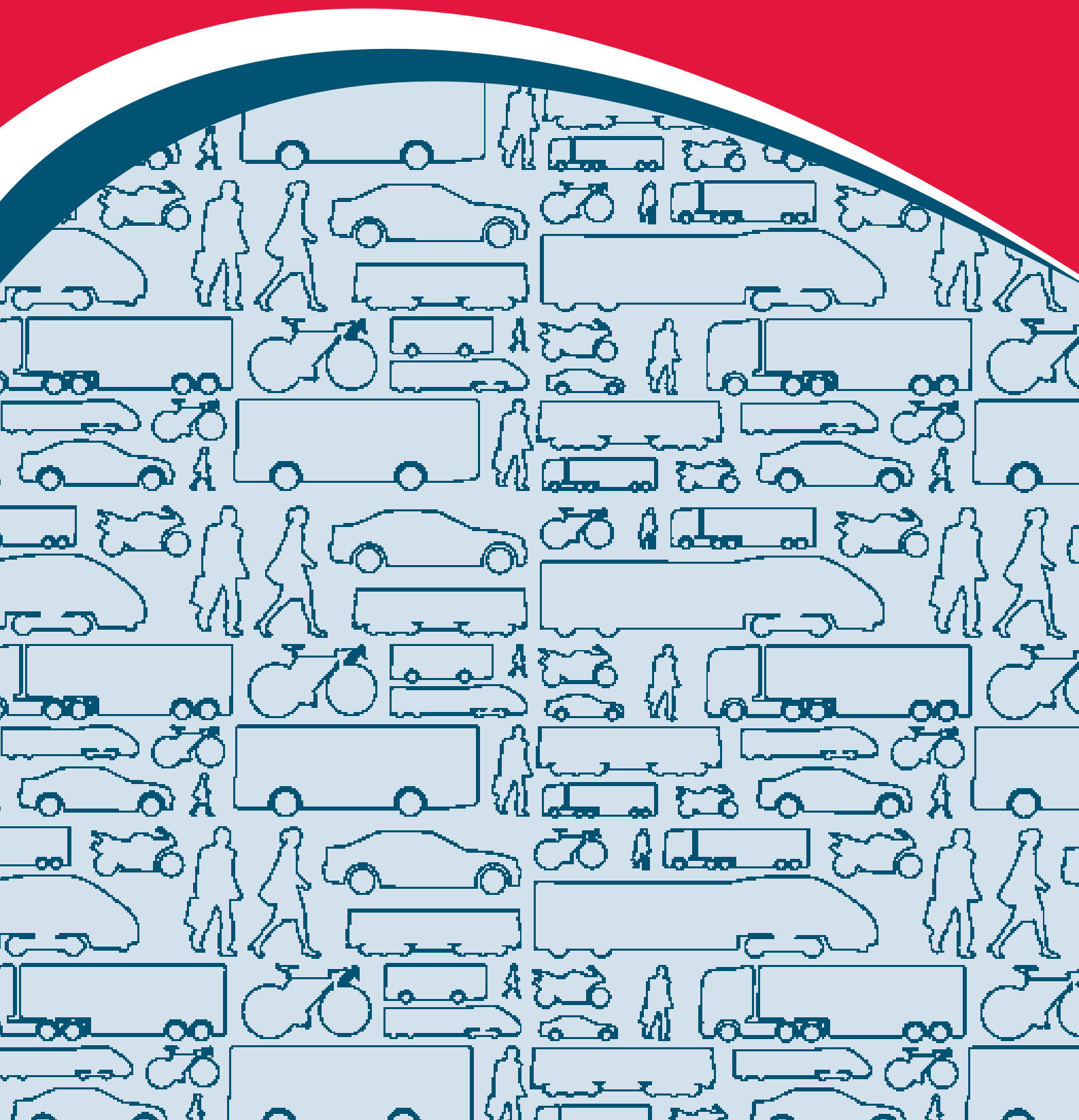


The Third Local Transport Plan for Halton

Transport : Providing for Halton's Needs



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Transport : Providing for Halton's Needs



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I Introduction

Halton's Approach to Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)

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 its LTP, Halton must reflect the views of a wide range of stakeholders and the public from within and outside its boundaries.

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), 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. In preparing LTP3, Halton has also liaised with other local authorities, including Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington.

The current LTP runs until March 2011, therefore the third Plan will start in April 2011. It presents itself in two parts; the first will set out a strategy for Halton until 2026. The second part lies beneath the long term strategy and it is an Implementation Plan, which will set out in detail how the strategy will be delivered in the first three years. LTP3 will be in line 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.

A good quality transport system is critical in continuing to build a strong and vibrant Halton. Transport plays a vital role in connecting our everyday activities together, from cycling to school, catching the bus to work or using the train to visit friends and family in neighbouring towns and cities.

Halton has a substantial transport network that is constantly undergoing improvement. Significant 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.

There are improved rail links to other parts of the country, a road network where safety and maintenance are improving along with improvements for freight distribution. 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.

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. There has also been a recent announcement that the

Government will provide £18.6 million of funding for the Silver Jubilee Bridge Major Maintenance Scheme.

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.

Transport planning cannot be considered in isolation as its purpose is to serve society. The preparation of LTP3 therefore has been built upon wider policy documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Children and Young Peoples Plan. LTP3 also needs to connect into the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR) and the Northwest. This makes it possible for the people of Halton to access a wide range of employment, leisure, education opportunities.

A strong transport network can attract investment, new businesses and jobs to Halton, and can contribute to a stronger and healthier borough, by providing transport links not only to the residents of Halton but the increasing number of visitors to the area.

Transport is a key element to emerging commercial sites such as the 3MG site in Widnes, where new road access has been provided along with proposed new rail sidings. Road improvements have also been implemented for Widnes Waterfront and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus.

These sites are bringing significant new employment opportunities for Halton.

In preparation of the LTP3 it's important that Halton takes account of not only regional and national policies, but also European initiatives, all of which ultimately determine what happens in Halton. This includes a whole range of areas such as education, social services, the economy and environment, regeneration, health, planning, safety and leisure.

In this document, we set out some of the challenges and opportunities that face us as we look ahead to 2026. Building on our past success, we now need to plan for the next 16 years.

This time period coincides with Halton's Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Both documents 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, but we must ensure that Halton and the Liverpool City Region's aspirations for regeneration and growth continue to be supported by a high quality, low carbon and efficient transport network.



2 Setting our goals

The previous Government established five national priorities for transport. The new formed coalition government hasn't officially confirmed its transport policy but it has not been suggested that these goals are not consistent with their thinking. They 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.

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 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.

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.

The North West Regional Strategy RS2010 has been revoked and is no longer a statutory document. In its place we now have 'Future North West, Our Shared Priorities' which is currently out to consultation. Halton will give due consideration to the content of this document whilst preparing its LTP.



Local and Sub Regional Priorities

The Liverpool City Region, which includes Halton, has set as its Vision:

'To establish our status as a thriving international City Region by 2030'

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:-
 - Building a low carbon economy
 - Developing the City Region's assets including the proposed Mersey Gateway, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, and the extensive logistics industry that includes Halton's Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) and the 'Liverpool SuperPort' which incorporates Weston Docks
 - Building on Capital of Culture to build and develop the Culture and Visitor Economy
 - 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.
- **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.

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.

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.

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,

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.

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

Our Goals

Ensure transport network resilience with particular regard to enhancing cross Mersey linkages, by the implementation of the Mersey Gateway project and the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Ensure the transport system supports the priorities of the Halton's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Liverpool City Region (LCR).

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 Halton, and the LCR by the efficient movement of people and goods.

Maintain our transport and highway assets to a high standard.

3 What do we mean by transport:

Providing for Halton's needs

In transport terms, the overriding challenges for the Government lie around creating the conditions for economic growth whilst addressing carbon reductions and climate change.

"The future of urban transport" a report produced by the Department for Transport in November 2009 set out the importance of good urban transport and how it could have triple benefits across health, regeneration and urban environments. In Halton, we believe the impacts of good urban transport are more wide ranging, but in order to achieve such gains we need our strategy and policies to work to deliver on multiple objectives. Any one measure, policy or intervention must clearly deliver results on as many headline themes as possible.

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, with consideration to the following emerging issues:

- 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; and
- A growing health crisis as a result of rising levels of obesity and lack of activity.

At a local level, Halton also faces many specific issues. Whilst a great deal of progress has been made there is much more to do. This will be

particularly challenging as less funding will be available for transport, in at least, the near future.

Halton has had a good recent track record in providing urban regeneration after years of economic decline and the loss of employment in traditional industries. The creation of new jobs has gone hand in hand with 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 expanding Liverpool John Lennon Airport. These successes should be seen as the forerunner to 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 in Halton can shape our own destiny.

Transport is not an end in itself; it needs to serve the wider needs of society. The specific transport challenges and opportunities are detailed in section 5 and many of these are in line with national transport issues, these include:

- The need to support economic growth whilst tackling climate change;
- Rising car ownership and usage;
- The need for more joined up land use and transport planning;
- The health impacts of transport are not fully acknowledged;
- Low levels of walking and cycling;
- The cost of bus transport;
- Rail capacity; and not least
- Finance will be limited.

Halton also has significant socio-economic issues to address including:

- Lower than average levels of educational attainment and skills;

- Higher than average levels of unemployment;
- A high level of dependency on state benefits;
- Many areas of the borough have very high levels of social deprivation; and
- 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.

Halton's goals for LTP3 are detailed in section 2 and include issues that are of international, national, regional and local significance,

It is by pursuing these goals that Halton will provide a transport system that will support its needs.



4 Planning for the future

It is recognised that the changes required to the transport system and indeed the way in which the system is used, cannot all be achieved in the first three years of implementation of this LTP.

Limitations on availability of funding, staff resources, planning considerations and indeed the challenges involved in winning the 'hearts and minds' of the public, require the development of a much longer term transport strategy. This Local Transport Plan has been carefully developed to ensure that it is consistent with and supportive of the transport strategy aims and objectives of Merseyside and Cheshire, and is seen as the next essential stage in the achievement of a transport system that is fit for purpose. This purpose is expressed in terms of a Long Term Vision, which is:

"To achieve sustainable, inclusive, accessible and fuel efficient transport systems that improve the quality of life for people living in Halton by sustaining economic growth and regeneration, whilst ensuring we address climate change, by reducing carbon emissions from transport".



5 The challenges and opportunities

The aspirations for economic growth that have been identified bring 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.

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. Therefore, surprisingly 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 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.

These issues reinforce 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.

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) 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 a 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 Liverpool City Region 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.
- 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.

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 location choice for services and employment locations, leading to inaccessible sites for those without access to a car ■ 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. ■ Parental choice - Access to schools leading to increased use of car and less cycling and walking. ■ Image of bus remains a barrier to future growth ■ Costs of public 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	■ 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 and deliver the benefits offered by the Mersey Gateway and the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy ■ Improved park and ride at rail stations ■ 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 transport solutions ■ 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 ■ 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

6 Links to other policy areas

The Emerging National and Local Policy Framework

Since Halton began developing its LTP3 there have been major changes at both national and regional level, following the General Election. At the time of writing, there remains some uncertainty about the Government's policies for transport, funding levels and the arrangements for delivery.

Government transport priorities

The major imperative of the Government's policy is to reduce the country's economic deficit. Our current assessment of the Government's transport policies and priorities is set out below.

Overarching Priorities

The Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond stated at the second Transport Council of the Spanish Presidency in Luxembourg on 24 June 2010 that:

"The UK's overarching national objectives for transport were to support economic growth and contribute to the 2020 carbon reduction targets. Additionally, I stressed the importance of having competitive transport services and the need to avoid excessive regulatory burdens on business."

Coalition Programme Transport Commitments

The Coalition programme for government set out the following commitments:

- The Government believes that modern transport infrastructure is essential for a

dynamic and entrepreneurial economy, as well as to improve well-being and quality of life. We need to make the transport sector greener and more sustainable, with tougher emission standards and support for new transport technologies;

- We will mandate a national recharging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles;
- We will grant longer rail franchises in order to give operators the incentive to invest in the improvements passengers want like better services, better stations, longer trains and better rolling stock;
- We will reform the way decisions are made on which transport projects to prioritise, so that the benefits of low carbon proposals (including light rail schemes) are fully recognised;
- We will make Network Rail more accountable to its customers;
- We will establish a high speed rail network as part of our programme of measures to fulfil our joint ambitions for creating a low carbon economy. Our vision is of a truly national high speed rail network for the whole of Britain. Given financial constraints, we will have to achieve this in phases.
- We support Crossrail and further electrification of the rail network;
- We will turn the rail regulator into a powerful passenger champion;
- We will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities;
- We are committed to fair pricing for rail travel;

- We will work towards the introduction of a new system of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) road user charging to ensure a fairer arrangement for UK hauliers;
- We will stop central government funding for new fixed speed cameras and switch to more effective ways of making our roads safer, including authorising 'drugalyser' technology; and
- We will tackle rogue private sector wheel clampers.

The Big Society

The Prime Minister announced the Big Society initiative in Liverpool on the 19th July 2010. It signals the Government's intentions to develop their 'localism' agenda, by devolving as much as possible to the local level. The Government have also signalled their intention to examine where shared services can be delivered in ways that save costs and improve efficiency.

At the launch the Prime Minister set out some ideas including:

Devolving budgets to street-level, to developing local transport services, taking over local assets such as a pub, piloting open-source planning, delivering broadband to local communities, generating their own energy...

The Government's view of the development of Local Transport Plans

The Government views LTP's as:

'The best way for authorities to plan transport strategy and delivery and to ensure that all funding is spent efficiently and effectively'

and that:

'authorities are accountable to their communities rather than to the Department for the quality of their plans.'

The DfT will therefore no longer intervene in the development of the LTP nor require progress reports or reviews in the future. The Government has also announced the abolition of regional Government offices from 2011 and are clear that development, implementation and performance management of LTP's should take place at the local level. One important aspect of our consultation and discussion programme will therefore be to discuss locally agreed appropriate targets for the next LTP.

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS)

The Department for Transport (DfT) published the document 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System' in 2007 and was the response to the Eddington Study and the Stern Review. DaSTS followed on from this and was published by the DfT in 2008 and set out the previous Government's approach to strategic transport planning for 2014 and beyond. The document outlines the five goals/priorities for transport (described in section 2) and focuses on the challenge of delivering strong economic growth while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Future of Urban Transport

This paper was published by the DfT in 2009 and described how the success of cities and urban areas may be maximised through an efficient and sustainable transport system. The paper highlights why cities and large towns are so important and why effective transport systems are essential to making them successful. It considers how these transport systems affect different areas; economy, health and urban environment, both negatively and positively. It then proposes solutions which can produce

positive outcomes to all of them: triple win outcomes.

Planning for Sustainable Travel

This advisory paper was produced by the Commission for Integrated Transport in 2009 and describes how land use planning can help meet carbon reduction targets.

New regional and sub regional arrangements

With the abolition of the North West Development Agency (NWDA), (from 2012) and the North West Leaders Forum (4NW), Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), were abolished in July. Both the NWDA and 4NW were keen to ensure that the research and work carried out for RS2010 was not lost and a slimmed down document has been issued as a non-statutory strategic framework for the North West entitled, 'Future North West, Our Shared Priorities'. It sets out the following aspirations:

- a The quality of life for the people of the North West will be excellent and the area will become more prosperous, more equitable and low carbon. By 2030 it will be a better place to live, learn, work, visit and invest in, with;
- b Job opportunities for all in a highly productive, well-skilled, internationally competitive, knowledge-based and resource-efficient economy which is adapting to climate change and living within environmental limits; and
- c High levels of health and social wellbeing, minimal deprivation and child poverty, good housing and excellent physical and digital connectivity.

Furthermore, and specific to the Liverpool City Region its states that:

Liverpool will be a world-class cultural city, a major driver of economic growth and an international gateway and the international potential of the Liverpool- Manchester corridor will have been developed.

'Future North West, Our Shared Priorities' is currently out to consultation and Halton will give due consideration to the content of this document whilst preparing its LTP.

The Liverpool City Region

The Liverpool City Region is made up of the five Merseyside local authorities of Liverpool, St Helens, Wirral, Knowsley and Sefton plus Halton. The Cabinet is made up of the leaders of these six authorities plus the Chair of the Mersey Partnership, (TMP).

Partnership at a city region level complements and adds value to the work of local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. It means that the city region is better positioned to attract investment and resources, ensure its residents have the skills to get the jobs that are created and that it is able to influence decisions made by Government and its agencies on issues such as housing, transport and waste.

The city region has already worked with Government to agree a number of actions set out in our Multi Area Agreement which was signed in September 2009 and the city region is currently developing proposals for a Local Enterprise Partnership which will shape specific city region activity in line with its defined priorities.

The Multi Area Agreement

Multi Area Agreements were established by the

previous government as the prime mechanism for supporting sub-regional working on economic issues. MAAs aimed to give local authorities more freedoms from Whitehall in return for pledging a local, partnership approach to boosting economic growth and tackling deprivation and financial inequalities. The MAA was formally signed with Government in September 2009.

The MAA set out four transformational programmes that underpinned its approach to future growth and regeneration. These are:-

- (a) The development of SuperPort building on the area's strengths around the port and logistics
- (b) Building a Low Carbon Economy
- (c) Building a Knowledge Economy
- (d) Developing the Visitor Economy

There is an extensive transport element to the MAA, covering accessibility, low carbon transport and increased capacity.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

The Government signalled its intention to create Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) in the Budget. They are designed to help tackle issues including planning and housing, local transport and infrastructure, employment, enterprise transition to a low carbon economy, small business start ups and tourism. The city region has submitted its outline proposals for a LEP and the proposed functions are as follows:

- (a) To promote private sector schemes
- (b) To vet bids for the Regional Growth Fund
- (c) Enterprise and business support
- (d) Asset management
- (e) Tourism
- (f) Inward investment
- (g) Employment and skills

- (h) Innovation and science and
- (i) European funding

The LEP will be private sector led and a Board established, initially in shadow form. It is likely to comprise of local authority leaders, prominent business leaders and representatives for small business, the third sector and social enterprise. It is proposed that the shadow LEP Board would be directly accountable to the city region and would be supported by the policy platforms of Transport, Employment and Skills, Housing and Planning, Environment and Health, in addition to the private and third sectors.

The LEP's will be responsible for bids to the new Regional Growth Fund, (RGF). This is short term funding and delivery of projects needs to be within the year the grant is made. Although this may rule out big transport schemes, there may be smaller scale projects that could be examined.

Links to Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is inextricably linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Halton. The LTP supports the delivery of the SCS by providing links to all five of the SCS themes. A strong transport system will be extremely valuable to all of us as it will enable us to provide a fully inclusive place to live, work and visit.

A Healthy Halton

By providing strong public transport links, a cycle network and maintaining public footpaths and Public Rights of Way (PROW) access, all residents of Halton and its visitors have the opportunity to increase their level of fitness and

engage in sport and leisure pursuits. A comprehensive sustainable transport system will also address wider issues, for instance, enabling residents easier access to Health centres and Hospitals by working in partnership with other agencies to provide a regular bus service. By taking advantage of these opportunities residents of Halton can improve their own health with little or no financial implications, and can actually create the opportunity to change their lifestyles.

Halton's Urban Renewal

The creation of employment parks and town centre development requires strong transport links to enable them to thrive and grow. Initiatives such as the Mersey Gateway project will enable the Borough to attract more visitors and bring investment and commercial opportunities to the area, increasing Halton's overall competitiveness. The 3MG site is assisting in not only creating thousands of jobs in the Borough, but also helping to reduce carbon emissions by creating a shift in transport from road to rail. Rail Station improvements have enhanced the journey experience of both leisure and business commuters to the area. By working inclusively with relevant departments, Halton can ensure excellent connectivity to places and spaces within the Borough and the wider Liverpool City Region.

Children and Young People in Halton.

To enable Children and Young people in Halton to achieve their potential, it is required that transport plays a key role in their daily routine. Whether it's cycling to school, walking to the local park, getting on the bus with friends to watch a film, transport is there connecting it together. Children and young people who have experienced independent travelling are more likely to achieve greater success in later life as

they have a greater confidence to "get up and go" to new places, attend job interviews and training courses in other towns.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

To create an economically prosperous Borough that encourages investment, transport has a major role to play in many ways. It enables residents to reach employment and educational facilities, which in turn makes it possible for them to develop and deliver the knowledge and skills required by local businesses. Transport schemes such as the Mersey Gateway Project which will reduce congestion, will attract new business to the area as journey times will be reduced and journey time reliability will be improved.

A Safer Halton

Halton is a member of the Cheshire Safer Road Partnership (CSRP) and our road safety officers work with colleagues from Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, the Highways Agency, the Police, Fire and Courts Services on a remit that not only includes the management and development of greater Cheshire's speed and red light cameras, but also delivering a Cheshire wide integrated programme of strategic road safety, education, training and publicity initiatives.

All casualty reduction work is informed and targeted on the basis of accident data collected by Cheshire Constabulary and Halton is comfortably on course to meet government-set casualty reduction targets in 2010. However, ongoing road traffic accident casualty reduction will continue to be the aim of all the work undertaken, utilising a range of traditional approaches and ground-braking initiatives aimed at the most at-risk road users in our Borough, namely car occupants, children and motorcyclists.

Halton also operates a travel trainer service for children with travel confidence issues, giving trainees the ability to travel independently to school, college and ultimately work.

There are still many locations in the Borough where the adoption of specific engineering solutions can pay dividends in terms of casualty reduction, and annual casualty location analysis updates the list and informs decisions on where Local Safety Scheme funds should be invested for the best incident reduction return on the investment.

