



Mersey Gateway Executive Board

**Monday, 19 May 2008 10.00 a.m.
Conference Room 1, Municipal Building**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', is positioned above a rectangular stamp.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Tony McDermott (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Mike Wharton	Labour
Councillor Rob Polhill	Labour

*Please contact Lynn Derbyshire on 0151 471 7389 or e-mail
lynn.derbyshire@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 16 June 2008*

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

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 6
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
3. PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO	
(A) PROGRESS WITH THE STATUTORY PROCESS AND ISSUES REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT	7 - 13
The report will incorporate:-	
i) Consultations with the Department for Transport; and	
ii) The delivery of the Statutory Procedures.	
4. THE MERSEY GATEWAY BUSINESS RELOCATION STRATEGY	14 - 22

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

MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board on Monday, 7 April 2008 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors McDermott (Chairman), Wharton and Polhill

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Redhead

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: B. Dodd, D. Parr, M. Reaney, D. Sutton, D. Tregear, S. Nicholson and M. Noone

Also in attendance: Councillor Findon

**ITEMS DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

Action

MGEB14MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2008, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND
RENEWAL PORTFOLIO**

**MGEB15PROGRESS WITH THE MERSEY GATEWAY
STATUTORY PLANNING PROCESS**

The Board received an update report on the progress made towards commencing the statutory planning process for Mersey Gateway. It was noted that on the 31st March 2008 the Merseyside Gateway Project had submitted the first phase of formal applications for Mersey Gateway to Halton Borough Council as Planning Authority for consideration. A second phase of formal applications would be submitted to the Council at the end of May 2008 and it was anticipated that the Planning Authority would have processed all applications, by June/July 2008

It was noted that as part of the first and second phase

Planning Applications there would be a statutory period of public consultation. At the conclusion of the consultation process any objections received could trigger a Public Inquiry.

The Board was advised that in early May 2008 a leaflet would be produced and circulated advising the public on the Statutory Planning processes for the Mersey Gateway.

RESOLVED: That Members note the progress made and the next steps to be taken.

MGEB16STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

The Board received a report which provided an update on the Mersey Gateway Strategic Business Case to reflect the considerable developments in the scheme since it was submitted to the DfT in July 2005. The information reported provided a summary of the Mersey Gateway Strategic Outline Business Case that had been prepared by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and previously accepted by the Mersey Gateway Officer Project Board. The report also included a review of the tolling strategy, financial case and value for money case.

It was reported that the Government had recently published a statement of its Transport Policy in the White Paper "Towards a Sustainable Transport System" – the Government's response to Eddington and Stern. The White Paper set out the challenge for transport in a world faced with climate change and associated economic considerations.

Eddington had stressed the importance of reliable transport and network resilience for business but similar requirements applied to ensure that effective civil contingency plans were in place. Mersey Gateway would provide the additional road capacity required to restore network resilience for road river crossings between the Merseyside Tunnels and M6 at Thelwall. To ensure the potential operational benefits were realised the following additional project objective was proposed in the Strategic Outline Business Case:

"To restore effective network resilience for road transport across the River Mersey."

At a local policy level, it was noted that the Programme Entry funding approval by the Department for

Transport in March 2006 enabled the supporting policy for Mersey Gateway to be developed in more detail and brought up to date. These supporting policies would be embraced in the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and Local Development Framework. In addition, the Council had commenced preparation of a Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. The outcome of the Regeneration Strategy would also inform the Council's priorities for physical investment and urban renewal.

As part of the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system for the Borough, the Council had commissioned a Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport study. The report had recommended that a bus based transit system utilising new as well as existing infrastructure and facilities would be the most achievable and affordable way forward and enable step changed improvements to be delivered in the short to medium term. The report also recognised that the development of light rail should not however be precluded but this should be seen as an option for the longer term.

The study was ongoing and potential schemes that would deliver the required improvements to bus services and cycling and walking facilities had been identified. A series of focussed public consultations and group interviews had been undertaken to understand the views of Halton's residents on public transport at present and in the future with the Mersey Gateway project. The Sustainable Transport study was aimed at delivering service improvements by 2015.

