7, 10, 11
ST7	Identify existing links between the rights of way network, other access routes and local bus and rail services.	☺	££		√		Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, User Groups	ST4, ST8	PTS 3, 11, 12, 17, 18
ST8	Ensure that rights of way, cycleway and other access route connections are considered when planning new bus routes and stops.	☺	£			√	Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, Developers, User Groups	ST7, ST9	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
ST9	Promote selected routes through time tables, bus route information maps, bus interchanges and train stations.	☺ ☺	£		√		All Users	HBC, Bus and Train Operators	ST5, ST7, ST8	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
ST10	Ensure that, wherever possible promoted routes can be accessed using public transport.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC	ST4	PTS 12
ST11	Provide relevant public transport information on promotion leaflets for walking and cycling.	☺	£		√		Walkers, Cyclists	HBC	ST4	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 18
ST12	Where appropriate work to integrate the PRoW and other access routes with work and school travel plans.	☺ ☺	£			√	Walkers, Cyclists	HBC, Schools, Colleges and Businesses	ST1	PTS 17
ST13	Continue to seek to upgrade footpaths where appropriate to provide greater opportunities.	☺	£££	Ongoing			All Users	HBC, User Groups, Neighbouring Authorities, Landowners The Mersey Forest	ST14, SA1, CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
ST14	Seek to develop a multi-user route across the River Mersey.	☺ ☺	£££			√	Walkers, Cyclists, Horse Riders	HBC, User Groups, Sustrans, BHS, The Mersey Forest	ST13, T7, T8, T9	PTS 3, 10, 11, 17, 18
ST15	Continue to ensure that the needs of disabled users, walkers, cyclists and horse riders, where appropriate, are taken into consideration in the design of new highway schemes.	☺	£	Ongoing			All Users	HBC	ST1, ST8, ST13, SA1, SA2, P2, T8	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 18

Strategic Aim 6: To improve the safety and attractiveness of routes affected by other parts of the transport network

Evidence of Need:

- Path users find crossing busy roads difficult which deters use;
- Driver attitude and awareness of equestrians and cyclists could be improved; and
- The illegal use of motor vehicles on the access network causes safety issues for users and concern to landowners. Attempts to restrict access to resolve problems can impact on other users and quite often, the problem simply moves elsewhere.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
SA1	Undertake a safety audit to identify safety issues on the Network and in particular where the PRoW network and other access routes are crossed by the road network, and seek opportunities to make and fund improvements.	☺	££		√		All Users	HBC	SA2, SA3, ST1, ST13	PTS 3, 10,11, 12, 17, 18
SA2	Identify where 'missing links' in the network, which require users to travel along busy roads and develop solutions including verge improvements, creation agreements/orders.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC	SA1, SA3, CO6, CO7	PTS 3, 10,11, 12, 17, 18
SA3	Identify locations where the network is crossed by the rail network and, working with the appropriate authorities, develop measures to improve safety, as required.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC Network Rail Train Operating Companies	SA1, SA2, SA4, SA5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17 18
SA4	Identify roadside verges that are suitable for use by non-motorised traffic and footway improvements that can provide safe links between routes. Compile a register of identified verges.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC	SA1, SA2, SA3, SA5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 18
SA5	Seek to create 'Behind the Hedge' routes to provide missing links where appropriate, and safe to do so.	☺ ☺	£££			√	All Users	HBC, Users, Landowners	SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12 18
SA6	Improve driver awareness of equestrians and cyclists and cyclists awareness of horses and walkers.	☺ ☺	££	Ongoing			Equestrians, Cyclists	HBC, Road Safety Partnership		PTS 3, 11
SA7	Work in partnership to promote road safety for equestrians.	☺ ☺	££	Ongoing			Equestrians	HBC, BHS, Road Safety Partnership	T14	PTS 11, 12
SA8	Continue to provide education and training that promotes cycle safety and seek to extend this to include equestrians.	☺ ☺	££	Ongoing			Cyclists, Equestrians	HBC, Sustrans, BHS, Users, Road Safety Partnership		PTS 3, 11

Strategic Aim 7: To support the rural economy, local businesses, countryside, and tourist sites through the promotion of Halton's PRow network and other access routes, to residents and visitors.

Evidence of Need:

- A good accessible network will benefit tourism, local businesses and the rural economy;
- Improvements to Public Rights of Way and other access routes that link to tourist attractions will greatly enhance the visitor experience;
- Development and improvement to the bridleway network, together with suitable network promotion and increased information can boost Equine tourism , which can make a considerable contribution to the local economy;
- Coastal tourism will benefit from a better connected access network;
- Marketing and promotion needs to be improved;
- There is a lack of promotion material specifically catering for mobility impaired users and equestrians; and
- In the past promoted events have been popular but limited to walking and cycling groups this should be extended.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
T1	Identify and list sites requiring improved links to the surrounding network of PRow and other access routes. Investigate, prioritise and implement options for securing improved access to poorly served sites.	☺	£			√	Site Managers, Landowners, All Users	HBC, Users, Site Managers	T2,T3,T4	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 18
T2	Identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from Countryside and Tourist Sites.	☺	£			√	All Users, Providers	HBC, Users, Site Managers	T1,T4	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T3	Identify and develop access opportunities to Open Access and Registered Common Land.	☺	££		√		Walkers	HBC, Users, Landowners	T1	PTS 10, 18
T4	Seek to develop links with tourism and accommodation providers to distribute information on the access network and other routes, to assist in the promotion of rivers, canals and other tourist attractions in the Borough for recreational purposes.	☺	£		√		All Users, Providers	HBC, Providers	T1,T2	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T5	Provide information on the accessibility of routes as determined by accessibility audits using suitable formats and medias.	☺	££			√	Users	HBC		PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T6	Identify, develop and promote links from the Trans Pennine Trail into the surrounding urban centres and tourist	☺					Users	HBC, Sustrans,		PTS 3, 10, 11,

	destinations.		££			√		Users		18
T7	Develop strategic routes for all users including horse riders, where possible, to support the development of long distance routes such as the North West Coastal Trail and to facilitate connections between other initiatives such as the Weaver Valley Park, The Mersey Waterfront, Upper Mersey Forest park.	☺ ☺	££££			√	All Users	HBC, MLAF, Neighbouring Authorities, Users, 4NW, The Mersey Forest, Other Organisations	ST14, T9, P6	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T8	Seek to provide a multi-user River Crossing, including provision for equestrians, to facilitate proposed regional and national trails.	☺ ☺	££	√			All Users	HBC, MLAF, BHS, Sustrans, Users, The Mersey Forest	ST14	PTS 3, 10,11, 12, 17, 18
T9	Continue to support partners in the development of new routes and trails.	☺ ☺	£			√	All Users	HBC, Other Authorities, The Mersey Forest, Other Organisations	ST14, T7	PTS 3, 10,11, 12, 17, 18
T10	Continue to develop the PRoW website and seek to include interactive web routes for all users with links to local services and tourist attractions.	☺	£	√			All Users	HBC	L3	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T11	Provide public transport information at key sites and along promoted routes.	☺	£		√		Users	HBC, Transport Providers	ST4	PTS 3, 11, 12, 18
T12	Establish links and work with Parish Councils to erect map display boards at suitable locations throughout the Borough.	☺	££			√	Users	HBC, Parish Councils		PTS 11
T13	Seek to continue to develop the series of 'Halton Village Walks' leaflets.	☺	££			√	Walkers	HBC, Groundwork Merseyside		PTS 10, 11, 18
T14	Research and develop other promotional leaflets for walkers, horse riders and cyclists.	☺	££	√			All Users	HBC, Groundwork Merseyside, Users	SA7	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T15	Seek to Identify and develop routes to link tourist accommodation e.g. hotels, B+B's to the network and other attractions.	☺	£		√		Providers, Visitors, Users	HBC, Providers		PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
T16	Produce a leaflet distribution strategy	☺	£	√			All Users	HBC		PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17,18

Strategic Aim 8: To seek opportunities to enhance the network through the planning process and through the various plans and strategies developed by the Council.

Evidence of Need:

- In the past a number of developments have had a detrimental effect on the access network;
- Many developments have the potential to contribute to the access network through dedication, permissive and concessionary means;
- The development of access opportunities through consultation on newly proposed tourist attractions will provide further opportunity for users and potentially secure new routes, ensuring that public rights of way and other access routes can further contribute to the local economy;
- Plans for all developments i.e housing, industrial, new tourist attractions/accommodation etc should include provisions for walking, cycling and horse riding, where appropriate;
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans have the potential to link with a number of plans and strategies through shared aims and objectives; and
- There are opportunities to promote the network with partners who have similar aims and objectives to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
P1	Seek to prevent developments that have a detrimental impact on the existing network.	☺	£	Ongoing			All Users	HBC	P3, P5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
P2	Continue to ensure that all new developments link to the network by appropriate dedicated footpaths, bridleways and cycleways.	☺	£	Ongoing			All Users	HBC, Developers, Users		PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 18
P3	Seek to improve the recognition & protection of public rights of way and other access routes in the planning process and the use of planning gain to enhance facilities.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC, Developers	P1	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
P4	Establish firm linkages with existing plans and strategies to integrate public rights of way, other access routes and the ROWIP to enable shared aims and objectives to be delivered.	☺	£	√			All Users	HBC		PTS 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
P5	Produce a Guide to Development and Public Rights of Way for the planners and developers.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC	P1	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
P6	Improve current links with partners and seek to establish new relationships to facilitate the identification and development of cross boundary routes and national and regional trails.	☺ ☺	£		√		All Users	HBC, Neighbouring Authorities, LAFs, The Mersey Forest, 4NW	T7	PTS 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18

Strategic Aim 9: To improve connectivity of the Network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians.

Evidence of Need:

- The access network is fragmented particularly for equestrians and cyclists;
- There is a lack of provision for equestrians which means that many have to travel along the highway for recreation or to access a limited number of routes;
- Improvements are needed to improve connectivity of routes;
- Horse riders and cyclists want a range of circular routes of varying lengths;
- Horse riders would like longer cross boundary routes and links to National Trails;
- All users want more off-road routes;
- There is a need to establish clearer relationships with cycling and equestrian groups to assist in route provision and development; and
- There is a need to map definitive routes, cycle routes, permissive agreements and other access opportunities to identify wider connectivity and areas lacking access.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	Links to LTP Policies
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
CO1	Upgrade footpaths to bridleways, where appropriate, to assist in the development of a more cohesive network of routes available to equestrians and cyclists.	☺	£££		√		All Users	HBC, Users, BHS, Neighbouring Authorities	ST13	PTS 3, 10, 11
CO2	Upgrade cycle tracks to bridleways, where appropriate, to assist develop a connected network of routes available to equestrians.	☺	£££		√		All Users	HBC, Users, Landowners, Neighbouring Authorities	ST13	PTS 10, 11
CO3	Upgrade footpaths to shared use cycle tracks, where appropriate, to develop a connected network of routes for cyclists.	☺	£££		√		Cyclists	HBC, Users, Sustrans	ST13	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CO4	Seek Creation Agreements/Orders to make missing links, where sufficient need has been established.	☺ ☺	££			√	All Users	HBC, Users, Landowners	ST13	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CO5	Ensure that all gates fitted on routes with equestrian rights have latches that can be operated from horse back.	☺	£	√			Equestrians	HBC, Landowners		PTS 10, 11
CO6	Continue to identify and develop off road walking, cycling and horse riding routes.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC, Users,	SA2	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CO7	Seek to identify and develop linkages to improve connectivity of the existing network and new routes.	☺	£		√		All Users	HBC, Users	SA2	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CO8	Seek to identify, develop and promote the use of 'Quiet Lanes' to benefit all non-motorised users.	☺	£			√	All Users	HBC		PTS 3, 10, 11, 17, 18

Strategic Aim 10: To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the Public Rights of Way network and other access routes through cross boundary working

Evidence of Need:

- Horse Riders want to be able to access the Salt Marshes at Frodsham, the Aston Ring and other neighbouring bridleway routes/networks;
- Horse riders requested the creation and development of routes in the north of the Borough;
- There are opportunities to extend and improve the network available to Halton residents for walkers, horse riders and cyclists; and
- There is the opportunity to facilitate the development of national and regional trails through the Borough.

Ref	Action	Resources		Targets & Timescales			Benefits	Partners	Links to other ROWIP actions	LTP Walking and Cycling
		Staff	Funding	Yr 1 & 2	Yr 3 & 4	Yr 5+				
CB1	Re-establish links with St Helens Bridleway Group and St Helens Council to facilitate the development of the Old Mineral Line, as a multi-user route for walkers, horse riders and cyclists.	☺	££	√			All Users	St. Helens BC, Groundwork Merseyside, Users, Landowners, The Mersey Forest	CB2, CB4, CB5, CB6	PTS 3, 10, 11, 17, 18
CB2	Research the status of the route along the north side of the Manchester Ship canal with a view to upgrading to a bridleway to improve access for walkers, horse riders and cyclists, through the Upper Mersey Valley Regional Park	☺ ☺	££	√			All Users	Warrington BC, HBC, The Mersey Forest, Groundwork Merseyside,	CB5	PTS 3, 10, 18
CB3	Seek to move the Mersey Way at Hale further away from the shore to ensure longevity of the route and upgrade sections of bridleway to provide a multi-user route for all users that connects to the Mersey Waterfront Park.	☺ ☺	££££	√			All Users	HBC, Landowners, Users	CB5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CB4	Establish links with the new Cheshire West & Chester Unitary Council with a view to replacing the old bridge across the Weaver Navigation to provide a multi-user connection into the Weaver Valley Regional Park and the Weaver Way for horse riders, walkers and cyclists.	☺	££££		√		All Users	HBC, Cheshire West & Chester BC, British Waterways, Users, Landowners	CB5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CB5	Identify, create and develop cross boundary links into neighbouring networks.	☺ ☺	£££			√	All Users	Neighbouring Authorities	CB1, CB2, CB3, CB4, CB6, CB7	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CB6	Establish links with partners to enable the development of the North West Coastal Trail in Halton.	☺ ☺	££££	√			All Users	Neighbouring Authorities, 4NW, The Mersey Forest	CB5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18
CB7	Seek to develop, with partners, a multi-user crossing over the River Mersey.	☺ ☺	££££			√	All Users	HBC, MLAF, Neighbouring Authorities, BHS, Users, Sustrans 4NW, The Mersey Forest	CB5	PTS 3, 10, 11, 18

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

6.1 Implementation

Whilst there is a statutory requirement to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, there is no requirement on Local Authorities to implement the plan. Specific funding has not been allocated to deliver improvements, so local authorities have to bid for funding to deliver the proposed improvements.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans are meant to be aspirational and ambitious in identifying potential improvement to the network. Therefore we have cast our net wide when considering ways to improve the network whilst recognising that it would not be possible to implement them all immediately.

The Council will need to work in partnership with a range of organisations in order to deliver many of the proposed actions. Additional funding will be required and will be sought from both internal and external sources.

6.2 Monitoring

It is intended that the Council's existing Public Rights of Way Milestone Statement will be the delivery mechanism for the ROWIP improvements. Details of proposed site specific schemes will be included within the Milestone Statement Progress Report, which outlines a programme of works.

6.3 Identifying 'Quick Wins'

It is clear that many of the Actions identified will require much time and the allocation of substantial resources to deliver. There are however, some actions that can be delivered within a shorter timescale, and within current resources. These actions are likely to be delivered within a shorter period of time as their implementation does not rely on identifying additional external funding. In broad terms, the improvements, which Halton Borough Council and their partners can best make progress on delivering, are those within the control of the Council.

The Council will therefore endeavour to identify 'Quick Wins' to ensure the improvement and development of the network progresses whilst more detailed/complex schemes are developed.

7.0 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP) POLICIES

7.1 In preparing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, it became clear that in order to provide direction on many of the issues identified, it was necessary to develop a wide range of policies, which are summarised below.

Policy R1

Halton Borough Council will seek to support the aspirations and work of partner authorities and organisations in identifying opportunities and securing improvements and additions to the rights of way network and other access routes through their own policies and the planning system. The Authority will look to partners for support in pursuing the aims and objectives of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, including cross boundary working.

Policy R2 (U1) Walking

Halton Borough Council will protect and seek to enhance the network available to walkers and cater for their needs. Priority will be given to making the existing network more accessible to those with limited mobility, where appropriate.

Policy R3 (U2) Cycling

Halton Borough Council will protect and seek to enhance the network available to cyclists. Opportunities to expand the available traffic-free and 'on-road' networks will be pursued, where appropriate.

Policy R4 (U3) Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers

Halton Borough Council will protect and seek to enhance the network available to horse riders and carriage drivers. Opportunities to expand and improve the available traffic free and 'on road' networks will be given a priority.

Policy R5 (U4) Motor Vehicles

In pursuing the aims of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Halton Borough Council will have due regard to the rights of motorised vehicular users, where appropriate.

Policy R6 (U5) Access for All

In developing and improving the local rights of way network and other access routes, Halton Borough Council will have due regard to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Council will seek to make the local rights of way network and other access routes as accessible as possible to people through the provision of clear information and by adopting an approach of the least restrictive option in route management, as outlined in Policy R15 (M2) Authorisation and Management of Structures on Local Rights of Way.

Policy R7 (U6) Encouraging Greater Use of the Network

Halton Borough Council will seek to raise awareness of the availability and benefits of the rights of way and access network. The Authority will support the aims of other bodies promoting greater use of the network and encourage partner authorities to be pro-active in their efforts to meet the needs of existing and potential users.

Policy R8 (U7) Minimising Conflict

In pursuing the aims of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Halton Borough Council will seek to ensure that the rights of farmers/landowners are respected and encourage responsible use of the network. Where appropriate, the Authority will initiate measures to minimise conflict between users.

Policy R9 (Imp1) Improving Network Connections

Halton Borough Council recognises that one of the biggest problems faced by users is the lack of connectivity of the internal and cross boundary networks, especially bridleways. Where problems are identified, opportunities will be sought to improve connectivity, where appropriate, with priority given to multi-user connections.

Policy R10 (Imp2) Improving Network Safety

Halton Borough Council will seek improvements to the safety of vulnerable users where they have cause to cross a highway in order to access the local rights of way network and other access routes. Where safety is identified as being a concern, the Authority will consider a wide range of options such as revised verge management, improved visibility, signing etc. Priority will be given to improving those routes which cater for a combination of horse riders, cyclists and walkers.

Policy R11 (L1) Dealing with Public Path Orders

Public Path Order (PPO) applications will normally be supported by the Authority where there is seen to be benefits to both landowner and user. PPO's will normally be processed in the order in which they are received, except in the following circumstances where orders may be considered sooner:

- Where processing of an order would allow the Council to pursue a significant access opportunity such as identified through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Where an order has been made by the Council in the capacity as Planning Authority to facilitate approved development;
- Where the processing of an order could save significant costs incurred in other Rights of Way functions; and
- Where public safety can be improved.

PPO's will be prioritised as above to enable orders to be made that have a significant impact on the path network.

Policy R12 (L2) Dedications and Creation Agreements

Halton Borough Council has powers to accept the dedication of a new right of way under Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980. Agreements will be considered:

- Where a dedication is offered in lieu of a Modification Order and satisfies the evidence for that order, enabling the early addition of the route to the Definitive Map; and
- Where the requirement to make a dedication forms part of an obligation under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 106.

Maintenance liability will normally only be accepted where;

- The addition of a path is of strategic public benefit;
- No initial additional expenditure by the Authority is necessary to bring a path into a fit state of use; and
- Limitations on the use of the route are not onerous to the public.

The Council will also consider dedication or creation agreements that secure a line/corridor through which it intends to develop a future route, previously identified through the Greenways Study, Bridleways Studies, ROWIP etc. When pursuing such agreements physical works may or may not be required by the landowner and any ensuing maintenance liabilities will be accepted by the Council.

Policy R13 (L3) Width of New Routes

Halton Borough Council has a duty to assert the rights of the public (Highways Act 1980, Section 130) when making orders or consulting on new routes. As a result, the Authority requires a minimum width of 2m for footpaths and 4m for bridleways, which are created by a Public Path Order (PPO) or dedication, except where a path has been previously fenced on both sides, when there is the presumption that the full available width should be recorded as the width. Where possible a 'gold standard' width of 5m for bridleways will be sought.

For Greenway routes intended for all users and those routes that are considered to be of strategic importance, the Council will seek a width of 10m to cater for the different classes of user and to allow for the provision of trees, hedges and benches to enable walkers to rest.

However, the Council recognises that sometimes it will be necessary to accept a lesser width or localised narrowing in order to create a route. It will therefore, endeavour to achieve the best and most appropriate width that fits the route's proposed purpose and its surroundings.

Policy R14 (M1) – Maintenance of the Network

Halton Borough Council has a duty to assert and protect the rights of the public to enjoy the path network (Highways Act 1980 S130). The Authority will normally prioritise its actions as follows, whilst minimising their impact on the natural and built environment:-

- Where public safety can be improved;
- According to the level of public use;
- Where the Council feels there would be a significant benefit to those with limited mobility;
- Where the Council's actions could result in a significant positive impact on the local rights of way network;
- Where actions by landowners and managers are in direct conflict with the Highways Act 1980;
- Where the Council is bringing a path into a 'fit' condition with the intention of adding it to the Definitive Map; and
- Where there is evidence that either the Definitive Map or Statement is incorrect.

y
R

Policy R15 (M2) Authorisation and Management of Structures on Local Rights of Way

Halton Borough Council will seek to keep the number of newly authorised structures erected on the local Rights of Way network to a minimum, to minimise the impact on legitimate users. In order to achieve this, only gates will normally be authorised to avoid unnecessary problems caused by stiles.

In most cases the least restrictive option available will be favoured, although careful consideration will be given to the needs of the farmers and horse owners for structures to be stock proof and any historic value, prior to replacement.

It should be noted that where a structure is no longer needed for stock control purposes and does not meet the criteria for authorisation, the Authority will seek the removal of that structure, leaving a clearly 'way marked' gap

Policy R16 (M3) Authorising new Bridges and Associated Structures on Local Rights of Way

Where a landowner creates a new ditch, pond or channel that crosses an existing right of way, a suitable bridge or structure must be provided, which can accommodate all legitimate users safely and without restriction.

Policy R17 (M4) Enforcing the Removal of Agricultural Obstructions

Halton Borough Council will endeavour to resolve any agricultural obstructions by negotiation with the landowner/farmer. However, where this fails, the Council will take action to address the identified problem, using its powers under Sections 134 and 137A of the Highways Act 1980.

Policy R18 (M5) Sustainable Practice

Halton Borough Council will aim to ensure that sustainable processes are employed for the procurement of goods and services associated with the management and maintenance of the PRow network and other access routes.

The Council will also aim to ensure that the waste generated as a result of improvements to or the maintenance of the PRow network and other access routes and indeed any litter, is managed sustainably, following the principles of the waste hierarchy to reduce, re-use and recycle, as appropriate.

Policy R19 (M6) Community Participation

Halton Borough Council will aim to develop communication with local communities about the PRow network and other access routes and provide opportunities, wherever practical and possible, to be involved in their management and maintenance.

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2009/19 – ROWIP Consultation Written Responses Summary Table.

Following the production of the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and approval from the Executive Board Member Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, the document along with a questionnaire was sent to 223 consultees. The consultees included:

- Local Authorities
- Parish Councils
- Natural England
- Defra
- Dft
- Prescribed Organisations
- Local User Groups
- Land Owners
- Interest Groups; and
- Other Sections within the Council

The consultation exercise was advertised in the local papers and copies of the document were available on the Council’s website and in the local libraries and direct links. Questionnaires were also deposited at nearly 100 locations inc health centres, shops, businesses, Norton Priory, visitor centres, post offices, community centres etc.

Although only 14 formal written responses were received, these responses and discussions with other consultees, were positive and reception on the whole was good with strong support for the document. Twenty seven questionnaires where also returned and a summary of these results together with our responses can be seen in Appendix 3.

The following table summarises the written responses received.

Consultee	Strategic Aim	Summary of Comments	Council’s Response/Action
Martin Harker - Chair of the Merseyside Local Access Forum	General Comment	“It seems to be clearly and logically presented and I thought the questionnaire leaflet was a particularly useful way of obtaining feedback. Unfortunately I have not had time to study the document in detail, I trust that you get some useful feedback.”	No Action required

<p>Dave Owen – Mersey Gateway Team</p>		<p>“I acknowledge that an addendum has been issued regarding references to the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy and that this will be reflected in the final draft.”</p> <p>Suggested and additional narrative be inserted after para 6.7.2.4</p>	<p>Para 1.6 - Alteration to document made as per addendum.</p> <p>Narrative inserted as requested. (pages 66 & 67)</p>
<p>John Spottiswood – Planner – British Waterways Wales and Border Counties</p>		<p>Thank you for consulting us on this document.</p> <p>We support action P3 which promotes the use of planning gain to enhance access routes.</p> <p>We support the proposed links from Runcorn into the Weaver Valley especially the route from Clifton to Dutton. In relation to action CB4 a note of caution is required. The old bridge cannot simply be replaced on a like for like basis because I understand the old bridge was an obstacle to navigation and National Grid need to use this location for deploying their rolling bridge. A new bridge will be required on a new alignment taking account the clearances required for the river on a fixed bridge or the work required for a swing, lift or sliding bridge to ensure that navigation of large craft is not jeopardised. There may be a security issue for National Grid at this location.</p> <p>We support the proposals to improve ‘access for all’ throughout the document.</p>	<p>No Action required</p> <p>British Waterways have been added as partners to action CB4. Comments have been noted and will be considered as the scheme is progressed.</p> <p>No Action required</p>
<p>Rick Rogers – Countryside Development Officer, St Helens Council</p>		<p>“Generally the document adequately covers the range of issues affecting Rights of Way issues. However, it would benefit from including references to the following strategic initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Mersey Growth Point • South St Helens Forest Park 	<p>New paragraphs inserted to accommodate these points –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.9.1.5.5 The South St Helens Park • 6.9.1.5.6 Mid Mersey Growth Point
<p>Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)</p>		<p>Thank you for the consultation document. We are sure you will appreciate that the EHRC receives many such documents. Unfortunately we do not have the resources to respond to consultations, unless they concern matters which are directly related to the work of the EHRC.</p>	<p>No Action required</p>
<p>CYCLE WALK Mrs E S Kamellard – Dft, Cycling & Sustainable Travel</p>		<p>Thank you for your email of 6 April informing us of Halton Borough Council Right of Way Plan. I understand the Department for environment Food and rural Affairs (Defra) is the Government Department that has the lead for Rights of Way. You can contact them on</p>	<p>No Action required. Defra were a statutory consultee and therefore consulted as a matter of course.</p>

<p>Diane Clarke - Network Rail</p>		<p>Thank you for providing Network Rail with an opportunity to comment on the above mentioned application. At this stage we have no comments to make, however, we would request that once Halton BC has made a decision as to the sites it will be developing under ROWIP that they contact Townplanning.LNW@networkrail.co.uk . Once a definitive list has been chosen of the particular sites of interest we will then be able to comment on the possible impact of those sites upon safety, integrity and operation of the railway. Please note this especially in sites where there is likely to be wider commercial issues or access over the operational railway line.</p>	<p>No further action required at this time.</p>
<p>Peter Waite – The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society</p>		<p>On behalf of the MCFS I have reviewed the above document which I found to be well written and informative. Please accept the following comments and observations which we hope will help with the final version and its implementation.</p> <p>Pg4 - SJB is not defined any where (& not understood by the reader)</p> <p>Pg 4 - Typo error – ‘walkers, cyclists and horse riders’</p> <p>Pg5 – Implementation – This is the Achilles Heel of the ROWIP. It is hoped that Halton BC will put up the short term funding required to bring the borough’s PROW’s up to the minimum standard. It is likely that most of the funding will be required for the records side of the outstanding problem.</p> <p>Pg8 2.1.2– Typo error – ‘distribution, chemicals...’</p> <p>Pg9 2.2.2 – Last sentence – fully agree & totally supportive of this objective.</p> <p>Pg14 3.3.5 MCFS would like to be part of this activity for Halton S</p> <p>P20 4.1.8 We agree. Maps, signage and obstructions are a problem in Halton.</p> <p>Pg28 RUPP is not defined until Pg45 (& may not understood by other readers)</p> <p>Pg32 4.6.21 This also applies to non-disabled persons and is a problem in Halton.</p>	<p>Correction made</p> <p>Correction made comma added after walkers</p> <p>The Council has already spent and committed substantial sums of money on the PRoW network during LTP1 & 2 and it is intended that our commitment will continue, subject to resources being made available.</p> <p>Correction made comma added after distribution</p> <p>No action required</p> <p>No Action required at this time. Application to join the Local Access forum will have to be made during the next recruitment process, which will be advertised.</p> <p>A list of required improvements to address these issues can be found in para 9.1.2.</p> <p>No action required. RUPP is actually defined in 4.4.1</p> <p>Comment noted, these issues will be addressed through the plan.</p>

		<p>Pg34 Chart 1 – very interesting. Our survey largely mirrors these findings. Halton S has low car ownership and needs PROWs to avoid pollution, accidents etc. but personal safety (from others) is essential. Visitors have the same needs but need suitable parking at potential walk start points.</p> <p>Pg35 4.7.9 & Policy R7 We agree and welcome this policy.</p> <p>Pg42 5.6.15 Contrary to the BVPI 178 indicator, maintenance in its broader sense is variable and often poor. Walkers are being discouraged.</p> <p>Pg43 5.7.4 MCFS trying to achieve this.</p> <p>Pg44 5.8.4 Some landowners are not taking reasonable steps to reduce the problems for themselves & walkers e.g. signing, reinstatement. Pointing a gun at walkers legitimately on a PROW does not lead to good relations. Responsible walkers respect the landowner’s rights but are less fussy when the landowner makes life difficult.</p> <p>Pg44 5.8 As 57% would welcome or allow access perhaps there is an education process here for those who would not allow future access. 5.8.3 % 5.8.6 appear to contradict each other.</p> <p>Pg44 6.1.4 The Definitive map and Statement are out of date and urgently require updating.</p> <p>Pg45 6.1.7 Fragmentation is a major problem in Halton S making it difficult to create circular walks.</p> <p>Pg47 6.2.2 MCFS is actively trying to assist Halton BC achieving the three</p>	<p>No action required</p> <p>No specific action required at this time, however, the comment has been noted and will be considered when improving existing routes and developing new routes.</p> <p>No action required</p> <p>The proposed action plan identifies eight actions within Strategic Aim 1(Improve standards of maintenance across the Network) that will assist in ensuring improved and consistent standards of maintenance across the network.</p> <p>No action required</p> <p>No Action at this time – Any reports are and will continue to be dealt with as and when they are received.</p> <p>The need to work with landowners/farmers is already identified in paragraph 5.8.6. The percentages given in 5.8.3 and 5.8.6 are consistent as the 88% refers to those who would not allow new public access to be created (7 out of 8).</p> <p>This will be addressed through the action plan, in particular Strategic Aim 2 (To Maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement) Actions L1, L5, L6 and L8.</p> <p>This will be addressed through a number of actions, but particularly through Action CO7 of Strategic Aim 9 (To improve connectivity of the Network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians).</p> <p>No action required</p>
--	--	--	--

		<p>national targets.</p> <p>Pg56 6.4.8.3 The BVPI 178 data appears rather optimistic compared with the 100% survey carried out by the MCFS during 2008 (albeit to a somewhat different standard but with the same aim).</p> <p>Pg70 6.8.3 Fig 5 should read Fig 8. This figure is too small to be much use. Research has been unsuccessful in revealing a location for Overhill Common without the O.S Ref.</p> <p>Pg101 Policy R8 Great care needs to be taken to minimise conflict. Pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians can share some paths but not all. When allowing multi-use of a PROW the interests of deaf walkers when confronted by cyclists or horses wishing to overtake (from the rear) are often neglected.</p>	<p>No Action required - The results were achieved using the methodology developed by the CSS Countryside Working Group, which was approved by the Audit Commission.</p> <p>Figure No. corrected in para 6.8.3 This figure is only indicative and is only provided to give the broad location of the open access land and common land. Overhill Common was wrongly drafted on the Conclusive Maps and was therefore not included in this figure to avoid any unnecessary concern to landowners.</p> <p>The comment has been noted and will be considered in the design of new paths and the improvement of existing paths.</p>
<p>James Widdop – Rights of Way Officer St Helens Council</p>		<p>With regards to the draft Halton ROWIP, the Council would like to make the following observations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to records held by St Helens Council, there are only two recorded public footpaths in St Helens meeting the boundary between the Boroughs of St. Helens and Halton <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. on the A57 “Union Bank Farm Cottage” and b. on the A5080 “South Lane entry” 2. According to an Ordnance survey 1:25000 map there are only two Halton public footpaths meeting the boundary between the Boroughs of St. Helens and Halton <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. on the A57 between Wilmere House and Old Brook Hall and b. on the A57 opposite the access to Union Bank Farm Cottage 3. Lack of Strategic routes between the Borough of St. Helens and Halton 	<p>This would concur with our records. No Action required at this time.</p> <p>This would concur with our records. No Action required at this time.</p> <p>The plan will address this through Strategic Aim 10 (To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the Public Rights of Way network and other access routes through cross boundary working), in particular actions CB1 and CB5.</p>

		<p>4. With reference to para 2.2.2 pg9 – Upon examining an Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map of the area, there are two public footpaths which are shown south of the A57 in the Borough of Halton. These public footpaths are approx 520m and 715m in length between the A57 and the A557. Both of these public footpaths appear to continue south of the A557 before merging at Cranshaw Hall and finishing at Lunts Heath. Clearly, these public footpaths form a vital linkage within the Borough of Halton between the urbanised area of Lunts Heath and the rural area of Bold, and there is scope to improve this existing provision in this locality.</p> <p>It is also noted in other areas north of Widnes, there appears to be a current lack of Public Rights of Way provision and the Council believes that there is great potential for network improvement in this area to the north of the River Mersey.</p> <p>5. On page 46, figure 2, there is a map showing distribution of Public Rights of Way in Halton. The two public footpaths described above appear on Ordnance Survey 1:2000 and 1:50000 maps, yet are not shown in figure 2.</p> <p>6. It is currently noted that there is a shortage of bridleways on both sides of the two Boroughs. Anecdotal evidence obtained from site visits, liaison with user groups, Merseyside Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Local Access Forum suggests there is a need to increase the public bridleway network in the southern area of St Helens which could have significant effects on both sides of the Borough Boundary from environmental, social and economic aspects.</p> <p>7. The disused Widnes to St Helens railway line links the Boroughs of Halton and St Helens and is one potential long distance strategic route.</p>	<p>These routes have already been identified as vital linkages as part of a feasibility study undertaken jointly with St. Helens. The plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 9 (To improve connectivity of the Network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians) and Strategic Aim 10 (To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the Public Rights of Way network and other access routes through cross boundary working).</p> <p>The plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 8 (To seek opportunities to enhance the network through the planning process and through the various plans and strategies developed by the Council) in particular Action P2, and Strategic Aims 9 and 10.</p> <p>The Definitive Map is currently being reviewed and updated. There are anomalies and errors on it, such as this, that will be addressed through Strategic Aim 2 (To maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement).</p> <p>This issue has already been identified and Halton has been working with St Helens Council and the Bridleway Development Group to address this matter. The plan addresses this through Strategic Aims 8, 9 and 10.</p> <p>The plan references this route in paragraph 2.2.3. The plan also addresses this route specifically through Strategic Aim 10, Action CB1.</p>
<p>Mrs M Fishwick – British Horse Society County Access Officer (Merseyside Committee)</p>	<p>Strategic Aim 1</p>	<p>Please be aware that, although I am a representative for the Merseyside branch of the British Horse Society, my comments may not always be those of the Society.</p> <p>M1 & M2 are independent, as are M5 & 8 in my view</p>	<p>Comment noted – No Action required.</p>

	<p>Strategic Aim 2</p> <p>Strategic Aim 2, 5 & 7</p> <p>Strategic</p>	<p>Owing to the lethal nature of ragwort on livestock, management of it ought to be part of the seasonal vegetation maintenance programme [M5].</p> <p>A comprehensive management strategy of all aspects of the RoW is important to both user and landowners. On a well-managed network – clearly marked, with stiles and gates in good repair users mostly keep to the proper path reducing damage to the adjoining land.</p> <p>Not a remit of Halton Council, entry points for any Access Land within the Borough need to be clear on all maps produced by Halton for public use.</p> <p>To facilitate a comprehensive Definitive Map the cut-off date for the now defunct Lost ways Project must be scrapped. It is impossible for ROW staff at Halton or the few volunteers in the Ramblers Association, the British Horse society and other user groups to have either the time or funding to locate paths and find proof of long-term use.</p> <p>The development of a network linking in with the neighbouring Boroughs is required, especially in Widnes where the bridleway network is non-existent. Links with St Helens, Warrington and Knowsley are essential to develop a network, which should create, in the long term, routes leading to Delamere, the Pennine Bridleway and the North West Coastal Path.</p> <p>An important point in the development of this network would be horse riders being able to cross the Mersey on the Silver Jubilee Bridge; which as you know is the lowest bridging point apart from Warrington and a private bridge at Moore.</p> <p>The availability of long distance Bridleway routes are very likely to bring in extra revenue from tourism.</p> <p>The use of signage and publications is useful to help users who have difficulty reading and O.S map to enjoy the network to the full.</p> <p>Disabled horse riders and carriage drivers also need to be considered in this</p>	<p>Comment noted and will be considered when developing Action M5.</p> <p>Comment noted – Strategic Aim 1, Action M7 has been amended to clarify the maintenance proposed.</p> <p>Comment noted and will be taken into consideration when preparing future promotional information. Strategic Aim 2 Action L4 and Strategic Aim 7, Actions T10, T12, T13 and T14 will help facilitate this.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 10 (To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the Public Rights of Way network and other access routes through cross boundary working). Section 6.9.2.1 Cross Boundary Issues supports this.</p> <p>The plan acknowledges the potential for horse riders to utilise the ‘downgraded’ Silver Jubilee Bridge in Section 6.9.3. The plan potentially addresses the issue of this multi-user route specifically through Strategic Aim 5, Action ST14, Strategic Aim 7, Action T8 and Strategic Aim 10, Action CB7.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this in a number of areas in particularly through Strategic Aim 1, Action M2 and Strategic Aim 7, Actions T10, T13 and T14.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 4 is targeted at all people with</p>
--	--	---	---

	<p>Aim 4</p>	<p>section. The ability to be able to ride or drive gives a disabled person greater access to the countryside which undoubtedly improves their quality of life. Riding and driving is not just the province of the well off, some riding establishments offer riding/driving for the disabled and need to be able to access the Row network, rather than just take their clients around a paddock.</p> <p>The state of stiles in many areas is a disgrace, often with barbed wire fences where hands need placing or the wooden crosspieces in disrepair. Stiles present problems to all but the agile, older people find them difficult to climb, and where possible, gates are a better option.</p> <p>RoW should be barrier free to allow wheelchairs, prams and mobility scooters easy access. Unfortunately, illegal motorbike users are responsible for Councils erecting barriers in unsuccessful attempts at restricting them. These barriers make access difficult or even impossible for legal users.</p> <p>A well-used area tends to be self-policing; strategic Policing where the offending vehicles are removed and crushed should also be of use. The ideal would be areas for people to use scrambler and quad bikes.</p>	<p>disabilities. Action A2 has been amended to make it clear that it applies to all modes of travel that are appropriate for use on the routes.</p> <p>Any such reports are and will continue to be dealt with, if and when they are received. Halton has few stiles in the borough preferring to install kissing gates. Policy R6 (U5) Access for All supports the approach of the least restrictive option in route management. This is also identified in Policy R15 (M2) Authorising New Bridges and Associated Structures on Local Rights of Way.</p> <p>The plan addresses this through Policies R6 (U5) Access For All and R15 (M2) Authorising New Bridges and Associated Structures on Local Rights of Way</p> <p>The Plan identifies Halton's approach to this issue in paragraphs 4.5.4 and 4.5.5.</p>
	<p>Strategic Aim 6</p>	<p>This is a comprehensive strategy. You, as the local Council, are only able to make the RoW network as safe as possible and should not be expected to second-guess stupidity of some users. Individuals, whatever their mode of transport must take responsibility for their own actions.</p>	<p>Comment noted – No Action required</p>
	<p>Strategic Aim 8</p>	<p>Developers must be encouraged to include multi-user routes from their sites to link with the RoW network.</p> <p>For new housing developments, it could be regarded as an important selling point for people; equestrians, in particular look for areas that have a good bridleway network. It could encourage people to leave the car at home and walk or cycle to school, the shops and work.</p> <p>Encourage developers to contact the various advisory bodies such as Sustrans, cycling clubs, the Ramblers Association and the British Horse Society.</p>	<p>The Plan addresses this specifically through Strategic Aim 8, Action P2.</p> <p>Comment noted – No Action required.</p> <p>This is something that already happens in Halton.</p>
	<p>Strategic</p>	<p>Many bridleway networks in the Borough, especially Widnes, are so</p>	<p>The Plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 9</p>