Halton Construction Employment Integrator

Halton Borough Council has identified that the forecast scale of development and other construction-related activity in the area offers significant potential for moving people from benefits into work. Schemes in Halton such as the Mersey Gateway and highway infrastructure works relating to Mersey Multi Modal Gateway have been specifically identified as offering significant training, employment and supply chain opportunities. Schemes such as these in turn will help address issues of high worklessness and concentrated deprivation in parts of the borough which will contribute towards the achievement of Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. Discussions have taken place between the Council and Working Ventures UK (WVUK) to identify how the opportunity for securing jobs in the construction industry for workless and other disadvantaged people could best be realised. As a result a Construction Employment Integrator (CEI) has been established in Halton to capitalise on the opportunities arising and WVUK have agreed to work with Halton to advise on the development of a suitable arrangement for the area.

Halton's approach to delivering employment to disadvantaged people in the construction industry is as follows:

- use **procurement processes and planning** to effect change, embedding obligations into public sector contracts to ensure developers, and subsequently contractors address targeted employment and training issues;
- **engage with employers and contractors** to ensure that recruitment and training provision is more relevant and demand-led – thereby providing the industry with a supply of suitably qualified labour;
- **provide tailored pre-recruitment support** and routeways that will enable local unemployed/workless people to access jobs within the industry – through greater integration and more flexible use of mainstream programmes and funding; and
- **encourage and assist Halton based SME's** to access opportunities arising from the new planned development activity in the area.

The CEI function will sit within the Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) – as the HEP already has a model for engaging with employers and sourcing relevant training and matching people to the opportunities arising through linkages with the Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) team.

The CEI will be managed through the existing Skills Steering Group which is in turn a sub group of the Employment, Learning and Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership of the LSP. The Skills Group and associated sub-groups oversee the HEP and other similar initiatives being delivered by employment and training organisations within the area. Membership of the group/s is outlined below:

- Halton Borough Council
- Riverside College
- HEP Manager
- Jobcentre Plus (JCP)
- Connexions
- Skills Funding Agency
- Voluntary Sector
- Higher Education
- Aim Higher
- Sector Skills Councils
- Education Business Partnership

Funding

In line with the coalition agreement, the Government implemented a programme to save £6 billion of public spending in the current financial year.

Nationally, the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) process, which allows for regional influence over funding for major schemes, has been abolished, through the abolition of regional leader's boards and proposed abolition of regional development agencies. Future funding allocations remain unclear. In terms of local transport funding, the impacts of national reductions means that the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) levels have been reduced by around 25% for Halton in 2010/11. Similar reductions to the ITB for the Merseyside Authorities have also occurred. Currently funding for road and bridge maintenance has been unaffected for 2010/11.

In addition to the ITB, reductions have also been made to other grants such as the Road Safety Grants and funding to cover maintenance of the Principal Road Network.

The recent Government cuts have resulted in the loss of the following:

- LTP Integrated Transport Block - £442k a

25% cut with ITB going down from £1.767m to £1,325m (used for a range of measures or improvements on the highway including cycling, walking, public transport, minor local safety schemes and rail station improvements and hence impacts will be felt here especially if further cuts come with the CSR; proposed capital implementation programme now being finalised);

- Road Safety Capital Grant - £75k or a 100% cut;
- Road Safety Revenue Grant - £90k or a 27% cut – the combined capital and revenue cuts will impact on the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership of which Halton is a member (it is proposed that £130k of the £165k cut be taken from the £274k that currently goes to the CSRP) and on the amount of RS Education, training and publicity that can be undertaken; and
- Primary Route Network Funding (maintenance of the SJB) – down by £440k. This is in addition to the cost of the delays associated with the Peregrine falcons which are estimated at £500k and have put the programme back by 3 to 4 months.

It is possible that in years following 2010/11 there could be further funding cuts for transport; this may become clearer following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review on 20th October. There is an expectation that the private sector will take greater leadership in many transport projects and that the community and third sectors will also have an increased role. More positively, in June 2010 the DfT confirmed that the SJB Major Maintenance Scheme was not subject to cancellation or suspension with funding of £18.9 million being allocated for a five year period starting in 2011/12.

7 Local Transport Plan 3 Consultation Results Phase I

The next Local Transport Plan (LTP3) entered the first phase of a 2 stage consultation process in April 2010. A wide public consultation was held which was available in various formats; using the traditional method of paper documents to an interactive link via the Halton Borough Council website and Facebook page. A consultation event at the Stobart Stadium Halton for Stakeholders, local residents and partner agencies also took place, with 28 people in attendance.

Overall we received 176 completed questionnaires and combined with the consultation event over 200 people were involved in prioritising the Goals, Challenges and Opportunities within the Local Transport Plan. The outcomes were collated and there was a resounding response that everyone recognised that “finances are going to be tight” but this shouldn’t diminish the Borough’s or the Liverpool City Region aspirations, and that the LTP will help provide the means by which these aspirations can be achieved.

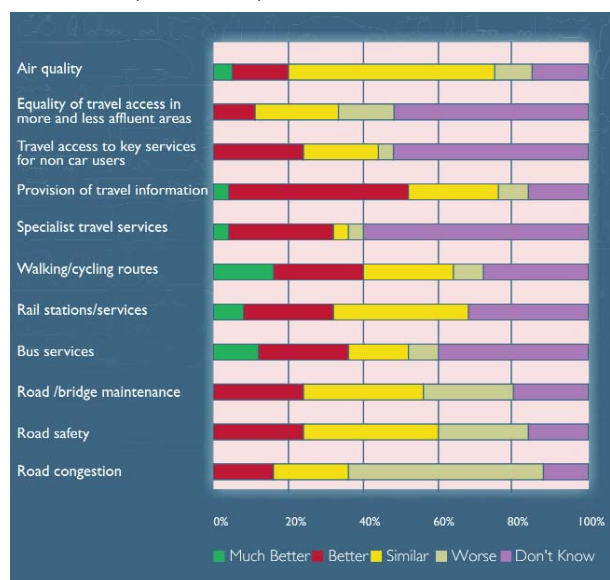
This document provides an overview of the first phase of consultation, however more details about the LTP 3 can be found at www.halton.gov.uk/ltp3

Electronic and Public Consultation Responses

Changes to transport over the last

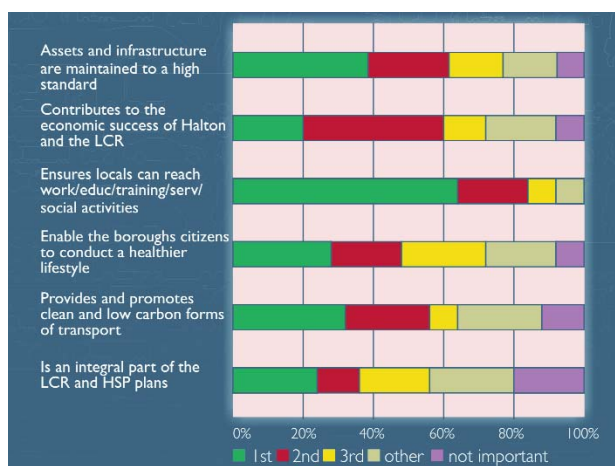
10 years

Taking a longer term view of transport in Halton, more than half of the respondents thought that there has been an improvement in the availability of travel information. Respondents also thought that there were improvements in the number and quality walking and cycling routes available. Road congestion is perceived to be worse and this is a key area of concern for Halton Borough Council and partner organisations, which would largely be addressed with the implementation of the Mersey Gateway.



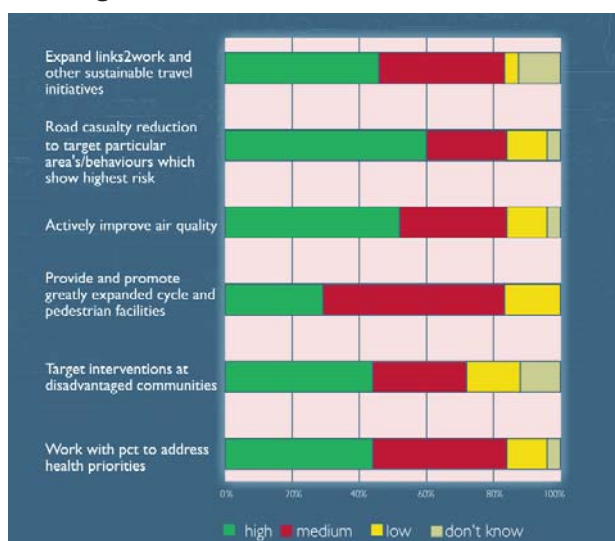
Halton's Transport Systems

The people of Halton want to keep their high quality transport infrastructure and are keen to play their part in a cleaner, greener environment through low carbon forms of transport. However, it is clearly evident from the results that the key priority is to ensure local people can reach work/education/training/services and social activities without restriction.



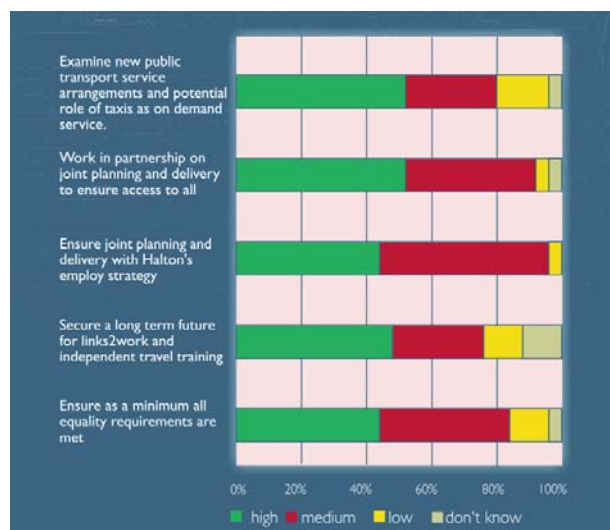
Transport that enables the residents of Halton to be healthier

There was an overwhelming response to keep initiatives that help reduce road casualties, following that respondents want to ensure ample access to both cycling and walking facilities within the borough. Working with partner organisations such as the PCT and targeting disadvantaged communities, it was acknowledged that transport has a key role to play in ensuring the long term health of Halton's residents.



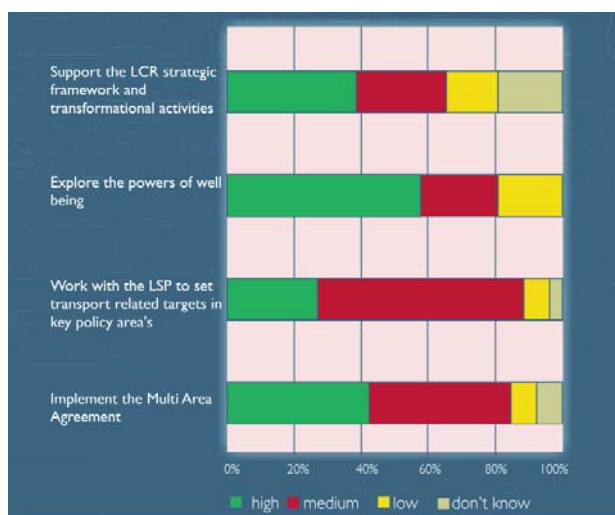
Transport that gets us to work/education/training

Respondents were keen to work in partnership in the planning and delivery of a transport service that is accessible to Halton's residents when they need it. It was also recognised that we need to work in partnership to help deliver the employment strategy, and ensure that all residents of Halton can take full advantage of the work, education, training and leisure opportunities available to them.



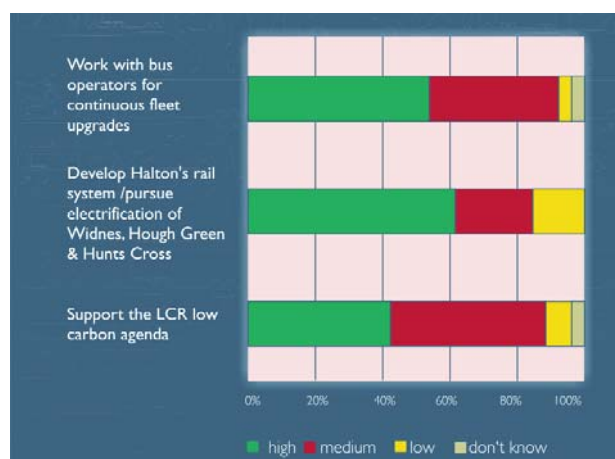
Halton's Transport System as part of the Liverpool City Region and Halton Strategic Partnership Plan

Overwhelmingly, the respondents to the consultation wanted Halton's transport system to contribute to the wellbeing of its citizens. However, it was also recognised that it must support both the Liverpool City Region and Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy with its policy options ensuring the most appropriate initiatives are developed.



Promotion of Clean and Low Carbon forms of Transport

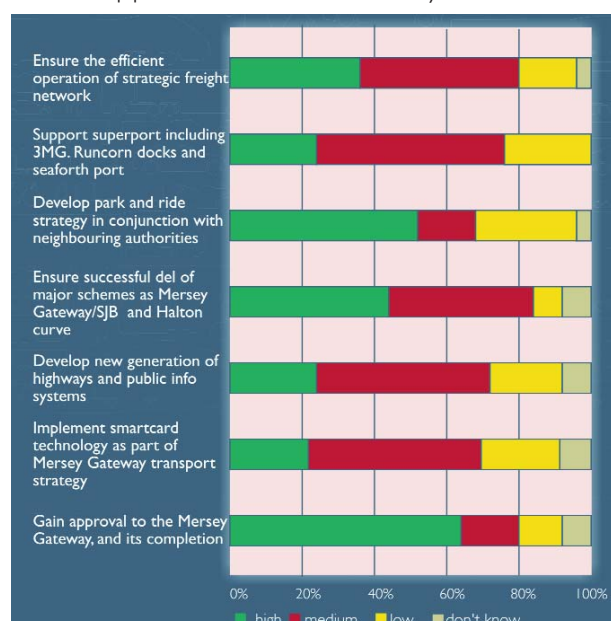
Residents acknowledge the provision of travel information has improved over recent years, there is however along with the rest of the Northwest region room for improvement in air quality. The main concern is still congestion particularly in terms of commuting or the taking of children to school.



Transport that contributes to the Economic success of the Liverpool City Region

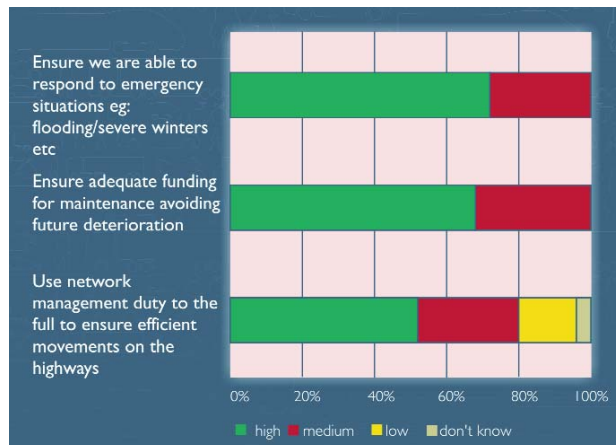
The strongest recognition within this particular graph is to ensure Halton Borough Council and

its partners gain approval for the new Mersey crossing (Mersey Gateway). We also need to work closely with our neighbouring Cheshire and Merseyside partners to develop a park and ride strategy and the facilities to allow the residents of Halton to take full advantage of the retail and leisure opportunities in the vicinity.



Halton's Transport Assets are well maintained

With the last winter in mind participants felt that Halton Borough Council should ensure that we are able to respond to emergency situations such as adverse weather conditions. It was also thought we should make certain that we have adequate funding available for the maintenance of our transport network to avoid future deterioration.



Stakeholders comments

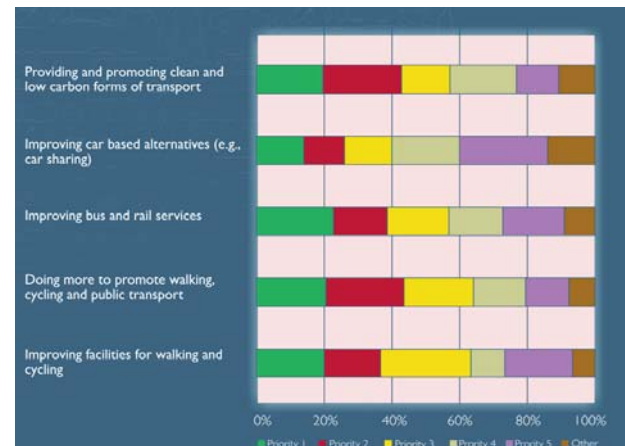
Goal 1- Supporting Economic Growth

Our Stakeholders firmly thought a key priority to supporting economic growth was to manage congestion on local routes. We also need to ensure good transport systems to employment and housing sites within the borough and wider Liverpool City region whilst acknowledging the need to be able to respond to emergency situations appropriately.



Goal 2- Tackling Climate Change

Participants of the Stakeholder consultation felt as part of the emerging LTP3 with specific reference to Climate Change, more attention should be given to walking and cycling initiatives. It was believed that promotion of walking and cycling was more important than new facilities. Emphasis was also needed to promote clean and low carbon forms of transport within the Borough and wider LCR.



Goal 3- Ensuring equality of opportunity and accessibility

There was a general view that people wanted good access to local amenities with particular consideration given to place of work, education, health centres, and other destinations.



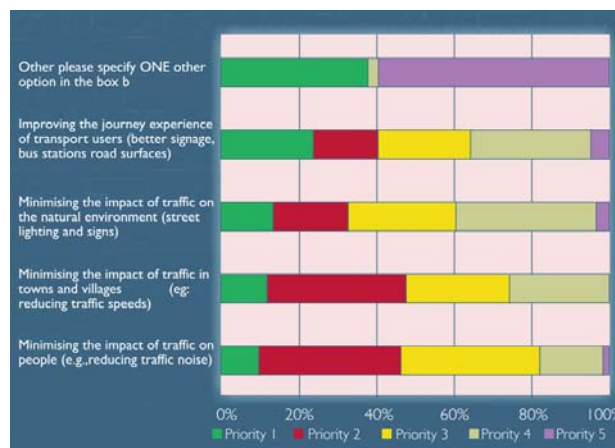
Goal 4- Protecting Health, Safety and Security

The two overwhelming themes from this particular question were to ensure we continue with our successful road safety initiatives and continue to reduce the number of killed or injured on our roads. However, consideration should be given to addressing the perception of crime whilst using public transport.



Goal 5- Promoting Quality of life and the Natural Environment

Improving the journey experience of the transport user can be achieved with effective travel information, better signage, and the universal implementation of real time information at all bus stops. Efficient transport results in less congestion, less pollution, more reliable journey times, reduced noise levels and less visual intrusion.



Conclusion

Congestion on the Silver Jubilee Bridge remains a major issue and as such the provision of the Mersey Gateway Project is viewed as a top priority. It is also viewed as important that work with partners in both Merseyside and Cheshire continues during the delivery of LTP3.

A key challenge is also ensuring that sustainable economic growth is maintained whilst tackling climate change issues. Efforts to make the road network as safe as possible will also need to continue, as will ensuring the safety of users of the public transport network.

The second stage of consultation will start in October 2010 and the information gathered during this process will enable the planning, implementation and support of an effective local transport system for the residents of Halton until 2026 and beyond.



The writing's on the wall

Improved access for people with Language Learning Disability issues.

Enable free pass users to use passes from 9am instead of 9:30am. Peak travel is well over by then.

Get school age children to walk to and from school

Improve the buses to local towns e.g. Warrington, Frodsham, Ellesmere Port

Making public transport more appealing, affordable and accessible

Improvement of some areas of Runcorn that have poor transport links, especially at night.

Ensuring transport needs are built into forthcoming developments.

Free/cheaper bus fares for people doing voluntary work...

New Bridge

Transport to run to cover shift workers

Providing a new Mersey crossing within the next 6 years

Provide better transport links for certain Runcorn areas e.g. Weston Village, Halton Village

Facilitate the provision of adequate safe public transport links to disadvantaged neighbourhoods at weekends and evenings

Better links to airports and main city train stations

Too many cars exceed limit on Halton Road





8 Primary Transport Strategies

No. 1 Airport Surface Access

No. 2 Bus Strategy

No. 3 Cycling

No. 4 Demand Management

No. 5 Development Control Strategy

No. 6 Freight Distribution

No. 7 Intelligent Transport Systems and Signing

No. 8 Maintenance of transport Assets

No. 9 Parking

No. 10 Passenger Rail

No. 11 Peak Oil Production and Emerging Vehicle Technology

No. 12 Provision for People with Disabilities

No. 13 Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Greenways

No. 14 Quality Transport Corridors

No. 15 Road Improvement Strategy

No. 16 Road Safety

No. 17 Street Lighting

No. 18 Taxi/private Hire Vehicles

No. 19 Traffic/Network Management

No. 20 Travel Plans

No. 21 Walking



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Airport Surface Access

Introduction

The Government White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport', published by the DfT in December 2003, sets out a strategic framework for the development of airport capacity in the UK over the following 30 year period. The White Paper specifically targets the regional airports of Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) has continued to experience rapid growth in passenger numbers in recent years and remains one of the UK's fastest growing regional airports. In 2009 LJLA handled almost 5 million passengers compared to 3.4 million in 2004. The Airport published its Master Plan to 2030 in 2007 (available on www.liverpoolairport.com).

Facilities at LJLA are being enhanced to cope with the increases in activity. 2009 saw the opening of a new 157-bed hotel and multi-storey car park, and Terminal works commenced the following year to improve retail, security and baggage areas. It is forecast that LJLA will be handling 8.3 million passengers per annum in 2016 and 12.3 mppa by 2030.

Manchester Airport in 2009 handled over 18.6 million passengers using 170,474 passenger air movements. Airfreight throughput in 2009 was 103,400 tonnes with 50% transported in the holds of passenger aircraft. The airport operates with a workforce of approximately 18,000. The White Paper indicates a possible capacity of 50 million beyond 2030.