With regard to tolling the Council had established a policy that was intended to allow successful delivery of Mersey Gateway within funding limits agreed with Ministers. The principal objective of tolling were:

- i) to operate a toll concession scheme within the limits of affordability, so as to mitigate the impact of tolls on local users who were currently able to use the Silver Jubilee Bridge free of charge, many of whom were frequently crossing the river and some fall within social inclusion target groups;
- ii) to manage demand to ensure the delivery transport and environment benefits, by maintaining free flow traffic conditions on the Mersey Gateway and Silver Jubilee Bridge and delivering priority for public transport on the Silver Jubilee Bridge; and

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

The new traffic model forecasts support the projected benefits from tolls as future traffic levels are suppressed by the tolling charges. The lower traffic levels with tolling prevent any general increase in traffic noise and air pollution (including carbon green house gases) across the Borough that would otherwise occur without the scheme.

It was proposed that bidders for toll operator (probably in their Standard Bid) should be asked to assume that toll levels were set initially at levels matching those at the Mersey Tunnels, increasing thereafter in line with inflation. Although during the bidding process prospective operators would have the opportunity to submit variant proposals that may prove more attractive for the Council. It was further proposed that they be told to assume that a fixed level of Central Government funding was available for the project. It was proposed that bidders should then be asked to bid the level of economic interest in the toll revenue which they were prepared to make available to the Council.

It was noted that the minimum Benefit Cost Ratio for qualifying as medium value for money was lower than the programme entry submission and hence the headroom to withstand any downward adjustment by Department for Transport had been reduced.

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

Arising from the discussion it was agreed that a Mersey Crossing monthly briefing note be sent to Councillor Round with a copy to Daniel Barrett.

RESOLVED: That Members

(1) note that Mersey Gateway still benefits from policy support at National, Regional and Local levels;

(2) agree to the additional project objective “to restore

effective network resilience for road transport across the River Mersey”, to align the project aims with the Eddington recommendations;

Project Director

(3) agree the principal elements of the tolling proposals which were designed to maximise the opportunity to deliver the project within the funding limits and to provide a best value option for funding toll discounts and a Mersey Gateway sustainable transport programme;

(4) note that the current financial analysis results show that the project remains on course to be delivered within the funding limits agreed with Government, with toll levels based on the current Mersey Tunnel charges; and

(5) note that the value for money parameters required by Government as a funding condition were satisfied but the headroom available to satisfy the condition had been reduced.

MGEB17REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF RECENT MEETINGS WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

The Board received a report which outlined the progress made in recent meetings with the Department for Transport officials dealing with the review of the value for money case for Mersey Gateway and their assessment of whether the project remained on course to be delivered within the funding limits agreed with Ministers. Following several meetings with Department officials the following actions had been agreed:

i) the Department would not ask the Council to postpone the commencement of the first phase Planning Application if the Council was ready to make such an application and the endorsement of value for money and project delivery were still outstanding; and

ii) department officials and the Mersey Gateway Project Team would establish a work programme that should enable the Department to confirm its views and advise Ministers accordingly. The work was planned to be concluded before the second phase of the Planning Application process commenced.

The work programme to support the Department's review had now been agreed and information was being submitted in line with the agreed dates. The information and assessment drew on the content of the Strategic Outline Business Case as discussed previously.

It was noted that in response to the Department's invitation to submit a bid for contribution towards development (preparation) costs, a letter had been sent requesting Ministers to give consideration to providing a contribution of £6.2m, to be phased over three broadly equal payments over three years. Department officials had advised that they were prepared to endorse the bid and phasing arrangements but it would be a matter for Ministers to decide whether the bid was accepted and in full. The funding of such a bid was also being discussed with the Government Regional Office.

RESOLVED: That the progress made be noted and the action taken supported.

MINUTES ISSUED: 15th April 2008

CALL IN: 22nd April 2008

Any matter decided by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board may be called in no later than 22nd April 2008

Meeting ended at 11.08 a.m.