		<p>In the long term a good, local multi-user, Row network linking in with the nearest long distance routes mentioned would encourage more visitors to the area. A definite plus for local coffers! Ref:- strategic aims 2,5 and 7 for a horse riding route over the Silver Jubilee Bridge please.</p> <p>Parking for horse boxes/trailers would be useful at strategic locations on the RoW network. Pubs or visitor centres, for example, with plenty of parking, café and toilets may be willing to participate in such a scheme. Maybe even providing a small corral or two so riders could partake of sustenance there.</p>	<p>The Plan addresses the need for linkages in particularly through Strategic Aim 9, Action CO7, Strategic Aim 7, Actions T6 and T7.</p> <p>The Plan acknowledges the potential for horse riders to utilise the ‘downgraded’ Silver Jubilee Bridge in Section 6.9.3. The Plan potentially addresses the issue of this multi-user route specifically through Strategic Aim 5 Action ST14, Strategic Aim 7, Action T8 and Strategic Aim 10, Action CB7.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.3.9.4 highlights the need for parking however, the comment has been noted and will be considered on a path by path basis.</p>
<p>Clare Olver – The Mersey Forest Team</p>		<p>The Mersey Forest Team welcomes the opportunity to comment on Halton’s Draft ROWIP. We are happy to discuss any of these issues with you further.</p> <p>When the 12 community forests were established, the corporate objectives agreed by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (now DEFRA) which each community forest has adopted has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase opportunities for sport and recreation, including artistic and cultural events and access. <p>The Mersey Forest Plan (reviewed in 2001) guides the development of the Forest. Networks, such as The Mersey Forest, of woodlands and other habitats are increasingly being recognised as part of our green infrastructure. The plan makes a number of recommendations and in the Access, Sport, Recreation, Tourism and Health section recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R6 The Mersey Forest Partners will aim to establish a network of greenways across the Forest area as both local level (linking people with local sites on their doorstep) and at a strategic level (providing longer routes crossing local authority boundaries). <p>There have been some recent changes under local government review which affects the wording of 6.6.10:</p> <p>6.6.10 The Mersey Forest The Mersey Forest is an environmental regeneration initiative creating woodlands and involving people across Merseyside and North Cheshire.</p>	<p>Comment noted no action required at this time.</p> <p>Comment noted no action required at this time. Halton will continue to enlist The Mersey Forest as partners, where appropriate.</p> <p>Alteration made to para 6.6.10 to incorporate the updated text.</p>

	<p>Strategic Aim 3</p>	<p>The Mersey Forest Partnership includes seven local authorities (Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Warrington) as well as the Forestry Commission, Natural England and businesses including United Utilities. Since the Mersey Forest began in 1994, more than 175 hectares of new woodland has been created in Halton.</p> <p>6.6.10.2 The guiding principles remain the same.</p> <p>6.6.11 Long distance routes/Trails</p> <p>The Mersey Forest Plan makes specific reference to targeting for priority implementation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trans-Pennine Trail • A link between St Helens and the TPT at Widnes • Weaver Way. <p>Over the years has contributed towards the delivery of the Timberland Trail.</p> <p>6.6.17 The Mersey Forest recognises the importance of a well connected network of paths and open areas and works in partnership with landowners to realise those benefits. For example, assisting landowners with woodland to apply to the English Woodland Grant Scheme for funding “For the provision and improvement of facilities for free public access to woodlands where there is a need.” These funds can be applied to both existing woodlands and newly created community woodlands funded under EWGS, provided there is a need for more or improved woodland public access in that location. The woodland must be accessible for free, quiet enjoyment by the public (including dogs on leads) during daylight hours for at least 11 months of the year.</p> <p>Comments on the Action Plans The Mersey Forest Team is a key partner to a number of the strategic aims, please feel free to add where appropriate in the Partner column.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of developing routes to encourage walking and cycling for health and pleasure, and has developed the Discover the Mersey Forest website to promote such routes across the forest area: www.discoverthemerseyforest.co.uk . Late in 2008, the Directors of public</p>	<p>No Action required</p> <p>Para 6.6.10.3 inserted to accommodate comment.</p> <p>Comment noted no action required at this time. Halton will continue to enlist The Mersey Forest as partners, where appropriate.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest have been added as partners in the following: Strategic Aim 3, Actions H2, H3, Strategic Aim 5, Actions ST13, ST14, Strategic Aim 7, Actions T7, T8, T9, Strategic Aim 8, Action P6 and Strategic Aim 10, Actions CB1, CB2, CB6 and CB7. This list is not exhaustive and the Council will seek to work in partnership with The Mersey Forest wherever appropriate to do so.</p> <p>Added as partners in actions H2 and H3. We will include this link with other useful links on the Council’s PRow website.</p>
--	-------------------------------	--	---

	<p>Strategic Aim 4</p> <p>Strategic Aim 5</p> <p>Strategic Aim 6</p> <p>Strategic Aim 7</p>	<p>health across the Mersey Forest agreed to work on a more strategic basis with the Forest team in order to try to maximise the health impacts of projects and programmes.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is committed towards in partnership to improving and developing routes that cater for the needs of people with disabilities. A number of routes of the Discover The Mersey Forest website have been through an accessibility audit survey using criteria from the rural and working landscapes Physical Access Standards published by the Fieldfare Trust as part of the Countryside For All project. www.discoverthemerseyforest.co.uk/page.aspx?region=2&page=Accessible Routes</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of increasing the use of the network for sustainable Transport and Utility trips through working with partners and promoting the use of public transport on websites and leaflets. Through the work of the Forest Team on the Upper Mersey Forest Park project, there is support towards the creation of a cross-boundary greenway between Warrington and Halton.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of improving the Safety and Attractiveness of routes affected by the Transport Network.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of The Rural Economy, Local Businesses, Countryside and Tourist Sites through the promotion of Halton’s PROW network and other access routes to residents and visitors.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest Team is leading on the development of the Upper Mersey Valley Forest Park which can offer range of benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract visitors and revenue • Improve image of forest park areas • Create jobs • Make positive environmental impact • Improve health levels through green exercise <p>Aim is for all woodlands within the Forest Park to be linked and equipped with appropriate visitor infrastructure (signage, interpretation, etc) and marked appropriately. The Upper Mersey Forest Park will develop links with the tourism sector, and to market the area to a range of visitors, including those with disabilities. It is in the vision to <i>Improve access to the area with</i></p>	<p>We will include this link with other useful links on the Council’s PROW website.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is already working in partnership with Halton and Warrington through the Upper Mersey Forest Park with a view to developing a multi-user Greenway route between Halton and Warrington. Added as Partners in Strategic Aim 5, Actions ST13 and ST14.</p> <p>No Action required</p> <p>Added as Partners in T7, T8 and T9 Halton are already working in partnership with the Mersey Forest on the Upper Mersey Valley Forest Park. No further action required at this time.</p> <p>Comment noted, no further action required at this time.</p>
--	---	---	---

	<p>Strategic Aim 8</p> <p>Strategic Aim 9</p> <p>Strategic Aim 10</p>	<p><i>the opportunity to develop a circular route around the estuary to improve access to the Forest Park as a whole as well as between the different sites. The circular route should be made accessible for both the walker and cyclist, linking up many of the key sites around the estuary and providing and extremely attractive visitor experience.</i></p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of seeking opportunities to enhance the network through the Planning Process and through various plans and strategies developed by the Council. Through the work of The Mersey Forest Partnership in contributing towards the cost of the Mersey Forest Team, Halton are enabling this strategic aim to be implemented.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of improving the Connectivity of the network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. Recommendation of the Mersey Forest Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R7 The partner authorities will seek to integrate facilities for horse riding into new and existing greenways where practical. <p>Please see above for comments re development of new greenway.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest is supportive of enhancing and extending the Rights of Way network and other access routes through cross boundary working.</p> <p>The Mersey Forest covers seven local authorities and works across all boundaries. The Upper Mersey Forest Park covers part of both Halton and Warrington. Likewise there are excellent links that can be made between the South St Helens Forest Parks and the Upper Mersey Forest, The Weaver Valley and other areas through the existing rights of way network.</p>	<p>Added as Partners to action P6 – No further action required at this time.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>No Action required.</p> <p>Added as Partners in actions CB1, CB2, CB6 and CB7.</p> <p>The plan references this in section 6.9.2.1 Cross Boundary Issues paragraphs 6.9.1.5.4 and 6.9.1.5.5 The South St Helens Park.</p>
<p>Ms D Hewitt – Planning Liaison Officer</p>		<p>Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above plan. We support the plan and have no further comments to make on the document.</p>	<p>No Action required</p>
<p>Rachel Apter - HBC</p>		<p>I thought the document was very good and had an excellent level of detail, so my comments relate mainly to very small aspects of the text. Nevertheless, I hope that they are useful.</p> <p>Pg6 – Mention “integrated network of routes” but this network is not shown pictorially within the document.</p>	<p>Pg6 1.2.1 Through the ROWIP it is intended to deliver an integrated network of routes. However, the network has not been identified or developed sufficiently at this time to be able to show it pictorially.</p>

		<p>Pg7 – Reference required for DEFRA guidance on ROWIP production</p> <p>Pg7 Mersey Gateway’s Sustainable Transport Strategy (typo)</p> <p>Pg7 PRoW / PROW and RoWIP / ROWIP inconsistencies (and throughout)</p> <p>Pg8 Is Halton the “lowest” bridging point of the Mersey? Didn’t make sense so suggest re-phrasing.</p> <p>Pg8 Vale Royal District Council is now part of Cheshire West and Chester Council.</p> <p>Pg8 Use of word “currently” means document dates quickly – suggest re-phrasing.</p> <p>Pg8 Need to give document references and evidence sources for IMD data and other Data.</p> <p>Pg9 Need to add reference for “greenway proposals”, i.e. Unitary Development Plan Policy (?).</p> <p>Pg9 Para 2.2: suggest could diagrammatically illustrate extent of countryside (and access) in Widnes and Runcorn to illustrate discussion.</p> <p>Pg9 Para 2.3.1: Halton is generally well served by open space provision, with excesses in some places (see Open Space Study 2004 and PPG17 typologies).</p> <p>Pg9 Suggest could like concept of “green corridors” to that of “green infrastructure” – relatively new concept, planning have further information or see www.greeninfrastructurenw.org.uk/</p> <p>Pg10 Para 2.4.2: what is the evidence to suggest that increased congestion is as a result of town centre regeneration?</p> <p>Pg12 Suggest could add section on emerging Core Strategy (in due course, depending on timetable for final ROWIP document).</p> <p>Pg13 Need to add reference to adopted Regional Spatial Strategy, part of the Council’s statutory development plan (published Sept 2008, replacing</p>	<p>Reference inserted as footnote on pg 7</p> <p>Pg7 1.6 Correction made already.</p> <p>Alterations made document now PRoW and ROWIP throughout.</p> <p>No Action required – this is an accepted term used by organisations and users. It is used in a number of other documents and leaflets produced by other bodies not just Halton.</p> <p>Alteration made to paragraph 2.1.1.</p> <p>Para 2.1.3 – word currently removed.</p> <p>Reference inserted as footnote on pg 9</p> <p>Para 2.2.3 amended.</p> <p>Unable to provide this information at this time. Comment noted for future documents/updates.</p> <p>Para 2.3.1 amended to reflect this.</p> <p>No action required.</p> <p>No Action – This was identified in Halton’s LTP2 paragraph 3.1.5, p24.</p> <p>New paragraph 3.2.1.4 inserted relating to Halton’s Core Strategy.</p> <p>New section 3.3 Regional Policy added to document.</p>
--	--	--	--

		<p>RPG13 see >documents/?page_id=4&category_id=275)and")</p> <p>Pg14 Wouldn't necessarily agree that PPG / PPS documents can assist in the development of the ROWIP, more that they provide the overarching national planning policy framework.</p> <p>Pg16/17 Question whether there is a need for a more explicit reference to opportunities afforded by the MG Project at this stage in the document?</p> <p>Pg22 (and after) Policy boxes sit slightly awkwardly within the text, is there some way of integrating them?</p> <p>Pg26 Specialist equestrian terms e.g. "hack out" may not be understandable for the lay reader</p> <p>Pg33 "Return Home" section is incomplete</p> <p>Pg35 Para 5.1.1: information is at odds with that presented regarding population numbers in the Borough earlier in the document.</p> <p>Pg51 Shropshire or Wiltshire Council – is this an inconsistency?</p> <p>Pg53 What is the Greenways Study? Is there a document reference?</p> <p>Pg54 English Partnerships is now part of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)</p>	<p>Comment noted para 3.4.6 amended to reflect this.</p> <p>Amendment made to 6.7.2.4 which clarifies the opportunities offered by the Mersey Gateway.</p> <p>This comment has been discussed and it was consequently agreed that no action was required at this stage.</p> <p>No Action required.</p> <p>This section is complete.</p> <p>Para 2.1.3 states the population figures for 2007 as reported in The State of the Borough in Halton – An economic, Social and Environmental Audit of Halton (January 2008). Pg 35 clearly states/clarifies that the statistics used within the report are based on the 2001 census population figure.</p> <p>There is no inconsistency. Para 6.3.11.2 is correct Wiltshire was chosen along with Cheshire to act as one of the pilot areas in the initial lead phase in July 2004. However, para 6.3.11.4 is also correct. Over the years the programme was rolled out to cover other areas. This paragraph reflects the results reported 6 years on at the point when the project folded. However, this paragraph has been altered to avoid confusion.</p> <p>The Greenways Study is referenced in paragraph 2.2.3.</p> <p>Alteration made in paragraph 6.6.3.1.</p>
--	--	---	--

		<p>Pg59-62 Maps need keys and references. Also might be helpful for maps to have some spatial context (roads and railways are helpful) to show relative location of routes.</p> <p>Pg62-64 Would it be possible to show the routes described on a map? Would be easier for the lay reader to understand their location and would also illustrate connectivity between them</p> <p>Pg65 Don't know whether I would say we have "strategic" links to Manchester Airport, though definitely to Liverpool.</p> <p>Pg65 Suggest need more information about the MGSTS here?</p> <p>Pg66 Para 6.7.3.2: brackets inconsistency</p> <p>Pg69 Para 6.7.5: should this section also include the Bridgewater Canal?</p> <p>Pg72 Para 6.9.1: Regional Parks info is out of date, see new RSS policy (RSS replaces adopted RPG13).</p> <p>Pg73 Is Coastal Trail a regional Park? Sounds a bit confusing</p> <p>Pg74 Not sure about this, but is the Upper Mersey Valley a designated regional park yet or just an area of search?</p> <p>Pg99 Some sections of bibliography are out-of-date and need expanding to</p>	<p>Keys have been added to the maps. The Definitive Map is currently being reviewed and updated and there are a number of anomalies and errors on it that need addressing. The other maps are also works in progress and the actual routes some of the paths will take have not been finalised. Therefore the maps are only indicative and spatial detail has been deliberately left out so as not to cause unnecessary concerns to property/landowners. Throughout the life of the document these issues will be addressed and more detailed plans recording routes/areas will be made available.</p> <p>Comment noted – No Action at this time.</p> <p>Comment noted – No Action required.</p> <p>Narrative provided by Mersey Gateway Team inserted at this point.</p> <p>Brackets removed.</p> <p>No the Bridgewater Canal is not relevant in the context of this section.</p> <p>No Action required – Paragraph 6.9.1 provides the background information on how the regional parks came about and what projects emerged across the North West. More detailed information is not required within the scope of this document.</p> <p>The North West Coastal trail was one of the Regional Park projects that emerged for the North West.</p> <p>No Action required.</p> <p>Bibliography updated.</p>
--	--	---	--

		<p>include other docs referenced e.g. national planning policy.</p> <p>General - Suggest document could benefit with a few more pictures and maps throughout to break up the text.</p> <p>General – There is some repetition of information throughout which is fine to make each chapter internally coherent but could be cut to shorten the document.</p>	<p>The final document will have additional pictures inserted to break up the text. This wasn't considered necessary for the draft to keep printing costs down, and to enable circulation by email where requested.</p> <p>No Action at this time due to deadlines.</p>
<p>John Watkin North and Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society</p>		<p>I have scanned through your draft ROWIP. My initial observations are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No Mention is made of the definitive map and path statements. It is up to date? Is it available to the general public? How can we get hold of a copy? 2. Although reference is made to disabled access there are no definitions of the standards Halton will work to too meet DDA95/05. 3. Where you will get resources from and will it be sufficient to meet your statutory duties? 4. No mention is made about liaison with LAF's or even a local access forum. Both Warrington and Cheshire find these committees very useful. 	<p>These comments where sent to Steve Eccles rather than myself and although they say they are on the ROWIP I think they might actually refer to the SEA as most of the issues are referenced and addressed by the Plan.</p> <p>The plan outlines the situation regarding the Definitive Map and Statement for Halton in paragraphs 6.3.9.2 and 6.3.12. The plan addresses this issue through Strategic Aim 1 (To Maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement).</p> <p>Specific standards are not identified as they may change throughout the 10 year life of the plan. Therefore standards will be applied on a path by path basis according to the latest advice.</p> <p>The Council has already spent and committed substantial sums of money on the PRoW network during LTP1 & 2 and it is intended that our commitment will continue, subject to resources being made available.</p> <p>The plan refers to LAF's in paragraph 3.3.5 Local Access Forum. LAF's are also listed as partners in Actions L5, T7, T8, P6 and CB7. This list is not exhaustive as the Local Access Forum will be consulted/liased with whenever necessary.</p>

		5. No mention is made of volunteer groups to help maintain the PROWs.	The plan references this through paragraphs 5.2.8, 5.2.9, 5.2.10 and Action H5.
--	--	---	---

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2009/19 – ROWIP Questionnaire Responses Summary Table

Following the production of the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and approval from the Executive Board Member, Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, the document along with a questionnaire was sent to 223 consultees. The consultees included:

- Local Authorities
- Parish Councils
- Natural England
- Defra
- Dft
- Prescribed Organisations
- Local User Groups
- Land Owners
- Interest Groups; and
- Other Sections within the Council

The consultation exercise was also advertised in the local papers and copies of the document were available on the Council’s website and in the local libraries and Direct Links. Questionnaires were also deposited at nearly 100 locations including health centres, shops, businesses, Norton Priory, visitor centres, post offices, community centres etc.

Twenty seven questionnaires were returned. Fourteen written responses were also received, a summary of these and our responses can be seen in Appendix 2.

The following table summarises the Questionnaire responses received.

SECTION 1	Summary of Results and Comments	Council’s Response/Action
The consultees were asked to give each of the Strategic Aims a rank from 1-10, where 1 was the most important and 10 the least important.	Twenty seven responses were received however, seven of these were deemed spoilt. From the valid responses the order of importance was identified as follows – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Aim 9 – To improve connectivity of the network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. 2. Strategic Aim 1 – Improve standards of maintenance across the 	The information will be used to inform programming priorities when allocating financial and staffing resources.

	<p>network.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Strategic Aim 4 – Improve accessibility by improving and developing routes that cater for the needs of people with disabilities. 4. Strategic Aim 10 – To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the rights of way network and other access routes through cross boundary working. 5. Strategic Aim 8 – To seek opportunities to enhance the network through the planning process and through the various plans and strategies developed by the Council. 6. Strategic Aim 7 – To support the rural economy, local businesses, countryside and tourist sites through the promotion of Halton’s Public Rights of Way network and other access routes to residents and visitors. 7. Strategic Aim 6 – Improve the safety and attractiveness of routes affected by the transport network. 8. Strategic Aim 3 – Promote the health benefits of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier life styles. 9. Strategic Aim 2 -Maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement. 10. Strategic Aim 5 – Increase the use of the network for sustainable transport and utility trips. 	
<p>The consultees were asked – Would you say that these Strategic Aims cover all the important issues that need addressing?</p> <p>If No, what issue(s) do you feel we have missed?</p>	<p>Sixteen out of the twenty seven respondents stated YES – that they thought that the Strategic Aims covered all the important issues that need addressing and four didn’t answer the question. However, seven of the respondents said NO, and their comments are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Add signage to Cycle routes (in particular) and PROW to link areas; ➤ Liaise with highways to incorporate cycle ways effectively with road designs; ➤ Improve Access to Rivers and Canals; 	<p>This is already covered by Strategic Aim 1 (Improve Standards of Maintenance Across the Network), and will be addressed through Actions M2 and M6.</p> <p>New actions identified: see Strategic Aim 5, Action ST15.</p> <p>This is addressed in Strategic Aim 7, through Action T1, however comment has been noted and will be considered when implementing actions within Strategic Aims 7, 9 and 10.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 11. Create & Maintain an accurate, up to date PROW website as a common focus point for information, complaints, temporary closures etc; ➤ Rationalize ROW's that don't go anywhere – e.g. Johnson's Lane ends at a railway line. South side of MSC just ends; ➤ Cut back bushes and trees adjacent to roads so they do not obstruct cyclists (e.g. by the bus station at end of Clifton Road); ➤ As part of item one, improve Tree and Hedge trimming to avoid narrowing pathways; ➤ Ban the use of loose gravel as cycleway repair topping as this is extremely dangerous; ➤ No2 Is this not statutory? - you <u>must</u> do this, you have no choice; ➤ Explicitly endeavour to make greater use of the canals, riverside towpaths for recreational purposes; 	<p>This element of work is already underway and is referenced in paragraph 6.5.3. The plan addresses this further through Strategic Aim 2, Actions L1, L3, L4, L7, and L8 and Strategic Aim 7 (To Support the rural economy, local businesses, countryside and tourist sites through the promotion of Halton's network and other access routes, to residents and visitors) Action T10.</p> <p>The plan will address such issues through Strategic Aim 2 (Maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement) Action L8.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 1 Actions M3, M4 and M5.</p> <p>Unless in the ownership of the Council adjacent hedges and trees are usually the responsibility of the landowner. However, the comment has been noted and will be considered when implementing Actions, M1, M3, M4 and M5.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 1 Action M7 addresses this issue.</p> <p>This is statutory and the Council will continue to fulfil its statutory obligations, but maintaining an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement was included in the Action Plan to enable an overview of resources required.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.3.4 has been amended to indicate the benefits of rivers (canals are already mentioned). Strategic Aim 7, Action T4 has also been amended to clarify this point.</p>
--	---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look to increase the overall number of public rights of way; ➤ You should make greater use of the canals in the region and encourage use of towpaths; ➤ I thought this was statutory anyway. <p>Two comments were also made by respondents who answered 'yes' and one comment made from a respondent who did not answer this question. These are as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is no commitment to funding. Perhaps this is inferred in the aims, but none will succeed without political will and funds; 	<p>The plan will address this through; Strategic Aim 8 (To Seek Opportunities to enhance the network through the Planning Process and through the various Plans and Strategies developed by the Council) Action P2, Strategic Aim 9 ((To Improve Connectivity of the Network and Create Opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians) Actions CO4, CO6, CO7 and Strategic Aim 10 (To Seek Opportunities to enhance and extend the Public Rights of Way network and other access routes through cross boundary working) Action CB5.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.3.4 addresses the importance of canals. Strategic Aim 7, Action T4 has been amended to help address this issue.</p> <p>This is statutory and the Council will continue to fulfil its statutory obligations, but maintaining an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement was included in the Action Plan to enable an overview of resources required.</p> <p>Table 9 indicates the likely level of funding required to address each action along with those partners who will be responsible for its delivery. It is not possible at this stage to commit funding for each element of the Action Plan, however, the Council has already spent and committed substantial sums of money on the PRow network and other access routes during LTP1 and 2 and it is intended that this will continue, subject to</p>
--	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does this plan include Hale?; ➤ Publicise and provide information leaflets these objectives, Vital actions. 	<p>resources being made available. It is however, recognised that assistance will be required from our partners to deliver the proposed ambitious programme of works, which again cannot be committed to at this stage.</p> <p>Yes the Plan includes Hale. The respondent to be contacted to confirm this.</p> <p>The plan references this issue in paragraph 6.5.2. It will also be addressed through Strategic Aim 7, in particular Actions T10 and T14.</p>
SECTION 2	Summary of Results and Comments	Council’s Response/Action
<p>Each Strategic Aim has a series of Actions and consultees where asked to tick their THREE preferred actions and suggest more if necessary.</p>	<p>There were no spoiled responses within this section all twenty seven responses where valid. The top three preferred actions for each Strategic aim have been listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Aim 1 - Improve standards of maintenance across the network. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. M7 – Continue to upgrade and improve path surfaces to ensure that they are in keeping with the environment and suitable for their expected use; 2. M5 – Using the information gathered in the survey to review the inspection and maintenance program – develop a vegetation management plan and cleansing regime; 3. M1 – Continue to conduct an annual condition survey of the whole public rights of way network. ➤ Strategic Aim 2 -Maintain an accurate and up-to-date Definitive Map and Statement. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. L3 – Make a digital version of the new Definitive Map available on the Council’s website; 2. L1 – Continue to review the Definitive Map and Statement and publish a new up-to-date Map and Statement that covers the area managed by Halton by 2010; 	<p>The information gained from the responses to this section will be used to inform programming priorities, when allocating financial and staffing resources. Where a timescale is identified in the Action Plan tasks, it should be noted that this is the overall target for completion.</p> <p>The preferred actions will be prioritised within these timescales. This may require some of the non preferred actions to be put back, and updates will be provided as work progresses.</p> <p>The small sample size has resulted in some conflicting feed back.</p>

	<p>3. L6 – Identify all cross boundary routes and work to ensure consistency of status and alignment</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 3 – Promote the health benefits of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily lives and lead healthier life styles.</p> <p>1. H7 – Identify and develop circular and linear routes that can be used to encourage walking and cycling for health; 2. H3 – Work in partnership to promote the health and well being associated with using the PROW network and other access routes; 3. H4 – Use the PROW network and other access routes to support existing health initiatives such as walking the way to health.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 4 – Improve accessibility by improving and developing routes that cater for the needs of people with disabilities.</p> <p>1. A3 – Establish links with Disabled Access Groups and other groups/organisations that represent people with disabilities; 2. A9 – Continue to encourage landowners to allow the Council to install gates in place of existing stiles that require repair or replacement; 3. A4 – Work in partnership with mobility impaired people to assist in developing a more accessible network.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 5 – Increase the use of the network for sustainable transport and utility trips.</p> <p>1. ST2 – Improve enforcement and management of the urban public footpath and other access routes to combat litter, fly-tipping and dog fouling; 2. ST1 – Continue to identify and improve off road routes linking communities with schools, employment centres and local services; 3. ST13 – Continue to seek to upgrade footpaths where appropriate to provide greater opportunities.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 6 – Improve the safety and attractiveness of routes affected by the transport network.</p> <p>1. SA2 – Identify where ‘missing links’ in the network, which require users to travel along busy roads and develop solutions including verge improvements, creation agreements/orders; 2. SA1 – Undertake a safety audit to identify points where the PROW</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>network and other access routes are crossed by the road network and seek opportunities to make ad fund improvements;</p> <p>3. SA5 – Create ‘Behind the Hedge’ routes to provide missing links where appropriate, and safe to do so.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 7 – To support the rural economy, local businesses, countryside and tourist sites through the promotion of Halton’s Public Rights of Way network and other access routes to residents and visitors.</p> <p>1. T2 – Identify and develop circular and linear recreational routes to and from Countryside and Tourist Sites;</p> <p>2. T7 – Develop strategic routes for all users including horse riders where possible, to support the development of long distance routes such as the North West Coastal Trail and to facilitate connections between other initiatives such as the Weaver Valley Park, The Mersey Waterfront, Upper Mersey Forest Park;</p> <p>3. T8 – Seek to provide a multi-user river Crossing, including provision for equestrians, to facilitate proposed regional and national trails.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 8 – To seek opportunities to enhance the network through the planning process and through the various plans and strategies developed by the Council.</p> <p>There are two joint first preferences for this Strategic Aim</p> <p>1. P2 – Continue to ensure that all new developments link to the network by appropriate dedicated footpaths, bridleways and cycleways;</p> <p>1. P3 – Seek to improve the recognition & protection of public rights of way and other access routes in the planning process and the use of planning gain to enhance facilities;</p> <p>2. P6 – Improve current links with partners and seek to establish new relationships to facilitate the identification and development of cross boundary routes and national and regional trails.</p> <p>3. P1 – Seek to prevent developments that have a detrimental impact on the existing network.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 9 – To improve connectivity of the network and create opportunities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians.</p> <p>There were three joint third preferences for this Strategic Aim</p> <p>1. CO6 – Continue to identify and develop off road walking, cycling and horse riding routes;</p> <p>2. CO3 – Upgrade footpaths to shared use cycle tracks, where appropriate, to develop a connected network of route for cyclists;</p>	
--	---	--

<p>Comments/Suggestions</p>	<p>3. CO4 – Seek Creation Agreements/Orders to make missing links, where sufficient need has been established;</p> <p>3. CO7 – Seek to identify and develop linkages to improve connectivity of the existing network and new routes;</p> <p>3. CO8 – Seek to identify, develop and promote the use of ‘Quiet Lane’ to benefit all non-motorised users.</p> <p>➤ Strategic Aim 10 – To seek opportunities to enhance and extend the rights of way network and other access routes through cross boundary working.</p> <p>There were two joint second preferences for this Strategic Aim</p> <p>1. CB7 – Seek to develop, with partners, a multi-user crossing over the River Mersey;</p> <p>2. CB2 – Research the status of the route along the north side of the Manchester Ship canal with a view to upgrading to a bridleway to improve access for walkers, horse riders and cyclists, through the Upper Mersey Valley Regional Park.</p> <p>2. CB5 - Identify, create and develop cross boundary links into neighbouring networks;</p> <p>3. CB1 – Re-establish links with St. Helens Bridleway Group and St. Helens Council to facilitate the development of the Old Mineral Line, as a multi-user route for walkers, horse riders and cyclists.</p> <p>The following suggestions/comments were made in the comment boxes that followed each Strategic Aim.</p> <p>➤ Six of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 1 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nobody wants to use an overgrown delapidated route except those wanting to behave in an anti-social way. Halton has so much potential that is lost by poor maintenance that acts as a strong demotivator and often a public safety threat; ▪ Also a litter/vandalism reporting procedure; ▪ Keep on top of the Fly tipping on all routes; 	<p>The Plan addresses this comment through Strategic Aim 1, Actions M1, M3, M4, M5, M7 and M8.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this comment through Strategic Aim 1, Action M5 and Strategic Aim 5, Action ST2.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this comment through Strategic Aim 1, Action M5 and Strategic Aim 5 Action ST2.</p>
-----------------------------	--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Litter is still a big problem which detracts from the attractiveness of PROWN - Monitoring and if necessary prosecution of people who are litter louts; ▪ Many sections of cycleway are badly affected by tree roots and poorly finished workings. These are dangerous (as well as very uncomfortable!); ▪ Maintenance on the permissive bridleways needs to be addressed. <p>➤ Six of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 2 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessible information to identify routes will encourage use. Many residents express surprise that there are so many “hidden” PROW that they could have been using; ▪ Make a public rights of way map available to buy; ▪ Desirable to establish ROW/permissive paths along both sides of MSC between Old Quay and Moore Lane Bridges. Good circular walk including several LNR's; ▪ Not in Comments box written alongside L7 - Again, you <u>have</u> to do this by law; ▪ L7 - this should be done anyway; 	<p>The Plan addresses this comment through Strategic Aim 1, Action M5 and Strategic Aim 5, Action ST2.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this comment through Strategic Aim 1 and Actions M4, M5 and M7.</p> <p>Maintenance of permissive routes is the responsibility of the landowner not the Council. However, we will work with landowners to bring about improvements in the quality of permissive bridleways.</p> <p>The plan will address this primarily through Strategic Aim 7, Actions T10, T12, T13, T14 and T16.</p> <p>It is the intention of the plan to provide such information free of charge through the development of leaflets and making a digital version of the Definitive map available on the Councils Website. Strategic Aim 2, Actions L2, L3 and Strategic Aim 7, Actions T10, T13, T14, and T16 will facilitate this.</p> <p>The plan will address this specifically through Strategic Aim 10, Action CB2 and Strategic Aim 7, Action T2 supported by Strategic Aim 2, Action L5 and Strategic Aim 9, Actions CO4 and CO7. The intention being to provide routes on both the north and south sides.</p> <p>This is statutory and the Council will continue to fulfil its statutory obligations. The development and maintenance of digital registers as required by legislation was</p>
--	--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We strongly support the dedication of all non-statutory bridleways in Halton. <p>➤ Five of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 3 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is evidence to show demand - but people need the information to be made readily available about routes that are accessible, convenient and can be readily achieved. This information and encouragement could be a swpk 'quick win' opportunity; ▪ H7 is also key to these objectives; ▪ Identify -Develop circular routes that can be used to encourage cross country and urban running; ▪ Combine 7 and 8; ▪ Horse riding and keeping a horse, have enormous health (physical and mental) benefits. Add horse riding to H7 <p>➤ Seven of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 4 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise to address access for all without allowing motorbike access; ▪ Halton has an existing network where disabled access is often relatively easy - but seldom if ever promoted as such. A 'quick win' opportunity; ▪ Access to public transport is almost impossible wheelchair users have to use mobility scooters but still find gradients are to steep in 	<p>included in the Action Plan to enable an overview of the resources required.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The plan addresses this comment primarily through Strategic Aim 7, Actions T10, T12, T13, T14 and T16.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The plan accommodates this comment through Strategic Aim 7, Action T2.</p> <p>Comment Noted. No Action required deliberately separated as H7 deals with identification and development and H8 deals with promotion.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Horse riding added to Action H7.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 4 addresses this through all of the Actions.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 7, Action 5 addresses this issue.</p> <p>Action A1 and A2 address the access issue.</p>
--	--	---

	<p>many places - http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/peti/inclusivemobility?page=3;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't forget those who are simply "elderly" – there are many who have difficulties even though not registered disabled; ▪ Please look at the provision of facing pairs of dropped kerbs at all road crossing points for the sake of wheelchair users & those using mobility scooters; ▪ Pushing a wheelchair or child's buggy, or using a motorised scooter it is difficult to find dropped kerbs opposite each other except where people have done these at the ends of their drives; <p>➤ Seven of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 5 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is an active desire by people to find alternatives to the car - but it needs to be readily accessible and convenient (so as to compete with the car). School and work travel plans fully supported by the Council in providing links would greatly improve the PROW and access; ▪ Make sure all footpaths are safe. The footpaths in Hale are narrow in some places and dangerous when walking with children; ▪ I think the problem with Fly-tipping and dog fouling is bad and need more dog bins in Palacefields Runcorn; ▪ As a dog walker was surprised to find how much dog faeces was around despite having dog faeces bins available for use; ▪ Operation of independent bus companies in one area effectively restricts travel options. Need much better integration of services and tickets (re-regulation!!); 	<p>Strategic Aim 4 is targeted at all people who have mobility difficulties.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 4 addresses this through actions A1 and A2.</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Strategic Aim 4 covers the access issue. The Council fully supports the development and implementation of travel plans and where possible and practical, utilises the PROW network to help encourage sustainable travel.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 6, Action SA1 has been amended to clarify the importance of safety on the Network.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 5, Action ST2 addresses the fly tipping and dog fouling issues. Contact will be made with the appropriate Department that deals with dog bins.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 5, Action ST2 addresses this issue.</p> <p>The bus network within Halton remains relatively competitive, with strong competition between the two principal operators - Halton Borough Transport Ltd and Arriva (North West) on the majority of the main bus route</p>
--	---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very difficult to choose 3 priorities for this aim. ALL the above are very important. <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Inserted Free before multi-user route in ST14;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is difficult to choose 3 of these as they are all equally important. <p>➤ Seven of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 6 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Also improve cyclist awareness of horses. Bikes often scare horses as they are so quiet when approaching from behind; ▪ As a Rambler walking on cycling Tracks am constantly surprised that cyclists don't have bells or bother to call out when coming up behind you - this is a safety hazard for both!; ▪ SA5, SA6 and SA8 also of importance; ▪ White paint on existing pavements does NOT constitute a cycleway! These are dangerous, especially at road junctions. Better to mark edges of roads as cycleways if off-road solutions not available; ▪ Widnes-Speke, create safe cycle route on A533 and/or Ditton Road, both dangerous routes at present, due to fast traffic and heavy vehicles; 	<p>corridors. Halton Borough Council is working with the bus and passenger rail operators to improve integration between services. Over the last few years for example a new multi operator travel card has been introduced called the "Halton Hopper" which is a valid on all local bus services within Halton. The Council has also supported the introduction of "Plus Bus" ticketing allowing passengers to transfer between rail and local bus services with one ticket. The Council is also working on improving key public transport interchanges.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>There is no intention to charge cyclists, walkers or equestrians, should such a route be established.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>SA6 has been amended to address this comment.</p> <p>SA6 has been amended to address this comment.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted and will be considered as part of Action SA1 and SA5 and in Strategic Aim 9.</p> <p>Comment noted and will be considered as part of Actions SA1, SA2 and Strategic Aim 9.</p>
--	---	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make sure that there are safe routes for children who wish to cycle to school; ▪ We strongly support the need for a Pegasus crossing on the A56 (ref. p26 para 4.3.9.1). <p>➤ Six of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 7 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See later comments about the Mersey Crossing. There is ample opportunity for recreational routes to be from existing tourist attractions - Wigg Island, Catalyst Museum, Norton Priory for example. The routes need to be promoted and <u>SIGNED</u>; ▪ Leaflets & map display boards are expensive compared with websites; ▪ TPT is very rough in places (especially Fiddler's Ferry area) and the steps adjacent to the Ditton Brook bridge are a real pain for cyclists and impossible for wheelchairs; ▪ In considering the re-alignment of roads to the Silver Jubilee Bridge seek to restore the Runcorn flight of locks to link the Bridgewater Canal and MSC once again; ▪ Again, these are all important and it is difficult to choose 3!; ▪ T9: Cheshire Cycleway No70: I believe this ought to be extended slightly to include north Cheshire e.g .Frodsham, Aston, Daresbury, Hatton, Arley including opportunities for cyclists to visit Norton Priory, Walton Gardens; <p>➤ Two of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 8 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is ample evidence to show that developers have ignored PROW and the once clear route has been lost through ineffective planning and enforcement to maintain these PROW; ▪ P3 is also very important. 	<p>This issue is addressed in the development of School Travel Plans.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 7, specifically Actions T2, T5, T10, T12, T13, T14 and T16 address this and are also supported by Strategic Aim 1, Action M2.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Appropriate Actions detailed in Strategic Aims 1 and 4 will help to address these issues. Fiddlers Ferry area is the responsibility of Warrington Borough Council.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted and will be considered as part of Strategic Aim 10 Action CB5.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p>
--	---	--

	<p>➤ Six of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 9 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A connected coherent network is essential to encourage people to make use of their PROW. Missing links can put people off trying altogether; ▪ As far as I am aware there are no bridleways in Hale except Within Way, but this turns into a footpath along the river. We really need safe places to ride as the roads are very busy. Quiet Lanes are an excellent idea; ▪ CO5 - Or at least have a mounting block until such time as all gates are suitably latched. Less agile riders need help remounting; ▪ Access to SJB is very poor for cyclists on the Runcorn side. It's not wide enough for bikes to pass and riders are blinded by the sound screens above the Old Town; ▪ We strongly support cross boundary links for horse riders to the Aston Ring and Frodsham Marshes and would also like to see the development of circular routes (5-10miles) for horse riders; ▪ As a keen walker, I prefer footpaths to be kept as footpaths. Bridleways tend to be swamped , muddy and wet I prefer to avoid them when walking. Anyway many cross-country footpaths would be difficult for horses! <p>➤ Six of the respondents made comments relating to Strategic Aim 10 these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link the multi-use crossing over River Mersey to the roads on both sides to assist cyclists crossing the bridge or they will continue to go roadside; ▪ The River Mersey crossing is an essential part of any long distance cyclists plan for the Land's End - John O'Groats ride. Most are put off. A crossing for them and making them welcome would create a significant financial opportunity; 	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted. Respondent will be advised of the location of bridleway.</p> <p>No action required at this time however, the comment has been noted and will be considered on a path by path basis.</p> <p>The plan addresses this through Strategic aim 5 Action ST14, Strategic Aim 7 Action T8 and Strategic Aim 10 Action CB7.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The comment has been noted and will be considered when implementing Actions, ST14, T8 and CB7.</p> <p>As Above</p>
--	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where is the bridleway, there are no signs and no access for horses onto the shore front. A link from Within Way towards the cycle route at Hale Bank and to the right back to Hale Park would be great; ▪ 3rd priority not identified; ▪ Re CB3 - How much further away from the shore do you mean? This route needs to be along the riverside to preserve its unique character; ▪ CB3 - How much further away? 	<p>Will advise respondent of location of bridleway. The plan addresses this specifically in Strategic Aim 10 Action CB3.</p> <p>No Action required.</p> <p>Query answered in person.</p> <p>Query answered in person.</p>
<p>SECTION 3</p>	<p>Summary of Results and Comments</p>	<p>Council's Response/Action</p>
<p>In Section 2 consultees were asked to chose their priorities for each of the strategic Aims. In Section 3 they were then asked to go back and circle one of these as their absolute priority for the Plan. The ONE thing that they thought should be done before anything else.</p> <p>Comments</p>	<p>Out of the twenty seven responses unfortunately thirteen were deemed to be spoilt. From the valid responses three Actions were jointly identified as the absolute priority for the Plan these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ M2 - Continue to maintain a fully signed and way marked network through the annual works programme using data obtained from the annual survey and user reports; ➤ CB4 - Establish links with the new Chester & Cheshire West Unitary Council with a view to replacing the old bridge across the Weaver Navigation to provide a multi-user connection into the Weaver Valley Regional Park and the Weaver Way for horse riders, walkers and cyclists; ➤ CB7 - Seek to develop, with partners, a multi-user crossing over the River Mersey. <p>Only one comment was made in Section 3 this was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All I can say is I love the Countryside and I <u>Don't</u> want it to get any smaller. 	<p>The information will be used to inform programming priorities when allocating financial and staffing resources. Where a timescale is identified in the Action Plan tasks, it should be noted that this is the overall target for completion.</p> <p>The preferred actions will be prioritised within these timescales. This may require some of the non preferred actions to be put back, and updates will be provided as work progresses.</p> <p>The small sample six has resulted in some conflicting feed back.</p> <p>Comment Noted.</p>
<p>SECTION 7</p>	<p>Summary of Results and Comments</p>	<p>Council's Response/Action</p>
<p>Respondents were asked if they would like to raise additional comments.</p>	<p>Only eight of the respondents made additional comments these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Publications need to be distributed locally as local people are not aware of 	<p>The plan addresses this specifically through</p>

	<p>what is on their doorstep;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bench - More of; ➤ Footpaths need to be wide enough to walk with young children and where possible protect from cars. Shared cycle/horse lanes; ➤ A newsletter using email would be v. useful. The budgets/resources available to do this work would be useful to know/understand problems; ➤ More dog bins are needed their only 2 bins near Castlefields and Manor Fell; ➤ Policy R17 (M4) Why no reference to 'other obstructions'? Should be commitment to use S143 if informal action fails. ➤ R11 (L1) Not clear how this would be applied to DMMO applications i.e to add paths to def map on basis of use; ➤ See attached sheet; <p>Top priorities/thoughts on matters related to ROWIP: - ensure cycleways are free of vegetation, loose branches, glass, debris and</p>	<p>Strategic Aim 7, Action T16.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Comment noted and will be considered in the light of available resources.</p> <p>The matter will be passed on to the appropriate Department that deals with dog bins.</p> <p>Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980 makes it a duty of highway authorities to protect public rights. The ROWIP need not contain every power that a highway authority has at its disposal to protect those rights. Policy R17 (M4) mentions powers that are likely to be specific to public rights as per the Definitive Map; i.e footpaths and bridleways. S 143 contains powers that can be used on any highway. The Council will always endeavour to use the most appropriate and effective power available to it to resolve issues. The Policy has therefore not been amended.</p> <p>This policy does not relate to DMMO's and therefore would not be applied to them. The plan references and addresses the priorities for DMMO's in section 6.3.10 – Applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO).</p> <p>Comments incorporated into summary table for Written responses.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 1, Actions M4 and M5.</p>
--	---	---

	<p>litter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure footpaths, byways and bridleways are accessible and clearly marked. -seek to enhance and extend the network of public paths and seek to acquire permissive paths in conjunction with sympathetic landowners. -toughen laws against short-sighted developers whose proposals have detrimental impact on the character, social well-being and accessibility of an area. <p>Relating to SA10, P4, CB4, CB5 i.e. Cross boundary issues: I'm not convinced that the borough's unitary status has improved anything in this past ten years. It seems to me that the increased fragmentation of the UK's regions has only bolstered the number adversaries and confusion to the detriment of the local tax payer. Runcorn, Widnes, most nearby villages and Warrington borough are part of north Cheshire. If all was part of the same county council (perhaps distasteful to some) there would be far fewer cross boundary issues!</p>	<p>The Plan will address this through Strategic Aim 1, Actions M2 and M3 and Strategic Aim 4.</p> <p>The Plan addresses this through Strategic Aim 9</p> <p>Comment noted, but cannot be addressed through the ROWIP.</p> <p>Comment noted, but cannot be addressed through the ROWIP.</p>
--	--	--

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 24 September 2009
PRESENTED BY: Strategic Director – Children and Young People
SUBJECT: Secondary Re-organisation - Runcorn
WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the response to the statutory consultation to close The Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior School, change the age range of The Grange Comprehensive and enlarge the school from 1050 pupils to 1445 pupils. An outline of the decision-making process is also included.