Halton is working in partnership with the airports along with other stakeholders to develop air surface access strategies in order to deliver a greater choice of more sustainable modes of transport to access the airports.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Halton is working with the regional airports in particular LJLA to deliver a sustainable Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS), designed to promote the use of sustainable transport.

Economic regeneration: The airports are major generators of the economy. The Mersey Gateway amongst other sustainable transport measures will help to facilitate economic growth, by enhancing access to the airport.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of transport, particularly in deprived areas will assist access to LJLA which is a major employer.

Health, safety and security: Assist with the provision of healthy and safe modes of transport to LJLA.

Quality of life: Assists with the provision of low emission transport and provide opportunities for employment.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of sustainable airport surface access will help the development of LJLA which in turn would provide economic growth in the LCR; it would also build upon all four of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. SuperPort, Low Carbon Economy, Knowledge Economy and Visitor Economy. Development of LJLA would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal and Employment, Learning and

Skills priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Halton assists with the provision of improved bus services to LJLA from the borough.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The sustainable ASAS will encourage the use of more healthy modes of transport to airports.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The ASAS will enable better access to LJLA for purposes of employment and leisure.

LCR wider links: The airports, in particular LJLA are a major contributor to the economic success of the LCR by supporting local employment, 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 transport assets: Halton will maintain its transport assets, in particular the SJB, to minimise delays to traffic accessing LJLA.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway and the maintenance of SJB will improve journey time reliability to LJLA.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Pursue the provision of the Mersey Gateway new crossing of the Mersey in order to ease congestion on the major road link to LJLA from Cheshire and North Wales;
- Pursue the proposal to allow bi-directional working on the Halton Curve in order to

facilitate a regular passenger service to link North Wales, Chester, Halton, LJLA via Liverpool South Parkway, Liverpool Lime Street;

- Work with LJLA and Merseyside Authorities to deliver the Eastern Access Transport Corridor (EATC) to link the A562 to the Airport;
- Support the proposals for highway capacity improvements to the Speke Boulevard corridor;
- Assist with the provision of improved bus services to LJLA from the Borough. The 82A bus service which links Halton with LJLA is part funded by the Council for Sunday services;
- Assist with the provision of the proposed C-NET 1 bus service which would pass through Halton and connect with Manchester Airport thereby restoring a now absent service;
- Investigate the provision of a shuttle bus service between Runcorn Railway Station and both LJLA and Manchester Airport;
- Develop a planning policy to presume against the provision of off site airport car parks in the Borough;
- Work in partnership with bus and train operating companies to improve existing services in terms of quality and frequency;
- Support the Western Rail Link which will improve links with Manchester Airport and Merseyside; and
- Market existing services through advertisement and highlight services in timetable booklets.



Primary Transport Strategy No. 2

Bus Strategy

Introduction

The Government's Transport White Paper, 'The Local Transport Act 2008', states that local bus services should:-

- Give local authorities the right mix of powers to improve the quality of local bus services, as proposed in "Putting Passengers First" (December 2006) following an extensive bus policy review;
- Allow for the creation of an influential new bus passenger champion to represent the interests of bus passengers;
- Give local authorities the power to review and propose their own arrangements for local transport governance to support more coherent planning and delivery of local transport;
- Update existing legal powers so that, where local areas wish to develop proposals for local road pricing schemes, they have the freedom and flexibility to do so in a way that best meets local needs - whilst ensuring schemes are consistent and interoperable.

The Local Transport Act 2008 includes provisions designed to make bus quality contracts schemes - the London-style model of bus contracts - a more realistic option for local transport authorities throughout England and Wales. Those provisions came into force, in England, on 11 January 2010.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to bus would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport. However, it

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should be noted that low bus occupancy could have a detrimental effect.

Economic regeneration: The use of buses and improved bus infrastructure would increase accessibility in particular in deprived communities allowing people to access employment more easily, by enhancing access to the airports.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of bus transport, particularly in deprived areas will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The provision of enhanced visibility around bus stops, the greater use of CCTV at transport interchanges and onboard buses, along with increased use of bus transport will help improve personal security and perceptions of crime.

Quality of life: The provision of low emission buses should help improve air quality.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of cross boundary bus services will help provide economic growth in the LCR; it would also build upon two of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy and Visitor Economy. Implementation of the bus strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal, Children and Young People, Employment, Learning and Skills and Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The Council financially supports a number of bus services which can be effective in reducing overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The provision of better bus services and

infrastructure, particularly in deprived areas, will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of better bus services and infrastructure, particularly in deprived areas, will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The provision of better bus services and infrastructure will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its bus infrastructure to ensure that bus usage is an efficient and desirable form of transport.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for buses on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider bus infrastructure enhancements across Halton.

Strategy

It is suggested that the Council adopt the following robust vision for the continued development of the local bus network within the Borough.

"Continue to improve and develop a single integrated local bus network within Halton, ensuring that all residents have good access to key facilities and benefit from a choice of high quality and safe public transport services and facilities."

The council will strive to:-

- Provide reliable services which are attractive to use;
- Ensure services are fully accessible to all members of the community;
- Provide high quality information on

passenger transport services within the Borough – provided through a variety of channels to suit the needs of the user;

- Provide safe services and infrastructure;
- Ensure services continue to be affordable to use;
- Provide a minimum level of service to communities across the network;
- Continue to provide Travel Training for vulnerable young people and adults;
- Ensure better utilisation of passenger transport provision for Halton Borough residents through the better co-ordination of different vehicle fleets;
- Provide excellent interchange opportunities across the network;
- Ensure user and stakeholder involvement on the continued development of the network;
- Give priority to the development of new improved services to enable Halton residents to access health facilities and employment, training and work based learning opportunities; and
- Make improvements to key cross boundary bus services.

Each of these commitments will be backed up by a series of passenger service quality guarantees jointly developed by Halton Council and the bus operators.

Delivering the Vision

In delivering the Vision, the Council and its partners have developed a set of strong and robust policies/service standards we expect for the network. In addition to this, Halton through the Mersey Gateway Project, commissioned 'The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy' (MGSTS). This details schemes which could be delivered through LTP3 and/or through the Mersey Gateway concession. Many of these

schemes relate to bus services and infrastructure.

Service Provision

The following service quality standards have been developed for different parts of the network, which will be divided up into: -

- Core Bus Network;
- Strategic Employment Links;
- Local Community Services; and
- Cross Boundary Services.

Core Bus Network

The Core Bus Network – will include all the main routes within the Borough linking the main town and commercial centres of Widnes, Runcorn town centre and Halton Lea with the various District Centres and other key facilities (health, education).

It is suggested that all the following minimum service levels be pursued for the Core Bus Network:-

- 'Turn up and go' frequencies of every 15 minutes (or better) between 07.00 am and 19.30 pm;
- At least 30 minute frequency Monday to Saturday evenings and Sundays;
- Guaranteed connections to Local Community Services, Strategic Employment Links and Cross Boundary services at key interchange points;
- Individual routes on the network to be clearly branded and marketed;
- All services to be operated by fully accessible low floor vehicles (operated by environmentally friendly fuels and low emission engines); and
- Reliability of services to be ensured by the continued 'roll out' of bus priority measures.

In addition as part of the MGSTS the following schemes have been identified for the core network:

- Extension of bus quality corridors;
- Improvements to Murdishaw Interchange;
- Improvements to Halton Lea South Bus Station;
- Improved passenger information in Halton Lea shopping centre;
- Improvements to Halton Hospital Interchange;
- Improvements to other stops on the Runcorn Busway Loop;
- Establishment of a bus quality partnership; and
- The implementation of a study into Green Oaks Bus Station and Widnes Town Centre Access.

Strategic Employment Links

This defines a network of services linking key communities within Halton and strategic employment sites both within the Borough and in surrounding areas.

This part of the network will also be developed to support the regeneration of key sites within the Borough.

It is intended that:-

- Services be operated to meet the main employment patterns of major employers within the Borough and those key employment sites in surrounding areas;
- All services to be operated by low floor fully accessible vehicles;
- Services will be carefully designed to provide good interchange opportunities with the Core Bus Route Network and Local Community Services; and
- Depending upon demand, these services

could be operated by a mixture of fixed route and demand responsive style services.

The network will need to encompass emerging proposals being developed for a new bus based public transport network to serve the OMEGA development in north Warrington. Part of this proposal includes a new high frequency bus service between Widnes and Runcorn with OMEGA. But this new network will take ten years to develop (in line with employment generation at the site), and therefore will be built up over a number of stages.

Local Community Services

The bus strategy should recognise the importance of providing a good network of local community services, which provide convenient, attractive and affordable links to a range of local community facilities, and interchange locations with the Core Bus Network and rail stations. By its very nature the majority of the network needs to be funded publicly by Halton Borough Council, with contributions from a range of other agencies.

Local community services typically provide access to the following key facilities:-

- Access to primary health care facilities;
- Access to key local service facilities (retail etc.);
- Specialised social/community services;
- Evening/Sunday access to social facilities.

The MGSTS has also identified a range of measures that relate to community services, these include:

- A new mobility smartcard;
- Expansion of the Neighbourhood Travel Team;
- Travelsafe;

- Coordination and marketing of community transport services; and
- Network development of bus services.

Cross Boundary Services

Given the Borough's strategic location in the heart of the Mersey Belt, it is important to develop a robust policy to develop and improve key cross boundary bus network links. This will need to include: -

- Links to Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington, Chester, St. Helens, Northwich; and
- Regional and National coach networks.

The Borough is very poorly served at present by regional and longer distance coach services. There is great potential to improve coach links to other major centres across the northwest as part of the Local Transport Plan. As a member of the Merseyside Bus Board we will continue to work with our neighbouring authorities and bus operators to maintain and improve services.



Cycling

Introduction

Cycling is a key mode of transport that can offer a sustainable transport alternative to the car and has many of the same benefits as walking, refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 21. In Halton, this it is particularly important, as the area suffers generally from high levels of deprivation. Cycling can offer a safe and affordable means of accessing key services and thereby can overcome many of the transport barriers often faced by people who don't own or have access to a car.

The Government in its White Paper on the Future of Transport: A Network for 2030, recognised the important contributions that cycling can have on reducing pollution and congestion and increasing physical activity and committed itself to encouraging more people to cycle. The recent Government publication the 'Future of Urban Transport' also makes reference to the benefits of cycling and compares England's low rate of cycling with much higher rates in other European countries.

Throughout the period of LTP1 and LTP2 substantial investment has been made to develop a network of routes within the borough with funding provided from the LTP and many other partner organisations. Footway conversions, to combined shared use footway/cycleways and cycle lanes have been installed as part of quality corridor improvements. Significant lengths of Greenway have also been constructed throughout the Borough.

Whilst the network has been developed significantly in recent years, there is still a great deal of work that needs to be undertaken to establish a fully connective cycle route network throughout the whole of the Borough. There is also much that could be done to encourage the use of cycling.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to cycle for relatively short trips would make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of cycling can provide accessibility to local employment sites, for example the rapidly developing 3MG site.

Equality of opportunity: The use of cycling, particularly in deprived areas will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The use of cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The greater use of cycling would provide a critical mass of cyclists whereby cycling on the highway would be seen as the norm and other road users would therefore have a far greater awareness of cyclists; this would enhance road safety for cyclists. Greater use of cycling on routes remote from motorised transport would also enhance the security of the individual.

Quality of life: Cycling would assist with the provision of quiet and pollution free transport.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of cross boundary cycle routes will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the cycle strategy would also have a positive impact upon

all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Halton is developing its greenway routes in order to promote and enable the greater use of cycling.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The encouragement of the use of cycling along with infrastructure enhancements, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The use of cycling, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The encouragement of the use of cycling and enhanced infrastructure, for example, greenways that connect with destinations out of the Borough will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas. Cross boundary working is a strategic aim of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This can be delivered through partnership working such as the Mid Mersey Growth Point.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its cycle infrastructure, for example, by the cutting back of vegetation on segregated routes to ensure that cycle use is desirable.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for cyclists on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider cycle infrastructure enhancements.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Construct the New Mersey Gateway to enable improvements to be made in the provision of cross Mersey cycling trips and implementation of the recommendations of the Sustainable Transport Strategy;
 - Use accessibility planning to identify and develop a network of cycle routes, both on and off road, that complement the existing network and which target routes that link residential areas with local facilities and services such as employment, educational establishments, health and welfare services, shops, public transport interchanges, recreational facilities, and routes that link communities;
 - Learn from cycling demonstration towns and cities and their successes in encouraging more people to cycle more safely, more often;
 - Continue to identify and implement cross boundary routes;
 - Continue the development of multi-user routes such as Greenways to meet cyclists' needs;
 - Consider the needs of cyclists on all new and improved highway schemes, including those proposed by developers, and where appropriate incorporate cycle improvements into these schemes;
 - Ensure that the network is formed of high quality routes to a consistent standard that the cyclists can become familiar with, taking into account the need to accommodate the local environment;
 - Identify and implement a strong identifiable signage strategy of all new and existing routes;
 - Provide cycle training for children through Road Safety Education, Training and
- Publicity;
- Ensure that all cycle tracks are maintained, inspected and cleaned on a regular basis to ensure that any debris, which would discourage cyclists, is removed, e.g., glass.
 - Implement a programme of high quality long and short stay cycle parking facilities in town centres, at public transport interchanges and at other appropriate public locations;
 - Ensure through the planning application process that all development sites both residential and commercial, have appropriate levels of cycle parking provision in accordance with the UDP and LDF;
 - Provide the opportunity for liaison with all relevant parties on the development and promotion of all cycle activities and encourage the establishment of bicycle user groups;
 - Promote and encourage cycling through the development of Commuter and School Travel Plans. Promote and publicise cycling as a sustainable and healthy alternative to the private car;
 - Support, promote and publicise campaigns and other strategies (e.g., National Bike Week, Green Transport initiatives) to encourage more people to cycle;
 - Work in partnership with other organisations in order to promote cycling and develop the cycle route network; and
 - Work in partnership with the Police to ensure effective enforcement to protect cyclists and cycling facilities.



Primary Transport Strategy No. 4

Demand Management

Introduction

Demand management provides an active means to control demand for travel and thereby reduce congestion. In addition, the control of demand for travel has the benefits of reducing air pollution and the production of greenhouse gases resulting from a reduction in unnecessary trips.

Demand management can be implemented in a number of ways, for example;

- Limiting the duration of stay for car parking, particularly in town centre areas, both on and off street;
- Charging for car parking;
- Limiting road space, in particular allocating existing all purpose road space to bus and cycle lanes;
- Road user charging, for example, the charging of tolls as proposed as part of the Mersey Gateway Project; and
- Smarter choice measures and incentives, and also through forward planning

Where demand management is put in place there needs to be an enhancement of provision for other sustainable modes of transport.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The implementation of road user charging for both the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and the SJB would be a means of controlling motorised vehicle use. Car parking management in town centres would also encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes.



Economic regeneration: Income raised through Mersey Gateway would help fund sustainable transport infrastructure that will encourage economic growth.

Equality of opportunity: Income raised through Mersey Gateway would help fund sustainable transport infrastructure which would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: Less car dominated travel will encourage healthy modes of travel along with greater road and personal safety.

Quality of life: Road user charging as part of the Mersey Gateway proposals will ensure that traffic growth can be controlled. Also less car dominated travel will create a more pleasant environment.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The reduction of congestion will help provide economic growth in the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the demand management strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The use of tolling as part of the Mersey Gateway Project will help to regulate possible growth in traffic.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The encouragement of non car modes such as walking and cycling will promote more healthy lifestyles

Access to employment, services and social activities: Income raised through Mersey Gateway would help fund sustainable transport infrastructure that would enhance accessibility in general.

LCR wider links: Road user charging for Mersey Gateway could be operated in a complementary manner with the Mersey Tunnels.

Maintain transport assets: The Mersey Gateway Project will be largely funded through tolls charged by the concessionaire. The concessionaire will be responsible for the maintenance of the Mersey Gateway

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will be largely financed through the charging of tolls.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Deliver the parking strategy, refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 9;
- Implement the road user charging for the new Mersey bridge and the existing SJB as part of the Mersey Gateway Project;
- Implement a road user charging policy for Mersey Gateway in a complementary manner with the Mersey Tunnels; and
- Ensure that where private car use is managed there are suitable sustainable modes of travel available.



Development Control Strategy

Introduction

The synchronisation of transport policies and land use planning is one of the key measures available to minimise the need to travel and to encourage travel by more sustainable modes.

Halton's current planning framework is set out in the saved policies from the Halton UDP, adopted in April 2005, which was prepared in conjunction with LTPI. The UDP set out the spatial priorities for new development across the Borough, sought to ensure accessibility to new development including the use of transport assessments / travel plans and safeguarded land for key transport schemes.

The overarching spatial strategy focused on promoting urban regeneration supported by sustainable urban extensions at Upton Rocks (Widnes) and Sandymoor / Runcorn East. The former has largely been delivered, whilst Runcorn East is being progressed as a mixed use development with new housing, office and science based employment together with new sustainable transport infrastructure.

The UDP also included proposals for the rail linked freight park at Ditton currently being developed as the Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) which will allow the transfer of long distance freight from road to rail.

The UDP policies will be replaced by the new Local Development Framework (LDF), with the Core Strategy document providing the strategic overview to guide development across the Borough in the period to 2026. Development of the Core Strategy and the LTP3 are being progressed in tandem to ensure ongoing policy co-ordination.



Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Development control will play a vital role in creating sustainable communities whereby the need to travel is reduced and where travel can be undertaken by more sustainable modes.

Economic regeneration: Development control will play a vital role in creating sustainable economic growth where travel to new developments can be made by sustainable modes.

Equality of opportunity: New developments that allow ready access to employment and services will benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: New developments that encourage the use of sustainable travel modes particularly, walking and cycling will encourage healthier lifestyles. New housing developments will be designed to have self-enforcing low speed limits to enhance road safety. The greater presence of people in non-car dominated developments will also enhance security for the individual.

Quality of life: Developments which are designed to encourage the use of walking and cycling will be better in terms of noise and air quality. The lack of dominance of the car will also make them a far more pleasant environment.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of major development schemes such as 3MG, Widnes Waterfront, Daresbury developments

and housing growth points help provide economic growth in the LCR; they also build upon three of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. SuperPort, Low Carbon Economy and Knowledge Economy. Implementation of a sustainable development strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Development control policies will play an important role in encouraging travel by sustainable modes.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The incorporation of facilities in developments to encourage use of cycling will have significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health.

Access to employment, services and social activities: New developments will be designed to allow ready access to employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: Developments will be located to provide easy access to transport hubs in order to link with the wider LCR, including St. Helens and Warrington through the Mid Mersey Growth Point.

Maintain transport assets: Developments will be designed to ensure easy and minimal maintenance of the transport infrastructure provided as part of them.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy will ensure sustainable transport access.

Strategy

In order for developments to be accessible to all,

be safe and attractive, have minimal impact on congestion, and encourage the use of less polluting forms of transport, which are beneficial to health, developers need to be given clear guidance regarding the Council's expectations.

Therefore, the Council will strive to:

- Produce a design guide in cooperation with neighbouring authorities to reflect the principles set out in 'Manual for Streets' and the forthcoming Manual for Streets 2, which applies the principles locally. It should be noted that there are certain elements of Manual for Streets (e.g. sightlines) where we need to apply standards in a different way to those directly quoted. This may be later adopted as an SPD and will help to deliver safe and attractive neighbourhoods which are not dominated by cars;
 - Produce a short summary document outlining what is expected of developers when producing a travel plan, and how these will be secured through conditions or agreements, including residential travel plans for high density developments and speculative developments – this will be adopted as part of the SPD and will help to secure quality travel plans for the most appropriate developments; and
 - Incorporate the Merseyside SPD on accessibility requirements, into guidance for this particular element of transport assessments (also reflecting DfT's 'Guidance on Transport Assessments'). This is to ensure that all new developments are accessible to all, and developers are clear about the detail required of a transport assessment for a particular development, and make use of the Council's accessibility planning software, where appropriate.
- Highway and community safety is a primary

objective of transportation development control. As per the UDP the Council will:

- Ensure that appropriate traffic management is included within and adjoining developments to avoid danger and encourage walking, cycling and improve the quality of local neighbourhoods; and
- Take the opportunity to influence community safety, using appropriate design of infrastructure.

Partnerships have been shown to maximise the effectiveness of expertise and resources, and deliver higher quality developments than the Council acting alone with a developer. For example, best practice for new build home zone type developments have been developed with the Homes and Communities Agency (formerly English Partnerships). Therefore, the Council will:

- Continue to develop partnerships with appropriate organisations such as, Homes and Communities Agency and new partnerships will be welcomed.

Travel plans are recognised as playing a major role in modal shift and improving accessibility, but limited resources can limit the quality and effectiveness of plans.

Therefore, the Council will strive to:

- Secure travel plans relating to developments, through planning conditions, with conditions for specific measures where appropriate, along with a Section 106 agreement with agreed outcomes for larger developments requiring an agreement for other issues.
- Seek Section 106 contributions for the monitoring of travel plans.
- Concentrate travel plan resources on

developments where there are congestion problems or likely problems as a result of the development, and where the development of travel plans will have maximum impact (e.g. sites with high numbers of employees).

- Secure residential travel plans where appropriate (e.g. high densities/accessible locations).

To ensure as far as possible the safety of newly adopted highways and alterations to existing highways, the Council will strive to:

- Insist that all developers produce a series of independent Road Safety Audits for new highways or alterations to existing highways.