REPORT TO: Mersey Gateway Exec Board

DATE: 19th May 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Mersey Gateway Project Director

SUBJECT: Progress with the Statutory Process and Issues reported to the Department for Transport

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 For Members to note the progress made in progressing the statutory planning procedures, together with the issues reported to the Department for Transport (DfT) in the routine quarterly progress report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the Mersey Gateway Executive Board note the progress made and the actions taken.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Discussions with DfT officials continue to focus on reaching a consensus on value for money based on the revised traffic model outputs (as reported to MGEb on 7th April 2008). The funding agreement with Ministers requires both value for money and deliverability to be reviewed prior to any Public Inquiry based on the results of the new traffic model. It is recognised that it would be prudent to settle these matters prior to making an application for the Transport and Works Act, planned in May 2008. A programme of work has been delivered broadly to the timetable agreed with DfT officials, and the results should enable a decision to be taken that confirms the funding conditions have been satisfied.

3.2 The delivery programme has slipped two weeks to accommodate a recent procedural requirement where we are required to provide a mandatory 28 day pre-application lead time to allow the DfT to review the draft Transport and Works Act Order (TWA). The draft TWA was submitted on 2nd May which establishes the new Application date as 30th May 2008. The project team are working to achieve this revised date so that the programme toward a Public Inquiry at the end of the year can be maintained. To assist the public to respond to what is an unusual statutory planning process, the leaflet attached at Appendix 1 will be distributed widely when the Applications are made.

3.3 Reaching a consensus on the relative value for money most likely from Mersey Gateway is dependent on the acceptance of the underlying inputs drawn mainly from the variable demand traffic model. For all

practicable purposes the Local Model Validation Report (which tests the traffic model to reproduce current traffic patterns) is settled, although there are some drafting changes still to be submitted to DfT. The Forecasting Report has been examined by Arup, acting as the DfT model auditors and this has raised some additional work, not included in the set work programme, involving quite extensive interpretation of the forecast results. The interpretation addendum to the Forecasting Report, running to about 30 pages, is expected to assist Arup to draw conclusions on the suitability of the model for scheme appraisal. So far, no potential showstoppers have been identified in the comments or views received from Arup and the Mersey Gateway team do not expect this to change as a result of the addendum information.

- 3.4 On the basis that the DfT clear the Forecasting Report, the value for money assessment, using the standard DfT appraisal computer programme TUBA, indicate a robust economic case. We are advised that officials can deal with the value for money submission without referring to Ministers, and on the basis of current discussions we expect the value for money submission to be cleared without delaying the project plan.
- 3.5 The financial projections reported to MGEB on 7th April 2008, in the summary of the Strategic Outline Business Case, demonstrate the project remains on course to be delivered within the funding support agreed with Ministers with toll levels that match Mersey Tunnel charges.
- 3.6 Government is looking to introduce revised financial accounting methods (the International Finance Reporting Standards, IFRS) for the public sector that may impact on projects like Mersey Gateway which are to be procured using the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The move to IFRS treatment has been assessed but we are not able to take this any further until Treasury guidance for the public sector is settled. Any issues arising based on the confirmed position will be reported to Members.
- 3.7 We therefore expect the affordability position to be concluded as being satisfactory, based on the information provided to the DfT.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 DfT officials have advised that they would be prepared to support a bid for development costs based on £6.4m in broadly equal payments over three years, commencing this year, but a final decision on whether to meet the full bid would be a matter for Ministers. To assist in reaching such a decision, we have been asked to consult the region's Transport Board on the potential for meeting a contribution to preparation costs out

of the RFT programme. This consultation is now taking place involving GONW. An update on progress will be given at the next MGEb in July as part of a comprehensive report on the project budget.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Addressing the value for money and affordability issues with the DfT will deliver a project endorsement that will support the project through the statutory planning process.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

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

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

Mersey Gateway planning process explained

The detailed plans for the Mersey Gateway Project are being published in two stages this spring.