In addition, to provide a summary of the response to the pre-statutory consultation to expand The Heath Specialist Technology College and provide an outline of the next stage in the procedure.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Proposals having been published in pursuance of the powers set out in sections 15(1) and 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and having had regard to the statutory guidance and to responses to consultation IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the following related proposals be approved:-**

- (a) With effect from 31st August 2010 The Grange Nursery School, The Grange Infant School and The Grange Junior School be discontinued;**
- (b) With effect from 1st September 2010 the age range of The Grange Comprehensive School be changed from 11–16 to 3-16 years; and**
- (c) With effect from 1st September 2010 The Grange Comprehensive School be enlarged from 1050 pupils to 1445 pupils and become known as The Grange School; and**

- (2) IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT statutory consultation be undertaken to expand The Heath Specialist Technology College from 1050 (210 per year group) in 2009 to 1200 in 2011 (240 per year group) to 1350 (270) in 2013.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 **The Grange Comprehensive, Junior, Infant and Nursery School**

At the Executive Board meeting on 9th April 2009 it was agreed that statutory consultation could be undertaken to discontinue The Grange Nursery; Infant and Junior; expand the age range of The Grange Comprehensive; and enlarge the school to establish an "All Through School".

- 3.2 The statutory proposal was published on 25th June 2009. Letters were sent to all parents and provided for staff and governors. These letters contained a copy of the statutory proposals and included a feedback form and contact details. They also provided the date, time and venue of consultation meetings. In addition, a public meeting was advertised in the local press and posters were displayed at the four schools, plus other secondary schools, Children's Centres, Community Centres, Direct Links and the libraries. The consultation details were also included on the circular, which is distributed to all schools and Children's Services setting. A copy of the statutory notice is attached at Appendix A for information.
- 3.3 A governors meeting was held on the consultation on 1st July 2009 and the staff meeting and public consultation meeting was held at The Grange Comprehensive on 2nd July 2009. The staff meeting was well attended and a copy of the presentation used was placed on the website along with the questions raised.
- 3.4 Those people wishing to respond to the consultation were advised to put their views in writing. They were also advised to note the different timescales for responding to the different elements of the notice. Anyone wishing to make representations on the discontinuance of the three schools would have to respond in writing within 6 weeks of the publication of the proposal. Respondents to the proposal to alter the age range of the school would need to respond within 4 weeks. Finally representation as to the proposal to expand the school size would need to be made within 6 weeks of the publication of the proposal.
- 3.5 A total of 20 responses have been received in response to consultation. The responses have been from staff, parents and governors. There have been no objections to the proposals. All those who have responded have supported the proposal.

3.6 **The Heath Specialist Technology College**

It was agreed at the Executive Board meeting on 9th April 2009 that pre-statutory consultation could be undertaken on the proposal to expand The Heath Specialist Technology College. Consultation commenced on the proposal on 25th June 2009.

- 3.7 Letters were sent to all parents and provided for staff and governors. These letters included a copy of the proposals and included a feedback form and contact details. They also provided the date, time and venue of the meetings.

In addition, the public meeting was advertised in the local press and posters were displayed at the four schools, plus other secondary schools, Children's Centres, Community Centres, Direct Links and the libraries. The consultation details were also included on the circular, (see Appendix B for the consultation proposal).

3.8 The proposed expansion was discussed at the Governors meeting where it was supported. There were a total of 3 responses received to the consultation. These responses were all in support of the proposal to expand the College.

4.0 DECISION

4.1 The Grange Comprehensive, Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools

The decision-maker (Executive Board) must decide the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period otherwise the decision must be referred to the Adjudicator for a decision. If referred to the Adjudicator the proposal and any representations must be forwarded to the school Adjudicator within one week of the end of the two month representation period along with any representations received and not withdrawn. Appendix B details the consultation undertaken and Appendix D the issues the decision-maker needs to consider.

4.2 The decision-maker can decide to:

- Reject the proposals;
- Approve the proposals;
- Approve the proposals with a modification (e.g. the school closure date)
- Approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition.

Conditional approval can only be granted in a limited number of circumstances related specifically to Academy provision or changes in admission arrangements relating to another school. A date by which the conditions should be met must be set.

4.3 The reason for the decision must be given whether it is approved or rejected it should also include the factors and criteria for the decision. A copy of the decision must be sent to:

- Each objector;
- The Secretary of State;
- LSC;
- Local C of E Diocese
- The Bishop of the RC Diocese; and
- The Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

4.4 The Heath Specialist Technology College

It is now proposed that statutory consultation be undertaken in Autumn 2009 on the proposal to expand The Heath Specialist Technology College. Following the completion of the statutory consultation a further report will be provided to Executive Board for consideration.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The new "All Through School" will be built on the existing Grange Comprehensive Site. The capital works will be funded through the BSF Programme for secondary provision and the Primary Capital Programme for primary provision.

5.2 It is a condition of the approval for the Outline Business Case for BSF that the statutory consultation to establish The Grange School is completed before the end of September 2009.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Grange Junior School currently has unit provision for pupils with special educational needs. A review of all primary provision is currently being undertaken on primary SEN provision across the Borough.

6.2 Pupils attending the existing day care centre will also transfer to the All Through School.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People

These proposal meet the requirement to provide diversity and choice within the Borough and is supported as part of the BSF secondary proposals.

7.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

Through access to an excellent secondary school for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's children and young people.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

The Grange Comprehensive and The Heath Specialist Technology College are part of the BSF Programme, in developing its secondary schools for the future the authority will demonstrate how it will enable schools to meet the school sport Public Service Agreement through its capital investment and achieve high nutritional standards and encourage healthy living and eating.

7.4 A Safer Halton

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

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

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

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The Grange Comprehensive is a sample school for BSF failure to agree All Through provision could jeopardise approval of the Outline Business case. It could also lead to programme delay. Approval has already been given to fund the primary developments through Primary Capital funding. It will not be possible to spend this money in the time allocated if this proposal is not agreed.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 To provide more choice and diversity and retain pupils within the Borough.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 N/A

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 A decision will be required by Executive Board prior to 24th September 2009.

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

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact
Consultation on Federation for The Grange	The Grange Comprehensive School	David Stanley
Executive Board Report – 9 th April 2009 – BSF Secondary Re-organisation	Grosvenor House	Daniel Hennessy
Statutory Proposal and Statutory Notice	As above	As above

CLOSURE OF THE GRANGE NURSERY, INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS AND THE CHANGE OF AGE RANGE AT THE GRANGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL TO ESTABLISH THE GRANGE ALL THROUGH SCHOOL

The Council is proposing the closure of the Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior Schools and a change of age range at the Grange Comprehensive School to establish a school for pupils aged 3 – 16 years old. This will be rebuilt on the existing Grange Comprehensive site as part of Halton's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme and Primary Capital Programme (PCP). This will establish an all through (0 to 16 years including the day care unit) school called The Grange School.

Part 1:

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Halton Borough Council, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF intends to discontinue:

The Grange Nursery School, Stonehills Lane, Runcorn WA7 5XB on 31st August 2010.
The Grange Infant School, Stonehills Lane, Runcorn WA7 5XB on 31st August 2010 and
The Grange Junior School, Latham Avenue, Runcorn WA7 5DX on 31st August 2010.

It is proposed that all the pupils from the Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior Schools will transfer to the Grange Comprehensive which will be altered to expand the age range and become The Grange School, a single all through school from the 1st September 2010 and existing provision will continue. Admission may also be sought to other schools which have places available. There will be no pupils displaced due to this re-organisation. The Grange Junior has provision for children with Special Educational Needs, this provision is subject to a separate statutory proposal. The Comprehensive School has provision for children with Special Educational Needs currently and this will continue into the future; this provision was subject to a previous concluded statutory proposal. It is proposed that all existing pupils will transfer to The Grange all through School where provision will continue. Pupils attending the existing day care centre will also transfer to the all through Grange School at the same time. There would be no impact on travelling as the new school is being established in the existing facilities with a purpose built facility being constructed on the site of the existing Grange Comprehensive School as part of the Halton BSF Programme and PCP.

All Statutory consultation requirements have been complied with.

Part 2 A and B:

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Halton Borough Council intends to make prescribed alterations to:
The Grange Comprehensive School, Latham Avenue, Runcorn WA7 5DX 1st September 2010.

It is proposed to

- A) change the age range of the school from 11-16 to 3-16 and
- B) enlarge the school from 1050 pupils to 1445 pupils.

The current capacity of the school is 1050 and the proposed capacity will be 1320 (excluding the Nursery school). The current number of pupils registered at the school is 950. The current admission number is 210 and the proposed admission number is 60 at age 4 and a further 120 at age 11, making a total of 180. The nursery will provide 52 full time equivalent places.

As part of the Halton BSF Programme and PCP, The Grange School will be rebuilt on The Grange Comprehensive School site.

During the period from 1st September 2010 to the completion of phase one of the Halton BSF Programme and PCP building work is complete, The Grange School will operate on a split site basis using all existing buildings. (Please see Part 1 of this notice for further information).

Following the completion of the new build, the school will cease to operate in separate facilities and will operate solely in the new building on the existing Grange Comprehensive site.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Ann McIntyre, Operational Director, Children and Young People's Directorate, Grosvenor House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2WD. Telephone Number 0151 471 7543. A full copy of the proposals can be found on <http://www.halton.gov.uk/bsf>.

Within 6 weeks of Part 1 and Part 2A and within 4 weeks of Part 2B from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Mr M Reaney, Operational Director (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) Municipal Buildings, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF.

Signed:



Publication Date: 25th June 2009

Explanatory Notes:

All written comments received at the above addresses will be acknowledged. In September 2009, comments will be submitted to the Executive Board of Halton Council in the form of a report, copies of which will be made available to the public on demand. It will not be possible to send detailed responses to individual letters. After a report has been submitted to the Executive Board, all written responses to the consultation exercise will become available for inspection by the public.

Parents will continue to have the right to express a preference. It is recommended that for each of the years up to 2013 a degree of flexibility is retained at each of the three secondary schools in Runcorn to ensure all pupils can be accommodated in advance of the completion of the BSF Programme. The Published Admission Numbers (PAN) will be reviewed to ensure that by 2013 there are a total of 29 forms of entry in Runcorn with a total 870 pupils in each year group. For 2010 it is recommended, subject to approval by the Halton Admission Forum, that the Published Admission Numbers would be; Halton High - 180 (6 form entry plus sixth form); St Chad's Catholic High School - 240 (8 form entry plus sixth form); The Grange School - 180 (6 form entry); The Heath – A Specialist Technology College - 270 (9 form entry).



SCHOOL ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

THE HEATH SPECIALIST TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

As part of the BSF secondary re-organisation process, on 9th April 2009 it was agreed by the Executive Board of the Council that consultation could be undertaken to expand The Heath Specialist Technology College.

It is proposed to increase the number of 11 -16 places offered by The Heath Specialist Technology College from an intake of 210 Year 7 pupils in September 2009 to 240 Year 7 pupils in September 2011 and 270 Year 7 pupils once the rebuild of The Heath has been completed, this is estimated to be from September 2013 onwards.

It is proposed to expand the number of places offered at The Heath Specialist Technology College to:

- ensure that there are appropriate places in Runcorn to meet projected future demand;
- improve diversity and choice within the Borough;
- expand a popular and successful secondary school; and
- reduce the number of pupils choosing to access their secondary education in another authority.

It is estimated that there will be a requirement for a total of at least 4074 mainstream places in Runcorn by 2018. In order to meet this requirement it is proposed that the four secondary schools offer the following places:

SCHOOL	SECONDARY PLACES (11- 16 years old)
St Chad's Catholic High	1200 (240 per year)
The Grange Comprehensive	900 (180 per year)
Halton High (proposed Academy)	900 (180 per year)
The Heath Specialist Technology College	1350 (270 per year)
Total	4350 ¹

In order to ensure that a smooth and managed increase in pupil numbers is possible, it is proposed that for 2011 and 2012 it is proposed that the number of places offered by The Heath increase to 240 for Year 7 pupils only.

¹ These numbers have been agreed as part of the BSF programme with the DCSF and Partnership for Schools and are within the audit commission guidelines



From 2013 it is proposed that places offered by The Heath Specialist Technology College are increased to 270 for Year 7 pupils only.

Planned Admission Number from September 2009

YEAR	PAN
September 2011	240
September 2012	240
September 2013	270
September 2014	270

Your response to this proposal would be welcome. You may therefore wish to complete the attached feedback form or alternatively put your views in writing to Ann McIntyre, Operational Director, Children and Young People's Directorate, Halton Borough Council, Grosvenor House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2WD.

All responses to the consultation must be received by 6th August 2009. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Executive Board on 24th September 2009 who will then determine whether a statutory proposal can be developed for formal consultation.

Consultation**Appendix C****The Grange Comprehensive, Juniors, Infant and Nursery**

Consultation on the proposal was initially undertaken in June 2008 as part of the proposal to establish a Federation between The Grange Comprehensive, Juniors, Infants and Nursery School. The proposal was agreed and the Federation of all four schools under one governing body commenced in September 2008.

The consultation on the statutory notice commenced on 25th June 2009. Six weeks representation was given to Part 1 and Part 2B of the process and four weeks to Part 2A.

The following people were consulted as part of the consultation:

- The general public of Halton;
- Staff and governors of The Grange Nursery, Infant, Junior and Comprehensive;
- Chair of Governors of all Runcorn Schools;
- Trade Unions;
- Executive Board;
- Other Neighbouring Authorities;
- Diocesan Authorities;
- Health Authority;
- Children's Trust Board;
- PCT staff;
- Other departments within the Council;
- Learning and Skills Council;
- Riverside College;
- Members of Parliament; and others.

Questions arising from the meetings were logged and have been placed on the internet.

The presentation used at the governors, staff and public meetings on 1st and 2nd July is available on request and can be found on the intranet site.

Each of the meetings outlined the objectives of the proposal and the previous consultation arrangements. They provided the opportunity for questions and concerns to be raised.

The response to the consultation is summarised below:

- Twenty responses were received to the Statutory Notice – all in favour of the proposals;
- Letters were sent to all parents and governors detailing the date, time and venue of the consultation meeting. In addition, the public meeting was widely advertised through the local press, and posters were displayed at each of the Grange Schools all other high schools; all Children's Centres, Community Centres, Direct Links and the library, within the Runcorn area;
- A governors meeting was held at the school on 1st July 2009 and the governors supported the proposal;
- A staff meeting and a public consultation meeting was held at The Grange Comprehensive School on 2nd July 2009;

The majority of Staff, and 10 members of the public attended the consultation meetings..

Copies of the letter sent to all those consulted are available, on request along, with a copy of the statutory notice. The consultation information was distributed to all schools, placed at key information points such as Children's Centres, Community Centres, Direct Links and also on the website.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Appendix D

FACTORS	CLOSING 3 SCHOOLS/CHANGING THE AGE RANGE AND ENLARGING A SCHOOL
Complies with requirements	Published linked statutory notice put together in line with advice and support from DSCF School Organisation Unit and Halton’s Legal Services.
Prior consultation	Copies sent to School Governors and School, all Schools, LSC Diocesan Authorities, Trade Unions, Trust Board Representatives, Health Authority Representatives and Neighbouring Authorities and Schools Organisation Unit. Published in local papers, schools and other public buildings.
Related to other proposals	<p>Two rounds of consultation held as part of the consultation on secondary re-organisation in Halton. First round in June and July 2007 and second round in November and December 2007. Full details of who was consulted, minutes of dates of public meetings and notes, Executive Board reports, a summary of the views of those consulted, copies of consultation documents are all included on the bsf pages on the local authority website. In addition, further consultation was undertaken in June 2008 on the proposal to federate the four Grange Schools under one Governing body and then establish an All Through School. The proposal to establish a federation was agreed and implemented in September 2008 and an Executive Headteacher was subsequently appointed.</p> <p>It is proposed to close The Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior Schools and change the age range and expand the size of The Grange Comprehensive School. This will establish “All Through Provision” for 0 – 16 years including the day care unit and the school will be known as The Grange School.</p>
System shaped by	The proposal to establish an “All Through School” was made by the school and supported

<p>Parents – best schools are able to expand and spread this ethos and success</p>	<p>by all four Grange Schools and the local Community.</p>
<p>Boosts standards and opportunities for young people and matches school place supply as closely as possible to pupils and parents wishes</p>	<p>The aim of The Grange School is that it offers an inclusive learning committed to promoting excellence and valuing each individual in a stimulating learning environment. The school will adopt a stage not age approach, transition smoothing, transfer collaboration, all through curriculum and consistent monitoring and tracking.</p> <p>The proposal has been supported by parents, staff and governors and there have been no objections to the statutory proposal.</p>
<p>Assists in delivering principles of Every Child Matters</p>	<p>The Grange School intends to be a hub for community regeneration, working in partnership with other agencies. The school aims to provide full extended service delivery through; GP health centre; BIP team; Connexions; CAMHS; Family Support and advice and other local authority services. It also aims to offer sport and cultural activities, adult learning, parent outreach and tuition and CLC support. Day Care provision will transfer to the new school.</p>

Ensures sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils – including future demand for places	There will be no displaced pupils as a result of this proposal. The current pupils will transfer to the new established school.
Diversity	This proposal enhances diversity within the borough as it will provide All Through provision from 0-16 years. The Governors of the school also intend to consult on acquiring Trust status.
Curriculum	The new school will continue to meet the general requirements in relation to the curriculum legislation. The Grange Comprehensive is part of Halton's 14-19 Partnership which is delivering the new diplomas in collaboration with other schools and the local college.
Impact on Community Cohesion and Race Equality	This proposal should enhance community cohesion as it will bring together four schools and offer a range of services to the local community.
Considers travel and accessibility for all	The new school will be established on the existing site. Once the new build is completed the school will be fully accessible.

Equal Opportunity Issues	The Grange School have intakes from a broad socio economic backgrounds across Runcorn. There are no sex, race or disability issues arising from the proposal.
Rural School	N/A .
Pupil Numbers and Admissions	The nursery will provide 52 full time equivalent places. The Published Admission Number at age 4 is will be 60. For September 2009 60 pupils have been allocated a place at The Grange Infants. At the age of 11 the Published Admission Number will increase by a further 120 to 180. For September 2009 161 pupils have been allocated a place at The Grange Comprehensive. Births in Runcorn however are now increasing and it is expected that The Grange will take up to its full capacity in future years.
14-19 Curriculum and Collaboration – opportunities for students are not being reduced	In Halton 14-19 provision is being developed borough-wide. This ensures that the contribution of a range of partners is maximised. Partners include the schools, college, City Learning Centres and work based providers. Through the development of collaborative arrangements the 14-19 Partnership is seeking to extend the range of 14-19 provision offered.
Capital	The Grange School will be rebuilt utilising BSF for the secondary development and Primary Capital for the Primary Capital element.
Views of interested parties	Extensive consultation has been undertaken. No alternative proposals were submitted during the statutory consultation.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24th September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Health and Community

SUBJECT: Health & Community Capital Programme Outturn 2008/09 & Capital Programme 2009/10

WARD(S): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of the 2008/09 capital programme outturn and the 2009/10 capital programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- (i) That the Board approve the recommendation in 3.3 and;
- (ii) That the Board recommend that the Council approve the capital programme for 2009/10 as set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A report was presented to Board on the 2nd April 2009 setting out the forecast outturn for the Health and Community capital programme 2008/09 and the reasons for monies being carried forward to 2009/10, together with a proposed programme of schemes for 2009/10. Due to the delay in announcing the housing grant allocations from Government Office, the report highlighted that assumptions had been made about the level of resources likely to be available in 2009/10.

3.2 The allocation for the housing programme has been announced as £2.911m, an increase of £2.289m over the 2008/09 allocation. After several years of declining grant in Halton, this level of funding considerably exceeds what was expected and is due to the introduction of a revised funding distribution formula which more closely reflects the priorities within the recently revised Regional Housing Strategy.

3.3 Given that the housing programme has been supported by corporate capital growth in recent years when the housing grant was reducing (primarily to finance the DFG programme), and the current pressures on the Council in terms of capital, it is proposed that the approved carry forward of £0.736m be vired to support the corporate capital programme.

- 3.4 There will be a requirement for some resources to be set aside to fund Halton's share of ICT and Software costs for the development and introduction of a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme, but the amount involved will not be clear until much later in the financial year. A provisional sum of £50,000 has therefore been included in the programme.
- 3.5 This still leaves £1.329M of the new housing allocation unallocated. There are a number of potential calls on this fund, but the main priority within the Housing and Supporting People Strategies is to secure the development of additional extra care housing schemes for the growing population of older people in the Borough. This is the subject of another report elsewhere on the Agenda.
- 3.6 A further priority is the RSL Partnership Agreement. This partnership between HBC and the RSLs began in July 2008. In 2008/09 the Council identified £467k to be used to fund, on a 50:50 basis, home adaptations within RSL properties.
- 3.7 In 2009/10 the Council has allocated £450k to the Partnership Agreement. To date £410k has been paid, committed or schemes agreed and it is anticipated that the RSLs could carry out further adaptations to a value of £400k requiring additional partnership funding of £200k, from the Council, to be matched by £200k from the RSLs.
- 3.8 If HBC is unable to identify the additional funding to continue the Partnership Agreement adaptations RSL tenants could be advised, by their landlords, to apply for DFGs:
- This would result in additional pressure on the budget for DFGs that is already on target to be fully committed this year;
 - The loss of any further RSL contribution to adaptations for the remainder of the year (contribution for April to July 2009 £200K); and
 - Additional pressure on the Home Improvement Agency staff to provide technical support for the increased number of DFG applications.
- 3.9 The table below details the actual funding available for the Health & Community capital programme for 2009/10 after the adjustment detailed in 3.3. The capital projects are detailed in Appendix 1.

	£
Regional Housing Pot Allocation	2,911,000
Disabled Facilities Grant	453,000

Mental Health SCP	101,000
Social Care SCP	60,000
DoH Grant	100,000
HBC	741,000
External	925,000
Total	5,291,000

3.10 Appendix 2 details the outturn for Health & Community's 2008/09 capital programme. The reasons for variations of spend against budget were set out in the report to Board on the 2nd April 2009.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Government, as detailed in 'Our Health Our Care Our Say' (2006), has clear expectations that councils will support vulnerable people by promoting independence and wellbeing. Capital projects detailed in this report support these objectives, and also promote social inclusion through sport and leisure.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial implications are as set out in the body of the report and Appendices.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Improved housing conditions funded through this programme will benefit any children and young people living in those dwellings, and particularly benefit those who need housing adaptations.

Culture & Leisure schemes provide play opportunities for young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Halton Lea Library will promote formal and informal learning opportunities for all.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

DFGs will help the chronically sick and disabled to maintain a better lifestyle at home rather than in residential care, and energy efficiency grants will help vulnerable households with fuel poverty issues.

Culture & Leisure schemes offer sport and recreation opportunities to increase the health and well being in Halton.

Refurbishment at Oakmeadow residential home will improve quality of life for vulnerable adults living there.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Culture & Leisure schemes provide diversionary activities for young people.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Helping vulnerable individuals to maintain/improve their homes will help minimise the incidence of dilapidated housing that can blight an area. Runcorn Town Hall Park will improve the green environment

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The proposed programme of work will help tackle the housing problems of some of those in greatest housing need.

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

DOCUMENT	PLACE OF INSPECTION	CONTACT
Executive Board Report Health & Community Provisional Capital Outturn 2008/09, 2009/10 Provisional Capital Programme 2 nd April 2009	Municipal Building Widnes	Michelle Clunie 01928 704598

Appendix 1 - Health & Community's Proposed Capital Programme 2009/10

Project	Existing 2009/10 Capital Program me	New Allocati on	Total 2009/10 Capital Program me
<u>Health & Partnerships</u>			
Information Technology Costs		28,000	28,000
Screened Tip Area - Runcorn Cemetery		25,000	25,000
Headstone Safety Programme	25,000		25,000
Total	25,000	53,000	78,000
<u>Adult Social Care</u>			
Pods utilising Disabled Facilities Grant	17,000		17,000
ILC Market Garden Canopy		16,000	16,000
Re-design Oakmeadow Phase 2		60,000	60,000
Bridgewater Refurbishment		2,000	2,000
Major Adaptations for Equity Release/Loans Schemes	100,000		100,000
Total	117,000	78,000	195,000
<u>Culture & Leisure</u>			
Show Pitches	20,000		20,000
Sports Facilities	28,000		28,000
Skate Park	100,000		100,000
Halton Lea Library Refurbishment Heritage Lottery Fund	790,000		790,000
Installation of 5 Multi Use Games Areas	100,000	100,000	200,000
Installation of Electronic Access Bollards to 6 Parks	72,000		72,000
Development of Facilities at Runcorn Town Hall Park	354,000		354,000
Improvement to Allotments		60,000	60,000
Total	1,464,000	160,000	1,624,000
<u>Housing Strategy</u>			
Housing Grants/Loans		354,000	354,000
Disabled Facilities Grants		686,000	686,000
Joint funding – Registered Social Landlords Adaptations		650,000	650,000
Modular Buildings		45,000	45,000
Stair lifts		120,000	120,000
Homelink		10,000	10,000
Energy Promotion		100,000	100,000
Choice Based Lettings Information and Communications Technology		50,000	50,000
Extra Care		1,329,000	1,329,000
Contingency		0	0
Total	-	3,394,000	3,394,000
HEALTH & COMMUNITY 2009/10 TOTAL	1,606,000	3,685,000	5,291,000

Appendix 2 - Health & Community's 2008/09 Capital Programme Outturn

Project	Original Capital Programme 2008/09	Revised Capital Programme 2008/09	2008/09 Outturn	Carry Forward 2009/10 Capital Programme
<u>Health & Partnerships</u>				
<u>Bereavement, Consumer Protection & Registration Services</u>				
Headstone Safety Programme	50,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Health & Partnerships Total	50,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
<u>Adult Social Care</u>				
Direct Door Access	24,000	24,000	16,461	
MH SCE 04/05 - 06/07 Womens Centre	19,000	19,000	10,345	
PODS utilising DFG	40,000	40,000	23,087	17,000
Re-design Oakmeadow	72,000	72,000	72,000	
Major Adaptations for Equity Release/Loans Schemes	100,000		-	100,000
Adult Social Care Total	255,000	155,000	121,894	117,000
<u>Culture & Leisure</u>				
Sports Pitches	27,000	7,000	6,820	20,000
Skate Park	100,000		-	100,000
Sports Facilities	30,000	30,000	1,251	28,000
Halton Lea Library Refurbishment HLF	1,470,000	873,000	791,726	790,000
Installation of 5 Multi Use Games Areas	100,000		-	100,000
Installation of Electronic Access Bollards to 6 Parks	72,000		-	72,000
Lewis Carroll HLB	50,000	50,000	50,000	
Dev of Facilities at RTH Park	495,000	50,000	141,026	354,000
Improvement to Allotments	65,000	65,000	69,045	
Culture & Leisure Total	2,409,000	1,075,000	1,059,868	1,464,000
<u>Housing Strategy</u>				
Housing Grants/Loans	284,000	284,000	335,915	
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,573,000	873,000	798,453	736,000
Homelink	10,000	10,000	9,938	
Energy Promotion	100,000	100,000	97,415	
Refurbishment of River View Gypsy Site	55,000	55,000	90,901	
Belvedere	-		4,692	
Stairlifts	92,000	92,000	106,928	
Travellers Transit Site Runcorn	474,000	668,000	624,150	
Unallocated	194,000		-	
Housing Strategy Total	2,782,000	2,082,000	2,068,392	736,000
HEALTH & COMMUNITY TOTAL	5,496,000	3,337,000	3,275,153	2,342,000

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Health and Community

SUBJECT: Extra Care Housing - Development Options and Resourcing

WARD(S) Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of progress to date in delivering new schemes as part of the Extra Care Commissioning Strategy and to seek delegated authority in the use of housing capital resources to support the development of future schemes as necessary.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Board:

(1) agrees to reserve the uncommitted capital in the 2009/10 housing programme to support the development of extra care housing by Registered Social Landlords;

(2) acknowledges that due to the development timescales involved, much of the expenditure will not be committed during 2009/10, and any uncommitted capital be carried forward to 2010/11;

(3) grant delegated authority to the Strategic Director Health and Community, in consultation with the Operational Director Financial Services and the Executive Board Member for Community, to determine appropriate levels of financial support on a scheme by scheme basis.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In February 2008 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society' set out the Government's vision for housing within an ageing society, describing a range of housing provision that will be necessary to accommodate future growth, including extra care housing. Nationally, by 2026 older people will account for 48% of forecast household growth resulting in 2.4 million extra older person households than currently.

3.2 In Halton the impact over the next ten years is a dramatic rise in the over 60's (27%) and over 75's (19%). This, combined with older people's desire to live independently for longer, means that Halton has a significant shortfall in current and projected extra care provision.

- 3.3 In comparing Halton with a sample of local authorities in the North West, Halton has a similar number of units in proportion to the older population as Blackpool, but a significantly lower number than Warrington, Blackburn and St Helens.

Authority	Extra Care Units	Population (65+)	Population (all)	% of people 65+	% of all people
Warrington	475	29,700	193,000	1.60%	0.25%
Blackpool	59	27,400	145,000	0.22%	0.04%
Blackburn	220	18,000	142,000	1.22%	0.15%
St Helens	318	29,300	177,000	1.09%	0.18%
Halton	40	16,500	118,900	0.24%	0.03%

- 3.4 There is currently only one 40 unit extra care scheme in the Borough and the 'Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care – May 2008', produced on behalf of the Council by Tribal Consultants, identifies an immediate need for 137 additional units of extra care housing (including 11 units for Adults with Learning Difficulties) and a further 59 units by 2017 (including another 11 units for ALD), a total need for 196 units.

- 3.5 Development to meet these needs will involve partnership working with Registered Social landlord (RSLs) and the PCT but, as a first step, potential sites to accommodate these developments have to be identified (notwithstanding that some provision may be met by remodelling existing sheltered schemes).

- 3.6 In recent years Halton has faced some difficulty identifying sites suitable for this type of scheme but as a result of a piece of work recently undertaken, a number of sites have been identified which represent possibilities for development. These include:

- Boardwalk, Widnes - which is the former concrete works;
- Beechwood, Runcorn - land owned by English Partnerships;
- Hargreaves House/Court, Widnes – remodelling the existing scheme;
- Madeline McKenna House, Widnes – remodelling the existing residential care home;
- Castlefields, Runcorn – a number of sites are potentially available in and around the local Centre.

Other potential sites are being considered in the medium to longer term but the above offer the best options at this current time.

- 3.7 All extra care housing developments will be reliant on financial support from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and a number of previous bids to both the Dept of Health and the Housing Corporation (HCAs predecessor) failed due to high unit grant requirements. HCA grant rates reflect average unit build costs, but with extra care there is a higher than normal level of communal space provided which makes it difficult to achieve a viable cost model. This is normally overcome

through additional subsidy in the form of either land provided at nil or low cost by the LA, or financial support from LAs or PCTs.

- 3.8 Financial support from the Council would improve the competitiveness of any funding bids as this reduces the unit grant cost to the HCA, and allows the HCA to maximise the number of dwellings delivered within the available grant. This is an important consideration for them given the Government's housing growth agenda.
- 3.9 At a time when Castlefields continues to benefit from significant HCA investment, securing a high level of additional resources in to the Borough for extra care housing will be difficult, and anything the Council can do to make RSL bids more competitive will be helpful.
- 3.10 Due to this year's unexpectedly large capital settlement, there is currently £1.329m uncommitted in the housing capital programme. This offers an opportunity (which may not be repeated as pressure mounts to curb public spending) to directly support the development of extra care housing, and the Board is asked to agree that the bulk of this sum of uncommitted capital be reserved for this purpose, and to acknowledge that due to the long lead in time for such developments, much of the expenditure will not be committed until 2010/11.
- 3.11 It is further proposed that delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director Health and Community, in consultation with the Operational Director Financial Services and the Executive Board Member for Community, to determine appropriate levels of financial support on a scheme by scheme basis.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The development of extra care housing to meet the demographic change facing the Borough features as a high priority in both the Housing and Supporting People Strategies, and the proposals in this report will help to deliver this policy initiative.

5.0 OTHER FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Revenue costs will be funded through a range of funding streams including the Council's Community Care budget, Supporting People budget, Housing Benefits, and through income from services users.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Extra Care Services provide a combination of health, care and support which will improve the health and well being of older people through:

- The prevention or minimisation of hospital admissions
- Enabling people to continue to live independently obviating the need to move to residential care
- Providing a medication monitoring services
- Adoption of falls prevention policy and practice
- Provision of support and care with shopping, cooking and catering facilities to enable residents to access healthy eating options
- Offering healthy living options including exercise, gardening, leisure activities
- Provision of flexible personal care to enable continuation of independent living
- Continued independence and activity as a means of maintaining mobility and daily functions (Extra-care residents improve more than people in traditional forms of care: they show an average mobility improvement of more than 35%; a 20% improvement in daily living functions; a 10% increase in sensory ability; and a 25% reduction in medication use.)
- Availability of a responsive on site team of carers to address care needs immediately preventing escalation.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Extra care services support the Councils objective to achieve a safer Halton by:

- Reducing anxiety through the reassurance provided by having people on site and available should the need arise.
- Adopting Health and Safety policy and procedures and physical design of the buildings to minimise risks to occupants
- Making links with the wider community to provide connections with the wider community and to provide opportunities for people living in the scheme to contribute
- Reducing social isolation through involvement in social events, clubs and activities to maximise opportunities for socialising and companionship

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The provision of extra care housing improves the quality and range of housing options available to meet the needs of Halton's aging population.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The needs highlighted in the Commissioning Strategy are likely to remain unmet unless future bids to the HCA are successful, the likely impact of this being increased demand and increased costs for Social Care and Health Care. If future extra care housing bids are to be successful, the unit cost will have to be reduced. This can only be achieved through the provision of a capital subsidy.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

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

None

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Homelessness Strategy

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek Executive Board's approval to ratify a new Homelessness Strategy for the Borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board agrees the adoption of the new strategy.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires each local authority to review the extent and nature of homelessness in their area and to produce a strategy and action plan to prevent and tackle the problem. Halton's first Homelessness Strategy was published in 2003 which included measures to prevent homelessness and to develop and improve services for households who become homeless.

3.2 The new Homelessness Strategy builds on the progress made from the previous Homelessness Strategy and focuses more heavily on prevention and early intervention strategies.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS AND STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Key findings of the Review include:

- Achievements include the setting up of a Homelessness Forum, rent deposit scheme, and a Homeless Prevention Service.
- In 2007/08 296 households applied to the statutory homeless service, of which 221 households were accepted as having a priority need and being homeless through no fault of their own. This represents a 14% reduction since 2003/04.
- In total the homeless service (including prevention work) dealt with 1,093 customers.
- More households seeking help have multiple problems such as mental health, and substance misuse.
- Homelessness due to parental evictions remains high.
- Levels of homelessness amongst those with dependent children also remains high.

- Debt related homelessness requires earlier intervention.
- A wide range of support services are available for those who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.
- Consultation highlighted a desire for service user involvement to shape service delivery.
- General satisfaction was expressed regarding provision, but services needed to be better co-ordinated.

4.2 Key recommendations include the following:

- Provide mechanisms to enable service users to contribute to service development.
- Ensure a comprehensive approach to intelligence gathering and analysis.
- Enable specific service developments and interventions focused on those most at risk and those facing multiple problems.
- Combine homelessness services with measures to improve employability, linking with training and employment services.
- Ensure mechanisms for cross departmental and organisation work to improve service delivery and development of joint planning to resolve barriers for re-housing, particularly for those with drug and alcohol issues and mental health problems.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 A formal consultation exercise was carried out in March 2009, to seek views on the draft documents referred to above. The Council received 6 formal responses of which 3 were from external sources, 1 from an Elected Member and 2 from internal officers.

