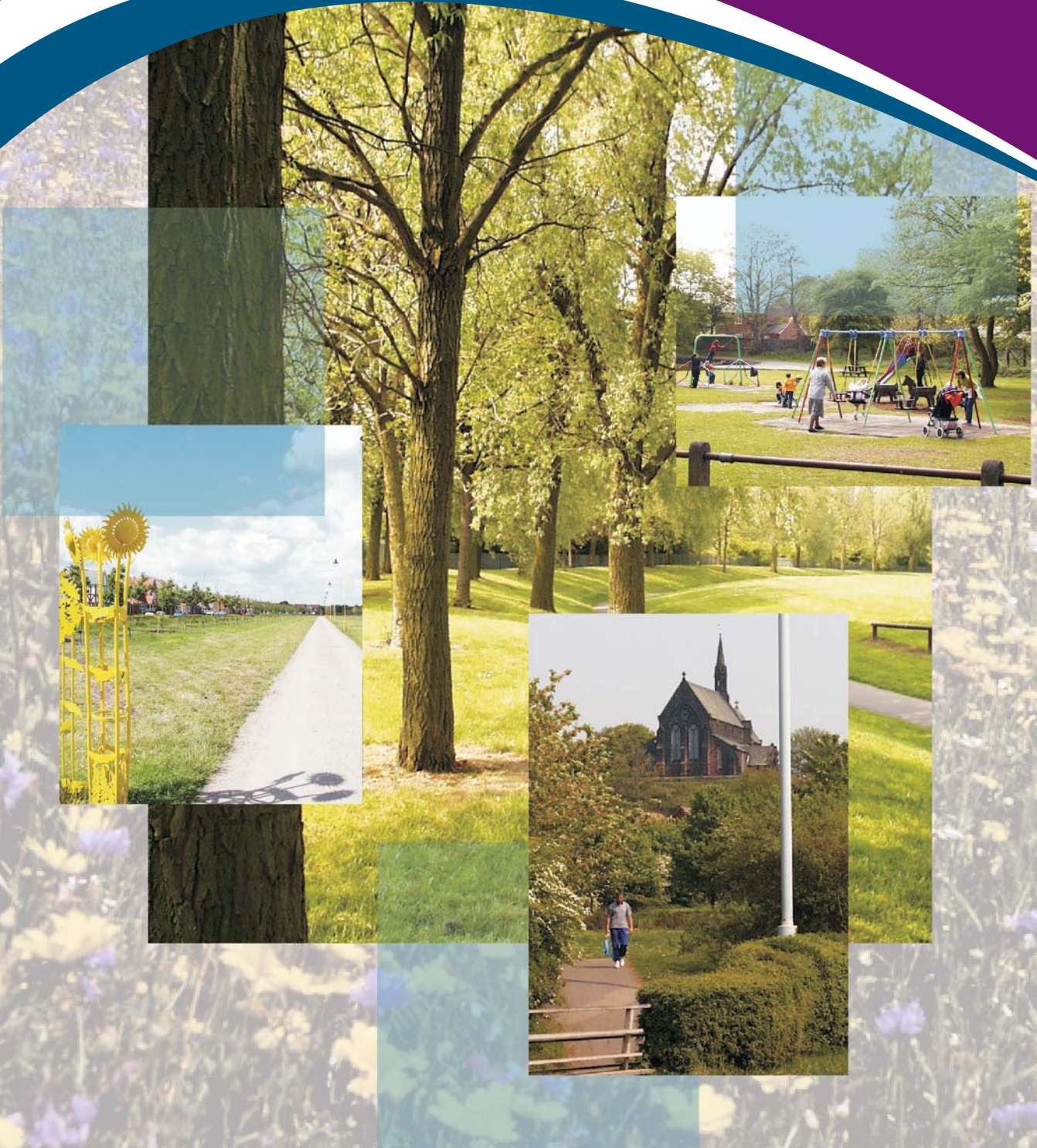




Provision of Open Space

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal
August 2006



Halton Borough Council

Provision of Open Space Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainability Appraisal Report

Public Consultation
August 2006

Presented for public consultation
between 3rd August 2006 and 14th September 2006

to: Operational Director – Environmental Health and Planning
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I Summary and outcomes

Non-technical summary

- 1.1 This document contains the information relating to the appraisal of the draft Provision of Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in relation to how it contributes to meeting environmental, social and economic objectives. Put simpler, this document assesses how the SPD contributes towards achieving development that ensures a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. The technical name for this document is a Sustainability Appraisal or SA for short. The SA is required to be produced because of new government guidance and legislation relating to the planning system.
- 1.2 The objectives that are used to test the SPD, to find out if it contributes towards achieving sustainability, have been taken from documents that identify the sustainability priorities of the local community. The main source for objectives is the Community Strategy; this was produced in close consultation with the people of Halton. The remaining objectives have been taken from the Sustainability Framework for the North West, which is produced by the North West Regional Assembly. This document also reflects the sustainability priorities of the people who live and work in the North West because it was based on consultation.
- 1.3 The objectives that are used to test the sustainability of the SPD are set out in a table (Appendix A), this table is called the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF). This table sets out how the council will measure each of the objectives to see if quality of life in Halton is improving. Early this year, in advance of producing the full SA, the Council asked a number of bodies if they agreed with the objectives that we included in the SAF. These bodies agreed with us, all their comments and how the Council responded is set out in a table (Appendix B).
- 1.4 At the same time as asking these bodies about the SAF, we also asked if they agreed with us if we needed to produce a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the SPD. The SEA is like an SA but looks in more detail at the effects that the SPD could have on the environment. SEA is required by a European Directive on plans and programs that could have a significant effect on the environment. The Council made an initial screening of whether a full SEA was needed to be produced, and decided it was not. The bodies agreed with us.
- 1.5 The Council then tested the draft SPD against the objectives in SAF, to appraise if the SPD contributes to achieving sustainability. This is set out in a table (Appendix D). The appraisal recognises that the SPD is supplementary policy and will not make dramatic changes to the way that we live, but will make small changes to the way buildings and places are designed. Therefore the SPD will not significantly affect any of the environmental, social or economic objectives set out in the SAF.
- 1.6 Overall the appraisal shows that the SPD will have a positive effect upon the contribution towards achieving sustainability, but there are many objectives that are difficult to test the SPD against because the Council is unsure how the SPD will affect those objectives. The appraisal also tells us that the positive effects will mainly only be seen in the longer term because the SPD will make gradual changes to places over many years as new development happens.
- 1.7 This SA is not the end of the process, if you think that the appraisal has missed something out, or hasn't properly realised the effect that the SPD could have on a particular objective, then let us know by following the instructions in section 1.3. A final SA, which includes all the

comments received on this appraisal, will be published alongside the SPD when it is adopted.

- 1.8 Sources of further information about the process and purpose of Sustainability Appraisals can be found in Appendix F.

Statement on the difference the process has made

- 1.9 Although the scope of the SPD is not significant, it is supplementary policy, providing practical guidance in relation to policies contained within Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP), the SA process has made a valuable contribution to the process of producing the SPD. Firstly it focused attention at the pre-production scoping stage to identify the key areas that the SPD needed to address. This was achieved through the analysis of baseline information. This process has helped to shape the purpose of the SPD, which has provided a strong foundation upon which the rest of the SPD has been constructed.
- 1.10 By testing the SPD against the SAF it has helped to recognise the limitations of the SPD and how these might be overcome through additional planning policies or by other means (such as the need for better training within the planning section to understand 'design' better). The 'testing' process has also enabled those within the forward planning team who were not responsible for the SPD's production to challenge those officer's who did produce it. This has helped create a sharper more responsive SPD focused upon its purpose and contributing to achieving sustainability. The SA process has made a real difference to help ensure a quality end product.