Parking availability can have a major influence on modal choice and assist with demand management, but needs to be carefully balanced with the availability of alternative forms of access, and resulting highway safety issues. Therefore, the Council will:

- Continue to impose maximum parking standards;
- Accept lower parking levels in more accessible locations, related to the level of accessibility resulting from the transport assessment (and possibly SPD assessment);
- Encourage shared parking between uses at different times of the day;
- Implement parking standards for those with disabilities;
- Consider a policy on electric vehicle charging points;
- Accept lower parking levels where public transport is improved through a Section 106 agreement and it can be proven that this will reduce parking demand; and
- Aim to ensure that on street parking relating to a development does not pose a hazard to highway safety.

Infrastructure capacity is a problem at certain locations in the Borough, and constantly expecting developers to build extra capacity into the network is not always a sustainable option.

Therefore:

- Capacity improvements will continue to be sought through Section 106 planning agreements where appropriate, to cater for traffic movements associated with major developments
- This approach will be balanced with demand management, and more investment through planning agreements in improved accessibility by healthier and less polluting modes e.g. public transport, cycling, public transport facilities and greenways
- Developers will be encouraged to make better use of existing infrastructure.

Added value can be gained from investment in infrastructure by including requirements of a number of developments, including those outside the Borough, in a single improvement.

Therefore:

- A wider “joined up” view will be taken where possible, with a single improvement developed to include the needs of a number of developments.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 6

Freight Distribution

Introduction

This freight strategy has been informed by the Department for Transport's 'guidance on Local Transport Plans' 2009 and the DfT's 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS): The Logistics Perspective' 2008.

It is recognised that freight distribution lies predominately within the private sector, but a local authority can influence the provision of effective freight movement through highway and planning powers and also through freight quality partnerships. To ensure that the freight strategy best serves the needs of both the freight industry and local communities, consultation has taken place with local authorities, representatives of the freight and logistics industry through the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership, and the Freight Working Group.

The movement of goods is vitally important in supporting the economic success of Halton and the Liverpool City Region. In the Liverpool City Region the Port of Liverpool, the airport and associated infrastructure, contributes 34,000 jobs and £1.1 billion of the GVA every year.

The strategy has pursued the dual theme of freight's importance to the economy, and the need to reduce the environmental and social costs of freight: noise, congestion, air pollution, accidents and carbon emissions as highlighted within 'DaSTS: The Logistics Perspective'. Provided that freight distribution facilities are suitably sited then this industry provides an economic opportunity rather than an environmental problem.

To inform Halton's first LTP, Halton and the Merseyside Authorities commissioned the

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Merseyside Freight Study in order to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding freight. LTP2 updated and built upon this as the initial freight strategies began to be implemented. The freight strategy for LTP3 has again built on past success, for example the developing Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG), by working closely with Merseyside.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Halton is working with Merseyside through the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership (MHFQP) to encourage the use of efficient and cleaner movement of freight; this can also be supplemented through development control measures. Schemes such as 3MG will also encourage a modal shift of road freight onto rail.

Economic regeneration: Freight is a significant contributor to the economy. The continued development of the 3MG site and proposed port of Weston will assist greatly in enhancing Halton's economy.

Equality of opportunity: The 3MG development will provide major job opportunities, with a significant proportion 'entry level' jobs'. The proposed Port of Weston will also provide further employment opportunities.

Health, safety and security: Halton with Merseyside is investigating possible secure sites with adequate overnight facilities for HGV parking.

Quality of life: The MHFQP along with

development control measures will encourage the provision of low emission transport and discourage inappropriate parking of HGVs. The modal shift from road to rail will also provide environmental benefits.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of freight related development schemes such as the expansion of 3MG and the proposed Port of Weston will serve and help provide economic growth in the LCR; they also build upon three of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. SuperPort, Low Carbon Economy and Knowledge Economy. The SuperPort concept also contains the Mersey Gateway as supportive transport infrastructure. Implementation of a sustainable development strategy would also have a major positive impact upon the Urban Renewal and Employment, Learning and Skills priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The 3MG development will enable a shift from road to rail which will help to reduce carbon emissions. Development control measures can also assist in providing the more efficient movement of freight.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Freight distribution is essential for all our daily needs, however through the use of development control conditions and other measures such as MHFQP the negative impacts of freight can be minimised.

Access to employment, services and social activities: In new freight related developments, for example, 3MG, Halton will ensure that appropriate measures are in place for people to access employment.

LCR wider links: It is recognised that freight distribution is of local, regional, national and international significance. Halton therefore, is working with Merseyside through the MHFQP to ensure these links. The 3MG and Weston Point Docks sites form part of the 'Superport' proposals.

Maintain transport assets: HGVs are the most significant contributor to deterioration of carriageways, Halton will seek to ensure that carriageways are maintained to a level that can accommodate HGV movements.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The SJB has substandard width lanes making it undesirable for HGV movements. The provision of the Mersey Gateway is critical to ensuring safe and reliable movement of road freight across the Mersey.

Strategy

It is Halton Borough Council's overriding objective on freight to assist economic regeneration with minimal environmental cost. To achieve this, the following strategy is proposed:

- The provision of the Mersey Gateway Project;
- Continue with the implementation of 3MG;
- Progress the proposals for the Mersey Gateway Port, (formally known as the Port of Weston);
- Priority will be given to develop brown field sites for freight distribution;
- Freight distribution sites to be located next to rail linkages and docks where possible, and in all cases to be accessed by suitable roads;
- To implement road and junction improvements to assist HGV movements

where technically feasible and where funding permits;

- To pursue the scheme to reinstate the Halton Curve.
- To ensure that the site traffic generated from developments involving modal change (road to rail/water) has a minimal environmental impact;
- To liaise with the Highways Agency to assist with the implementation of motorway junction improvements and motorway signing;
- To promote and assist in the upgrading of existing railway lines and safeguard disused railway lines for possible future use;
- To promote the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnerships to the commercial sector;
- To enhance HGV routing and signing; and
- The provision for overnight HGV parking in appropriate locations; and
- To continue to work with our partners and neighbouring authorities in developing a freight strategy that meets both national and local transport goals.

Intelligent Transport Systems and Traffic Management

Introduction

This area of highway infrastructure covers the following main topics:

- Road signing;
- Traffic signals;
- Carriageway markings;
- Variable message signing;
- Journey time monitoring systems; and
- Real time bus passenger information.

Signs and road markings are a visual means of conveying information to the driver relating to the highway on which they are travelling, and therefore should promote safe and efficient use of the highway.

Traffic signals provide a safe and efficient means of managing opposing traffic movements at junctions. They do this by sharing time between the various road users including pedestrians and cyclists. Signal controlled junctions are most common where traffic flows are relatively high and space is limited and a 'space share' junction such as a roundabout cannot be provided. They are also useful to enhance capacity and to regulate queues on roundabout junctions. Traffic signals also provide for pedestrian, cyclist and even equestrian movements either at stand alone crossing points or as a pedestrian stage for example, in a signal controlled junction. There are a total of 83 traffic signal installations (including pedestrian crossings) in Halton.

Whilst conventional road signs are effective in normal traffic flow conditions they are ineffective in providing useful information in the event of incidents and delays. Variable message signs (VMS) can give current information about prevailing highway conditions and give drivers advice on an appropriate course of action. The most congested location in Halton is the Silver



Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and a system of VMS has been installed on the approaches to the SJB and at key locations in the Borough. Currently there are ten signs installed and these are used to provide information to drivers of works on the SJB plus other works/incidents in the area.

A Journey Time Monitoring System (JTMS) has been installed using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. Initially, six cameras were installed on either side of the Silver Jubilee Bridge to monitor journey times across the bridge. The JTMS links through the common database (Comet) to allow journey time data to be displayed on the website (using our graphical display system 'eMerge') and stored for analysis of changes in journey times. Cheshire Police have installed similar cameras in the area and the system is being developed to allow data to be shared between the two systems. The technical issues of data transfer have been agreed and it is hoped the system will be operational soon. The journey time data will then be published to the Council's website to provide guidance on current delays on the network. Consideration is also being given to displaying journey times on the VMS.

The Council has implemented Real Time Bus Passenger Information, in partnership with Arriva, Halton Transport and Merseytravel (which is the Integrated Transport Authority for Merseyside). 'State of the art' real time displays have been installed at key bus stops and interchanges along the route of the main bus service linking Hough Green to Widnes and Runcorn town centres. The system, with the help of satellite technology, informs passengers waiting at bus stops of the actual time of arrival of the next service. On board bus displays also inform passengers of the name of the next stop along with any expected delays to the service.

Traffic management covers the traditional methods of controlling traffic, such as fixed signs and carriageway markings, and Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) covers the use of technology to control traffic, such as traffic signals, Variable Message Signs (VMS) and automated warning systems.

All new installations are now Extra Low Voltage (ELV) to reduce energy costs and provide a safer installation. This now includes the use of LED signal heads which are also being installed at existing sites to reduce energy and maintenance costs. The latest design of signal head aspect is also being used to ensure maximum conspicuity. The equipment on each site is reviewed annually as part of the annual inspection process. When an installation is refurbished the opportunity is taken to review the facilities and add pedestrian crossing and/or bus priority facilities where appropriate. Improvements to pedestrian crossings include upgrading to Puffin or Toucan type control, which provides better facilities for pedestrians/cyclists and reduces delays to drivers. The use of MOVA is now considered for all junctions, including refurbishments, and currently five intersections include this facility to reduce delays and congestion. In most areas the traffic signals are too far apart to gain any benefit from linking them together, but the use of UTM compatible equipment will allow this to be considered in the future.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The use of intelligent transport systems (ITS) can reduce unnecessary journeys by providing information on road conditions such as on the SJB or on availability of

parking. The use of MOVA at traffic signal control junctions, will assist in reducing queues and delays, and hence pollution.

Economic regeneration: Improved efficiency of the road network will assist with reducing delays and give more predictable journey times which will allow businesses to operate more efficiently.

Equality of opportunity: A more efficient transport system is beneficial to all users and non users.

Health, safety and security: ITS can help reduce congestion and hence vehicle emissions; it can also provide advance warnings of incidents and thereby contribute to road safety.

Quality of life: Improved efficiency of the road network will benefit users and non users.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: Halton's system of variable message signs is compatible with systems installed by Liverpool City and Wirral Councils, discussions are taking place to improve the supply of information in the LCR; they also build upon two of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy and Visitor Economy. Implementation of effective ITS and Signing would also have a positive impact upon A Safer Halton priority of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The use of a range of ITS in Halton can reduce congestion and improve efficiency of the transport system; this in turn will reduce carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: ITS can help reduce vehicle emissions and can contribute to a less stressful journey. RTPI can also encourage the use of public transport.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Improved efficiency of the road network will improve access in general.

LCR wider links: Halton's ITS can link with those of the Highways Agency, Police authorities,

Merseyside authorities and the wider north west region.

Maintain transport assets: ITS is effective as a traffic management measure during maintenance works and can also give advance warning of such works.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: ITS is effective as a traffic management measure during maintenance works on the SJB and can also give advance warning of such works.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Review signs and markings to ensure they are applicable and necessary, including removing redundant street furniture to improve the street scene and reduce clutter;
- Monitor journey times to identify trends and appropriate improvements and/or adjust to strategies for routing traffic;
- Ensure ITS is used to assist in fulfilling the Network Management Duty, as required by the traffic Management Act;
- Expand the ITS to maximise benefits if the Mersey Gateway is constructed and in the short term review the systems to maximise capacity;
- Review existing traffic signal installations to determine; whether they are still needed in order to reduce energy consumption and unnecessary delays;
- Monitor improvements in traffic signal control and VMS technologies and establish the viability of using them on Halton's highways;
- Review the need for and viability of introducing a car park guidance system; and
- Adopt a flexible and innovative approach to provide signing that aids economic regeneration (e.g. through sponsorship signing) or provides public information.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 8

Maintenance of Transport Assets

Introduction

This strategy looks at the maintenance of the road, bridge and footpath networks within the Borough.

A well-maintained and managed highway network contributes to the delivery of the Council's main aims, particularly those pertaining to transportation policies. It is, therefore, vital to produce and adopt a comprehensive and effective maintenance strategy for the highway network throughout the Borough.

The highway network supports and encourages a thriving economy by enabling the flow of people, goods and access to services. It also promotes safer communities through safer conditions for drivers and pedestrians and through effective street lighting to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Within Halton, there are good quality dual carriageway road links with motorways and with Warrington, Liverpool & Manchester. The Borough also provides a link between the M62, which runs to the north of the Borough and the M56 to the south. This route includes the Silver Jubilee Bridge crossing of the Mersey.

The key statistics of the highway network are as follows:

- Length of principal roads maintained: 49km
- Length of non –principal classified roads maintained: 79km
- Length of other unclassified roads maintained: 432km
- Length of independent footpaths maintained: 226km
- Length of Runcorn Busway: 17km
- Number of highway bridges: 179 (including gantries)"
- Number of highway retaining walls: 59



Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Roadworks, especially on the SJB will be planned in order to minimise congestion and hence carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The effective maintenance of the transport network will assist with connectivity to commerce and industry.

Equality of opportunity: An effective, well maintained transport system would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: Roadworks will be implemented in a safe manner. Well maintained roads can reduce casualties and improve network resilience especially during severe weather.

Quality of life: A well maintained effective transport system is beneficial to all users.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The maintenance of Halton's transport infrastructure in particular the SJB will help sustain economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of effective maintenance would also have a positive impact upon A Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Roadworks in Halton, especially on the SJB will be planned in order to minimise congestion and hence carbon emissions. The recycling of materials can also cut overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing:

Roadworks will be carried out to minimise noise and dust. Footways and cycleways will be maintained to encourage more walking and cycling and reduce tripping incidents.

Access to employment, services and social activities:

An effective, well maintained transport system would allow access for all purposes.

LCR wider links: Maintenance will be planned to minimise disruption on the wider network.

Maintain transport assets: The maintenance strategy contained in this section details how this will be carried out.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The SJB will be maintained in line with the SJB major maintenance scheme for which funding has been granted for a five year period starting in 2011/12. A decision on the powers and funding for Mersey Gateway is awaited from DfT.

Strategy

In order to deliver its objectives and priorities, the Council will strive to:

- Co-ordinate and manage roads and bridge works to minimise delays, congestion and pollution;
- Continue to undertake inspection of road and footways to identify defects and programme repairs;
- Develop current maintenance programmes taking into account casualty data to give priority to works that contribute towards casualty reduction;
- Continue to take appropriate enforcement action to remove illegal obstructions to the highway;
- Continue to take appropriate enforcement

- action in regards to illegal access crossings;
- Continue to ensure that maintenance works are implemented to maximise efficiency and minimise disruption to the public;
- Implement a comprehensive programme of maintenance schemes over the period of the plan to ensure that the strategic routes within the Borough can operate safely and efficiently, taking into account the need to minimise disruption to highway users;
- Ensure that opportunities are taken when implementing maintenance schemes to improve facilities for people with disabilities and the mobility impaired;
- Develop performance indicator targets to monitor the effectiveness of the highway maintenance programmes;
- Ensure that winter maintenance continues to be undertaken in order that main roads and footpaths are kept open and safe to use during the winter period;
- Develop the role of the Traffic Manager to co-ordinate and manage works on the highway to ensure the minimum of delay to road users;
- Continue to monitor and repair trip hazards and loose flags on the footway network;
- Ensure that targets for emergency repairs and replacement of damaged street furniture are met;
- Give particular attention to the Runcorn Expressway network, which although currently is in good condition, will become a maintenance liability in future due to the fact that all the roads within the network were constructed at the same time;
- Utilise surveys, records and maintenance plans at strategic locations, and in particular, culverts, watercourses, and flood attenuation tanks in order to reduce the risk of flooding;
- Continue to seek funding through Local Safety Schemes and set in place programmes for erection of safety fencing to the central reserve of the Runcorn Expressway that are not currently protected;
- Incorporate maintenance schemes with Quality Corridor works which combine measures to improve walking, cycling, bus infrastructure, safe routes to school and safety improvements;
- Utilise the output from the Transport Asset Management Plan to ensure that the maximum effect can be achieved through the careful use of funding;
- Through the data collected and processed in UKPMS software identify additional areas of the highway network that are substandard and seek sufficient funding to upgrade to current standards.
- Identify scheme priorities to both meet our Key Performance Indicators and achieve a level of targeted maintenance that produces safer highways and safeguards the highway assets.
- Continue to apply the CSS developed "Bridge Condition Indicator" methodology as a Performance Indicator means of effectively identifying, prioritising and implementing a programme of structural maintenance on the other highway structures in the Borough.
- Continue to apply the principles of the Code of Practice for the Management of Highway Structures.
- Work in partnership with others to identify any savings associated with procurement or supply chain management;
- Improve the supply and analysis of data relating to the condition of the highway network assets, and to identify priorities;
- Implement the Highways, Transportation and Logistics Service Plan, and to maintain highways to ensure that they provide an

- effective system for transport;
- Upgrade existing blocked out beam safety fencing identified in existing surveys as being below current standards;
- Continue to liaise with Network Rail to identify locations of “Road on Rail Incursion” sites and develop the programme for protective measures;
- Identify any additional locations of “Road on Road incursion” sites, mainly on the Runcorn Expressway, and make provision for the provision of appropriate remedies;
- Identify, prioritise and implement carriageway schemes to reduce road casualties associated with poor skid resistance of the surface course;
- Identify, prioritise, design, programme and implement repairs to failing roads to both improve safety and prolong the “life” of carriageways;
- Identify “hot-spots” of footway and footpath claims against the authority due to tripping and use the data to develop programmes of work;
- Identify, prioritise, design, programme and implement repairs to failing footways, footpaths and cycle ways to both improve safety and prolong the “life” of footways, footpaths and cycle ways;
- Continue regular surveys and maintenance to highway drainage of pipes, culverts, watercourses, and flood attenuation systems to develop drainage and flood defence programmes of work;
- Further improve co-operation with other agencies, e.g. United Utilities and the Environment Agency or with riparian owners to plan, programme and implement flood alleviation schemes;
- Time works to minimise traffic disruption generally and for specific local events;
- Give special consideration when maintaining highways in conservation areas and in locations close to historic structure;
- Make use of recycled materials where appropriate;
- Co-ordinate works to minimise the impact on the environment, and
- Where appropriate make use of materials to reduce traffic noise.



Primary Transport Strategy No. 9

Network Management

Introduction

One of the biggest causes of frustration for the travelling public is congestion and the resulting delays on the highway network. To reduce these problems the Authority takes the need for Network Management seriously and is striving to reduce delays and improve the information available to the travelling public, to help them make informed choices before and during their journeys.

Since the implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Borough has actively implemented the requirements of the Act, in particular in relation to Network Management and liaising with neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations. The efficient management of the highway network is essential to ensure the safe and convenient movement of traffic for all road users. The Council is producing a Network Management Plan to detail its plans for co-ordinating and controlling roadworks and planning for dealing with incidents on the highway network, strong winds and closures.

A simple system has been the installation of monitoring cameras on the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge. The images from these cameras are available through the Council's website and show traffic conditions at any particular time. These allow drivers to view them and then make a decision about their journey before embarking upon it, especially if they are travelling from outside the Borough, when there are more options to find alternative routes.

In order to implement these systems, the Borough is making use of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to make the most effective use of



the highway network within Halton. The most visible element of ITS is the variable message signs (VMS) system which provides real time information to drivers and warns of delays and/or proposed lane closures on the Silver Jubilee Bridge and other areas of the network. This system is compatible with the systems installed by Liverpool City and Wirral Borough Councils, with whom discussions are taking place to share resources. Liaison also takes place with the National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) with whom we have a Local Operating Agreement, to utilise the VMS on the motorway network, when possible.

The messages displayed on the VMS and other travel information such as planned roadworks is now available on the Local traffic report maps on the website. This also includes information from other providers of travel information, such as the railway stations and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

Monitoring systems are in place to automatically relay to the VMS system warnings for motorists of strong winds and if pre-determined wind speeds are reached then messages are displayed to warn vulnerable vehicles to find alternative routes. Also being investigated are links to enable information to be displayed about delays by linking to the Journey Time Monitoring System (JTMS). The JTMS is planned to link with the Cheshire Police Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, to enable more journey times to be included in the system.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The use of variable message signs (VMS), especially on the SJB will help reduce congestion and hence carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The effective management of the transport network will assist with connectivity to commerce and industry and the movement of employees, visitors and freight.

Equality of opportunity: An effective, well managed transport system would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: The use of VMS and other information systems will allow safer journeys as these will be able to warn of incidents in advance.

Quality of life: A well managed, effective transport system is beneficial to all users. Effective network management can reduce delays, improve journey time reliability and ensure people reach home when expected.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: By providing quality information to inform members of the public the potential issues of congestion / road maintenance will help provide more reliable journey times that will assist with economic growth in the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The use of VMS, especially on the SJB will minimise congestion and hence carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing:

Traffic will be managed to reduce emissions. Effective network management can improve journey time reliability and provide slightly greater confidence in the use of electric or hybrid vehicles.

Access to employment, services and social activities: An effective, well managed transport system would allow access for all purposes. In particular the use of VMS and journey time information will allow people to plan their journeys more effectively.

LCR wider links: Management of maintenance activities will be planned to minimise disruption on the wider network. Also the use of VMS and journey time information will allow people to plan their journeys more effectively.

Maintain transport assets: Effective network management will allow maintenance to be carried out with minimal disruption.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The use of VMS and journey time information will allow people to plan their journeys more effectively, particularly when crossing the SJB.

Strategy

The approach to Network Management proposed for the future will involve four specific areas.

1. Keeping the TAMP up to date will clearly identify the resources required to keep the network in an efficient and serviceable condition
2. The creation and maintenance of a Network Management Plan to clearly identify, measure and monitor key

congestion data and set performance targets.