5.2 However it should also be noted that the 'blue print' for developing the draft Homelessness Strategy was presented to the Borough's Homelessness Forum. The Homelessness Forum also had the opportunity to consider and comment on the findings and draft strategy on several occasions ahead of a wider consultation exercise.

5.3 The Council also consulted with service users regarding the Homelessness Service as part of the options appraisal, which informed the Council's thinking on the most appropriate service delivery model for the operational service. The views of young service users aged 16-25 years were considered during a Youth Homelessness Conference in October 2008. The views from these consultation events have been fed into the review findings and addressed via the strategy action plan. The general public has also had the opportunity to comment via the Council's web site.

5.4 Specific service user consultation regarding the Homelessness Strategy (as opposed to the operational aspects of the Housing Solutions service) has also taken place. This will provide a credible

foundation on which to proceed.

- 5.5 The majority of comments received from the formal consultation exercise relate to presentational issues, or the need to update some information due to a time lag from the documents being written and the consultation exercise-taking place. One of the respondents, (Halton Housing Trust,) felt that some comments contained within the documents required further expansion or clarification. These comments have been acted upon accordingly and any factual inaccuracies corrected. The Homelessness Strategy will also be complemented by a recently drafted Repossession Action Plan which is a new requirement imposed by the Government reflecting the current economic climate.
- 5.6 The key thing to note is that the respondents were supportive of the preventative emphasis of the new strategy, its general strategic direction and the objectives and recommendations contained within the draft strategy.
- 5.7 The Review and Strategy were presented to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on the 17th June 2009 and endorsed its content.
- 5.8 The draft documents have now been revised taking account of all appropriate comments. Where possible the recommendations have been rationalised in order to clarify and prioritise strategic thinking and to aid delivery of resulting actions.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Homelessness is a statutory function and directly contributes to several of the Council's Corporate Priorities. The Homelessness Review has mapped linkages to the Council's strategic priorities and the new strategy will complement existing corporate strategies.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is anticipated that a significant proportion of the actions identified can be achieved within existing budgets. However some additional expenditure may be required over time as projects develop. The effective use of existing resources, including service re-configuration where necessary and any potential new funding streams will be explored to fund these areas.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Most of the referrals to the Housing Solutions Team relate to

households with dependent children. An increasing number of referrals relate to young people under the age of 25.

8.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The new strategy emphasises the need to look holistically at services and to link homelessness services with measures to improve employability, linking with training and employment services.

8.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Improving the performance of the statutory homelessness service and ensuring a strategic focus on early intervention and prevention will reduce the negative effects that being homeless can have on an individual's health and well being.

8.4 **A Safer Halton**

A significant proportion of households seek the assistance of the Housing Solutions Team because they have lost their last address due to harassment or domestic abuse. A range of preventative options such as the sanctuary scheme and floating support schemes are potentially available to prevent homelessness. The early intervention approach and improved communication between agencies should tackle this issue more effectively in the future.

8.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

9.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

9.1 Failure to adopt a new Homelessness Strategy will be in breach of the Homelessness Act 2002 and would hinder the Council's efforts to reduce homelessness in the Borough. This could impact on the operational aspects of the Housing Solutions service resulting in the following:

- Poor inspection ratings.
- A negative impact on the CAA rating.
- Increased bed and breakfast expenditure.
- Poor outcomes for service users.

10.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

10.1 The new Homelessness Strategy seeks to address inequality of access to services and life opportunities experienced by many homeless people who are amongst the most marginalised members of our community.

11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

11.1 To adopt a new fit for purpose Homelessness Strategy for the Borough covering the next five years.

12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 The Action Plan prioritises a number of developmental activities. The actions highlighted are considered to be the ones which would optimise the potential to improve outcomes for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

13.1 With immediate effect.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Homelessness Strategy Executive Board Report 24/07/03	Municipal Building Widnes	Strategic Director Health & Community

Halton's Homelessness Strategy

2009 - 2013

The New Direction.....	3
1 Strategic Aims & Priorities	3
2 Strategic Outcomes	5
3 Delivering the Strategy	5
Strategic Activity.....	6
4 The Housing Solutions Model	6
5 Accommodation Strategies & Initiatives	10
6 Evidence & the proliferation of good practice	11
7 Development of Strategic Management	12
Table 1: Priorities and related Delivery Programme	15
Outline Action Plan.....	16-30

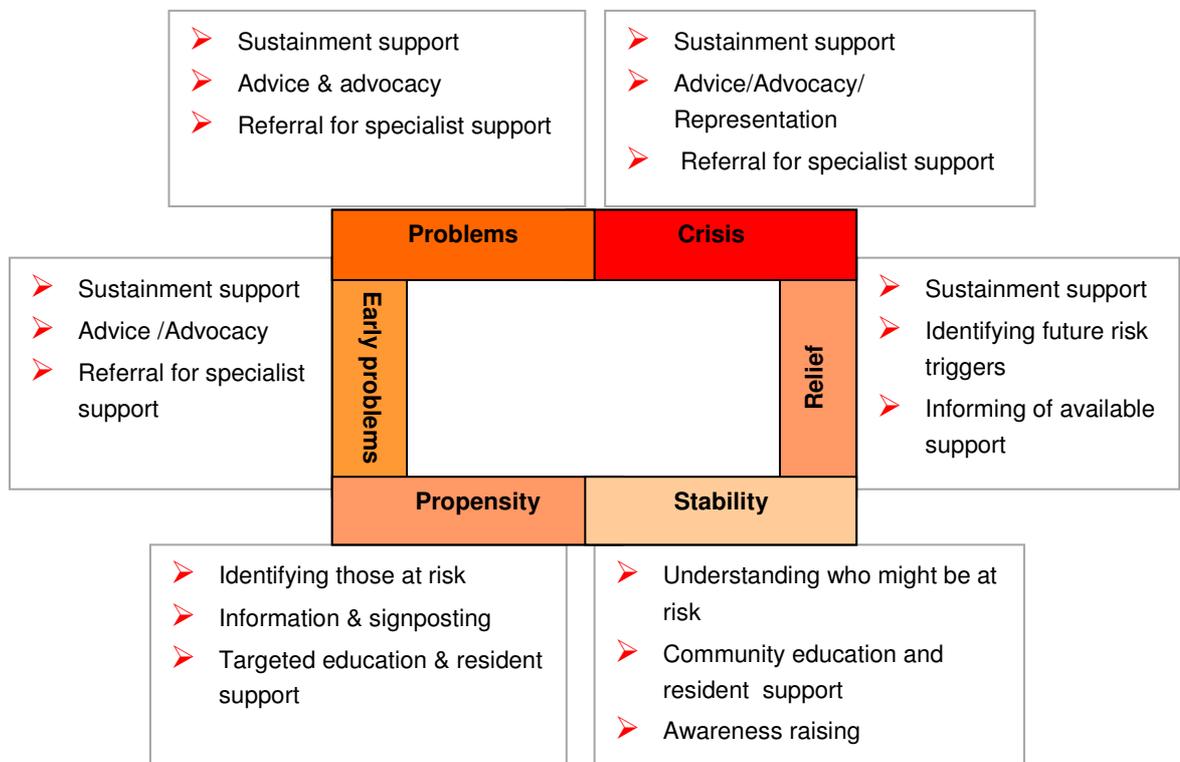
The New Direction

1 Strategic Aims & Priorities

- 1.1. This Strategy will address the extent and nature of homelessness in Halton as determined by the Strategic Review of Homelessness in the Borough in 2008. The findings of the Review are available in a separate document. The Strategy is designed to deliver a programme that will reduce homelessness in Halton. It will promote greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and also remodel provision to enable earlier and more appropriate interventions.
- 1.2. The Strategy aims to position homelessness centrally to key housing and welfare related concerns within Halton; creating constructive partnerships between Council Directorates and with external agencies. The Strategy will support strategic developments that increase homelessness prevention. It will ensure that underpinning strategic activity there is a sound management process for comprehensive review, evaluation, planning and delivery.
- 1.3. The Council's role is to coordinate and facilitate development. There will be a need for a partnership approach and for other organisations to help deliver the outcomes contained within the Homelessness Strategy.
- 1.4. The Homelessness Strategy to 2013 will address seven major priorities:

Priority 1. Intervene much earlier in the 'homelessness risk' process

- 1.4.1. Whilst crisis intervention and relief will be enduring features of homelessness provision in Halton, this strategy will enable earlier points of access to preventative action. Fig 1 shows the shows the types of intervention at different stages of homelessness risk.



- 1.4.2. The aim will be to develop new approaches that avoid problems arising- giving people support to tackle risks earlier. This will continue and increase the pace of direction of travel relating to the shift in emphasis of provision from crisis intervention to risk reduction.

Priority 2. Ensure that services are developed and coordinated to deliver a comprehensive, inclusive and effective approach to homelessness prevention.

- 1.4.3. The considerable developments in service provision over the past five years have laid a substantial foundation for homelessness prevention. There is now a need to consolidate those changes into a coherent and efficient whole and to develop a new model for provision that delivers an earlier intervention focus.

Priority 3. Fill gaps in prevention activity to reduce the highest risks and provide effective prevention and earlier intervention.

- 1.4.4. This requires the development of a wider range of services that are targeted to those most at risk.

Priority 4. Ensure support for the most marginalised and vulnerable client groups in the most appropriate settings – particularly for those with multiple needs.

- 1.4.5. The Strategy needs to tackle those at risk of chronic homelessness. Whilst this affects a limited number of people, those concerned represent some of the most vulnerable in Halton living in the most extreme circumstances.

Priority 5. Ensure that those living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and at risk of homelessness can access appropriate housing, without becoming homeless.

- 1.4.6. This demands both individual support to plan movement between homes and wider structural development that will open up options for those in need.

Priority 6. Ensure that emergency or short term housing is available for households in crisis, with appropriate and effective move on opportunities.

- 1.4.7. The provision of temporary accommodation should be appropriate to the level of need – offering periods of supported housing for those who cannot live independently and the fastest possible route to settled accommodation for those who do not need support. This priority also addresses the need for efficient use of resources and the potential to release funds for other interventions.

Priority 7. Development of a robust process for strategic development.

- 1.4.8. This priority seeks to establish strong management tools and a delivery cycle of review, evaluation, planning and action. This will also include mechanisms for continuous service user and stakeholder consultation to drive forward service improvements and strategic developments.

2 Strategic Outcomes

2.1. Strategic action will be geared to the following measurable outcomes.

Outcomes	Measured by
An increase in home retention or planned moves from one home to another for those facing home loss .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of baseline data and targets by end of 2010. • A 20% reduction in the number of homelessness presentations by 2013. • Elimination of rough sleeping by 2013.
Reduction of homelessness risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of early interventions showing a successful outcome. • Baseline data and performance targets in place by end of 2010.
Faster and more efficient access to appropriate settled homes for those who become homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 50 % reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by 2010. • Targets set by 2010 for further year on year reductions. • Elimination of the use of B&B as temporary accommodation, for statutory homeless households by 2013.
A robust evidence base for prevention success and good practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single set of performance indicators in place by end of 2010. • Performance review process in place by end of 2011. • Baseline data in place by end of 2010. • Good practice benchmarking & evaluation process in place by end of 2010 and annual reviews.

3 Delivering the Strategy

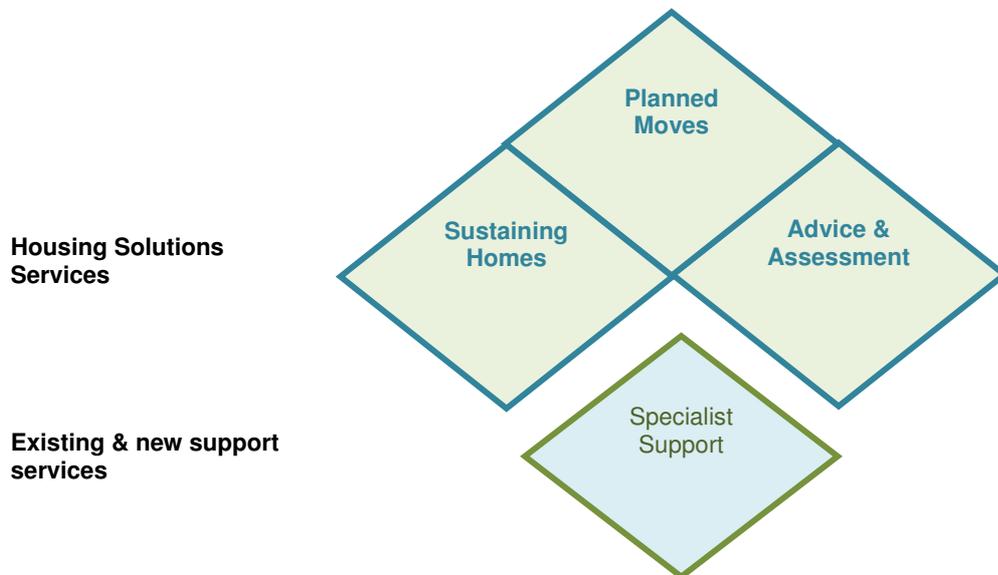
3.1. To deliver the strategic priorities, there are four major delivery programmes –

<p>1. The Housing Solutions Model.</p> <p>Increased focus for homelessness prevention work- taking the priorities relating to service development and placing them within a coherent framework, where their impact on homelessness prevention can be assessed and developed.</p>	<p>2. Accommodation-related strategies and initiatives.</p> <p>Capturing the strategic priorities relating to the development of temporary and long term accommodation options.</p>
<p>3. The development of evidence and the proliferation of good practice.</p> <p>Setting evaluation and research criteria and processes to increase understanding of the causes & effects of homelessness, deliver a deeper analysis of risk and improve knowledge about prevention success and good practice.</p>	<p>4. Strategic management.</p> <p>This involves the review and revision of the role of the Homelessness Forum and the development of mechanisms to ensure delivery, track progress and maintain momentum.</p>

Strategic Activity

4 The Housing Solutions Model

- 4.1. The Housing Solutions Model brings together statutory homelessness and Prevention Services to deliver a comprehensive approach, which aims to reduce homelessness. The model is based on 3 interventions **Sustaining Homes**: to help people avoid risk and keep their homes; **Planned Moves**: to help people progress from one settled home to another without experiencing homelessness; and **Advice & Assessment**: access to guidance on options and assessment of entitlements when someone becomes or is threatened with homelessness.
- 4.2. These elements will build on the existing Council advice and assessment services to develop new methods of delivery.
- 4.3. The 3 interventions will be underpinned by access to specialist support provision - both existing and new – which will include Supporting People commissioned services and for example, those provided through Community Safety and Children's Services.



- 4.4. It is envisaged that the whole service will in future be accessible through a Gateway process, ensuring efficiency and coordination in provision.

Housing Solutions Gateway

- 4.5. This will provide a single point of access for those needing help from Housing Solutions and related Supporting People commissioned services, and will deliver:
- A common assessment & planning process so that those using the various interventions and specialist services do not have to undergo multiple assessments.
 - Referral protocols between all services.
 - A common system for monitoring service provision and outcomes.

Housing Solutions Advice & Assessment

- 4.6. This service will help anyone facing imminent homelessness to keep hold of their home for as long as possible and plan their move, or to assess their entitlement to rehousing under the homelessness law. This stage is essentially crisis intervention, incorporating the Council's statutory duty to help those at risk of homelessness.

Key Activities

- 4.7. **Stronger Integration of the current Homelessness and Prevention services.** Following the return of the Statutory Homelessness service to the Council's direct management in October 2008, a further review process will lead to increased service and process improvements providing:
- A full assessment of need by generic officers.
 - Housing options guidance.
 - Assessments under the homeless law.
 - Access to temporary, supported and long term housing.
- 4.8. **Develop shop front access to the Housing Solutions service.** This will enable the Advice & Assessment service and the Planned Moves facilities to work from one centre, but utilising Halton's Direct Links where necessary to provide maximum accessibility for customers.
- 4.9. **Improve integration and cooperation with non-Gateway services** This will target agencies supporting children and young people, those with mental health or drug and alcohol problems, victims of domestic abuse - to make sure that there is pro-active Housing Solutions engagement with clients in key risk groups. Initiatives will be developed to provide:
- Early warning and referral processes.
 - Programmes of reciprocal staff training.
 - Joint assessment and planning protocols.

Housing Solutions Planned Moves

- 4.10. This service will provide a range of re-housing options and choice for residents, alongside advice and support, which will enable them to avoid homelessness and plan a sustainable move to settled housing.
- 4.11. The Planned Moves stage will incorporate support to access Choice Based Lettings [CBL], low cost home ownership schemes and the private sector. The service will offer assistance through electronic home search facilities, the Bond Guarantee Scheme and referral to supported short term accommodation and temporary accommodation schemes.

Key Activities

- 4.12. **Develop a home visiting service to families with children over 16 at risk of eviction.** This will involve working with relevant community agencies to target those most at risk and providing families with:
- Advice about rehousing options and expectations.
 - Low level mediation and guidance.
 - Referral to further sources of support –including intensive mediation, debt advice, employment and training services.

- 4.13. **Development of short term accommodation access policy and protocols.** These will ensure consistent effective and efficient take up of temporary and short term supported housing for statutory and non statutory homeless people. It will dovetail with the development of a temporary accommodation strategy.
- 4.14. **Develop a furniture & removals scheme** and ensure consistency in access to Community Care Grants and similar payments. – see 5.5. below.
- 4.15. **Develop Home Search support** – this will assist the introduction of CBL, offering a mixture of information literature, web-based search facilities and guidance to make use of the various bidding and applications processes involved in accessing housing. It is envisaged that specific support workers will provide additional support to those most in need of assistance to bid for properties.
- 4.16. Home Search will also include outreach services and open days for specific risk groups – eg young people - linked to public education programmes, [see 4.18 below] which will enable understanding of the schemes and ensure realistic expectations about the process and options.

Housing Solutions Sustaining Homes

- 4.17. This service will educate, advise and support residents to remain in their homes – whatever the tenure. This stage represents the earliest intervention to avert risks, which might lead to homelessness.

Key Activities

- 4.18. **Develop a Public Education programme** – aimed at raising awareness of risks and options for key groups, focusing on those most at risk – single parents and single young people. This service will involve work in schools, youth centres and through Sure Start/Children’s Centres. It will also involve the development of a peer education programme, which will lend a greater degree of credibility and authority and also develop the skills and knowledge of the peer tutors. This programme will build on developments in good practice and local provision e.g. from Halton YMCA and the CLG education DVD.
- 4.19. **Develop a resident support programme** – providing information & signposting packages to residents, alerting them to potential risks and sources of help. This will involve working with RSLs’ homelessness strategies & financial inclusion programmes to scope, pilot, evaluate and roll out the following elements:
- New resident information packs for all tenures distributed via landlords and lenders.
 - Specific guidance to private tenants to ensure financial capability and successful operation of Local Housing Allowance.
 - Landlord good practice sharing utilising the established Halton Landlord’s Forum e.g. briefings from RSL and other providers on what works re. pro-active management and community activity to prevent homelessness.
 - Resident seminars and open days to develop understanding of rights and responsibilities and help available via Housing Solutions services and specialist support provision; focusing on key themes such as financial and household management.
- 4.20. **Develop work with “problem noticers”** - this will enable key workers from Primary Health and Social Care services [Health Visitors, Midwives and Children’s Workers] to identify risks and make appropriate referrals for their

clients, encouraging proactive engagement with Housing Solutions and specialist support services to prevent homelessness.

Specialist Support Services

- 4.21. Each stage of intervention within Housing Solutions will be underpinned by access to a range of specialist support services. These services are grouped in the diagram below in “virtual” packages according to the type of prevention support they offer. This way of categorising does not affect how the services are delivered, or who will deliver them, but allows a coherent overview of currently disparate services and gives greater clarity to service planning, with additional focus for evaluating prevention success and identifying development priorities.

Financial advice Maximising income Banking Savings Budgeting Debt avoidance & management	Emergency funds and financial support Bond Scheme Housing Benefit Discretionary Housing Payments Community Care Grants
Employment & skills development Job searching Coaching Training Access to learning	Legal rights & enforcement Advice Advocacy Negotiation Court /tribunal representation
Improving conditions & security Mediation Improving physical conditions Adaptations Increasing safety Education on rights & responsibilities	Support to reduce personal risks Domestic violence Parenting & family Independent living skills Mental health Anti Social Behaviour cessation Drug and alcohol abuse cessation

- 4.22. In addition to the development of the Gateway, which will change access to a number of existing services, the Strategy will seek the creation and development of further risk reduction and preventative initiatives.

Key Activities

- 4.23. **Develop a Repossessions Action Plan** which averts homelessness risk and reduces repossessions and evictions. Key agencies within Halton – CAB, Welfare Rights Service, RSLs and Shelter, along with the Legal Services Commission will work together to develop an action plan to meet need. Two essential developments from the Action Plan will be:
- 4.23.1. **A comprehensive financial advice and support programme** – focusing on maximising income, savings, banking, debt management and court representation. This will involve scoping need and capacity and proliferation of existing financial inclusion toolkits and good practice.

- 4.23.2. **Specialist legal advice & court duty services** – ensuring that all those needing advice and representation when faced with repossession can obtain help as early in the process as possible. This will involve developing the skills and capacity within the Advice & Assessment element of the Housing Solutions service to deliver specialist advice and representation services, and working with local advice agencies to develop and market their provision.
- 4.24. **Integrate homelessness prevention with employment & skills development services:** ensuring strong links, joint work and planning between Housing Solutions and services that increase the opportunities for employment. Developing:
- Service delivery relationships including referral processes to employment and skills services.
 - Educational events about prevention for those attending employment training programmes.
 - Improvement of access to training for homeless young people.
 - Reciprocal training to increase understanding of services and available support.

5 Accommodation Strategies & Initiatives

- 5.1. Structural changes to prevent homelessness include the wider strategic objectives to develop sources of accommodation, affordable housing and regeneration of neighbourhoods, which are contained in the Housing Strategy 2008-2011. Activity set out here aims to augment detailed Housing Strategy work so that homelessness prevention is optimised.
- Key Activities**
- 5.2. **Review and revise the Council’s Allocation Policy pre-CBL**, changing the current policy to ensure that it is ‘fit for purpose’. This will include assisting households moving on from supported housing, increasing prevention options and removing perverse incentives to apply as homeless.
- 5.3. **Devise & implement a Temporary Accommodation and “Move-On” Strategy** to ensure the right balance of provision and support across all needs groups and geographical areas and deliver appropriate move-on capacity.
- 5.4. The strategy will set out the goals and development plan for temporary accommodation, including the following specific features:
- Review of demand, supply, accessibility and appropriateness of all forms of temporary and short term housing across Halton.
 - Assessment of the capacity to contract and expand certain types of temporary accommodation – eg reducing B&B use, increased use of mainstream housing and of supported housing for specific need groups.
 - Scoping the potential for furniture packages linked to use of mainstream housing as temporary accommodation.
 - Assessment of the capacity for temporary-to-permanent schemes – working with RSLs to develop access to units on a temporary basis and the options for transition into permanent offers.
 - Development of a move-on protocol – this will involve an audit and joint work with providers to increase overall move-on.
 - Assessment of the potential for additional short-term supported accommodation – schemes for consideration include:

- Accommodation in Widnes.
- Self referral emergency access.
- Specialist accommodation and day centre provision for those with chronic substance misuse and street homelessness.
- Provision for dedicated transition placements for care leavers that take account of their history and potential risks in independent living, eg; supported lodgings.

5.5. **Develop a furniture & removals scheme and ensure consistency in access to Community Care Grants and similar payments.** This will deliver speedier and more sustainable moves to settled homes – particularly for young people and will require joint work with short term and settled accommodation providers to scope the furniture project scheme.

5.6. **Ensure Choice Based Lettings [CBL] works to prevent homelessness and takes account of those who are most at risk.** Work with CBL developers and participate in the development project at strategic and operational levels to deliver accessibility as part of the Planned Moves service by ensuring:

- The allocation of sufficient priority to homelessness in any banding process.
- The allocation of sufficient priority to those who are in high need and unsuitable housing to reduce the need for households to become homeless in order to gain priority.
- The need to ensure genuine choice for homeless bidders – to reduce the prospect of repeat homelessness.
- The provision of sufficient support to those who are most vulnerable to enable equal access to the bidding process.

5.7 **Support the viability of appropriate sites and facilities for Gypsy and Travelling communities.** Working in the context of the county-wide Gypsy & Traveller Assessments and related work programme to:

- Ensure that relevant issues are discussed at the Homelessness Forum- participating in information gathering and raising awareness.
- Provide support and ongoing information so that Housing Solutions Team understands the specific homelessness prevention and accommodation rights of these communities.

6. Evidence & the proliferation of good practice

6.1 A key feature of this Strategy is the establishment of mechanisms which ensure that future development and prioritisation are informed by sound evidence and the latest understanding of good practice. It is crucial that methods of forecasting and evaluation, and the capacity to pass on knowledge from service delivery and improvement, are given strategic priority alongside the development of new initiatives.

Key Activities

6.2. **Deliver a statistical evidence base,** making use of existing local and regional intelligence to show what is needed and what works.

6.2.1. Devise key data sets & recording processes that will optimise data collection for key categories:

- Those at risk, including demographic and geographical factors.
- Key risk factors, including personal and structural factors.

- Levels of risk.
 - Levels of crisis.
 - Performance of key services in meeting needs or averting risk.
 - Successful Outcomes for service users.
- 6.2.2. Review the capacity to provide common baseline data across Housing Solutions and the majority of specialist support services – linked to the Gateway. This will include a review of Multi-Agency Monitoring in contributing to the data capture needed; and integration of data collection across the Housing Solutions services.
- 6.2.3. Develop a model of forecasting which informs the data capture and service monitoring processes.
- 6.3. **Undertake a programme of research into the risk of homelessness amongst minority communities within Halton** and their homelessness prevention needs, to ensure that of communities are appropriately represented in homelessness prevention and Housing Solutions services, targeting:
- Those with mental health problems.
 - Young people at risk.
 - Gypsy & Traveller communities.
 - Those with physical disabilities.
 - Members of Black and Minority Ethnic groups.
 - Members of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.
- 6.4. **Devise a user consultation and feedback strategy** to inform service and Homelessness Strategy development.
- 6.5. **Develop a good practice knowledge base** – using links and reference materials to build a virtual library, and develop good practice and new solutions seminars to work across agencies and sectors and to evaluate and refine solutions, ensuring that this feeds into new service development strategies. These processes will involve user participation and a programme will be devised in consultation with service users and stakeholders.
- 6.6. **Instigate routine evidence evaluation & reporting for strategic development** – via Homelessness Forum, Homelessness Strategy meetings and briefings.
- 6.7. **Support the development of services that currently deliver risk reduction and prevention.** This will involve providing evidence of need, evaluation of services in relation to homelessness prevention, and good practice assessment and proliferation. Target services will include:
- Mediation and Parenting support.
 - Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Schemes and related provision.
 - Anti- Social Behaviour cessation projects.

7 Development of Strategic Management

- 7.1. A vital component of the Strategy is ensuring that its initiatives are delivered and developments over the life of the Strategy remain relevant and timely. This requires a capacity to measure and evaluate performance – of both the Strategy and of the services and projects it supports. It also demands a set of structures and processes that will ensure action and maintain momentum and commitment.

Key Activities

- 7.2. **Develop clear and quantifiable outcomes** for all existing and new initiatives based on homelessness prevention success and service specific outcomes set in conjunction with service users.
- 7.3. **Devise a single set of performance indicators for evaluating the success of the Strategy** [linked to the National Indicator set]. The set should be based on the following elements detailed in the table below:

Definitions and measurement of homelessness and prevention should include all groups and all types of homelessness.	
The measurement of homelessness should cover all those without secure accommodation that can reasonably be occupied.	Measurements of success in resolving homelessness should include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Numbers making homelessness applications. → Numbers needing temporary accommodation. → Numbers gaining access to settled accommodation. → Numbers gaining access to supported accommodation.
The measurement of prevention should cover all those who are at risk of homelessness but retain their home or successfully move directly from one settled term home to another.	Measurements of success in preventing homelessness should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Numbers retaining homes. → Numbers making successful planned moves. → Numbers of previously homelessness households or those at risk who continue to sustain settled living. → Numbers of households reducing homelessness risk factors.

- 7.4. **Create a robust strategy management process**
- 7.4.1. **Review and development of the Homelessness Forum**

- Devise new terms of reference to create a strategic supervision and action planning focus.
- Scope the potential for a Homelessness Strategy “Board” supported by wider operational sub group/s, with a very clear focus for members and activities.
- Enable representation of the Forum on relevant bodies – such as Primary Care Trust and social care related activity.

This process should ensure that the Homelessness Strategy integrates with other strategic areas – particularly children & young people, mental health and employment – encouraging a wider input and user involvement. Its also spreads responsibility for strategic management across all interested parties, to maximise delivery against the action plan.

- 7.4.2. **Instigate a consistent strategy reporting and review process** – creating: routine accountability through the Council’s reporting mechanisms; transparent

feedback about decisions relating to homelessness developments; assessment of progress; and evaluation of priorities.

7.5. **Develop management of and access to development funding streams** to enable cost/benefit analysis and the realistic development of initiatives. This will involve:

- Mapping current sources of funding contributing to prevention activity – ensuring a capacity to track the value of investment.
- Develop an evidence base for prevention outcomes and activity – including analysis of ‘spend to save’ options, cross -agency support to obtain funding, and direct investment by strategic partners.
- Develop a knowledge base of funding opportunities.

Table 1: Priorities and related Delivery Programme

Delivering the strategic priorities	Delivery Programme			
	Housing Solutions	Accommodation Strategies	Evidence & Good Practice	Robust Strategic Management
1. Intervene much earlier in the homelessness risk process.	Sustaining Homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public education Resident support Joint work with "problem noticers" Planned Moves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visiting family support service 	PRS Development	Statistical evidence base	Quantifiable outcomes & Single set of performance indicators
		Revise Allocations Policy	Good practice base	
		CBL development	Support risk reduction services	
2. Coordinated & comprehensive approach to homelessness prevention.	Gateway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice & Assessment Integrate services Shop front service Cooperation with non-Gateway services Planned Moves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term accommodation access protocols Home Search Support 		Statistical evidence base	
			Support risk reduction services	
			3. Fill gaps in prevention activity to reduce the highest risks and proliferate proven interventions.	
Good practice base				
4. Support for the most marginalised.	Gateway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice & Assessment Cooperation with non-Gateway services 		Temporary accommodation & move on strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New schemes 	Research programme
				Good practice base
5. Ensure that those living in unsatisfactory housing conditions have to access appropriate housing.	Planned Moves services		Revise allocations policy CBL development PRS Development Gypsy & Traveller sites	Support services delivering risk reduction
		Statistical evidence base		
		Good practice base		
		6. Ensure appropriate emergency and short term accommodation & effective move on.		Temporary accommodation & move on strategy Furniture Scheme
7. Robust strategic development.	Evaluation & reporting			
	Management process			
Funding Management				

Homelessness Action Plan

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
Housing Solutions Gateway Scoping & Development						P1,3,5 NI 7,39,40,142,156	Successful implementation. Numbers accessing service. Numbers achieving successful outcomes.	Supporting People Funding	DM Planning & Commissioning
Housing Solutions Gateway Implementation						P1,3,5 NI 7,39,40,142,156	Successful implementation. Numbers accessing service. Numbers achieving successful outcomes.	Supporting People Funding	DM Planning & Commissioning
Redesign Housing Solutions model						P1,3 NI 7,39,40,142	Successful implementation. Numbers accessing	Within existing budgets	Principal Manager Housing Solutions

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
Revise team structure and processes							service. Numbers achieving successful outcomes.		
Develop & implement shop front access to Housing Solutions						P 1,2,3 NI 5	Successful implementation. Numbers accessing service. Numbers achieving successful outcomes.	Dependent on identified site and costings	Principal Manager Housing Solutions
Improve integration & co-operation with non-gateway services by: Early warning and referral processes. Reciprocal staff training.						P 1,3,4,5 NI 7,39,40,142.	Numbers of agencies actively engaged. Numbers accessing services. Numbers	Within existing budgets	Principal Manager, Team Manager Housing Solutions, Service Development Officer.

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
Joint assessment & planning protocols.							achieving successful outcomes.		
Develop a home visiting service to families with children over the age of 16 at risk of eviction.						P 1,3,4,5 NI 116,117,142,153,156,163.	Numbers achieving successful outcomes (planned move or remaining at home).	Within existing budgets and staffing resource	Principal Manager, Team Manager Housing Solutions, Service Development Officer.
Develop Home Search Support – link to CBL developments.						P 1,2,3 NI 5,142	Successful implementation. Numbers accessing services. Numbers achieving successful move.	Supporting People Funding for Support Workers to aid vulnerable clients in Choice Based Lettings bidding process.	Divisional Manager, Planning & Commissioning. Housing Strategy Manager.
Scope public education/raising awareness programme of housing options targeting 'high risk' groups (including peer						P 1,3,4,5. NI 32, 39, 40, 116, 117, 142,153.	Scoping of programme successfully completed.	Staff time- Within existing resources.	Service Development Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
education scheme).									
Pilot public education/raising awareness programme of housing options.						P 1,3,4,5. NI 32, 39, 40, 116, 117, 142,153.	Successful implementation. Number of events & information packages. Number of peer support providers. Reduction in homelessness incidences.	Staff time-within existing resources.	Team Manager Housing Solutions
Roll out public education/raising awareness programme.						P 1,3,4,5. NI 32, 39, 40, 116, 117, 142,153.	Successful implementation.	Staff time	Team Manager Housing Solutions/ Service Development

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
							<p>Number of events & information packages.</p> <p>Number of peer support providers.</p> <p>Reduction in homelessness incidences.</p>		Officer.
Devise general resident information pack and pilot.						<p>P 1,3,4,5.</p> <p>NI 32, 39,40.</p>	Pack finalised.	Use of Homelessness Grant or existing Communications budgets.	Service Development Officer /Principal Manager Housing Solutions.
Devise specific Private tenants' guidance.						116,117,142,153.	Guidance agreed and published.	Use of Homelessness Grant or existing Communications budgets.	Service Development Officer
Roll out targeted social landlord						116,117,142,153.	Guidance agreed and printed.	Link into existing mechanisms. Agree shared	SDO/Enforcement Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
guidance.							Number of agencies actively engaged. Reduction in homelessness due to tenancy failure.	costs with RSL partners where applicable via Housing Partnership.	
Hold resident seminars on financial and tenancy management.						116,117,142,153.	Number of events & packages. Number of agencies actively engaged. Number of residents attending seminars. Reduction in homelessness.	Link into existing mechanisms. Agree shared costs with RSL partners where applicable via Housing Partnership.	Service Development Officer /Team Manager Housing Solutions.
Scope potential to work with agencies that can spot accommodation issues i.e.						P 1,3,5 NI 30,32,39,40,116,117,142,153.	Feasibility study successfully completed.	Existing staff resource.	Service Development Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
'problem noticers.'									
Develop training programme for 'problem noticers.'						P 1,3,5 NI 30,32,39,40,116,117,142,153.	Training programme developed and a number of agencies actively engaging.	Existing training budget utilised and staff time.	Service Development Officer/Directorate Training Officer.
Pilot 'problem noticers' scheme.						P 1,3,5 NI 30,32,39,40,116,117,142,153.	Number of agencies actively engaged in process. Number of resulting referrals to Housing Solutions. Increased prevention outcomes.	Existing staff resource. Re-configuration of internal communications budget and/or Homelessness Grant.	Service Development Officer
Roll out 'problem noticers' scheme.						P 1,3,5 NI 30,32,39,40,116,117,142,153.	Number of agencies actively engaged in process.	Existing staff resource. Re-configuration	Service Development Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
							Number of resulting referrals to Housing Solutions. Increased prevention outcomes.	of internal communications budget and/or Homelessness Grant.	
Develop and implement a Repossessions Action Plan-ensuring that legal and financial representation is maximised to reduce evictions and mortgage repossessions.						P 1,3,5 NI 30,32,39,40,116,117,142,153,156.	Action Plan agreed by partners and implemented.	Homelessness Grant and re-prioritisation of existing budgets (communications and marketing). Tap into partners funding streams where possible. Communities & Local Government Loans funding	Principal Manager Housing Solutions/ Service Development Officer.

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
								utilised.	
Develop an enhanced Housing Options Approach linking employment and skills development advice/sign-posting with Housing Options.						NI 116, 117, 153, 156, 163	Number of agencies actively engaged. Increased numbers accessing employment & training. Tracked referrals from Housing Solutions to evidence outcomes.	Link to existing staffing and budgets. Growth dependent on securing increased staff resource.	Principal Manager/Team Manager Housing Solutions.
Review and revise the Council's Allocations Policy ahead of CBL to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' and that it reflects the Government's Prevention Agenda.						P 1,3. NI 116, 142, 156.	Reduction in the number of statutory acceptances and applications.	Existing staff resource.	Principal Manager Housing Solutions/Housing Strategy Manager.

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
Devise and implement a temporary accommodation strategy.						P 1,3,5. NI 39,40,116,142,156.	Reduction in B&B use. Higher rate of appropriate 'move on'. Meet the Governments Temporary Accommodation target. Increased prevention rates. Increase in supported housing.	Within existing budgets.	Principal Manager Housing Solutions.
Develop and implement a furniture and removals scheme.						P 1,3. NI 39,40.	Higher rate of appropriate move on. A reduction in 'failed tenancies.'	Supporting People budget	Service Development Officer
Set up good practice exchange and training network to tackle						116,142,156.	Increased sharing of good practice. Improved rates	Within existing resources.	Service Development Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
operational issues such as inconsistent access to Community Care Grants.							of access to Community Care Grants.		
Raise awareness around the needs of ethnic minority groups such as Gypsies and Travellers and link into and support strategic developments around needs assessment and site provision. Devise training for agencies.						P 1,2,3,5 NI 5,17,116,142,156.	Knowledge increased and raised awareness. Reduction of homelessness due to appropriate interventions.	Training and communications budgets to be utilised.	Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Co-ordinator.
Map and review statistical evidence base to inform service delivery and future strategic developments.						P 1,2,3,4,5 NI 7, 17,32,39,40,116,117,153,142,154,163.	Robust evidence to inform strategic & operational decisions.	Staff time to be re-prioritised.	Research Officer/ Service Development Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
Undertake a programme of research into the risk of homelessness amongst minority communities.						P 1,3,5. NI 7, 32, 39, 40, 116, 117, 153, 142, 154.	Number of evidence based reports, which improve practice. Implementation of new initiatives.	Integrate into existing staff work plan.	Service Development Officer
Devise and implement a programme to facilitate user consultation and feedback.						P 1,3,4. NI 5,7.	Agreement of processes and successful implementation of programme. Number of users taking part.	Staff time	Service Development Officer /Principal Manager Housing Solutions.
Develop and maintain a 'good practice' knowledge base.						P 1,2,3,4,5. NI 5,7,17,30,32,39,40,116,117,153, 142, 154, 163.	Successful implementation. Number of agencies taking part. Number of new initiatives.	Staff resource.	Research Officer/ Service Development Officer

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
Support the development of services that reduce the risk of homelessness.						P 1,3,5. NI 7,17, 32, 39, 40, 116, 117, 153, 142, 163.	Appropriate service improvements and new initiatives are delivered.	Possibility of Supporting People funds. Will depend on nature of services developed.	Service Development Officer /Principal Manager Housing Solutions.
Develop clear and quantifiable outcomes for any new projects/initiatives introduced in conjunction with the Homelessness Strategy.						P 1,2,3,4,5. NI 7,32,39,40,116,117,153,142,154,163.	Robust mechanism to evaluate success of new initiatives.	Within existing staff resource.	Service Development Officer
Agree a single set of performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.						P 1,2,3,4,5. NI 7,32,39,40,116,117,153,142,154,163.	Robust mechanism to evaluate success of strategy.	Within existing staff resource.	Service Development Officer /Principal Manager Housing Solutions.
Ensure robust strategy						P 1,2,3,4,5.	Raised profile of the	Within existing	Principal Manager Housing

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
<p>management by the Homelessness Forum:</p> <p>Reviewing Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Agreeing 'supervision' mechanisms.</p> <p>Review membership and mechanism to engage service users.</p>							<p>Homelessness Strategy and Forum.</p> <p>Appropriate and effective mechanism to monitor strategy delivery and outcomes.</p>	resources.	Solutions.
Successful management of existing funding sources and exploration of new sources of funding. Funding decisions linked						<p>P1,2,3,4,5.</p> <p>NI 7, ,32,39,40,116,117,153,142,154,163.</p>	<p>Development of services based on robust cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Potential to maximise</p>		Service Development Officer /Principal Manager Housing Solutions.