How to comment on the Appraisal

- 1.11 If you would like to make comments on the SA or the SPD, which it has been

produced to appraise, please complete one of the representation forms, which can be obtained from places of inspection, from the Council's website or by contacting the forward planning section. Representations may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specific address of the adoption of the SPD and hence the publishing of the final SA. The formal period of public participation in relation to the SPD and this SA, commences on 3rd August 2006, for a six week period until 14th September 2006.

2 Sustainability Appraisal Rationale

Approach adopted to the SA

- 2.1 The methodology selected to be applied within this SA has been chosen to ensure that the SPD is tested against the most appropriate sustainability criteria. The methodology of the SA has therefore been drawn from the priorities, objectives and targets of the Community Strategy. In addition these objectives have been complemented with a number of broader sustainability objectives drawn mainly from the regional sustainability framework - Action for Sustainability, produced by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA). In some instances these objectives have been amended to take account of Merseyside sub-regional issues and objectives. The objectives, their indicators and other information is set out in the SAF, which is contained in Appendix A.
- 2.2 The approach adopted was consulted upon as part of the Pre-Production Scoping Report. This consisted of consultation with the four statutory SEA bodies (English Nature, English Heritage, Countryside Agency and Environment Agency) and other stakeholders. Only minor comments in relation to the approach adopted were made; the fundamental approach being taken was not challenged. These comments are set out in Appendix B.
- 2.3 The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) monitors the improvement targets, set within the Community Strategy, annually. Similarly most of the regionally derived objectives are monitored by the NWRA. It will therefore be possible to assess the impact of this SPD against the appropriate targets, although obviously this will be within the context of other factors affecting the targets. The monitoring can also be seen to be independent as it is conducted by the LSP and NWRA, the

former is subject to the scrutiny of the LSP board. This approach offers the most realistic means for monitoring the impact of this SPD.

- 2.4 It is our intention that the objectives, targets and indicators that form the SAF within this document will be broadly consistent throughout all sustainability appraisals that the Council undertakes.

When the SA was carried out?

- 2.5 The SA process began in July 2005 with the production of the SA Pre-Production Scoping Report; this document was consulted upon between 29th September 2005 and 3rd November 2005. The responses to the Pre-Production Scoping Report were considered and have informed and lead to the production of this document. The SA process has been an integral part of the production of the SPD, and has been prepared to enable its publication to coincide with the public consultation on the draft Provision of Open Space Supplementary Planning Document.

Who carried out the SA?

- 2.6 Halton Borough Council has conducted the entire process of the production of the SA, with consultation at the appropriate stages with statutory consultation bodies (for the SA and SEA process) and other stakeholders as necessary. This approach was felt to be commensurate to the intended purpose of the SPD. Responses to the Pre-Production Scoping Report, particularly those from the statutory consultation bodies, acknowledged the scope of the SPD and did not raise any significant issues that would deem it necessary for the SA to be produced externally / more independently. To ensure a degree of

independence in the production of the SA and the assessment of the effects of the SPD, the SA has been prepared by a member of the Planning & Policy section who was not directly involved in the production of the SPD itself.

Who was consulted, when and how?

2.7 The scope of the SA was formally consulted upon between 29th September 2005 and 3rd November 2005. The consultation was targeted at those who the Council felt were best placed to further shape the SA process and the purpose of the proposed SPD. A list of those consulted, their comments and the how these have been addressed in the SA is contained in Appendix B.

3 Background

Purpose of the SA process and the SA Report

3.1 The Provision of Open Space SPD will form part of the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF). This document will not form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Halton. To be able to be formally adopted as part of the Halton LDF, the process of forming the SPD must comply with Part Five of The Town And Country (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Part Five requires the production of a SA for SPDs. The purpose of preparing a SA is to encourage sustainable development, through improved integration of sustainability considerations throughout the preparation and adoption of land use plans and policies.

Purpose of Provision of Open Space SPD (Draft)

3.2 The purpose of the Provision of Open Space SPD (draft) is to complement the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The intended purpose of the proposed Provision Of Open Space SPD is to complement those policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) that recognise the importance of open space within the borough. Added to this it will provide a stimulus for the enhancement in quantity, quality and accessibility of all types of open space within the borough. Specifically it will help provide: -

- a) Networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, and are fit for purpose and

economically and environmentally sustainable.

- b) An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision.
- c) Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the financial requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space, sport and recreation provision from new residential developments.

3.3 The intended geographical coverage of the SPD is therefore Borough wide.

Compliance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations

3.4 In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004, the SA Pre-Production Scoping Report included a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening statement. The Council's intermediate determination of the statement was that the proposed SPD was unlikely to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly does not require a SEA to be produced. The four statutory agencies (English Nature, Environment Agency, English Heritage and Countryside Agency) were consulted as part of the pre-production scoping stage and they agreed with the Council's intermediate determination (Appendix B).

3.5 Therefore a formal determination can be made that the Provision of Open Space Supplementary Planning Document is

unlikely to have significant environment effects and accordingly does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The screening statement from which this determination has been made is set out in Appendix C of this SA.

4 Sustainability objectives, baseline and context

Links to other strategies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives

- 4.1 In producing the UDP the Council considered and took account of relevant plans and programmes as the plan progressed. In relation to the proposed SPD a number of specific relationships and issues can be identified.

National Planning Statements

- 4.2 PPG 17: Planning For Open Space, Sport & Recreation (2002) states that authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreation facilities. This will enable them to set local standards to guide future provision. In addition Local authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity or quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs.

Regional Spatial Strategy & Sustainability Framework

- 4.3 Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), which is now by virtue of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), contains seven key objectives of which, the two most relevant are;
- To ensure active management of the regions environmental and cultural assets;
 - To secure a better image for the region and high environmental and design quality.
- 4.4 Policy DP2 states that local authorities should, in writing policy, set out clearly the means, including planning obligations and conditions and the phasing of programming of development by which any necessary

compensation, mitigation of substitution is to be achieved.

- 4.5 Action for Sustainability is the North West Regional Sustainability Framework; it is produced by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA), the main goal of the framework is to improve the quality of life within the region.

Unitary Development Plan

- 4.6 The Halton Unitary Development Plan (adopted 7th April 2005) has policies that are related to this proposed SPD in both of its two parts.

- 4.7 Part I, strategic aims that are directly related to the SPD include the protection and enhancement of environmental and cultural assets, achieved by maintaining a sustainable balance between development, conservation and by protecting and improving recreation and leisure amenities.

4.8 Strategic policies state the importance of promoting linkages through greenspace systems, improving greenspace of poor quality and creating new greenspace in areas of deficiency. This is justified by the fact that open space of all kinds can not only provide a buffer between different land uses but it is also an important recreational and environmental resource.

4.9 Part I of the UDP also promotes the use of planning conditions and planning obligations to compensate, mitigate and substitute areas where a development has caused an exacerbation in deficiencies in infrastructure or environmental capital.

