Transport - providing for Halton's needs

Issues for discussion
April 2010

Challenges and Opportunities for Future Transport Provision in Halton

'The challenge is to find ways of improving the outcomes for economy, health and urban environment simultaneously: a 'triple win' outcome'
('The Future of Urban Transport', Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and the Department for Transport.)

The Third Local Transport Plan for Halton
Issues for discussion April 2010

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<u>Chapters</u>

1. __Introduction__

1.1 Halton is currently preparing its third Local Transport Plan (LTP3). The previous two Local Transport Plans (LTP1 and LTP2 respectively) were prepared by working with our Merseyside partners to ensure that transport policies for Halton and Merseyside were closely aligned. Halton is now recognised as being part of the Liverpool City Region, (LCR), (ref. a) and as a result whilst the LTPs for Halton and Merseyside will again be separate documents this time they will be prepared jointly as we face similar challenges and opportunities. As transport needs extend across administrative boundaries this will ensure that the needs of the LCR are considered in an integrated manner.

1.2 Halton and Merseyside already boast an extensive and efficient transport network. Substantial public investment matched by the train and bus companies over the past 10 years has provided a modern and extensive public transport network. Examples include a modernised railway station at Runcorn and a newer accessible bus fleet. During the period of LTP1 and 2 we have also implemented quality transport corridors where provision for bus, walking and cycling has been greatly enhanced.

1.3 There are improved rail links to other parts of the country, a road network where safety and maintenance are improving and efficient freight movement has been prioritised. A comprehensive 'greenways' network is being delivered that provides for generally car free routes for walking, cycling and sometimes horse riding. Also many streets have had enhanced pedestrian provision.

1.4 We have seen the development of the Mersey Gateway Project that is currently awaiting Ministerial approval following the public inquiry last year. This would provide a new road crossing of the River Mersey and free the existing congested Silver Jubilee Bridge for use by local traffic, public transport, walking and cycling. The Mersey Multi Modal Gateway (3MG) is now a reality and will provide up to 5,000 new jobs in the freight and logistics sector.

1.5 These major infrastructure investments sit alongside ground breaking initiatives such as Links2work and Independent Travel Training which provide information and programmes to support travel choices and help for those travelling to new employment.

1.6 A large measure of our success has been due to the support of our many stakeholders and partners. Our collective ability to deliver improvements was acknowledged by the Government through the Department for Transport, (DfT) which recognises Halton as 'excellent' in the quality of delivery of transport as well as our forward planning.

Halton and Merseyside were also awarded 'Beacon' status for accessibility in 2008. We now need to deliver LTP3 to the same high standard

1.7 We must build on this past success and now plan for the next 16 years. This time period is consistent with Halton's Local Development Framework Core Strategy document and both aim to ensure transport and land use planning are fully integrated. We know, despite our extensive successes, there is much more to be done. The circumstances in which we find ourselves are very different to those of even a relatively short while ago. There will be much less public finance available, at least in the short term, but we must ensure that Halton and the LCR's aspirations for regeneration and growth continue to be supported by a high quality and efficient transport network.

1.8 At the same time transport must play a full part in addressing climate change and supporting a healthy community. **Not to change and adapt is not an option.** Recent events, most notably locally in Cumbria, have illustrated the impact that the loss of effective transport services can have on the local community. These challenges can be met through the strength of our partnership most recently seen in the signing of the LCR Multi Area Agreement, (MAA) for transport (Ref. b).

1.9 In this report, we set out some of the challenges and opportunities that face us as we look ahead to 2026. **We pose some questions and your responses will help us finalise our policies and plans. We very much welcome your views and hope you will take the time to respond to this report. In return we will ensure that you are kept fully informed of our progress.**

1.10 It is important to note that at this stage of our planning process we are presenting forecasts of what may potentially happen based *on the current transport network.* No new policies or schemes have been considered at this stage. We call this the 'do-minimum' option. In the summer we will consult again on our preferred strategy for addressing the challenges and opportunities set out in this report.

The third Local Transport Plan, (LTP) for Halton

1.11 Local Transport Plans are required of every transport authority. Halton Borough Council as a Unitary Authority is the transport authority for the area of Halton. In drawing up the LTP, Halton must reflect the views of a wide range of stakeholders and the public.

1.12 The current LTP runs until March 2011, therefore the third Plan will start in April of that year. It will be in two parts; the first will set out a strategy for Halton until 2026: this report is largely concerned with this element of the LTP. Beneath the long term strategy, there will be an Implementation Plan, setting out in detail how the strategy will be delivered in the first three years. It will therefore be concurrent with Halton's Local Area Agreement (LAA), and the role of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will be very important in shaping our policies and plans and ensuring their successful delivery.

2. <u>Setting our goals</u>

2.1 The Government has established **five new national priorities for transport** (Ref. c). These are:-

- Addressing climate change, by reducing carbon emissions from transport
- Supporting economic regeneration by helping competitiveness and productivity
- Ensuring equality of opportunity
- Protecting Health, Safety and Security
- Promoting Quality of Life and the Natural Environment.

2.2 Government believes that modern and efficient transport systems can also support a wide range of other priorities in urban areas including healthier communities, supporting the local economy and providing a high quality urban environment. It highlights the challenges but also the opportunities for meeting all of these outcomes together. The DfT's recent report, *The Future of Urban Transport* (Ref. d), highlights the prospect of a 'triple win' if good quality transport is provided;-

'The challenge for decisions makers at all levels is to find ways of improving the outcomes for economy, health and urban environment simultaneously: a 'triple win' outcome.

This report was a response to the Cabinet Office's, *An Analysis of Urban Transport*, which supported the integration of transport into wider economic and spatial planning issues.

2.3 We support this approach as it reflects our long standing belief that safe and efficient transport is essential to Halton's health, economic and social life and future well being. We shall highlight later in this report what we believe should be particular local priorities.

2.4   Within the national priorities, the new North West Regional Strategy, (RS2010), will be completed over the next twelve months, and is being consulted upon separately. Our LTP will be advised by RS2010.

Local and Sub Regional Priorities

2.5   The Liverpool City Region, which includes Halton, has set as its Vision:
       'To establish our status as a thriving international City Region by 2030'

2.6   The LCR is adopting a Strategic Framework which has four core priorities which Halton shares:-

- Jobs: - To transform the City Region's prospects by increasing the scale of economic activity by raising and growing business levels and securing jobs. This will be achieved through the four ' transformational' activities relating to:-
  - o Building a low carbon economy
  - o Developing the City Region's assets including the proposed Mersey Gateway, , Liverpool John Lennon Airport, and the extensive logistics industry that included Healton's Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) and the 'Liverpool SuperPort' which incorporates Weston Docks
  - o Building on Capital of Culture to build and develop the Culture and Visitor Economy
  - o Creating a Knowledge-based economy
- Worklessness & Skills: - To radically redraw the deprivation map in the City Region, halving the number of LCR wards ranked in the UK's most deprived 10% wards. (Ref. e)
- Health: - To develop collaboration to reduce health inequalities and address the challenges these present across the City Region.
- Efficiency: To develop a sustainable structure of collaboration and shared services across the City Region.

Transport is seen as a key enabling measure within these priorities.

2.7   A critical element to securing the ambitions of the Strategic Framework is the recently signed LCR Multi Area Agreement, (MAA), which sets out a series of activities relating to the economy, housing, knowledge and skills, and transport.

2.8   The draft Strategic Framework and the MAA have placed transport firmly at the heart of the LCR strategy They have also clearly linked demand for transport with serving the wider policy priorities including health, worklessness, economic growth, skills and employment, housing, and social exclusion.

2.9   In Halton and across Merseyside we are also working with partners within the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to ensure we place transport at the heart of the Sustainable Community Strategies and support the key priorities at local level. All LSPs have at least one direct transport target and we have shown in our work with the LSP how effective transport can help deliver a wide range of other priorities, ranging from addressing obesity to encouraging greater levels of learning, (Ref. f).

2.10   These are a major challenge and responsibility. Halton's LTP along with that for Merseyside are therefore vital elements in helping achieve the City Region's ambitions. There is therefore a large measure of common ground within the two LTPs.

2.11   For Halton we have set out the following goals to guide our third Plan.

Our Goals

- Ensure the transport system supports the priorities of the Liverpool City Region and Halton's Local Strategic Partnership.
- Provide and promote a clean and low carbon transport system.
- Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing.
- Ensure the transport system allows people to connect easily with employment, services and social activities.
- Ensure the transport network supports the economic success of the LCR by supporting local employment, key economic drivers and the efficient movement of people and goods, including access to international, national and regional networks, through the provision of high quality transport infrastructure, services and information.
- Maintain our transport and highway assets to a high standard.

3.   What do we mean by 'Transport providing for Halton's needs'?

3.1   The world we have to plan for is likely to be very different to the one we have now. By 2020 we must plan for a 34% reduction in carbon levels compared with those of 1990, against a backdrop of many imponderables, including:-
- The possibility of increased climate change incidents.

- Rising fuel prices, perhaps as a result of more limited future production.
- The impact of new technologies in areas such as vehicle fuel and communications.
- The possibility of new communications systems leading to a reduced need to travel or significantly changing travel patterns.
- The possibility of imposed or planned different food distribution patterns.
- A growing health crisis as a result of rising levels of obesity and lack of activity.

3.2   To help address these issues, we and our Merseyside Partners have been preparing for the third LTP through our 'Planning for the Future' programme. It has had two main parts. The first is the collection and collation of large evidence bases to help us assess the current state of the transport network (Ref. g). We show some key findings from the evidence base for Halton later. Secondly, we have developed a transport model that will help us forecast future travel demand and make judgements as to the best solutions to the challenges and opportunities that we set out later in this report (Ref. h).

3.3   As part of 'Planning for the Future' we have commissioned a number of reports and research projects and consulted with a number of stakeholders, notably the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Transport Forum and the Foresight Group established by the University of Liverpool.

3.4   Some consistent themes have emerged for the LCR from this work. The first is that we must learn from the experiences of others. An international comparison (Ref. j) has illustrated the importance of good mobility as a vital ingredient for inward investment and economic well being. In this regard we have seen that the LCR transport network compares well with comparable cities, but that constant and consistent effort is required to maintain that position.

3.5   The second, and perhaps most important, theme is that we should recognise that the LCR has a sense of place, quality and uniqueness that marks it out from other places. This must be maximised and we must build on our track record in reinventing ourselves after years of economic decline and the loss of employment in traditional industries. The creation of new jobs has gone hand in hand major new investments in Halton's town centres including Widnes Shopping Park and the Brindley theatre, the Widnes Waterfront development, the 3MG site and the Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre. Next to Halton's boundary there is the rapidly expanding Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the continuing regeneration of Liverpool City Centre. These successes should be seen as the precursors of the

next phase in the development of a dynamic borough well prepared to thrive in the new future we face. We need to understand that change is within our power and we can shape our own destiny.

3.6   However, it is also necessary to acknowledge the persistence of some particular problems. Despite continuing improvements, Halton has a relatively low level of skills and qualifications in its workforce and a high level of dependency on state benefits. The health of people in Halton is generally worse than the average for England. These problems do not detract in any way from the successes but they must inspire constant review and questioning of strategies underpinning economic revitalisation, renewal and regeneration. Regeneration must seek to benefit everyone. These problems are the principal focus of the LCR Strategic Framework and MAA described previously.

3.7   The third theme is one of a time of opportunity which presents itself due to the following:-

- The growing international emphasis on low carbon economies and low carbon futures and the links between this and job creation;
- The recognition that dynamic City Regions with strong local government can make real progress with economic development and regeneration given the right powers and influence over public policy in that City Region area; and
- The recognition in European and US cities that City Regions require the best possible arrangements for the movement of people and freight in ways that deliver choice, lowered costs and much reduced congestion and pollution.   Successful cities have well-developed, highly co-ordinated, easy to use and low cost public transport systems together with high levels of walking and cycling.

3.8   This last point reflects the fourth consistent theme. Evidence clearly shows that urban areas with a progressive approach to sustainable transport are such as set out in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy successful with a clear competitive green edge that helps attract and sustain investment. These places will also be better prepared to handle changes in oil supply and pricing and other potential structural economic changes.

3.9   Finally, there is a clear recognition that transport is inextricably linked to a host of wider concerns including addressing exclusion and good access; for example how do we ensure equality of travel opportunity in our disadvantaged areas. Good transport planned around green public space can create the conditions for greatly increased cycling and walking which will help to support healthy communities and the

well being of the area. We must examine our current use of space for transport to see where we can support more public space potentially by removing existing infrastructure that has outlived its usefulness. A particular example is as part of the Mersey Gateway proposals to remove redundant existing highway infrastructure to provide public open spaces and wider urban regeneration.

3.10   We believe the LTP can act as a catalyst to build on the uniqueness of Halton, helping to create a sense of place which itself creates the conditions for renewed growth and well being.

3.11   As we shall describe later, there is one further key factor. We have to address the situation we face where we have mobility rich and mobility poor communities. Such diversity needs to be addressed as a clear equity issue, and to create a position where everybody has equality of travel opportunity.

3.12   In order to meet these challenges and maximise these opportunities, we believe that we have to use our past successes as a springboard for a new approach and **provide transport for Halton's needs.**

3.13   We believe this will deliver a transport network which minimises congestion levels. Such congestion can damage:
• business efficiency;
• quality of life and health;
• people, particularly young people being active as part of their daily lifestyles;
• reduced health inequalities;
• increased social inclusion; and
• a cut in the carbon footprint of travel as a major contribution to the City Region's low carbon economy.

We examine these issues in the next part of this report.

4.   <u>What we know</u>

4.1   Through our 'Planning for the Future' programme we have collected a large amount of evidence about not only the transport network in Halton and on Merseyside but also the wide range of other factors that influence our travel demands and needs. This 'evidence base' is available at www.halton.gov.uk

4.2   In addition, our annual updates showing our success in delivering the second Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) are also extremely relevant in building up a picture of the trends, challenges and opportunities that we face in our third LTP.   These are also available from the website above.

4.3   Halton's population experienced a 6.4% fall between 1989 and 2002. However, since 2003 the population has increased by 1.2% returning to 1999 levels. The proportion of Halton's population over retirement age has increased by 1.8% since 1998. However the most recent mid-year population estimates for 2008 show that a lower proportion of Halton's population is over retirement age compared with the national average.

4.4   The numbers of vehicles licensed on Halton's roads has increased since 2001. Whilst there has been significant growth in rail patronage across the city region, bus patronage has fallen steeply over the same period. Targets to grow bus patronage within the second LTP have not been achieved; this however could be largely due to the economic downturn. Figure One below illustrates these key trends.

4.5   All the evidence both nationally and locally, points to a clear link between personal wealth and trip-making, with people on higher incomes making more trips per day than those on lower incomes. Similarly, as the economy grows stronger, people become more affluent, car ownership rates grow and people make greater use of cars. This pattern has been seen in the Liverpool City Region with continuous traffic growth in all districts including Halton.

Figure One - Key economic and transport trends
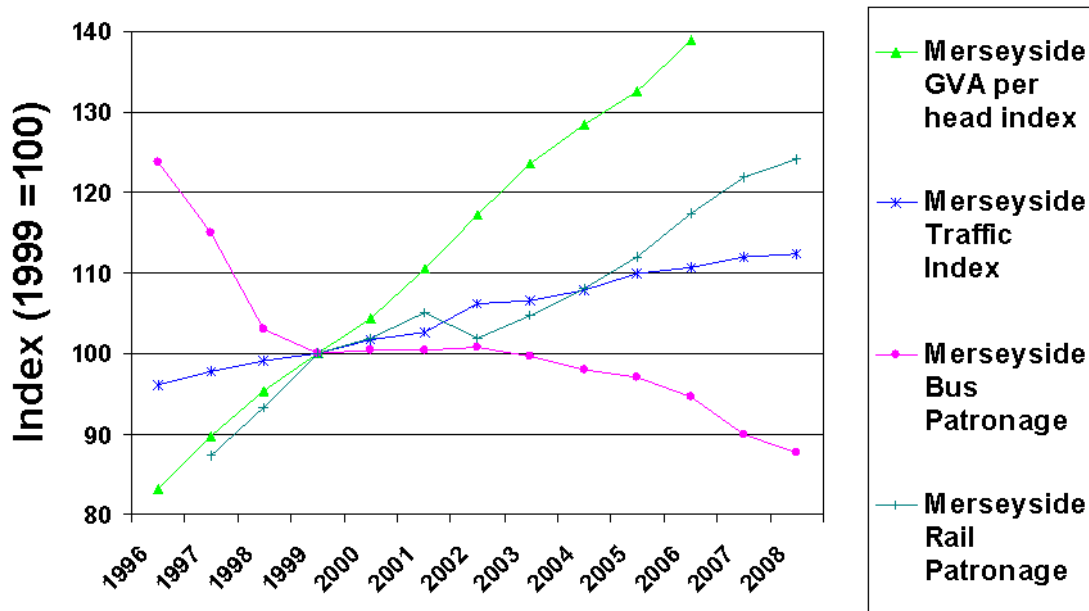
[CHART TO BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE HALTON FIGURES PRIOR TO PUBLICATION]

4.6 During the lifetime of the second LTP, we have seen traffic volumes rise on the SJB but due to the recent economic downturn these have now reduced slightly.

4.7 Rail use in Halton and Merseyside has grown considerably in recent years with the rail network carrying a growing proportion of all peak-hour commuters. However, this growth in rail is now creating problems of crowding on many peak-hour services, for example Runcorn East to Manchester. At stations in Liverpool these are also issues of passenger congestion, particularly at Liverpool Central.

4.8 The success of the Mersey Ports is seen in a 41% growth in freight tonnage throughput at Liverpool between 1999 and 2007, although there has been a recent decline due to the effects of the recession. Similar success at Liverpool John Lennon Airport has seen a significant growth in passengers passing through the airport and supporting the visitor economy. The newly constructed 3MG site in Halton will be a major contributor to freight distribution in the LCR.

4.9 Whilst Halton's regeneration has had a favourable impact on the community, there is more work to be done. Although Figure One has shown steady growth in the economy and personal wealth in Halton, enormous challenges remain in terms of disadvantage and deprivation, measured by a range of indicators, including employment rates, reliance on benefits, attainment at school, skills levels and ill health. Map One below shows the concentration of the areas of disadvantage in Halton.
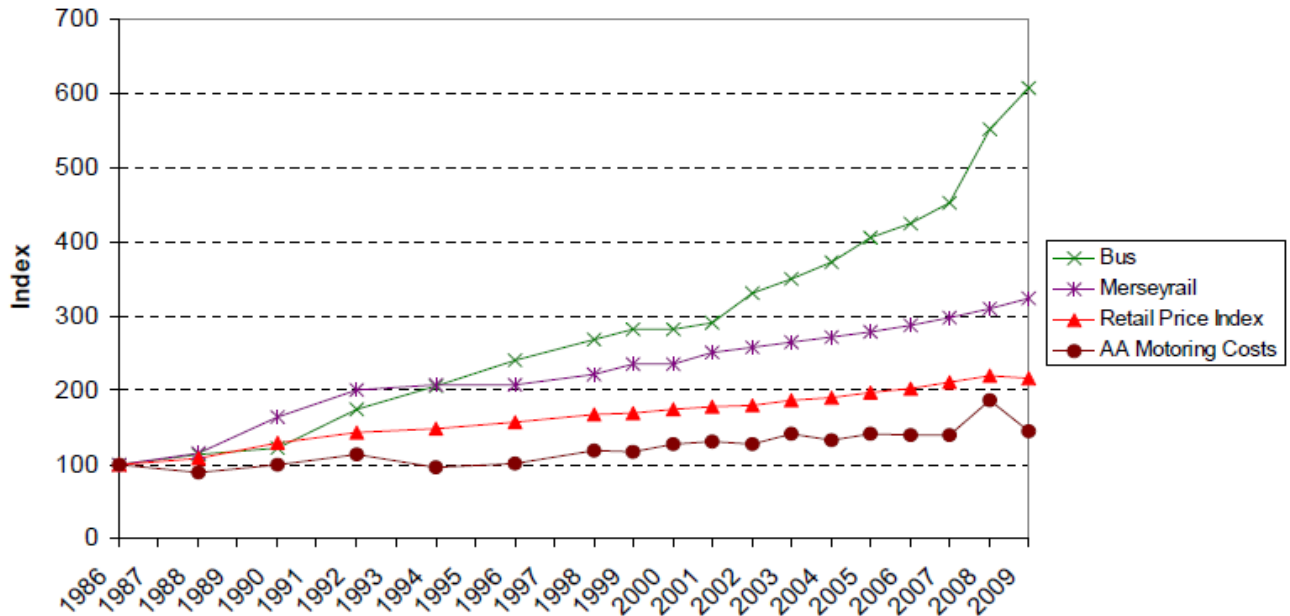
Map One - Disadvantaged areas in Halton
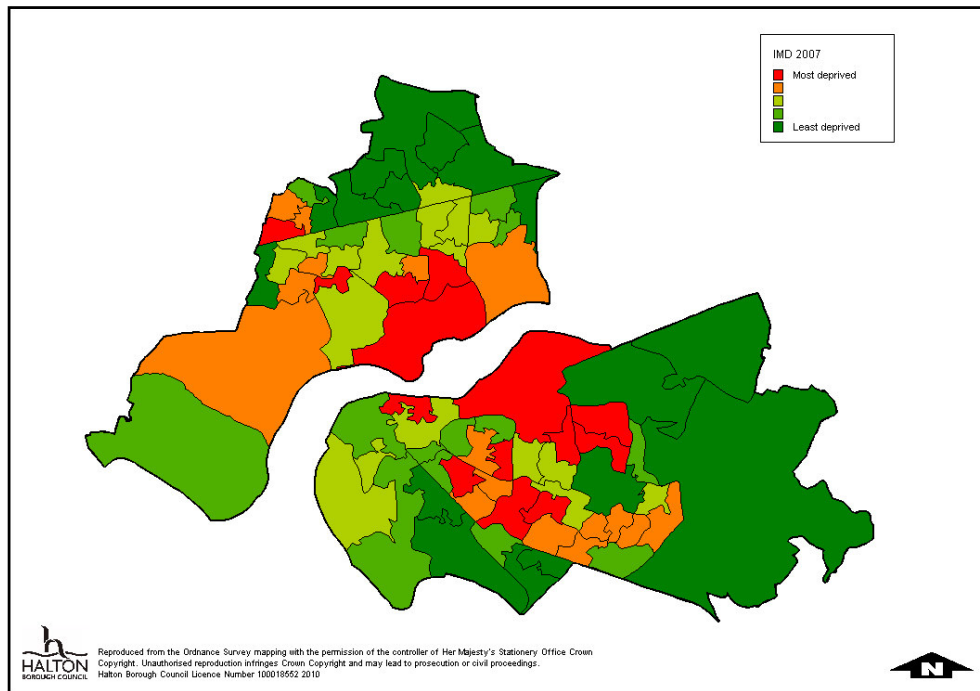
4.10   As Figure Two below clearly shows, over the past 23 years, the cost of
        using public transport has risen faster than for private transport, with
        motoring costs remaining consistently below the Retail Price Index.
        The cost of bus travel has risen most in relation to other forms of
        transport.

4.11   The relatively high cost of public transport can be a significant barrier
        to many people. The cost of travel as a proportion of weekly income
        is high for those on a low wage or benefits. For somebody claiming a
        worklessness benefit and actively seeking work this could be a major
        disincentive to seeking work.

4.12   Cash fares for single or return tickets remain the most popular form of
        payment for public transport journeys in the Liverpool City Region.
        However, given the high cost of public transport, this indicates that
        the majority of passengers are paying the highest price for their
        travel. Affordable and convenient interoperable tickets are essential
        if passengers have to interchange as part of their journey.

4.13   The major commercial bus companies in Halton offer discounted
        day, weekly and monthly tickets available from the driver.
        Merseytravel also provide a range of pre-paid tickets at a reduced
        rate. These can be purchased from Merseytravel Travel Centres, rail
        stations, post offices and a number of other retail outlets. However,
        the requirement for payment in advance for season tickets can be

an obstacle to purchasing such tickets and other cheaper packages.

**Figure Two - Cost of travel by mode**

4.14 Car ownership rates are much lower in disadvantaged areas, (DA's). These are defined as those neighbourhoods in Halton that are in the top 10% worst performing neighbourhoods in England (f). 27% of Halton neighbourhoods are in the top 10% nationally. 46% of DA households do not have access to a car compared to 23% of non DA areas.

4.15 Between 2008 and 2009 Halton experienced the largest increase (4.3%) in gross weekly pay for full-time workers compared to Merseyside, the North West and Great Britain. However median gross pay in Halton (£438) remains lower than in Merseyside (£453), North West (£460) and Great Britain (£491).

4.16 As noted above, the cost of transport can be prohibitive for some people on very low incomes, having a major impact on a person's ability to travel, and to access a range of opportunities within easy reach of those with access to a car. Figure Three below shows the clear links between income and use of mode.

**Figure Three - Household income and modal choice for journeys**
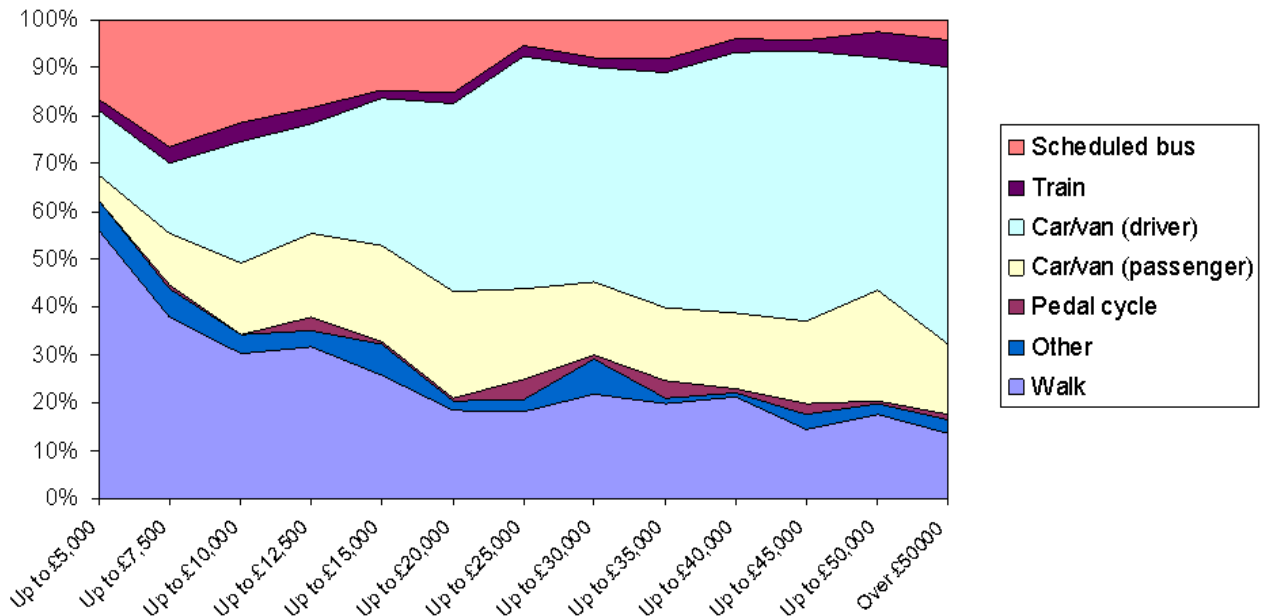
4.17　People on lower levels of income will typically make more trips by foot and by bus than people on higher incomes. For example, people with household incomes of up to £10,000 will typically make 30% of their trips by foot, 20% by bus and 45% of their trips by car (either as a passenger or as a driver). This compares with people on household incomes of up to £50,000 who typically make 20% of their trips on foot, 70% by car (either as a passenger or as a driver). Figure Four illustrates the clear divide between the mobility rich and poor in terms of how much travel is undertaken.

Figure Four - Levels of trip making by household income

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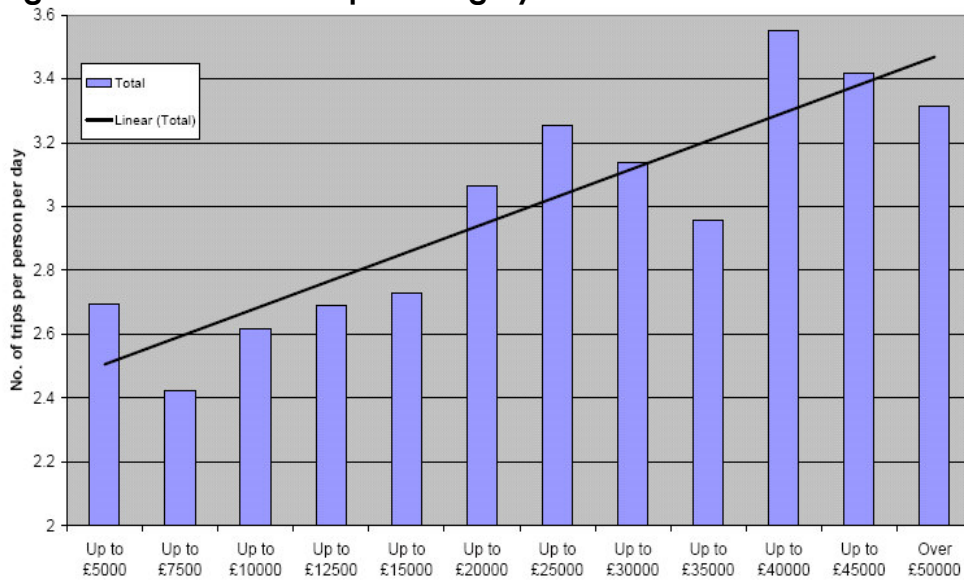
4.18 Such disparities are a clear contributor to social exclusion and the isolation of a number of areas from the mainstream life of Halton and the LCR. This issue was highlighted in great depth in our second Local Transport Plan, which contained policies aimed at tackling transport barriers to work, training and education. This included initiatives such as Links2Work, which provides travel support for people who have recently re-entered the jobs market.

Figure Five ; % of working age people with access to employment via public transport
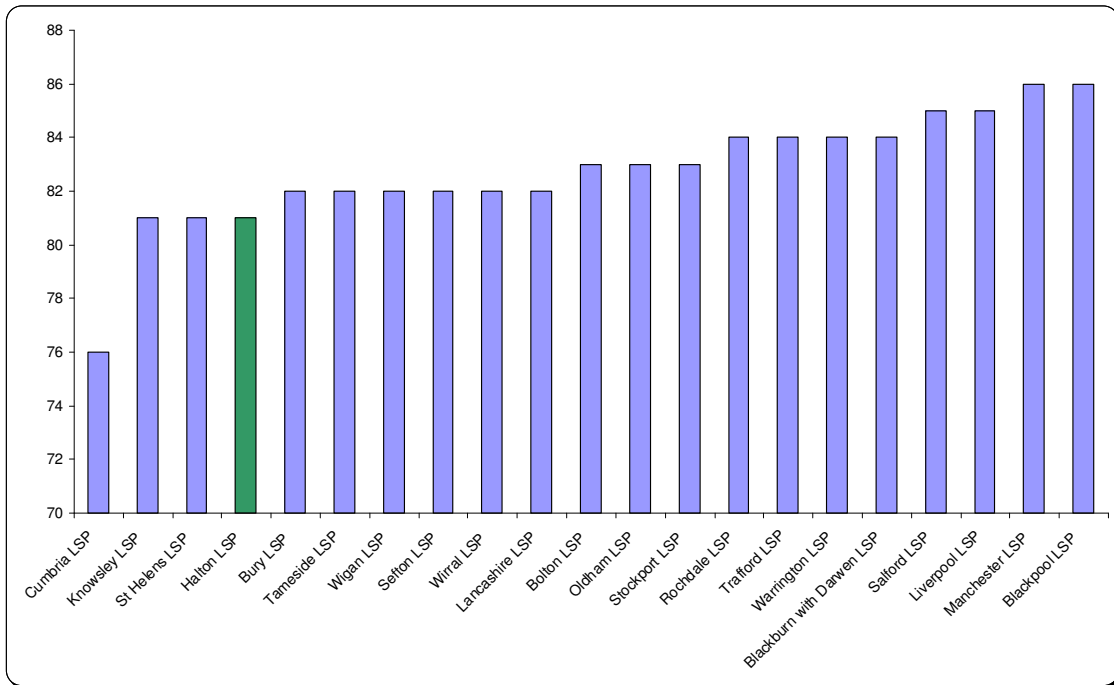
4.19 The evidence also shows worrying trends in terms of health impacts that are closely related to transport and traffic. Poor air quality in parts of the LCR is caused by elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide principally produced by road traffic. Map Two shows current Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and other areas of elevated pollutant levels and the close correlation with highways traffic.

4.20 This is extremely important as poor air quality not only leads to poor health and a polluted environment but may lead to negative perceptions of the area as a place in which people want to invest, live, work and visit.
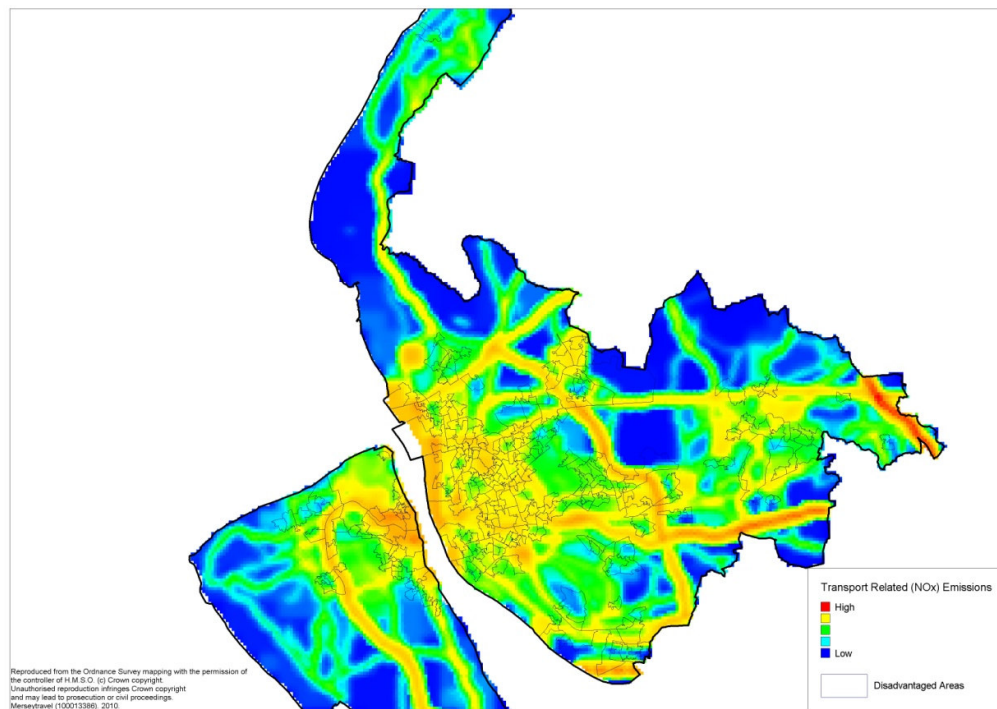
Map Two - Road traffic and impact on air quality

Air Quality Management Areas
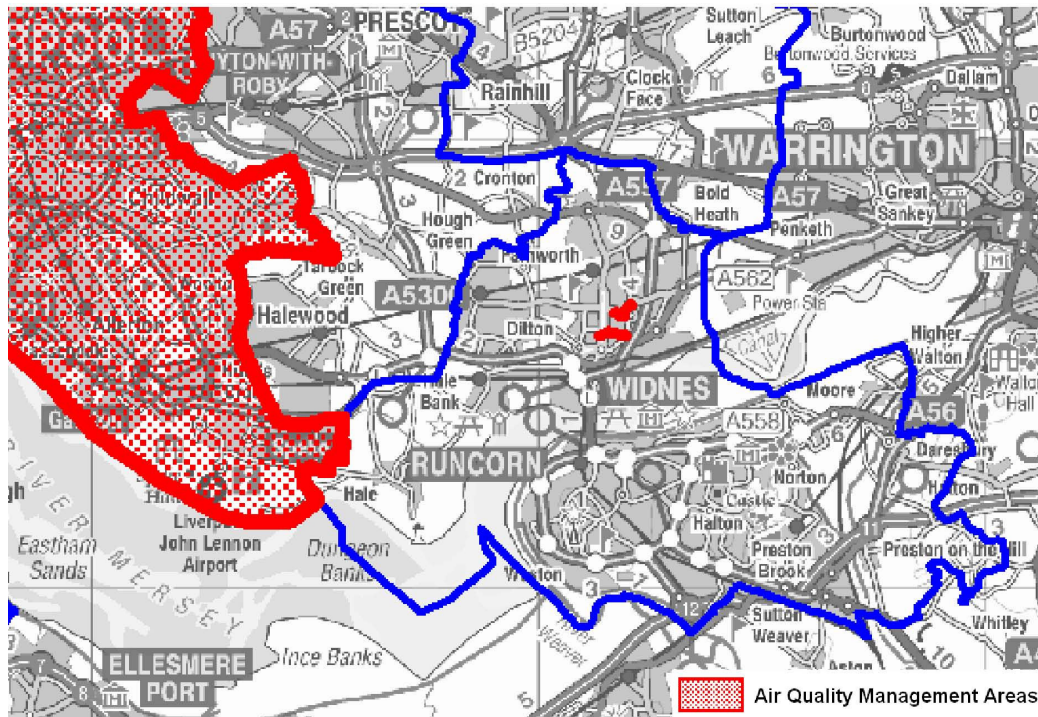
4.21   Significantly, it will be seen from Map Three below that transport emissions are higher in the vicinity of disadvantaged communities than in more affluent communities. This reflects the fact that arterial roads carrying high volumes of traffic to the city centre, port, airport and industrial areas, typically run through, or pass disadvantaged communities.

4.22   As we have stated, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, linked to climate change is now a major priority that the government requires us to address. Climate change is expected to cause rising temperatures and more severe and unpredictable weather patterns. Road transport is a major source of carbon emissions (21% nationally). The patterns shown in the maps above show similarities for levels of carbon emissions from transport across Merseyside, with primary roads being responsible for the highest emissions.

Map Three - Disadvantaged areas and transport emissions

Transport Related (NOx) Emissions

High

Low

Disadvantaged Areas

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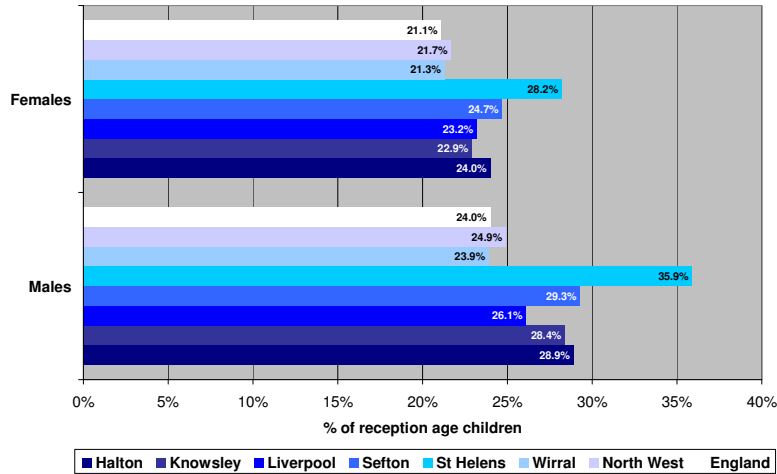**[MAP TO BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE HALTON PRIOR TO PUBLICATION]**

4.23   Rising levels of obesity pose major challenges across Halton as Figure Six below shows in relation to reception age children. There is a close link to transport, as children particularly are becoming less active and are making fewer trips by foot and by bike. Despite considerable efforts the trend towards more car based travel to schools continues. This is exacerbated by the Government's commitment to parental choice which has led to pupils and students travelling further to their school of choice. The 'Building Schools for the Future' Programme (BSF) has had School Travel Plan Officers and Transport Planners involved in the design process. Albeit will be important to secure offsite transport measures as part of the BSF Programme. These offsite requirements will need to be be supported by measures contained in LTP3.

4.24   More sedentary lifestyles, linked to a growing reliance on the car, contribute towards obesity and being overweight across all age ranges. Tackling these issues is recognised as a major priority for the health sector in Halton and Merseyside.

Figure Six – NI 55 Percentage of reception age children obese & overweight (2008/09)
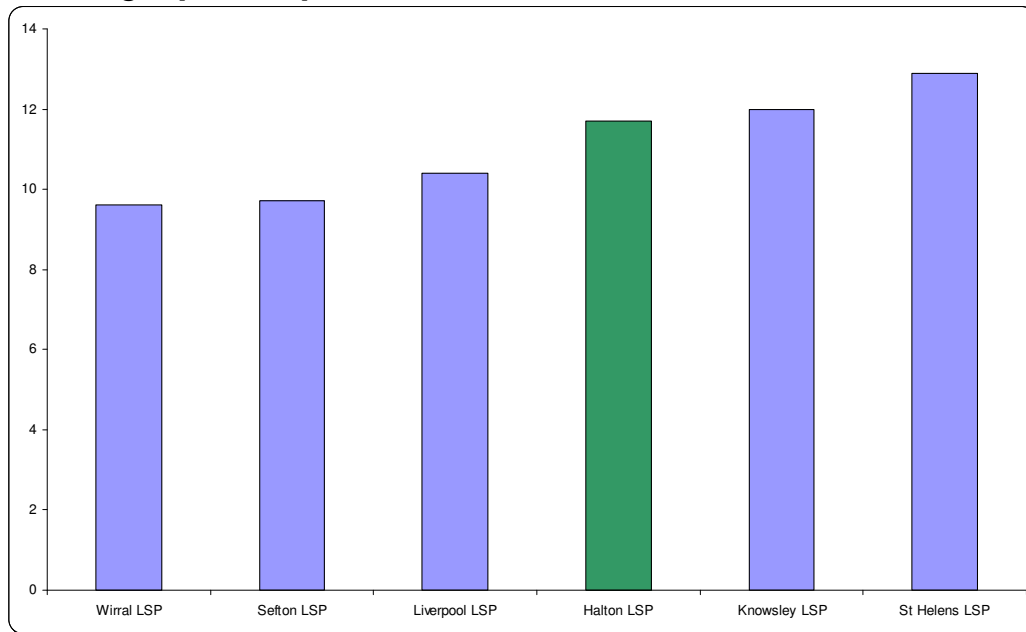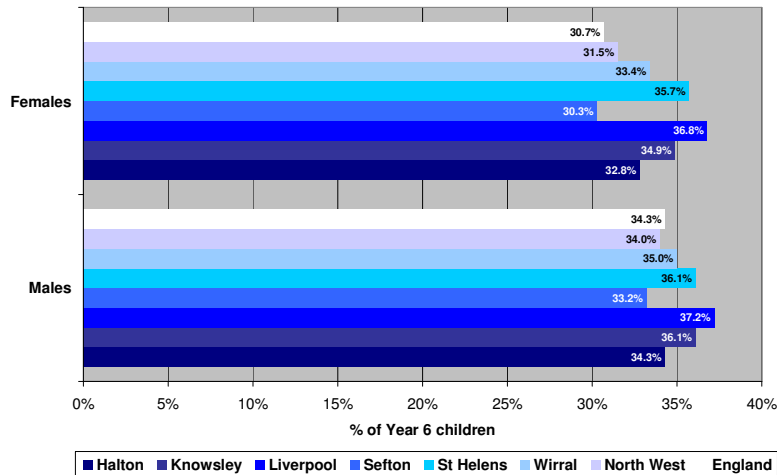

4.25 If we look at the evidence around air quality and carbon emissions, and health and obesity, it is clear that there are common goals around the need to promote a more active and less polluting use of transport through increased cycling and walking, as well as ensuring the location of key services are made accessible to non car users. Halton has provided much of the proposed 'Greenways' network which are generally off road routes for walking, cycling and sometimes horse riding. These Greenways have helped deliver Halton's Safer Routes to School initiatives. Halton now needs to investigate and promote solutions to address identified problems in its in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

Figure Seven: % of Reception Age Children Obese & Overweight 2008

Females
- 21.1%
- 21.7%
- 21.3%
- 28.2%
- 24.7%
- 23.2%
- 22.9%
- 24.0%

Males
- 24.0%
- 24.9%
- 23.9%
- 35.9%
- 29.3%
- 26.1%
- 28.4%
- 28.9%

% of reception age children

■ Halton ■ Knowsley ■ Liverpool ■ Sefton ■ St Helens ■ Wirral ■ North West ■ England

Source: North West Public Health Observatory

Figure Eight : % of Year 6 Children Obese & Overweight 2008

Females
- 30.7%
- 31.5%
- 33.4%
- 35.7%
- 30.3%
- 36.8%
- 34.9%
- 32.8%

Males
- 34.3%
- 34.0%
- 35.0%
- 36.1%
- 33.2%
- 37.2%
- 36.1%
- 34.3%

% of Year 6 children

■ Halton ■ Knowsley ■ Liverpool ■ Sefton ■ St Helens ■ Wirral ■ North West ■ England

Source: North West Public Health Observatory

4.26   Another clear link between transport and health is in relation to road traffic accidents. Good progress has been reported during the lifetime of the current Halton Local Transport Plan in reducing the numbers of people killed and injured on Halton's roads.

4.27   What has emerged most clearly from our assessment of the evidence is the disparity between the mobility rich areas and the disadvantaged areas where the costs of transport restrict ability to travel and where some of the worst impacts of transport in relation to air quality and traffic accidents are most keenly felt.

5.   Planning for the future

5.1   We and our Merseyside partners now have a sophisticated transport model that helps us make judgements about what may happen in

the longer term and how demand for transport may change and grow. The model uses data about economic, housing and population projections and data on how the area may change over the coming 16 years through for example, the planned major developments planned at Liverpool Waters and at Wirral Waters (Ref. j). It uses 2008 as its base year and covers two main time periods

- Short term, up to 2014, and
- Longer term, to 2026.

5.2   As noted in paragraph 1.9, it is important to note that at this stage of our planning process we are presenting forecasts of what may happen based **on the current transport network.**

The forecasts

5.3   Maps Four and Five below show where growth is forecast to occur across the LCR in terms of employment and housing. The housing growth figures take into account the "Growth Point" status in Liverpool, Wirral and the Mid Mersey area (St Helens, Halton and Warrington), (Ref. k).

Map Four – Employment change between 2008-2024
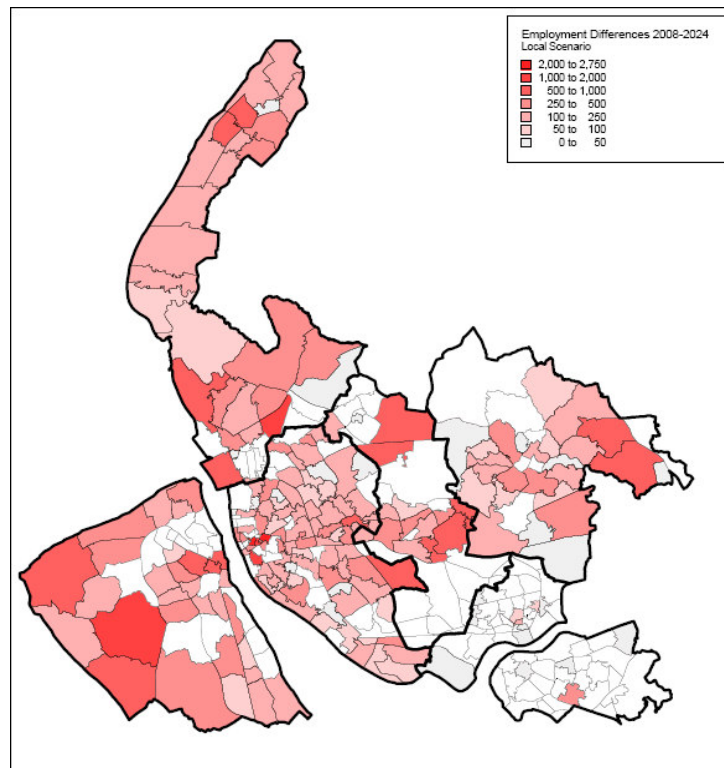
Source: Pion/ Cambridge Econometrics – MM utilised for LCRTM

Map Five – Housing change between 2008-2024
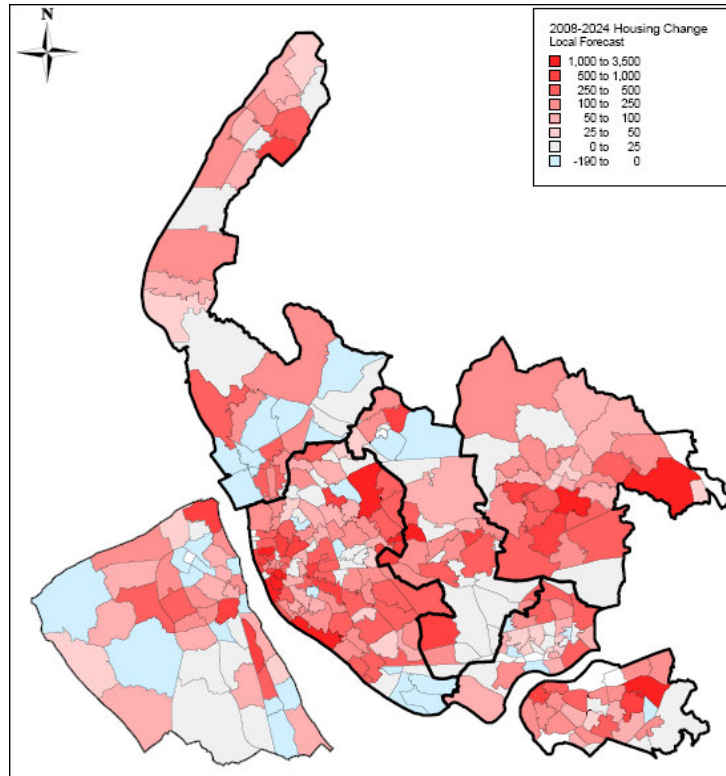
5.4   The impacts of these forecast changes are likely to be continuing trips, which will also arise in response to changing population and economic activity rates. This is shown in Figure Nine below. This shows a high and low range of possible traffic growth, but both follow established trends discussed previously in relation to the link between economic growth and a rise in journeys made. De-coupling this link between economic growth and transport demand is the major challenge for all urban areas and especially in light of the imperative to reduce our carbon emissions.

5.5   Significantly, the model also forecasts growth in the length of trips made. This may be a result of the fact that housing and employment areas are not always located in close proximity, given the propensity to locate employment growth away from residential areas. Linked to the growth in trips and traffic, it follows that travel times are also forecast to grow, as roads become more congested. Figure Ten and Map Six illustrate this for the high growth scenario.

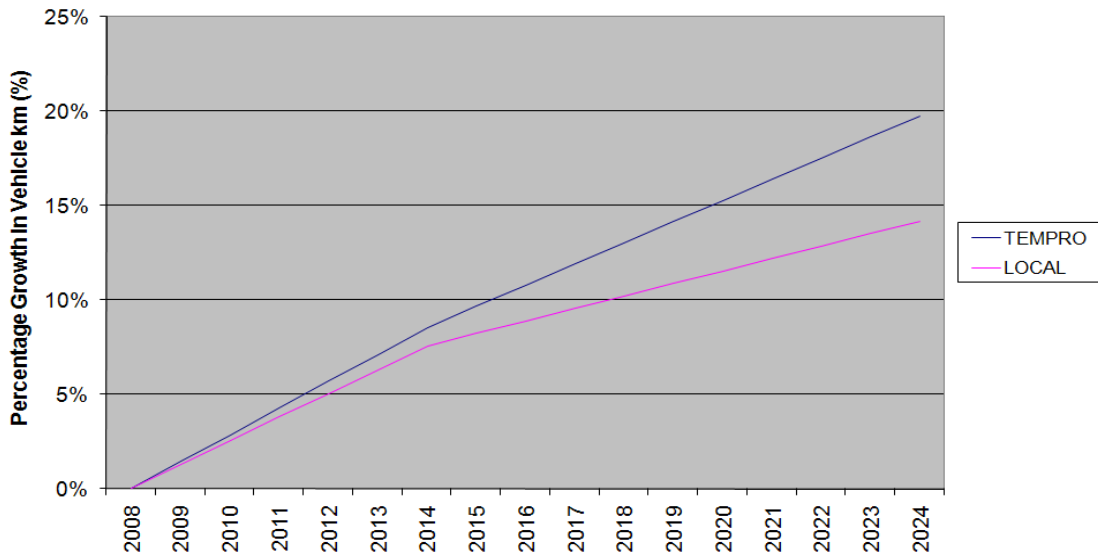**Figure Nine – Range of Traffic Growth Forecasts**

Figure Ten – Forecast change in trips and distance travelled 2008 – 2014 (am) *Need update specifically for Halton*
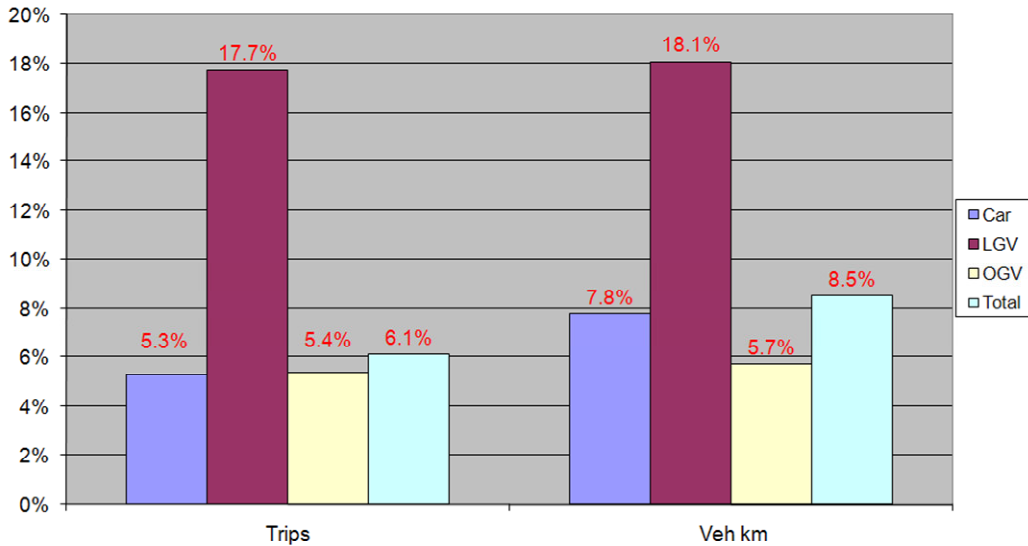
* LGV: Light Goods Vehicle, OGV: Other Goods Vehicle

5.6   A striking issue concerns the increase in the numbers of trips made by LGVs (Light Goods Vehicles) – 'white vans' predominantly. There is also a significant increase predicted in the length of these trips. This reflects changes to the way that freight is distributed, using regional warehouses and distribution hubs, for example, coupled with the rise in consumer trends such as internet-based home shopping.

Map Six – Forecast increase in journey times to Liverpool City Centre by 2024
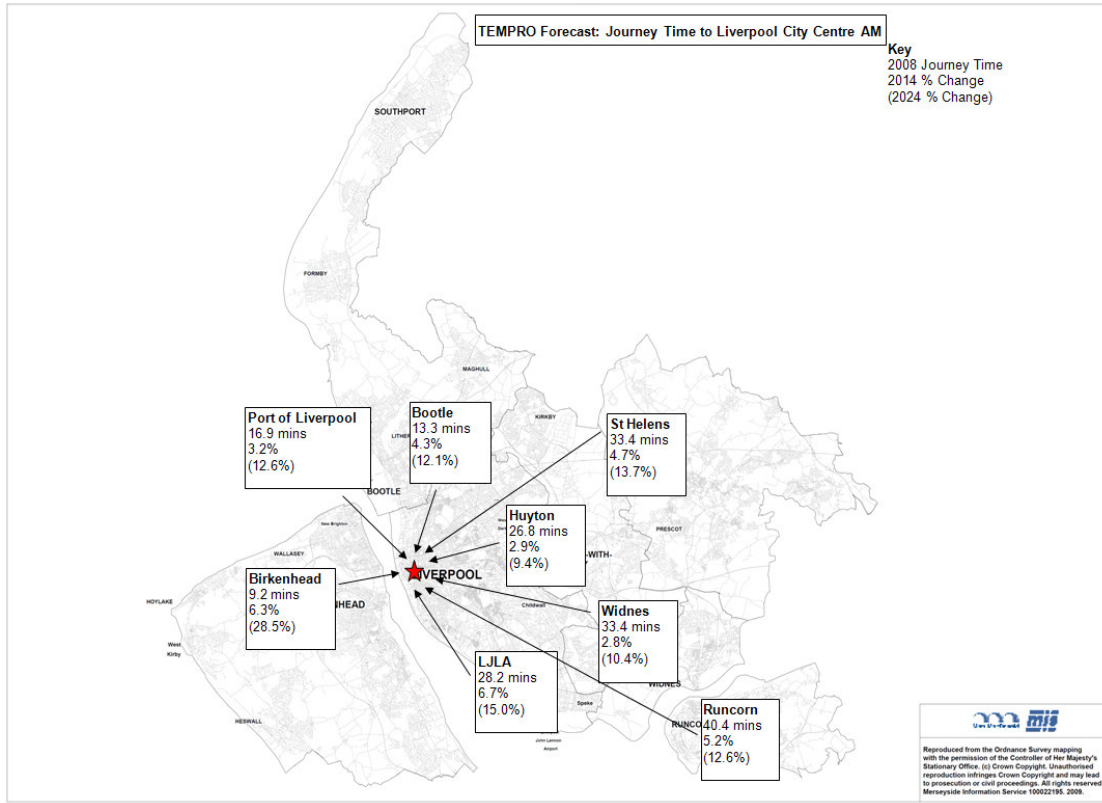
5.7 Longer distance trips contribute the most damage in terms of carbon emissions and will also adversely affect air quality. Addressing our reliance on a carbon based transport system is essential for a number of reasons over and above just climate change demands; we have already noted that some forecasts show peak oil production passing within the lifetime of this plan. Government projections suggest there are likely to be increased fuel costs in the region of 14-27% by 2024. This potentially has a major impact upon business, individuals and services.

5.8 The distribution of the numbers of trips by different lengths is important in helping define appropriate interventions. For example, the LCR strategy to encourage more housing choice within Merseyside and Halton and thereby reduce longer distance commuting in the longer term will help to reduce carbon emissions caused by longer trips. Increasing rail capacity will also help reduce long distance car commuting. Equally the large numbers of shorter trips under 5km in length, suggests that our emphasis on encouraging cycling and walking will help address carbon emissions and air quality but also improve health and access to services as well.

5.9 Model forecasts for changes in public transport usage have also been produced. These show a consistent story, following recent trends, with all indications suggesting that in a *do minimum* (no major new interventions) scenario a continued decline in bus usage is forecast. On rail, in contrast, growth is predicted. In Halton there are proposals for improvements to rail infrastructure which include:

- Enhanced car parking at Widnes Station to overcome the current shortfall;
- Provision of greatly enhanced car parking at Hough Green Station to encourage use as a P&R site;
- The Halton Curve proposal, which will provide a new rail service between North Wales, Chester, Runcorn, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Liverpool Lime Street;
- In the event of the Halton Curve being delivered then there is also the possibility of new rail stations at Beechwood and Ditton;
- The emerging proposals for the 'Northern Rail Hub' around Manchester that would permit a half hourly service through Runcorn East Station;
- Greater use of rail electrification; and
- Emerging proposals for 'High Speed Rail'.

Growth for rail is also forecast by Network Rail as detailed in the Merseyside Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), (Ref. I). Network Rail's forecasts for the Merseyrail network suggest up to a 40% increase in patronage by 2020, creating some significant pressure on the network, particularly at Liverpool Central station.

5.10 Halton needs to maintain its transport infrastructure in order to reduce cost of repairs in the longer term. This will avoid the need for unnecessary road works and hence delays, ensure resilience is built in and service levels are maintained. Halton also needs to consider the possible effects of climate change on the transport network in terms of more extreme weather conditions. Recent events especially the severe winters have placed an increasing emphasis on winter maintenance and highway maintenance. The transport network also needs to be in a 'fit for purpose' condition in order to accommodate emergencies and other unplanned incidents.

6. **The Challenges and Opportunities**

6.1 The aspirations for economic growth that have been identified brings with them major implications for transport requirements in Halton and the City Region. However, planning and providing for transport will in turn be dependent upon what is happening in other policy areas.

6.2 We must endeavour to understand the underlying changes that may be taking place within the region. Examples are;

- As the economy becomes more knowledge-based, workers' propensity to travel longer distances to work may be likely to increase. So, perversely, whilst the City Region may secure significant growth in employment, there is a risk that adjacent areas will benefit from the resulting housing demand. This reinforces the imperative for City Region housing initiatives, such as 'The Mid Mersey Growth Point' to provide more suitable housing in proximity to employment.
- Equally, if the skills of the workforce are not improved then job creation within the LCR may be reliant upon drawing in workers from outside causing the increase in longer distance commuting noted above and increasing disadvantage in the centre of the City Region.
- Likewise employment creation at locations that are not well served by public transport, such as Deeside Industrial Park and Omega could begin to reverse traditional travel patterns. More widely, new business models (such as remote working, and 'double –hubbing' – that is having more than one formal workplace with a single employer) are likely to give rise to still more complicated travel-to-work patterns.

    This assessment reinforces the importance of the integrated approach adopted within the MAA to be continued and reinforced as an essential element to the delivery of our LTP.

6.3   Taking this into account, our assessment of the current situation allied to forecasts for the longer term lead to the following broad conclusions.

   i)   We have been successful in our delivery of LTP2, and are meeting most of our targets.

   ii)   This has given rise to a largely free flowing road network, meaning that congestion is not yet generally a critical issue, although there are some problems at specific times of day or at certain locations. There is however ongoing congestion issues to address which will need enhanced highway infrastructure. For example, the SJB remains a serious congestion problem despite slightly lower traffic flows as a result of the economic downturn. In order to address this problem the construction of the Mersey Gateway project will be of the upmost importance. The maintenance of the SJB also remains an major issue even with the Mersey Gateway project in place.

   iii)   Our transport infrastructure is a valuable asset and must be maintained to high standards, and appropriate measures

taken to ensure mitigation of adverse weather conditions, for instance.

iv) Halton's economy has been growing, but there has been an uneven distribution of increasing prosperity, leading to:-
   - Continued increase in car trips and travel distances. This has been exacerbated by the continuing fall in the cost of motoring compared particularly to the cost of using the bus.
   - Past planning and housing policies have also led to a reliance on car for access to key services and opportunities and increased commuting over longer distances.
   - There is also the problem of providing more efficient housing types in areas with no services or facilities or with poor public transport to and from them. The integration of land use planning and transport as a result becomes ever more important.
   - This growth in car use and distance travelled by the mobility rich, leads to more congestion, road casualties and pollution and leads to negative consequences that bear most heavily in disadvantaged areas.
   - Conversely, for these communities, high public transport costs and poor transport options lead to short travel horizons, and reduced choice.

v) There has been continued growth in rail use partly as a result of increased longer distance commuting but growth is seen across all income bands, leading to capacity constraints at certain key locations.

vi) There has been a continuing reduction in bus use across Merseyside and Halton.

vii) Health concerns must shape future transport policies given, for example, the threat to public health and the economy of Liverpool City Region from a projected rise in obesity (60% of adults by 2050). Greater car dependency will only make this problem worse.

viii) Over the past five years we have seen some increase in cycle usage but a decrease in walking. Linking health and transport concerns suggests clear common goals around cycling and walking to address obesity and health, assist with creating a low carbon economy and provide cheap and convenient access to jobs and services.

ix) The ports and logistics centres of Merseyside plus Liverpool John Lennon Airport have continued to grow leading to:-
   – Growing tourism sector;
   – The potential growth of strategic freight distribution across the LCR as a result of the 3MG; and
   – Continued increase in general freight movement, movement, which includes particularly strong growth in usage of vans.

x) There is clear support from many quarters for supporting the role of transport in shaping many aspects of the life of the City Region.

xi) Across the world, Sustainable Cities are economically successful cities. Halton being part of the LCR will benefit from this association.

6.4 Arising from our assessment of the current situation, allied to forecasts for the longer term, we believe there are a number of **key messages** that inform our future direction with LTP3. These are:-

- Halton must continue its efforts to secure the Mersey Gateway because of the substantial benefits it can bring to the borough and sub-region in terms of reduced congestion, economic regeneration, environmental improvement and sustainable transport.
- We have a large and valuable asset that must be maintained.
- Not to adapt and change is not an option. We must support continuing regeneration, reduce our carbon levels and promote a healthy lifestyle.
- At least in the short term we must do this with less funding, as we will not have the same levels of government transport funding in LTP3 as we have had to date. We will have to be smarter and more creative with the funding we have.
- We have a unique opportunity to use LTP3 as a catalyst to create a sustainable borough and successful City Region.
- Halton will want to continue to regenerate its town centres.
- Halton will want to build on the recent successes of investment in Widnes town centre and apply the same principles to Runcorn Town Centre, but this will put further pressure on the transport network.
- Economic regeneration brings pressures on the highway network due to increased traffic growth and on the need to provide good quality public transport and improve air quality;

this will necessitate changes and additions to critical sections of the highway.

- It will want to ensure the successful development and implementation of major developments including 3MG, HBC Fields, Runcorn Docks, Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre and Building Schools for the Future.
- Increased demand for trips will necessitate more investigation and provision of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), Smartcard technology, Demand Responsive Transport and parking management.
- Halton has developed the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy; this will inform the strategy for Halton's LTP3.
- Sustainable modes of travel (public transport, cycling and walking) must be promoted and supported by the LSP partner agencies to allow the Borough and Merseyside to contribute to Government priorities for Transport and thus achieve a healthier, safer and more prosperous environment for all.
- Halton is seeking to deliver improvements to railway infrastructure and rail services; examples include improvements to stations at Hough Green, Widnes, Runcorn and Runcorn East; working with Network Rail to improve frequency of rail services and; working with Merseytravel to improve cross boundary rail services.

6.5   We are now able to define the key challenges and opportunities we must address.

Table One – Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
• Supporting economic regeneration and growth whilst reducing carbon levels • Significant pressures of potential rising car ownership and car usage • Increasing levels of long distance commuting into the region • Rising freight demand on the roads, particularly vans • In the longer term rising demand will impact on business efficiency and environment • Continuing lack of integration of land use and locational choice for services and employment locations, leading to inaccessible sites for those without access to a car and unnecessary levels of road traffic and parking requirements • Challenges in securing consideration and provision for sustainable modes in the design of new developments • Reducing the negative transport impacts on disadvantaged communities • Health impacts of transport not fully acknowledged. Increasing levels of cycling and walking is essential against current low levels of use.	• Widespread support for effective transport can provide a catalyst and competitive edge • Agreement with all Local Authorities to the 'Choice of Travel' Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD), which provides a framework for promoting sustainable travel choices • Integration with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to ensure better land use and transport integration • Acting jointly with Government and other stakeholders to implement MAA • To work jointly with our City Region and Housing Growth Point partners in contributing to economic growth, housing provision and to a low carbon economy through the promotion of sustainable transport modes. • Completion of schemes in the pipeline such as Mersey Gateway, the SJB major maintenance scheme, Halton Curve and other rail improvements • progress in the development of the Mersey Gateway Project which is awaiting Ministerial Approval subsequent to Public Inquiry in summer 2009 • The benefits offered by the Mersey Gateway and the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy • Improved park and ride at rail stations

• Parental choice - Access to schools leading to increased use of car and less cycling and walking.	• The use of major developments to promote sustainable travel, for example the possible new railway station to serve Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus • Potential for bus quality partnerships and introduction of smartcard technology • To work with our LSP partners to identify accessibility issues and to promote joint working and funding of initiatives that provides improved access to initiatives • High numbers of short trips offer opportunities for shift to sustainable modes linked to a transformational public health programme via walking and cycling • A sustainable travel city *region* can generate investment and jobs • A clear opportunity for lower cost sustainable solutions and Smarter Choices
Challenges	**Opportunities**
• Image of bus remains a barrier to future growth • Costs of bus transport • Rail capacity may act as a constraint on future growth • Finance will be extremely tight • Using evidence to justify actions, together with clear prioritisation will be critical	• New technologies offer potential to cut travel and reduce carbon levels and poor air quality • The Rail network is a major asset and rail improvements such as the Northern Hub, rail electrification and Halton curve provide potential new and more frequent services that in turn will encourage greater use of this mode of travel • The growing acceptance of the climate change agenda and the opportunities afforded by it for sustainable travel initiatives, green travel plans, workplace travel planning, biofuels and electric vehicle technology

7.   **The Next Stage**

7.1   Once we have confirmed the challenges and opportunities based on the responses we receive from this report we will move on to the next stage. This involves the following elements:-

- Examine a range of possible options that may help address our challenges and opportunities, ranging from smarter choices through to transformational infrastructure
- Appraise these options and predict their effects
- Consult on preferred options and strategy. We anticipate this being undertaken in June / July 2010
- Following this consultation we will select options and decide priorities
- This will provide the platform for the shorter term Implementation Plans that will be drawn up in the autumn

7.2   It will be clear that there will be considerable financial constraints, at least in the short term. In addition, we must ensure we maintain our existing assets to a high standard. We must prioritise our actions in ways that maximise the benefits to be gained in addressing the goals we have set.

7.3   Table Two below summarises some of the key actions and interventions we will examine more closely to assess their impact on our challenges and opportunities. At this stage, this is not a definitive list, and the anticipated outcomes must be treated as tentative ahead of proper appraisal.

Table Two – Matching goals and priorities

Goals	Priorities	Anticipated outcomes
Ensure the transport system supports the priorities of the Liverpool City Region and Halton's Local Strategic Partnership	• Support the LCR Strategic Framework and transformational activities • Implement the MAA • Work with LSPs to set transport related targets in key policy areas • Explore use of Powers of Well Being	• Transport investment is targeted at local priorities. • Joint approach agreed with DfT • Transport provision supports Sustainable Community Strategy priorities • Potential source of new funding to address exclusion
Provide and promote a clean and low carbon transport system	• Support the LCR Low Carbon agenda • Develop Halton's rail system and pursue electrification of the Widnes, Hough Green and Hunts Cross line • Work with operators for continuous fleet upgrades	• Transport related carbon emissions are reduced. Air quality improved. Quality of life improved and costs reduced
Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing	• Work with health authorities to address obesity and other health priorities • Target interventions at disadvantaged communities to reduce transport impacts • Provide and promote greatly expanded cycle and pedestrian facilities • Actively improve Air Quality • Road casualty reduction to target particular areas and behaviours which show the highest risk • Expand Links2Work and other sustainable travel initiatives	• Supports low carbon and health priorities. Reduces costs to health sector and provides low cost alternatives for car transport for short journeys. Also provides low cost access to services • Continued reduction in road accidents • Low cost effective solutions that also address exclusion and accessibility

Goals	Priorities	Anticipated outcomes
Ensure the transport system allows people to connect easily with employment, services and social activities	• Ensure as a minimum, compliance with all Equalities requirements • Secure a long term future for 'Links2work, and Independent Travel Training • Ensure joint planning and delivery with Halton's Employment Strategy • Work with partners on joint planning and delivery to ensure all services are accessible to all • Examine new public transport service arrangements and potential role of taxis, the provision of door-to-door services and demand-flexible services	• Secure equality of travel opportunity for all • Aligns with priorities of LCR Strategic Framework and City Employment Strategy
Ensure the transport network supports the economic success of LCR by supporting local employment, key economic drivers and the efficient movement of people and goods, including access to international, national and regional networks, through the provision of high quality transport infrastructure and information	• Obtain approval to the Mersey Gateway project and successfully manage the procurement, construction and all works associated with it • Implement in conjunction with DfT a smart card as part of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy • Develop new generation highways and public transport information systems • Ensure successful delivery of existing schemes such as the SJB Major Maintenance Scheme and Halton Curve • Develop a Park and Ride Strategy in conjunction with neighbouring authorities • Support Superport including access to 3MG and Runcorn Docks • Ensure the efficient operation of the strategic freight	• The Mersey Gateway will deliver economic growth, increased use of public transport, walking and cycling, improved and more reliable journey times and network resilience • Reduce congestion on main corridors • Reduce cost of travel by revised family of tickets or smartcards and open up new journey opportunities particularly for disadvantaged communities. • An efficient freight and public transport network that supports

	network	business efficiency
		• The development of Superport, 3MG and Runcorn Docks as a centre for sustainable freight distribution – operationally and as a centre of expertise
Goals	**Priorities**	**Anticipated outcomes**
Maintain our transport and highway assets to a high standard	• Use Network Management Duty to the full to ensure efficient movement on the highway • Ensure adequate funding for maintenance. avoiding any further deterioration of our transport infrastructure • Ensure that we are able to respond appropriately to emergency situations, for example, flooding, severe winters and strong winds	• Efficient and well maintained assets supporting the operation of the network, and prepared for a range of adverse conditions.

8.   References

a)   Merseyside is defined as the five local authorities of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. The Liverpool City Region is defined as Merseyside plus Halton. The LCR now has a shadow 'Cabinet' made up of the six local authority leaders acting to address issues of common concern across the area.

b)   Multi Area Agreement, (MAA) Multi Area Agreements are cross-boundary Local Area Agreements which allow local authorities to tackle cross-boundary issues such as transport, housing, economic development and employment generation in a coordinated manner. The Liverpool City Region MAA covers the boroughs of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 provides for the possibility of MAAs being given 'statutory' status. This would bring the potential for further devolution of powers from central government to the city region level.

c)   DaSTS. Delivering a sustainable Travel System. DfT November 2008.

d)   The Future of Urban Transport. DfT November 2009.

e)   Disadvantaged Areas. Disadvantaged Areas are defined as the number of Super Output Areas (neighbourhoods) across Merseyside in England's worst performing 10% where high levels of multiple deprivation remain acute.

f)   Local Strategic Partnerships and Transport. A review was conducted of each of the 5 Merseyside LSP's Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) to identify where transport can support the work of the LSP's in delivering their Local Area Agreements. Full details are available at www.transportmerseyside.org

g)   LTP Evidence Base Review. Mott McDonald March 2010. Full details are available at www.transportmerseyside.org

h)   Liverpool City Region Transport Model. Full details are available at www.transportmerseyside.org

i)   Liverpool City Region; Inclusion in the Complete Mobility Index. For the Foresight Group. McLean Hazel. August 2009.

j)   Liverpool City Region Economic Assessment. TMP. Pion Economics January 2010. (As yet unpublished)

k)   Housing Growth Points. Housing Growth Points are specific locations supported by government through funding for infrastructure projects and essential studies to support sustainable growth. The Mersey Heartlands (Liverpool and Wirral) and the Mid Mersey Authorities of Warrington, St Helens and Halton are designated as Growth Points.

l)   Merseyside Route Utilisation Strategy March 2009.

9. <u>Getting involved</u>

Throughout this report we have detailed a number goals, challenges and opportunities. In order to obtain your views on these we have put together a questionnaire which will help us in the development of our LTP3. These are now listed in the attached questionnaire.

**Third Halton Local Transport Plan
Consultation**

Q1. Thinking about the last 10 years[1] (Local Transport Plans 2001-2006 and 2006-2011), **to what extent have the following characteristics of Halton transport network changed? (Please cross one box on each line).**

Answer options: A great deal, To some extent, Not very much, Not at all, D/K.

Congestion

Air quality

Road safety

Accessibility of key services to non car users

Opportunities for cycling and walking

The disparity between the mobility-rich and mobility-poor areas of the borough.

Q2. Below is a list of goals for the development of transport in Halton in the next 16 years proposed by 2026. Please indicate what level of priority you think each goal should be given. (Please cross one box on each line).

Answer option: High priority, Medium priority, Low priority

1. Halton transport system is an integral part of the Liverpool City Region and Halton Strategic Partnership's plans.

2. Halton transport system provides and promotes clean and low carbon forms of transport.

3. Halton transport system enables the borough's citizens to conduct a healthier lifestyle and to improve their wellbeing.

4. Halton transport system ensures that local residents can easily reach work / education / training, services and social activities.

5. Halton transport system contributes to the economic success of the Liverpool City Region by supporting local employment and ensuring the efficient movement of people and goods within the region.

6. The assets of Halton transport system are maintained to a high standard.

Q3. After considering all of the goals for the development of transport in Halton proposed by 23026, please select three most important goals. (Please write the corresponding number on the boxes below. For example, if your first priority is clean and low carbon form of transport write 2 in the first box).

Answer option: First priority, Second priority, Third priority

Q4. Are there additional goals that should be considered in addition to the above ones? (Please write in the space below).

Q5. In order to achieve the above-mentioned goal, a number of specific objectives been proposed. Please indicate what level of priority you think each of these objectives should be given. (Please cross one box on each line).

Answer option: High priority, Medium priority, Low priority

GOAL 1: Halton transport system is an integral part of the Liverpool City Region and Halton Strategic Partnership's plans.

Objective 1. Support the LCR Strategic Framework and transformational activities.

Objective 2. Implement the MAA

Objective 3. Work with LSP's to set transport related targets in key policy areas

Objective 4. Explore use of Powers of Well Being

Are there any other Goal 1 related objectives we should consider? (Please write in the space below).

GOAL 2. Halton transport system provides and promotes clean and low carbon forms of transport.

Objective 1. Support the LCR Low Carbon agenda.

Objective 2. Develop Merseyrail as carbon neutral.

Objective 3. Work with operators for continuous fleet upgrades

Are there any other Goal 2 related objectives we should consider? (Please write in the space below).

GOAL 3. Halton transport system enables the borough's citizens to conduct a healthier lifestyle and to improve their wellbeing.

Objective 1. Work with health authorities to address obesity and other health priorities.

Objective 2. Target interventions at disadvantaged communities to reduce transport impacts.

Objective 3. Provide and promote greatly expanded cycle and pedestrian facilities.

Objective 4. Actively improve Air Quality

Objective 5. Road casualty reduction to target particular areas and behaviours which show the highest risk

Objective 6. Expand the Travelwise programme

Are there any other Goal 3 related objectives we should consider? (Please write in the space below).

GOAL 4. Halton transport system ensures that local residents can easily reach work / education / training, services and social activities.

Objective 1. Ensure as a minimum, compliance with all Equalities requirements.

Objective 2. Secure a long-term future for Lets Get Moving and Workwise.

Objective 3. Ensure joint planning and delivery with the City Employment Strategy.

Objective 4. Work with partners on joint planning and delivery to ensure all services are accessible to all

Objective 5. Examine new public transport service arrangements and potential role of taxis, the provision of door-to-door services and demand-flexible services

Are there any other Goal 4 related objectives we should consider? (Please write in the space below).

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GOAL 5. Halton transport system contributes to the economic success of the Liverpool City Region by supporting local employment and ensuring the efficient movement of people and goods within the region.

Objective 1. Implement a revisited Park and Ride Strategy.

Objective 2. Work with operators to develop a new fares structure.

Objective 3. Implement in conjunction with DfT a 'county' wide smart card.

Objective 4. Develop new generation highways and public transport information systems

Objective 5. Ensure successful delivery of existing schemes such as Hall Lane and Edge Lane road improvements

Objective 6. Support including access to the Port at Seaforth.

Objective 7. Seek continuous improvements to Merseyrail.

Objective 8. Ensure the efficient operation of the strategic freight network

Are there any other Goal 5 related objectives we should consider? (Please write in the space below).

▪▪▪

GOAL 6. The assets of Halton transport system are maintained to a high standard.

Objective 1. Use Network Management Duty to the full to ensure efficient movements on the highways

Objective 2. Ensure adequate funding for maintenance, avoiding any further deterioration of our transport infrustructure

Are there any other Goal 6 related objectives we should consider? (Please write in the space below).
▪▪▪

Q6. Do you have any comments or concerns about the Challenges and opportunities outlined in table 1? (Please write in the space below).

Q7. Any other comments or concerns? Please add any other comment or concern that you may have in relation to the new Halton Local Transport Plan. (Please write in the space below).

To answer these questions online and read further information on LTP3 please go to www.halton .gov.uk
If you would prefer to respond to us in writing, please post your comments on the questions above to:

HBC

The five-year Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP) runs until 2011and is a long-term strategy and delivery programme of transport investment and service improvements.

It aims to give Halton a safer, sustainable, efficient and integrated transport network, accessible to all.

www.halton.gov.uk