Key Activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Community Strategy priority & LAA NI	Measurement of success	Financial Implications	Responsible Officer
to deliverance of prevention outcomes.							funding opportunities realised.		

Strategic Review of Homelessness in Halton 2008

Executive Summary	4
1 Homelessness & Prevention: definitions and measurement.....	12
What is homelessness?	12
The statutory definition of homelessness	13
Measuring homelessness	13
Homelessness Prevention	14
2 Context for the Homelessness Strategy	15
The borough's profile	15
Housing supply & demand	16
Halton's strategic development	17
Regional Homelessness Strategy	19
Government Policy & Performance Framework.....	19
Conclusions & Recommendations.....	21
3 The 2003-2008 Strategy	23
Goals	23
Achievements	23
Conclusions & Recommendations.....	26
4 The Extent of Homelessness in Halton	27
Households using the Statutory Service.....	27
Households using the HHT Options & Advice Service.....	34
Households using Halton's Prevention Service	36
Overall level of homelessness.....	38
Conclusions & Recommendations.....	41
5 Halton's provision for those facing - or most at risk of – homelessness.....	43
The Council's homelessness services.....	43
Homelessness and Debt Advice Services.....	46
Support during family breakdown	48
Domestic abuse response.....	49
Support for young people.....	51
Anti Social Behaviour cessation	52
Drug & alcohol support.....	52
Support for those with mental health problems	53
Outreach support for general risk groups	54
Registered social landlords' support for tenants at risk.....	55
Support from Housing Benefit	55
The Council's Enforcement Service	56
Conclusions & Recommendations.....	57
6 Short Term Accommodation	61
Current strategic context	61

Sources of accommodation.....	61
Support provision in short term accommodation.....	63
Gypsy & Traveller accommodation.....	63
Conclusions & Recommendations.....	63
7 Settled Housing	65
Access to Social Housing.....	65
The Private Rented Sector.....	66
Low cost home ownership.....	68
Gypsy & Traveller sites	68
General access considerations	68
Conclusions & Recommendations.....	69
8 Forecasting future homelessness	72
Historical pattern of homelessness in Halton.....	72
Current risk levels and the impact of strategies and new services.....	73
Emerging risks	73
Strategic resources	75
Conclusions	75
Appendix 1 Review & strategy development methods.....	77
Appendix 2 Strategic priorities and planned activity in the 2003-2008 strategy.....	78

Executive Summary

1. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires each local authority to review the extent and nature of homelessness in their area and to produce a strategy and action plan to prevent and tackle the problem. Accordingly, Halton's first Homelessness Strategy was published in 2003, creating a 5-year programme of measures to develop and improve services for those who become homeless and to prevent homelessness in the borough wherever possible.
2. The first strategy delivered an unprecedented collective response from services and housing providers across the borough to reduce homelessness levels and achieve significant improvements in the scope and scale of services.
3. A second strategic review of homelessness was undertaken in 2008 and updated in 2009 to reflect the return of the formerly contracted out homelessness and housing advice service to direct Council control in October 2008. The review has provided a robust evidence base on which to develop the Borough's Homelessness Strategy for 2009-13. This review document details the data and information from service users and stakeholders used to inform the new Homelessness Strategy. Services and delivery models were analysed and gaps or duplications highlighted. Recommendations were made on the basis of the findings of the review process.

Methods used in drawing up this review

4. The review of current need and provision was conducted via desktop research and analysis of primary and secondary data and assessment of existing strategic and performance review documents. Information gathering exercises were carried out 6 months apart, with a series of detailed follow up interviews with key agencies. The strategy was also informed by user consultations carried out in relation to the homelessness services and provision for young people. A range of service users and stakeholders attended these events across all the collective 'homelessness' services. Further details can be found at Appendix 1.

Definitions

5. This review has used the CLG¹ definition of homelessness as "a lack of secure accommodation that can reasonably be occupied".
6. The main reasons for people losing their homes in England are:
 - Parents/friends/relatives no longer willing to accommodate.
 - Breakdown of relationships.
 - Loss of private rented homes – usually at the end of fixed term tenancies.
7. Structural problems- such as the shortage of affordable housing - turn home loss into homelessness. Additionally, a number of personal factors can predispose people to the risk of homelessness – e.g. debt, domestic abuse, drug or alcohol addiction, and living in insecure or poor quality housing.

¹ Communities & Local Government – the government department with responsibility for homelessness

8. Under the Housing Act 1996², each local authority has a duty to help those who are homeless. The law defines homelessness broadly, and specifies the categories of people entitled to help. Only those who are most vulnerable [e.g. those with dependent children] and who have not caused their own homelessness are entitled to help with what is known as 'the main housing duty' i.e. assistance with accommodation.
9. The national measurement of homelessness is the level of this statutory homelessness- i.e. the number of people who apply for help under the Housing Act.
10. Whilst this is a valuable indicator of the scale of the problem amongst some of the most vulnerable, it does not capture all those who are homeless but not entitled to help, or those who do not seek rehousing under the law.
11. The Government has actively encouraged local authorities to introduce early intervention and prevention measures to avoid households being assisted at the point of crisis. Measurement of prevention has inevitably concentrated on the reduction of statutory homeless applications and acceptances. It is important to consider this when assessing the overall demand for 'homelessness services' in Halton.

Local strategic context

12. Halton is reversing a long-term decline in its population and in its economic and social conditions. However, it is still clearly one of the most deprived boroughs in England – the 10th most deprived in the northwest. Its decline created a legacy of poverty and social exclusion, which are significant factors in the risk of homelessness. The Housing Needs Survey found that there is an annual shortfall in affordable housing of 176 homes. It was recommended that this figure should be split between rent and shared ownership properties.

The 2003-2008 Strategy

13. Halton's first Homelessness Strategy met the majority of its aims. Key developments included:

- **Establishment of a Homelessness Forum.**
- **Multi Agency Monitoring** - a common data collection system.
- **A Deposit Guarantee Scheme** – to help people secure privately rented accommodation.
- **A mediation service** to prevent young people becoming homeless.
- **Increased access to hostel accommodation.**
- **A Common Nomination scheme** to settled housing provided by Registered Social Landlords.
- **A Homelessness Prevention Service**, working with those at high risk of or actually homeless to reinstate them in their home, or get speedy access to settled accommodation.

² As amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

15. Some initiatives set out in the 2003 strategy are still to be delivered and remain pertinent and will be carried over to actions required in the new strategy.
16. Consultation highlighted a desire for stronger user consultation processes and more 'routine' consultation. The Borough's new Homelessness Strategy 2009-13 will also address this.

The Extent of Homelessness in Halton

17. The review process examined data from the 3 key services provided by or on behalf of the Council in 2007/08. At that time this was– the Statutory Homelessness Service, the Options & Advice service and the Homelessness Prevention Service.
18. In 2007/8, 296 households applied to the Statutory Homelessness Service, a 62% reduction from 780 in 2003/4. 221 households were accepted as homeless through no fault of their own and in priority need for assistance. This is a 14% reduction since 2003/4. These changes also coincided with: a national fall in homelessness after a peak caused by changes in the legislation in 2002/3; changes to Halton's homelessness service practice; the development of the Prevention services and Deposit Guarantee Scheme; and a new system for service access which allowed more filtering of cases.
19. Those accepted in 2007/8 represent 75% of all those who applied, whereas in 2003/4, this figure was 33%. As the number of decisions fell, the rate of acceptance increased. Wider analysis suggests that this pattern is linked to more appropriate use of the service by those who need it and are entitled to help.
20. Data from all three services suggests that households seeking help because they were facing home-loss in 2007/8 numbered 1,093.
21. There is concern - backed by evidence from the Multi Agency Monitoring project- that more people are now seeking help who have multiple problems, including mental illness and drug or alcohol addiction, and that the majority of those using the services lack the skills to enable employment, and better housing prospects.
22. Across the three principal services 46 clients had slept rough or were of no fixed abode in 2007/8. Multi Agency Monitoring for Halton shows that 97 people reported sleeping rough in 2007/8. Halton carried out a rough sleeper "street count" in March 2008 where one person was officially counted.
23. Evidence from the review of these services suggests a number of challenges that need to be addressed by the new Homelessness Strategy:
 - The level of homelessness arising from the parental home.
 - Levels of homelessness amongst those with dependent children – over 600 children and 70 expected children were homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2007/8.
 - Levels of homelessness amongst young people under 24yrs.

- Debt related homelessness and the potential for this to worsen over the coming years, requiring early assistance.
 - Street homelessness reported amongst some key need groups.
 - The prevalence of domestic abuse as a cause of homelessness.
 - The employability of many who are at risk of home loss.
 - Multiple needs amongst those seeking help.
 - The higher levels of repeat enquiries – around 7% - for service users of the Prevention and Options & Advice services.
24. The merger of the 3 principal homelessness services in October 2008 into the Council's Housing Solutions Team should result in a comprehensive and a more proactive approach to those at risk of homelessness.

Homelessness & Debt Advice Services

25. The Citizens Advice Bureau, Shelter and the Council's own Welfare rights service offer a mixture of legal advice and practical support to households at risk of homelessness and debt, including representation at court.
26. The CAB handled 3,000 debt advice cases in 2007/8. Around 500 households were already in direct danger of losing their home due to rent or mortgage arrears. 1,500 had debt problems, which if not dealt with would put at risk their ability to pay for day to day living, potentially leading to home loss.
27. There is also a Court Duty Desk scheme, which provides free, independent advice to households at Court Hearings to try to avert homelessness as a result of mortgage or rent arrears. Take-up rates are low and the new strategy will need to consider ways to increase take-up such as effective marketing strategies.

Specialist Support

28. A wide range of services offer support to those who have been or are at risk of homelessness in Halton. Many of these are commissioned through Supporting People [SP]. The SP funded services alone assisted 400 people in 2007/8.
29. The support provided – both in the community and via accommodation such as hostels, involves helping clients to set up a home, live independently, manage their affairs and increase employment prospects.
30. Most provision targets key groups most at risk of homelessness, including:
- **Families at risk of relationship breakdown.**
 - **Households risking evictions due to anti social behaviour,**
 - **Those experiencing Domestic abuse.**
 - **Young people.**
 - **Those with drink and drug addictions.**
 - **Those with mental health problems.**
31. Mainstream providers also work to assist homelessness prevention. For example

- **Registered Social Landlords:** most have in place early intervention mechanisms that provide support to tenants.
 - **Housing Benefit Section:** including the mobile Benefits Express facility - and Discretionary Housing Payments [DHP] which can assist those who might otherwise suffer hardship – including homelessness.
32. There is general satisfaction with provision, but consultation revealed the need for better coordination between services, with streamlined access, improved information and more joint work, e.g. with assessments and delivery. There was also a desire for more user involvement in service development and design.
33. There are strong concerns about the needs of those with lower level mental health problems and those with chronic addictions.
34. The majority of services are located at the crisis end of the homelessness risk process, intervening after problems have escalated. Prevention is a lower cost option, both financially and personally for those at risk. A challenge for the strategy will be to ensure more efficient take up of existing services and also to shift focus over time to earlier intervention that will yield a higher rate of successful prevention.

Short term accommodation

35. Short-term accommodation in Halton consists of hostels, specialist temporary accommodation and bed & Breakfast hotels. Statutory homeless households are generally referred to the Grangeway Court complex in Runcorn; whilst single homeless people have access to hostels. B&B is used by the statutory homelessness services as a stopgap of last resort. A refuge is available for women and children escaping domestic abuse.
- In 2007/8, 138 households were placed in B&B hotels, including 61 families; 94 households were placed in Grangeway Court.
 - **Hostels** A total of 128 bed-spaces are available across the four hostels in Halton. This includes 6 direct access bed spaces (not direct referral). Access is usually subject to a waiting list.
 - **Women's refuge:** Halton Women's Aid offers 16 bed-spaces.
 - **Grangeway Court** offers 32 self contained units
 - In all types of short term accommodation support is provided.
36. Short term housing in Halton is oversubscribed. 92% of hostel accommodation is in Runcorn, which can create problems of access and retaining family and community contact for those who become homeless from Widnes. The new strategy will need to address this imbalance. Potentially there is scope to build on the feasibility studies that the YMCA has undertaken regarding expanding their base to Widnes. There is also a need for more emergency provision that removes the requirement for B&B use. Provision is also lacking for those with very complex needs, who cannot cope with or would be excluded from mainstream accommodation.
37. Halton has a shortfall of between 10 and 15 spaces for immediate access by people without dependent children. Consideration should be given to move on practice; and to the provision of non-traditional accommodation– e.g. supported lodgings for young people and accommodation that can cater for ongoing substance abuse.

38. There is scope to remodel short term accommodation provision, to route people to the most appropriate forms of temporary accommodation, secure settled homes, and reduce the need for homelessness applications.

Settled housing

Social housing

39. The Housing Register offers the principal rehousing route for those accepted under homelessness legislation. In 2007/8 there were 1,720 households on the register. Just over 380 were offered accommodation and 55% of these offers were made to homelessness households.
40. There is a tension between meeting the needs of those who are at high risk of homelessness because of the unsuitability of their housing, and those who have actually become homeless. Halton's main cause of homelessness is family breakdown, and a particularly high proportion of households during 2007/08 remained "homeless at home" for long periods awaiting an offer of settled housing. It could be argued that the Allocations Policy offers an incentive for homelessness applications to be made in order to speed up rehousing.
41. This does not suggest that levels of need are not high amongst this group, or that living arrangements are reasonable, but it does indicate a need for broader preventative approaches. It is anticipated that Choice Based Lettings³ will be introduced from 2010 in line with government targets. Until Choice Based Lettings is introduced, there is a need to review the allocation of housing under the register to create a more preventative focus, affording more priority to those at risk.
42. Mechanisms are being developed to increase access to affordable housing. The Housing Strategy addresses the need for additional affordable housing with plans to provide 500 new homes, and 176 affordable units split between rent and shared ownership.

The private rented sector

43. The 2003-2008 Homelessness Strategy enabled the development of a Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS), which assisted tenants to secure a private tenancy by providing the landlord with a deposit on their behalf.
44. In 2007/8 314 households were referred to the DGS, and 114 households assisted to take up private rented sector tenancies. Over 100 households referred to the scheme by the Prevention service were families with dependent children. This has now evolved into a Bond Guarantee Scheme (no physical transfer of funds takes place unless there are issues in the first 12 months of a tenancy). This will permit the funding available to assist more households.

³ A single scheme replacing housing registers, where vacancies are advertised and where prospective tenants can "bid" for (i.e. express an interest in) the vacancies.

Forecasting

45. Whilst levels of statutory homelessness have reduced, the current pattern suggests that need is reaching a plateau. Demand for housing options and preventative services appear to indicate that overall, up to 800 households a year will remain at acute risk of homelessness without further interventions.
46. The future is complicated by uncertain economic prospects, which suggests an increase in debt related homelessness. House purchase, the development of new affordable housing and the expansion of the private rented sector will possibly all be hampered by recession.
47. It is too early to predict the success of government attempts to remedy some of the economic problems, or the impact of many new initiatives, such as the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme (aimed at assisting homeowners with mortgage arrears to remain in their home); although clearly there are further opportunities to reduce risks and reinvigorate markets.
48. It will be vital to ensure that the capacity to forecast is delivered in the future, so that the setting of measurable outcomes and attention to monitoring and evaluation processes will generate authoritative information for service delivery.

Key Recommendations for the Strategy to address

- Provide mechanisms to enable those at risk of homelessness or using homelessness services to contribute to the review of progress and the development of new solutions.
- Ensure a comprehensive approach to intelligence gathering and analysis to inform future strategic developments and outcome based assessments of services.
- Embed evidence based good practice and national prevention initiatives in development activity.
- Deliver a new approach to service provision which aims for a comprehensive response to homelessness and risk and which enables the earliest possible targeted interventions.
- Enable specific service developments and interventions focused on those who are most at risk including young people, families with children, those at risk of debt, and those facing multiple problems – particularly mental health and substance abuse.
- Combine homelessness services with measures to improve employability; linking with employment and training services.
- Support RSLs in the development of prevention strategies, and work with them to learn from and proliferate financial inclusion and worklessness reduction.
- Ensure mechanisms for cross departmental and organisation work to improve service delivery and development and the encouragement of joint planning to resolve barriers to rehousing for :

- Young people.
 - Those with drug & alcohol problems.
 - People with mental health problems.
 - People experiencing domestic abuse.
-
- Consider research or specifically commission local research into the homelessness-related needs of those with mental health problems and dual diagnosis; encourage greater links between services and the development of appropriate provision.
 - Deliver a Temporary Accommodation (TA) Strategy to meet the Government target to reduce TA use: including the potential for new provision.
 - Scope the feasibility of appropriate accommodation and day centre provision for those with chronic substance misuse and street homelessness.
 - Enable provision for dedicated transition placements for care leavers– scoping the potential for a supported lodgings scheme
 - Review and revise the Council's Allocation Policy.
 - Support the expansion of the existing recycled furniture scheme.
 - Enable capacity for pro-active assessment - anticipating trends and need by developing coherent baseline data and a model of forecasting the need for 'homelessness services'.

1 Homelessness & Prevention: Definitions and Measurement

What is homelessness?

- 1.1 This strategy uses the Communities & Local Government⁴ definition of homelessness as “a lack of secure accommodation that can reasonably be occupied”.
- 1.2 Homelessness is caused by a variety of factors. The main reasons for people losing their homes in England are:
 - Parents/friends/relatives no longer willing to accommodate.
 - Breakdown of relationships.
 - Loss of private rented homes – usually at the end of fixed term tenancies.
- 1.3 A shortage of affordable housing plays a major part in turning home-loss into homelessness when people are forced to leave their homes and cannot find another long-term option.
- 1.4 Homelessness can affect anyone from any walk of life. However, there are factors which can predispose people to the risk of homelessness – debt which might lead to eviction, living in violent relationships; behaviour such as drug or alcohol addiction which reduces a person’s capacity to take responsibility for their home; living in poor quality or insecure housing with fewer rights; living for long periods in institutions such as prisons or the armed forces which make independent living harder.
- 1.5 A substantial body of research consistently highlights that those who face economic and social deprivation are far more likely to become homeless – due to the greater number of risk factors leading to homelessness and the inability to find a new home which is affordable.
- 1.6 The impact of homelessness on the community is substantial. Homelessness increases the risk of physical and mental ill health for all those affected – including children, and can lead to increased abuse of drugs and alcohol. The disruption it causes puts pressure on health, social and education resources and the criminal justice system. It increases the risk of relationship breakdown and unemployment, and the social and economic cost of resolving those problems. There are also costs to landlords and housing agencies – both in the process of eviction and in the provision of emergency housing to accommodate those who become homeless. For the individual, homelessness robs them of the stability from which to take an active part in society and develop their potential.

⁴ The government department with responsibility for homelessness

The statutory definition of homelessness

- 1.7 Under the Housing Act 1996⁵, every local authority has a duty towards those who are homeless. This includes: people who have lost their home or cannot gain access to it; those who have a home but cannot reasonably be expected to live in it (for example because their health or safety is significantly at risk); and those who have a mobile home, but nowhere to pitch it and live in it. An authority's legal duties vary depending on the circumstances of the homeless person and the reasons for their homelessness. Only those people who fall within specific categories of "priority need"⁶ and in addition, have not caused their own homelessness,⁷ are entitled to have accommodation secured for them – usually via social housing (e.g. council or housing association property), or from a private landlord. Those not entitled to this full rehousing duty but who have a priority need, can be offered a limited stay in temporary housing. Every applicant not entitled to rehousing is also given advice and assistance to find their own accommodation.
- 1.8 Local authorities must operate an allocations policy, which sets out the process for selecting and prioritising homeless applicants for social housing. They must give homeless people who are entitled to rehousing a reasonable preference within those priorities. Authorities are no longer obliged to keep a Housing Register – a waiting list for those seeking social housing. However, many – including Halton – continue to do so.

Measuring homelessness

- 1.9 The only consistent national measurement of homelessness in the England is of those who are considered "statutorily" homeless – ie those who make an application as homeless under the law. Details about households, the cause of homeless, and what happens to them, are only recorded for those accepted as 'statutory homeless' i.e. where the Council accepts a legal duty to provide accommodation. This information is collected quarterly by all local authorities on a voluntarily basis under the "P1E" statistical return to CLG. For this reason there can be a significant divergence between the numbers of those who are actually homeless and those counted in national statistics. However, data based on P1E returns provides an indicator of those who are in the greatest need or most vulnerable.

⁵ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts1996/ukpga_19960052_en_14#pt7 As amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. There is supplementary guidance provided by the government to which local authorities must have regard. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homelessnesscode>

⁶ Priority need is given automatically to household containing a pregnant woman or dependent children, to 16-17; to some groups of care leavers aged 18-21, and to people who lose their home because of an emergency such as a fire or disaster. Other people can be accepted as having priority need if they can show that they are vulnerable as a result of their age, illness, disability, domestic violence, or was previously in care, in the armed forces or in prison.

⁷ Intentionally homeless– eg those who have been evicted for failing to pay their rent, when they were able to do so.

Homelessness Prevention

The prevention agenda and the development of good practice

- 1.10 The Government now encourages local authorities to reduce the extent of homelessness by taking a preventative approach to tackling homelessness. A number of prevention initiatives have been developed and encouraged nationwide, including “tenancy sustainment” services to support people in managing their affairs and avoiding risks that might cause them to lose their homes; schemes to improve home security and support for those who suffer domestic abuse; payments that will enable people to move directly into a new home; advice to help people who are in debt, or facing other risks to their housing; and help to increase access to the private rented sector.

Measuring prevention

- 1.11 The measurement of homelessness prevention nationally has inevitably concentrated on reducing levels of statutory homelessness applications and acceptances. However, whilst reductions may indicate prevention, they may also indicate reluctance amongst homeless households to follow the statutory route, or changes in homelessness practice which reduce applications, or manage demand in a different way – e.g. awarding points on the local housing register to a homeless person in a hostel to guarantee re-housing, without the need for a homelessness application.
- 1.12 This strategy defines prevention of homelessness as successful measures which enable someone to stay in their home or to move directly from one settled home to another.

2 Context for the Homelessness Strategy

The Borough's profile

- 2.1 Halton is reversing long-term decline in its population and economic and social conditions. Growth in the 1970's arose from the development of Runcorn in particular, with the creation of large scale council housing settlements, encouraging migration from surrounding urban areas in the expectation of continued growth for the local chemical and manufacturing industries. The subsequent decline of those markets, the poorly designed housing provision and a lack of amenities, created a legacy of emigration and of large-scale unemployment for those remaining. The population is now relatively young, there is little inward migration, and the ethnic minority population is less than 2% of the whole (although this figure may well be higher or rise following the accession of A8 European countries).
- 2.2 Halton's decline created a negative impact on the health, education and skills of a large section of the population. Such levels of poverty and social exclusion are significant factors in the risk of homelessness, generating debt, the breakdown of relationships, problems with alcohol and drugs, and disengagement within communities leading to anti social behaviour and crime.
- 2.3 Economic downturn in Halton reduced investment in housing conditions or new affordable housing. Right to buy sales and a small private rented sector have limited choice for new households and those needing to move.
- 2.4 Halton is tackling these fundamental problems, resulting in a substantial movement since 2004 from 16st to 30th in the deprivation ranking of 354 districts in England⁸. However, Halton is still clearly one of the most deprived boroughs in England – the 10th most deprived in the northwest. This position will continue to have an impact on levels of homelessness.

2.5 Characteristics of this level of deprivation include

- ◆ **Unemployment** - claimant unemployment is the 5th highest amongst neighbouring authority areas in northwest.
- ◆ **Economic inactivity**- only 68.2% of Halton's potential workforce are employed.
- ◆ **Poverty** – almost a third of households have an annual income of less than £10,000 and almost 50% of household receive some form of financial assistance from the state.
- ◆ **Health** – Halton is in the bottom 6% of districts in the country in respect of positive health indicators.
- ◆ **Mental health**– extrapolating from national averages, the likely incidence of mental illness in Halton⁹ will be over 400 people with severe and enduring

⁸ 1st being the most deprived

⁹ Taking into account socio-economic factors affecting mental illness

mental health problems and 15,000 people experiencing depression, anxiety and phobias¹⁰.

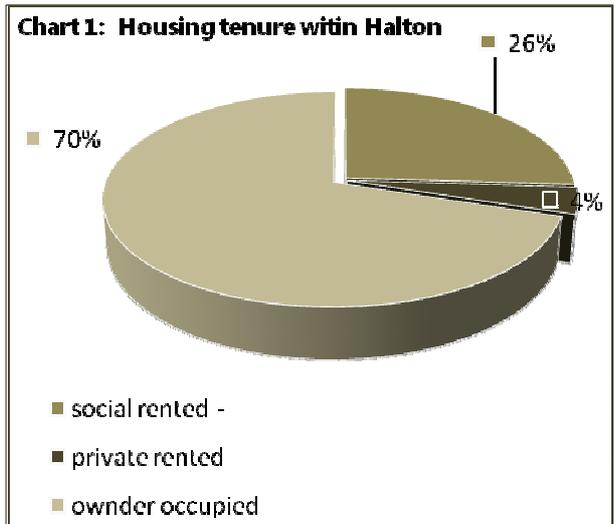
- ◆ **Drug and alcohol abuse** – estimates¹¹ suggest that there are over 1,700 problematic drug users in Halton, and research shows over 800 hospital patient admissions identified an alcohol-related illness.
- ◆ **Domestic violence** – the police recorded over 1,400 offences in 2004.
- ◆ **Ex offenders** – over 100 offenders return or are referred to Halton each year¹²

- 2.6 It is important also to note that some areas within Halton are considerably more disadvantaged than others, and that 8 “super output areas”¹³ in Halton are in the top 35 most deprived areas in England.

Housing supply & demand

- 2.7 The correlation between the lack of affordable housing and homelessness is clear. The principal source of affordable housing is the social rented sector¹⁴. In Halton, this housing stock has reduced by over 5% since 2003 as a result of regeneration demolition and sales.

- 2.8 On the housing market, prices are low compared to national and regional averages, and combined with income levels, suggest that house purchase in Halton is affordable. However, the Housing Needs Survey¹⁵ uncovered a developing affordability gap for a significant number of households. Around 76% of new households formed in the last two years were below the income level necessary to buy the cheapest properties available. This also applies to 70% of “concealed households” (ie adults living for example with parents and wanting to move). For these and many existing households, affordability is also threatened by a relatively low level of savings from which to afford deposits.



- 2.9 The very small private rented sector also highlights affordability problems – with 61% of new households being unable to afford market rents. Added to this is the unpopularity of the sector – preferred by only 1% of those seeking to move to new housing.

¹⁰ Halton Mental Health & Accommodation Strategy

¹¹ Liverpool John Moores University 2004

¹² Cheshire Probation Service

¹³ These are smaller geographical areas used for census analysis.

¹⁴ le provided by councils, and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) -housing associations and trusts

¹⁵ Halton Borough Council Housing Needs & Market Assessment Survey – DCA 2006

- 2.10 The Survey found that there is an annual shortfall in affordable housing of 176 homes, with a recommendation that this should be split between rented and shared ownership housing.

Halton's strategic development

- 2.11 The Council has in place a number of strategies designed to improve the life and prospects of Halton's population.
- 2.12 **The Community Strategy 2006-2011** contains the overarching vision and plan for the borough, and is led by Halton's Local Strategic Partnership – a body which brings together representatives from all sectors of work and life in Halton vital to its future prospects. It sets out five priorities areas for action and investment to improve and develop Halton.
- A Healthy Halton
 - Halton's Urban Renewal
 - Halton's Children and Young People
 - Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
 - A Safer Halton
- 2.13 The strategy tackles problems, which are also risk factors for homelessness. Action includes commitments to increase employability and access to employment, reduce drug and alcohol abuse, increase support to people in debt and increase access to affordable housing.
- 2.14 This is supported by the Corporate Plan –detailing how strategy will be delivered, with progress measured across every section of the Council. Flowing from the Community Strategy, there are also a number of strategies for specific areas of work.
- 2.15 **The Housing Strategy 2008-2011** details the plans to improve and develop the supply and condition of housing and the environment in which people live. Specific priorities for action include
- Continued regeneration of declining areas in Halton
 - Ensuring that homes are of a decent standard across all sectors
 - Improving conditions in the private rented sector.
 - Increasing the levels of affordable housing
 - Ensuring that there are enough homes for an increasing elderly population.
 - Developing facilities for Gypsies and Travellers.
 - Introducing Choice Based Lettings to replace the current social housing allocations system – to increase options for those seeking social housing and movement for existing tenants.
- 2.16 Factors, which influence the success of the Housing Strategy, include the allocation of funding from central and regional government to enable house building and development, which is uncertain at the time of writing.
- 2.17 **The Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010** - sets out the provision, funding and evaluation of housing-related support services commissioned by the Council, which enable people to live independently. These services avert homeless or the need for people to live in residential accommodation. The types of service include

developing living skills such as managing finances, understanding responsibilities and rights, claiming benefits and managing or changing behaviour, such as addiction and offending - along with developing employment and education opportunities and access to vital health and support services.

- 2.18 Many Supporting People (SP) services are aimed at preventing institutional care eg for elderly people or those with learning difficulties. Some are directly concerned with supporting homeless people – including families - to re-establish themselves in the community and avoid repeat homelessness. Others that help young people or people who have mental health problems, drug addiction or offending behaviour are clearly helping to tackle some of the root causes of homelessness. Further details on services are found in Section 5.
- 2.19 Priorities within the current SP Strategy which will impact on the Homelessness Strategy include
- Expanding support for single homeless people with support needs- including young people at risk and those leaving care.
 - Developing services to people with mental health problems.
 - Converting more of the generic support services provided for vulnerable households into targeted work with specific groups.
- 2.20 **The Children & Young People’s Plan** - Halton’s strategy for Children & Young People follows the strategic framework set out in the Government’s Every Child Matters programme. Halton’s priorities for children which link to homelessness and its prevention include the following:
- Be Healthy**
- Improve physical health and increase opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles.
 - Enhance emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing.
- Stay Safe**
- Extend prevention and early intervention.
 - Increase targeted support for vulnerable children.
- Enjoy & Achieve**
- Improve educational outcomes for all children.
- Make A Positive Contribution**
- Increase young people’s participation and community engagement.
 - Reduce offending and anti-social behaviour of children and young people.
- Achieve Economic Well-Being**
- Improve access to suitable accommodation.
- 2.21 **The Safer Halton Partnership** – accountable to the Local Strategic Partnership, this has developed objectives to tackle domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse by:
- Increasing the number of drug treatment places.
 - Developing a multi agency strategy to combat alcohol abuse.
 - Increasing provision for people escaping domestic violence.
 - Reducing repeat homelessness by people fleeing domestic violence.

Regional Homelessness Strategy

- 2.22 The Northwest Regional Housing Group (NWRHG) which is accountable to the Northwest Regional Assembly has set out a strategy for homelessness reduction in the region, with the following priorities
- Prevent homelessness.
 - Increase access to a choice of settled homes.
 - Develop plans and activity based on a robust understanding of homelessness and housing need.
- 2.23 Its position within the region will enable NWRHG to influence other key strategic developments, such as affordable housing development. As a strategic body, it has produced an action plan largely focused on supporting and enabling local authorities to carry out and develop homelessness-related work, which will achieve the 3 priorities. Practical activities include
- Developing an understanding of the problem via research, intelligence gathering and information exchanges between authorities.
 - Providing information– for example a regional directory of services tackling homelessness.
 - Providing support to local authorities by developing and promoting protocols and other mechanisms that will deliver greater levels of success.
 - Collating evidence of good practice and sharing this across the region.

Government Policy & Performance Framework

National performance

- 2.24 According to Government figures the number of households accepted by local authorities under the homelessness law is half that of 2003/04, with annual decreases – including a 2% fall between 2007 and 2008. The Government estimates a 74% reduction in rough sleeping over the past 10 years.
- 2.25 The number of households living in temporary accommodation has fallen: with a 12% reduction between 2007 and 2008, it is now 26% lower than in 2004. This fall includes an end to the use of Bed & Breakfast hotels to accommodate households with children dependent for longer than 6 weeks.
- 2.26 The Government has developed a series of national targets relating to homelessness. Currently these include:
- Halving the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010.
 - Measures to tackle youth homelessness including:
 - Ending the use of B&B hotels to accommodate 16 and 17 year olds under the homelessness law, by 2010.
 - Greater access to homelessness mediation services.

- A new national supported lodgings development scheme enabling accommodation, advice and mediation for young people who cannot remain in the family home.

Prevention development

- 2.27 To achieve these reductions in homelessness, the Government has set out a prevention agenda fostering changes in practice and provision. Key elements include the development of more settled homes – currently being implemented through national and regional strategies to increase supply and affordable homes; support to vulnerable people via the Supporting People programme to enable independent living, and tackling some of the key risk factors involved in homelessness.
- 2.28 The Government is also seeking to improve services for people who become homeless – including the transformation of hostels into “places of change”, which develop the skills and abilities of residents to resettle successfully and avoid repeat homelessness.
- 2.29 A cornerstone of the agenda is the encouragement of local authorities to take a strategic approach to prevention and to develop new practices in dealing with homeless households. This has included promotion of “options interviews” where local authority homelessness services explore all possibilities of clients returning to their home or finding alternative housing without necessarily making a homelessness application. This might include making a home safe enough for someone fleeing domestic violence to return, mediating with parents to enable young people to continue living at the family home, negotiating with landlords, or helping people to move into a privately rented home.

Evaluating success in reducing and preventing homelessness

- 2.30 As noted in Section 1, the P1E data on statutory homeless households provided by local authorities is the principal source of information from which to evaluate progress and make meaningful national and regional comparisons. Until 2008 the Government had also assessed progress via a series of performance indicators under the Best Value system, including: the assessment of number of homelessness preventions achieved through options advice and assistance, the number of households in specific types of temporary accommodation; and numbers of repeat homeless cases.
- 2.31 From April 2008, a national set of 198 performance indicators were introduced against which the full range of local authority activities will be audited. Within the new indicators, authorities chose up to 35 as the basis for Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets – which influence the authority’s strategic action, investment and commissioning priorities. The Council is also at liberty to set additional targets and performance indicators which reflect local concerns.

- 2.32 The specific homelessness indicator is
- NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation.

Related national indicators are

- NI 141 - % of vulnerable people achieving independent living.
- NI 142 - % of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living.

Figures

Within Halton's LAA, targets have been set for

- NI 142- % of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living.

- NI 154 - supply of new homes.

- 2.33 P1E data is still collected, and now includes information about those helped via prevention activity in addition to those helped under the homelessness law.
- 2.34 The prevention agenda pursued by the Government has generated a considerable body of good practice evidence and guidance, along with government led initiatives to support prevention – such as the National Homelessness Advice Service which develops community based advice services and the links between the voluntary and statutory sectors to combat homelessness.

Government Funding for homelessness prevention

- 2.35 Local Authorities may use Revenue Support Grant to fund homelessness services and to prevent homelessness. Additional dedicated grants include the Homelessness Grant and the Supporting People grant.

- 2.36 The Homelessness Grant is currently provided until 2011. The Supporting People grant¹⁶ will be amalgamated into the Local Authorities' Area Based Grant from 2009/10. This is a single pot from which local authorities fund activity within their Local Area Agreements.

Figures

Homelessness Grant for Halton

- **£31K** per yr.

Supporting People allocation for Halton

- 2009/10 **£7.2M**
- 2010/11 **£6.8M**

Conclusions & Recommendations

- 2.37 The measurement of statutory homelessness provides a valuable indicator of levels within the borough. However, it does not capture all those who are not entitled to help under the legal safety net, or who do not see it as an effective solution.
- 2.38 Halton's approach to tackling homelessness is to take a robust and creative preventative approach. This must be applicable to and measurable across all groups and categories of homelessness.
- 2.39 Whilst the performance indicators and LAA targets give limited incentives for high performance in homeless prevention, the Homelessness Strategy should be seen as a significant contribution to fulfilling the Council's wider goals for Halton within

¹⁶ Note that this covers a very wide range of services including those for elderly people and adults with learning difficulties, which tend to be aimed at avoiding institutional care.

the Community Strategy such as; the strategic desire to invest in preventative activity;¹⁷ obligations under the homelessness legislation; and alignment with national homelessness policy development.

- 2.40 Halton's Homelessness Strategy must contribute to the overall Community Strategy and dovetail with strategies allied to homelessness prevention.

The Homelessness Strategy must

R1. Take the lead in defining success and setting relevant indicators for services and activity.

- i. Definitions and measurement of homelessness and prevention should include all groups and all types of homelessness.
- ii. Measurements of success in resolving homelessness should include
 - Numbers making homelessness applications.
 - Numbers needing temporary accommodation.
 - Numbers gaining access to settled accommodation.
 - Numbers gaining access to supported accommodation.
- iii. The measurement of prevention should cover all those who are at risk of homelessness but retain their home or successfully move directly from one settled term home to another.

The Homelessness Strategy should

R2. Assist strategic decision making by effective use of existing local and regional intelligence to:

- i. Develop methods of forecasting and enable new solutions planning
- ii. Support the understanding of affordable housing needs in the borough.
- iii. Add value to the services currently in place which tackle homelessness risk factors, eg: by providing intelligence to help key services develop, improve, and make constructive links with homelessness prevention activity.
- iv. Contribute to regional strategic development.
- v. Demonstrate success in relation to the Community Strategy and LAA targets.

R3. Target solutions that take account of the varying levels of deprivation in Halton across communities and particular geographical areas.

R4. Ensure that evidence based good practice and national prevention initiatives are embedded in development activity.

R5. Develop local and regional partnership working to generate new solutions and good practice.

¹⁷ Local Area Agreement for Halton - 2008-2011

3 The 2003-2008 Strategy

Goals

- 3.1. Halton's first strategy concentrated on three main areas
- i. The coordination of the strategy itself and of key homelessness services - this included aims to set up a Homelessness Forum, review and improve homelessness services and develop the capacity to monitor and evaluate provision across Halton.
 - ii. The prevention of homelessness – aiming to introduce new services as alternatives to the Council's statutory homelessness service; target groups at risk of becoming homeless; and improve information about services.
 - iii. Access to accommodation – this included targets to increase units of temporary accommodation and improve access to social rented housing.

Achievements

- 3.2. This strategy achieved the majority of its objectives. Substantial developments and improvements emerged and are outlined below. The overall progress made against the strategy's aims is outlined in the table at Appendix 2.
- **A Homelessness Forum** has now been established which meets quarterly to discuss the direction of homelessness services and understand the implications of wider strategic developments related to homelessness. There are now over 30 members coming from key departments within the council (including Benefits, Community Safety, Young People and Supporting People) and from over 20 services across Halton, including those providing accommodation, support and advice.
 - **Multi agency monitoring** – (MAM) – enables common monitoring of service use for a variety of homelessness related providers. The same sets of data are completed by service providers and collated by Shelter. This enables an understanding of the profile of users, the problems leading to their homelessness and their involvement with various agencies.
 - **A deposit guarantee scheme** – was set up to assist homeless people to access the private rented sector. The Council provided a returnable deposit direct to the landlord on behalf of the client, which insured against non-payment of rent or property damage. (This scheme has now developed into a Bond Guarantee Scheme rather than a scheme based on a cashable deposit).
 - **A mediation service** - offered by the YMCA to help young people return to their family home or restore the contact and support that will enable the young person to live independently.
 - **Increased access to accommodation** – additional units of short-term housing have enabled specific groups– particularly young people – to make the transition from homelessness to long term rehousing.

- **A Common Nomination scheme** has been developed, ensuring that the procedures for access to housing provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are consistent and more transparent.
 - **A Homelessness Prevention Team** – operating from June 2007, the team offers an advice and referral service, which helps those facing homelessness to retain their home, move to a new home, or access short-term accommodation and support to help them achieve independent living in the future.
- 3.3. The climate fostered by the Homelessness Strategy and by related strategies has created greater scope for homelessness provision and joint working generally. Amongst the most significant additional achievements are:
- **Increase in Supporting People commissioned services** - has enabled greater numbers of people to live independently, manage their risk of homelessness and prevent home-loss.
 - **Raising the profile of homelessness via strategic groups such as Halton’s Housing Partnership** – which brings together the Council and RSLs to ensure that there is consistent practice and procedure in access to and development of social rented housing. This also includes good practice in tenant management, reducing the risks of homelessness amongst tenants.
 - **RSL homelessness prevention** – more housing associations and trusts are developing mechanisms to prevent tenants from losing their homes. Earlier intervention in cases of arrears and anti social behaviour is reducing the risk of eviction.
 - **A Nightstop Service** - to enable young people who cannot stay at home to be accommodated by accredited volunteer “hosts” – families who can offer an emergency home as an alternative to running away from home or having to spend time in hostel accommodation. This service was implemented in 2009, following development in 2008.
- 3.4. Further details of services available in Halton can be found in Section 5 of this document.
- 3.5. A significant change in homelessness provision since the 2003-2008 Strategy was the decision to transfer the Council’s homelessness and housing advice functions to Halton Housing Trust (HHT). This occurred in 2005, in the context of the Council’s transfer of its housing stock and management of the Housing Register to HHT.
- 3.6. In 2007 this decision was reviewed and it was decided that the homelessness service should be brought back under the direct management of the Council. The review took into account the Council’s continued liability for service activity set against its lack of operational control; and the viability of provision by an external contractor within the funds available from the Council.
- 3.7. The review also took into account the development of the Council’s Prevention Service. Increasingly, the operation of parallel homelessness services caused

confusion about access, some duplication of tasks and uneven usage of prevention measures and accommodation. All parties to the consultation exercise in November 2007¹⁸ felt that the Homelessness and Prevention Services would work better as a joint package. This was reinforced by a growing trend towards users opting out of the statutory homelessness route¹⁹.