- 4.10 Part 2 UDP policies are used to implement those policies and aims set out in part I. In

particular, Green Environment policies deal with the provision and enhancement of open space and recreational land. Added to this, Housing chapter policy, H3 states the requirement for open space provision from new residential development – that is, for all new dwellings there should be sufficient recreational greenspace to meet the local needs of the people living there.

4.11 The fact that the definition of open space can be segregated into various typologies means that there are several other policies relevant to this SPD, an example of this is policy TP9 THE GREENWAY NETWORK which aims to protect and enhance this type of open space.

Community Strategy & Corporate Plan

4.12 The intended SPD will be produced to contribute to the priorities, principles, objectives and targets of the Halton Community Strategy, 2006 to 2011. This strategy co-ordinates the resources of the local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes.

4.13 The Strategy identifies ‘A Healthy Halton’, ‘Halton’s Urban Renewal’ and ‘A Safer Halton’ as three of five priorities. Within this there are a great number of objectives particularly relevant to the intended SPD. Some of these include: To promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public, sustain individual good health and well being, and help prevent illness, to promote sustainable development; to improve the overall image of the Borough in order to attract regenerative investment; to ensure a high quality of attractiveness and maintenance of the public realm; to remodel and extend key open spaces to provide a better network of high quality recreational open spaces, to ensure high quality design and landscaping throughout the borough and ensure progressive and sustainable environmental improvements in all areas of the Borough reflecting the priorities of the public.

Description of the social, environmental and economic baseline characteristics and the predicted future baseline

4.14 The baseline information for the proposed SPD, can be put into two categories. Firstly, information relating to specific issues that the intended SPD is proposed to contribute towards such as promoting a healthy living environment; and secondly, other generic sustainability baseline information that is consistently applied as a baseline to all appraisals within Halton.

Generic sustainability baseline information

4.15 The Council has identified a range of generic sustainability baseline information that it feels needs to be considered with all SA applied to land use plans and policies. This baseline information relates closely to the sustainability issues identified in the following section. Appendix A outlines the generic baseline information.

Predicted future baseline information

4.16 The current generic baseline information set out in Appendix A will continue to be used until such a time as it is felt a review of the baseline is required. Situations that may require the baseline information to be reviewed could include

- a new baseline information emerging that better reflects the current objectives in the sustainability framework,
- b changes to the objectives in the sustainability framework, and
- c direction from a consultation body that baseline information needs amending.

4.17 It is felt that the current generic baseline information represents a competent rational for assessing the sustainability issues that are relevant to Halton and the wider area, specific baseline information to

assess the effect of the proposed SPD. Therefore information relating to specific issues that the intended SPD is proposed to contribute towards were used for the function of establishing the purpose of the proposed SPD and its draft content.

Difficulties in collecting data and limitations of the data

4.18 The existing baseline information, which is contained within the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF) contains some omissions, this is because presently targets, base dates and figures, and sources have not been established for some indicators. This is largely due to the difficulties associated with accurate data collection such as the information being out of date and the reliance on external bodies collecting the data. Reliance on external bodies may also result in some baseline data not being collected in the future.

The SA Framework, including objectives, targets and indicators

4.19 In determining an appropriate SA approach to apply to this SPD, it is important to draw upon sources that identify those sustainability issues that are relevant to Halton and the wider area. This can be achieved by identifying issues that are:

- a based upon sound quantitative analysis; and
- b involved extensive community participation in setting sustainability priorities.

4.20 There are two sources that identify sustainability issues relevant to Halton that meet criteria a) and b) above. The sources selected are the Sustainability Framework for the North West – Action for Sustainability, produced by the North West Regional Assembly

(NWRA), and the Halton Community Strategy. The rationale for selecting these two sources was addressed in section 2.1 within this report.

4.21 These two sources identify the following sustainability issues as being important to the North West and Halton.

Action for Sustainability

4.22 The NWRA adopted, Action for Sustainability (AfS) in 2000, which is currently being updated. It recognises that the path to true sustainable development involves tough, often controversial choices. The sustainability framework aims to establish a firm foundation for sound, balanced decision-making that takes the region's economic, environmental and social needs into full account. The AfS was developed through a consultation exercise involving 600 individuals and organisations, a draft was then distributed across the region and to key national organisations. In all 1200 copies were distributed. From this, ten priorities for AfS to address were identified and a vision for 2020 established.

4.23 The AfS has a vision for 'A North West that embraces sustainable development as the sound foundation for delivering an improved quality of life for the people of the region and across the world'.

4.24 The vision has been translated into a number of priorities and long term goals for the North West:

- **Sustainable transport and access**, reducing the need to travel and allowing access for all to places, goods and services;
- **Sustainable production and consumption**, ensuring that energy and resources are used both efficiently and effectively by all;

- **Social equity** that respects, welcomes and celebrates diversity and allows all communities and generations a representative voice;
- **Biodiversity and landscapes** that are valued in themselves and for their contribution to the region's economy and quality of life;
- **Active citizenship** that empowers people and enables them to contribute to issues that affect the wider community;
- A culture of **lifelong learning** that allows people to fulfil their duties and potential in a global society by acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding;
- **Cultural distinctiveness**, nurturing and celebrating our diversity to create a vibrant and positive image;
- An active approach to reducing our contribution to **climate change** whilst preparing for potential impacts;
- **Healthy communities** where people enjoy life, work and leisure and take care of themselves and others; and
- **Enterprise and innovation**, harnessing the region's educational and scientific resources and the creative and entrepreneurial skills of its people to achieve sustainable solutions.

4.25 These in turn have been translated into a number of regional sustainability objectives. These objectives have been developed so that every organisation, business and individual can take ownership of them and take them into account in their actions.

Halton Community Strategy 2006 – 2011

4.26 The Community Strategy (CS) for Halton was developed by Halton's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) - the Halton Strategic Partnership Board. The Halton Community Strategy 2006 to 2011 has been selected as it offers the most robust framework for testing the extent that this SPD contributes towards

achieving sustainable development within Halton because:

- a The CS was produced in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. Part I (4) of the Act states that "Every local authority must prepare a strategy (known commonly as a Community Strategy) for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom" Therefore the priorities, objectives and targets contained within the CS seek to achieve and monitor progress towards achieving sustainable development;
- b One of the stated guiding principles of the Strategy is "Improving the quality of life for today's Halton residents without jeopardising that of future generations and enhancing the biodiversity of the area". Therefore if this SPD has negative implications for the priorities, objectives and targets contained within the CS, it would by virtue have negative implications for seeking to achieve sustainable development; and
- c The CS was developed with a clear rationale, based on quantitative evidence (contained in the 'State of the Borough' report) and through the involvement of the community. Involvement of the community is achieved through the membership of Halton Strategic Partnership Board that brings together representatives from all sectors of life in the Borough; and through the community consultation process that helped shape the CS. This ensures that the priorities, objectives and targets within the strategy provide a SA methodology framework that is relevant to the community, with realistic quantitative and qualitative targets set.

4.27 The Vision of the CS is "Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people enjoy a good quality of life with:

- good health;
- a high quality, modern urban environment;
- opportunity for all to fulfil their potential;
- greater wealth and equality; and
- safe and attractive neighbourhoods."