3. The continuation of development of links with adjacent authorities and organisations that influence or are affected by the changes in the pattern of traffic flow.
4. The dissemination of traffic management data to the Public will continue to be developed and expanded. The use of Variable Message Signing will be added to and enhanced in conjunction with the National and Regional Traffic Control Centres and neighbouring local authorities.



Parking

Introduction

This Council has to date operated a free and uncontrolled car parking policy in support of its over-riding economic regeneration objective. This has been seen as a vital contribution to attracting inward investment, maintaining employment levels and helping to ensure the viability and competitiveness of its retail centres.

Car parking studies had been carried for the first LTP in 2000 and these indicated that whilst there was not a significant parking problem, there was potential to manage car parking to optimise economic regeneration. The most significant issue for further consideration was the possible need to develop a parking management strategy for Runcorn Town Centre.

To date there remains an absence of parking management in Runcorn Town Centre but there is still an issue with long stay parking in the central and surrounding residential areas.

During 2008, consultants Mott MacDonald (MM) completed assessments of on and off street parking in Runcorn Town Centre, Widnes town centre and Halton Lea, with a view to recommending a strategy for managing parking across the Borough.

In relation to Widnes, MM reported that "According to the parking surveys undertaken in Widnes town centre, there appears to be sufficient capacity overall to meet present demand at most times. However, within that context, there are also areas which could be addressed."

Other problems noted from the MM survey were that car park users were least satisfied with car park security, quality and cleanliness, and

there was a lack of disabled spaces. In relation to Halton Lea, MM reported that the Asda car park regularly operated at or over capacity with the Trident car park at about 80% but the multi-store car parks were at no more than 50% much of the time. Again the main problem was long-stay parking in prime areas.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Car parking management would encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes.

Economic regeneration: The provision of free car parking can contribute to assist with the regeneration of the town centres. Experience has shown that less car dominated town centres can encourage the economic vibrancy of the centre.

Equality of opportunity: Stricter parking controls may encourage more use of sustainable transport modes which would be beneficial to all.

Health, safety and security: Less car dominated town centres will encourage healthy modes of travel along with greater road and personal safety. Also control of inconsiderate parking could improve quality of life in residential areas. Security of car parks could be enhanced through a possible parking partnership.

Quality of life: Less car dominated town centres will create a more pleasant environment. Also control of inconsiderate parking could improve

quality of life in residential areas. Parking controls can improve access for short stay trips.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The management of parking will help tackle congestion and encourage more sustainable transport in the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the parking strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Healthy Halton and Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Car parking management would encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Less car dominated town centres and residential areas will create a more pleasant environment.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The management of car parking could allow better access to services in town centres for people visiting on a short stay basis.

LCR wider links: The management of parking will be considered in line with neighbouring authorities.

Maintain transport assets: Any possible income raised through parking charges could help finance car park management and infrastructure.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Any car park management measures should be applied on a proportional basis so as not to encourage additional cross river journeys.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Review the findings of the consultant's report on the feasibility of applying for Civil Parking Enforcement Powers and determine the most appropriate way forward;
- Develop a Parking Partnership with all private car park operators that will review and monitor the impact of the emerging regeneration of the town centres on the demand for and provision of car parking;
- The Partnership will consider the management of car parks including the possibility of the introduction of limiting duration of stay in town centres areas and/or car parking charging;
- Continue to monitor the levels of on street parking within the Borough in terms of congestion and road safety and introduce parking restrictions as necessary and appropriate;
- Review all existing traffic regulation orders and amend or revoke as necessary;
- Continue to impose maximum parking standards on new developments as appropriate;
- Continue to require 10% of all parking spaces to be accessible for disabled parking and half of these to be marked as such on new developments, as appropriate;
- Continue to require cycle parking at a minimum level of 10% of the 'actual parking standard' on all new developments;
- Continue to ensure that motorcycle spaces are provided at all new developments at a level of 4% of the 'actual parking standard' as appropriate;
- Review parking standards as necessary through the LDF;
- Accept lower car parking levels in more accessible locations, related to the level of accessibility resulting from a transport assessment;
- Encourage shared parking between uses at different times of the day;
- Accept lower car parking levels where public transport is improved through a Section 106 agreement and it can be proven that this will reduce parking demand;
- Aim to ensure that on street parking relating to a development does not pose a hazard to highway safety; and
- Continue to review the provision of taxi ranks to address changing demands.

Passenger Rail

Introduction

The use of passenger rail services has seen substantial growth over the last ten years and as a result much of the rail network is at or approaching capacity. Whilst Halton has no direct control over passenger rail services and rail infrastructure it can work in partnership with Network Rail, the Train Operating companies, other local authorities and rail interest groups to deliver station improvements, the upgrade of existing railway lines and possibly new stations.

Halton has a fairly extensive rail network with the following passenger rail lines passing through the Borough:

- Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline, passing through Runcorn and South West Widnes;
- West Coast Mainline (to Warrington), but with no stations in the Borough;
- North Wales, Chester, Warrington, Manchester Line, passing through East Runcorn, and
- Transpennine Line, passing through North Widnes.

In addition to these lines there is a link of single track between the Chester-Manchester Line and Liverpool Branch of the WCML known as the Halton Curve.

There are currently four operational stations in the Borough these comprise:

- Hough Green on the Transpennine Line;
- Widnes (Farnworth), on the Transpennine Line;
- Runcorn, on the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline; and
- Runcorn East, on the Chester to Manchester Line.



The rail network in Halton provides good links to places outside the Borough but the low number of local stations means that the network serves limited useful purpose for trips within the Borough, with no provision for cross river journeys.

Generally the facilities at the stations are basic and often with a run down appearance. Apart from Runcorn Station, the stations tend to have a remote feel to them, particularly the car parks and station forecourts. Access for people with disabilities is generally possible but often indirect.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: In terms of passenger kilometres rail has less carbon emissions than the private car. A modal shift from car to rail would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Economic regeneration: Rail has the advantage of ease of direct access to large commercial centres without problems of road congestion.

Equality of opportunity: An effective railway network is beneficial to all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: In terms of injury accidents per kilometre travelled, rail travel is safer than road transport.

Quality of life: A modal shift from car to rail would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport. Where rail electrification is used there would be zero emissions at the point of delivery.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The enhancement of rail services will help provide economic growth in the LCR; it would also build upon three of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy, Knowledge Economy (as employees in this sector tend to travel further to work) and Visitor Economy. Implementation of the rail strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal, Employment, Learning and Skills priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Low carbon transport: Through its station and station access improvements, Halton is encouraging a modal shift from car to rail which would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of rail travel will often involve the greater use of walking and sometimes cycling as part of the overall journey. The use of rail travel would also play a part in reducing pollutants from transport.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of better rail services and infrastructure, would allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The provision of better rail services and infrastructure would allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its transport infrastructure to ensure that rail usage is an efficient and desirable form of transport.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The reinstatement of the Halton Curve to bi-directional working would allow the provision of a new cross Mersey passenger rail service connecting North Wales, Chester, Frodsham, Runcorn and Liverpool Lime Street.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Work with the Train Operating Companies (TOC's) to improve existing train services through increased and more regular frequency;
- Work with Merseytravel and seek extension of the Merseyrail Electrics service from Hunts Cross to Hough Green
- Work with Network Rail and the TOC's to implement programme of station improvements;
- Discuss with Merseytravel the extension of their TRIO ticketing system to all stations within the Borough;
- Work with Merseytravel and the TOC'S to improve car parking facilities at Widnes and Hough Green Stations;
- Provide road improvements to access Widnes station using developer Section 106 funding;
- Pursue the opening of the Halton Curve to a bi-directional service between Liverpool-Runcorn-Chester-North Wales;
- Pursue the provision of new rail stations at Beechwood (on the Halton Curve), Upton Rocks and Barrows Green;
- Safeguard land for possible new stations and access to them at Daresbury, Widnes South and Ditton;
- Remove the protection against development of station sites at Moore, Sutton Weaver and Beechwood (on the Liverpool branch of the WCML);
- Safeguard against further development on the Shell Green Route (Ditton - Widnes South - Warrington Central);
- Lobby for action by Network Rail, TOC's Merseytravel and other rail related organisations for the improvement of services and infrastructure within and around the Borough;
- Continue with all interested parties to secure improvements in services on the trans-Pennine rail line.
- Work with the surrounding local authorities in lobbying for improvements and investing in the rail network;
- Continue to be an active member of the North West Rail Campaign (NWRC), lobbying for improvements and investment in the North West rail network.
- Support the proposals for the Manchester Hub capacity improvements; and
- Support proposals for high speed rail to serve the North West.

Peak Oil Production and Emerging Vehicle Technology

Introduction

The repercussions of a heavy reliance on carbon and fossil fuels are significant and our transport system is at particular risk. We know that the point at which fossil fuel resources can no longer meet demand is getting nearer and that this is likely to lead to volatile prices and restrictions in availability.

The transport system is reliant on oil for 97% of the energy it uses and is highly susceptible to these pressures; through this strategy the measures we will take to reduce emissions and provide a low carbon transport system will go some way towards minimising the negative consequences resulting from price increases and inconsistent supplies.

However, we recognise that the approach outlined here is unlikely to be sufficient to insulate the transport system against the severe impacts of oil shortages and this is something we intend to address as a priority.

The case for supporting alternative fuel and vehicle companies is strong; the sector is showing sustained growth which is likely to increase and locally we have two vehicle manufacturers - Jaguar-Land Rover in Halewood and General Motors in Ellesmere Port who are both pursuing low carbon vehicles and are significant local employers.

The currently emerging vehicle technologies include electric vehicles, internal combustion/electric hybrids and hydrogen powered vehicles.

The Coalition Government has expressed the following overarching national objective for transport as:

To support economic growth and contribute to the 2020 carbon reduction targets.

The Government has also set out the following transport commitments in relation to new transport technologies:

- “The Government believes that a modern transport infrastructure is essential for a dynamic and entrepreneurial economy, as well as to improve well-being and quality of life. We need to make the transport sector greener and more sustainable, with tougher emission standards and support for new technologies; and
- We will mandate a national recharging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.”

It is therefore believed that emerging vehicle technology will play a substantial role in LTP3 to reduce oil consumption, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The use of low carbon emission vehicles, in particular electrically powered vehicles will enable a significant reduction in overall transport carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of electrically powered vehicles will have significantly lower running costs. Whilst purchase costs are higher than comparable conventionally powered vehicles, it is anticipated that as sales rise the cost will reduce. This in the longer term will reduce transport costs for businesses. The

expansion of this evolving area of technology also provides new business opportunities.

Equality of opportunity: It is often the case that air quality is worse in deprived areas compared with more affluent areas and transport is a major contributor to this situation. The use of low emission, in particular, electric vehicles will assist in improving air quality in these areas.

Health, safety and security: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will improve air quality and hence the health of people in proximity of traffic.

Quality of life: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will improve air quality and hence the wellbeing of people in proximity of traffic.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. low carbon economy. This strategy would also have a positive impact upon A Healthy Halton and Halton's Urban Renewal LSP's SCS priorities.

Low carbon transport: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will assist in tackling any possible Air Quality Action Areas in Halton.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will improve air quality and hence the health and wellbeing of people in proximity of traffic.

Access to employment, services and social activities: It is anticipated in the longer term that

low emission vehicles will have low overall running costs and this will allow more people to access the destinations that they require.

LCR wider links: The use of fuel efficient vehicles, especially electric vehicles will help sustain oil supplies and reduce our dependency on oil thereby sustaining transport's ability to move people around the LCR and wider destinations.

Maintain transport assets: Whilst there are currently no on-highway charging points for electric vehicles in Halton this situation could change, whereby such charging points would need to be maintained to a safe and serviceable condition.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Fuel efficient vehicles, especially electric vehicles may be subject to financial incentives. This may need consideration in any tolling or road pricing policy.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Produce a development control policy whereby electric vehicle charging points are provided where appropriate in new developments;
- Pursue bids to Government where available for the provision of electric vehicle charging points at existing developments;
- Consider financial incentives for fuel efficient vehicles, especially electric vehicles in any tolling or road pricing policy;
- Consider a policy on the use of fuel efficient vehicles for its own fleet and other vehicles used for Council business; and
- Publicise any Government incentives for the purchase and use of fuel efficient vehicles.



Primary Transport Strategy No. 13

Provision for People with Disabilities

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed in 1995 to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. It protects disabled people in:

- Employment
- Access to goods, facilities and services
- The management, buying or renting of land or property and;
- Education

The Employment Rights and First Rights of Access came into force on 2 December, 1996; further rights of access came into force on 1 October, 1999; and the final rights of access came into force in October 2004.

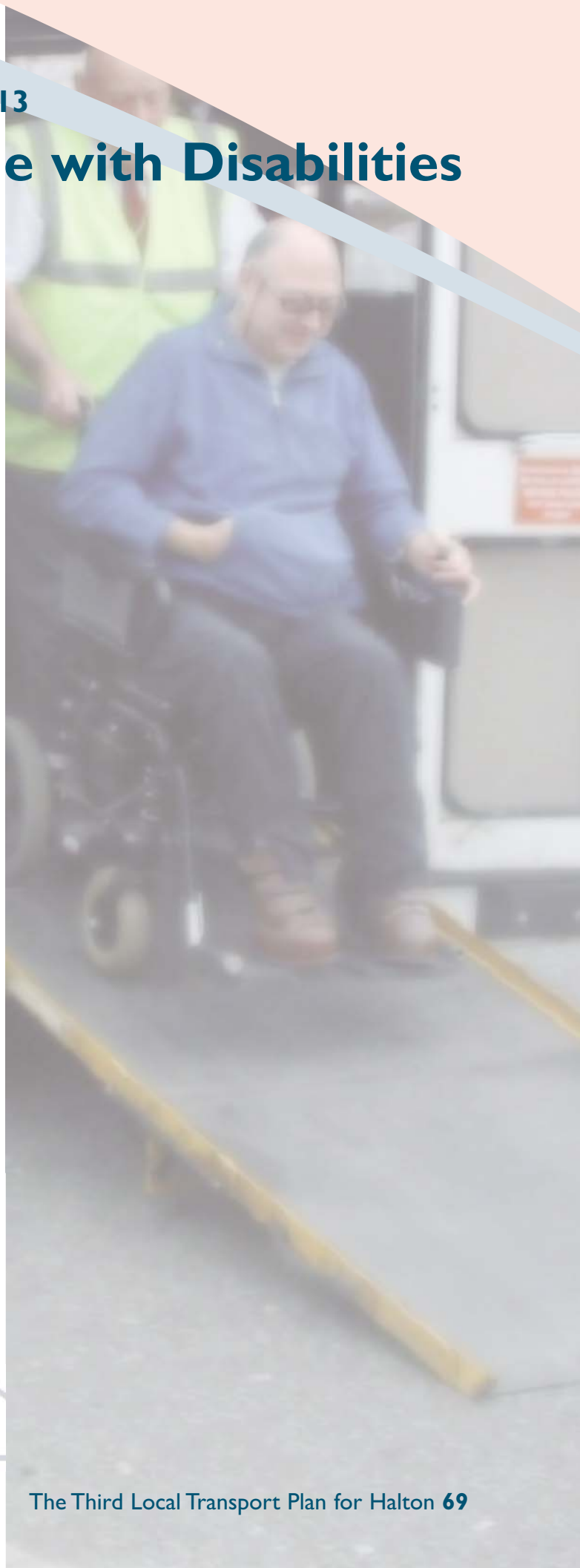
In addition this Act: allows the Government to set minimum standards so that disabled people can use public transport easily. It should be noted that when reference is made to 'all' disabled people in statements that this includes those who are users of mental health services.

The needs of those who are semi ambulant, and visually impaired, or wheelchair-bound are fully considered in the design of all highway improvement measures with the aim of removing unnecessary obstructions, easing gradients and the provision of safe crossing places.

The common aim of all these facilities being to make the transport network accessible to the mobility impaired; and as such help to address problems of social exclusion and deprivation within communities.



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Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Ensuring that people with disabilities have access to sustainable modes of travel that will reduce the need to travel by car.

Economic regeneration: Ensure equal access to all modes of transport for employment, training and education.

Equality of opportunity: Providing transport and facilities that allow all members of the community to access employment and services.

Health, safety and security: The provision of transport infrastructure that is suitable for people with disabilities is safer to use by all sections of society.

Quality of life: Provide transport infrastructure that allows people with disabilities to access a full range of services and activities.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of Halton's strategy will enable greater accessibility within the LCR; it would also build upon two of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. the Knowledge Economy and the Visitor Economy. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton and Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Low carbon transport: Halton will continue to provide for the travel needs for people with disabilities whilst reducing the need for travel.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Access to services and social networks is vital for health, in particular mental wellbeing for all sections of society.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Halton will continue to make its transport infrastructure accessible to all.

LCR wider links: Halton will continue to make improvements in access for the disabled at transport interchanges such as at railway stations.

Maintain transport assets: Transport infrastructure will be maintained to ensure access for all.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway and the Halton Curve scheme will enhance access for all.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Continue to provide improvements in the accessibility of the public transport system delivered through Quality Partnerships with public transport operators; (see Bus Strategy in PTS No.2)
- Continue to provide improvements to access rail infrastructure;
- Continue to carry out improvements to the highway network to remove obstructions and facilitate movements by the mobility impaired;
- Provide a network of safe and well maintained pedestrian routes in and around

- town centres;
- Provide disabled parking provision to meet demand at new developments; (see Development Control Strategy and Parking Strategy);
- Implement it's ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) which aims to ensure that Halton's Public Rights of Way network is as accessible for all users under the policy of "Access for All", along with the actions contained within Strategic Aim 4 which relates to the needs of people with disabilities;
- Support the provision of a fully accessible Community Transport Scheme;
- Adopt a system of formal liaison with Halton Disability Information services on improvement schemes to the highway;
- Continue to provide Travel Training for vulnerable young people and adults;
- Continue to provide bespoke travel advice to people with mobility problems;
- Seek to ensure that the maintenance regime for the highway network will facilitate the safe and convenient passage of people with mobility problems; and
- Implement Section 69 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (amends section 147 of the Highways Act 1980, and introduces a new section 147ZA), to provide that stock-proof furniture (principally stiles and gates) across public footpaths and bridleways will be better suited to the needs of people with mobility problems.

sensory and physical but also psychiatric impairments;

- Clear, unambiguous signage.

The needs of people with mental health problems will be considered through:

- Community transport schemes, including Dial a Ride;
- Concessionary travel for people with

Primary Transport Strategy No. 14

Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Greenways

Introduction

In July 2004 the Government paper 'Smarter Choices' stated, "In recent years, there has been growing interest in a range of initiatives, which are now widely described as 'soft' transport policy measures. These seek to give better information and opportunities, aimed at helping people to choose to reduce their car use while enhancing the attractiveness of alternatives. They are, mostly relatively uncontroversial, and often popular."

The Importance of these soft measures is recognised in the development of Halton's Strategy for PROW and Greenways.

Public Rights of Way (PROW) are routes over which the public have the right to pass and re-pass. They are made up of a number of facilities, these being:

- i) Public footpaths – for pedestrian use only;
- ii) Public bridleway – for use by pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists; and
- iii) Public byways- for use by pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and motorised vehicles, dependent on the character of the way.

In addition, there are greenways which have no legal status but have the definition as being a network of largely car free off road routes connecting people to facilities and open spaces in and around towns and cities and to the countryside; for shared use by people of all abilities on foot, cycle or horseback for commuting, play or leisure. It is important that they are well managed and provide a co-ordinated network, formed through the use of off-road routes, routes adjacent to carriageways and 'Quiet Roads'. Quiet Roads should offer the

non-motorised traveller an attractive route, which is largely free from intimidation from the traffic, with lower flows and vehicles speeds encouraging more people to walk, cycle or ride instead of drive.

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.

Halton Borough Council adopted its Rights of Way Improvement Plan in September 2009, following extensive consultation with all users.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to walking and cycling for relatively short trips would make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of walking and cycling can provide accessibility to local employment sites. Halton will continue to invest in infrastructure such as greenways to access employment sites, for example, the provision of greenways to the Widnes Waterfront site. The rural economy is also supported through a high standard PROW network.

Equality of opportunity: The use of walking and cycling routes, particularly in deprived areas will

assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The use of walking and cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. Greater use of walking and cycling on routes remote from motorised transport would also enhance the security of the individual. (ROWIP strategic aim 3)

Quality of life: Walking and cycling would assist with the provision of quiet and pollution free transport.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of cross boundary greenway routes will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR; its strategy would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the PROW and greenway strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Through its policy to maintain, upgrade and where possible provide new infrastructure for walking and cycling, Halton is encouraging a modal shift from car for shorter journeys which would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of walking and cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The promotion of the use of walking and cycling on PROW and greenways along with infrastructure enhancements will allow people to

connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities:

The use of walking and cycling, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The promotion of the use of PROW and greenways along with enhanced infrastructure, for example, greenways that connect with destinations out of the Borough, will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas. (ROWIP strategic aim 10)

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its PROW and greenways, for example by, the cutting back of vegetation and enforcement of illegal encroachments to ensure that their use is viable and desirable.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on the SJB and would allow a connection between two national cycle routes to the north and south of the Mersey.

Strategy

Through the Public Rights of Way and Greenways Strategy the Council will strive to:

- Deliver the ROWIP strategic actions;
- Continue to identify potential Greenway routes and links within the Borough;
- Provide off-road Greenways including routes that develop existing footpaths and bridleways as well as creating entirely new routes;
- Where appropriate provide Greenway routes along “quiet roads”;
- Develop Greenways adjacent to roads,

where there is no alternative;

- Ensure that where new developments can be served by the proposed Greenways network, that the opportunity is taken to require the developer to fund the cost of any works deemed necessary;
- Target routes that link communities with facilities and services such as employment sites, schools, shops, leisure centres and health centres;
- Ensure that the network is used to its full potential by constructing quality routes appropriate to the location and proposed use;
- Ensure that routes are accessible to all users including the mobility impaired;
- Where possible, provide a network that incorporates circular routes that not only provide access to facilities and services but can also be used for recreation and leisure;
- Work in partnership with adjacent authorities to develop long distance routes that tie into the wider network;
- Ensure that it fulfils its statutory duty to maintain and protect Public Rights of Way;
- Ensure that the Definitive Maps and Statements for the Borough are kept up to date and correctly record the line and legal status of all highways required to be shown on them;
- Ensure that all footpaths and bridleways are correctly signed where they leave a metalled road;
- Ensure that the surface of every Public Right of Way is in proper repair, reasonably safe and suitable for its expected use;
- Ensure that all Public Rights of Way are inspected regularly by, or on behalf of, the authority;
- Ensure that the Public Rights of Way and Greenways networks are well publicised;
- Continue to produce an annual works

programme for the maintenance of the Public Rights of Way network;

- Develop a 'rolling' annual programme of improvement works for the Public Right of Way network;
- Continue to identify new routes and missing links within the network and where necessary negotiate with landowners to provide these;
- Provide pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian crossing facilities ('Pegasus' crossing) on priority routes and sites where they are justified;
- Implement measures along equestrian routes to increase both road and personal safety;
- Maintain bridleways to an acceptable standard; and
- Implement the PROW and Greenway interventions detailed in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.



Quality Transport Corridors

Introduction

A “Quality Corridor Strategy” was adopted in LTP1 and continued in LTP2 as an effective method of bringing about highway infrastructure improvements, designed to encourage bus patronage through improved bus stops and bus priority measures. This strategy was further developed to co-ordinate other transport improvements such as measures such as tactile paving to encourage walking and cycling and to integrate road safety schemes and traffic calming measures within an identified route or corridor. The implementation of these quality corridors makes provision for people with disabilities by providing measures such as tactile paving and dropped crossings, enhancing the overall streetscape contributing to the the quality of life

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to walking, cycling and bus would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Economic regeneration: The use of walking, cycling and buses and improved associated infrastructure would increase accessibility in particular in deprived communities allowing people to access employment more easily.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure particularly in deprived areas will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The provision of

enhanced visibility around walking and cycling routes along with bus stops will help improve personal security and perceptions of crime.

Quality of life: Assist with the provision of low emission transport.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of quality transport corridors such as the route passing through Hough Green to Liverpool will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR; its strategy would also build upon two of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy and Visitor Economy. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Low carbon transport: Through its provision of quality transport corridors, Halton is encouraging a modal shift from car to walking, cycling and public transport which would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The provision of better cycling and bus infrastructure will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its pedestrian, cycling and bus infrastructure to ensure that such usage is an efficient and desirable form of transport.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for buses on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider bus infrastructure enhancements.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Enhance bus stop waiting areas, provide access improvements and creation of footway/cycle paths on areas of footway and verge;
- Integrate the PROW, greenway and cycleway network to create comprehensive sustainable transport routes;
- Co-ordinate an approach to speed reduction/traffic calming and management in the area and at schools;
- Integrate transport links to major employment sites;
- Provide streetscape improvements at district centres at;
- Maximise the use of bus priority facilities; and
- Provide improvements to street lighting.

Road Improvements

Introduction

The road network serving Halton is extensive, of reasonable standard and has significant spare capacity in most places. This is particularly true of the Runcorn Expressways, which are generally dual carriageways with grade-separated junctions. The Expressways encircle Runcorn connecting the M56 motorway to the south of Runcorn with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. To the north of the bridge the A562/A5300 and the A557 Widnes Eastern Relief Road connect to the M62. The only significant sources of congestion within the Borough are the A533 Silver Jubilee Bridge and the A557 approach to M56 Junction 12 at Clifton.

Details of road schemes that have been implemented during the course of LTP2 are as follows:

- Upton Rocks Distributor Road;
- A56 Chester Road / A558 Daresbury Expressway junction improvement and Expressway dualling to Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre roundabout junction;
- A558 Watkinson Way junction with Fiddlers Ferry Road;
- Gerrard Street / Lugsdale Road junction improvement; and
- As part of the Castlefields regeneration programme the new all-purpose link road replacing a section of Busway to the planned Castlefields Village Square was completed in 2006.

In addition, a range of highway improvement schemes have been implemented in connection with industrial and commercial developments across the Borough, principally through S278 and S37 Highways Act agreements.

Major Road Schemes planned during course of LTP3 include:

- The Mersey Gateway;
- A557 Approach to M56 Junction 12 (as part of the Mersey Gateway Project);
- Johnson's Lane Employment Site Access Road;
- Widnes Town Centre Access Road;
- Fiddlers Ferry Road to Greenoaks Way;
- Runcorn Station Access Road;
- Hale Bank Relief Road;
- Widnes Waterfront EDZ – Bayer Employment Site Access Road and New Junctions;
- Access improvements to Daresbury Science Innovation Campus;
- Minor improvement schemes, some of which are planned to be delivered in partnership with developers;
- Local safety schemes; and
- Schemes delivered as part of quality transport corridors.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The Mersey Gateway will relieve congestion on the SJB and hence carbon emissions. As tolls will be charged on both bridges there is the means available to regulate any traffic growth.

Economic regeneration: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will assist with connectivity to commerce and industry at a local, regional and national scale. The project in itself will enable the redevelopment of large areas of land in its proximity.

Equality of opportunity: An effective road system would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: New roads and road improvements will be designed to current standards which have been derived based upon highway safety.

Quality of life: Schemes such as the Mersey Gateway will reduce congestion and provide an overall improvement in air quality.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of road improvements where appropriate can enhance the transport network within the LCR. In particular, the Mersey Gateway will help provide a new strategic connection within the LCR providing faster and more reliable journey times. The provision of the Mersey Gateway would also build upon all of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. SuperPort, Low Carbon Economy, Knowledge Economy and Visitor Economy. The SuperPort proposal includes Mersey Gateway as an important supportive piece of transport infrastructure. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular Urban Renewal.

Low carbon transport: The implementation of the Mersey Gateway project would reduce congestion and the charging of tolls would enable the regulation of traffic this would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: New roads and road improvements will be designed to current standards which have been derived based upon highway safety. The Mersey Gateway will also provide an overall improvement in air quality.

Access to employment, services and social activities:

The provision of the Mersey Gateway will assist with connectivity to employment, services and social activities at a local and regional scale.

LCR wider links: The Mersey Gateway will provide a new key strategic link with LCR, the north west and beyond.

Maintain transport assets: New highway infrastructure will be designed in order to reduce the need for future maintenance.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The Mersey Gateway will provide a new key strategic cross river link with LCR, the north west and beyond.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Continue to pursue the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project which will provide a new crossing of the River Mersey;
- Enter into partnerships with developers and other agencies to promote highway improvements that contribute to the economic regeneration and renewal of the Borough;
- Implement minor improvements to address road safety issues and enable regeneration and reallocation of road space to more sustainable modes of transport; and
- Ensure that improvements are designed so as to minimise environmental impact and where possible utilise sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).



Road Safety

Introduction

Halton became a unitary authority in 1998 at which time it became responsible for road safety education, training and publicity (RSETP) in addition to its existing role designing and implementing engineering Local Safety Schemes.

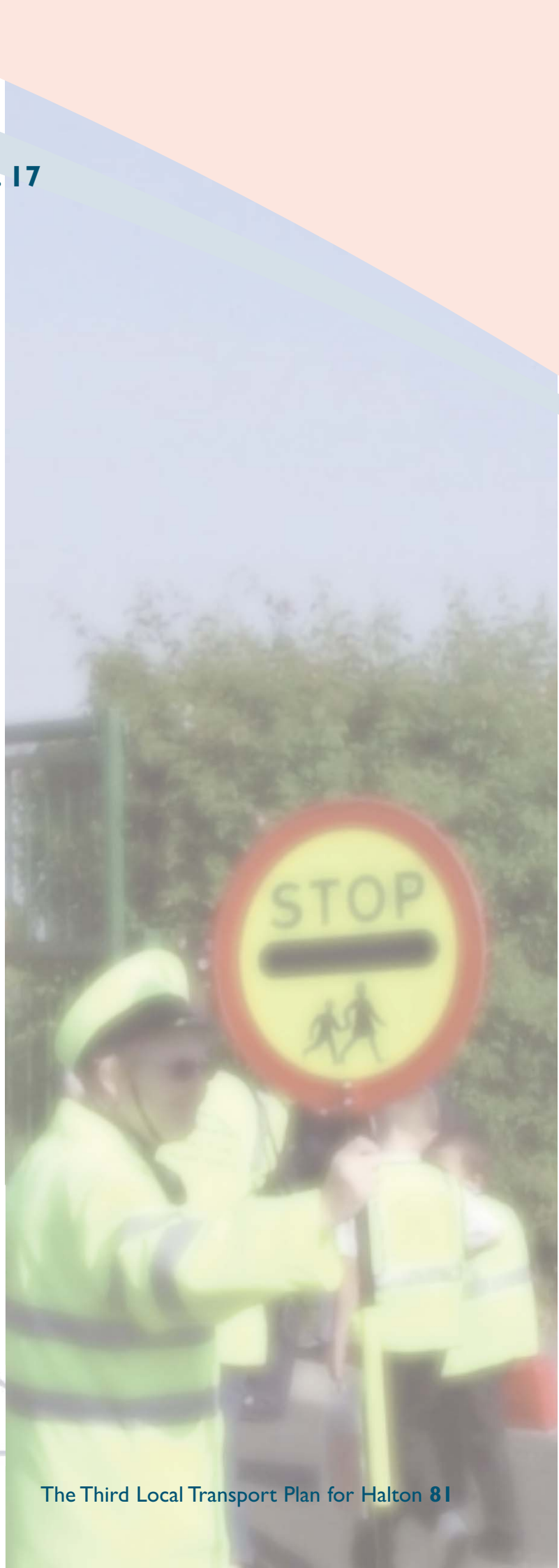
Although traditionally Britain has one of the best road safety records in the world, in 2000 the Government set challenging new casualty reduction targets in its strategy document 'Tomorrow's Roads - Safer for Everyone'. This set targets to be achieved by April 2010, compared with a baseline average of 1994-98 including a:

- 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI);
- 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured (CKSI); and a
- 10% reduction in the slight casualty (SLI) rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres. Due to difficulties in producing this figure, Halton uses the pure number of SLI casualties alone, not expressed as a rate.

Since 2000, immense progress has been made with large reductions in the number of traffic accidents and in the number of casualties of all severities being achieved. At the end of 2009.

- KSI numbers were down 74%
- CKSI numbers were down 88%
- SLI numbers were down 40%

and Halton is thus comfortably on course to meet all three of its 2010 targets.



Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The introduction and enforcement of speed limits will reduce carbon emissions by curbing traffic speeds and encouraging smoother driving practices. The encouragement of more fuel efficient driving techniques is linked with safer driving practices.

Economic regeneration: Road traffic accidents generate high costs to the community, particularly in terms of lost output and 'human costs'. On roads with high traffic flows such as the SJB, the cost of delays to other road users can be considerable; it is estimated that a full closure of the SJB costs £160,000 per hour. The reduction of such accidents therefore, would be beneficial to the wider economy.

Equality of opportunity: Although nationally there is evidence of a link between deprivation and traffic accident casualty rates, investigation indicates this is not the case in Halton. In the case of child casualties, ward design, layout and planning could prove to be of greater significance and can also be more of a key to identifying road safety education, training and publicity priorities.

Health, safety and security: Road safety relates to all these issues. The provision of a variety of road safety measures such as road improvements at accident 'hotspots', speed limit enforcement, traffic calming, pedestrianisation schemes in town centres and road safety education, training and publicity can all play a major part in improving road safety.

Quality of life: A safer highway environment improves quality of life for all.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The implementation of Halton's road safety strategy will be of benefit to those travelling across the LCR. Implementation of the strategy would also have a significant positive impact upon Children and Young People in Halton and A Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The introduction and enforcement of speed limits in Halton will encourage more fuel efficient driving and hence less carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Safer roads have benefits for all users. In many situations safer roads can encourage people to make use of more healthy options of transport such as walking and cycling.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Safer roads encourage access to a variety of destinations by sustainable modes.

LCR wider links: Halton is a member of the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership and also works closely with the Merseyside authorities on road safety policies.

Maintain transport assets: Transport infrastructure will be maintained in a manner to enhance road safety and reduce accidents by maintenance of the road surface, white lining and signing.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: There is currently a high accident record associated with the SJB, the provision of the Mersey Gateway will reduce

accidents and provide a far safer environment for cyclists.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Minimise the number of traffic accidents on Halton's roads by continuing to identify casualty problems and develop road improvements and road safety, education, training and publicity programmes to address the problems.
- Continue to monitor the impact of deprivation on road casualties and take appropriate action to address problems should any correlation be found;
- Utilise new technology to reduce the potential for and severity of road casualties;
- Continue to work with Cheshire Police to ensure that targeted enforcement action and publicity campaigns are undertaken to maximise the potential for casualty reduction;
- Continue to adopt and implement the latest guidance on road safety measures and interventions, which have proven to be effective, ensuring that all new developments meet these requirements and,
- Work with our LSP partners to utilise funding that these and other agencies have access to.



Street Lighting

Introduction

The Council's aim is to provide, maintain and improve the Borough's highway lighting systems in accordance with current legislation and the relevant British Standards, with the objective of improving amenity, public security and road safety. Quality lighting has been installed for a long time, as a known accident prevention measure, but more recent surveys have shown that improved lighting also has crime reduction effects, and makes residents less fearful of crime and more confident of their own safety at night.

At the present time there are about 20,200 lighting units in the Borough (excluding signs, bollards and traffic signals), and about 38% have reached the end of their design life (over 30 years old). The funding over recent years has not been sufficient to make any impact on clearing the backlog of potentially dangerous units. Priority has been given to the columns giving the most cause for concern on main roads.

The high mast lighting is a particular area of concern because the majority of it was installed in the 1970's as part of the Runcorn New Town development. The majority of the high mast lighting has reached the end of its design life and needs to be refurbished or replaced.

The Council, from its own resources, has provided funding, for additional lighting installations throughout the Borough. Due to the large increases in energy charges and the increased inventory resulting from new developments and improvements, the revenue budget is struggling to cope with the demands put on it. Over the last few years energy rates have increased, impacting upon the maintenance that has been carried out. The increased number of traffic signal installations,(19 in the last 10

years) and illuminated bollards and signs (approximately 1000 additional units in the last 10 years) has also had an impact on our energy costs, although non illuminated bollards have been installed and the use of LEDs(white light) within illuminated bollards and traffic signals are being provided to reduce energy costs. When the energy supply was last tendered the opportunity was taken to obtain all energy from green sources.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Halton will work to install more energy efficient lighting as part of its maintenance strategy.

Economic regeneration: A well lit urban environment encourages usage of the highway network during periods of darkness. This could support Halton's night time economy and allow shift workers to move about in greater safety.

Equality of opportunity: A safe lit urban environment is beneficial to all members of society.

Health, safety and security: Lighting is a known accident prevention measure, but also is an effective crime reduction measure reducing the fear of crime and more people feel confident of their personal safety during darkness.

Quality of life: A safer highway environment improves quality of life for all.

Halton Goals

The provision of quality street lighting where appropriate can benefit those living and travelling across the borough. Using energy efficient technology to it's full potential, will help to address issues of crime and the perception of crime, increasing the confidence of residents and their personal safety. It will also contribute to road safety and the reduction of traffic accidents. The strategy would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programme, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton and A Safer Halton.

Low carbon transport: Efficient street lighting can encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport especially walking.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Safer roads have benefits for all users. In many situations safer roads can encourage people to make use of more healthy options of transport such as walking and cycling.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Safer roads encourage access to a variety of destinations by sustainable modes.

LCR wider links: Halton works closely with the Merseyside authorities on highway lighting policies.

Maintain transport assets: Lighting infrastructure will be maintained in a manner to enhance road safety and to give the public a reduced fear of crime. Maintaining lighting to the desired standard will however be a challenge due to the degree of life expired equipment, limited budgets and increasing energy costs.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Lighting needs to be replaced, in particular around the SJB.

Strategy

To delivery the street lighting strategy the Council will strive to:

- Maintain the street lighting to the best possible standard, subject to finance being available;
- Review equipment and the latest technology to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions;
- Continue with the conversion from SOX (low pressure sodium; yellow in colour) to SON (High pressure sodium; white in colour) lighting;
- Replace high mast lighting with conventional lighting, where possible, to reduce maintenance costs and improve lighting levels and efficiency;
- Improve the lighting in subways;
- Upgrade the lighting to current design standards;
- Give special consideration to lighting in conservation areas and other sensitive locations; and
- Evaluate the potential to remove street lighting or introduce dimming and/or reduce hours of operation in order to save energy and costs.



Taxi/private Hire Vehicles

Introduction

Taxis (i.e. Hackney Carriages) and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) are separate and distinct in law but both make important contributions to public transport. The Borough currently licenses 267 Taxis and 158 PHVs. The number of vehicles licensed has continued to increase annually, thus reflecting the continuing demand for such services. The Borough has 16 taxi ranks on the public highway and four under private control. For a large and growing number of elderly and disabled people, they are, literally, a lifeline. In addition to this, taxis and private hire vehicles also provide:

- Local authority contracts for social services and education transport;
- Transport for visitors unfamiliar with the area;
- A high level of accessibility to other transport modes and amenities; and
- An indispensable 'out-of-hours' service for members of the public.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Taxis in urban areas can be an efficient form of transport as they can directly access a location without the need to travel to park provided that there is a return fare. If there is mileage travelled without a passenger then this would be counter productive.

Economic regeneration: Taxi's and private hire vehicles contribute to economic regeneration by providing a flexible mode of transport for shorter journeys. They can assist



with the night time economy as a primary means of transport to and from entertainment venues.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of taxi/private hire vehicles are, particularly valuable for addressing some of the issues of accessibility to facilities and activities. This is particularly true for areas of low car ownership where people will often share taxis to access facilities such as larger retail premises.

Health, safety and security: The use of taxis is viewed as a safe form of transport particularly during hours of darkness.

Quality of life: A wide variety of flexible transport modes is beneficial to all.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of Taxi/Private hire vehicles will help provide economic growth in the Borough; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, Visitor Economy. Implementation of the Taxi/Private hire vehicle strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal, Children and Young People, Employment, Learning and Skills and Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Halton requires that all taxi/private hire vehicles that are over 3 years old have a 6 monthly MOT/VOSA test, and as part of that test engine emissions are checked and must be within DfT/VOSA guidelines.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Taxis can provide access to health care and social networks.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Taxis can provide a flexible mode of transport to employment, services and social activities. They are of particular benefit at times when public transport is not available.

LCR wider links: Taxis provide a mode of transport that can provide cross boundary linkages.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Taxis provide a mode of transport across the SJB, particularly when public transport is not available and walking or cycling is viewed as undesirable.

Strategy

To deliver the Taxi/Private hire strategy the Council will strive to:

- Continue to undertake an assessment of the existing taxi stands within the Borough in order to develop a programme of works, which when implemented, will ensure that the stands are accessible to all members of the public including the mobility impaired;
- Ensure that any future taxi provisions are accessible for all members of the public;
- Continue to use taxis where they are an optional means of accessible transport available to special needs and social services clients, in order to ensure that their accessibility to education and other essential amenities/services is not compromised;
- Ensure, where possible, that taxis have access to all public transport priority measures where safe and appropriate;
- Continue to ensure, through its licensing regulations, the highest possible standards of safety, security and reliability in its taxi provision in terms of vehicles and drivers;
- Actively promote the provision of taxi stands for the convenience of users and the benefit of the trade;
- Continue to review the provision of fully accessible taxis to wheelchair users and develop a mechanism to meet their needs.

Travel Plans

Introduction

Travel plans have been used successfully for many years, whether secured through planning or prepared on a voluntary basis. They are an important tool for promoting sustainable travel, e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, and help to reduce single occupancy car use. They also encourage effective use of current transport networks and support their enhancement. Travel plans are now being used to secure the provision of sustainable travel choices, both to new developments and to extensions of existing sites, whatever their function. But there is scope to make travel planning still more integral to the activities of local authorities and developers alike.

Travel plans can be a key tool in achieving national, regional and local objectives to manage the demand for movement and improve accessibility for everyone.

Definition: A travel plan (TP) is a long-term management strategy for an occupier or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

Halton has been successful in implementing travel plans for 100% of schools in situations where travel plans apply.

The new Coalition Government's transport commitments include the following statement:

'We will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking, and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities'.



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Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The implementation of travel plans will encourage less car use and a shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

Economic regeneration: An increased choice of transport modes to employment sites and other facilities will enable greater accessibility.

Equality of opportunity: An increased choice of transport modes to employment sites and other facilities will enable people to travel by walking, cycling and public transport; this is of particular importance for people living in deprived areas.

Health, safety and security: Less car dominated centres will encourage healthy modes of travel, along with greater road and personal safety.

Quality of life: A greater choice of transport, along with less car dominated centres and less congestion will be of benefit to all.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The continuation of travel plans will assist the reduction of car based congestion, thus this will help provide economic growth in the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the travel plan strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The implementation of travel plans for education and employment

related activities will encourage a modal shift towards low carbon transport.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of walking and cycling promoted through travel plans will be of great benefit in terms of health and wellbeing.

Access to employment, services and social activities: An increased choice of transport modes to employment sites and other facilities will enable a wider range of people to have access. It can also give people the choice of more healthy travel options.

LCR wider links: Travel to work patterns and other journeys often extend across local authority boundaries. Travel plans will therefore be of benefit to the wider area.