Appraisal of the 2003/8 Homelessness Strategy

- 3.8. Housing Quality Network carried out an appraisal in 2004. The review of the strategy was very favourable. However it found that improvements could be made in the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy – including the provision of quantifiable outcomes- and in the management of its progress. It was also noted that wider agency and user involvement in strategic development and better forecasting could deliver a more thorough strategy.

Review of the Homelessness Strategy

- 3.9. The assessment undertaken within this strategic review highlights areas where developments are still outstanding and where there is a need for revision or a fresh approach.
- 3.10. Ambitions for practical change such as access to furnished accommodation, and the delivery of a Choice Based Letting (CBL) process are still to be realised. The proliferation of additional services has also brought to the fore the need for updated information about service provision and access arrangements.
- 3.11. The Homelessness Forum is generally perceived to be working well as a means of relaying information, outlining new developments and creating impetus for change. Review consultations revealed that there is an appetite to strengthen its capacity to deliver change and to find ways of creating action from the areas under discussion at Forum events.
- 3.12. Review consultation also picked up a general agreement that much has been achieved, but some frustration was expressed that certain elements have not improved – for example the shortfall of temporary accommodation in Widnes. This was potentially as much, if not more, about transparency in the Council's prioritisation and decision-making process for homelessness activity, as about the lack of progress.
- 3.13. The Multi Agency Monitoring project (MAM) is seen as a commendable initiative, and has added value to homelessness intelligence in Halton. However, its effectiveness is hampered by periods of low in data returns, reducing the authority of some of its findings. At the same time, agencies struggle to deliver their services and comply with a plethora of monitoring requirements for various performance management and funding purposes.

¹⁸ A review of Halton's Statutory Homelessness Services carried out by CLG and involving service providers and users.

¹⁹ See Section 4

Conclusions & Recommendations

Building on the Current Strategy

- 3.14. There is now a substantial foundation from which to build – including a widespread appreciation of and commitment to preventative working, a structure of support and strategic management and an impetus for further development and improvement.
- 3.15. The remaining initiatives set out in the 2003 Strategy are still pertinent and these will be addressed by the new Homelessness Strategy in respect of service development – for example CBL, furnished accommodation and information about services, and service monitoring – including MAM.

Strategic management & development

- 3.16. Specific measures are needed to ensure the effective progress of the strategy and the evaluation of its success. The Homelessness Forum has demonstrated the value of collaborative working across agencies and sectors and is in a position to adopt a more strategic role in managing the progress of the strategy.
- 3.17. There is a further need to embed strategic priorities for homelessness within the wider council activity, promoting effective processes for moving developments forward, transparent decision making and robust monitoring and evaluation – which should include the views of users and the widest possible group of professional stakeholders.

The strategy should ensure:

R6. The development of clear and quantifiable outcomes.

R7. A robust management process – which includes a review and revision of the role of the Homelessness Forum, a consistent wider input from agencies with a very clear focus for members; clear processes to progress action, and mechanisms to ensure transparency; and feedback about decisions relating to homelessness developments.

R8. Mechanisms to enable those at risk of homelessness or using homelessness services can contribute to the Forum, the review of progress and the development of new solutions.

4 The Extent of Homelessness in Halton

Data sources

4.1. This section assesses the level of homelessness within Halton by examining the data from the 3 key services provided by or on behalf of the Council. This covers:

1. Households officially recorded as homeless under the legal provision of the Housing Act 1996²⁰ and dealt with by Halton Housing Trust (HHT) Homelessness Service) – referred to here as the Statutory Service.
2. Those who did not apply as homeless under the law, but were provided with advice by HHT - referred to here as the Options & Advice service
3. Users of the Council's own Homelessness Prevention Service.

All data relates to the financial year 2007/8.

4.2. The extent of homelessness as encountered by each service is dealt with separately below. This approach enables national and regional comparison for the statutory service.²¹ It also enables comparison with the picture in 2003 when the first strategy was implemented.

4.3. Meaningful amalgamation of data across the three services is limited due to inconsistency in data fields used. The risk of duplication between those accessing all three services has been accounted for where any figures have been jointly assessed.

4.4. The Multi Agency Monitoring (MAM) project data is also used to build a picture of overall homelessness. Whilst the MAM baseline data corresponds with that taken from the three principal services, it is not used in conjunction with that service data, to avoid the risk of client duplication and because of the greater divergence between data fields. However, the MAM figures enable a valuable insight into particular characteristics of households and the extent of self reported street homelessness, which are not captured by the three principal services.

Households using the Statutory Service

4.5. In common with all statutory homelessness services, records include only those about whom a decision was made under the Housing Act 1996 – ie those who apply as homeless and are assessed in terms of whether they are homeless, in priority need and so on. Within these “decisions”, households entitled to the full help with rehousing – also known as the “main duty” – are referred to as “acceptances”. The recording of characteristics such as age, household, and reason for homelessness is only applied to acceptances.

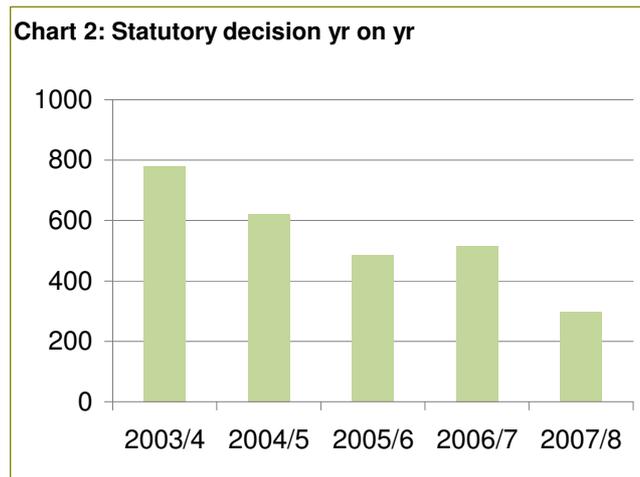
²⁰ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts1996/ukpga_19960052_en_14#pt7

²¹ The only national statistical information on homelessness is provided by the P1E data from each Local Authority

- 4.6. The “decisions” referred to in this data are therefore those who actually made an application. Whilst this indicates the numbers presenting to the service as homeless, it is not the full picture. As outlined above, some of those who present to the service might not go on to formally apply – for example because they can be helped in alternative ways, or are unlikely to pass the priority need or intentional homelessness tests - and are not counted here.

Homelessness decisions

- 4.7. According to figures for 2007/8²², the service made decisions about 296 households. This is substantially down – 62% - from 780 in 2003/4.

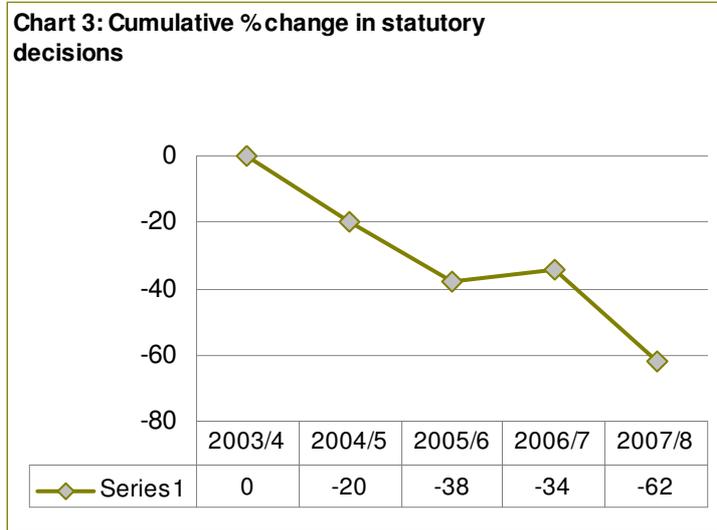


- 4.8. Chart 2 shows a year on year reduction in the number of decisions made regarding homelessness applications in Halton since the first Homelessness Strategy.
- 4.9. Chart 3 shows the rate of reduction year on year for the past four years. Also apparent is the dramatic rate of decrease in 2007/8. With a decline of 39% from quarter 1 to quarter 2. There are several elements at play during these periods.
- ◆ **A change in the law** – the Homelessness Act 2002 expanded the categories of people entitled to rehousing. This encouraged a substantial increase in applications, with most authorities experiencing a high peak in 2003/4. In reality, many of those additional applications were rejected for rehousing - inevitably a factor in the subsequent decline in 2004/5.
 - ◆ **A change in recording of cases.** Following the development of “options interviews” running in tandem with homelessness assessment, households were given wider options and helped by other means. This averted the need to make a homelessness application, and was recorded under the Advice and Options service.
 - **The Council restricted the choice in rehousing.** Those entitled to rehousing were given only one offer of accommodation in the town of their

²² P1E return to CLG

choice. This appears to have reduced the number of households pursuing a homelessness application as route to rehousing.

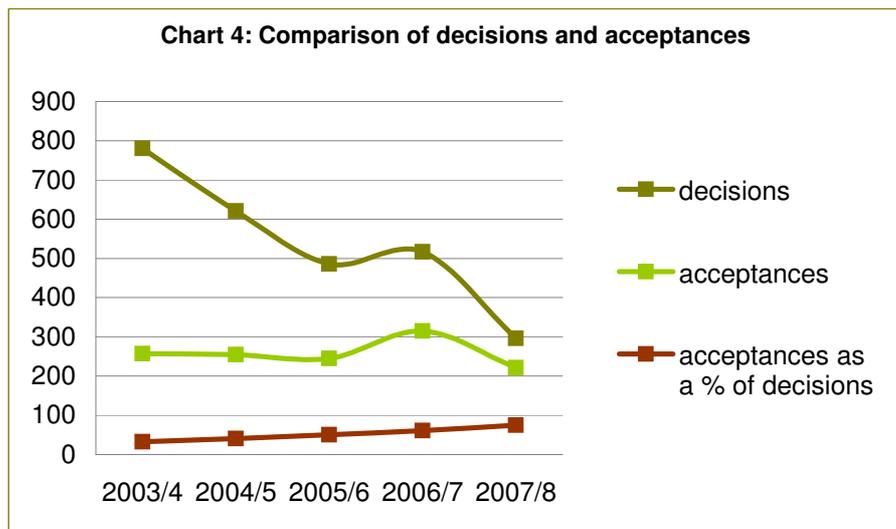
- ◆ **New services.** The 2007/8 reduction also coincided with the implementation of the Council's Prevention Service and its Deposit Guarantee Scheme, which averted homelessness and enabled direct access to homes in the private rented sector.



- ◆ **More filtering of enquiries.** In the light of these service developments, the Council's Halton Direct Link service became the first point of access and referral to the Statutory Homelessness and Prevention Services, enabling a greater level of filtering and targeting for services.

Halton's decisions about those applying as homeless

4.10. In 2007/8, Halton accepted 221 people as statutorily homeless, through no fault of their own and in priority need for assistance; a 14% reduction since 2003/4. This is not proportional to the huge reduction in decisions, indeed, those accepted in 2007/8 represent 75% of all those who applied, whereas in 2003/4, this figure was 33%.



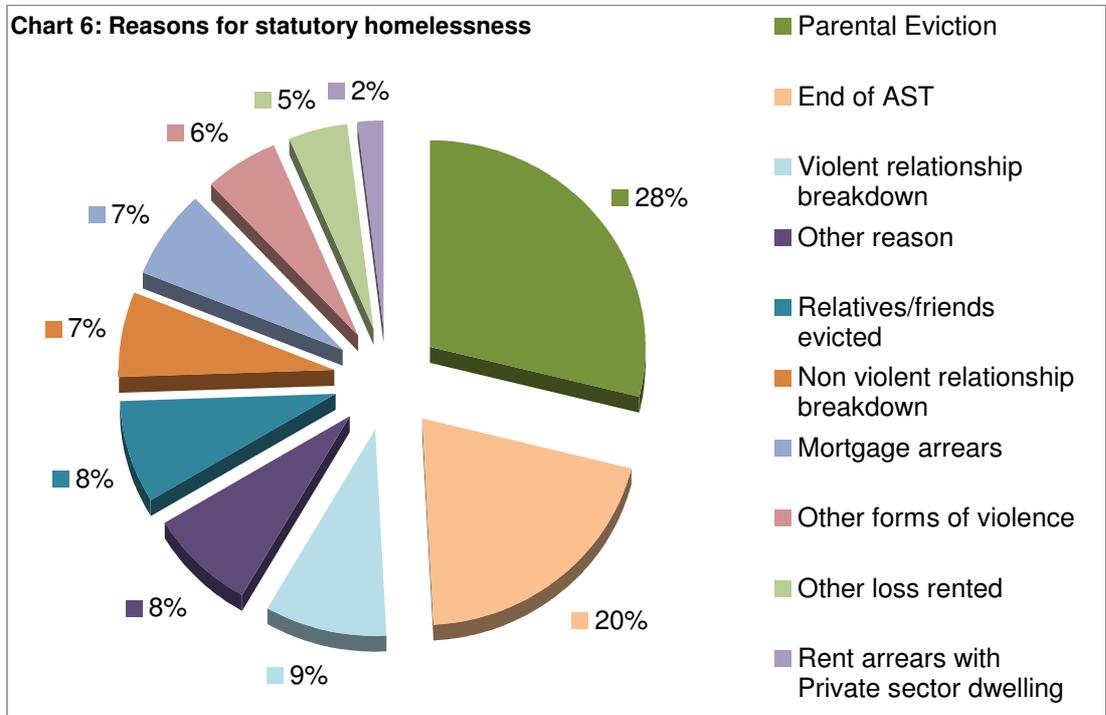
- 4.11. Looking at the proportion of acceptances to decisions, a pattern emerges: as the number of decisions fell, the rate of acceptance increased.
- 4.12. There is no definitive reason for this change. It could reflect a change in approach – e.g. the reduction in pressure of applications encouraged a more generous interpretation of the law. There was also a marked increase in the proportion of applicants in priority need. Again, this may indicate a more liberal approach.
- 4.13. However, the data on decisions shows that the overall proportion of applicants who were assessed to be homeless has grown by 9% since 2003/4, (including those who were not in priority need, or were intentionally homeless). Furthermore, analysis of priority need shows that there has been a significant increase in the “automatic” priority categories, over which the Council has no discretion in their decision-making.
- 4.14. This pattern taken together with the changes adopted outlined above, suggest that the increased proportion of acceptances is linked more to the appropriate use of the service by those who need it and are entitled to help.

Characteristics of households accepted for help with rehousing in Halton

- 4.15. As noted above, details of circumstances and personal characteristics are only recorded when households are entitled to rehousing. The following data therefore excludes a quarter of applicants.

Reasons for homelessness of those accepted in 2007/8

- 4.16. The principal reasons for homelessness amongst this group were:
 - Eviction from the parental home – 29%
 - The end of a short term private tenancy – 20%

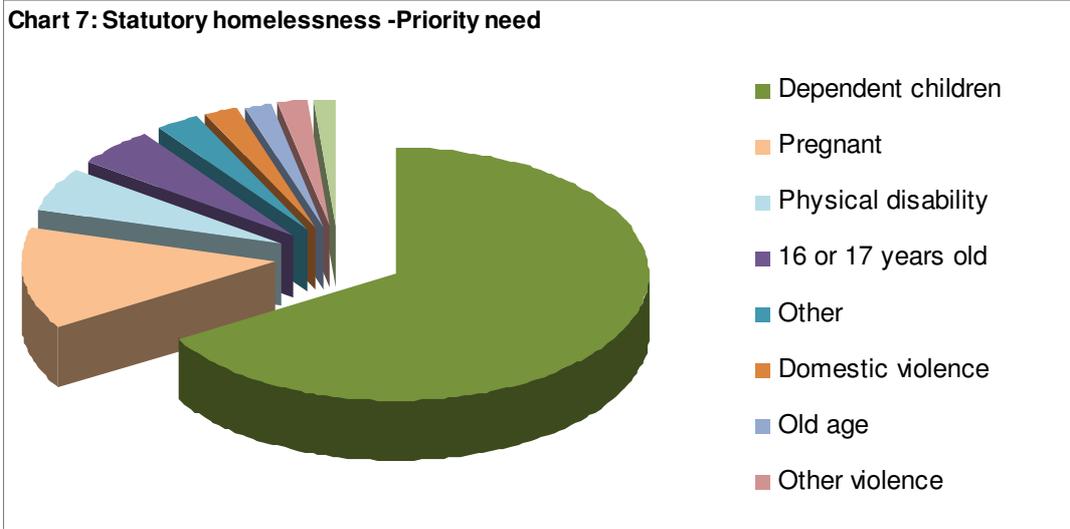


- 4.17. Both of these proportions are higher than the North West Regional average by 10% and 8% respectively. Eviction from the family home reflects the younger population in Halton and the extent of concealed households revealed in the Housing Needs survey. There is anecdotal evidence from professionals consulted, of a trend in parental evictions of 16 year olds when child benefit entitlement ends, this is reported as both a problem of affordability for the family and a factor exacerbating existing tensions with the child.
- 4.18. Private tenancies coming to an end of were a major cause of homelessness. Private tenants do not enjoy high levels of security. Tenancies are often of limited duration and landlords can easily terminate them after 6 months, regardless of the tenant's conduct. The trend in Halton has reduced slightly since 2003/4. This may be attributable to the Council's work with private sector landlords and greater confidence that their financial risk is limited.
- 4.19. Relationship breakdown involving violence was the third most common cause amongst this group, but is half the northwest's proportion and has reduced by 6% since the first Homelessness Strategy. This reflects the substantial work that has taken place in assisting those facing domestic violence through support and prevention work. (See Section 5)
- 4.20. Mortgage arrears were an increasing cause of homelessness, following the economic downturn in early 2008. Halton's proportion for 2007/8 mirrored the regional average. Taken together with arrears in private tenancies, there was a 5% increase in the proportion of homelessness caused by financial problems since 2003/4. Clearly, the current economic climate will exacerbate these trends.
- The "priority need" of those accepted**
- 4.21. The reasons for priority need in 2007/8 are shown in chart 7. In common with most other authorities, the largest proportion of those accepted are caring for or expecting children.
- 4.22. Most (83%) of those accepted had an automatic priority need status²³. The rest were granted priority need on the basis that they were more vulnerable than the 'average homeless person' if homeless.
- 4.23. The proportion of those accepted as vulnerable because of a physical disability increased in both proportion and total number. There were fewer acceptances for reasons of age – particularly under 18's, which reflects the reduction in this age group making applications after 2003/4. The reduction in priority need as a result of domestic violence appears to mirror the reduction in domestic violence as a reason for homelessness.
- 4.24. The homelessness data shows that at least 244 children were amongst the households accepted for help with rehousing, and it should be noted that this undercounts the number for families with more than 3 children. There were at

²³ Those with dependent children, or who are pregnant, or who are 16-17 yrs old or who have lost their home as a result of an emergency – such as a fire or flood

least 28 pregnancies counted (those who are pregnant but also have children are only counted within the children category).

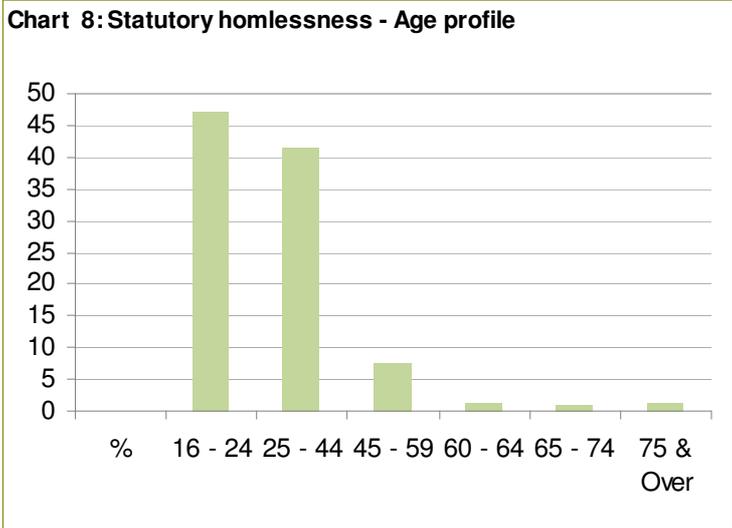
Chart 7: Statutory homelessness -Priority need



Age of those accepted

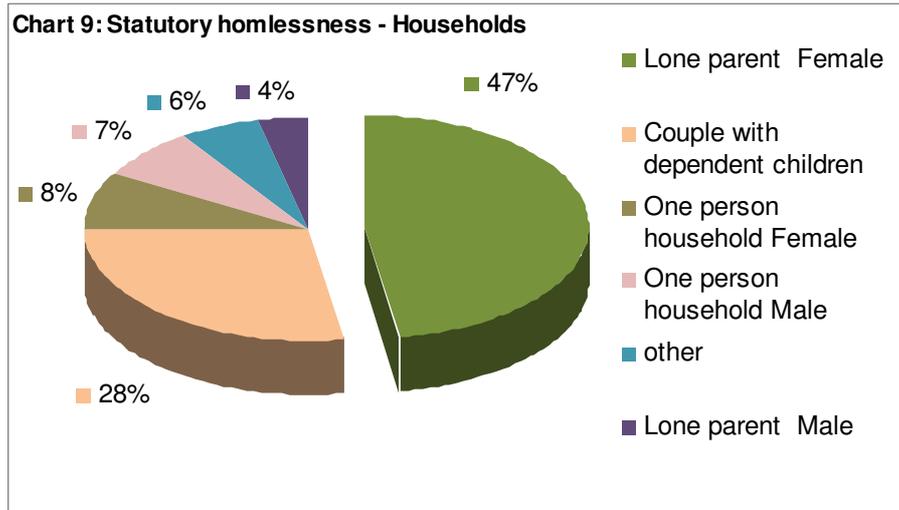
4.25. Whilst there was a reduction in the proportion of 16-17 yr olds found to be in priority need, young people under 25 were still the highest age group being accepted for rehousing. 90% of those accepted were under 44yrs. This was slightly higher than the national average, which may reflect Halton’s younger population.

Chart 8: Statutory homelessness - Age profile



Household composition of those accepted

4.26. As might be inferred from the priority need categories, the majority of households were those with children or pregnant (just over 79%). This was 12% higher than the national average (where there are larger proportions of single and single male applicants accepted). Halton also had 9% more couples with children/pregnant than the national average, and 4% more single parents.



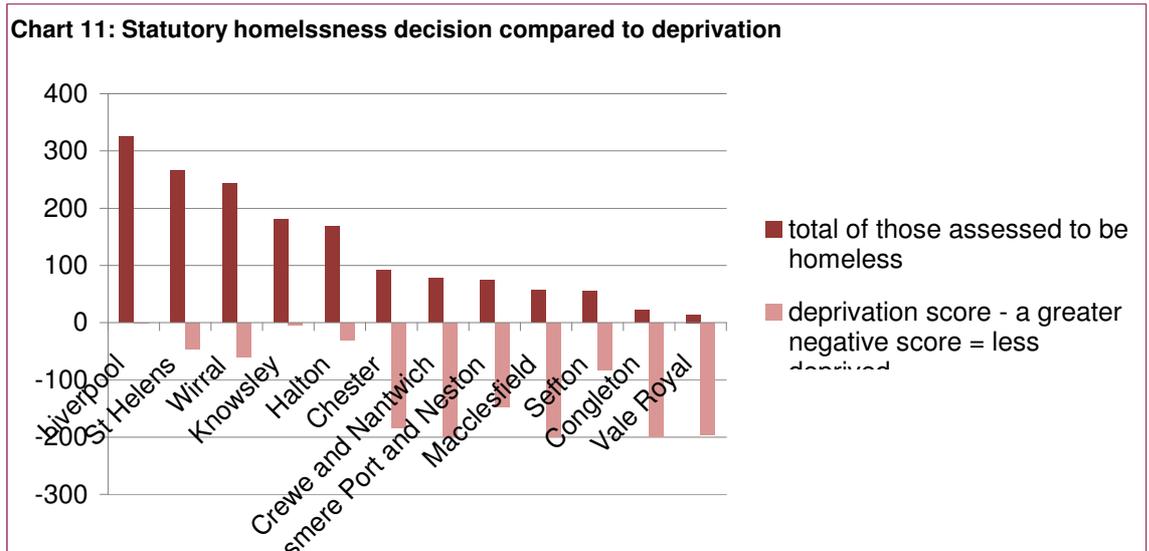
Repeat homelessness

4.27. Halton's proportion of repeat statutory homelessness is below the national average at less than 1%.

Regional comparisons

4.28. In addition to the comparisons made above, setting the data in the context of regional experience in Merseyside and Cheshire, Halton appears to have a relatively high level of both decisions and acceptances, given its population size, and a relatively high ratio of acceptances to decisions made.

4.29. Halton is closer in trend to its Merseyside neighbours than to Cheshire Authorities, which reflects its more urban context and levels of deprivation. Indeed when viewed alongside the deprivation ranking of local authorities, the trend is for the least deprived authorities to assess fewer people under the Housing Act.



- 4.30. Chart 11 shows the total number of those found to be homeless (whether or not in priority need or intentionally homeless) per 1,000 households compared to the deprivation ranking of the authority. This suggests that Halton's level of homelessness could simply reflect the level of need in the area.
- 4.31. It is also important to consider the rates of acceptance for help with rehousing, given that this represents those cases considered most deserving. It seems that the least deprived authorities have lower levels of acceptances, with those authorities ranked in the top 60 most deprived areas accepting the highest proportions of homeless applicants.
- 4.32. The two authorities that deviate from this trend are Liverpool and Sefton. Liverpool, whilst having a high level of homeless decisions, rejects over 70% of all those it assesses. 60% of those rejected are nonetheless assessed to be homeless, but over half are deemed not in priority need. This might suggest that the characteristics of those applying for help in Liverpool are significantly different to Halton – eg fewer families with dependent children.
- 4.33. Sefton on the other hand has a relatively high level of deprivation, but a lower level of decisions and acceptances, with almost 50% of all applications being rejected because the person is not considered homeless. It will be important over the course of the strategy to assess whether this is a feature of Sefton's prevention success or of the characteristics of those approaching the Statutory Service.

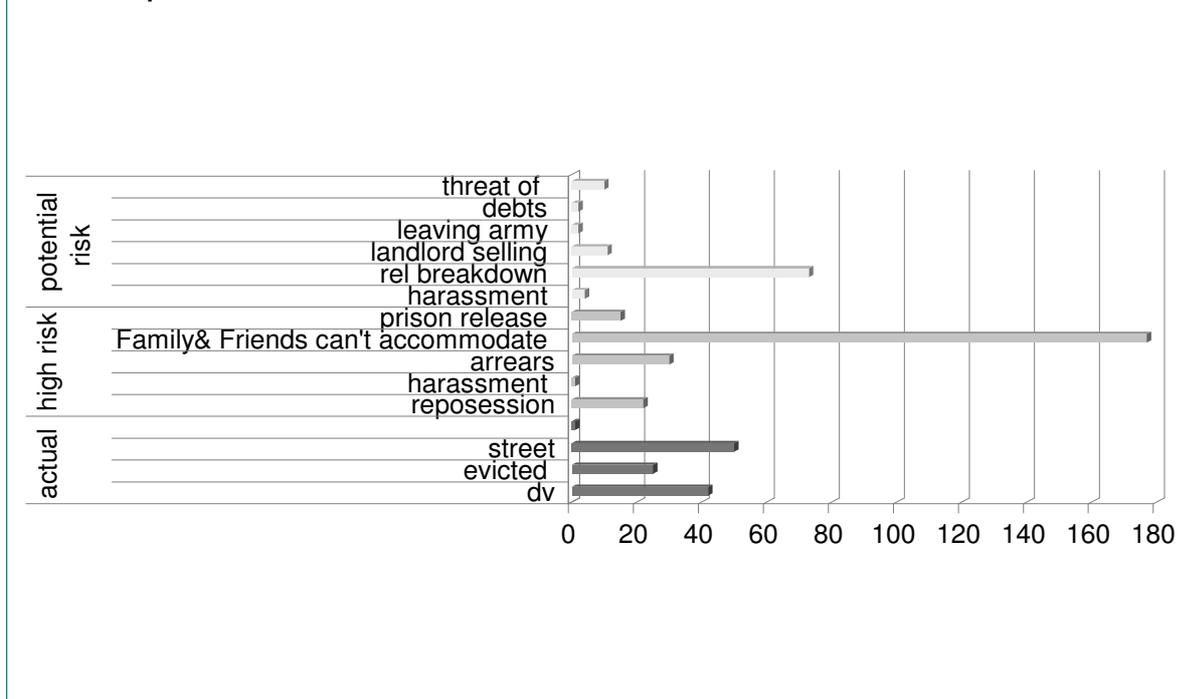
Households using the HHT Options & Advice Service

- 4.34. For those who do not wish or are not entitled to help under the homelessness legislation, there is a legal requirement to provide advice and assistance. The advice provided aims to enable the person to return to their home, and/or to understand what options they have for long or short-term housing.

Referrals to the service

- 4.35. In 2007/8 Just over 500 people approached the service and received assistance (without making a homelessness application). Of these, 6% were repeat enquiries - most of which took place within 6 months of an initial enquiry.
- 4.36. Based on the reasons given for their homelessness, it is possible to deduce that 21% of this client group could be classified as homeless under the legal definition. A further 42% could be deemed high risk – ie home loss would quickly follow without intervention, but remedial action or securing fresh accommodation could prevent homelessness. 19% could be categorised as at risk at some stage if no action was taken but there were remedies or time to resolve the problem. The method of assessment used here cannot give a completely accurate picture, but it gives some indication of potential homelessness if the reported risk goes unchecked.

Chart 12: Options & Advice - Level of homelessness risk

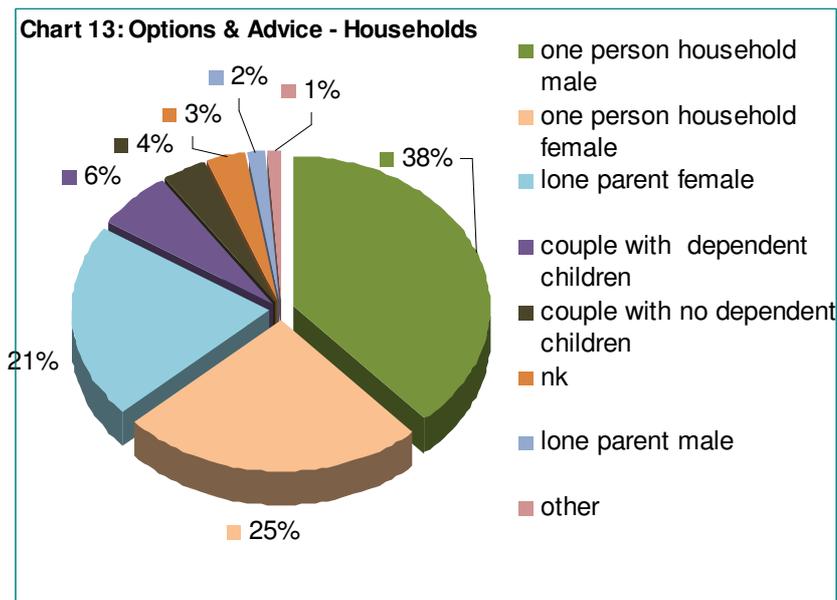


Reasons for homelessness amongst those using this service

- 4.37. The largest single cause of homelessness was eviction by family or friends. This mainly affected the under 25's, who accounted for over two thirds of such evictions. The overall proportional profile of causes was broadly similar to those making statutory homelessness applications, but for Options & Advice service users, there was a greater level of relationship breakdown and general debt problems. There was also a higher proportion of street homelessness recorded under this service. These trends indicate the larger proportion of single men and those without children in this client group.

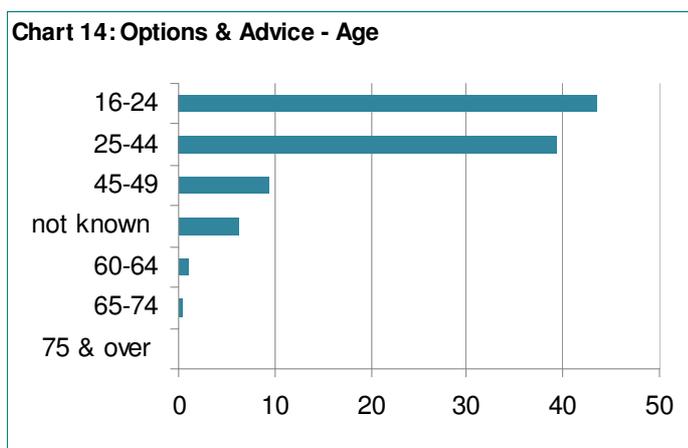
Households using this service

- 4.38. Unlike the group making homelessness applications who often have a priority need, most of the Advice and Options service users were single people or couples without children (67%), and single men in this client group was far higher at 38% (compared with only 7% for homelessness applicants).
- 4.39. However, it is notable that almost a third of advice and assistance service users were parents with dependent children. The number of children amongst the households helped by the service was 235. 26 pregnancies were also recorded.



Age of those using this service

4.40. The age range of service users was similar to that of homelessness applicants, with a slightly higher proportion of people aged over 40. Almost half of those seeking help were under 24 yrs. There was a high rate of unknown ages, which is often the case for services providing one-off advice where full details are not always captured.



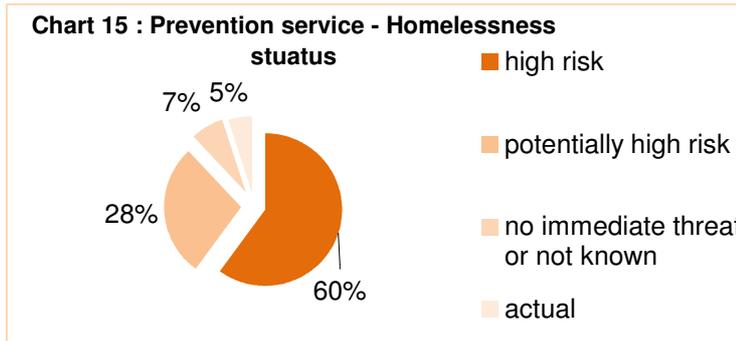
Households using Halton’s Prevention Service

4.41. Halton’s Prevention Service began in June 2007. It works with those who are at risk of homelessness, and aims to avert homelessness or to secure settled housing as soon possible.

4.42. Whilst the service is dedicated to preventing homelessness, it remains the option for many of those who are homeless but are not entitled to ‘the main housing duty’ under the homelessness law. The service also provides the access point to the Council’s Rent Deposit Guarantee scheme (now Bond Scheme).

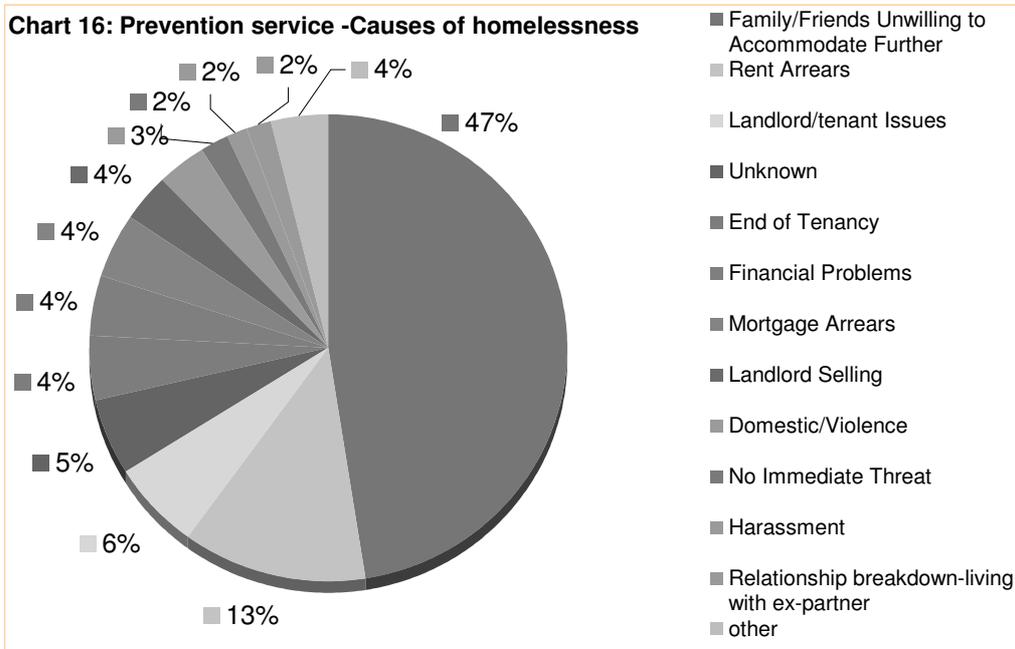
Referrals to the service in 2007/8

- 4.43. In ten months of operation, 380 households were referred to the service. This takes into account 36 repeat approaches from 17 individuals - most of whom used the service twice within three months of their previous appointment.
- 4.44. Using the method of assessment for the Options & Advice service, about 6% of Prevention Service households could be classified as homeless under the legal definition. Most cases involved accommodation, which could possibly be saved. About 55% of households had a high risk of homelessness and 33% a potential risk.



Reasons for homelessness or risk amongst those using this service

- 4.45. Almost 50% of households faced homelessness because family (including parents) and friends were unwilling to continue to accommodate - around 16% higher than for the Statutory Service. It is interesting to note that only 5% of those evicted by family and friends were under 18yrs and 44% were over 25yrs.



- 4.46. There was a higher rate of rent arrears amongst this client group, and more problems with private rented accommodation. This was most prevalent amongst the over 25's.

Gender, age and household type.

- 4.47. The age of service users showed a similar proportion of 18-24 to 25-44 yr olds. 60% of the whole client group, and 64% of the 18-24yr range was female.

Chart 17: Prevention service - Households

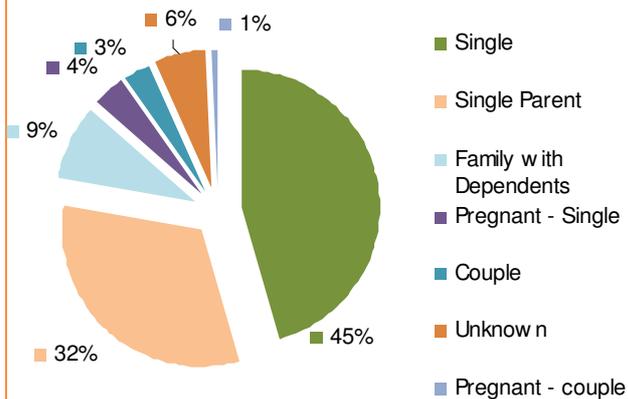
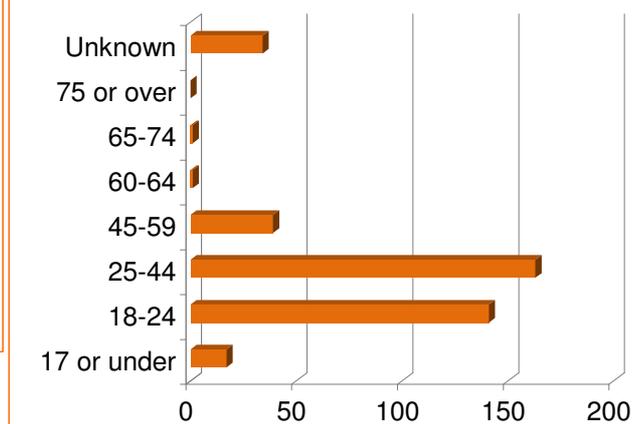


Chart 18: Prevention service - Age



- 4.48. 45% of those using the service had or were expecting children. 49% of female service users were single parents. There is no specific data on the number of children involved, but if each household with children is taken to represent one child the overall number of children was at least 162. The number of pregnancies recorded was 18.
- 4.49. 75% of those who were single and without children were male.