4.28 The CS sets the strategic direction through until 2005/6 by identifying a number of priorities for improving the quality of life in Halton Borough, centred around five strategic priorities:

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Halton's Children & Young People
- Employment, Learning & Skills In Halton
- A Safer Halton

4.29 The CS and AfS set out the sustainability issues and accompanying targets appropriate to this SPD. These are outlined in Appendix A. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF) has been tested against itself and the proposed purpose and principles of the intended SPD. At this stage it is not envisaged that there is any conflict between the objectives. No weighting has been apportioned to any one of the SA objectives, as no priority is considered more important than another.

Main social, environmental and economic issues and problems identified

4.30 The SAF (Appendix A) has been produced to reflect the main social, environmental and economic issues and problems identified through consultation with the people of Halton, supplemented by broader sustainability issues identified through regional consultation (as discussed throughout this report).

4.31 The Halton Borough Council Open Space Assessment 2005 identifies several issues in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. At this juncture however they are too numerous and detailed to mention so will be covered within the SPD.

4.32 In determining an appropriate SA approach to apply to this SPD, it is important to draw upon sources that identify those sustainability issues that are relevant to Halton and the wider area. This can be achieved by identifying issues that are based upon sound quantitative analysis; and / or involved extensive community participation.

4.33 The key sustainability issues for Halton and the wider area include:

- **Unemployment** - 'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- **Disparity in employment** - 'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- **Access to employment** - State of the North West Economy (Subregional Report) (Oct 2004)
- **The need to raise the levels of education & skills** - The State of the Borough (Jan 2005)
- **The need to foster enterprise and entrepreneurship** - The State of the Borough (Jan 2005)
- **Reliance on a narrow economic base and low wage economy** - 'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- **The need to improve the economy** - The State of the Borough (Jan 2005)
- **The need to revitalise the town centres** – Community Strategy (2006)
- **The image of the Borough** - 'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity' 2005-2008
- **The need to improve health & life expectancy** - North West Public Health Observatory & Community Strategy (2006)
- **Long-term ill** – 2001 Census & Community Strategy (2006)

- **Ageing residents & the need to grow the health-care sector** – Department of Health
- **Perception of crime levels and fear of crime** - 'Quality of Life Survey' of 1999
- **Increased demand for affordable housing** - Land Registry and Housing Needs Study
- **Providing an appropriate and balanced housing supply** – Draft Housing Strategy 2005/06 to 2007/08
- **Providing appropriate sites to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers** - Circular 01-2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites'
- **Improve access to Services from the East of Runcorn** – Local Transport Plan 2
- **Improve access to Services in Widnes** – Local Transport Plan 2
- **Improve access to services to those who do not own cars**
- **Community facilities**
- **Amount, location and access to recreational space** - PMP Open Space study
- **Population** - Nomis
- **Deprivation** - 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
- **Water quality** – Environment Agency
- **Conserving biodiversity, habitats and species**- Securing The Future Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy
- **SSSI** - English Nature, April 2005
- **Waste Management** - Halton's Waste Management Strategy 2004
- **Transport congestion & pollution** - Local Transport Plan 2
- **Air quality** – Local Transport Plan 2
- **Design quality in development** - Housing Audit (CABE, 2005)
- **Protecting cultural & built heritage** – English Heritage (2005)
- **Obtaining energy from renewable sources** - Securing The Future - Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy
- **Requiring energy efficiency improvements** - Securing The Future -

Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy

- **Ensuring the most effective use of land** – Draft RSS (2006)
- **Water resources** - Securing The Future - Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy
- **Climate change** - Securing The Future - Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy
- **Industrial legacy** – Community Strategy (2006)

4.34 The issues highlighted blue are those issues which are considered to be of particular importance with regard to the proposed Provision of Open Space SPD.

5 Plan issues and options

Main strategic options considered and how they were identified

- 5.1 Three strategic options for delivering the purpose of the draft SPD were considered. These were identified and considered as part of the Pre-Production Scoping Report to this SA. This approach was taken as it was felt important that before the Council resources were committed to progressing the policy response selected to deliver the intended purpose of the SPD, the option selected was:
- a based on which would address the issues identified in the scoping report;
 - b most likely to contribute to achieving sustainable development, and
 - c supported by the statutory consultation bodies and other stakeholders.
- 5.2 In summary the options considered during the pre-production scoping stage were identified based on the preliminary purpose and geographical coverage of the intended SPD. Significantly the coverage of the SPD is borough wide and does not directly relate to an identified geographical area. The preliminary purpose and coverage were consulted upon, and neither has been amended as a result of responses to the consultation exercise. The comments received in relation to the Pre-Production Scoping Report consultation and the Council's responses are contained in Appendix B.
- 5.3 Therefore the preferred option identified and selected in the Pre-Production Scoping Report is the option appraised within this SA. For comprehensiveness the options considered at that stage in the process are contained in Appendix E.

How social, environmental and economic issues were considered in comparing the options and choosing

the preferred option.

- 5.4 As stated in 5.1 the purpose and coverage of the intended SPD were tested as part of the Pre-production Scoping Report and have not been amended as a result of the consultation exercise. The report included the formal screening exercise required by Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations. This exercise made an initial assessment of the characteristics of the proposed SPD, and its (environmental) effects, and of the area likely to be affected by it. This assessment demonstrated that the purpose and coverage of SPD would not have a significant environmental effect.
- 5.5 This process also contributed to identifying the limited scope of the SPD, that it will only provide additional practical guidance to policies that have already been scrutinised and consulted upon through the plan making process, which are adopted in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). This recognised that the UDP itself has been through the Sustainability Appraisal process. The screening process identified that the purpose of the SPD is to promote sustainable development by creating a more pleasant, healthier and safer environment. The statutory SEA bodies and other stakeholders have agreed with the Council's conclusions during the screening process.
- 5.6 The preferred option for delivering the purpose of the intended SPD has been established and tested through the Pre-Production Scoping Report, it is recognised as contributing to achieving sustainability and that its scope is only to provide additional practical guidance. This is felt to represent a sufficient scrutiny of comparison of the options identified. It also establishes that the preferred option that has been selected is commensurate to the scope of the intended SPD.

Other options considered, and why these were rejected

5.7 This was established and consulted upon as part of the Pre-Production Scoping report. The relevant extract is contained in Appendix E.

Proposed mitigation measures

5.8 No proposed mitigation measures were considered necessary at this stage in the process, because of the scope of the SPD and its purpose of providing supplementary guidance to the adopted UDP.

6 Assessment of the social, environmental and economic effects of the draft Provision of Open Space SPD

Significant social, environmental and economic effects of the draft SPD

6.1 The Pre-Production Scoping Report, which incorporated the formal SEA screening statement, established that the intended SPD was unlikely to have a significant environmental effect. Additionally the screening statement established that the intended scope of the SPD will be to provide additional practical guidance to policies within the adopted UDP. Within the context of this, an assessment of the likely social, environmental and economic effects can be made to accompany the draft Provision of Open Space SPD. This assessment is set out in Appendix D.

6.2 The assessment tests the likely effects that the proposed SPD will have on the social, environmental and economic objectives set out within the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF). These objectives relate to the indicators derived from the Halton Community Strategy and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West. This ensures that the SPD is tested against local and regional priorities, as stated in section 2.1 of this SA. The SAF was established in the Pre-Production Scoping Report and is contained in Appendix A.