Maintain transport assets: Transport assets will be maintained to encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will enable less congested journeys and greater journey time reliability.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Safely reduce the number of people who travel to the school by car in favour of using more sustainable modes of transport;
- Increase the proportion of school journeys undertaken on foot, cycle and public transport;
- Reduce congestion, pollution, traffic danger and road casualty figures around the school;
- Contribute to pupils' health and personal

development by encouraging increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport use so that they carry such habits into adulthood;

- Minimise the negative environmental impacts of school travel by increasing the number of staff and pupils travelling sustainably to school;
- Increase the numbers of pupils participating in road safety education;
- Increase awareness amongst pupils, staff and parents about the environmental, safety, health and social consequences of their travel choices;
- Inform pupils, parents and teachers of the benefits of sustainable transport;
- Involve children in the School Travel Plan initiatives;
- Provide an interesting focus for class work within the national curriculum;
- Assist local businesses in producing travel plans;
- Promote and encourage sustainable transport such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing;
- Continue to provide travel training for vulnerable young people and adults;
- Offer a car share scheme to local organisations as well as Council staff;
- Update and implement the Council's own Travel Plan;
- Provide cycle storage at various Council sites;
- Look at personal safety issues (training, personal alarms) for staff;
- Look at ways to invest in cycle, and implement cycle allowances for business use;
- Encourage all local businesses and organisations to implement Travel Plans;
- Encourage new developments in the Borough to develop Travel Plans through

the planning process (106 agreement); and

- Work with our partners to secure additional funding to implement travel plans and promote their use.

The support that HBC will provide to employers who wish to explore the feasibility of travel plans for their organisation will include advice on:

- Company car share schemes;
- Company car share database.
- Individual employee journey plans;
- Job Link travel service;
- Allaying employees concerns regarding public transport e.g. reliability and cost;
- Looking at personal safety issues for employees; and
- Investigating the feasibility of incentives, which encourage employees to use bicycles to get to work.

Walking

Introduction

Walking is a form of travel that has the least environmental impact and a form of exercise that has significant benefits to health. It is therefore an extremely important mode of travel.

In 2009 the DfT produced the paper 'The Future of Urban Transport' which states that the success of cities and urban areas may be maximised through an efficient and sustainable transport system. These are achieved through the 'triple win outcomes' of economy, health and urban environment. The paper describes how the proportion of trips by walking had fallen significantly in the last 20 years and how there had been corresponding levels of obesity. It states that: 'Two thirds of the adult population do not meet recommended activity levels. Obesity is rising rapidly, with 30% of children and 60% of adults defined as either overweight or obese in 2007.'

In Halton levels of childhood obesity are generally much worse than the England average. Coronary heart disease in Halton is at the second highest level compared with other authorities in the LCR. With nearly 40% of all trips less than two miles in length there is much to be done to encourage walking as a healthy and sustainable mode of transport.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to walking for short trips would make a

significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of walking can provide accessibility to local employment sites, for example the rapidly developing 3MG site and Widnes Waterfront.

Equality of opportunity: The use of walking, particularly in deprived areas, will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The use of walking for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. Greater use of walking on routes remote from motorised transport would also enhance the security of the individual.

Quality of life: Walking would assist with the provision of quiet and pollution free transport and is also means of recreation and exercise.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of walking facilities will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the walking strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Halton, through its implementation of infrastructure improvements for walking would encourage less car use and hence less carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of walking for both leisure and travel to

work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The encouragement of the use of walking along with infrastructure enhancements, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The use of walking, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The encouragement of the use of walking and enhanced infrastructure, for example, greenways that connect with destinations out of the Borough will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its pedestrian infrastructure, for example, the cutting back of vegetation on segregated routes to ensure that walking as a travel mode is desirable.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for pedestrians on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider pedestrian infrastructure enhancements.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Continue to identify and develop, through analysis and consultation, a strategic network of pedestrian routes and links that connect into facilities such as employment, educational establishments, health and welfare services, shops, public transport interchanges, and recreational facilities, and

- routes that link communities;
- Ensure that any new or improved footways and footpaths are accessible to people with disabilities through the provision of measures such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving and safe crossing provision;
- Continue to identify and develop off-road routes such as Public Rights of Way, Greenways and Bridleways with reference to the action points set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Target routes that complement the developing network of Quality Transport Corridors;
- Improve and maintain effective directional signing along pedestrian routes;
- Ensure that developers incorporate safe and convenient pedestrian footways or other safe pedestrian routes within the design and layout of new developments, and where required, provide new or improved routes to provide pedestrian access to the site;
- Ensure that land use plans deliver developments that minimise the need to travel longer distances and encourage the use of walking;
- Ensure that new routes are designed to minimise crime and the fear of crime and when in urban areas, offer natural surveillance from adjacent buildings whenever possible;
- Ensure that adopted footways and footpaths are adequately maintained
- Work in partnership with other organisations such as Groundwork Mersey Valley to develop, promote and publicise walking within the Borough;
- Work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that the wider network of pedestrian routes is maintained and developed;
- Consult with the Merseyside and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Access Forums where appropriate;
- Promote walking as a sustainable alternative to the private car through publicity and marketing of new and improved routes;
- Promote walking through the development of Commuter and School Travel Plans that emphasis the environmental and health benefits of walking;
- Support, promote and publicise national campaigns and strategies such as Green Transport Week and Car Free Day;
- Make available opportunities for measures such as information boards to provide visual maps of pedestrian routes and key locations and seating facilities to afford resting points along pedestrian routes;
- Ensure, where possible, that maintenance works to the highway incorporate improved crossing provision with wheelchair friendly dropped kerbs and tactile paving;
- Ensure maintenance is undertaken to facilitate use of footways, footpaths, etc and minimise accidental trips; and
- Implement proposals for walking contained within the Mersey Sustainable Transport Strategy.

9 Implementation Options

A wide range of options for implementation are being considered for both the shorter term implementation plan and the longer term implementation of this LTP3 strategy.

These options will help attain the national and local goals and must respond to the challenges and opportunities and will also be guided by our developing Primary Transport Strategies. A range of options will be considered that were originally identified in LTPI and 2, have been identified in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS) or will meet more recently identified needs including Phase 1 of the consultation.

As part of the Phase 1 consultation it was emphasised that there would be less funding available, at least in the near future, and the following issues were viewed as emerging priorities:

- Address/manage congestion, in particular through the construction of Mersey Gateway and addressing the 'school run'
- Improve access to work, education, training, services (including health) and social activities, targeting disadvantaged communities
- Reduce road casualties
- Cleaner, low carbon transport
- Enhance economic success through the Mersey Gateway and through better freight distribution
- Continue to maintain the highway and transport infrastructure to avoid further deterioration and ensure there is the ability to respond to emergency situations e.g. adverse winter weather
- Reduce delays due to maintenance works – with more particular reference here to the Silver Jubilee bridge

- Promote public transport, walking and cycling and improve access thereto
- Reduce perceptions of crime on public transport and improve safety and security of users
- Reduce traffic impact on communities in terms of pollution and noise.

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

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

The MGSTS has two component parts which are:

- The identification of schemes for LTP3 that could be delivered with or without Mersey Gateway; and
- The identification of schemes of schemes that could be delivered through the Mersey Gateway concessionaire.

Alongside sustainable transport measures, maintenance of transport infrastructure will be a key priority and the degree to which this is carried out will be dependent on available funding. The proportion of funding actually spent on maintenance will be balanced against the need for new schemes. With the anticipated financial pressures on local authorities, there may in the short term, be a presumption against new schemes in favour of maintaining existing assets.

Options for the new schemes will be assessed against the following criteria need, strategic fit, value for money, maintenance or whole life costs, the ease of delivery and affordability.

Taking into account all of the above we must ensure that our schemes meet as many national and local goals as possible. The adoption of a long term strategy does however enable us to consider a range of options at this stage. In view of the financially challenging times that lie ahead, affordability will be a major consideration.

Taking into account the above criteria an initial subjective assessment has been carried out for each of the schemes and initiatives so far identified. This outlines the likelihood of delivery during the period of LTP3 with a grading of unlikely, possible or probable. This is determined for both the 3 year implementation period 2011/12 to 2013/14 and the 15 year strategy period 2011/12 to 2025/26.

Identified schemes and initiatives for LTP3 are as follows:

Mersey Gateway (Major Scheme)

This scheme was granted Programme Entry in 2006. In 2009 it went through the Public Inquiry process and is awaiting the Government's decision on the granting of legal powers and funding as part of its Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn. Refer to Major Schemes Section 10.

Likelihood of completion by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of completion by 2025/26: possible

SJB Maintenance (Major Maintenance Scheme)

£18.6 million of funding for this scheme was confirmed by Government in June 2009 covering a five year period commencing in 2011/12. Refer to Major Schemes Section 10.

Likelihood of completion by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of completion by 2025/26: probable

Halton Curve (Major Rail Scheme)

This scheme has a positive economic case and is progressing on through the development stage. New legal powers will not be required but no firm source of funding has been identified. Refer to Major Schemes Section 10.

Likelihood of completion by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of completion by 2025/26: possible

Improvements for Pedestrians (General)

These include roadside footways, crossing facilities and off road facilities including Public Rights of Way and Greenways, the extent of such schemes will depend on funding. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy Nos. 13 and 21.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements for Cyclists (General)

These include on road and off road improvements such as bridleways and Greenways, the extent of such schemes will depend on funding. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy Nos. 3 and 14.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements for Walking and Cycling Delivered Through the Mersey Gateway Project

A number of pedestrian and cycling schemes have been identified that could be delivered as

part of the Mersey Gateway Project or through income generated from tolls charged for use of the Mersey Gateway.

As an integral part of the project, the Mersey Gateway will deliver the strategic and important sustainable transport corridor over the SJB between the regeneration areas of West Bank and Runcorn Old Town.

Specific walking and cycling improvements to be delivered through the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy have been identified with the first priority being the improvement of links to the highly strategic NCN 62. Several Greenways have also been identified and these are detailed in the strategy section for PROW and Greenways. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy Nos. 3, 14 and 21.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Rail Improvements (excluding Halton Curve)

Hough Green Station Access Improvement

This includes improved junction visibility at Liverpool Road and increased and enhanced parking facilities including better security. This scheme was intended to be completed during 2010/11 but due to budget cuts this may be deferred. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Widnes Station Access Improvement

This includes increased and enhanced parking including better security. This scheme is due for completion during 2010/11. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

New Railway Stations

New stations are proposed at Barrows Green, Upton Rocks, Ditton, Widnes South and Beechwood. Land has been safeguarded in development plans for these stations but they have yet to reach detailed design stage and funding for them has yet to be identified. A further proposal at Daresbury is currently progressing through GRIP 1, 2 and 3 stages of development; no exact location or funding has been identified. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

New Railway Sidings 3MG

New railway sidings are proposed as part of the 3MG development; it is intended that these will be funded through the development. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 6.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

New Railway Lines

The Shell Green Route and the Ditton – Widnes South – Fiddlers Ferry – Warrington Bank Quay proposals have had no design carried out and no funding has been identified. Similarly the Trans Pennine Line through Widnes has had no design carried out to upgrade it and no funding has been identified.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: unlikely

Rail Improvement Schemes to be Delivered Through Mersey Gateway

The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy has identified a number of possible rail improvement schemes that could be delivered through income generated from tolls charged for use of the Mersey Gateway; these include:

- Bus, pedestrian and cycling improvements at Runcorn Railway Station as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy;
- New railway station booking offices and passenger waiting facilities (with enhanced opening hours);
- Improved bus/railway interchange facilities at all railway stations;
- Measures to enhance pedestrian and cycling facilities within 800 metres of railway stations;
- Improved passenger information.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible (in part)

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Bus Infrastructure and Services

There are many improvements that could be made to bus infrastructure and services, examples of these are outlined below. However, with the likelihood of reduced future funding it is important to note that a substantial proportion of such improvements can only be funded through income generated through tolls charged as part of the Mersey Gateway Project.

Extension of Bus Quality Corridors

The implementation of Quality Transport Corridors (QTC) has largely been completed during LTP 1 and 2, although some gaps remain. Therefore, a new approach is to be adopted to build upon the QTC philosophy utilising the same comprehensive / co-ordinated approach to maximising the benefits that are possible from a range of improvements to safety, walking, cycling and public transport but which are now focused on accessibility in and around specific centres, which provide services to the local communities. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2 and No. 15.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable (in part)

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements to Murdishaw Interchange

This scheme encompasses a range of improvements and enhancements to Murdishaw Interchange. This is one of the busiest bus stops on the Runcorn Busway in terms of departures and passenger use. The scheme builds on a range of improvements that have previously been introduced to enhance safety and security of passengers and improve bus operations. Proposed improvements include higher quality stops, better lighting, CCTV and real time information.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Improvements to Halton Lea South Bus Station

Halton Lea North Bus Station has recently been extensively improved to create a safe, secure and highly attractive passenger waiting environment. Similar improvements are

proposed for Halton Lea South but physical constraints at the site may limit the extent of improvement and facilities that can be provided. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Improved Passenger Information in Halton Lea Shopping Centre as part of the Bus Station Improvements

To enhance passenger information for public transport it is proposed that a large plasma screen display is installed in the central concourse of Halton Lea shopping centre, where maximum footfall occurs. The screen would show scheduled timetable information for buses serving Halton Lea North and South as well other prominent destinations. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2 and No. 7

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements to Halton Hospital Interchange

It is proposed that similar improvements be made to Halton Hospital Interchange to those at Murdishaw Interchange. This would include improved passenger shelters, better lighting and real time information. Improvements to footways between the interchange and the hospital are also proposed. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Improvements to Other Stops on the Runcorn Busway Loop

The components of this proposal are to enhance safety and security of bus users and improve passenger information. The following 16 pairs of stops have been identified for enhancement:

- Parkgate Way;
- Runcorn East;
- Norton Village;
- Goosebury Green;
- Windmill Hill;
- Southwood Avenue;
- Norton Priory;
- The Park;
- Castle Ward;
- Rowlands Walk;
- The Brow;
- Palacefields;
- Parkside;
- Brook Lane;
- Stockham Lane; and
- Barnfield Avenue.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Green Oaks Bus Station and Widnes Town Centre Public Transport Access Strategy

Widnes Town Centre has seen considerable growth in the last 15 years. In order to optimise public transport access to the centre it is proposed that a study is carried out to develop a new access strategy which recognises the new and proposed developments. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

New Mobility Smartcard

The potential for smartcards to offer a quick,

easy and attractive method of paying for a range of goods and services is now well understood. The cashless transactions possible through smartcards can be applied to a range of functions, including public transport. The Liverpool City Region authorities are developing a proposal for a smartcard system. Halton is well positioned to pilot the introduction of the scheme on the back of the Mersey Gateway Project in advance of the rest of the City Region and to pioneer its use to wider applications across the Borough as a true 'Citizen Card', which could also be used for the payment of bridge tolls.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Bus Quality Partnership

The Council already has a good working relationship with both of the principal bus operators in the Borough, and has made significant progress in the development and improvement of the network. However, it is believed that further significant improvements to the bus network can be accelerated if the commercial bus operators and Council commit to work in partnership to deliver the enhancements. The lead for taking forward a Quality Partnership would be taken by Halton in conjunction with operators and the Merseyside Bus Board.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Expansion of the Neighbourhood Travel Team

Halton's Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT) was formed in August 2002 to respond to the

findings of a comprehensive study examining access to employment opportunities in the Borough, carried out in 2000. The original remit of the NTT was to work collaboratively with local communities, employers, employment organisations, schools, colleges and other bodies to identify and reduce transport barriers that prevent people living and working in Halton from accessing education, employment and training opportunities. However, as the NTT evolved the work of the team expanded to promote improved access to local facilities and services in general. Due to budget pressures however, the scale of the work carried out by NTT has been reduced and its future appears uncertain.

It is proposed if possible the NTT initiative is reinvigorated using funding provided through charging tolls on the Mersey Gateway Project. It is also proposed that other potential sources of funding be explored to enable the good work of the initiative to continue. Refer to Primary Transport initiative Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely

Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

TravelSafe

If growth in bus patronage is to be achieved, it will be important that users, and potential users, have confidence in the network and feel safe whilst accessing and using it. Halton introduced the TravelSafe initiative in 2002 to address crime against the public transport network and concerns from the community about personal safety. TravelSafe was funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Cheshire Police and bus operator contributions. Due to budget pressures however, the TravelSafe initiative has lapsed, but other sources of appropriate funding will be considered.

It is proposed that the TravelSafe initiative is reinvigorated using funding provided through charging tolls on the Mersey Gateway Project. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Coordination and Marketing of Community Transport Services

There are a number of community transport services available in Halton, these include:

- Halton Dial-a-Ride;
- Women's Safe Transport;
- Community Car Scheme;
- Vehicle Group Hire;
- Links2Work; and
- Hospital Link.

Each scheme presently operates under a different name, although often providing the same function. This could lead to confusion amongst users and the potential target groups, and makes marketing and promotion more difficult and disjointed. It is therefore, recommended that all such schemes be promoted under the generic Door2Door banner. It is also recommended that a full feasibility study is carried out to identify the potential for the expansion of the Community Transport provision in Halton including full consultation with users and other stakeholders. The availability of funding may impact on the provision of community transport. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Network Development of Bus Services

Different bus routes can follow the same section of road along much of the total route length. Where more than one operator provides a service along the same section of road there can be a duplication of service where buses travel at the same time. By staggering the timings of services the frequency of the service can be effectively doubled. Such services include Widnes to Hough Green and Widnes to St Helens.

It is proposed that a number of services could be enhanced, these could include:

- An extension to Busway services 1 and 2 to provide a full intra-Runcorn service as a 'figure of eight' loop;
- A revised service joining Hough Green, Chestnut Lodge, Widnes Green Oaks, SJB and Runcorn High Street;
- A circular route between Runcorn High Street, Halton Lodge, Halton Lea, Halton Brook, The Grange and back to Runcorn High Street;
- Access to the Bridge Retail Park;
- Access improvements to Runcorn Railway Station;
- Access improvements to Riverside College, Runcorn Campus;
- Access to Old Coach Road, Runcorn;
- Access to Halton Independent Living Centre;
- Access to the Promenade and Deck residential Developments;
- Access improvements to Mersey Road, Bridge Street and the Runcorn Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre;
- Stops on Picow Farm Road for Runcorn Railway Station;
- Access to Lugsdale Road between Gerrard Street and the Town Hall;
- Access improvements to West Bank;
- Access to 3MG;

- Expansion of the Route 66 service that serves East Runcorn; and
- Bus/rail interchange to the commercial sites around Daresbury.

Many of these listed above will however be dependent on the Mersey Gateway Project and the revenue made available to the Council. They will also depend on the support and cooperation of the bus operators in Halton.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Road Improvement Schemes (excluding Mersey Gateway and SJB major maintenance scheme)

A557 Approach to M56 Junction 12

The A557 is a two-lane dual carriageway with a two-lane approach to the roundabout at Junction 12. At peak times this approach arm is over capacity and long queues form. A modification to this approach would reduce delays and congestion. It is intended that this junction capacity improvement will be delivered as part of the Mersey Gateway project that is due to be completed in 2015; however, it could be constructed separately from Mersey Gateway. The Highways Agency are also planning capacity improvements at Junction 12.

Refer to Major Schemes section and Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

3MG Access Road

As part of the 3MG development a new link

road is to be constructed between the site and the A562 Speke Road / A5300 Knowsley Expressway Junction, crossing over the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline. The road is to be funded by the developer. The design of the link road is complete and agreement has been reached with Knowsley Council regarding the construction and future management & maintenance of the proposed road. Planning permission was granted in 2008. Approval in Principle for the bridge over the railway has been granted, a Basic Asset Protection Agreement is in place with Network Rail and negotiations are well advanced in respect of an Overbridge Agreement and for the planning of the bridge construction works. It is expected that the 3MG Access Road will be constructed by Halton's development partner early during the LTP3 programme.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 6 and 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: probable
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Johnsons Lane Improvement

The Johnson's Lane site is a 19 acre site within the Widnes Waterfront EDZ, but in order to open up the site for development, the provision of approximately 300 metres of spine road infrastructure is required to enable access to individual employment site plots. The site has been identified as having the potential for relocation of businesses displaced from southern Widnes due to the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge approach roads.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Widnes Town Centre Access Road

Halton's UDP includes a potential scheme to provide a road link, north of the Gyratory, from Greenoaks Way to Tanhouse Lane that would provide relief to the gyratory junction at A557 Wilkinson Way/Fiddlers Ferry Road/Earle Road. The Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan also contains ideas for access to the development sites on Tanhouse Lane north. Completion of this Circulatory System will aid ease of movement into and around the Town Centre for all means of transport. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Runcorn Station Access Road

The first section of the route has been constructed and utilises the commercial development access road, between the expressway junction and Greenway Road. Land has been reserved at Okell Street for a junction to be constructed, linking the development through to Greenway Road. This will enable traffic from higher Runcorn to join the Expressway in either direction at the new traffic signal junction. The existing slip road from Greenway Road onto the Silver Jubilee Bridge northbound carriageway can then be closed and a new section of carriageway constructed approximately on the line of the slip road to Shaw Street. The new access road will enable the station to be signed directly from the Expressway, along a single preferred route, thus reducing the existing array of confusing directional signing. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Hale Bank Relief Road

The draft Hale Bank Supplementary Planning Document outlines the principle of a relief road for Hale Bank to the east of Hale Road. The aims of the scheme are to reduce the number of vehicular movements through Hale Bank, particularly heavy goods vehicles that access the industrial areas of Pickerings Road and Mersey View Road, and to improve the environment for new and existing residents through reductions in traffic, noise and by improving air quality. It is anticipated that the majority of funding for the new highway infrastructure will come from contributions through new developments as they are granted planning permissions. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Widnes Waterfront EDZ – Bayer Employment Site Access Road and New Junctions.

The re-development of the Bayer site will inevitably generate new traffic which needs to be accommodated. Halton have commissioned an Access Study which has considered options for new junctions and access roads to serve the site along with public transport provision and pedestrian and cycle routes in the vicinity. Options include the provision of a new route through the site, either as an all-purpose road or with restricted through access for sustainable modes only, and separate access roads to serve the western and eastern parts of the site separately. Preferred junction layouts are for new roundabouts on Fiddlers Ferry Road and Gorsey Lane. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Minor Improvement Schemes

The following schemes are currently under consideration and investigation. Note: it is expected that some will be funded and delivered in partnership with developers and through S106 and S278 agreements. These include:

- A558 Daresbury Expressway – Origin Roundabout junction capacity improvements;
- Kingsway / Milton Road junction capacity and pedestrian crossing improvements;
- Bus Priority route Widnes - Gerrard Street to Widnes Road;
- Earle Road access widening to Watkinson way Gyratory (EDZ);
- Leigh Avenue / Deacon Road / Appleton Village junction improvement;
- Derby Road / Peelhouse Lane / Farnworth Street junction improvement;
- Cronton Lane / Birchfield Road junction;
- Wilmere Lane / Lunts Heath Road junction improvement to resolve capacity and safety issues;
- Upton Rocks – alternative routes for East – West Traffic;
- Access improvements to the Daresbury sites;
- Murdishaw Roundabout capacity and safety improvements; and
- A range of local Safety Schemes which are yet to be determined.

In addition to the above listed schemes there are a number of integrated and sustainable transport improvements, local safety schemes and works as part of Quality Transport Corridors that have yet to be defined.

Non-Detailed Schemes

Road schemes where a potential need has been identified but a layout has yet to be detailed include the following:

The Foundry Lane to Desoto Road Link

This historic proposal would allow the diversion of heavy industrial traffic away from the residential area of Hale Bank. The need for this scheme was identified in the Merseyside Freight Study.

Proposals are now being developed for the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park into which this road proposal could be incorporated. The road could be constructed as a private road that would cause no increase in traffic through Hale Bank due to the construction of the 3MG. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 6 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Alternative Access Road From Picow Farm Road To Weston Docks

This will enable the diversion of heavy industrial traffic away from the residential area of Weston Point and allow the possible regeneration of the disused docks for new commercial uses such as a rail freight depot. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 6 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Liverpool John Lennon Airport Eastern Access Road

Halton Council is supportive of the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport. In order for further growth to take place road access needs to be enhanced from the east. The construction of a link road from the A562 to the airport would deliver the highway capacity required for the growth in air travel. The Eastern Access Road would be promoted by the airport but in turn would be supported in principle by Halton and the Merseyside Authorities. Primary Transport Strategy No. 1 provides more information on these issues. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 1 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Strategic Park and Ride Facilities

Halton in conjunction with Warrington Borough Council have undertaken a feasibility study and this has identified a potential strategic park and ride site close to Junction 11 of M56. Such a site has the potential to act as a bus based park and ride facility for journeys to Manchester City Centre, Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Warrington Town Centre and Liverpool City Centre. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 10 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS)

Improvement themes and Associated Schemes

It is proposed that the schemes below are to be delivered through the Mersey Gateway Project as part of the concessionaire agreement. Some

projects to could however be delivered through LTP3.

Transport Options for appraisal Phase 1 of the MGSTS up to 2021/22:

- MGSTS Improvement Theme 1: Development of the proposed Halton Rapid Transit Network (HRTN);
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 2: Further development of the proposed HRTN;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 3: Introduction of a new mobility smartcard;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 4: Further development of mobility management initiatives;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 5: Walking and cycling improvements; and
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 6: Improvements to bus/rail interchange and railway stations.

Transport Options for appraisal Phase 2 of the MGSTS, after 2021/22:

- MGSTS Improvement Theme 7: Development of new strategic park and ride facilities across Halton;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 8: Canal and waterway improvements; and
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 9: Improvements to the Halton Curve.

Many of these proposals are covered in other areas of implementation.

10 Major schemes

Priority 1 – Mersey Gateway

The Scheme: The need for a new crossing was established as a Major Objective in the Borough's Local Plan adopted in 1996. The case for a new crossing became central to policies and strategies of LTPI and the Council's long term (30 year) Transport Strategy. This policy was further confirmed in the Unitary Development Plan formerly adopted in April 2005.

The construction of a new Mersey crossing has been strongly supported across the Liverpool City Region. The Mersey Gateway is the prime intervention to tackle congestion in Halton and is set in the context of a complementary road-user charging regime ensuring that the maximum benefits are fully realised.

The justification for the crossing has extensively been examined and detailed in a full Major Scheme Appraisal, submitted to DfT in July 2003, when it was judged to be "Super" Work in Progress. Subsequently, a revised and expanded appraisal was resubmitted in December 2004. Detailed appraisal work continued throughout 2005. In March 2006 the Government announced that the scheme had gained 'Programme Entry' in the DfT's major schemes programme.

In September 2006 the Mersey Gateway Team was formed to deliver the scheme through the approvals process. In the summer of 2007 a major public consultation exercise took place which indicated general widespread support for the project; however some concerns were expressed in relation to localised impacts. During 2007 and the early part of 2008 an extensive traffic model was built to inform the project and the design progressed accordingly. Changes to

the design included alterations to the Runcorn Expressways and M56 Junction 12 to take account of redistribution of traffic that the new crossing would induce. The possibility of a direct link from the Southern Expressway to M56 Junction 11 was also considered.

The DfT granted permission to use the Transport and Works Act (TWA) for the new bridge whilst the legal powers for changes to the approach roads were covered by a planning application to Halton Borough Council. The TWA however due to its own legal process had to progress through a public inquiry with a subsequent recommendation to Government ministers. The proposals include the tolling of both the new bridge and the SJB. The TWA provides the legal mechanism for tolling the new bridge whilst a separate Road User Charging order is required for tolling the SJB.

The need for the 'Mersey Gateway' scheme results from the fact that the only road crossing of the Mersey, in the Borough, is provided by the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). Traffic flows on the SJB can exceed 90,000 vehicles per day and congestion, particularly in the peaks, is severe and results routinely in long queues. The SJB is an important alternative crossing route for the M6 Thelwall Viaduct and provides strategic links between M56 and M62 serving as an important gateway to Liverpool John Lennon Airport from the south and east and the Mersey region. The strategic function of SJB is underlined by the fact that most traffic using the bridge is making trips through or out of the Borough boundaries.

The strategic importance of SJB cannot be over-emphasised. All but 18% of the vehicles crossing the bridge are either in or out of the Borough or pass through the Borough. The continuing availability of SJB is dependent in the more

immediate term on the funding that was recently secured for the five year period starting 2011/12. In the longer term, Mersey Gateway will provide the essential alternative strategic route to permit the more complex structural maintenance works to be undertaken without lengthy and disruptive lane closures and possibly total closures. The construction of the Mersey Gateway will address the prime cause of congestion in the Borough and enable the SJB to provide for local sustainable travel within the Borough. Road user charging, in addition to generating the investment required to deliver the new bridge, will provide a mechanism to manage demand, so that free flow traffic conditions are maintained on the new link, thereby locking in the delivery of the projected service reliability and standards. Complementary measures on SJB will include priority schemes for public transport, cyclist and pedestrians, reducing the road space available to general purpose traffic and down grading linkages to the strategic highway network. Extending the tolling charge to SJB protects these rebalanced local transport priorities against future congestion on the local road network connecting to SJB. The scheme will also address safety issues on the SJB, primarily caused by inadequate road width.

In July 2008 a planning application was determined by Halton Borough Council where it was resolved that 'The Council was minded to approve the application, but would defer the decision to be made as part of the TWA application'. The outcomes of this are due to be announced on 20th October as part of the Government's comprehensive spending review.

Impact of Proposal: The proposal will have an impact on transport targets associated with modal split, accessibility, maintenance, road casualties and air quality. However, the benefits of this proposal are much wider and will also be

reflected in targets associated with regeneration, employment, the economy, both locally, across the wider Liverpool City region and beyond. In addition, as referred to above, the construction of the Gateway will enable structural maintenance work to be undertaken on the SJB with a minimum of delay and inconvenience to road users. There will also be significant savings in undertaking the work on the SJB, through increased flexibility on when the work can be carried out and its duration. Benefits of including future maintenance of SJB in the Mersey Gateway PFI concession have been explored. The marketability of this approach will be greatly enhanced by undertaking all high priority structural maintenance works during LTP2 and providing an enhanced inspection regime. This underlies the bid to extend the major maintenance scheme for SJB into LTP3.

Current Position: The public inquiry was held during the Summer of 2009. The Inspector then subsequently submitted his recommendations to ministers. On Thursday 10 June 2010, the government announced a delay to all transport schemes currently progressing through the planning process. Mersey Gateway is one of the transport schemes caught by this announcement. Schemes will now be assessed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR will report back on 20th October 2010 this year, consequently it is most unlikely we will receive an announcement now on the Mersey Gateway before the autumn.

This delay is disappointing and also frustrating but perhaps not surprising given the position taken by the new coalition Government on public spending. The good news is Mersey Gateway fits well against the CSR criteria Government will use to determine which schemes will progress.

In particular, Mersey Gateway:

- Is a major economic driver delivering new jobs and increased economic opportunities which is a priority for government. An estimated 4,640 new jobs would be created through direct employment, regeneration activity and inward investment. It would also generate an estimated £61.9 million a year in Gross Value Added from new jobs by 2030;
- Is predominantly private sector funded (over 70% of the total costs);
- Is a "user pays" infrastructure proposition;
- Reduces the current carbon footprint generated by vehicles crossing the River Mersey;
- It provides a significant overall improvement in air quality particularly in Runcorn Old Town and West Bank;
- Offers excellent value for money for government and the public purse as it brings benefits four times greater than the cost
- Significantly enhances network resilience; and
- Significantly enhances regional resilience. It has recently been calculated that the economic cost to the north west of closing the SJB is £160,000 per hour at peak time.

Next Steps

The Mersey Gateway Team will now work with partners and advisers to revise the Mersey Gateway case and put this powerfully to government as part of the CSR process.

We are confident Mersey Gateway remains a very strong case for investment and will make this case powerfully and often to government.

We will also liaise with businesses – large and small – that have consistently and effectively

supported the case for Mersey Gateway. We will encourage businesses to use all their networks – political and other – to consistently reinforce the positive and important case for Mersey Gateway.

The Public will also have an important role to play in reinforcing the importance of Mersey Gateway to Halton and the North West of England.

We are also taking every opportunity to use all our political networks to reinforce the case for Mersey Gateway.

In Summary

- There remains a very strong and powerful case for Mersey Gateway.
- We must all continue to reinforce this message.
- The CSR will report in the autumn (20th October) of this year.
- We remain confident but not complacent
- Mersey Gateway will receive government support in the autumn and will be delivered.

We will continue to keep you advised on progress on this vitally important project for Halton and the North West.

SJB maintenance

The Scheme: The SJB is a Grade 2 listed, largely steel structure opened in 1961 and now approximately 50 years old. The bridge was widened in 1977 in order to increase its capacity to 65,000 vehicles per day (vpd) but currently

the bridge operates at flows that can exceed 90,000 vpd, considerably in excess of its design capacity. The bridge and the associated complex of approach structures, function as both a local and strategic link.

Prior to 1998 Local Government Reorganisation there had been significant underfunding of the maintenance of the Silver Jubilee Bridge and its adjacent structures. As a result, HBC recognised that there was a need to address this neglect as a matter of priority.

This culminated in the preparation of a 10-year maintenance strategy document which identified, costed and programmed the structural maintenance activity necessary to bring the condition of the structures to a steady state of maintenance.

The scale of work involved to address the maintenance backlog was so great that it fell within the DfT's definition of a Major Scheme.

Maintaining the availability of the SJB is critical to the local area, the Liverpool City Region and beyond. This impacts heavily on how and when the work can be undertaken. The first LTP capital settlement included a major maintenance scheme for SJB, initially for £6.3m. As reported in successive APR's, expenditure on the major scheme increased to over £9m spent on essential structural maintenance, much of which involved innovative and groundbreaking engineering. The parapets have been brought up to modern standards, the concrete deck has been completely repaired and waterproofed, the expansion joints have been replaced and a completely new running surface installed. The extension to the major scheme will include similar specialist items of work, e.g. concrete repairs and cathodic protection.

With such high traffic flows and lack of an alternative route, closures have to be restricted to only two lanes at any one time and to overnight and/or weekends, (the SJB carries a 4 lane single carriageway). Inevitably this results in work taking longer and incurring significantly higher costs. Full closures are only considered overnight and for prolonged closures only on Sunday evenings.

Utilising experience gained in the initial stages of maintaining the bridge, a revised 10 year maintenance strategy was developed and included with the 2004 Annual Progress Report submission. This has identified significant further works required to bring the bridge and complex to a sustainable steady state of maintenance.

The initial Mersey Gateway commercial submission, at the request of the DfT, included an option to fund SJB maintenance through the Mersey Gateway PFI. The Mersey Gateway will provide the essential alternative strategic route to permit the more complex structural maintenance works to be undertaken without lengthy and disruptive lane closures. It may also be necessary to impose temporary weight restrictions during some structural repair works.

With Mersey Gateway, there would not be the need to carry out major works in a piecemeal manner in order to limit closures. This would yield significant time and cost savings on maintaining the SJB structures. An integral feature of the Mersey Gateway scheme is the re-configuration of SJB to a local function with two vehicle lanes and improved provision for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. This is likely to result in parts of the approach viaducts and other associated structures becoming redundant.

The benefit of including future maintenance of

SJB in the Mersey Gateway PFI concession has been explored. The marketability of this approach will be greatly enhanced by undertaking all high priority structural maintenance works in the years of LTP3 and providing an enhanced inspection regime. This approach will coincide with the planned opening of Mersey Gateway towards the end of the LTP3 period. Under a combined PFI the successful bidder would be able to plan SJB maintenance works around the future availability of the alternative route of the Mersey Gateway.

There is not a “Do Nothing” maintenance option, if the Silver Jubilee Bridge is to continue carrying out its current functions. Should the Gateway scheme not gain entry into the programme, then at some point in the future lengthy lane closures and possibly weight restrictions will be inevitable in order to carry out essential work. Without an alternative route being made available, this would have significant impacts on accessibility, regeneration and the economy both locally and across the Liverpool City Region.

During the period of LTP2 (plus late LTP1) the following significant progress has been made in delivering the SJB maintenance programme:

- The final draft of the Major Maintenance Scheme Bid was formally submitted to DfT on 08 March 2006 and comprised a bid for funding over a 10 year period totalling £42.7m (excluding optimism bias);
- In late 2007, as part of the DfT's LTP announcement, it was confirmed that HBC had been awarded PRN Grant funding totalling £14.3m for the years commencing 2008/09 which in addition to other funding sources would allow them to address the

first three years of work included in the maintenance strategy;

- 2010/11 is the final year of PRN Grant funding and delivery of the programme of work through the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership with Balvac Ltd is ongoing;
- By the end of 2010/11, through PRN Grant and Highway Maintenance Block funding we will have completed a significant programme of major maintenance works. Some of the more significant achievements are listed as follows:
 - a) SJB – Major painting, structural steelwork repairs, reinforced concrete deck repairs and installation of cathodic protection for the soffit of the entire suspended span;
 - b) SJB – Major painting of all above deck level steelwork in both Runcorn and Widnes end spans;
 - c) SJB – Major painting, structural steelwork repairs, reinforced concrete deck repairs and installation of cathodic protection in the Runcorn spandrel area;
 - d) SJB – Installation of protective wrapping and other measures for the hanger cables on both elevations of the SJB;
 - e) SJB – Completion of Principal Bridge Inspection of the entire suspended span below deck and all structural steelwork above deck;
 - f) SJB – Complete refurbishment of overhead inspection gantries;
 - g) Widnes Approach Viaduct – Completion of deck waterproofing, joint replacement & resurfacing;
 - h) Widnes Approach Viaduct – Completion of outstanding below deck concrete repairs;
 - i) Runcorn Approach Viaduct - Deck waterproofing, joint replacement &

- resurfacing;
- j) Hutchinson's Sidings Bridge - Deck waterproofing, joint replacement & resurfacing;
- k) Station Road Bridge & Footbridge – Strengthening of Piers to accommodate impact loading;
- l) Weston Village Bridge - Strengthening of Piers to accommodate impact loading, deck waterproofing, joint replacement & resurfacing; and
- m) Desoto Road Railway Bridge – Major painting and refurbishment

- HBC therefore revised the Bid in the context of the work which the Grant and Block funding have allowed us to address. This involved rationalising the remaining programme of work in the context of more detailed condition information available and also reviewing the economic appraisal and value for money assessment;
- This review of the remaining element of the programme reduced the Bid's funding profile over a five year period to £18.6m total (excluding optimism bias);
- The Secretary of State granted Full Approval to the SJB Major Maintenance Scheme in late March 2010 although this was subsequently advised as being subject to review following the May 2010 change in Government; however
- In June 2010 DfT confirmed that the SJB Major Maintenance Scheme was not subject to cancellation or suspension and HBC is gearing up to deliver the remainder of the works required to complete the Maintenance Strategy programme commencing in 2011/12.

Halton Curve

This scheme is supported by Halton Borough Council as it will benefit the community and reduce, to some degree, trips across the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Whilst the scheme is within Halton, the main benefits of the scheme will be gained in Merseyside and therefore the scheme is being promoted by Merseytravel.

Scheme: The Halton Curve connects the Chester-Warrington Line with the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline (WCML). The local passenger service Chester-Runcorn-Liverpool was withdrawn in the mid 1970's. The track infrastructure was retained as a diversionary route with only a weekly train service that is operated in the summer on Saturdays. Subsequent decisions taken to reduce renewal costs resulted in the Halton Curve being reduced to single track with points and signalling only operating in the Liverpool direction. In its current form, the line is of limited use to either passengers or freight. The proposed scheme involves the reinstatement of the points at Halton and Frodsham junctions with some upgrade to the track. The scheme has been developed in partnership with Merseytravel, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the TAITH consortium of North Wales authorities. The partnership together with Network Rail, believe that with the improvements, the Halton Curve could be operated to allow the provision of a new frequent local passenger train service that would serve Liverpool Lime Street – Liverpool South Parkway – Runcorn – Frodsham – Helsby – Chester and then onwards to North Wales. The Halton Curve could also assist with freight movements.

The provision of a new station at Beechwood on the Halton Curve and the reopening of Ditton Station are being considered as part of the proposals. The enhancement of the train service from Ellesmere Port to Helsby and then onto Runcorn and Liverpool is also under consideration in the proposals.

Strategic Fit: The improvements to Halton Curve would help to reduce the demand for travel across the Silver Jubilee Bridge and as such would help to address the acute problems of congestion. In addition, the scheme would increase rail accessibility both within Halton and also to the wider region, by providing a direct link between Liverpool and North Wales. In addition, the scheme would be supportive of the development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

Current Position: A Demand Study (business case) was completed in 2009 and considered the following issues:

Options for new services using the Halton Curve;

- Options for services between Ellesmere Port and Helsby;
- Possible new stations at Beechwood and Ditton;
- Possible improved connections at Chester;
- Improved access to Daresbury Business Parks; and
- Opportunities for rail freight.

The options considered for Halton Curve were:

- Option 1 – An hourly service between Liverpool Lime St – Runcorn – Chester (stopping at all stations)
- Option 2 – As Option 1 plus extending the service to Wrexham General
- Option 3 – As Option 1 plus extending the service to Llandudno Junction
- Option 4 – As Option 1 but with a half hourly service

The benefits to cost ratios (BCR) for each option are as follows:

Option	BCR
1	1.5
2	1.9
3	1.3
4	1.7

Note: a BCR of 2 or more represents high value for money.

Historically an hourly service operated between Helsby, Ellesmere Port and Hooton. Following the extension of the electrified Merseyrail network from Hooton to Ellesmere Port in 1994 the service between Helsby and Ellesmere Port has been greatly reduced. Although stakeholders would wish to see this service reinstated BCRs for options considered are between 0.1 and 0.4.

In terms of BCRs for the station options:

- Beechwood, Runcorn – single platform on a single track (passive provision for passing loop)
 - ½ hourly service BCR 1.7;
 - Hourly service BCR 1.1.
- Ditton, Widnes – new or replacement station
 - ½ hourly service BCR 1.0;
 - Hourly service BCR 0.8.

Options were investigated to link up the existing Merseyrail services on the Wirral Line services to Chester with onward services using the Halton Curve. The optimum option is to have a service every 15 minutes between Liverpool and Chester.

The demand study looked at the wider issue of possible bus links from existing railway stations in

Halton and Warrington to the Daresbury Business Parks. This area includes:

- Daresbury Laboratory;
- The Cockcroft Institute;
- Daresbury Innovation Campus; and
- Daresbury Park.

Options also included a brief assessment of a new railway station at Daresbury on the Chester to Manchester line and/or the West Coast Main Line, refer to Passenger Rail Strategy. The study concluded that in the short term a bus service from existing stations may be more effective; however a new station could be viable in the longer term as the developments become operational.

The Demand Study indicates that Halton Curve would have limited benefit for rail freight, however as Network Rail move towards a 24/7 railway the curve could offer a useful diversionary route at times when the West Coast Main Line between Weaver Junction and Crewe may be closed.

The Halton Curve proposal had not achieved 'Programme Entry' prior to the general election and therefore it is unlikely to receive major scheme funding from Government in the short term. The partnership however will progress the scheme through the planning process and consider other sources of funding.