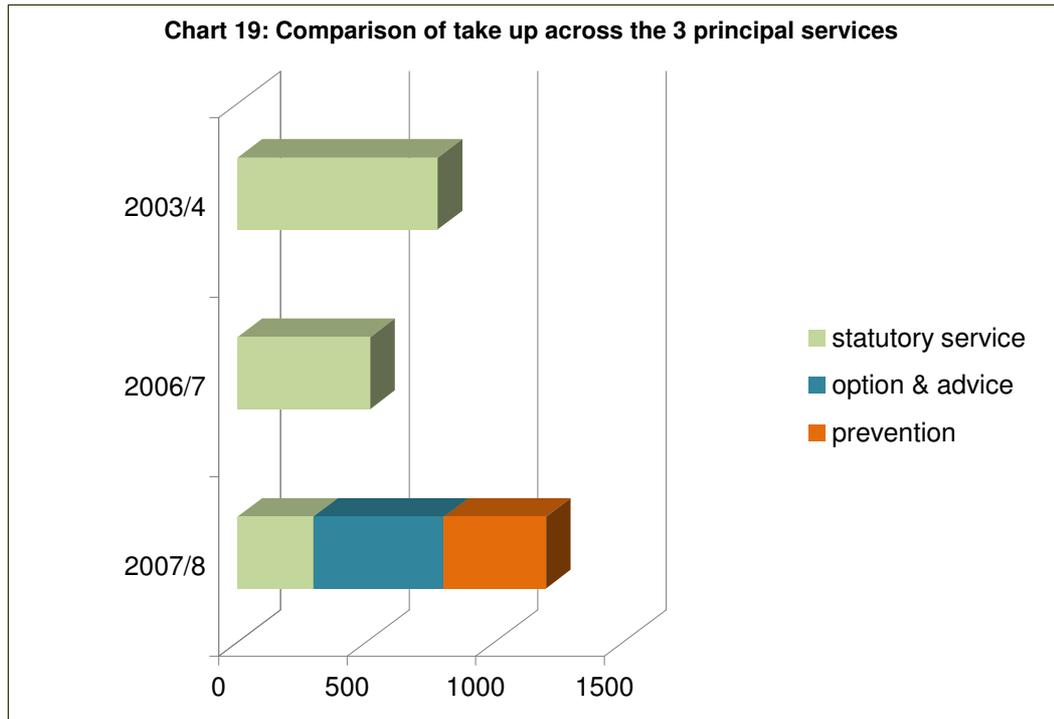
Overall level of homelessness

- 4.50. Those recorded across all three services as seeking help because they were facing home-loss in 2007/8 numbered 1,093²⁴. (The Multi Agency Monitoring (MAM) figures show a total of 1,077 homeless households for 2007/8).
- 4.51. One cannot make a direct comparison between this figure and the 780 people making homelessness applications in 2003/4. The two sets of data clearly relate to several different types of service and the lack of consistency between data provided also limits the capacity to provide a consolidated picture.
- 4.52. However, analysis of both the Options & Advice and Prevention services does suggest that a significant proportion of those seeking help across all three services were indeed at risk of homelessness. Potentially 73% of the overall

²⁴ Note that this analysis uses figures adjusted to remove duplication of cases between the three services.

total – or 800 households - faced imminent home loss if no intervention was provided. Around 37% could fall under the statutory definition of immediate homelessness²⁵. 19% could be categorised as at risk without intervention, and 8% as facing no discernable risk, or risk was not recorded.

- 4.53. Whilst all of those seeking help from the statutory safety net are considered the most vulnerable and less able to fend for themselves, it is interesting to note that almost a third of those using non-statutory services would be classified as in priority need because of dependent children or pregnancy.



Overall notable characteristics

- 4.54. A common finding in the consultation across the three services and beyond, was the concern that there are now more people seeking help who have multiple problems, including mental health problems and drug or alcohol addiction, and that the majority of those using the services lack the skills to enable employment, and better housing prospects.
- 4.55. MAM figures for 2007/8 show that drug or alcohol abuse were cited by service users as one of the top 4 factors contributing to their homelessness. Lack of “life skills” where households cannot meet their own basic needs was the 5th most commonly reported contributory factor. 12% of service users had some form of social services involvement in the previous year – mainly relating to time spent in care. 20% reported that they had received help from GPs, counsellors or mental health services for mental health problems in the previous year. 16%

²⁵ As opposed to the threat of homelessness within 28 days

had some involvement with the criminal justice system (probation, prison or anti social behaviour order)

- 4.56. MAM also reports that income levels for the vast majority of service users (97%) was below £20,000 a year, with 86% living on less than £10,000, and around 80% reliant on benefits as their sole source of income.
- 4.57. The ethnic origin of those using the three services and recorded by MAM is predominantly White British, with around 1% of users coming from black or minority ethnic communities. This is slightly lower than the borough averages. As people from some BME communities tend to face more homelessness risks, it is worth considering whether those in Halton are not making use of services or are not experiencing homelessness. Only two of the three principal services collected information on ethnic origin, and both show a 50% “not known” rate.

Street homelessness

- 4.58. National data about street homelessness levels is now collected via periodic street counts.²⁶ Halton carried out a street count in 2004, when no people were found to be sleeping rough, and in March 2008 where one person was officially counted.
- 4.59. Street counts are important, to understand the extent of chronic and/or extensive and consistent rough sleeping in the borough. However, the anecdotal information from services assisting those most at risk of this type of homelessness is that actual levels of rough sleeping are masked, particularly amongst those who sleep out intermittently – alternating between makeshift sleeping arrangements at the homes of friends and acquaintances, (so called “sofa surfing”) and sleeping on the streets. Street homelessness that is either chronic or intermittent is cited as a major obstacle to tackling underlying substance abuse and mental health problems.
- 4.60. The data considered across the three services suggests that 46 people had slept rough or were most at risk of doing so because they reported having no fixed abode in 2007/8. Multi Agency Monitoring for Halton shows that 97 people reported sleeping rough in 2007/8.
- 4.61. Those services catering for people with complex and chaotic lifestyles – principally concerning drug and alcohol abuse – suggest that there is a core group of around 13 people who sleep rough on a more or less permanent basis. Agencies working with this group cite a number of barriers to resettlement, including past experiences, which make hostel living too challenging. Many are excluded from both short and long term accommodation due to chronic substance abuse, past behaviour or arrears, and are more at risk of being found intentionally homeless.

²⁶ A council-led exercise to literally go out at night to places where rough sleeping takes place and count the number of those sleeping out.

- 4.62. Whilst nothing about the duration of each episode of rough sleeping has been captured in available data, it is still evident that this type of homelessness remains a significant problem.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- 4.63. Although statutory rates have clearly reduced, the overall level of homelessness, the degree of homelessness risk and the vulnerability of those in need remain relatively high. There is still a problem of "statutory" homelessness in Halton and a continuing need to provide a safety net.
- 4.64. There is also a very real sense that the establishment of the Prevention Service and the provision of Options & Advice support previously unmet demand. This suggests a wider need for support for those who cannot or will not pursue the statutory homelessness route to rehousing, but are nonetheless homeless or at imminent risk. It is also clear that such volume will require careful service targeting.
- 4.65. The combining of the 3 principal services in 2008 gives an opportunity for a comprehensive response and the development of a more pro-active approach to those at risk. It will also enable more sophisticated data to provide enough depth of analysis to target prevention activity effectively.
- 4.66. There will also be lessons to learn from similar and contrasting authorities, which manage their services and prevention approaches differently, and these should be explored throughout the life of the strategy.
- 4.67. Across the range of homelessness and prevention services there are some clear priority areas of concern that need to be addressed:
- The levels of homelessness arising from the parental home.
 - Levels of homelessness amongst those with dependent children – over 600 children and 70 expected children were homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2007/8.
 - Levels of homelessness amongst young people – under 24yrs.
 - Continued homelessness as a result of short-term tenancies ending.
 - Debt related homelessness and the potential for this to worsen over the coming two years.
 - Street homelessness.
 - The continuing prevalence of domestic abuse.
 - The employability of many who are at risk of home loss.
 - Multiple needs amongst those seeking help.
 - The higher levels of repeat enquiries – around 7% - for service users of the Prevention and Options & Advice services.
- 4.68. For those at risk because of family eviction there is potential for earlier intervention, with a planned approach to moving home and living independently.
- 4.69. Early assistance and the building of strong relationships with housing providers to limit evictions will also be critical to prevent escalation of debt problems and arrears.

The strategy should deliver:

- R9. A new approach to service provision which aims for a comprehensive response to homelessness and risk, enabling**
- i. The earliest possible targeted interventions.
 - ii. Planned movement from one settled home to another.
- R10. Specific service developments and interventions focused on those who are most at risk** including young people, families with children, those at risk of debt, those facing multiple problems and those escaping domestic abuse.
- R11. Links with employment and skills development services** to deliver better prospects of employability, financial security and housing choice for those experiencing homelessness and its risk.
- R12. A comprehensive approach to intelligence gathering and analysis,** including a review of the use of MAM and service statistics- to enable
- i. A coherent set of data.
 - ii. Deeper understanding of homelessness causes, risk factors and communities affected.
 - iii. Targeting of households where risk trends are developing.
 - iv. Tracking and recording outcomes and reducing “not known” entries.

5 Halton's Provision for Those Facing - Or Most at Risk of Homelessness

5.1. This section gives an overview of the provision available in Halton in 2007/8. It does not detail every project or provide a critique of services, but offers an outline of the provision, its range, scope, and the value to those at risk of homelessness.

5.2. Since the first Homelessness Strategy, Halton has seen the emergence of new projects and the development of many existing services, which have had a positive impact on homelessness and supporting those at risk. In addition to the council's homelessness services, provision has been greatly bolstered by the Supporting People (SP) programme, commissioning a range of independent living and risk reduction services.

Figures

In 2007/8

- The Supporting People programme in Halton provided over **400** people with access to intensive one to one support, dealing with a range of problems that placed them at risk of homelessness.

5.3. Accommodation-based services commissioned by SP are dealt with in Section 6.

The Council's homelessness services

5.4. This section deals with the three principal services provided by or on behalf of the Council.

The Homelessness Service

5.5. As noted elsewhere, the Homelessness service - provided by Halton Housing Trust (HHT) between December 2005 and September 2008- fulfilled the Council's legal duty to assist those who became homeless. (The service has now transferred back to direct management by the Council and has been re-branded as the Housing Solutions service in order to emphasise the focus on prevention of homelessness.)

5.6. Access is now principally via the Council's Halton Direct Link service (HDL). In addition in 2007/8 access was provided directly by phone, email or visiting one of HHT's offices, (although these avenues were not publicised). Clients were also referred via the emergency services and GPs or other primary care professionals.

5.7. All those presenting to the Homelessness Service are offered an "options interview" where the possibilities for resolving their problem or finding a new home are explored. The service user is advised of opportunities to improve their current housing situation or find an alternative home. One of the options – depending on circumstances – is to complete a homelessness application (see below). Service users who opt out of homelessness applications or are not entitled to rehousing are helped under the Options & Advice service.

5.8. **Options & Advice:** is aimed at helping to get the household back into their home: eg: challenging wrongful evictions or negotiating with landlords; or getting help to overcome problems which put them at risk of homelessness, such as

securing debt advice. Service users receive assistance with access to emergency and short-term housing, legal advice and support services, along with advice about their long-term options.

Options & Advice 2007/08	
Take Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 509 households used this service in 2007/8. ■ Detail on the take up of this service is found in Section 4
Action & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The main action taken on behalf of Options & Advice clients was to provide advice, with almost a third also being referred to hostel or short-term accommodation – including women's refuges.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 16% were referred or signposted to the Council's Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 11% of clients abandoned their enquiry before any action could be taken to assist them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data on outcomes is not available for this service. The fact that nothing is known about the success or otherwise of the advice and help provided is important to bear in mind in the planning of the new service and data collection by the strategy.

5.9 **Statutory homelessness applications.** In accordance with the law, all those whom the service has reason to believe may be homeless are entitled to be assessed and a decision made about their right to specific types of assistance. The table below gives the detail of who qualifies for what sort of help.

Decision Under Homelessness Law	Help Given
Those who are found not homeless – e.g. there may be some homelessness risk, but it is not within 28 days.	<input type="checkbox"/> Helped via the Options & Advice service.
Those who are homeless but have no priority need for help	<input type="checkbox"/> Advised about their housing options; referred to further advice or support and sources of rehousing.
Those who are in priority need but have caused their own homelessness (<i>intentionally homeless</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Provided with temporary accommodation where necessary, for up to 28 days.
Those who are accepted for rehousing	<input type="checkbox"/> Provided with temporary housing, as needed, until offered a property through the Council's Housing Register.
	<input type="checkbox"/> If the client has a connection with another local authority area, they can be referred there for rehousing.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Only one offer of accommodation is made. For more detail on access to accommodation see Section 7.

5.10 In general terms those who have a priority need for help and are homeless through no fault of their own are given top priority on the Housing Register.

5.11 People using this route to rehousing are entitled to have decisions about their application or the suitability of any accommodation offered reviewed or appealed, including via the courts.

Homelessness Service 2007/08	
Take Up	■ 296 people opted to make an application.
	■ 221 households were accepted for rehousing.
Action & Outcomes	■ 51% of all those accepted for rehousing were placed in a temporary home or hostel.
	■ 49% of those accepted remained in their homes classified as “homeless at home” – (usually this is with family or friends, until an offer of settled housing is made)
	■ Most clients were rehoused within six months (76%), the majority being offered a property within 3-4 months.
	■ A further 9% were rehoused between 6 months and a year after their assessment ■ 12% made arrangements of their own (usually within 6 months).
	■ Of those rehoused, the vast majority were offered a property via the Council Housing Register. They were nominated to one of several local RSLs including Halton Housing Trust.

The Prevention Service

- 5.12 This service is provided by the Council to assist those at risk of homelessness to retain their accommodation or to get access to fresh housing without becoming homeless. In reality the service also responds to those who are actually homeless, but who cannot, or chose not to pursue the statutory homelessness route. Access is principally via the Council's Halton Direct Link service (HDL).
- 5.13 Following initial assessment, the service offers a range of options including advice on rights to occupy their home and provision of or referral to legal advice and representation for enforcement of rights; support to reinstate the client in their home – through mediation with family or friends or negotiation with landlords; work with the client to reduce arrears and understand their responsibilities as a tenant; referral to the Bond Guarantee Scheme (see Section 7) and referral for longer term support to develop skills and manage their affairs and sustain tenancies.

Prevention Service 2007/08	
Take Up	■ 380 people used the service in the ten months of operation.
Action & Outcomes	■ In 48% of all cases it is known that the client either retained their existing home or secured a new one.
	■ Almost 40% of those helped were referred to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
	■ 17% were helped via mediation or negotiation to reinstate them in their homes.
	■ The remainder were provided with advice and support usually through a referral to further help.
	■ The greatest success rate for home retention was amongst private tenants seeking to stay in their tenancy.
	■ Of those securing a new home, only 6% lost their current home before taking up the new one.
	■ 4% of the total client group were recorded as still homeless on case closure (they were referred on to other services for assistance).
	■ In over 40% of cases, outcomes are unknown. There is a high rate of contact lost following one-off advice. This will be resolved by the Council's new IT database. However the strategy needs to ensure more robust data collection across all services.
■ Almost a fifth of clients did not keep their appointment or pursue the case. This was most prevalent amongst those facing eviction from friends and family.	

Future Services

- 5.14 There is an ongoing legal requirement for HBC to provide a homelessness service – including advice & assistance, homelessness assessment and temporary and long-term accommodation for those who qualify.
- 5.15 The return of the Statutory Homelessness and Options & Advice Service to direct Council management facilitated the three principal services to combine to deliver an efficient and coherent service, laying the foundation for the new Homelessness Strategy in developing a comprehensive prevention focus for those at risk of homelessness.

Figures

- In 2007/8 almost **1,100** people approached the combined services.
- The new Housing Solutions Service (post October 2008) is staffed by 3 homelessness assessment officers, 3 prevention officers and the service manager.
- The Bond Guarantee Scheme officer also works within the team.

Homelessness & Debt Advice Services

- 5.16 There are three specialist advice providers²⁷ operating in Halton whose services have a direct impact on people facing or at risk of homelessness. Two are independent of the Council - Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Shelter; the third is the Council's own Welfare Benefits Service.

Citizens Advice Bureau

- 5.17 The only provider of generic, independent advice based permanently in the borough is the CAB, with two offices in Halton at Widnes and Runcorn.
- 5.18 Access is direct and wide - via open surgeries, appointments, telephone and email. There is an electronic referral and appointments system, available to a wide range of agencies across the borough. Referral arrangements via Sure Start children's services enable parents to access a dedicated Sure Start CAB team for support with claiming benefits, managing money and other welfare related work.

Figures CAB Debt Advice Service

- In 2007/8 almost **3000** households used the CAB debt service – with problems ranging from bankruptcy to catalogue debts.
- Around **500** households were already in direct danger of losing their home due to rent or mortgage arrears.
- **1,500** had debt problems, which if not dealt with would have a serious impact in income, ability to pay for day-to-day living and potentially to home loss.

²⁷ le services specifically set up primarily to provide advice as opposed to offering it as part of a wider range of services.

- 5.19 The CAB covers an extensive range of legal advice issues including consumer, family, employment, tax, immigration, benefits, debt and housing. The main services provided are information and legal advice, advocacy, negotiating with third parties, providing or securing legal representation for clients at court or in tribunals, helping clients to fill out forms and claims entitlements, and referral to other specialist agencies.
- 5.20 The wide scope of the CAB's service is essential in preventing homelessness by averting or resolving problems that might lead to homes becoming unsuitable, unaffordable or being repossessed. Critical to this prevention role is the CAB's provision of financial advice, ensuring that clients are getting the right levels of income, including benefits, and using the most appropriate financial products. They also assist people to manage their money and avoid or tackle rent or mortgage arrears, loans secured on their home, or other debts which force the sale of their home. The CAB provides assistance to those with the most complex debt-related cases – usually characterised by multiple and high-risk debts.
- 5.21 The CAB is funded by a combination of grants, including £139K from the council, contracts e.g. through the Legal Services Commission and voluntary donations. During 06/07 and 07/08 the CAB suffered a loss in funding of over £180K as a result of funding changes, the inability to replace pilot funding and grant cuts. However the CAB was successful in securing funding from the Primary Care Trust in 2009, which enabled four debt advisers to be employed.

Shelter

- 5.22 Shelter is a national campaigning charity, providing advice, information, advocacy and support services to people who are homeless or badly housed. Shelter's provision in Halton is via weekly surgeries at the CAB offices in Halton and a Housing Aid service based in Chester, which offers a Cheshire-wide telephone advice service. Shelter also operates a national freephone helpline providing housing advice and emergency advocacy.
- 5.23 Shelter advisers will offer a range of support including Court representation. They will also represent those who are not satisfied with the handling of their application under the homelessness law, seeking to review decisions and in some cases to assist in any resulting Court appeal or judicial review proceedings.
- 5.24 Shelter also provides the National Homelessness Advice Service - offering consultancy advice and training on housing law, free of charge, to independent advice providers. The service is a partnership with Citizens Advice and the department for Communities & Local Government. The aim is to build the capacity of frontline community based services to provide advice, which prevents homelessness.

Figures

- In 2007/8, **169** people from Halton sought advice from Shelter about homelessness or the threat of homelessness

One of its objectives is to work with local authorities, developing cooperation and joint working between statutory and voluntary sector services on homelessness prevention.

- 5.25 Shelter receives funding from donations and contracts. Advice services are funded largely via the Legal Services Commission.

The Council's Welfare Rights Service

- 5.26 The take up of benefits is a critical element in preventing homelessness, ensuring that people can pay for their homes and manage their household finances.

- 5.27 The Council's Welfare Rights Service provides advice and support about any welfare benefit. Access is very wide – including telephone, appointments and drop in surgeries at HDL one-stop shops in Runcorn and Widnes. A surgery is also provided at the Brooker Centre, which supports people with mental health problems.

- 5.28 The service has two key goals: to promote take up and to ensure that people receive appropriate benefit payments. It conducts proactive targeted campaigns to help people understand their entitlement and to make claims. The service also supports those who have problems with their benefits, to claim the right level of benefit and challenge decisions and deal with over and underpayments.

- 5.29 Advice and support is comprehensive, from help completing benefit claim forms to advocating for claimants in reviews and appeals, and representing at tribunals.

Figures

- The Welfare Rights service secured **£2.8** million in benefits for Halton residents in 2007/8
- **84%** of this figure relates to benefits associated with disability

- 5.30 Where claimants are also experiencing debt problems, the service can offer debt advice including Court representation. This specialist provision is limited by the resources available and is not advertised, but provides those seeking help about benefits with vital support to prevent further financial disadvantage.

Court Services

- 5.31 There is currently a Court Advocacy Service provided for Runcorn residents, attending the County Court at Runcorn. Warrington Law Centre has Legal Service Commission funding to provide a Court duty scheme i.e. free legal advice on the day of possession hearings. Widnes residents attend the County Court at St Helens and a local firm of solicitors provide the Duty Scheme at this court.

Support during family breakdown

- 5.32 As noted earlier – family breakdown is the primary cause of homelessness – increasingly arising from problems between parents and adult children. This trend is particularly pronounced amongst the homelessness recorded in Halton.

- 5.33 Family breakdown has increased, as the shortfall in affordable housing has not kept pace with expectation of independent living for young people. An increase in

single parents with no independent housing options has also created multi generational households, with problems of overcrowding, affordability and relationship stress. A number of services are available to assist families - those intervening in cases of abuse (see below), and those that mediate between family members to get relationships back on track.

- 5.34 **Mediation Service:** Provided by the YMCA since September 2007, this assists young people (under 25yrs) to re-establish relationships with their families and to return home if this is appropriate. The scheme is intensive and demanding of all participants, and whilst it is successful in assisting those who take up the service the greatest challenge is in gaining agreement from parents to participate. It is accessible via referral from other support services.

Figures

- Between September 2007 and April 2008, **70** young people were referred for help with mediation.
- **48** entered the mediation programme.

- 5.35 **Parenting Support:** The Council's Community Strategy encourages the development of parenting support services in the context of the national Every Child Matters agenda (which seeks to safeguard children and promote their welfare and potential); and in the drive to develop safer and stronger communities by reducing anti social behaviour. Halton Council's Children and Young People's services enable access to parenting support through Children's Centres and a dedicated Family Support Team. Specialist support is also available to parents where children's behaviour is of concern (see below) .

Domestic abuse response

- 5.36 Domestic abuse typically affects women, who often leave the family home with their children in response to physical danger. The abuse also causes homelessness for women without children and for men; and the abuse may be psychological – nonetheless causing severe harm. The principal consideration for most of those escaping is to find safety, and this is most often provided via a refuge, offering a secure and confidential place to stay. For those who leave home to escape, the majority (over 60%) will not feel safe to return, and the act of leaving in itself places them in considerable danger.²⁸
- 5.37 As outlined in Section 4, statutory homelessness in Halton as a result of domestic abuse is 50% lower than regional average and 4% lower than the national average. However domestic violence remains the third largest reason for statutory homelessness in Halton; and demand for refuges spaces typically exceeds supply.
- 5.38 Halton has established a multi agency Domestic Abuse Forum, and a strategy to guide the development of prevention and response work across the borough. This is established via strong links between the Relationship Centre (based in Warrington), the local Women's Aid refuge, the Police, Social Care and Health Care

²⁸ Daly & Wilson (1998) abusive people who kill their partners are more likely to do so when the partner is planning to or has just moved out of the home.

professionals. The work is part of Halton's Safer Halton Partnership, and enables an effective emergency response, efficient referral processes and the development of solutions aimed at prevention of abuse and the ability to remain safely in the family home where appropriate. It also facilitates a joint assessment and information sharing procedure to assist those most at risk. The services offered across Halton include:

- 5.39 **Halton Women's Aid refuge:** provides 16 bed spaces for women and children (boys must be under 13yrs). The service offers advice and advocacy regarding legal and housing issues; ensures emotional and practical support for residents, assists them to overcome the trauma of abuse, and helps them develop confidence and achieve independence in setting up and maintaining a new home. It also supports the development of skills and access to employment, and refers residents to additional forms of support – e.g. for drug abuse or mental health problems.
- 5.40 Many of the women placed in the refuge will have a priority need for assistance under the homelessness law – either because of their children or because they are considered vulnerable as a result of the abuse, and many will be rehoused via the Housing Register.
- 5.41 **A 24 hour helpline:** provided by the Relationship Centre offers advice on a range of issues including finding accommodation; support in assisting with the prosecution of their abusive ex- partner; access to help for children to overcome the effects of witnessing abuse; and referral to support similar to that provided by Women's Aid. Couples can also get assistance to stop abuse in their relationship.
- 5.42 **A Sanctuary Scheme:** provides the option of remaining in the home, with enhanced security measures in place to deter an abusive partner who has been excluded from the property, (usually following an injunction). There are two elements to the scheme: structural security measures for the home, including additional locks, reinforced doors and emergency alarms; and the provision of support and practical help to overcome the emotional effects of the abuse and develop new skills and knowledge (which is currently provided by the Relationship Centre).
- 5.43 **Community outreach support** – practical help, advice and emotional support is also offered by SHAP. Their Halton Domestic Abuse Support Service assists those who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse to recover their self esteem and avoid isolation, providing similar services to the Women's Aid refuge - enabling access to opportunities that improve their emotional, social and economic prospects, and reduce the risk of homelessness.

Figures

- In 2007/8 **49** households were helped by Halton Women's Aid
- **46** women were helped via the Sanctuary Scheme
- Over **250** people were provided with regular emotional support from the domestic abuse telephone helpline.

Support for young people

Local Authority services

- 5.44 Halton's Young People's Team (YPT) delivers the Council's statutory duties to support care leavers and Children in Need.²⁹ The team supports children in need, those evicted by parents and those who leave care or whose placement breaks down, to get access to mediation services or to accommodation. Their strategy seeks a 15% reduction in the number of such children in temporary accommodation by 2009.
- 5.45 The YPT provide support, advice and guidance and act as brokers with other agencies. They work closely with local hostels to develop a plan of support to achieve independent living, and liaise with providers of other support services such as employment and skills, Youth Offending Teams and alcohol and drug abuse support.
- 5.46 Consultation with the service revealed that whilst it would be desirable for young people to remain in their placements until they reach 18, having gained appropriate life skills. The reality is that many leave at 16 or 17, but then find the living arrangements and regulations at hostels challenging, some are unable to cope leading to eviction and the potential to be found "intentionally homeless" as a result. Access to longer-term accommodation is also problematic because of the reluctance to grant tenancies for young people under 17yrs.

Figures

- A snapshot at the end of March 2008 showed **10** care leavers and **4** Children In Need in hostel accommodation in Halton

Accommodation and community based support

- 5.47 A range of hostel-based support is available generally to homeless young people – this is detailed in Section 6.
- 5.48 Carr Gomm provides support and a specific project for young people & teenage parents - offering guidance and advice to teenagers at risk of becoming homeless. Services are geared towards helping with emotional and practical issues to enable independent living, with a strong emphasis on building confidence, developing skills and entering training and employment. Young people are referred for support to deal with problems such as childhood abuse or addiction.

Consultation with young people

- 5.49 A consultation event³⁰ with over 20 young people aged 16 to 25 identified additional service needs:

²⁹ These groups cover those between the ages of 15½ and 21 yrs, and the team usually works with 16-17 yr olds. Children in Need include those whose health or development are significantly at risk without the provision of services

³⁰ Youth Homelessness Forum 2008

- More publicity about what services are available.
- Access to health services – particularly GP and dentist.
- Financial management and debt services.
- More easily understood information on benefits.
- Practical support getting access to training – for example subsidised /free travel to college.
- Help with clothing for job interviews.
- Access to subsidised physical fitness activity.

Anti Social Behaviour Cessation

- 5.50 Tenants or their household members who perpetrate neighbour nuisance and other acts of anti social behaviour are at risk of eviction. Considerable national and local government attention to community safety has increased the prevalence of zero-tolerance initiatives to reduce anti social activities. Where homes are lost because of anti social behaviour and a homelessness application is then made, a finding of intentional homelessness will invariably follow.
- 5.51 **The Anti Social Behaviour Floating Support Service** intervenes to ensure that those who carry out anti social activity are assisted in altering their behaviour, developing skills to prevent homelessness such as household management and budgeting, reducing debts, and gaining access to other forms of advice and support. The service has links to other preventative provision such as: counselling, anger management therapy, mental health support, parenting support, the Youth Offending Team, and the Council's Prevention Service and Bond Guarantee Scheme.
- 5.52 **A Family Intervention Project** is available in Halton, to work with those families with a strong likelihood of eviction because of anti social behaviour across all housing sectors. This will offer intensive interventions with families in their own homes, and also to those who have been evicted or are in the process of losing their homes. The services will enable families to establish routines, develop parenting skills, organise their affairs and finances, and encourage family activities and behavioural change.
- 5.53 **A Senior Parenting Practitioner** ensures the availability of appropriate support via parenting programmes delivered in the community, for parents whose children are at risk of poor outcomes relating to their behaviour.

Drug & alcohol support

- 5.54 Those with drug and alcohol problems run the risk of homelessness when their addiction disables the ability to manage their affairs or exacerbates behaviour that might lead to eviction. Those who become homeless have a higher risk of developing drug or alcohol problems, which in turn makes sustaining long-term housing more difficult.
- 5.55 The pattern of homelessness amongst those with substance misuse problems is often a downward spiral where underlying problems – for example poor early life experiences, abuse and neglect – and the effects of addiction combine to create or exacerbate mental ill health, reduce physical health and create chaotic lifestyles.

- 5.56 The Safer Halton Partnership – through the Drug & Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) delivers a range of strategic initiatives, funding and direct services to help people avoid harm in their drug and alcohol consumption, and reduce or stop their addiction.
- 5.57 Ashley House is a one ‘stop shop’ commissioned by the DAAT, which provides a range of health related, social care and advice services, and enables access to treatment, housing advice, training and education services. The project also provides counselling and advice for those who care for or live with people abusing alcohol or drugs. Examples of homelessness–related outreach services linked to Ashley House include:
- Addaction outreach and helpline: providing practical and emotional support for people experiencing drug problems, including harm reduction, alternative therapies, support for those undergoing treatment, leaving prison or coming out of treatment.
 - SHAP: providing an outreach programme offering support advice, advocacy and access to services, helping people set up or maintain their home, develop the skills to manage their affairs and access other support services and social networks. SHAP work with education services to develop training that is accessible for this client group, for whom mainstream provision is often problematic.
- 5.58 These and others agencies operating in the borough assist those without a home to get into hostel or longer-term housing or to access mental health services and liaison with criminal justice services.
- 5.59 Halton agencies in this field report an absence of day care facilities - for example washing and laundry - which could assist people to engage with services and develop connections that reduce chaotic behaviour; and a lack of specialist housing options that can accommodate the challenges posed by long term substance misuse (see Sections 6&7).

Figures

- Addaction report that up to **22** of their clients are habitually rough sleeping, with a core group of around **13** who sleep on the streets more or less permanently.
- **60%** of SHAP’s drug and alcohol service clients have their own tenancies, **20%** have some form of roof over their heads – eg on friends’ floors, whilst **10%** are generally living rough.

Support for those with mental health problems

- 5.60 As noted earlier, 20% of those recorded via Multi Agency Monitoring had sought support for mental illness in the previous year. Research suggests that between 30% and 50% of those who experience homelessness have suffered from a mental health problem in the past. According to anecdotal evidence from those consulted in the field of drug and alcohol support, a significant proportion of those seeking help with housing are also affected by mental ill health. It is clear that people with

mental health problems will find it harder to manage their affairs and are more prone to problems such as debt and arrears and to abandoning accommodation.³¹

- 5.61 Halton provides for those with severe and/or enduring mental health problems through a combination of second tier health care and social care, offering medium and long term supported housing alongside community based and outreach services, which enable people to live in the community and to resettle after hospital discharge.
- 5.62 Consultation with agencies supporting people with mental health problems, revealed concerns about those who might have lower level mental health problems, or whose mental health problems are accompanied by substance misuse (referred to as “dual-diagnosis”), which can create problems in both diagnosis and treatment. These concerns centred on the greater risk of such people falling through the net of provision, developing multiple problems, and not being perceived as vulnerable enough to warrant intervention by the Statutory Homelessness service. It is interesting to note that statistics provided by the YMCA highlight that 25% of residents in 2008 had a mental health issue albeit minor. The YMCA is working on a mental health and well being strategy.
- 5.63 The Supporting People Strategy recognises the need to increase services to this group. The Mental Health Accommodation Strategy recommends both an in-depth analysis of those with dual-diagnosis, and a greater understanding of the needs of people with mental health problems who are homeless.

Outreach support for general risk groups

- 5.64 There are a number of so-called “generic” services assisting those who are vulnerable to home-loss. These “floating support” or community-based services are available to ensure that people are able to manage their affairs and their tenancies. Those who access this type of support have often been homeless before, or have been referred by other welfare services to ensure that their homelessness is prevented.
- 5.65 For example, Halton Tenant Support Service (provided by SHAP) helps clients to set up or maintain a home, which includes advice, support and skills development, concentrating on increasing the users’ capacity to live independently, avoid social isolation, develop their ability to manage money and increase their employment prospects.

Figures

- In 2007/8 SHAP assisted **38** people with general tenancy support (in addition to the 32 people who needed help with substance misuse) - providing an average of **8 months** support per person.

³¹ Ravenhill, M., Routes Into Homelessness, London, 2000.

Registered Social Landlords' support for tenants at risk

- 5.66 As the major providers of rented housing in Halton, the role of RSLs is critical in the prevention of homelessness amongst tenants. Their rationale for addressing prevention includes: the reduction in voids and costs caused by evictions; their role as a *social* housing provider - often with a mission to support individual and social advancement; and their increasing role in community development.
- 5.67 Those consulted are engaged in a number of activities aimed at reducing evictions and abandonment.
- 5.68 **Arrears reduction** Most RSLs have early intervention mechanisms in place that provide support to those who fall into arrears. In some cases a single missed payment will trigger an alert to the tenant. A further missed payment will result in a home visit with help to support budgeting and debt management, including access to debt specialists.
- 5.69 **Tenancy sustainment work** - there are increasingly early interventions with tenants who start to display anti social behaviour or who might be at risk in managing their tenancies. RSLs link into floating support schemes to ensure that their tenants have assistance to keep their homes.
- 5.70 With the increasing importance of RSLs as the providers of affordable housing, Government initiatives seek a strategic homelessness response from RSLs. A programme of work is now expected of RSLs to deliver homelessness prevention strategies, develop financial inclusion and create initiatives to reduce worklessness amongst tenants.

Support from Housing Benefit

- 5.71 The Housing Benefit (HB) Department fulfils a major role with regard to homelessness prevention – the provision of subsidy to enable people to afford their rented homes and the provision of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent hardship by covering a shortfall between benefit levels and rent. The amount of funding regarding DHP is a relatively small sum of money (£30,000 in 2007/08), but can prove effective in preventing homelessness.
- 5.72 Delays in HB payments, problems with under and overpayments and failures to renew claims create arrears, which in many local authority areas have resulted in evictions. In Halton the HB service has an excellent record in timely processing of applications. This is supported by the Benefits Express service, a high-tech, mobile facility, which travels to pre-advertised community locations to receive and process claims and refer claimants for welfare rights advice. As a result claims usually take less than two weeks to administer. In addition the team works very closely with the Council's Welfare Rights Officers, further reducing the likelihood of claimant problems.
- 5.73 Consultation with young people identified that good communication with the benefits service and easily understood information on entitlements would be helpful to them in reducing the risk of arrears.

- 5.74 From the 1st April 2008 the Housing Benefits provision for private tenants changed to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which is paid to the tenant rather than the landlord for all but the most vulnerable tenants. This is designed to encourage - amongst other things - greater levels of tenant responsibility, and greater certainty over what they will be expected to pay. Changes in the calculation of the allowance will actually provide some tenants with a small surplus (up to a maximum of £15) after rent is paid.
- 5.75 LHA does open up the risk of tenants defaulting on rent payments; although the scheme allows for direct payment to landlords for tenants who are unable to manage their finances or fall into arrears. Halton's Housing Benefit Department have stated their intention that those who are considered at risk - eg many of those in receipt of Supporting People funded services – will have their LHA paid direct to the landlord.
- 5.76 The LHA regime remains problematic for single private tenants without children who are under 25yrs old.³² They are subject to the “shared room rate” regulations - where it is assumed that younger people will share part of their homes with others and the benefit level is therefore set at the rate for a single room with shared facilities, regardless of the type of housing actually occupied. The LHA regulations are less restrictive than the previous regime, however there is still a risk of insufficient benefit for under 25's. The shortfall in Halton between the shared rate and the rate for a one-bed property is £40 a week.
- 5.77 DHP can assist those who might otherwise suffer hardship – including homelessness. The Halton budget for DHP is £29,500 for 2009/10. DHP is always fully used each year, providing support to around 200 claimants

The Council's Enforcement Service

- 5.78 As part of the Council's role in protecting all tenants, there is an enforcement service, which ensures that the conditions of tenancies do not fall below the legal standards, and also that tenants are not evicted illegally. This service largely helps to prevent homelessness by improving conditions, which might otherwise force tenants to abandon their home.
- 5.79 As far as possible the service works informally to persuade landlords to make improvements, as the ability to evict tenants legally is relatively easy, and a more aggressive approach could increase evictions.
- 5.80 The service also refers clients to the Homelessness Prevention services so that clients can get assistance to avoid wrongful evictions.

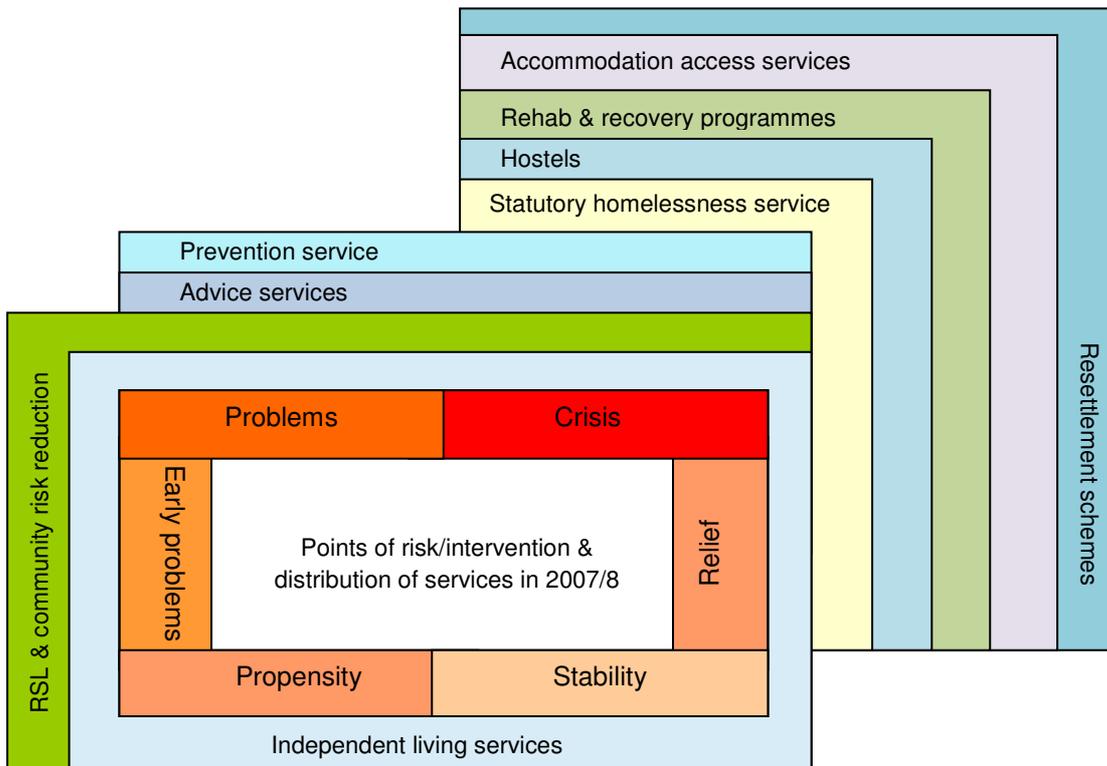
Figures

- In 2007/8, **127** households were helped by the service to enforce their rights to decent standards of accommodation.