Consideration of social, environmental and economic problems in developing the draft SPD

6.3 The pre-production stage enabled the identification of the social, environmental and economic problems relevant to Halton and to the intended

purpose of the SPD, this was mostly through the collection and analysis of baseline information. This process influenced the preliminary purpose of the SPD (which remains unchanged) and the preferred option to achieve its delivery. Additionally, the approach taken in relation to the SA, was also identified. These issues were 'tested' and consulted upon through the Pre-Production Scoping Report consultation. The out come of this consultation led to the production of the draft SPD which continued to take into account the relevant social, environmental and economic problems that could be addressed through the purpose of the SPD.

Proposed mitigation measures

6.4 No proposed mitigation measures were considered necessary after the testing of the SPD against the objectives contained within the SAF because the assessment did not identify any issues that could be suitably mitigated for. Additionally, the scope of the SPD and its purpose of providing supplementary practical guidance to the adopted UDP means that necessary policy checks are in place that afford greater protection to areas such as protected wildlife habitat, which the SPD is supplementary to.

Uncertainties and risks

6.5 The assessment of the likely effects that the proposed SPD will have on the social, environmental and economic objectives (as set out in Appendix D) identified that the effect of the SPD on

a number of objectives was difficult to determine. This creates a degree of uncertainty in relation to the effects of the SPD. Additionally, the incremental cumulative nature of the changes that the SPD will make to places is difficult to test and predict against the objectives in the SAF.

6.6 The long-term nature of influence of the SPD in terms of delivering its purpose will be difficult to assess, due to the influence of other factors in relation to health & quality of life.

7. Implementation

Links to other tiers of plans and programmes and the project level

- 7.1 The strategy for implementation of the proposed SPD, once adopted as a formal SPD will include Council Officer training in relation to the guidance set out in the SPD. This is to ensure that its purpose is achieved more consistently across the Borough. The SPD will also be actively signposted by relevant Officers to ensure that the development industry is fully aware of the content of the SPD, and take it into account within their proposals.
- 7.2 The Halton Local Development Scheme 2006 (LDS) also identifies a number of other SPDs that will be produced over the LDS period that will address matters in relation to design. These include the following SPD's: Design of New Residential Development and Transport and Accessibility. These SPDs will need to take into account the

guidance set out within the Provision of Open Space SPD to ensure a consistent policy approach towards design is maintained within the Halton Local Development Framework. As Development Plan Documents replace the Unitary Development Plan, it will be necessary to ensure that a suitable policy is provided to create the linkage through to the SPD.

Proposals for monitoring

- 7.3 The objectives, targets and indicators contained within the SAF will be monitored as part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report. This will bring together the monitored data from their source, such as the Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West monitoring report, and collect data deficits where appropriate.

Appendix A: Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Part I - Local Objectives				
SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
Local Social Objective 1: To promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public, sustain individual good health and well-being, and help prevent illness.				
Population & Human Health	Community Strategy - Improving Health	Life Expectancy at Birth	Narrow the gap between life expectancy at birth in Halton and the national average by at least 10% by 2010.	From birth onwards, women in Halton UA Authority can expect to live an average of 78.92 years and men to live an average of 73.83 years. This compares to a life expectancy of 80.4 for women and 75.8 for men for all England and Wales. (Source: North West Public Health Observatory, 2004)
Population & Human Health	Community Strategy - Improving Health	Death Rate	Reduce the overall death rate in Halton by 10% by 2010.	In 2001, the overall death rate in Halton PCT was 1033.97 for every 100,000 of the population compared to 1113.8 for the North West as a whole. (Source: North West Public Health Observatory, 2004)
Local Social Objective 2: Reassure the community and reduce fear of crime.				
Population & Human Health	Community Strategy - Ensuring safe and attractive neighbourhoods	Fear of crime	Achieve a reduction in fear of crime as measured by public opinion surveys, with the people feeling more reassured in relation to community safety from Spring 2004	Annual Surveys show the fear of crime has reduced by 42% since 2000. (Source: Halton crime and community safety survey, reported in Halton Strategic

Part I- Local Objectives				
SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
			baseline.	Partnership Annual Report 20032004)
Local Social Objective 3: To maximise an individuals potential to increase their income.				
Social Inclusiveness	Community Strategy - Increasing Wealth and Equality	Index of Multiple Deprivation	Reduce the gap between average household income in Halton and the UK average by 3 points by 2010. This is a moving target as UK average may also change.	Gap closed by 4 points by 2003 (Source: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
Social Inclusiveness	Community Strategy - Increasing Wealth and Equality	Index of Multiple Deprivation	Improve Halton's ranking in Government Index of Multiple Deprivation to 40th by 2010.	Halton ranked 30th in 2004 index (Source: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
Local Economic Objective 1: To contribute towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate.				
Economic Development	Community Strategy - Enhancing Life Chances and Employment	Employment Rate	Reduce the unemployment rate in Halton to the regional average by 2006 current regional average 2.8%, Halton 3.8%. This is a moving target as regional average may also change.	Employment Rate (Working age) - 55.3% Unemployment rate (Working age) - 7.3% Economic Inactivity (Working age) - 40.4% (Source: Office of National Statistics, Labour Market Summary for Halton; March 2002 to February 2003, not seasonally adjusted)
Local Economic Objective 2: Remould and enhance the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn Halton Lea and Widnes Town Centre) and adjacent residential areas.				

Part I - Local Objectives				
SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
Economic Development	Community Strategy - Promoting Urban Renewal	Footfall	Increase the footfall through the town centres year on year.	Base and source to be determined.
Economic Development	Community Strategy - Promoting Urban Renewal	Average town centre rents	Increasing levels of rent from base rate.	Base and source to be determined.
Economic Development	Community Strategy - Promoting Urban Renewal	Vacancy rates	Decrease vacancy levels from base rate.	Base and source to be determined.
Local Economic Objective 3: To improve the overall image of the Borough in order to attract regenerative investment, by maximising attractiveness of waterfront areas and canals in particular.				
Economic Development	Community Strategy - Promoting Urban Renewal	Business Community Perceptions	Improve the appearance and perception of the area by 10%.	As measured by business community survey, base to be determined. (Source: Halton Strategic Partnership Annual Report)
Economic Development/ Cultural Heritage and Landscape/ Water and Soil	Community Strategy - Promoting Urban Renewal	Land Reclamation	Reclaim 40 hectares (of derelict or contaminated land by 2006).	From 1st April 2002. (Source: Halton Strategic Partnership Annual Report)
Local Environmental Objective 1: To bring about environmental improvements in all areas of the Borough reflecting the priorities of the public to improve public perceptions and attractiveness.				
Cultural Heritage and Landscape	Community Strategy Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Residents' Satisfaction	Raise the level of residents overall satisfaction with attractiveness of the neighbourhood/area where they live by 10% by 2006.	From 2002 baseline. (Source: residents survey conducted by Halton Strategic Partnership)

Part I- Local Objectives				
SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
Water and Soil	Community Strategy Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Percentage of total waste (in tonnage) recycled and or composted	Targets (percentage): 2004/05 13% Recycled 9% Composted 2005/06 15% Recycled 10% Composted 2006/07 15% Recycled 10% Composted.	2003/04 actual rates (percentage): - 11.92% Recycled 5.78% Composted. (Source: Halton Best Value Performance table 2004/05)
Cultural Heritage and Landscape/ Social Inclusion	Community Strategy Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	Seek to achieve annual targets as set out by various organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% in National Planning Policy Guidance 3 (PPG3) Housing • 55% Unitary Development Plan between 2002 – 2016. 	42% achieved in 2003/04. (Source: Best Value Performance Plan 2004/05)
Local Environmental Objective 2: To safeguard and improve air quality in Halton.				
Climatic Factors/ Air	Community Strategy - Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Air Quality	To meet all air quality objectives by the specified date, as set and amended by Department for Environment and Rural Affairs. Objectives are contained in the Air quality strategy for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; it can be viewed at - www.airquality.org.uk .	From 2004 baseline. (Source: DEFRA air quality data)
Local Environmental Objective 3: To promote an integrated transport system that balances the need for people and goods to move around, including improved accessibility to local services, whilst also reducing the adverse impact on local neighbourhoods and the environment from traffic pollution and noise.				

Part I - Local Objectives

SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
Population and Human Health/ Climatic Factors/ Air	Community Strategy - Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Bus Passenger Journeys (i.e. boarding's) per year in Halton	Increase bus patronage by 5% by 05/06.	2000/03 - 6,121,200. (Source: HBC Local Transport Plan Annual Progress report for 2002/03)
Population and Human Health/ Climatic Factors/ Air	Community Strategy - Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Journeys to work and school by bicycle and walking	Increase cycling to 6% of all journeys to work and 2% of all journeys to school by 05/06. Increase walking to 9% of all journeys to work and 55% of all journeys to school by 05/05.	00/01 - Cycling accounts for 3% of journeys to work and 1% of journeys to school 00/01 - Walking accounts for 7% of journeys to work and 50% of journeys to school. (Source: HBC Local Transport Plan Annual Progress report for 2002/03)
Population and Human Health/ Climatic Factors/ Air	Community Strategy - Ensuring Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in Halton	To reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in Halton to 80 (01/05 average).	1994 - 1998 average of 33 people killed or seriously injured on roads in Halton.

Part 2: Regional Objectives

SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
Regional Social Objective 1: To protect, enhance and manage the sub-region's rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets.				
Cultural heritage and landscape	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Number of listed Buildings on 'at Risk' Register	No target set at present.	Daresbury Hall, Daresbury Lane Grade II* Listed Building and in a Conservation Area - Condition classed as POOR which means a building or structure with deteriorating masonry and/or a leaking roof and/or defective rainwater goods, usually accompanied by rot outbreaks within and general deterioration of most elements of the building fabric, including external joinery; or where there has been a fire or other disaster which has affected part of the building and the priority level is A which means it is at Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed. · Undercroft of West Range, Norton Priory - Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Not Listed Condition classed as POOR which means a building or structure with deteriorating masonry and/or a leaking roof and/or defective rainwater goods, usually accompanied by rot outbreaks within and general

Part 2: Regional Objectives

SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
				deterioration of most elements of the building fabric, including external joinery; or where there has been a fire or other disaster which has affected part of the building and the priority level is C which means it faces slow decay; no solution agreed.(Source: English Heritage, Buildings at Risk Register 2003)
Regional Social Objective 2: To improve local access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.				
Social Inclusion	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Proportion of unfit private dwellings made fit or demolished as a result of direct action by Halton BC	Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.10% by 2004/05 • 9.20% by 2005/06 • 9.30% by 2006/07 	9.9% in 2002/03(Source: Halton Best Value Performance table 2004/05)
Social Inclusion	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Ratio between average price and average salary	Target not to be set.	2003/04 - average price to salary ratio of 4.9, compared to regional average of 5.3 (Source: land Registry and New earnings survey by NOMIS)
Social Inclusion	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) energy rating of LA owned dwellings	Targets (rating out of 100): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 by 2004/05 • 62.5 by 2005/06 • 63 by 2006/07 	61.69 in 2002/03. (Source: Halton Best Value Performance table 2004/05)
Regional Economic Objective 1: To improve educational achievement, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability.				

Part 2: Regional Objectives				
SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
Social Inclusion/ Economic Development	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Adult Education	Increase participation in adult community education programmes by 3% by 2005.	5.4% of population currently participating. (Source: Halton Best Value Performance table 2004/05)
Social Inclusion/ Economic Development	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Percentage of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent	Target to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 % by 2004/05 • 54% by 2005/06 • 56% by 2006/07 	2002/03 - 42.7%. (Source: Halton Best Value Performance table 2004/05)
Regional Economic Objective 2: To increase use of locally produced goods, foods and services.				
Economic Development	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	To be determined.	Target to be set.	Base and source to be determined.
Regional Environmental Objective 1: To increase the proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable sources.				
Air/ Climatic Factors/ Economic Development	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	To be determined.	Energy White Paper 2003 set a national target that 10% of the UK's electricity supply comes from renewable source by 2010; 15% by 2015 and 20% by 2020.	Base and source to be determined.
Regional Environmental Objective 2: To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of endangered species, habitats and sites of geological importance.				
Biodiversity, fauna and Flora/ Water and Soil	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Percentage of Halton Biodiversity Action Plan targets	No target to be set.	Base and source to be determined.

Part 2: Regional Objectives

SA/ SEA Topic	Objective Source	Indicator	Target	Baseline Data
		achieved.		
Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora/ Water and Soil	Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West	Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest	No target to be set.	Flood Brook Clough SSSI - 100% Unfavourable (no change) (Assessment 30/04/00). Mersey Estuary SSSI - 99.95% Favourable, 0.05% Unfavourable (recovering) (Assessment 03/07/03). Red Brow Cutting SSSI - 100% Favourable (Assessment 05/06/01). (Source: English Nature)

Appendix B: Statement of Consultation: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Assessment (SA) process

Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Provision of Open Space Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - Statement of Consultation

SA Pre-production Scoping Report (incorporating SEA screening statement): 29th September 2005 – 3rd November 2005 Date of consideration of representations: 3rd November 2005 – 5th December 2005.

Consultee	Date comments received and how responded	Comments	Response
Stephen Hedley – Countryside Agency	25 th October 2005 – Responded by Email	<p>Thank you for your letter dated 29 September 2005 addressed to my colleague Ken Burgess.</p> <p>We note that the document concludes that the SPD is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment, but otherwise we do not wish to comment on the document. This is simply an expression of our priorities at this time and, of course, should not be taken as indicating any lack of interest or implying either agreement with or objection to the statements in the document.</p>	
Judith Nelson – English Heritage	10 th October 2005 – Responded by letter	<p>I note your consultation set out in appendix A that SEA is not required and have no further comments to make on this.</p> <p>In terms of the SA and the section on baseline information it would be useful to highlight any historic environment considerations</p>	<p>Acknowledged</p> <p>No action required – the existing objectives are felt to cover this issue sufficiently in light of current resources. If suitable objectives,</p>

		<p>associated with existing or proposed new open space and its surroundings. Whilst there are no registered historic parks and gardens within the Borough there will be locally important parks and gardens or other open spaces with historic architectural interest. Additionally there will be open spaces in Conservation Areas which make an important contribution to the character and appearance; and there will be open space associated with archaeological sites. This would aid testing the SPD against the sustainability criteria particularly Regional Social Objective 1 as set out in Appendix C. This should be tailored to fit the purposes of this SPD in respect to locally important cultural, built environment and archaeological assets associated with new or existing open space.</p>	<p>accompanying targets and baseline information were supplied by a third party, then the Council would consider amending the sustainability appraisal framework.</p>
<p>Helen Barrett – Environment Agency</p>	<p>12th October 2005 – Responded by letter</p>	<p>The Agency fully supports the proposed SPD. Open spaces/green networks can provide habitats for many species as well as providing recreational use. It can also reduce the impact of flooding by providing permeable areas and therefore reducing runoff.</p> <p>Watercourse networks can provide opportunities to develop ‘green’ corridors and linkages. Whilst the Agency supports certain recreational use, the habitat type and conservation of watercourses must be considered, to ensure balance is achieved.</p> <p>The Agency agrees that an SEA is not needed as the SPD will have a positive effect on a strategic level.</p>	<p>Acknowledged</p> <p>Acknowledged</p> <p>Acknowledged</p>

		<p>Whilst the Agency supports in principal the draft goals, I would like to take this opportunity to recommend one or two changes to the wording of the framework – as mentioned in consultations on other SPD's.</p> <p><u>Local Environmental Objective 1</u></p> <p>An amendment should be made to the indicator of new homes on previously developed land. Rather than restricting the indicator to the number of new homes built, the Agency would rather see an indicator that shows the total area of land reclaimed and brought back into beneficial use for all land use purposes, including open space.</p> <p><u>Regional Environmental objective 1</u></p> <p>A suggestion for an indicator here is the use of BREEAM ratings. An increase in these provides a sustainable use of energy over a longer term.</p> <p><u>Regional Environmental Objective 2</u></p>	<p>Provision is made within the SA to allow amendments to the SAF. This provision is set out in paragraph 2.1 of the SA. One of the reasons for amendment to the SAF is that the Council receives direction from a consultation body that information within the framework needs amending. Although it would be advantageous to change the objective to reflect the views of the consultation body, presently it is not possible to monitor such an indicator without additional workload placed upon existing resources, and that the current indicators are appropriate for measuring the objective. If the consultation body can provide assistance to help monitor the proposed indicator then this could be added or replace an existing indicator.</p> <p>Please see comments relating to Local Environmental Objective 1, as above.</p>
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		<p>The Agency would like to see an amendment to the indicator which reflects the conditions of SSSI's.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to all designations/habitats rather than just one type.</p> <p>A suggestion could be an indicator that will measure the number and type of habitat lost to development. The Agency frequently meets with developers who often wish to culvert watercourses and in mitigation propose the creation of a pond. Whilst in numeric terms there may be no net loss of habitat (i.e. one stretch of watercourse lost but a new pond created) there could well be an overall loss in terms of biodiversity.</p>	<p>Please see comments relating to Local Environmental Objective 1, as above.</p>
Development Control – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Received	
Landscape Services – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Received	
Policy & Performance – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Received	
Economic Development – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Received	
Leisure & Community Services – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Received	

Parks & Countryside – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Recieved	
Sports & Recreation – Halton Borough Council		No Comments Recieved	

Appendix C: Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

CI Requirements of the SEA Regulations

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004 (from now on referred to as 'the regulations'), places an obligation on the Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on land use and spatial plans. Part of this process includes a screening exercise to determine the need for a SEA to be undertaken, by assessing if the proposed plan is likely to have any significant environmental effects. This screening process stage is particularly relevant where the plan being proposed can be considered to be small scale. The Provision of Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can be considered to be a small-scale land use plan.

C2 Screening Process Methodology

The regulations provide a set of criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment of land use and spatial plans. These criteria are derived from Annex 2 of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and are set out in Schedule I of the regulations and can be summarised as:

I. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:

a The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature,

size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

- b The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- c The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- d Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
- e The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- a The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- b The cumulative nature of the effects;
- c The transboundary nature of the effects;
- d The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
- e The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- f The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - ii. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
 - iii. Intensive land-use; and
- g The effects on areas or landscapes, which have a recognised national, [European] Community or international protection status.

These criteria will form the framework of the screening process

C3 Screening Process for Supplementary Planning Document (Draft): Provision of Open Space

The intended purpose of the proposed Provision Of Open Space SPD is to complement those policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) that recognise the importance of open space within the borough. Added to this it will provide a stimulus for the enhancement in quantity, quality and accessibility of all types of open space within the borough. Specifically it will help provide: -

- a) Networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities in both urban

and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, and are fit for purpose and economically and environmentally sustainable.

- b) An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision.
- c) Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the financial requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space, sport and recreation provision from new residential developments.

The intended geographical coverage of the SPD is Borough wide. Using the criteria in Schedule I of the regulations as a framework, the requirement for a need to carry out an SEA on the intended Provision of Open Space SPD can be determined.

I. The Characteristics of the Proposed Provision of Open Space SPD	
Criteria	Assessment
(a) The degree to which the SPD sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The SPD is intended to be supplementary and complementary to the adopted planning policy contained in the UDP.
(b) The degree to which the SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	It is intended that the scope of the SPD will be to provide additional practical guidance to policies that have already been scrutinised and consulted upon through the plan making process.
(c) The relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	By seeking to improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space, the intended SPD promotes sustainable development by creating a more efficient, pleasant, healthier and safer environment.
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the SPD	The intended SPD will seek to promote green links to allow people to travel other than using the private car, thereby reducing the emissions of greenhouse gasses. It will also aid Local wildlife by ensuring the stability of green corridors.
(e) The relevance of the SPD for the implementation of [European] Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	There are no direct linkages with the implementation of European Community legislation.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed Provision of Open Space SPD	
Criteria	Assessment

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed Provision of Open Space SPD

Criteria	Assessment
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The probable effect of the intended SPD will be to improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space typologies within the borough.</p> <p>Once adopted as part of the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF), the short to medium term effects of the intended SPD will be incremental. It is intended that in the longer term the guidance will bring about a suitable level of all open space which is of a high design quality.</p> <p>As part of the LDF the intended SPD will be subject to annual review and its relevance and effectiveness will be monitored. The LDF system allows for the SPD to be amended, replaced or deleted relatively easily if required.</p>
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The likely cumulative nature of the effects from the intended SPD is improving the quality of the natural environment within the Borough for people to live and work within.</p>
(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	<p>There are no transboundary effects from the SPD due to the intended scope of its purpose and the geographical coverage it will have.</p>
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	<p>There are no significant or likely risks to human health or the environment from the intended SPD.</p>
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>The intended SPD is not site specific or time constrained. Effects from the SPD will therefore be incremental and Borough wide, although the impact of this guidance will be concentrated on existing areas of open space and within or around new development sites.</p>

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the proposed Provision of Open Space SPD

Criteria	Assessment
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii. Intensive land-use.	<p>The intended SPD is not site specific. It will not impact upon areas of value or vulnerability as identified in i - iii.</p> <p>The SPD will provide guidance to existing planning policies and be seen with the context of part of the LDF and not part of the Development Plan, which contains policies relating to safeguarding and enhancing the built and natural environment.</p>
(g) The effects on areas or landscapes, which have a recognised national, [European] Community or international protection status.	<p>The intended SPD is not site specific and would be supplementary to adopted planning policy. The practical guidance it will contain will be considered in the context of planning policies relating to safeguarding and enhancing areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status. Therefore the SPD is not likely to have a negative effect on such areas, but will seek to provide additional guidance on enhancing such areas, i.e. through acknowledging local distinctiveness in the design of new development.</p>

C4 Intermediate Determination of the need for an SEA

In accordance with Part 2(9) of the regulations, the Council, as the responsible authority consider that the intended Supplementary Planning Document (draft): Provision of Open Space is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The intermediate determination is subject to consultation with the bodies required under Part 1(4) of the regulations. Once responses from these bodies have been received the Council shall make a formal determination, subject to powers of the Secretary of State.

Appendix D: Testing the Purpose of the Provision of Open Space SPD against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Key



Positive Effect





Negative Effect














Neutral Effect





Unknown Effect

Objective	Nature of Effect	Additional Comments
Local Social Objective	1. To promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public, sustain individual good health and well-being, and help prevent illness	 By seeking to enhance the quantity, quality and accessibility of all types of open space, the SPD will contribute to a more healthy living environment for those living in the borough of Halton. Increased access to high quality open spaces should promote more healthy lifestyles along with reductions in car emissions from the reduction in use of non sustainable forms of transport, such as the private car.
	2. Reassure the community and reduce fear of crime	 There are no potential impacts upon crime and fear of crime as a result of this SPD. The SPD does however promote high design standards for new provision and enhancement of existing open space. This attribute potentially has the ability to incorporate safety features to discourage crime and reduce the fear of crime. It is therefore unknown at this point what impacts, if any, there will be upon crime.

	Objective	Nature of Effect	Additional Comments
	3. To maximise an individuals potential to increase their income		The direct/indirect impact of the SPD on this objective is difficult to qualify. Although the SPD will seek the development of safe and secure environments, which could provide the potential for increased incomes.
Local Economic Objective	1. To contribute towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity		The SPD seeks to create more vibrant places, and improve the natural environment. This will have positive implications for creating places where business and enterprise will want to locate.
	2. Remould and enhance the three town centres (Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn Halton Lea and Widnes Town Centre) and adjacent residential areas		The inclusion of high quality areas of open space within town centres is achievable through the use of the intended SPD. Particular reference should be made to green corridors which can provide sustainable patterns of travel to and from town centres.
	3. To improve the overall image of the Borough in order to attract regenerative investment, by maximising attractiveness of waterfront areas and canals in particular		The SPD will seek contributions from residential developments towards the improvement of waterfront areas and green corridors.
Local Environment al Objective	1. To bring about environmental improvements in all areas of the Borough reflecting the priorities of the public to improve public perceptions and attractiveness		One of the reasons for the production of the SPD is to meet the priorities of the people of Halton. The SPD seeks to ensure that there is adequate open space facilities for all the residents of Halton and that further development within the Borough does not exasperate any existing deficiency in quality or quantity.

	Objective	Nature of Effect	Additional Comments
	2. To safeguard and improve air quality in Halton		By seeking to increase the quantity, accessibility and design of all types of open space, the SPD encourages modes of transport other than the private car. The cumulative long-term effect will be to reduce car emission and improve air quality through increased amounts of natural open spaces and increased use of green corridors.
	3. To promote an integrated transport system that balances the need for people and goods to move around, including improved accessibility to local services, whilst also reducing the adverse impact on local neighbourhoods and the environment from traffic pollution and noise		The SPD aims to increase & enhance the numbers of green corridors in the Borough, as a result of new development.
Regional Social Objective	1. To protect, enhance and manage the sub-region's rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets		The impact of the SPD on this objective is difficult to qualify. It is possible sections relating to boundary treatment and landscaping could impact upon development within conservation areas and the SPD will certainly have the potential to impact upon the setting of the built environment.
	2. To improve local access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing		The SDP will contribute to new residential developments which provide, through either on site provision or contributions, better quality housing developments.
Regional Economic Objective	1. To improve educational achievement, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability		The impacts upon this objective from the proposed SPD are difficult to quantify, however it is anticipated that an improved natural, recreational environment within the Borough may have beneficial effects towards economic objectives.
	2. To increase use of locally produced goods, foods and services		The direct/indirect impact of the SPD on this objective is difficult to qualify. The SPD will encourage walking and cycling so it may mean individuals will use local shops and services instead of driving to access services further away.

Objective	Nature of Effect	Additional Comments	
Regional Environmental Objective	1. To increase the proportion of energy generated from sustainable and renewable sources		Whilst the effect of this SPD on this objective will certainly not be a negative one, it is unknown if there will be any impacts at all.
	2. To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of endangered species, habitats and sites of geological importance		Specifically, the policies within the SPD will require potential developers to consider any possible impacts upon biodiversity, species and habitats on sites on or adjoining the proposal site. Furthermore proposals for development will be required demonstrate how harmful impacts will be prevented or reduced.

Appendix E: Options Considered

Extract of Pre-Production Scoping Report

As a Local Planning Authority, it is important to consider the options available for meeting the purpose of the intended SPD. The options considered are:

Option 1: Do nothing

This approach relies on existing policy within the UDP and government advice, such as that contained within PPG17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, to help inform determining planning applications. Alternatively another agency or function of the Council could produce guidance we can subsequently adopt.

In seeking to achieve sustainable forms of development, it is important that practical guidance is produced that will have sufficient weight to promote better design within Halton. This can only really be achieved if a SPD is adopted. It would be difficult for another agency or function of the Council to lead on the production of what is essentially a planning document. Therefore although this option is rejected, it is necessary to ensure that all relevant agencies and functions of the Council are closely consulted throughout the production of the SPD, as their knowledge of the issues relating to open spaces and recreational opportunities will be greater than the Local Planning Authority.

Option 2: Adopt government documents as SPD

Another option is to seek adoption of government documents as SPD. There are two documents which each (in part) contributes to meeting the purpose of the intended SPD. These are – PPG17 Provision of Open Space, and Better places to live by design: A companion guide to PPG3.

It is possible to adopt these two documents as SPD for Halton, but firstly it would be difficult to amend them after a consultation exercise; secondly, the combined length of the three documents would be difficult to digest by those involved in the planning and design of development, and; thirdly, the documents would not have the flexibility to respond to local circumstances. Therefore it would not be the most effective means to deliver more sustainable places. It is clearly important that these three documents are used as a basis for developing a specific tailored document for Halton.

Option 3: Produce a Provision of Open Space SPD

The final option considered by the Local Planning Authority is to produce a Provision of Open Space SPD. This would be produced to meet the specific purpose and objectives of the need for its production.

This is the most likely option to achieve creating more sustainable places. Although the production of the SPD must take into account national documents that relate to the issue of open space. The intended SPD must be shaped throughout by those who are involved in seeking to meet the same objectives as those set out in the intended purpose of the proposed SPD. It is therefore proposed to progress option 3.

Appendix F: Further Information

Further information relating to the purpose of the intended SPD:

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 2, or for further general planning information visit the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website at www.odpm.gov.uk or for a hard copy contact the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by telephone on 0870 1226 236.

Green Space Strategies – A good Practice Guide (May 2004)

Is The Grass Greener ...? Learning from international innovations in urban green space management (July 2004)

The Value of Public Space (March 2004)

Can all be downloaded free of charge from the CABE website at www.cabespace.org.uk/publications/

You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk or www.planningoffice.co.uk

Further information regarding Sustainability Appraisals and the Strategic Environmental Assessment can be found in the following documents:

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities (for land use and spatial plans), October 2003
- A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, September 2005
- Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, November 2005

Are available via the DCLG website at www.odpm.gov.uk. This website also contains a general introduction to SEA and SA. The DCLG can be contacted on 020 7944 4400.

- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Biodiversity: Guidance for Practitioners, June 2004; and
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Climate Change: Guidance for Practitioners, May 2004

Are available via the Environment Agency website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk or telephone 08708 506 506