The first phase of applications for the Mersey Gateway Project was submitted to Halton Borough Council at the end of March.

Phase two of the submission will be a series of applications to central government for legal orders. This will be done in May.

Together, these submissions detail the plans for a new six-lane toll bridge crossing the

River Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes and the work along the access routes through the two towns. They also outline improvements planned for the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

This leaflet describes the different applications and orders and explains how you can have your say.

This is a large and complex project. Planning applications and legal orders are being submitted to or made by Halton Borough Council and the Department for Transport. These are summarised below.

Name	Permissions covered	Likely determining authorities
Expressway planning application	To change the road network in Runcorn from the Central Expressway to M56 junction 12 via Weston Link	Halton Borough Council
Silver Jubilee Bridge planning application	To change the road network from Ditton roundabout in Widnes to the Runcorn end of the Silver Jubilee Bridge	Halton Borough Council
Listed Building Consent	To change the Silver Jubilee Bridge road layout and to introduce new pedestrian and cycle routes	Halton Borough Council
Transport and Works Act Order	To build the new bridge, the main tolling plaza in Widnes and a series of new access roads throughout Halton. It will also give compulsory purchase powers to buy land required along the route. There will be no compulsory acquisition of any residential properties. It will also authorise tolls on the new bridge	Department for Transport
Road User Charging Order	To charge tolls or charges on the Silver Jubilee Bridge	Halton Borough Council and Department for Transport
Side Roads Orders	To close off and, where necessary, re-route access routes like side roads, bridleways and footpaths that are affected by the project	Halton Borough Council and Department for Transport
Compulsory Purchase Orders	To use compulsory purchase powers to buy land required along the route where it is not covered by the Transport and Works Act Order. There will be no compulsory acquisition of any residential properties	Halton Borough Council and Department for Transport

The deadlines for responding to the different consultation periods will be published through statutory notices in the local media and online at www.merseygateway.co.uk once they have been confirmed.

Find out more

We are holding exhibitions where you can find out more about the planning applications and legal orders and ask us any questions you might have.

Monday 9th June

Stobart Stadium, Halton

12noon - 8pm

Tuesday 10th June

Stobart Stadium, Halton

10am - 5.30pm

Wednesday 11th June

The Brindley, Runcorn

12noon - 8pm

Thursday 12th June

The Brindley, Runcorn

10.30am - 4.30pm

The full contents of the all the planning applications are available online at www.merseygateway.co.uk.

Details of the orders will be added once these have been submitted.

You can also find more information about the orders and applications at any of the Council's Halton Direct Link one-stop-shops at:

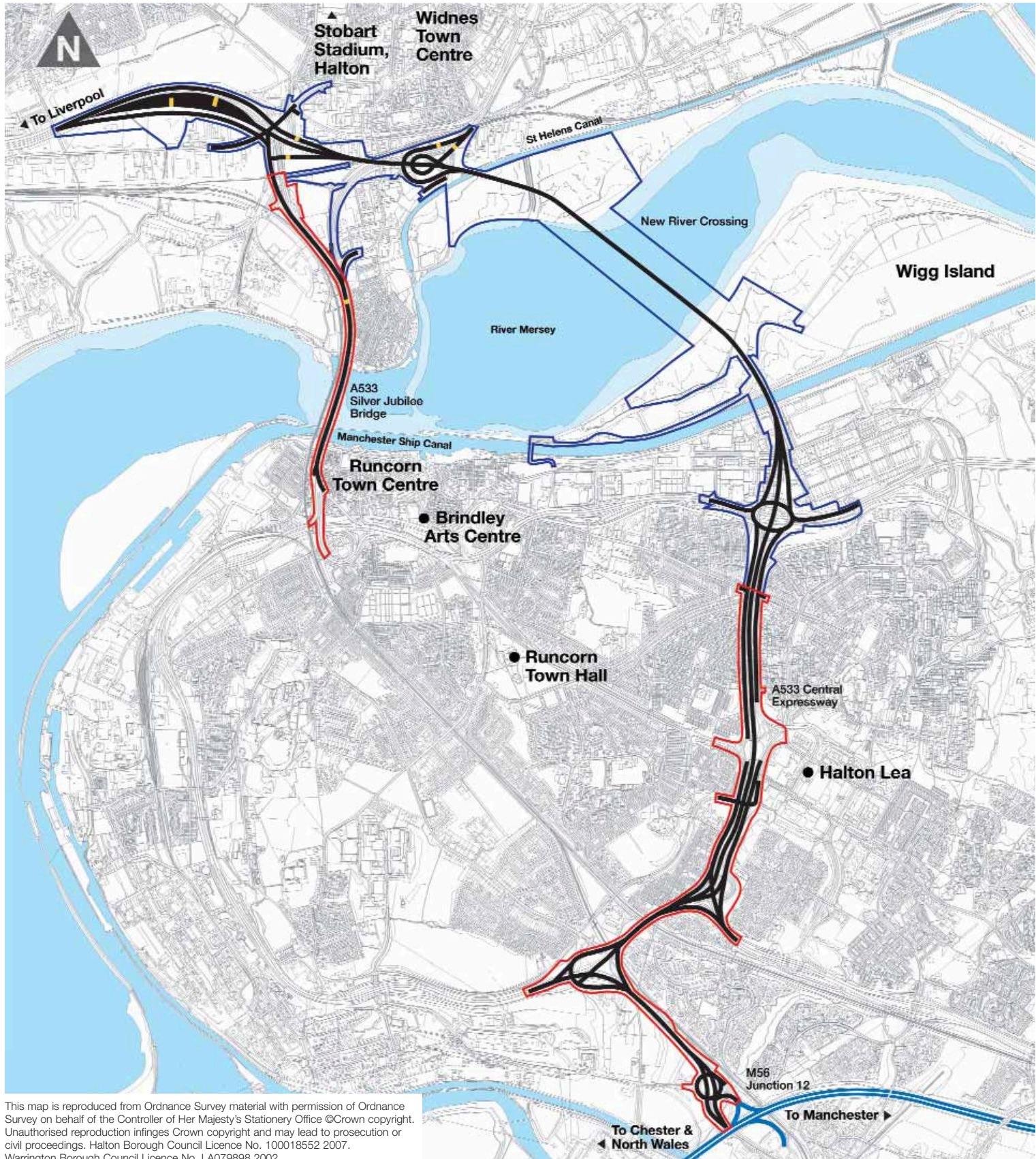
- Halton Lea, Runcorn
- Church Street, Runcorn
- Brook Street, Widnes
- Queens Avenue, Ditton, Widnes

Alternatively, you can contact the Mersey Gateway Project Team on 0151 906 4899 / 906 4898 or email mersey.gateway@halton.gov.uk

The route

The map below shows how the new bridge will fit into the road network in Halton. It also shows the different geographical areas covered by the planning applications and the Transport and Works Act Order.

- Key:**
- Mersey Gateway Project – main works
 - Planning applications boundaries
 - Transport and Works Act boundary
 - Likely location of toll booths



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Next steps

If approved, the Mersey Gateway is due to open in 2014. Before then, there are a number of important stepping stones along the way.

The sections in blue show where you will have an opportunity to give your views.

March – May 2008

Mersey Gateway planning applications and accompanying legal orders submitted

April – July 2008

Halton Borough Council consultation on the planning applications

May – July 2008

Government consultation on the required legal orders

Summer 2008

Halton Borough Council gives formal response to planning applications

Late 2008

Likely public inquiry

Late 2009

Outcome of public inquiry announced

2010

Invite tenders from companies interested in building and operating the Mersey Gateway

2011

Appoint the successful company and start on construction

2014

Mersey Gateway opens

To respond to any aspect of the planning applications, please write to Halton Borough Council:

- **by post** –
Environmental and Regulatory Services Department
Halton Borough Council
Halton Lea
Rutland House
Runcorn WA7 2GW
- **by email** –
dev.control@halton.gov.uk
- **online** –
www.halton.gov.uk
click on the 'planning' section
- **in person** – you can hand in a written response in a sealed envelope at Municipal Buildings in Widnes or any of the Halton Direct Link one-stop-shops across the borough.

Please mark all correspondence clearly: 'Mersey Gateway planning applications response'.

About us

The Mersey Gateway Project team is a dedicated unit set up within Halton Borough Council.

The project is supported by the Mersey Crossing Group, which is made up of representatives from regional government, other local authorities and businesses from across the region.

If you need this information in a different format such as large print, audio tape, Braille or another language, please call 0151 906 4899.

REPORT TO: Mersey Gateway Exec Board

DATE: 19th May 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway – Relocation Strategy

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the attached Mersey Gateway Relocation Strategy and recommend its adoption to support the Mersey Gateway project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the Mersey Gateway Executive Board approve the attached Mersey Gateway Relocation Strategy for formal adoption as the Acquiring Authority's Relocation Strategy for the Mersey Gateway project.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The land referencing exercise for the Mersey Gateway project has identified over 100 individual parcels of land that need to be acquired in order to complete the land assembly package for the construction of the scheme.
- 3.2 In order to complete the land assembly, it will be necessary to acquire the land either by negotiation with the freeholder or via the Transport and Works Act or the two compulsory purchase orders, one for the area to the south of the TWA and one for the area to the west of TWA.
- 3.3 At present there are over 70 businesses that potentially may need to be relocated from the sites to be acquired. The businesses occupy their premises as a mixture of freehold, leasehold and on licence.
- 3.4 In total, the businesses employ approximately 1,000 people, 2% of Halton's workforce. The industrial sectors are wide-ranging and include transport and distribution, manufacturing, including high value goods (medical equipment, fire resistance wiring, security and conductive film, valves and wiring trays for the on and offshore gas and oil industries), retail, engineering, and several service sector businesses. Ownership of the business varies from sole traders through to several foreign owned multi-national corporations.
- 3.5 The type of premises include shops, cafes, multi-occupancy offices, detached office buildings, small industrial premises, large manufacturing

facilities, storage and distribution depots, open storage, trade counter units and a call centre.

- 3.6 Based on Gross Value Added figures supplied by the NWDA, the value of these businesses could be estimated at £38m per annum to the economy. Were it possible, to attract this level of employment using a grant scheme such as the Selective Finance for Investment scheme, it would cost £5.5m.
- 3.7 Both in terms of its commitment to the Mersey Gateway and to the economic development of the Borough, it is necessary to develop a relocation strategy that seeks to work with these businesses to ensure, where possible, that they and the associated employment are retained within Halton.
- 3.8 The Mersey Gateway project is currently supported by a policy agreed with Members for dealing with property acquisition in advance of the formal CPO procedure. Although this policy has been developed, taking account of legal advice, to ensure the Council meets its legal obligations it stops short of providing affected businesses with a comprehensive relocation service. The attached strategy at Annex 1 outlines such a relocation service in addition to meeting the obligations under Circular 06/2004, by relocating businesses and undertaking advanced purchase of property. The strategy also outlines the Council's business relocation and support process, the need to understand the requirements of individual businesses and the identification of relocation options.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals will address the economic prosperity and employment objectives set out in the Corporate Plan, Community Strategy and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. The action proposed will contribute to the Council's priority of securing Mersey Gateway through the planning process by minimising the risk that jobs will be lost due to the project's direct impact on businesses.

Urban Renewal

- 4.2 Objective A: To create and sustain a 21st Century business environment with the required variety and quality of sites, premises and infrastructure that can support high levels of investment and growth, and increase Halton's competitiveness.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Currently the early land acquisition programme is supported by £6m (through the amended Council Capital Programme). The administration costs for the proposed relocation strategy would be covered by this funding. The initial advanced purchase cases are also expected to be funded from the Capital Programme, but two third party funding options

are under assessment and the results should be available by the end of May.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The project is more than just a bridge – the regional economic strategy identifies Mersey Gateway as a transformational project. It is the catalyst that will connect communities and lead regeneration and investment throughout Halton and the North West.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The strategy has been prepared with the assistance of the Mersey Gateway Project Team's professional advisor and will withstand scrutiny should the document be questioned as part of any objection to the CPO at enquiry. The strategy will provide a more robust basis to support the economic mitigation claims in the Environmental Statement.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

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

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

APPENDIX 1

REPORT TO: Mersey Gateway Exec Board

DATE: 19th May 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Mersey Gateway – Relocation Strategy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 One of the strategic objectives of the Mersey Gateway project is “to improve accessibility in order to maximise local development and regional growth opportunities”. As part of fulfilling this objective and the Council’s obligations in accordance with Government guidance on compulsory purchase procedures contained in Circular 06/2004, it is necessary to provide a strategic framework within which the various options to minimise the impact of the scheme on affected businesses can be formulated.
- 1.2 The objectives of this strategy can be achieved in part by relocating businesses and where it is appropriate purchasing businesses in advance of the exercise of any compulsory purchase powers. The Council will offer assistance for relocation based on the advice and guidance provided in Circular 06/2004, which is incorporated into the following policy.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 Before embarking on compulsory purchase and throughout the preparation and procedural process, the Council will seek to acquire land by agreement wherever practicable and this will include relocation of existing businesses where necessary.
- 2.2 The Council will initiate action to provide full information about the CPO process including timetable and the rights and duties of those affected. It is important that the Council is accessible to various parties and a specific case manager will be available to those concerned.
- 2.3 The Council may offer to alleviate concerns about future compensation entitlement by entering into agreements. Agreements can be used as a means of guaranteeing minimum levels of compensation including the basis upon which disturbance costs would be assessed.
- 2.4 The Council will consider making early payments where justified to enable claimants to proceed with reinstatement. The Council will consider using its wide-ranging powers under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 2.5 The primary objective of this policy is to ensure that the benefits of the Mersey Gateway can be delivered whilst minimising the extent of the impact upon those businesses that are suitable for relocation. To achieve this, such existing businesses will need to be transferred to locations that are appropriate to the present and future needs of the businesses concerned.
- 2.6 This policy details the approach required to understand and address the relocation needs of the businesses. Its purpose is to demonstrate that:
- HBC recognises the scale, character and diversity of the businesses and their associated need to relocate; and
 - A strategy exists to support businesses throughout the relocation period, from pre-location support and identifying requirements through the actual process and appropriate aftercare to ensure that the effects of relocating are minimised.
- 2.7 To address the needs of a range of existing commercial occupiers, an assessment will be carried out which will include:
- Level of demand – the overall demand for alternative commercial premises and sites. This will be based upon an emerging understanding of the current business requirements;
 - Level of supply – an overview of the current supply of premises within the Borough and if appropriate the neighbouring authorities; and
 - Matching supply and demand – initial assessment of supply against demand and identification of shortfalls.
- 2.8 The most effective method for achieving a successful business relocation in any individual case is through a detailed assessment of the needs of each individual business. This assessment will be achieved through direct, proactive face-to-face meetings with the individual businesses.

3.0 INITIAL LEVEL OF DEMAND

- 3.1 It was resolved at the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting on 15th November 2007 that the Mersey Gateway Team should enter into discussions with affected stakeholders with a possible view to making a purchase in advance of a CPO. Following this resolution, affected businesses were written to asking them if they wished to be considered for an advanced purchase.
- 3.2 A number of the affected businesses have come forward for consideration and some have expressed an interest in relocation. (Liaison with affected businesses will continue during the CPO process and efforts will be made to relocate affected businesses where appropriate).

3.3 Detailed discussions are now taking place with the businesses already identified as wishing to relocate. This is a specialised area of work and the following resources are involved in the process:

- Mersey Gateway Team;
- HBC Economic Development;
- HBC Property Services; and
- GVA Grimley.

3.4 The Council has committed funding to support advanced property purchase and this commitment will be reviewed alongside the take up of early acquisition opportunity.

4.0 CURRENT SUPPLY OF SITES AND PREMISES

4.1 The Economic Regeneration Service maintains a comprehensive database of all commercial premises and sites in Halton, regardless of ownership.

4.2 The table at Annex 1 indicates the availability of commercial premises in Halton and the neighbouring local authority areas as of 31 March 2008. It does not include premises which are proposed but not yet under construction.

4.3 Due to the unique nature of each business, the suitability and requirements for each business will be managed on a case by case basis. The variability of requirements counts against providing a single development site for relocation, although this has not been ruled out if a site can be identified which could accommodate a number of businesses. However, the current support is focused on assisting businesses in finding their own relocation sites.

5.0 ABILITY TO MEET DEMAND

5.1 There is currently a shortage of possible sites for businesses to relocate to.

5.2 Should a business affected by the CPO be unable to identify a suitable site within Halton, then HBC will work with adjacent Local Authorities to identify suitable sites which are likely to be in neighbouring regeneration areas.

6.0 UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES

6.1 There have been on-going discussions with businesses who have asked to be considered for a purchase in advance of a CPO in order to understand the more detailed characteristics of each and their potential needs - in some cases this has involved a possible relocation.

6.2 This process will continue throughout the CPO procedure. In order to balance the various demands of the businesses, the following factors are considered to be relevant in identifying a suitable site:

- Location of business customers;
- Contribution to the local economy in terms of employment;
- Transport requirements;
- Intensity of land use on current site;
- Scope for integration on a business park;
- Individual business and investments plans; and
- The emerging Mersey Gateway regeneration strategy.

7.0 IDENTIFYING RELOCATION OPTIONS

7.1 The outcome of the business engagement process will be to identify suitable relocation sites for each of the businesses.

7.2 Following initial contact between the team and the business, a support package will be developed from a number of different elements to aid the business concerned.

7.3 The elements will include:

- Assistance in finding space/premises within the Halton area;
- Assistance in finding space in other locations, where this is the preferred choice of the business;
- Access to support through the Business Link where appropriate; and
- Access to training through the Learning and Skills Council.

8.0 BUSINESS AND RELOCATION SUPPORT PROCESS

8.1 The key elements of the process are:

8.1.1 Setting up a team with clear lines of communication with the businesses.

8.1.2 Delivering proactive one-to-one support to the businesses to:

- Establish a working relationship between the team and business;
- Understand the characteristics and requirements of the individual businesses; and
- Identify through discussions with businesses support measures and property options available.

8.2 The Mersey Gateway project is committed to helping businesses relocate where appropriate. A key element of this objective is to ensure that proactive assistance to businesses is available, helping them to find alternative premises that are suitable to their needs.

8.3 The Team will be headed by Steve Eccles of the Mersey Gateway Team (0151-906-4899) and draw upon the following expertise as required:

- HBC Property Services, Alan Scarisbrick;
- HBC Economic Regeneration, David Lyon – 01928-516125; and
- GVA Grimley, John Rhoades and Helen Kirkham.

8.4 It is recognised that the process of relocation must be managed both carefully and sensitively so that the disturbance to the businesses is kept to a minimum.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 MG provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

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

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

The availability of Commercial Premises in Halton and the neighbouring Local Authority Areas as of 31 March 2008

1) Halton

Size Range	Widnes	Runcorn
0-5,000 ft ²	24	30
5,000-10,000 ft ²	6	11
10,000 ft ² +	15	38
Site <5 acres	4	6
Site >5 acres	1	0

2) Neighbouring Areas

Type	St Helens	Knowsley	Wirral	Liverpool	Sefton	Ellesmere Port & Neston	Vale Royal	Warrington
Industrial								
<5,000 ft ²	33	87	88	52	48	73	21	94
>5,000 ft ² and <10,000 ft ²	18	35	28	34	16	14	3	26
>10,000 ft ²	31	64	31	53	33	12	17	42
Sites								
<5 acres	5	20	14	46 (*)	17	6	2	9
>5 acres	1	4	0	0	4	8	1	4