³² There are some exceptions for example those under 22 who have left local authority care.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.81 Government policy and the strategic direction, which Halton has taken in its homelessness provision since 2003, have enabled a significant array of services to combat the risks that cause or exacerbate homelessness. The rebranded Housing Solutions service will provide a basis for a comprehensive prevention and assessment service.
- 5.82 The strategic review and consultation exercises highlight a number of themes in provision and development. There is general satisfaction with provision, but concern about access, in particular the need to develop:
- Better knowledge of services – publicity and communication about what is available.
 - Streamlined access to services and a single point of access.
 - More joint work– e.g. with client assessments and referrals.
 - More user involvement in service development and design.
 - Earlier intervention.
- 5.83 Currently the majority of services are located at the crisis end of the homelessness risk process, intervening once problems have escalated. The diagram overleaf highlights this. Prevention is a lower cost option financially and also personally for those at risk. A challenge for the Strategy will be to ensure more efficient take up of existing services and also to shift focus over time to earlier intervention that will yield a higher rate of successful prevention.



- 5.84 There is scope to capitalise on the successful outcomes across current services which tackle risk factors and which enable people to plan re-housing without

enduring homelessness. In particular, models and tools from national and local RSL initiatives and some of the generic SP services could be promoted with other providers and will be applicable in a wider context to enable early risk reduction.

5.85 In addition to the general themes referred to above particular service areas were identified for development work or ‘marketing.’

- a) **Advice & Court representation services** - There is an ongoing need to provide and publicise homelessness advice services. A greater emphasis on prevention requires that more people know about their rights and entitlements and can gain support in pursuing these.

The current economic climate will result in an increase in problems concerning arrears and debt related home loss, requiring financial advice and support and intervention prior to dedicated Court representation services.

- b) **Family support** The shortage of housing and desire for independent living will continue to exacerbate tensions within families and generate evictions. The new strategy should support the continuation and extension of parenting and child welfare support.

It is also notable that up to 50% of those who are statutorily homeless and accepted for rehousing remain at home until settled accommodation is secured. This indicates scope for a new approach, which involves greater ‘move planning’ potential for families with adult children and the need to revisit the Council’s Housing Allocations Policy to award a degree of priority to households threatened with homelessness.

- c) **Support for young people**- Support with planned moves will help young people to move more successfully to independence. This could be backed by expansion of mediation services. Measures are also required to address the complex levels of risk for young people who have become Children in Need or who have left the care system.
- d) **Support for those with complex and multiple needs.** New interventions are needed to support those with lower level mental health problems – particularly when combined with drug or alcohol abuse; and for those with enduring homelessness linked to chronic drink and drug addiction.
- e) **Employment and training** There is also considerable need to link homelessness and prevention services to employment, training and skills development services, to ensure greater financial and housing prospects.
- f) **Skills to sustain settled housing** The continuing patterns of home loss in Halton will require ongoing support to those who find it difficult to manage their affairs and who might otherwise abandon their homes.
- g) **ASB Cessation** The services which tackle anti social behaviour will enable greater levels of homelessness prevention, which the strategy should support and develop further. It may be possible to learn from some of the supportive work and behaviour modification projects and apply these appropriately in much earlier interventions on a wider scale.

- h) **Domestic Abuse Services** in Halton represent an effective response and pro-active approach, but there will be a continuing need to ensure that people can remain safely in their homes and to support provision for those who have to escape.

5.86 The Homelessness Strategy should

R13. Develop an optimal model of homelessness prevention and relief including consideration of

- i. High profile accessibility and streamlined access to services.
- ii. The capacity for earlier intervention and risk reduction, to enable home retention; with an appropriate balance between prevention work and homelessness assessment.
- iii. The development of a planned move approach- particularly for younger people leaving the family home.

R14. Develop a legal and financial advice and representation strategy for Halton including:

- i. Development of debt and finance advice – covering money management, bank accounting, saving, debt avoidance and management.
- ii. Maximise take-up of the Court representation service aimed at reducing repossessions and evictions.
- iii. Stronger links with bodies such as the Legal Services Commission to develop appropriate provision.

R15. Support RSLs in the development of prevention strategies, and work with them to learn from and proliferate financial inclusion and worklessness reduction initiatives.

R16. Enable the development and expansion of mediation services for those at highest risk and formalise and develop the Prevention Service's capacity to deliver mediation via officers formally qualified in mediation.

R17. Support the further development of the Sanctuary services and maintain effective links with the Domestic Abuse Forum and key partners to ensure a pro-active approach to homelessness prevention and relief.

R18. Ensure mechanisms for cross departmental and organisational work with services to improve service delivery and development and the encouragement of joint planning to resolve barriers to rehousing for

- i. Children and young people.
- ii. Drug & alcohol support.
- iii. People with low mental health problems.
- iv. Victims of domestic abuse.

R19. Scope the feasibility of appropriate accommodation and day centre provision for those with chronic substance misuse and street homelessness.

- R20. Research the homelessness-related needs of those with mental health problems and dual diagnosis, and scope the development of appropriate provision.**
- R21. Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of specialist services such as services ASB cessation, private tenant enforcement and children's services become an integral part of homelessness prevention evaluation.**

6 Short Term Accommodation

Current strategic context

- 6.1. For those who become homeless, Halton has a range of short-term housing. Much of this is linked to on-site support.
- 6.2. Across the country, short-term provision has largely moved away from big, direct access hostels where anyone can self-refer and stay indefinitely, to the development of “places of change”³³ providing transitional, time-limited support linked to finding and sustaining settled rehousing.
- 6.3. This move to reduce institutionalisation and increase self-responsibility has been coupled with more sophisticated support planning with residents and higher levels of risk management to ensure the safety of residents and staff. Risk assessment has removed the onus on short-term housing providers to accept all-comers.
- 6.4. One effect of this development is that there are no hostels or temporary homes in Halton – apart from Bed & Breakfast (B&B) hotels – which homeless people can approach themselves for emergency access.
- 6.5. The Government has set targets to reduce temporary accommodation and bed & breakfast use by statutorily homeless households; requiring each local authority to halve its temporary accommodation use by 2010. It is clear that this accommodation is undesirable for long periods, and the goal is to secure settled housing as quickly as possible. However, it is also evident that the type of support, which can be provided to residents in short term housing is often an essential part of transition to independent living for many and is successful in reducing the risk of, repeat homelessness.

Sources of accommodation

- 6.6. **Grangeway Court** – is available only to homeless households assessed as statutory homeless, or likely to meet the provisions of the homelessness legislation, (mainly those who are pregnant or with dependent children). Households are placed there in self-contained flats, pending offers of settled housing.
- 6.7. **Bed & Breakfast** – a variety of hotels are used by the homelessness services

Figures

In 2007/8

■ **138** households were placed in B&B hotels including **61** families

■ **94** households were placed in Grangeway Court

³³ CLG <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/placeschange>

to place single people and couples without children. This is generally accepted as a place of last resort for those making the transition from homelessness to settled living; and often exacerbates instability. It is also relatively expensive, and is therefore subject to reduction targets by the Council in addition to central government. It should be noted that in 2007/8 B&B use increased during refurbishments taking place at two hostels which substantially limited hostel access.

- 6.8. **Hostels** – access can be direct or by referral. All hostels operate waiting lists and these tend to be oversubscribed.
- 6.9. With the addition of 3 Direct Access YMCA units in 2008, there are now 6 Direct Access bed spaces available in Halton. N.B. customers cannot self-refer direct to accommodation providers. Referrals are via an agency (usually the Council's Housing Solutions Team or children's services). These units are to be used for a limited period to enable sufficient turnover. A difficulty for providers in enabling direct access is the lack of security for rental income – particularly where the person referred has a history of chaotic living, eg: in the time needed to claim benefit to cover rent, the resident may have left the hostel, reducing the hostel's income.
- 6.10. Most hostels provide accommodation and support for those between 16 and 25 years. Belvedere and the largest provider- the YMCA – offers support to those over 25. There is a move amongst most hostels towards self-contained units, with some shared facilities – kitchens or bathrooms, and very few shared bedrooms.
- 6.11. 92% of hostel accommodation is in Runcorn, which can create problems of access and retaining family and community contact for those who become homelessness from Widnes.
- 6.12. Young people reported difficulties with the rent levels in hostels- where there are often service charges for facilities, which are not covered by Housing Benefit.
- 6.13. **Halton Women's Aid refuge** – is for those escaping domestic violence. Access is direct or by referral and depends on available space –which is often oversubscribed. Families with boys over the age of 13 cannot be accommodated with their son/s because of the vulnerable nature of residents.
- 6.14. **Nightstop:** The YMCA has developed a Nightstop scheme for young people aged over 16. This enables the young person to stay with a host family (volunteer providers) who accommodate them for an emergency period during which more suitable short-term housing can be found, and/or intensive mediation between the young person and their family can be undertaken to reunite them. The scheme is based on existing models of good practice and is proving to be a successful model of providing emergency accommodation.

Figures

Hostels

- 118 bed-spaces are available across the **four** hostels in Halton
- 10 of these are in Widnes

Women's Refuge

- 16 bed-spaces

Grangeway Court

- 32 units

Support provision in short term accommodation

- 6.15. In all types of short term accommodation the support provided is considerable, from counselling, life assessment, personal goal setting and strategies for independent living - to practical assistance: developing skills; undergoing training; gaining access to qualifications; job searching; help understanding and managing money; household management skills; links to services that help with drug and alcohol abuse etc. Most of those receiving this support will do so as residents, with some additional after-care when they move into a settled home.
- 6.16. At Grangeway Court the average length of stay at the accommodation is usually around four months. For those in hostels the stay varies from 6 months to a year in most cases.
- 6.17. There are high rates of success for those leaving short term supported accommodation (following being re-housed) and living independently, with the vast majority sustaining their longer term accommodation for over 6 months to a year, and very few households experiencing repeat episodes of homelessness.
- 6.18. Most providers – including Grangeway court – report an increase in the number of residents with complex needs or who are very vulnerable and unable to live independently. Grangeway Court also reported a rise in the number of very young pregnant women and or single parents who need more intensive and longer-term support before they can move on. This can create tension between ensuring sufficient length of support to achieve resettlement and freeing accommodation for use by other homeless households.
- 6.19. A number of providers of both accommodation based and community outreach services have expressed concern for a small number of people who cannot cope with shared living arrangements, or who, because of their past behaviour – involving violence or arson – have been banned from or pose too high a risk to access available accommodation and as a result have literally nowhere to stay.
- 6.20. There are also concerns about move-on from hostels. Whilst some providers felt that this was manageable and that services were not “silting up”, others have cited delays in achieving rehousing in reasonable time frames.

Gypsy & Traveller accommodation

- 6.21. The Council has a transit site for Gypsies and Travellers (in addition to the permanent site available see Section 7) along with additional support provided via the Council’s Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers. The lack of available permanent pitches in Halton and on a national basis can create homelessness for this section of the community.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- 6.22. Short term housing in Halton is currently oversubscribed with very little accommodation available in Widnes. There is also a need for more immediate access that removes the requirement for B&B use. Provision is lacking for those

with very complex needs, who cannot cope with or who would be excluded from mainstream accommodation.

- 6.23. From the figures provided for 2007/8 (taking into account hostel waiting lists and reported rough sleeping levels), there is a shortfall of between 10 and 15 spaces for immediate access by people without dependent children.³⁴ Further investigation is needed to assess how far changes in practice and move-on development can address this. Consideration should also be given to non-traditional provision – eg supported lodgings for young people and accommodation that can cater for ongoing substance abuse.
- 6.24. To meet the reduction target for temporary accommodation use by statutorily homeless households, there is potential to remodel short-term accommodation provision. By diversifying and re-designating specific sources and extending the scope of the Council's Housing Allocations scheme (see Section 7) it should be possible to route people to the most appropriate forms of temporary accommodation, secure settled homes, and reduce the need for homelessness applications. For example:
- ◆ It is possible to offer units of RSL accommodation for those who need little support to sustain future tenancies, and to place those who need support into appropriate short-term housing or hostels. Using RSL accommodation in this way could potentially enable a temporary allocation to be made permanent, ie as an offer of rehousing under the Council's homelessness duties – in effect providing a direct rehousing option. Such schemes would in some circumstances need to be accompanied by support with furnishings. A range of options may be available including use of Halton Haven's recycled furniture scheme or the purchase of a furniture package. If the Council leased units of accommodation from partner RSLs to provide temporary accommodation the Council would purchase furniture packages as part of a lease arrangement. Similarly those who need assistance could be placed in supported short term with an automatic high priority onto the Housing Register, which is not dependent on a homelessness application.
- 6.25. The Homelessness Strategy should deliver:
- R22. A Temporary Accommodation Strategy to ensure**
- i. The right balance of provision and support across all needs groups and geographical areas, with appropriate move-on capacity.
 - ii. The scoping of diverse provision such as lodgings schemes and for those with multiple problems including chronic substance abuse.
 - iii. The development of a common move-on process and protocols.

³⁴ This figure takes account of the reintroduction of units closed for refurbishment in 2007/8.

7 Settled Housing

Access to Social Housing

The Housing Register

- 7.1. Access to social rented housing in Halton is divided between nominations through the Council's Housing Register and direct applications to a provider's waiting list. However tenancy turnover for participating RSLs is low, creating relatively few new vacancies.

Allocations of housing under the Homelessness Act 2002

- 7.2. The Housing Register offers the principal rehousing route for households accepted under homelessness law in Halton. Homelessness confers the maximum points needed to secure an offer of accommodation. However these households are restricted to one offer (applicants can chose either Runcorn or Widnes), which they must accept unless they can show that it is unsuitable – eg because of health or other risk. This restriction of choice increases rehousing speed and temporary accommodation turnover, reducing related expense. It can increase the risk of less suitable offers, although this should also be balanced against the very low levels of repeat statutory homelessness.

Figures

- In 2007/8 there were **1720** households on the register.
- Just over **380** were offered accommodation
- **55%** of these offers were made to homelessness households
- **26%** of all vacancies available for new tenants within Halton's 7 major RSLs were allocated to homeless people

- 7.3. The restriction also reduces perverse incentives to apply as homeless in order to acquire maximum points on the register. It is notable that the implementation of the one-offer policy (amongst other developments) correlated with a subsequent reduction in homelessness applications.

Non-statutory allocations

- 7.4. Those who apply to the register outside the statutory nominations process are entitled to three offers of housing.
- 7.5. If applicants restrict their choices of accommodation or areas they are less likely to be rehoused quickly. Young people in particular expressed concern that they were more likely to be offered property in a poor state of repair or in "hard to let" areas.

Future plans for access to social housing

- 7.6. Halton Borough Council and RSL partners plan to introduce Choice Based Lettings³⁵ in 2010 in line with Government targets. Choice based schemes have been shown to offer greater transparency about vacancy information, resulting in more realistic expectations amongst home-seekers about availability; increased consumer choice, with greater prospects that households and properties will be well matched helping to improve the prospects of tenancy sustainment. All of these elements can reduce the risk of future homelessness and enable more stable transition from one home to the next. It can also reduce the confusion between pathways to rehousing, and possibly the incentive to use homelessness as a route to rehousing.
- 7.7. However most CBL schemes – particularly in high demand areas – are based on banding of bidders according to need, and in some cases on restrictive bidding processes according to bands, which can impact negatively on homeless households if not modelled and managed effectively.
- 7.8. Longer term there is evidently a need for sufficient vacant properties to enable the scheme to support homelessness prevention effectively. The Regional Spatial Strategy sets a minimum target for the provision of 500 new homes per annum in Halton. Halton's status as a Growth point, in partnership with St Helens and Warrington councils, will see the development of an additional 100 homes per annum. The Council will be working closely with the Homes and Communities Agency to maximise affordable housing in the Borough. This will reduce some of the pressure on the Housing Register and any future scheme.

The Private Rented Sector

- 7.9. The 2006 Housing Needs Survey evidenced the unpopularity of this relatively small sector amongst those seeking to move home. Private tenancies offer limited security for residents in contrast to social rented housing or home ownership, although the usual 6 month fixed terms offered often roll on to a longer term tenancy.
- 7.10. Traditionally across the country, this sector has been characterised by extremes of higher quality but high cost housing at one end of the market, and lower cost but very poor standard accommodation at the other. Government enforcement of improvements to the standards expected of private landlords for some types of housing, and legislation to protect tenants' deposits, along with an expanded buy-to let market, have contributed to the increasing use of privately rented housing. In Halton, the affordability problem for many first time buyers and the limited turnover in the supply of vacant social housing is now increasing the take up of private tenancies. This take up has been boosted considerably by the development of a Deposit and now Bond Guarantee Scheme – see below.
- 7.11. A Landlord's Accreditation scheme has also encouraged the development of the sector. It supports landlords to deliver good practice, offering regular liaison with

³⁵ A single scheme replacing housing registers, where vacancies are advertised and where prospective tenants can "bid" for (ie express an interest in) the vacancies

the Council, the Housing Benefit Section, and access to specialist discounted services and suppliers.

Halton's Deposit Guarantee Scheme

- 7.12. The 2003-2008 Homelessness Strategy enabled the development of a Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS), which provided deposits on behalf of tenants to secure a private tenancy. As the deposits were actual sums of money paid to landlords from a finite funding pot, the overall pot therefore dwindled over the financial year, creating an uneven spread of support throughout the year. For this reason the scheme evolved into a Bond Guarantee Scheme (BGS) whereby Halton Borough Council guarantees to pay the landlord up to £500 to cover any financial loss in lieu of a deposit should problems arise during the first year of tenancy. This is advantageous as more households can be assisted, as the actual rate of problems and payments made is very low as a proportion of bonds guaranteed.
- 7.13. The DGS and its successor the BGS have provided an important route to rehousing for many of those unable to secure other forms of accommodation. Service users can source tenancies themselves or receive support in finding accommodation. Access to the scheme has been via the Council's Prevention Service and latterly the Housing Solutions Team, which works with the dedicated BGS Officer. This approach checks the suitability of the customer to the tenancies available, avoiding problems of affordability and ensuring that those assisted by the scheme understand their rights and responsibilities and are able to seek help if there are any problems with their new tenancy. As a result most of the tenancies have been sustainable, continuing beyond the fixed term.
- 7.14. The BGS also provides positive experiences for landlords, who are increasingly inclined to seek tenants through the scheme, helping those who may not have been able to secure a tenancy through their own endeavours. It encourages greater willingness by landlords to take on a wider range of tenants than they may have previously considered. Overall the scheme has been hugely successful however it should be noted that it is not possible to assist every household to access the private rented sector. Those accepted for bonds are sometimes required to undergo a credit check to satisfy the landlords/agents of their capacity to manage a tenancy. In some cases clients are also asked to provide a guarantor for the rent, which for those without family or friends to turn to, can prove impossible.

Figures

- In 2007/8 **114** tenancies were created using the Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
- **314** households were referred to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
- **65%** households referred to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme by the Prevention service were families with dependent children.
- **77%** continued on after their initial fixed term.
- **96%** of tenancies that reached the end of their fixed term resulted in the landlord returning the deposit to the scheme.

Low Cost Home Ownership

- 7.15. Low cost home ownership (LCHO) covers: shared ownership schemes that enable people on modest incomes to purchase part of their home and rent the rest; and help through an equity loan³⁶ for certain types of purchasers - eg first time buyers. There has been an increase in RSLs developing these schemes, partly in response to the desirability of mixed tenure communities and in the context of profits generated which can subsidise rental housing.
- 7.16. A potential 140 new low cost homes has been projected to be built in the coming 3-5 years, and offered for sale through the new build HomeBuy scheme. Such schemes can reduce pressure on the Housing Register and in multi generational households, create opportunities for movements through tenures and enable rented development.

Gypsy & Traveller sites

- 7.17. A permanent Council owned and managed site is available in Halton, enabling secure pitches for rent by Gypsy and Traveller households. Support is available from the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers and to provide liaison between the site users, other agencies and the local community.
- 7.18. This is part of a Cheshire-wide initiative to deliver local authority obligations to Gypsies and Travellers³⁷. These communities run a higher risk of statutory homelessness due to the lack of legal sites on which to place their homes. At the same time, those who become homeless have no absolute right to be rehoused in a mobile home, and no right to have a legal site created for them to occupy. It is clearly critical to the communities concerned that they have access to provision that enables them to continue their lifestyle and culture.

General access considerations

- 7.19. Agencies and service users have expressed concern about the timing of moves from short term to settled housing, where rent is payable from the start of the tenancy, but benefit is only paid from the date the tenant moves in. When tenants have to remain in short term accommodation until they can secure furniture and equipment for their move, they have to pay two rents and potentially start their new tenancy in arrears.
- 7.20. Agencies and services users consulted have also noted a mismatch between the offers of accommodation made and user's needs, which can result in rejection of offers or abandonment of accommodation further on. There are wider concerns about the information available about access, which if improved could help to make expectations and choices more realistic.

³⁶ These are loans which provide part of the funding for the property in return for a % stake in any future sale and therefore enables a smaller mortgage.

³⁷ Housing Act 2004 – Local Authorities must assess the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities and detail how these needs will be catered for.

- 7.21. Young people in particular are concerned about the difficulties securing lettings for those under 18, who are often deemed unsuitable to hold tenancies in their own right, but may not have anyone to act as a guarantor.
- 7.22. The Mental Health Accommodation Strategy highlights the need for additional investigation in to the housing needs of homeless people with mental health problems.

Help with furnishing

- 7.23. Many homeless households are without the means to furnish a new home. The lack of furniture and essential equipment such as cookers and fridges can make people reluctant to move from temporary homes, and can contribute to abandonment of new tenancies.
- 7.24. Assistance is available via the benefits system's Social Fund, which offers discretionary help through Community Care Grants or Budgeting Loans. The availability of the grant or loan will be judged on a case-by-case basis and is also subject to the District Social Fund Budget, which reduces over the course of the year. Timing and support to make a claim are therefore critical to receipt of these benefits. The Strategy Review consultation revealed a mixed experience amongst agencies with some achieving greater rates of successful claims for their clients than others.
- 7.25. Many local authority areas benefit from furniture projects where recycled furnishings and white goods can be purchased very cheaply or provided free of charge to those in crisis – including homeless households. A local charity Halton Haven offers recycled furniture at reasonable prices for sale and will also depending on availability help households with free furniture that has been donated, but did not sell in the charity's shops. Some of the RSLs in the Borough are working in partnership with Halton Haven regarding removal and donation of furniture left in empty properties by the previous tenant. The Council is currently undertaking a feasibility study to see if this scheme can be developed further with funding from the Council.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Access to housing

- 7.26. There remains a tension between meeting the needs of those who are at high risk of homelessness because of the unsuitability of their housing, and those who have actually become homeless. In the context of Halton's main source of homelessness – family breakdown- and the particularly high proportion of statutory homeless households who remain "homeless at home" for some time awaiting offer of social housing, it could be argued that the Allocations Policy still offers an incentive for homelessness applications to be made in order to speed up rehousing.
- 7.27. This is not to suggest that levels of need are not high amongst this group, or that living arrangements are reasonable and present no homelessness risk, but that more effective interventions are required for those living in unsatisfactory family housing.

- 7.28. Until CBL is introduced, there is a need to review the allocation of housing under the register, to create a more preventative focus and reduce perverse incentives to apply as homeless; and also to assist families with the process of planning moves, with support to enable continued residence in the family home- eg through mediation.
- 7.29. The economic downturn is likely to have an impact on both the social and rented markets and a reduced impact from LCHO on both levels of homelessness and the ability to subsidise rented developments.
- 7.30. The Homelessness Strategy will also need to address barriers to access:
- The lack of furniture that some households require to aid ‘move on’ especially from supported housing schemes.
 - Mechanisms to ensure that timing of offers and moves do not create financial hardship.
 - Enhanced communication to match households to appropriate settled housing.
- 7.31. The Homelessness Strategy will need to support the Housing Strategy in development schemes that can improve access to the relevant markets, and increase affordable housing. It will also need to support access for particular groups such as Gypsies and Travellers and those with mental health problems.

Implementing Choice Based Lettings

- 7.32. CBL will need to ensure:
- The allocation of sufficient priority to homelessness in any banding process.
 - The allocation of sufficient priority to those who are in high need and unsuitable housing, to reduce incentives for households to become homeless in order to gain priority.
 - The need to ensure genuine choice for homeless bidders – to reduce the prospect of repeat homelessness.
 - The provision of sufficient support to those who are most vulnerable, to enable equal access to the bidding process.

The Bond Guarantee Scheme

- 7.33. The Scheme’s provision for families with children is significant and marks a positive alternative to the Housing Register/social housing route. Further incentives for landlords and support to tenants to ensure sustainability should be considered. For example the Council could undertake a feasibility study regarding working with or acting as a credit referencing agency, using cheaper credit checks, which will facilitate better access to those in greatest need.
- 7.34. The Homelessness Strategy should:

R23. Evidence the need to review and revise the Council’s Allocation Policy (pre-CBL) to increase prevention allocating greater priority to those at risk.

R24. Develop processes to ensure efficient transition to settled housing:

- i. A planned moves approach – especially to avoid family evictions.

- ii. Information and guidance packages to reinforce rights and responsibilities and promote clear expectations.
- iii. Consider negotiating to extend the existing furniture-recycling scheme in partnership with Halton Haven and RSL partners.
- iv. A move-on protocol to deliver consistency, maximise appropriate offers and take up of accommodation, leading into CBL access protocols.
- v. Support to enable 16 and 17 yrs olds to take up appropriate settled housing.

R25. Ensure Choice Based Lettings takes account of those who are most at risk.

R26. Provide support to the Housing Strategy by evidencing risk and need:

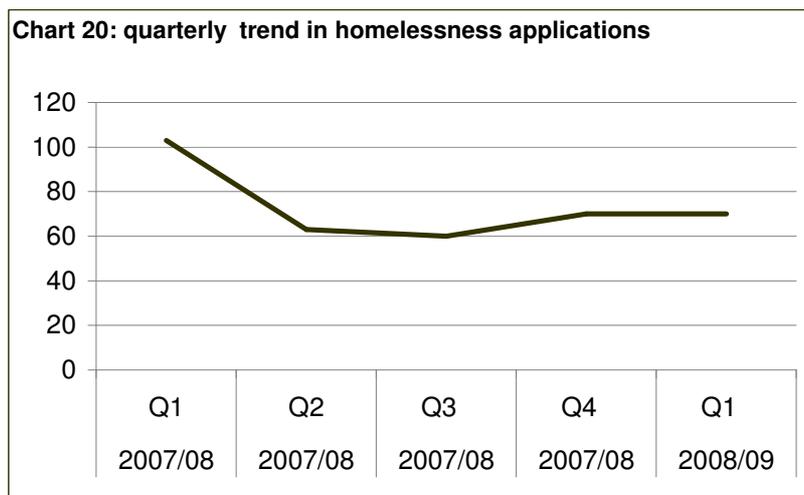
- i. For the development of affordable housing and appropriate schemes.
- ii. In the development and maintenance of sites and facilities for Gypsy & Traveller communities.
- iii. For appropriate accommodation for those with mental health problems.

8 Forecasting Future Homelessness

- 8.1. To achieve an appropriate strategic direction, it is important to anticipate homelessness risk factors and the impact that services and policy developments may have in reducing homelessness.
- 8.2. It is common to forecast by extrapolating from historical data, weighting this according to known or likely influences such as demographic or economic factors. The considerable services changes in 2007/8 (and ongoing) mean that it is too early to map future trends with any sophistication. Similarly the extent and duration of the economic downturn and the impact of responses to it, are not fully clear at this stage. However, it is possible to identify some broad risk areas over the coming five years.

Pattern of Homelessness in Halton

- 8.3. Whilst the substantial reduction in statutory homelessness applications (62%) over the past five years might suggest a downward trajectory for the years to come, the pattern of this reduction is more complicated.
- 8.4. As outlined in Section 4, the figures for 2003/4 were probably increased by the broadening of the legislation in 2002. A 75% increase from 2002/3 was then followed by a smaller downward trend - perhaps a natural re-adjustment as the law was understood more clearly in practice. The subsequent downward trend did not take a straight path. There was a slight increase in applications in 2006/7 from the year before. The reduction in 2007/8 correlates with the take up of the Options & Advice and Prevention services, suggesting a shift rather than reduction in demand.
- 8.5. Added to this, the level of statutory homelessness seen in the first quarter of 2008/9 is on a par with the rates in 2007/8. The pattern over the last 5 quarters may indicate that without addition prevention resources, the statutory homelessness take-up rate is reaching a plateau rather than reducing. Further assessment in 2008/9 and into 2010 will be needed to establish further shifts across the three services.



- 8.6. Taking services as a whole, it will also be critical to differentiate between levels of homelessness risk and match this against outcomes.
- 8.7. It is likely however that overall levels of demand from those who are homeless or at high risk of homelessness will remain at current levels of around 800 households a year, or actually increase.

Current risk levels & the impact of strategies & new services

- 8.8. Considerable progress is being made to reduce levels of deprivation in Halton and the associated problems and to increase and improve the supply of affordable housing. For the medium term, the current climate is still one of relative poverty across Halton, with low levels of employment and low health prospects for a number of communities, coupled with a limited supply of affordable housing, and a growing affordability problem. It is a context in which homelessness remains a very real risk.
- 8.9. It is encouraging to note that the development of the Prevention and Bond Guarantee Scheme services have made a positive impact on the outcomes for many homeless households and those at risk, in terms of successful home retention or rehousing. However, a comprehensive approach to recording outcomes across all homelessness services would enable a more accurate measure of how well services are reducing or mitigating the effects of homelessness.

Emerging Risks

- 8.10. At the time of writing the country is facing economic recession, bringing the potential for increased individual and structural risks.

Debt

- 8.11. Recession will increase unemployment and debt, leading to arrears of rent or mortgage payments, and repossessions.
- 8.12. Acceleration in possession proceedings – both for mortgage and rent arrears – has been dramatic at the County Courts covering Halton. This will not always result in homelessness, as some claims will be dismissed or settled and others will be subject to a binding agreement for the debtor to reduce arrears; but it indicates the increased level of ‘homelessness risk’ facing those in financial difficulty. Nationally there has been a 13% increase in landlords

Figures

Action brought for **mortgage repossessions** in the first 2 quarters of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007

- In St Helens county Court a **rise of 24%**
- In Warrington County Court a **rise of 41%**

Action brought for **landlord repossessions** in the first 2 quarters of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007

- In St Helens county Court a **rise of 25%**
- In Warrington County Court a **rise of 9%**

gaining possession orders and a 48% increase in the number of mortgage possession orders, which resulted in repossession.

- 8.13. Debts, which are not secured on homes, can nonetheless jeopardise homes in two ways – by making homes unaffordable; and through Court Orders which enable the lender to force the sale of the home. Current evidence suggests that the rate at which these orders result in repossession is increasing and seeking such an Order is being made easier as a result of legislation³⁸.
- 8.14. There is an additional risk with the introduction of Local Housing Allowance, which pays benefit straight to the tenant in the expectation that it will be used to cover rent. As spending priorities are squeezed there is a risk that some tenants may have difficulty managing payments.
- 8.15. Taking into account the current debt levels reported across all services, this factor – if unchecked at current risk levels - could increase overall homelessness by at least 5% in Halton.
- 8.16. It should be noted however that the Government has introduced a number of measures to assist Councils and their partners in reducing homelessness due to repossessions and evictions. The Mortgage Rescue Scheme is one such initiative that has been adopted in Halton. Funding has also been made available to introduce a small loans scheme. A Repossessions Action Plan has been drawn up which will complement the objectives in the Borough's Homelessness Strategy for 2009-2013.

House sales and housing availability

- 8.17. Whilst recession may continue to depress house prices, there is no indication that this will translate into increased affordability and sales. Homeowners facing negative equity will be reluctant to move until prices improve and may indeed find their level of debt exacerbated as their home devalues. At the same time, credit availability is now being substantially restricted – reducing the opportunities for many potential buyers.
- 8.18. The recession also reduces capacity for property development. The lack of credit and the impact of recession on developers could lead to stagnation in many RSL building programmes. This, along with an increasing inability or reluctance of potential buyers to take up low cost home ownership options, may further reduce the opportunity to use commercial properties to subsidise affordable rented housing.
- 8.19. The downturn may lead to some restriction in the availability of private rented housing or affordable private rents. Continued contraction of the buy-to-let market, and the increasing risk of landlords returning to live in their properties or selling up, will reduce the stock, whilst increased rent levels will price some people out of this option.

³⁸ Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007

- 8.20. These trends would at best leave homelessness levels static, but at worse may further reduce the prevention options available, making an increase in homelessness more likely.

Individual risk factors

- 8.21. It is important to recognise that the economic downturn may have a wider impact on existing risks. There is the potential to exacerbate problems involving individual or household tension, stress or existing abusive behaviour– leading to increased incidences or worsening of mental health problems, alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence and family breakdown.
- 8.22. There is also the risk that practical difficulties such as job seeking and affordability are made worse, with the potential to affect younger people – eg: the possibility that families evicting children when Child Benefit ends could increase; or a heightened risk to young people leaving school with low skill levels.

Strategic Resources

- 8.23. Funding sources are subject to change, with the allocation of SP funds shifting to Area Based Grant from 2009 and the remodelling of funding needs assessment.
- 8.24. The recession may also affect levels of new funding available and it will be important to find ways of reconfiguring resources and to ensure that potential new funding streams are utilised wherever possible.

Conclusions

- 8.25. There is considerable uncertainty and difficulty in accurately predicting future homelessness. The economic risk may be tempered by Government initiatives to mitigate recession and stabilise markets; by initiatives already underway from some RSLs, councils and property developers; and by the inception of the Homes and Communities Agency³⁹ which will have greater freedom to enable new methods of investment to develop social housing.
- 8.26. The recent proliferation of prevention and support services, and further development - particularly in relation to debt reduction, assistance to increase employability and support to families and young people - could reduce the impact of the risks identified above.
- 8.27. It will be important to develop methods of accurately assessing the cost of prevention. As a consolidated budget is available for the Housing Solutions Team it is possible to arrive at baseline costs for direct service provision. In conjunction with coherent monitoring of service take-up across a range services, unit cost assessments can be made, enabling cost/benefit and spend to save analyses. (It is more difficult to place a cost on the overall preventative initiatives taking place across the Borough.)

³⁹ The organisation formed in December 2008 from the merger of the Housing Corporation and English partnerships

- 8.28. It will also be vital to set measurable outcomes along with monitoring and evaluation processes to generate authoritative information for forecasting. The current combination of Statutory Homelessness and Prevention services located in one Housing Solutions Team provides an excellent opportunity to develop a coherent set of data, and enable a fuller picture of homelessness and its risk.

The strategy should

R27. Prioritise service development activity in the following areas –

- i. Debt and financial management.
- ii. Family support and support for young people to enable planned moves to independent living.
- iii. Combining homelessness services with those, which increase skills and employability, i.e. an 'enhanced Housing Options Service.'

R28. Enable capacity for pro-active assessment - anticipating trends and need by

- i. **Developing coherent baseline data** to enable mapping of service and policy impacts.
- ii. **Developing a model of forecasting** which informs the data capture and service monitoring processes.

R29. Develop financial management capacity and intelligence about current and potential costs and funding.

Appendix 1 - Review & Strategy Development Methods.

The Homelessness Review and Strategy development process involved a combination of desktop research and consultation, using the following processes:

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was sent to all members of the Homelessness Forum and other relevant agencies in 2007. This yielded a very low response rate.

A follow up questionnaire was sent to 30 Forum members and 10 additional agencies. This brought a 38% response rate.

Interviews

In depth interviews were then conducted with 12 agencies representing specific areas of provision. Interviews were based on the second questionnaire, expanding on specific issues for their user group.

Data analysis

Research data was taken from the following sources:

- Statutory homelessness returns – P1E data 2003-2008.
- Monitoring information form.
- The Prevention Service.
- The Options & Advice Service.
- Multi Agency Monitoring.
- B&B usage.
- Temporary Accommodation usage.
- Supporting People performance returns.
- RSL Nominations.
- CLG Statutory homelessness data.

Secondary sources are cited within the text.

User Consultation events

Two consultation events with homelessness service users and with young homelessness people were held in 2007 and 2008 respectively. The Focus Group in 2008 was facilitated by the Specialist Homelessness Adviser from the Government Department leading on homelessness issues and was attended by 15 service users. Information from those events was used to inform the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy.

Appendix 2

Strategic priorities & planned activity in the 2003-2008 Strategy

Coordination of the strategy & services		
1. Maintain and further develop multi agency liaison in order to deliver the Homelessness Strategy		
a) Establish Homelessness Forum		Bi monthly meetings established and membership increased.
b) Develop & undertake joint training programmes		Training has taken place across agencies (provided by Shelter)
c) Review existing protocols and development new protocols – particularly in relation to referrals of clients between services.		Some progress re: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rehousing vulnerable young people in 2005. ✓ Internal work on the development of good performance on referrals. ✓ The development of referral mechanisms to homelessness and prevention services by Halton Direct Link centres.
2. Develop common data recording systems		A Multi Agency Monitoring scheme has been established and monitoring reports are now produced.
3. Develop common homelessness assessment process		This has been done in respect of Supporting People funded services
4. Ensure Halton's Homelessness Strategy continues to be linked to other relevant strategies and initiatives.		Ongoing work
5. Ensure continuous improvement of the Homelessness Service.		See note above on the contracting out of this service and its reversal. Mechanisms were put in place to develop improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Housing Agency Agreement contracted service providers HHT ✓ Mock inspections have been carried out ✓ Bi-annual Homelessness reviews monitor progress against the strategy.
		Halton established a Homelessness Prevention Team
a) Enable user feedback		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A user consultation exercise was carried out in November 2007 as part of a wider ranging review of the homelessness service
6. All provider agencies to comply with CRE standards		This has been achieved with respect to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ HHT homelessness provision compliance with monitoring standards and those for tackling racial harassment. ✓ All RSL compliant with relevant Housing Corporation standards.
Prevention		
7. Carry out a fundamental review of advice services to ensure they are meeting need		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Some progress made on this via the review of HHT services. ▫ Work overtaken by loss of funding to voluntary organisations to provide direct advice services in

		the borough.
8. Produce service guide for providers and users		This work was completed but now needs to be updated and provided electronically.
9. Produce an accommodation directory of all temporary /permanent accommodation across the borough		Current directory of SP funded services across the borough
10. Promotion promote existing and new advice services		Contingent on the continued provision of advice services.
11. Recruit 2 additional tenancy support workers to be based @ Grangeway Court		Posts filled by 2006
12. Promote access and monitor tenancy support services available from different providers		Supporting People services compliant with all monitoring requirements and SP representation at Homelessness Forum encourages sharing of relevant performance information.
13. Establish private landlord scheme		Scheme established in 2006.
14. Establish Rent Deposit Scheme		Scheme established in 2007.
15. Develop education programme for young people on the reality of homelessness		A YMCA based project ran from 2006 to 2008 – producing a DVD for use in schools, youth centres etc.
16. Establish the feasibility of establishing a family mediation service		A YMCA scheme established for young people
17. Review social landlords arrears procedures and referral protocols		Reviews were started however this has been overtaken by the development of practice by the RSLs themselves. This also forms part of the current review.
18. Develop a scheme to assist homeless households who fall into arrears whilst in TA		A fund is currently in place and managed by the Prevention Team
19. Assist in the establishment of the Cheshire prison advisory service.		The service has now moved on with resettlement teams in the relevant prisons.
20. Promote existing health services available to homeless applicants		Health visitor surgery for Grangeway court residents, plus walk-in dentist surgery in Halton Lea and Information for teenage parents.
21. Conduct Rough Sleepers Count		Counts have been conducted in ✓ 2004 – result = 0 ✓ 2008 – result = 1
22. Evaluate effectiveness of tenant support services to ensure they meet strategic priorities and identified needs		Supporting People monitoring and review of services 2007.
23. Continue to provide support to Merseyside Asylum Seekers Consortium		Ongoing work – but limited need within the borough
Accommodation		
		Establishment of the Housing Partnerships following LVST has created a positive environment to deliver improvement in access and practice across the borough
24. Review existing nomination scheme with RSLs and develop a common		Common Nominations Agreement now in place. Meetings take place to monitor effectiveness

nomination scheme		
25. Develop performance management info on RSL net lettings & nomination levels		Established
26. Provide improved access to RSL accommodation		
a) Revise Allocation Policy		This was revised, however as a result of delays in access to accommodation, the policy was amended to allow one offer only to homeless households
b) Establish Choice Based Lettings		The scheme to be adopted by Halton is still under discussion. Government target for implementation is 2010.
27. Evaluate feasibility of additional accommodation		
a) Temp/short term accom for general use in Widnes – initial target: 10 units		Orchard House - 6 bed unit Halton Goals - 4 bed unit
b) 4 units for teenage parents		✓ There is some provision for this group at Grangeway Court
c) 10 units of supported accom for special/multiple needs		This has been recorded as achieved in 27.a)
d) 6 units furnished accom		
e) 4 units of emergency direct access		CIC - 3 units YMCA – units 3
28. Reduce use of B&B		Use of B&B increased over the life of the strategy.
a) End use for families entirely		Although length of stay was reduced.
b) Reduce stay for all others to max 2 weeks		

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted