

# Public Document Pack



## Executive Board

Thursday, 18 November 2010 2.00 p.m.  
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

**Chief Executive**

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

#### PART 1

Item	Page No
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b>	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
<b>3. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</b>	
<b>(A) HALTON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION - KEY DECISION</b>	<b>1 - 492</b>

*Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 471 7529 or  
Angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.  
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 2 December 2010*

Item	Page No
4. RESOURCES PORTFOLIO	
(A) LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY	493 - 529
(B) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY	530 - 551

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

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director - Environment

**SUBJECT:** Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document for Public Consultation

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of the Executive Board of the content of the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (**Appendix A**). In approving the document for 'publication' for a period of public consultation, the Board attests that they consider the document to be 'sound' and ready for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination and eventual adoption.
- 1.2 It is intended that the document be subject to an eight week period of public consultation from the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

## **RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) The Board resolve that they consider the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft to be 'sound'.**
- (2) The Proposed Submission Draft be approved for the purposes of 'Publication' for an eight week period of public consultation under Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.**
- (3) The Board approve the following supporting documents for a concurrent period of public consultation;**
  - Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix B)**
  - Infrastructure Plan (Appendix C)**
  - Statement of Consultation (Appendix D)**
  - Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix E)**
  - Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix F)**
- (4) Further editorial and technical amendments that do not materially affect the content of the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission document or the supporting documents be agreed by the Operational Director - Environmental and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Physical Environment as**

**necessary, before they are published for public consultation; and**

- (5) The results of the statutory public consultation exercise on the Halton Core Strategy Pre-Submission document are reported back to the Executive Board following the consultation period, prior to seeking approval of Full Council for Submission to the Secretary of State.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **The Halton Local Development Framework**

- 3.1 The Core Strategy will be the principal document in the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF). Over time the LDF will replace the saved policies from the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was originally adopted in April 2005, and from which the majority of policies, together with the Proposals Map, were “saved” by agreement of the Secretary of State, in 2008.

#### **Preparation of the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission (*Publication*) Consultation Document**

- 3.2 The ‘Publication Stage’ will be the third and final round of formal consultation in the production of the Core Strategy.
- 3.3 Consultation on the Core Strategy began with the **Issues and Options consultation** in July / August of 2006. This set out a range of issues affecting the borough (largely drawn from the work undertaken in support of the Sustainable Community Strategy) and the broad strategic options that could be developed to help address these.
- 3.4 These were further developed and consulted upon in the **Preferred Options consultation** of September / November 2009, which contained a suite of draft ‘preferred’ policies together with reasonable alternatives.
- 3.5 Since the preferred options consultation last year, there have been a number of developments and events that have helped further shape the development of the plan, including;
- abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy
  - Planning Inspectorate’s free ‘advisory visit’
  - completion of outstanding evidence base documentation
  - Sustainability Appraisal / Habitats Regulations Appraisal / Equality Impact Appraisal and Health Impact Appraisal.
- 3.6 The above have resulted in a slimmed down, more focused document that is now fully supported by a substantively complete evidence base. The intention is to consult for 8 weeks rather than the statutory

minimum of 6 to allow for the consultation unavoidably running over the holiday period.

- 3.7 Under the new planning system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the plan, by this stage should have been subject to significant 'frontloading' consultation that there should be a degree of consensus and 'buy in' from the public and other stakeholders concerning the content of the Plan.
- 3.8 As such, the Publication stage consultation focuses on the tests of legal compliance and 'soundness' as set out in PPS12 and the consultation will be limited to these issues. Following the consultation, the Council will prepare a report setting out the main issues raised in the consultation to help inform the Examination in Public (EiP)

**Next steps – "Submission"**

- 3.9 Should the Council be satisfied that the consultation has not highlighted any fundamental issues of 'soundness', the next stage will be for the Council to formally 'submit' the Plan to the Secretary of State (Regulation 30) who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to hold a public inquiry known as the Examination in Public (EiP) into the content of the Plan.
- 3.10 The Inspector will aim to hold a Pre-Hearing Meeting within 8 weeks of Submission and the Inquiry should start around week 14. Should the Inspector have any significant concerns relating to soundness from their initial reading of the material, they may exceptionally call an *exploratory meeting* to discuss the issues. In extreme circumstances, this may result in the LA having to request that the Plan be withdrawn.
- 3.11 At the EiP the Inspector will be charged with checking that the plan has complied with legislation. In particular, this includes checking that the plan:
- has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme and in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the Regulations;
  - has been subject to sustainability appraisal;
  - has regard to national policy; and
  - has regard to the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.12 The Inspector will then need to determine whether the plan is 'sound'. To be found sound, a Core Strategy should be JUSTIFIED, EFFECTIVE and consistent with NATIONAL POLICY
- 3.13 "Justified" means that the document must be:
- founded on a robust and credible evidence base
  - the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives
- 3.14 "Effective" means that the document must be:

- deliverable
- flexible, and
- able to be monitored

3.21 If found 'sound', the Inspector will prepare and issue a report that may contain recommendations for changes or amendments to the Plan, which (under the current regulations) will be binding on the Council. The Plan will then be formally adopted and form part of the statutory development plan for the Borough.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Core Strategy is the central policy document within the Halton LDF. The Core Strategy is more than a planning document: it is a significant corporate policy document and as such, it will have widespread policy implications for the Council and its partners.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **5.1 A Healthy Halton**

The Core Strategy Proposed Submission document contains a number of policies intended to directly or indirectly contribute to addressing the Borough's health problems. The SCS priority for a healthier Halton is strongly reflected across a number of policies, including through the maintenance of well-designed places and spaces, support for accessible sustainable travel options and through the provision of a healthy, green local environment.

##### **5.2 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Key Areas of Change highlight areas which will be subject to concentrated renewal. The other policies in the Plan seek to support the renewal and/or enhancement of the Borough's green and built environment, with a particular focus on housing areas, employment land and the Borough's centres.

##### **5.3 Children and Young People in Halton**

A significant component of the content of the Core Strategy is aimed at supporting raising aspirations of younger people, and supporting the provision of opportunities for them to enter further education or employment. The Plan also address the need to encourage and provide opportunities for children and younger people to access and participate in physically active, healthy lifestyles.

##### **5.4 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

One of the main thrusts of the Core Strategy is to support the maintenance and enhancement of the Borough's economy and hence economic growth. The Core Strategy also aims to consolidate and enhance linkages to the wider sub-region and delivers the economic benefits of Halton's strategic location and facilities to the Borough's residents and businesses.

**5.5 A Safer Halton**

Making Halton safer is a key consideration for the Core Strategy, which aims to ensure that Halton's communities, businesses and visitors enjoy access to a safe and sustainable physical environment with natural and man-made risks and hazards being minimised. A number of policies seek to create and sustain safer environments, which are well designed, well built, well maintained and valued by all members of society.

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 In approving the Plan for 'publication' the Council is confirming that it believes the plan to be sound, however given the changing regulatory regime and the recent abolition of Regional Spatial Strategy the biggest risk to the Plan is that an Inspector calls an Exploratory meeting over potential concerns relating to 'soundness'.

6.2 Should this be the case, the Inspector may advise on remedial actions to make the Plan sound, or may advise the Council to seek its withdrawal and potentially have to repeat a stage or stages to resolve the issue(s), with associated time and cost implications.

6.3 Failure to progress towards adoption presents risks in continued reliance on the saved policies from the Halton UDP. Whilst only adopted in 2005, a number of policies have either been superseded by newer guidance, are coming to the end of their time periods or are otherwise becoming more susceptible to challenge raising the possibility of increasing numbers of planning appeals.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 An integral part of the Core Strategy is to support a socially inclusive environment that takes into account Halton's diverse communities by breaking down unnecessary barriers and exclusions in a manner that benefits the entire Borough. The Equality Impact Assessment demonstrates whether the Plan has any significant foreseeable implications for Halton's communities and ways that these potential effects should be mitigated.

**8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

8.1 Publication of the Proposed Submission Document for a statutory minimum 6 week period of public consultation is the final formal consultation stage in the preparation of the Halton Core Strategy. As the Core Strategy is a Development Plan Document, publication for public consultation requires the approval of Executive Board.

**9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

9.1 The Core Strategy is the central document in the Halton Local Development Framework, the preparation of which is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. As such, there are no alternatives to the preparation of a Core Strategy. The content of the document has been subject to extensive internal and external consultation.

**10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

10.1 It is envisaged that the Core Strategy should be subject to an Examination in Public during the summer of 2011 and adopted by December 2011.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Saved Policies and Proposals Mao of the Halton Unitary Development Plan	Places, Economy and Transport Policy Team, Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Halton Core Strategy Preferred Options Documents	Places, Economy and Transport Policy Team, Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Halton Local Development Scheme	Places, Economy and Transport Policy Team, Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning	Places, Economy and Transport Policy Team, Rutland House	Alasdair Cross





# **HALTON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

**05<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**HALTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**  
It's all happening IN HALTON  
A Spatial Strategy for Halton 2026

## Foreword

*Foreword by Cllr Polhill / Cllr McInerney*

Welcome to Halton Borough Council's Core Strategy which will play a crucial role in shaping the spatial development of Halton up to 2026.

The Core Strategy sets out in 'Halton's Story of Place' how the Borough has developed over time and introduces the Borough's characteristics, including the issues and challenges that the Borough now faces and those likely to have an impact and drive further change during the period to 2026. The Core Strategy then introduces a vision for the Borough, imagining the place we would like Halton to be by 2026 and identifies a series of 13 Strategic Objectives that will help us to deliver that vision. From this a Spatial Strategy has been prepared, showing how development will be distributed throughout the Borough, and indicating which areas will be subject to the most substantial change. This is followed by a series of core policies relating to key themes of development including transport, urban design, conservation and health.

The Core Strategy, once implemented, will significantly contribute to the delivery of a prosperous, well connected and attractive Borough, supporting healthy communities, performing a key role within the Liverpool City Region and well positioned to respond to future economic and social changes and challenges.

# Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document Contents

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Vision and Strategic Objectives

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CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy  
Key Diagram  
CS2 Sustainable Development  
CS3 Housing Supply and Locational Priorities  
CS4 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities  
CS5 A Network of Centres for Halton  
CS6 Green Belt  
CS7 Infrastructure Provision

## KEY AREAS OF CHANGE

CS8 3MG  
CS9 South Widnes  
CS10 West Runcorn  
CS11 East Runcorn

## CORE POLICIES

CS12 Housing Mix  
CS13 Affordable Housing  
CS14 Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People  
CS15 Sustainable Transport  
CS16 The Mersey Gateway Project  
CS17 Liverpool John Lennon Airport  
CS18 High Quality Design  
CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change  
CS20 Natural and Historic Environment  
CS21 Green Infrastructure

CS22	Health and Well-Being
CS23	Managing Pollution and Risk
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CS25	Minerals

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1	Housing Trajectories
Appendix 2	Monitoring Framework
Appendix 3	Schedule of UDP Policies to be Replaced
Appendix 4	Glossary

## **CORE STRATEGY PUBLICATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

A	Infrastructure Plan
B	Sustainability Appraisal
C	Habitats Regulation Assessment
D	Statement of Consultation
E	Health Impact Assessment (TBC)
F	Equality Impact Assessment
G	LDF Evidence Base (TBC)

## Guide to the Proposed Submission Stage

This document is the Council's Core Strategy Proposed Submission document. This means that this is the document that the Council proposes to submit to the Secretary of State for an independent examination. The strategy and policies contained within this document have taken into account comments from previous rounds of public and stakeholder consultation and a comprehensive evidence base.

From X to X representations can be made on the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document. However, unlike the previous two formal stages of public consultation during the preparation of the Core Strategy, representations at this stage should only relate to the 'soundness' of the Strategy. To be sound the Strategy should be:

- **Justified** – founded on a robust and credible evidence base and is the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives
- **Effective** – meaning deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored
- Consistent with **National Policy**

The representations submitted relating to the above tests of soundness will be considered when the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for the independent examination along with other requirements of legal compliance. Halton Borough Council considers the Core Strategy document to be sound and in compliance with the legal requirements.

The public examination will include a thorough assessment of the content of the document and the way that it has been produced and will establish whether the Core Strategy can be formally adopted by the Council.

### How can you make representations on the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document?

Representations can be made in any of the following ways:

**Online at:** [www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning](http://www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning) where you can complete an online representations form.

**By email:** [forward.planning@halton.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@halton.gov.uk)

**In writing to:**

Halton Core Strategy FREEPOST XXXX  
Places, Economy and Transport,  
Halton Borough Council,  
Rutland House,  
Halton Lea,  
Runcorn,  
WA7 2GW

**By phoning:** 0151 906 4884

Visit our **Facebook** page: Halton2026

**Further Information:** If you would like to discuss any matters relating to the Core Strategy in more detail, please call the Core Strategy team on 0151 906 4884.

## I Introduction

### What is the Core Strategy?

- I.1 The Halton Core Strategy is the central document within the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) which will eventually replace Halton's current plan the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and be used to guide development and determine planning applications over the next 15 years, to 2026. Figure X illustrates the component documents of Halton's LDF.

Insert Figure showing the LDF

- I.2 The Core Strategy provides the overarching strategy for the LDF, setting out why change is needed; what the scale of change is; and where, when and how it will be delivered. It does this through identifying the current issues and opportunities in the Borough, how we want to achieve change and stating the future vision for Halton to 2026. To deliver this vision the Core Strategy sets out a spatial strategy stating the extent of change needed and the core policies for delivering this future change.
- I.3 The Core Strategy will help to shape the future of Halton, including its natural and built environments, its communities and ultimately peoples quality of life. The Core Strategy therefore joins up a range of different issues such as housing, employment, retail, transport and health. This is known as 'spatial planning'.

### How has the Core Strategy been Produced?

- I.4 Work on the Core Strategy commenced in January 2006 with the production of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers. Public consultation took place from the 27<sup>th</sup> July and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006 representing the first stage of community involvement on the Core Strategy and the spatial planning approach that should be taken.
- I.5 The Issues Paper began by introducing the new plan making system and what the meaning and purpose of 'spatial planning' was. It then set out the broad issues that planning policy within the Borough will need to help address, including those issues identified by the SCS. The Options Paper began to establish the role of planning policy in addressing the issues and introduced some of the broad policy options that the Core Strategy could adopt. This included three alternative spatial development scenarios for the Borough and seven spatial themes dealing with specific policy areas relevant to Halton.
- I.6 From the Issues and Options stage, work was progressed on the Preferred Options for Spatial Development of the Borough. On 24<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009 the Core Strategy Preferred Options document underwent a 6 week period of public consultation. The main purpose of this stage was to provide an opportunity for Halton's communities, stakeholders and other interested parties to tell us their views on the preferred policy options for Halton's future to 2026.
- I.7 Subsequent to the Preferred Options stage full consideration has been taken of the comments received, and further work has been undertaken with key stakeholders, neighbouring authorities and delivery partners regarding key sites and supporting infrastructure. The preferred policy approaches were developed to form the Proposed Submission document which represents the final formal stage of

consultation for the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination before the Council can formally adopt the plan.

### **What is the Policy Context for the Core Strategy?**

- 1.8 In producing the Core Strategy, consideration has been given to the context provided by existing policy frameworks at the national, regional, sub-regional and local level.

#### **National Context**

- 1.9 National planning policies are currently set out in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Guidance (PPGs). These PPSs and PPGs establish high-level planning principles and requirements for the LDF, covering a range of topics from sustainable development to the historic environment to flood risk. The Core Strategy must conform with, but not repeat national planning policy, unless it is essential in order to provide a coherent set of policies.
- 1.10 Although the overall direction and approach to national planning policy is unlikely to change, it is anticipated, following the plans of the new Coalition Government, that there will be moves to streamline current national planning policy into a wider, less detailed, National Planning Framework. This will be taken into consideration when preparing future LDF documents and policies.
- 1.11 The Government also publishes legislation, regulations and circulars which set the legal framework for the planning process.

#### **Regional Context**

- 1.12 Following the revocation and subsequent abolition of the North West of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) the regional context has evolved during the development of Halton's Core Strategy. As a result the Core Strategy no longer has a statutory obligation to conform to previous regional targets and policy.
- 1.13 In order to provide a strategic outlook for the region, the North West Development Agency (NWDA) has developed the Future North West: Our Shared Priorities<sup>1</sup> document. The document sets out four overarching themes which are supported throughout Halton's Core Strategy:
- **Theme 1:** Capitalise on the opportunities of moving to a low carbon economy and society, and address climate change and resource efficiency.
  - **Theme 2:** Build on our sources of international competitive advantage and distinctiveness.
  - **Theme 3:** Release the potential of our people and tackle poverty.
  - **Theme 4:** Ensure the right housing and infrastructure for sustainable growth.

#### **Sub-Regional Context**

- 1.14 Halton forms part of the core Liverpool City Region along with the local authority areas of Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens, Wirral and the City of Liverpool. The Liverpool City Region is committed to the achievement of a step change in the city region's economic performance based upon its established strengths including ports and logistics, the low carbon economy and the knowledge economy. These aims are to be formalised through the creation of a Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise

<sup>1</sup> NWDA (2010) Future North West: Our Shared Priorities

Partnership (LEP) which is intended to provide strategic leadership for the sub-region and create the right environment for business success and economic growth.

- 1.15 The City Region has also agreed a series of spatial priorities<sup>2</sup> covering five thematic areas: economy; employment and skills; housing; transport; and, environment and waste. These spatial priorities recognise a number of Halton specific projects, schemes and assets that will substantially contribute to the aims of the Liverpool City Region.

#### Local Context

- 1.16 The Core Strategy and the wider LDF has a close relationship to Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which outlines the long-term vision to achieve sustainable improvement in Halton. Halton's SCS for 2011-2026<sup>3</sup> brings together the main social, economic and environmental issues facing the Borough and identifies priorities for action across five strategic themes:

- A Healthy Halton
- Employment Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton
- Children and Young People in Halton
- Environment and Regeneration in Halton

- 1.17 The five strategic themes of the SCS provide a framework for the Core Strategy Vision, Strategic Objectives and Spatial Strategy, thus helping to inform the overall approach of the Core Strategy and the future development of Halton to 2026.

- 1.18 The Core Strategy also has close ties with the Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP) which aims to provide a good quality transport system, the Borough's Economic Regeneration Strategies which support the economic performance of the Borough and Halton's Housing Strategy ensuring that Halton offers a broad range of good quality housing which meets the needs of existing and future communities.

#### What is the Core Strategy's Relationship to the Supporting Documents?

- 1.19 The Core Strategy is accompanied by a number of important supporting documents which perform a variety of roles. These documents are listed below with a brief summary of their relationship to the Core Strategy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT	RELATIONSHIP TO THE CORE STRATEGY
<b>Infrastructure Plan</b>	Sets out the major infrastructure projects which are planned by the Council, its partners and third party agencies, detailing delivery mechanisms, timescales and funding for these projects. The Infrastructure Plan is to be a 'live' document and will be updated and amended throughout the life of the Core Strategy.
<b>LDF Evidence Base</b>	Lists the entire evidence base documents used and referred to in the preparation of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission document. Also included is a list of the available monitoring documents used to inform the Core Strategy production.

<sup>2</sup> Merseyside Policy Unit (MPU) (2010) Draft Liverpool City Region Spatial Priorities Plan 2010

<sup>3</sup> HBC (2010) Draft Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026



<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>	Assesses the social, economic and environmental impact of the Core Strategy policies and informs how these impacts can be positively addressed to ensure the most sustainable outcome. The SA also ensures that the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive have been complied with during the Core Strategies production.
<b>Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)</b>	<p>Assesses the potential effects of the plan on sites designated as important at the European Level. The process is split into three distinct phases with the first screening stage completed as part of the Core Strategy Preferred Options and latter two stages, termed Appropriate Assessment, completed as part of the Proposed Submission document. The Appropriate Assessment assesses the likely effects of the plan on the integrity of designated European wildlife sites and the identification of mitigation measures or alternative solutions, where appropriate.</p> <p>The draft Appropriate Assessment report is published alongside the Core Strategy Proposed Submission document and will be subject to consultation with the Statutory Consultee (Natural England). The amendments required through this process will be included within the Submission version of the Core Strategy.</p>
<b>Health Impact Assessment (HIA)</b>	Assesses the impacts of the Core Strategy policies on the important issue of health in Halton.
<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	Assesses the Core Strategy for potential disproportionate impacts on Halton's diverse communities.
<b>Statement of Consultation</b>	Summarises consultation undertaken so far and highlights how this has been taken into account in the development of the Core Strategy.

## 2 Halton's Story of Place

- 2.1 Covering the towns of Widnes and Runcorn, Halton is a unitary authority located in the North West of England which straddles the upper estuary of the River Mersey. It is located to the east of Liverpool City with the Borough of St.Helens to the north, Warrington to the east and rural north Cheshire lying to the south.
- 2.2 Home to 118,700<sup>1</sup> people Halton lies within the core of the Liverpool City Region and together with St.Helens and Warrington form Liverpool's Eastern or 'Mid-Mersey' housing market area.

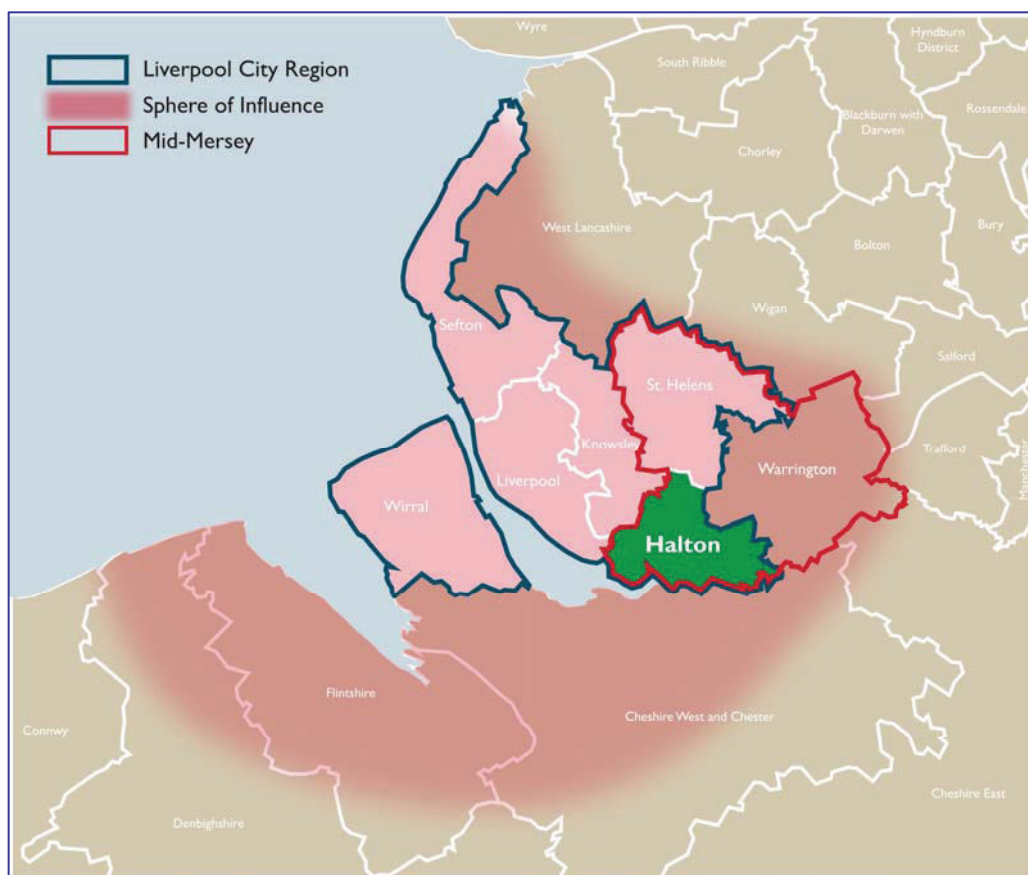


Figure XX: Liverpool City Region

- 2.3 Green Belt covers approximately one third of the land area of the Borough and contains the smaller settlements of Moore, Daresbury and Preston-on-the-Hill, with Hale Village inset within the Green Belt.
- 2.4 One of the defining characteristics of the Borough of Halton is the Mersey Estuary. Designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), an internationally important wetland (Ramsar convention) site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the estuary provides a unique waterfront environment that both divides and unites the principal towns of Runcorn and Widnes presenting both problems and opportunities for the development of the Borough.

<sup>1</sup> ONS (2009) Mid-Year Population Estimates

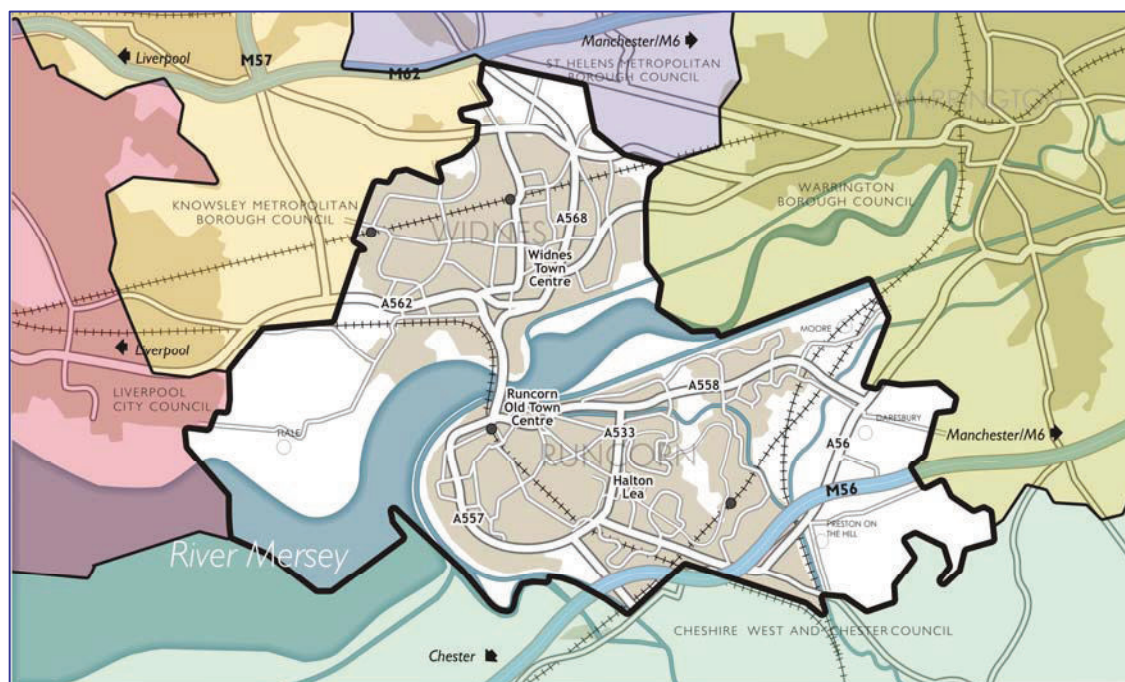


Figure XX: Liverpool City Region

- 2.5 The following sections map out the story of Halton as a place, concentrating on the two towns and their relationship to each other from opposite sides of the Mersey Estuary, and the key drivers of change that will affect and shape the Borough to 2026 and beyond. From this the key challenges for Halton to be dealt with in the Core Strategy are summarised.

## A Tale of Two Towns

- 2.6 Widnes and Runcorn grew up independently and have only been administered by a single local authority since local government reorganisation in 1974 and as a unitary authority since 1998. Previously Widnes was part of Lancashire and Runcorn part of Cheshire, with the Mersey Estuary separating the two Counties. Consequently, the two towns have very different histories. These are considered separately so that the combined future of the towns can be fully understood.

### Widnes

- 2.7 Widnes originally developed as a significant urban centre with the growth of the chemical industry in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was due to its locational advantages along the Mersey Estuary providing a ready supply of water and a central location between areas of salt production in Cheshire and coal production in Lancashire, providing necessary raw materials for the chemical processes. Infrastructure grew to support the chemical industry with the building of the St Helens (Sankey) Canal, the railways and the development of Widnes Docks, around modern day Spike Island.
- 2.8 Chemical plants developed along the waterfront from Ditton to Moss Bank, and northwards alongside the numerous railways that now criss-crossed the area. By the 1860s Widnes had developed into an international centre for alkali production.

Commerce, housing and civic institutions grew to support the expanding chemical enterprises.

- 2.9 Products manufactured by the chemical plants included alkali, soap, borax, soda ash, salt cake and bleaching powder. Unfortunately, manufacturing these products produced various toxic liquid and solid waste by-products that were often tipped or buried on land adjacent to the factories that produced them, thus contaminating the land and leaving a legacy affecting development of the area to this day.
- 2.10 Widnes Town Centre originally developed to the north of the waterfront around Victoria Road / Victoria Square before migrating northwards to its current focus on Albert Road (on reclaimed chemical works). Victorian and interwar housing expanded north of the Town Centre, enveloping the previous hamlets of Appleton and Farnworth. 1970's social housing estates in addition to more recent developments around Upton, to the north and north-west of Widnes, rounded out the urban form.
- 2.11 Since the 1970's Widnes has seen significant changes with many old polluting industries closing down and concerted efforts made to decontaminate and reclaim large swathes of despoiled land. Road infrastructure has been transformed with a grade separation from Ditton Roundabout (A533 Queensway) providing direct access to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, the eastern by-pass (A557 Watkinson Way) between the M62 (junction 7) and the Bridge, and Fiddlers Ferry Road (A562) improving access to Warrington.
- 2.12 Industrial and former industrial land continues to dominate the waterfront areas, with new employment opportunities within the logistics and distribution sector being created at 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) and on Widnes Waterfront which is seeking to establish a modern office market and address the town's lack of modern business accommodation.
- Runcorn**
- 2.13 Runcorn is the older of the two settlements. After a brief spell as a Spa resort, Runcorn's modern growth can be traced to the opening of the Bridgewater canal in 1761 which provided the stimulus for commercial and industrial growth. This was furthered by the development of the mainline railway and the Manchester Ship Canal in the 1800s. Although to a lesser extent than compared with Widnes, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century Runcorn increasingly became industrialised with the growth of the chemical and associated industries, which (as with Widnes) sprawled along the banks of the Mersey. Runcorn Locks connected the Bridgewater Canal with the Manchester Ship Canal and Weaver Navigation supporting the development of significant port facilities at Runcorn and Weston Docks.
- 2.14 In 1964 Runcorn was designated as a New Town. Its purpose was primarily to provide sites for Liverpool's population overspill and to re-house residents from Liverpool and north Merseyside's unfit dwellings. The Masterplan for the New Town was prepared to provide homes and jobs for 45,000 people growing to a population of 70,000 by the 1980s and with the possibility of expanding further up to 100,000 in later years.
- 2.15 The principles of a strong community and accessibility underlie the overall structure of Runcorn New Town. As a result the New Town comprises a number of distinct neighbourhoods, each with an individual identity emphasised in individual architectural forms linked by a busway system on a segregated carriageway and the

all purpose Expressway which forms a unique 'figure of eight' around the town. At the intersection of this 'eight' is located the town centre originally called 'Shopping City' and now rebranded 'Halton Lea' with supporting office development and the General Hospital.

- 2.16 Existing and new employment areas were located around the outside of the new town linked to the residential neighbourhoods by the segregated busway. The new estates at Astmoor and Whitehouse grouped largely single storey commercial units of various sizes around shared courts, often with communal parking areas, generous landscaping with good connections to the new expressway network.

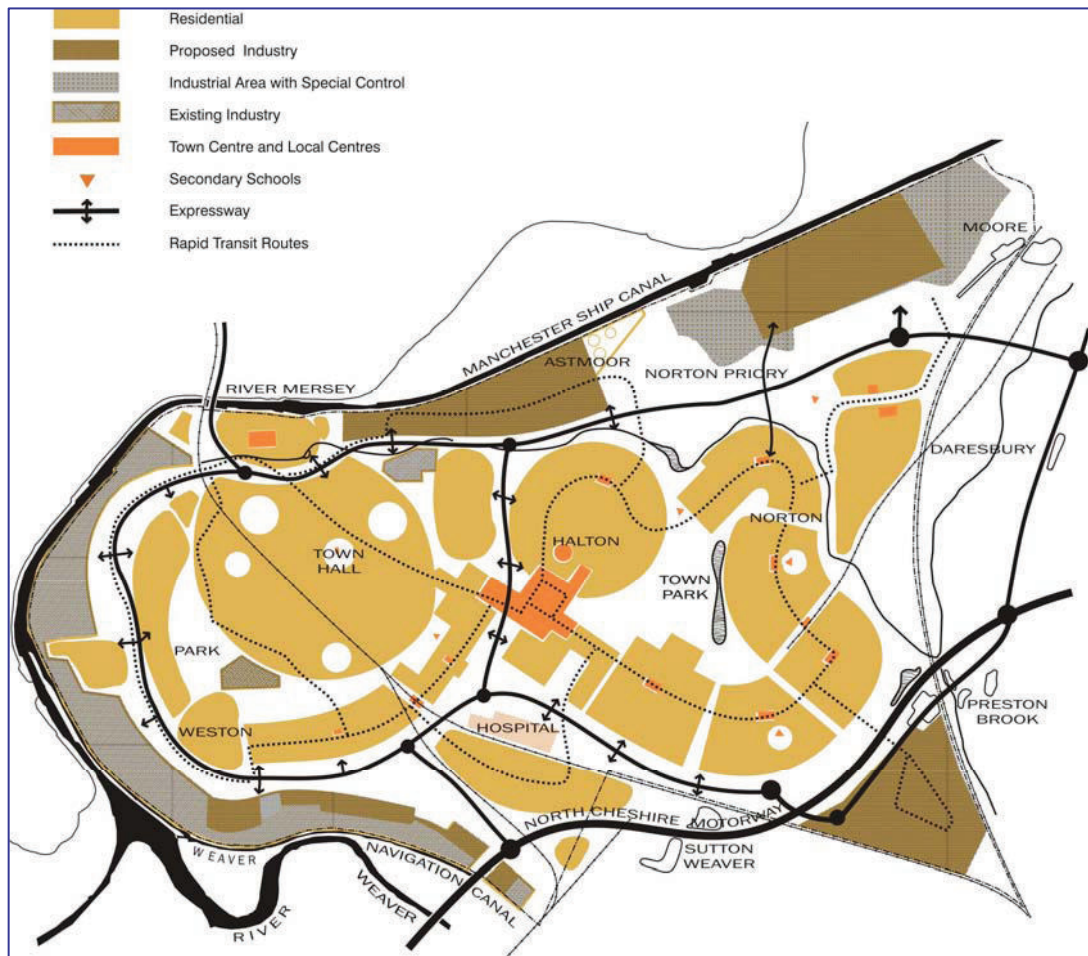


Figure XX: Runcorn New Town Masterplan

- 2.17 With its unique urban form and uncompromising architectural styles, the New Town has left a mixed legacy. This includes residential neighbourhoods where there has been the need for comprehensive redevelopment, for example Southgate, or focused regeneration as seen at Castlefields. Similarly, the early employment estates of Astmoor and to a lesser extent Whitehouse also suffer from a design legacy that is not suited to modern standards.
- 2.18 The full extent of the New Town Masterplan was never fully realised and as a result a number of unimplemented New Town planning consents remain. This is particularly apparent in East Runcorn, where extant planning permissions were

granted under the New Towns Act 1981 for the development of a residential neighbourhood at Sandymoor.

## Bridging the Gap

- 2.19 The two towns of Widnes and Runcorn lie either side of a natural narrowing of the Mersey Estuary known as the Runcorn Gap. The Runcorn Gap is a long standing strategic crossing of the Mersey since Roman times when crossing by boat and on foot (in low tides) would have been undertaken.
- 2.20 The first physical link between Widnes and Runcorn was established with the opening of the Ethelfreda Railway Bridge in 1868 which still remains in use today as the Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line railway. In the past the railway bridge also catered for pedestrians with road vehicles unable to make the crossing until 1905 when the Transporter Bridge opened.



The Transporter Bridge

- 2.21 With the post war growth in road traffic the Transporter Bridge proved inadequate and was replaced by the iconic Silver Jubilee Bridge which opened in 1961. The Silver Jubilee Bridge currently acts as a strategic link in the regional transport network as well as presenting the only current vehicular and pedestrian link between the towns of Runcorn and Widnes. Despite being converted to four lanes in the 1970s, the Silver Jubilee Bridge is now operating beyond its original operational capacity of 60,000 vehicles per day, with over 80,000 vehicles making the crossing every weekday. As a result the Silver Jubilee Bridge suffers from severe peak time congestion creating a pinch point on the road network, a situation further exacerbated by the increasing maintenance requirements on the 50 year old structure.
- 2.22 To relieve current cross river congestion and aid connectivity between Widnes and Runcorn, a new road crossing across the Mersey Estuary upstream of the Silver Jubilee Bridge is to be delivered. The Mersey Gateway Bridge is seen as more than just a bridge, but the 'catalyst' that will connect communities and lead to regeneration and investment throughout Halton, the Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and the North West.

- 2.23 Halton's bridges, past, present and future, provide Widnes and Runcorn with a deep rooted connection, decreasing the traditional divide, leading to a more unified and prosperous Borough.



Picture showing the Ethelfreda Railway Bridge the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the future Mersey Gateway Bridge

## Drivers of Change

- 2.24 Halton Borough Council is a high achieving and aspirational council with a proactive approach towards encouraging and enabling development in the Borough. To guide Halton's future development to 2026 and beyond it is important to understand the Borough's current characteristics including the assets, issues and opportunities. Together these form Halton's drivers of change.

### Demographics

- 2.25 Halton's resident population has, after a significant period of population decline, started to experience a reverse in the trend with modest growth projection. The population of the Borough, currently 118,900, is now projected to increase to by around 4,700 to 123,600 by the end of the plan period (2026)<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.26 The population structure in the Borough is comparatively young, partly as a legacy of young families moving into Runcorn during the 1970s and 80s New Town era. However, these first generation New Town residents are getting older, currently swelling the 45-59 age band, and will reach retirement age during the plan period. As such the population structure is ageing with the numbers aged over 65+ projected

<sup>2</sup> ONS (2008) Subnational Population Projections

to increase by some 50%, growing by some 8,600 from 16,900 in 2008 to 25,500 in 2026. This ageing population will create additional demand for care services and for adapted or specialist housing.

- 2.27 Net outward migration which drove past population decline is expected to reduce, but will remain an issue for the Borough, particularly amongst young working age adults leaving to pursue education and employment opportunities elsewhere.

### Deprivation

- 2.28 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)<sup>3</sup> can be used to identify groups and areas in Halton suffering from deprivation. Halton is ranked as the 30<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough nationally (at 2007) and 3<sup>rd</sup> on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool. 47% of the Borough's population live in the top 20% most deprived areas in England. Although Halton's ranking has improved since the previous IMD in 2004 the Borough is still performing poorly in terms of overall deprivation.
- 2.29 Halton has eight areas within the top 3% most deprived in England. These are identified in dark red in figure X. The most deprived neighbourhood in Halton is ranked 306<sup>th</sup> out of 32,482 and is situated in Central Runcorn.

### Figure XX: Halton's Spatial Deprivation

### Health

- 2.30 A principal concern for Halton is the health of its residents. The Borough has for many years had some of the poorest health outcomes and shortest life expectancies of any area in England. Life expectancy at birth in Halton (2006-2008)<sup>4</sup> is 74.8 years for males and 78.8 years for females. This is significantly lower than both the North West (76.3 male, 80.1 female) and England figures (77.9 male, 82 female). Pioneering research in 2003 by the University of Lancaster commissioned by the Halton Health Partnership<sup>5</sup> showed that local health issues were not, as then suspected, the result of the Borough's industrial past and heavily contaminated local environment, but are more strongly related to poor lifestyles and economic deprivation.

### Housing

- 2.31 Within the Borough there are a total of 53,759 dwellings. The property profile is fairly varied and as such meets the needs of a wide range of population groups, however, there is currently an over representation of terraced properties (New Town in Runcorn / Victorian in Widnes) and a need for more family and aspirational housing<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.32 Halton has a lower proportion of owner occupied and private rented dwelling stock than the regional and national averages; the Borough also has a significantly higher proportion of the population who rent housing from a Registered Social Landlord (RSL)<sup>7</sup> due to the high proportion of social housing provided by the New Town. House prices across the Borough are still below regional and national averages but have risen significantly over recent years. Although the current economic climate has shown a decrease in house prices, the needs of lower income and new forming

<sup>3</sup> CLG (2007) The English Indices of Deprivation

<sup>4</sup> ONS (2008) Life Expectancy at Birth

<sup>5</sup> Lancaster University (2003) Understanding Factors Affecting Health in Halton

<sup>6</sup> GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting (2010) Halton and Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment

<sup>7</sup> HBC (2010) State of the Borough Report



households are increasingly not being met due to other barriers such as decreasing loan to value ratios applied by major lenders.

- 2.33 The recent provision of larger more aspirational housing developments at Upton Rocks (Widnes) and Sandymoor (East Runcorn), the latter representing a remaining consent from the New Town period, has begun to address an identified deficiency in the local stock for larger family houses, and may have contributed to the recent stabilisation in population numbers, however, there is still an identified need for these house types across the Borough.
- 2.34 As part of providing access to housing for all sectors of the community, Halton must also consider the specific needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Council currently owns and manages two permanent sites for Gypsies and Travellers, one in Widnes and the other in Runcorn. Additionally there are two private sites located in Runcorn. In total there are 40 permanent pitches and 10 transit pitches across Halton.

### **Employment, Learning & Skills**

- 2.35 Halton's local economy has been subject to major restructuring with the decline of the traditional chemical manufacturing industries that once dominated both Widnes and Runcorn. However, Halton still has a larger proportion of workers employed in manufacturing as compared to the Liverpool City Region<sup>8</sup>. Distribution, information and communication sectors are also large employment sectors in the Borough.
- 2.36 In terms of economic activity, Halton displays issues of worklessness and unemployment. The economic activity rate, which shows the percentage of economically active people of working age, for Halton (76.2%) is below both the North West (76.8%) and England (78.6%)<sup>9</sup>. The current Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rate in Halton is 5.9%; this is greater than the North West rate (4.5%) and the national rate (4.1%)<sup>10</sup> and is likely to increase in the current recessionary period.
- 2.37 Despite recent successes in education and more specifically school exam results in the Borough, low levels of education and skills are apparent within the local workforce. This has led to a mismatch between workforce skills and jobs available. Consequently, Halton's residents have been unable to access the full spectrum of jobs in the Borough. The median weekly pay data shows that people who work in Halton have a weekly pay of £402.50 compared to £370.60 for the residents of Halton<sup>11</sup>.
- 2.38 Whilst there is general satisfaction with Halton as a place to do business, there are problems with the range of commercial sites and premises on offer. Widnes suffers from an excess of poor quality, despoiled former industrial land and has a limited modern office market. Runcorn has early New Town industrial estates, most notably Astmoor, where layouts and unit specifications do not meet modern business requirements and high vacancy rates are prevalent. The Widnes Waterfront Masterplan and Delivery Strategy, the multimodal logistics and distribution development at 3MG and the Business Improvement Districts at Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates are among the measures already being used to address these deficiencies.

<sup>8</sup> ONS (2008) Annual Business Inquiry

<sup>9</sup> ONS (2007) Annual Population Survey

<sup>10</sup> ONS (2009) Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants

<sup>11</sup> ONS (2009) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

- 2.39 Despite the contraction of the chemical industry due to globalisation, high value-added, specialist chemical manufacturing, and scientific and research based employers remain a key component of the local economy with the remaining firms such as Ineos Chlor amongst the largest individual private sector employers. Redevelopment of ICI's headquarters at the Heath Business Park and the public sector investment at Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (SIC) has ensured Halton has strong foundations in, and is now becoming home to, science, technology and research sectors.

### **Environment**

- 2.40 Halton has a historic legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, housing, commercial buildings, physical infrastructure and contaminated land. Although the physical appearance of the Borough has improved considerably over recent years, through a number of regeneration schemes, challenges still remain.
- 2.41 Despite Halton's legacy, the Borough has a large number of environmental assets and designations. Perhaps the greatest of these being the Mersey Estuary with its surrounding saltmarsh and terrestrial open space. The Borough also has a tightly drawn Green Belt boundary, with the total area of Green Belt land standing at 2,500ha, and substantial green infrastructure including parks, recreation grounds and public open spaces. In Runcorn the abundance of parkland and open space can be considered as one of the New Town's great successes, but also a challenge for the Council to maintain. The Borough's green infrastructure supports a wide network of biodiversity, serves as a recreation resource for the benefit of the health and well-being of residents and as a means of mitigation against the effects of climate change. The Borough boasts one Ramsar Site, one Special Protection Area (SPA), three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), ten Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), 47 Local Wildlife Sites and 12 Open Spaces of Green Flag award standard.
- 2.42 In terms of the Borough's historic environment there are a range of heritage assets which serve as a positive link to, and reminder of, Halton's past, including ten conservation areas, seven scheduled monuments and 126 Listed Buildings.
- 2.43 Additionally, a substantial part of Halton's character and 'sense of place' is formed by the Borough's waterside environments along the Mersey Estuary, the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal, St Helens Canal and the Weaver Navigation. Halton's waterways provide an attractive setting for waterside development, a recreational resource and help improve the image of the Borough.

### **Climate Change and Sustainability**

- 2.44 Climate change is recognised as one of the most serious challenges facing the UK. Evidence shows that over the last century there has been an unprecedented rate of increase in global temperatures leading to climatic changes. Scientific consensus attributes this global warming to emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide from combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation or transport. The impacts of climate change may be felt within the Borough through warmer summers and wetter winters and an increased frequency of severe weather events. These climatic shifts will have a pronounced effect on Halton's natural and built environments.
- 2.45 Extreme weather events may also increase the risk of coastal and estuarine flooding. Halton's estuarine location and the number of brooks which run into the Mersey

Estuary present a number of areas in the Borough that have been identified at risk from flooding.

- 2.46 The sustainable management of waste is also a major concern for Halton. European and national legislation is driving a change in the way we handle waste. Disposing the majority of our waste to landfill is no longer a viable long term option.

### **Transport Links**

- 2.47 The Borough enjoys excellent links being at the heart of the region's transport network. The M56 motorway runs through the south of the Borough and the M62 is located just to the north, both a short drive from the M6, whilst A-class routes converge on the Silver Jubilee Bridge river crossing.
- 2.48 The Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line railway offers regular services from Runcorn Train Station delivering passengers to London in less than 2 hours and to Liverpool in around 20 minutes. Local and Trans-Pennine services call at Widnes, Hough Green and Runcorn East stations before connecting with Manchester and other destinations across the north of England.
- 2.49 Liverpool John Lennon Airport is located adjacent to Halton Borough Council's western boundary within Liverpool City Council. The Airport provides national and international connectivity for the Borough whilst also bringing economic benefits including job creation.
- 2.50 Travel patterns show that 13.8% of commuting flows to Halton are by residents within the Liverpool City Region, however, the largest flow is by residents of Warrington (9.7%)<sup>12</sup>. Overall, 70% of journeys to work within Halton are made by car<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.51 Although, as explained previously, there are a range of issues associated with congestion and the unpredictability of journey times for cross river traffic, Halton exhibits a number of locational advantages presented by the Borough's existing rail links, waterways, ports, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the proposed Mersey Gateway Project. These present a unique opportunity to ensure that Halton fulfils its potential as a major hub for distribution and logistics. This opportunity is also taken forward in the Liverpool City Region 'SuperPort' concept<sup>14</sup> which aims to ensure that these assets along with other freight infrastructure across the sub-region become a key driver in the local economy.

### **Retail and Leisure**

- 2.52 Halton has three main retail centres with Widnes being the largest centre followed by Halton Lea and then Runcorn Old Town.
- 2.53 Widnes Town Centre has a strong convenience and comparison retail offer. In terms of the town's market share of comparison retail, this has been substantially improved with the opening of Widnes Shopping Park in early 2010. Victoria Square to the south of the Town Centre provides an opportunity to extend the evening economy and a new leisure development at Widnes Waterfront comprising of a cinema, ice rink and restaurants will complement the Town Centre's retail offer and boost leisure opportunities within the Borough.

<sup>12</sup> HBC (2010) State of the Borough in Halton

<sup>13</sup> ONS (2001) Census 2001

<sup>14</sup> TMP (2008) Liverpool SuperPort

- 2.54 In Runcorn, during the New Town era, the location of the new town centre, Halton Lea, can be seen as a contributing factor to the subsequent decline of Runcorn Old Town which struggled to maintain its position as a key retail centre in the Borough. As a result Runcorn Old Town centre has been subject to several regeneration projects. In recent years Runcorn Old Town has acquired assets such as the Brindley Arts Centre, consolidating its role as an independent and specialist destination. Although Halton Lea has suffered from a number of issues including weak pedestrian access, high vacancy rates and the lack of an evening economy, its complimentary leisure facilities at Trident Retail Park have improved its offer substantially.

### **Risk**

- 2.55 Halton is affected by a number of installations which have the potential to create a significant risk for Halton's communities in the event of a major incident. These include industries that store quantities of potentially dangerous chemicals such as chlorine at Ineos Chlor in Runcorn, pipelines that carry explosive gases or liquids and the approach to the runway of Liverpool John Lennon Airport. Flooding events, land contamination and pollution also present a major potential risk to Halton's communities.

## **Halton's Challenges**

- 2.56 Through the description of Halton's characteristics including the Borough's assets, issues and opportunities a number of challenges have become clear.

Halton's challenges are to:

- respond to the changing population structure including the Borough's ageing population;
- tackle issues of deprivation and health for the Boroughs residents;
- deliver and secure a balanced housing offer which is appropriate to local markets and ultimately supports the Borough's economic growth;
- continue to create an environment where employers want to invest and create jobs;
- attract skilled workers into the Borough and increase the proportion of Halton's working age population with appropriate qualifications;
- support the Boroughs economic growth sectors including science and technology, and logistics and distribution;
- ensure all development is of a high quality of design and that areas of contaminated land are successfully remediated;
- maintain and enhance Halton's natural and heritage assets including its sites of local, national and international importance, waterside environments and distinctive character;
- put in place mitigation and adaptation measures to deal with the threat of climate change;
- utilise resources sustainably;
- reduce congestion and support travel by sustainable modes;
- maintain and enhance the retail and leisure offer of Widnes Town Centre, Halton Lea and Runcorn Old Town; and,
- minimise and respond to the potential risk of major accidents, flooding, contamination and pollution.

2.57 These challenges must be addressed in order to ensure Halton fulfils its future vision to 2026.

## A VISION FOR HALTON IN 2026

The overarching vision taken from the [draft Halton Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026](#):

*“Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.”*

Flowing from this, the spatial vision underpinning Halton’s Core Strategy is as follows:

“In 2026, Halton is well equipped to meet its own needs with housing for all sections of society, a range of employment opportunities, plus retail and leisure facilities for everyone. Halton continues to contribute positively to achieving the economic, environmental and social potential of the Liverpool City Region and the North West.

Thriving and diverse residential communities are emerging at Sandymoor, Daresbury and Runcorn Waterfront while additional high quality housing in other locations across Runcorn and Widnes are reinforcing and diversifying the Borough’s residential offer, responding to the needs of the Borough’s communities. There has been a renewed emphasis on the delivery of affordable housing providing accommodation for those who were previously unable to access the type of home they required.

The Borough’s economy has been strengthened by the expansion of key employment areas at Daresbury, 3MG, Mersey Gateway Port and Widnes Waterfront, and Halton has developed an important role in the sub-region for sustainable distribution and logistics and in high-tech science and research. Halton’s residents are well equipped with the skills needed to compete for jobs in all sectors and locations throughout the Borough, where existing employment areas have been retained and improved through appropriate regeneration to meet the needs of modern employers. The Borough’s traditional industries, centred on the chemicals sector, continue to play a key role in both Runcorn and Widnes.

Retail and leisure centres in the Borough maintain their function as key areas for the provision of shops, services and community facilities. The town centres at Widnes and Halton Lea offer vibrant and busy destinations for people to do their shopping, access services and meet one another. Runcorn Old Town has developed into a unique location for shopping and leisure, with a niche role compared to the two main town centres in the Borough.

Development across the Borough is highly sustainable and contributes to the health and well-being of Halton’s communities, has made the best use of previously developed land and has utilised infrastructure and resources efficiently. Climatic risks continue to be managed and mitigated and development has contributed to minimising Halton’s carbon footprint. Additionally, Halton benefits from high quality infrastructure serving new and existing development.

The rural character and setting of the Borough’s villages of Moore, Daresbury and Preston on the Hill within the Green Belt has been retained through restrictions on new development. The character of Hale Village (inset within the Green Belt), has also been protected, and any negative impacts associated with the expansion at Liverpool John Lennon Airport are minimised. The Borough’s Green Belt continues to provide a vital resource for current and future residents and keeping important spaces between settlements.

The historic and natural environments across Halton have been conserved and enhanced for future generations and the Borough's multifunctional Green Infrastructure network fulfils the recreational needs of residents, contributes to general well-being and provides important linked diverse habitats. Additionally, Halton's legacy of contaminated land continues to be remediated and regenerated, and development responds to the potential risks of major accidents and flooding.

Transport routes both through the Borough and to surrounding areas are intrinsic to how the Borough functions on its own and as part of the sub-region, for the movement of goods and people. A second river crossing between the Borough's towns of Runcorn and Widnes, in the form of the Mersey Gateway Project, has been secured, improving connections and acting as a major sub-regional catalyst for development and regeneration".

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The spatial vision will be achieved through the delivery of the strategic objectives:

1. Create and support attractive, accessible and adaptable residential neighbourhoods where people want to live
2. Provide good quality, affordable accommodation and a wide mix of housing types to create balanced communities
3. Create and sustain a competitive and diverse business environment offering a variety of quality sites and premises, through the revitalisation of existing vacant and underused employment areas
4. Further develop Halton's economy around the logistics and distribution sector, and expand the science, creative and knowledge based business clusters
5. Maintain and enhance Halton's town and local centres to create high quality retail and leisure areas that meet the needs of the local community, and positively contribute to the image of the Borough
6. Ensure all development is supported by the timely provision of adequate infrastructure, with sufficient capacity to accommodate additional future growth
7. Provide accessible travel options for people and freight, particularly through the realisation of the Mersey Gateway Project, ensuring a better connected, less congested and more sustainable Halton
8. Ensure that all development achieves high standards of design and sustainability and provides a positive contribution to its locality
9. Minimise Halton's contribution to climate change through reducing carbon emissions and ensure the Borough is resilient to the adverse effects of climate change
10. Support the conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment including the Borough's Green Infrastructure in order to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits
11. Improve the health and well-being of Halton's residents throughout each of their life stages, through supporting the achievement of healthy lifestyles and healthy environments for all
12. Prevent harm and nuisance to people and biodiversity from potential sources of pollution and foreseeable risks
13. Support sustainable and effective waste and minerals management, reducing the amount of waste generated and contributing to the maintenance of appropriate mineral reserves.



**HALTON CORE STRATEGY  
PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

**SPATIAL POLICIES**

## Halton's Spatial Strategy

- 1.1 The Spatial Strategy flows from the Vision for Halton It expresses how we will achieve what we want to deliver over the plan period, taking into consideration the existing physical and social environment of the Borough, and how we intend to meet the Strategic Objectives. The Spatial Strategy sets out how Halton will change over the coming years; where change will happen, when it will happen and how this is to be delivered.

### Policy CS1: Halton's Spatial Strategy

To achieve the Vision for Halton to 2026, new development should deliver:

- 8000 additional new homes
- 260 ha (gross) of land for employment purposes
- Up to 35,000 SqM of town centre convenience /comparison goods retailing
- Up to 22,000 SqM of bulky goods retailing

*Specific principles to guide the location, timing and delivery of the above development are set out in policies CS3-CS5.*

#### 1. Urban Regeneration and Key Areas of Change

The Spatial Strategy for Halton is focused around a balanced mix of prioritised urban regeneration supported by appropriate levels of greenfield expansion. The strategy will largely be realised by the delivery of four “key areas of change” across the Borough where the majority of new development will be located. The four areas are:

##### (a) Regeneration of previously developed (brownfield) land within the existing urban area as Key Areas of Change at:

- 3MG, (Ditton) in Widnes,
- South Widnes,
- West Runcorn; and

##### (b) Greenfield expansion involving the completion of Runcorn New Town and limited further urban extension to Runcorn as a Key Area of Change at:

- East Runcorn

This specific Key Area of Change includes the designation of a Strategic Site encompassing Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and Daresbury Park.

*Specific proposals for these areas and the type and amount of development they will accommodate are set out in policies CS7-CS10.*

#### 2.. Brownfield Focus (beneficial and efficient use of existing sites)

Outside of the Key Areas of Change, the re-use of previously developed land will be prioritised, notably where regenerating or bringing sites back into use will bring wider benefits to the Borough. Important Green Infrastructure within the urban area will be protected from adverse development to ensure its value, both individually and as part of a network is retained.

#### 3 Halton's rural areas and Green Belt

The rural character of the Borough's villages and Green Belt will be predominantly maintained. Minor amendment of the Green Belt is proposed to the west of the

Borough to facilitate the planned runway extension at Liverpool John Lennon Airport. In addition, the land supply position may warrant a general review of Green Belt boundaries to serve development needs arising north of the river prior to 2026.

*Specific proposals relating to Liverpool John Lennon Airport are set out in CS16.*

## Justification

- 1.1 Informed by Halton's existing characteristics, issues and opportunities as detailed in Halton's Story of Place, the Spatial Strategy has been developed to focus future development on areas where there is an impetus or a need for change. A number of areas of the Borough such as industrial parts of Widnes and New Town areas in Runcorn have not benefitted from sufficient investment for a number of years and are now in need of renewal. Development over the plan period will predominantly be focused on renewing Halton's urban landscape through the re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land, including derelict sites and those with a history of contamination particularly at South Widnes and West Runcorn. Specific policies deal with when this change will happen. By seeking wherever possible to concentrate development in brownfield regeneration areas, the roles of Runcorn and Widnes as important towns in the sub-region will be maintained and secured for the future. This will ensure that the Borough is able to meet the day-to-day needs of its current and future population by providing ample employment opportunities, a range of high quality services and facilities and a choice of homes.
- 1.1 Despite the priority to renew and improve the Borough's urban landscape through new development, it is apparent through the evidence base that not all future development can be delivered on brownfield land. Despite the Borough's strong record for bringing brownfield land back into use, much of the remaining previously developed land is highly constrained through contamination or other factors which affect development viability, therefore reducing the realistic amount of brownfield land which can be brought back into beneficial use. In addition to the limitations on the re-use of brownfield land, development opportunities in the Borough are constrained (particularly north of the river) by tightly defined Green Belt boundaries, limited scope for infilling, coupled with the Mersey Estuary dissecting the Borough, there are not a wide variety of strategic options available to accommodate future growth requirements. However, Halton must plan for the level of development needed to secure the future prosperity of the Borough and to ensure that the services, facilities and opportunities on offer serve Halton's population over the lifetime of the plan. During the earlier stages of the Core Strategy's production, three different options to deliver the required level of growth were consulted on; **Sustainable Urban Extensions, Brownfield Only Focus** and a **Mix of Brownfield and Urban Extension**. Following public consultation, the development of the evidence base and refinement of the options, the option of combining a brownfield approach, coupled with an extension of the Borough's existing built up area to the east of Runcorn emerged as the preferred option, and the most balanced approach to both deliver the amount of new development needed whilst contributing towards the achievement of the Vision and Objectives for the Borough.
- 1.1 The land proposed to be developed at East Runcorn is predominantly greenfield land beyond Runcorn's current built up urban area. Evidence from both the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2010) and the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010) indicate that without the inclusion of this area of the Borough,

there would be insufficient land for new residential and employment development needed over the plan period.

- 1.1 The strategy for development in Halton over the Core Strategy period should be viewed as the next phase in the development of the Borough, and a continuation of previous strategies as implemented in the 2005 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the 1996 Halton Local Plan. For instance, the impetus to develop land at East Runcorn dates back to the New Town Master Plan and its amendment, where the proposals were extended to incorporate land beyond the areas of Windmill Hill and Murdishaw primarily to accommodate a greater number and range of dwellings. This area began to be developed in the late 1980s to form the residential area of Sandymoor. In Widnes, pockets of greenfield land lie between the existing urban area and the Green Belt surrounding the north of the Borough, and these areas were released for development in the later phases of the UDP, where sites within the urban area were brought forward first. Currently there are no further housing renewal programmes, such as that nearing completion at Castlefields (Runcorn), which are planned to take place within the lifetime of the Core Strategy. Aside from the urban Key Areas of Change which present opportunities for brownfield development, there is not an abundance of sites within the urban area with the ability to deliver development, particularly residential development.
- 1.1 The following table sets out the land supply position for residential and employment purposes at April 2010. This demonstrates that almost three quarters of the potential housing supply identified in the SHLAA lies south of the river, with previously identified land accounting for only 38% of the potential supply. For employment land there is marginally more land available in Widnes, however this supply is concentrated in a limited number of large sites forming the 3MG development.

**Table 1: Distribution of identified development potential (April 2010)**

		Potential Housing Supply (SHLAA 2010)		Identified Employment Land Supply 2010 (Ha.)	
3MG	Green	--	--	24.8	26%
	Brown	--	--	70.0	74%
		0	0%	94.8	48%
South Widnes	Green	--	0%	15.8	61%
	Brown	876	100%	9.9	39%
		876	7%	25.7	13%
Widnes (ALL)	Green	1,486	48%	40.6	32%
	Brown	1,595	52%	86.8	68%
		3,081	26%	127.4	64%
East Runcorn	Green	3,410	100%	49.2	100%
	Brown	--	0%	--	0%
		3,410	29%	49.2	25%
West Runcorn	Green	75	4%	--	0%
	Brown	2,058	96%	0.3	100%
		2,133	18%	0.3	0%
Runcorn (ALL)	Green	5,802	67%	7.0	10%
	Brown	2,798	33%	63.4	90%
		8,600	74%	70.4	36%
HALTON	Green	7,288	62%	47.6	24%
	Brown	4,393	38%	150.2	76%

(ALL)	11,681	100%	197.8	100%
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- 1.1 The strategy identifies four **Key Areas of Change** where the biggest transformation of the current landscape is expected will occur. These key areas are seen as fundamental to the longer term development of the Borough and in most cases represent existing areas where impetus for change exists, through priority projects or support from the development industry. Table 2 below illustrates the likely quantum and distribution of development / development land across Halton to 2026..

**Table 2: Projected distribution of development / development land to 2026.**

	WIDNES			RUNCORN			Totals
	Key Area of Change		Other *	Key Area of Change		Other *	
	3MG	South Widnes		West Runcorn	East Runcorn		
Housing (dwellings)		350	3,250	2,000	3,400	1,000	8,000
Employment (Ha)	98.9	29.2	10.7	26.9	62.3	32.0	260.0
'Town Centre' Retail (SqM)		25,000		5,000		5,000	35,000
Bulky Goods Retail (SqM)		19,000				3,000	22,000

\* Other may include currently unidentified 'windfall' sites that may arise within Key Areas of Change.

### Where are the Key Areas of Change and why have they been chosen?

- 1.1 The Key Areas of Change in Halton have been identified as:
- **3MG** (the Mersey Multimodal Gateway) at Ditton in Widnes.
  - **South Widnes** – including Widnes Town Centre, Widnes Waterfront and the regeneration area of West Bank.
  - **West Runcorn** – including Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn Waterfront and the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks).
  - **East Runcorn** – covering Daresbury Park, Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and Sandymoor.

#### 3MG, Widnes

- 1.1 The existing strategic rail freight interchange in Ditton, Widnes known as **3MG** (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) has been operational since 2006, and is well located in relation to the strategic road network, West Coast Main Line (WCML) rail access, the Port of Liverpool, and the expanding cargo facility at Liverpool John Lennon Airport. The site is a key location for logistics and distribution in the North West and when fully developed, offers the potential to deliver up to 5,000 jobs in this expanding sector. Whilst part of the site is already well established as an operational freight facility, there remains significant development potential to the west of the existing rail freight facility where there is scope for similar employment uses.
- 1.1 Support for the development and expansion of intermodal freight facilities such as 3MG reflects national and regional priorities to facilitate a shift in the movement of freight from road based transportation to sustainable modes. The 3MG site is currently connected via the WCML to the markets of the South East of England and to the European continent. There are also plans to further connect rail freight

services between 3MG and southern Spain to allow the transport of fresh fruit and vegetables from Europe for distribution within the UK.

### South Widnes

- 1.1 The South Widnes Key Area Change is made up of three component parts which abut each other along the southern edge of Widnes, adjacent to the key route of the A568. **Widnes Town Centre** is the largest Town Centre in the Borough and home to a substantial retail offer, including the recently completed Widnes Shopping Park to the east of the existing shopping precinct. Evidence from Halton's Retail and Leisure Study<sup>1</sup> suggests that there is potential to expand the bulky goods (DIY and gardening products, furniture, carpets, electrical goods, office supplies and toys) retail offer in the town centre, hence the requirement for identified level of additional floorspace.
- 1.1 The area known as **Widnes Waterfront** adjoins the Town Centre and covers the area south of Fiddlers Ferry Road and east of Ashley Way. Predominantly an employment area, the site's prominence in the Borough will be boosted in the future given the area's proximity to the new river crossing after the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project. The area has been the focus of regeneration efforts in recent years, mainly towards the west however there is potential for the remainder of the area to offer a renewed employment offer.
- 1.1 The **West Bank** area is situated to the west of Widnes Waterfront and currently comprises a variety of different land uses, with industrial and commercial to the north and a residential neighbourhood to the south. There is the scope for substantial reconfiguration of this area following the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project.

### West Runcorn

- 1.1 The West Runcorn Key Area of Change includes the retail and leisure area of **Runcorn Old Town**. Although Runcorn Old Town centre is an important convenience centre in its local catchment, the centre was adversely affected by the development of its larger New Town neighbour, Halton Lea (previously known as Shopping City), and at present lacks a defined role. There is definite scope and impetus to build a complementary relationship for Runcorn Old Town with Halton Lea, centred around the evening economy and cultural uses in the centre. Longer term redevelopment opportunities for Runcorn Old Town centre are related to the Mersey Gateway Project which will create better linkages and connectivity between the waterfront area and Runcorn Train Station on the WCML.
- 1.1 Lying to the west of Runcorn Old Town centre, adjacent to the Riverside College Campus and recent waterside housing developments, lies **Runcorn Waterfront** a key development site anticipated to come forward for a mix of residential and commercial uses during the plan period.
- 1.1 Towards the south of the West Runcorn Key Area of Change, the **Mersey Gateway Port** (previously known as Weston Docks) offers the opportunity to create a civil waterway port offering improved road, rail, inland waterway and sea freight logistics. The realisation of this site's potential will further strengthen and expand the Borough's specialism in the logistics and distribution sector.

### East Runcorn

<sup>1</sup> GVA Grimley (2009) Halton Retail and Leisure Study, para 11.42, page 132

- 1.1 The East Runcorn area can be split into two distinct sections – the predominantly residential area at **Sandymoor** and the area of employment focus at Daresbury, divided between the business community at **Daresbury Park** and the nationally significant science and research centre at **Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus**. The delivery of an extension to Runcorn's urban area represents an opportunity to integrate the existing employment area with the rest of the Borough, whilst additionally making a significant contribution towards achieving the Borough's aims in terms of securing future economic prosperity and offering opportunities to diversify the skills base.
- 1.1 Within the East Runcorn Key Area of Change, the Daresbury area is being allocated as a Strategic Site as it is a key component in Halton's future development and will see substantial change over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. Alongside the expansion of the employment offer, a new residential community is also being promoted at Daresbury, which will not only meet help to meet the housing needs of the Borough's residents, but will also connect the two existing employment areas through shared amenities and new transport routes. The residential area at Sandymoor, to the west of Daresbury, comprises approximately 147 hectares of land, of which 46 hectares have already been developed<sup>2</sup>. This comprehensive redevelopment of the Sandymoor area will continue, creating a mixed and sustainable community supported by the facilities and services needed by local residents.

### Outside of the Key Areas of Change

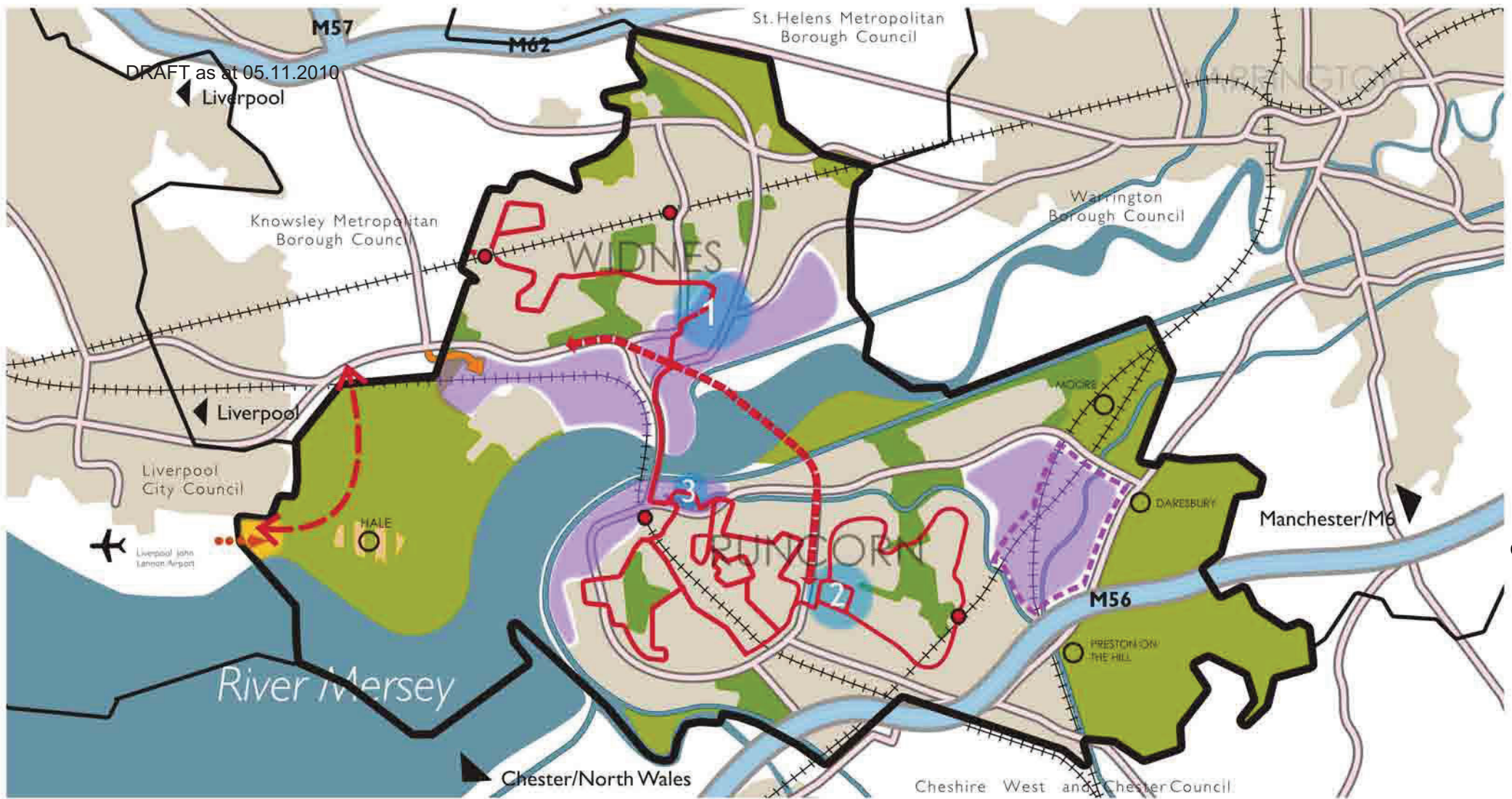
- 1.1 Outside of the identified Key Areas of Change, the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy indicates that there is scope to make more efficient use of already developed areas of the Borough, bringing benefits to the Borough's existing communities. In line with the spatial priorities enshrined in national planning policy, previously used land and buildings in the rest of Halton are high priorities for accommodating new development. Bringing underused and redundant sites back into beneficial use will have positive effects on existing surrounding communities.
- 1.1 Halton's existing network of Green Infrastructure will continue to serve the leisure and recreation needs of the population and support the Borough's biodiversity.
- 1.1 The rural character and setting of the Borough's villages and areas of open countryside will be maintained with limits on new development. In order to achieve this, the Green Belt will continue to be protected in accordance with national planning policy to prevent uncoordinated expansion of urban areas which result in the loss of strategic gaps between settlements. Minor changes to the Green Belt boundary at the western extent of the Borough will be required to allow the runway at Liverpool John Lennon Airport to be extended, and this will be addressed in a later Development Plan Document. In addition, should the land supply within the Borough warrant it, a partial review of the extent of the Green Belt may be required during the plan period, particularly to ensure adequate land to meet development needs north of the river. Any such review will be undertaken as part of a subsequent Allocations DPD.
- 1.1 The character of Hale Village which is inset within the Green Belt, will need to be carefully managed like the other villages, with particular respect to its close proximity to Liverpool John Lennon Airport. As the towns of Runcorn and Widnes will be the focus of development for the Core Strategy, the Green Belt area will play a pivotal role in maintaining the setting of the Borough's rural assets and providing a distinct

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<sup>2</sup> HBC (2009) Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document

boundary to the built up area. The character and setting of the rural villages of Moore, Daresbury and Preston on the Hill, will be protected with the careful management of development.





**A Spatial Strategy for Halton 2026 and beyond Key Diagram**

- |                           |                                  |  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Borough Boundary          | Halton Lea Town Centre           | Mersey Gateway Route                           |
| Urban Extents             | Runcorn Old Town District Centre | Halton Core Bus Network                        |
| Railway Line              | Green Belt                       | Liverpool John Lennon Airport Runway Extension |
| Strategic Highway Network | Hale Village Green Belt Inset    | Liverpool John Lennon Airport Eastern Access   |
| Motorway                  | Key Areas of Change              | 3MG Western Link Road                          |
| Waterways                 | Daresbury Strategic Site         | Green Space                                    |
| Widnes Town Centre        | Rail Stations                    | Area of search for Green Belt release at L JLA |

## CS2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The overall Spatial Strategy as set out in CS1 establishes the spatial distribution of future growth and development in the Borough. The Sustainable Development Principles exist alongside the Spatial Strategy in order to ensure that growth and development is sustainable, meeting the needs of Halton's present communities, and planning for the needs of future communities over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. All development in the Borough is required to contribute towards these principles in order to ensure a sustainable Halton, now and in the future.

### Policy CS2: Sustainable Development Principles

Over the lifetime of the Halton Core Strategy, development in the Borough should:

- contribute towards the delivery of mixed and balanced communities;
- increase the quality of life for the Borough's communities, contributing to long term improvements in health and well-being, educational attainment and skill development;
- contribute towards a strong, stable and more competitive economy, responsive to Halton's needs and building upon Halton's strengths;
- be located to minimise the need to travel, increase accessibility and support sustainable transport options;
- regenerate and remediate Halton, bringing noticeable improvements to the Borough's urban areas and green spaces;
- conserve and enhance the character and quality of Halton's natural and historic environment and Green Infrastructure Network;
- minimise factors which contribute to climate change and plan for the potential effects of a changing climate on the Borough's communities and environments; and,
- make efficient use of resources and ensure infrastructure needs are met.

### Justification

- 1.2 'Sustainable development' is defined as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"<sup>1</sup>. National guidance in the form of PPS 1: 'Delivering Sustainable Development'<sup>2</sup> states that sustainable development should be delivered through achieving:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- protection and enhancement of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and,
- sustainable economic development.

- 1.3 To achieve sustainable development across Halton a number of principles have been agreed. These sustainable development principles are informed by the Borough's drivers of change and respond to Halton's challenges as set out in Halton's Story of Place. As a result the sustainable development principles reflect the current social,

<sup>1</sup> HM Government (2005) Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2005) Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

economic and environmental needs of the Borough whilst building upon the aims of sustainable development at the national level.

- I.4 In order to achieve sustainable development in Halton over the plan period, all development, where appropriate, will be assessed against these principles. The Sustainable Development Principles are therefore integral to the delivery of the Core Strategy and are amplified throughout the plan.

## CS3: HOUSING SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES

- 1.1 New homes must be provided to ensure an adequate supply of suitable housing for the Borough's existing communities and to accommodate projected growth in the Borough's population. Whilst the resident population has stabilised over recent years it is projected to experience modest growth rates to 2026, however changing demographics and needs of residents has meant even faster growth in the number of households placing pressure on Halton's current housing stock.
- 1.2 As indicated in both Halton's Story of Place and the Spatial Strategy, over the Borough's history development has taken place in distinct waves of urban regeneration often involving the replacement of unsuitable New Town estates, coupled with growth of the Borough onto expansion land at the edges of the urban area. Whilst this pattern of development will continue to a certain extent, housing renewal projects will play less of a role in the future and the Borough will be more dependent on delivering housing on Halton's remaining greenfield sites at the periphery of the urban area.

### Policy CS3: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities

#### Housing Requirement

- 8,000 new homes (net of demolitions) should be provided between 2010 and 2026 at a minimum rate of:
  - 400 units per annum for the period 2010-2015
  - 600 units per annum for the period 2016-2020
  - 500 units per annum for the period 2021-2026
  - Beyond 2026, development should continue at a minimum rate of 500 units per annum (net gain) unless this is superseded by a change to policy at national level.
- New homes will be delivered from a variety of sources, including:
  - Sites which are currently available for housing development:
    - Housing sites which have been completed since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010
    - Sites under construction for housing development
    - Sites with planning permission for housing
    - Sites which are currently allocated
  - Sites which have the potential to contribute to housing land supply:
    - Identified housing opportunities within the Key Areas of Change
    - New housing or mixed-use allocations in subsequent DPDs
    - Appropriate windfall development
    - Areas of Search within the Green Belt

In order to deliver sites that are identified as having the potential to contribute to housing supply, are available and will realistically deliver housing development, specific sites be identified in the Site Allocations DPD or location specific Area Action Plans.

#### Maintaining a 5 year supply

- In accordance with the relevant annual target for housing delivery, the Council will maintain a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land
- If the Council is unable to identify a 5 year supply of sites for housing development, a review of housing land supply through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will be undertaken, and if necessary, will seek to allocate additional land in a

DPD to make up any shortfall.

#### **Brownfield land**

- An average of at least 40% of new residential development delivered on brownfield land will be sought over the plan period.

#### **Density**

- To ensure the efficient use of land, a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) will be sought. In more accessible locations such as those close to town / local centres or transport interchanges the presumption will be for developments achieving densities of 40 dph or greater.

### **Justification**

#### **Setting a housing target**

- 1.3 Prior to its revocation in the summer of 2010 the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West formed part of the statutory development plan for Halton and set housing policy target of 500 net dwelling gain per annum for the period 2003 to 2021. It now falls to the Core Strategy to set a replacement figure. Local housing targets are necessary to help deliver the required level of house building to meet local needs whilst giving certainty for both residents and the development industry in terms of how much residential development a local area is going to accommodate in future years.
- 1.4 The housing target of 8,000 new homes at an average rate of 500 homes per year in Halton over the Core Strategy plan period to 2026 has been determined by considering data and research from a variety of sources, including predicted population, household and economic growth. The process for reaching this target is set out in the supporting document “Determining a Housing Requirement for Halton”.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.5 The housing targets which have been set represent a level which will meet forecasted locally arising household growth over the plan period, whilst also allowing for a degree of further growth across the Borough. Halton’s population is anticipated to rise to 123,600 persons by 2026, a rise of approximately 5,000 persons over the plan period, whilst 2006 based household projections predicted growth of 8,920 households between 2006-2030, an average of 372 households per annum.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.6 The proposed housing figure is marginally above the projected growth in households however this level has been set to promote modest growth in Halton and to enable a range of housing types to be provided. This will allow a continuation of recent trends which will see diversification in the housing offer, which it is hoped will assist in reducing or stemming net out migration that has been prevalent over recent years, particularly with young adults moving away to pursue educational opportunities but many of whom do not return to the Borough after their studies.

<sup>1</sup> HBC (2010) Determining a Housing Requirement for Halton

<sup>2</sup> 4NW (2010) Technical Background Paper - Initial Technical work on Housing Provision and Job Growth Figures for the North West

([www.4nw.org.uk/downloads/documents/jul\\_10/4nw\\_1279264181\\_RS2010\\_Part\\_2\\_Housing\\_provisio.pdf](http://www.4nw.org.uk/downloads/documents/jul_10/4nw_1279264181_RS2010_Part_2_Housing_provisio.pdf))

- 1.7 Housing delivery and demand is strongly correlated with the state of the economy. Economic forecasts and predictions vary in their predictions for when the economy will recover from the effects of the recent 'credit crunch' and resultant recession, and for when capacity within the house building industry will return to pre-recession levels. In setting the above housing targets, the effects of the recession have been acknowledged with a lower target is set for the initial 5 years (in line with the approach for employment land as set out in CS4), before increasing in the following period to deliver the overall quantum required to 2026.

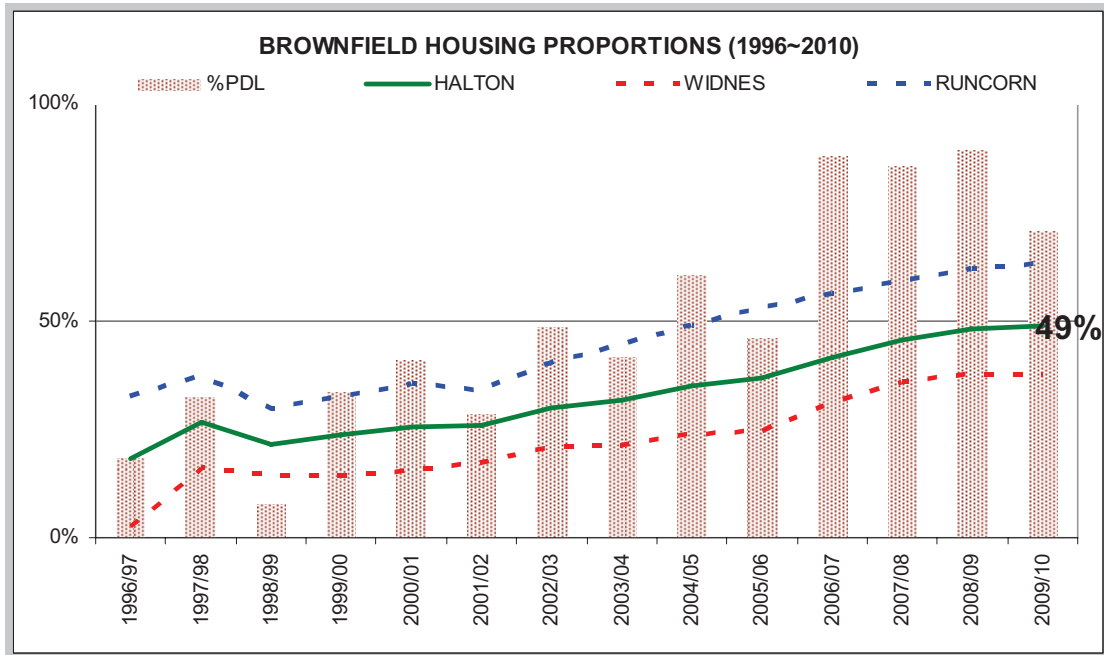
#### **Potential housing supply**

- 1.8 Table 1 in the preceding section summarises the predicted potential housing supply at 2010 across the Borough. The SHLAA indicates there is identified land in the Borough with the capacity to deliver 11,681 dwellings. This appears sufficient to meet the Borough's housing requirement to 2026 and potentially for a number of years beyond, however the distribution is heavily skewed to south of the river and it must be noted that not all of the sites in the SHLAA will be delivered for housing or come forward in the timeframes indicated. Indeed, it may not be desirable for certain sites to be developed for housing rather than other uses.
- 1.9 Windfall sites are those which have not been previously identified in the SHLAA as having the potential to deliver housing development, and therefore the potential yield of the site has not been factored into potential housing supply. Whilst no allowance is made for windfall supply in Table 1 above, it is likely that sites will come forward which have not been included within the SHLAA, because of unforeseen circumstances such as the redevelopment of commercial buildings or the release of Council owned land. Urban windfall sites also have the potential to boost the delivery of residential development on brownfield land, supplementing those brownfield sites included within the SHLAA.

#### **Brownfield land**

- 1.10 A national minimum standard for development on brownfield land of 60% is included within PPS3: Housing. Chart 1 below illustrates past rates of delivery of new homes on previously developed land in Halton. Delivery over the previous 15 years has varied significantly, with a high of almost 90% of new dwellings built on brownfield land in 2008/09, compared to a low of only 8% delivered in 1997/98, averaging 49% over the 15 years. Brownfield land delivery has varied over this period reflecting the focus of delivery year to year, with greenfield sites in locations such as Upton Rocks being balanced with urban regeneration schemes such as Castlefields. As discussed in the Spatial Strategy, due to the phased approach in which the New Town has been constructed, development on greenfield sites has formed a key part of Halton's housing delivery over many years. The approach taken in previous local plans has been to phase the release of greenfield sites, to prioritise development within the built up areas in the first instance. These long term patterns of development are reflected in the split between greenfield and brownfield delivery in the chart below, and in the remaining stock of ongoing supply as set out in table 1 and Appendix 1.

**Chart I, Historical Previously Developed Land (Brownfield) Performance**



1.11 Whilst a target of 40% delivery of housing development to come forward on brownfield sites is below the desired national minimum level of delivery, over the longer term, it is evident that Halton has achieved higher rates of brownfield delivery. Of those sites expected to come forward during the plan period or being promoted through the Core Strategy, a high proportion are on greenfield sites, dictating that to set a higher target for brownfield development would not be realistic or achievable. Annual levels of delivery of net additional dwellings and delivery on brownfield land will continue to be monitored by the Council and will influence the allocation of sites in later DPDs.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Halton Housing Strategy 2008-2011, Halton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010, Halton Housing Baseline Reports
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	1 and 2
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS4: EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES

- 1.1 Employment land will be provided over the lifetime of the Core Strategy to strengthen Halton's economy and to offer business and industry a range and choice of sites so that differing site requirements and locational needs can be met. The supply of available employment land in Halton has become increasingly constrained over recent years with competing pressures to redevelop existing employment areas for housing. It is therefore important to identify both how provision for new employment land will be met, and to safeguard land for future use by business and industry. Over the plan period it is likely that levels of economic growth will vary due to periods of recession and recovery, however it is the role of the Core Strategy to plan positively for the longer term.

### Policy CS4: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities

Employment land will be provided over the lifetime of the Core Strategy to ensure that an adequate supply and range of sites are available to:

- Meet the needs of both new and existing businesses;
- Develop and strengthen Halton's economy with an emphasis on logistics and distribution, science and high-tech industries; and
- Contribute towards the priorities of the employment offer in the sub-regional

260 hectares of land will be made available over the period 2010-2026 to facilitate the sustainable growth of Halton's economy. Employment land supply will be made up from a variety of sources, including:

- Sites which are currently available for employment use:
  - Sites which benefit from planning permission or are under construction for employment use
  - Sites which are currently allocated
- Sites which have the potential to contribute to employment land supply:
  - Regeneration and remodelling opportunities within existing employment areas
  - New allocations

#### Maintaining existing employment areas

In order to secure Halton's economic future, sites in existing employment use will be retained as such, unless an alternative use can be proven to be of greater benefit to the Borough than retaining the land for employment purposes.

Any proposals for non-employment uses within existing employment areas should be accompanied by an examination of the wider employment land situation in the Borough, including a consideration of:

- the overall supply of employment land in the Borough (including amount, type, quality, availability and size of premises), in accordance with this policy;
- the relative suitability and sustainability of the site for the employment uses and for the proposed alternative use;
- the location of the site and its relationship to other uses; and
- the need for the proposed use.



## Justification

- 1.2 It is important to both protect existing employment sites and to make further provision for employment uses to secure and expand the Borough's economy in future years. The requirement for future employment land has been informed by a key piece of the evidence base underpinning Halton's LDF. The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010) was undertaken jointly with Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire Councils, and analyses the existing employment land situation in the study area and the need for further land to be made available in order to meet the needs of the economy and deliver economic growth over the plan period.
- 1.3 The study used long term average take-up rates (past trends of employment land completions) to project forward the likely future requirement for employment land need in the Borough to 2026. A 20% flexibility factor was also included to allow for a choice of sites for potential investors. The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study suggested Halton plan for an additional 147.62ha of employment land for the period 2008-2026 to meet predicted needs to 2026. This was in addition to the then identified 'realistic' supply of 178.94ha (as at 2008) recommending therefore a total of 326.56ha of land for employment purposes which the evidence base suggests needed to be made available over the Core Strategy plan period.
- 1.4 Given that the Joint Employment Land Study was produced using a base date of April 2008, before the effects of the current economic recession were felt, it has been necessary to amend the proposed employment land requirement to taken account of reduced take-up rates over the recessionary period. Current estimations suggest that the current period of economic recession in the UK will continue until 2015, before the economy will experience significant growth as prior to 2008.
- 1.5 Table 3 below sets out the revised calculation of an annual requirement for employment land, assuming demand at 80% of the long term average take-up rate, for the period from 2010-2015, therefore giving a slightly lower requirement for employment land than included within the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study.

**Table 3: Summary Employment Land Requirements Calculation**

	Hectares
Long term average take-up rate (1998-2008)	14.47
<b><u>Requirement during period of economic slowdown 2010-2015</u></b>	
Reduced rate of take-up to take account of recession period (@ 80%)	11.576
Requirement over 5 year period	57.88
<b><u>Requirement during period of economic recovery 2015-2026</u></b>	
Rate of take-up over post-recession period	14.47
Requirement over 11 year period	159.17
Sub-total of land required over 2010-2026	217.05
Total land requirement to 20% flexibility factor to maintain a range and choice of sites throughout the plan period	<b>260.46</b>
	<b>LESS</b>
Outstanding employment land allocations at April 2010	163.33
Sites with planning permission for employment uses at April 2010	28.31
<b>Total available employment land at April 2010</b>	<b>191.64</b>

Total potential employment land undersupply	68.82
Additional land to be allocated for employment purposes (East Runcorn)	17.62
Land to be regenerated for West Runcorn	14.00
Opportunities for remodelling and regeneration of sites within existing employment areas	130.55

### Existing employment areas (at 2010)

#### Widnes

- Derby Road/Moorfield Road
- Everite Road
- St Michael's Industrial Estate, Oldgate
- Moor Lane, Widnes
- West Bank
- Halebank Industrial Estate
- Widnes Waterfront

#### Runcorn

- Astmoor Industrial Estate
- Manor Park
- Heath Road North
- ~~Halton Road~~
- Halton Lea
- Picow Farm Road
- The Heath
- Ashville Industrial Estate
- Whitehouse Industrial Estate and Preston Brook
- Rocksavage (INEOS Chlor)
- Runcorn Docks and Mersey Gateway (Port of Weston)

#### Regional Employment Sites

- 3MG, Ditton, Widnes
- Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and Daresbury Park, Runcorn

- 1.6 The exact location and boundaries of the above existing employment areas and of land to be prioritised for future employment use will be set out in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, but in the intervening period, the Primarily Employment Areas notation on the UDP proposals map will continue to be used.

POLICY FRAMEWORK:	
National Policy	PPS1, PPS4
Local Evidence	Economic and Tourism Development Strategy, Halton Economic Review
Strategic Objectives	
SCS Priorities	Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
SA Objectives	
SA Outcome	

## CS5: A NETWORK OF CENTRES

- 1.1 Halton has two main town centres serving the needs of the populations either side of the river; Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea. These are third tier centres within the regional hierarchy behind the regional centres of Manchester and Liverpool and surrounding sub-regional centres such as Warrington, St.Helens and Chester.

### Policy CS5: A Network of Centres

The following hierarchy of centres will be maintained and enhanced for retail and other town centre uses (as defined in PPS4) in order to provide access to a wide range of shops, employment and associated services for all sections of the community.

Designation	Role and Function	Location	
Town Centres	Principal focus for new and enhanced retail and other town centre activity within Halton	<b>Widnes Town Centre</b> <b>Halton Lea</b>	
District Centre	A focus for convenience, small scale or niche comparison and service retail and leisure uses	<b>Runcorn Old Town</b>	
Local Centres*	Focus for local convenience and service retail and complementary community facilities.	<u><b>Runcorn</b></u> Ascot Avenue, Beechwood, Brook Vale, <del>Castle Rise,</del> Castlefields, Greenway Road Halton Brook, Halton Lodge, Halton Road, Halton View Road, Halton Village, Murdishaw Centre, Palacefields Picton Avenue, Preston Brook, Russell Road, The Grange, Windmill Hill, <del>Weston Point</del>	<u><b>Widnes</b></u> Alexander Drive, <del>Bancroft Road,</del> Beechers, Cronton Lane, Ditchfield Road, Farnworth, Hale Bank, Hale Road, Langdale Road, Liverpool Road, Moorfield Road, Queens Avenue, Warrington Road, West Bank  <u><b>Hale</b></u> Hale Parade, Hale

\*The list of centres will be reviewed and updated in the Allocations and Development Management DPD

New retail or other town centre uses should be located within or on the edge of a defined centre above, appropriate to the scale of the proposal.

Any proposals in excess of 2,000SqM retail floorspace not located within a defined Town Centre, or allocated in the LFD will be subject to sequential and impact assessments. Additional or replacement convenience retail units (up to 280SqM) within or immediately adjacent to a defined local centre will be supported.

The development of new centres will be expected to consolidate and enhance the network and hierarchy of centres and not harm the vitality and viability of existing centres. New retail development of an appropriate scale to meet local need will be required in the following locations to serve the new residential and business populations at:

- Upton Rocks;
- Sandymoor (see CS10 East Runcorn)
- Daresbury (see CS10 East Runcorn)
- Runcorn Waterfront (see CS9 West Runcorn).
- West Bank (see CS8 South Widnes)

The Allocations and Development Management DPD will set out the following;

- Primary and secondary retail frontages for the town and district centres
- Primary Shopping Areas (PSAs) for the town and district centres
- Detailed re-appraisal of, and boundaries for the Local Centres

The Allocations and Development Management DPD will identify sites for future retail development in line with the capacity identified in the Retail Study.

Location	Convenience / Comparison Goods	Bulky Goods (Retail Warehousing)
Widnes Town Centre	up to 25,000 SqM	up to 19,000 SqM *
Halton Lea Town Centre	up to 5,000 SqM (after 2016)	around 3,000SqM (after 2016)
Runcorn Old Town District Centre	Up to 5,000 SqM	--

\* includes replacement provision (6,000 SqM) for Ashley Way Retail Park

The Hot Food Take Away SPD will set out specific criteria for the assessment of proposals for new Hot Food Take Aways (Use Class A5) and Restaurants (Use Class A3) that will have a substantial take-away component.

## Justification

### Widnes Town Centre

- 1.2 Widnes town centre comprises the Green Oaks Centre, Albert Square and the newly opened Widnes Shopping Park (phase 1) arranged off the pedestrianised core of Albert Road / Widnes Road with peripheral car parking associated with the main developments. To the south lies Asda (Simms Cross) and the largely vacant Ashley Way Retail Park which is the subject of redevelopment proposals. The Council's main administrative headquarters are located to the south west adjacent to Riverside FE College and other civic and leisure functions. Tightly constrained by surrounding residential uses to the north and west, and predominately single or two storeys, the centre contains very little in the way of office or commercial leisure space.
- 1.3 Widnes has a over twice the regional average proportion of floorspace given over to convenience goods (29.4%) which reflects its role primarily catering for weekly or day-to-day needs and is largely due to the presence of large Asda and Morrison's foodstores. However, the number of convenience units is below the regional average highlighting a limited presence of independent, non-market, traders (butchers, grocers etc.) in comparison to other town centres in the North West. Conversely, the centre has a slight under-representation of comparison retail floorspace (27.9% to 29.4%) with the number of comparison goods units being significantly above the regional

average pointing to existing comparison retail provision within Widnes being predominantly accommodated within small retail units that will not be attractive to national multiple traders. This is particularly prevalent along the main Widnes Road / Albert Road spine. The redevelopment of the Windmill Centre as Widnes Shopping Park has helped remedy the quantitative and qualitative deficiency in comparison goods floorspace provision by providing larger retail floorplates in the town centre for national multiple retailers such as M&S.

- 1.4 The Halton Retail Study identifies capacity to 2026 for between 5,000 and 11,000 SqM of additional town centre retail floorspace, assuming a constant market share. As Widnes currently retains only 50% of locally arising comparison goods expenditure a modest improvement in market share could support up to 25,000 SqM of additional town centre floorspace by 2026.
- 1.5 Bulky goods (retail warehouse) provision has been focused on the Ashley Way Retail Park but this site has lost its main anchor (B&Q) to a site on Widnes Waterfront and is now the subject of proposals for comprehensive redevelopment for a 12,000SqM foodstore. This will see the displacement of 6,000SqM of existing floorspace, which together with projected capacity suggests the Core Strategy and subsequent DPDs will need to make provision for up to 19,000SqM of new provision.

#### **Halton Lea**

- 1.6 Halton Lea was designed and built by the former New Town to be a self contained town centre for Runcorn. Planned around the principles of fully segregating pedestrian, public transport, car borne and service traffic, the main centre is an example of 1960's 'mega-structure' architecture and is one of the earliest covered shopping malls in the UK. The main shopping provision is located on the second floor, above segregated service areas with leisure and service uses to be located on the top (third) floor. The shopping level is arranged around a central square with covered malls leading to four peripheral multi-storey car parks, each of which has a link bridge providing pedestrian access to the residential areas beyond. Originally designed to serve a population of up to 100,000, and with an inflexible built form, the centre has never reached its potential and currently suffers from a high level of vacancies with the top floor all but vacated.
- 1.7 The centre is flanked to the north and east by office developments and the police station and magistrate's courts with residential beyond.
- 1.8 Additional retail developments have been added at Trident Retail Park, providing large floorplate accommodation for retail and leisure uses directly linked to the main mall and a stand-alone Asda superstore. As with Widnes, convenience goods floorspace is over represented in Halton Lea reflecting the centres purely localised role. The centre performs adequately on convenience goods due to the presence of a modern superstore, but currently retains only 28% of locally arising comparison goods expenditure with particularly poor performance in the core goods of clothing (12%), recreational goods (20%) and personal goods (17%). The centre has been the subject of proposals to extend the shopping deck across East Lane to provide a accommodation for a large space user involving the demolition of the vacant East Lane House.
- 1.9 The Retail Study identifies only modest capacity to 2026 of around 5,000 SqM for additional floorspace, however advises against adding allocating sites for additional provision in the short-term before addressing existing vacancies in the retail core.

### Runcorn Old Town

- I.10 Runcorn has a second 'town centre' at Runcorn Old Town. Previously the main commercial centre for the town prior to designation as a New Town in 1964 and the subsequent creation of Halton Lea, Runcorn Old Town now finds itself largely fulfilling the role of a large District Centre, but with an enhanced 'complementary' role to Halton Lea as a centre for service and leisure uses not catered for in its larger neighbour.
- I.11 The centre is separated from its natural catchment areas by canals, rail and road infrastructure and with the new town's busway unsympathetically driven through the heart of the centre. As such the centre struggled to maintain significant market share with residents choosing to shop at Halton Lea, in Widnes or even further afield. Recent works have sought to resolve many of the problems affecting the centre by removing the busway, developing modern retail provision including a supermarket with associated parking in the central core and the Brindley Arts Centre, establishing a basis for an enhanced leisure function. Despite this, the retail provision remains scattered and a degree of consolidation and concentration may be required.
- I.12 New residential communities have been created in the surrounding hinterland with the Runcorn Waterfront development having the potential to substantially boost the local catchment population. The Mersey Gateway Project will allow the removal and reconfiguration of highway infrastructure to create new development opportunities and improve connections to the residential areas to the south.
- I.13 The Retail Study identifies scope for up to 5,000SqM of additional floorspace to 2026, with the main need being to provide a stronger convenience goods offer to attract additional footfall. The Allocations and Development Management DPD and Runcorn Old Town SPD will help guide future development of the centre.

### Local Centres

- I.14 There is a network of local centres across the Borough that provide valuable local shopping and service provision. Local shopping patterns have changed significantly over the years and where banks and independent butchers, bakers and newsagents were once the norm, they are now a rarity. People often now drive to local stores, sometimes as part of a linked trip, instead of walking. As such, centres not located on main roads or offering adequate parking are often put at a disadvantage.
- I.15 Many of the Borough's centres, particularly in the new town neighbourhoods, are located in the heart of residential areas, and whilst having excellent pedestrian links suffer from poor road access and now offer a poor shopping environment. The Allocations and Development Management DPD will review the provision of local centres and set out policies to protect and enhance the strongest or most valuable centres, having regard not just to retail, but to other uses. For example, the way public services are provided is changing and there may be opportunities for co-location of services within existing centres and more effective joint use of facilities.

### Offices and other town centre uses

- I.16 National guidance advises that offices and commercial leisure developments should be considered town centre uses and directed to town centre or edge-of-centre locations where they can be served by a range of forms of transport. In Halton, there has never been a strong central office market, with little office provision in Widnes and peripheral employment areas (following the New Town model) in Runcorn.

- I.17 The Widnes Waterfront development is seeking to establish an office market to the east of Widnes town centre and this is to be supported as the most sequentially preferable location.
- I.18 In Runcorn however, the new town land use model, significant extant office permissions at Runcorn East with the opportunity to capitalise on existing research facilities to create an knowledge based science cluster, combined with the limited available land around the principal centres means that in Runcorn, peripheral office expansion is likely to be the norm.

### Maps of Town Centre Boundaries

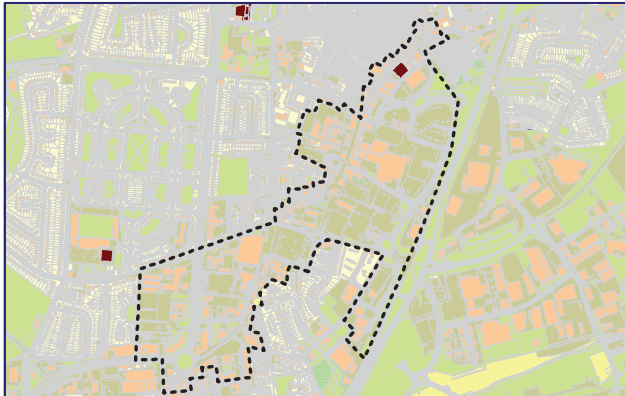


Figure XX: Widnes Town Centre



Figure XX: Halton Lea



Figure XX: Runcorn Old Town

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS4
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	5
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	



## CS6: GREEN BELT

- 1.1 Green Belt land covers approximately one-third of the Borough, and provides important gaps between surrounding urban areas including St Helens to the north, Liverpool to the west and Warrington to the east, to maintain distinct towns and villages with their own identities. In addition to the strategic function that areas of Green Belt play, it also has a role in Halton's Green Infrastructure network providing informal recreational opportunities for the Borough's residents and representing a significant biodiversity resource.

### Policy CS6: Green Belt

The general extent of the Green Belt surrounding Halton, broadly following the line of the built up area as indicated on the Key Diagram, will remain largely unchanged over the initial plan period. This is with the exception of the area to the east of Liverpool John Lennon Airport where minor alterations are supported, in accordance with CS17.

A partial Green Belt review may be necessary during the plan period to ensure a sufficient supply of deliverable development land to meet the requirements of the Borough's separate communities as set out in CS1, CS3 and CS4. Any review is likely to focus on the Green Belt north of the River Mersey and will be undertaken as part of a subsequent Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.

Small scale development amounting to minor infilling within the 'washed over'<sup>1</sup> Green Belt settlements of Daresbury, Moore and Preston on the Hill may be permitted where it can be shown to be necessary to meet identified local needs.

### Justification

- 1.2 The main purpose of Halton's Green Belt designation is to keep land open and generally free from development, maintaining strategic gaps between Runcorn and Widnes and surrounding settlements. In accordance with CS2: Sustainable Development Principles, it protects against unwanted urban sprawl, and directs development to built up areas where it can assist in urban regeneration and be of benefit to existing communities.
- 1.3 Given that Widnes previously fell within the county of Lancashire, (with later changes designating surrounding authorities as the county of Merseyside) and Runcorn within Cheshire, Green Belt boundaries were first established through separate processes in different County Structure Plans. The current area of Green Belt north of Widnes was set out in the Merseyside Structure Plan from 1979 and since then the Merseyside Green Belt Subject Plan (1983). In Cheshire, broad areas of Green Belt land were first designated as part of the 1979 Structure Plan. The extent of the Green Belt land surrounding Runcorn was then embedded in the Halton Local Plan in 1996 and reconfirmed in the Unitary Development Plan of 2005.
- 1.4 The Halton Landscape Character Assessment<sup>2</sup> focused its assessment of the Borough's landscape on Green Belt land surrounding the urban area. The assessment

<sup>1</sup> CLG(2001) Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts

<sup>2</sup> TEP (2009) Halton Landscape Character Assessment

categorised the three main areas of Green Belt in the Borough as having distinctive landscape characteristics and made recommendations in terms of how these areas should be managed, which will be taken forward in accordance with the approach set out in CS20: Natural and Historic Environment. The landscape characteristics of the three main areas of Green Belt are:

- Hale Shore and Farmland
- North Widnes Farmland
- Daresbury Sandstone Escarpment / Preston on the Hill Undulating Enclosed Farmland

- I.5 National Policy for Green Belts is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 2 which details the importance of Green Belts and how they can contribute to achieving sustainable development. It underlines the importance of the openness of Green Belt land and the role that Green Belt can play in determining patterns of development at a sub-regional and regional scale. The main aim of specific Green Belt policy is to preserve the countryside surrounding towns and cities from development which would be better accommodated within urban areas.
- I.6 Hale Village is inset within the Green Belt, meaning that unlike the other villages in the Borough, Green Belt policy does not apply within the settlement boundary. Infill development within the village will be viewed as appropriate where it would enhance the character of the village.
- I.7 National planning policy allows for limited development within villages which are 'washed over' by a Green Belt designation. In certain instances, small scale development may be necessary to maintain or enhance the sustainability of rural communities, such as for the provision of village services or for affordable housing. Any proposals for such development within Halton's Green Belt villages would need to demonstrate specific local need, such as a requirement for affordable housing.
- I.8 In 2010, a study was undertaken across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) in respect of cross-boundary employment and housing land development issues.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the study was to determine whether there were land supply issues in individual authorities, and whether the development needs of one area could reasonably be met in other authorities within the sub-region, avoiding the need for a strategic review of the Green Belt. This concludes that at present, there is no need for a strategic review of Green Belt in the LCR Eastern Housing Market Area (consisting of Halton, St Helens and Warrington), though a number of our neighbours in the Northern Housing Market Area are embarking on reviews. The study considered land supply within local authorities as a whole and did not look at the adequacy of supply to meet future needs in specific communities within an authority.
- I.9 Current land supply as detailed in CSI: Halton's Spatial Strategy and in the evidence base accompanying the Core Strategy indicates that overall Halton has an adequate supply of land to meet anticipated development needs over the plan period, however, this assessment of the whole Borough masks a mismatch in supply north and south of the river.
- I.10 Runcorn has sufficient identified land to meet its anticipated housing needs with the supply of land for employment purposes sufficient in the short term with redevelopment opportunities within existing protected employment areas likely to

<sup>3</sup> GVA Grimley (2010) Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study for Liverpool City Region Partners

bolster supply. Widnes / Hale currently have sufficient identified land to meet their anticipated housing development needs<sup>4</sup> for around 8 years<sup>5</sup>, with land for employment purposes sufficient in terms of overall supply for the plan period but limited in terms of range and quality.

- 1.11 The land supply and demand situation across Halton's communities will be kept under review through annual monitoring. If the situation arises where the availability of deliverable land for development falls below acceptable levels, a Green Belt review may be triggered to ensure the future prosperity of the Borough and the wider sub-region. Any review of Green Belt land will be undertaken as part of a subsequent Site Allocations and Development Management DPD and conducted in consultation with neighbouring authorities (particularly St Helens and Warrington) to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach is taken.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG2
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Halton Landscape Character Assessment 2009, Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Halton Housing Needs Study 2006, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010/11, Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study for Liverpool City Region Partners 2010
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	2 and 10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>4</sup> DCA (2006) Halton Housing Needs and Market Assessment Survey

<sup>5</sup> HBC (2010) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010/11

## CS7: INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

- 1.1 To support the Borough's planned growth over the plan period and to ensure that Halton's infrastructure is both appropriate and of a high quality, it is essential to deliver necessary improvements to the Borough's existing infrastructure and to provide new infrastructure able to accommodate the needs of Halton's communities.

### Policy CS7: Infrastructure Provision

Development should be located to maximise the benefit of existing infrastructure capacity to minimise the need for new provision, and will be required to provide for its own infrastructure requirements at the appropriate time.

On major development sites the Council may seek to negotiate on an individual basis for on or off-site physical and social infrastructure improvements, adopting either an agreed phased delivery schedule of works or a 'tariff' based approach.

The Council will continue to work with infrastructure / service providers to develop the Infrastructure Plan and may use this as the basis of a charging regime to support necessary infrastructure across the Borough. Any such proposals will be set out in detail in an appropriate DPD.

### Justification

- 1.2 An integral part of the Core Strategy is to ensure that development proposals are supported by the timely provision of an appropriate level of infrastructure including:
- transport infrastructure such as roads, railways, public transport, and cycling and walking routes;
  - physical and environmental infrastructure such as water supply and treatment, and energy supply;
  - Green Infrastructure such as public greenspaces;
  - social infrastructure including community services and facilities; and,
  - digital infrastructure such as internet supply.
- 1.3 To ensure that the Borough's infrastructure needs are achieved, all new development should be located in the most sustainable locations, already well served by existing infrastructure achieving the objectives of sustainable development in accordance with CS2: Sustainable Development Principles. However, all new development makes demands on existing infrastructure. This will be especially applicable in the Borough's Key Areas of Change where the level of growth anticipated will create the need for additional infrastructure.
- 1.4 To assist the delivery of infrastructure needs across the Borough, developers, where applicable, will be expected to contribute towards any necessary improvements or new provision to serve the needs arising from their development, taking account the cumulative impact of schemes. In such circumstances Planning Obligations or a tariff based approach will be used to secure funds or works for essential elements of schemes.

- 1.5 The Council will work with its partners and developers to identify the key infrastructure schemes required to facilitate development and secure the delivery of the Core Strategy with a particular focus on the Key Areas of Change. A current list of schemes is set out within the Core Strategy Infrastructure Plan which provides details of the projects that will support the delivery of the Core Strategy and the identified infrastructure needs of the Borough. Further details regarding infrastructure requirements in the Key Areas of Change will also be detailed in appropriate SPDs, Masterplans and other related studies.
- 1.6 Infrastructure needs will evolve over the plan period and as such it will be necessary to undertake further reviews of the Infrastructure Plan. The Infrastructure Plan will become a 'live' document which will be updated over the lifetime of the Core Strategy in accordance with infrastructure / service providers to further review the need for infrastructure within the Borough over the Core Strategy period. The Infrastructure Plan may be used to provide a basis to calculate an appropriate strategic infrastructure tariff. The Council's approach to such arrangements will be set out in greater detail through an appropriate document within the LDF, unless this approach is superseded.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	
<b>Local Evidence</b>	
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	6
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton, A Safer Halton, Children and Young People in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

**HALTON CORE STRATEGY  
PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

**KEY AREAS OF CHANGE**

## CS8: 3MG

- 1.1 The existing Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) at Ditton makes a huge contribution to the economy of Halton and the wider region, and the site is a key employment generator. Looking to the future, the site has further potential to deliver a large quantum of employment development, and over time a significant increase in the number employed at the site. There is a need to guide the future development of 3MG and maintain its status as a leading multimodal freight facility in the region by setting out a framework for its future development.

### Key Area of Change CS8: 3MG

Key elements of the future of 3MG will be:

- The availability of approximately 90ha of land for B8 employment development within the 3MG site to deliver regionally important logistics and distribution development and the provision of jobs for the people of Halton.
- Improving the ability to move freight by sustainable modes, most notably rail including the provision of sustainable connections to other freight facilities in the sub-region
- The provision of a western link road to connect the site with the regional and national road network, also discouraging the movement of freight across the site on the local road network
- The development of the Halton Borough Council Field site at the western end of the site for over 18ha of B8, rail served warehousing uses

Principles of development

- Protecting the amenity of residents in the adjoining areas of Ditton and Halebank
- Conserving local features of visual, environmental and historic importance, notably Lovel's Hall Scheduled Monument, Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and the surrounding Green Belt.

Development opportunities in the employment areas immediately surrounding 3MG at Ditton and Halebank should seek to complement but not duplicate the employment offer of the site, whilst also protecting the amenity of existing and future residents.

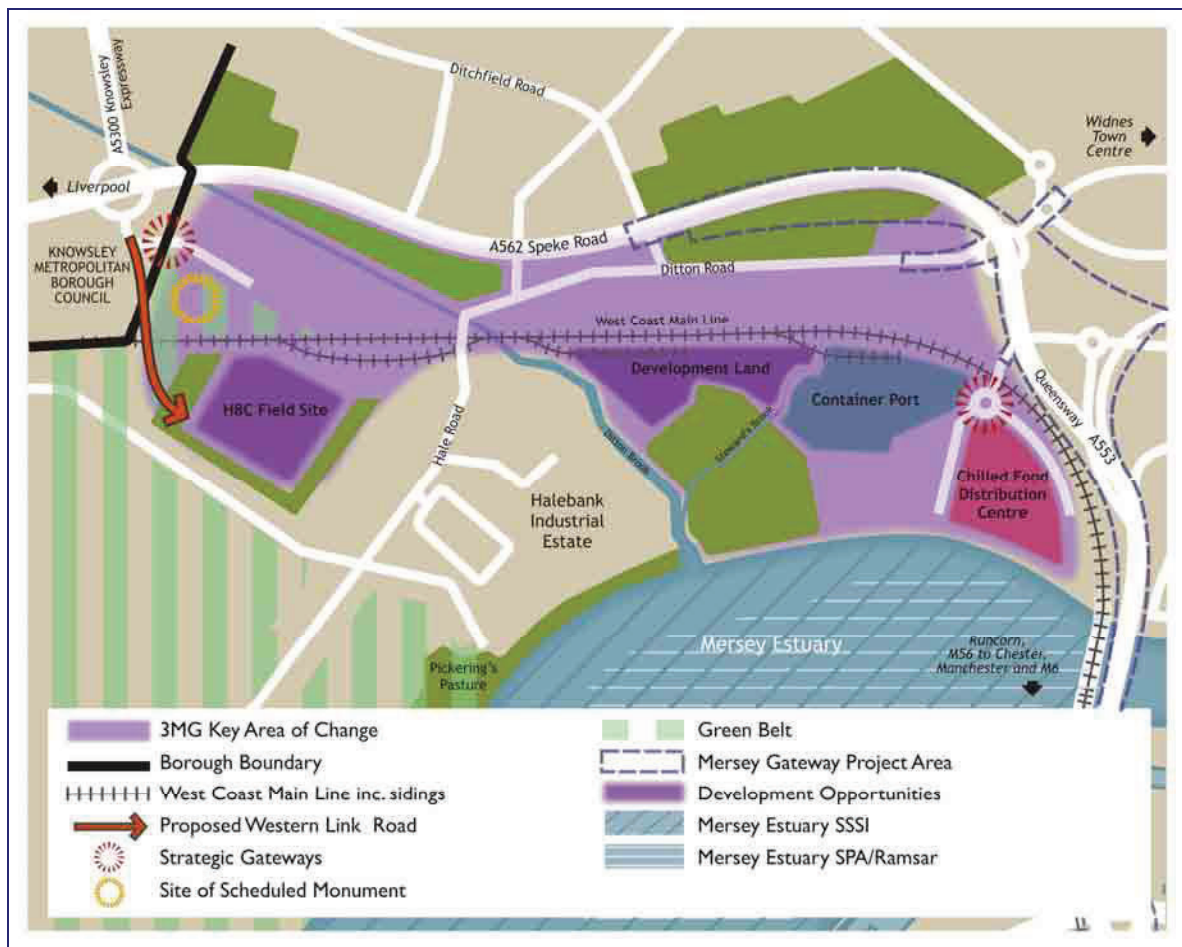


Figure XX: 3MG Diagram

### Justification

- 1.2 Over recent years, substantial amounts of development at 3MG (previously known as Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park) have been permitted and the site has established itself as a key employment area in the region. The site was recognised as a Regional Site for employment purposes since the Regional Economic Strategy in 2006. In a more recent review of Regional Sites, conducted by the NWDA in 2009, the site maintained its status as it is seen as pivotal in encouraging sustainable freight distribution. Estimates suggest that the site can deliver in the region of 5000 jobs if the site is developed out fully and is therefore vital to support and enhance Halton's economy. Employment development of this scale, delivering jobs for local residents is vitally important in this area of the Borough, where deprivation levels are high compared to national and regional averages<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3 The Key Area of Change lies to the south of the A562 (Speke Road) and north of the Mersey Estuary in Widnes. Hale Road and the Halebank residential and industrial area divides the site into two separate parts, with the HBC Field site comprising the majority of the western portion. Up to this time, development has been concentrated around the eastern portion of the site close to the A533/Queensway. The Stobart Group have been at the forefront of the

<sup>1</sup>HBC (2007) Index of Multiple Deprivation. Table 5 – Deprivation within Wards in Halton



development to date, delivering a major container handling and storage facility, and more recently a large chilled food distribution facility. The more westerly areas of 3MG which currently lie undeveloped are in close proximity to the residential community of Halebank and future development must be carefully managed to avoid any negative effects. Considerable landscaping work has already taken place in this vicinity in preparation for development on the site, and as development proposals come forward, it will be important to ensure that all aspects of the development are considered for their potential impact on local people.

- 1.4 Designating the 3MG area as a Key Area of Change reflects the importance of the site to Halton's economy and also its wider influence as a location for inter-modal freight transfer within Merseyside and the Northwest. The logistics and distribution sectors are core elements of Halton's economy and much of this is centred on the multimodal freight transfer facility at 3MG. Given Halton and specifically Ditton's locational advantages, with the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Main Line passing through the site, the M57 and M62 in very close proximity, the site lends itself to further freight and more specifically rail served freight development.
- 1.5 Within and outside of the Borough there are proposals to increase the amount of freight being handled by non-road based freight facilities, both in relation to air freight through Liverpool John Lennon Airport and water-borne freight along the Manchester Ship Canal. As such, one of the criteria of the policy is to improve connections to nearby freight facilities, namely the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) and the are also potential future synergies with Liverpool John Lennon Airport. The reliability of freight movements on the local road network will also be improved through the realisation of the Mersey Gateway Project, improving journey times and accessibility for freight movements across and through the Borough. Within the neighbouring authority of St Helens, a site is being promoted for an intermodal freight terminal on the former colliery site at Parkside, Newton-le-Willows. There is therefore potential for the Mid-Mersey area around Widnes and St Helens to become a distinct hub for rail served freight and logistics uses.
- 1.6 The site lies on the edge of the built up area in Widnes, and its western extents are adjacent to the Green Belt which separates Halton from the adjoining authorities of Liverpool and Knowsley. Aside from this specific alteration of the Green Belt which would be required to facilitate the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport as included in Policy CS17, it is important that the strategic gap between development at 3MG / Halebank and the nearest built up areas of Halewood and Speke in neighbouring authorities is maintained and that the amenity of the Green Belt designation is upheld. Also in close proximity to the site is Lovel's Hall Scheduled Monument. Development of the Halton Borough Council (HBC) Field site to the west of the existing development at 3MG should conserve both the monument and its setting, including the provision of landscape buffers and enhancements where necessary.
- 1.7 Specific infrastructure is required to enable the full development of the site. Further rail sidings are also required to increase the number of trains able to serve the site each day from 6 to 16, thus taking freight off the region's roads. A new siding should be delivered as part of the development of the western portion of the site to connect the HBC Field site with the eastern portion of 3MG. The proposed Western Link Road, benefitting from planning permission<sup>2</sup> from both Halton and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Councils, will provide direct access to the HBC

<sup>2</sup> Planning Application reference 08/00031/HBCFUL – Proposed new link road and landscaping

Field site and better connect the site with the M57 and M62. It will also limit the number of traffic movements on local roads across the two sides of the site, thereby avoiding unnecessary disruption for local residents and businesses. The potential to reopen the redundant passenger station at Ditton, located off Hale Road should be retained as a long term possibility.

- I.8 An adopted Supplementary Planning Document exists for the 3MG site, based on the policy within Halton's Unitary Development Plan. This SPD will need to be updated to reflect the revised policy framework given through C87.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG2, PPS4
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Joint Employment Land and Premises Study, 3MG Masterplan, 3MG SPD
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	3, 4, 6, 10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Employment Learning and Skills, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS9: SOUTH WIDNES

- 1.1 The South Widnes Key Area of Change consisting of Widnes Town Centre, Widnes Waterfront and West Bank presents the opportunity to deliver a high quality mixed use environment furthering the economic revitalisation of the area, creating sustainable communities and ultimately the achievement of a valued waterfront environment and gateway location.

### Key Area of Change CS9: South Widnes

A mix of uses including a combination of employment, retail, leisure and residential development will be achieved across South Widnes over the Core Strategy period through:

- a) Making available 29 hectares of employment land and redeveloping and regenerating existing employment areas across South Widnes with an emphasis on mixed employment uses in Widnes Waterfront and West Bank.
- b) Directing up to 25,000 sqm of convenience / comparison retail provision to Widnes Town Centre with small scale provision across the wider area.
- c) Directing up to 19,000 sqm of bulky goods retailing across South Widnes with a particular focus on Widnes Town Centre.
- d) Focusing new leisure facilities in Widnes Town Centre, with a particular emphasis on the enhancement of the evening economy in the Victoria Square area, and complementary leisure uses in Widnes Waterfront through the realisation of the Venture Fields site leisure development.
- e) The delivery of 350 residential dwellings across South Widnes diversifying the current housing offer.
- f) Capitalising on the development and regeneration opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway Project particularly associated with the restructuring of West Bank to provide for new employment and residential uses and the delivery of a new neighbourhood centre appropriate to the needs of the local community.
- g) Developing Strategic and Local Gateways at key locations to promote linkages across South Widnes and surrounding areas.

### Principles of Development

Development across South Widnes will be expected to:

- Improve connectivity and accessibility across South Widnes and the wider area and take advantage of opportunities to improve sustainable transport provision.
- Facilitate public access to the waterfront and prioritise opportunities for informal leisure associated with the waterfront destination.
- Ensure strong urban design in order to reflect the prominent waterside environment, gateway locations and the positive characteristics of South Widnes.

- Achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction including a reduction in carbon emissions through renewable and low carbon technology with a particular emphasis on Widnes Waterfront and its potential as an Energy Priority Zone.



Figure XX: South Widnes Diagram

## Justification

- I.2 South Widnes includes the distinct sub-areas of Widnes Town Centre, Widnes Waterfront and West Bank. Each of the sub-areas provides a different but complementary role for Widnes and the wider Borough: Widnes Town Centre is the main retail core for the Borough providing a range of retail and leisure opportunities; Widnes Waterfront has historically and continues to provide a core employment area for the town and the wider sub-region; and, West Bank consists of a residential community to the south with employment and industrial uses to the north.
- I.3 The area exhibits a number of issues within each sub-area and across the entire Key Area of Change, key amongst these are a physical and functional severance between different land uses, lack of connectivity between the different sub-areas, and, contamination issues, particularly along the waterfront, due to past chemical and industrial uses. The Key Area of Change, however, benefits from a prominent waterfront location, excellent regional and sub-regional transport links and a range of existing employment, retail and environmental assets. There is now a need to integrate and unify South Widnes, concentrating on linkages and connections and complementary uses in order to provide for a sustainable mixed use area for the benefit of Halton's residents, businesses and visitors.
- I.4 South Widnes, and in particular Widnes Waterfront, will be promoted as a driver for economic regeneration increasing employment opportunities through business growth and inward investment. The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (JELPS)<sup>1</sup> highlights the importance of Widnes Waterfront in delivering both the Borough and sub-region's employment land requirements and in particular much needed BI office development in Widnes. Although national planning policy<sup>2</sup> directs office uses to town centres, the JELPS recognises the severe lack of office supply in Widnes and constrained land supply in the Town Centre and as a result Widnes Waterfront is a more preferable location. Complementary employment provision will also be focused in West Bank to maintain and enhance local employment uses, and where appropriate in Widnes Town Centre to support a diversity of uses and to maintain the existing civic quarter around Kingsway.
- I.5 Widnes is the largest town centre within the Borough and has the greatest retail offer in terms of range and floorspace. The Town Centre's retail role will be maintained and enhanced, in accordance with CS5: a Network of Centres for Halton, through the delivery of new retail opportunities and improvements including the potential to redevelop the Albert Square shopping centre. Leisure facilities will be focused on the Town Centre with Victoria Square remaining as the focus for evening entertainment given the attractive public realm and heritage assets in the locality. The realisation of the Hive development on the Widnes Waterfront Venture Fields site will ensure the delivery of complementary leisure facilities for the South Widnes area.
- I.6 Although there are limited opportunities for residential development within South Widnes, other than those presented by the Mersey Gateway Project through the restructuring of West Bank, a priority for this Key Area of Change is to reinforce the existing residential neighbourhoods, and in particular the West Bank residential neighbourhood, through the addition of high quality housing development offering a

<sup>1</sup> BE Group, HBC, *et al* (2009) Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (JELPS)

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2009) Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

mix of tenures. It will also be necessary to ensure that the residential neighbourhoods, including those north of the Town Centre have connections to employment, leisure and retail opportunities across South Widnes in order to create thriving and sustainable communities.

- I.7 The Mersey Gateway Project will bring considerable physical changes to the area at West Bank coupled with wider regeneration and development opportunities across Widnes Waterfront and Widnes Town Centre. The removal of redundant infrastructure through the subsequent downgrading of the Silver Jubilee Bridge will release land and create the potential for new employment and residential development sites. In accordance with CS5 (a Network of Centres for Halton) the potential for a new mixed use neighbourhood centre in West Bank has been identified to provide for the needs of the local population. The realisation of the Mersey Gateway Project will increase cross river connectivity, reduce journey times and relieve congestion, which will be essential for future employment growth and to expand the sub-regional retail catchment for Widnes Town Centre. The project will also act as a catalyst for regeneration across the South Widnes area.
- I.8 To deliver a mixed use area there is a need to ensure that key links across the area become a focus for improved movement and high quality design. Particular attention should be given to the gateway links between West Bank and Victoria Road and at the Watkinson Way / Fiddlers Ferry junction between Widnes Waterfront and the Town Centre. These 'Strategic Gateway' locations are intended to deliver upgrades to pedestrian and cycle networks, support strong building frontages of an appropriate scale and massing, and assist in strengthening the identity of South Widnes through quality streetscapes. Other opportunities to improve the areas physical linkages should be taken where necessary and in accordance with existing Masterplans and SPDs through the development of 'Local Gateways'. Local Gateways will play a significant role in ensuring localised legibility and to aid connectivity of the outlying areas. One such opportunity to forge a Local Gateway is the link between West Bank and Widnes Waterfront adjacent to the St Helens (Sankey) Canal. This Local Gateway would have the potential to support and connect recreational, leisure and employment opportunities across the Key Area of Change.
- I.9 In addition to improving sustainable links in the Gateway locations, improving sustainable transport provision across South Widnes is an integral component of improving connectivity and accessibility and as such will be supported across the Key Area of Change. Improving pedestrian and cycle access to the Mersey waterfront, St Helens Canal, the Widnes Waterfront Moss Bank Linear Park and Widnes Warth, will also be supported, particularly from Widnes Town Centre, increasing the areas informal leisure offer. Opportunities to connect to the National Cycle Network (route 62) and the Trans Pennine Trail will be important in the achievement of this.
- I.10 High quality and sustainable design is imperative for the South Widnes Key Area of Change. The waterfront location adjacent to the Mersey Estuary and St Helens Canal should inform the design of new development in the area, ensuring strategic views are not compromised and are utilised by new development where possible. Future development and regeneration should maximise the area's location as an important gateway to Widnes and ensure high quality frontages along key routes with a particular emphasis on the Strategic and Local Gateways. Renewable and low carbon energy development will also be supported across South Widnes. Widnes Waterfront in particular has been identified as having potential for the delivery of

district heating<sup>3</sup> and may present an opportunity to develop an additional Energy Priority Zone in accordance with CS19: Sustainable Development and Climate Change.

- 1.11 Contamination as a result of the chemical and heavy industry that in the past dominated Widnes Waterfront and West Bank presents issues for future development. Potential risk as a result of flooding and pollution also exists in certain locations across the area. CS23: Managing Pollution and Risk and other LDF policies containing guidance associated with contamination, flooding and pollution are therefore particularly applicable to this Key Area of Change and should be fully considered by future development proposals.
- 1.12 The future development of Widnes Waterfront is currently guided by the Widnes Waterfront SPD based on the 2004 Widnes Waterfront Masterplan<sup>4</sup>. Building on the successful delivery of the Masterplan, the Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan and Delivery Strategy<sup>5</sup> has been developed to provide a framework to attract investment and guide physical development across the area until 2013 and beyond. Opportunities to update the current Widnes Waterfront SPD in accordance with the Phase 2 Masterplan will be pursued.
- 1.13 The future development and regeneration of the West Bank area will be supported by an SPD for the area. This draws heavily on the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy<sup>6</sup> which is integral to the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Project. The potential for a future SPD for Widnes Town Centre to aid future growth will also be pursued along with more specific studies responding to localised issues and opportunities.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3: Housing; PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth; PPG13: Transport
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (HBC, 2010); Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2009); Retail and Leisure Study (GVA, 2009); Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan and Delivery Strategy (HBC, 2009); Draft West Bank SPD (HBC, 2009); Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (HBC and GVA, 2008); Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (ARUP, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>3</sup> Arup (2010) Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study

<sup>4</sup> HBC and BDP (2004) Widnes Waterfront Masterplan and Delivery Strategy

<sup>5</sup> HBC, Taylor Young, *et al* (2009) Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan and Delivery Strategy

<sup>6</sup> HBC and GVA (2008) Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

## CSI0: WEST RUNCORN

- 1.1 West Runcorn comprising Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn Waterfront and the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) presents a range of development and regeneration opportunities which will deliver high quality and accessible environments utilising the areas waterfront assets, re-establish Runcorn Old Town as a vibrant centre, offer a new residential community and further exploit the Borough's freight and distribution potential.

### Key Area of Change CSI0: West Runcorn

The development and regeneration of West Runcorn over the Core Strategy period will be achieved through:

- a) Improving Runcorn Old Town's retail offer, focusing up to 5,000sqm of convenience / comparison goods retailing and supporting its role as a District Centre and a cultural and leisure destination.
- b) The delivery of 2000 dwellings across West Runcorn with a particular emphasis on the Runcorn Waterfront site to accommodate 1400 dwellings, with the potential for additional residential development, subject to appropriate access.
- c) The delivery of 27 hectares of employment land and the redevelopment and regeneration of existing employment areas across West Runcorn with a focus on the Mersey Gateway Port and the development of an employment area in the southern part of Runcorn Waterfront.
- d) Supporting the comprehensive redevelopment of Runcorn Waterfront to be a residential led, mixed use regeneration initiative with detailed guidance, land allocations, access arrangements and capacity to be determined.
- e) Redeveloping the Mersey Gateway Port into a new civil waterway port, utilising the direct links to the Manchester Ship Canal, road and rail infrastructure, further strengthening Halton's role as a centre for logistics and distribution.
- f) Capitalising on the development and regeneration opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway Project particularly associated with the removal of redundant infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge.
- g) Developing Strategic and Local Gateways at key locations to ensure linkages across West Runcorn and surrounding areas.

### Principles of Development

Development across West Runcorn will be expected to:

- Improve accessibility and connectivity and support improvements to the sustainable transport network.
- Ensure high quality urban design reflecting West Runcorn's waterfront environments, creating a vibrant destination and boasting a highly attractive public realm.



- Facilitate public access to the waterfront locations, particularly Runcorn Promenade and the Bridgewater Canal, and, where appropriate, take advantage of opportunities to increase the leisure and recreational potential of the waterfronts where commercially appropriate.
- Achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction including a reduction in carbon emissions through renewable and low carbon technology.

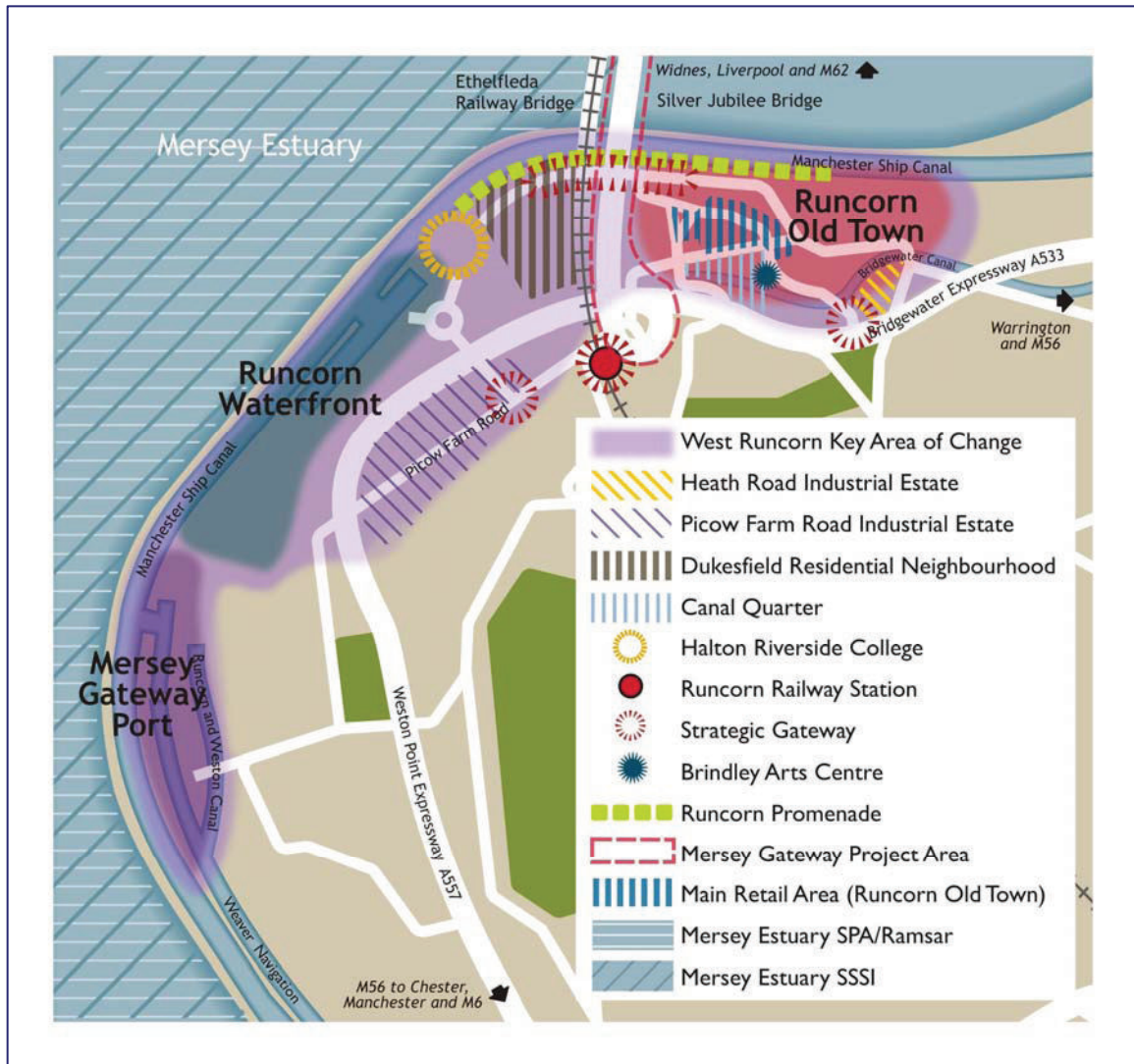


Figure XX: West Runcorn Diagram

### Justification

- 1.2 Runcorn Old Town is the historic core of Runcorn. Following the Borough's commercial and industrial growth, the Old Town was at one time the main shopping centre in Runcorn. However, with Runcorn's designation as a New Town in 1964, and subsequent construction of Shopping City (Halton Lea), Runcorn Old Town has suffered a steady decline. The Expressway road network, rail infrastructure and past redevelopment in the centre has contributed to a poorly defined and disjointed environment and there is a lack of clear and direct pedestrian and vehicular routes

and connections between Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn Railway Station, Dukesfield and Runcorn Riverside College and Runcorn Waterfront.

- I.3 Following the Manchester Ship Canal west of Runcorn Old Town is Runcorn Docks and Weston Docks. This is currently an area of predominantly employment uses and includes commercial docks, general industry, storage and distribution uses, along with a large amount of derelict and underused land.
- I.4 Although the Key Area of Change displays a range of issues there are a number of development and regeneration opportunities across West Runcorn which will help to re-establish the area as a vibrant waterside location offering retail, leisure and employment opportunities and delivering high quality residential development. Development is encouraged to respond positively to these opportunities and take advantage of West Runcorn's assets including views across the Mersey Estuary, Runcorn Promenade, the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal and the sub-regional and national links afforded by West Runcorn's proximity to the strategic highway network and Runcorn Railway Station.
- I.5 The focus for Runcorn Old Town over the Core Strategy plan period will be on re-establishing the centre and enabling it to provide for the day to day shopping needs of its immediate catchment whilst offering a wider complementary function to Halton Lea. The Old Town's designation as a District Centre (as detailed in CS5: A Network of Centres for Halton) will refocus the centre for local independent shops, niche retailers and service providers and as a centre for cultural and leisure activity reinforcing and diversifying the evening economy for Runcorn. The Old Town's role within its localised catchment will be protected and enhanced wherever possible and opportunities for additional convenience and comparison provision should be identified and promoted, where appropriate, in accordance with the Retail and Leisure Study<sup>1</sup> and national policy. Future retail provision will be allocated within the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.
- I.6 The Canal Quarter offers a significant opportunity to support the Old Town's re-defined role. Through taking advantage of the waterfront setting alongside the Bridgewater Canal and building upon the success of the Brindley Arts Centre, the Canal Quarter offers the potential to become the catalyst for the wider regeneration of the Old Town, delivering a mix of leisure and retail uses in addition to a significant residential element.
- I.7 West Runcorn has the capacity to contribute to diversifying the housing offer across the Borough reinforcing existing neighbourhoods through the addition of some higher quality residential development. Runcorn Waterfront (located at Runcorn Docks) in particular provides the opportunity to deliver a new high quality waterfront residential community with the potential to accommodate up to 4,000 units overall. The full delivery of the residential redevelopment of Runcorn Waterfront, however, will be dependent upon securing adequate site access and will be established through masterplanning, the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD and the development of a Runcorn Waterfront SPD. As such the current Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment<sup>2</sup> only includes a yield of 1400 units in the period to 2026. The future redevelopment of Runcorn Waterfront will also support retail and community facilities, open space, and an employment area forming a buffer to the

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<sup>1</sup> GVA (2009) Retail and Leisure Study

<sup>2</sup> HBC (2010) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

industrial area to the south. It is envisaged that the redevelopment of Runcorn Waterfront will be delivered over a 20-30 year time span.

- 1.8 Weston Docks, to the south of the Key Area of Change, has been re-branded as the Mersey Gateway Port. This will be redeveloped into a new civil waterway port for multimodal logistics and distribution providing employment opportunities for the local area and building upon the freight and distribution strengths of the 3MG facility at Ditton (Policy CS8). The Port is linked directly to the Manchester Ship Canal and connects to the Mersey Estuary and Weaver Navigation. Road access to the Port is via Picow Farm Road and then westwards across the Runcorn and Weston Canal. In the longer term, the aspiration is to connect the Port to rail infrastructure to expand freight transport.
- 1.9 Employment opportunities also exist within the Picow Farm Road and Heath Road North Industrial Estates. These estates already perform an important local employment role which should be enhanced. Runcorn Old Town has been identified within the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study<sup>3</sup> as having a limited office market due to land constraints and as such new office development activity in Runcorn is largely directed to Daresbury in East Runcorn (CSI I).
- 1.10 Additional employment opportunities may emerge in the longer-term as part of the Mersey Gateway Project and the subsequent 'de-linking' of the Silver Jubilee Bridge which will see the removal of redundant highway infrastructure, 'unlocking' development land through remodelling the Runcorn 'Loops'. The 'de-linking' arrangements are aimed at reducing the potential for the Silver Jubilee Bridge to be used as a strategic link for long distance traffic movement, whilst increasing its function as a local connection for residents and businesses in the Borough<sup>4</sup>. This will maximise the development and commercial opportunities of the land adjoining Runcorn Railway Station, whilst facilitating the provision of a key sub-regional interchange and transport hub<sup>5</sup> and will help to tackle the issues of severance across the area. The removal of road infrastructure may also present opportunities to reinstate the former alignment of the Bridgewater Canal between Runcorn Old Town and Runcorn Waterfront to the Manchester Ship Canal. This has the potential to create a second Cheshire Canal Ring further encouraging and supporting the leisure and recreational potential of the Bridgewater Canal. The route of the alignment will be protected through the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.
- 1.11 Key points of vehicular and pedestrian access across West Runcorn have been prioritised as 'Strategic Gateways' to aid movement and connectivity throughout this Key Area of Change. This includes the links between Runcorn Town Centre, the station and Runcorn Waterfront and the strategic road link to the Mersey Gateway Port via Picow Farm Road. Attractive gateway features such as landscaping and artwork will be supported in these locations. Other locally important gateways will also be encouraged to support localised access and connectivity and improve the legibility of the local environment. These 'Local Gateways' should be used to better integrate the Bridgewater Canal with walking and cycling networks and the Manchester Ship Canal where compatible with continuing commercial use of the waterway.

<sup>3</sup> BE Group (2009) Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (JELPS)

<sup>4</sup> HBC (2009) Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy

<sup>5</sup> HBC & GVA (2008) Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

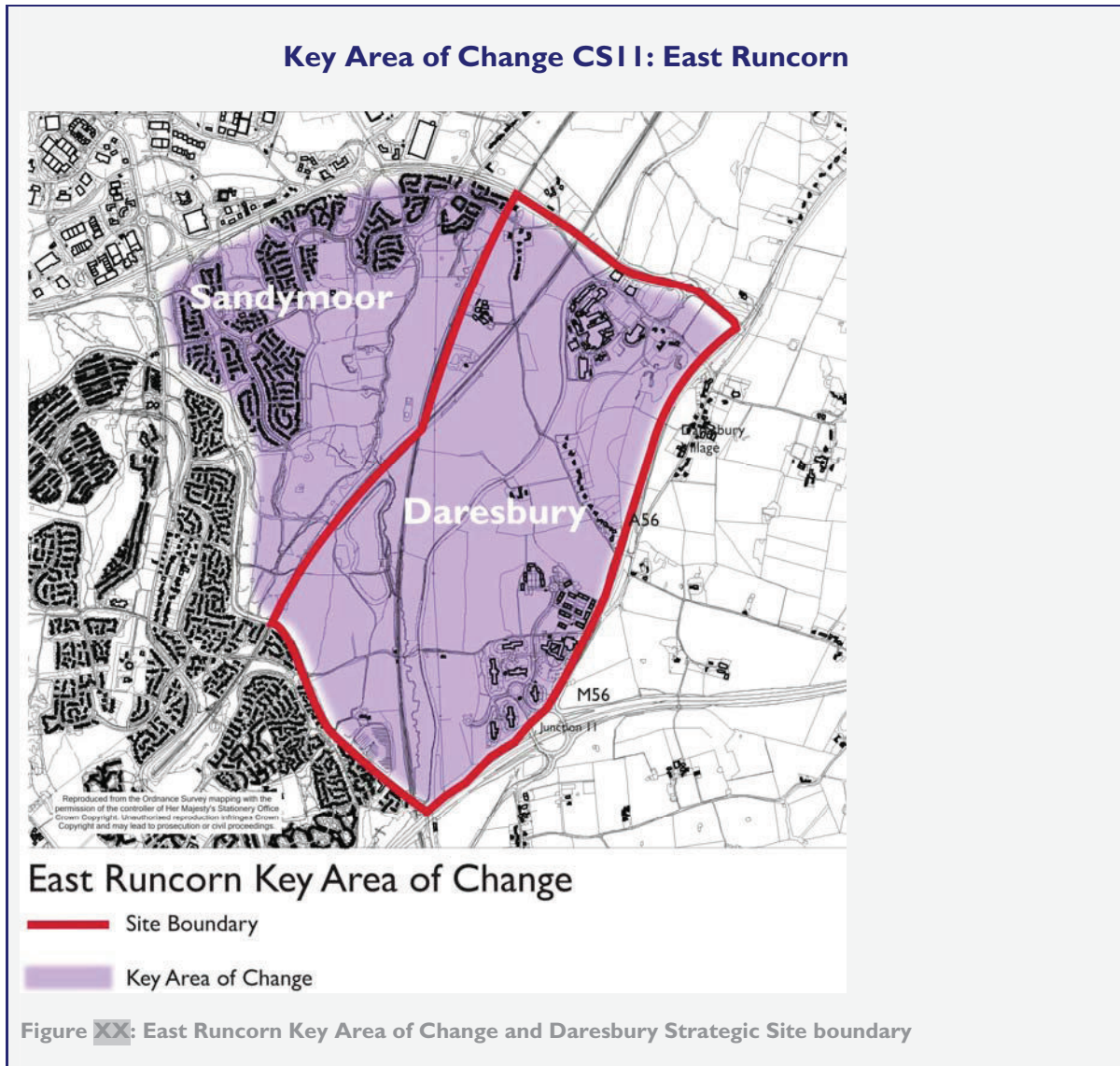
- 1.12 High quality design throughout West Runcorn will be used to create attractive environments, responding positively to the character of the area and integrating the area with the waterfronts of the Bridgewater Canal, Manchester Ship Canal / Mersey Estuary, creating a unique sense of place and a vibrant asset for the Borough.
- 1.13 Sustainable design and construction and the development of renewable and low carbon energy will also be supported across West Runcorn. Runcorn Waterfront has been identified as an Energy Priority Zone<sup>6</sup> and opportunities to develop a District Heating scheme will be particularly encouraged in the future redevelopment of this area particularly where this is compatible with neighbouring industrial uses.
- 1.14 The Council will work proactively with the landowner of Runcorn Waterfront and other potential delivery partners to develop a Masterplan to guide the development of the site. This will be translated into the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD and will form the basis of a Runcorn Waterfront SPD. Proposals for Runcorn Old Town, including those associated with the Canal Quarter will be supported by a SPD. This SPD will also aim to build upon the measures proposed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy including those to remove redundant sections of infrastructure associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. More detailed policies and the allocation of sites for the delivery of this Key Area of Change (including the Mersey Gateway Port) will be included within the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3: Housing; PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth; PPG13: Transport
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (HBC, 2010); Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2009); Retail and Leisure Study (GVA, 2009); Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (HBC and GVA, 2008); Mersey Gateway Transport Strategy (HBC, 2009); Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (ARUP, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>6</sup> Arup (2010) Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study

## CSI I: EAST RUNCORN

- 1.1 At East Runcorn, the opportunity exists to create a new community for Halton which will encompass a diverse mix of uses and continue the development of Runcorn in line with the long term vision for the Borough. Whilst the whole of the East Runcorn area constitutes a Key Area of Change within the Core Strategy, the Daresbury is allocated as a Strategic Site. Under the provisions of PPS12, areas within the Strategic Site are therefore allocated for specific land uses as indicated in Figure XX below. As a Strategic Site, the area will deliver many of the required outcomes intrinsic to the success and future prosperity of Halton.



### Daresbury

The Strategic Site as defined above, will deliver the following development:

- a) 19ha of land will be made available to aid the expansion of the BI science, high tech and research development at the existing Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (SIC) at land between the Bridgewater Canal and the Chester-Manchester railway line; and

- b) The office and knowledge based facilities at Daresbury Business Park will be increased through the delivery of a further 40ha of BI (a) and (b) development.
- c) Phased delivery of approximately 1,550 dwellings, to provide a wide range of housing by size, type and tenure, including affordable housing in accordance with the provisions of CS13: Affordable Housing. New housing should be brought forward in the following broad phases:
- Phase 1 – 650 dwellings in the land between the West Coast Main Line and the Chester-Manchester Line to the north of the site, and on the land immediately surrounding Preston Brook Marina
  - Phase 2 – 600 dwellings in the central area between the Daresbury SIC and Daresbury Park
  - Phase 3 – 300 dwellings at the area known as Wharford Farm, between the West Coast Main Line and the Chester-Manchester line to the south of the site
- d) A mixed use neighbourhood centre including a marina providing moorings for inland waterways craft sited alongside the Bridgewater Canal around the existing George Gleave's bridge. The neighbourhood centre will be served by public transport and will meet the needs of the nearby residential and business communities. Any such provision of a neighbourhood centre should avoid unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres and the planned neighbourhood centre at Sandymoor. Individual retail units should not exceed 500sqm in size.
- e) Infrastructure requirements to achieve the above development will include:
- A new road bridge over the Bridgewater Canal on Keckwick Lane
  - A signalised junction on to the A56 at Delph Lane
  - A vehicular and public transport route through the site connecting Daresbury Park to Daresbury SIC, including a bridge over the canal, south of Delph Lane incorporating a bus-only connection to Daresbury Park
  - A public transport interchange located to the east of the intersection of the West Coast Main Line and the Chester-Manchester railway line, including the safeguarding of land to maintain the long term aim of accommodating a new railway station
  - Adding an additional lane to the A558 between the Pitts Heath Lane roundabout and the Daresbury SIC roundabout to create a dual carriageway
  - Improvements to Junction 11 of the M56

Further infrastructure requirements at Daresbury Strategic Site are set out in the Infrastructure Plan

### **General principles of development**

1. A network of open spaces for nature conservation and recreation should be provided, including the retention of Daresbury Firs, the creation of a linear country park along the Bridgewater canal corridor, formal green space to serve the residential area, new parkland south of Delph Lane, and smaller green spaces integral to individual developments.
2. Design, layout and style of individual plots will be guided by a framework in the Daresbury Supplementary Planning Document which recognises the locational assets of the area and its surroundings.
3. The promotion of walking and cycling routes and expansion of the Greenway network to provide clear and safe links to surrounding communities, including new pedestrian and vehicular links to Sandymoor and improvements to the canal corridor.

4. Development of the Daresbury Strategic Site should integrate with the adjacent residential community at Sandymoor.

### Sandymoor

Completion of the Sandymoor residential area will be achieved through the delivery of approximately 1,400 additional units to the south and west of the existing Sandymoor community, in line with outstanding consents including a new neighbourhood centre, primary school and public transport connections. The delivery of further development at Sandymoor should have regard to the existing planning framework provided through the Sandymoor SPD.

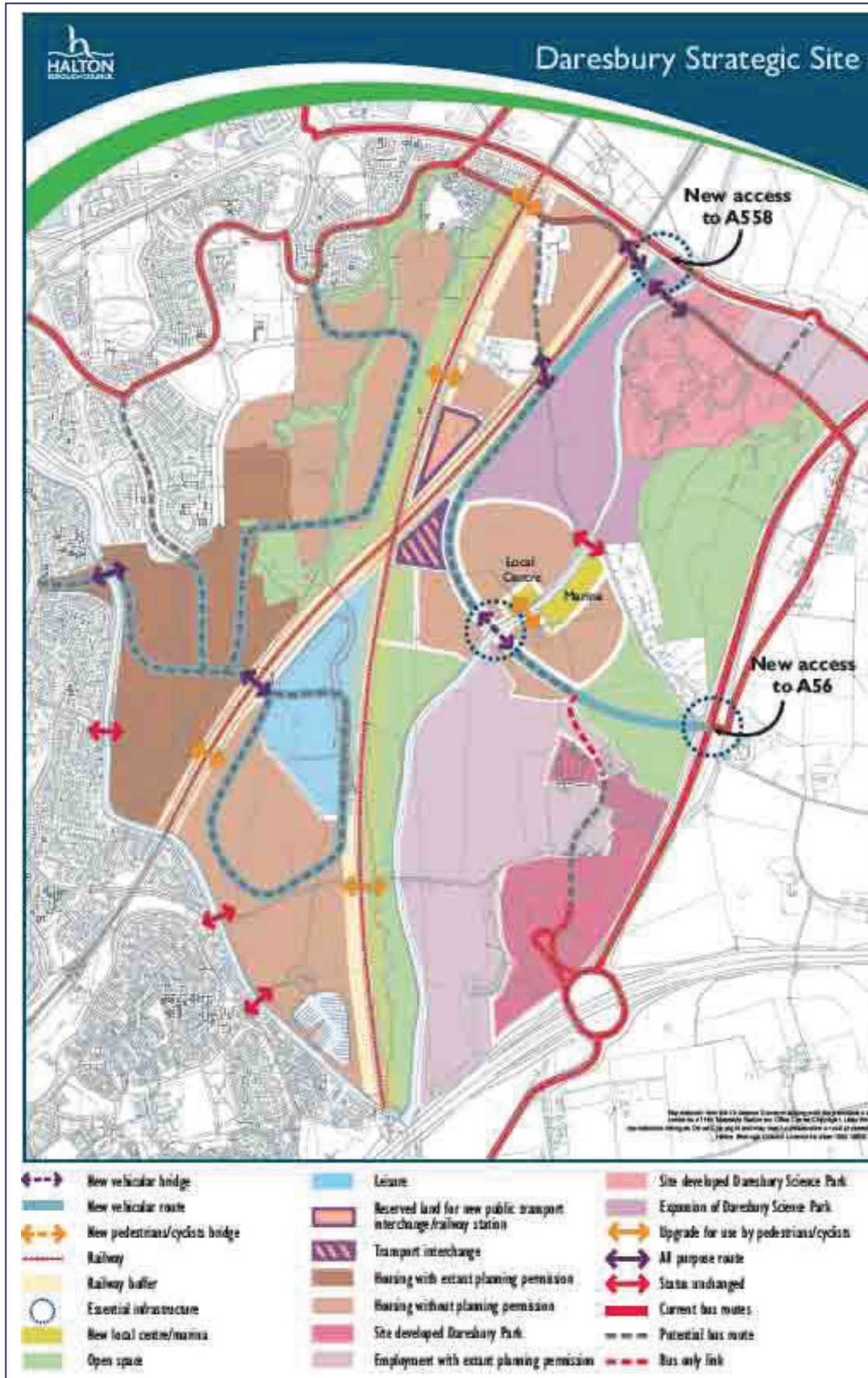


Figure XX: East Runcorn Key Area of Change and Daresbury Strategic Site Indicative Masterplan



## Justification

- 2.1 The Key Area of Change lies to the east of Runcorn and is currently a mixture of developed land, interspersed by agricultural land. The area is dissected by the Bridgewater Canal which splits into two arms at the south of the area and also two railway lines; the West Coast Main Line and the Chester-Manchester line. The various transport links present both barriers to movement and development, countered by opportunities to improve amenity and sustainable transport respectively. The canals offer an attractive landscape for the area, with opportunities for tourism and recreation, whilst the presence of the railway lines through the site offers the potential for long distance sustainable travel options in the longer term. The Key Area of Change has a varied topography which gives prominence to east and south of the site including the wooded area of Daresbury Firs, which adds a strong visual identity to this part of the site and as a backdrop to Daresbury SIC. The undeveloped remainder of the Sandymoor area to the west of the main arm of the Bridgewater Canal, along with land to the west of Daresbury village, represents some of the remaining greenfield sites in Halton.
- 3.1 Proposals to develop the Sandymoor area were included in the Runcorn New Town plans of the 1960s and 1970s, and specifically arose from Master Plan Amendment No.2<sup>1</sup> in 1971. Under Section 7.1 of the New Towns Act 1981, development of the Sandymoor area for residential development has conditional approval for development. At April 2010, just over 1000 dwellings, plus infrastructure, green spaces and a community centre had been built at Sandymoor since Phase I of the development commenced in the late 1980s<sup>2</sup>. Outstanding planning consents indicate that the area has the remaining potential to deliver an additional 1400 dwellings, along with reserved sites for a local centre and school which are likely to be delivered once the community has grown sufficiently to make these facilities sustainable and viable.
- 4.1 Nationally the expansion of scientific research and science related business development has been prioritised over recent years to grow the sector. In 2006, a Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014<sup>3</sup> was drawn up to guide future investment in national science facilities including the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus<sup>0</sup>. This framework specifically promoted the creation of two Science and Innovation Campuses, one at Harwell in Oxfordshire and the other at Daresbury. The relationship between the two campuses, known as the 'dipole', enables any organisation engaging with one Campus to have access to the facilities and expertise of both. At Daresbury, the existing Daresbury Laboratories and associated facilities form the basis of the Science and Innovation Campus, with aspirations for the science and research facilities to expand to double the current size of the facility. In recent years, a number of facilities have been built on prominent gateway sites such as the Daresbury Innovation Centre and the Cockcroft Institute (the National Centre for Accelerator Science). Vanguard House (under construction in 2010) will deliver high quality office, laboratory, and workshop space.
- 5.1 Following on from the recognition of Daresbury as a nationally important campus, a renewed impetus to realise the development potential of the Daresbury area arose which emerged through the 'Daresbury Framework'<sup>4</sup> during 2007-2008. Stakeholders, landowners and potential developers in the area worked collaboratively to produce a strategic vision and comprehensive Master Plan for the Daresbury area,

<sup>1</sup> Runcorn Development Corporation (1971) Runcorn New Town Master Plan Amendment No.2

<sup>2</sup> GVA Grimley for HBC (2009) Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document

<sup>3</sup> HM Treasury (2006) Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014: Next Steps

<sup>4</sup> Taylor Young et al (2009) The Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus Framework

based around the notion of connecting the separate knowledge nuclei of the business and science facilities. By broadening the appeal of the Daresbury site the intention is to protect Daresbury SIC's role as a primary national site for world-class science and create an environment which encourages knowledge transfer. The Master Plan forecast a 30-40 year delivery period for the realisation of the proposed development, driven by the pace of expansion at Daresbury SIC which is predominantly determined by the availability of funding.

- 6.1 Taking the scale of the proposals into account, it is anticipated that the build out of the proposed development will take a number of decades, and is likely to extend beyond the Core Strategy plan period. Likely phasing of the residential and employment development is indicated in Table XX below.

	DARESBUY STRATEGIC SITE			Sandymoor Number of dwellings
	Number of dwellings	Amount of employment floorspace (sqm)		
		Daresbury Park	Daresbury SIC	
Phase 1 (2010/11-2020/21)	650	22,919	49,623	366
Phase 2 (2015/16-2025/26)	600	22,919	79,532	788
Phase 3 (2020/21-2025/26)	300			310
Beyond Core Strategy period (2026+)	-	26,081	46,450	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1550</b>	71,919	175,605	<b>1464</b>
		<b>247,524</b>		

Table XX: Development phasing at East Runcorn

- 7.1 It has been necessary to translate the aspirational Daresbury Framework into a realistic and deliverable planning framework for the Core Strategy, and to assist this process, the Council commissioned a Viability Assessment<sup>5</sup> for this site. The viability assessment also factors the likely cost of infrastructure requirements at Daresbury into account. The viability report finds that public sector funding will be necessary to achieve the proposed level of development and underlines the long term nature of the proposals.
- 8.1 In order to achieve the desired aims for the Daresbury area, partnership working will need to continue over the lifetime of the plan and beyond. To assist with this, partner organisations have come together to form both a Joint Venture company for Daresbury SIC. It is estimated that £600m will be invested in the area during the realisation of the Master Plan and partnership working will be essential in channelling investment into the most appropriate proposals to deliver maximum benefits. The newly formed Local Enterprise Partnership for Merseyside, JESSICA funding and the emerging Technology and Innovation Centre network are all possible funding opportunities which will need to be investigated to allow Daresbury SIC to reach its potential. Government funding has been earmarked for specific projects at the SIC, including the Hartree Centre for Computational Science and Engineering. Investment of this type will be necessary to maintain and improve the site's profile as a focus for business, science and advanced engineering into the future and create the optimum environment for further inward investment.
- 9.1 In accordance with PPS4, office development should ordinarily be directed towards a local authority's designated town centres. In the case of Daresbury Park, the entirety

<sup>5</sup> DTZ (2010) Halton Key Sites Viability Assessment

of the area proposed for office development already benefits from outline planning consent for over 165,000m<sup>2</sup> of B1(a) floorspace (at April 2010) as indicated below in Table XX. Although a large amount of employment floorspace has consent to be developed, monitoring of the density of office completions at Daresbury Park indicates that a lower amount of office development is likely to actually be built, and this has been translated in the phasing of employment development included in Table XX above. The already consented floorspace, coupled with information taken from a survey of businesses which indicates that there is little demand from within the office sector to locate in the Borough's town centre locations, particularly in Runcorn Old Town<sup>6</sup>. The JELPS study recognises that Daresbury Park, is an established office location, which has capitalised on its accessibility and location on the M56 corridor to create a critical mass of out of town office space. Notwithstanding the guidance set out in national planning policy, the specific requirements of businesses, such as the size of site required, site quality, access and proximity to markets, should be recognised. To date, Daresbury Park has proved to be a popular location for office development given the high quality environment within which it is set, the bespoke buildings offered with large floorplates, able to accommodate Head Quarter type buildings. At Daresbury SIC office development is proposed to supplement the specialist science offer and to provide support services for the laboratory and research space.

	Number of Dwellings	Amount of Employment floorspace (sqm)
Sandymoor (Full or Outline Planning Permission or Section 7.1 approval under the New Towns Act)	1464	-
Daresbury SIC – (Full or Outline Planning Permission)	-	16,205
Daresbury Park – (Full or Outline Planning Permission)	-	165,564
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1464</b>	<b>181,769</b>

Table XX: Development at East Runcorn benefitting from existing planning consents

- 10.1 The extent of the changes proposed at East Runcorn necessarily mean that new infrastructure will be required to support development, particularly in relation to highways and sustainable transport. As part of developing the approach for the Key Area of Change, a transport study of the East Runcorn development area<sup>7</sup> has been commissioned to assess the likely impact of the proposed level of development on the existing road network. The study concluded that substantial investment in the highways network and in sustainable transport initiatives will be necessary to increase both reduce reliance on the private car and increase the capacity of surrounding roads where the impact of a shift to more sustainable modes will not eradicate the issue. Highways infrastructure will be needed to provide sufficient access to the site, including a new spine link road to join the Daresbury Park and SIC sites including improvements to existing and the provision of new canal bridges, a new primary link route to the A56, road linkages to the Sandymoor area and associated footpaths and cycleways. Further detail of specific transport projects is given in the Infrastructure Plan which accompanies the Core Strategy. Some of this new infrastructure is included specifically within the policy as it will be necessary for this infrastructure to be in place to access certain development sites and the onus will be the developer of the associated site to provide this infrastructure. Other less strategic infrastructure such as small scale greenspaces and internal roads will be provided as individual parcels of development land come forward.

<sup>6</sup> BE Group (2010) Joint Employment Land and Premises Study - Table 68, page 162 and Para 7.40, page 174

<sup>7</sup> Mott MacDonald (2010) East Runcorn Sustainable Development Study

- 11.1 The above policy for East Runcorn includes the provision of a public transport interchange at the intersection of the two railway lines which run through the site. It is envisaged that this will initially provide bus interchange facilities to serve the employment and residential areas with the aspiration of delivering a railway station to serve either one or both of the railway lines in the longer term. The precise location of a public transport interchange has not yet been determined but will be largely dependent on the outcome of the current Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) Study, which is being progressed by Network Rail on behalf of Halton Borough Council. Should this study find that the practicality and feasibility of a railway station at Daresbury is limited, a wider choice of sites will be available for a bus-based interchange.
- 12.1 Two SPDs will support the delivery of development at East Runcorn. An adopted SPD exists for the Sandymoor area of the site to the west of the railway lines. An SPD will also be produced for the area covering the Daresbury Strategic Site including the intervening areas. This will focus on the implementation of the Core Strategy policy, particularly detail in terms of design, layout, phasing and access.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3, PPS4, PPS12, National Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008, Halton Science Report, Sandymoor SPD
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	<b>Employment Learning and Skills in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton</b>
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

**HALTON CORE STRATEGY  
PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

**CORE POLICIES**

## CSI2: HOUSING MIX

- 1.1 The number of new homes to be provided has been set out in the Spatial Strategy and accompanying policy on Housing Supply and Locational Priorities. Alongside delivering the right quantity of new homes, it is equally important that the right type of housing is provided to meet the needs of Halton's existing population, address imbalances in the existing housing stock and ensure the homes provided can adapt to changing demographics, particularly an ageing population. The type of affordable housing required on each site is set out in CSI3: Affordable Housing, but it is equally important to influence the mix of private housing on development sites. As such, housing developers should have regard to locally arising needs for dwellings of differing size and type.

### Policy CSI2: Housing Mix

On sites of 10 or more dwellings, the type of new housing delivered should relate to the characteristics of existing neighbourhoods and future demographic trends, as indicated in the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Should there be issues of viability, an alternative mix of housing could be negotiated.

Proposals for new specialist housing for the elderly, including extra-care<sup>1</sup> and supported accommodation, will be encouraged in suitable locations (and sites allocated in the Site Allocations DPD, as appropriate), particularly those providing easy access to local services and community facilities.

To reduce reliance on specialist housing in the future and to allow residents to live within their own homes for as long as they are able, the Council will encourage the delivery of homes which meet Lifetime Homes standards.

### Justification

- 1.2 Evidence from the emerging Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010<sup>2</sup> (SHMA) suggests that there is a need for a greater diversity of housing types and sizes across market housing as well as in affordable accommodation. The housing type profile in Halton currently differs from the national pattern with much higher proportions of medium/large terraced houses and bungalows than elsewhere in the country<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, there is under provision of other dwelling types, namely small terraced and detached homes and also to a certain extent, flatted homes. The Housing Needs Survey demonstrates that the variety of bed spaces provided in homes across the Borough is comparable to other areas in the country, but survey data reveals that residents' aspirations are mostly for two and three bedroomed terraced and semi-detached properties<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Extra-care housing is defined in Halton's Housing Needs Survey as housing which supports independent living and increases choice by providing older people with their own homes together with care and support that meets their individual needs.

<sup>2</sup> GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting (2010) Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment

<sup>3</sup> HBC and CPC (2009) Private Sector House Condition Survey (para 2.3)

<sup>4</sup> David Couttie Associates (2006) Halton Housing Needs Survey (Table 5-34: Type by Size of Market Housing Accommodation Needed New Forming Households Seeking Market Housing)

- I.3 In order to rebalance the type and size of housing across the Borough and to ensure that the most appropriate form of housing is provided to meet the requirements of current and future residents, housing developers should consult the SHMA 2010 (or replacement) which indicates the most needed housing type and size within a particular sub-area in the Borough to inform the mix of dwellings on larger sites. In exceptional cases where particular constraints exist on a site (e.g. design issues or size) or where there are viability issues which prohibit the desired mix of housing from being achieved, developers should provide a clear explanation through information supporting the planning application of how these factors have influenced the proposed housing mix. The Site Allocations and Development Management Document will set out requirements and guidance on these matters for housing allocations in the Borough.
- I.4 The need for extra care or supported housing in Halton is particularly pronounced because of low levels of existing provision. This level of need is anticipated to grow over the plan period given the Borough's ageing population. In 2008 there were 550 units provided across 18 sheltered housing schemes in the Borough and one extra care scheme in Runcorn consisting of 40 units. This level of provision was found to be below average when compared to other local authorities in the North West<sup>5</sup>. The Halton Housing Strategy indicates that there is a need to develop a wider range of housing options, including extra care and retirement housing across all tenures, to prevent over reliance on residential care<sup>6</sup>. Based on the current level of provision referred to above, evidence indicates that by 2017 there will be a need for 214 extra care units across the Borough, with an additional need by 2015 for 22 extra care units specifically for older people with learning difficulties.
- I.5 Selecting an appropriate location for extra care and supported housing is very important to ensure that residents are able to integrate with the surrounding community and where feasible, retain some independence. Specific preferred locational criteria are set out within Halton's Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care and these factors will influence the allocation of sites for extra care housing in later Development Plan Documents. Provision of extra care housing is hindered by the lack of developable or publicly owned land and the high costs associated with land purchase, remediation and conversion or demolition of an existing building. Where the Council has the opportunity to influence the type of housing provision on sites which meet a number of the criteria for extra care housing, the need for this specialist type of accommodation will be emphasised.
- I.6 The concept of Lifetime Homes<sup>7</sup> was introduced in the early 1990s with the overall aim of making homes suitable for people at all stages of their lives. The Lifetime Homes Standard consists of 16 design criteria which place emphasis on accessibility and design features that make homes flexible enough to meet the needs of individual households for as long as they wish to remain in their own homes. As outlined above, the Borough's ageing population will increase the need for specialist accommodation which has been adapted to meet the needs of older people. Making new private housing more flexible to changing needs not only reduces the burden on such facilities but also offers older people independence in their own homes. It is a mandatory requirement of Level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes<sup>8</sup> (which is equivalent to zero carbon) to comply with Lifetime Homes criteria. Therefore from 2016, all

<sup>5</sup> HBC and Tribal Consulting (2008) Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care (Table 5)

<sup>6</sup> HBC (2008) Halton Housing Strategy 2008-2011

<sup>7</sup> Lifetime Homes - [www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/)

<sup>8</sup> CLG (2009) Code for Sustainable Homes - Technical guide May 2009 - Version 2

homes will be expected to be built to Lifetime Homes Standards in accordance with the national agenda to reach zero carbon status for residential development and policy CS19: Sustainable Development and Climate Change of this plan.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3 (CLG, 2010); Code for Sustainable Homes – Technical Guide (CLG, 2009); Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (CLG, 2008); Lifetime Homes Criteria (Habinteg, 2010)
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010); Halton Housing Strategy (HBC, 2008); Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care (HBC and Tribal Consulting, 2008); Private Sector House Condition Survey (HBC and CPC, 2009)
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	I and 2
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	



## CSI3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 1.1 The delivery of affordable housing to meet current and future housing needs is an essential component of creating sustainable communities. Buying or renting private housing has become increasingly difficult for many Halton residents and as such there is a need to ensure the supply of affordable housing units in the Borough.

### Policy CSI3: Affordable Housing

Affordable housing units will be provided on schemes which generate 15 dwellings or more and on development sites which are 0.5 hectares or more.

Affordable housing provision will be sought within a target range of 20-25% of the total number of units delivered. The Council will seek to ensure a 50:50 split between social rented and intermediate affordable housing tenures across the Borough.

The provision of affordable housing must:

- be of a similar size and type to the overall mix on site, unless it is agreed with the Council to target a specific identified category of greatest housing need in the locality; and
- be fully integrated in the development site so as to avoid the over concentration of affordable housing in any particular location within the development site and in order to achieve seamless design

The minimum affordable housing contribution may only be reduced where robust justification is provided. This must demonstrate that the affordable housing target would make the development unviable.

There will be a presumption that any affordable supply will be provided on site. Off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision may only be made in exceptional circumstances where on-site provision is proven to be unachievable or localised need does not necessitate affordable housing provision.

Planning permission will be refused on development sites which are sub-divided into separate development parcels below the affordable housing threshold, unless the affordable housing provision is proportionate to that which would have been required on the site as a whole.

### Justification

- 1.2 Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are unable to be met by private market housing. Social rented housing is rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above, including shared equity products, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.
- 1.3 The need for affordable housing must be assessed in the context of a market which is increasingly beyond the reach of low income existing and new forming households

within Halton<sup>1</sup>. Will need to provide an update of the key findings from the SHMA (once complete)...and the identified annual deficit in the provision of affordable housing

- I.4 The Economic Viability Assessment<sup>2</sup> has considered the realistic level at which affordable housing in the Borough can be achieved. ...
- I.5 In response to the SHMA and Economic Viability Assessment the overall target range for new affordable housing in Halton during the plan period has been set at 20-25%. This target will be applied to all residential developments on sites capable of providing 15 units or more and on development sites of 0.5 hectares or more. Affordable housing provision at a rate lower than the target range will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated through a financial appraisal that existing physical constraints on the site will result in extraordinary costs, or competing uses of a higher value would render the development unviable when the affordable housing contribution is taken into account.
- I.6 Across all sites in the Borough, the Council will seek to achieve a tenure split of 50% social rented and 50% intermediate housing. However, the actual size, type and tenure of affordable supply sought will be informed by the most up to date evidence of housing need evidenced through the SHMA (or replacement) and will depend on the site location, the local housing mix and identified priorities to meet local needs.
- I.7 Only in exceptional circumstances will off-site provision be considered appropriate and this is dependant on the suitability and availability of alternative sites. The off-site provision of affordable housing will only be acceptable if it can be proven that on-site provision would not be feasible or the identified localised need does not require the provision of affordable housing. Financial contributions instead of on-site provision may also be sought in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the Development Contributions DPD or equivalent.
- I.8 This policy and the evidence base that supports it will be subject to regular review to ensure it reflects changes in the Borough's housing need and local circumstances.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3: Housing
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting, 2010); Halton Economic Viability Assessment (DTZ, 2010); Halton Housing Strategy 2008-2011 (HBC, 2008).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	1 and 2
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>1</sup> David Couttie Associates (2006) Halton Housing Needs Survey

<sup>2</sup> DTZ (2010) Economic Viability Assessment



## **CSI4: MEETING THE NEEDS OF GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE**

- I.1 Halton Borough Council is committed to ensuring that members of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities have access to decent and appropriate accommodation sufficient to meet their needs.

### **Policy CSI4 : Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

Appropriate provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be made by testing the suitability of sites against the following criteria:

- a) The proposal is not unacceptably detrimental to the amenity or character of the surrounding area
- b) The site is not affected by pollution, contamination, flooding or other environmental factors that would result in unacceptable living conditions
- c) The site is well designed and landscaped to give privacy between pitches/plots and, where appropriate, between the site and adjacent users
- d) The site is well located on the highway network with adequate vehicular and pedestrian access, and provision for parking and circulation
- e) The site is accessible to local services and facilities and by public transport
- f) The site has appropriate storage areas, where required, so long as their use would not create unacceptable air or noise pollution or other nuisance, or present a risk to the health and safety of those living on or near the site
- g) The site can be supplied with essential services such as water, sewerage, drainage, and waste disposal.

Existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites previously approved by the Council will be safeguarded unless suitable replacement sites are provided.

### **Justification**

- I.2 Halton currently has two private Gypsy and Traveller sites located in Runcorn providing 13 pitches in total. A further 27 permanent pitches and 10 transit pitches are provided through two local authority residential sites, one in Widnes (23 permanent pitches) and the other in Runcorn (4 permanent and 10 transit pitches) which opened in 2009. Therefore, in total there are currently 40 permanent pitches and 10 transit pitches currently provided in Halton. There are no current plots for Travelling Showpeople.
- I.3 The need for additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople in Halton has been identified in the Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and

Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)<sup>1</sup>. The Cheshire GTAA study concluded that there is a need for additional pitch provision in Halton between 2006 and 2016 (demand for Travelling Showpeople plots was not identified). It is envisaged that the GTAA will be reviewed to ensure that need is addressed across the lifetime of the Core Strategy.

- I.4 The criteria in the policy will be used to identify suitable sites and to determine applicable planning applications. Particular attention should be paid to the amenity and character of the surrounding area and the potential of the site to accommodate the necessary infrastructure associated with the development.
- I.5 In accordance with identified need and where there is a necessary requirement for the provision of sites in the Borough, this will be allocated in an appropriate DPD.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3: Housing
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit and The University of Salford, 2007).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	2
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit and The University of Salford (2007) Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

## CSI5: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- 1.1 Increasing the proportion of passenger journeys made by sustainable modes including walking, cycling and public transport is an important priority for Halton. Advantages of using sustainable transport are many and varied, from reducing the number of private vehicles on the road and hence reducing congestion and exhaust emissions, and improving air quality, to encouraging healthy lifestyles through walking and cycling routes, to facilitating access to key services and facilities. It is therefore of high importance that every effort is taken to encourage travel by sustainable modes through the mechanisms available in the Core Strategy.

### Policy CSI5: Sustainable Transport

#### i. Encouraging Sustainable Transport

In order to encourage journeys to be made by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport, the Council and its partners will support a reduction in the need to travel, encourage a choice of sustainable transport modes and ensure new developments are highly accessible.

This will be achieved through:

- directing significant development, which generates a large number of trips, into the most sustainable location available in accordance with Halton's Spatial Strategy;
- ensuring all development is well connected and achieves high levels of accessibility including satisfactory access by bus, rail, walking and cycling;
- requiring the production of Travel Plans and Transport Assessments, for development proposals that are likely to generate a significant number of trips; and,
- setting maximum parking standards to deter use of the private car.

#### ii. Halton's Sustainable Transport Network

To support sustainable transport across the Borough, Halton's existing Sustainable Transport Network will be protected, and improvements to the existing network and the introduction of new sustainable routes and facilities will be encouraged including:

- A cross-river sustainable transport route prioritising public transport, walking and cycling on the Silver Jubilee Bridge in association with the Mersey Gateway Project
- Pedestrian and cycling routes and facilities especially in association with the Key Areas of Change
- Increased use of the Halton Curve rail route (southwest Runcorn)
- Reinstated or new railway stations where appropriate
- An improved rail station in central Widnes
- Park and ride facilities in appropriate locations
- Capacity for innovative transport technology, including the use of alternative fuels and sources of power

Identified for their potential future use within the Halton Sustainable Transport Network the following routes and facilities will be safeguarded through the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD:

- Disused or underused facilities including the Halton Curve rail route
- Sites which have been identified for reinstated or new railway stations, bus interchanges or park and ride facilities

- Potential routes to extend the Borough's pedestrian and cycling network

### Justification

- 1.2 The outcome of the combined measures to encourage sustainable transport will be that there is a reduction in the number of unsustainable trips and a greater proportion of journeys made by sustainable modes including public transport, walking and cycling within and through Halton. This will contribute to a cleaner and low carbon transport system, healthier lifestyles and more sustainable patterns of development where people can connect easily to employment, services and social activities.
- 1.3 To encourage and enable this shift to more sustainable modes of travel it is necessary to ensure that a successful sustainable transport network is in place. Halton's existing Sustainable Transport Network includes:
- Halton Greenway Network
  - Silver Jubilee Bridge public transport and walking routes
  - The Bridgewater Way, Mersey Way, Mersey Timberland Trail and the Trans Pennine Trail
  - Other walking and cycling routes including the Public Rights of Way, the Cycle Network and other access networks
  - Halton Core Bus Network including the Runcorn Busway and Bus Priority Routes
  - Railway routes and stations
  - Bus interchanges and bus stops
  - Waterways, including towpaths
- 1.4 Although making the best use of the existing sustainable transport network and infrastructure will be the main priority in Halton, patterns of growth for the Borough and in particular the Key Areas of Change may require improvements to the existing sustainable transport network and the introduction of new sustainable routes and facilities. The existing Sustainable Transport Network will therefore be protected, and opportunities to improve the existing or provide new facilities and services where appropriate will be supported. This complements the goals set out within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is fundamental in the delivery of sustainable transport in Halton.
- 1.5 It is also imperative that the cross-boundary nature of travel is recognised and where appropriate, opportunities are taken to ensure that public transport, walking and cycling routes are integrated across boundaries. Working with neighbouring authorities will be supported in order to achieve sustainable cross boundary accessibility particularly in conjunction with the Liverpool City Region and Mersey Travel.
- 1.6 Even with the move to more sustainable modes of travel, growth will inevitably bring pressures on the highway network. As a result improvements to critical sections of the local network and the introduction of new road infrastructure will be necessary and as such the network will be managed, maintained and improved in conjunction with the Council's Highways division. New road infrastructure will be provided where the need for new road infrastructure is attributable to the effects of development and/or developer contributions will be sought in accordance with CS7: Infrastructure Provision.

- 1.7 Further detail regarding the need to encourage travel by sustainable modes will be set out in the Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This SPD will provide guidance on accessibility; outline the requirements for Transport Assessments and Travel Plans; and, set car and cycle parking standards for different types of development. Routes and facilities to be safeguarded for their potential future use within the Borough's Sustainable Transport Network will be set out in the Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document in accordance with Halton's LTP.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG13: Transport (CLG, 2001); Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) (DfT, 2007).
<b>Local Evidence</b>	LTP2 (HBC, 2006); Draft LTP3 (HBC, 2010); Halton Curve Rail Improvements: Demand Study (Steer Davies Gleave, 2009); Mid-Mersey Local Authorities Cross Boundary Public Transport Accessibility Report (Atkins, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	7
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	



## CSI6: THE MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT

- 1.1 The Mersey Gateway Project is 'more than just a new bridge', but the 'catalyst' that will connect communities and lead to regeneration and investment throughout Halton, the Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and the North West.

### Policy CSI6: The Mersey Gateway Project

#### a) Delivering the Mersey Gateway Project

The land and infrastructure necessary for the successful implementation of the Mersey Gateway Bridge will be safeguarded. Any proposals that would impact negatively or prevent the successful implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project and associated infrastructure will not be permitted.

As part of the Mersey Gateway Project, associated works will be supported and safeguarded including those related to the road network, road junctions, main toll plazas and the M56 with a focus on it's junctions in Halton.

#### b) Sustainable Transport Opportunities

Following the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, opportunities to secure improved cross-river sustainable transport options will be capitalised upon, including sustainable transport opportunities associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

#### c) Regeneration and Development Opportunities

Development proposals should seek to take advantage of the regeneration and development opportunities attributable to the Mersey Gateway Project, especially where this can assist in raising the quality of design in an area and the in the creation of gateway features. This will be particularly encouraged in the South Widnes (CS9) and West Runcorn (CS10) Key Areas of Change.

#### d) Environmental Impacts

Negative environmental impacts caused by the construction of the Mersey Gateway will be mitigated where appropriate, and opportunities to enhance the natural environment sought. This is particularly applicable to the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar site, and Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and other areas of significant environmental value.

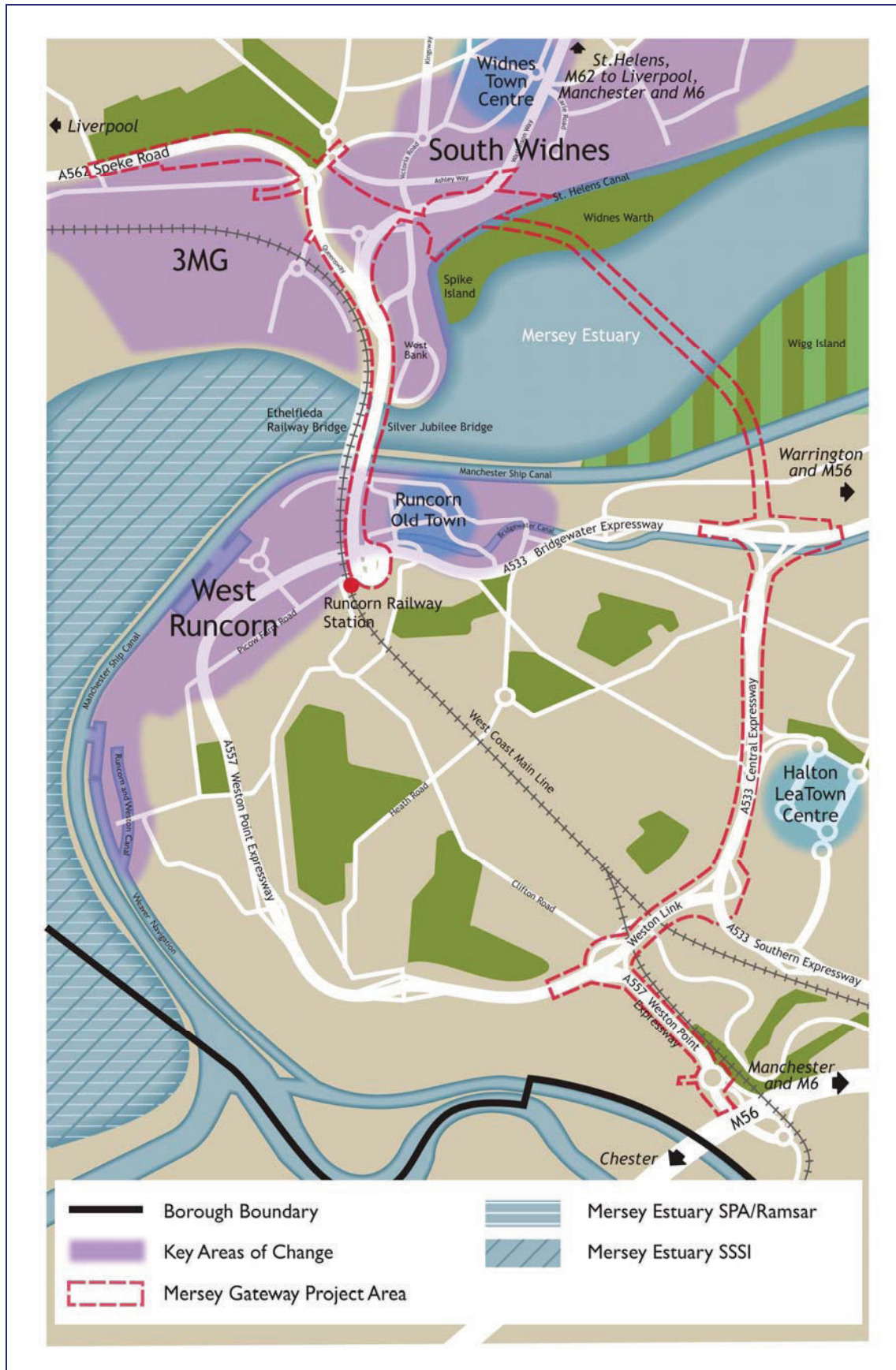


Figure XX: Mersey Gateway Project Diagram

## Justification

- 1.2 The Silver Jubilee Bridge is a key regional asset providing an important road connection across the Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes and a strategic link between the M56 and M62. It is also one of four locations where the River Mersey can be crossed, at or, to the west of the M6, with other locations being Liverpool via the Kingsway and Queensway tunnels, the A49/A50 in Warrington and the Thelwall Viaduct (M6). The Silver Jubilee Bridge however, currently suffers from congestion, particularly at peak times, which contributes to disruption and unreliable journey times, and creates a pinch point on the road network.
- 1.3 To relieve the increasing problems of congestion, Halton Borough Council is promoting the delivery of a new bridge across the River Mersey situated c. 1.8km upstream from the Silver Jubilee Bridge. The Mersey Gateway Bridge and the wider project is intended to improve cross river accessibility, connectivity and sustainable travel options and restore effective network resilience for transport across the River Mersey. As a result the Mersey Gateway Project will improve connectivity between Runcorn and Widnes and the wider sub-region and region, present opportunities for local regeneration, maximise local economic growth opportunities and ultimately become an iconic gateway for the area.
- 1.4 The plans for the Mersey Gateway Project were submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2008, and a Public Inquiry held in 2009. In October 2010 the Government confirmed its commitment to the Mersey Gateway Project<sup>1</sup>. It is anticipated that construction work will start within two years of government granting planning approval, and that the new bridge will take around three years to complete.
- 1.5 The route of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated infrastructure is protected through the policy to ensure the successful implementation of the project. This incorporates works associated with the wider Mersey Gateway Project including the construction of the main toll plazas and associated structures, junction improvements to link the road network, and structures and bridges to carry the main carriageway over the Freight Line and St Helens Canal and across Astmoor Industrial Estate. Works to the M56 and its junctions in Runcorn will also be supported to ensure effective network resilience and to provide increased capacity due to current congestion issues during peak hours<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.6 In accordance with the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy<sup>3</sup> the advancement of sustainable travel options in the Borough will be supported including the re-designation of the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a reliable, local link between Runcorn and Widnes. Additionally, development should have regard to the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy<sup>4</sup> and aim to ensure that opportunities for regeneration and development attributable to the Mersey Gateway Project are capitalised on. Such opportunities will be particularly supported in the West Bank area within the South Widnes Key Area of Change (CS9) as a result of the area's proximity to the Mersey Gateway Bridge and associated infrastructure, and in Runcorn Old Town within the West Runcorn Key Area of Change (CS10), due to potential opportunities presented

<sup>1</sup> DfT (2010) Investment in local Major Transport Schemes

<sup>2</sup> HBC (2008) The Mersey Gateway Project Environmental Statement (Chapter 16: Transportation)

<sup>3</sup> HBC (2009) Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy

<sup>4</sup> HBC and GVA (2008) Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy

by the re-designation of the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Further information is detailed within the appropriate Key Area of Change policies.

- I.7 Although the design of the Mersey Gateway Bridge has been influenced by environmental considerations, the Mersey Gateway Project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process<sup>5</sup> has identified localised negative environmental impacts particularly associated with the construction phase of the Mersey Gateway. Measures to satisfactorily mitigate negative environmental impacts and to enhance environmental quality should be managed during the construction phase of the project. It should be acknowledged that the EIA process concluded that the cumulative effects of the operational phase of the Mersey Gateway Project are mainly positive and include a range of permanent long term effects once the Bridge is operational.
- I.8 As the lead organisation for the Mersey Gateway Project, Halton Borough Council will continue to have a role in its delivery. However, the successful delivery of the Project, and hence the successful application of this policy, will rely on partnership working with the Council's public and private sector partners, including notably the Mersey Gateway Concessionaire<sup>6</sup>, on matters of transportation, regeneration and environmental mitigation.
- I.9 Although the Council is wholly supportive and dedicated to the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Project, the Core Strategy must be flexible enough to account for the circumstances in which the Project is severely delayed or potentially not delivered during the plan period and to identify how the Core Strategy would respond. This is considered in the following paragraphs:
- I.10 As part of the Mersey Gateway Project, traffic modelling was undertaken within Halton and the surrounding areas based on several scenarios. The forecasts<sup>7</sup> looked at traffic numbers in 2015 and 2030 and included comparisons against the 2006 baseline which looked at the do-minimum (no scheme) and do-something (Mersey Gateway in place) scenarios.
- I.11 From the analysis it was concluded that peak hour capacity on the Silver Jubilee has been reached. Peak hour traffic growth, over the period 2006 to 2015, across the Mersey, however, is predicted to increase by 10%. This means that in the absence of the project, traffic conditions currently experienced at the Silver Jubilee Bridge during peak hours will extend across the working day. Journey times will increase, irrespective of trip purpose, and congestion will become an inefficient way of managing demand and supply. Future growth will force trips to be made on alternative routes i.e. the Thelwall Viaduct and the Mersey tunnels. This will impact on journey times and reliability as well as the overall network resilience and performance of Halton and the wider area.
- I.12 It follows that the 'do nothing' option would have an impact upon accessibility and economic and social regeneration within and throughout Halton. In these circumstances opportunities to improve sustainable transport and deliver development and regeneration across Halton would still be pursued over the Core Strategy plan period, in accordance with applicable policies. Hence, the successful

<sup>5</sup> HBC (2008) The Mersey Gateway Project Environmental Statement

<sup>6</sup> The Mersey Gateway Project involves the letting of a Concession Contract to a private entity for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Project. The 'Mersey Gateway Concessionaire' refers to this private entity.

<sup>7</sup> Mott MacDonald and HBC (2009) Mersey Gateway Highway Model Traffic Forecasting Report

delivery of the overall Spatial Strategy for the development of Halton to 2026 would not be placed at risk should the new bridge not be completed during the plan period. However, localised impacts will need to be fully considered by future growth especially where this impacts upon the strategic highway network.

- I.13 Should the Mersey Gateway Bridge not be delivered during the Core Strategy plan period, Halton Borough Council will continue to sustain its support for a new bridge in order to deliver benefits for Halton, the Liverpool City Region and the wider north west region.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	Investment in Local Major Transport Schemes (DfT, 2010)
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (HBC, 2009); Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy (HBC and GVA, 2008); The Mersey Gateway Project Environmental Statement (HBC, 2008); Mersey Gateway Highway Model Traffic Forecasting Report (Mott MacDonald and HBC, 2009).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	7
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS17: LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT

- 1.1 Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) is located on the southern boundary of the local authority of Liverpool City Council adjacent to Halton Borough Council's western boundary. To ensure the airport's continued growth and investment, and as required by the 2003 White Paper "The Future of Air Transport"<sup>1</sup>, a Master Plan for LJLA<sup>2</sup> was prepared in 2007 establishing the long term framework to 2030. This Master Plan has been endorsed by the Department for Transport (DfT).

### Policy CS17: Liverpool John Lennon Airport

The operation and expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) in line with its 2007 Master Plan will in principle be supported, including proposals for a runway extension and the new Eastern Access Transport Corridor (EATC).

#### a) Runway Extension

A runway extension to the east of the existing airport boundary will require a local change to Halton's Green Belt boundary. An area of search for the Green Belt boundary change for the runway extension is shown in figure X. The precise extent of this change, and the detailed criteria to be met in the implementation of the runway extension, will be set out in a Site Allocations and Development Management DPD or equivalent.

Any land re-designated as part of the Green Belt boundary change will only be permitted for the purpose of a runway extension and associated airport uses.

#### b) Surface Access

The provision of sustainable surface access to the airport in accordance with the Airport Surface Access Strategy will be supported to maintain existing network capacity. Additional network capacity will be met through the development of the EATC.

The route of the proposed EATC, through Halton's Green Belt, will be determined through a Development Management approach and will not require an amendment to Halton's Green Belt.

#### c) Environmental and Social Impacts

Future development and expansion of LJLA should demonstrate that it is in accordance with Halton's Sustainable Development Principles and that positive impacts are enhanced where appropriate. Negative environmental and social impacts associated with the operation and expansion of LJLA will be appropriately addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on:

- the natural and built environment, including areas of international, national or local conservation, ecological and landscape value;
- the setting and local character of Hale Village;
- the risks associated with climatic change;
- residents and other users, of any increases in noise, road traffic, air pollution or public safety risk; and,
- the local and regional transport network

<sup>1</sup> DfT (2003) The Future of Air Transport



Figure XX: Liverpool John Lennon Airport Diagram

### Justification

- 1.2 The Future of Air Transport White Paper acknowledged the importance of the future growth of air travel for national and regional economic prosperity and to deliver economic and social benefits throughout the UK. Further studies have also recognised the significance of aviation's role in the UK economy and stimulating the development of businesses in new and existing sectors throughout the UK<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.3 Recent statistics<sup>4</sup> show that there has been a substantial growth over the past 30 years in the number of passengers travelling through UK airports, from under 60 million in 1981 to more than 241 million in 2007. By 2030 the DfT forecast that, in the absence of capacity constraints, passenger numbers at UK airports will rise to around 465 million per annum. LJLA anticipate through their 2007 Master Plan that passenger

<sup>2</sup> Liverpool John Lennon Airport (2007) Airport Master Plan to 2030

<sup>3</sup> AOA (2009) Cleared for Take Off: Airports Providing Lift to an Economy in Recovery

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport (DfT) (2009) UK Air Passenger Demand and CO<sub>2</sub> Forecasts

numbers will increase to from 3.4 million per annum in 2004 to 12.3 million per annum by 2030.

- I.4 Along with strong predicted growth in future years for the passenger sector, freight has been identified as one of the main growth sectors for LJLA and the wider Liverpool City Region. The Airport Master Plan anticipates that expansion of the freight facilities at the airport will see it handling 220,000 tonnes of freight per annum by 2030.
- I.5 The Master Plan recognises that if the airport is to grow its passenger services and freight facility in the long term, it needs to invest in the infrastructure to take larger, longer range aircraft. In particular, the runway needs to be lengthened and strengthened to take long haul wide-bodied aircraft with the tonnage and fuel loads necessary to reach long haul destinations and the major intercontinental freight hubs. The airport would also require additional defined areas for the stationing of freight aircraft separate from passenger areas and the land resource for the large distribution and handling warehouses.
- I.6 Although the Airport has assessed how much of the required development could be achieved on the existing site, this is not seen to be a long term solution. The Airport, therefore, will need to expand beyond its existing boundary to accommodate future desired growth. This will include an extended runway to the east of the airport (due to land constraints to the west) and an Eastern Access Transport Corridor (EATC) to serve the freight facilities and passenger growth. Both the proposed runway extension and EATC fall within areas of Halton's Green Belt. To serve the expansion of freight facilities at LJLA the Masterplan proposes a new 'World Cargo Centre' which would require an extension to the south of the airport boundary into Liverpool City Council's Green Belt. The proposed runway extension, EATC and World Cargo Centre are indicated in figure X.
- I.7 The runway extension will require a change to Halton Borough Council's Green Belt boundary which will be addressed through Halton's Site Allocations and Development Management DPD or equivalent document. This document will consider the detailed requirements for LJLA's future growth and subsequent runway extension. An area of search for the Green Belt Boundary change is shown on the Key Diagram; however, the Site Allocations DPD or equivalent will determine the precise boundary of the Green Belt boundary change. Any future release of Green Belt land shown within the area of search will only be permitted for the purposes of the Airport's runway extension and associated airport uses that cannot be accommodated elsewhere. Land outside of the Area of Search will not be considered for Green Belt release. Public consultation will be undertaken during the stages of production for the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD or equivalent document.
- I.8 In order to secure LJLA's future growth it is necessary to maintain safe, convenient and sustainable access to the airport. LJLA has developed an Airport Surface Access Strategy<sup>5</sup>, which reflects the Airport's aspirations to encourage travel to and from the Airport by sustainable transport modes. However, there is also recognition that the majority of journeys will continue to be made by car and that sufficient highway capacity to serve the airport must be maintained. Although the Airport will continue to optimise capacity along the Speke Boulevard Corridor (A561) there is potential to provide additional capacity in the form of the EATC in order to accommodate future growth. The EATC would follow a route of about 2km from Speke Boulevard through

<sup>5</sup> The Airport Surface Access Strategy is subject to ongoing review and update.



Halton's Green Belt towards the Airport's boundary. The EATC will not require an amendment to the Green Belt boundary and as such will be subject to standard planning processes.

- 1.9 The operation and planned expansion of LJLA will have important impacts on the Borough of Halton. This includes increased national and international connectivity, expansion of freight transportation sectors, economic benefits including job creation, and various environmental impacts and opportunities. Additionally, the development of 3MG, and in the longer term Mersey Gateway Port, can substantially increase the offer of the Liverpool City Region as an international freight gateway or "SuperPort"<sup>6</sup>.
- 1.10 It is essential to ensure that LJLA's future growth is sustainable and that there is a commitment to Halton's sustainable development principles, as such negative environmental and social impacts associated with the expansion and operation of the Airport should be assessed and any negative effects should demonstrate that they can be effectively mitigated or compensated. Specific consideration should be given to the Mersey Estuary SPA, Ramsar Site and SSSI, the coastal location of the airport, the proximity to Hale Village and the sustainable transport network including the Trans Pennine Trail.
- 1.11 Matters relating to development within LJLA's Public Safety Zone (PSZ) (shown in figure X) will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance<sup>7</sup> and the Planning for Risk SPD<sup>8</sup>. The basic policy objective for the PSZ is that there should be no increase in the number of people living, working or congregating in the zone. Any extension of the PSZ in accordance with LJLA's proposed runway extension will be shown in the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.
- 1.12 Opportunities to work jointly on proposals associated with LJLA's expansion and its associated implications for Halton, including with Airport authorities, Liverpool City Council, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, and other partners will be sought to ensure a joined-up approach to the future growth of LJLA.

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<sup>6</sup> TMP (2008) Liverpool SuperPort - The Liverpool City Region "SuperPort" concept encompasses the Port of Liverpool, the Manchester Ship Canal, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, 3MG, Mersey Gateway Port, other localised freight infrastructure and the wider logistics network. It aims to ensure that these assets become a key driver of the Liverpool City Region's economy creating the most effective and cost efficient environment for freight logistics and passenger transit in the UK.

<sup>7</sup> Department for Transport (DfT) (2002) Circular 01/2002: Control of Development in Airport Public Safety Zones

<sup>8</sup> HBC (2009) Planning for Risk Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG2: Green Belts; The Future of Air Transport (DfT, 2003); Cleared for Take Off: Airports Providing Lift to an Economy in Recovery (AOA, 2009).
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Airport Master Plan to 2030 (Liverpool John Lennon Airport, 2007); Liverpool SuperPort (TMP, 2008)
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	4 and 7
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CSI8: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

- 1.1 The design of places and spaces can have a profound effect on the way that we live, how we understand an area, the way that we treat an area and the way that we move through it. It is crucial for development design in Halton to be of a high quality, build upon an area's character, be adaptable to changing situations, and provide safe, healthy and accessible environments for all members of society.

### Policy CSI8: High Quality Design

Achieving and raising the quality of design is a priority for all development in Halton. All development design should be consistent with the following design principles and in particular respond positively to the context and identity of Halton, including waterfront areas, the historic and natural environment and the identified Key Areas of Change.

Development proposals, where applicable, will be expected to:

- provide attractive and well designed residential, commercial and industrial developments appropriate to their setting;
- enhance and reinforce positive elements of an area's character contributing to a 'sense of place', including the incorporation of public art where appropriate;
- respect and respond positively to their setting, including important views and vistas, landmark buildings, features and focal points that have been identified in a proper context appraisal;
- be flexible and adaptable to respond to future social, technological and economic needs of the Borough;
- promote safe and secure environments through the inclusion of measures to address crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- create public spaces which are attractive, promote active lifestyles and work effectively for all members of society;
- incorporate appropriate landscape schemes into development designs, integrating local habitats and biodiversity;
- provide safe, secure and accessible routes for all members of society, with particular emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport;
- be well integrated and connected with existing development; and,
- be designed sustainably with future management and maintenance in mind.

### Justification

- 1.2 All development in Halton is required to demonstrate high quality design with the aim of creating high quality environments where people want to live, work, play and visit.

In order to achieve high quality design in the Borough it will be necessary for all development proposals to not only have a thorough understanding of a site's design characteristics but also to have a wider understanding of Halton's individual character and context.

- 1.3 To meet these design principles, development proposals will be expected to implement current design guidance and principles. This will include publications and documents from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and English Heritage, alongside national standards for instance the 'Building for Life' standard, to ensure that housing designs are adaptable and accessible, and the use of the 'Secured by Design' principles which focuses on crime prevention through development design for homes and commercial premises.
- 1.4 The high quality design principles for the Borough expressed in this policy will also be supported by a range of policies within the LDF including the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD and appropriate SPDs. Area specific policies within DPDs and SPDs will also provide design guidance to ensure that positive elements of an area's character are enhanced and reinforced.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPSI: Delivering Sustainable Development.
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Draft Design of New Residential Development SPD (HBC, 2009); Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development SPD (HBC, 2005).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	8
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, A Safer Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CSI9: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- 1.1 The deployment of renewable and low-carbon energy and the design and construction of future development has a central role in delivering sustainable growth, contributing to the mitigation and adaptation of climate change and ensuring energy security. The UK Government has set a legally binding target of 34% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050<sup>1</sup>. There are also UK targets to generate 20% of electricity from renewable sources by 2020<sup>2</sup> and an objective to deliver zero carbon and sustainable developments that are adaptable to changing climatic conditions.

### Policy CSI9: Sustainable Development and Climate Change

All new development should be sustainable and be designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change including reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and adapting to climatic conditions. The following principles will be used to guide future development:

- The Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 will be required as a minimum standard for residential development, rising to Level 4 in 2013 and to Level 6 in 2016.
- The BREEAM 'Very Good' standard will be required as a minimum standard for non-residential development, rising to 'Excellent' standard in 2013.
- Development should incorporate appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, including passive design features, water efficiency and conservation measures, and the management of surface water run-off.
- Reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be sought through the incorporation of energy efficient building design solutions as a first priority, and secondly through energy supply from decentralised renewable and low carbon sources.
- Minimum carbon reduction targets will remain in line with the successful implementation of the revisions to Part L of the Building Regulations<sup>3</sup>, however, development will be expected to seek to improve CO<sub>2</sub> emissions savings above the Building Regulations baseline.
- Development proposals should maximise, where appropriate, the use of available local opportunities for district heating, particularly in association with the Key Areas of Change and Energy Priority Zones.
- Proposals in appropriate locations for large scale grid-connected renewable and low carbon energy and equipment, including, but not limited to wind, solar photovoltaics, and Combined Heating and Power schemes will be supported.
- Proposals for renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy schemes will be supported provided that they do not result in unacceptable harm to the local environment which cannot be successfully mitigated.

<sup>1</sup> HM Gov (2008) Climate Change Act

<sup>2</sup> HM Gov (2009) UK Renewable Energy Strategy

<sup>3</sup> CLG (2010) Circular 06/2010: New Approved Documents for F, J and L and Guidance Documents

## Justification

- 1.2 New development will be required to incorporate current best practice in sustainable design and construction. In achieving this, development proposals must offer an integrated approach to sustainable development incorporating mitigation and adaptation measures against the future impacts of climate changes.
- 1.3 The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and the Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method (BREEAM) are the most widely accepted rating systems for assessing the environmental performance and sustainability of homes and buildings<sup>4</sup>. These standards set individual 'sustainability ratings' covering performance across a number of sustainable design and construction principles. Although there are variations across the standards, categories include energy, water, materials, pollution, ecology, health and well-being and management. To ensure Halton achieves high standards of sustainability, development should meet the appropriate CSH and BREEAM standards unless it is proven that this would cause the development to become unviable.
- 1.4 An integral component of the sustainability standards includes reducing carbon emissions through reducing energy demand and utilising sustainable sources of energy. In line with national targets and commitments, new residential development is intended to be zero carbon by 2016<sup>5</sup> and non-residential development by 2019<sup>6</sup>. Changes to the Building Regulations are expected to bring in these challenging CO<sub>2</sub> emissions targets, with the energy requirements of the CSH and BREEAM aligned accordingly. For instance based on the standards in the energy requirement in the CSH, the step by step tightening of Building Regulations is intended to be equivalent to CSH Level 3 in 2010, Level 4 in 2013 and Level 6 in 2016.
- 1.5 To support the new Building Regulations and to ensure the planning system contributes to reducing carbon emissions, development is required to show how improvements to CO<sub>2</sub> emission savings can be made over the Building Regulations (Part L) baseline<sup>7</sup> with a focus on reducing the demand for energy as a first priority and then utilising renewable and low carbon energy. Where minimum standards cannot be exceeded, developers are required to provide evidence that all options have been investigated and to provide evidence that further CO<sub>2</sub> emissions savings are not feasible and / or viable.
- 1.6 The changes to Building Regulations are anticipated to reduce the extra-over costs associated with meeting the sustainability ratings for CSH and BREEAM. For CSH, evidence shows that this is due to a greater part of the construction cost becoming the cost of building a Building Regulations compliant dwelling (and not part of the cost of achieving the Code rating)<sup>8</sup>. As a result it is anticipated that as CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions are integrated into Building Regulations in line with national targets, achieving higher levels of the CSH and BREEAM will become more viable.

<sup>4</sup> If the CSH or BREEAM are superseded by other national standards over the plan period then developments should comply with the most up to date national guidance.

<sup>5</sup> CLG (2010) Ministerial Statement 'Zero Carbon Homes'

<sup>6</sup> In the 2008 Budget, the Labour Government announced an ambition for all new non-domestic buildings to be zero carbon from 2019, with consultation on the timeline and its feasibility. Since the change of Government no further announcements have been made.

<sup>7</sup> Including and future revisions to Part L: CLG (2010) Circular 06/2010: New Approved Documents for F, J and L and Guidance Documents

<sup>8</sup> CLG (2010) Code for Sustainable Homes: A Cost Review

- 1.7 Building a comprehensive spatial understanding of the opportunities for decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy is fundamental to delivering carbon reduction targets and increasing the proportion of decentralised energy. To provide the evidence base for such an approach the Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study<sup>9</sup> was commissioned by the Liverpool City Region authorities (including West Lancashire and Warrington). As part of the study Energy Priority Zones across the Sub-Region were identified for the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy. For Halton this indicated prospective areas for District Heating networks based on the available data, the critical mass of heat demand and development growth. This primarily identified Daresbury and Runcorn Waterfront as Energy Priority Zones but also considered Widnes Waterfront and 3MG as having potential for District Heating Networks. As a result the Council will support the development of Energy Priority Zones for District Heating particularly within the Borough's Key Areas of Change and encourage future proposals to connect to such networks.
- 1.8 Large scale grid connected renewable energy developments also have an important role to play in contributing to national and local targets for reducing carbon emissions and producing energy from renewable sources. Although the Renewable Energy Capacity Study did not identify significant scope for large scale renewable energy developments in Halton, future potential may exist as renewable technology advances and economies of scale become more widely realistic. Sub-regional developments that contribute to the production of renewable energy will be supported including the Power from the Mersey project subject to the management and mitigation of any identified environmental impacts.
- 1.9 ... Potential to insert indicative renewable energy generation taken from the Renewable Energy Study ...
- 1.10 The Council intends to produce an SPD to supplement this policy and to provide advice and guidance to aid developers and householders on how sustainable design and construction techniques, and carbon reduction can be incorporated into new development.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	Climate Change Act (HM Gov, 2008); UK Renewable Energy Strategy (HM Gov, 2009); Circular 06/2010: New Approved Documents for F, J and L and Guidance Documents (CLG, 2010).
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (ARUP, 2010); Halton Economic Viability Assessment (DTZ, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	9
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>9</sup> ARUP (2010) Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study

## CS20: NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 1.1 Halton's natural and historic environments provide the Borough with a range of biological, geological and heritage assets which are not only of environmental value but provide a social and economic resource and ultimately contribute to the character of the Borough's landscapes. These assets should therefore be conserved and where possible enhanced for current and future generations and to ensure a strong sense of place and improve local distinctiveness.

### Policy CS20: Natural and Historic Environment

Halton's natural and heritage assets, and landscape character will contribute to the Borough's sense of place and local distinctiveness in accordance with the following:

- A hierarchical approach will be given to nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity and geodiversity including:
  1. Sites of international importance including the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and 'Ramsar' site;
  2. Sites of national importance including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) namely; The Mersey Estuary, Flood Brook Clough and Red Brow Cutting; and,
  3. Sites of local importance including Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Local Geological Sites, Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodland, and habitats and species identified in Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
- Opportunities to enhance the value of Halton's natural assets should be taken including restoring or adding to natural habitats and other landscape features, and the creation of habitats where appropriate.
- The Borough's heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Areas of Archaeological interest, Scheduled Monuments and other buildings and structures of local architectural or historical interest will be conserved and enhanced and special regard will be had to their setting.
- The strength of landscape character and condition as informed through the Halton Landscape Character Assessment will be conserved and enhanced.
- The management of natural and heritage assets, and landscape character through the development and implementation of Management Plans, Action Plans and area appraisals will be encouraged, particularly in association with local communities.
- Replacement or compensatory measures will be employed where appropriate to ensure that there is no net loss of natural or heritage assets or landscape character as a result of development.

### Justification

- 1.2 Halton contains a wealth of natural assets which are protected as international, national and locally important sites. Statutory protected sites are afforded the highest level of protection with a high priority also given to those that are locally significant



and which provide an important source of environmental, social and economic benefit for the Borough

- 1.3 The Mersey Estuary is an important resource for internationally important wintering birds and as such is afforded the highest levels of protection through its designation as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Convention Wild Birds Directive and a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Halton has three Sites of Significant Scientific Importance (SSSI): Flood Brook Clough SSSI, Mersey Estuary SSSI and Red Brow Cutting SSSI. All of which are recognised as of national importance due to their biodiversity and geodiversity features. Locally significant sites include 47 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) which support a range of habitats and species, three Local Geological Sites (Halton Castle, Quarry Ct Widnes and Keckwick Hill), 154ha of woodland and numerous priority habitats and species identified within the Halton Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 In addition to the conservation of biodiversity, it is also important to explore opportunities for enhancement, including restoring or adding to networks of natural habitats and other landscape features. This is essential for the mitigation, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, contributing to the Boroughs Green Infrastructure Network (Policy CS21)
- 1.5 Heritage assets are defined as those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest<sup>2</sup>. It is important to conserve and enhance these assets as they contribute to Halton's sense of identity.
- 1.6 Halton has 126 Listed Buildings, 2 of which are Grade I listed, 17 are Grade II\* and the remaining 107 are Grade II listed. There are also seven scheduled monuments including Duck Decoy, Halton Castle and Lovel's Hall. Of these designations, Daresbury Hall, a Grade II\* Listed Building, and Undercroft of West Range (Norton Priory) and Halton Castle, both Scheduled Monuments, are considered to be 'at risk'<sup>3</sup> and require necessary maintenance. Conservation Areas, of which there are ten in Halton, are areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by the Council. Within a Conservation Area there is a statutory duty to pay 'special attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance.
- 1.7 Not all locally important features of local historic or architectural interest are listed or part of a Conservation Area. However, they can still provide a valuable contribution to the local historic environment and can make an important contribution to creating a sense of place and local identity. This could include buildings and other structures and features, archaeological remains, historic open spaces and the wider historic landscape or townscape. Building and structures of local importance will be identified in a Local List SPD.
- 1.8 The overarching aim of the policy is to conserve and enhance the local character and distinctiveness of Halton. To achieve this areas of significant landscape character have been identified by Halton's Landscape Character Assessment<sup>4</sup> (2009). The study identifies distinctive special features and characteristics of the Borough's landscape and has divided the Borough into broad landscape character types and more detailed

<sup>1</sup> HBC (2003) Halton Biodiversity Action Plan

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2010) Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

<sup>3</sup> English Heritage (2010) Buildings at Risk Register

<sup>4</sup> TEP (2009) Halton Landscape Character Assessment

landscape character areas. The Landscape Character Assessment provides guidance on the strength and condition of the landscape within each of the nine distinct landscape character areas and makes recommendations on the conservation, enhancement, restoration or creation of landscape character through a series of landscape strategies and guidelines which are based upon the landscape's capacity to accommodate change. New developments will be expected to have particular regard to these landscape character strategies and guidelines.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment; PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation; Consultation Paper on PPS9: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment.
<b>Local Evidence</b>	TEP (2009) Halton Landscape Character Assessment; Halton Biodiversity Action Plan (HBC, 2003); State of the Borough Report (HBC, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS21: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1.1 Green infrastructure is the network of multifunctional green space and other environmental features, both new and existing, both rural and urban. Amongst its many benefits, green infrastructure can improve sustainability, health and well-being, support and enhance biodiversity, contribute to climate change adaptation, improve environmental quality and provide recreational and sporting opportunities.

### Policy CS21: Green Infrastructure

Halton's green infrastructure network will be protected, enhanced and expanded, where appropriate. Halton Borough Council working alongside other partners and agencies responsible for the delivery and maintenance of green infrastructure will achieve this through:

- Ensuring that new development maximises opportunities to make provision for high quality and multifunctional green infrastructure taking account of deficiencies and the standards for green space provision.
- Resisting the loss of green infrastructure where there are identified deficiencies in provision.
- Protecting, enhancing and where possible creating linkages and connections between natural habitats and other landscape features which contribute towards a network of green spaces and corridors of value for biodiversity, recreation and the amenity needs of the community.
- Improving accessibility, where appropriate, to the green infrastructure network particularly where this encourages walking and cycling.
- Maximising the contribution of Halton's green infrastructure to broader sustainability objectives including health, climate change adaptation, and maintaining and improving biodiversity.
- Identifying the Borough's multifunctional green infrastructure network and preparing detailed policies within the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD for its protection.
- Sustaining the protection afforded to internationally important sites for biodiversity by managing recreational impacts and encouraging the use of the wider green infrastructure network which is less sensitive to recreational pressure.
- Using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to the quality, connectivity and multifunctionality of the Borough's green infrastructure network.
- Supporting the delivery of programmes and strategies to protect, enhance and expand green infrastructure across the Borough including local and sub-regional strategies and Regional Park initiatives.

## Justification

- 1.2 For the purposes of Halton's LDF, green infrastructure is defined as:
- Parks and Gardens – including parks and regional parks
  - Amenity Green Space – including informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing
  - Outdoor Sports Facilities – including formal playing fields, golf courses and other outdoor sports areas
  - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces – including woodlands, scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water and bare rock habitats
  - Green Corridors – including rivers and canal banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way
  - Other – including allotments, community gardens, cemeteries and churchyards
- 1.3 Green infrastructure, as defined, is present across Halton from the urban green space areas of Town Park and Victoria Park, the waterways and canals including the Sankey and Bridgewater Way Canals, to areas of nature conservation interest, play areas, parks and golf courses. However, it is their 'multifunctionality' which is central to the green infrastructure concept and approach. This is the potential for green infrastructure to have a range of functions and to deliver a broad range benefits<sup>1</sup>. Multifunctionality can apply to individual sites and routes, but it is when the sites and links are taken together that a fully multifunctional green infrastructure network is achieved.
- 1.4 The Borough's green infrastructure network contributes significantly to the quality of life for Halton's residents, workers and visitors, through providing opportunities for sport and recreation and contributing to healthy living and well-being. Green infrastructure creates a sense of place allowing for greater appreciation of valuable landscapes and biodiversity and heritage assets. It also plays an important role in sustainable design, makes a positive impact to adapting to the potential risks of climate change including flood risk, and provides opportunities for sustainable transport. In addition, green infrastructure contributes significantly to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, by creating an ecological network allowing for the movement of wildlife along corridors and facilitating the colonisation of new areas.
- 1.5 Clear priorities for the protection, enhancement and, where appropriate, the expansion of green infrastructure will be set out in the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD and through masterplanning for strategic sites. Future studies, including a Green Infrastructure Strategy, will assist in this approach identifying the current network, areas of deficiency and surplus, and opportunities for enhancement and, where possible, expansion. This may include progressing opportunities for connecting green infrastructure assets as identified by the Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework<sup>2</sup>. Such studies will be particularly important within the Key Areas of Change and where it can be used to mitigate the negative impacts of development.
- 1.6 A review of open space, sport and recreation facilities has been undertaken for the Borough in accordance with the advice in Planning Policy Guidance 17. Halton's Open Space Study<sup>3</sup> considered the quantity, quality, accessibility and adaptability of provision

<sup>1</sup> Natural England (2009) Green Infrastructure Guidance

<sup>2</sup> MEAS (2010) Draft Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework

<sup>3</sup> HBC and PMP (2004 and as updated 2006) Halton Borough Council Open Space Study

and the local needs of the population. The study concludes that Halton has predominantly good quality and accessible open spaces although there are specific areas of priority. The study report sets out local standards of provision (table X) which should be taken into consideration by future development. These standards will be updated through the Green Infrastructure Strategy following the changing approach from open space to the wider green infrastructure network and as such will necessitate an update to the evidence base. Future amendments to the standards will be detailed within the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD or another appropriate document within the LDF.

Category	Standard (ha per 1000 population)
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.09
Amenity Open Space	1
Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space	2.75
Outdoor Sports Facilities	2.75
Parks and Gardens	1.25
Provision for Children and Young People	0.2

Table X: Halton Borough Council Standards of Provision for Green Space / Green Infrastructure

- 1.7 Although the recreational potential of the Borough's green infrastructure network is an important aspect of its multifunctionality it is also necessary to balance this against potential detrimental effects on sensitive sites. As identified in the Habitats Regulations Assessment<sup>4</sup> this is particularly relevant for European sites, specifically the Mersey Estuary Ramsar Site and Special Protection Area (SPA). Recreational impacts should be managed for these sites through access and habitat management and through prioritising other assets within the Borough's green infrastructure network for their recreational potential.
- 1.8 It is recognised that Halton's Green Infrastructure network cannot be delivered in isolation from other partners and agencies and neighbouring Local Authorities. As such the evolution of localised and cross boundary frameworks and studies over the Core Strategy period are supported where these contribute to the aims of protecting, enhancing and expanding the Borough's green infrastructure network. This includes site specific masterplans and studies, and sub-regional green infrastructure and ecological frameworks. Programmes of delivery and initiatives concerning Regional Parks and assets that are relevant to the Borough will also be supported.

POLICY FRAMEWORK:	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation; Consultation Paper on PPS9: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment; PPS12: Local Spatial Planning.
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Halton Borough Council Open Space Study (HBC and PMP, 2004 and as updated 2006); Draft Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework (MEAS, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton

<sup>4</sup> Scott Wilson (2010) Halton Core Strategy Habitats Regulation Assessment – Appropriate Assessment

<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS22: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- 1.1 Ensuring the Borough's communities have good health and well-being is a major priority for Halton. Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country and highlight that this is an aspect of life in the Borough in need of urgent improvement. It is essential that policies are put in place that tackle the underlying causes of health problems in the Borough, and facilitate the provision of healthy lifestyles and healthy environments for all.

### Policy CS22: Health and Well-Being

Healthy environments will be supported and healthy lifestyles encouraged across the Borough by ensuring:

- proposals for new and relocated health and community services and facilities are located in accessible locations with adequate access by walking, cycling and public transport;
- applications for large scale major developments are supported by a Health Impact Assessment to enhance potential positive impacts of development and mitigate against any negative impacts
- the proliferation of Hot Food Takeaway outlets (Use Class A5) is managed; and,
- opportunities to widen the Borough's cultural, sport, recreation and leisure offer are supported.

### Justification

- 1.2 When compared with other areas in England, Halton is within the worst 20% of areas for life expectancy<sup>1</sup> and ranks 371 out of 408 Local Authorities in terms of health deprivation<sup>2</sup>. As referred to in Halton's Story of Place, the Lancaster University Health Study<sup>3</sup> showed that the Borough's health issues are connected to poor lifestyles and levels of deprivation. Some particularly prevalent health problems include obesity and diabetes, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, cancers, alcohol abuse, depression and mental illness, and smoking related diseases.
- 1.3 Current studies have shown that improving health and well-being is a cross-cutting issue and cannot be achieved in isolation. In accordance with the Borough's partners and applicable strategies, including the Halton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>4</sup>, and the Ambition for Health Strategy and Commissioning Strategic Plan<sup>5</sup>, many of the policies in the Core Strategy promote healthy environments and lifestyles by, for example, promoting travel by walking and cycling, protecting the Borough's open spaces and improving air quality through reducing congestion. However, in order to address the significant problem of health and well-being in Halton, it is necessary to

<sup>1</sup> ONS (2008) Life Expectancy at Birth

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2007) The English Indices of Deprivation

<sup>3</sup> Lancaster University (2003) Understanding Factors Affecting Health in Halton

<sup>4</sup> Halton and St Helens NHS (2009) Halton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

<sup>5</sup> HBC and St Helens NHS and PCT (2009) Ambition for Health Strategy and Commissioning Strategic Plan

support further measures which will help to facilitate healthy lifestyles and environments, and alleviate health problems.

- I.4 It is imperative to ensure that there is sufficient access for Halton's communities to a whole range of health and community services and facilities, especially when considering that the Borough's population is ageing, potentially putting even greater demands on these services and facilities. Such services and facilities can contribute to community cohesion and identity, and can present opportunities for residents to pursue healthy and fulfilling lifestyles. As such proposals for new and the relocation of health and community services and facilities should ensure that they are sited in the most accessible locations and support access by a range of sustainable transport modes.
- I.5 It is considered that some development, particularly large schemes, may have negative impacts on health. To ensure that development will not create or exacerbate health problems and equally to take advantage of opportunities to improve health and well-being in the Borough, the production of Health Impact Assessments to identify and address potential health impacts for large scale major developments<sup>6</sup> will be required.
- I.6 In addition to these interventions there is a need to manage the concentration and clustering of hot food takeaway shops across the Borough which can have potential adverse impacts on community health and on the viability of the Boroughs town, district and local centres (CS5: A Network of Centres for Halton). Current data suggests that the number of A5 Hot Food Takeaway uses in the Borough is increasing with a high clustering of these uses in Widnes Town Centre and Runcorn Old Town. The prevalence of uses such as these can influence eating habits and has been linked to the risk of obesity<sup>7</sup>. In Halton, 37% of Year 6 pupils were classed as overweight or obese in 2008/09, this is higher than both the North West (23.1%) and England (32.6%)<sup>8</sup>. A Hot Food Takeaway SPD will be developed to set out a range of requirements and recommendations for such uses to ensure that possible adverse effects caused by an over-abundance of hot food takeaways are minimised.
- I.7 Culture, sport, recreation and leisure can also significantly contribute to health and well-being and as such should be supported. The Borough has many positive attributes including a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network, extensive pedestrian and cycle routes, facilities for culture and the arts, including the Brindley Arts Centre, and a number of waterfront environments afforded by the Mersey Estuary and the Borough's waterways which present opportunities for leisure and recreation. In accordance with other policies in the Core Strategy and to sustain positive lifestyle choices, opportunities to improve and extend this offer should be taken.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS: Delivering Sustainable Development
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Understanding Factors Affecting Health in Halton (Lancaster University, 2003); Halton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Halton and St Helens NHS, 2009); Ambition for Health Strategy

<sup>6</sup> Large Scale Major Developments: Residential - 200 dwellings / 4ha or more

All other uses – 10,000sq.m or more / 2ha or more

<sup>7</sup> Government office for Science (2010) Tackling Obesity: Future Choices – Project Report 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

<sup>8</sup> HBC (2010) State of the Borough Report (National Child Measurement Programme)



	and Commissioning Strategic Plan (HBC and St Helens NHS and PCT, 2009); State of the Borough Report (HBC, 2010).
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	11
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS23: MANAGING POLLUTION AND RISK

- 1.1 Halton is affected by risk to its population, environment and buildings from a variety of sources from both within and outside of the Borough. The domination of Halton's past and current economy by industry has left a legacy of pollution, particularly ground contamination which presents a physical and financial barrier for development to overcome. Today, industrial processes in the Borough are carefully controlled through environmental legislation and permits to ensure that pollution is managed. In addition to these statutory processes it is important that the mechanisms available through planning processes are also used to minimise the effects of pollution on health and the environment.
- 1.2 In addition to the effects of pollution, there are parts of the Borough affected by high levels of risk from hazardous installations because of the nature of the industrial processes taking place. The Borough is also subject to risks associated with both tidal and fluvial flooding from the Mersey Estuary and the rivers, brooks and waterways which run through the Borough.

### Policy CS23: Managing Pollution and Risk

#### Pollution

To control development which may give rise to pollution:

- Development proposals should not exacerbate and where possible should minimise all forms of emissions and odour, water, noise and light pollution
- Proposals for development within or close to identified Air Quality Management Areas in the Borough should have specific regard to how the exceedance in air pollutants can be addressed and how the impact on receptors can be reduced
- Prior to development on potentially contaminated land or unstable land, sites should be investigated to ascertain the extent of any contamination and possible risks to future uses. Development will only be permitted where the land has or will be, made suitable for the proposed use. Where it is not possible to achieve the full remediation of a site, the Council may seek soft-end or green uses

#### Reducing Risk from Hazards

To prevent and minimise the risk from potential accidents at hazardous installations and facilities, the following principles will apply:

- Minimisation of risk to public safety and property wherever practicable
- Controlling inappropriate development within identified areas of risk surrounding existing hazardous installations or facilities, to ensure that the maximum level of acceptable individual risk does not exceed 10 chances per million and that the population exposed to risk is not increased
- Ensuring that any proposals for new or expanded hazardous installations are carefully considered in terms of environmental, social and economic factors

#### Managing Flood Risk

Development should not exacerbate existing levels of flood risk nor place residents or property at risk from inundation from flood waters. This will be achieved by:

- Directing development to areas where the use is compatible with the predicted level of flood risk, both at present and taking into consideration the likely effects of climate change
- Using Halton's SFRA to inform the application of the sequential approach/test and exception test in accordance with national planning policy

- Requiring site-specific Flood Risk Assessments for proposals in areas at risk from flooding as identified in the Halton SFRA
- Supporting proposals for sustainable flood risk management (e.g. defence / alleviation work) so long as they do not have a detrimental impact on the landscape of the Borough

### Justification

- 1.3 New development should minimise all forms of pollution, manage actual or potential conflicts between sources of risk and surrounding land uses, with the safety of wider communities and the protection of the environment of paramount importance throughout.
- 1.4 In 2009, air pollutants were found to be in exceedance of acceptable levels in two separate locations in Widnes town centre. Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels at the junctions of Milton Road/Gerrard Street and Deacon Road/Albert Road in the town centre were found to be above objective levels, with the source of the exceedance found to be emissions from road traffic. In accordance with legislation, DEFRA requires that Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are designated at such locations in order to lower the level of NO<sub>2</sub> to within appropriate levels. In order to address the issues in the AQMA, an Air Quality Action Plan will be drawn up which will propose a range of measures which can contribute to reducing levels of pollution. Any specific measures arising from the Air Quality Action Plan which require an input from planning will be addressed in a relevant LDF document.
- 1.5 While the Borough has had some major successes in recent years with remediation and re-use of contaminated land, there remain some parts of the Borough which have proven to be too contaminated to develop and too costly to remediate. In these instances, green or soft-end uses will be sought to ensure that land can be used beneficially and does not cause issues of blight to surrounding land uses. Adjacent to the Mersey Estuary, particularly in Widnes there is a clustering of areas of contamination given the concentration of heavy industry in this area in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In 2008 it was estimated that there are approximately 400 hectares of contaminated land in the Borough<sup>1</sup>. Given the predominance of contaminated land close to the Mersey, it will be particularly necessary for developments within the Key Areas of Change at 3MG and South Widnes to address contamination issues. The Mersey Gateway Project will also have a key role to play in bringing contaminated sites back into beneficial use.

### Insert map indicating broad location of contaminated sites

- 1.6 Much of Widnes is underlain by coalfields which have the potential to create ground stability issues to new and existing development. The Coal Authority has designated a 'Coal Mining Development Referral Area'<sup>2</sup> which covers most of Widnes, where potential land stability and other safety risks associated with former coal mining activities are likely to be greatest. They include, for example, recorded mine entries and areas of former surface mining. For all development proposals which fall within

<sup>1</sup> HBC (2008) Contaminated Land Strategy 2008-2013

<sup>2</sup> The Coal Authority (2010) Halton Coal Mining Referral Area  
[www.coal.gov.uk/media/viewer/?mid=8101DCED-9DC1-65C0-02B4F431790CAF97](http://www.coal.gov.uk/media/viewer/?mid=8101DCED-9DC1-65C0-02B4F431790CAF97)

Halton's Coal Mining Referral Area, the Council will apply the Coal Authority's standing advice and refer relevant applications to them in accordance with their risk based approach to development management.

- 1.7 Given the nature of the historic and current industrial sector in Halton, the Borough is home to a number of hazardous installations identified under the 'Control of Major Accident Hazards' (Planning) Regulations 1999 (and its amendments) (known as COMAH). Advice on the nature and severity of the risk presented by operations at specific sites is provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Council is required to consult the HSE on any application for a hazardous installation or within the designated consultation zone surrounding COMAH sites. Ultimately, it is for the Council to make decisions on planning applications, taking into account the advice of the HSE along with any wider social and economic benefits which may outweigh any adverse impacts. In addition to the COMAH sites, the Borough contains a number of major pipelines carrying hazardous chemicals through the Borough.
- 1.8 The Council proposes to continue to use a risk-based approach to managing the risk arising from hazardous installations in the Borough. A risk based approach looks at the **likelihood** of an event actually happening which is in contrast to a hazard based approach which looks at the **consequences** of an accident event happening. The level of acceptable risk should not exceed 10 chances in a million (cpm) individual risk of death and this level is used to assess whether the effect of a development proposal is significant in affecting individual accidental risk. This uses the same approach to assessing the risk arising from hazardous installations as for airports and is a methodology that Halton Borough Council has developed in partnership with the HSE over many years. Further background to Halton's approach to risk and guidance on the approach to development applications relating to hazardous installations is provided through the Planning for Risk SPD<sup>3</sup>.

#### Insert map showing location of COMAH sites

- 1.9 As discussed in policy CS17: Liverpool John Lennon Airport, the operation of the airport presents a risk to Halton and a Public Safety Zone (PSZ) has been established which reflects the area most affected by the movements of aircraft. Currently this extends over a small area of the Borough, but in accordance with the runway extension proposals the PSZ will be extended accordingly to reflect the larger area of risk associated with the airport.
- 1.10 The Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 was endorsed by the Environment Agency and finalised in 2007<sup>4</sup>. This indicates where there are flood risk issues in the Borough and provides a detailed and robust assessment of its extent and nature. A Level 2 SFRA has been produced in 2010<sup>5</sup> and provides a key source of information to ensure that future development does take place in areas known to be at risk of flooding, or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Any development application in an area at risk from flooding will need to be supported by a site level Flood Risk Assessment which should build upon information in the SFRA.
- 1.11 The SFRA Level 2 concentrates on the key locations at a medium or high risk of flood risk as identified in the SFRA Level 1. These areas are Ditton Brook (Widnes), Bowers Brook (Widnes) and Keckwick Brook (Runcorn). The Study also covers the risk of a

<sup>3</sup> HBC (2009) Planning for Risk Supplementary Planning Document

<sup>4</sup> HBC (2007) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Level 1

<sup>5</sup> JBA Consulting (2010) Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Level 2

breach of the Manchester Ship Canal and of tidal flooding from the Mersey Estuary which includes modelling of the likely effects of sea level rise on the incidence and ferocity of a flood event. Need to add in conclusions from SFRA when they are known.

Insert map showing SFRA flood risk areas

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPG14, PPS23, PPG24, PPS25, DfT Circular 01/2010
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Halton Air Quality Management Areas, Halton Contaminated Land Strategy 2008-2013, Planning for Risk SPD
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	11 and 12
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton, A Safer Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

## CS24: WASTE

- 1.1 The Council's aim for sustainable waste management is that an adequate range of waste management facilities will be provided to ensure that waste generated in Halton is treated and disposed of in a sustainable and environmentally acceptable way, balancing the economic, social and environmental needs of the Borough. A large proportion of Halton's current waste goes to landfill<sup>1</sup>. The move away from landfill disposal towards more sustainable means of dealing with waste, through promotion of waste management and recycling, brings a requirement to develop the range of facilities required to meet the Borough's needs.

### Policy CS24: Waste

The Council will promote sustainable waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy, to:

- identify and safeguard (where appropriate) waste management sites in appropriate locations suitable for new and enhanced waste management facilities for the identified waste management needs of Merseyside & Halton. The allocation of sites and detailed development management policies will be provided in the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document.
- ensure that the Borough can meet the identified waste management needs;
- encourage good design in new development in order to minimise waste, promote the use of recycled materials and, to facilitate the collection and recycling of waste;
- encourage the sustainable transport of waste and promote use of site waste management plans; and
- ensure that waste management facilities are developed whilst minimising the impacts on the environment and communities of the Borough.

### Justification

- 1.2 European legislation, government targets, increased waste generation, the need for improved environmental protection, and rising public expectations all drive the need for rapid changes in our approach to managing waste. In particular, Merseyside (including Halton) needs to reduce its reliance on landfill by providing alternative facilities for recycling, reprocessing, treatment and disposal. It will be necessary to promote all forms of waste reduction ensuring that Halton's residents are aware of their responsibility for minimising waste.
- 1.3 The Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document (Joint Waste DPD) will provide policy guidance standards for waste and allocate sites for waste purposes. A Spatial Strategy and Sites Report, Issues and Options Report and a Preferred Options Report have been prepared for the Joint Waste DPD outlining the various strategies and options available and recommending a Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy. The Spatial Strategy is a resource recovery-led strategy which aims to maximise the ability to

<sup>1</sup> HBC (2010) State of the Borough Report

achieve self-sufficiency in waste management. Halton's approach to implementing the principles of sustainable waste management for all waste streams takes into account all of the sustainable waste management principles and will ensure that all facilities are developed in line with the principles of the waste hierarchy (Figure X).

Insert diagram of the Waste Hierarchy

- 1.4 This approach is in accordance with Halton's Municipal Waste Management Strategy<sup>2</sup> and recognises the importance of the sub-regional apportionment of waste and through the Joint Waste DPD and will provide alternative facilities for recycling, reprocessing, treatment and disposal of Halton's waste.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Halton (HBC, 2008); State of the Borough Report (HBC, 2010); Emerging Joint Merseyside Waste DPD
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	13
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>2</sup> HBC (2008) Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Halton

## CS25: MINERALS

- 1.1 Minerals such as crushed rock aggregates, sand, gravel and clay are the essential raw materials that underpin development of the built environment. Halton Borough Council as a Minerals Planning Authority has the responsibility to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to ensure primary resources are maintained for future generations, minimise potential environmental impacts of such developments and to support economic growth.

### Policy CS25: Minerals

To minimise the need for minerals extraction the use of recycled and secondary aggregates across the Borough will be encouraged.

Although there are limited mineral resources in the Borough<sup>1</sup>, Minerals Safeguarding Areas and Minerals Areas of Search for sand and gravel resources will be identified and protected to prevent their sterilisation. The Site Allocations and Development Management DPD will allocate areas of minerals resources and set out the criteria for their potential extraction.

### Justification

- 1.2 Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals (MPS1) requires Minerals Planning Authorities to plan for minerals within their administrative boundaries. A requirement of MPS1 is to identify areas of search, preferred areas, and site specific allocations for future minerals development as well as safeguarding areas where minerals exist.
- 1.3 Minerals are a finite resource and can only be worked where they exist. This means that possible extraction sites are limited. There are currently no operational mineral sites in the Borough and there is limited evidence of previous activity. Information held by the Coal Authority additionally indicates that there are no surface coal reserves in the Borough<sup>2</sup>. The Urban Vision Study on Mineral Planning in Merseyside has shown that Halton does not contain a significant amount of high quality minerals. However, the study does identify four potential sites of sand and gravel mineral resources which should be protected to prevent their sterilisation. The Site Allocations and Development Management DPD will identify Minerals Safeguarding Areas and Minerals Areas of Search in accordance with the Urban Vision study and other appropriate studies, and set out the detailed criteria to be met by proposals for minerals extraction.
- 1.4 For the reasons stated above, Halton and the wider Liverpool City Region are highly reliant on imports of high quality aggregate for use in the construction industry. It is therefore vital to reduce reliance on land-won minerals extraction by encouraging an increase in the amount of recycled and secondary aggregates used in new construction. The incorporation of resource efficient design and construction techniques will also be vital in minimised the need for minerals extraction and should be pursued in accordance with CS19: Sustainable Development and Climate Change.

<sup>1</sup> Urban Vision (2008) Mineral Planning in Merseyside

<sup>2</sup> The Coal Authority (2010) Surface Mining Coal Resource Areas  
[www.coal.gov.uk/media/viewer/?mid=81BD1CC7-EDD1-8D6B-57E1466510C3C7D9](http://www.coal.gov.uk/media/viewer/?mid=81BD1CC7-EDD1-8D6B-57E1466510C3C7D9)



- 1.5 Should the supply of aggregate minerals from the Borough become of economic importance and become necessary to contribute towards meeting the regional apportionment of aggregates provision<sup>3</sup>, mineral extraction may become necessary. Proposals for minerals extraction will be required to ensure that environmental, social and economic issues and impacts are fully considered and where adverse affects are identified, they are effectively managed and mitigated.

<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPSI; MPSI; MPS2; CLG (2009) National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2005-2020.
<b>Local Evidence</b>	Urban Vision (2008) Minerals Planning in Merseyside.
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	13
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Environment and Regeneration in Halton
<b>SA Objectives</b>	
<b>SA Outcome</b>	

<sup>3</sup> CLG (2009) The National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2005-2020

**HALTON CORE STRATEGY  
PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX I HOUSING TRAJECTORIES

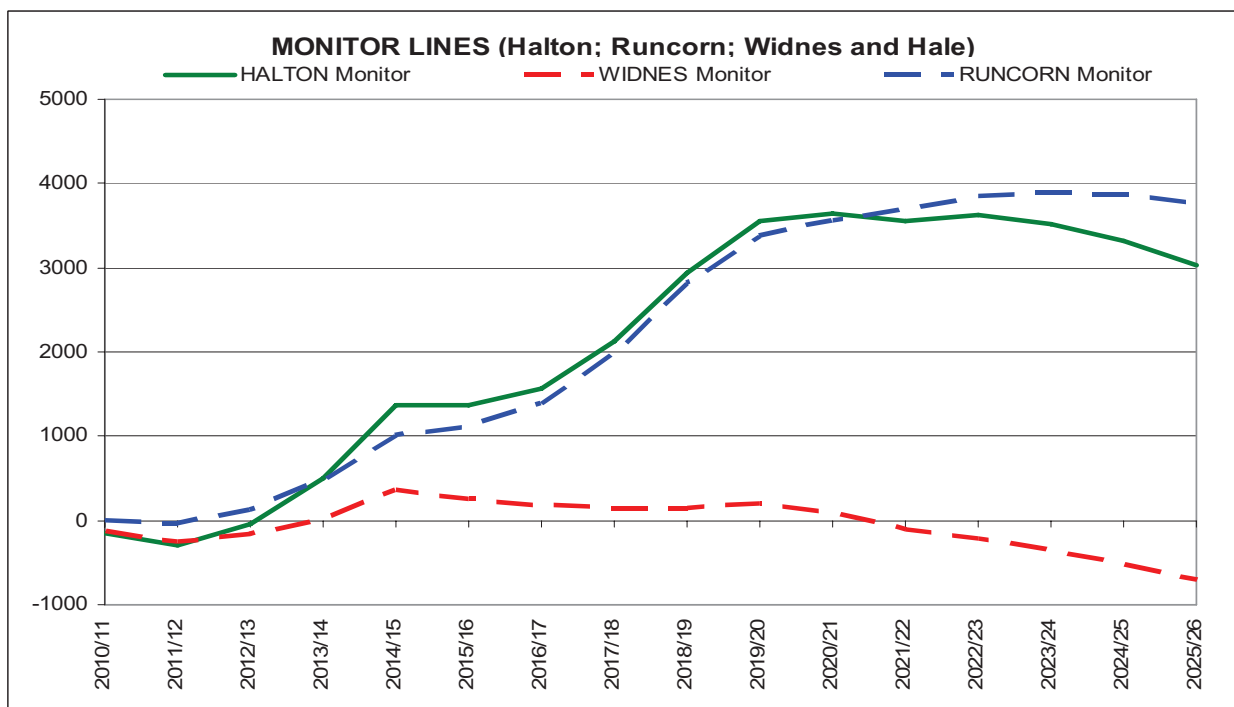
Housing trajectories track housing completions (Housing Baseline report) and forecast potential completions (SHLAA) against the housing development targets as set out in Policy CS3. This demonstrates the robustness and soundness of the overall housing strategy in the Core Strategy and provides a powerful tool to monitor performance against requirements.

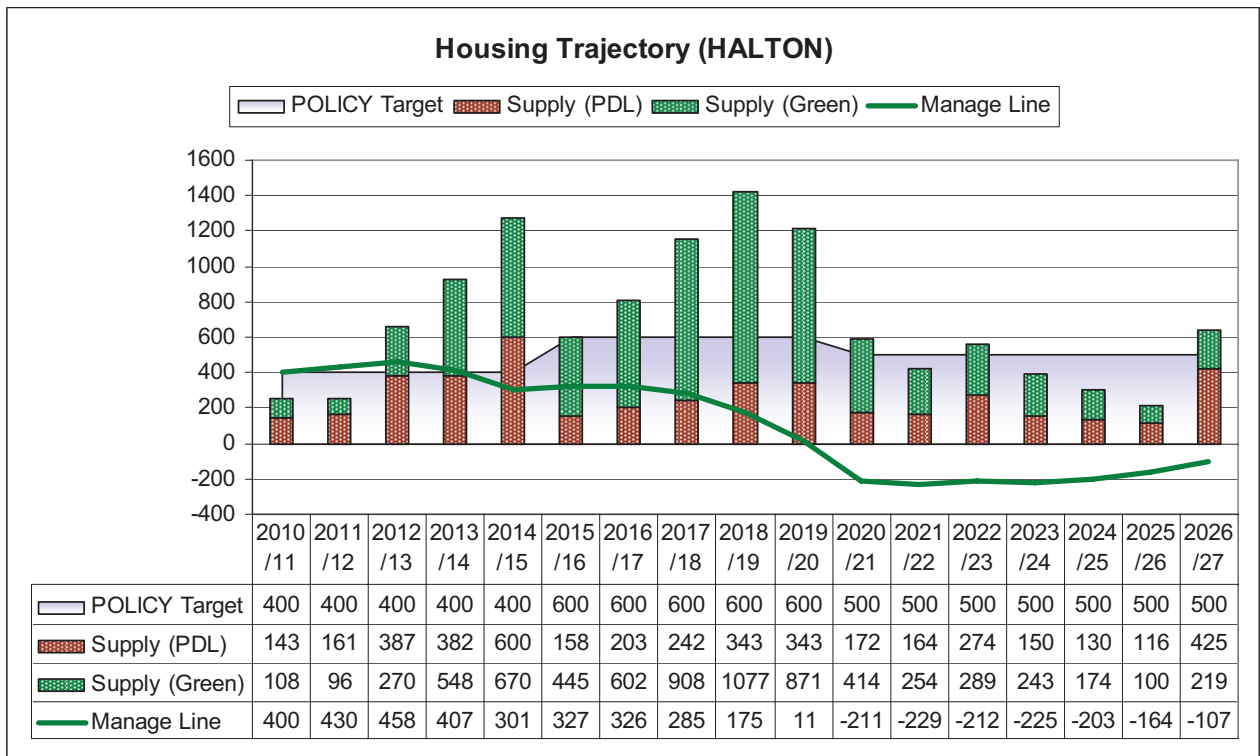
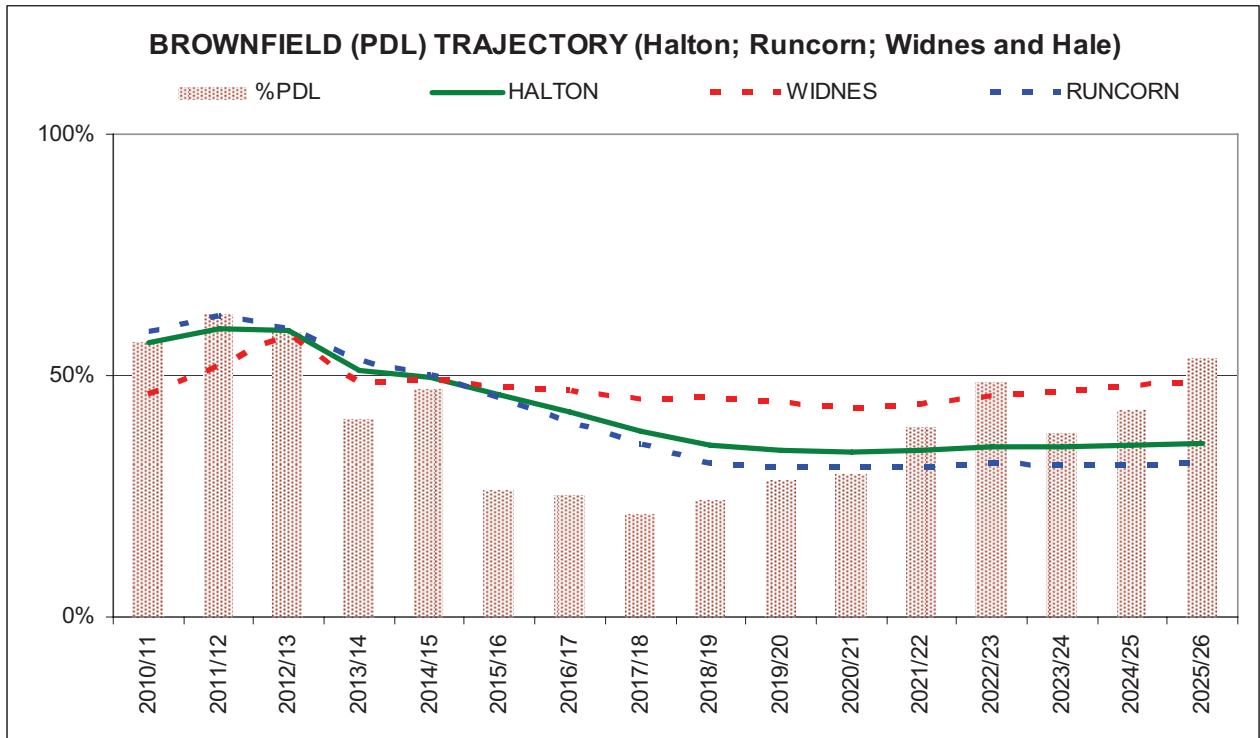
Figures from the SHLAA present potential developable and deliverable number of dwellings by year on individual sites. Updated annually, the SHLAA is subject to independent scrutiny being produced in consultation with the development community, and whilst the figures represent the potential number of units that could be provided on individual sites, it is not intended to be a forecast of actual completions across the Borough as a whole.

The Trajectories include data on two main measures:

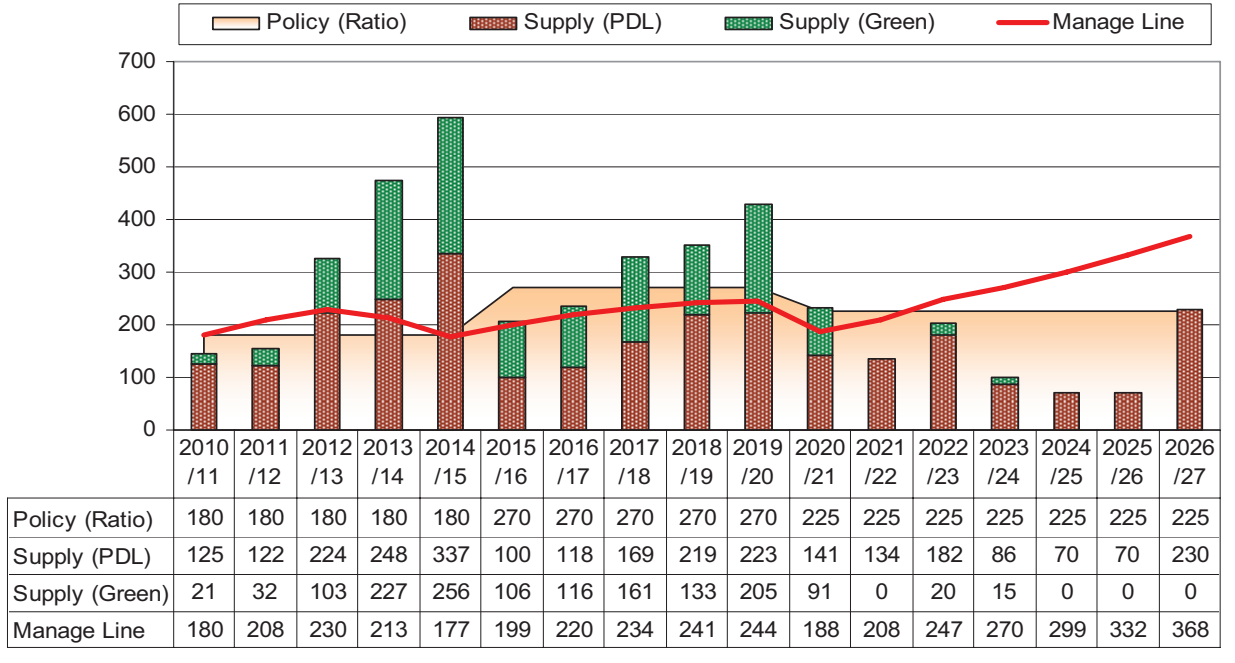
1. The **Monitor Line** shows how many dwellings above or below the planned rate of housing supply at any one time.
2. The **Manage Line** indicates the number of completions required in each year to address any projected shortfall or surplus in supply. This is calculated by subtracting actual and projected potential completions from the cumulative policy target for each year, dividing the answer by 5 (the number of years allowed to address any variance) and adding to the policy target for that year. Hence a Manage line above the policy target indicates a shortfall in forecast supply and a Manage line below indicates a surplus in supply.

In addition, a trajectory can be created showing the cumulative proportion of actual and projected supply delivered on Previously Developed Land (PDL).

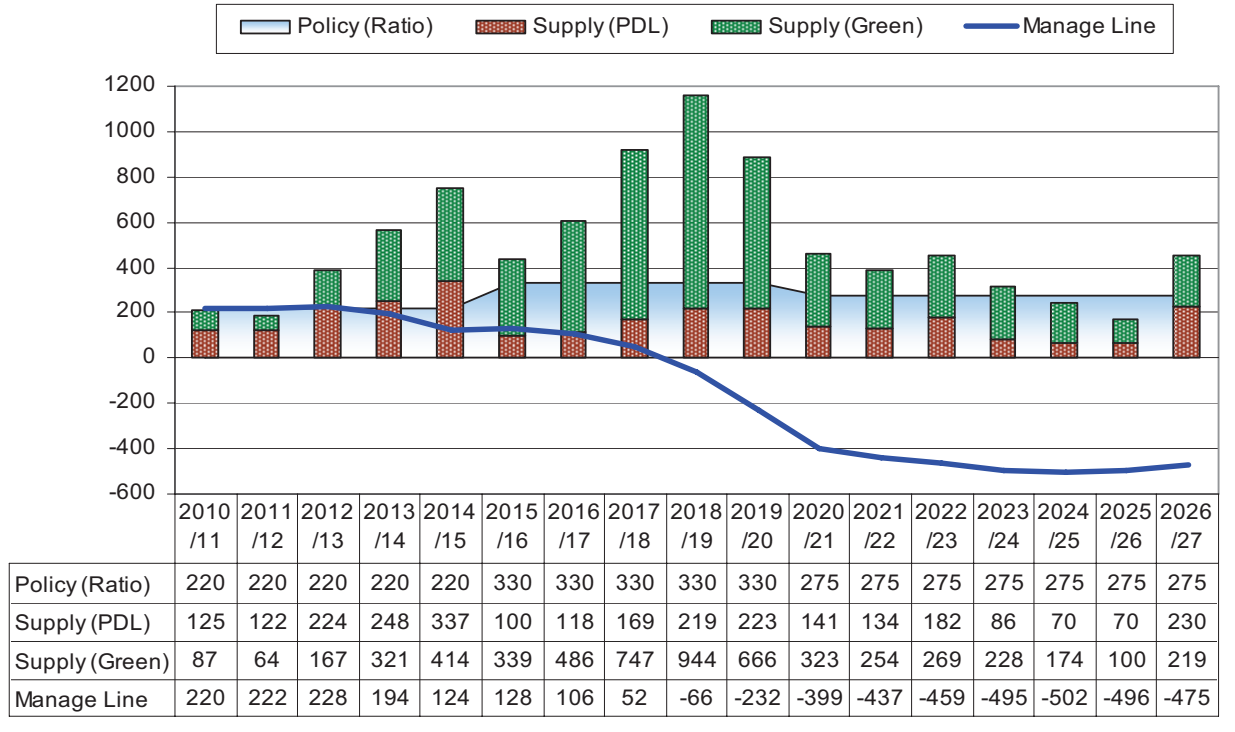




### Housing Trajectory (WIDNES / HALE)



### Housing Trajectory (RUNCORN)



## APPENDIX 2 MONITORING FRAMEWORK

1. The Monitoring Framework sets out how we will measure how successfully the policies within the Core Strategy are being implemented. Each year the Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report to specifically chart the progress of the LDF and the success of its planning policies. Prior to the production of the Core Strategy, the Annual Monitoring Report charted the implementation of policies from the Unitary Development Plan. As Halton’s LDF grows, the Annual Monitoring Report will expand to monitor the implementation of policies within all of Halton’s Development Plan Documents.

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
CSI	Halton’s Spatial Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Net number of new homes delivered</li> <li>2. Amount of employment land available for development</li> <li>3. Amount of retail development delivered</li> <li>4. Delivery of Key Areas of Change</li> <li>5. Percentage of new development coming forward on brownfield land</li> <li>6. Development within the Green Belt</li> <li>7. Maintain a balance in completions between Runcorn and Widnes</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400/600/500 net new homes per annum (in accordance with current policy period), contributing to 8000 homes over the plan period to 2026</li> <li>• Target of 260ha of land available for employment development over the plan period</li> <li>• 57,000sqm of retail development across the 3 centres</li> <li>• Number of planning applications coming forward within Key Areas of Change in accordance with strategy for the area</li> <li>• Minimum of 50% of housing development and minimum of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
			80% of employment development on brownfield land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrict general development within the Green Belt, with the exception of Liverpool John Lennon Airport</li> <li>• Average of 60:40 Runcorn: Widnes split for new housing and employment development</li> </ul>	
CS2	Sustainable Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improvement in Overall deprivation score as an indication of Quality of Life</li> <li>2. Sustained economic growth</li> <li>3. Percentage of new development coming forward on brownfield land</li> <li>4. Total amount of land remediated</li> <li>5. Reduction in carbon emissions</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An improvement in Halton's rank of 30<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in the country (IMD, 2007)</li> <li>2. Improvement in the Economic Activity rate in Halton (76.2% in 2007)</li> <li>3. Minimum of 50% of housing development and minimum of 80% of employment development on brownfield land</li> <li>4. XXXXX</li> <li>5. Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita by 4% per annum</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
			(Baseline of 9.4 tonnes per capita in 2008 <sup>1</sup> )	
CS3	Housing Supply and Locational Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Net number of new homes delivered per annum</li> <li>2. 5 year supply of deliverable housing land</li> <li>3. Percentage of new housing development coming forward on brownfield land</li> <li>4. Average densities delivered on new housing sites</li> <li>5. Delivery of Site Allocations DPD</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimum of 400/500/600 homes per annum in accordance with relevant policy period</li> <li>2. Housing land available with the potential to deliver 2000/2500/3000 units at any given time, in accordance with relevant policy period</li> <li>3. Average of 50% over the plan period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not below 40% in any given year?</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Minimum density of 30dph, rising to a minimum density of 40dph in proximity to community facilities</li> <li>5. Adoption of Site Allocations DPD by 2014</li> </ol>	•
CS4	Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Available supply of employment land</li> <li>2. Minimise loss of land within existing employment areas for non-employment uses</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain 5 year supply of sites available for employment development</li> <li>2. No loss of land within existing employment areas</li> </ol>	•
CS5	A Network of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allocation of sites to deliver</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adoption of Site Allocations</li> </ol>	•

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/indicators/ni186/ni186.aspx>



Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
	Centres for Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>required floorspace expansion in each of the centre</li> <li>2. Floorspace completions in each of the centres</li> <li>3. Percentage of retail development in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations</li> <li>4. Percentage / number of vacant units within each of the centres</li> <li>5. Percentage / number of A3/A5 units within centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPD by 2014</li> <li>2. Completions of floorspace in line with required floorspace as set out in policy</li> <li>3. Minimise</li> <li>4. Minimise/Reduce over time</li> <li>5. Adoption of Hot Food Takeaways SPD by 2012</li> </ul>	
CS6	Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extent of Green Belt</li> <li>2. Controlling development within the Green Belt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain the level of Green Belt at XXXXha</li> <li>2. Restrict general development within the Green Belt, with the exception of Liverpool John Lennon Airport or following a review of Green Belt boundaries should land need to be released in accordance with CS1</li> </ul>	•
CS7	Infrastructure Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amount of planning gain secured</li> <li>2. Delivery of projects within associated Infrastructure Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Total planning gain</li> <li>2. As per timescales in Infrastructure Plan</li> </ul>	•
CS8	3MG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quantity of employment development at the site</li> <li>2. Jobs generated by the site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of total jobs created filled by Halton's</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Total land area is 60ha</li> <li>2. Number of jobs generated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 60% filled by Halton residents</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Provision of infrastructure –</li> </ul>	•

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
		residents 3. Delivery of Western Link Road 4. Delivery of new rail sidings 5. Development of HBC Field Site 6. Improvement to/no decline in the condition and setting of the Lovel's Hall Scheduled Monument	in line with timescales in the Infrastructure Plan 4. Provision of infrastructure – in line with timescales in the Infrastructure Plan 5. HBC Field Site – 18ha 6. Improvement to the setting of Lovel's Hall Scheduled Monument	
CS9	South Widnes	1. Quantity of employment development in Key Area of Change 2. Delivery of retail floorspace 3. Delivery of West Bank SPD 4. Air Quality in Widnes Town Centre	1. Total employment opportunities total 29ha 2. Delivery of up to 25,000SqM of convenience/comparison goods retail floorspace and 19,000SqM of Bulky Goods floorspace in line with policy 3. Adoption of West Bank SPD by 2012 4. Reduction in air pollutants to within acceptable levels	•
CS10	West Runcorn	1. Delivery of employment land across the Key Area of Change 2. Delivery of retail floorspace 3. Improvements to Runcorn Old Town Centre 4. Realise the potential of Runcorn Waterfront	1. Total employment opportunities total 27ha 2. Delivery of 5000SqM of retail floorspace in line with policy 3. Adoption of Runcorn Old Town SPD by 2012 4. Adoption of Runcorn Waterfront SPD by 2013	•
CS11	East Runcorn	1. Expansion of SIC	1. 19ha/1,000,00Sqft of	•

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
		2. Expansion of Daresbury Park 3. Delivery of housing 4. Delivery of neighbourhood centres, primary school 5. Infrastructure requirements in line with Infrastructure Plan 6. Retention of Daresbury Firs and establishment of a green infrastructure network 7. Establishing a detailed framework for the delivery of the Daresbury Strategic Site	employment at Daresbury SIC 2. Business development at Daresbury Park – 40ha 3. 1500 dwellings at Daresbury, 1400 dwellings at Sandymoor 4. In line with timescales in Infrastructure Plan 5. In line with timescales in Infrastructure Plan 6. Delivery of a green infrastructure strategy for Daresbury 7. Adoption of Daresbury SPD by	
CS12	Housing Mix	1. Provision of a range of house sizes and types provided across sites 2. Percentage of homes achieving Lifetime Homes Standards 3. Provision of specialist housing for the elderly	1. Address identified imbalances from SHMA 2. 85% (excluding dwellings which come forward on sites of less than 10 dwellings) 3. Allocating sites for specialist or extra-care housing to contribute to the delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 214 extra care units</li> <li>• 22 extra care units for adults with learning difficulties</li> </ul>	•
CS13	Affordable Housing	1. Number of affordable homes delivered	1. Target from SHMA? a. 20-25% across sites of	•

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
		a. Through planning agreements on private developments b. By RSLs 2. Percentage of affordable homes delivered on applicable schemes 3. Split between social rented and intermediate homes	greater than 15 dwellings b. Dependent on public subsidy 2. 20-25% affordable housing 3. 50:50 Social rented: Intermediate homes	
CSI4	Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	1. Meeting the need for pitch provision for G, T and TS 2. Total number of permanent and transit pitches	1. Allocation of sites/extension to existing sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople 2. Increase in the current number of permanent pitches (40) and transit pitches (10) where there is an identified need for additional provision	•
CSI5	Sustainable Transport	1. Reduction in the number of unsustainable trips 2. Number of Travel Plans associated with large trip generating uses 3. Implementation of maximum parking standards	1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Modal split data – increase in number of cyclists</li> <li>b. Increase in bus patronage</li> </ul> 2. Safeguarding of routes and facilities through the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD 3. No exceedance of maximum standards	•
CSI6	The Mersey Gateway	1. Delivery of the Mersey Gateway	1. In accordance with timings as	•

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
	Project	Bridge 2. Increase in sustainable transport use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge 3. Capitalising on regeneration opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway Project	set out in Infrastructure Plan 2. Modal split data from the SJB 3. Adoption of West Bank and Runcorn Old Town SPDs identifying development sites	
CS17	Liverpool John Lennon Airport	1. Removal of land from the Green Belt 2. Delivery of a runway extension 3. Provision of Eastern Access Transport Corridor 4. Managing negative environmental impacts	1. Adoption of Site Allocations DPD by 2014 2. In accordance with Infrastructure Plan 3. In accordance with Infrastructure Plan 4. Minimise	•
CS18	High Quality Design	1. Resident satisfaction with area 2. Homes/commercial areas built to Building for Life / Secured by Design standards.	1. Maintain and increase current level of resident satisfaction (need Baseline) 2. Promotion of standards through Development Management approach	•
CS19	Sustainable Development and Climate Change	1. Reduction in Halton's contribution to climate change 2. Percentage of new residential development achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 3. Percentage of new commercial development achieving BREEAM Very Good standards 4. Implementation of large scale renewable energy schemes inc.	1. 10.1 tonnes per capita (2005) 2. 100% Code Level 3 from 2011, rising to 100% Code Level 4 from 2013, and 100% Code Level 6 from 2016 3. 100% BREEAM Very Good from 2011 and 100% BREEAM Excellent from 2013	•

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
		District Heating		
CS20	Natural and Historic Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Condition of Mersey Estuary SSSI - % favourable</li> <li>2. Area protected for local importance (LNRs/LWS/LGS)</li> <li>3. Restoration of habitats</li> <li>4. Maintaining Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings</li> <li>5. Maintaining Landscape Character Areas and their condition</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No decline in current position of SSSIs (use Natural England data)</li> <li>2. Maintain area</li> <li>3. Maintain number</li> <li>4. Landscape enhancements through relevant planning applications</li> </ol>	•
CS21	Green Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extent of Green Infrastructure network</li> <li>2. Identification of Green Infrastructure network through Site Allocations document</li> <li>3. Amount of developer contributions sought for improvements to the Green Infrastructure network</li> <li>4. Number of greenspaces awarded the Green Flag standard</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additions to the extent and quality of the Green Infrastructure network (2009 Baseline of 1484.064ha)</li> <li>2. Adoption of Site Allocations DPD by 2014</li> <li>3. Maximise</li> <li>4. Maintain and increase the number of Green Flag award greenspaces (Baseline of 12 Green Flag awards in 2010)</li> </ol>	•
CS22	Health and Well-Being	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percentage / number of A3/A5 units within centres</li> <li>2. Number of applications requiring a Health Impact Assessment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adoption of Hot Food Takeaways SPD by 2012</li> <li>2. All relevant applications to undertake HIA</li> </ol>	•
CS23	Managing Pollution and Risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development within flood zones</li> <li>2. Number of planning applications in flood zones which are permitted, contrary to the</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No highly vulnerable development</li> <li>2. None</li> <li>3. None</li> </ol>	•

Policy	Policy Title	Indicators	Targets (All indicators will be monitored annually, unless otherwise stated)	Implementation and Delivery
		advice of the Environment Agency 3. Development not in accordance with HSE endorsed approach 4. Amount of contaminated land remediated	4. <del>XXXX</del>	
CS24	Waste	1. Safeguarding of sites for the purpose of waste management	1. Adoption of the Joint Merseyside Waste DPD by 2013	•
CS25	Minerals	1. Land won aggregates 2. Designation of sites as minerals safeguarding areas or Minerals Areas of Search	1. Contribution to the North West regional requirement 2. Adoption of Site Allocations and Development Management DPD by 2014	•

### APPENDIX 3

## SCHEDULE OF UDP POLICIES TO BE REPLACED

(To be finalised)

- 1.1 This appendix seeks to provide a comprehensive list of the saved policies from the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which will be deleted upon adoption of the Halton Core Strategy.

Halton Core Strategy: Proposed Submission Document	UDP Policies to be Replaced
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SPATIAL POLICIES		
CS1	Halton's Spatial Strategy	S1, S24
CS2	Sustainable Development	
CS3	Housing Supply and Locational Priorities	S18, H2
CS4	Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities	S19
CS5	A Network of Centres for Halton	S16, S17
CS6	Green Belt	S21
CS7	Infrastructure Provision	S25

KEY AREAS OF CHANGE		
CS8	3MG	S20, E7
CS9	South Widnes	R1, R2, R3
CS10	West Runcorn	R4
CS11	East Runcorn	S20, E6

CORE POLICIES		
CS12	Housing Mix	
CS13	Affordable Housing	
CS14	Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People	H5
CS15	Sustainable Transport	S13
CS16	The Mersey Gateway Project	S14
CS17	Liverpool John Lennon Airport	TP20
CS18	High Quality Design	
CS19	Sustainable Development and Climate Change	S10, S11
CS20	Natural and Historic Environment	
CS21	Green Infrastructure	S3
CS22	Health and Well-Being	
CS23	Managing Pollution and Risk	S4, S5, S6
CS24	Waste	S7, S8
CS25	Minerals	S7, MW4



## APPENDIX 4

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND LIST OF ACRONYMS

- 3MG Mersey Multimodal Gateway** The Mersey Multimodal Gateway, commonly referred to as 3MG is the regionally significant inter-modal (rail–road) freight terminal located on the West Coast Main Line at Ditton (Widnes).
- Affordable Housing** Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided at below market rates to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market and includes social rented and intermediate housing. A full definition is included in Annex B to PPS3.
- AA Appropriate Assessment** Comprising the latter two stages of Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) is the assessment of likely effects of a development plan or proposal on the integrity of designated European wildlife sites, and the identification of mitigation measures or alternative solutions, where appropriate.
- AAP Area Action Plan** An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Local Development Framework (LDF), which provides the planning framework for a specific geographic area.
- AMR Annual Monitoring Report** The AMR is part of the local development framework and assesses the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which policies in local development documents are being successfully implemented.
- AQMA Air Quality Management Area** AQMAs are declared by Local Authorities in areas where there is poor air quality and national air quality objectives are not being met. AQMAs can range in size from a couple of streets to much bigger areas. Once declared, the Local Authority must compile a plan to improve the air quality in this area.
- BAP Biodiversity Action Plan** A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides an overarching framework for habitat and species conservation, and works on the basis of partnership to identify local priorities and targets.
- BREEAM Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method** BREEAM is a family of assessment methods and tools used to assess the environmental performance of any type of building (new and existing).
- Brownfield Land** See Previously Developed Land (PDL)
- CFS Code for Sustainable Homes**
- CHP Combined Heat and Power**
- CLG (Department for) Communities and Local Government**
- CSH Code for Sustainable Homes** The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is an environmental assessment method for new homes and contains mandatory performance levels in 7 key areas.
- Conservation Area** A Conservation Area is any area of “special architectural or historic interest” whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This

“specialness” is judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national importance, and designation leads to restriction of permitted development. There are 10 Conservation Areas in Halton.

**COMAH Control of Major Accident Hazards** (Regulations, 1999) COMAH regulations apply mainly to the chemical industry, but also to some storage activities, explosives and nuclear sites, and other industries where threshold quantities of dangerous substances identified in the Regulations are kept or used and aim to ensure all necessary measures to prevent major accidents and limit the consequences to people and the environment of any major accidents which do occur. This includes controlling land uses and developments within prescribed distances of regulated sites.

**CS Core Strategy**

**DfT Department for Transport**

**DPD Development Plan Document** Part of the LDF, Development Plan Documents include Core Strategies, Site Allocations DPD, Detailed Development Management DPD and Area Action Plan DPDs and form part of the statutory development plan for their area.

**DH District Heating ...**

**Energy Priority Zones**

**EqIA Equality Impact Assessment** Equality Impact Assessment is a method of assessing whether a plan, policy or project will have a foreseeable and disproportionate impact on specific sectors of society. It can help to ensure that policies and projects reflect the needs of different groups that it will affect. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Core Strategy.

**GI Green Infrastructure** Green Infrastructure (GI) is a new concept in the recognition of the environmental, social and economic, often multi-functional value of the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between towns and villages. In the same way that the transport infrastructure is made up of a network of roads, railways, airports etc. green infrastructure has its own physical components, including parks, rivers, street trees and moorland.

**Green Belt** “Green Belt” is a planning designation with the aim of keeping land permanently open for the purpose of (1) checking unrestricted urban sprawl (2) preventing neighbouring towns from merging (3) safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (4) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and (5) assisting urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Growth Point** Growth Points is a central Government initiative designed to provide support to communities who wish to pursue large scale and sustainable growth, including a particular focus on housing provision. A Growth Point is a partnership between Central Government and local partners to help deliver this growth. Halton is within the mid-Mersey Growth Point area along with St. Helens and Warrington councils.

**Gypsies and Travellers** Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.

**HSTN Halton Sustainable Transport Network** The Halton Sustainable Transport Network (HSTN) is the connected network of sustainable transport facilities in Halton, encompassing the Core Bus Network, the rail network, the Greenway Network, and other walking and cycling routes. It also includes links to transport interchanges, as well as links to sub-regional sustainable transport routes.

**HBC Halton Borough Council**

**HCA Homes and Communities Agency**

**HIA Health Impact Assessment** A method of assessing the potential health impacts, positive or negative, of a policy, programme or project. Outcomes are in the form of recommendations to minimise possible negative health impacts and enhance predicted positive ones. A rapid Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the Core Strategy.

**HRA Habitats Regulation Assessment** HRA is an assessment of the potential effects of a policy contained within a plan or programme on one or more sites designated as important at the European Level, namely Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Ramsar sites and candidate areas are also often assessed alongside these sites. The process of assessing development plans is split into three discrete phases: 1) Screening, or identifying whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site; 2) Ascertaining the effects on site integrity; and 3) Identification of mitigation measures and alternative solutions.

**HSE Health and Safety Executive** Governmental Executive Agency responsible for promoting and enforcing workplace health and safety.

**IMD Index of Multiple Deprivation** IMD is a national indicator set combining statistics across a range of economic, social and housing issues into single deprivation scores. Published at SOA level, the IMD allows areas to be ranked across a number of domains relative to one another.

**JELPS Joint Employment Land and Premises Study** Research study commission by Halton, Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire districts to look at the supply and demand for land and premises for business purposes.

**Key Diagram** The Key Diagram is a diagrammatic interpretation of a spatial strategy contained within a spatial planning policy document such as a Core Strategy or a Regional Spatial Strategy.

**LAA Local Area Agreement** LAA is a three year agreement, based on the local Sustainable Community Strategy, that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government and a local authority plus other key partners such as the LSP.

**LCA Landscape Character Assessment**

**LCR Liverpool City Region**

**LDD Local Development Document** LDDs are documents within the Local Development Framework (LDF).

**LDF Local Development Framework** The LDF is the portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs) including Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and process documents, including the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The LDF also includes the Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which will eventually be replaced by policies in LDDs.

**LDS Local Development Scheme** The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets the timetable for the production of the Local Development Framework and its constituent documents, and provides details of all of the Local Development Documents (LDDs) to be produced.

**Listed Building** A listed building is a building or other structure officially designated as being of special architectural, historic or cultural significance. There are three types of listed status, in descending order of importance: Grade I, Grade II\* and Grade II. Works or alterations, including certain maintenance require specific Listed Building Consent (which is separate and in addition to planning consent)

**LJLA Liverpool John Lennon Airport**

**LNR Local Natural Reserve** Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. In addition to supporting bio- and geodiversity, LNRs also offer opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy the natural environment.

**LPA Local Planning Authority**

**LTP Local Transport Plan** The Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the Council's objectives, strategies and policies for transport, detailing the schemes and initiatives that will be delivered, together with the performance indicators and targets used to monitor progress.

**Local Wildlife Sites** Local Wildlife Site is a designation used to protect areas of importance for wildlife at a local scale. Previously known as Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

**Natura 2000** Natura 2000 is the European ecological network of sites established under the Habitats Directive. Its main purpose is the protection of habitat types and plant and animal species of community interest in the European Union.

**NI National Indicator** NIs are Government defined indicators used to monitor the performance of local authorities and local partnerships. Updated in 2007, there are 198 NIs, covering diverse topics including education, health, environment, crime and transport.

**NWDA North West Development Agency**

**PADHI Planning Advice for Development near Hazardous Installations** PADHI is the methodology and software decision support tool developed and used by the Health

and Safety Executive used to give advice on proposed developments near hazardous installations.

- PDL Previously Developed Land** Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition includes defence buildings, but excludes:
- Land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings.
  - Land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures.
  - Land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds and allotments, which, although it may feature paths, pavilions and other buildings, has not been previously developed.
- Land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings).
- PINs Planning Inspectorate** The Planning Inspectorate is the Government-Agency with responsibility for processing planning and enforcement appeals and holding examinations into Regional Spatial Strategies and Development Plan Documents.
- PPG Planning Policy Guidance** Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) are Central Government statements of national planning policy and guidance. They are being superseded by Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)
- PPS Planning Policy Statement** Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) are prepared by Central Government as statements of national planning policy and provide guidance to local planning authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.
- PSZ Public Safety Zone** Area where new development will be restricted to control the population exposed to increased risk from a specified hazard. In Halton a PSZ extends from Liverpool John Lennon Airport runway affected by increased risk from aircraft arriving or departing the airfield.
- Ramsar Site** Wetland sites covered by the Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- RSL Registered Social Landlord** Including Housing Associations and Councils, Registered Social Landlord's (RSLs) are independent not-for-profit organisations providing low cost "social housing" for those in housing need and are the UK's major provider of homes for rent, as well as providing opportunities for shared ownership.
- SA Sustainability Appraisal** This process appraises the social, environmental and economic effects of the policies contained within Local Development Documents (LDDs), including all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and where appropriate, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- SAC Special Area of Conservation** A Special Area of Conservation is a designation under the European Union Habitats Directive, providing increased protection to a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats and are a vital part of global efforts to

conserve the world's biodiversity.

**Scheduled Monument** A Scheduled Monument is a nationally important historic building or structure or archaeological site, given protection against detrimental and unauthorised change. When designated, Scheduled Monuments are added to the schedule (which has been kept since 1882) of monuments whose preservation is given priority over other land uses. Scheduled Monuments are also sometimes referred to as "Scheduled Ancient Monuments".

**SCI Statement of Community Involvement** The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the role that the community and other stakeholders will play in the production of all documents within the Local Development Framework (LDF), as well as their role concerning planning applications.

**SCS Sustainable Community Strategy** The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), also known as the Community Strategy, provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of the partners within a Local Strategic Partnership can contribute. An SCS must contain a vision for the area and an action plan, as well as evidence of a shared commitment to implementation and arrangements for monitoring, review and reports of progress.

**SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment** European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. To meet the requirements of the directive, a body must prepare an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan, are identified, described and evaluated.

**SFRA Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) are primarily produced by local planning authorities, in consultation with the Environment Agency, and are intended to form the basis for preparing appropriate policies for flood risk management at the local level.

**SHLAA Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** A systematic assessment of the land developable and deliverable for housing within an area. The assessment includes a 'Call for Sites' where the public can promote sites as being suitable for housing development and appraisal of deliverability by a panel of developers and RSLs active in the local market.

**SHMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment** SHMA is a study across an identified largely 'self contained' housing market to provide understanding how the market operates and is likely to operate in the future. A SHMA provides an assessment of past, current and future trends in housing type and tenure, household size, and housing need, including an assessment of the needs of groups with particular housing requirements. In the preparation of the document, a consistent sub-regional approach is important, as is the involvement of key stakeholders in the local housing market.

**SIC Science and Innovation Campus**

**SJB Silver Jubilee Bridge**

**SINC Site of Importance for Nature Conservation**

**SO Strategic Objective**

**SPA Special Protection Area** SPAs are designations under the European Union directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Together with Special Areas of Conservation, the SPAs form a network of protected sites across the European Union, called Natura 2000.

**SPD Supplementary Planning Document** Part of the LDF, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide supplementary information in respect of the policies contained in DPDs, and tend to focus on particular issues or on particular places. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to an independent examination.

**SSSI Site of Special Scientific Interest** A Site of Special Scientific Interest is a national conservation designation denoting a protected area. SSSIs are the basis of other site-based nature and geological conservation, including National Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation.

**Strategic Site** A Strategic Site is an area which is considered central to the achievement of an authority's Core Strategy. National planning policy allows Core Strategies to specifically identify and allocate such sites for development.

**SuDS Sustainable Drainage System** Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) provide an alternative to the traditional methods of dealing with water drainage, aiming to mimic the natural movement of water from a development, slowing run-off, reducing flood risk, improving water quality and potentially providing attractive features.

**Travelling Showpeople** Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such), but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 1/2006.

**UDP Unitary Development Plan** A Unitary Development Plan (UDP) development plan prepared under the pre-2004 system by a Metropolitan district or Unitary Local Authority, which contains policies equivalent to those in both a structure plan and local plan, forming the part of the authority's statutory development plan. Policies from which are saved for an initial 3 year, or indeterminate period by consent of the Secretary of State and form part of the Development Plan for an area until superseded or otherwise deleted by a Development Plan Document.

**Use Classes Order** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and subsequent amendments, group a number of land uses into categories or 'Use Classes'. Changes of use within the same Use Class or between certain different Use Classes as set out in the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) are deemed to have consent and do not require specific planning permission.

# HALTON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic  
Environmental Assessment**

OCTOBER 2010

**Please acknowledge that this document is  
currently a working draft and includes  
inconsistencies in relation to the draft Proposed  
Submission Document.**

**This document will be subject to change.**

HALTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
It's all happening IN HALTON  
A Spatial Strategy for Halton 2026





## **Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft**

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

#### **DRAFT REPORT**

Main Report  
October 2010

Prepared for  
**Halton Borough Council**

## Revision Schedule

**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of Halton's Core Strategy  
Proposed Submission Draft – DRAFT Report**

October 2010

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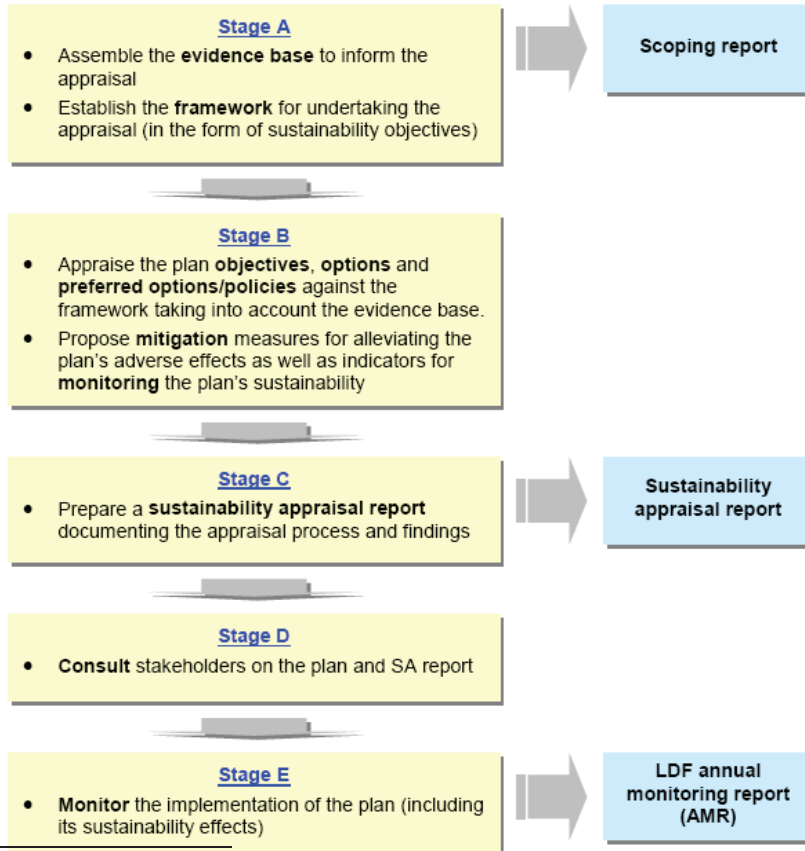
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a sustainability appraisal (SA) is mandatory for new or revised DPDs. Alongside this requirement, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 sets a statutory requirement for local authorities to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of all planning and land use documents. The 2004 Regulations transpose the requirements of the SEA EU Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment) into UK law.
- 1.1.2 The Government's preferred approach is to combine the SEA and SA requirements into one unified process that considers economic and social effects alongside environmental effects. The Government has published guidance on undertaking SA of LDFs that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' ('the Guidance') (Nov 2005)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.1.3 The Guidance advocates a five-stage approach to undertaking SA (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: Five-Stage Approach to SA**



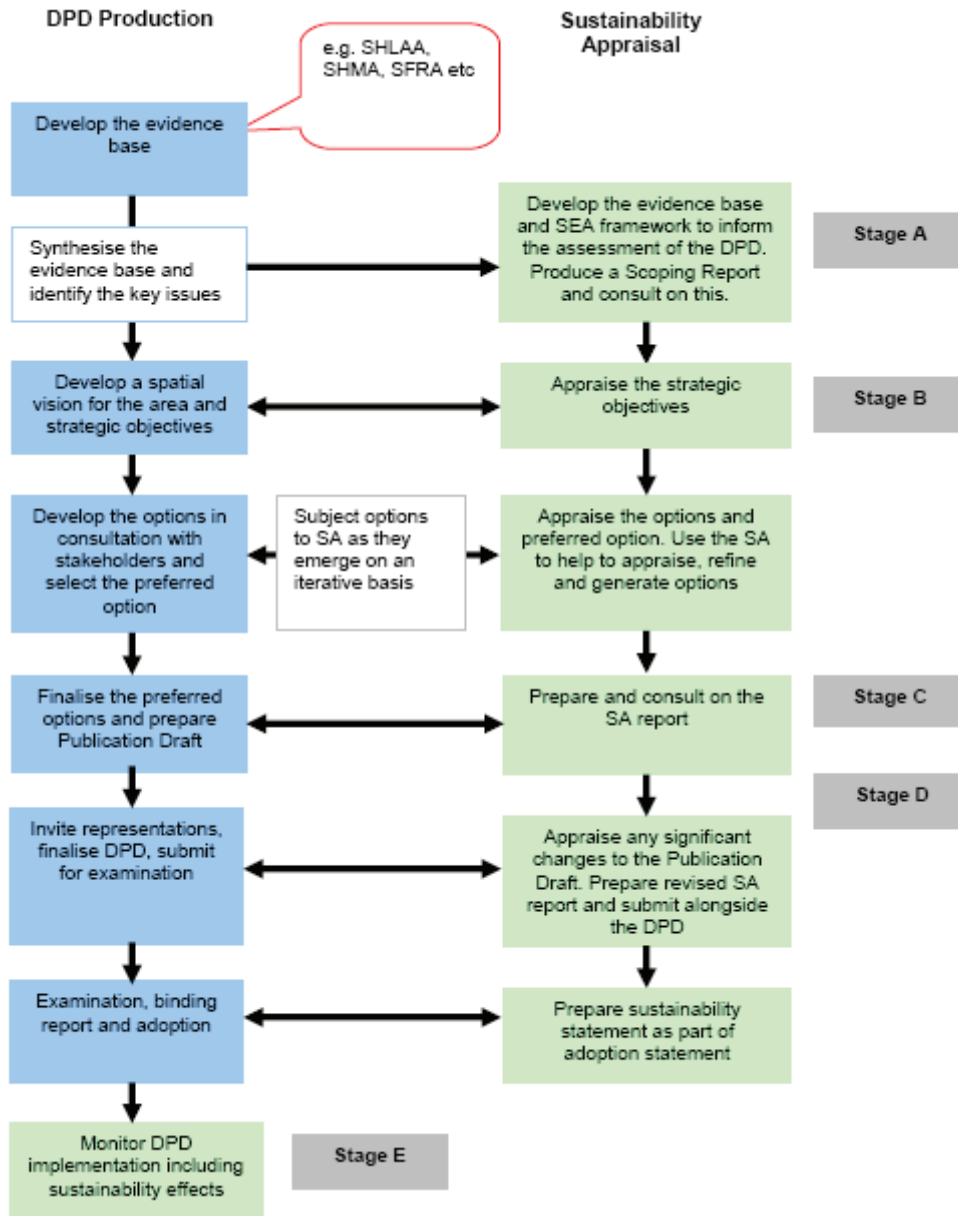
<sup>1</sup> The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in this report as Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Following the abolition of RSS's this guidance is no longer applicable insofar as it relates to the preparation or review of RSS. However in the absence of any more up to date government guidance on the SA/SEA of Local Development Frameworks, it remains a useful reference.

- 1.1.1 Stage A in the SA process develops the framework for undertaking future appraisals – generally this is a set of sustainability objectives – as well as collating an evidence base to inform the appraisal. The framework and evidence base are presented in a ‘Scoping Report’ for consultation with stakeholders, including the statutory consultees (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England).
- 1.1.2 An early Scoping Report was prepared by Halton Council in 2006 and used as the basis for appraisal of the development plan documents that form the Halton LDF. The Scoping Report was updated in 2009 to take account of new baseline information and this revised Scoping Report provides the appraisal platform for the SA of the Core Strategy as well as the other documents within the Halton Local Development Framework. This document is available from the Council's website<sup>2</sup> and will be available to view at deposit locations during periods of public consultation for Halton Local Development Framework Documents. Further details about the Scoping Report and a brief summary of its contents can be found in Section 1.5 of this report.
- 1.1.3 Stage B in the SA process is the appraisal itself, and is an iterative process. This requires the identification and evaluation of the impacts of the different options open to the plan-makers, as well as those of the preferred options / draft plan policies (depending on the stage in the process which is being reported on). Mitigation measures for alleviating adverse impacts are also proposed at this stage, together with potential indicators for monitoring those impacts during the plan's implementation.
- 1.1.4 Stage C in the SA process involves documenting the appraisal and preparing the SA Report (this incorporates the material required for inclusion in the Environmental Report under the SEA Directive). Following statutory consultation (Stage D) the SA Report may require updating to reflect changes made in response to representations. Stage E concerns ongoing monitoring of significant effects.
- 1.1.5 An SA Report was published in 2006 which assessed the Core Strategy Issues and Options stage and this was consulted upon alongside the Core Strategy document. A further SA report was produced to assess the Preferred Options in September 2009 in the same way. This SA Report, which accompanies the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft document, is the third iteration of the Stage C SA Report.
- 1.1.6 SA provides a decision aiding process that assists in the development of the plan or programme under development. Government guidance on local spatial planning states that<sup>3</sup>:
- “The Sustainability Appraisal should perform a key role in providing a sound evidence base for the plan and form an integrated part of the plan preparation process. Sustainability Assessment should inform the evaluation of alternatives. Sustainability Assessment should provide a powerful means of proving to decision makers, and the public, that the plan is the most appropriate given reasonable alternatives”*
- 1.1.7 The SA should seek to be an integrated, effective and purposeful tool for the production of Local Development Documents (LDD) for the Halton LDF. Figure 1.2 (below) illustrates how the SA is an integral part of the plan preparation process and should be undertaken in parallel with it.

<sup>2</sup>Link to Halton Borough Councils scoping Report (August 2009) - <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/pdfs/environment/planning/ldfscoping>

<sup>3</sup> This quote is taken from: Communities and Local Government (2008), Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning, London:TSO

Figure 1.2: SA Process – How it fits into the process of preparing a DPD



## 1.2 SEA Directive Requirements

1.2.1 In preparing new or revised Development Plan Documents (DPD), Halton Borough Council must conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, (the SEA Directive).

1.2.2 Following the Scoping Report, there are two levels of appraisal for a DPD: firstly, an appraisal of the DPD objectives and secondly; iterative appraisals of the content of the DPD – the options put forward during frontloading consultation, the preferred options and, finally, any additional



options that need to be worked up in finalising the submission DPD. Mitigation and enhancement measures for alleviating adverse effects and maximising positive effects, as well as potential indicators for monitoring the plan's sustainability are also identified at this stage. The SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment Regulations require the public and the SEA Consultation Bodies to be given "an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames" to express their opinions on the draft plan and the accompanying environmental report. When consulting on the DPD Publication Draft, LPAs must also invite comments on the SA report.

1.2.3 SA reports that meet the SEA Directive requirements to prepare an 'environmental report' have been prepared to accompany consultation documents on Halton's Core Strategy Issues and Options (September 2006) and Preferred Options (September 2009). This most recent report accompanies and assesses the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft (2010) for the Halton Core Strategy.

1.2.4 The table in Appendix 1 set out a procedural 'quality assurance' checklist for evaluating SA reports, based on questions and criteria derived from the SEA Directive, the regulations implementing the SEA Directive in England and the government's guidance on undertaking SA for LDDs.

## 1.3 Structure and Layout of this Report

1.3.1 This report sets out the findings of the SA of the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft. The report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** introduces the report and sets out the key requirements of the SEA Directive and how it has been transposed through the SA process for the Halton Core Strategy.
- **Chapter 2** outlines the SA process undertaken for the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report.
- **Chapter 3** sets out our methodology for undertaking the SA.
- **Chapter 4** outlines how the Core Strategy has developed from Preferred Options to Proposed Submission Draft.
- **Chapter 5** outlines which policies in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft need to be reappraised through the SA process.
- **Chapter 6-16** set out the **SA findings and recommendations** in relation to the following topic areas:
  - **Chapter 6 – Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna**
  - **Chapter 7 – Water Quality and Resources**
  - **Chapter 8 – Soil and Land Resources**
  - **Chapter 9 – Air Quality**
  - **Chapter 10 – Climatic Factors and Flooding**
  - **Chapter 11 – Cultural Heritage and Landscape**
  - **Chapter 12 – Population and Human Health**
  - **Chapter 13 – Social Inclusiveness (including skills and education)**

- **Chapter 14 – Transportation**
- **Chapter 15 – Local Economy and Employment**
- **Chapter 16 – Housing**
- **Chapter 17** sets out the cumulative and synergistic effects of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft.
- **Chapter 18** sets out the SA conclusions for the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft.
- **Chapter 19** outlines the recommendations for monitoring the impacts of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft.
- **Chapter 20** describes the consultation to be undertaken on the report.

## 1.4 Halton, the Halton LDF and the Core Strategy

- 1.4.1 Halton Borough Council is a unitary authority in the North West of England with two major centres, Runcorn and Widnes, lying on either side of the River Mersey. The estimated population of the Borough in mid 2004 was 118,900, with the towns of Runcorn and Widnes having respective populations of 61,250 and 57,660. The Borough covers an area of 30.6 square miles and is made up of 21 wards, the location of which can be seen on the map below.
- 1.4.2 In 1964 Runcorn was designated a new town and a master plan was published in 1967. The aspiration was to house 70,000 people within the new town's 2,930ha and was one of the first new towns to include an existing town area. The town was designed around a radical new road network with a figure-of-eight expressway embracing the town and a bus-way network of bus roads. From the start the then fashionable high rise home philosophy was eschewed in favour of houses with gardens and the town was provided with two industrial estates, a business park and town centre, Halton Lea. Rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s followed the new town designation and a considerable area of derelict land in Widnes was reclaimed in the 1970s and 1980s.
- 1.4.3 However over the last 20 years industrial decline and under-investment has left the Borough in economic decline. By 2001 the Borough was ranked as the 18th most deprived English local authority area overall, with complex problems of poverty and social exclusion. Eight of Halton's 21 wards rank in the lowest 10% for employment, and unemployment among under-25s was the second highest in England. Nevertheless, in recent years the Borough has shown some of the strongest improvements in the region in this area.
- 1.4.4 Despite its problems, the Borough does enjoy locational advantages. The M62 lies to the north and the M56 to the south and these two motorways are linked through the Borough by the Mersey Bridge. Runcorn has a main line railway station with direct links to Liverpool, Birmingham, London, Manchester and north Wales. Widnes is on the Liverpool to Manchester line. It is a relatively short distance from Liverpool and Manchester airports and the major seaports of Merseyside.
- 1.4.5 Congestion on the existing road bridge has led the Borough to support proposals for a new Mersey road crossing and for massive redevelopment of the waterfront, within the constraints of the nature conservation area. The Council intends to tackle the combined problem of

population decline, contaminated land, major accident risk installations and traffic congestion through stressing locational advantages, preparing sites for development and encouraging investment.

1.4.6 Halton Borough Council's LDF is the overall name for the collection of new planning documents that will be written. It consists of the Local Development Scheme, Statement of Community Involvement, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. Like the UDP, it will provide a policy framework for decisions about the future use and development of land and will help to shape the local environment.

1.4.7 The Halton LDF will include the following LDDs:

Development Plan Documents

- Core Strategy DPD
- Site Allocations and Development Management DPD
- Development Contributions DPD
- Joint Merseyside Waste DPD

Supplementary Planning Documents

In production

- West Bank (to be adopted)
- Design of New Residential Development (to be adopted)
- Halebank (to be adopted)

New SPDs referred to in the Core Strategy

- Daresbury
- Runcorn Old Town
- Hot Food Takeaways
- Climate Change and Sustainable Development
- Runcorn Waterfront

Other previously planned SPDs

- Local List
- Transport and Accessibility
- Widnes Town Centre
- Widnes Waterfront (Update)
- Halton Lea

Adopted SPDs (related to UDP policies)

- 3MG
- Planning for Risk
- Sandymoor
- House Extensions
- Telecommunications
- Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development
- Castlefields
- Shop Fronts, Signage and Advertising
- Designing for Community Safety
- Widnes Waterfront

1.4.8 The most important DPD to be produced by the Council is the Core Strategy DPD, which will provide the overarching spatial planning framework for Halton for the period to 2026 and beyond. The production of the Core Strategy has been ongoing since 2006, when Issues and Options Papers were published for a period of public consultation. In 2009 the Council prepared a “Preferred Options” report, which took into account the results of the previous consultation and the emerging evidence base collated, and set out the Council’s preferred approach to dealing with a variety of issues and opportunities pertinent to Halton, alongside alternative options which had not been chosen. A ‘Proposed Submission Draft’ of the Core Strategy has now been prepared, which includes a number of revised policies, reflecting a more concise approach, and taking into account the abolishment of the North West Regional Strategy.

1.4.9 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft contains several key components, including:

- **A Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives:** The vision sets out the aspirations for the development of the Borough by 2026 and overarching objectives for policy development to achieve this.
- **Spatial Strategy:** The spatial strategy highlights how much development should be delivered and broad locations for accommodating it, as well as areas of the Borough where built development will be restrained.
- **Key Diagram:** This presents the main elements of the Spatial Strategy in diagrammatic form.
- **Supporting Documentation:** The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft Report is supported by a wide range of evidence, including a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Housing Needs Survey, Urban Housing Capacity Study, Joint Employment Land and Premises Study, Retail Study, Landscape Character Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment and an Open Space Survey. This Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft SA Report is among the most important of the supporting documents.

- 1.4.10 A list of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies appraised in this report is included in Table 1.1 below:

**Table 1.1: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft Policies**

<b>Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft Policies</b>
<b>Key Spatial Policies</b>
CS? Halton's Spatial Strategy
CS? Sustainable Development
CS? Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
CS? Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
CS? A Network of Centres for Halton
CS? Infrastructure Provision
<b>Key Areas of Change</b>
CS? 3MG
CS? South Widnes
CS? West Runcorn
CS? East Runcorn
<b>Core Policies</b>
CS? Affordable Housing
CS? Housing Mix
CS? Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
CS? Sustainable Transport
CS? The Mersey Gateway Project
CS? Liverpool John Lennon Airport
CS? Sustainable Development and Climate Change
CS? High Quality Design
CS? Natural and Historic Environments
CS? Green Infrastructure
CS? Green Belt
CS? Health and Well-Being
CS? Managing Pollution and Risk
CS? Waste
CS? Minerals

## 1.5 The Scoping Report: Summary

- 1.5.1 As described in paragraph 1.1.2, an SA/SEA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy was prepared in 2006, which was subsequently updated in 2009. The 2009 Scoping Report synthesised and presented to stakeholders the main messages emerging from the LDF evidence base. The Scoping Report was based on the information gathered and developed during the previous stages of the SA process, specifically a contextual analysis, the collection of baseline information, the identification of sustainability issues as well as the formation of SA objectives.

- 1.5.2 This scoping report was organised on the following topic-by-topic basis:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Water Quality and Resources
- Soil and Land Resources
- Air Quality
- Climatic Factors and Flooding
- Cultural Heritage and Landscape
- Population and Human Health
- Social Inclusiveness including Skills and Education
- Local Economy and Employment
- Housing
- Transportation.

1.5.3 Each of these topics were explored in terms of a context review, including a review of key messages from national and regional policy; an assessment of the current baseline situation, including locally collected data; and an appraisal of the likely future baseline, should existing trends continue. For each topic, the key emerging sustainability issues were highlighted, as were the data limitations encountered. This topic-by-topic approach will be replicated within this Sustainability Appraisal for the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document.

1.5.4 A critical role of the Scoping Report was to outline a series of SA Objectives which can be used to assess the sustainability of plans and documents within the LDF. These objectives form the SA Framework, which is used as a central component of this Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document SA, and will be used for sustainability appraisals for other LDF documents.

1.5.5 The Scoping Report was published for a five week period of consultation between 8th June and 13th July 2009 with the statutory authorities, namely English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency and other key stakeholders. Following this period of consultation amendments were made to the Scoping Report in accordance with comments received, and the final Scoping Report was published in September 2009.

## 1.6 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

1.6.1 The Scoping Report produced a SA framework, which sets out a series of SA Objectives. The SA framework is reproduced below, with key objectives and locally distinctive sub-criteria.

**Figure 1.3: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

SA Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
<b>1. To protect, enhance and manage places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural</b>	Protect and enhance features of historical and archaeological importance which contribute to the cultural and tourism offer of the Borough.
	Ensure that all new development meets high standards in terms of quality of design, safety, security and accessibility and relates well to existing development and the public realm.

SA Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
<b>and archaeological value</b>	<p>Conserve and enhance high quality landscapes and townscapes in the Borough, especially those that contribute to local distinctiveness.</p> <p>Ensure access to high quality public open space and natural green space.</p>
<b>2. To protect, enhance and manage Biodiversity in Halton</b>	<p>To ensure that new development does not impact upon the condition of sites of biodiversity (including both habitat and species) interest including SSSI and other local and national designations.</p> <p>To protect Natura 2000 sites from the adverse effects of human activity, pollution and coastal erosion.</p> <p>To promote habitat provision and enhancement within new development and seek to link these to existing habitats.</p>
<b>3. To maintain and enhance the water quality of Halton's inland, estuarine and coastal water and to sustainably manage water resources</b>	<p>Promote sustainable design and construction measures that reduce water consumption and result in decreased run-off of polluted water (including during construction phase)</p> <p>Encourage the allocation and location of new development where water abstraction can occur sustainably.</p> <p>Ensure efficient use and management of water resources throughout the Borough.</p>
<b>4. To promote adaptation to Halton's changing climate</b>	<p>Promote new development that minimises the emission of greenhouse gases.</p> <p>Seek to provide a built environment and green infrastructure network that will minimise health impacts associated with climate change.</p>
<b>5. To reduce flood risk in Halton from rivers, estuaries and sea level change</b>	<p>Ensure new development incorporates SUDs.</p> <p>Avoid development in locations at risk from flooding and mitigate any residual flood risk through appropriate measures including through design.</p>
<b>6. Increase energy efficiency in the built environment, and the proportion of energy use from renewable sources</b>	<p>Promote high sustainable design and construction standards for housing and non-housing development, in order to ensure that Halton meets the Government target of all new residential development being zero carbon by 2016.</p> <p>Clear guidelines and support for the use of renewable energy Sources such as wind and hydro power in new and existing developments.</p>
<b>7. To protect and improve land quality in Halton</b>	<p>To conserve and enhance soil quality and general geodiversity in Halton.</p> <p>Develop brownfield sites where these can support wider sustainability objectives (e.g. reduce travel by car, improve the public realm, avoid loss of biodiversity, gardens, etc.).</p> <p>Ensure new development will not result in contamination of land and promote the remediation of existing contaminated sites.</p>
<b>8. To improve air quality in Halton</b>	<p>Seek to reduce the volume of CO2 emissions attributable to the transport sector.</p>

SA Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
	<p>Reduce the number of journeys made by private car in order to reduce the high levels of nitrogen dioxide in areas of traffic congestion in the Borough.</p> <p>Consider and mitigate the impacts on air quality that might result from development, including major infrastructure projects.</p>
<b>9. To minimise production of waste and increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates</b>	<p>Reduce the proportion of waste that goes to Landfill in the Borough.</p> <p>Promote the integration of waste management facilities to enable efficient recycling and energy from waste as part of new developments.</p>
<b>10. To improve access to a range of good quality and affordable housing that meets the needs of the community of Halton</b>	<p>Ensure that all new development meets the lifetime homes standards, in order to meet the needs of an ageing population in the Borough.</p> <p>Seek to develop mixed income communities and flexibility of tenure and housing type in the Borough.</p> <p>Coordinate housing provision with investment in employment and community services to ensure that settlements meet the needs of their communities.</p> <p>Provide decent, good quality and affordable housing for all, including intermediate and key worker housing in line with RSS (and Growth Point) housing targets.</p>
<b>11. To improve access to services and facilities in Halton</b>	<p>Provide improved physical access to education, skills and training facilities on foot, cycle and by public transport.</p> <p>Secure economic inclusion in the most deprived wards in the Borough, particularly those most affected in Runcorn and Widnes.</p> <p>Ensure that issues of both rural and urban deprivation are considered in development proposals.</p>
<b>12. To improve physical and mental health and well-being of people and reduce health inequalities in Halton</b>	<p>Maintain accessible healthcare facilities throughout Halton.</p> <p>Promote healthy and active lifestyles through encouraging walking and cycling as well as the provision and improvement of public access to good quality rights of way, open space, countryside, sporting, recreational and community facilities in Halton.</p> <p>Reduce crime and the fear of crime, by adhering to ‘designing out crime’ principles in all new development.</p>
<b>13. To improve education, skills and qualifications in the Borough and provide opportunities for life long learning</b>	<p>Improve linkages between higher education providers and local employers.</p> <p>Promote good access to educational and training opportunities for all sectors of the population, particularly amongst deprived communities.</p>
<b>14. To support a strong, diverse, vibrant and</b>	<p>Promote employment in areas where unemployment is high, particularly in Runcorn and Widnes, which reflects the skills and aspirations of local people.</p>



SA Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
<b>sustainable local economy to foster balanced economic growth</b>	Provide a positive planning framework for exploiting new opportunities in tourism, creative and knowledge based industries and the energy sector, including renewable energy technologies.
	Maximise the opportunities that Growth Point Status offers in Halton.
	Provide support for economic development that is appropriate for small businesses or home-based working.
	Seek to attract employment and training programmes specifically targeted at maintaining and increasing the proportion of young people in the Borough.
<b>15. Support the development of the sustainable leisure and tourism industry</b>	Improve the quality of supporting infrastructure for tourism in the Borough, such as accommodation and leisure and cultural facilities.
	Encourage the use of the Borough's natural and cultural features for tourism development, within their environmental limits.
<b>16. To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres in the Borough</b>	Protect the shopping and community services function of local service centres.
	Reduce the number of vacant retail properties in Runcorn, Halton Lea and Widnes and the other smaller service centres in the Borough.
	Improve the quality of the public realm in order to improve the attractiveness of the service centres to new investment.
<b>17. To improve the choice and use of sustainable transport in Halton and reduce the need to travel</b>	Improve the provision and quality of bus and rail services in Halton.
	Develop and maintain safe, efficient and integrated transport networks within Halton, with good internal and external links.
	Reduce car dependency by providing services and facilities accessible by sustainable modes of transport, particularly in rural areas.
	Promote a pattern of development which reduces private vehicle dependency in the location of homes, jobs, leisure and community services.

## 2 The Preferred Options SA report

- 2.1.1 Substantial work was undertaken as part of the SA process for the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report.
- 2.1.2 The Preferred Options Core Strategy SA was undertaken as a “whole plan” assessment. This means that the combined effect of all of the policies together were assessed in terms of their impact on each of the topic areas contained within the report and listed in Figure 1.3. This approach is considered to be more holistic, with only the policies that are likely to have a significant effect on SA Objective(s) within a particular topic area, being assessed in detail.
- 2.1.3 Such policies were assessed together so as to ascertain their impact in combination on the appropriate topic area, hence reflecting the reality of the policies of the plan being adopted and implemented together. Recommendations for enhancing the positive effects and mitigating the negative effects of individual policies on the overall sustainability of the plan were identified as a result of the assessment, together with general improvements that could be made to the policies to make them more sustainable.

## 2.2 Topic Chapter Assessments

- 2.2.1 Set out below is a short description of the main components of the topic based assessments in the Preferred Options SA Report.

*(i) Introduction*

The topic is introduced with a brief overview.

*(ii) Policy Context*

This section is linked to the context review information collected in the Scoping Report. The main findings of the context review as they relate to each topic are summarised.

*(iii) The Situation Now*

This section details the key baseline sustainability issues identified in the Scoping Report (and any updated baseline information) that are relevant to the assessment (e.g. those components likely to be affected by the plan). The local plan (UDP) planning policies (and any other relevant Council policies) are also referred to, where they have an effect on the current situation.

*(iv) The situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option*

This section reports on the ‘business as usual scenario’ (as required in the ODPM SA Guidance). The effect of the local plan (UDP) planning policies (and any other relevant Council policies) are considered in terms of how they will affect the future situation – this is usually a declining effect, as policies become out of date and are replaced.

**Table 2.1: Example of table used in ‘The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option’ section**

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect



The matrix is used to ‘screen out’ those policies which have little or no effect on this topic / objective. This allows the assessment to focus on those policies with a significant effect and, to a lesser degree, the policies with a less significant effect.

The assessment is narrative in nature, and looks at policies in combination, rather than in silo’s. So, for example, the discussion considers the effects of the plan (by which we mean those policies identified as having a significant or less significant effect on this specific topic) in a cumulative and synergistic manner. This includes long / medium / short term effects and whether the policies have any effects specifically on certain spatial areas.

*(v) The situation be under the Core Strategy Alternative Options*

Utilising a matrix approach the preferred policy option and alternatives for each specific policy area were assessed as follows:

SA Topic	Preferred Policy Option	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Assessment focused on the topics that the policy area had a direct impact on – those “driver” policies that have the most significant effect. Topics where effect is minimal were scoped out.	Brief summary of the impact the preferred policy has on the topic, as assessed in the topic chapter	Comparison as to how the impact on this topic would change if the alternative were implemented instead of the preferred option	Comparison as to how the impact on this topic would change if the alternative were implemented instead of the preferred option

SA Topic	Preferred Policy Option	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
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Summary: of the overall comparison between the preferred policy option and the alternatives and any justification for selecting the preferred policy if an alternative had actually been assessed as more sustainable than the preferred option.

The following key was used to demonstrate within the matrix the individual effect of a preferred option or alternative on a topic, to provide an easily comprehensible comparison of the effects. A separate matrix for each policy area was prepared.

#### KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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#### *(vi) Mitigation and Enhancement of Effects*

This section recorded the changes required to mitigate and enhance effects. This approach ensures that the 'whole plan' assessment does not miss some of the subtleties that in-depth policy appraisal allows, without replicating the disjointed assessment that results from considering policies in silos.

#### *(viii) Summary of Impacts*

A summary table sets out the type of impact (short to medium, long term, permanent versus temporary, secondary), the areas most likely to be affected, the results of the assessment of the Preferred Options policies, and the in-combination effects with other plans and programmes.

The "Summary of Impacts" section deals with all of the requirements of the SEA Directive and tells the story of the predicted effects, both positive and negative. If and where effects may vary between different parts of the Borough, this is identified. A discussion on the relative spatial sustainability of the plan is also provided. Secondary effects are also required to be identified by the SEA Directive. These are mainly the "less significant effects" but the key concept is that they are indirect impacts. A section is included that identifies the secondary factors required to reach sustainable outcomes. For example, a healthy population depends on several factors including:

- Provision of adequate housing;
- Thriving economy;
- Low pollution and access to open space;
- Lack of flooding; and
- Adequate social infrastructure.

This section ties together the sustainability effects identified in the summary tables. A brief section is also included to discuss changes through the lifetime of the plan and beyond this, addressing the temporal nature of effects.

## 2.3 Topic Areas and the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

2.3.1 The table below indicates how the objectives contained within the SA Framework were allocated to the topics within the SA Scoping Report and were replicated in Preferred Options SA Report.

**Table 2.3: Topic Areas and SA Framework Objectives**

Topic Area	Applicable SA Objective(s)
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## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Summary of SA/SEA appraisal to date

- 3.1.1 An initial LDF Scoping Report was prepared in 2006 and formally consulted on between 24th March and 28th April 2006. The Scoping Report examined in detail the policy context; set out baseline information and projected trends in the future baseline; identified sustainability issues; and, on this basis, developed a number of SA objectives – the SA Framework.
- 3.1.2 Taking into account comments from consultees, the finalised SA Scoping Report was used to assess the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers. Between 27th July and 7th September 2006, initial consultation was carried out on issues affecting Halton and the potential options for addressing these issues, alongside ways of accommodating new development. An interim SA Report was produced to accompany the publication of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers and consultation. This report made an initial comparison of the broad spatial options discussed in the Options Paper.
- 3.1.3 An updated LDF Scoping Report for all of the documents in Halton’s LDF was produced in August 2009. Following an update to the evidence base and identification of sustainability issues in this Report the SA Framework was revised.
- 3.1.4 On the basis of the findings of the Issues and Options Interim SA Report and in response to comments received on the Issues and Options Papers, a Preferred Options Core Strategy document was drawn up. This was published for public consultation between 24th September and Thursday 5th November 2009. The Preferred Options was accompanied by a further SA/SEA Report which assessed the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the preferred policy options and their alternatives. The Preferred Options SEA/SA Report was based on the revised SA Framework developed in the 2009 SA Scoping Report.
- 3.1.5 The SA reports for the Issues and Options stages and the SA Scoping Report can be found on the Council’s website<sup>4</sup>.

### 3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 This report builds on the previous Preferred Options SA work which was prepared using a robust methodology that is consistent with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the European Directive 2001/42/EC.
- 3.2.2 As in the Preferred Options SA Report, this Proposed Submission Document SA will be undertaken on the basis of a “whole plan” assessment. This means that the combined effect of all of the policies taken together will be assessed in terms of their impact on each of the topic areas contained within the report and listed in Table 2.3. This approach is considered to be more holistic, with only the policies that are likely to have a significant effect on SA Objective(s) within a particular topic area being assessed in detail. This SA Report appraises any new significant effects that might originate as a result of revisions to one or more of the policies since the Preferred Options Stage, and any impacts this might have, in holistic terms, i.e. in combination with any other policies. A ‘significant’ change to a policy is one that might result in

<sup>4</sup><http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/environment/planning/forwardplanning/ldf/corestrategy/>

- a significant change in terms of policy approach, direction, content or delivery, such that it might generate significant positive or negative effects that will need reconsidering.
- 3.2.3 A number of the policies in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document have not changed significantly since the Preferred Options SA Report. The appraisal of these policies has not been revisited in this report, unless it was necessary to reappraise them in light of any revised policies, where it was thought that they might have an ‘in-combination’ effect with the revised policy.
- 3.2.4 In terms of the detailed methodology, this report firstly considers the changes between the Preferred Options and Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies and then identifies and justifies which policies do not need to be subject to a reappraisal through the SA process. Table 5.1 documents the changes to each policy and indicates whether the policy needs to be reappraised.
- 3.2.5 The matrix in Appendix 2 sets out the effect of each policy on the sustainability topics, i.e. whether this is “significant”, “less significant” or “little or no” significance, and how likely this is to have an effect on the SA Objectives within each topic. This is not an assessment of whether the effects are positive or negative, but purely a consideration of the likely significance of any effect of a policy on a given topic. This essentially is a screening process, which screens out the need to appraise those policies which have little or no effect on certain topics. The topic chapter assessments that follow this chapter focus on those policies that are likely to exhibit a significant effect on the topic, using a “whole-plan” assessment.
- 3.2.6 The combined effects of all of the reappraised policies have also been assessed, in terms of their impact on each of the topic areas contained within the report, or in combination with those policies which have not been subject to a full reappraisal.
- 3.2.7 This assessment methodology ensures that the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft has been subject to a suitably robust SA / SEA process and that this report is focused and concise.

### 3.3 Difficulties Encountered

- 3.3.1 The SEA Directive requires an acknowledgement of any difficulties such as technical difficulties or data gaps encountered in undertaking the assessment and in compiling the required information.
- 3.3.2 A key issue in undertaking the appraisal of the DPD is the strategic nature of the Core Strategy, the uncertainty surrounding precisely how the strategic direction will be implemented in practice and the degree to which objectives will be delivered (particularly since many different partners are involved in its delivery). A key assumption has been made that the policies in the Core Strategy will be fully implemented (i.e. they have been taken at ‘face value’). However, having identified this, where tensions between priorities are evident or it appears clear that full implementation will be problematic, or involve trade-offs, this has been highlighted.
- 3.3.3 There remains a significant element of uncertainty in relation to whether the policies in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will be a significant enough response to the challenges which are faced in relation to adaptation to climate change, and the fundamental change which is required to achieve a low carbon economy and society. The policies in the Strategy have yet to be tested, and close monitoring will be required to see whether this response will be sufficient. This is an issue not just for Halton, but for every local authority.



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## 4 Development of the Core Strategy from Preferred Options to Proposed Submission Draft

- 4.1.1 At the Preferred Options stage a number of preferred policy options and policy directions were formulated. Following comprehensive public consultation in 2009 these policy options and directions have been refined, a process which has been informed by the amendments suggested in the Preferred Options SA Report. In some instances policies have been combined /amalgamated or new policies of a similar direction have been added. These policies are the subject of the appraisal in this report.
- 4.1.2 The following table demonstrates how the results of the Preferred Options SA have influenced the preparation of the Proposed Submission Draft policies.

**Table 4.1: How the Sustainability Appraisal process has influenced plan development since the Core Strategy Preferred Options Stage**

Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy	Recommendations	Commentary
CS1: Halton’s Spatial Strategy	Policy should recognise the importance of green spaces within the urban area in terms of the value they provide to the borough and its residents.	Policy now recognises the importance of green spaces within the urban area in terms of the value they provide to the borough and its residents. Positive impact on sustainability.
CS2: Sustainable Development Principles	There were no recommendations suggested at preferred options stage.	N/A
CS3: Housing Supply	The location and level of development has been identified as a key determinant for flood risk. It will therefore be necessary to make further reference to reducing this risk in the preferred policy options for CS3: Housing Requirements and Locational Priorities, CS4: Employment Land and Locational Priorities, and the Key Areas of Change policies.  Policy CS3 Housing Supply will be improved by indicating that close monitoring of provision may lead to a change in the policy in the future, if actual net housing completions do not meet the annual targets.  With respect to Policy CS3, it would be helpful to include a reference in the policy that it will be important that the provision of supporting infrastructure does not lag behind housing development.	Policy CS?: Managing Pollution and Risk now considers flood risk.  Policy CS?: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities indicates that the Council is unable to identify a 5 year supply of sites for housing development, a review of housing land supply through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will be undertaken, and if necessary, will seek to allocate additional land in a DPD to make up any shortfall.  Policy CS?: Infrastructure Provision addresses the issues of supporting infrastructure.
CS4: Employment Land Supply and	It is recommended that Policy CS4:	Recommendations have not been

Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy	Recommendations	Commentary
Locational Priorities	Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities is amended to identify strategic areas for employment; to ensure that development pressure from higher value development such as housing does not have a negative cumulative impact on the future provision of employment land, i.e. by compromising delivery on strategic sites or areas.	incorporated as strategic sites / areas have been identified in the Spatial Strategy policy and in the Key Areas of Change polices.
CS5: Neighbourhood Priority Areas	The Core Strategy preferred policy options should emphasise to a greater extent the importance of contributing to carbon emission reductions and ensuring our environments and communities are fully adapted to the effects of climate change. This may mean bringing out further policy links to climate change within the Core Strategy, for instance in policy CS5: Neighbourhood Priority Areas.	Recommendations have been incorporated into CS? Sustainable Development and Climate Change.
CS6: The Mersey Gateway Project	-	N/A
CS7: 3MG	-	N/A
CS8: South Widnes	-	N/A
CS9: East Runcorn	-	N/A
CS10: West Runcorn	-	N/A
CS11: Addressing Housing Needs	Policy should address the Housing SA sub-objective 1, relating to lifetime homes standards as recommended.	Policy CS? Housing Mix now focuses on lifetime homes. This inclusion strengthens the positive impacts of the policy on the Housing SA sub-objective 1.
CS12: Affordable Housing	Policy CS12 states that all qualifying housing developments must make provision for an element of affordable housing. It doesn't state which developments will 'qualify' however. Decisions on form, tenure and quantity of affordable provision are left to a site specific	Recommendations have been incorporated into the policy. The policy now provides more detail as to the development threshold and requirements of affordable housing provision including tenure requirements.

Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy	Recommendations	Commentary
CS13: Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	determination, which is likely to generate uncertainty for developers and place a lot of pressure on the decision making process at application stage. -	N/A
CS14: Design of new Residential Development	Specified in policy CS14 'Design of New Residential Development', is the aim that "development proposals should embrace the 'Buildings for Life' principles", a design code that includes a consideration of accessibility to open space. This could be advanced after the initial 'grace period' permitted to developers given that this is a recently created design code; by demanding achievement of Building for Life Gold Standard within all developments across the Borough. -	Policy CS? Sustainable Development and Climate Change seeks to ensure that the design and construction of future residential development meets high design standards, including Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
CS15: Safeguarding and Regenerating Employment Areas	-	N/A
CS16: Increasing Employment Opportunities	The sustainability of Policy CS16: Increasing employment opportunities could be improved by supporting opportunities for home working. Home working is likely to reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable modes of transport. This in turn, may reduce congestion and improve air quality. -	The suggested mitigation measure was not incorporated into the policy.
CS17: A Network of Centres	-	N/A
CS18: Halton Lea Town Centre	-	N/A
CS19: Health and Well-Being	The link between ensuring developments are adaptable to a changing climate and the positive benefits for Halton's communities could be further explored and expanded upon. It suggests that this is dealt with in CS19.	The suggested mitigation measure was not incorporated into the policy.

Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy	Recommendations	Commentary
CS20: Community Services and Facilities	-	N/A
CS21: Inclusive Communities	-	N/A
CS22: Protection from Risk and Pollution	<p>The wording of policy CS22 should be altered to ensure that developments are 'required' not to cause water pollution.</p> <p>The preferred options SA report suggests that the link between ensuring developments are adaptable to a changing climate and the positive benefits for Halton's communities could be further explored and expanded upon. It suggests that this is dealt with in CS22.</p>	The suggested mitigation measures were not incorporated into the policy.
CS23: High Quality Design	<p>The inclusion of more detail as to the design principles that developments should follow in order to enhance the setting of cultural heritage and landscape across Halton should be made.</p>	Two of the recommendations that were suggested as part of the preferred options sustainability appraisal were incorporated into the policies contained in the submission version of the core strategy. More detail on design principles has been included. The policy now incorporates a section that considers the need to ensure that the design is sustainable in terms of future management and maintenance.
CS24: Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development	<p>There were no recommendations suggested at the preferred options stage.</p>	N/A
CS25: Conserve, Manage and Enhance	<p>Include a reference to climatic change in the policy to ensure that areas of biodiversity interest are accordingly conserved, managed and enhanced in response to changing climatic conditions.</p>	The suggested mitigation measure was not incorporated into the policy.
CS26: Green Infrastructure	<p>The SA reported recommended a separate bullet point dealing with the effects of local</p>	Two of the suggested mitigation measures (relating to dealing with the effects of climate

Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy	Recommendations	Commentary
	pollution and climate change	<p>change) identified in the preferred options SA were incorporated in to the proposed submission draft policy, including a separate bullet point on local pollution and climate change.</p> <p>The proposed submission draft policy does not incorporate any of the recommendations re ensuring good air quality for those living and working in Halton of for reducing the risk of flooding within the Borough however.</p>
CS27: Contaminated Land	-	N/A
CS28: Encouraging Sustainable Transport	Greater emphasis could be placed in policy CS28 and CS29 on the air quality related benefits of increased use of sustainable transport, particularly for shorter journeys.	A new section has been added to the policy in relation to encouraging sustainable transport. This has improved the compatibility of the policy with SA Objectives 8, 11 and 7.
CS29: Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions	<p>Greater emphasis could be placed in policy CS29 on the air quality related benefits of increased use of sustainable transport, particularly for shorter journeys. This could be linked to a greater emphasis on reduced greenhouse gas emissions, along with particulate emissions, associated with this desired modal shift.</p> <p>The role of the Silver Jubilee Bridge, particularly after the planned completion of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, could be better explained, emphasising the prioritisation of this route for improved walking and cycling access. This could be achieved through the alteration of policies CS6 and/or CS29.</p>	The recommendations have been incorporated into CS?: Sustainable Transport and Travel and CS?: The Mersey Gateway Project.
CS30: Accessibility of New Development	-	N/A
CS31: Freight Transportation	Policy CS31 could be further developed to	The suggested mitigation measure was not



Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy	Recommendations	Commentary
CS32: Liverpool John Lennon Airport	<p>explore the negative impacts of freight transportation on air quality, potentially linking to Policy CS22, in order to ensure that any negative impacts on air quality are monitored and mitigated, particularly in locations where road-based freight movements are likely to increase.</p> <p>Stronger wording on mitigation of the negative impact of the implementation of this policy was recommended. Stating this matter within the policy itself may result in a reduction of the negative effects through the requirement of mitigation.</p>	<p>incorporated into any of the relevant policies.</p> <p>Greater emphasis has been placed on the need to address negative environmental and built environment and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of the airport.</p>
CS33: Infrastructure Provision	-	<p>Reference to work with infrastructure/service providers to develop the Infrastructure Plan has been incorporated into the policy - this is positive.</p>
CS34: Waste	<p>The preferred options SA report suggested that the positive influence of CS34 could be enhanced by applying more challenging targets.</p>	<p>The suggested mitigation measure was not incorporated into the policy.</p>
CS35: Minerals	N/A	N/A

4.1.3 The changes to the Core Strategy policies that took place between the Preferred Options and the Proposed Submission Draft stages is set out in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2: Development of Core Strategy policies from Preferred Options to Proposed Submission Draft**

Preferred Options Policies	Proposed Submission Draft Policies
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## 5 SA/SEA of Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft Policies

- 5.1.1 Table 5.1 below indicates which policies in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft have been reappraised. Some policies did not need to be reappraised through the SA process due to limited changes to the policy meaning, direction or effects arising from those policies which were appraised at the Preferred Options stage.



**Table 5.1: SA implications of the changes between the Preferred Options and Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft**

Core Strategy Proposed Submission Policy	Change to Core Strategy Policy since Preferred Options stage	SA Implications
x		
x		
x		
x		







x

x

x





x

x

x





x

x

x







## 6 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Biodiversity is the term given to the diversity of life on Earth. This includes the plant (flora) and animal (fauna) species that make up our wildlife and the habitats in which they live. It also includes micro-organisms and bacteria. As well as being important in its own right, we value biodiversity because of the ecosystem services it provides, such as flood defence and clean water; and the contribution that biodiversity makes to our wellbeing and sense of place.

6.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna topic area should be reappraised:

- CSx: Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CSx: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Green Belt

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

6.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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## 6.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

6.2.1 Table 6.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna topic area.

**Table 6.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options		Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
	<p>The Preferred Core Policy options identified within the Core Strategy generally strive to meet the sustainability objective identified in the SA framework on the topic of Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora. Overall the Preferred Core Policy Options proposed are considered to offer potentially less negative effects on environmental aspects, when compared to that of the alternative options.</p> <p>The negative effects identified above can be minimised or in some instances removed through the effective implementation of other preferred Core Policy options in combination and through detailed mitigation measures.</p>		<p>Other plans and programmes that promote growth will have similar negative effects on biodiversity however very positive effects are created by the implementation of other locally strategic plans and programmes such as the Natural Assets Strategy and National Planning Policy described earlier.</p>	

Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>The extent of the significance of effects and the subsequent mitigation will be assessed in greater detail in the assessment of the Site Allocations DPD and Detailed Development Policy DPD.</p> <p>Consequently, careful wording of more specific policies suggested above could minimise the significant negative effects identified as well as ensuring that there is adequate provision for the protection of the environment resulting in a positive effect on biodiversity, fauna and flora in Halton.</p>	
	<p>Biodiversity flora and fauna can be affected by a combination of environmental considerations such as air pollution and climate change therefore it is difficult to predict the impact of the Core Strategy beyond 2026. Although the delivery of the Core Strategy policy options will result in a continuing positive effect on biodiversity, fauna and flora in Halton if all mitigation identified is delivered.</p>	<p>As above</p>

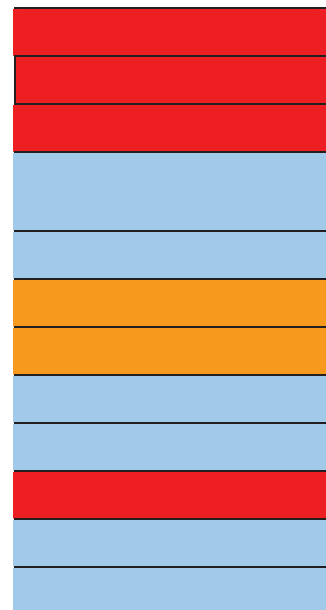
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
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### 6.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

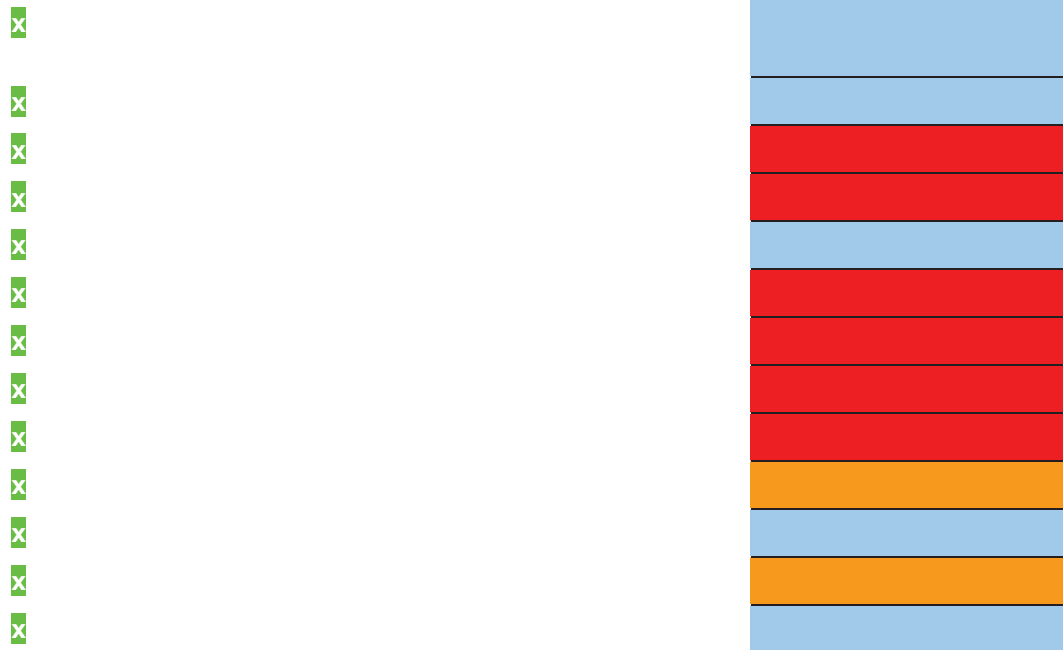
6.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on Biodiversity Fauna and Flora in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of Biodiversity Fauna and Flora.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

x  
x  
x  
x  
  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x







**General Comments**

6.3.2 Overall, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is envisaged to have a positive impact on the biodiversity, flora and fauna topic area. In particular, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles) and policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton’s Natural and Historic Environments) set out the guiding principles for the Core Strategy in relation to protecting key areas of biodiversity value within Halton. A number of the policies that are re-appraised in this section identify the level and type of development that is required in Halton over the plan period. New development in the borough (set out in policies: CS<sub>x</sub>: Halton’s Spatial Strategy, CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Supply and Locational Priorities, CS<sub>x</sub>: East Runcorn, CS<sub>x</sub>: Infrastructure Provision and CS<sub>x</sub>: Liverpool John Lennon Airport) is likely to pose a threat to areas of biodiversity value. Policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision) provide sufficient measures for ensuring that areas of biodiversity value are protected alongside the delivery of development. However, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) would benefit from the inclusion of an additional text to improve its sustainability in relation to this topic area.

**Protecting Biodiversity Assets**

6.3.3 The main effect that the Proposed Submission Draft policies could have on the key biodiversity, flora and fauna assets in Halton arise from the level of development proposed. Halton’s Spatial Strategy (CS<sub>x</sub>) identifies that in order to achieve the vision for Halton by 2026, 8000 new homes and 260 hectares of employment land will be required. The broad principles for locating new housing within Halton over the plan period are set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Supply and Locational Priorities). New development within Halton that is required over the plan period is likely to create pressure on areas of biodiversity value located throughout the Borough.

6.3.4 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) sets out the level of development that could be accommodated towards the east of Runcorn in Daresbury and Sandymoor. The key area of change has a number of sites of ecological value located in and around it, including the Red Brow Cutting SSSI, the Daresbury Firs LNR and the Murdishaw Wood and Valley LNR. Although the policy identifies the importance of providing a network of open space for nature conservation and the

retention of Daresbury Firs which is positive, it could be strengthened by a reference to the need to protect and enhance the existing ecological assets in this area, recognising the additional pressure that these areas will be placed under by new development.

- 6.3.5 The approach to providing sufficient infrastructure provision in Halton is set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision). The development of new infrastructure (particularly transport infrastructure) within Halton could potentially have a negative impact on areas of biodiversity, flora and fauna. However, the justification for the policy identifies the need to ensure that the policy is delivered in accordance with achieving the objectives of CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles), which should assist in protecting key areas of biodiversity, flora and fauna when developing new infrastructure.

### Green Belt Protection

- 6.3.6 The Proposed Submission Draft of the Core Strategy includes a new policy relating to the protection of the Green Belt within Halton. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Belt) highlights how the general extent of the Green Belt is likely to remain unchanged over the plan period, which should help to ensure that key areas of biodiversity value located in the Green Belt will be protected.
- 6.3.7 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (John Lennon Airport) indicates that a runway extension and the new Eastern Access Transport Corridor will require a change to Halton's Green Belt. This could potentially have an impact on key areas of biodiversity located close to the airport (i.e. the Mersey Estuary SSSI/SPA/RAMSAR and the Millwood and Alder Wood LNR). However, the policy incorporates measures to ensure that any future development and expansion of the airport considers the need to incorporate measures that will reduce or alleviate any detrimental impacts on the natural environment (including areas of international, national/local conservation and ecological value) and provided these measures are successfully implemented, this should help to offset these impacts.

## 6.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 6.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the biodiversity theme.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 6.4.2 Although the policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) identifies the importance of providing a network of open space for nature conservation as part of delivering new development, it does not include any measures that will help ensure that the pressures felt by existing areas of ecological value are mitigated.

#### *Recommendation*

- In the justification for the policy, provide a cross reference to policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles) to help ensure that the need to conserve and enhance the biodiversity features of East Runcorn is considered as part of delivering substantial new development in East Runcorn.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 6.4.3 Measures relating to the protection of the Green Belt in new policy CSx (Green Belt) will help to retain areas of biodiversity value located in the Green Belt over the plan period. Furthermore, measures included in policies CSx (Infrastructure Provision) and CSx (John Lennon Airport) should provide some measure of protection to biodiversity when delivering new development in Halton.
- 6.4.4 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing these positive effects on the biodiversity, flora and fauna topic area.

## 6.5 Summary of Impacts

- 6.5.1 Table 6.2 below provides a summary of likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the biodiversity, flora and fauna topic area.

**Table 6.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p><b>Overall, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is envisaged to have a positive impact on the biodiversity, flora and fauna topic area. In particular, policy CSx (Sustainable Development Principles) and policy CSx (Halton’s Natural and Historic Environments) set the overarching principles for the Core Strategy in relation to protecting key areas of biodiversity value within Halton.</b></p> <p><b>The main risk to key areas of biodiversity value within the Borough is the level of development proposed within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft. A number of policies provide sufficient</b></p>	<p><b>Other plans and programmes that promote growth will have similar negative effects on biodiversity. However very positive effects are created by the implementation of other locally strategic plans and programmes such as the Natural Assets Strategy and National Planning Policy (in particular PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation).</b></p>

Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>measures for ensuring that new development will be delivered whilst ensuring that areas of biodiversity are protected.</p> <p>However, if the recommendation set out above for policy CS1 (East Runcorn) is implemented, then the sustainability of this policy in relation to the biodiversity, flora and fauna topic area will be improved.</p>	
	<p>Biodiversity flora and fauna can be affected by a combination of environmental considerations such as air pollution and climate change therefore it is difficult to predict the impact of the Core Strategy beyond 2026. Although the delivery of the Core Strategy policy options will result in a continuing positive effect on biodiversity, fauna and flora in Halton if all mitigation identified is delivered.</p>	<p>As above</p>



## 7 Water Quality and Resources

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 In the UK, access to clean water is generally taken for granted, yet large quantities are used for domestic purposes, for cooling, rinsing and cleaning in industry, and for irrigation in agriculture. Such activities place a heavy burden on water resources in terms of both quality and quantity. Water resources include precipitation, surface water (lakes, rivers, etc.), soil (near-surface) water and groundwater. Sustainable and effective planning and management of water resources is essential.

7.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the Water Quality and Resources topic area should be reappraised:

- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: West Runcorn
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Managing Pollution and Risk

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

7.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Water Quality and Resources topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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## 7.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

7.2.1 Table 7.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the Water Quality and Resources topic area.

**Table 7.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options		Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
	<p>Advice from United Utilities and the Environment Agency is that the growth proposals in the Regional Spatial Strategy can be accommodated with reference to water resources.</p> <p>Action needs to be taken to reduce demand to protect the natural environment at times of low flows and prepare for future climate change when water resources may be stretched. CS24 and CS 33 are the primary policies to move the water efficiency agenda forward in Halton.</p> <p>The Water Framework Directive needs local implementation and the Core Strategy sets a strong direction to improve water quality through policies CS2, CS22, CS23, CS24, CS26 and CS27.</p>		<p>The Core Strategy builds upon the regional plans, including the Draft North West River Basin District - River Basin Management Plan; Draft Dee River Basin District - River Basin Management Plan; Lower Mersey and Alt Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy; Catchment Flood Management Plans; and the Regional Spatial Strategy that should together deliver the improvements required by the Water Framework Directive and help to conserve water resources.</p>	

In the longer term, should sufficient growth have been achieved, there will be a need for continual monitoring and mitigation of water quality and resource issues.

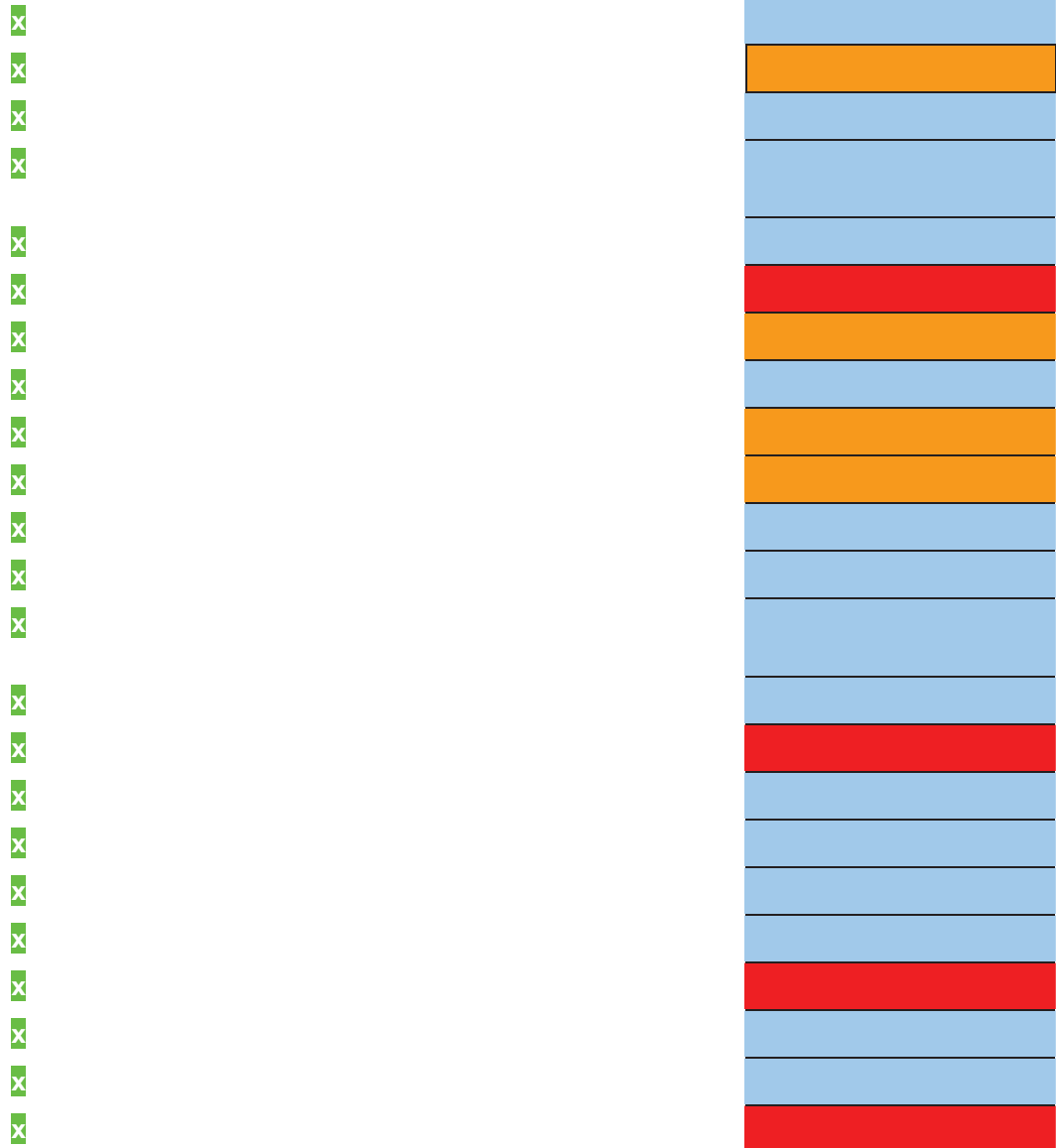
An emphasis on water quality and resource management will continue to be prevalent in all documents. It is necessary for Halton to maintain a long term commitment to promoting water efficiency in all new developments.

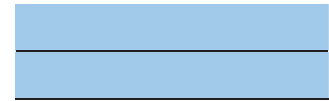


### 7.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

7.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on water quality and resources in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of water quality and resources.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect





## General Comments

- 7.3.2 Overall, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies are judged to have a positive impact on the water quality and resources topic area. Although the level of development outlined within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is likely to pose a threat to water quality and resources, there are a number of policies (including CS<sub>x</sub>: Sustainable Development Principles, CS<sub>x</sub>: High Quality Design, CS<sub>x</sub>: Sustainable Development and Climate Change and CS<sub>x</sub>: Green Infrastructure) that incorporate measures which should assist to protect water quality and quantity. In particular, Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (managing Pollution and Risk) highlights how development proposals should not exacerbate water pollution and should aim to minimise it.

## Protection of Water Quality and Resources

- 7.3.3 In terms of protecting water quality and resources, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) provides the guiding policy. It states that development proposals should not exacerbate and where possible should minimise all forms of emissions and odour, water, noise and light pollution. This will help to protectionwater quality and resources when delivering new development within Halton. The positive impact of this policy on the water quality and resources topic area is further strengthened by policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles), CS<sub>x</sub> (High Quality Design), CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development and Climate Change) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Infrastructure).
- 7.3.4 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision) incorporates measures to ensure that development proposals are supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure, including water supply and treatment infrastructure which supports efficient use and management of water resources. One of the significant changes to this policy since the preferred options stage is that it includes a measure to ensure that planning obligations or a tariff based approach can be used to fund infrastructure provision.

## Level of New Development

- 7.3.5 Both policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) and CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) promote significant levels of new development within Halton. It is likely that the concentration of new development in these two areas will post a threat to the quality of watercourses within the Borough. Intensified development in West Runcorn (as set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub>) could have a negative impact on the water quality of the Mersey Estuary. Furthermore, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) will result in the loss of greenfield land, which may reduce the ability for rainwater to recharge the groundwater aquifer, due to the presence of impermeable surfaces. Both policies would be improved by reference to the need to protect water quality as part of delivering new development in these areas.

## 7.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 7.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the water quality and resources topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

7.4.2 Policies CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) and CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) set out requirements for significant levels of new development within Halton. It is likely that the concentration of new development in the two areas will post a threat to the quality of watercourses within the Borough.

*Recommendation*

- Provide a cross reference in the justification for the two policies to CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk), highlighting the need to protect water quality when delivering new development in West and East Runcorn.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

7.4.3 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) will help to safeguard water quality in the delivery of new development in Halton. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision) should ensure the appropriate water supply and treatment infrastructure is provided.

7.4.4 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing these positive effects on the water quality and resources topic area.

## 7.5 Summary of Impacts

7.5.1 Table 7.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the water quality and resources topic area.

**Table 7.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>The Core Strategy sets a strong direction to improve water quality through policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk), policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles), CS<sub>x</sub> (High Quality Design), CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development and Climate Change) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Infrastructure)</p> <p>The changes made since the _____</p>	<p>The Core Strategy builds upon the regional plans, including the Draft North West River Basin District - River Basin Management Plan; Draft Dee River Basin District - River Basin Management Plan; and the Lower Mersey and Alt Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy;</p>

preparation of the preferred options stage do not have a major impact on the sustainability theme. However, if suggested recommendations in relation to cross referencing in the reasoned justification of the policies are implemented, then the positive impact of the Core Strategy in relation to water quality and resources will be further enhanced.

Catchment Flood Management Plans that should together deliver the improvements required by the Water Framework Directive and help to conserve water resources.

In the longer term, should sufficient growth have been achieved, there will be a need for continual monitoring and mitigation of water quality and resource issues.

An emphasis on water quality and resource management will continue to be prevalent in all documents. It is necessary for Halton to maintain a long term commitment to promoting water efficiency in all new developments.



## 8 Soil and Land Resources

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The use of land resources is a key component of sustainable development, the needs of urban development, agriculture, the protection of valued flora and fauna and the provision of open space must all be balanced with the protection of geodiversity. Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils, along with the natural processes that shape the landscape.

8.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the Soil and Land Resources topic area need reappraising:

- CSx: Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: West Runcorn
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- CSx: Green Belt
- CSx: Managing Pollution and Risk
- CSx: Minerals

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

8.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Soil and Land Resources topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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## 8.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

8.2.1 Table 8.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the Soil and Land Resources topic area.

**Table 8.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	<p>A significant focus of the plan is on the remediation of previously developed land and efforts to bring this back into beneficial use through the Key Areas of Change policies. It must also be remembered that the sustainability appraisal considers social and economic effects not just environmental implications.</p> <p>Over the plan period, some aspects of the Spatial Strategy may result in potential negative impacts on soil and land resources due to the development of Greenfield sites in East Runcorn.</p> <p>However, these negative effects can be mitigated by other policy content within the preferred options, which aim to address potential problems over the plan period. Examples</p>	<p>Halton's Urban Renewal is a key theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. Tackling contaminated land and focusing regeneration on areas of previously developed land is a primary objective of many Council plans and strategies and also wider sub-regional documents.</p>

	include the design policies and also those on Green Infrastructure and Contaminated Land.	
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	In the longer term, the location of growth will require innovative thinking, as the portfolio of previously developed land gets increasingly smaller due to redevelopment, pressure on Greenfield and Green Belt sites will increase.	There is increasing pressure upon land resources for development across the sub-region. It is likely the sub-region will be left with a 'hard core' of previously developed land that is not economically viable to remediate. At this point Greenfield / Green Belt will be the only options.
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	The riverside belt of land either side of the Mersey Estuary is most likely to be affected by this policy as this is where the majority of previously developed land is located. These areas will be affected positively. Areas of Greenfield development, such as Daresbury and Sandymoor in East Runcorn are the areas that may see negative effects in terms of soil and land resources.	
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	As the development of land is considered a permanent arrangement, both the positive and negative effects will be permanent.	
<b>Secondary</b>	Positive secondary effects are likely to result from the Mersey Gateway Priority Project where land regeneration opportunities will be sought in West Bank, Runcorn Old Town, Astmoor Industrial Estate, and Widnes Town Centre and Waterfront. Development in West Runcorn is also likely to bring previously developed land back into beneficial use.	

### 8.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

8.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on water quality and resources in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of soil and land resources.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

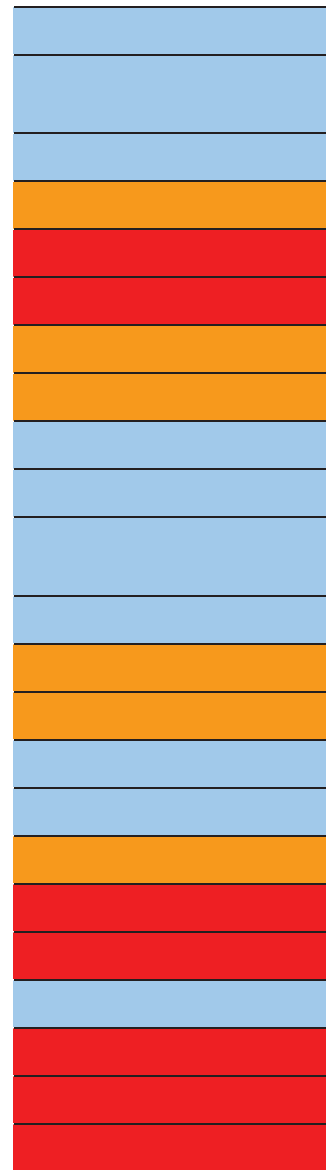
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**General Comments**

8.3.2

The impact of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the soil and land resources topic theme is broadly similar to that of the preferred options. Over the plan period, development promoted by the Spatial Strategy may result in negative impacts on soil and land resources through the development of greenfield sites in East Runcorn, the development of Green Belt land and the extraction of mineral resources. However, these negative effects can be offset by other policies within the Proposed Submission Draft, which aim to protect key soil and land resources over the plan period and highlight the importance of delivering a high quality Green Infrastructure network across the Borough. The policies which will help to mitigate any negative effects include: CSx (Sustainable Development Principles); CSx (Halton's Natural and Historic Environment); and CSx (Green Infrastructure).

## Impact of Development on Soil and Land Resources

- 8.3.3 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft sets out the need for new development to occur in Halton over the plan period. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton's Spatial Strategy) and CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) highlight how a significant proportion of this new development will be required on greenfield land. It is acknowledged that development on greenfield land is necessary in order to deliver economic and social benefits throughout Halton and policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton's Spatial Strategy) outlines the importance of prioritising the re-use of previously developed land outside of the key areas of change. This should help to ensure that development on greenfield land outside of the key areas of change is avoided over the plan period.
- 8.3.4 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) sets out the type and level of development that will be targeted towards West Runcorn. As the policy will involve development of brownfield land in the area, it will have a positive impact on ensuring prudent use of land resources within Halton.
- 8.3.5 The approach to providing sufficient infrastructure provision in Halton is set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision). The development of new infrastructure (particularly transport infrastructure) within Halton could potentially have a negative impact but a cross reference is provided to policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles) to highlight this.

## Green Belt

- 8.3.6 A key aim of policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Belt) is to protect the general extent of the Green Belt surrounding Halton over the plan period, which will contribute to a positive impact on the topic theme. However, this positive impact is slightly negated by the section of the policy (along with policy CS<sub>x</sub>: John Lennon Airport), which highlights the requirement for Green Belt release to the east of John Lennon Airport to accommodate further expansion of the airport over the plan period. Any Green Belt release will have a negative impact on the protection of land resources in the Borough. However, it is acknowledged that the expansion of John Lennon Airport is necessary in order to deliver economic benefits to Halton and neighbouring local authority areas.

## Further Impacts

- 8.3.7 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) sets a positive approach to bringing contaminated land back into use throughout the Borough. The implementation of this policy will have a positive impact on the soil and land resources topic area, as it will promote the reduction of contaminated land within the Borough over the plan period.
- 8.3.8 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Minerals) identifies the Council's approach to managing mineral resources throughout the Borough. The policy highlights the potential for exploiting the Borough's limited mineral resources, which will have a negative impact on sustainability in relation this topic area. However, the policy mitigates this negative impact to a certain extent as it encourages the use of recycled and secondary aggregates across the Borough to minimise the need for minerals extraction.

## 8.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 8.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the soil and land resources topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 8.4.2 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton’s Spatial Strategy) and CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) highlight how a significant proportion of new development will be required on greenfield land, which will have a negative impact on the topic theme. However, it is acknowledged that development on greenfield land is necessary in order to deliver economic and social benefits throughout Halton. No additional mitigation measures are therefore recommended to off-set the negative impacts of these two policies.
- 8.4.3 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Belt) and CS<sub>x</sub> (John Lennon Airport) identify that there will be a requirement for release of Green Belt in order to accommodate new development at John Lennon Airport. It is acknowledged that this development is necessary in order to deliver economic benefits throughout Halton and neighbouring local authority areas. No additional mitigation measures are therefore recommended to off-set the negative impacts of these two policies.
- 8.4.4 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Minerals) states that there is potential for exploiting mineral resources in the Borough. However, the policy mitigates potential negative impacts to a certain extent by highlighting the importance of using recycled and secondary aggregates across the Borough in order to minimise the need for minerals extraction.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 8.4.5 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) has a positive impact on the topic theme as it will help ensure that new development is delivered on brownfield land within Halton. Furthermore, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) identifies a positive approach for bringing contaminated land back into use across the Borough, which will have a positive impact on the topic area.
- 8.4.6 No further measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the soil and land resources topic area.

## 8.5 Summary of Impacts

- 8.5.1 Table 8.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the soil and land resources topic area.

**Table 8.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	The impact of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the soil and land resources topic theme is broadly similar to that of the preferred	Halton’s Urban Renewal is a key theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. Tackling

	<p>options. Over the plan period, some aspects of the Spatial Strategy may result in potential negative impacts on soil and land resources due to the development of greenfield sites in East Runcorn, the development of Green Belt land and the extraction of mineral resources.</p> <p>However, these negative effects can be mitigated by other policies within the Proposed Submission Draft, which aim to address potential problems over the plan period and highlight the importance of delivering a high quality Green Infrastructure network across the Borough.</p> <p>The policies which will help to mitigate the negative effects include: CSx (Sustainable Development Principles); CSx (Halton's Natural and Historic Environment); and CSx (Green Infrastructure).</p>	<p>contaminated land and focusing regeneration on areas of previously developed land is a primary objective of many Council plans and strategies and also wider sub-regional documents.</p>
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	<p>In the longer term, the location of growth will require innovative thinking, as the portfolio of previously developed land gets increasingly smaller due to redevelopment, pressure on greenfield and Green Belt sites will increase.</p>	<p>There is increasing pressure upon land resources for development across the sub-region. It is likely the sub-region will be left with a 'hard core' of previously developed land that is not economically viable to remediate. At this point greenfield / Green Belt will be the only options.</p>
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	<p>The riverside belt of land either side of the Mersey Estuary is most likely to be affected by this policy as this is where the majority of previously developed land is located. These areas will be affected positively. Areas of greenfield development, such as Daresbury and Sandymoor in East Runcorn are the areas that may experience negative effects in terms of soil and land resources.</p>	
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	<p>As the development of land is considered a permanent arrangement, both the positive and negative effects will be permanent.</p>	
<b>Secondary</b>	<p>A potential significant secondary or indirect effect on land resources is the impact increased development (especially residential development) could have on land resources if the waste produced by those new developments is not minimised, re-used or recycled.</p>	

## 9 Air Quality

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 In previous years Halton acquired a poor reputation for air quality. It has been home to the chemical industry and this commercial activity, combined with the burning of coal for heating led to high levels of pollutants. Over recent years changes in legislation and local industry has led to improved air quality. The main causes of poor air quality today are from traffic; Carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOX), volatile organic compounds (VOC) and small particles (PM10), all of which are among the pollutants emitted from vehicle exhausts. This chapter of the report assesses the impact that the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft has on the air quality sustainability topic area.

9.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the air quality topic area need reappraising:

- CSx: Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CSx: West Runcorn
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- CSx: Managing Pollution and Risk

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

9.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Soil and Land Resources topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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### 9.2 Th

## e Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

9.2.1 Table 9.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the air quality topic area.

**Table 9.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options		Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
	<p>Over the plan period, some aspects of the Spatial Strategy may result in potential negative impacts on air quality due to increased transport movements and economic productivity, but this should be mitigated by other policy content within the preferred options, which aim to address potential problems over the plan period.</p>		<p>The Council's Local Air Quality Management duties will be important in practically assessing the impacts of development on local air quality over the plan period.</p> <p>Similarly, the Local Transport Plan has an important role in ensuring that transport-related schemes, projects and plans have regard to impacts on local air quality and that these are managed and mitigated.</p> <p>Overall, these plans and activities, along with the Core Strategy, should ensure that sustainability in terms of air quality should not be negatively affected.</p>	
	<p>In the longer term, should sufficient growth have been achieved, there will be a need for continual monitoring and mitigation of air quality issues, which will be supported through the policy</p>		<p>Emerging plans, programmes and strategies, including likely continuation of air quality management at the local level, will be extremely likely to effectively continue the</p>	

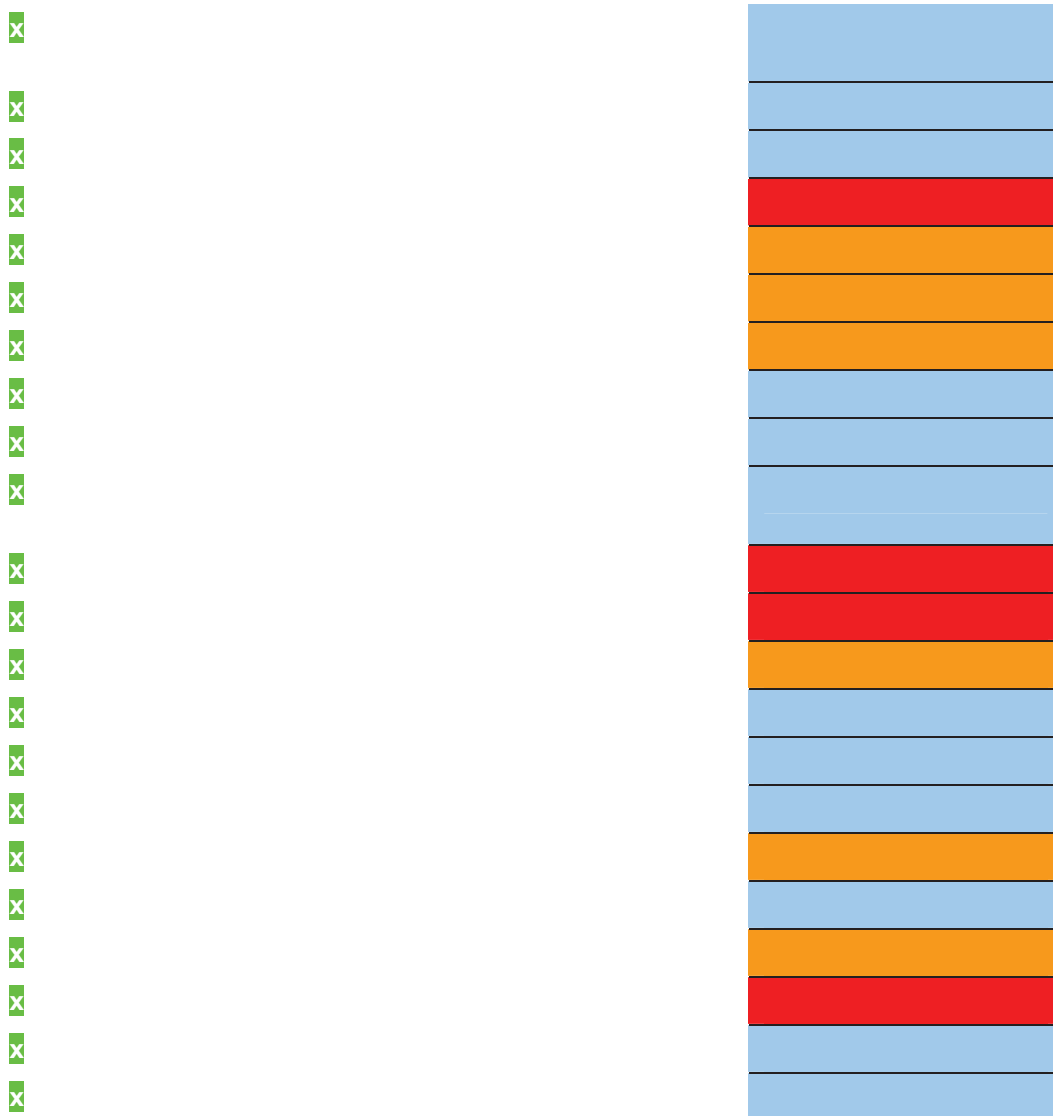
content of the Core Strategy.      emphasis on protecting air quality.

### 9.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

9.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on air quality in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of air quality.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

x  
x  
x



**General Comments**

9.3.2 The impact of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies on the air quality sustainability topic area are broadly similar to that of the preferred options. The implementation of the Core Strategy (in particular, policies CS<sub>x</sub>: Halton's Spatial Strategy, CS<sub>x</sub>: West Runcorn and CS<sub>x</sub>: East Runcorn) is likely to lead to increased residential and working population in the Borough, which will lead to increased transport and traffic movements. In turn, this will lead to increases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which will have a negative impact on air quality in the Borough. However, efforts have been made through the suite of Core Strategy policies to address the expected impacts of this new development, as well as existing air quality problems. Expansion at John Lennon Airport (policy CS<sub>x</sub>) could also potentially have a negative impact on air quality through increased carbon emissions from aircraft movements and from land-based transport to and from the airport. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) is expected to have a positive impact on air quality as it incorporates numerous measures that highlight the importance of protecting air quality within Halton.



### Impact of Increased Levels of Development

- 9.3.3 The level of development proposed within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is likely to pose the most significant threat to air quality within Halton. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton's Core Strategy) identifies that in order to achieve the vision for Halton by 2026, 8000 new homes and 260 hectares of employment land will be required. Increased transport and traffic movements due to the increased residential and working population in Halton will lead to higher CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which will have a detrimental impact on air quality in the Borough.
- 9.3.4 However, the negative impacts of increased levels of development are offset to a certain extent by the same policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton's Core Strategy). It highlights how major new residential and employment development will be on brownfield and urbanised areas (with the exception of development on greenfield land at East Runcorn), near to transport links and key facilities. Reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car, should over time lead to a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport and help to improve air quality in the Borough (in combination with other initiatives to reduce energy consumption).
- 9.3.5 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) focuses on improving accessibility and connectivity and supports improvements to the sustainable transport network, which will assist to make sustainable methods of transport available for people wanting to access the area once it is developed. This will help reduce reliance on the private car, which, provided people are willing to travel by other means, should assist to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport and improve air quality in the Borough.
- 9.3.6 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) is expected to have a negative impact on air quality through the emissions created by the construction of significant housing and employment development on a greenfield site. However, the policy does attempt to mitigate this by describing proposals for a new public transport interchange to be developed as part of the urban extension and how walking and cycling routes will be promoted in order to reduce the need to travel by the private car.

### John Lennon Airport Expansion

- 9.3.7 The expansion of John Lennon Airport set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub> will increase carbon emissions from aircraft movements and from land-based transport to and from the airport. This will have a negative impact on the air quality sustainability topic area. The policy highlights how any negative impacts associated with the operation and expansion of the airport will be addressed through measures to alleviate/reduce impacts on air quality, although it is difficult to see how this might be achieved.

### Air Quality Management Areas

- 9.3.8 The implementation of policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) is expected to have a positive impact on air quality. The policy sets out specific measures for proposals for developments that take place in the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). The policy highlights how the exceedances in air pollutants can be addressed and how the impact on receptors can be reduced. This should help to afford a level of protection of air quality in these areas where development proposals are being considered.

## 9.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

9.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the air quality topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

9.4.2 The implementation of the Core Strategy (in particular, policies CSx: Halton’s Spatial Strategy, CSx: West Runcorn and CSx: East Runcorn) is likely to lead to an increased residential and working population in the Borough, which will lead to increased transport and traffic movements. In turn, this will lead to increases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which will have a negative impact on air quality in the Borough. However, the policies are judged to incorporate sufficient measures that will help to mitigate any negative impacts on air quality that are caused as part of delivering new development in Halton.

9.4.3 The expansion of John Lennon Airport set out in policy CSx will increase carbon emissions from aircraft movements and from land-based transport to and from the airport, which will have a negative impact on air quality in the Borough. The policy is judged to incorporate sufficient mitigation measures to offset any negative impacts caused by the expansion of the airport will be mitigated, provided these measures are effectively implemented. These are likely to be the subject of detailed assessment through the planning application process.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

9.4.4 Policy CSx (Managing Pollution and Risk) is expected to have a positive impact on air quality as it incorporates numerous measures that highlight the importance of protecting air quality within Halton.

9.4.5 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the air quality topic area.

## 9.5 Summary of Impacts

9.5.1 Table 9.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the air quality topic area.

**Table 9.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

	Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft			Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.	

<p>The short/medium term impact of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is broadly similar to that of the Preferred Options. Over the plan period, some aspects of the Spatial Strategy may result in potential negative impacts on air quality due to increased transport movements and economic productivity. However, these negative impacts are mitigated to a certain extent by measures included within policies (CSx: Halton’s Spatial Strategy, CSx: West Runcorn and CSx: East Runcorn).</p>	<p>The Council’s Local Air Quality Management duties will be important in practically assessing the impacts of development on local air quality over the plan period.</p> <p>Similarly, the Local Transport Plan has an important role in ensuring that transport-related schemes, projects and plans have regard to impacts on local air quality and that these are managed and mitigated.</p> <p>Overall, these plans and activities, along with the Core Strategy, should ensure that sustainability in terms of air quality should not be negatively affected.</p>
<p>In the longer term, should sufficient growth have been achieved, there will be a need for continual monitoring and mitigation of air quality issues, which will be supported through the policy content of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Emerging plans, programmes and strategies, including likely continuation of air quality management at the local level, will be extremely likely to effectively continue the emphasis on protecting air quality.</p>



## 10 Climatic Factors and Flooding

### 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 Climate change is recognised as one of the most serious and important challenges facing the UK. Climate change issues must be addressed at the national, regional and local level. In recent decades evidence has accumulated to demonstrate that an unprecedented rise in global temperatures has occurred over the last century or so. Scientific consensus attributes this change to emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide from combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation or transport. The major contributing factor to increased greenhouse gases and climate change is human activity. Floods can occur anywhere and at anytime. They are caused by rising ground water levels, burst or overloaded waste or stormwater infrastructure, hillside run-off as well as flooding from rivers and the sea.

10.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the climatic factors and flooding topic area need reappraising:

- CSx: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
- CSx: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: West Runcorn
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- CSx: Managing Pollution and Risk

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

10.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Climatic Factors and Flooding topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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## 10.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

10.2.1 Table 10.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

**Table 10.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option


Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
	<p><b>Type of Impact</b></p> <p><b>Core Strategy Preferred Options</b></p> <p>The preferred options will have a positive impact in terms of requiring new development to contribute to carbon emission reductions and ensuring that development is adaptable to changing climatic conditions including flood risks.</p>		<p><b>Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.</b></p> <p>Other plans and strategies at all spatial levels in the UK will strengthen the impact of the preferred policies and emphasise the importance of this topic area.</p>	

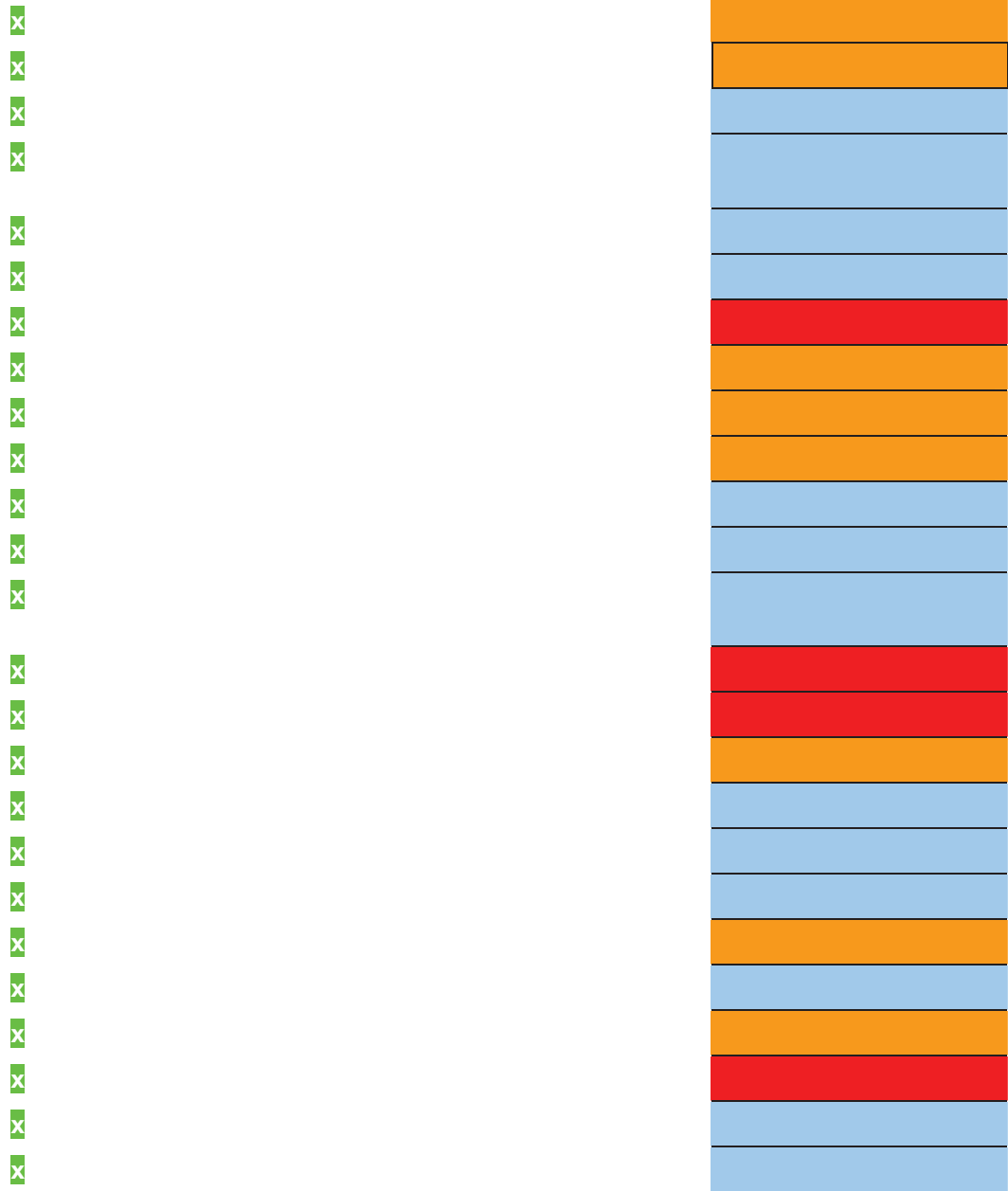
<p><b>In the long term the preferred options relating to climatic factors and flooding may have less of an impact as new guidance and legislation is introduced.</b></p> <p><b>However, by ensuring that Halton is contributing to carbon emission reductions and adaptable to a changing climate over the lifetime of the plan this will have a very positive impact for the future of Halton.</b></p>	<p><b>Over the long term national and regional legislation and guidance may emerge which will strengthen the targets for carbon emission reductions and will ensure that environments are adaptable. This may outdate the Core Strategy policies.</b></p>
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### 10.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

10.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on air quality in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of climatic factors and flooding.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect

 Little or no Effect



**General Comments**

10.3.2 The additional residential, commercial and industrial development that is proposed in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will inevitably contribute to increasing carbon emissions throughout Halton over the plan period. However, there are measures within the Core Strategy, particularly within policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development and Climate Change), that will assist to deliver sensitive



development in the context of guarding against climate change. Policies CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) both propose development in locations that could increase the level of carbon emissions within the Borough. However, both policies contain some measures that will assist to offset these negative impacts to some extent.

- 10.3.3 In terms of reducing flood risk in the Borough, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Flood Risk) incorporates measures that highlight the importance of managing flood risk in the Borough when delivering new development. However, policies CS<sub>x</sub> East Runcorn and CS<sub>x</sub> West Runcorn would benefit from a reference to the importance of considering flood risk when delivering new development in these locations.

### Climate Change

- 10.3.4 The overall level of growth anticipated in Halton as detailed in Halton's Spatial Strategy (CS<sub>x</sub>) and through housing and employment supply (CS<sub>x</sub> and CS<sub>x</sub>) will potentially have a negative impact on the Borough's ability to adapt to a changing climate. The level of growth proposed in the borough will increase the carbon emissions from domestic and commercial sources. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development and Climate Change) seeks to address this by requiring new development to be designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change in Halton.
- 10.3.5 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) sets out the level of new development that will be targeted towards West Runcorn, which includes 1400 new dwellings and 25/30 hectares of employment land. The policy highlights the importance of achieving high standards of sustainable design and construction in the key area of change, including a reduction in carbon emissions through renewable and low carbon technology.
- 10.3.6 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) delivers significant housing and employment development on a greenfield site. However, the policy does incorporate measures which should help to reduce the volume of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated, by inclusion of a new public transport interchange as part of the urban extension and the promotion of walking and cycling routes to reduce the need to travel by the private car. The policy would be strengthened further with the inclusion of a reference to the need to ensure new development within East Runcorn is designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change.
- 10.3.7 The expansion of John Lennon Airport set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub> will increase carbon emissions from aircraft movements and from land-based transport to and from the airport. This will have a negative impact on the climatic factors and flooding topic area. However, the policy makes some attempt to address the negative impacts associated with the operation and expansion of the airport through measures to alleviate/reduce impacts on the risks associated with climate change.

### Flood Risk

- 10.3.8 The anticipated level of growth proposed in the Core Strategy could potentially have a negative impact on managing areas of flood risk in the Borough. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Flood Risk) incorporates numerous measures that highlight the importance of managing flood risk in the Borough alongside delivering new development. Policies CS<sub>x</sub> East Runcorn and CS<sub>x</sub> West Runcorn cover key areas of change that include areas susceptible to flooding. Both would benefit from the inclusion of a reference to the need to consider flood risk when delivering new development in these locations.

## 10.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

10.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

10.4.2 The overall level of growth anticipated in Halton will potentially have a negative effect on the Borough's ability to: adapt to a changing climate; and to manage flood risk. However, there are measures included within the Core Strategy policies that will assist to mitigate negative impacts.

10.4.3 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) will include development on a greenfield site. Although the policy incorporates a measure that will promote the use of public transport, the sustainability of the policy could be further strengthened.

#### *Recommendation*

- Provide a cross reference to CS<sub>x</sub> (Sustainable Development and Climate Change) in the justification for the policy to ensure that new development within East Runcorn is designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change.

10.4.4 Policies CS<sub>x</sub> East Runcorn and CS<sub>x</sub> West Runcorn cover key areas of change that include areas at risk of flooding. Both policies would be strengthened with the inclusion of a reference to the need to avoid development that will have a detrimental impact on flood risk within the two key areas of change.

#### *Recommendation*

- Provide a cross reference to CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) in the justification for the two policies. This will help to ensure that new development within the two areas is delivered whilst ensuring that existing levels of flood risk are not exacerbated.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

10.4.5 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) highlights the importance of achieving high standards of sustainable design and construction in the key area of change, including a reduction in carbon emissions through renewable and low carbon technology. This will have a positive impact on tackling climate change in West Runcorn.

10.4.6 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Flood Risk) incorporates measures that highlight the importance of managing flood risk in the Borough alongside delivering new development. This will have a positive impact on reducing the impacts of flood risk throughout the Borough.

10.4.7 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

## 10.5 Summary of Impacts

10.5.1 Table 10.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

**Table 10.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact		Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
		<p>The additional residential, commercial and industrial development that is proposed in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will inevitably contribute to increasing carbon emissions throughout Halton over the plan period. However, there are numerous measures within the Core Strategy, particularly within policies CSx (Sustainable Development Principles) and CSx (Sustainable Development and Climate Change), that will help ensure that new development is delivered in the context of guarding against climate change.</p> <p>In terms of reducing flood risk in the Borough, policy CSx (Managing Pollution and Flood Risk) incorporates numerous measures that highlight the importance of managing flood risk in the Borough alongside delivering new development.</p> <p>If suggested mitigation measures are incorporated for policies CSx (East Runcorn) and CSx (West Runcorn) then the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will be</p>	<p>Other plans and strategies at all spatial levels in the UK will strengthen the impact of the preferred policies and emphasise the importance of this topic area.</p>	

<p>further strengthened in relation to the climatic factors and flooding topic area.</p>	
<p>In the long term the policies relating to climatic factors and flooding may have less of an impact as new guidance and legislation is introduced.</p> <p>However, by ensuring that Halton is contributing to carbon emission reductions and adaptable to a changing climate over the lifetime of the plan this will have a very positive impact for the future of Halton.</p>	<p>Over the long term national and regional legislation and guidance may emerge which will strengthen the targets for carbon emission reductions and will ensure that environments are adaptable. This may outdate the Core Strategy policies.</p>

## 11 Cultural Heritage and Landscape

### 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Cultural heritage can be considered<sup>5</sup> to include monuments (architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting or elements or structures of an archaeological nature), groups of buildings and sites (works of man or the combined works of nature and man). Landscapes can be areas designated for natural beauty and/or ambience but can also be 'ordinary' places that are not given statutory protection. Urban landscapes also have an important role to play in affecting the quality of people's lives, therefore acknowledging and enhancing 'townscapes' is also important.

11.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the cultural heritage and landscape topic area need reappraising:

- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: West Runcorn
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- CSx: Green Belt
- CSx: Minerals

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

11.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the cultural heritage and landscape topic area:

Number	SAF Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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<sup>5</sup> UNESCO (1972) CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE, Article 1  
Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> accessed on the 22nd December 2008

## 11.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

11.2.1 Table 11.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the cultural heritage and landscape topic area.

**Table 11.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
	<p><b>Type of Impact</b></p> <p><b>Core Strategy Preferred Options</b></p> <p>The Core Strategy policies consider the wider context and setting for the development of the Borough. The impact of the spatial strategy and key areas of change upon culture, heritage and landscape have been fully considered.</p> <p>The policies will protect and enhance features of historical and archaeological importance which contribute to the cultural and tourism offer of the Borough.</p> <p>The high quality landscapes and townscapes in the Borough, especially those that contribute to local</p>		<p><b>Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.</b></p> <p>The Core Strategy policies have been formulated through the consideration of the wider context of plans, strategies and guidance. There is expected to be a positive impact from the combination of the Core Strategy and other plans and programmes.</p>	

distinctiveness will be protected and enhanced.

Policy CS26 will ensure access to high quality public open space and natural green space.

The importance of protecting, enhancing and managing places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value is well recognised and these features will be well managed into the longer term.

Emerging plans, programmes and strategies recognise the value of proactive management of key features.

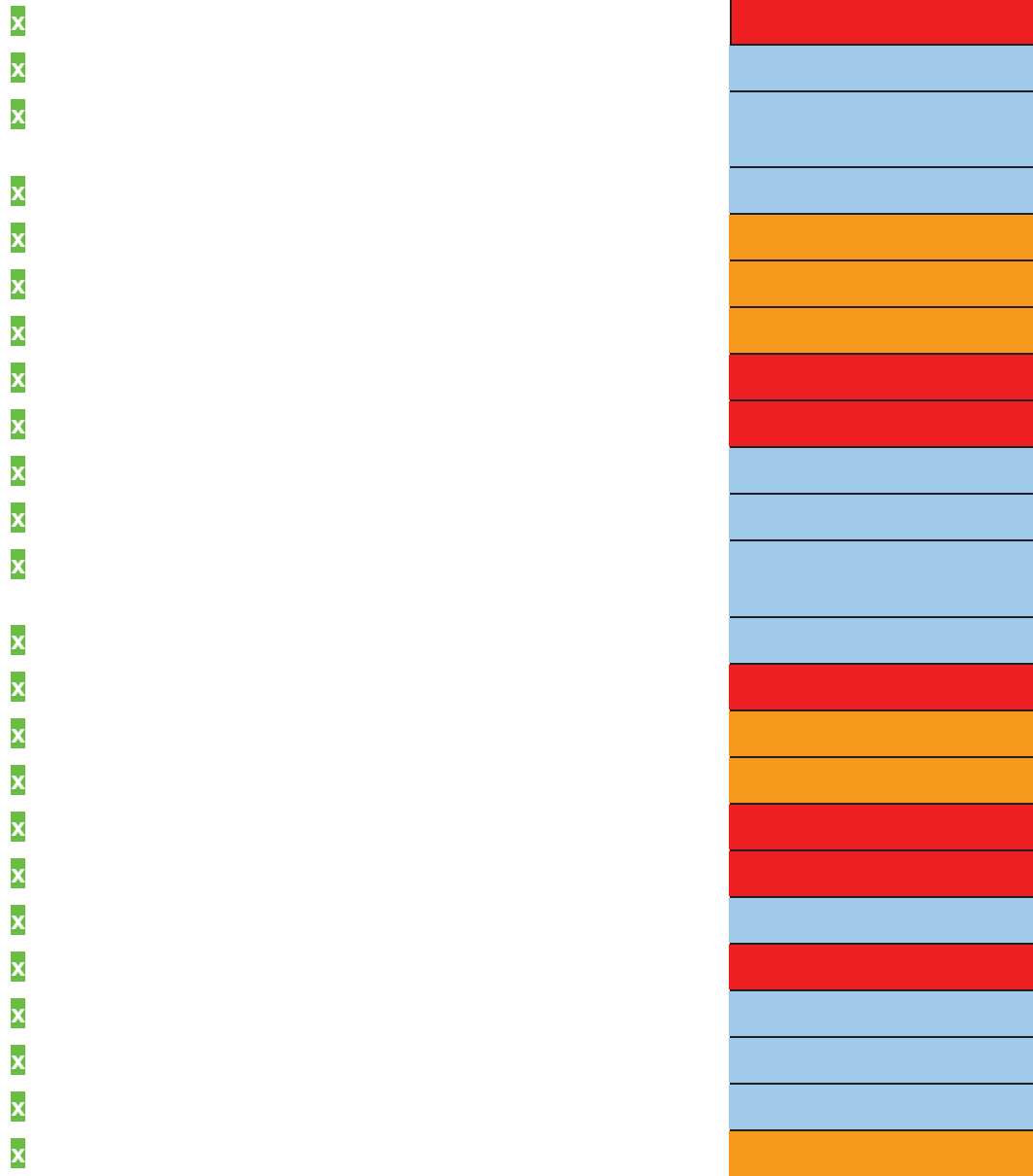
### 11.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

11.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on air quality in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of cultural heritage and landscape.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

x





### General Comments

11.3.2 Overall, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is expected to have a positive impact on protecting the cultural heritage and landscape of Halton. Policies CSx (Sustainable Development Principles) and CSx (Halton’s Natural and Historic Environment) provide the overarching principles within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft for protecting key areas of landscape and heritage value within Halton. Although the development proposed as part of policies CSx (Infrastructure Provision), CSx (West Runcorn), CSx (East Runcorn) and CSx (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) could potentially have a negative impact on the topic area over the plan period, all contain sufficient measures to mitigate these impacts, provided they are implemented. In particular, policies CSx (West Runcorn) and CSx (East Runcorn) will have a particularly positive impact on developing the Green Infrastructure within the Borough over the plan period.



## Impact on Key Areas of Heritage and Landscape Value

- 11.3.3 The overarching policies in relation to protecting areas of heritage and landscape value throughout Halton over the plan period are CSx (Sustainable Development Principles) and CSx (Halton's Natural and Historic Environment). Both policies incorporate measures that will: help to ensure development is delivered over the plan period that is sympathetic to buildings of heritage value; and help to protect areas of particular landscape value within Halton.
- 11.3.4 The approach to providing sufficient infrastructure provision in Halton is set out in policy CSx (Infrastructure Provision). The development of new infrastructure (particularly transport infrastructure) within Halton could potentially have an impact on areas of landscape value. However, the justification for the policy identifies the need to ensure that the policy is delivered in accordance with achieving the objectives of CSx (Sustainable Development Principles). The policy also highlights how development will be located to maximise the benefit of existing infrastructure. This should help to ensure that the need to develop new infrastructure will be reduced, which should have a positive impact on protecting key areas of landscape and heritage value.
- 11.3.5 Policy CSx (West Runcorn) highlights the importance of high quality urban design that reflects West Runcorn's waterfront environment. This measure will help promote the protection of buildings of heritage value within the Borough through sympathetic design of new developments in the area. The policy also sets out a requirement for development to facilitate access to the waterfront locations within West Runcorn. This will help to enhance the Green Infrastructure network in the area.
- 11.3.6 The implementation of policy CSx (East Runcorn) will involve significant development on greenfield land, which will be likely to impact on areas of landscape value. However, the policy mitigates this negative impact to a certain extent as it identifies how a network of open space will be provided as part of new development on the site to offset this impact. There are a number of areas of heritage value located on or close to the proposed East Runcorn site, including listed buildings and conservation areas. The implementation of the policy through the proposed SPD will have a positive impact on protecting these areas of heritage value as this supplementary policy should guide the design, layout and style of internal plots in order to protect the assets of the area and its surroundings.
- 11.3.7 The expansion and development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (as set out in policy CSx) could potentially have a negative impact on the landscape and built heritage in the surrounding area. However, the policy highlights how measures will be incorporated into any scheme to reduce/alleviate any negative impact that it will have on nearby areas of landscape value and built heritage.
- 11.3.8 Policy CSx (Minerals) identifies the councils approach towards managing mineral resources throughout the Borough. The policy highlights the potential for exploiting the Borough's limited mineral resources, which will have a negative impact on sustainability in relation to the need to protect key landscape resources. However, the policy mitigates this negative impact to a certain extent as it encourages the use of recycled and secondary aggregates across the Borough to minimise the need for minerals extraction. This will help to protect key areas of landscape value throughout the Borough.

## 11.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

11.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the cultural heritage and landscape topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

11.4.2 The following are all considered to be negative effects in relation to the implementation of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft:

- The development of infrastructure provision over the plan period (as set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub>) could potentially have a negative impact on key areas of heritage and landscape value.
- Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) will involve significant development on greenfield land, which will be likely to impact on areas of landscape value in the vicinity of this area. However this development delivers considerable social and economic benefits over the plan period.
- The expansion and development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (as set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub>) could potentially have a negative impact on key areas of heritage and landscape value.
- Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Minerals) states that there is potential for exploiting mineral resources in the Borough which could have negative effects on the cultural heritage and landscape if not carefully managed and restored.

11.4.3 It is considered that there are sufficient measures contained within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft that will ensure the potential negative effects outlined above are mitigated.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

11.4.4 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) highlights the importance of high quality urban design that reflects West Runcorn's waterfront environment. The policy also sets out a requirement for development to facilitate access to the waterfront locations within West Runcorn. These measures will ensure a positive impact on the topic area.

11.4.5 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

## 11.5 Summary of Impacts

11.5.1 Table 11.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the cultural heritage and landscape topic area.

**Table 11.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Po siti ve	No Eff ect	Ne gat ive	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>Overall, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is expected to have a positive impact on protecting the cultural heritage and landscape of Halton.</p> <p>Policies CS<sub>1</sub> (Sustainable Development Principles) and CS<sub>2</sub> (Halton’s Natural and Historic Environment) provide the overarching principles within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft for protecting key areas of landscape and heritage value within Halton.</p> <p>Although the development proposed as part of many of the policies could potentially have a negative impact on the topic area over the plan period, all contain sufficient measures that will help ensure that these impacts are mitigated.</p> <p>In particular, policies CS<sub>3</sub> (West Runcorn) and CS<sub>4</sub> (East Runcorn) will have a positive impact on developing the Green Infrastructure within the Borough over the plan period.</p>	<p>The Core Strategy policies have been formulated through the consideration of the wider context of plans, strategies and guidance. There is expected to be a positive impact from the combination of the Core Strategy and other plans and programmes.</p>
	<p>The importance of protecting, enhancing and managing places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value is well recognised and these features will be managed into the longer term.</p>	<p>Emerging plans, programmes and strategies recognise the value of proactive management of key features.</p>



## 12 Population and Human Health

### 12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 Health is a fundamental contributor to the quality of life and well being of people living in Halton. The provision of health-related facilities and ensuring inclusive access to facilities such as GPs, Dentists, Hospitals and Nursing Homes in an important factor in terms of improving quality of life in Halton.

12.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the population and human health topic area need reappraising:

- CSx: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
- CSx: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: Housing Mix
- CSx: Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- CSx: Green Belt
- CSx: Managing Pollution and Risk

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

12.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the population and human health topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
12	To improve physical and mental health and well-being of people and reduce health inequalities in Halton	<p>Maintain accessible healthcare facilities throughout Halton.</p> <p>Promote healthy and active lifestyles through encouraging walking and cycling as well as the provision and improvement of public access to good quality rights of way, open space, countryside, sporting, recreational and community facilities in Halton.</p> <p>Reduce crime and the fear of crime, by adhering to 'designing out crime' principles in all new development.</p>

## 12.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

12.2.1 Table 12.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the population and human health topic area.

**Table 12.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options		Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	Over the plan period to 2026, the Core Strategy Preferred Options should have an overall positive impact on health in the Borough. During this period, the Borough's population should also grow, in accordance with new residential accommodation on offer.		The role of the Primary Care Trust, National Health Service and other agencies, and their plans, will be particularly important in ensuring that the preferred options have the desired effect of addressing localised health issues.	
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	The Core Strategy plan period should see significant improvements to health levels in Halton, with a more prosperous, sustainable population enjoying life living and working in the Borough.  There may be a need for planning policy to change its emphasis in the future due to these successes, or there may be new problems arising which will need addressing more explicitly, such as an increasing ageing population.		National Health Service activities will continue to be important to supporting health improvements.  Changes to national and regional policy which emphasise population change through the provision of new residential accommodation may affect Halton's population as new strategies emerge.	
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	Areas subject to health problems are targeted for particular interventions, including Neighbourhood Priority Areas, but all parts of the Borough should benefit from health improvements in terms of improved environments and lifestyle options. Areas where large scale residential development is anticipated will undergo the greatest population change.			
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	Facilities to improve health may be permanent but improving health is dependent on lifestyle choices in some cases and hence subject to change. New health problems may emerge, and the Borough will not be immune from these.			

<b>Secondary</b>	Population and human health is explicitly linked to other areas of sustainability, including those relating to the physical environment (air quality, housing provision, open spaces, sustainable transportation) and to the social environment (employment and local economy, education and skills, and social inclusion).
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## 12.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

12.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on air quality in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of population and human health.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

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x





### General Comments

- 12.3.2 The impact of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies on the population and human health sustainability topic area is broadly similar to that of the preferred options. Policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Supply and Locational Priorities), CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Mix) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities) set out the requirement to provide housing and employment land supply over the plan period. This will help ensure that there are sufficient housing and employment opportunities for the predicted increase in population.
- 12.3.3 In terms of human health, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Health and Well being) provides the overarching direction for delivering health environments and encouraging healthy lifestyles over the plan period. The implementation of policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision), CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Belt) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) should all help to ensure that: healthy lifestyles are promoted within the Borough; and the health of the local population is protected. Although the expansion and development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport is promoted as part of policy CS<sub>x</sub>, which could have a negative impact on human health, the policy provides sufficient measures that will help mitigate any negative impacts.

### Population

- 12.3.4 Policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Supply and Locational Priorities) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Mix) set out the requirement to provide a sufficient amount and supply of housing throughout Halton over the plan period. Both these policies have a positive impact on the topic as implementation will help ensure sufficient housing capacity and choice to accommodate the expected increase in people living in Halton in the future. More specifically, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Mix) will assist to promote the provision of housing for the elderly in Halton, which was identified as a key issue in the Halton SA scoping report (published August 2009).
- 12.3.5 In addition, policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities) will contribute to this positive impact on the topic area. The implementation of the policy should assist to provide the appropriate land for businesses to generate job opportunities for the growing population over the plan period.

### Health

- 12.3.6 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Health and Well Being) provides the primary policy measures for addressing health issues across the Borough over the plan period. The policy sets out how healthy environments will be supported and healthy lifestyles encouraged across the Borough over the plan period. The implementation of this policy will help to ensure that the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft has a positive impact on the population and human health topic area.



- 12.3.7 The delivery of policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision) will help to deliver sufficient infrastructure over the plan period as part of new development. In particular, the policy highlights how the required infrastructure will include the provision of cycling and walking routes and Green Infrastructure. This will have a positive impact on promoting healthy lifestyles over the plan period.
- 12.3.8 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Green Belt) sets out how the general extent of the Green Belt surrounding Halton will remain unchanged over the plan period. The implementation of this policy will have a positive impact on the topic area as it will help to ensure that opportunities to access recreational activities in areas of Green Belt are protected and this in turn will help to promote healthy lifestyles throughout Halton.
- 12.3.9 The implementation of policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Managing Pollution and Risk) will have a positive impact on the topic area. The policy highlights the importance of: controlling development within the Borough that may give rise to pollution; and minimising the risk to public safety from potential accidents at hazardous installations and facilities. Both these measures will help to protect the health of the local population.
- 12.3.10 The expansion and development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (as set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub>) could potentially have a negative impact on the health of the local population through an increase in carbon emissions from additional aviation traffic. However, the policy highlights how measures will be incorporated into any scheme to reduce/alleviate any negative impact that it will have on local residents.

## 12.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 12.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the population and human health topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 12.4.2 The expansion and development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (as set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub>) could potentially have a negative impact on the health of the local population through an increase in carbon emissions from additional aviation traffic. It is considered that (provided they are successfully implemented) there are sufficient measures contained within the policy that will ensure this potential negative effect is mitigated.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 12.4.3 Policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Supply and Locational Priorities), CS<sub>x</sub> (Housing Mix) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities) set out the requirement to provide housing and employment land supply over the plan period. This will help ensure that there are sufficient housing and employment opportunities for the predicted increase in population.
- 12.4.4 Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision) highlights how there is potential to develop cycling and walking routes and Green Infrastructure as part of delivering infrastructure provision over the plan period. This will help to promote healthy lifestyles within Halton.
- 12.4.5 The protection of the Green Belt (as set out in policy CS<sub>x</sub>) will help to ensure that recreational opportunities over the plan period. This, in turn, will help to promote healthy lifestyles across the Borough.

- 12.4.6 The implementation of policy CSx (Managing Pollution and Risk) will have a positive impact on the population and human health topic area as it highlights the importance of: controlling development within the Borough that may give rise to pollution; and minimising the risk to public safety from potential accidents at hazardous installations and facilities.
- 12.4.7 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the population and human health topic area.

## 12.5 Summary of Impacts

- 12.5.1 Table 12.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the population and human health topic area.

**Table 12.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	Over the plan period to 2026, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft should have an overall positive impact on health in the Borough. During this period, the Borough's population should also grow, in accordance with new residential accommodation on offer.	The role of the Primary Care Trust, National Health Service and other agencies, and their plans, will be particularly important in ensuring that the preferred options have the desired effect of addressing localised health issues.
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	The Core Strategy plan period should see significant improvements to health levels in Halton, with a more prosperous, sustainable population enjoying life living and working in the Borough.  There may be a need for planning policy to change its emphasis in the future due to these successes, or there may be new problems arising which will need addressing more explicitly, such as an increasing ageing population.	National Health Service activities will continue to be important to supporting health improvements.  Changes to national and regional policy which emphasise population change through the provision of new residential accommodation may affect Halton's population as new strategies emerge.
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	Areas subject to health problems are targeted for particular interventions, including Neighbourhood Priority Areas, but all parts of the Borough should benefit from health improvements in terms of improved environments and lifestyle options. Areas where large scale residential	

	development is anticipated will undergo the greatest population change.
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	Facilities to improve health may be permanent but improving health is dependent on lifestyle choices in some cases and hence subject to change. New health problems may emerge, and the Borough will not be immune from these.
<b>Secondary</b>	<p>The provision of sustainable travel options can have secondary impacts on community health, through the improvement of local air quality and the promotion of walking and cycling, which can bring health benefits alongside increasing equality through increased accessibility to services and facilities.</p> <p>In addition, the design and layout of development can have secondary impacts on community health and well-being. Adopting principles to protect the amenity of existing areas and to create attractive places that are accessible and safe, can have positive secondary impacts on the quality of life for residents through reducing the fear of crime and reducing opportunities for crime in the local environment and by ensuring development can be used by all sections of the community.</p>

## 13 Social Inclusiveness (including skills and education)

### 13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 Social Exclusion can occur when an individual or an area suffers from a combination of linked problems. These problems could include unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown. Social Exclusion can also be more than poverty. It is often about individuals having the personal capacity, self confidence and aspirations to make the most of the opportunities, choices and options available to them. This chapter appraises the sustainability of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft in relation to social inclusiveness (which includes skills and education).

13.1.2 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies relevant to the social inclusiveness topic area need reappraising:

- CSx: Halton’s Spatial Strategy
- CSx: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
- CSx: A Network of Centres for Halton
- CSx: Infrastructure Provision
- CSx: West Runcorn
- CSx: East Runcorn
- CSx: Liverpool John Lennon Airport

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

13.1.3 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the social inclusiveness topic area:

Number	SAF Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
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## 13.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

13.2.1 Table 13.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the social inclusiveness topic area.

**Table 13.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

	Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options				Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2026)	Over the short to medium term the preferred options should have a positive impact on the sustainability topic of social inclusiveness. Over this timeframe levels of deprivation in the Borough should improve especially in relation to health and employment deprivation.				Over this timeframe, other plans, programmes and strategies which relate to improving social inclusion in the Borough will strengthen the positive impact of the Core Strategy Preferred Options in terms of social inclusiveness.
Long term (beyond 2026)	The positive effects seen in the short / medium term should continue in the long term, especially in terms of increased levels of access to services and facilities.				In the long term the Core Strategy will need to ensure that it is in accordance and continues to support other policy, guidance and plans especially in terms of national and regional guidance which may strengthen the link between social inclusion and spatial planning.

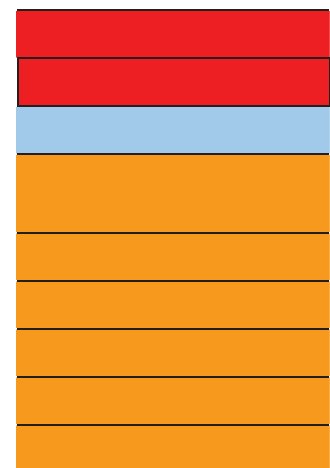
Areas likely to be significantly affected	All areas in Halton will be affected positively by the preferred options in relation to increasing social inclusion. This should be particularly noticeable in the Borough’s wards that currently exhibit social exclusion and high levels of deprivation.
Permanent vs. temporary	Ensuring Halton’s communities can sustainably access community services and facilities including health, education and training should have a permanent positive impact for social inclusiveness in Halton. However, this will also be dependant on individuals choosing to access these services and facilities which may result in a more temporary impact. Additionally, there may be other issues that present themselves over the lifetime of the Core Strategy and beyond which will mean that some affects become temporary. This includes changing economic and social conditions and circumstances.
Secondary	Social inclusion can be related to a number of other topic areas including health, sustainable transport, urban design, education, employment and housing provision.

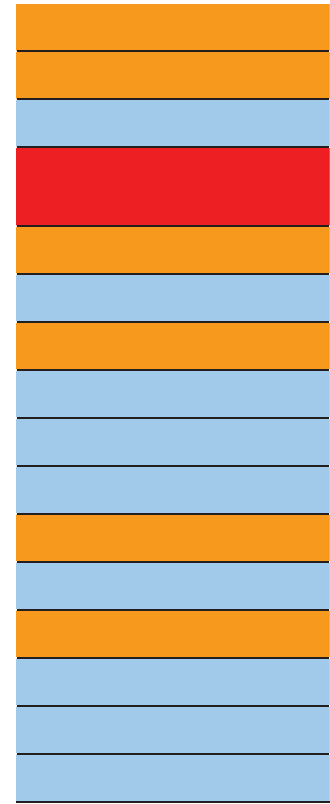
### 13.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

13.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on air quality in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of social inclusiveness.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

- x
- x
- x
- x
- x
- x
- x
- x
- x
- x





**General Comments**

13.3.2 Over the plan period, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is expected to have a positive impact on ensuring social inclusion across the Borough. The implementation of policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Halton’s Spatial Strategy), CS<sub>x</sub> (A Network of Centres), CS<sub>x</sub> (West Runcorn) and CS<sub>x</sub> (East Runcorn) will all help to ensure community services and facilities are delivered alongside housing and employment development within Halton over the plan period. Policy CS<sub>x</sub> (Infrastructure Provision) highlights the importance of locating new development close to existing infrastructure provision and of providing social infrastructure improvements as part of major development in Halton. This will help to ensure that sufficient community services and facilities are developed as part of delivering new development in Halton. Furthermore, the implementation of policies CS<sub>x</sub> (Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities) and CS<sub>x</sub> (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) will both help to improve social inclusiveness through increasing employment opportunities throughout Halton. However, it is uncertain whether these job opportunities will be accessible to Halton’s communities.

**Social Inclusion**

13.3.3 The Overall Spatial Strategy (CS<sub>x</sub>) presents a number of spatial priorities that are crucial for ensuring social inclusion across the Borough including supporting housing development and delivering employment development. The policy identifies the need to focus development on brownfield land within key areas of change, which will help to ensure that new development is accessible to existing services and facilities within Halton. The policy that sets out the network of centres within Halton (CS<sub>x</sub>) highlights the importance of providing sufficient provision of shops, employment and associated service centres in the key centres of Halton.

- 13.3.4 Policy CS~~x~~ (Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities) sets out a series of measures for the delivery of employment land throughout Halton over the plan period. The implementation of this policy will have a positive impact on the social inclusiveness topic area as it will help to improve access to employment opportunities for Halton residents. Furthermore, through partaking in employment activities, it is likely that Halton residents will have the opportunity to improve their skills, which will contribute to the positive impact on this topic area. It will be important that job opportunities provided in Halton over the plan period are accessible to Halton's communities
- 13.3.5 The measures included as part of policy CS~~x~~ (Infrastructure Provision) will help ensure a positive impact on the social inclusiveness topic area. The policy highlights the importance of locating new development close to existing infrastructure provision and of providing social infrastructure improvements as part of major development in Halton.
- 13.3.6 The implementation of policy CS~~x~~ (West Runcorn) will help to deliver new housing and employment opportunities within West Runcorn and will help improve the retail offer of the area. The proposed improvements to accessibility and connectivity to the sustainable transport network will also have a positive impact on the topic area through increasing the accessibility of community services and facilities located elsewhere in Halton.
- 13.3.7 Policy CS~~x~~ (East Runcorn) highlights the importance of delivering affordable housing within the East Runcorn key area of change which will have a positive impact on social inclusiveness within this area. The policy also highlights how a mixed use neighbourhood centre and a public transport interchange will be provided within East Runcorn. Both of these will contribute to the positive impact and help ensure that community services within and outside of East Runcorn are accessible.
- 13.3.8 The future development and expansion at Liverpool John Lennon Airport (as set out in policy CS~~x~~) may have a positive impact on the topic area through increasing job opportunities for local Halton residents, available at the airport. Improved access to the job market for local residents will have a positive impact on improving social inclusiveness within Halton and could potentially provide them with opportunities to improve their skills. However, it is uncertain whether the types of job opportunities provided as part of expansion at the airport will be accessible to residents of Halton.

## 13.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 13.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the social inclusiveness topic area.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 13.4.2 There is no certainty as to whether the job opportunities that could potentially be delivered as part of developing employment land over the plan period will be accessible to Halton's communities. It is difficult to propose recommendations for amendments to the Core Strategy that will address this negative impact, as this best addressed through training and education services.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 13.4.3 Potential positive impacts on the topic area of social inclusion can be summarised as follows:



- The implementation of policies CSx (Halton’s Spatial Strategy), CSx (A Network of Centres), CSx (West Runcorn) and CSx (East Runcorn) will help to ensure that community services and facilities are delivered alongside housing and employment development within Halton over the plan period, creating sustainable, balanced communities.
- The implementation of policy CSx (Infrastructure Provision) will help to ensure that sufficient community services and facilities are provided as part of delivering new development in Halton.
- The implementation of policies CSx (Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities) and CSx (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) will help to improve social inclusiveness through increasing employment opportunities throughout Halton.

13.4.4 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the social inclusiveness topic area.

## 13.5 Summary of Impacts

13.5.1 Table 11.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the social inclusiveness topic area.

**Table 11.2:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

<b>Very Positive</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>No Effect</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Very Negative</b>
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2026)	<p>Over the short to medium term the Core Strategy should have a positive impact on the sustainability topic of social inclusiveness. Over this timeframe levels of deprivation in the Borough should improve especially in relation to health and employment deprivation.</p> <p>Numerous positive impacts have been identified, which will help to ensure that sufficient housing and employment development is delivered in order to increase social inclusiveness in Halton. There are also numerous measures within the policies, which will help to ensure that sufficient community services and facilities are developed alongside new</p>	<p>Over this timeframe, other plans, programmes and strategies which relate to improving social inclusion in the Borough will strengthen the positive impact of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft in terms of social inclusiveness.</p>

	development delivered over the plan period.	
Long term (beyond 2026)	The positive effects seen in the short / medium term should continue in the long term, especially in terms of increased levels of access to services and facilities.	In the long term the Core Strategy will need to ensure that it is in accordance and continues to support other policy, guidance and plans especially in terms of national and regional guidance which may strengthen the link between social inclusion and spatial planning.
Areas likely to be significantly affected	All areas in Halton will be affected positively by the Core Strategy in relation to increasing social inclusion. This should be particularly noticeable in the Borough's wards that currently exhibit social exclusion and high levels of deprivation.	
Permanent vs. temporary	Ensuring Halton's communities can sustainably access community services and facilities including health, education and training should have a permanent positive impact for social inclusiveness in Halton. However, this will also be dependant on individuals choosing to access these services and facilities which may result in a more temporary impact. Additionally, there may be other issues that present themselves over the lifetime of the Core Strategy and beyond which will mean that some affects become temporary. This includes changing economic and social conditions and circumstances.	
Secondary	Aspects relating to the physical environment (air quality, housing provision, open space,) and to the economic environment (employment and local economy) can have a number of secondary impacts on social equality and community services. For example, the provision of affordable and supported housing can increase social integration through mixed communities and can have secondary positive impacts on quality of life.	



## 14 Transportation

### 14.1 Introduction

- 14.1.1 Transportation networks play a critically important role in the sustainable development of a Borough, enabling people and goods to move around. Halton's transportation networks are vital for those living, working and visiting the area, providing local accessibility to key locations as well as connectivity to wider, sub-regional networks.
- 14.1.2 Ensuring that residents and visitors have a choice of sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling, helps to increase accessibility to key employment, education, training and leisure opportunities as well as improving health and well-being through more active lifestyles.
- 14.1.3 Similarly, many businesses require an efficient local transport network, so ensuring that new development is located centrally or is accessible by a variety of transport modes helps to increase accessibility to goods, services and amenities and to secure the viability of their operations.
- 14.1.4 Therefore, it is important to ensure that transport infrastructure is able to safely and efficiently cope with demand and provide choice of transportation, thereby reducing the impact of congestion on the Borough's roads.
- 14.1.5 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies which have a significant effect on the Transportation topic area need appraising:
- CS? Halton's Spatial Strategy
  - CS? Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
  - CS? Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
  - CS? A Network of Centres for Halton
  - CS? Infrastructure Provision
  - CS? West Runcorn
  - CS? East Runcorn
  - CS? Liverpool John Lennon Airport
  - CS? Green Belt
  - CS? Health and Well-Being
  - CS? Managing Pollution and Risk
- 14.1.6 Their effects on the Transportation topic area are considered together, as well as independently, in this chapter.

## Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

14.1.7 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the transportation topic area:

Number	SAF Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
17	To improve the choice and use of sustainable transport in Halton and reduce the need to travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve the choice and use of sustainable transport in Halton and reduce the need to travel</li> <li>Develop and maintain safe, efficient and integrated transport networks within Halton, with good internal and external links.</li> <li>Reduce car dependency by providing services and facilities accessible by sustainable modes of transport, particularly in rural areas.</li> <li>Promote a pattern of development which reduces private vehicle dependency in the location of homes, jobs, leisure and community services.</li> </ul>

## 14.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Preferred Option

14.2.1 Table 16.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the transportation topic area.

**Table 16.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Preferred Option


Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2026)	The successful implementation of the preferred options will place pressure on the transportation network, but the policy content should support the mitigation of any negative effects, and positively encourage the new provision and use of	In addressing transportation matters, the Core Strategy will need to complement existing and future LTPs over the plan period, as well as other Council transportation functions, such as

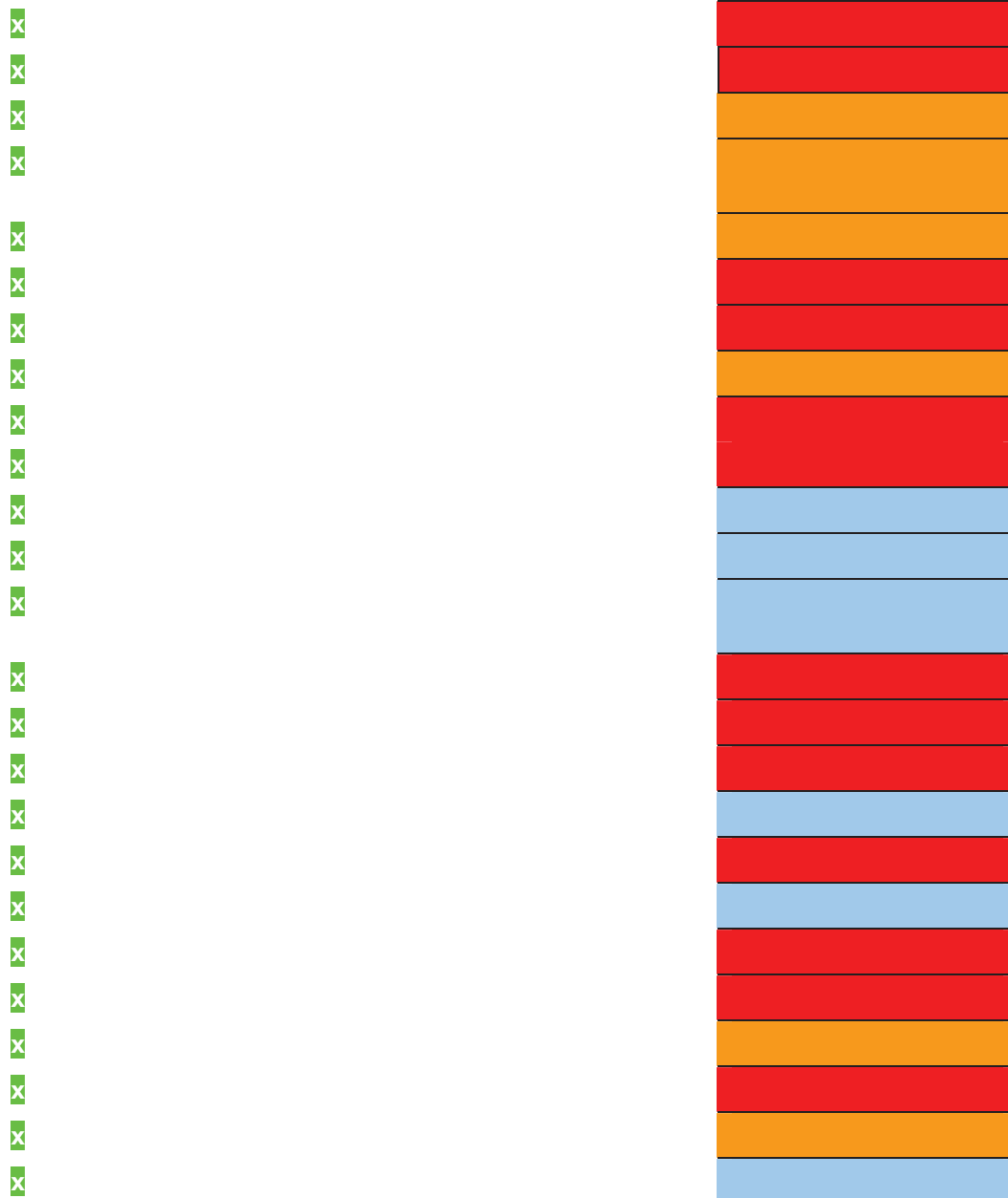
	sustainable transport modes in Halton over the plan period.	its role as the local highways authority.  Over the plan period, policies in the Core Strategy will support the proposals contained within the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	The preferred options seek to support the provision of sustainable travel options in the long term, and the safeguarding of transport infrastructure to achieve this.  The preferred policies offer scope for innovation in transportation, and over the plan period and beyond, opportunities to take advantage of emerging technologies.	The Core Strategy will need to work with emerging transport policy at the national, regional and local level, including future LTPs or their replacement.  However, these plans and programmes are likely to uphold the same priorities as highlighted in the preferred options, of sustainability and green travel modes, which are likely to become increasingly important in the long term.
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	Areas which will be subject to changes in transport infrastructure, like those near to new interchanges or roads, will be significantly affected. Likewise, where transport improvements will be focussed, such as town centres and key areas of change, affects should be positive in terms of increased connectivity. Some areas will benefit from the connectivity and regeneration opportunities arising from Mersey Gateway Project.	
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	The provision of new physical transport infrastructure will represent a permanent improvement, while softer measures, like new bus services or transport planning measures, may be more temporary and can be altered to meet future changes in need.	
<b>Secondary</b>	Transportation policy is closely related to air quality, green infrastructure, health levels, economic development and town centre viability. A good quality, reliable and efficient transport network with a choice of sustainable travel options can have a positive impact on quality of life.	

## 14.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

14.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on Transportation in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of Transportation.

<b>KEY</b>	
	Primary Effect

	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect



**General Comments**

14.3.2 A large number of the policies within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft significantly and directly affect transportation in the Borough. All new development has to be accessible and creates changes in transport and movement patterns; therefore any policy proposing new

development will have at least a “less significant” effect. Other policies concern transportation, movement and access proposals themselves and will clearly have a “significant” effect.

- 14.3.3 Overall, the Core Strategy pays close consideration to the transportation needs of the Borough, recognising that accessibility and an efficient transport network is a key principle in the successful development of Halton over the plan period. The sustainability of the Borough’s transport network is a central concern of the policy approaches, with the focus on encouraging sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling and public transport. Policies **CS?**: Sustainable Transport and Travel, **CS?**: Sustainable Development Principles, **CS?**: Liverpool John Lennon Airport, **CS?**: The Mersey Gateway Project and **CS?**: Infrastructure Provision will all have a positive overall effect on transportation in the Borough.

### Location of New Development

- 14.3.4 Policy **?**: Halton’s Spatial Strategy sets the overall context as to where the main areas of new development in Halton will be. 3MG, South Widnes, West Runcorn and East Runcorn are identified as the Key Areas of Change. Focusing major new residential and employment development primarily in these brownfield and urbanised areas near to transport links and key facilities should reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, this should have a positive impact on transportation. In addition, the growth of 3MG will have a positive impact on transportation in the Borough, through the further expansion of more sustainable inter-modal freight transportation facilities in the Borough.

- 14.3.5 Policy ?**: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities emphasises the need to provide new housing in Halton. Identified housing opportunities within the Key Areas of Change are identified as have potential to contribute to housing land supply. These areas are the most sustainable locations in which to accommodate growth and have the best level of services and facilities, which will help reduce the need to travel and will have an indirect positive impact on air quality. Policy **?** states in more accessible locations such as those close to town/neighbourhood facilities or transport interchanges the presumption will be for developments achieving densities of 40 dph or greater. The implementation of this policy will ensure that high density residential developments are located in the most sustainable locations, such as the main towns, where they are well served by public transport.

- 14.3.6 The implementation of **Policy ?**: A Network of Centres for Halton promotes Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea Town Centre as the main focal point for growth and development, supported by the Runcorn Old Town centre. As such new development will add pressure to the local public transport network and, inevitably, increase traffic levels on the road network if suitable transport alternatives are not catered for.

- 14.3.7 The implementation of Policy **CS?**: West Runcorn is expected to have a very positive impact on transportation, due to its focus on improving accessibility and connectivity and supporting improvements to the sustainable transport network. Redeveloping the Mersey Gateway Port into a new civil waterway port and utilising the direct links to the Manchester Ship Canal, road and rail infrastructure should have a positive impact on providing more sustainable travel options within the area and supporting a modal shift.

- 14.3.8 The implementation of Policy **CS?**: East Runcorn is expected to have a negative impact on transportation, through the delivery of significant housing and employment development outside of the main urban area, away from established transport links. However a key principle of any new development in the area to be upheld is “the promotion of walking and cycling routes to provide clear and safe links to surrounding communities, including new pedestrian



and vehicular links to Sandymoor and improvements to the canal corridor”, clearly the implementation of this principle should ensure any negative impacts on transportation are reduced.

- 14.3.9 The provision of moorings for inland waterways craft sited alongside the Bridgewater Canal and the provision of public transport to the neighbourhood centre at Daresbury should help to strengthen sustainable transport links within the Borough and support a modal shift.
- 14.3.10 The implementation of Core Strategy Policy CS: Health and Well-Being will have a positive impact on transportation in the Borough through the delivery of new and relocated health and community services and facilities in accessible locations with adequate access by walking, cycling and public transport.

### Delivery of Transport Infrastructure

- 14.3.11 Policy **CS?**: Infrastructure Provision seeks to ensure that all new development should be located in the most sustainable location already well served by existing infrastructure, this is likely to bring about positive indirect impacts on the sustainability of transportation. Policy **?** also provides scope for utilising developer contributions for transportation infrastructure improvements and therefore is sustainable with regards to transportation.
- 14.3.12 Publication Draft Policy **CS?**: Green Belt is likely to have a positive impact on increasing the choice of transport modes in the Borough through the support of minor alterations to the Green Belt to accommodate expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
- 14.3.13 The implementation of Policy **CS?** Liverpool John Lennon Airport will increase carbon emissions from aircraft movements and from land-based transport to and from. Negative impacts will be felt by both the environment (sensitive habitats, species) as well as local communities - though increased noise pollution, air pollution, disruption to amenity, and traffic congestion. However the implementation of Policy **CS?** should increase the choice of transport modes in the Borough through the support and expansion of airport operations, and will also increase surface access to the airport. The implementation of this policy will have a positive impact on a number of economic objectives. Clearly there are some sustainability conflicts inherent here.
- 14.3.14 In addition, whilst there is potential for the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport to lead to congestion problems near to the airport, the policy does seek to ensure that any negative environmental and social impacts associated with the operation and expansion of airport will be appropriately addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the local and regional transport network.
- 14.3.15 The implementation of Policy **CS?**: Managing Pollution and Risk should have a positive impact on transportation sustainability in the Borough. Policy **CS?**: Managing Pollution and Risk seeks “to prevent and minimise the risk from potential accidents at hazardous installations and facilities”. The implementation of this policy will have a positive impact on the long term sustainability of transportation in the Borough, particularly in relation to John Lennon Airport and its future expansion, which already has an established Public Safety Zone (PSZ), which reflects the area most affected by the movements of aircraft.

## 14.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

14.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the transportation theme.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

14.4.2 Overall, the negative effects of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on transportation are limited to the general effect of new development such as the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport increasing the burden on the transport network. However many of the policies are formulated in such a way as to limit this effect by proposing improvements to the transport network that will potentially off-set any negative effect, provided they are implemented.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

14.4.3 Behaviour change measures to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport represent a significant opportunity to address congestion and improve the efficiency of the highway network in the Borough. Restricting the provision of car parking at developments where there is high public transport accessibility and good walking and cycling links is supported by government policy (e.g. PPG13) and can have a role to play in encouraging sustainable travel in some cases, particularly for large new developments.

14.4.4 It is recommended that the forthcoming Site Allocations and Development Management DPD contains a policy that seeks to ensure that maximum parking standards are enforced on sites which are highly accessible from public transport use, cycling and walking.

## 14.5 Summary of Impacts

14.5.1 Table 16.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Publication Draft on the transportation topic area.

**Table 16.2: Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Publication Draft**

Very Positive	Po siti ve	No Eff ect	Ne gat ive	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	The successful implementation of the Proposed Submission Draft will place pressure on the transportation network, but the policy content should support the mitigation of any negative effects, and positively encourage the new	In addressing transportation matters, the Core Strategy will need to complement existing and future LTPs over the plan period, as well as other Council transportation functions, such as its role as the local highways

	<p>provision and use of sustainable transport modes in Halton over the plan period.</p> <p>The expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport will have positive impacts for the regional and national economy in the short-medium term.</p>	<p>authority.</p> <p>Over the plan period, policies in the Core Strategy will support the proposals contained within the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b></p>	<p>The Proposed Submission Draft policies seek to support the provision of sustainable travel options in the long term, and the safeguarding of transport infrastructure to achieve this.</p> <p>The Proposed Submission Draft policies offer scope for innovation in transportation, and over the plan period and beyond, opportunities to take advantage of emerging technologies.</p> <p>In the long-term, the effects of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the sustainability of transportation will still be positive, but less so. This is because the specific improvements proposed will have been delivered but there will be new demands from new developments, possibly in different locations, emerging that no specific proposals will have been established to address.</p> <p>However, the more general policy wording in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft that requires developments to be more sustainable in relation to transportation to mitigate for the negative effects they have on the transport network will continue to have positive effects.</p> <p>The expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport will have positive impacts for the regional and national economy in the long term.</p>	<p>The Core Strategy will need to work with emerging transport policy at the national, subregional and local level, including future LTPs or their replacement.</p> <p>However, these plans and programmes are likely to uphold the same priorities as highlighted in the Proposed Submission Draft, of sustainability and green travel modes, which are likely to become increasingly important in the long term.</p>

<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	In terms of transportation the areas likely to be significantly affected by the Core Strategy are areas which will be subject to changes in transport infrastructure, like those near to new interchanges or roads. Likewise, where transport improvements will be focussed, such as town centres and key areas of change, affects should be positive in terms of increased connectivity. Some areas will benefit from the connectivity and regeneration opportunities arising from the Mersey Gateway Project.
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	In terms of transportation most of the impacts will be permanent as new development will inevitably be permanent, as will many physical improvements to the transport network. However, there will be a temporary variation in effects as the Plan is implemented in either a positive or negative way, depending on whether new development or transport proposals are implemented first. Softer measures, like new bus services or transport planning measures, may be more temporary and can be altered to meet future changes in need.
<b>Secondary</b>	<p>Effects on other sustainability factors and issues do not generally have indirect, secondary effects on transportation, although there is the potential for the adverse effects of climate change to affect transportation indirectly in the long-term, through disruption caused by extreme weather events.</p> <p>Transportation can have indirect, secondary effects on a number of sustainability factors such as air quality, housing, green infrastructure, health levels, economic development and town centre viability. A good quality, reliable and efficient transport network with a choice of sustainable travel options can have a positive impact on quality of life.</p>

## 15 Local Economy and Employment

### 15.1 Introduction

15.1.1 The performance of the economy has a fundamental bearing on the achievement of sustainable development. Economic growth can help tackle deprivation and support regeneration. The economy provides employment and generates wealth, but can as a result generate adverse effects, such as waste or pollution from industry or traffic.

15.1.2 A healthy economy can be characterised by:

- A range of employment opportunities;
- Access to skills training and education;
- Economic growth;
- Inward investment;
- New business start-ups;
- A diverse range of business sectors;
- Low unemployment;
- Job satisfaction; and
- Resource use efficiency.

15.1.3 Planning policy can support inward investment and new business formation through the supply of land allocated for employment development. The Core Strategy will provide a framework to protect and enhance existing employment areas and support appropriate new employment land.

15.1.4 The Core Strategy will need to take a spatial approach to the location of new employment. New economic development will need to be located in sustainable locations that are accessible to residential areas and well served by public transport.

15.1.5 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies which have a significant effect on the local economy and employment topic area need appraising:

- CS? Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CS? Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
- CS? Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
- CS? A Network of Centres for Halton
- CS? Infrastructure Provision
- CS? West Runcorn
- CS? East Runcorn

- CS? Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- CS? Green Belt

15.1.6 Their effects on the local economy and employment topic area are considered together, as well as independently, in this chapter.

### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

15.1.7 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Local Economy and Employment topic area:

Number	SAF Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
14	To support a strong, diverse, vibrant and sustainable local economy to foster balanced economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote employment in areas where unemployment is high, particularly in Runcorn and Widnes, which reflects the skills and aspirations of local people.</li> <li>• Provide a positive planning framework for exploiting new opportunities in tourism, creative and knowledge based industries and the energy sector, including renewable energy technologies.</li> <li>• Maximise the opportunities that Growth Point Status offers in Halton.</li> <li>• Provide support for economic development that is appropriate for small businesses or home-based working.</li> <li>• Seek to attract employment and training programmes specifically targeted at maintaining and increasing the proportion of young people in the Borough.</li> </ul>
15	Support the development of the sustainable leisure and tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the quality of supporting infrastructure for tourism in the Borough, such as accommodation and leisure and cultural facilities.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of the Borough's natural and cultural features for tourism development, within their environmental limits.</li> </ul>
16	To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the shopping and community services function of local service centres.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of vacant retail properties in Runcorn, Halton Lea and</li> </ul>

		<p>Widnes and the other smaller service centres in the Borough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the quality of the public realm in order to improve the attractiveness of the service centres to new investment.</li> </ul>
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## 15.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

15.2.1 Table 15.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the local economy and employment topic area.

**Table 15.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	<p>The overall effect of the plan on local economy and employment is positive. The provision of a wide range of employment opportunities should have positive indirect effects on the vitality of communities.</p> <p>Policies encourage sustainable transport and require new developments to contribute to providing an integrated sustainable transport network and improved walking and cycling facilities within the Borough.</p> <p>Providing better transport links to the Borough's employment areas will improve access for the Borough's residents.</p>	<p>Employment, learning and skills in Halton are a key focus for the Halton's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).</p> <p>The Core Strategy is aligned to deliver all of the benefits that the spatial planning process can contribute to the attainment of the specified goals of the SCS.</p> <p>The Core Strategy implements the policy and guidance of the national, regional and sub-regional levels.</p>
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	<p>Policy CS1 seeks to deliver employment opportunities in Neighbourhood Priority Areas, and at the Borough's Key Areas of Change at 3MG, South Widnes, East Runcorn and West Runcorn.</p>	<p>The long term outlook is positive with all strategies aligned towards the similar outcomes.</p>

	<p>Similarly, Policy CS4: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities, supports new employment land allocations on small scale development sites within Neighbourhood Priority Areas where jobs are accessible to local people.</p> <p>The implementation of these policies will have a direct positive impact on the local economy, as in the long term they are likely to help reduce the high unemployment rate and increase economic activity in areas where unemployment is high.</p>	
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	Policies support, protect and strengthen the primary employment areas of the Borough and promotes growth in the Key Areas of Change (3MG, South Widnes, East and West Runcorn). Policy CS5, Neighbourhood Priority Areas, aims to narrow the gap between the highest deprived areas and the rest of the Borough, particularly in four wards - Castlefields and Grange (in Runcorn) and Ditton and Kingsway (in Widnes) - where unemployment is significantly higher than the Borough average.	
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	The changes will be permanent. The development of employment land is considered a permanent change.	
<b>Secondary</b>	Secondary effects will be on the health and well being of Halton's communities. Policies to protect employment land will ensure that jobs remain in the Borough. Local jobs combined with local training opportunities are likely to help tackle worklessness.	

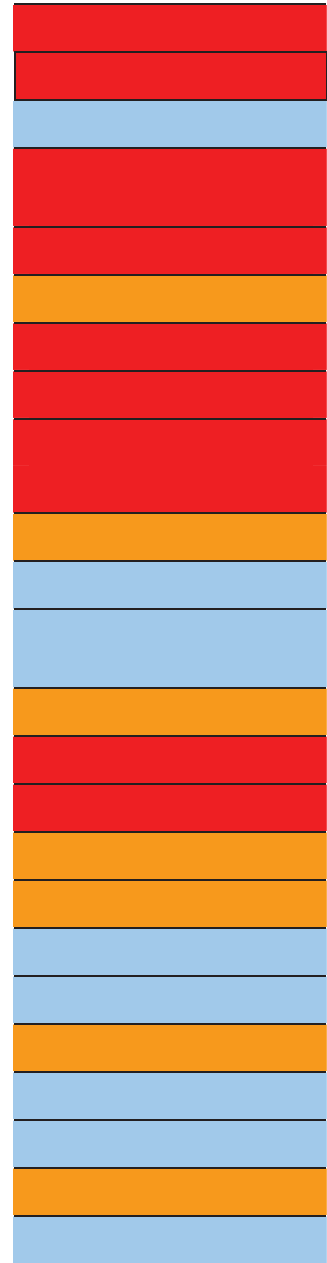
## 15.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

15.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on the local economy and employment in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of local economy and employment.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect



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**General Comments**

- 15.3.2 Planning for a sustainable local economy and providing local employment opportunities is an important issue to address in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy strongly focuses development needs in general upon the existing urban areas. This will help to achieve regeneration in the Borough, resulting in growth of the local economy over time.
- 15.3.3 Policies in the Core Strategy have been found to be sustainable and demonstrate the Council's commitment to accommodating the required economic growth in a sustainable way which in general prioritises brownfield land.

- 15.3.4 The overall effect of the plan on local economy and employment is positive. The Core Strategy develops the broad concept of the option of a mix of a brownfield focus and an urban extension to the east of Runcorn, which will include housing and employment development accommodated on greenfield sites.
- 15.3.5 Ensuring the vibrancy and strength of Halton's economy, coupled with sustaining the attractiveness of the Borough's centres have been identified as ongoing aims over the entire plan period.
- 15.3.6 The implementation of the Core Strategy will assist in the delivery of new employment opportunities within the Borough. The provision of a wide range of employment opportunities should have positive indirect effects on the vitality of communities and the sense of wellbeing amongst residents of Halton.
- 15.3.7 Policies CS?: Halton's Spatial Strategy, CS?: 3MG, CS?: Liverpool John Lennon Airport, CS?: The Mersey Gateway Project, CS?: A Network of Centres and Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities and CS?: Infrastructure Provision will all have a significantly positive overall effect on local economy and employment in the Borough.

## General Comments

### Sustainable local economy

#### Economic Development

- 15.3.8 Policy CS?: Halton's Spatial Strategy sets out the direction of growth for housing, employment land and retail development across the Borough. Focusing major new residential and employment development primarily in the Key Areas of Change, which are already key centres or key employment areas, is likely to exploit the growth potential of business sectors.
- 15.3.9 Policy CS? seeks to prioritise the re-use of previously developed land and ensure that important greenspaces within the urban area are protected from adverse development. Protection of greenspaces and the redevelopment of vacant and under-used sites are likely to increase the attractiveness of the Borough and help stimulate investment.
- Policy CS? Sustainable Development seeks to deliver sustainable economic growth by ensuring that new development in Borough contributes "towards a strong, stable and more competitive economy, responsive to Halton's needs and building upon Halton's strengths."
- 15.3.10 Policy CS? A Network of Centres for Halton seeks to support the growth of Widnes Town Centre. The economic impacts of this policy are positive particularly in the long-term as an improved town centre will boost the economy in a number of ways.
- 15.3.11 Policy CS? West Runcorn sets out strategies for each of the distinct areas within this Key Area of Change and as such is seen to have a positive effect through the creation of new jobs both in the town centre, at Runcorn Docks and at the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks).
- 15.3.12 The redevelopment of the Mersey Gateway Port into a new civil waterway port, utilising the direct links to the Manchester Ship Canal, road and rail infrastructure, will help to further

strengthen Halton's role as a centre for logistics and distribution and will have positive impacts on economic growth and increasing employment opportunities in the Borough.

- 15.3.13 The implementation of Policy **CS?** East Runcorn is likely to have a significantly positive impact on local economy and employment. The expansion of the Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus will help secure Daresbury's place as one of the world's key locations for scientific, innovation and entrepreneurial collaboration. The expansion of the campus will see the local, regional and national economy benefit from investment in world-class scientific research and innovation from at home and abroad, more joint working between different organisations located on the campus, open up access to science and technology facilities to industry and support the creation and growth of new science and technology related businesses.
- 15.3.14 Through the implementation of Policy **CS?** East Runcorn, the Key Area of Change will also see significant residential development and the growth of Daresbury Business Park, this will have a positive impact on the sustainable growth of the local economy and the creation of employment opportunities in the Borough.
- 15.3.15 **Policy CS?:** Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities seeks to protect existing employment sites and to make further provision for employment uses, this will have a positive impact on the expansion of the local economy and employment in the long term.
- 15.3.16 However, it is essential that the Site Allocations DPD delivers a portfolio of employment land which is balanced enough to ensure provision for different sectors of the economy across the Borough, in both urban and rural areas. The portfolio of employment land should be flexible enough to respond to dynamic market conditions and changing business needs and working practices. In addition, it is considered that the Core Strategy should also support flexible and home based working, at present it does not.

### Infrastructure

- 15.3.17 Infrastructure planning and provision is an essential factor in ensuring that sustainable growth is delivered in a way that enhances the area and allows safe, sustainable access to a wide range of services and facilities. Policy **CS?** Infrastructure Provision is likely to strengthen the economy and aid the regeneration of the Borough. In particular, the policy ensures that sufficient services and infrastructure will be in place to meet the needs of employment and housing growth this will have a positive impact on delivering sustainable economic growth.

### Housing

- 15.3.18 Core Strategy policy **CS?**; Housing Supply and Locational Priorities seeks to deliver 8000 new dwellings for the period 2010-2026. New housing of a good quality will support efforts to attract new businesses by providing a good choice of homes for employees and may increase employment in the construction industry.
- 15.3.19 It is essential that new housing growth areas are linked with employment opportunities. Policy **CS?**; Housing Supply and Locational Priorities prioritises the development of previously developed land and encourages higher density developments in sustainable locations close to town/neighbourhood facilities or transport interchanges. This policy is therefore likely to help ensure that communities have easy access to a wide range of employment opportunities.

### Transport

- 15.3.20 Policy **CS?**: Green Belt allows for minor alterations to the Green Belt surrounding Halton to allow for the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Policy **CS?** Liverpool John Lennon Airport also supports the expansion of the airport. The implementation of both of these policies will have a positive impact on the local economy and employment through an increase in workforce numbers and the anticipated impact on the economic infrastructure of the area from the expansion of the airport; for example by the introduction of new hotels and car parking facilities.
- 15.3.21 The Masterplan for the expansion of the airport through to 2030 states that the airport has the potential to increase direct on-site employment numbers to between 4,000 and 5,900 by 2015, and to between 4,500 and 6,700 by 2030. Including off-site employment, the total job growth from airport growth could reach 9,400 jobs by 2030, and could be as high as 11,300.
- 15.3.22 The expansion of the airport is therefore likely to significantly increase job opportunities and business development opportunities in Halton and the wider sub-region in the long term.

### Town and village centres in the Borough

- 15.3.23 The overall impact of the Core Strategy on centres in the Borough is significantly positive. **Policy CS?** A Network of Centres for Halton promotes Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea Town Centre as the main focal points for growth and development, supported by the Runcorn Old Town centre. Improved and more accessible town centres within the Borough will be more likely to attract investment, stimulating the local economy and generating further employment opportunities.

## 15.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 15.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the transportation theme.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

#### Employment

- 15.4.2 A key mitigation issue is the need for the Core Strategy to facilitate opportunities for home working. The sustainability impacts of policy **CSX:** Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities could be increased by supporting opportunities for home working; this is likely to reduce the need to travel. This, in turn, may reduce congestion and improve air quality.

### Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 15.4.3 Overall, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is envisaged to have a positive impact on the local economy and employment, particularly in the medium to long-term when the policy measures will have had time to take effect and provide conditions for the economic growth required to generate the level and range of employment opportunities which will meet the needs of the Borough.
- 15.4.4 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the local economy and employment topic area.

## 15.5 Summary of Impacts

15.5.1 Table 15.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the local economy and employment topic area.

**Table 15.2: Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft**

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	<p>The overall effect of the plan on local economy and employment is positive. The provision of a wide range of employment opportunities should have positive indirect effects on the vitality of communities.</p> <p>Policies encourage sustainable transport and require new developments to contribute to providing an integrated sustainable transport network and improved walking and cycling facilities within the Borough.</p> <p>Providing better transport links to the Borough's employment areas will improve access for the Borough's residents.</p> <p>The expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport will have positive impacts for the regional and national economy in the short-medium term.</p>	<p>Employment, learning and skills in Halton are a key focus for the Halton's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).</p> <p>The Core Strategy is aligned to deliver all of the benefits that the spatial planning process can contribute to the attainment of the specified goals of the SCS.</p> <p>The Core Strategy implements the policy and guidance of the national, regional and sub-regional levels.</p>
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	<p>Policy CS? Halton's Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver employment opportunities at the Borough's Key Areas of Change at 3MG, South Widnes, East Runcorn and West Runcorn.</p> <p>The implementation of Policy CS? East Runcorn is likely to have a significantly positive impact on local economy and employment. Similarly, Policy CS4: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities, seeks to protect existing employment sites and to make further provision for employment uses.</p> <p>The implementation of these policies will have a direct positive impact on the local economy, as in the long term they are likely to help reduce the high unemployment rate</p>	<p>The long term outlook is positive with all strategies aligned towards the similar outcomes.</p>

	<p>and increase economic activity in areas where unemployment is high.</p> <p>The expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport will have positive impacts for the regional and national economy in the long term.</p> <p>There may be a need for planning policy to change its emphasis in the future due to these successes, or economic conditions could change and these may need addressing more explicitly. The Core Strategy should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such change.</p>	
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	<p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from economic growth, regeneration and the provision of a wide range of employment opportunities, but particularly wherever new development takes place in or close to the key in the Key Areas of Change (3MG, South Widnes, East and West Runcorn).</p>	
<b>Permanent vs. temporary</b>	<p>The changes will be permanent. The development of employment land is considered a permanent change.</p> <p>The development of employment and other commercial development on previously developed land will help to encourage urban renaissance and is likely to have a permanent impact.</p> <p>The success of the Borough's economy is tied to that of the UK economy as a whole, and as such, there will be other spatial planning issues in relation to the local economy and employment that will evolve over the lifetime of the Core Strategy and beyond, which will mean that some affects become temporary. This includes changing economic, environmental and social conditions and circumstances.</p>	
<b>Secondary</b>	<p>The local economy and employment topic is interrelated to all the other sustainability topic areas identified within this report. Other areas of sustainability explicitly linked to economic growth and employment, include those relating to the physical environment (ecosystem services, air quality, housing provision, open space, transport) and to the social environment (community health and equality, education and skills, leisure) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on the local economy and employment.</p> <p>Secondary effects will be on the health and well being of Halton's communities. Policies to protect employment land will ensure that jobs remain in the Borough. Local jobs combined with local training opportunities are likely to help tackle worklessness.</p>	





## 16 Housing

### 16.1 Introduction

- 16.1.1 Access to shelter and the need for a home are fundamental human requirements and as such provision of sufficient good quality housing is also a crucial component of a sustainable community. The housing needs of a community vary greatly and different people have different housing demands, which also change over their lifetime. The need to provide a variety of dwelling types and sizes is therefore crucial.
- 16.1.2 In many areas, less affluent members of society are not always able to access the housing market due to high house prices. Affordable housing provision whereby housing is subsidised is therefore a key component of housing provision for a sustainable community. Many public sector workers such as teachers and health-care workers cannot access the housing market. Gypsies and travellers have different accommodation needs. Provision of a range of affordable housing/accommodation options is therefore important.
- 16.1.3 In order to ensure the development of sustainable communities in Halton, the Core Strategy and wider LDDs must ensure the availability of sufficient housing to meet identified needs, in terms of housing quantity, location, quality, affordability and choice.
- 16.1.4 There is a need to have regard to national and sub-regional pressures, demographic change in Halton and climate change, with an increasing need to ensure that development is located, designed and constructed sustainably.
- 16.1.5 Table 5.1 indicates that the following policies which have a significant effect on the housing topic area need appraising:
- CS? Halton's Spatial Strategy
  - CS? Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
  - CSx: Housing Mix
  - CS? Infrastructure Provision
  - CS? West Runcorn
  - CS? East Runcorn
  - CS? Green Belt
  - CS? Managing Pollution and Risk
- 16.1.6 Their effects on the housing topic area are considered together, as well as independently, in this chapter.

#### Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives Identified by the SA Scoping Report

- 16.1.7 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the housing topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
10	To improve access to a range of good quality and affordable housing that meets the needs of the community of Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all new development meets the lifetime homes standards, in order to meet the needs of an ageing population in the Borough.</li> <li>• Seek to develop mixed income communities and flexibility of tenure and housing type in the Borough.</li> <li>• Coordinate housing provision with investment in employment and community services to ensure that settlements meet the needs of their communities.</li> <li>• Provide decent, good quality and affordable housing for all, including intermediate and key worker housing in line with RSS (and Growth Point) housing targets.</li> </ul>

## 16.2 The Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

16.2.1 Table 16.1 below is an extract from the SA Report on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (2009) which shows the impacts of the preferred options policies on the housing topic area.

**Table 16.1:** Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

Very Positive	Po siti ve	No Eff ect	Ne gat ive	Very Negative
------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------

Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	The Core Strategy policies perform very well against the housing objective, as the policies should result in an increase to the supply of housing (including affordable housing) within the borough, whilst also creating mixed and balanced communities. Overall the preferred policy options will have positive impacts on the relevant areas of sustainability.	The policies are compatible with the Regional Spatial Strategy and other local policies on housing. The in-combination effects of the multiple plans are likely to be positive.

Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	In the long term the non prescriptive policy approach will ensure continued positive impacts over time as the context of housing need and housing markets in the borough changes.	The policies allow for sufficient growth in, and design aspects of, the housing stock to accommodate future changes in the population.
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	The areas that are likely to be significantly affected by the preferred policy options are the Key Areas of Change in East Runcorn, West Runcorn and Neighbourhood Priority Areas.	
<b>Permanent vs. Temporary</b>	A minor negative effect has also been identified against this objective, as new housing situated in areas with an increased likelihood of flooding in East Runcorn may detract from the quality of housing provided although this will not be permanent and is mitigated by the inclusion of policy CS23. Overall the increase in Housing will be a permanent change.	
<b>Secondary</b>	There are positive social and economic effects, mainly related to the provision of more affordable housing, low carbon, sustainable, and adaptable housing, and a more diverse mix of house types.	

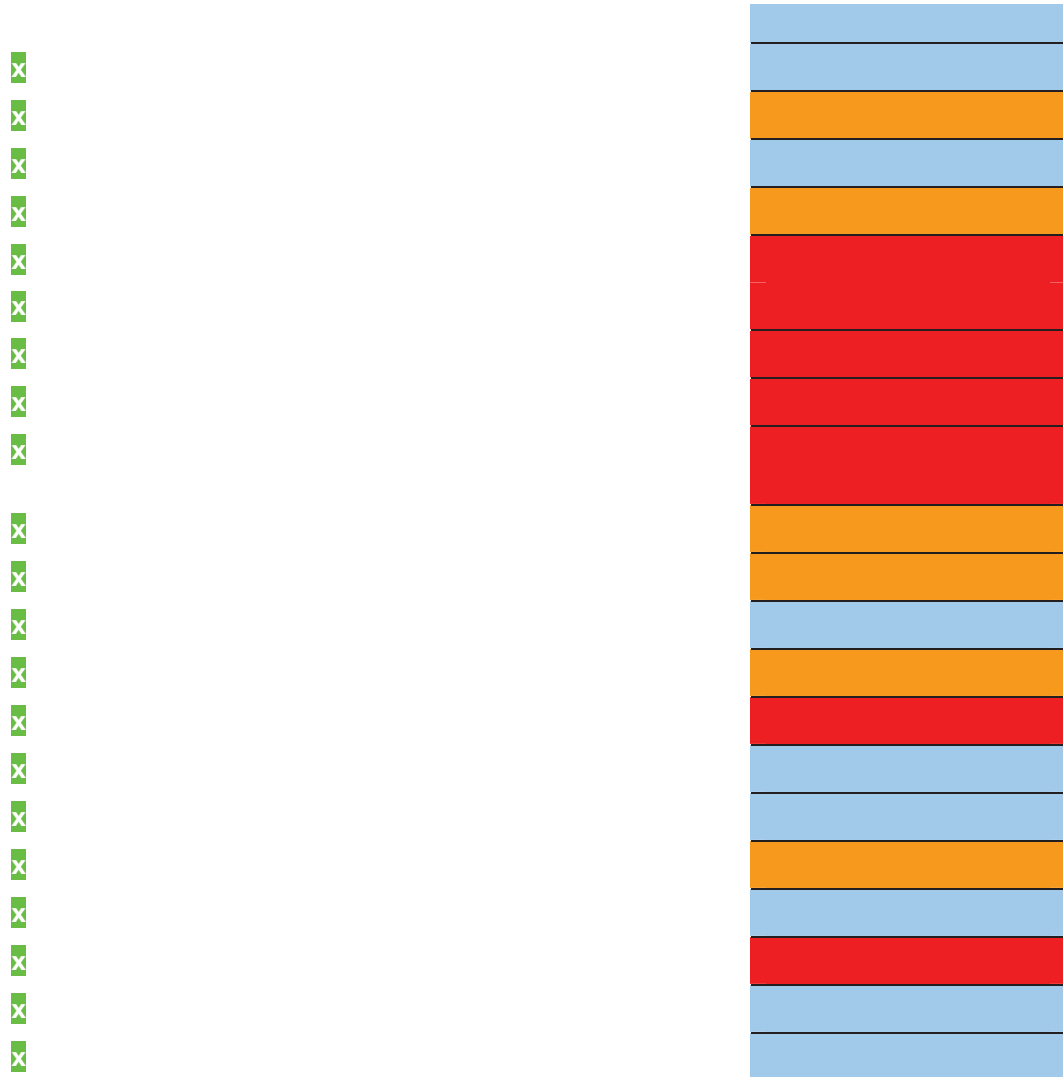
### 16.3 Situation under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft

16.3.1 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft will have an impact on housing in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the Proposed Submission Draft policies on the theme of housing.

KEY	
	Primary Effect
	Secondary Effect
	Little or no Effect

x  
x  
x  
x





**General Comments**

- 16.3.2 The supply and type of housing provided across Halton is a key issue in terms of promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability throughout the Borough.
- 16.3.3 The housing market itself has a crucial role to play in encouraging and supporting economic growth. Without the right types of homes in the right places, Halton will not be able to retain or attract residents and investors.
- 16.3.4 The Core Strategy housing policies focus upon ensuring that the Borough delivers an overall balanced housing stock that meets the needs of new and existing residents.
- 16.3.5 The development of new homes is likely to have a positive effect on meeting local housing needs and on the local economy through providing employment in the construction industry. However, the development of new homes could have a negative environmental impact (potentially on sites of biodiversity importance, key land resources, water quality and air quality)

and significant impact on landscape in the Borough. Therefore, all new development needs to take account of the local character of areas.

- 16.3.6 The provision of new housing may result in opportunities to improve cultural, social, leisure and recreational provision. However, it could lead to increased pressure on these same services, thus reducing the quality of provision. This issue is addressed in policy CS2: Infrastructure Provision.
- 16.3.7 Increasing the provision of new housing will be important as it will help to broaden the housing offer within the Borough, which will be critical to help retain the Borough's younger generation, as well as increasing the attractiveness of the Borough to potential residents.
- 16.3.8 Overall the Core Strategy aims to support an appropriate level of housing growth and promotes a balanced housing offer through ensuring a mix of tenure and type in sustainable locations to meet the needs of new and existing residents. This includes improving the existing housing stock, as well as new housing, specialist housing, affordable housing and sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 16.3.9 Policies CS?: Halton's Spatial Strategy, CS? Housing Supply and Locational Priorities, CS?: Affordable Housing, CS? Housing Mix, CS?: High Quality Design and CS?: Infrastructure Provision will all have a significantly positive overall effect on housing in the Borough.

### Spatial Priorities and Housing Supply

- 16.3.10 The location of new housing development affects the landscape, the future of settlements, population, the services and facilities that are required by residents and the viability of these.
- 16.3.11 Policy CS?: Halton's Spatial Strategy sets out the direction of growth for housing, focusing major new residential development primarily in the Key Areas of Change. The implementation of this policy will improve access to a range of housing options in the Borough, having an overall positive impact on the SA objective 10. The coordination of housing provision with investment in employment and community services should ensure that settlements meet the needs of their communities.
- 16.3.12 Policy CS?: seeks to deliver residential development through existing commitments and allocated sites, planned development within the Key Areas of Change, windfall development and future allocations of housing land.
- 16.3.13 Policy CS?: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities prioritises the development of previously developed land and encourages higher density developments in sustainable locations close to town/neighbourhood facilities or transport interchanges. This will ensure that housing is located close to key public transport corridors; creating the critical mass in these locations needed to support improvements to existing facilities such as healthcare and education.
- 16.3.14 The implementation of Policy CS?: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities is likely to have a positive impact on housing choice in the Borough and will help maximise the use of vacant and under-used previously developed land, provided that this land is suitable for housing.

Policy CS? East Runcorn seeks to create a new community for Halton which will encompass a diverse mix of uses and continue the development of Runcorn in line with the long term vision for the Borough. New housing development at East Runcorn will supplement the expanded employment offer at Daresbury, and at Sandymoor, with the completion of further homes

supported by a new neighbourhood centre. A new sustainable transport interchange to serve the area will also be created.

The implementation of Policy CS? West Runcorn will diversify the housing offer in the borough and will reinforce existing neighbourhoods through the addition of some higher quality residential development. Runcorn Docks provides the opportunity to deliver a new high quality waterfront residential community.

- 16.3.15 Policy CS? Green Belt allows for small scale change amounting to minor infill development within the existing settlements within the Green Belt of Daresbury, Moore and Preston on the Hill if necessary to meet identified local needs. This flexible approach will improve housing choice in the Borough and should allow for housing need to be met in these areas where appropriate.

### Housing Mix

- 16.3.16 Policy CS?: Housing Mix states that housing proposals of 10 dwellings or more will be required to provide an appropriate mix of housing on site. The final mix is not stated, and will be negotiated with the developer on the basis of a housing needs assessment in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This flexible approach should ensure that specific housing needs of particular groups are met through the appropriate provision of specialist and supported housing, in order to address deficiencies in the existing housing stock.
- 16.3.17 It is considered that the low site threshold in policy CS? Housing Mix for the potential provision of supported housing will help to meet need in those areas where sites come forward and will mean that more sites qualify. The implementation of policy CS? Housing Mix alongside policy CS? Infrastructure Provision is considered to be a flexible approach to meeting housing needs in the Borough. Contributions could be directed to the appropriate area relevant to the type of need that exists at the time.
- 16.3.18 CS? Managing Pollution and Risk seeks to minimise the effects of pollution on health and the environment. The policy seeks to ensure that new development reduces the impact on amenity and that new development is developed in safe areas away from flood risk and land contamination. The implementation of this policy should ensure that new housing is provided in safe locations and that the impacts of pollution from new development on existing residential areas are limited, thereby increasing quality of life for residents in Halton.

## 16.4 How can we mitigate/enhance effects?

- 16.4.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the housing theme.

### Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 16.4.2 Overall, the negative effects of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on housing are limited to the general effect of new development increasing the burden on the social and physical infrastructure in the Borough. However many of the policies are formulated in such a way as to limit this effect by proposing improvements to social and physical infrastructure in the Borough that will potentially off-set any negative effect, provided they are implemented.

## Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 16.4.3 By meeting existing and proposed housing needs while maximising the efficient use of land, respecting the identity of settlements and reducing the need to travel, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is envisaged to have a positive impact on housing within the Borough.
- 16.4.4 No additional measures are recommended for enhancing the positive effects on the housing topic area.

## 16.5 Summary of Impacts

- 16.5.1 Table 15.2 below provides a summary of the likely impacts arising from the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft on the housing topic area.

**Table 15.2: Summary of Impacts under the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft**

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
<b>Short / medium term (to about 2026)</b>	The Core Strategy policies perform very well against the housing objective, as the policies should result in an increase to the supply of housing (including affordable housing) within the Borough, whilst also creating mixed and balanced communities. Overall the Core Strategy will have positive impact on the relevant areas of sustainability.	Other plans, programmes and strategies which relate to housing in the Borough, including PPS3, Housing (2006) and PPS1, Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) will strengthen the positive impacts of the Draft Publication Core Strategy on this topic area.
<b>Long term (beyond 2026)</b>	The positive effects seen in the short / medium term should continue in the long term, especially in terms of meeting existing and proposed housing needs in the Borough.  The Core Strategy policies are based on a robust evidence base and have been developed to respond to local	The policies allow for sufficient growth in, and design aspects of, the housing stock to accommodate future changes in the population.

Type of Impact	Core Strategy Preferred Options	Core Strategy plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	needs in the Borough. However, there may be a need for housing policies to change emphasis in the future due to changes in the socio-economic makeup of the Borough. The Core Strategy should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such changes.	
<b>Areas likely to be significantly affected</b>	<p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from increased housing quantity, quality, affordability and choice, but particularly wherever new development takes place.</p> <p>The most positive effects will likely be in the Key Areas of Change in East Runcorn and West Runcorn.</p> <p>There could also potentially be negative impacts on areas of landscape value within the Borough, depending upon where new housing is located.</p>	
<b>Permanent vs. Temporary</b>	The Core Strategy sets the long term vision and strategic objectives for spatial planning in the Borough. The implementation of the Core Strategy policies in relation to housing will have a permanent impact.	
<b>Secondary</b>	<p>The housing topic is interrelated to many other sustainability topic areas identified within this report.</p> <p>Other areas of sustainability explicitly linked to housing, include those relating to the physical environment (employment provision, open space, transport) and to the social environment (community health and equality, local economy, education and skills, and leisure) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on housing. There could also potentially be secondary impacts on some ecosystem services including water quality, quality of biodiversity sites and air quality.</p> <p>For example, a diverse local economy can have positive secondary impacts on housing choice and can support housing growth through the attraction of potential residents and investors.</p>	



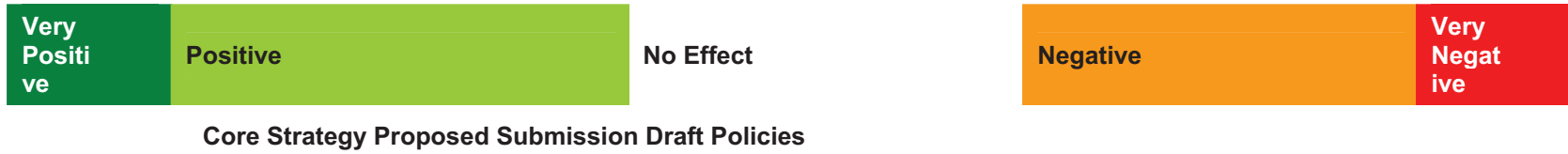
## 17 Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

### **To be completed awaiting policy numbers**

- 17.1.1 Table 17.1 below looks at the performance of all the policies taken together. Appendix 4 looks at the performance of the plan in combination with other initiatives in the Borough. Some of the key cumulative and synergistic effects are set out in this section.
- 17.1.2 Table 17.1 below sets out the performance of the policies in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft together, in relation to each of the SA topics. The policies have varying impacts on the different SA topics explored within this SA.



Table 7.1 – Cumulative Effects of the Policies – **To be completed (awaiting policy numbers)**



SA Topics

Heritage and Landscape

Biodiversity

Water and Land Resources

Climatic Factors and Flooding

Transportation

1



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**and Air  
Quality**

**Social  
Equality  
and  
Communi-  
ty  
Services**

**Local  
Econom-  
y and  
Employ-  
ment**

**Housing**

## 18 Conclusion

- 18.1.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the Core Strategy achieves a sustainable balance between making provision for development to meet local needs, taking into account infrastructure requirements and the physical and environmental constraints of the area, in particular the high volume of contaminated land, and displaying flexibility to respond to changing circumstances across the lifetime of the Core Strategy.

### Location of New Development

- 18.1.2 Through the identification of Key Areas of Change, the Core Strategy highlights areas which will be subject to urban renewal over the plan period. The Core Strategy proposed submission draft polices indicate the Council's commitment to accommodating growth in a sustainable way which prioritises sustainable brownfield land. It is however, recognised that a significant proportion of development will have to be accommodated on greenfield land (such as in East Runcorn), although the greenfield development opportunities indicated are in accessible locations, close to good public transport links.

- 18.1.3 The Council's Spatial Strategy policy CS? seeks to concentrate development in the main town centres in the Borough (Widnes and Halton Lea, supported by Runcorn) thus reducing the need to travel. The importance of conserving and enhancing settlement character is recognised in the settlement hierarchy (Policy CS: A Network of Centres for Halton) which indicates the scale of development acceptable in settlement's and is based on the services they provide.

### Natural and Historic Environments

- 18.1.4 The main risk to key areas of biodiversity value within the Borough is the level of development proposed within the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft. However it is recognised that a number of policies provide sufficient measures for ensuring that new development will be delivered whilst ensuring that areas of biodiversity are protected.

- 18.1.5 The Council's commitment to improving the environment of the Borough is emphasised throughout the Core Strategy, but is particularly evident policies CS? Sustainable Development and CS? Natural and Historic Environments. The successful implementation of these policies will ensure that the environmental quality of the Borough is maintained and enhanced. Likewise, the importance of protecting, enhancing and managing places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value is well recognised throughout the Core Strategy and providing these policies are implemented these features will be well managed into the longer term.

### Soil, Land and Water Resources

- 18.1.6 Over the plan period, the implementation of the Core Strategy will result in potential negative impacts on soil and land resources due to the development of greenfield sites in East Runcorn and the development of Green Belt land and the extraction of mineral resources. However, these negative effects are partly mitigated by other policies within the Proposed Submission Draft which aim to reduce the impact of new development on or close to Green Belt and greenfield land where possible over the plan period, and seek to deliver a high quality green infrastructure network across the Borough, to mitigate the loss of this Greenfield land.

- 18.1.7 New development through the implementation of the Core Strategy will bring an increase in water consumption and waste generation in absolute terms, hence in most cases there is a negative assessment of those policies which direct growth against these objectives. It is however recognised that waste generation can be mitigated through design policies in the emerging Development Management DPD, but will also require other awareness raising programmes to encourage recycling, carried out by the Council and its partners.
- 18.1.8 In addition, it is also recognised that, through the implementation of policy CS?: Design of new Residential Development, there is a requirement for new housing to meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes which will assist in delivering water and energy efficiency in new affordable homes.

### **Economic Growth, Social Inclusiveness and Key Infrastructure**

- 18.1.9 One of the main thrusts of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is to support the maintenance and growth of the Borough's economy. The Core Strategy aims to consolidate and enhance linkages to the wider sub-region and seeks to deliver the economic benefits of Halton's strategic location and facilities to the Borough's residents and businesses. The expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the further development of Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus represent significant growth and investment opportunities for the Borough and are likely to significantly increase job opportunities and business development opportunities in Halton and the wider sub-region in the long term.
- 18.1.10 The implementation of policies CS?: Green Belt and CS? Liverpool John Lennon Airport which support the expansion of the airport, will have a positive impact on the local economy and employment through an increase in workforce numbers and the anticipated impact on the economic infrastructure of the area from the expansion of the airport; for example by the introduction of new hotels and car parking facilities.
- 18.1.11 The implementation of the Core Strategy is likely to have a significantly positive impact on transportation in the Borough. The negative effects on transportation are limited to the general effect of new development such as the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport increasing the burden on the transport network. However many of the policies are formulated in such a way as to limit this effect by proposing improvements to the transport network that will potentially off-set any negative effect, provided they are implemented.
- 18.1.12 Numerous positive impacts on increasing social inclusiveness in Halton have been identified in relation to the housing and employment policies. There are also numerous measures within the policies which will help to ensure that sufficient community services and facilities are developed alongside new development delivered over the plan period.
- 18.1.13 By meeting existing and proposed housing needs while maximising the efficient use of land, respecting the identity of settlements and reducing the need to travel, the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft is envisaged to have a positive impact on housing within the Borough.
- 18.1.14 The Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft contains a wide variety of policy content focused on addressing the Borough's health problems. Approaches notable for their consideration and impact upon health priorities include those within policy CSx: Health and Well-Being, but there are also efforts to address health problems through the maintenance of well-designed places and spaces, through the support of accessible sustainable travel options and through the provision of a healthy, green local environment.

- 18.1.15 In essence, the Core Strategy seeks to create healthy and liveable urban neighbourhoods, provide social infrastructure (such as basic health, community and sports facilities, and open space) and raise levels of educational attainment.

### **Climate Change**

- 18.1.16 The implementation of the Core Strategy will have a positive impact on tackling the impacts of climate change. As new development is broadly directed towards existing centres, it will be located close to existing services. This should reduce the need to travel, which will in turn have a positive impact on reducing the volume of carbon emissions produced through travelling. The Core Strategy also promotes the development of decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy, which will increase the potential for delivering sustainable energy throughout the Borough.
- 18.1.17 Due to its estuarine location and the number of brooks which run into the Mersey Estuary in Halton, there are areas of Halton that are low lying and have been identified by the Environment Agency as being at risk from flooding. Some of these areas are amongst the most important nature areas in Halton. The risk of flooding is likely to increase over the lifetime of the Core Strategy due to climate change. The Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy addresses the need to take account of flood risk in development proposals.

### **Overall Cumulative Impacts**

- 18.1.18 The Core Strategy as a whole is likely to result in both positive and negative cumulative impacts on sustainable development. The most significant of those impacts are highlighted below.
- Positive cumulative impacts are likely to include:
    - Positive impacts on economic growth and diversity, employment and investment throughout Halton, provided the employment growth and infrastructure improvements set out in the Core Strategy are accompanied by investments to improve the skills of Halton's population;
    - Positive impacts on sustainable land use and patterns of development by directing housing and employment growth to previously developed land within existing urban areas such as in Widnes. These areas also have established transport links and are in need of regeneration;
    - Positive impacts on achieving a more equitable distribution of prosperity and a fairer access to services by directing development and infrastructure and service improvements to areas that contain pockets of deprivation; also by increasing the number of homes (including affordable housing) and jobs in the Borough; and
    - Positive impacts on health and health inequalities by increasing the provision of health facilities and also providing and enhancing the factors that contribute to health and well being. These factors or determinants of health include: access to housing, employment and services, provision of open spaces, recreation and sports opportunities.
  - Adverse cumulative impacts are likely to include:

- Adverse impacts on flood risk resulting from the increase in development in areas at risk of flooding particularly those areas located close to the Mersey Estuary and associated brooks;
- Potential adverse impacts on wildlife and nature conservation sites across Halton from increasing pressures from development particularly on greenfield sites in East Runcorn; and
- Potential adverse impacts on consumption of resources and production of waste in the Borough as a consequence of the increase in development and jobs.

18.1.19 Overall, it is considered that the implementation of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft policies will achieve sustainable and sensitive growth in the Halton.

## 19 Monitoring – to be completed



## 20 Next Steps

- 20.1.1 As an integral part of the development of the Core Strategy, the Council is required to engage the community on the Proposed Submission Draft (Publication version) of the Core Strategy under Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
- 20.1.2 Preparation of the Core Strategy has already been through a number of stages during which extensive stakeholder involvement has taken place. At this stage, the intention of issuing this SA Report alongside the Core Strategy DPD is to allow for representations to be made in connection with issues of soundness (i.e. whether the Core Strategy is justified, whether it is effective and whether it is consistent with national policy) and legal compliance only.
- 20.1.3 The Planning Inspectorate has issued guidance entitled 'Local Development Frameworks – Examining Development Plan Documents: Procedural Guidance' (August 2009). This document can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's web site at the following link: [http://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/pins/appeals/local\\_dev/dpd\\_procedure\\_guide\\_aug09.pdf](http://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/pins/appeals/local_dev/dpd_procedure_guide_aug09.pdf).
- 20.1.4 In order to ensure that the scope and content of representations on the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft (Publication version) and this SA Report are restricted to issues of soundness and legal compliances in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate guidance stated above, respondents are requested to make representations on an official comment form that has been specifically designed to assist in making representations. The Council are keen to promote the submission of comments electronically and will encourage anyone with appropriate facilities to make their responses in this way. An electronic version of the official comment form can be found on the Council's web site at: [www.halton.gov.uk/halton2026](http://www.halton.gov.uk/halton2026).
- 20.1.5 Alternatively, completed comment forms can be returned by post to the following address by no later than Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
- 20.1.6 Should the policies in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft undergo any further significant changes in the future prior to submission, including as a result of taking into account any representations received on the Proposed Submission Draft, the significant changes will also be submitted for further SA.

## Glossary – to be completed

### **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

One of a number of documents required to be included in the Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents. It is submitted to Government via the Regional Government office by a local planning authority at the end of December each year to assess the progress and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

### **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**

Non-permanent designation created if monitoring reveals that statutory air quality thresholds are being exceeded or will be exceeded in the near future.

### **Built Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)**

A voluntary measurement rating for green buildings that was established in the UK by the BRE. Since its inception it has since grown in scope and geographically, being exported in various guises across the globe.

### **Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)**

A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances; absorbed from the air by plants in photosynthesis.

### **Conservation Area**

A conservation area is a tract of land that has been awarded protected status in order to ensure that natural features, cultural heritage or biota are safeguarded. A conservation area may be a nature reserve, a park, a land reclamation project, or other area.

### **Core Strategy**

Core Strategy Document is the key compulsory Local Development Document specified in United Kingdom planning law. Every other Local Development Document is built on the principles it sets out, regarding the development and use of land in a Local Planning Authority's area. The principles should be in accordance with the Community strategy.

### **Development Plan Document (DPD)**

A Local Development Document which forms part of the statutory development plan, including the Core Strategy and Allocations and Proposals Map DPD.

### **Geodiversity**

Geodiversity is the variety of earth materials, forms and processes that constitute and shape the Earth, either the whole or a specific part of it.

### **Green Belt**

Green Belt is undeveloped land, which has been specifically designated for long-term protection. It is a nationally important designation.

## **Green Infrastructure**

Green Infrastructure is a concept originating in the United States in the mid-1990s that highlights the importance of the natural environment in decisions about land use planning. In particular there is an emphasis on the "life support" functions provided by a network of natural ecosystems, with an emphasis on interconnectivity to support long term sustainability.

## **Greenhouse Gas (GHG)**

Greenhouse gases are gases in an atmosphere that absorb and emit radiation within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect.

## **Local Development Document (LDD)**

The individual documents that set out planning policies and guidance for the Borough for specific topics or for the geographical areas.

## **Local Development Framework (LDF)**

The Local Development Framework is the portfolio or folder of Local Development Documents, which set out the planning policy framework for the Borough.

## **Local nature Reserves (LNR)**

A Local Nature Reserve or LNR is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, the powers of district councils to establish LNRs are contained in Article 22 of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

## **Local Planning Authority (LPA)**

A Local Planning Authority is the local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom.

## **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)**

Local strategic partnerships exist in nearly all local authority areas in England. They bring together representatives from the local statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to address local problems, allocate funding, discuss strategies and initiatives.

## **Local Geological Sites (LGS)**

Local Geological Sites (formerly known as Regionally Important Geological Sites - or RIGS) are non-statutory sites that have been identified by local geo-conservation groups as being of importance. A potential Local Geological Site is put through an assessment panel and, if a site is dually recommended, is notified to the relevant local authority. By designating a Local Geological Site, the features identified then become a material consideration in any future development.

## **Per capita consumption**

The amount of a commodity used by each person.

## **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)**

Guidance documents which set out national planning policy.

### **Planning Policy Statement (PPS)**

Planning Policy Statement Guidance documents which set out national planning policy. These are gradually replacing PPGs.

### **Previously Developed Land (PDL)**

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings.

### **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

Site of Special Scientific Interest is a special area to protect wildlife, habitats and geographic features based on scientific interest.

### **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is defined in the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), also known as the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

### **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

A Special Protection Area or SPA is a designation under the European Union directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a system of incorporating environmental considerations into policies, plans and programmes. It is sometimes referred to as Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

In England and Wales, Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) are a required part of the local planning process, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 25, produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

A document that's primary objective is to identify sites with potential for housing, assess their housing potential and when they are likely to be developed.

### **Sustainable**

When making decisions in relation to land uses, local authorities have a duty to ensure that a development is sustainable. This means that a development or activity must meet the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

In United Kingdom Planning Law a Sustainability Appraisal is an appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development. Since 2001, Sustainability Appraisals have had to be in conformity with the Strategic Environmental Assessment EU directive.

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

These are Local Development Documents that have not been subject to independent testing and do not have the weight of development plan status. Replaces Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## Appendix 1: Procedural ‘Quality Assurance’ Checklist – To be completed

This table is taken from the PAS SA guidance document<sup>6</sup>. Assessment findings are colour coded as follows:

	Requirement is satisfactorily covered in this report
	Requirement is partially covered in this report
	Requirement is not adequately covered in this report

Does the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft Report...	Commentary
<b>Scoping Report</b>	
Describe the emerging plan and summarise the Scoping Report?	
Account for the recommendations included in the review of the scoping report?	
Adequately summarise the scoping report?	
<b>Test the Core Strategy Objectives Against the SA Framework (Stage B1)</b>	
Describe findings of stage B1 of the SA process?	
Test the compatibility of the plan objectives with the SA objectives?	
<b>Develop the Options (Stage B2)</b>	
Include reasonable options/alternatives in line with stage B2 of the SA process?	
Document the reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives of the plan?	
Include an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with?	
<b>Prediction, Evaluation and Mitigation of the Effects and Maximisation of Benefits Associated with the Options and Preferred Options (Stage B3 – B5)</b>	
Describe the findings of Stage B3–B5 of the SA process?	
Ensure that all significant effects on the economy, community and environment are considered including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors?	
Predict effects in terms of their magnitude, geographical scale, the time period over which they will occur, whether they are permanent or temporary, positive or negative, probable or	

<sup>6</sup> Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and Scott Wilson, (2007), Local Development Frameworks: Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal

Does the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft Report...	Commentary
improbable, frequent or rare, and whether or not there are secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects?	
Quantify predictions and evaluations of significance where possible, taking care to avoid false precision?	
Ensure that qualitative judgement of predictions and evaluation of significance is supported by baseline evidence, such as likely effects on specific indicators, trends, targets or other evidence?	
Highlight where a number of small, less significant effects may act in a cumulative or synergistic fashion to result in a significant effect?	
Compare options against sustainability criteria and each other and possibly a business-as-usual option?	
Consider and document ways of mitigating significant adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects?	
Document any uncertainties or limitations in the information underlying both quantitative and qualitative predictions and evaluations of significance?	
<b>Propose Measures to Monitor the Significant Effects of the Core Strategy (Stage B6)</b>	
Document stage b6 of the SA guidance?	
Include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring?	
<b>Other</b>	
Contain a non-technical summary that is written in a way most likely to engage prospective readers?	
Use simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms?	
Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation?	
Use maps and other illustrations where appropriate?	
Set out what happens next in the SA process?	

## Appendix 2: Policy and Topic Impact Table

Policy No	Policy Title	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Water Quality and Resources	Soil and Land Resources	Air Quality	Climatic Factors and Flooding	Cultural Heritage and Landscape	Population and Human Health	Social Inclusiveness including skills and education	Local Economy and Employment	Transportation	Housing
	Halton's Spatial Strategy	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect
	Sustainable Development Principles	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect
	Housing Supply and Locational Priorities	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect
	Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect
	A Network of Centres for Halton	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect
	Infrastructure Provision	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect
	3MG	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect
	South Widnes	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect
	West Runcom	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect
	East Runcom	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect
	Affordable Housing	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect
	Housing Mix	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect
	Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect
	Sustainable Transport and Travel	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect
	The Mersey Gateway Project	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect
	Liverpool John Lennon Airport	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect
	Sustainable Development and Climate Change	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect
	High Quality Design	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect
	Natural and Historic Environments	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect
	Green Infrastructure	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect
	Green Belt	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect
	Health and Well-Being	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect
	Managing Pollution and Risk	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Primary Effect	Primary Effect
	Waste	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect
	Minerals	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Primary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Secondary Effect	Secondary Effect	Little or no Effect	Little or no Effect

KEY	
Primary Effect	Red
Secondary Effect	Orange
Little or no Effect	Blue





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## Appendix 3: Cumulative Effects of Existing Legislation – **To be completed**

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# **APPENDIX C**

Halton Borough Council

## **INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document

November 2010

Operational Director  
Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Infrastructure Delivery Plan is one of a series of evidence documents, which supplement and support Halton's Core Strategy. This infrastructure plan provides more detail on the necessary infrastructure provision to enable the delivery of the policies contained in the Core Strategy. It is a living document and will be kept under review over the plan period and updated on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Planning for the future through the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy must be supported by evidence of what physical, social and environmental infrastructure is needed to enable the necessary development to progress. At the same time existing infrastructure deficiencies need to be identified and addressed.
- 1.3 The IDP identifies what infrastructure is required, when it is needed, who is responsible for its provision and how it will be funded. It draws on and influences the investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.
- 1.4 Planning Policy Statement 12 describes the role of the infrastructure delivery plan as follows:

The core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The Core Strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.

## **2.0 Methodology**

- 2.1 To ensure effective engagement of the key agencies was achieved at the most senior level, the Chief Executive contacted partner organisations and members of the Local Strategic Partnership. The partnership capital programme was supplied to inform the Core Strategy IDP. This approach was then shared and reported with the Liverpool City Region authorities.
- 2.2 Eight Councils comprising the majority of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) agreed to work together to address the issue of sub regional infrastructure planning within the LCR through a single joint approach. A Regional Sub-Group was formed to approach infrastructure planning collaboratively and avoid the need for repetition. Membership of that group included:

- Halton
- Knowsley
- Liverpool
- Sefton
- St Helens
- Warrington
- West Lancashire
- Wirral

- 2.3 Information relating to capital programmes and asset management strategies of partner organisations was sought in April 2009 from infrastructure providers (physical, social, green and digital infrastructure) a total of XX in the Greater Merseyside and surrounding areas. Following a further request sent in July 2009, 33 responses were received. The information if supplied would assist in ensuring that any schemes for public infrastructure would be included within Local Development Frameworks, specifically the Core Strategies of each local planning authority (LPA).
- 2.4 To further this joint approach and to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plans a number of meetings were arranged with the main electricity, gas and utility infrastructure providers to discuss the specifics of servicing the proposed areas of growth (housing and employment land) in the sub region.
- 2.5 Infrastructure providers contacted included:
- Electricity: Scottish Power (all authorities)
  - Electricity: Electricity North West (St Helens / Sefton / West Lancs. / Warrington)
  - Gas: National Grid (all authorities)
  - United Utilities (Warrington, St Helens and Halton)
- 2.6 Responses received and Information supplied by the main electricity, gas and utility providers has been used to inform this infrastructure plan.

### **3.0 Structure**

- 3.1 There are three parts to this document: section 1, describing the current situation, section 2, describes addressing future provision and anticipated needs, and section 3, a full schedule that describes the „what’, ‘how’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ of infrastructure requirements.

## **4.0 Section I. Halton's Current Situation**

### **4.1 Physical Infrastructure**

#### **4.2 Highway Network**

4.3 Access is available to both the M56 and M62 motorways within the Borough. This is supported by the Primary Route Network, which consists of the A533, A557, A56, A558 and A562 which are maintained by Halton Borough Council. In recent years two major road projects have been completed at the A56 / A558 / M56 link.

4.4 Parts of the highway network in Halton are under stress from volume of vehicle movements causing serious congestion problems. Areas particularly susceptible to congestion include the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which provides a road crossing of the River Mersey in Halton across the Runcorn gap, and the M56 junctions in Halton.

4.5 Problems associated with cross-river congestion and network capacity at the river crossing pinch-point will be addressed as part of the Mersey Gateway Project. This is the multi-million pound scheme to create a new road crossing of the River Mersey in Halton, upstream from the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. The 6-lane road crossing will connect the Speke Road in Widnes with the Central Expressway in Runcorn and will involve works to connect road infrastructure. The scheme is more than just a new bridge: it is anticipated to have major regeneration benefits for Halton, both in areas of Widnes and Runcorn, and will also result in improvements to sustainable transport in the Borough, with works to the Silver Jubilee Bridge allowing for increased levels public transport, walking and cycling. As well as being of major significance for Halton, the Mersey Gateway represents a scheme of sub-regional importance, which will result in accessibility benefits for the Liverpool City Region and the wider area. The Mersey Gateway Project was the subject of a Public Inquiry in June 2009, the results of which are expected in early 2010.

4.6 Ongoing and forthcoming major developments in Halton will necessarily have impacts upon the highway network, due to increased traffic movements, including those attributable to new residents and new employees. In order to cater for these impacts, improvements to the existing network may be required, and where appropriate new road infrastructure may be necessary. Examples of this include proposals for a new spine road for the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus, and new road access to the 3MG site from the Knowsley Expressway.

#### **4.7 Rail**

4.8 Halton is served by four passenger railway stations, including Runcorn, Runcorn East, Widnes and Hough Green. The West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch) runs through the Borough, together with the Liverpool to

Manchester, and North Wales to Manchester lines. This means that Halton as a whole has excellent rail connectivity to Liverpool, Manchester and London.

- 4.9 In addition to the existing railway stations, Halton also has underused or disused railway infrastructure which could be reinstated, as well as locations which could cater to new railway stations. Reinstated or new railway stations could be created at Barrow's Green, Beechwood, Daresbury, Ditton, Upton Rocks and Widnes South. Safeguarded railway lines include the Halton Curve in south-west Runcorn, which offers potential to increase connectivity from Cheshire to south Liverpool, and the Shell Green line, which could better connect the Ditton area of Widnes to Warrington.
- 4.10 Rail infrastructure plays an important role in the Borough's logistics and freight sector, with particular reference to the multimodal freight terminal at 3MG in Widnes, which has access to the West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch). 3MG offers road-to-rail freight transfer facilities and hence benefits from rail links to Liverpool and to the South, with scope for increased rail freight use to other freight facilities in Halton, including the Manchester Ship Canal ports.
- 4.11 Support will be given for improvements and expansion to rail facilities in Halton, to ensure sufficient capacity is maintained and to capitalise opportunities afforded by the re-use and reinstatement of existing infrastructure.
- 4.12 Buses**
- 4.13 Halton is generally well-served by bus routes and infrastructure, with a good dispersion of services, stops and interchanges across the Borough. There are bus interchanges in Runcorn Old Town centre, Halton Lea and in Widnes. There are bus-based links from residential areas to town centres and employment areas in Halton and in the wider area, including cross-boundary routes to Liverpool, Warrington, St. Helens and towns in Cheshire.
- 4.14 The majority of commercial bus services in Halton are provided by the two main bus operators in the Borough: Arriva North West and Halton Transport. The Council does subsidise some services when low passenger numbers would result in a lack of commercial viability.
- 4.15 Runcorn has an unusual bus infrastructure, with the New Town initiative of the Runcorn Busway, a bus-only route around the town, segregated from other traffic. While offering excellent bus connectivity for the New Town residential areas, there is scope for the Busway to be improved through physical works to tackle problems associated with isolation and antisocial behaviour. Smaller scale community transport operations provide specialist services, for example for older or disabled people.
- 4.16 Existing projects and programmes to improve bus transportation in Halton are contained within the adopted Local Transport Plan, and include the provision of Quality Bus Corridors, accessible services and improved stops



and interchanges. There are also proposals to improve bus services and routes as part of the Mersey Gateway Project,

- 4.17 Continual support will be given to improvements and expansion to the bus network in Halton, with efforts to improve frequency and quality of service and to seek expansions to the network to reach existing under-served areas and major new developments. The provision of innovations in bus transport, including ticketing measures and vehicle advances, will also be supported.

#### **4.18 Walking and Cycling**

- 4.19 Halton's public rights of way network extends to 74km and comprises public footpaths and bridleways which the Council is responsible for. These routes are of importance in terms of on-foot connectivity for short journeys and also in terms of leisure uses.
- 4.20 There are approximately 42km of both "on road" and "off road" cycle routes within the Borough, including stretches on the carriageway, on converted footways and on traffic-free routes, including the Runcorn Cycleway, a New Town legacy. There are also 232 cycle parking spaces.
- 4.21 Halton is crossed by a number of regionally and nationally significant walking and cycling routes, including the Trans Pennine Trail, the Mersey Way, the Mersey Valley Timberland Trail and the Bridgewater Way. Most significant of these, the Trans Pennine Trail, is an extensive network of multi-user paths connecting the Liverpool City Region with the east coast of England across the Pennines, which also forms part of the National Cycle Network.

#### **4.22 Waterways and Ports**

- 4.23 Halton benefits from waterborne connectivity by virtue of the location of the towns of Runcorn and Widnes adjacent to the River Mersey, and also due to the several waterways which cross through the Borough, including the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal, the Sankey Canal and the Weaver Navigation.
- 4.24 The Manchester Ship Canal is an inland waterway stretching from the Wirral to Salford and connecting the Liverpool and Manchester areas. Once extensively used for shipping and freight transfer, there is scope for the Ship Canal to be used as part of a sustainable freight transportation network, benefitting ports on to the Canal in Halton, including the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks). The Ship Canal has scope to accommodate vessels of up to 15,000 tonnes.
- 4.25 The Borough's other canals are now less likely to be used for commercial purposes, but play an extremely important role for leisure and recreation uses. This includes their role as "blue infrastructure" and as wildlife habitats, as well as the role of their footpaths as walking and cycling routes (such as the Bridgewater Way, adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal).

4.26 Halton's ports and freight terminals are well positioned in relation to other freight assets in the North West, including the Port of Liverpool and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

#### **4.27 Airports**

4.28 Liverpool John Lennon Airport is located just outside of Halton, directly to the west of Hale Village. The Airport is a significant transport advantage to the Borough, both in terms of passenger transport and in terms of freight transport. The Airport's expansion plans to 2030 anticipate major increases in passenger numbers, and also include proposals for a new World Cargo Centre to the south of the existing Airport, which would cater for a major expansion to the Airport's freight handling capacity. The expansion plans also include proposals for a new eastern access road and a runway extension, both of which are located within Halton's boundaries.

#### **4.29 Water**

4.30 United Utilities (UU) are responsible for the supply of water and for wastewater across the Borough with the Environment Agency having responsibility for flood and pollution prevention.

4.31 Halton is not known to have any capacity issues, either for treatment works, mains supply, or sewers. However, due to climate change and continually increasing demand, reduction in water consumption needs to be promoted.

4.32 The Environment Agency has indicated that it is commissioning a Water Cycle Study to examine the major issues surrounding sourcing of potable water, through to issues of disposal and flood risk. This is being undertaken as part of the Growth Point delivery.

4.33 The Draft Water Resources Management Plan indicates sufficient capacity for water provision. The supply in Halton is obtained from North Wales and the Lake District.

4.34 United Utilities have confirmed that there are no capacity issues either for treatment works or sewers and that they do not have any concerns with the level or location of growth proposed. However, the potential effect of water abstraction on the Natura 2000 sites remains unresolved. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) discusses this in detail.

#### **4.35 Flooding and Drainage**

4.36 The strategic flood risk assessments show where areas of higher flood risk arise, and where development is proposed in these areas, make recommendations about what mitigation is required. A level I Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken for Halton identifying a relatively small area of the Borough as being at risk from flooding. The main source of flood risk is fluvial flooding from Keckwick Brook (Sandymoor, Runcorn) and Ditton Brook (Ditton, Widnes). The largest potential flood risk across the Borough

is that of tidal flood events from the River Mersey. A level 2 SFRA was undertaken in 2010 and concluded that flood risk is not considered to constrain the delivery of future development in the Borough. Core strategy policies aim to minimise the run-off from new developments. Where development takes place in areas of higher flood risk, then developers will need to fund the required flood risk infrastructure as the Environment Agency is responsible for flood defence work. The SFRA will be updated on a regular basis.

#### **4.37 Gas**

4.38 National Grid Gas owns and operates the National Transmission System throughout Great Britain and owns and operates a significant gas distribution network that delivers gas to homes and businesses throughout central England, including Halton and the wider Liverpool City Region.

4.39 The national transmission system connections are only suitable for large scale industrial uses of gas e.g. connections of major power stations to the network where there is a need to connect to high pressure flows. National transmission system connections are also suitable for large scale gas storage facilities and operators wishing to put gas into the national transmission system.

4.40 The local gas distribution network operates at a lower pressure eventually supplying the customer. Low pressure connections are usually required for housing developments up to around 1000 dwellings. Medium pressure connections will be more appropriate for very large urban extensions or shopping centres.

4.41 Any changes to the local network will arise from National Grid's mains replacement programme in addition to requests for customer connections and/or significant changes in demand requiring reinforcements to the local network as required. Discussions held with National Grid regarding future development in Halton and the wider Liverpool City Region raised no significant concerns regarding adequate pressure to service new development in the area. However, further analysis of Halton's Key Areas of Change has identified where reinforcement may be required over the lifetime of the Core Strategy.

#### **4.42 Electricity**

4.43 Energy North West and Scottish Power operate the primary and secondary electricity networks within the Liverpool City Region. Main transmission networks are operated by National Grid. Electricity North West operates around the periphery of the City Region, in some areas of Warrington, Sefton, West Lancashire and St Helens. All other authorities are operated wholly by Scottish Power, including Halton.

4.44 Scottish Power (and Electricity North West) is generally reactive providing the necessary infrastructure as required to serve development and meet demand. However, long term development statements are produced which

provide information on the operation and development of the distribution systems and how the system is expected to develop.

4.45 Discussions have been held with Scottish Power to ensure sufficient supply capacity is available for proposed growth in the Borough particularly within the Key Areas of Change. Further analysis is currently being undertaken to identify areas where there may be insufficient capacity in the network for future development. This includes Widnes Waterfront where existing electricity infrastructure constraints have been identified.

4.46 In considering the future of electricity distribution and supply it is envisaged that there will be change due to energy efficiency measures and renewable technologies. This presents opportunities to alleviating potential electricity infrastructure issues across the Borough.

#### **4.47 Renewable Energy**

4.48 Halton Borough Council in partnership with the Liverpool City Region (including Warrington and St Helens) commissioned Arup to undertake a Renewable Energy Study in 2009<sup>1</sup> with the primary aim to identify future potential for renewable energy across the sub-region and provide evidence to support the emerging Local Development Frameworks.

4.49 The commission was split into two distinct stages. Stage One (completed in December 2009) provided an introduction to renewable energy technologies and targets, the key issues associated with them and how suitable they are in the context of the partner authority areas. The purpose of Stage Two was to provide more detailed spatial evidence for each planning authority, identifying Energy Priority Zones for delivery of low and zero carbon technologies and to provide a policy framework to enable the partner authorities to achieve consistency at a strategic sub-regional level.

4.50 Based on the available data, the critical mass of heat demand and development growth, the study indicated prospective areas for district heating networks for Halton. This primarily identified Daresbury and Runcorn Waterfront as Energy Priority Zones but also considered Widnes Waterfront and 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) as having potential for district heating networks. Further site specific investigation is recommended into the feasibility and viability of these zones and the delivery of renewable energy.

4.51 Although the Renewable Energy Capacity Study did not identify significant scope for large scale renewable energy developments in Halton, future potential may exist as renewable technology advances and economies of scale become more widely realistic.

#### **4.52 Waste**

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<sup>1</sup> Arup (2010) Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study

4.53 Currently Halton is part of the sub-regional group of local authorities who are producing the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Development Plan Document (Waste DPD). This grouping includes the following Councils: Halton; Knowsley; Liverpool; Sefton; St. Helens; and Wirral. The Preferred Options version of the Waste DPD went out to public consultation in May 2010. This document contained a range of specific sites across the six districts suitable for a variety of waste management needs. The proposed Waste DPD will enable implementation of the principles of sustainable waste management for all waste streams.

4.54 Halton has a substantial proportion of the waste facilities that serve the Liverpool City Region and wider geographical area. Halton has a hazardous landfill site at Randall's Island, Runcorn operated by Ineos Chlor Ltd. This deals with waste from the Ineos Estate. The Government's aim is to reduce reliance on landfill in preference for more sustainable methods of waste treatment. At Shell Green, in Widnes, sewage sludge is taken from seven wastewater treatment plants across the northwest. This is then processed by de-watering and incineration. When operational, Ineos Chlor's combined heat and power plant at Weston Point, Runcorn, will be able to process 850,000 tonnes of solid recovered fuel from waste each year. In addition to these large scale secondary treatment and disposal facilities, Halton has 18 waste transfer stations located in the Borough. This gives Halton the largest concentration of waste transfer stations, per head of population, in the North West. Halton therefore currently makes a significant contribution to the waste treatment and disposal needs of the Merseyside sub-region.

#### **4.55 Minerals**

4.56 The Urban Vision Study on Mineral Planning in Merseyside (2008) has shown that Halton does not contain a significant amount of high quality minerals. There are currently no operational mineral sites in Halton and limited evidence of previous activity. The study did identify sand and gravel deposits in four small disparate locations in east Runcorn. The potential of these becoming mineral extraction sites is limited and as no commercial viability analysis has been produced it is proposed to address the safeguarding of the sites in a Site Allocations DPD.

#### **4.57 Communications**

4.58 The Core Strategy recognises the growing importance of digital infrastructure and that access to digital technologies is vital for the Borough's residents and businesses. An Interim Digital Britain Report was published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in conjunction with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in June 2009. One of the main objectives included within this report is to modernise and upgrade the wired, wireless and broadcasting infrastructure to sustain Britain's position as a leading digital economy.

4.59 Availability of broadband has two components: the right network today and the right network tomorrow. To ensure all can access and benefit from the

network of today, the government confirms its intention to deliver the Universal Service Broadband Commitment at 2Mbps by 2012. This can be delivered through upgrades to the existing copper and wireless networks.

- 4.60 The government also proposes public support for the network of tomorrow so that consumers who will not be reached by the market can enjoy next generation broadband. This support amounts to installing a new network and is known as the 'Next Generation Final Third' project. True superfast broadband will be concentrated in the first two thirds of the market leaving the 'final third' served only with current generation broadband.
- 4.61 For wireless infrastructure, Digital Britain sets out three objectives: firstly, a rapid transition to next generation high-speed mobile broadband; secondly, progress towards universal coverage in 3G and Next Generation Mobile, reliable coverage throughout the rail network; thirdly, maintaining a highly competitive mobile market. One other aspect of infrastructure, sound radio, is considered and the report proposes digital upgrade of all national broadcast radio stations to DAB-only (Digital Audio Broadcasting) from the end of 2015.
- 4.62 The implications of this digital infrastructure for Halton's homes and businesses will be investigated further over the development of the Core Strategy.

#### **4.63 Social Infrastructure**

#### **4.64 Health**

- 4.65 Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust manages two hospitals that are accessible to Halton's residents – Warrington Hospital and Halton General Hospital.
- 4.66 The Halton and St. Helens PCT also provide NHS services to the community. The PCT's Community Services operate from a number of health centres and clinics across the Borough including Widnes Healthcare Resource centre which was developed as part of the LIFT programme. The PCT also provides hospital facilities at St Helens, Newton-le-Willows and Whiston Hospital.
- 4.67 Developments proposed through the Core Strategy have been taken into account in the preparation of the NHS Strategic Service Development Plan (SSDP) and Strategic Commissioning Plans. As such, new planned primary care developments are programmed to match the potential for increased demand.
- 4.68 The Directors of Adult Social Services, Public Health and Children and Young People's Services and Primary Care Trust (PCT) have worked together to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The document identifies key priorities that will form the basis of planning service development, which

will be a key part of the commissioning process. As yet there is no infrastructure need identified from this process.

#### **4.69 Education**

- 4.70 Halton has four nursery schools, 52 primary schools, seven secondary schools, four special schools and two pupil referral units offering secondary provision. The Borough also has sixth form and further education provision through Riverside College and further adult and community learning facilities throughout Halton.
- 4.71 Halton has been allocated to Wave 6 of the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF), the programme have been stopped by the Coalition Government in the announcement on the 5 July and 6 August. Based upon these announcement only the sample schemes will go ahead The capital value of the Outline Business Case submission for the samples only is £59m along with plus ICT.
- 4.72 Halton's Primary Strategy for Change sets out the strategic approach to capital investment in the Borough's primary education facilities this capital program has been stopped by Coalition Government. The Authority are using Primary Capital funding they have received to date for the All Saints Upton (£3,566,736 of which PCP make up £750,000 New build), Our Lady Mother of the Saviour (£1,153,280 of which PCP make up £578,000 refurbishment scheme) and The Grange Primary element of the BSF scheme (£6,500,000 for the Nursery, Infant and Junior parts of the school).

#### **4.73 Affordable Housing**

- 4.74 Sufficient affordable housing is necessary to avoid homelessness, and housing overcrowding and the associated various problems such as anti-social behaviour reduced educational achievement and poor health. The provision of housing that is affordable to occupants, and is of decent quality is therefore a valuable tool in supporting the needs of society.

#### **4.75 Emergency Services**

- 4.76 Consultation have been undertaken with Merseyside Police and Cheshire Police, their main concern is to ensure that due consideration is given to the prevention of crime in the Core Strategy. Halton will continue to work with the Police to ensure their views are taken into consideration.
- 4.77 Halton will continue to work with Merseyside and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure their views are taken into consideration.

#### **4.78 Community Facilities**

- 4.79 Halton has 4 community libraries distributed across the Borough and one mobile library, ensuring that residents have access to services and to the Internet. There are 11 Community Centres supporting programmes and services for groups and individuals, and 12 designated children's centres located across the Borough. There are also a range of play areas for Halton's young people including outdoor play areas at children's centres

## **4.80 Green Infrastructure**

### **4.81 Green Infrastructure**

- 4.82 The landscape of England has been classified into 181 different 'natural areas' by the Countryside Commission (now Natural England). Halton is mainly within the 'Mersey Valley' Character Area, but some outlying parts have more in common with the character of the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain/Cheshire Sandstone Ridge Area.
- 4.83 The Mersey Estuary has been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), for its internationally important numbers of migratory species and waterfowl. A site is considered to be of international importance for any species of bird if it supports more than one per cent of the total European population. The Mersey Estuary is internationally important for three species of duck and four species of wading bird and so qualifies as a Special Protection Area, a status reserved for only the most important bird sites in Europe. The Mersey Estuary also qualifies as a Ramsar site; a wetland of international importance. The SPA and the Ramsar Site form part of a network of sites that are collectively known as Natura 2000.
- 4.84 Halton has three SSSIs: Flood Brook Clough SSSI, Mersey Estuary SSSI and Red Brow Cutting SSSI. Flood Brook Clough is currently considered to be in unfavourable condition, whilst the Mersey Estuary and Red Brow Cutting are considered to be 99.95% and 100% favourable respectively.
- 4.85 The Borough Council has 10 Local Nature Reserve's (LNRs) which amounts to 142.02 hectares of land or the equivalent of 1 hectare per 837 head of population (2004 population estimate). This figure exceeds the Natural England standard.
- 4.86 There are also a number of locally designated non-statutory sites in the Borough which were re-named in 2007 as Local Wildlife Sites. The adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005) recognises 47 such sites under the old name as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- 4.87 Other designations in Halton that are of local significance include areas and sites designated as Areas of Special Landscape and Important Landscape Features.
- 4.88 The Green Flag Award scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces across England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a



means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas. Halton Borough Council currently has 12 Green Flag Parks.

- 4.89 There are 2 habitats and 7 species identified in the Halton Biodiversity Action Plan that are of particular interest within Halton these are: Saltmarsh, Reedbed, Bluebell, Purple Hairstreak, Great Crested Newt, Redshank, Skylark, Song Thrush and Reed Bunting.
- 4.90 Only 7% of England's surface area is made up of woodland (greater than 0.25 hectare in size) and Halton has less than half of the national average. The resource of smaller wooded areas (less than 0.25 hectare in size) and individual trees in Halton is very varied, with some parts of the Borough being very poor in tree cover whilst other parts have relatively high numbers of trees. Runcorn New Town has an abundance of both mature woodlands and developing semi-mature trees, and is a good example of an urban forest.
- 4.91 Halton is situated at the heart of The Mersey Forest, the largest of England's twelve designated community forests. The Council is an active partner in this project, which was launched in 1994 with the aim of dramatically increasing woodland cover in the region over the next 30 years. In Halton, the successful outcome has been the creation of more than 100 hectares of new woodland to date.
- 4.92 An important part of the Borough's Green Infrastructure is the greenway network, which is a series of walking and cycling routes through and connecting the Borough's green and open spaces. This includes existing, proposed and potential routes as identified by the UDP.
- 4.93 Halton's blue infrastructure which includes the River Mersey, the Weaver Navigation, the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal and the Sankey Canal also provides opportunities for formal and informal recreation and tourism, contributing to urban regeneration and biodiversity protection/enhancement.
- 4.94 Future Green Infrastructure proposals include the creation of an upper Mersey Valley Park. This is a large, landscape-scale response to economic and social changes that are being proposed within Halton. An Upper Mersey Green Lung has also been identified, providing recreation and tourism opportunities to encompass both sides of the estuary. This is the unifying ecological feature to bring together the components within the Natural Assets Strategy to connect the existing system of 10 Local Nature Reserves and over 40 Local Wildlife Sites which spread across the whole of Halton.

**4.95 Open Space**

- 4.96 An Open Space Study, undertaken in 2006, concluded that Halton has predominantly good quality and accessible open spaces although there are specific areas of priority that need resourcing. The study identified that:

- The overall quality of parks is good; however there is a potential need for a small park within the south and east of Runcorn
- Halton is well provided for in terms of natural and semi natural open spaces and is fortunate to have a number of regionally significant sites within its boundaries. It may be appropriate to investigate the protection of existing good quality sites and increase accessibility to sites.
- There is a small overall deficiency of amenity greenspace and there are a number of areas outside appropriate catchment areas. Areas in Widnes were identified as priorities
- The quality of young people's areas is variable across the Borough and the report highlights some of the higher and lower quality sites. There is also high demand for additional provision borough wide, particularly in Farnworth
- There is a shortage of junior sports pitches, other types of outdoor sports facilities are very accessible within the Borough
- Consultation highlighted that allotments are a valuable form of recreation and are currently 100% full. Although there is limited additional demand at present for further provision, some residents are outside the defined catchment area, particularly in the east of Runcorn.

## **5.0 Section 2. Addressing Future Provision**

- 5.1 An integral part of the Core Strategy is to ensure that development proposals are supported by the timely provision of an appropriate level of infrastructure including:
- transport infrastructure such as roads, railways, public transport, and cycling and walking routes;
  - physical and environmental infrastructure such as water supply and treatment, and energy supply;
  - Green Infrastructure such as public greenspaces;
  - social and health infrastructure including community services and facilities; and,
  - digital infrastructure such as internet supply.
- 5.2 In developing the Core Strategy it was essential to assess the capacity of existing infrastructure and what the future needs of infrastructure will be to achieve the plan's vision and strategic objectives. The previous section outlines existing provision in the Borough, together with significant planned schemes.
- 5.3 The Core Strategy is expected to deliver the needs of the Borough to 2026. This includes the provision of 8000 residential units (net of demolitions), and 260 hectares of employment land to facilitate the sustainable growth of Halton's economy. In order to ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place to facilitate this growth several policies have been included.
- 5.4 The council currently secures monies through section 106 agreements, and these are used for various purposes, including paying for the provision of

infrastructure deficits that arise as a result of new development. These monies can not be used to address existing gaps in provision. They are primarily based on a per dwelling basis for residential development and square metre gross floor space for commercial development. Obligations include

- Community Facilities and Infrastructure e.g. education and health care facilities
- Transport & Travel e.g. pedestrian and cycling facilities, public and community transport, travel plans.
- Recreation and Environment e.g. amenity open space, sports provision, the Mersey Community Forest, nature conservation.
- Affordable Housing
- Social Progress e.g. increased employment opportunities for the disadvantaged and economically inactive.
- Utility Infrastructure e.g. foul sewage and water drainage.

5.5 Halton have previously negotiated a 'roof-tax' type Section 106 agreement with English Partnerships to fund infrastructure improvements to support the delivery of the Sandymoor development in the East Runcorn key area of change further details of the infrastructure provision can be found in Section 3.

5.6 The current coalition government has indicated that it wants to look at the CIL process with a view to simplifying it. Once the national situation has been clarified, the council will re-evaluate its own situation on the use of CIL, tariffs, or whatever new system is introduced, in a future Planning Obligations DPD.

## **6.0 Section 3: Delivery Schedule**

6.1 The following schedule of infrastructure schemes provides the details of the projects that will support the delivery of the Core Strategy. The information presented here has been drawn from the Council's capital programme, internal departments, and also from consultation with a wide range of partners. Annex I provides details of infrastructure providers contacted, copies of correspondence sent and copies of responses received to inform the Infrastructure Plan.

6.2 The schedule specifically looks at planned infrastructure across the Borough with a specific reference to the Key Areas of Change where a range of infrastructure will be required to support new development. For each project the schedule identifies the policy link, lead agencies, phasing and timescales, funding sources, the desired outcome, potential risks and possible interventions or alternative scenarios.

6.3 Phasing has been broken down into the below time periods to give an indication of the timeframe that the project is envisaged to be delivered within:

Short term 0-5 years (2012-16) = **P1**  
Medium term 6-10 years (2017-21) = **P2**  
Long term 11-15 years (2022-26) = **P3**

Some projects span all three phased periods therefore this is indicated in the final year columns of the schedule.

6.4 This schedule is effectively a 'living document' and is subject to change over the Core Strategy preparation process. Flexibility is required to take account of changing conditions and other possible opportunities that may arise.

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame	
<b>Mersey Gateway Bridge</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>									
	Bridge Construction	CS8 CS9	Bridge concessionaire (yet to be appointed) HBC, Department for Transport	PI	Regional Funding Allocation of £86m – remainder through Private Finance and tolls  Est. Cost: £604m	Provision of second river crossing to ease congestion, increase network resilience, improve journey times and make improvements to public transport and cycling/walking facilities.	Insufficient funding  Unable to secure a Concessionaire  Planning applications turned down	Continue with Silver Jubilee Bridge as single mode for vehicles to cross river.  Regeneration at West Bank and Runcorn Old Town can continue without the construction of the new bridge, but at a slower pace. Larger scale redevelopment sites will not become available.	Construction due to start in 2012 – road open in 2015.	
	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>									
		CS15 CS19	HBC, Natural England, Environment Agency, Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust		Not yet known: to be included in the procurement process	1. a new 28 hectare saltmarsh nature reserve 2. additional nature management to Wigg Island	Insufficient funding  Unable to secure a Concessionaire		Phased delivery, majority to be delivered in time for the Operational Phase	

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
						3. The Mersey Gateway is to act as a catalyst for wider environmental initiatives in the Upper Mersey Estuary.			
	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>								
<b>Building Schools for the Future</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>								
	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>								
	Educational Establishments	CS7 CS22			Est. Cost: £167 million				
<b>3MG</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	Rail sidings connected to West Coast Main Line	CS8	Private Sector	PI	Private sector and Halton Borough Council  Est. Cost: £4 million	4 new rail sidings to serve the whole of 3MG and increasing capacity of 5 trains per day to 16.	Market conditions.		
	Western Link Road	CS8	Private Sector	PI	Private sector	Ensure	Desired route		

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
	to connect site with A5300				and Halton Borough Council  Est. Cost: £10 million	accessibility to the HBC Fields Site.	for link road cannot be secured.  Market conditions		
<b>South Widnes</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
Widnes Waterfront	Boulevard/ improved links across Watkinson Way	CS9	Private Sector		No funding identified				
	Widnes Waterfront - Primary Substation	CS9	Private Sector	PI/2	Private Sector		Cost and timescales for delivery.	Widnes Waterfront - Primary Substation	
<b>West Runcorn</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	Runcorn Docks - Southern access route	CS10	Private Sector	P2/3	Cost not yet known	Increase access to the Runcorn Docks area to ensure future development.	Costs of providing southern access route are prohibitive.	Quantum of development at Runcorn Docks is limited due to capacity constraints from a single access.	
	District Heating Networks (Runcorn Docks Energy Priority Zones)	CS10	Halton Borough Council and	PI/2/3	The Council and private developers through (re)development proposals	Reduction in carbon emissions	Feasibility and viability	Determine possible funding sources??	
<b>Borough</b>	<b>Physical</b>								

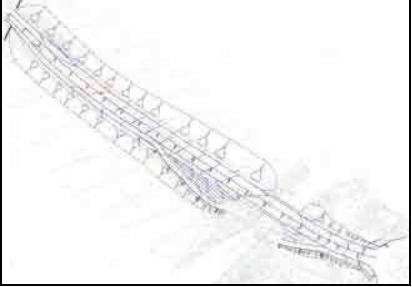

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
<b>Wide</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>								
Halton Curve	Connecting Chester-Warrington line to Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line	CS14	Merseytravel, Merseyside LAs, Halton BC, CWaC and North Wales LAs.	P1/2	In the order of £12m.	New passenger rail service linking Chester, Helsby, Frodsham, Runcorn, LSP and Lime Street.	Funding not forthcoming from partner organisations.		
	Reinstatement and re-use of the Shell Green (Ditton to Warrington) rail route	CS14	Reinstatement and re-use of the Shell Green (Ditton to Warrington) rail route	P3+	No costs or funding identified.	New passenger service along the Transpennine rail corridor serving South Widnes.	Gaining legal powers, funding and agreement with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies.		Longer term aspiration.
	New rail station in South Widnes	CS14	Halton BC	P3+		Improved gateway into Widnes.	Gaining legal powers, funding and agreement with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies. Also dependent on the delivery of the Sheel Green rail route.	None applicable.	Longer term aspiration.






Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
	Pedestrian, cycling and public transport routes e.g. PROW, Greenways and Quality Transport Corridors.	CS14	Halton BC	P1/2/3	Funding will primarily be through the LTP for a range of integrated transport schemes.	These schemes will assist with the increased choice of sustainable low carbon transport.	Lack of funding at least in the shorter term.	Implementation of schemes could continue but at a slower rate.	Ongoing
	Connecting Chester-Warrington line to Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line	CS14	Merseytravel, Merseyside LAs, Halton BC, CWaC and North Wales LAs.	P1/2	In the order of £12m.	New passenger rail service linking Chester, Helsby, Frodsham, Runcorn, LSP and Lime Street.	Funding not forthcoming from partner organisations.		
	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>								
	Creating or improving existing open space	CS6	Halton Borough Council	On-going	Planning contributions	Improvements to local environments.	None identified	Not applicable	
	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>								

**Current Status and Future Aspirations for Infrastructure at Daresbury**

**Daresbury Strategic Site Bridges – INDICATIVE**



Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Keckwick Lane <b>*New*</b> Canal Bridge	-	Existing Daresbury SIC to SIC expansion land		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed new bridge for two-way vehicular traffic, including buses</li> </ul>	£750,000 to be funded through DSIC Joint Venture
Keckwick Lane Canal Bridge	Masonry arch over the Bridgewater Canal	Existing Daresbury SIC to SIC expansion land		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be used for pedestrians and cyclists only</li> </ul>	Minimal
Keckwick Lane <b>*NEW*</b> over- bridge	-	Daresbury SIC to Delph Lane West	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New pedestrian and cyclist bridge alongside existing Keckwick Lane vehicular overbridge</li> </ul>	Developer of Delph Lane West site

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Delph Lane Railway Bridge	Brick arch over the Chester-Manchester line	Delph Lane West and Keckwick Hill housing area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to an all purpose route</li> <li>• Single way</li> <li>• Delph Lane would need realigning in order to incorporate single way working under the bridge to facilitate two-way traffic</li> </ul>	Developer of Delph Lane West site
Delph Lane Canal Bridge	Masonry arch over the Bridgewater Canal	Access over Bridgewater Canal within Keckwick Hill housing area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to accommodate two-way vehicular traffic</li> <li>• Realign Delph Lane to improvement approach to bridge</li> </ul>	Minimal - £150,000

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
George Gleaves Canal Bridge	Listed Brick arch bridge over the Bridgewater Canal	Access over Bridgewater Canal within Keckwick Hill housing area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade for use by pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>	Minimal - £150,000
Norton Level Crossing, Redbrow Lane	Level crossing over the West Coast Main Line	Daresbury Park to Wharford Farm	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve safety for use by pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>	S106 contribution from original planning permission at Daresbury Park for the developers to provide £300,000 for a footbridge with approach ramps crossing the WCML to replace existing level crossing upon completion of floorspace (B1 (a) or (b)) exceeding 65,000sq m

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Cawleys' Bridge	Bridge over Runcorn arm of the Bridgewater Canal to Preston Brook Marina	Murdishaw to Preston Brook Marina		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial upgrading needed to improve access to Preston Brook Marina and surrounding development area</li> </ul>	Developer of land surrounding Preston Brook Marina
Borrow's Bridge, Redbrow Lane	Single span brick arch over the Runcorn arm of the Bridgewater Canal, providing access from Wharford Farm to Murdishaw	Murdishaw to Wharford Farm		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial upgrading needed to Wharford Farm to facilitate the proposed level of development</li> </ul>	Homes and Communities Agency

<sup>2</sup> Photograph taken from <http://www.canalwalking.co.uk/photograph.php?opt=runcorn&photo=301>

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Bogwood Railway Bridge	Three span brick arch supporting the West Coast Main Line	Wharford Farm to Sandymoor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use for emergency access</li> <li>• Side spans could accommodate pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>	
Keckwick Lane Railway Bridge	Brick arch tunnel/underpass under the West Coast Main Line	Sandymoor to Delph Lane West		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial improvements to accommodate buses to give public transport connection to Delph Lane West</li> <li>• Redrow indicate 'Single way signal control underpass'</li> </ul>	Developer of Delph Lane West site

**Other essential transport infrastructure at Daresbury Strategic Site**

	Description	Cost	Timing	Responsible body
Internal spine road	Main internal routes running from northern portion of the site (Keckwick Lane) to Delph Lane / A56 junction.	£4- £9 million	Completion of Keckwick Hill / Central Housing Area	All parties
Signalisation and capacity improvements at Delph Lane / A56 junction				

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**Infrastructure recommendations arising from East Runcorn Sustainable Development Study 2010**

	Description	Cost	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Improvements to Junction 11 on the M56 (in addition to those already required in relation to existing development at Daresbury Park)		£2.5 million	All parties
Dualling of A558 between DSIC and Pitts Heath Lane	Turning the A558 into a dual carriageway between Pitts Heath Lane and the current DSIC roundabout	£1-£4.5 million	All parties
Junction improvements at A558/A56 to increase capacity			All parties
Creation of a signal controlled layout at existing Daresbury SIC roundabout			All parties
Junction improvements at Pitts Heath Lane/A558 to increase capacity			All parties
<b>Sustainable transport improvements</b>			
Bus routing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improvements to routes and frequency of: Access 200, 62 services</li> <li>○ Provision of a Daresbury shuttle service from Runcorn East station</li> <li>○ Improved bus links with nearby towns (Route X30/21 and ...)</li> </ul>		£3 million (bus subsidy)	All parties
Incorporating the requirement for Greenway provision into masterplanning and s106 agreements			All parties
Pursuing workplace and personal Travel Plans			All parties

<b>Other transport infrastructure requirements over the lifetime of the Master Plan</b>	<b>Estimated cost of work (taken from Daresbury SIC Master Plan Issues and Options Report, Feb 2008)</b>
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Other transport infrastructure requirements over the lifetime of the Master Plan	Estimated cost of work (taken from Daresbury SIC Master Plan Issues and Options Report, Feb 2008)
Transport interchange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus interchange</li> </ul>	£2.5-£3.9 million
Marina – 200 berths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New mooring points on Bridgewater Canal</li> </ul>	£500,000
Footpaths	£500,000
Bridleways	£200,000

**East Runcorn Key Area of Change bridges – Essential work**

Bridge/ Location	Description	Image	Future use	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Bogwood Bridge (connection from Windmill Hill Avenue to Sandymoor)	Concrete bridge with brick cladding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to all purpose route to provide bus access into Sandymoor from Norton/Windmill Hill</li> </ul>	Minimal cost as structure is existing  Homes and Communities Agency

**Other specific transport infrastructure outside of the Strategic-Site**

- Further access points to Sandymoor
  - Windmill Hill Avenue North
  - Wharford Lane (off Pitts Heath Lane)



## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Extensive consultation with infrastructure providers in the Borough revealed that Infrastructure provision is considered sufficient to meet the requirements for the planned development proposed in the Borough over the plan period.
- 7.2 Improved collaborative working with infrastructure providers will ensure that a more proactive approach will be adopted ensuring that the necessary infrastructure to support planned growth will be available when required.
- 7.3 The Council will continue to work with service providers to ensure planned developments can be accommodated within existing networks, or adequate provision can be made to service their requirements. Development will continue to be directed toward areas where infrastructure capacity exists.
- 7.4 Halton Borough Council will continue to work collaboratively with authorities in the Greater Merseyside area to address the issue of sub regional infrastructure ensuring coverage across the area is provided in a timely and effective manner.

# **APPENDIX D**

Halton Borough Council

## **STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION**

Core Strategy Publication of the Submission Document

November 2010

Operational Director  
Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW

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**6. Core Strategy Issues and Options Representation Received**

**7. Core Strategy Commencement of Preferred Options**

**8. Core Strategy Preferred Options Public Consultation**

**9. Core Strategy Preferred Options Representation Received**

**10. Publication of Proposed submission of the Core Strategy DPD.**

**11. Submission of the Core Strategy**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1: List of Respondents**

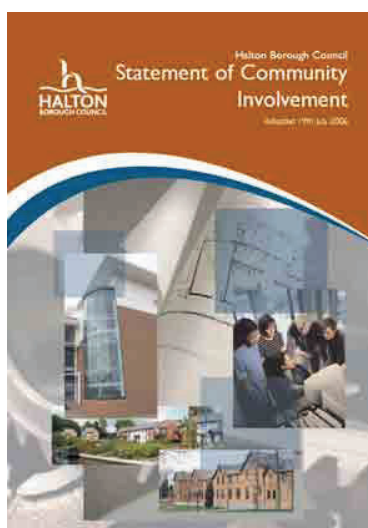
**Appendix 2: List of Representations Received and an explanation as to how this has been addressed in the Core Strategy Publication Document.**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Halton Borough Council has been working together with the community, stakeholders and other interested parties to produce the Halton Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). Having reached the Publication stage of the Core Strategy, this Statement of Consultation outlines;
- How preparation and consultation for this document has been undertaken.
  - Which bodies and persons were invited to make representations in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
  - How those bodies and persons were invited to make such representations
  - A summary of the main issues raised by those representations, and
  - How those main issues have been addressed in the Core Strategy DPD.
- 1.2 The publication of the submission version of the Core Strategy DPD represents the requirement placed on the Local Authority to publish and make available the documents it proposes to submit in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

## **2.0 Preparing a Development Plan Document**

- 2.1 The Core Strategy is a Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is the folder of spatial plans which will replace the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP), as introduced by the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended).
- 2.2 Once completed and adopted, the Core Strategy will form the overarching framework for the development of Halton to 2026 and beyond. As a DPD, it will contain development plan policies which will be used to guide development and investment in the Borough and also to determine planning applications. All subsequent DPDs and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) will therefore be guided by the over-arching policies that the Core Strategy sets.
- 2.3 Core Strategies must be prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations (in this case the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008) and national planning policy. Guidelines for the preparation of Core Strategies are outlined in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) and also in the accompanying “Plan Making Manual”, produced by the Planning Advisory Service.
- 2.4 Core Strategies must also be prepared in accordance with the local authority’s adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out guidelines for public and stakeholder involvement in LDF preparation. Halton’s SCI was adopted by the Council on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006.



Statement of Community Involvement

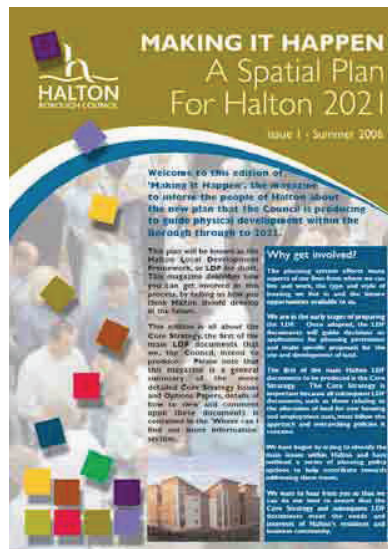
### 3.0 Core Strategy Commencement and Issues and Options

- 3.1 The Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers were produced by officers within the Forward Planning team of the Council. The process was officially commenced in early 2006, with a consultation with the statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal from 24<sup>th</sup> March to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009.
- 3.2 The main two documents produced were the Issues and Options Papers themselves, which contained information about the broad key issues and challenges affecting Halton, and options for tackling these issues. This included three broad alternative spatial options for the development of the Borough, as well as further spatial options for specific topics and areas.
- 3.3 The Options Paper was written specifically as a consultation document, with questions throughout about the options proposed, and scope for readers to comment on the content and respond to the questions posed. This part of the Options Paper has been referred to as the “long questionnaire”.
- 3.4 The production of the Issues and Options Papers involved much background work, research and consultation with existing policy at the national, regional and local level.
- 3.5 The Issues and Options Documents were also accompanied by supporting information, most notably that relating to the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy. For the Issues and Options stage, it was necessary to produce a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and a Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report.



Issues Paper, Options Paper and Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report

- 3.6 As part of the consultation materials, a Core Strategy magazine was produced, which summarised the content of the Issues and Options paper in an easy-to-understand and accessible manner. The magazine also included a short questionnaire, to allow readers to comment on the broad content of the Issues and Options papers without having to engage in great detail with their content.



Core Strategy Magazine

#### 4.0 Core Strategy Issues and Options Partnership Consultation

- 4.1 The Partnership consultation was conducted between 19<sup>th</sup> May and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006, with both the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers being sent to a wide variety of people across the Council, including the Chief Executive, the Strategic Director for Environment and many of the Operational Directors and also to several key stakeholders who are not within the Council including the Government Office for the North West and the Primary Care Trust. During the consultation period several meetings were also held to ensure that both Council

Officers and Council Members had the opportunity to contribute to the production of the Core Strategy Issues and Options papers.

- 4.2 There were three Council Officer meetings, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 24<sup>th</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> May, again a wide variety of officers were invited to these meetings to ensure that as many people as possible were able to contribute to the production of the Core Strategy DPD. Details of who attended each of these meetings and a summary of the comments made can be found in the section 3 of the document. There was one meeting held with Council Members where the aim of the meeting was to discuss the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers rather than endorse or agree the documents. This was the LDF Working Party, which met on the 1<sup>st</sup> June.
- 4.3 The Council Members have also endorsed the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers through the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006, and agreed the document for consultation through the Council’s Executive Board. A report on the Halton Local Development Framework including information on the Core Strategy DPD was also presented to the Halton Strategic Partnership, at their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

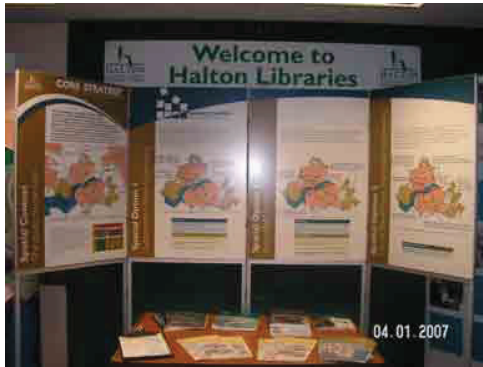
## 5.0 Core Strategy Issues and Options Public Consultation

- 5.1 The Core Strategy Issues and Options papers were published for a period of public consultation from 27<sup>th</sup> July to 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006.
- 5.2 Consultation materials, including copies of the Issues and Options Paper, Sustainability Appraisal document and Core Strategy magazine, were made widely available in various deposit locations and online on the Council’s website. Links were also hosted on the website of the Halton Strategic Partnership and the Moore Community website. Notice of the publication of the documents was placed in local papers, including contact details and an explanation of how to respond to the content of the documents.



The Council’s website

- 5.3 Promotional materials, including posters, press releases and display board were produced. These materials were used in a series of consultation “roadshows”, held from 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> August 2006, at various locations across the Borough. These roadshows, held during morning, afternoon and evening periods, represented an opportunity for members of the public to discuss the Issues and Options and wider Core Strategy and spatial planning issues with Council officers.



Issues and Options Roadshow

- 5.4 It was possible for consultees and respondents to submit their comments in writing or electronically. It was stated that views would be taken into consideration when developing the best options to take forward in the Core Strategy.

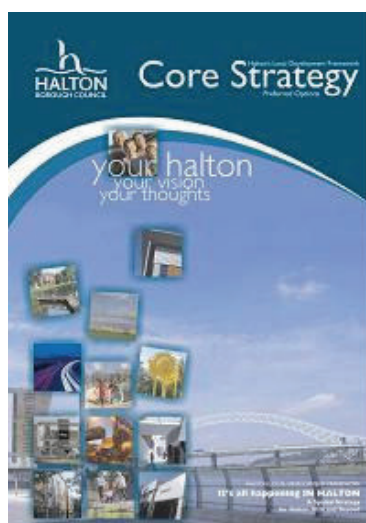
## 6.0 Core Strategy Issues and Options Representations Received

- 6.1 In total, 42 short questionnaires were received. These were completed by individuals, Councillors, Council departments, Parish Councils and other organisations. These representations included filled in questionnaire with additional comments where appropriate.
- 6.2 Further to this, 46 long questionnaires were returned. These included longer, more descriptive comments and responses to the questions posed.
- 6.3 These comments have been reviewed as part of the preparation of the Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy and have been summarised within the "What you said at the Issues and Options Stage in 2006..." sections of the Preferred Options document.

## 7.0 Core Strategy Commencement of Preferred Options

- 7.1 The preparation of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document followed the completion of the Issues and Options public consultation.
- 7.2 The main document that has been produced is the Core Strategy Preferred Options document, which contains the Council's preferred overarching strategy for the development of the Borough to 2026.

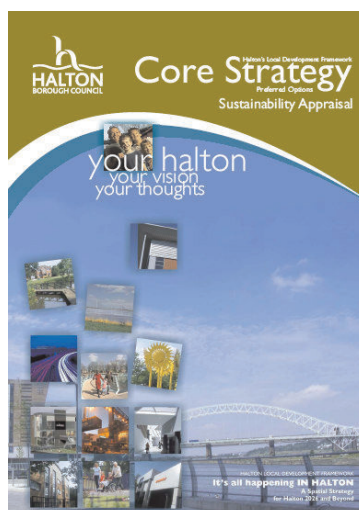




Preferred Options Document

- 7.4 The development of Core Strategy policy has been undertaken through consultation and discussion across the Council's services and with elected members.
- 7.5 Between 6<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009, the Local Development Framework Working Party met a number of times to discuss the development of Core Strategy Preferred Options policy. Chaired by the Executive Board member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, these meetings were well-attended by members, who participated in a meaningful discussion around a wide range of topics, and who oversaw the development of the Preferred Options document from research-based topic papers through to the development of preferred policy wording.
- 7.6 Between 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2008 and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009, the Core Strategy Officer Steering Group, chaired by the Chief Executive and attending by senior officers, met several times to discuss the development of Core Strategy Preferred Options policy. This started with a series of "Hot Topics" meetings to discuss the most pertinent issues for the development of Halton. Further meetings, alongside those of the Local Development Framework Working Party, allowed senior officers to oversee and contribute to the development of Core Strategy policy.
- 7.7 At various points of Core Strategy Preferred Options preparation, the Halton Strategic Partnership has been informed of progress and has received a series of presentations from the Divisional Manager for Planning and Policy. The partnership has been invited to comment on policy development at various stages.
- 7.8 In addition, the Council's Management Team have received a quarterly update of the progress towards the completion of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document, and also approved the public consultation draft prior to its consideration by the Council's Executive Board. This Executive Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by Portfolio holders was the body responsible for the approval of the Core Strategy Preferred Options for a period of public consultation. The document was approved on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

- 7.9 During the drafting of the Core Strategy's preferred spatial strategy and the development of policy approaches, various officers of the Council have been involved in internal discussions regarding policy content. Some of these discussions have fed directly from the Core Strategy Officer Steering Group, while others have been on an ad-hoc basis during policy drafting. The discussions provided valuable insights into how Core Strategy policy could affect other Council service areas, and how policies could be drafted to better reflect the ongoing priorities and activities of these Council functions.
- 7.10 The Preferred Options document was supported by an in depth evidence base and a number of supporting documents including the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).



Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal

## 8.0 Core Strategy Preferred Options Public Consultation

- 8.1 The Preferred Options consultation represented Regulation 25 requirements for public participation, in accordance with the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Development\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2008](#).
- 8.2 The Core Strategy Preferred Options was subject to a 6 week period of public consultation from the 24<sup>th</sup> September to the 5<sup>th</sup> November.
- 8.3 The Preferred Options consultation allowed the public an opportunity to comment on the Preferred Policy Options and on the overall direction of the document.
- 8.4 It was crucial to ensure that people living and working in Halton had their say about the way in which Halton develops in the future. A range of consultation materials were prepared to raise awareness for Halton's communities.
- 8.5 This included an article in the "Inside Halton" magazine (September 2009 edition) which was sent to all residents and businesses in the Borough.



“Inside Halton” Magazine Article

8.6 It was also recognised that a large number of Halton Borough Council staff lived in the Borough and so an article was also placed in the “In Touch” magazine (September 2009 edition), circulated electronically to every member of staff in the Council. In addition, each member of the Council’s staff received notification of the consultation via leaflets attached to their September 2009 payslips.

8.7 Small scale exhibitions took place in key locations in the Borough during the consultation period, including Runcorn Street Market, the Greenoaks Centre and the Unicorn Gallery. Information was also posted in other public places, including the Council’s libraries, Town halls, Halton Direct Links and various shops and businesses in the Borough to raise awareness.



“In Touch” Magazine Article



Preferred Options Consultation Poster

8.8 A number of presentations took place with the Parish Councils and Area Forums and a presentation was given to members of Halton's Youth Cabinet.

8.9 Engaging young people has been highlighted as an important aspect of the Preferred Options document and in addition to speaking to the Youth Cabinet, a Facebook group was set up and invitations to present to every school in the Borough were circulated via the schools bulletin.

8.10 Businesses, organisations and individuals who also had an interest in how Halton develops and had requested to be notified of consultation periods for Development Plan Documents were contacted via letter. Statutory consultees, who the Council must consult on the content of the Core Strategy, were also informed.

8.11 Representations were invited in a number of ways including:

- **In Person:** by speaking to a member of the team at the exhibitions or presentations.
- **Online at:** [www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning](http://www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning) where an online form can be completed
- **By emailing:** [forward.planning@halton.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@halton.gov.uk)
- **In writing**
- **By phoning:** 0303 333 4300
- **By texting:** your name and the words Halton 2026 to 07786 203300 and one of our staff will call back

## 9.0 Core Strategy Preferred Options representations received

9.1 The public consultation on the Preferred Options documentation resulted in 51 submissions being received from interested parties and members of the public. Despite the seemingly low number, the nature of the comments made within these 51 representations was wide ranging and covered a multitude of issues. Some individual responses were very extensive and totalled over 30 pages, and ultimately the value lies in the content of the comments, rather than the overall number received.

9.2 A full list of the 51 organisations and individuals who commented on the Core Strategy Preferred Options documentation is contained within Appendix I of this report. Appendix 2 lists the comments received, describes how they have been addressed and what changes have been made to the Core Strategy Publication document as a result.

9.3 A summary of the issues raised have been divided between four types of respondent. These are:

- Agencies with no particular development interest (NDI) = 18
- Developers/land owners with a specific interest (Dev) = 14
- Democratic institutions (Dem) = 10
- Members of the public (Pub) = 9

9.4 The following sections briefly summarise the nature of the comments received by each type of organisation.

#### **9.5 Agencies with No Particular Development Interest (NDI)**

The majority of comments received on the Preferred Options documents came from respondents who have been grouped together under the title 'Agencies with no particular development interest'. These organisations are not developers, but have an interest in how Halton develops because of their remit, whether that relates to protecting the region's environment or promoting economic development. Many of the organisations in this group are linked to Central Government, and as such, have a duty to consider Local Authorities' LDFs, just as equally, we as a Local Authority have a statutory duty to consult such agencies. Examples of the type of organisations within this sub-group are Executive Agencies of the Government, such as the Highways Agency, the National Offender Management Service and the Environment Agency. Regional organisations, such as Northwest Regional Leaders 4NW and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) also fell within this sub-group of respondents.

Reflecting the variety of interests represented by this sub-group, the comments made were wide-ranging. A number of comments related to the overall spatial strategy for future development in Halton, with respondents emphasising the need to prioritise regeneration of brownfield sites over a release of greenfield sites. The proposed Key Area of Change at East Runcorn generated the most comments, with respondents raising concern over the deliverability and sustainability of any development at this location. Comments were also made regarding the need to protect the borough's important green spaces and utilise the renewable energy resources available in Halton by promoting renewable energy installations.

#### **9.6 Developers/land owners with a specific interest (Dev)**

Responses within this sub-group were received from or on behalf of individuals, companies and agencies with specific land holdings, businesses or development interests in the Borough that will be affected by the content of the LDF. Respondents included two national house builders, a number of land owners (promoting the development of their sites) and some existing employers seeking to ensure proposals do not prejudice their ongoing operations. In general comments related both to the treatment of specific sites in the Core Strategy and to the wider strategy where amendments are suggested to protect or facilitate particular development proposals.

Individual sites for which representations were lodged include land at north Widnes, Runcorn Docks, land to east of Manor Park (Runcorn), Daresbury SIC, the Highways Agency Depot (Preston Brook) and some existing commercial sites on Widnes Waterfront. In addition representations were made concerning the content of the Core Strategy in relation to facilitating the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport including possible amendments to the Green Belt.

The Council's assumptions concerning land supply, the deliverability of housing sites and the proposed development strategy including the balance of proposals between Runcorn and Widnes was challenged and a review of the Green Belt requested. Employment land supply was raised and the need to retain existing employment sites highlighted.

Developers also questioned the basis for the affordable housing policy and objected to the introduction of a 'contributions' or 'tariff' regime. The detailed coverage and extent of green infrastructure, especially application of 'Green Lung' status to Widnes Golf Course was disputed.

### **9.7 Democratic Institutions (Dem)**

The democratic institutions sub-group consists of Halton's political parties, parish councils, adjoining local authorities, associated public companies, public housing organisations and Halton Borough Council officers. The respondents included within this sub-group therefore have an important position and part to play in respect of how Halton develops in the future. Of the ten submissions received from this sub-group it is worth noting that one of these included the Parish Council Planning Liaison Group which consists of Preston Brook, Daresbury, Sandymoor and Moore Parish Councils.

A number of the comments received from the democratic institutions related to the overall Spatial Strategy and the proposed urban extension at East Runcorn. The main emphasis of these comments question the preferred Spatial Option of a brownfield focus combined with an urban extension, the level of proposed development at East Runcorn and the previously developed land target. Other comments received relate to the Neighbourhood Priority Areas, the proposed development at Runcorn Docks, the role of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Halton's retail centres.

### **9.8 Members of the public (Pub)**

Responses received from members of the public generally relate to specific sites or areas of the Borough and not to how the Core Strategy complies with national and regional policy. Of specific relevance are comments relating to issues around the amount of development proposed, affordable housing, the spatial strategy in terms of a brownfield focus, the designation of Runcorn Old Town centre as a district centre, childhood obesity and what the Core Strategy can do to help, and the protection of the Green Belt. Other comments relate to supporting documents such as the Health Impact Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment.

## **10 Publication of Proposed submission of the Core Strategy DPD.**

10.1 In accordance with Regulation 28, the Local Authority must allow at least six weeks in which to receive representations on the Core Strategy DPD. The requirement for Councils to seek representations on the published plan is not an additional stage of public participation or consultation. The purpose of the regulation is to gather representations on the soundness of the development plan document that is to be submitted to the Secretary of State to examine as part of the submission material. At this stage, the Council have published a plan which it believes to be 'sound', which means that it feels that the content of the plan is:

- **Justified** – in relation to the evidence base and is also the most appropriate strategy for the area;
- **Effective** – meaning that the plan can be delivered, but is also flexible enough to deal with changing circumstances; and

- **Consistent** – with National Policy.

## 11. Submission of the Core Strategy

11.1 Following on from the eight week representation period at the proposed submission of the Core Strategy stage, the Core Strategy is then submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 30 of the aforementioned Act, who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to examine the soundness of the plan. Any representations received at the submission stage will be sent to the Planning Inspector to be considered alongside the soundness of the plan at the Examination.

11.2 The current timetable for the remaining key stages in the production of the Core Strategy is shown in Table 1 below.

<b>Table 1 Core Strategy Production Process</b>	
Commencement	<b>March 2006</b>
Issues and Options Consultation	<b>June - Sept 2006</b>
Preferred Options Consultation	<b>Sept - Nov 2009</b>
Publication	<i>November 2010</i>
Submission to Secretary of State	<i>February 2011</i>
Pre-Hearing Meeting	<i>April 2011</i>
Hearing Session Open	<i>June 2011</i>
Inspectors Binding Report	<i>September 2011</i>
Adoption	<i>December 2011</i>
Commencement	<b>March 2006</b>

11.3 Representations are therefore invited in a number of ways including:

- **In Person:** by speaking to a member of the LDF team available at Halton Direct Link, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn
- **Online at:** [www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning](http://www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning) where an online form can be completed
- **By emailing:** [forward.planning@halton.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@halton.gov.uk)
- **In writing to:**  
Halton Core Strategy,  
Environment and Regulatory Services,  
Halton Borough Council,  
Rutland House,  
Halton Lea,  
Runcorn,  
WA7 2GW
- **By phoning:** 0303 333 4300

## APPENDIX I

**Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation  
List of Respondents**

		Agent (where applicable)
<b>Agencies with No Particular Development Interest (NDI)</b>		
1	The Theatres Trust	
2	The National Trust	
3	Envirolink Northwest	
4	National Offender Management Service	Atkins Global
5	Environment Agency	
6	Government Office North West	
7	4NW	
8	Cheshire Wildlife Trust	
9	NWDA	
10	Highways Agency – Strategic Planning	
11	Merseytravel	
12	The Coal Authority	
13	Mersey Forest	
14	Network Rail	
15	English Heritage	
16	United Utilities	
17	Natural England	
<b>Developers/land owners with a specific interest (Dev)</b>		
18	Redrow	
19	Great Lime Holdings	
20	Specimen Trees, Knutsford	McDyre and Co
21	W.Smith & Sons, Cranshaw Hall Farm	McDyre and Co
22	Homes & Communities Agency	GVA Grimley
23	Peel Energy	Drivers Jonas
24	Highways Agency	King Sturge
25	Dreaming Spires Ltd	Jones Lang Lasalle
26	Bellway Homes	
27	Peel Holdings	
28	Mobile Operators Association (MOA)	Mono Consultants
29	Tangent Properties	
30	Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus	King Sturge
31	Saffil Ltd	BNP Paribas
32	ADS Recycling	Emery Planning Partnership
<b>Democratic Institutions (Dem)</b>		
33	Halton Lib Dem	
34	Promotion and Tourism	
35	Older People; Health & Community HBC	
36	Halton Housing Trust	
37	Knowsley BC	
38	NFU	
39	St Helens Council	
40	Moore Parish Council	
41	Parish Council Planning Liaison Group	
42	Halton Conservative Club	
<b>Members of the Public (Pub)</b>		
43	Roger G Pearce	
44	Carl Crowley	
45	Thomas Warburton	
46	Sheila Keough	
47	Richard Williams / H Cadwallader	
48	Seth Kay	
49	Prof David Norman	
50	Janet Wood	
51	Phil Harper	



## APPENDIX 2

**Analysis of Key Issues arising from the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation and an explanation as to how this has been addressed in the Core Strategy Publication Document.**

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
CSI Halton's Spatial Strategy	The Core Strategy should plan for the future development of the Borough to 2031 instead of 2026.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated.</b></p> <p>Planning Policy Statement 12 sets out the requirement for Core Strategies to plan for a minimum period of 15 years. From the proposed adoption date of December 2011, Halton's Core Strategy should therefore cover the period to 2026.</p> <p>There is felt to be an insufficient policy framework and evidence base to extend Halton's Core Strategy beyond this period.</p>
	Halton should promote a strategy of brownfield regeneration, which excludes the designation of a Sustainable Urban Extension.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated.</b></p> <p>The proposed Spatial Strategy maintains the focus for new development on brownfield land in the Borough. Analysis through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (<b>SHLAA</b><sup>1</sup>) and work undertaken on employment land supply (<b>JELPS</b><sup>2</sup>) indicates that there is insufficient land available within the existing built up areas to meet future development needs.</p> <p>In addition to the shortage of brownfield land within Runcorn and Widnes, much of the land covered by the Sustainable Urban Extension at East Runcorn benefits from land allocations in the Unitary Development Plan or existing planning consents.</p>
	A phased approach to the release of land should be included to ensure that brownfield land is developed ahead of greenfield land.	<p><b>Suggestion partially incorporated.</b></p> <p>Further commentary is included within the Core Strategy which explains the implied phasing as set out in policy CS3: Housing and Locational Priorities. Policy CS3 also sets out a sequential process to meeting the housing requirement which prioritises brownfield sites over greenfield sites.</p> <p>Policy CS4 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities has also been amended to follow a similar format to CS3, and thus prioritising existing brownfield sites over the release of greenfield sites for the employment uses.</p>

<sup>1</sup> SHLAA: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010

<sup>2</sup> JELPS: Joint Employment Land and Premises Study

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
	A number of alternative areas of land (namely greenfield sites and land within the Green Belt) are proposed instead of those areas included within the current Spatial Strategy.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated at this time</b></p> <p>Policy CS21 Green Belt addresses the issue of green belt protection with the exception of Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion proposals in accordance with Policy CS16. Given the current analysis of land supply in Halton, a Green Belt review is not currently necessary. Suggestions for development on Greenfield sites will be addressed in a Site Allocations DPD and will be re-examined during the next stage of producing the LDF.</p>
	Due to the highly constrained nature of brownfield land in the Borough, it is not felt that the housing and employment land requirements can be met if the proposed Spatial Strategy is pursued. A review of Green Belt boundaries is required.	<p><b>Suggestion partially incorporated.</b></p> <p>Analysis of the housing and employment land supply for the Core Strategy period indicates that there is sufficient land in the Borough to deliver the required levels of development, if the proposed Spatial Strategy is pursued.</p> <p>It is recognised that looking beyond the Core Strategy time period of 2026, there may be the need to review Green Belt boundaries and Halton are partaking in a sub-regional Overview study with partners in the Liverpool City Region to review the sub-regional supply of land for housing and employment purposes in the future.</p>
	Request for the overall spatial strategy to refer to detailed change to the Green Belt required to facilitate the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA).	<p><b>Suggestion incorporated.</b></p> <p>The incorporation of an area of search to accommodate the expansion of LJLA within the Spatial Strategy has been addressed in Policy CS 21 indicating that a minor alteration of the green belt boundary will be supported in accordance with Policy CS 16 the extent of the green belt boundary change will be addressed in a subsequent DPD.</p>
	Suggestion that Runcorn Docks should be designated as a Strategic Site.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated.</b></p> <p>Insufficient evidence in relation to the sites deliverability was unavailable preventing this site being designated as a Strategic Site.</p>

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
<b>CS3</b> <b>Housing Supply and Locational Priorities</b>	<p>A number of issues were raised in terms of the overall Previously Developed Land (PDL) target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement for an overall target for housing delivery on brownfield land to be included in the plan</li> <li>• Regional Spatial Strategy target for Halton for brownfield land is achievable</li> <li>• RSS sets out a combined brownfield land target for Halton and St Helens. The current reliance on St Helens to meet the combined target means that priority should be given to releasing brownfield sites in St Helens ahead of greenfield sites in Halton.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Suggestions partially incorporated.</b></p> <p>The issue of a target for Previously Developed Land (PDL) has been addressed in Policy CS3 Housing supply and locational priorities incorporating a target of 50% of new residential development delivered on brownfield land over the plan period.</p> <p>The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy has addressed the remaining issues.</p>
	<p>The Council should make provision for 600 net additional dwellings per annum for the period 2008-2026 to reflect Growth Point status. At least 1000 additional dwellings should be provided to 2026.</p>	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated.</b></p> <p>Growth Point Status will discontinue post April 2011. Housing provision in the Borough has been based upon evidence from a variety of sources, including predicted population, household and economic growth. The process for reaching a housing target of 8000 net additional new homes at an average rate of 500 homes per year is set out in the supporting document "Determining a Housing Requirement for Halton" (HBC, 2010).</p>
<b>CS4</b> <b>Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities</b>	<p>The employment land requirement is considered to be difficult to meet and therefore all existing employment areas should be retained.</p>	<p><b>Suggestion substantially incorporated.</b></p> <p>The protection and safeguarding of existing employment areas has been embedded in Policy CS 4 Employment Land supply and locational priorities.</p>
	<p>The Core Strategy needs to set out where in the Borough the employment land requirements will be met.</p>	<p><b>Suggestion substantially incorporated.</b></p> <p>Policy CS 4 Employment Land supply and locational priorities sets out broad locations in the Borough where employment land requirements will be met. More detailed locations will be allocated in a subsequent DPD.</p>

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
	The figure for the employment land requirement for the Core Strategy period may need to be increased to reflect Growth Point status and the consequent increase in population.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated.</b></p> <p>The figure for Halton's employment land requirement is taken from the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study which has taken the Mid-Mersey Growth Point into account. Employment land needs forecasting figures are based around previous land take-up rates and population levels are not a major factor in influencing these figures.</p>
CS5 Neighbourhood Priority Areas	The policy as drafted appears to contradict the Spatial Strategy and the approach to prioritise development in the Key Areas of Change.	<p><b>Policy not carried forward</b></p> <p>To ensure any inconsistencies between the approach for the NPAs and the overall Spatial Strategy are resolved this policy has been deleted. Elements of the policy have been incorporated into various policies within the document.</p>
	Concern over the presumption for Neighbourhood Priority Areas (NPAs) to be the sequentially preferable location for employment development.	<p><b>Policy not carried forward</b></p> <p>This policy has been deleted.</p>
CS8 South Widnes	A wider town centre boundary should be drawn for Widnes as the current approach would constrain development.	<p><b>Suggestion incorporated.</b></p> <p>In light of the evidence provided by Halton Retail Study and in response to comments received, the extent of Widnes Town Centre is now defined and illustrated in Policy CS 5.</p>

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
<b>CS9</b> <b>East Runcorn</b>	<p>General objections to the promotion of a sustainable urban extension at this location for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of justification that development in this area is needed</li> <li>• Gives preference to the development of greenfield sites over other areas of the Borough</li> <li>• Lack of justification for the area to become a location for Regionally Significant Economic Development, as set out in RSS</li> <li>• Strategic Sites should be focused on existing settlements</li> <li>• Land should be used in a more sustainable way</li> </ul>	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated.</b></p> <p>As stated above in response to the issues raised under policy CS1, the planned development at East Runcorn is required to meet the Borough's housing and employment land requirements. Insufficient land exists within the existing urban area to meet Halton's needs for future development without extending the Borough to the east of Runcorn.</p> <p>The existing employment areas at Daresbury (Business Park and Science and Innovation Campus) have been identified as a Strategic Regional Site by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). No guidance exists as to where Strategic Sites should be located, but the Daresbury area is felt to constitute a Strategic Site. The expansion of the employment offer at the Business Park and at the Science and Innovation Campus will support the diversification of the Borough's economy, which is a key objective of the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The intention of the proposal for further development at East Runcorn is to expand the existing employment offer to create a more cohesive employment area which better relates to adjoining areas, rather than a series of separate development sites.</p> <p>The policy reference in the proposed submission document is now CS10.</p>
	<p>Comments questioned the sustainability of East Runcorn for new housing and employment development, with reference made to poor sustainable transport links and connectivity with the rest of the Borough, the lack of community services and facilities in the area and fears that additional development will exacerbate flooding in the area.</p>	<p><b>Additional evidential work undertaken.</b></p> <p>As discussed in the response directly above, expansion of the existing development at East Runcorn is necessary to bring the separate areas of development together to form a cohesive extension to the Borough, where the day-to-day needs of those who live and work in the area can be met, through provision of community services and local shopping opportunities, connected by sustainable transport infrastructure.</p> <p>In relation to new development exacerbating flood risk, Halton's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment indicates that additional development will not increase flood risk across the area. The existing balancing lake to the west of the area at Wharford Farm is identified as having a greater risk of flooding than the rest of the site. This is acknowledged in the proposed policy by the retention of the balancing lakes in line with the principles of 'making space for water'.</p>

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
	Further detail required on infrastructure requirements for the area.	<p><b>Additional evidential work undertaken</b></p> <p>The need for additional information on infrastructure requirements at East Runcorn is acknowledged. The Council's has produced a background/topic paper focusing on the area which will provide further detail in support of the policy. The Council will continue to work with the development partners for the area to establish essential infrastructure requirements and mechanisms for delivery.</p>
	Proposed station will be difficult to implement due to viability issues given proximity to Runcorn East station and the feasibility of a new station on the West Coast Main Line.	<p><b>GRIP study undertaken by Network Rail</b></p> <p>A new station at East Runcorn to serve the sustainable urban extension remains a long term aspiration, although it is acknowledged that this may be unachievable in the lifetime of the Core Strategy it is felt that safeguarding the land for a transport interchange in this location is justified.</p>
	The impact of the proposed development on the highways network will need to be assessed through a transport assessment.	<p><b>Additional evidential work undertaken</b></p> <p>The Council has commissioned a transport assessment at East Runcorn to assess the impact of planned development on the highways network and to ensure sufficient capacity exists.</p>
<b>CS10 West Runcorn</b>	Further details required on what is proposed at Runcorn Docks and how it will be achieved.	<p><b>Suggestion noted. Additional work to be undertaken in partnership with landowner</b></p> <p>The Runcorn Docks redevelopment has the potential to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Core Strategy objectives. The site is being promoted by Peel Holdings and its delivery will be dependent upon the company's intentions.</p> <p>The policy reference in the proposed submission document is now CS9.</p>
	Proposals to de-link the Silver Jubilee Bridge which incorporate the impact of 4000 additional dwellings at Runcorn Docks should be tested using traffic modelling.	<p><b>Suggestion noted. Additional work to be undertaken, including with landowner.</b></p> <p>Given the proposed scale of the development at Runcorn Docks, transport and highways considerations will form an important part of the schemes appraisal. These have not yet been addressed as the proposed development mix has not been confirmed.</p> <p>Detailed appraisal of options for the delinking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge in Runcorn have had regard to outstanding development commitments and are being dealt with as part of the wider Mersey Gateway Priority Project.</p>
	Objection to Runcorn Old Town being classified as a district centre, for retail planning purposes.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated</b></p> <p>See detailed response under Policy CS17.</p>

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
	Runcorn Old Town suffers from accessibility problems.	<p><b>Comment noted.</b></p> <p>The dislocation of Runcorn Old Town centre from its residential hinterland is a longstanding issue. This is identified in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy and is a consideration in the proposed delinking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge. The Core Strategy seeks to facilitate mitigation measures where possible with the aim of improving connectivity and access.</p>
<b>CS12 Affordable Housing</b>	Concern that the policy is too restrictive and that the proposed threshold and percentage of affordable housing to be sought need to be justified in terms of development viability.	<p><b>Additional evidential work undertaken.</b></p> <p>Following Preferred Options a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was undertaken in 2010 which enabled a Borough-wide target to be justified in terms of development viability, as illustrated in Policy <b>CS12: Affordable Housing</b></p>
	The level and nature of affordable housing being sought should relate to a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.	<p><b>Suggestion noted. Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been undertaken.</b></p> <p>The Preferred Options policy clearly stated that the policy will need to be supported by an up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) before adoption. This was completed in 2010 and forms the evidence upon which the level and nature of affordable housing in Policy <b>CS12: Affordable Housing</b> is being sought</p>
<b>CS14 Design of New Residential Development</b>	This policy should include a requirement for residential development to achieve Lifetime Homes standards.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated</b></p> <p>The use of Lifetime Homes Standard was considered for Preferred Options but discounted due to issues of implementation and monitoring. Subsequently Policy CS 11 seeks to encourage the delivery of homes which meet the Lifetime Homes Standard. A general review of Policy CS14 Design for new residential development has resulted in the amalgamation of this policy with other design policies within the Core Strategy at Preferred Options stage resulting in Policy CS17 High Quality Design.</p> <p>The policy reference in the proposed submission document is now CS17</p>
<b>CS17 A Network of Centres</b>	Concern over the detrimental impact of designating Runcorn Old Town as a district centre	<p><b>Suggestion noted but not incorporated</b></p> <p>This is largely a technical matter. This approach has been substantiated by the Halton Retail Study and Policy CS5 A Network of Centres for Halton. The hierarchy of centres will ensure protection from inappropriate development.</p> <p>The policy reference in the proposed submission document is now CS 5</p>

Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
<b>CS24 Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development</b>	The Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards for commercial development duplicate the requirements of Building Regulations.	<p><b>Suggestion noted but not incorporated</b></p> <p>It is important that the Core Strategy sets out the need for all development in the Borough to achieve high standards of sustainability and highlight the Council's commitment to contribute to carbon emission reductions and respond to existing and anticipated climate change risks. The Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study ensures that the requirements as set out in this policy are achievable and compliment the requirements of Building Regulations as opposed to duplicating them.</p> <p>See Policy CS18 in the proposed submission document.</p>
<b>CS26 Green Infrastructure</b>	The proposed 'green lung' at Widnes Golf Course should be deleted as the green spaces within this area have little or no functional relationship and poor public access.	<p><b>Suggestion incorporated</b></p> <p>The proposed 'green lung' at Widnes Golf Course has been deleted.</p>
	The results of the ongoing Greenfield: Brownfield Exchange Concept study and the Brownfield Strategy should be incorporated into this policy.	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated</b></p> <p>The Greenfield: Brownfield Exchange Concept study concluded that further evidence would be required to pursue an alternative policy approach. Therefore due to insufficient evidence no change to the policy is proposed.</p>
<b>CS28 Encouraging Sustainable Transport</b>	Clearer links need to be made between the sustainable transport proposals in this policy and planned development as set out in the Spatial Strategy.	<p><b>Suggestion partially incorporated</b></p> <p>Full consideration should be given to future transport demands, the impact on Halton's Strategic Road Network and how more sustainable modes of transport can be encouraged. This will be especially important for the Key Areas of Change and in particular East Runcorn. Amendments to policy <b>CS 14 Sustainable Transport</b> also incorporates a reference to transport modelling undertaken.</p>
<b>CS29 Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions</b>	A better understanding of existing and potential future congestion hotspots needs to inform the Core Strategy to ensure that the highways network can continue to operate safely and efficiently.	<p><b>Suggestion noted and additional evidential work undertaken</b></p> <p>It is the Council's intention to expand understanding of existing and potential future congestion hotspots through transport modelling. This policy has been deleted. Elements of this policy have been incorporated into policy CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk.</p>



Preferred Options Policy Ref: Title	Key Issue to be resolved	How this issue has been addressed at Publication
<b>CS32</b> <b>Liverpool John Lennon Airport</b>	A policy within the Core Strategy or wider LDF is needed which will clearly set out how the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport can be achieved through a change to the Green Belt boundary.	<p><b>Suggestion incorporated</b></p> <p>The precise extent of the change (<i>to the Green Belt boundary</i>), and detailed criterion to be met in its implementation, will be set out in a Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.</p> <p>Detailed commentary on this issue is provided under policy CS1.</p> <p>The policy reference in the proposed submission document is now CS16</p>
<b>CS33</b> <b>Infrastructure Provision</b>	<p>The introduction of a blanket tariff approach to infrastructure provision is contrary to Circular 05/2005.</p> <p>The detail surrounding how such an approach would be implemented should not be delegated to a Supplementary Planning Document.</p>	<p><b>Suggestion not incorporated</b></p> <p>The approach to securing developer contributions towards the cost of infrastructure will be provided in a subsequent Developer Contributions DPD.</p> <p>Circular 05/2005 sets out requirements for planning obligations using S.106 agreements including the requirement that obligations must relate directly to the development proposed.</p> <p>The introduction of a tariff based approach is not necessarily contrary to Circular 05/2005. The Government is introducing the requirement for LPAs to prepare Infrastructure Plans and has introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as a means to securing contributions.</p> <p>The policy reference in the proposed submission document is now CS6</p> <p><b>Suggestion accepted.</b></p> <p>The detail surrounding this approach and detailed criterion to be met in its implementation will be set out in a separate Developer Contributions DPD.</p>
<b>General</b> -	The Core Strategy should include a policy which supports renewable energy projects.	<p><b>Suggestion incorporated</b></p> <p>Renewable energy projects are encouraged in Policy CS 18; Sustainable Development and Climate change</p>

# HALTON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

Habitats Regulations Assessment  
Appropriate Assessment

OCTOBER 2010

Please acknowledge that this document is currently a working draft and includes inconsistencies in relation to the draft Proposed Submission Document.

This document will be subject to change.

HALTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
It's all happening IN HALTON  
A Spatial Strategy for Halton 2026

## Revision Schedule

HRA/AA Report  
October 2010

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
01	22/10/10	AA Draft for client comment	<b>Leila Payne</b> Ecologist	<b>Dr. James Riley</b> Principal Ecological Consultant	<b>Dr. Jo Hughes</b> Technical Director (Ecology)

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation, SACs, and Special Protection Areas, SPAs; as a matter of UK Government policy, Ramsar sites<sup>1</sup> are given equivalent status). The need for AA is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (**Box 1**). The ultimate aim of the Directive is to “*maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest*” (Habitats Directive, Article 2(2)). This aim relates to habitats and species, not the European sites themselves, although the sites have a significant role in delivering favourable conservation status.

## Box 1. The legislative basis for Appropriate Assessment

### Habitats Directive 1992

*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.”*

Article 6 (3)

### Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

*“A competent authority, before deciding to ... give any consent for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site ... shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that sites conservation objectives ... The authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site”.*

- 1.2 Scott Wilson has been appointed by Halton Borough Council (“the Council”) to assist in undertaking a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the potential effects of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, on the Natura 2000 network and Ramsar sites.
- 1.3 The LDF will supersede the current Unitary Development Plan. The current Unitary Development Plan was adopted in 2005 and is saved until the LDF Development Plan Documents (DPDs) come into effect. The Council’s aim is to adopt an LDF Core Strategy from 2010.
- 1.4 This document reports on the HRA Screening of the Draft Publication Core Strategy. Earlier HRA work associated with the Issues and Options draft of the Core Strategy is reported elsewhere (Scott Wilson, June 2009).
- 1.5 Chapter 2 of this report explains the process by which the screening element of the HRA has been carried out. Chapter 3 explores the relevant pathways of impact resulting from the scale of

<sup>1</sup> Wetlands of International Importance designated under the Ramsar Convention 1979



development that will be delivered in Halton. Chapters 4 to 15 provide a screening exercise for the Core Strategy as a whole organised on the basis of one chapter per European site, except where multiple sites overlap in a particular geographic area (e.g. Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar sites). Each chapter begins with a consideration of the interest features and ecological condition of the site and environmental process essential to maintain site integrity. A brief assessment of the Core Strategy in respect of each European site (both in isolation and in combination with other projects and plans) is then carried out. The conclusion of the screening exercise is then summarised in Chapter 16.

## Halton Core Strategy

- 1.6 The purpose of the Core Strategy is to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development within Halton. This is to be achieved through setting out the vision, objectives and strategic approach for the spatial development of the Borough until 2026. The Core Strategy will therefore provide the over-arching policy framework for the Halton LDF (Local Development Framework).
- 1.7 The draft publication Core Strategy, subject to this HRA screening, sets out the vision, objective and strategy for development in the Borough. Whilst some broad particular locational sites for development are identified, the allocation of individual sites will be implemented through the Allocation and Policy DPDs.
- 1.8 The key aspects of the Core Strategy that are subject to HRA screening in this report relate to:
- the provision of 8,000 housing units (2003-2026) at rate of 600 units per annum (2008-2017) and 500 units per annum (2017-2026) (Policy CS2);
  - the provision of 289 hectares of new employment land (2010-2026) (Policy CS3);
  - provision of infrastructure (CS5) including transport infrastructure (roads, railways, public transport, walking and cycle routes) (also CS6; CS14, CS15); physical/environmental infrastructure e.g. water supply/treatment energy supply; green infrastructure (green spaces) (also CS210); and social infrastructure (community services/facilities);
  - 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) facilitating freight by rail and a new link road joining the site with Knowsley Expressway (CS6);
  - South Widnes town centre and waterfront revitalisation (CS7) (CS4);
  - East Runcorn mixed use/new housing/science park/business park development (CS8);
  - Runcorn old town centre to be developed as a vibrant waterside location (shopping, leisure) and Runcorn docklands to accommodate major residential /mixed use development on existing waterside employment sites (CS9, CS4);
  - Mersey Gateway Port (Western Docks within Runcorn) to be developed as a multimodal facility encouraging greater use of Manchester ship canal for freight, and making use of rail/road infrastructure (CS9);

- Mersey Gateway Bridge construction to improve cross-river sustainable transport opportunities (CS15);
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion (CS16);
- meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People (CS12);
- renewable energy and low carbon energy (including wind turbines and CHP) (CS18);
- remediation of contaminated land (CS24);
- sustainable waste management (CS 25), and
- minerals management (CS26).

1.9 It is important to note that the population of Halton is not actually expected to increase over the Core Strategy period despite the delivery of new housing (it may either stabilise or continue its current declining trend), but the relative demographic distribution is likely to change leading to a shift from a younger population to an older population and a greater number of smaller households. In addition, part of the intent of the Core Strategy is to stimulate growth and investment in the Borough which may over the Core Strategy period reverse the declining trend.

1.10 It should be noted that the proposed expansion of the Port of Liverpool onto Seaforth Nature Reserve, while referenced in the Core Strategy is not ultimately in the control of Halton Council but will be decided through the Harbour Revision Order process. For this reason we have treated the port expansion as a 'plan or project' to be considered 'in combination' with the Core Strategy throughout this report.

## 2 Methodology

### Introduction

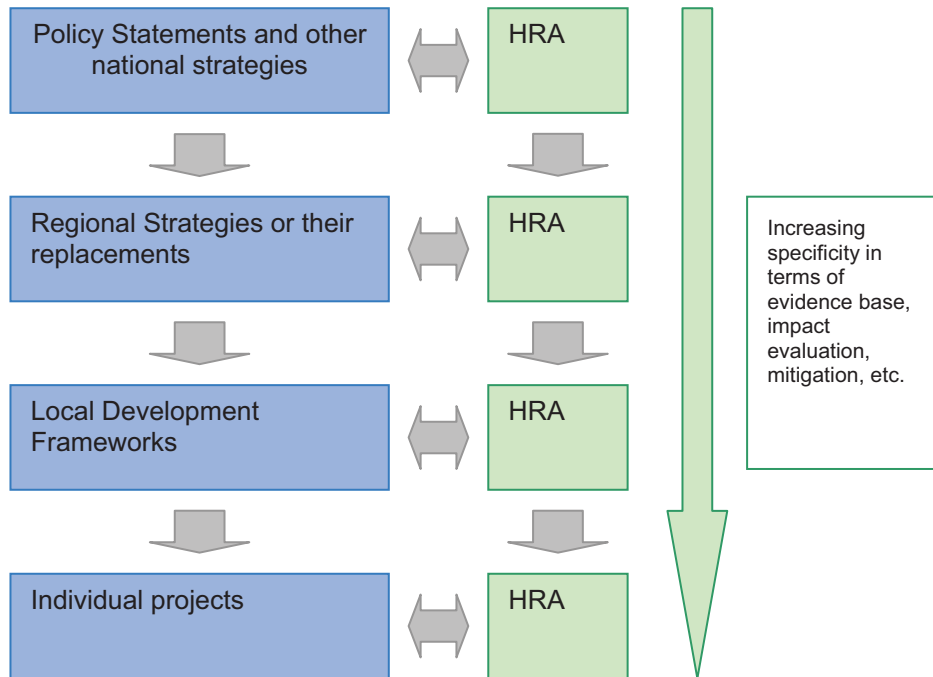
- 2.1 This section sets out our approach and methodology for undertaking the HRA. Although this report relates only to the HRA Screening stage, the full HRA process is described briefly below in order to provide context and clarity to the current assessment. Habitat Regulations Assessment itself operates independently from the Planning Policy system, being a legal requirement of a discrete Statutory Instrument. Therefore there is no direct relationship to PPS12 and the 'Test of Soundness'. The HRA process that we have adopted has been designed to ensure that the HRA is: a) compliant, b) accepted by key stakeholders including Natural England c) has clear recommendations that can be used by the Council to develop their plan; and d) has a clear record of the process undertaken, providing the necessary evidence base for the plan.

### A Proportionate Assessment

- 2.2 Project-related HRA often requires bespoke survey work and novel data generation in order to accurately determine the significance of adverse effects, that is, to look beyond the risk of an effect to a justified prediction of the actual likely effect and to the development of avoidance or mitigation measures.
- 2.3 However, the draft CLG guidance<sup>2</sup> makes it clear that when implementing HRA of land-use plans, the Appropriate Assessment (AA) should be undertaken at a level of detail that is appropriate and proportional to the level of detail provided within the plan itself:
- "The comprehensiveness of the [Appropriate] assessment work undertaken should be proportionate to the geographical scope of the option and the nature and extent of any effects identified. An AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. It would be inappropriate and impracticable to assess the effects [of a strategic land use plan] in the degree of detail that would normally be required for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of a project."*
- 2.4 In other words, there is a tacit acceptance that appropriate assessment can be tiered and that all impacts are not necessarily appropriate for consideration to the same degree of detail at all tiers (**Figure 1**).
- 2.5 For an LDF the level of detail concerning the developments that will be delivered is usually insufficient to make a highly detailed assessment of significance of effects. For example, precise and full determination of the impacts and significant effects of a new settlement will require extensive details concerning the design of the town, including layout of greenspace and type of development to be delivered in particular locations, yet these data will not be decided until subsequent stages.
- 2.6 The most robust and defensible approach to the absence of fine grain detail at this level is to make use of the precautionary principle. In other words, the plan is never given the benefit of the

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites, Consultation Paper

doubt; it must be assumed that a policy/measure is likely to have an impact leading to a significant adverse effect upon a European site unless it can be clearly established otherwise.

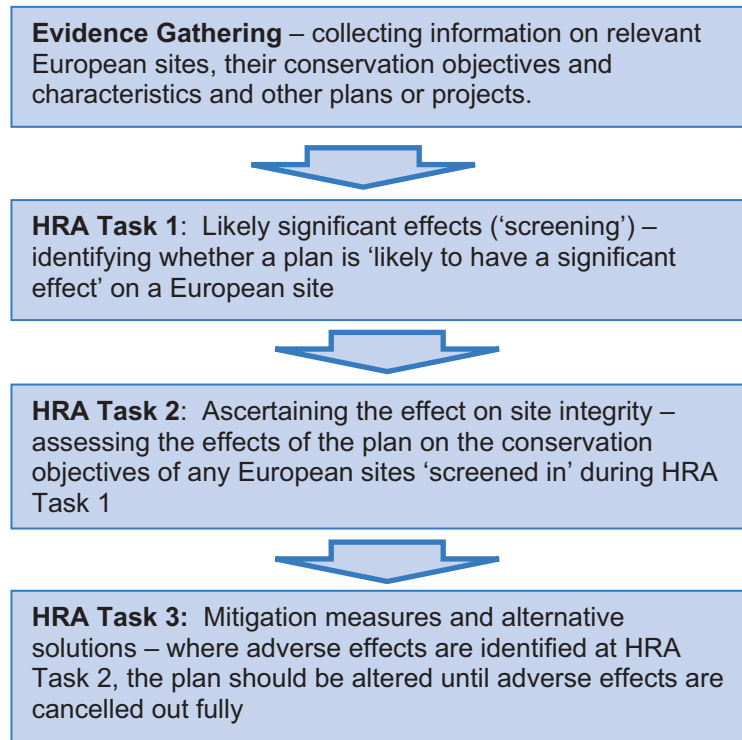


**Figure 1: Tiering in HRA of Land Use Plans**

## The Process of HRA

- 2.7 The HRA is likely to be carried out in the continuing absence of formal Government guidance. CLG released a consultation paper on AA of Plans in 2006<sup>3</sup>. As yet, no further formal guidance has emerged.
- 2.8 **Figure 2** below outlines the stages of HRA according to current draft CLG guidance. The stages are essentially iterative, being revisited as necessary in response to more detailed information, recommendations and any relevant changes to the plan until no significant adverse effects remain.

<sup>3</sup> CLG (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites, Consultation Paper



**Figure 2: Four-Stage Approach to Habitat Regulations Assessment**

2.9 In practice, we and other practitioners have discovered that this broad outline requires some amendment in order to feed into a developing land use plan such as a Core Strategy. The following process has been adopted for carrying out the subsequent stages of the HRA.

## Stage Two: Likely Significant Effect Test (Screening)

2.10 This stage is the purpose of the current report.

2.11 The first stage of any Habitat Regulations Assessment is a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) test - essentially a high level risk assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as Appropriate Assessment is required. The essential question is:

*"Is the Plan, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European sites?"*

2.12 The objective is to 'screen out' those plans and projects (or site allocations/policies) that can, without any detailed appraisal, be said to be unlikely to result in significant adverse effects upon European sites, usually because there is no mechanism or pathway for an adverse interaction with European sites. In addition, European sites may be screened out where there is no mechanism or pathway for an adverse effect from any element of a plan or project.

- 2.13 Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening was undertaken by Scott Wilson (June 2009) on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. The Core Strategy was screened in with respect to likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites listed below in Table 1.

## Appropriate Assessment and Mitigation

- 2.14 With regard to those European sites where it was considered not possible to ‘screen out’ the Core Strategy without detailed appraisal, it was necessary to progress to the later ‘Appropriate Assessment’ stage to explore the adverse effects and devise mitigation.
- 2.15 The steps involved are detailed in Box 2.

### Box 2. The steps involved in the Appropriate Assessment exercise undertaken for the Rushmoor Core Strategy

1. Explore the reasons for the European designation of these sites.
2. Explore the environmental conditions required to maintain the integrity of the selected sites and become familiar with the current trends in these environmental processes.
3. Gain a full understanding of the plan and its policies and consider each policy within the context of the environmental processes – would the policy lead to an impact on any identified process?
4. Decide if the identified impact will lead to an adverse effect.
5. Identify other plans and projects that might affect these sites in combination with the Plan and decide whether there any adverse effects that might not result from the Plan in isolation will do so “in combination”.
6. Develop measures to avoid the effect entirely, or if not possible, to mitigate the impact sufficiently that its effect on the European site is rendered effectively inconsequential.

- 2.16 In evaluating significance, Scott Wilson have relied on our professional judgement as well as stakeholder consultation. We believe that we are in an excellent position to provide such judgement given our previous experience in undertaking HRA of plans in the East of England, South East and North West at RSS, LDF and Area Action Plan levels.
- 2.17 The level of detail concerning developments that will be permitted under land use plans will never be sufficient to make a detailed quantification of adverse effects. Therefore, we have again taken a precautionary approach (in the absence of more precise data) assuming as the default position that if an adverse effect cannot be confidently ruled out, avoidance or mitigation measures must be provided. This is in line with CLG guidance that the level of detail of the assessment, whilst meeting the relevant requirements of the Habitats Regulations, should be ‘appropriate’ to the level of plan or project that it addresses (see Figure 2 for a summary of this ‘tiering’ of assessment).

- 2.18 When undertaking this part of the assessment it is essential to bear in mind the principal intention behind the legislation i.e. to ensure that those projects or plans which in themselves have minor impacts are not simply dismissed on that basis, but are evaluated for any cumulative contribution they may make to an overall significant effect. In practice, in combination assessment is therefore of greatest relevance when the plan would otherwise be screened out because its individual contribution is inconsequential.

## Physical scope of the HRA

- 2.19 The physical scope of the HRA is as shown in Table 1. The location of these European Sites is illustrated in Figures 3 and 4.

**Table 1: Physical scope of the HRA**

European site	Reason for inclusion
Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar Site	Located partly within the Halton Borough Core Strategy Area.
Manchester Mosses SAC	Located adjacent to the M62, which is one of the principal routes into and out of north Merseyside and therefore the north part of Halton
Oak Mere SAC	Located immediately adjacent to the A54 and A49, both of which are busy roads connecting Merseyside to Cheshire.
River Dee & Bala Lake SAC	Identified as a source of potable water for Merseyside.
Sefton Coast SAC	Located within Merseyside, currently subject to recreational pressures.
Dee Estuary SAC SPA & Ramsar site and pSPA extension	Downstream of the River Dee which is identified as a source of potable water for Merseyside.
Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pRamsar and pSPA	Located within Merseyside, with hydraulic connections to the Mersey (within Halton Borough Core Strategy Area) and currently subject to recreational pressures.
Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site	Located within Merseyside with hydraulic connections to the Mersey (within Halton Borough Core Strategy Area) and currently subject to recreational pressures.
Liverpool Bay SPA	Located immediately adjacent to Merseyside and is therefore a potential water quality pathway through sewage effluent discharges as well as disturbance.
River Eden SAC	Haweswater Lake (to which the River is hydrologically connected) is likely to form part of the future water supply for Merseyside.
Martin Mere SPA	Whilst this is located approximately 20km north of Halton, any renewable energy policies (e.g. wind turbines), alone or in combination have the potential to affect flight paths of qualifying bird species.

- 2.20 No other pathways to European sites have been identified.
- 2.21 Thought was given to including the following European sites but we are currently minded to scope them out of consideration:

- **Rixton Claypits SAC** – Previous HRA Screening of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (Scott Wilson, 2009) found no realistic pathway;
- **Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 & Phase 2 Ramsar site** Located within 10km of Halton. No realistic pathway has been identified.
- **West Midlands Mosses SAC** - Located close to the A49 and lies within 10km of Halton. However, the A49 is not a direct link between Halton and Cheshire and the site lies more than 200m from the A49 which is outside the core impact zone with regard to local air quality (see Chapter 3 for further discussion of this zone).

2.22 Further details regarding the interest features and vulnerabilities of the European sites included within the scope of the HRA are given below.

2.23 All baseline data relating to these European Sites presented in subsequent sections of this Report is taken from Joint Nature Conservancy Council websites (JNCC) unless otherwise stated. A full reference list of sites used is given in Section 17 (References).

## The 'in combination' scope

2.24 It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts and effects of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and projects that may also be affecting the European site(s) in question. In practice, 'in combination assessment' is of greatest importance when the DPD would otherwise be screened out because the individual contribution is inconsequential. It is neither practical nor necessary to assess the 'in combination' effects of the DPD within the context of all other plans and projects within the region. The principal other plans and projects that we are considering are:

### Projects

- Gwynt Y Mor Offshore Windfarm Project;
- Peel Ports 'Super Port';
- Power from Mersey;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion;
- The Mersey Gateway: Proposed 2nd Mersey Crossing (Halton);
- Proposed incinerators at Runcorn and Ince Marches;
- Frodsham Windfarm;
- Thornton to Switch Island Link Road; and
- Crosby Water Centre, Seaforth Terminal and possible visitor centres at Formby/Marshside

### Plans

- The Wales Spatial Plan;
- Draft West Cheshire and North East Wales Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy (2007);
- Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study;



- North West England & North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2;
- Liverpool LDF Core Strategy;
- Cheshire West and Chester LDF Core Strategy;
- Knowsley LDF Core Strategy;
- Sefton LDF Core Strategy;
- Wirral LDF Core Strategy;
- St Helens Core Strategy;
- Flintshire Unitary Development Plan + Proposed Modifications;
- Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan + Local Development Plan;
- Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Delivery (Wirral and Liverpool);
- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document;
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Framework;
- Dee Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy;
- Dee Draft River Basin Management Plan;
- North West River Basin Management Plan;
- United Utilities Water Resource Management Plan;
- West Lancashire Core Strategy;
- Great Ormes Head to Formby Point Shoreline Management Plan (under review);
- Formby Point to River Wyre Shoreline Management Plan (under review);
- Wales Transport Plan; and
- Liverpool and Wirral Waters Development masterplans.

2.25 In practice, in combination assessment is of greatest relevance when the plan would otherwise be screened out because its individual contribution is inconsequential. For the purposes of this assessment, we have determined that, due to the nature of the identified impacts, the key other plans and projects relate to the additional housing and commercial/industrial allocations proposed for other Merseyside authorities over the lifetime of the Core Strategy, and other transport priorities, specifically the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

**Table 2. Housing to be delivered within Merseyside under current Core Strategy plans**

<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>Annual housing average</i>	<i>Total housing from 2003 to 2021</i>
<b>Merseyside</b>	<b>4,470</b>	<b>80,460</b>
Liverpool	1,950	35,100
Knowsley	450	8,100
<i>Halton</i>	<i>600 (until 2017), then 500</i>	<i>8,000</i>

St Helens	570	10,260
Wirral	500	9,000
Sefton	500	9,000 <sup>4</sup>

2.26 With regard to the specific issue of water resources, the long distance transfer pathways that exist for the supply of water to the Merseyside area and the fact that these same pathways or water sources also supply parts of North Wales, the West Midlands, Manchester, Cumbria and Cheshire, means that development across a much broader area is required for the consideration of water resource impacts 'in combination', as follows:

- North East Wales – specific housing levels to be delivered are not mentioned in the Wales Spatial Plan or its 2008 update but a significant increase is likely;
- Greater Manchester area – 185,800 homes to be delivered across Manchester, Salford, Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside, Stockport, Trafford, Congleton, Macclesfield, Bolton, Bury and Wigan between 2003 and 2021;
- West Midlands – potentially up to 445,600 additional homes across the region until 2026;
- West Cumbria – 11,640 homes to be delivered across Allderdale, Barrow-in-Furness and Copeland between 2003 and 2021;
- Cheshire – 31,800 homes to be delivered across Crewe & Nantwich, Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal between 2003 and 2021, over half (17,955) within Cheshire West and Chester.

2.27 It should be noted that, while the broad potential impacts of these other projects and plans will be considered, we do not propose carrying out HRA on each of these plans – we will however draw upon existing HRA that have been carried out for surrounding regions and plans.

## John Lennon Liverpool Airport Extension

2.28 The expansion of the John Lennon Liverpool Airport is (currently) an explicit element of national government policy as set out in the White Paper 'The Future of Air Transport' (2003). However, Halton does have a Core Strategy policy relating to the expansion and the Airport does lie immediately adjacent to the borough boundary. Due to the location of the airport expansion immediately adjacent to the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and the potential for effects on the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site, this project is described below.

2.29 The 'Draft Liverpool John Lennon Airport (JLA) Masterplan' (November 2007) shows how the Airport intends to respond to the White Paper's 'The Future of Air Transport' objectives.

2.30 The proposals for 2015 would involve the construction of new terminal facilities, with additional car-parking, as well as new cargo handling and aircraft maintenance facilities, a mixed-use development and hotel. There would also be an extension to the runway, extension of the northern parallel taxiway and additional apron areas and the European Air Transportation Command EATC at the end of the period leading up to 2015. The proposals for 2030 incorporate cargo development and a new parallel taxiway, and further additional apron, terminal and car

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the 9,000 to be delivered to 2021, the Core Strategy includes a further 2,500 to be delivered by 2026

park areas. There would also be a requirement for an expanded fuel farm facility and a waste water treatment plant to serve the new cargo facilities.

- 2.31 At its western end JLA lies immediately adjacent to the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar. The Masterplan highlights several potential adverse effects on nature conservation and biodiversity which could directly or indirectly affect the favourable status of Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar. These effects include: severance of habitats; bird and animal road deaths; pollution to adjacent habitats by road run-off; disturbance to feeding, roosting and breeding birds and bats due to increased lighting; and changes to the hydrology of the area. Potential indirect effects could include: sourcing and transport of construction materials and possibly disturbance to feeding waterfowl during construction, depending on its timing.
- 2.32 Aircraft currently take off or land over the adjacent mudflats. Since these flats are used by a proportion of the passage and wintering waterfowl for which the Estuary is of international importance, there is a potential for an increase in such traffic to effect on the integrity of the SPA/Ramsar site.

## 3 Pathways of Impact

### Introduction

- 3.1 In carrying out an HRA it is important to avoid confining oneself to effectively arbitrary boundaries (such as Local Authority boundaries) but to use an understanding of the various ways in which land use plans can impact on European sites to follow the pathways along which development can be connected with European sites, in some cases many kilometres distant. Briefly defined, pathways are routes by which a change in activity associated with a development can lead to an effect upon a European site. It is also important to bear in mind CLG guidance which states that the AA should be '*proportionate to the geographical scope of the [plan policy]*' and that '*an AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose*' (CLG, 2006, p.6<sup>5</sup>).
- 3.2 The following indirect pathways of impact are considered relevant to the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy.

### Disturbance

- 3.3 Habitat Regulation Assessments of Core Strategies tend to focus on recreational sources of disturbance as a result of new residents or an increasingly aging population with more leisure time available. While this is a key factor, other sources of disturbance associated with an increase in commercial development, road transport adjacent to sensitive sites or increases in shipping and aircraft movement may also result.

#### Breeding birds

- 3.4 Concern regarding the effects of disturbance on birds stems from the fact that they are expending energy unnecessarily and the time they spend responding to disturbance is time that is not spent feeding<sup>6</sup>. Disturbance therefore risks increasing energetic output while reducing energetic input, which can adversely affect the 'condition' and ultimately survival of the birds. In addition, displacement of birds from one feeding site to others can increase the pressure on the resources available within the remaining sites, as they have to sustain a greater number of birds<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, the more time a breeding bird spends disturbed from its nest, the more its eggs are likely to cool and the more vulnerable they, or any nestlings, are to predators.

#### Wintering birds

- 3.5 The potential for disturbance may be less in winter than in summer, in that there are often a smaller number of recreational users. In addition, the consequences of disturbance at a population level may be reduced because birds are not breeding. However, winter activity can still cause important disturbance, especially as birds are particularly vulnerable at this time of year

<sup>5</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government. 2006. *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502244>

<sup>6</sup> Riddington, R. *et al.* 1996. The impact of disturbance on the behaviour and energy budgets of Brent geese. *Bird Study* 43:269-279

<sup>7</sup> Gill, J.A., Sutherland, W.J. & Norris, K. 1998. The consequences of human disturbance for estuarine birds. *RSPB Conservation Review* 12: 67-72

due to food shortages, such that disturbance which results in abandonment of suitable feeding areas through disturbance can have severe consequences. Several empirical studies have, through correlative analysis, demonstrated that out-of-season (October-March) recreational activity can result in quantifiable disturbance:

- Tuite et al<sup>8</sup> found that during periods of high recreational activity, bird numbers at Llangorse Lake decreased by 30% as the morning progressed, matching the increase in recreational activity towards midday. During periods of low recreational activity, however, no change in numbers was observed as the morning progressed. In addition, all species were found to spend less time in their 'preferred zones' (the areas of the lake used most in the absence of recreational activity) as recreational intensity increased.
- Underhill et al<sup>9</sup> counted waterfowl and all disturbance events on 54 water bodies within the South West London Water Bodies Special Protection Area and clearly correlated disturbance with a decrease in bird numbers at weekends in smaller sites and with the movement of birds within larger sites from disturbed to less disturbed areas.
- Evans & Warrington<sup>10</sup> found that on Sundays total water bird numbers (including shoveler and gadwall) were 19% higher on Stocker's Lake LNR in Hertfordshire, and attributed this to observed greater recreational activity on surrounding water bodies at weekends relative to week days. However, in this study, recreational activity was not quantified in detail, nor were individual recreational activities evaluated separately.
- Tuite et al<sup>11</sup> used a large (379 site), long-term (10-year) dataset (September – March species counts) to correlate seasonal changes in wildfowl abundance with the presence of various recreational activities. They found that shoveler was one of the most sensitive species to disturbance. The greatest impact on winter wildfowl numbers was associated with sailing/windsurfing and rowing.

#### Other activities causing disturbance

- 3.6 Human activity can affect birds either directly (e.g. through causing them to flee) or indirectly (e.g. through damaging their habitat). The most obvious direct effect is that of immediate mortality such as death by shooting, but human activity can also lead to behavioural changes (e.g. alterations in feeding behaviour, avoidance of certain areas *etc.*) and physiological changes (e.g. an increase in heart rate) that, although less noticeable, may ultimately result in major population-level effects by altering the balance between immigration/birth and emigration/death<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.7 The degree of impact that varying levels of noise will have on different species of bird is poorly understood except that a number of studies have found that an increase in traffic levels on roads does lead to a reduction in the bird abundance within adjacent hedgerows - Reijnen et al (1995)

<sup>8</sup> Tuite, C. H., Owen, M. & Paynter, D. 1983. Interaction between wildfowl and recreation at Llangorse Lake and Talybont Reservoir, South Wales. *Wildfowl* 34: 48-63

<sup>9</sup> Underhill, M.C. *et al.* 1993. *Use of Waterbodies in South West London by Waterfowl. An Investigation of the Factors Affecting Distribution, Abundance and Community Structure.* Report to Thames Water Utilities Ltd. and English Nature. Wetlands Advisory Service, Slimbridge

<sup>10</sup> Evans, D.M. & Warrington, S. 1997. The effects of recreational disturbance on wintering waterbirds on a mature gravel pitlake near London. *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 53: 167-182

<sup>11</sup> Tuite, C.H., Hanson, P.R. & Owen, M. 1984. Some ecological factors affecting winter wildfowl distribution on inland waters in England and Wales and the influence of water-based recreation. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 21: 41-62

<sup>12</sup> Riley, J. 2003. Review of Recreational Disturbance Research on Selected Wildlife in Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage.

examined the distribution of 43 passerine species (i.e. 'songbirds'), of which 60% had a lower density closer to the roadside than further away. By controlling vehicle usage they also found that the density generally was lower along busier roads than quieter roads<sup>13</sup>.

- 3.8 Activities other than recreation may also lead to disturbance of wildlife. Of relevance to the Wirral Core Strategy for example would be noise and visual disturbance from ports and airports, and potentially disturbance from wind farms. Disturbance and displacement from feeding and areas has been demonstrated with regard to wintering geese<sup>14</sup>, curlew and hen harriers<sup>15</sup>.
- 3.9 The sensitivity of wildlife to the noise of roads and aircraft varies greatly from species to species. However road and airport/aircraft noise can cause some wildlife – notably a range of grassland and woodland birds - to avoid areas near them, reducing the density of those animal populations<sup>16</sup>. Elsewhere, reduced breeding success has been recorded.
- 3.10 Large structures (e.g. a new bridge over the Mersey Estuary, offshore and onshore wind turbines), have the potential to alter bird flight paths (e.g. hunting flight paths for raptors, bird migratory paths, regular flight paths between roosting and feeding sites, and foraging routes for bats etc. This may result in a collision risk barrier effect or displacement which could make birds either vulnerable to predation or loss of vital energy stores.
- 3.11 Animals can also be disturbed by the movement of ships. For instance, a DTI study of birds of the North West coast noted that: "Divers and scoters were absent from the mouths of some busier estuaries, notably the Mersey... Both species are known to be susceptible to disturbance from boats, and their relative scarcity in these areas... may in part reflect the volume of boat traffic in these areas"<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.12 Disturbing activities are on a continuum. The most disturbing activities are likely to be those that involve irregular, infrequent, unpredictable loud noise events, movement or vibration of long duration. Birds are least likely to be disturbed by activities that involve regular, frequent, predictable, quiet patterns of sound or movement or minimal vibration. The further any activity is from the birds, the less likely it is to result in disturbance.
- 3.13 The factors that influence a species response to a disturbance are numerous, but the three key factors are species sensitivity, proximity of disturbance sources and timing/duration of the potentially disturbing activity.
- 3.14 The distance at which a species takes flight when approached by a disturbing stimulus is known as the 'tolerance distance' (also called the 'escape flight distance') and differs between species to the same stimulus and within a species to different stimuli. These are given in Table 3, which compiles 'tolerance distances' from across the literature. It is reasonable to assume from this that disturbance is unlikely to be experienced more than a few hundred metres from the birds in question. Tolerance distances are unknown for many birds and simple extrapolation to other species is not advised.

<sup>13</sup> Reijnen, R. et al. 1995. The effects of car traffic on breeding bird populations in woodland. III. Reduction of density in relation to the proximity of main roads. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 32: 187-202

<sup>14</sup> Langston, R.H.W & Pullan, J.D. (2003). Effects of Wind Farms on Birds: Nature and Environment No. 139. Council of Europe.

<sup>15</sup> Madders, M. & Whitfield, D.P. 2006. Upland raptors and the assessment of wind farm impacts. *Ibis* 148 (Suppl. 1), 43-56.

<sup>16</sup> Kaseloo, P. A. and K. O. Tyson. 2004. Synthesis of Noise Effects on Wildlife Populations. FHWA Report.

<sup>17</sup> DTI (2006). Aerial Surveys of Waterbirds in Strategic Wind Farm Areas: 2004/05 Final Report

**Table 3 - Tolerance distances of 21 water bird species to various forms of recreational disturbance, as described in the literature. All distances are in metres. Single figures are mean distances; when means are not published, ranges are given. <sup>1</sup> Tydeman (1978), <sup>2</sup> Keller (1989), <sup>3</sup> Van der Meer (1985), <sup>4</sup> Wolff et al (1982), <sup>5</sup> Blankestijn et al (1986).<sup>18</sup>**

Species	Type of disturbance		
	Rowing boats/kayak	Sailing boats	Walking
Little grebe		60 – 100 <sup>1</sup>	
Great crested grebe	50 – 100 <sup>2</sup>	20 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Mute swan		3 – 30 <sup>1</sup>	
Teal		0 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Mallard		10 – 100 <sup>1</sup>	
Shoveler		200 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Pochard		60 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Tufted duck		60 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Goldeneye		100 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Smew		0 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Moorhen		100 – 400 <sup>1</sup>	
Coot		5 – 50 <sup>1</sup>	
Curlew			211 <sup>3</sup> ; 339 <sup>4</sup> ; 213 <sup>5</sup>
Shelduck			148 <sup>3</sup> ; 250 <sup>4</sup>
Grey plover			124 <sup>3</sup>
Ringed plover			121 <sup>3</sup>
Bar-tailed godwit			107 <sup>3</sup> ; 219 <sup>4</sup>
Brent goose			105 <sup>3</sup>
Oystercatcher			85 <sup>3</sup> ; 136 <sup>4</sup> ; 82 <sup>5</sup>
Dunlin			71 <sup>3</sup> ; 163 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Tydeman, C.F. 1978. *Gravel Pits as conservation areas for breeding bird communities*. PhD thesis. Bedford College  
Keller, V. 1989. Variations in the response of Great Crested Grebes *Podiceps cristatus* to human disturbance - a sign of adaptation? *Biological Conservation* 49:31-45

Van der Meer, J. 1985. *De verstoring van vogels op de slikken van de Oosterschelde*. Report 85.09 Deltadienst Milieu en Inrichting, Middelburg. 37 pp.

Wolf, W.J., Reijnders, P.J.H. & Smit, C.J. 1982. The effects of recreation on the Wadden Sea ecosystem: many questions but few answers. In: G. Luck & H. Michaelis (Eds.), *Schriftenreihe M.E.L.F., Reihe A: Agnew. Wissensch* 275: 85-107

Blankestijn, S. et al. 1986. *Seizoensverbreding in de recreatie en verstoring van Wulp en Scholkester op hoogwatervluchplaatsen op Terschelling*. Report Projectgroep Wadden, L.H. Wageningen. 261pp.

### Mechanical/abrasive damage and nutrient enrichment

- 3.15 Most types of aquatic or terrestrial European site can be affected by trampling, which in turn causes soil compaction and erosion. Walkers with dogs contribute to pressure on sites through nutrient enrichment via dog fouling and also have potential to cause greater disturbance to fauna as dogs are less likely to keep to marked footpaths and also tend to move in a more erratic manner. Motorcycle scrambling and off-road vehicle use can cause more serious erosion, as well as disturbance to sensitive species. Boats can also cause some mechanical damage to intertidal habitats through grounding.

### Atmospheric pollution

- 3.16 The main pollutants of concern for European sites are oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) and sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). NO<sub>x</sub> can have a directly toxic effect upon vegetation. In addition, greater NO<sub>x</sub> or ammonia concentrations within the atmosphere will lead to greater rates of nitrogen deposition to soils. An increase in the deposition of nitrogen from the atmosphere to soils is generally regarded to lead to an increase in soil fertility, which can have a serious deleterious effect on the quality of semi-natural, nitrogen-limited terrestrial habitats.

**Table 4. Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species**

Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
Acid deposition	SO <sub>2</sub> , NO <sub>x</sub> and ammonia all contribute to acid deposition. Although future trends in S emissions and subsequent deposition to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems will continue to decline, it is likely that increased N emissions may cancel out any gains produced by reduced S levels.	Can affect habitats and species through both wet (acid rain) and dry deposition. Some sites will be more at risk than others depending on soil type, bed rock geology, weathering rate and buffering capacity.
Ammonia (NH <sub>3</sub> )	Ammonia is released following decomposition and volatilisation of animal wastes. It is a naturally occurring trace gas, but levels have increased considerably with expansion in numbers of agricultural livestock. Ammonia reacts with acid pollutants such as the products of SO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> emissions to produce fine ammonium (NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> )- containing aerosol which may be transferred much longer distances (can therefore be a significant trans-boundary issue.)	Adverse effects are as a result of nitrogen deposition leading to eutrophication. As emissions mostly occur at ground level in the rural environment and NH <sub>3</sub> is rapidly deposited, some of the most acute problems of NH <sub>3</sub> deposition are for small relict nature reserves located in intensive agricultural landscapes.
Nitrogen oxides NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen oxides are mostly produced in combustion processes. About one quarter of the UK's emissions are from power stations, one-half from motor vehicles, and the rest from other industrial and domestic combustion processes.	Deposition of nitrogen compounds (nitrates (NO <sub>3</sub> ), nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) and nitric acid (HNO <sub>3</sub> )) can lead to both soil and freshwater acidification. In addition, NO <sub>x</sub> can cause eutrophication of soils and water. This alters the species composition of plant communities and can eliminate sensitive



Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
		species.
Nitrogen (N) deposition	The pollutants that contribute to nitrogen deposition derive mainly from NO <sub>x</sub> and NH <sub>3</sub> emissions. These pollutants cause acidification (see also acid deposition) as well as eutrophication.	Species-rich plant communities with relatively high proportions of slow-growing perennial species and bryophytes are most at risk from N eutrophication, due to its promotion of competitive and invasive species which can respond readily to elevated levels of N. N deposition can also increase the risk of damage from abiotic factors, e.g. drought and frost.
Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> )	A secondary pollutant generated by photochemical reactions from NO <sub>x</sub> and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These are mainly released by the combustion of fossil fuels. The increase in combustion of fossil fuels in the UK has led to a large increase in background ozone concentration, leading to an increased number of days when levels across the region are above 40ppb. Reducing ozone pollution is believed to require action at international level to reduce levels of the precursors that form ozone.	Concentrations of O <sub>3</sub> above 40 ppb can be toxic to humans and wildlife, and can affect buildings. Increased ozone concentrations may lead to a reduction in growth of agricultural crops, decreased forest production and altered species composition in semi-natural plant communities.
Sulphur Dioxide SO <sub>2</sub>	Main sources of SO <sub>2</sub> emissions are electricity generation, industry and domestic fuel combustion. May also arise from shipping and increased atmospheric concentrations in busy ports. Total SO <sub>2</sub> emissions have decreased substantially in the UK since the 1980s.	Wet and dry deposition of SO <sub>2</sub> acidifies soils and freshwater, and alters the species composition of plant and associated animal communities. The significance of impacts depends on levels of deposition and the buffering capacity of soils.

- 3.17 Sulphur dioxide emissions are overwhelmingly influenced by the output of power stations and industrial processes that require the combustion of coal and oil, as well (particularly on a local scale) as shipping.
- 3.18 Ammonia emissions are dominated by agriculture, with some chemical processes also making notable contributions. As such, it is unlikely that material increases in SO<sub>2</sub> or NH<sub>3</sub> emissions will be associated with Local Development Frameworks. NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, however, are dominated by the output of vehicle exhausts (more than half of all emissions). Within a 'typical' housing development, by far the largest contribution to NO<sub>x</sub> (92%) will be made by the associated road traffic. Other sources, although relevant, are of minor importance (8%) in comparison<sup>19</sup>. Emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> could therefore be reasonably expected to increase as a result of greater vehicle use as an indirect effect of the LDF.
- 3.19 According to the World Health Organisation, the critical NO<sub>x</sub> concentration (critical threshold) for the protection of vegetation is 30 µg m<sup>-3</sup>; the threshold for sulphur dioxide is 20 µg m<sup>-3</sup>. In addition,

<sup>19</sup> Proportions calculated based upon data presented in Dore CJ et al. 2005. UK Emissions of Air Pollutants 1970 – 2003. UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. <http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php>

ecological studies have determined 'critical loads'<sup>20</sup> of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (that is, NO<sub>x</sub> combined with ammonia NH<sub>3</sub>).

3.20 The National Expert Group on Transboundary Air Pollution (2001)<sup>21</sup> concluded that:

- In 1997, critical loads for acidification were exceeded in 71% of UK ecosystems. This was expected to decline to 47% by 2010.
- Reductions in SO<sub>2</sub> concentrations over the last three decades have virtually eliminated the direct impact of sulphur on vegetation.
- By 2010, deposited nitrogen was expected to be the major contributor to acidification, replacing the reductions in SO<sub>2</sub>.
- Current nitrogen deposition is probably already changing species composition in many nutrient-poor habitats, and these changes may not readily be reversed.
- The effects of nitrogen deposition are likely to remain significant beyond 2010.
- Current ozone concentrations threaten crops and forest production nationally. The effects of ozone deposition are likely to remain significant beyond 2010.
- Reduced inputs of acidity and nitrogen from the atmosphere may provide the conditions in which chemical and biological recovery from previous air pollution impacts can begin, but the timescales of these processes are very long relative to the timescales of reductions in emissions.

3.21 Grice et al<sup>22 23</sup> do however suggest that air quality in the UK will improve significantly over the next 15 years due primarily to reduced emissions from road transport and power stations.

<sup>20</sup> The critical load is the rate of deposition beyond which research indicates that adverse effects can reasonably be expected to occur

<sup>21</sup> National Expert Group on Transboundary Air Pollution (2001) Transboundary Air Pollution: Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-Level Ozone in the UK.

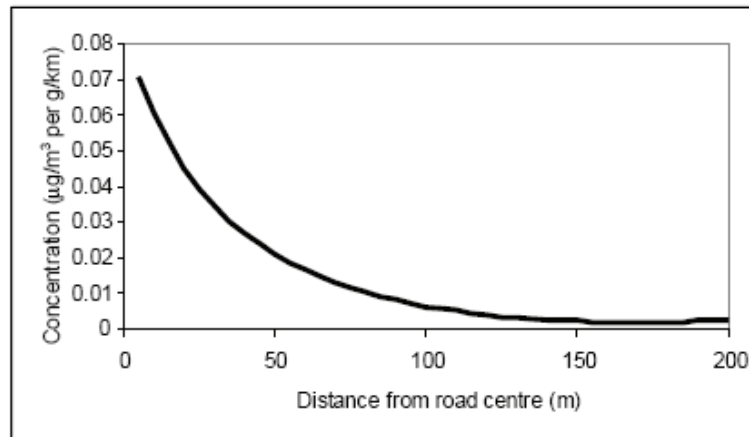
<sup>22</sup> Grice, S., T. Bush, J. Stedman, K. Vincent, A. Kent, J. Targa and M. Hobson (2006) Baseline Projections of Air Quality in the UK for the 2006 Review of the Air Quality Strategy, report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Executive and the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

<sup>23</sup> Grice, S., J. Stedman, T. Murrells and M. Hobson (2007) Updated Projections of Air Quality in the UK for Base Case and Additional Measures for the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007, report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Executive and the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

## Local air pollution

- 3.22 According to the Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance, "*Beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant*"<sup>24</sup>.

**Figure 5. Traffic contribution to concentrations of pollutants at different distances from a road (Source: DfT)**



- 3.23 This is therefore the distance that has been used throughout this HRA in order to determine whether European sites are likely to be significantly affected by traffic generated by development under the Core Strategy. Such a distance threshold cannot currently be applied to shipping emissions and we must therefore restrict ourselves to assuming that the presence of a pathway indicates a possible issue.

## Diffuse air pollution

- 3.24 In addition to the contribution to local air quality issues, development can also contribute cumulatively to an overall change in background air quality across an entire region (although individual developments and plans are – with the exception of large point sources such as power stations – likely to make very small individual contributions). In July 2006, when this issue was raised by Runnymede District Council in the South East, Natural England advised that their Local Development Framework '*can only be concerned with locally emitted and short range locally acting pollutants*'<sup>25</sup> as this is the only scale which falls within a local authority remit. It is understood that this guidance was not intended to set a precedent, but it inevitably does so since (as far as we are aware) it is the only formal guidance that has been issued to a Local Authority from any Natural England office on this issue.
- 3.25 In the light of this and our own knowledge and experience, it is considered reasonable to conclude that it must be the responsibility of higher-tier plans to set a policy framework for addressing the cumulative diffuse pan-authority air quality impacts, partly because such impacts stem from the overall quantum of development within a region (over which individual districts

<sup>24</sup> [www.webtag.org.uk/archive/feb04/pdf/feb04-333.pdf](http://www.webtag.org.uk/archive/feb04/pdf/feb04-333.pdf)

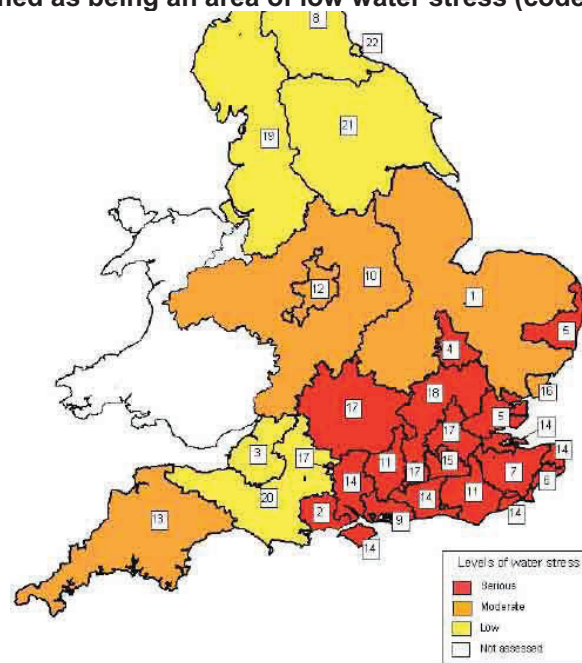
<sup>25</sup> English Nature (16 May 2006) letter to Runnymede Borough Council, 'Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, Runnymede Borough Council Local Development Framework'.

have little control), and since this issue can only practically be addressed at the highest pan-authority level. Diffuse air quality issues will not therefore be considered further within this HRA.

## Water resources

3.26 The North West is generally an area of low water stress (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Areas of water stress within England. It can be seen from this map that Merseyside is classified as being an area of low water stress (coded yellow).**<sup>26</sup>



3.27 Initial investigation indicates that Halton lies within United Utilities' Integrated Resource Zone which serves 6.5 million people in south Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and most of Cheshire. The Integrated Zone is supplied with around 1800 Ml/d of drinking water, of which about 500 Ml/d comes from water sources in Wales, about 600 Ml/d comes from sources in Cumbria, and the rest from sources in other parts of North West England. It constitutes a large integrated supply network that enables substantial flexibility in distributing supplies within the zone. The construction of the 'west to east link' will further aid this flexibility and thus break the traditional division in which Greater Manchester received water from Cumbria and Merseyside received water from the River Dee (which lies partly in England and partly in Wales) and from purely Welsh sources (e.g. Lake Vyrnwy).

3.28 In exploring water resource issues relating to Welsh European sites for St Helens Council, we determined from United Utilities that approximately 75% of St. Helens potable water supply is currently abstracted from the River Dee, 20% is abstracted from Lake Vyrnwy and only 5% is abstracted from sites in Cumbria. It is likely that similar proportions relate to Halton although this is likely to change in the future as a result of the greater flexibility provided by the west-east link.

<sup>26</sup> Figure adapted from Environment Agency. 2007. Identifying Areas of Water Stress. <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0107BLUT-e-e.pdf>

In any case, Cumbrian and Welsh sources will still be involved in one ratio or another in water supply to Halton.

- 3.29 The River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation and flows into the Dee Estuary which is also designated as an SAC as well as an SPA (and pSPA extension) and Ramsar site. Four water companies abstract from sources that affect the River Dee including United Utilities (UU), Dee Water Valley, Welsh Water and Severn Trent Water. Excessive abstraction from the Dee could therefore result in sufficient drawdown of water to damage the interest features of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC (through desiccation, fish entrainment or a deterioration in water quality due to the lower proportion of freshwater to sediment) and in turn reduce freshwater flows into the Dee Estuary to such a degree as to damage the interest features of that site through an increase in salinity.
- 3.30 In the future as a result of the west-east link, Merseyside (including Halton) will obtain a much greater proportion of its water supply from Lake District sources. This is likely to involve Haweswater as a principal reservoir. Haweswater is within the catchment of the River Eden SAC and thus we have also included consideration of drawdown and reduced flow impacts on this designated site in this report.

## Water quality

- 3.31 The Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) that serve Halton all discharge into the Mersey either within or slightly upstream of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site and 23km upstream of Liverpool Bay SPA and Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA and pRamsar site.
- 3.32 Increased amounts of housing or business development can lead to reduced water quality of rivers and estuarine environments. Sewage and industrial effluent discharges can contribute to increased nutrients on European sites leading to unfavourable conditions. In addition, diffuse pollution, partly from urban run-off, has been identified during an Environment Agency Review of Consents process as being a major factor in causing unfavourable condition of European sites.
- 3.33 The quality of the water that feeds European sites is an important determinant of the nature of their habitats and the species they support. Poor water quality can have a range of environmental impacts:
- At high levels, toxic chemicals and metals can result in immediate death of aquatic life, and can have detrimental effects even at lower levels, including increased vulnerability to disease and changes in wildlife behaviour. Eutrophication, the enrichment of plant nutrients in water, increases plant growth and consequently results in oxygen depletion. Algal blooms, which commonly result from eutrophication, increase turbidity and decrease light penetration. The decomposition of organic wastes that often accompanies eutrophication deoxygenates water further, augmenting the oxygen depleting effects of eutrophication. In the marine environment, nitrogen is the limiting plant nutrient and so eutrophication is associated with discharges containing available nitrogen; in the freshwater environment, phosphorus is usually a principal cause of eutrophication.
  - Some pesticides, industrial chemicals, and components of sewage effluent are suspected to interfere with the functioning of the endocrine system, possibly having negative effects on the reproduction and development of aquatic life, and subsequently bird life.

- Increased discharge of treated sewage effluent can result both in greater scour (as a result of greater flow volumes) and in high levels of macroalgal growth, which can smother the mudflats of value to SPA birds.
- 3.34 For sewage treatment works close to capacity, further development may increase the risk of effluent escape into aquatic environments. In many urban areas, sewage treatment and surface water drainage systems are combined, and therefore a predicted increase in flood and storm events could increase pollution risk.
- 3.35 However, it is also important to note that the situation is not always simple – for sites designated for waterfowl, a STW discharge can actually be a useful source of food and birds will often congregate around the outfall<sup>27</sup>. In addition, while nutrient enrichment does cause considerable problems on the south coast (particularly in the Solent) due to the abundance of smothering macroalgae that is produced, it is not necessarily a problem in other areas where the macroalgae are broken up by tidal wave action and where colder and more turbid water limit the build-up in the first place. For example, although The Wash in the East of England is hypernutrified the Environment Agency Review of Consents process has identified that this is not leading to adverse effects on the internationally important interest features of the site.
- 3.36 Nonetheless, at this stage water quality impacts are considered to be an issue that requires investigation.

## Port and Channel Construction, Maintenance Shipping and Dredging

- 3.37 The construction and maintenance of ports and inland shipping channels poses a number of environmental risks<sup>28</sup>. Of particular importance is the dredging necessary to permit large vessels to enter ports, or to maintain inland channels. In natural estuaries and harbours, there is a balance between sediment transported out to sea and that which flows in with rivers and runoff, which tends to maintain an equilibrium depth. Often this is not deep enough to allow vessels safe passage, so navigational channels and harbours are dredged to deepen them. Because natural forces will tend to build up sediment until the channels and port return to their equilibrium, dredging to maintain safe depth is an ongoing maintenance activity. The need for such dredging is likely to increase in the future as ships become larger and require deeper ports or as inland water transport grows in importance.
- 3.38 Dredging poses direct threats to the areas in which it occurs. It introduces sediment into the adjacent water column, which is then redeposited on the bottom. This has a variety of usually short-term effects on pelagic fish and the benthic community. The suspended sediment increases turbidity, decreasing light penetration and photosynthetic activity. Dredging can also have longer term effects on water circulation patterns, particularly in estuarine areas where water circulation determines the distribution of fresh and salt water, patterns of dissolved oxygen, and other water quality parameters. Changes in salinity can affect the viability of freshwater wetlands and tidal marshes, with consequent impacts on the distribution of marine life. Changes in water circulation

<sup>27</sup> Anecdotal observation from the author's work on numerous sewage treatment works around the county (particularly London) and bird surveys undertaken by the author and colleagues on such sites

<sup>28</sup> OECD (ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (1997) The Environmental Effects of Freight available from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/14/3/2386636.pdf> (Accessed June 2010 )(p17)

patterns can also alter sediment accumulation, thus affecting all ecosystems in the immediate area<sup>29</sup>

- 3.39 Dredging for marine minerals has occurred in UK waters for many years, in response to the need for sand and gravel used as construction aggregate and for beach replenishment, including the Mersey. Mersey Silt has historically been identified as having a possible contribution to the supply of construction aggregates in north-west England<sup>30</sup>.including as a concreting or mortaring sand as coarse aggregate or bricks.
- 3.40 The development of Mersey Gateway Port (Western Docks) as part of the policy to develop West Runcorn (CS9), and encourage greater use of Manchester Ship Canal for freight has the potential to result in disturbance of sediment releasing legacy heavy metal pollution (mercury, lead, cadmium and other poisons) that is bound into the sediment, or other introduction of these metals. Policies that encourage more freight by shipping also have the potential to result in pollution through fuel emissions, and accidental spillages.
- 3.41 As a precaution these pathways have been considered in this report.

## Coastal squeeze

- 3.42 Rising sea levels can be expected to cause intertidal habitats (principally saltmarsh, sand dunes and intertidal mudflats) to migrate landwards. However, in built-up areas, such landward retreat is often rendered impossible due the presence of the sea wall and other flood defences. In addition, development frequently takes place immediately behind the sea wall, so that the flood defences cannot be moved landwards to accommodate managed retreat of threatened habitats. The net result is that the quantity of saltmarsh, sand dunes and mudflat adjacent to built-up areas will progressively decrease as sea levels rise. This process is known as 'coastal squeeze'. In areas where sediment availability is reduced, the 'squeeze' also includes an increasingly steep beach profile and foreshortening of the seaward zones.
- 3.43 Intertidal habitat loss is mainly occurring in the south and east of the country, particularly between the Humber and Severn. Northwest England, south Wales, the Solent in Hampshire, the southeast around the Thames estuary and large parts of East Anglia are also affected but to a lesser degree.
- 3.44 Defra's current national assessment is that the creation of an annual average of at least 100 ha of intertidal habitat associated with European sites in England that are subject to coastal squeeze, together with any more specifically identified measures to replace losses of terrestrial and supratidal habitats, is likely to be required to protect the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network. This assessment takes account of intertidal habitat loss from European sites in England that is caused by a combination of all flood risk management structures and sea level rise. The

<sup>29</sup> Marine Board, Commission on Engineering and Technical Systems, National Research Council (1985), Dredging Coastal Ports: An Assessment of the Issues. (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press) (pp124-128)

<sup>30</sup> P.F.G. Banfill\* and A.C. Benson (Department of Building Engineering),(1979). Alternative aggregate materials: Properties of Mersey Silt Building and Environment (Volume 14, Issue 3, 1979, Pages 203-208)

assessment will be kept under review taking account of the certainty of any adverse effects and monitoring of the actual impacts of plans and projects<sup>16</sup>.

- 3.45 Coastal squeeze cannot be assessed in detail until actual site allocations exist, but it can be at least broadly considered in the HRA of the Core Strategy.

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<sup>16</sup> Defra. 2005. Coastal Squeeze – Implications for Flood Management.  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/csqueeze.pdf>



## 4 Summary of screening

4.1 The Core Strategy was screened in for Appropriate Assessment covering recreational pressures, direct disturbance, deterioration in water quality, loss of supporting habitat and deterioration in air quality. Some Core Strategy policies may act in combination with each other (e.g. Sustainable Transport and Green Infrastructure encouraging recreational use of the Merseyway cycle/footpaths). The following policies are screened in therefore requiring Appropriate Assessment:

- Halton's Spatial Strategy CS1;
- Housing Supply and Locational Priorities CS3;
- Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities CS3;
- A Network of Centres for Halton CS4;
- Infrastructure Provision CS5;
- 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) CS6;
- South Widnes CS7;
- East Runcorn CS8;
- West Runcorn CS9;
- Minerals CS26;
- Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People CS12;
- The Mersey Gateway Project CS15;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport CS16; and
- Sustainable Development and Climate Change CS18.

4.2 These policies may interact with other plans and policies which have been identified to have the potential to have similar impacts on the European sites, thus creating an exacerbated 'in combination' effect.

4.3 The following policies are screened out therefore not requiring Appropriate Assessment:

- Waste CS25 – screened out on the basis that the Merseyside Joint Waste DPD is being subject to its own Appropriate Assessment;
- Sustainable Transport and Travel CS14;
- Green Infrastructure CS21;
- Affordable Housing CS10;
- Housing Mix;
- Green Belt;
- Sustainable Development Principles;

- High Quality Design CS19;
- Halton's Natural and Historic Environments CS20;
- Health and Well-Being CS22; and
- Managing Pollution and Risk CS23.

4.4 This is because no pathway has been identified between these policies and European sites.

## 5 Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar

### Introduction

- 5.1 Figures 3 and 4 show the location of the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, and the extent to which it is located within the Borough of Halton. The Mersey Estuary is a large sheltered estuary that receives drainage from a catchment area of c.5,000km<sup>2</sup> encompassing the conurbations of Liverpool and Manchester, and including the River Mersey and the River Bollin and their tributaries in Cheshire and Merseyside. The Estuary covers 5023.35ha of saltmarsh and intertidal sand and mudflats, with limited areas of brackish marsh, rocky shoreline and boulder clay cliffs, within a rural and industrial environment. The intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large and internationally important populations of waterbirds, and during the winter, the site is of major importance for duck and waders. The site is also important during the spring and autumn migration periods, particularly for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain.

### Reasons for Designation

- 5.2 The Mersey Estuary is designated an SPA under Article 4.1<sup>31</sup>
- Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*): 3,040 individuals (1.2% of GB population)
- 5.3 SPA Article 4.2 - winter:
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*): 4,993 individuals (2.8% of Eastern Atlantic population)
  - Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*): 48,789 individuals (3.6% of Northern Siberian / Europe / West African population)
  - Pintail (*Anas acuta*): 1,169 individuals (1.9% of NW European population)
  - Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*): 6,746 individuals (2.2% of wintering NW European population)
  - Eurasian teal (*Anas crecca*): 11,723 individuals (2.9% of NW European population)
  - Wigeon (*Anas penelope*): 11,886 individuals (4.2% of the GB population) Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*): 976 individuals (1.6% of the Iceland population)
  - Curlew (*Numenius arquata*): 1,300 individuals (1.1% of the GB population)
  - Grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*): 1,010 individuals (2.3% of the GB population)
  - Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*): 136 individuals (1.4% of the GB population)
  - Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*): 10,544 individuals (0.7% of the GB population)
- 5.4 SPA Article 4.2 - on passage:
- Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*): 505

<sup>31</sup> All bird count data in this document is sourced from the SPA Review site accounts as available on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee website [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1412](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1412)

5.5 Ramsar Criterion 6, Internationally important populations of:

- Shelduck
- Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
- Redshank
- Eurasian teal
- Pintail
- Dunlin

5.6 Ramsar Criterion 5:

- 89,576 waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1998/99-2002/03)

5.7 Birdlife (2001) identify the Important Bird Area (IBA) to exceed the area currently designated as a Ramsar site, and recommend the designation expansion. This additional area is termed a 'potential Ramsar' (which is precedes the 'proposed' Ramsar (pRamsar) designation). This additional area is not considered in the assessment as objectives and site boundaries are unconfirmed, however its status highlights the nature conservation value of areas of the Mersey outside of the SPA/Ramsar designation.

## Historic Trends and Existing Pressures

5.8 Appendix 2 illustrates the extent of the Mersey Catchment. Water pollution has been an issue in the Mersey Estuary since at least the 18th century, when the Mersey catchment became a prime location for industrial expansion, especially the textile industry. With this there was an associated growth in bleaching, dying, and finishing trades, and paper, heavy chemical and glass industries, which are still in production to this day. All of these industries used the waterways as a means for the disposal of industrial waste, resulting in a legacy of pollutants within the River Mersey and including mercury, pesticides (e.g. DDT), and persistent organic contaminants (e.g. polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pentachlorophenol (PCP)). In addition, there was surface runoff, and the discharge of domestic waste-water and sewage directly into the waterways from a large and growing human population, resulting in gross pollution<sup>32</sup>. The high levels of sewage discharged in to the waterways resulted in low oxygen levels and a major difficulty in improving water quality.

5.9 The problem of water pollution in the Mersey Estuary 'was probably at its worst in the 1960's' and made it the most polluted Estuary in the UK (Mersey Basin Campaign 2004). Major improvements to water quality have been realised since the formation of the Mersey Basin Campaign in 1985, which aims to 'revitalise the River Mersey and its waterfront'<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006). Characterisation of European Marine Sites. Mersey Estuary SPA. [Online]. *Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. Occasional Publications 18*, 185pp. Available at: [www.mba.ac.uk/nmb/publications/occpub/pdf/occ\\_pub\\_18.pdf](http://www.mba.ac.uk/nmb/publications/occpub/pdf/occ_pub_18.pdf) (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006). Characterisation of European Marine Sites. Mersey Estuary SPA. [Online]. *Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. Occasional Publications 18*, 185pp. Available at:

- 5.10 The major projects that brought about the improvements to water quality tackled the direct discharges of sewage into the region's waterways. New projects included: primary sewage works at Sandon Dock which replaced 28 crude sewage discharges directly into the Mersey Estuary through the MEPAS scheme (Mersey Estuary Pollution Alleviation Scheme); fine sewage screening plants on the Wirral peninsula; secondary sewage treatment and petrochemical effluent treatment plants at Ellesmere Port; secondary sewage treatment plants at Widnes and Warrington; modification of the Davyhulme sewage treatment plan in Greater Manchester to treat ammonia (which may kill salmonid species); and later secondary sewage treatment plants at Birkenhead/Bromborough. Other improvements have been made, including reducing inputs of mercury, lead, cadmium, PCP and chlorinated hydrocarbons into the Estuary.
- 5.11 However, certain inputs remain, including:
- pesticides and herbicides from agriculture (largely dairy farming) into the upper river system;
  - phthalate esters (used as plasticisers, increasing flexibility in plastics) thought to come from wastewater discharges in the upper Mersey;
  - hydrocarbon contamination from oil spillage/spills from Tranmere Oil Dock/Terminal, Stanlow (Shell) Oil Refinery and oil tanks along the southern bank of the Estuary, from pipelines that run between these sites along the southern bank of the Estuary, and from oil shipping spills in the Irish Sea;
  - PCB<sup>34</sup>s from the River Mersey (possibly also dredge spoils); and
  - PCBs from contaminated land in the catchment area<sup>35</sup>
- 5.12 The General Quality Assessment (GQA) scheme, introduced by the National Rivers Authority (NRA), and replaced by the Environment Agency (EA) in 1996, monitors the water quality of rivers and canals throughout England and Wales. It assesses the chemical and biological status, nutrient levels, and aesthetic water quality from permanent sampling stations. The Mersey Basin Campaign (2005) reports on sites in the Mersey catchment that detail low (Grades D, E and F, or 'fair' to 'bad') biological and chemical river water quality; only those within the Mersey catchment – see Appendix 2 – are described here. Such sampling sites are particularly concentrated in the area between Knowsley and Manchester, including St. Helens and Wigan, although biological quality is generally poor from Liverpool to Manchester.
- 5.13 The main current environmental pressures upon the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site are considered to be:
- disturbance of sediment releasing legacy heavy metal pollution (mercury, lead, cadmium and other poisons) that is bound into the sediment, or other introduction of these metals;
  - pollution via rivers and drains by both treated sewerage and untreated runoff containing inorganic chemicals and organic compounds from everyday domestic products, which 'may

[www.mba.ac.uk/nmb/publications/occpub/pdf/occ\\_pub\\_18.pdf](http://www.mba.ac.uk/nmb/publications/occpub/pdf/occ_pub_18.pdf) (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Polychlorinated biphenyl are toxic persistent organic pollutants used in industry as dielectric fluids for transformers, capacitors, coolants can bioaccumulate in the sublittoral prey species of the common scoter and bioaccumulate/ biomagnify in the fish species

<sup>35</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006). Characterisation of European Marine Sites. Mersey Estuary SPA. [Online]. *Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. Occasional Publications* 18, 185pp. Available at : [www.mba.ac.uk/nmb/publications/occpub/pdf/occ\\_pub\\_18.pdf](http://www.mba.ac.uk/nmb/publications/occpub/pdf/occ_pub_18.pdf) (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

combine together in ways that make it difficult to predict their ultimate effect of the marine environment. Some may remain indefinitely in the seawater, the seabed, or the flesh, fat and oil of sea creatures<sup>36</sup>;

- pollution via commercial shipping by chemical pollution and the dumping of litter at sea;
- 'coastal squeeze' and physical loss from land reclamation and coastal flood defences and drainage used in order to develop coastal land, and from sea level rise;
- loss or physical damage of marine benthic habitat directly and indirectly (through changed sedimentation/deposition patterns) as a result of navigational or aggregate dredging;
- disturbance to birds from increased recreational pressure (e.g. boat or other recreational activity) and wildfowling;
- introduction of non-native species; and
- selective removal of species (e.g. bait digging, wildfowl, fishing)<sup>37</sup>

5.14 Although the Mersey Estuary does have a high load of nutrients mainly from diffuse sources, with levels for phosphate and nitrogen decreasing from point sources, recent modelling has shown that due to the natural turbidity of the water, there is only a low risk of excessive algal growth.

## Key Potential Pressures from Halton

5.15 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development in Halton could interfere with the environmental requirements and processes on the SPA/Ramsar Site:

- 'coastal squeeze' and loss of supporting habitat associated with development on the Mersey including 'Key Areas of Change (Widnes, Runcorn, 3MG) and identified 'Employment Areas'; land reclamation, coastal flood defences, aggregate extraction;
- excessive recreational pressure resulting from enhanced connectivity across the Mersey and encouraging greater use of Merseyway footpaths/cycle tracks;
- pollution via rivers and drains by both treated sewerage and untreated runoff containing inorganic chemicals and organic compounds from everyday domestic products, which '*may combine together in ways that make it difficult to predict their ultimate effect of the marine environment... Some may remain indefinitely in the seawater, the seabed, or the flesh, fat and oil of sea creatures*';
- pollution arising from construction of Mersey Gateway Bridge/Mersey Gateway Port (Runcorn);

<sup>36</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006). Characterisation of European Marine Sites. Mersey Estuary SPA. [Online]. *Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. Occasional Publications 18*, 185pp. Available at: [www.mba.ac.uk/nmbi/publications/occpub/pdf/occ\\_pub\\_18.pdf](http://www.mba.ac.uk/nmbi/publications/occpub/pdf/occ_pub_18.pdf) (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006). Characterisation of European Marine Sites. Mersey Estuary SPA. [Online]. *Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. Occasional Publications 18*, 185pp. Available at : [www.mba.ac.uk/nmbi/publications/occpub/pdf/occ\\_pub\\_18.pdf](http://www.mba.ac.uk/nmbi/publications/occpub/pdf/occ_pub_18.pdf) (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

- disturbance of sediment releasing legacy heavy metal (lead, cadmium, arsenic and other poisons) pollution that is bound into the sediment from greater shipping freight/aggregate extraction;
- alternation of hydrological table from increase in hard standing/flood defence and/or increased water abstraction (for sources other than Public Water Supply) and/or mineral extraction;
- potential displacement of birds through Mersey Gateway Construction/Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion/wind turbine development and aggregate extraction; and
- deterioration in local air quality and thus increased nitrogen deposition (from greater cross-river travel, air travel).

## Role of other plans and projects

5.16 The following plans and projects are considered to have the potential to act upon the SPA/Ramsar site 'in combination':

### Projects

- Peel Ports 'Super Port' – potential impacts due to increased sulphur deposition from shipping, physical disturbance of habitat, mobilisation of contamination, possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise and shipping activity;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion – potential impacts due to increased sulphur and nitrogen deposition from aircraft, loss of supporting foraging/high-tide roost habitat and possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise;
- The Mersey Gateway: Proposed 2nd Mersey Crossing (Halton) – potential impacts due to direct landtake, changes in hydrodynamics of river flow, noise and visual disturbance during construction and operation;
- Power from Mersey – potential impacts due to changes in hydrodynamics of river flow and structure, possible restrictions on bird movements, possible direct landtake, possible disturbance of waterfowl during construction; and
- Proposed incinerators at Runcorn and Ince Marches – possible air quality impacts through nitrogen and sulphur deposition.

### Plans

- Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study – possible impacts on waterfowl flightpaths between the Mersey Estuary and other European sites depending upon the degree of wind power involved and the location of turbines;
- North West England & North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 – possible impacts due to the maintenance or enhancement of flood defences could lead to coastal squeeze, changes in sediment release (if previously undefended areas become defended) and direct loss of habitat to flood defence footprint;
- Core Strategies for Liverpool, Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral and St Helens, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Delivery (Wirral and Liverpool) and Liverpool and Wirral Waters Development masterplans – possible water quality, air quality

and wildfowl disturbance impacts as a result of delivery of 110,000 dwellings and associated commercial development over the next 20 years; and

- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document – possible impacts due to water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance or chick predation. However, since this DPD is itself subject a recent HRA it will address its own contribution to any ‘in combination’ effect that may otherwise arise.

## Appropriate Assessment

### Disturbance of Qualifying Bird Species

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 5.17 HRA Screening identified pathways whereby policies within the Halton Core Strategy have the potential to result in direct disturbance to qualifying bird species of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. These pathways are assessed in more detail below, including a discussion of any mitigation already built into the Core Strategy.
- 5.18 The Halton Core Strategy sets out (in the policy ‘Housing Supply & Locational Priorities’) proposals for the delivery of 8,000 new dwellings between 2010 and 2026. Although a number of the dwellings that will count towards this total already have planning permission, many have not yet come forward. The supporting text for this policy indicates that the population of the Borough will increase by approximately 5,000 people over the Core Strategy period (i.e. 4.2%). While a 4% increase in residents is small it cannot be considered in isolation but within the context of the approximately 110,000 dwellings to be delivered across Merseyside and Cheshire West/Chester and the fact that the Borough is likely to experience an aging population with increasing leisure time such that recreational pressure from the existing population may increase. As such, recreational disturbance impacts from Halton cannot be ruled out when considered in combination with the other Merseyside boroughs. Halton’s contribution to any effect may be smaller than that of some other boroughs although it does lie immediately adjacent to the Mersey Estuary which increases the likelihood that residents utilise accessible parts of the site.
- 5.19 Avoidance of adverse recreational impacts at European sites involves location of new development away from such sites (which is clearly not possible in Halton given that respondents to the England Leisure Day Visits<sup>38</sup> surveys typically travelled 25.5km to visit a coastal site for the day) or for the local authority in question (i.e. Halton MBC) to manage tourism and recreational use of the coastlines in conjunction with other relevant authorities. There thus needs to be an appropriate framework to manage recreation.
- 5.20 To achieve this, Halton Council needs to work with the other Merseyside Authorities, MEAS, Natural England, CCW and other partners to devise a framework for the delivery of:
- Suitably located Green Infrastructure where this will prove effective (the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park may well be a key element of this if it is accompanied by enhanced access management or wardening or provides additional greenspace landwards of the SPA). While this is unlikely to be effective (or viable) with regard to water-based recreation, it may be

<sup>38</sup> Various. 2006. England Leisure Visits: the Results of the 2005 Survey. Countryside Agency



possible and effective with regard to dog walking and other non-vehicular activities. Some species for which European sites have been designated are particularly sensitive to dogs, and many dog walkers may be happy to be diverted to other, less sensitive, sites. However the location and type of alternative space must be sufficiently safe and appealing to be effective; and

- Enhanced access management to the European sites when it becomes necessary, to be informed by the collation of visitor survey data. Examples of measures that may be deployable include temporary footpath/access closures during sensitive periods (e.g. the winter, when wintering birds are a key feature), rerouting of footpaths away from key hotspots for waterfowl, introducing enhanced wardening, introducing improved signage to encourage dogs to be kept on a lead or walked in areas that are away from key waterfowl hotspots or screening of key locations for recreational activity. With regard to the use of watercraft, on some sites this can be achieved through zoning of activities by site managers or the introduction of permitting systems limiting the amount of watercraft using the available space, although it is uncertain at this stage whether that would be feasible in the Mersey Estuary.

5.21 **Policy CS25** 'Green Infrastructure' states with regard to protecting and enhancing the green infrastructure network in the Borough that '*Halton Borough Council working alongside other partners and agencies responsible for the delivery and maintenance of green infrastructure will achieve this through ... sustaining the protection afforded to internationally important sites for biodiversity by managing recreational impacts and encouraging the use of the wider green infrastructure network which is less sensitive to recreational pressure*'. This specifically places management of the GI network within the context of sustaining the protection of European sites by directing recreational activity to less sensitive areas. However, it is considered that some amendments would be desirable and these are discussed in the recommendations section.

5.22 The Mersey Gateway Project (**CS15**) and policies enhancing infrastructure development alongside the Estuary have the potential to adversely affect important bird viewlines, displace qualifying bird species, and cause cumulative disturbance to birds through an increase in noise, vibration and lighting. The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy has been subject to its own HRA<sup>39</sup>. This concluded that, due to the highly urbanised nature of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration area, the strategy would not impact upon the extent and distribution of bird viewlines. It was concluded that the Mersey Gateway Bridge would not provide any additional obstructions or provide roosting sites for predators such as raptors over what is currently available.

5.23 In addition, the supporting text for the Mersey Gateway Project policy states that: '*Although the design of the Mersey Gateway Bridge has been influenced by environmental considerations, the Mersey Gateway Project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process has identified localised negative environmental impacts particularly associated with the construction phase of the Mersey Gateway. Measures to satisfactorily mitigate negative environmental impacts and to enhance environmental quality should be taken. This will include environmental management techniques, compensation to offset effects and consideration of mitigation approaches during the construction phase. It should be acknowledged that the cumulative effects of the operational phase of the Mersey Gateway Project are mainly positive and include a range of permanent long term effects*'. This is reflected in the actual policy which states that '*Negative environmental*

<sup>39</sup> Halton Borough Council (May 2008) Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy Habitat Regulations Assessment  
<http://www2.halton.gov.uk/pdfs/environment/spd/westbankspdhabitats>

*impacts caused by the construction of the Mersey Gateway will be mitigated where appropriate, and opportunities to enhance the natural environment sought. This is particularly applicable to the Mersey Estuary area and other areas of significant environmental value'. While this includes specific reference to the Mersey Estuary it is currently considered that this policy would benefit from a more explicit wording. This is covered in our recommendations section, below.*

- 5.24 In meeting the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people (**Policy CS12**), HRA Screening identified a pathway for direct disturbance on the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar depending on the location of allocated sites. This policy states that the Council will allocate appropriate sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Show people through a Site Allocations DPD. It also states that in allocating sites and for the purpose of considering planning applications relating to sites not identified in the Site Allocations DPD, it would need to be satisfied that the proposal is '*not unacceptably detrimental to the amenity or character of the surrounding area*'. While this could be taken to cover impacts on European sites it is general and non-specific. It is currently considered that this policy would benefit from a more explicit wording. This is covered in our recommendations section, below.
- 5.25 In identifying the requirement for mineral extraction (**Policy CS9**), HRA Screening identified a potential pathway of effect in changing landscape features resulting in the displacement of qualifying bird species within the SPA/Ramsar Boundary. **Policy CS9** states that minimising the need for minerals extraction is priority with all new developments expected to maximise the use of recycled and secondary aggregates by ensuring that any waste produced by development during construction and demolition is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy; and the use of recycled/secondary aggregates is in accordance with the Joint Merseyside Waste DPD. Where mineral extraction does take place, the policy states it will be important to ensure that this is efficient and sustainable. To achieve this, proposals for mineral extraction in the Borough must meet criteria including that the development does not adversely impact upon Halton's communities, built or green environments and that the natural and historic environment is conserved, managed and enhanced. This policy will be supported by more detailed policy in relation to site specific requirements in the Development Management DPD. It is therefore considered that the Core Strategy contains necessary measures in place to ensure impacts on Natura 2000 sites are avoided. Further, more site-specific, mitigation would be developed in the Development Management DPD as required.
- 5.26 The Core Strategy promotes renewable and low carbon energy within Halton (**Policy CS18** – Sustainable Development & Climate Change). HRA Screening identified that, should this include wind turbine construction, a pathway exists for the construction of onshore/offshore turbines to disrupt flight paths and displace qualifying bird species. Disturbance issues associated with maintenance activities were also identified. The policy states that subject to successful assessment and mitigation of impacts of development proposals, Halton would seek to direct proposals for grid-connected renewable energy infrastructure and equipment, including, but not limited to: wind, solar PV and biomass CHP, to the identified priority zone areas. This policy is being informed by The Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options<sup>40</sup> which identifies these priority zone areas for wind energy, none of which are located within the Borough of Halton. It is therefore unlikely that **Policy CS18** of the Halton Core Strategy will result in the development of wind turbines. As such it is considered that it will not lead to adverse effects on European sites.

40 Arup (2001) Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options Stage 2 (Drawing Title CHP/DH & Wind Priority Zones, Final Issue) (date 27/5/2010)

5.27 The HRA Screening identified potential pathways of effects between The Liverpool John Lennon Airport (JLA) expansion (**Policy CS16**) and disturbance/displacement/collision of qualifying bird species due to increase in bird scaring devices and airplanes landing closer to the SPA/Ramsar designation area. A suite of ecological surveys has been undertaken in connection with this Master Plan on land within and adjacent to JLA and on areas required for expansion<sup>41</sup>. Aircraft currently take off or land over the mudflats adjacent to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site. The flats are used by a proportion of the passage and wintering waterfowl for which the Estuary is of international importance which probably constitutes more than 1% of the total population in the estuary and any impact on them would therefore be significant. The assessment of the potential disturbance effect on both feeding and roosting waterfowl under the flight path was carried out as part of the regular wintering bird study to inform the John Lennon Liverpool Airport Masterplan<sup>42</sup>. The following was identified:

- the majority of waterfowl feeding on the shore at low water use the area between Garston and the western end of the runway. On most tides many of these birds remain to roost, moving up the shore in front of the tide. A relatively high level of disturbance to both feeding and roosting birds occurs here due to the use of the shore by walkers, dogs, quad bikes and four wheel drive vehicles, and at some times many of the birds are kept almost constantly on the move;
- no disturbance to the feeding birds due to aircraft was observed in any month except on abnormally high tides when roosting flocks are pushed right up to the toe of the cliff. At such times they are at their most susceptible to disturbance from all sources. During all other tide states, including more regular high tide heights, no disturbance effects from aircraft have been observed;
- most feeding birds move a relatively short distance along the shore before pitching again, but roosting birds may move directly to the cliff top and small flocks of waders have been observed feeding over the high tide period on remaining amenity grassland in the Liverpool International Business Park. Towards the end of winter 2005/06 small flocks of waders were observed on the new Coastal Reserve grassland areas. No birds moved (either off or along the shore by disturbance from any source) were observed passing through the flightpath of aircraft approaching or taking off from JLA;
- sporadic disturbance of roosting waterfowl by aircraft has been observed at the eastern (Hale) end of the survey area. Most waterfowl movements recorded are, again, of flocks travelling along the shoreline at all tide states, but occasional inshore movement has also been observed. This primarily consists of individuals and small flocks of curlews which feed on the farmland between Hale Heath and Rabbit Hey at all tide states, but more abundantly during the high tide periods;
- movements tend to be low and local, between the shore and adjacent land. No birds were seen to cross the airport flightpath during any survey visit, although single birds or small flocks of curlew have occasionally been recorded feeding on the fields north of Hale Heath.

<sup>41</sup> John Lennon Liverpool Airport Masterplan November 2007  
[http://www.liverpoolairport.com/assets/\\_files/documents/oct\\_08/peel\\_\\_1224146206\\_12\\_Master\\_Plan\\_Chapter\\_11.pdf](http://www.liverpoolairport.com/assets/_files/documents/oct_08/peel__1224146206_12_Master_Plan_Chapter_11.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> John Lennon Liverpool Airport Masterplan November 2007  
[http://www.liverpoolairport.com/assets/\\_files/documents/oct\\_08/peel\\_\\_1224146206\\_12\\_Master\\_Plan\\_Chapter\\_11.pdf](http://www.liverpoolairport.com/assets/_files/documents/oct_08/peel__1224146206_12_Master_Plan_Chapter_11.pdf)

Curlew is not a qualifying species for the SPA/Ramsar site, other than as part of the total assemblage, and at most, tens of birds have been recorded feeding in this area; and

- since the numbers involved were very small and birds disturbed at present appear to move the shortest possible distance, it was considered that there would be no significant impact to feeding or roosting birds using the shore adjacent to JLA, and thus no adverse effect on the integrity of the protected site. The proposed runway extension to 2,750 m would not encroach on the SSSI, SPA/Ramsar site.

5.28 The findings of the wintering bird study carried out to inform the John Lennon Liverpool Airport Masterplan suggest that the Liverpool John Lennon Airport (JLA) expansion (**Policy CS16**) within the Halton Core Strategy is unlikely to result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar through direct land take, or disturbance to feeding or roosting birds. However, it is not clear as to whether this conclusion has been accepted by Natural England and CCW. **Policy CS16** of the Halton Core Strategy does state that '*negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural and built environment, including areas of international, national or local conservation, ecological and landscape value*'. However, it is considered that with regard to internationally important sites this should be strengthened since measures that merely 'reduce or alleviate' effects may not be sufficiently stringent to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

#### **Recommendation for amendments to policy**

- 5.29 As a result of the assessment, we recommend the following amendments to policy.
- 5.30 To ensure direct disturbance to qualifying bird species as a result of **Policy CS12** Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Traveller and Travelling Show People is avoided, additional text is proposed: '*sites that would lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site would not be taken forward*'.
- 5.31 To ensure that adverse significant effects on Natura 2000 sites are avoided, additional wording is recommended within Liverpool John Lennon Airport (JLA) expansion (**Policy CS16**). **Policy CS16** of the Halton Core Strategy currently states that negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural environment, including locally, nationally and internationally important sites. We would recommend adding: '*With respect to internationally important sites such measures will need to be sufficiently extensive to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity unless it can be demonstrated that there are both no alternatives and Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest*'. This would make clear the high standards that would need to be achieved in order for mitigation to be deemed acceptable.
- 5.32 **Policy CS25** 'Green Infrastructure' states with regarding to protecting and enhancing the green infrastructure network in the Borough that '*Halton Borough Council working alongside other partners and agencies responsible for the delivery and maintenance of green infrastructure will achieve this through ... sustaining the protection afforded to internationally important sites for biodiversity by managing recreational impacts and encouraging the use of the wider green infrastructure network which is less sensitive to recreational pressure*'. This specifically places management of the GI network within the context of sustaining the protection of European sites

by directing recreational activity to less sensitive areas. However, it is considered that some amendments would be desirable.

- 5.33 Any strategy that follows on from this policy commitment will need to be sufficiently developed (or at least there will need to be a clear timescale for the introduction of such a strategy) by the time the Site Allocations DPD is adopted such that there is at least a funded mechanism to monitor recreational activity and trigger the introduction of enhanced management, since the delivery of enhanced access management and Green Infrastructure will need to be phased alongside delivery of housing. The contribution of each authority should be based upon their contribution to recreational activity in each site or (where this information is not yet available) their relative populations and proximity to the site. In general therefore the devising of such a strategy (whether it is part of a specific future SPD or not) will need to be well advanced by the time the Site Allocations DPD is adopted as some strategic greenspace and a possible contribution to funding access management may need to be associated with particular sites. It would be preferable for this to be mentioned in the Core Strategy policy or supporting text, or alternatively for the Core Strategy supporting text to cross-refer to this HRA report.
- 5.34 For the Mersey Estuary an appropriate detailed framework that encompasses the management of recreation may exist through a European Marine Site Management Scheme, which, if it follows the pattern of other EMS Management Schemes would include recreation/access management within its remit. If this does prove to be the case then the commitment given in the Green Infrastructure policy cited above could be explicitly linked to a commitment to support and participate (financially as required) this Management Scheme, in conjunction with the other Merseyside authorities and stakeholders.
- 5.35 If the above recommendations to manage access are implemented, it is concluded that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar through direct disturbance as a result of any of the policies proposed within the Core Strategy.

## Loss of Supporting Habitat and Coastal Squeeze

### Appropriate Assessment

- 5.36 HRA Screening identified the potential for development arising from the Core Strategy (on land either immediately adjacent to the Mersey SPA/Ramsar designation or elsewhere in the Borough) to result in loss of supporting semi natural habitat. The loss of such supporting habitat may affect qualifying bird species e.g. wading birds can roost and seek shelter on former industrial land inland from the Mersey Estuary.
- 5.37 Work has been undertaken to establish the location of such important supporting habitat sites for qualifying bird species within Merseyside<sup>43</sup>. This included an assessment of sites both within and adjacent to the SPA/Ramsar designation. It has been established that The Weaver Bend (south west Runcorn) support nationally important numbers of roosting European Golden Plover and locally important numbers of feeding Dunlin. Additionally Hale and its associated mudflats and sand bars have been identified the most important site surveyed on the north shore of the Mersey. Locally important numbers of feeding, roosting and loafing Common Shelduck and Dunlin were recorded at this site. Furthermore limited evidence from ad hoc sources suggests land at Ditton, and possibly at Shell Green also serve as supporting habitat can perform this

<sup>43</sup> RSK (2010) Mersey Feasibility Study Winter Bird Report

function<sup>44</sup>. Hale and its surrounding land is identified as greenbelt within the Halton Core Strategy. This includes a presumption against development of this area.

- 5.38 Policy **CS9** (West Runcorn) identifies West Runcorn as a 'key area of change' and seeks to focus major residential and industrial development in this area. Both Runcorn Docks and Western Docks (Mersey Gateway Port) are identified for development. It is therefore considered a legitimate concern that waterside development could result in loss of supporting habitat (e.g. brownfield/post industrial land) at Weaver Bend. Furthermore Ditton is identified as a 'Neighbourhood Priority Area'. Loss of land around Ditton may also result in a loss of supporting habitat. It is likely that additional such areas exist within the Borough. The Core Strategy states that a Site Allocations DPD will have an important role in determining which of the West Runcorn Sites are used for particular purposes. At the moment the Core Strategy does not explicitly address the issue of loss of supporting habitat.

#### **Recommendations for amendment to policy**

- 5.39 In view of the potential for loss of supporting habitat and coastal squeeze as a result of the Core Strategy, the following recommendations are made:

- Development of Runcorn and Western Docks (**Policy CS9**) would be subject to a suitable assessment and appropriate mitigation to ensure any loss of supporting habitat does not result in significant adverse effects on the integrity of qualifying bird species. This should be reflected in policy wording. If supporting habitat were to be lost to any development, then the applicant would need to determine (a) how significant it was (i.e. whether it was used by more than 1% of the population of qualifying bird species and (b) to provide alternative habitat to replace it in an location that was reasonably close to the Estuary; and
- The development of the site allocation DPD would include the identification of areas outside of the SPA/Ramsar designation that serve as important supporting habitat for qualifying bird species. The Site Allocation DPD should include appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the loss of such sites is adequately assessed and mitigated.

- 5.40 The Core Strategy should also prevent any development being delivered in areas that may exacerbate coastal squeeze. The Core Strategy should:

- Ensure that new development is not delivered in locations which would require a change in coastal defence policy that might compromise natural coastal processes (e.g. from No Active Intervention to Hold the Line or Advance the Line); and
- Prevent development being delivered in areas that may compromise locations identified for managed retreat as set out in the Environment Agency Coastal Habitats Management Plan (CHaMP) and Regional Habitat Creation Programme.

<sup>44</sup>Halton Borough Council (July 2007) Provision of Open Space SPD Habitat Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment Stage) <http://councillors.halton.gov.uk/Published/C00000292/M00002968/AI00005602/AppendixDOpenSpaceSPDfinalHRAAA.pdf>

## Deterioration in Water Quality

### Appropriate Assessment

- 5.41 HRA Screening identified policies within the Halton Core Strategy that have potential pathways of impacts relating to the water quality of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. These relate to three areas which are discussed in turn below:
- waste water discharge (domestic and industrial);
  - shipping and dredging; and
  - water abstraction (industrial).
- 5.42 Table 5<sup>45</sup> summarises the water quality issues being experienced at the Mersey SPA/Ramsar site, along with the likely causes and features of interest at risk of being adversely affected.
- 5.43 The Halton Core Strategy, through the provision of housing, employment and other mixed-use development (and associated waste water discharge) has the potential to result in a deterioration of water quality in the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.
- 5.44 A study carried out in 1999<sup>46</sup> serves as a useful indication of the location and size of waste water treatment work inputs to the Mersey Estuary. Whilst slightly dated now this study illustrates the extent of water quality pressures on the Mersey within the context of other similar sites in the UK. The study show major trade and sewage effluent to be discharged throughout the Mersey Estuary with significant inputs including from Widnes, Runcorn within Halton. Estimated inputs from trade effluent at that time (~650,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day) represent just over half the amount of sewage effluent (~1,200,00 m<sup>3</sup>/day). This is significantly greater than the neighbouring Dee Estuary which had estimated trade effluents at ~50,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day and sewage effluents at ~62,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day. There are few other European Marine Sites which have such a high level of discharge, only the Thames and Solent in Southampton. No data on contaminants in discharges is currently available. Water quality issues are clearly a major vulnerability currently being experienced by Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. It should be noted that since this study the Mersey basin clean-up campaign has improved this baseline (described in greater detail below).
- 5.45 The Environment Agency is understood to have conducted its own review of sources in relation to the requirements of HRA. According to Langston *et al*<sup>47</sup> following a review of the Environment Agency Review of Consents for 3,886 permitted water discharges, all of these were 'screened in' as part of the Stage 1 HRA, and of these 919 were taken through from Stage 2 to Stage 3 Appropriate Assessment. This included:
- those discharges responsible for discharging the top 90% of the nutrient/BOD/ammonia load entering the Mersey Estuary;
  - those discharges discharging directly into the Mersey Estuary;

<sup>45</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006). (The Marine Biological Association (2006)) *Characterisation of European Marine Site: the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area*, Marine Biological Association Occasional Publication No18.

<sup>46</sup> Allen, Y. T., Hurrell, V., Reed J., and Mathiessen P. (2000) Endocrine Disruptors and European Marine Sites in England. Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS). Contract C01042 for English Nature. 159pp

- those discharges authorised to discharge a List 1 and/or List 2 Dangerous substance that has been found to be either exceeding or at risk of exceeding the Environmental Quality Standard in the Mersey Estuary;
- all IPC/IPPPC water discharges not already considered under the Directive.

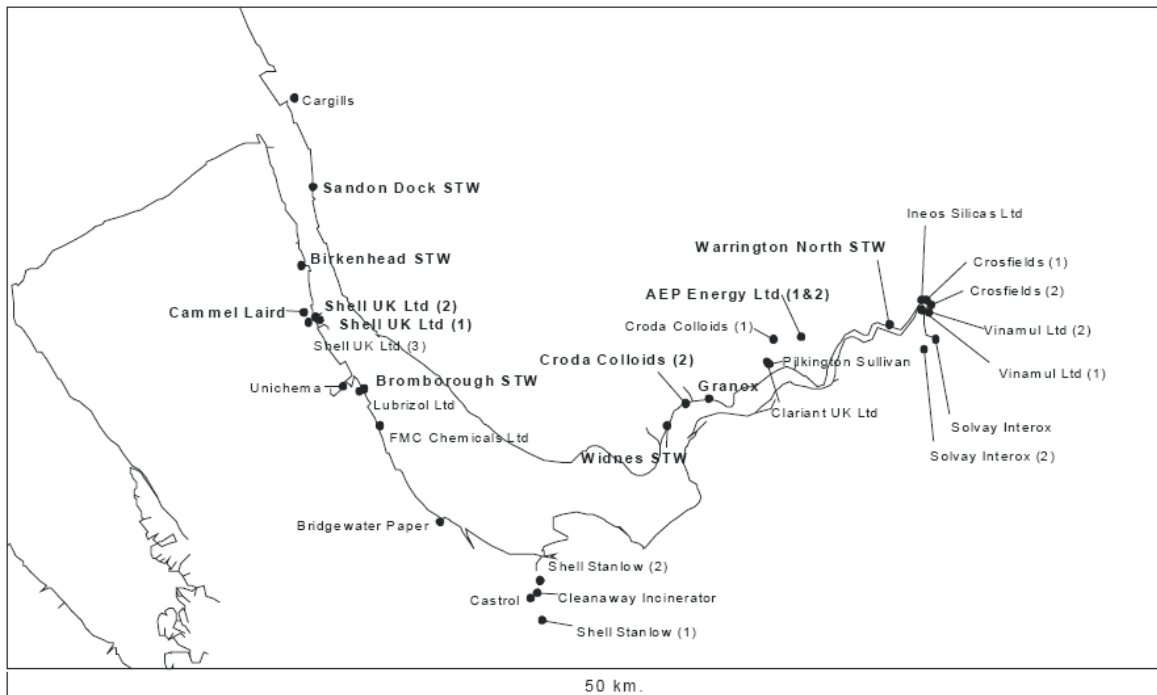
5.46 Of the 919 discharges requiring an AA only around 380 are continuous discharges. The remainder largely represent intermittent discharges (storm sewage overflows / emergency discharges from pumping stations). Figure 5 indicates the Environment Agency priority outfalls of the Mersey<sup>48</sup>. It is noted that three priority outfalls are located in Halton (Runcorn) with others located in Liverpool, Wirral and Warrington.

5.47 It should be noted that the Mersey Basin clean-up campaign has produced substantial improvements over the last 25 years. The Mersey is now reported to support a wide range of fish species, including migratory fish, and there has been an increase in numbers of other animals returning to the estuary including reported sightings of porpoises, grey seals and octopus. Langston *et al*<sup>49</sup> conclude that in the absence of specific information on individual discharges, there is insufficient evidence to justify further expensive remedial action on particular sources. However, there is sufficient uncertainty to justify a more targeted and detailed programme of research and surveillance to measure actual biological impacts at a variety of levels (e.g. biochemistry, bioaccumulation, biomarkers and community structure) at sites within the European Marine Sites and near priority discharges. If results indicate deleterious effects, which can be attributed to known causes then the case for remedial action against key sources (which may include multiple inputs) would be placed on a stronger scientifically sound basis. At the very least such a program would provide a benchmark for assessing future changes in the condition of the site and likely contributions from water quality.

<sup>48</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006).(The Marine Biological Association (2006)) *Characterisation of European Marine Site: the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area*, Marine Biological Association Occasional Publication No18.

<sup>49</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006).(The Marine Biological Association (2006)) *Characterisation of European Marine Site: the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area*, Marine Biological Association Occasional Publication No18.





- 5.48 These studies illustrate that combined pollution pressure from run off and waste water discharges throughout the Mersey catchment (including the upper reaches outside of Merseyside) has been a significant historic pressure. Whilst this situation has improved significantly, the potential still exists for surface water run off and waste discharges to adversely affect the qualifying features of the Mersey SPA/Ramsar. It would be disproportionate to suggest Halton Core Strategy has the potential to significantly deteriorate the water quality of the Mersey Estuary above the existing baseline. However it is reasonable to identify the potential for an *in-combination* effect of the Halton Core Strategy (above the existing baseline) on the water quality pressures. The policies within the Core Strategy, in particular, include policies for the waterfront revitalisation at of South Widnes town centre (CS4, CS7) the development of Runcorn and Western Docks (CS9) and the Mersey Gateway Project (CS14). Other policies that are likely to contribute equally to this in-combination effect are those contained within the Liverpool, Wirral and Warrington Core Strategies.

#### Recommendations for amendment to policy

- 5.49 It should be noted that the majority of the processes that could result in a deterioration of water quality (waste water discharges, surface water runoff and pollution from construction activities) are either regulated through statutory requirements or can be mitigated through standard construction techniques and environmental good practice. These impacts are therefore unlikely. Furthermore it should be noted that policy CS23 (Managing Pollution and Risk) states that '*Development proposals should not exacerbate and where possible should minimise all forms of emissions and ... water ... pollution*'.
- 5.50 Avoiding an adverse effect is largely in the hands of the water companies (through their investment in future sewage treatment infrastructure) and Environment Agency (through their role in consenting effluent discharges). However, local authorities can also contribute through

ensuring that sufficient wastewater treatment infrastructure is in place prior to development being delivered through the Core Strategy. In the case of Halton, this is alluded to in the supporting text for **Policy CS15** (Infrastructure Provision): “An integral part of the Core Strategy is to ensure that development proposals are supported by the timely provision of an appropriate level of infrastructure including... physical and environmental infrastructure such as water supply and treatment’.

- 5.51 However, it is considered that this allusion needs to be slightly expanded upon in order to provide a firm commitment with regard to the linking of housing delivery to delivery of necessary infrastructure that will ensure that an adverse effect on European sites is avoided. Ideally, the supporting text for the Core Strategy should make specific reference to the fact that the delivery of development will be phased in order to ensure that it only takes place once any new water treatment infrastructure or appropriate retro-fitted technology (e.g. phosphorus stripping) necessary to service the development while avoiding an adverse effect on European sites is in place. The Core Strategy should also indicate how this need will be determined and delivered through interaction with other authorities (United Utilities, the Environment Agency etc) i.e. through a Water Cycle Strategy.
- 5.52 It is concluded that, with the recommended addition to the supporting text for policy **CS15** (Infrastructure Provision), the Halton Core Strategy is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts on qualifying features of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar through waste water discharge.

## Dock, Port and Channel Construction, Maintenance Shipping and Dredging

### Appropriate Assessment

- 5.53 HRA Screening identified policies encouraging dock and port development, and greater use of freight by shipping within the Halton Core Strategy to have the potential to result in a deterioration of water quality of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site. Development of ports and docks has the potential to disturb substrates/ circulate synthetic chemical pollutants and heavy metals all of which could result in potential harm to benthic communities, aquatic invertebrates and habitats required by qualifying bird species. Furthermore greater shipping freight has the potential for pollution through fuel emissions/ accidental spillage (described above in relation to waste water discharge/run-off above).
- 5.54 These risks are highlighted by a study for Natural England<sup>50</sup>. The level of Tributyltin (TBT) in tidal waters exceeds the Environmental Quality Standard (EQS) at most sites, sometimes by a considerable margin. Sources include the Manchester Ship Canal, docks and shipyards, and the river Mersey itself: highest levels were at Monks Hall at the head of the tidal waterway. Sediments in docks contain hotspots which are above action limits (for safe disposal). Additionally, heavy metal distribution, along with PAHs, PCBs and DDT residues from historical inputs, were identified as significant. Enhanced loadings sometimes appear in subsurface layers in sediment cores. Dredging has been identified as a key activity that could re-expose these layers making them and their associated contaminant burdens available to organisms. Redistribution of these sediments was identified as a significant threat to the condition of the site. Further investigation on sources, trends and impacts was recommended including further bio

<sup>50</sup> Langston, W.J., Chesman, B.S. and Burt, G.R. (2006).(The Marine Biological Association (2006)) *Characterisation of European Marine Site: the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area*, Marine Biological Association Occasional Publication No18.

monitoring of sediments (bioaccumulation and effects) and the possibility of transfer of contaminants through dietary organisms to bird populations of the SPA.

- 5.55 With regards to greater shipping freight in the Mersey and the potential for pollutions through fuel emissions/accidental spillages, it should be noted that oil pollution is a continual threat to all inshore marine habitats, and is particularly pronounced in the Mersey Estuary due to its enclosed and sheltered nature. Risks include small leaks, spills and discharges, as well as the possibility of a major accident. There are a number of ways in which oil could potentially impact on the interest features of the SPA/Ramsar including intertidal habitats, shellfish beds, benthic communities, *Zostera* plants, Eggs and planktonic larval stages of fish, molluscs and crustacean.
- 5.56 Studies have found total hydrocarbon concentrations (THC) in the Mersey to be amongst the most elevated in the UK<sup>51</sup>. In the mouths of the estuaries sampled (including Liverpool Bay for the Mersey), highest THC levels occurred at low tide, reflecting respective dominant flows of more highly contaminated water from upstream. A variety of sources were suggested including industrial discharges and spillages from shipping and land-based sources (including river-borne discharges, road runoff) and atmospheric discharges.
- 5.57 Based on this evidence it is clear that policies contained within the Core Strategy which encourage the development of docks and ports within the Mersey, and/or result in greater ship movements (either larger ships or new shipping routes which may require navigational dredging, or a greater number of ships creating more ship wash and erosion) have the potential to result in significant impacts on qualifying features of Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.

#### **Recommendations for amendment to policy**

- 5.58 It is clear that there a number of activities relating from the development of ports, docks, channel construction and greater number of ships as result of above, that is likely to require differing mitigation. The Core Strategy is able to set the framework for these, but the details of specific measures would require further development at a project level, particularly since this will include authorities other than Halton. Broadly, mitigation that could be designed into the design and management of new dock/port development may include<sup>52</sup>
- environmental policy, reviews and management systems,
  - information and codes of conduct,
  - ensuring safety,
  - emergency response procedures,
  - provision of information on SACs,
  - zoning of activities,
  - re-routing via alternative navigation channels,

<sup>51</sup> Kirby et al (1998) in English Nature, Plymouth Marine Partnership, The Marine Biological Association (2006) *Characterisation of European Marine Site: the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area*, Marine Biological Association Occasional Publication No18.

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.ukmarinesac.org.uk/activities/ports/ph3\\_3\\_1.htm](http://www.ukmarinesac.org.uk/activities/ports/ph3_3_1.htm)

- protection of intertidal features from ships wash using breakwaters and other structures,
- compliance with regulations covering cargo operations and promotion of good practice, and
- managing anchoring.

- 5.59 Where there is evidence that ship or boat wash is causing erosion of designated intertidal flats or saltmarsh habitat, and where other appropriate measures have been considered and applied, a further management option that may be considered is to protect the intertidal features by creating structures, such as breakwaters, bunds or mounds of sediments on the intertidal. Harwich Harbour Authority has applied this approach in Trimley Marshes on the Stour/Orwell Estuary<sup>53</sup>. Such an approach to protecting marine features may also provide a beneficial use for dredged materials, however the potential impacts on local hydrodynamics and ecology, should be considered. This should not be considered where the costs of undertaking such a scheme would greatly outweigh the potential environmental gain. Furthermore, the potential application of this approach may be limited by the need for a grant aid to fund this work and by land ownership issues.
- 5.60 A further method of minimising ships' wash in the proximity of vulnerable shores might be to place moorings in the area to reduce speeds. This is a particularly useful approach where small speedboats and personal watercraft are a potential problem. Other variables which influence ships' wash, such as propeller wake, ship design and hull form, are outside the scope and powers of any port authority.
- 5.61 It should be noted that **Policy CS22** (Managing Pollution and Risk) already makes provision to ensure risk levels from existing installations or facilities with the potential to create major accidents are recognised and that development proposals for new or expanded installations that increase risk levels do not take place on such sites. The same policy also seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable levels of pollution (including air, odour, water, ground, noise and light) through its location, design, construction and operation. Additionally **policy CS6** (3MG) makes particular regards to respecting the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. It can therefore be demonstrated that the Core Strategy already includes inherent mitigation to avoid these potentially significant effects on the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.
- 5.62 However it is considered that a greater commitment to this is required in the Core Strategy to ensure the development of Docks and Ports within the Mersey Estuary, and any associated channel construction or dredging activity will be permitted subject only to the completion of a project based Appropriate Assessment. Such an Appropriate Assessment would include a thorough consideration of impacts relating to construction (including potential disturbance of sediments and hydrodynamic modelling if required), operational impacts (including anticipated changes in boat traffic and associated impacts) with necessary mitigation in construction, design and management. This particularly applicable to policies **CS7** (South Widnes); **CS9** (West Runcorn) and Mersey Gateway Port (3MG Western Docks) to be developed as a multimodal facility using Manchester Ship canal (**CS6**).

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.ukmarinesac.org.uk/activities/ports/ph3\\_3\\_1.htm](http://www.ukmarinesac.org.uk/activities/ports/ph3_3_1.htm)

## Deteriorating Air Quality

### Appropriate Assessment

- 5.63 The Core Strategy identifies policies that have the potential to contribute to a rise in atmospheric nitrogen deposition in the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. This includes policies that:
- may result in an increase car use notably as a consequence of housing and business development, particularly within 200m of the Mersey Estuary (e.g. CS7, CS9);
  - promote greater cross Mersey travel (e.g. The Mersey Gateway Project CS15);
  - air travel (Liverpool John Lennon Airport CS16);
  - CHP (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy CS18) (currently being informed by The Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options<sup>54</sup> which two District Heating Priority Areas within Halton); and
  - policies promoting greater shipping (CS9) has the potential to result in a rise in atmospheric sulphur deposition.
- 5.64 Some of these policies do include qualifying statements (i.e. subject to successful assessment and mitigation of impacts) to avoid significant impacts on the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.
- 5.65 With regards to air quality impacts relating to atmospheric sulphur deposition, these will relate largely to shipping and airport expansion. Reference to APIS<sup>55</sup> indicates that 41% of sulphur currently deposited in the SPA arises from 'other transport' (i.e. not road or shipping), which in this case is likely to essentially be air traffic. This compares to only 3% derived from shipping. However, the Site Relevant Critical Load for each bird for which the SPA was designated also seems to indicate that they are not considered likely to be affected by high sulphur deposition. Therefore no further mitigation is required at policy level with respect to sulphur deposition from air transport with regard to the interest features of the SPA.
- 5.66 With regards to eutrophication as a result of atmospheric nitrogen deposition, one might expect similar pressures to arise described in the water quality section above. However, the Site Relevant Critical Load on APIS for nitrogen deposition as it relates to each bird for which the SPA was designated indicates that actual nitrogen deposition is on 11.9 kgN/ha/yr compared to a critical load (for littoral sediment) of 20-30 kgN/ha/yr. It is therefore highly unlikely that increases in traffic would result in the enormous increases in deposition which would be required to exceed the critical load, given that road transport is currently only responsible for 7% of nitrogen deposition in the SPA. It should also be noted that APIS concludes the effects may be positive for many birds because nitrogen enrichment potentially means more prey species.
- 5.67 Based on this information it is concluded that the Halton Core Strategy is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar due to a deterioration in air quality. Therefore no mitigation is recommended.

<sup>54</sup> Arup (2001) Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options Stage 2 (Drawing Title CHP/DH & Wind Priority Zones, Final Issue) (date 27/5/2010)

<sup>55</sup> Air Pollution Information System <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>

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## Conclusion

- 5.68 The Appropriate Assessment has concluded that with the incorporation of the measures listed above, the draft publication Halton Core Strategy would include an adequate policy framework to enable the delivery of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate an adverse effect on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site.

## 6 Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA / pRamsar site

### Introduction

6.1 The Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA and pRamsar site is approximately 2,078ha, located at the mouths of the Mersey and Dee estuaries. The site comprises intertidal habitats at Egremont foreshore (feeding habitat for waders at low tide), man-made lagoons at Seaforth Nature Reserve (high tide roost and nesting site for terns) and the extensive intertidal flats at North Wirral Foreshore (supports large numbers of feeding waders at low tide and also includes important high-tide roost sites). The most notable feature of the site is the exceptionally high density of wintering Turnstone. The Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore has clear links in terms of bird movements with the nearby Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site, and (to a lesser extent) the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site (Wirral MBC, 2001).

### Reasons for Designation

6.2 The Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA and pRamsar site is proposed on the grounds of its feeding and roosting habitat for non-breeding wading birds, and as a breeding site for terns (Wirral MBC, 2001). The Birds Directive Annex I species (qualifying the site under Article 4.1), which can be found in any season, are:

- Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: 124 pairs breeding = 1.0% of the GB population; and
- Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: 537 individuals wintering = 1.0% of the GB population.

6.3 The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive, as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following migratory species:

- Knot *Calidris canutus*: 10,661 individuals = 3.0% of NW European, NE Canadian, Greenland & Icelandic populations;
- Redshank *Tringa totanus*: 1,606 individuals = 1.1% Eastern Atlantic population; and
- Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: 1,593, individuals = 2.3% Western Palearctic population.

6.4 Additionally, in qualifying under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive, the site regularly supports over 20,000 individuals of a wider range of species, including dunlin, knot *Calidris canutus*, grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*.

6.5 The site qualifies under the Ramsar Convention under Criterion 5, regularly supporting over 20,000 waterbirds (non-breeding season, 28,841 individual waterbirds), and Criterion 6, regularly supporting 1% of the species or subspecies of waterbird in any season listed above.

## Historic Trends and Current Pressures

- 6.6 Due to its location at the mouth of the Mersey Estuary and in the Liverpool Bay, this site has been subject to the same changes as described for the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, in particular water quality improvements since the 1960s (especially since 1985), and increases in agricultural effluent pollution during this same period.
- 6.7 Some of the main current (as opposed to future) environmental pressures relevant to the nature conservation objectives of the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA / pRamsar site are:
- disturbance of sediment releasing legacy heavy metal pollution (lead, cadmium, arsenic and other poisons) that is bound into the sediment;
  - pollution via rivers and drains by both treated sewerage and untreated runoff containing inorganic chemicals and organic compounds from everyday domestic products, which 'may combine together in ways that make it difficult to predict their ultimate effect of the marine environment... Some may remain indefinitely in the seawater, the seabed, or the flesh, fat and oil of sea creatures';
  - pollution via commercial shipping by chemical or noise pollution and the dumping of litter at sea;
  - damage of marine benthic habitat directly from fishing methods;
  - damage of marine benthic habitat along the North Wirral Foreshore directly or indirectly from aggregate extraction, particularly anywhere that dredging may be altering erosion/deposition patterns;
  - 'coastal squeeze' (a type of coastal habitat loss) from land reclamation and coastal flood defences and drainage used in order to farm or develop coastal land, and from sea level rise;
  - loss or damage of marine benthic habitat directly and indirectly (through changed sedimentation/deposition patterns) as a result of navigational dredging in order to accommodate large vessels – e.g. into the ports of Liverpool;
  - harm to wildlife (especially birds) or habitat loss due to increasing proposals/demand for offshore wind turbines; and
  - pollution, direct kills, litter, disturbance or loss of habitat as a result of water-based recreation or other recreation activity and related development along the foreshore (Wildlife Trust, 2006);
  - introduction of non-native species and translocation; and
  - selective removal of species (e.g. bait digging, wildfowl, fishing) (Wildlife Trust, 2006 and Marine Biological Association, 2006).
- 6.8 The Mersey Estuary does have a high load of nutrients mainly from diffuse sources, with levels for phosphate and nitrogen decreasing from point sources. However, recent modelling has shown that due to the natural turbidity of the water, there is only a low risk of excessive algal growth. Given the close hydrological linkage between the Mersey Estuary and the North Wirral Foreshore, this is likely to hold true for this pSPA/pRamsar site.



## Key potential pressures from Halton

- 6.9 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the pSPA and pRamsar:
- water quality from one or more of the following pathways to the River Mersey: discharge of treated sewage effluent into the Mersey; potential water pollution incidents arising from construction of Mersey Gateway Bridge/Mersey Gateway Port development (Runcorn), untreated runoff containing inorganic and organic compounds;
  - water quality from increase in commercial shipping resulting from development of Mersey Gateway Port (Runcorn);
  - loss or damage of marine benthic habitat directly and indirectly (through changed sedimentation/deposition patterns) as a result of navigational dredging in order to accommodate large vessels – e.g. into Mersey Gateway Port; and
  - pollution, direct kills, litter, disturbance or loss of habitat as a result of water-based recreation or other recreation activity.
- 6.10 Local air quality issues arising from the Core Strategy are scoped out of consideration since the site is physically separated from Halton.

## Role of other plans and projects

- 6.11 In addition, the following plans and projects are considered to have the potential to act upon the pSPA/pRamsar site 'in combination':

### Projects

- Peel Ports 'Super Port' – potential impacts due to increased sulphur deposition from shipping, physical disturbance of habitat, mobilisation of contamination, possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise and shipping activity;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion – potential impacts due to increased sulphur and nitrogen deposition from aircraft, loss of supporting foraging/high-tide roost habitat and possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise;
- Proposed incinerators at Runcorn and Ince Marches – possible air quality impacts through nitrogen and sulphur deposition; and
- Frodsham Windfarm - possible impacts on waterfowl flightpaths between the North Wirral Foreshore and other European sites.

### Plans

- Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study – possible impacts on waterfowl flightpaths between the Mersey Estuary and other European sites depending upon the degree of wind power involved and the location of turbines;
- North West England & North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 – possible impacts due to the maintenance or enhancement of flood defences could lead to coastal squeeze, changes in

sediment release (if previously undefended areas become defended) and direct loss of habitat to flood defence footprint;

- Core Strategies for Flintshire, Denbighshire, Liverpool, Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral and St Helens, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Delivery (Wirral and Liverpool) and Liverpool and Wirral Waters Development masterplans – possible water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance impacts as a result of delivery of over 110,000 dwellings and associated commercial development over the next 20 years; and
- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document – possible impacts due to water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance or chick predation. However, since this DPD is itself subject a recent HRA it will address its own contribution to any ‘in combination’ effect that may otherwise arise.

## Appropriate Assessment

### Water Quality Deterioration

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 6.12 The Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar includes the mouth of the Mersey Estuary (principally Egremont Foreshore on the south bank, and Seaforth on the north bank) as well as the North Wirral Foreshore itself. Egremont Foreshore and Seaforth are separated by approximately 2km, but are considered to be an integral site on the basis of the constant interchange of bird populations. These areas of the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar are susceptible to changes in water quality in the Mersey Estuary arising from:
- wastewater discharge (domestic and industrial); and
  - shipping and dredging.
- 6.13 Chapter 4 has already provided an Appropriate Assessment of these identified pathways from the Halton Core Strategy to the Mersey Estuary. These potential adverse effects would also be relevant to Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site (particularly Egremont Foreshore and Seaforth nature reserve at its mouth) due to the hydraulic connections along the Mersey Estuary.
- 6.14 A recent study has been undertaken to establish the ecological value and functionality of key points along the Mersey Estuary, which included these two sites within the Mersey Narrows<sup>56</sup> described below.
- 6.15 The area around Seaforth Nature reserve was identified as particularly important as a high tide roost site, particularly during high spring tides when rocky shores and man-made structures closer to the feeding areas are submerged and not available as roosting sites. Important for wildfowl and some wading bird species. The Marine Lakes is a sheltered roosting location that regularly supported a diverse assemblage of mixed duck species; notably diving ducks. Numbers of dabbling ducks; Eurasian Teal and to a lesser extent Common Shelduck were high in

<sup>56</sup> RSK (2010) Mersey Feasibility Study Winter Bird Report

comparison to other sites surveyed but again these records were mostly of birds on the Seaforth site. The site is adjacent to the Seaforth LNR and most of the wading species recorded at Crosby were of birds on this site. Black-tailed Godwits regularly used this site but were recorded almost exclusively on the Seaforth site. The foreshore areas were used by feeding shorebirds including locally significant numbers of Eurasian Oystercatcher, Sanderling and Ringed Plover. The foreshore areas at Crosby were subject to the greatest level of activity of Eurasian Oystercatcher of all sites surveyed. These birds transferred regularly with the site at New Brighton. The exposed sandy beaches were used regularly by this species as a feeding site with birds roosting near the Marine Lakes or on the Seaforth site. Bar-tailed Godwits were recorded sporadically at this site.

- 6.16 The North Wirral Foreshore and New Brighton area (around Egremont Foreshore) are widely recognised as being of conservation importance for many species of wading bird, particularly feeding at low tide on the barnacle beds and groynes. The foreshore area consists of large expanses of exposed sandy beach at low tide and it is in these areas that the highest activity of Eurasian Oystercatcher were recorded. This species occurred in locally significant numbers roosting on the breakwaters and surrounding structures at high tide. There is a high transference of birds between Egremont Foreshore and Crosby. This site is well known as a regular wintering site for Purple Sandpipers. These birds used the rocky areas, groynes and shore defences for both feeding and roosting and were closely associated with larger flocks (several thousands) of Ruddy Turnstone which also congregate on the Marine Lake area as a high tide roost; as well as feeding on the tide line. Eurasian Oystercatchers were also noted using the high tide roost on the Marine Lake as this area was relatively undisturbed.
- 6.17 It is therefore possible that any changes in water quality and resultant effects on crustaceans, worms or other food source, has the potential to affect these qualifying bird species within the Egremont Foreshore and Seaforth Nature Reserve areas. It should be noted, however that any deterioration in water quality arising from Halton Core Strategy, particularly when considered *in combination* with the Liverpool and Wirral Core Strategies within Merseyside, as well as the Warrington Core Strategy in Cheshire.

#### **Recommendations for amendment to policy**

- 6.18 The recommendations given in Chapter 4 for addressing water quality and dredging/port development related impacts with regard to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site would also serve for Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site.
- 6.19 The potential for direct disturbance from shipping on qualifying bird species is described below.

#### **Disturbance**

##### **Appropriate Assessment**

- 6.20 Several online sources<sup>57 58</sup> suggest that the North Wirral Foreshore is both easily accessible and well used by dog walkers. These sources also suggest water based recreation (e.g. jet skies) to

<sup>57</sup> <http://friendsofnorthwirralcoastalpark.co.uk/>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/1732173.0/>

be potentially damaging. Additionally, the North Wirral Foreshore is used for bait digging<sup>59</sup>. Recreational pressures highlighted in HRA Screening are therefore a legitimate concern.

- 6.21 General increased housing development within Halton, coupled with policies seeking to enhance connectivity and accessibility between Halton and other Merseyside Boroughs has the potential to increase the existing recreational pressures on Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site. These policies include the provision of infrastructure (CS5) including transport infrastructure (roads, railways, public transport, walking, cycle routes (including sustainable transport (CS14)) and Mersey Gateway Project construction to improve cross-river sustainable transport opportunities (CS15). From a sustainability perspective, such policies are beneficial and it would be inappropriate for the Core Strategy to reduce connectivity and accessibility between the Merseyside Boroughs in an attempt to reduce visitors to these sites.
- 6.22 However, the North Wirral Foreshore is approximately 30km from the nearest urban areas of Halton by road. Even the delivery of measures to improve accessibility between Halton and other Merseyside authorities is unlikely to materially decrease this distance. This is well beyond the 25.5km that the England Leisure Day Visits Survey indicates that people typically travel to visit the coast for the day. With the above in mind it can be concluded that Halton is likely to make a negligible contribution to recreational activity in the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site.
- 6.23 HRA screening identified potential pathways of effects between the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport (JLA) (Core Delivery Policy 7) and disturbance of qualifying bird species due to increase in bird scaring devices and airplanes taxiing and due to increased light in the vicinity, which could create disturbance issues for birds using the SPA/Ramsar. Expansion of the Airport is likely to result in extension of the approach lighting gantry which already extends into the Mersey Estuary. The airport masterplan refers to increased lighting as a result of the airport expansion, and notes that birds and bats may be affected by this (Peel Airports, 2006). It is not clear at this stage to what degree the extension may increase illumination of the SPA although it is noted that the use of the SPA by waterfowl remains high despite the north bank of the Mersey generally being a brightly lit environment.

#### Recommendations for amendment to policy

- 6.24 Policy CS16 of the Halton Core Strategy does state that '*negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural and built environment, including areas of international, national or local conservation, ecological and landscape value*'. Provided this is amended in line with recommendations in Chapter 5 (i.e. adding: '*With respect to internationally important sites such measures will need to be sufficiently extensive to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity unless it can be demonstrated that there are both no alternatives and Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest*') the Core Strategy will contain adequate policy protection to ensure that no adverse effect occurs.

<sup>59</sup> Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales and Welsh Assembly Government (January 2010) 'The Dee Estuary European Marine Site'

## Renewable Energy

### Appropriate Assessment

- 6.25 The Core Strategy promotes renewable and low carbon energy within Halton (**policy CS18**). HRA Screening identified that, should this include wind turbine construction, a pathway exists for the construction of onshore/offshore turbines to disrupt flight paths and displace qualifying bird species. Disturbance issues associated with maintenance activities were also identified.
- 6.26 The policy states that subject to successful assessment and mitigation of impacts of development proposals, Halton would seek to direct proposals for grid-connected renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure and equipment, including, but not limited to: wind, solar PV and biomass CHP, to the identified priority zone areas. This policy is being informed by The Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options<sup>60</sup> which identifies three priority zone areas for wind energy, none of which are located within the Borough of Halton. It is therefore unlikely that the Policy CS18 of the Halton Core Strategy will result in the development of wind turbines.

## Conclusion

- 6.27 The Appropriate Assessment has concluded that with the incorporation of the measures listed above with regard to water quality and expansion of John Lennon Airport, the draft publication Halton Core Strategy would include an adequate policy framework to enable the delivery of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate an adverse effect on the integrity of the Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site.

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<sup>60</sup> Arup (2001) Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options Stage 2 (Drawing Title CHP/DH & Wind Priority Zones, Final Issue) (date 27/5/2010)

## 7 Sefton Coast SAC

### Introduction

- 7.1 Located to the north of Liverpool, the Sefton Coast SAC (approximately 4,560ha) consists of a mosaic of sand dune communities comprising a range of ages from embryonic (i.e. dune formation) to more established communities. A number of other habitats are also present, including lagoons, estuaries and riverine environments, but also scrub, heath and coniferous woodland.

### Reasons for Designation

- 7.2 The Sefton Coast qualifies as an SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex I habitats of:
- embryonic shifting sand dunes: considered rare, as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1,000 hectares – the Sefton Coast SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom;
  - shifting dunes along the shoreline with marram *Ammophila arenaria* (“white dunes”): the Sefton Coast SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom;
  - fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (“grey dunes”): the Sefton Coast SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom;
  - dunes with creeping willow *Salix repens ssp. argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*): considered rare, as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1,000 hectares – the Sefton Coast SAC is considered to support a significant presence of the species;
  - humid dune slacks: the Sefton Coast SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom; and
  - Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*): considered rare, as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1,000 hectares – the Sefton Coast SAC is considered to support a significant presence.
- 7.3 Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*, for which it is one of the best areas in the United Kingdom, and great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.

### Historic Trends and Current Pressures

- 7.4 The dune habitats of the Sefton Coast SAC are dependent upon natural erosive processes. Various human activities that interrupt natural sedimentation and deposition patterns within the Liverpool Bay have had an effect on the wildlife value of these dunes and their existence. Since as early as the 18th century, ‘dredging, river training and coastline hardening have imposed a pattern of accretion and erosion on the shoreline where previous conditions were much more variable’ (Liverpool Hope University College, 2006). More recently, the dunes have been partially

stabilised through maintaining their natural vegetation, the planting of pine trees, and artificial sea defences for protecting the developed shorelines. Another compounding influence is that the inland lakes and mosses behind the belt of coastal dunes have been drained and claimed for agricultural production (Liverpool Hope University College, 2006).

7.5 The environmental requirements of the Sefton Coast SAC are mainly:

- the need to reduce the fragmentation of habitats, and the impact of fragmentation, to provide stepping stones for the movement of species;
- the need to counter negative changes to low-nutrient habitats resulting from atmospheric nutrient deposition;
- the need to manage the continuing coastal erosion at Formby Point which leads to a squeeze on habitats. This management would not constitute formal defences as these would in themselves harm the dune ecosystem, but the management of pine plantations preventing dune roll-back. The dunes require sufficient space that natural processes can maintain the important habitats through roll-back;
- the need to consider the potential impact of climate change on shorelines, wetlands and dunes;
- the need to manage abstraction from the underlying aquifer for sources such as golf courses. The aquifer is critical to some features of the site, such as the humid dune slacks and the great crested newts;
- to manage recreational pressures and direct disturbance to qualifying habitats;
- the need to develop and maintain management practices which sustain the conservation value of the area; and
- the need to avoid loss of great-crested newt habitat, and habitats being further fragmented by distance or barriers.

## Key potential pressures from Halton

7.6 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SAC:

- Excessive recreational pressure.
- Deteriorating air quality as a result of increased deposition of SO<sub>2</sub>/NO<sub>x</sub> through increased aircraft movements.

## Role of other plans and projects

### Projects

- Peel Ports 'Super Port' – potential impacts due to increased sulphur deposition from shipping, physical disturbance of habitat, mobilisation of contamination, possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise and shipping activity;

## Plans

- North West England & North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 – possible impacts due to the maintenance or enhancement of flood defences could lead to coastal squeeze, changes in sediment release (if previously undefended areas become defended) and direct loss of habitat to flood defence footprint;
- Core Strategies for Liverpool, West Lancashire, Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral and St Helens, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Delivery (Wirral and Liverpool) and Liverpool and Wirral Waters Development masterplans – possible water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance impacts as a result of delivery of 90,000 dwellings and associated commercial development over the next 20 years; and
- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document – possible impacts due to water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance or chick predation. However, since this DPD is itself subject a recent HRA it will address its own contribution to any ‘in combination’ effect that may otherwise arise.

## Recreational trampling

### Appropriate Assessment

- 7.7 Sand dunes are vulnerable to recreational trampling in that excessive physical disturbance can retard or set back the dune development process and lead to a reduction in habitat diversity. However, at the same time some recreational trampling is beneficial in that it ensures that the dune vegetation does not all succeed to the same late stage of development and thereby actually helps to preserve diversity.
- 7.8 A recent study on the recreational users of Sefton’s Natural Coast<sup>61</sup> estimated half of the recreational users to be ‘local residents’ (i.e. residents within the Borough of Sefton). With respect to reasons for visiting the coast over half of the respondents main reason was either dog walking/walking/fresh air or visiting the coast. Nature based attractions including visiting the squirrels, bird watching, fishing accounted for approximately 20% of the visitors. The majority of visitors were focused on Formby and Crosby.
- 7.9 Unfortunately the study did not explore where the remaining 50% of visitors (i.e. not local residents from Sefton) came from. However, respondents to the England Leisure Day Visits Survey indicated that they typically travelled 25.5km to visit the coast for the day. The nearest access point to the Sefton Coast SAC is located a minimum of 26km from the main urban areas of Halton if one follows transport routes. The urban areas of Halton therefore lie outside the typical distance people could be expected to travel to visit the coast for the day. While it is likely that some Halton residents do visit the Sefton Coast SAC it also seems reasonable to conclude that Halton residents probably constitute a very small proportion of visitors to the SAC and that a far greater portion come from Borough of Liverpool which is much closer to Sefton Coast, and other adjacent Boroughs outside of Merseyside (e.g. in within Lancashire).

<sup>61</sup> England’s North West Research Service for Economic Development and Tourism (May 2009) Sefton’s Natural Coast Local Users of the Coast (Version 2)



- 7.10 Policies contained within the Halton Core Strategy relate to a greater connectivity and accessibility from Halton to other Merseyside Boroughs as well as the delivery of 8,000 new dwellings. These policies include the provision of infrastructure (CS5) including transport infrastructure (roads, railways, public transport, walking, cycle routes including sustainable transport (CS14); Mersey Gateway Bridge construction to improve cross-river sustainable transport opportunities (CS15). However, the delivery of measures to improve accessibility between Halton and other Merseyside authorities is unlikely to materially decrease the distance needed to travel from Halton to the Sefton Coast.

## Air quality

### Appropriate Assessment

- 7.11 With regards to air quality impacts relating to atmospheric sulphur deposition, these will relate largely to shipping and airport expansion. The Site Relevant Critical Load on APIS currently indicates that 34% of sulphur deposition within the SAC is due to shipping and 'other transport' (the latter category excludes road transport but does include air travel). However, reference to APIS<sup>62</sup> indicates that the actual SO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the SAC is well below the critical level (according to APIS the concentration<sup>63</sup> is 1.1 µgm<sup>-3</sup> compared to a critical level for damage of 20 µgm<sup>-3</sup>).
- 7.12 With regards to eutrophication as a result of atmospheric nitrogen deposition, sand dune succession and petalwort are both vulnerable to excessive nitrogen inputs in that this can increase the development of vegetation and both out-compete petalwort and more rapidly advance sand dune succession to a point of excessive scrub development. Moreover, the Site Relevant Critical Load on APIS for nitrogen deposition indicates that actual nitrogen deposition is 11.9 kgN/ha/yr compared to a critical load (for sand dunes) of 10-20 kgN/ha/yr. The site is therefore already exceeding its critical load. Road transport, air transport and shipping are currently responsible for 14% of nitrogen deposition in the SPA. Since the site is already exceeding its critical load any source of NO<sub>x</sub> which will increase nitrogen inputs by more than 1%<sup>64</sup> will at least require a project level Appropriate Assessment and could lead to an adverse impact 'in combination'.
- 7.13 The Sefton Coast SAC does not lie within 200m of a major arterial route for traffic travelling from Halton to (or through) Sefton and therefore it is primarily airport expansion that will contribute to any increase in nitrogen deposition. However, Policy CSxx (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) already states that negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural environment, including locally, nationally and internationally important sites. Assuming that the additional wording identified in Chapter 5 (*'With respect to internationally important sites such measures will need to be sufficiently extensive to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity unless it can be demonstrated that there are both no alternatives and Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest'*) is included, this would make clear the high

<sup>62</sup> Air Pollution Information System <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>

<sup>63</sup> For grid reference SD271077

<sup>64</sup> 1% generally being the threshold used by the Environment Agency and Natural England to determine whether a point source can be scoped out as making a contribution that would be effectively inconsequential even when considered 'in combination'. Exceedence of the 1% threshold does not mean that adverse effects will result but does mean that the project/plan cannot be simply dismissed and further detailed consideration is required.

standards that would need to be achieved in order for mitigation to be deemed acceptable and adverse impacts of the Core Strategy could be ruled out.

## Conclusion

- 7.14 The Appropriate Assessment has concluded that the draft publication Halton Core Strategy will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Sefton Coast SAC.

## 8 Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site

### Introduction

- 8.1 The Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site is approximately 12,360ha, and consists of extensive sand- and mud-flats and, particularly in the Ribble Estuary, large areas of saltmarsh. There are also areas of coastal grazing marsh located behind the sea embankments. The saltmarshes, coastal grazing marshes intertidal sand- and mud-flats all support high densities of grazing wildfowl and are used as high-tide roosts. Important populations of waterbirds occur in winter, including swans, geese, ducks and waders. The highest densities of feeding birds are on the muddier substrates of the Ribble.
- 8.2 The SPA is also of major importance during the spring and autumn migration periods, especially for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain. The larger expanses of saltmarsh and areas of coastal grazing marsh support breeding birds during the summer, including large concentrations of gulls and terns. These seabirds feed both offshore and inland, outside of the SPA. Several species of waterbird (notably pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*) utilise feeding areas on agricultural land outside of the SPA boundary. There is considerable interchange in the movements of wintering birds between this site and Morecambe Bay, the Mersey Estuary, the Dee Estuary and Martin Mere.

### Reasons for Designation

- 8.3 The Ribble and Alt Estuaries site is designated as an SPA for its Birds Directive Annex I species, both breeding and over-wintering, and these are:
- 8.4 During the breeding season:
- common tern *Sterna hirundo*: 182 pairs = 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain;
  - ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: 1 pair = 9.1% of the breeding population in Great Britain;
- 8.5 Over winter:
- bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*: 18,958 individuals = 35.8% of the population in Great Britain;
  - Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus ssp. bewickii*: 229 individuals = 3.3% of the population in Great Britain;
  - golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*: 4,277 individuals = 1.7% of the population in Great Britain
  - whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*: 159 individuals = 2.9% of the population in Great Britain.
- 8.6 It also meets the criteria for SPA designation under Article 2 of the Birds Directive, supporting internationally important populations of lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*, ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, sanderling *Calidris alba*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa ssp. limosa*, dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, knot *Calidris canutus*, oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, pintail *Anas*

*acuta*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, sanderling *Calidris alba*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, teal *Anas crecca* and wigeon *Anas penelope*. It also qualifies by regularly supporting up to 29,236 individual seabirds, and, over winter, 301,449 individual waterfowl.

- 8.7 It is additionally designated as a Ramsar site in accordance with Criterion 5 (UN, 2005) for supporting up to 89,576 waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03), and in accordance with Criterion 6 for supporting internationally important populations of common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa ssp. limosa*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, Eurasian teal *Anas crecca*, northern pintail *Anas acuta* and dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*.
- 8.8 The Ribble and Alt Estuaries also qualifies as Ramsar as it meets criterion 2 by supporting over 40% of the UK population of Natterjack toad. The Natterjack Toad occurs on the Sefton Coast in seaward dunes between Southport and Hightown. In 2000 it was present on 13 sites (three of which are reintroductions). The breeding population is estimated just over 1000 females.
- 8.9 The largest populations are on Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR and Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills LNR. Natterjacks are absent from much of the dune coast and some breeding sites are relatively isolated (North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan, undated).

## Historic Trends and Current Pressures

- 8.10 As an estuarine site linked with the Liverpool Bay, this site has been subject to the same changes as described for the Liverpool Bay SPA but additionally its own unique pressures (some similar to those experienced in the Mersey Estuary). The estuaries were largely undisturbed until the 19th century, at which point there was extensive modification and dredging of the river channel for the Port of Preston, as well as landfill and drainage along the shoreline in order to increase agricultural usage of the land. The Ribble Estuary has over the past century experienced ‘a general pattern of sediment accretion in the inner Estuary and erosion in outer areas,’ but the estuary has begun ‘to revert to its natural state... since maintenance of the Ribble Channel for shipping ceased in 1980. There have been dramatic changes in the course of channels in the outer Estuary, and these are expected to continue. Anticipated climatic and sea level changes are likely to exaggerate existing patterns of erosion and accretion, although sea level rise is not expected to cause significant loss of intertidal land in the Ribble<sup>65</sup>.
- 8.11 The Ribble and Alt Estuaries are among ‘the most popular holiday destinations in Britain’, with Blackpool as the largest resort and Southport increasing in visitors. Leisure activities include ‘watersports such as sailing and windsurfing; fishing and shooting; bird watching; land yachting; and generally relaxing at the coast... enjoyed by both local people and visitors<sup>66</sup>’.
- 8.12 Some of the main environmental pressures relevant to the nature conservation objectives of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site are:
- loss or damage of habitat as a result of increasing off-shore exploration and production activity associated with oil and natural gas;

<sup>65</sup> (Ribble Estuary Strategy Steering Group, 1997, p.15).

<sup>66</sup> (Ribble Estuary Strategy Steering Group, 1997, p.10).

- over-grazing of the saltmarshes by cattle-farming;
- heavy metal pollution (lead, cadmium, arsenic and other poisons) from either industry or disturbance of sediment (legacy pollution bound into the sediment);
- pollution via rivers by agricultural effluent flowing off fields, 'leading to increased fertility of inshore waters and associated algal blooms and de-oxygenation of seawater, particularly in enclosed bays and estuaries';
- pollution via rivers and drains by both treated sewerage and untreated runoff containing inorganic chemicals and organic compounds from everyday domestic products, which 'may combine together in ways that make it difficult to predict their ultimate effect of the marine environment... Some may remain indefinitely in the seawater, the seabed, or the flesh, fat and oil of sea creatures';
- damage of marine benthic habitat directly from fishing methods;
- damage of marine benthic habitat directly or indirectly from aggregate extraction;
- 'coastal squeeze' (a type of coastal habitat loss) from land reclamation and coastal flood defences and drainage used in order to farm or develop coastal land, and from sea level rise;
- harm to wildlife (especially birds) or habitat loss due to increasing proposals/demand for offshore wind turbines;
- pollution, direct kills, litter, disturbance or loss of habitat as a result of water-based recreation or other recreation activity and related development along the foreshore<sup>67</sup>
- that there is disturbance to birds from aircraft, both from Blackpool Airport and from a private testing station
- introduction of non-native species and translocation;
- selective removal of species (e.g. bait digging, wildfowl, fishing) (Wildlife Trust, 2006 and Ribble Estuary Strategy Steering Group, 1997);
- interruption of dune accretion processes leading to over-stabilisation of dunes;
- the spread of rank grasses and scrub, partly caused by a decline in rabbit-grazing, further reducing suitable habitat;
- losses to development, forestry and recreational uses have reduced the area of available habitat;
- fragmentation of habitat has led to isolation of populations;
- creation of permanent water bodies in the dunes has encouraged populations of invertebrates which prey on Natterjack tadpoles and, most seriously, of Common Toads which both predate and suppress the development of Natterjack tadpoles;
- gassing of rabbits, especially on golf courses, can kill Natterjacks using burrows and removes a valuable grazing animal;

<sup>67</sup> Wildlife Trust (2006) – The Wildlife Trust For Lancashire, Manchester And North Merseyside (2006). *Uses and abuses*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.lancswt.org.uk/Learning%20&%20Discovery/theirishsea/usesandabuses.htm> (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

- collecting and disturbance of spawn and tadpoles can reduce metamorphic success;
- inappropriate management can cause the loss of low vegetation structure and open ground used by Natterjacks for foraging;
- water abstraction, conifers and scrub lower the water table locally and reduces the number of pools in which Natterjack tadpoles can develop to maturity.

8.13 There is both formal and informal recreation along the Sefton Coast and intensity varies with season, event and attraction. Recreation is much more informal within the Ribble Estuary itself.

## Key potential pressures from Halton

8.14 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the pSPA and pRamsar:

- water quality from one or more of the following pathways to the River Mersey (with hydraulic connections to this pSPA and pRamsar: discharge of treated sewage effluent into the Mersey; potential water pollution incidents arising from construction of Mersey Gateway Bridge/Mersey Gateway Port development (Runcorn), untreated runoff containing inorganic and organic compounds;
- water quality from increase in commercial shipping resulting from development of Mersey Gateway Port (Runcorn);
- pollution, direct kills, litter, disturbance or loss of habitat as a result of water-based recreation or other recreation activity and related development along the foreshore (Wildlife Trust, 2006).
- Deteriorating air quality as a result of increased deposition of SO<sub>2</sub>/NO<sub>x</sub> through increased aircraft, shipping or vehicle movements.

8.15 Local air quality issues arising from the Core Strategy are scoped out of consideration since the site is physically separated from Halton.

## Role of other plans and projects

8.16 It was considered that the following projects and plans could act 'in combination' with the Core Strategy:

### Projects

- Peel Ports 'Super Port' – potential impacts due to increased sulphur deposition from shipping, physical disturbance of habitat, mobilisation of contamination, possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise and shipping activity;

### Plans

- Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study – possible impacts on waterfowl flightpaths between the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and other European sites depending upon the degree of wind power involved and the location of turbines;

- North West England & North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 – possible impacts due to the maintenance or enhancement of flood defences could lead to coastal squeeze, changes in sediment release (if previously undefended areas become defended) and direct loss of habitat to flood defence footprint;
- Core Strategies for Liverpool, West Lancashire, Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral and St Helens, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Delivery (Wirral and Liverpool) and Liverpool and Wirral Waters Development masterplans – possible water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance impacts as a result of delivery of 90,000 dwellings and associated commercial development over the next 20 years; and
- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document – possible impacts due to water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance or chick predation. However, since this DPD is itself subject a recent HRA it will address its own contribution to any ‘in combination’ effect that may otherwise arise.

## Appropriate Assessment

### Disturbance

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 8.17 Although the coast that lies adjacent to the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site draws tourists from across the county due to the proximity of Blackpool in particular, these tourist activities are focussed upon the Ribble Estuary which is the furthest part of the SPA/Ramsar site from Halton. With regard to visitors from Merseyside the southern part of the site (i.e. that largely contiguous with the Sefton Coast SAC) is of greater relevance.
- 8.18 As the southern part of the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar largely falls within the same geographical area as Sefton Coast SAC, the recreational pressures described for Sefton Coast SAC (above) are largely applicable to this site. One key difference is that recreational pressures in the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar related more to the bird interest and some species for which the site is designated (e.g. nesting terns) may be subject to different recreational disturbance in the fact that they use slightly different habitats than the SAC was designated for (i.e. sandflats and intertidal mudflats rather than coastal dunes). Furthermore since most of the interest of the SPA is in its wintering birds, the risk of recreational disturbance may be lower since there will be less recreational activity in winter. Natterjack toads however are qualifying Ramsar species, and would be more sensitive to disturbance during the spring/summer months when toadlets leave breeding ponds (the breeding ponds are generally fenced off/protected but toadlets leaving these ponds would be more subject to disturbance).
- 8.19 The nearest access point to the Sefton Coast (and thus the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site) is located a minimum of 26km from the main urban areas of Halton if one follows transport routes. The urban areas of Halton therefore lie outside the typical distance people could be expected to travel to visit the coast for the day. While it is likely that some Halton residents do visit this part of the SPA/Ramsar site it also seems reasonable to conclude that Halton residents probably constitute a very small proportion of visitors to the Sefton Coast and that a greater portion come from Borough of Liverpool and other adjacent Boroughs outside of Merseyside (e.g. in within Lancashire).

- 8.20 Policies contained within the Halton Core Strategy relate to a greater connectivity and accessibility from Halton to other Merseyside Boroughs. These policies include the provision of infrastructure (CS5) including transport infrastructure (roads, railways, public transport, walking, cycle routes including sustainable transport (CS14); Mersey Gateway Bridge construction to improve cross-river sustainable transport opportunities (CS15). However, the delivery of measures to improve accessibility between Halton and other Merseyside authorities is unlikely to materially decrease the distance needed to travel from Halton to the Sefton Coast.

## Air quality

### Appropriate Assessment

- 8.21 The Site Relevant Critical Load on APIS currently indicates that 34% of sulphur deposition within the SAC is due to shipping and 'other transport' (the latter category excludes road transport but does include air travel). However, reference to APIS<sup>68</sup> indicates that the actual SO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the SAC is well below the critical level (according to APIS the concentration<sup>69</sup> is 1.1 µgm<sup>-3</sup> compared to a critical level for damage of 20 µgm<sup>-3</sup>). The Site Relevant Critical Load on APIS for nitrogen deposition indicates that actual nitrogen deposition is 11.9 kgN/ha/yr compared to a critical load (for sand dunes) of 10-20 kgN/ha/yr. The site is therefore already exceeding its critical load. Road transport, air transport and shipping are currently responsible for 14% of nitrogen deposition in the SPA.
- 8.22 However, the Site Relevant Critical Load for each bird for which the SPA was designated also seems to indicate that they are not considered likely to be affected by high sulphur deposition. It should also be noted that APIS concludes the effects may be positive for most birds because nitrogen enrichment potentially means more prey species. The only SPA species for which nitrogen deposition is identified on APIS as being potentially negative are black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and curlew *Numenius arquata* (if nitrogen deposition increases the sward height of their grassland foraging grounds); however, sward height is much more strongly influenced by other factors than atmospheric nitrogen deposition such as cut height & frequency and conventional fertilisation.
- 8.23 The Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site does not lie within 200m of a major arterial route for traffic travelling from Halton to (or through) Sefton and therefore it is primarily airport expansion that will contribute to any increase in nitrogen deposition. However, **Policy CSxx** (Liverpool John Lennon Airport) already states that negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural environment, including locally, nationally and internationally important sites. Assuming that the additional wording identified in Chapter 4 ('*With respect to internationally important sites such measures will need to be sufficiently extensive to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity unless it can be demonstrated that there are both no alternatives and Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest*') is included, this would make clear the high standards that would need to be achieved in order for mitigation to be deemed acceptable and adverse impacts of the Core Strategy could be ruled out.

<sup>68</sup> Air Pollution Information System <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>

<sup>69</sup> For grid reference SD271077



## Water Quality Deterioration

### Appropriate Assessment

- 8.24 Deterioration in water quality is a key environmental pressure being experienced by The Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar, namely through heavy metal pollution from industry and sediment disturbance, pollution via rivers from agricultural effluent, and pollution via rivers and drains by both treated sewerage and untreated runoff containing inorganic chemicals and organic compounds from everyday domestic products.
- 8.25 Hydraulic connections were identified during Screening between the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar and the Mersey Estuary located within the Borough of Halton. Chapter 4 provides an Appropriate Assessment of these identified pathways from the Halton Core Strategy to the Mersey Estuary. These potentially significant effects could be to be relevant on the Ribble and Alt SPA/Ramsar due to the hydraulic connections. These changes could arise from:
- waste water discharge (domestic and industrial) and surface water runoff;
  - shipping, port/dock expansion and associated navigational dredging/ship wash.
- 8.26 It is worth considering at this point that the majority of water quality pressures being experienced by the SPA/Ramsar are likely to arise from the River Ribble, the River Alt as well as the River Mersey. Furthermore it should be noted the sections of the Mersey immediately adjacent to the Liverpool and Wirral Boroughs are much closer to the SPA/Ramsar (within 5km) compared to the section of Mersey within Halton (over 20km). With this in mind policies contained within Halton Core Strategy that may result in deterioration in water quality in the River Mersey are unlikely to result in a significant adverse effect on the qualifying features of the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar. Nevertheless, the in-combination contribution to the water quality of the Mersey should be considered and mitigated appropriately.

### Recommendations for amendment to policy

- 8.27 The recommendations given in Chapter 5 for addressing water quality and dredging/port development related impacts with regard to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site would also serve for Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site.

## Conclusion

- 8.28 The Appropriate Assessment has concluded that with the incorporation of the measures listed above, the draft publication Halton Core Strategy would include an adequate policy framework to enable the delivery of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/pRamsar site.

## 9 Liverpool Bay SPA and pRamsar

### Introduction

- 9.1 The Liverpool Bay SPA and pRamsar site is an approximately 198,000ha maritime site located in the Irish Sea, straddling the English and Welsh borders. The site has exposed mudflats and sandbanks in places, although the site extends up to approximately 20km from the shoreline and thus most of the area of the SPA/pRamsar site is relatively shallow water up to 20m deep. It is contiguous with a number of other European sites, including the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site, Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA and pRamsar site, and Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site.

### Reasons for Designation

- 9.2 Liverpool Bay SPA was designated from a pSPA to SPA in July 2010. Liverpool Bay has been identified by Natural England and CCW as qualifying for SPA status under the following Stage 1 guidelines:

- Liverpool Bay regularly supports over 1% of the GB population of one species listed on Annex I of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC): red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*). The mean peak count of overwintering red-throated divers within the pSPA boundary over the period 2001/02 – 2005/06 was 922 individuals: or 5.4% of GB's total estimated overwintering population.
- Liverpool Bay regularly supports more than 1% of the biogeographical population of one regularly occurring migratory species: common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*). The mean peak overwintering common scoter population of 54,675 individuals between 2001/02 – 2005/06 is an estimated 58% of the GB population.
- The site also supports more than 20,000 waterbirds in the non-breeding season with a mean peak average over 2001/02 – 2005/06 of at least 55,597, with at least 80,346 in winter 2001/02.

- 9.3 In 2004, a study team of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (referred to in citation as 'Webb et al.') produced two reports on a potential Liverpool Bay SPA, the first on the recommendation for designation, and the second on boundary options. The report also mentions its potential qualification as a Ramsar site due to the large numbers of waterfowl supported (Criterion 5 regarding Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention).

- 9.4 Other species that might be judged for inclusion:

- great-crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*,
- common eider *Somateria mollissima*,
- red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*, and
- little gull *Larus minutus* (Webb et al., 2004b);

## Historic Trends and Current Pressures

- 9.5 With the proposed site encompassing approximately 198,000 hectares and a range of estuarine and maritime habitat, the Liverpool Bay SPA and pRamsar site is subject to a wide range of pressures of varying spatial scope and human activity. Perhaps the most direct way to establish the proposed site's recent changes in health / ecological status is through the changing environmental pressures upon the Irish Sea.
- 9.6 The industrial revolution of the 19th century led to the Irish Sea being used to dispose liquid waste, including sewage and unwanted by-products of industrial processes (including mining, manufacturing, nuclear waste reprocessing and energy generation). This improved in the latter half of the 20th century, and sewage and other waste are no longer dumped offshore in an uncontrolled manner. While Liverpool Bay is hypernutrified, there is no evidence of harmful algal blooms or de-oxygenation of seawater (Environment Agency, pers. comm.).
- 9.7 Some of the main existing environmental pressures on the Irish Sea relevant to the nature conservation objectives of the Liverpool Bay SPA and pRamsar site are:
- disturbance of sediment releasing legacy heavy metal pollution (lead, cadmium, arsenic and other poisons) that is bound into the sediment;
  - pollution via rivers and drains by both treated sewerage and untreated runoff containing inorganic chemicals and organic compounds from everyday domestic products, which '*may combine together in ways that make it difficult to predict their ultimate effect of the marine environment... Some may remain indefinitely in the seawater, the seabed, or the flesh, fat and oil of sea creatures*';
  - pollution via commercial shipping by chemical or noise pollution and the dumping of litter at sea;
  - damage of marine benthic habitat directly from fishing methods;
  - damage of marine benthic habitat directly or indirectly from aggregate extraction;
  - 'coastal squeeze' (a type of coastal habitat loss) from land reclamation and coastal flood defences and drainage used in order to farm or develop coastal land, and from erosion and sea level rise;
  - loss or damage of marine benthic habitat directly and indirectly (through changed sedimentation/deposition patterns) as a result of navigational dredging in order to accommodate large vessels – e.g. into the ports of Liverpool;
  - harm to wildlife (especially birds) or habitat loss due to increasing proposals/demand for offshore wind turbines; and
  - pollution, direct kills, litter or loss of habitat as a result of water-based recreation and related development along the foreshore.

## Key Pressures from Halton

- 9.8 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SPA and pRamsar:
- water quality from one or more of the following pathways to the River Mersey: discharge of treated sewage effluent into the Mersey; potential water pollution incidents arising from construction of Mersey Gateway Bridge/Mersey Gateway Port development (Runcorn), untreated runoff containing inorganic and organic compounds;
  - water quality from increase in commercial shipping resulting from development of Mersey Gateway Port (Runcorn);
  - loss or damage of marine benthic habitat directly and indirectly (through changed sedimentation/deposition patterns) as a result of navigational dredging in order to accommodate large vessels – e.g. into Mersey Gateway Port; and
  - pollution, direct kills, litter, disturbance or loss of habitat as a result of water-based recreation or other recreation activity along the foreshore.
- 9.9 Local air quality issues arising from the Core Strategy are scoped out of consideration since the site is physically separated from Halton.

## Role of other projects and plans

- 9.10 It is considered that the following additional plans and projects could act 'in combination' on the SPA/pRamsar:

### Projects

- Gwynt Y Mor Offshore Windfarm Project - possible impacts on waterfowl flightpaths within Liverpool Bay;
- Peel Ports 'Super Port' – potential impacts due to increased sulphur deposition from shipping, physical disturbance of habitat, mobilisation of contamination, possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise and shipping activity;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion – potential impacts due to increased sulphur and nitrogen deposition from aircraft, loss of supporting foraging/high-tide roost habitat and possible disturbance of waterfowl from noise;
- Proposed incinerators at Runcorn and Ince Marches – possible air quality impacts through nitrogen and sulphur deposition; and

### Plans

- Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study – possible impacts on waterfowl flightpaths between the Mersey Estuary and other European sites depending upon the degree of wind power involved and the location of turbines;
- North West England & North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 – possible impacts due to the maintenance or enhancement of flood defences could lead to coastal squeeze, changes in

sediment release (if previously undefended areas become defended) and direct loss of habitat to flood defence footprint;

- Core Strategies for Flintshire, Denbighshire, Liverpool, Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral and St Helens, the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Delivery (Wirral and Liverpool) and Liverpool and Wirral Waters Development masterplans – possible water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance impacts as a result of delivery of over 110,000 dwellings and associated commercial development over the next 20 years; and
- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document – possible impacts due to water quality, air quality and wildfowl disturbance or chick predation. However, since this DPD is itself subject a recent HRA it will address its own contribution to any ‘in combination’ effect that may otherwise arise.

## Appropriate Assessment

### Water Quality Deterioration

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 9.11 Liverpool Bay SPA extends over the Mouth of the Mersey Estuary. It is therefore susceptible to changes in water quality within Mersey Estuary arising from:
- waste water discharge (domestic and industrial) and surface water runoff; and
  - shipping, port/dock expansion and associated navigational dredging/ship wash.
- 9.12 Chapter 5 provides an Appropriate Assessment of these identified pathways from the Halton Core Strategy to the Mersey Estuary. These potentially significant effects could also be to be relevant on Liverpool Bay SPA due to the hydraulic connections.
- 9.13 The Natural England Draft Conservation Objectives and Advice on Operation<sup>70</sup> provide more detail on the risk that the pollutants pose to the qualifying features of interest at the Liverpool Bay SPA.
- 9.14 With respect to waste water discharge, non-toxic contamination through nutrient loading, organic loading and changes to the thermal regime could impact on prey species and distribution. The sensitivity of the prey species of both red-throated diver and common scoter to non-toxic contamination is considered moderate. As benthic feeders, common scoter are closely associated with the availability and condition of their shallow sandbank habitat. As such they are considered highly sensitive to its physical loss and smothering and any adverse impact on benthic communities.
- 9.15 PCBs are toxic persistent organic pollutants used in industry as dielectric fluids for transformers, capacitors, coolants can bioaccumulate in the sublittoral prey species of the common scoter and bioaccumulate/ biomagnify in the fish species of the red-throated diver. If marine pollution were to occur there is the potential for exposure to PCBs to change. Hotspots of PCBs include industrial estuaries and sandy environments offshore, but as PCB's are currently banned, exposure can be

<sup>70</sup>Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales (September 2009) *Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl pSPA Conservation Objectives from Natural England and CCW, September 2009* [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/LivBay-consobj\\_tcm6-15189.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/LivBay-consobj_tcm6-15189.pdf)

considered low. However disturbance of sediments through shipping, dock/port expansion and navigational dredging may release such hotspots of PCBs.

- 9.16 Large oil and chemical spills affecting shallow sandbank habitats can have a detrimental effect on bird populations as it can affect their food sources and also the birds directly especially during their moulting times when they are far less mobile. Sensitivity to non-synthetic compounds is therefore considered to be high. Oil on the feathers of birds could lead to loss of insulation, reduced buoyancy and possible drowning. Consequently both qualifying bird species may suffer the inability to feed, resulting in starvation and death. The possibility of a pollution event, however, has been considered and the overall assessment of exposure is considered to be low. This is a combination of 'normal' toxic contamination in the SPA plus the low risk of a catastrophic event. Although exposure is low, the possibility of a catastrophic event due to vessel traffic (oil tankers, ships with toxic contaminants etc) exists.

#### **Recommendations for amendment to policy**

- 9.17 The recommendations given in Chapter 5 for addressing water quality and dredging/port development related impacts with regard to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site would also serve for Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar site.

### **Recreational Activities**

#### **Appropriate Assessment**

- 9.18 Recreational disturbance arising from fishing, boating, visual impacts and noise are highlighted as pressures on the qualifying features of Liverpool Bay SPA<sup>71</sup>. North Wirral Foreshore SPA/pRamsar, Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA Ramsar are all subject to recreational pressure, and due to their close proximity to Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar, these same pressures are likely to be relevant. Red-throated diver winter inshore in water 0-20m deep (having one of their key concentrations off the north Wirral foreshore) and as such is likely to be particularly exposed to the impacts of water-borne recreation which largely takes place close to the shore.
- 9.19 Most of Liverpool Bay SPA is sufficiently far from the coast that coastal water-borne recreation (e.g. windsurfing, personal watercraft, water-skiing etc.) will constitute a small source of disturbance in comparison to conventional shipping. However, there is a margin of the site which abuts and is integrally linked with the North Wirral Foreshore and the Sefton Coast. As such, water-borne recreation around either coast will potentially affect not only the interest features of the Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site but also Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar site. However, it has already been established in previous chapters that the Sefton Coast/Ribble & Alt Estuaries and North Wirral Foreshore are both sufficiently distant from Halton that the boroughs contribution to recreational activity within those sites is likely to be effectively inconsequential. This same conclusion will therefore apply to Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar site.

<sup>71</sup> Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales (September 2009) *Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl pSPA Conservation Objectives from Natural England and CCW, September 2009* [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/LivBay-consobj\\_tcm6-15189.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/LivBay-consobj_tcm6-15189.pdf)

## Renewable Energy

### Appropriate Assessment

- 9.20 The Core Strategy promotes a renewable and low carbon energy within Halton (**policy CS18**). HRA Screening identified that, should this include wind turbine construction, a pathway exists for the construction of onshore/offshore turbines to disrupt flight paths and displace qualifying bird species. Disturbance issues associated with maintenance activities were also identified.
- 9.21 The policy states that subject to successful assessment and mitigation of impacts of development proposals, Halton would seek to direct proposals for grid-connected renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure and equipment, including, but not limited to: wind, solar PV and biomass CHP, to the identified priority zone areas. This policy is being informed by The Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options<sup>72</sup> which identifies three priority zone areas for wind energy, none of which are located within the Borough of Halton. It is therefore unlikely that the Policy **CS18** of the Halton Core Strategy will result in the development of wind turbines.

## Conclusion

- 9.22 The Appropriate Assessment has concluded that with the incorporation of the measures listed above, the draft publication Halton Core Strategy would include an adequate policy framework to enable the delivery of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate an adverse effect on the integrity of Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar site.

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<sup>72</sup> Arup (2001) Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options Stage 2 (Drawing Title CHP/DH & Wind Priority Zones, Final Issue) (date 27/5/2010)

## 10 The Dee Estuary SAC, SPA & Ramsar site, pSPA Extension

- 10.1 The Dee Estuary SPA, Ramsar and SAC is located outside approximately 15km west of Halton Borough. An extension to the Dee Estuary forms a proposed SPA<sup>73</sup>. The Dee is a large funnel-shaped sheltered estuary and is one of the top five estuaries in the UK for wintering and passage waterfowl populations. The Dee Estuary site covers over 13,000ha and is the largest macro-tidal coastal plain Estuary between the larger Severn Estuary and the Solway Firth. The Dee Estuary is hyper-tidal with a mean spring tidal range of 7.7m at the mouth. The site has extensive areas of intertidal sand-flats, mud-flats and saltmarsh. In areas where agricultural use has not occurred, the saltmarshes grade into transitional brackish and swamp vegetation on the upper shore. The site also supports three sandstone islands (the Hilbre islands) which have important cliff vegetation and maritime heathland and grassland. The two sides of the Estuary show a marked difference between the industrialised usage of the Welsh coastal belt and the residential and recreational English side.
- 10.2 The Dee Estuary supports internationally important numbers of waterfowl and waders. The estuary is an accreting system and the extent of saltmarsh continues to expand as the estuary seeks to achieve a new equilibrium situation following large-scale historical land-claim at the head of the estuary which commenced in the 1730s. Nevertheless, the estuary still supports extensive areas of intertidal sand and mudflats as well as saltmarsh. Where land-claim has not occurred, the saltmarshes grade into transitional brackish and freshwater swamp vegetation, on the upper shore. The site includes the three sandstone islands of Hilbre with their important cliff vegetation and maritime heathland/grassland. The site also includes an assemblage of nationally scarce plants and the sandhill rustic moth *Luperina nickerlii gueneei*, a British Red Data Book species. The two shorelines of the estuary show a marked contrast between the industrialised usage of the coastal belt in Wales and residential and recreational usage in England.

### Reasons for Designation

- 10.3 The Dee Estuary qualifies as an SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:
- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation;
  - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide;
  - *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand - The Dee Estuary is representative of pioneer glasswort *Salicornia spp.* saltmarsh in the north-west of the UK. *Salicornia spp.* saltmarsh forms extensive stands in the Dee, especially on the more sandy muds where there is reduced tidal scour. It mainly occurs on the seaward fringes as a pioneer community, and moving landwards usually forms a transition to common saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia maritima* saltmarsh (SM10). There is also a low frequency of *Salicornia spp.* extending well inland.

<sup>73</sup> Barbara McCarthy, Natural England (2009), *Pers. comms*, Telephone call 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009



Associated species often include annual sea-blite *Suaeda maritima* and hybrid scurvy grass *Cochlearia x hollandica*.

- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) - The Dee Estuary is representative of H1330 Atlantic salt meadows in the north-west of the UK. It forms the most extensive type of saltmarsh in the Dee, and since the 1980s it has probably displaced very large quantities of the non-native common cord-grass *Spartina anglica*. The high accretion rates found in the estuary are likely to favour further development of this type of vegetation. The saltmarsh is regularly inundated by the sea; characteristic salt-tolerant perennial flowering plant species include common saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia maritima*, sea aster *Aster tripolium*, and sea arrowgrass *Triglochin maritima*. In a few areas there are unusual transitions to wet woodland habitats.

10.4 Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II habitats and species:

- Estuaries
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts
- Embryonic shifting dunes
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ('white dunes')
- Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes')
- Humid dune slacks
- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*

10.5 The Dee Estuary also qualifies as a SPA supporting:

10.6 During the breeding season;

- Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, 277 pairs representing at least 2.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year mean 1991-95)
- Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*, 56 pairs representing at least 2.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (RSPB, 5 year mean 1991-95)

10.7 On passage;

- Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, 818 individuals representing at least 5.8% of the population in Great Britain (5 year mean 1991-95)
- Redshank *Tringa totanus*, 8,451 individuals representing at least 4.8% of the Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

10.8 Over winter;

- Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, 1,013 individuals representing at least 1.9% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

10.9 This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:

- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, 1,739 individuals representing at least 2.5% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Curlew *Numenius arquata*, 4,028 individuals representing at least 1.2% of the wintering Europe - breeding population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, 22,479 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, 2,193 individuals representing at least 1.5% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Knot *Calidris canutus*, 21,553 individuals representing at least 6.2% of the wintering Northeastern Canada/Greenland/Iceland/Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, 28,434 individuals representing at least 3.2% of the wintering Europe & Northern/Western Africa population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Pintail *Anas acuta*, 6,498 individuals representing at least 10.8% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Redshank *Tringa totanus*, 6,382 individuals representing at least 4.3% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, 6,827 individuals representing at least 2.3% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- Teal *Anas crecca*, 5,918 individuals representing at least 1.5% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

10.10 The Dee Estuary is also designated as an SPA for regularly supporting 130,408 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)<sup>74</sup>.

10.11 In addition to the SPA designation the Dee Estuary is also designated as a Ramsar site by meeting Ramsar criteria 1, 5 and 6 as follows:

- Extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary.
- Supporting an overall bird assemblage of international importance; and
- Supporting the following species at levels of international importance: shelduck, oystercatcher, curlew, redshank, teal, pintail, grey plover, red knot, dunlin, bar-tailed godwit, black-tailed godwit and turnstone

<sup>74</sup> The Ramsar citation sheet identifies the waterfowl population as 74,230 using slightly more recent data (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003). However, this is still more than the 20,000 needed for consideration as being internationally important.

10.12 The historic trends and current pressures on the site are summarised below.

## Historic Trends and Current Pressures

10.13 The majority of the site is in the ownership and sympathetic management of public bodies and voluntary conservation organisations. Unlike most western estuaries, sizeable areas of saltmarsh in the Dee remain ungrazed and therefore plant species that are susceptible to grazing are widespread. This distinctive flora would therefore be sensitive to an increase in grazing pressure. The intertidal and subtidal habitats of the estuary are broadly subject to natural successional change, although shellfisheries and dredging are a current concern. Threats to the estuary's conservation come from its industrialised shorelines on the Welsh side and the impact of adjacent historic industrial use. These include land contamination from chemical and steel manufacture and localised water quality problems. Remediation works are being undertaken. Contemporary issues relate to dock development and navigational dredging, coastal defence works and their impact on coastal process, regulation of shellfisheries, and the recreational use of sand dunes and saltmarshes.

10.14 The environmental pressures upon the Dee Estuary SAC, SPA & Ramsar site are mainly:

- overgrazing of ungrazed/little grazed saltmarsh;
- certain recreational activities in sensitive areas at sensitive times such as shellfishing (in terms of loss of material from the food chain) and dog walking (in terms of disturbance of waterfowl)
- water quality threats from ex-industrial usage and agriculture;
- physical loss and alteration of coastal processes due to navigational dredging;
- 'coastal squeeze' from land reclamation and coastal flood defences and drainage used in order to develop coastal land, and from sea level rise;
- introduction of non-native species; and
- risk of excessive abstraction resulting in a decrease in freshwater flows into the estuary, reducing drinking and bathing habitat for birds and increasing the salinity in localised areas.

## Key potential pressures from Halton

10.15 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development requires investigation, since if it occurred it could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar:

- Damaging levels of abstraction to supply housing in Halton when considered in combination with development elsewhere in United Utilities Integrated Resource Zone and development outside the zone that will receive water from the same sources (e.g. abstraction from the River Dee in relation to development in North Wales).
- Increased recreational pressure when considered 'in combination' with the additional dwellings to be delivered throughout Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales over the same time period, coupled with possible disturbance due to Liverpool Airport and the Peel 'SuperPort' projects.

## Appropriate Assessment

### Disturbance

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 10.16 The Dee Estuary is located 24km from Halton (distance measured by roads). The England Leisure Day Visits surveys indicate that respondents typically traveled 25.5km to visit the coast (not including 'seaside') for the day - despite policies enhancing connectivity and transport throughout Merseyside, the Dee Estuary is on the outer fringes of this distance from Halton and there are other estuaries closer to Halton (e.g. Mersey, Ribble & Alt Estuaries) which residents are more likely to visit.
- 10.17 It is therefore concluded that there are no policies within Halton Core Strategy that are likely to lead to significant effects on the Dee Estuary SPA/Ramsar/SAC as a result of recreational pressure. Disturbance impacts due to development in other Merseyside authorities (particularly Wirral), Cheshire West & Chester and North Wales are likely to be more relevant to this SAC/SPA/Ramsar site.
- 10.18 It is conceivable that an increase in flights from Liverpool John Lennon Airport may result in increased disturbance of SPA waterfowl (both from aircraft noise and lighting) given that aircraft taking off from the airport routinely cross the Dee Estuary as well as the Mersey. At this stage it is not possible to evaluate these impacts in detail although the risk is clearly considerably lower than that for the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site and current noise contours as reported within the Masterplan indicate that noise levels will be similar to background levels at distances closer to the airport than the Dee Estuary SPA.

#### Recommendation for amendment to policy

- 10.19 **Policy CS16** of the Halton Core Strategy does state that '*negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural and built environment, including areas of international, national or local conservation, ecological and landscape value*'. Provided this is amended in line with recommendations in Chapter 5 (i.e. adding: '*With respect to internationally important sites such measures will need to be sufficiently extensive to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity unless it can be demonstrated that there are both no alternatives and Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest*') the Core Strategy will contain adequate policy protection to ensure that no adverse effect occurs.

### Water quality

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 10.20 The Dee Estuary SAC designation covers not only the Dee Estuary proper but also the North Wirral Foreshore. There are therefore similar possible water quality impacts on the SAC as there are on the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar site (see Chapter 5). It is therefore possible that any changes in water quality. It should be noted, however that any deterioration in water quality arising from Liverpool Core Strategy, particularly when considered in combination with the Halton and Wirral Core Strategies within Merseyside, as well as the Warrington Core Strategy in Cheshire.

### Recommendations for amendment to policy

- 10.21 The recommendations given in Chapter 5 for addressing water quality and dredging/port development related impacts with regard to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site would also serve for Dee Estuary SAC/SPA/pRamsar site.

### Air quality

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 10.22 The extension of Liverpool John Lennon Airport may increase sulphur dioxide emissions in the vicinity of the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site. However, reference to APIS<sup>75</sup> indicates that the actual SO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site is well below the critical level (according to APIS the concentration<sup>76</sup> is 1.0 µgm<sup>-3</sup> compared to a critical level for damage of 20 µgm<sup>-3</sup>). Similarly, the current level of nitrogen deposition for the same point is 10.5 kgN/ha/yr compared to a minimum critical load for sublittoral sediment of 20 kgN/ha/yr or for saltmarsh of 30 kgN/ha/yr. It is highly unlikely that the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport would increase nitrogen deposition or sulphur dioxide concentrations to such a degree that it would cause exceedence of the critical level/load, even when considered within the context of the expansions of the ports of Liverpool and Garston.
- 10.23 Based on this information it is concluded that the Halton Core Strategy is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on the integrity of the Dee Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site due to deterioration in air quality. Therefore, no mitigation is recommended.

### Water resources

#### Appropriate Assessment

- 10.24 The adopted United Utilities Water Resource Management Plan (September 2009) indicates that the water available for use in the Integrated Resource Zone is expected to reduce by 24.8 Ml/d between 2009/10 and 2014/15. Without water efficiency measures or new resources the initial supply demand balance for the Integrated Resource Zone is calculated to be in deficit by 8 Ml/day by 2024/25.
- 10.25 However, from reading the Water Resource Management Plan it does appear that abstraction from the Dee or any other European sites beyond the current licensed volumes is not part of United Utilities' intended future supply strategy<sup>77</sup>, which rather depends on a mixture of demand management and increased abstraction from groundwater as follows:
- Construction of a bi-directional pipeline, known as the "West-to-East Link", between Merseyside and North Manchester. It is due to be in operation by 2012. This will help United Utilities maintain adequate supplies to Greater Manchester and Merseyside if there is a need

<sup>75</sup> Air Pollution Information System <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>

<sup>76</sup> For grid reference SJ236825

<sup>77</sup> Mark Smith of United Utilities North & Central Area Water Asset Management Team confirmed in a personal communication on 27/07/09 that abstraction from the Dee will not exceed the current licensed volume. The current licensed volume was subject to the Environment Agency's Review of Consents process and no reductions were considered necessary. It can therefore be concluded that no adverse effects on the integrity of the River Dee (either alone or 'in combination') will result from the United Utilities abstraction

to temporarily reduce supply from a major reservoir, for example due to maintenance work or drought conditions;

- Maintain current leakage levels;
- Help customers save 9 MI/d by 2014/15 (increasing later on to 12 MI/d), through a base service water efficiency programme;
- Achieve a water demand reduction of 10 MI/d in a dry year by 2014/15 (increasing to 22 MI/d by 2034/35) as a result of the expected scale of voluntary metering of households; and
- Non-household customers in the Integrated Zone are expected to reduce water demand by 87 MI/d by 2014/15 (141 MI/d by 2034/35) due to the effects of the economic downturn and as part of their continuing water efficiency programmes.

10.26 United Utilities enhanced plans identified as part of their economic programme to maintain adequate supply-demand balances are:

- Further reducing leakage by 23 MI/d by 2034/35.
- A programme of economic water efficiency measures to save 4 MI/d by 2034/35; and
- Implementing water source enhancements of 48 MI/d by 2034/35<sup>78</sup>.

## Conclusion

10.27 It is concluded that since no increased abstraction from European sites will be required in order to service new development in Halton (or elsewhere within the Integrated Supply Zone) that significant effects on the Dee Estuary SAC, SPA or Ramsar site can be screened out as unlikely. Risk of abstraction at inappropriate times of the year (such as periods of low flow) will be prevented by the Environment Agency's licensing regime and Review of Consents process.

10.28 It is also concluded that since Halton is located sufficiently far from the Dee Estuary that any change in either the size of the population of Halton or its demographic makeup is unlikely to lead to a significant effect on the Dee Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site as a result of recreational pressure since while a small proportion of Halton residents may visit the Dee Estuary on occasion, their contribution when considered within the context of the other authorities that lie closer to the Estuary is likely to be effectively inconsequential.

<sup>78</sup> Widnes groundwater (22.7 MI/d), Southport groundwater (22.5 MI/d) and Oldham groundwater (2.5 MI/d)

## 11 Manchester Mosses SAC

### Introduction

- 11.1 Figure 3 shows the location of Manchester Mosses SAC, located between 10-20km from Halton Borough.
- 11.2 Manchester Mosses SAC comprises Astley and Bedford Mosses, Holcroft Moss and Risley Moss, totalling approximately 173ha. The site is significant for mossland that '*formerly covered a very large part of low-lying Greater Manchester, Merseyside and southern Lancashire, and provided a severe obstacle to industrial and agricultural expansion*'. These sites are examples that have survived as degraded raised bog on the Mersey floodplain, with their surfaces elevated above surrounding land due to shrinkage of the surrounding tilled land, and '*all except Holcroft Moss have been cut for peat at some time in the past*'.

### Reasons for Designation

- 11.3 Manchester Mosses SAC is designated for its Habitats Directive Annex I habitat of '*degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration*' (EC, 1992).

### Historic Trends and Current Pressures

- 11.4 As discussed above, the Manchester Mosses SAC is a direct result of historical loss of mossland (i.e. bog) habitat due to drainage for agriculture and built development. Mossland is reported to have been a significant obstacle to industrialisation of the area around Manchester, and its drainage and landfilling was intensified during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, recent rehabilitation management over the past 15-20 years has increased peat-producing *Sphagnum* species.
- 11.5 Laxen and Wilson (2002) suggests that NO<sub>2</sub> emissions from motorways essentially reach background levels within 200m of the roadside. Air pollution at many European sites is already believed to be having an adverse effect. Tables 5 and 6 show the degree to which Manchester Mosses SAC is affected by atmospheric nitrogen deposition (data downloaded from APIS on 28/04/10).

**Table 6: Atmospheric nitrogen deposition compared with critical load at Holcroft Moss\***

Site	Grid reference	Habitat	Minimum critical Load / Kg N/ha/year	Nitrogen Deposition/ Kg N/ha/ year	Exceedance	Is atmospheric nitrogen deposition currently a problem?
Manchester Mosses SAC (Holcroft Moss)	SJ683928	Raised and blanket bogs	5	23.5	Current deposition is more than four times the minimum critical load.	Yes

Source: Based on information provided by the UK Air Pollution Information System ([www.apis.ac.uk](http://www.apis.ac.uk)). Data downloaded from APIS on 28/04/10

\* the closest part of Manchester Mosses SAC to the M62

**Table 7: Atmospheric sulphur dioxide concentrations compared with critical load at Holcroft Moss**

Site	Grid reference	Habitat	Critical Level / $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	SO <sub>2</sub> Concentration / $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Exceedance	Is sulphur dioxide currently a problem?
Manchester Mosses SAC (Holcroft Moss)	SJ683928	Raised and blanket bogs	20	.8	Current concentration is 25% of the critical level.	No

Source: Based on information provided by the UK Air Pollution Information System ([www.apis.ac.uk](http://www.apis.ac.uk)). Data downloaded from APIS on 28/04/10

11.6 Nevertheless, it is clear from Table 6 that nitrogen deposition is already a problem within Manchester Mosses SAC and it is not unreasonable to attribute this to the proximity of Holcroft Moss to the M62. Indeed, Environment Agency modelling data suggest that 40% of the nitrogen deposited on this site arises from road transport. In contrast, the site is not suffering from sulphur dioxide deposition, presumably because road traffic contributes very little to atmospheric concentrations of sulphur dioxide.

11.7 The environmental pressures upon the mossland habitat for which this site is designated are mainly:

- atmospheric nitrogen deposition from road traffic;
- increased agricultural drainage in the surrounding land, which causes the habitat to dry out and begin succession towards scrubland and woodland (including drainage of peat that gradually increases a downward gradient away from the mosslands);
- changes to the maintenance regime of nearby agricultural drainage, which can cause either drying out through unsympathetic dredging, or waterlogging through complete lack of dredging;
- increased water abstraction for irrigation, which can contribute towards the drying out of mossland habitat through reduced flows and/or a lowered water table;
- afforestation as a result of natural succession;
- fly-tipping;
- loss of neighbouring mossland habitat as a result of agricultural drainage or drainage and landfill for development;
- loss of neighbouring peat and mossland habitat as a result of peat harvesting, both legally and illegally;
- damage to mossland habitat due to increased recreational pressure (e.g. paintball); and
- loss of *Sphagnum* species as a result of drying out and increased air pollution.



## Key potential pressures from Halton

- 11.8 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SAC:
- Deterioration in local air quality and thus increased nitrogen deposition.

## Appropriate Assessment

- 11.9 North Halton is located immediately south of the M62, 18km west of Manchester Mosses SAC. It is possible that development in Halton (e.g. the Mersey Gateway Bridge (CS15), 3MG (CS6), commercial development (CS3), new housing (CS2), associated infrastructure provision (CS5)) has the potential to result in an increase in vehicle movements using the M62, and therefore contribute to an increase in atmospheric nitrogen deposition into the SAC. The M62 is located approximately 5km north of the River Mersey, and runs parallel to it without any crossing. The Mersey Gateway Bridge is therefore unlikely to result in a significant increase in M62 vehicle movements compared to other roads serving the Borough. It would be more appropriate to consider these likely significant effects as an 'in combination effect' with other plans and projects that may contribute to greater vehicle traffic on the M62.
- 11.10 Under current plans, approximately 80,460 new dwellings and at least 1,440 ha of commercial development will be delivered across the Merseyside area over the next 20 years (including the 8,000 dwellings to be delivered in Halton). Given the key role of the M62 as one of the major entry/exit routes to Merseyside from the Midlands and the North, it is reasonable to assume that a significant cumulative 'in combination' air quality effect as a result of the cumulative increase in vehicle emissions is not unlikely.
- 11.11 There are several policies which would serve to protect the SAC either directly or through promoting and delivering Sustainable Transport & Travel (**policy CSxx**):
- Directing significant development, which generates a large number of trips, into sustainable locations in accordance with Halton's spatial strategy;
  - Ensuring all development is well connected and achieves high levels of accessibility including satisfactory access by bus, rail, walking and cycling;
  - Requiring the production of Travel Plans and Transport Assessments, in association with major new developments and in accordance with national guidance.
  - Setting maximum parking standards to deter use of the private car.
  - To support sustainable transport across the Borough, improvements to the existing network and the introduction of new sustainable routes and facilities will be encouraged including:
    - A cross-river sustainable transport route prioritising public transport, walking and cycling on the Silver Jubilee Bridge in association with the Mersey Gateway Project
    - Increased use of the Halton Curve rail route (South-West Runcorn)
    - Park and ride facilities in appropriate locations

- Reinstated or new railway stations
- An improved rail station in central Widnes
- Pedestrian and cycling routes and facilities especially in association with the Key Areas of Change
- Capacity for innovative transport technology, including the use of alternative fuels

11.12 Moreover, the supporting text for this policy specifically address cross-boundary issues: *'In addition to the above it is also imperative that the cross-boundary nature of travel is recognised and where appropriate opportunities are taken to ensure that public transport, walking and cycling routes are integrated across boundaries. Working with neighbouring authorities will be supported in order to achieve sustainable cross boundary accessibility particularly in conjunction with the Liverpool City Region'*.

11.13 Based on this information it is concluded that the Halton Core Strategy does provide a system of measures to minimise the contribution to any increase in nitrogen deposition within Manchester Mosses SAC. However, one further amendment to policy is recommended.

## Recommendations for amendment to policy

11.14 The only further measure that we would recommend for inclusion in policy is to make it clear that since the Manchester Mosses SAC is already exceeding its critical load any project/development within the Borough which would increase nitrogen inputs into the SAC by more than 1% will require a project level Appropriate Assessment. This will include traffic movements associated with housing. In order to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on small scale housing development proposals it may be appropriate to restrict this requirement to developments of more than 50 dwellings.

## Conclusion

11.15 The provision of these policies demonstrates that the Core Strategy does already include proportionate measures to minimise its contribution to vehicle movements on the M62 and therefore contains an adequate policy framework to enable Halton to reduce its atmospheric nitrogen deposition on Manchester Mosses SAC from Core Strategy development to a level that is effectively inconsequential.

## 12 Oak Mere SAC

### Introduction

- 12.1 Figure 3 shows the location of Oak Mere SAC in Cheshire, which is approximately 12km south of the Halton Borough and which is also part of the Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar site.
- 12.2 Oak Mere covers an area of 68.82ha. This site consists of a large water body formed in a kettle-hole in the fluvio-glacial sands of the Cheshire Plain. The lake has low nutrient levels typical of oligotrophic waters containing few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) and has a marginal zone of shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*). The lake also has floating rafts of bog-moss (*Sphagnum* spp.) and narrow small-reed (*Calamagrostis stricta*) which are now rare in the lowlands of England. There are also transition areas at the waters edge which contain, soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), marsh pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*) and water horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*). The small depressions in the peat contain bottle sedge (*Carex rostrata*), cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*) and round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*).

### Reasons for Designation

- 12.3 The primary reason for selection of this site is the presence of Habitats Directive Annex I habitats (EC 1992c) of oligotrophic waters containing few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) and transition mires and quaking bogs.

### Historic Trends and Existing Pressures

- 12.4 The nutrient-poor water of Oak Mere has already been shown to be highly sensitive to several sources of enrichment. There are potential threats of further nutrient enrichment and chemical pollution at times of high water table, via discharges into the Mere's surface inflow. The risks from these point sources are being investigated by Natural England and the Environment Agency. There is also a continual risk of accidents and spillages from the busy transport network at the sides of the Mere.
- 12.5 The Mere has reduced in size due to a natural lowering in the local water table caused by successive droughts. The water-level changes are also being monitored and managed to minimise the threat to shoreline communities from desiccation and invasion by birch and willow.
- 12.6 Table 8 indicates that atmospheric nitrogen deposition is already exceeding the critical load by almost three times. A review of the sources of nitrogen deposition ([www.apis.ac.uk](http://www.apis.ac.uk)) indicates that an overwhelming majority (52%) arises from livestock emissions. Road traffic emissions are estimated to contribute to 6% of the nitrogen deposition at Oak Mere SAC. In contrast, the site is not suffering from sulphur dioxide deposition, presumably because road traffic contributes very little to atmospheric concentrations of sulphur dioxide.

**Table 8: Atmospheric nitrogen deposition compared with critical load at Oak Mere\***

Site	Grid reference	Habitat	Minimum critical Load / Kg N/ha/year	Nitrogen Deposition/ Kg N/ha/ year	Exceedance	Is atmospheric nitrogen deposition currently a problem?
Oak Mere SAC	SJ573679	Oligotrophic waters	5	13.2	Current deposition is almost four times the minimum critical load.	Yes

Source: Based on information provided by the UK Air Pollution Information System ([www.apis.ac.uk](http://www.apis.ac.uk)). Data downloaded from APIS on 09/07/10

**Table 9: Atmospheric sulphur deposition compared with critical load at Oak Mere\***

Site	Grid reference	Habitat	Critical Level / $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	SO <sub>2</sub> Concentration / $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Exceedance	Is atmospheric nitrogen deposition currently a problem?
Oak Mere SAC	SJ573679	Oligotrophic waters	20	1.2	Current concentration is 6% of the critical level.	No

Source: Based on information provided by the UK Air Pollution Information System ([www.apis.ac.uk](http://www.apis.ac.uk)). Data downloaded from APIS on 09/07/10

## Key Potential Pressures from Halton

12.7 Oak Mere SAC is located immediately adjacent to the A54 and A49, both of which are busy roads within Cheshire. From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SAC:

- deterioration in local air quality and thus increased nitrogen deposition

## Likely Significant Effects of the Core Strategy

12.8 While it is possible that some development in Halton (e.g. the Mersey Gateway Bridge (CS15), 3MG (CS6), commercial development (CS3), new housing (CS2) and associated infrastructure provision (CS5)) has the potential to contribute to traffic flows on the A54 and A49 neither are key routes for traffic movements into and out of Halton, even from Cheshire West & Chester (the M56 being a far more significant route). As such, and given the distance between Halton and Oak Mere SAC (10km) it is considered reasonable to conclude that any contribution of Halton to traffic movements is effectively inconsequential when compared to that arising from Cheshire West & Chester and parts of north Wales.

## Likely Significant Effects of Other Projects and Plans

12.9 A total of 17,955 homes are to be provided in Cheshire West and Chester by 2021 which are directly served by the A54 and A556. It is reasonable to assume that a significant cumulative 'in combination' air quality and water quality effect as a result of the cumulative increase in vehicle emissions is not unlikely. However, it would be a matter for the Cheshire West and Chester Core Strategy to take any steps necessary to mitigate any effect.

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## Conclusion

- 12.10 It can be concluded that the Halton Core Strategy is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects upon Oak Mere SAC.

## 13 River Dee and Bala Lake SAC

### Reasons for Designation

13.1 The River Dee and Bala Lake qualifies as an SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

13.2 Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*
- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*
- Otter *Lutra lutra*

13.3 The historic trends and current pressures on the site are summarised below.

### Historic Trends and Current Pressures

13.4 The habitats and species for which the site is designated are dependent on the maintenance of good water quality and suitable flow conditions. Fish species require suitable in-stream habitat and an unobstructed migration route. Otters also require suitable terrestrial habitat to provide cover and adequate populations of prey species. The site and its features have been historically threatened by practices which had an adverse effect on the quality, quantity and pattern of water flows, such as inappropriate flow regulation, excessive abstraction, deteriorating water quality from direct and diffuse pollution, eutrophication and siltation. Degradation of riparian habitats due to engineering works, agricultural practices and invasive plant species have also had localised adverse effects in the past. The Atlantic salmon population has been threatened by excessive exploitation by high sea, estuarine and recreational fisheries. Introduction of non-indigenous species has also been a risk to both fish and plant species.

13.5 The environmental pressures upon the River Dee & Bala Lake SAC are mainly:

- Deterioration in water quality and changes in flow rates due to ex-industrial runoff, discharge of treated sewage effluent (which contains elevated nitrates) and agricultural runoff;
- Risk of excessive abstraction resulting in a decrease in freshwater flows and an increase in sediment loading of water such that dehydration of interest features may occur;
- Overfishing of Atlantic salmon; and

- Introduction of invasive species.

## Key potential pressures from Halton

13.6 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development requires investigation, since if it occurred it could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SAC:

- Damaging levels of abstraction to supply housing in Halton when considered in combination with development elsewhere in United Utilities Integrated Resource Zone and development outside the zone that will receive water from the same sources (e.g. abstraction from the River Dee in relation to development in North Wales).

## Likely Significant Effects of the Core Strategy (in combination)

13.7 Due to the integrated nature of water supply across Greater Manchester and Merseyside it is not possible or necessary to consider the impacts of the Halton Core Strategy in isolation since the situation does not arise; all impacts will be 'in combination'. These are described in the table below, against each potential impact.

Aspect of the Core Strategy	Water resource issues
<p>Delivery of 8,000 new dwellings across Halton (2003-2026) (mainly through urban intensification until 2018). After 2018 development may involve greenbelt release.</p> <p>Economic development – 289 hectares of land will be made available (2010-2026) from a variety of sources for employment purposes (Policy CS3), and existing economic development enhanced (CS13). Development focus within 'key areas of change' (CS7-CS9)</p>	<p>The adopted United Utilities Water Resource Management Plan (September 2009) indicates that the water available for use in the Integrated Resource Zone is expected to reduce by 24.8 MI/d between 2009/10 and 2014/15. Without water efficiency measures or new resources the initial supply demand balance for the Integrated Resource Zone is calculated to be in deficit by 8 MI/day by 2024/25.</p> <p>However, from reading the Water Resource Management Plan it does appear that abstraction from the Dee or any other European sites beyond the current licensed volumes is not part of United Utilities' intended future supply strategy<sup>79</sup>, which rather depends on a mixture of demand management and increased abstraction from groundwater as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Construction of a bi-directional pipeline, known as the "West-to-East Link", between Merseyside and North Manchester. It is due to be in operation by 2012. This will help United Utilities maintain adequate supplies to Greater Manchester and Merseyside if there is a need to temporarily reduce supply from a major reservoir, for example due to maintenance work or drought</li> </ol>

<sup>79</sup> Mark Smith of United Utilities North & Central Area Water Asset Management Team confirmed in a personal communication on 27/07/09 that abstraction from the Dee will not exceed the current licensed volume. The current licensed volume was subject to the Environment Agency's Review of Consents process and no reductions were considered necessary. It can therefore be concluded that no adverse effects on the River Dee (either alone or 'in combination') will result from the United Utilities abstraction.

Aspect of the Core Strategy	Water resource issues
	<p>conditions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Maintain current leakage levels.</li> <li>3. Help customers save 9 MI/d by 2014/15 (increasing later on to 12 MI/d), through a base service water efficiency programme.</li> <li>4. Achieve a water demand reduction of 10 MI/d in a dry year by 2014/15 (increasing to 22 MI/d by 2034/35) as a result of the expected scale of voluntary metering of households.</li> <li>5. Non-household customers in the Integrated Zone are expected to reduce water demand by 87 MI/d by 2014/15 (141 MI/d by 2034/35) due to the effects of the economic downturn and as part of their continuing water efficiency programmes.</li> </ol> <p>United Utilities enhanced plans identified as part of their economic programme to maintain adequate supply-demand balances are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further reducing leakage by 23 MI/d by 2034/35.</li> <li>2. A programme of economic water efficiency measures to save 4 MI/d by 2034/35.</li> <li>3. Implementing water source enhancements of 48 MI/d by 2034/35<sup>80</sup></li> </ol>

## Conclusion

- 13.8 It is concluded that since no increased abstraction from European sites will be required in order to service new development in Halton (or elsewhere within the Integrated Supply Zone) that significant effects on the River Dee & Bala Lake SAC can be screened out as unlikely. Risk of abstraction at inappropriate times of the year (such as periods of low flow) will be prevented by the Environment Agency's licensing regime and Review of Consents process.

<sup>80</sup> Widnes groundwater (22.7 MI/d), Southport groundwater (22.5 MI/d) and Oldham groundwater (2.5 MI/d)



## 14 River Eden SAC

### Reasons for Designation

14.1 The River Eden in the Lake District qualifies as an SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea*
- Watercourses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

14.2 Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- White-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*
- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*
- Otter *Lutra lutra*

14.3 The historic trends and current pressures on the site are summarised below.

### Historic Trends and Current Pressures

14.4 The maintenance of breeding and nursery areas for the species on this site depends on the habitat quality of streams and their margins. Many of the streams within the site suffer from overgrazing of riverbanks and nutrient run-off. This is being addressed by a number of measures, including a conservation strategy with actions to address river quality issues, and a partnership approach to funding habitat improvements. The water-crowfoot communities as well as the species are sensitive to water quality, particularly eutrophication.

14.5 Practices associated with sheep-dipping pose a potential threat at this site, and are currently under investigation. Much of the alluvial forest cover is fragmented and/or in poor condition. It is hoped to address this through management agreements or Woodland Grant Schemes with individual owners.

14.6 The habitats and species for which the site is designated are dependent on the maintenance of good water quality and suitable flow conditions. Fish species require suitable in-stream habitat and an unobstructed migration route. Otters also require suitable terrestrial habitat to provide

cover and adequate populations of prey species. The site and its features have been historically threatened by practices which had an adverse effect on the quality, quantity and pattern of water flows, such as inappropriate flow regulation, excessive abstraction, deteriorating water quality from direct and diffuse pollution, eutrophication and siltation. Degradation of riparian habitats due to engineering works, agricultural practices and invasive plant species have also had localised adverse effects in the past. The Atlantic salmon population has been threatened by excessive exploitation by high sea, estuarine and recreational fisheries. Introduction of non-indigenous species has also been a risk to both fish and plant species.

14.7 The environmental pressures upon the River Eden SAC are mainly:

- Deterioration in water quality and changes in flow rates due to agricultural runoff and discharge of treated sewage effluent (which contains elevated nitrates);
- Risk of excessive abstraction resulting in a decrease in freshwater flows and an increase in sediment loading of water such that dehydration of interest features may occur;
- Overfishing; and
- Introduction of invasive species.

### Key potential pressures from Halton

14.8 Traditionally, the water supply for Merseyside comes from the River Dee and Welsh sources, while that for Greater Manchester comes from the Lake District (particularly Haweswater which is within the catchment of the River Eden). The new west-east link main will enable greater flexibility of supply such that there will no longer be a strong split between water sources.

14.9 From the environmental requirements that have been identified above it can be determined that the following impacts of development could interfere with the above environmental requirements and processes on the SAC:

- Damaging levels of abstraction to supply housing in Halton when considered in combination with development elsewhere in United Utilities Integrated Resource Zone and development outside the zone that will receive water from the same sources (e.g. abstraction from Haweswater in relation to development in Cumbria).

### Likely Significant Effects of the Core Strategy (in combination)

14.10 Due to the integrated nature of water supply across Greater Manchester and Merseyside it is not possible or necessary to consider the impacts of the Halton Core Strategy in isolation since the situation does not arise; all impacts will be 'in combination'. These are described in the table below, against each potential impact.

Aspect of the Core Strategy	Water resource issues
<p>Delivery of 8,000 new dwellings across Halton (2003-2026) (mainly through urban intensification until 2018). After 2018 development may involve greenbelt release</p> <p>Economic development – 289 hectares of land will be made available (2010-2026) from a variety of sources for employment purposes (Policy CS3), and existing economic development enhanced (CS13). Development focus within 'key areas of change' (CS7-CS9)</p>	<p>The most recent draft United Utilities Water Resource Management Plan (January 2009) indicates that the water available for use in the Integrated Resource Zone is expected to reduce by 24.8 Ml/d between 2009/10 and 2014/15. Without water efficiency measures or new resources the initial supply demand balance for the Integrated Resource Zone is calculated to be in deficit by 8 Ml/day by 2024/25.</p> <p>However, it has been confirmed by United Utilities that one of the main reasons for the existence of the new west-east link is in response to expected reductions in the licensed abstractions from Haweswater and other Lake District sources resulting from the Environment Agency's Review of Consents process. As such, abstraction from these sources is already being revised to ensure no adverse effect on the River Eden SAC or other sensitive sites in the Lake District.</p>

## Conclusion

- 14.11 It is concluded that since no increased abstraction from the River Eden SAC will be required in order to service new development in Halton (or elsewhere within the Integrated Supply Zone) significant effects can be screened out as unlikely.

## 15 Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar

### Introduction

- 15.1 Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site (119.89 ha) is located north of Ormskirk in West Lancashire, north west England, approximately 20km north of Halton. However, the outstanding importance of Martin Mere is as a refuge for its large and diverse wintering, passage and breeding bird community.
- 15.2 It occupies part of a former lake and mire that extended over some 1,300 ha of the Lancashire Coastal Plain during the 17th century. In 1972 the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust purchased 147 hectares of the former Holcrofts Farm, consisting mainly of rough damp pasture, with the primary aim of providing grazing and roosting opportunities for wildfowl. Since acquisition the rough grazed pastures have been transformed by means of positive management into a wildfowl refuge of international importance. Areas of open water with associated muddy margins have been created, whilst maintaining seasonally flooded marsh and reed swamp habitats via water level control. In September 2002, an additional 63 hectares of land were purchased on the southern most part of the refuge at Woodend Farm, with the aid of the Heritage Lottery Fund, to restore arable land to a variety of wetland habitats including seasonally flooded grassland, reedbed, wet woodland and open water habitats.
- 15.3 The complex now comprises open water, seasonally flooded marsh and damp, neutral hay meadows overlying deep peat. It includes a wildfowl refuge of international importance, with a large and diverse wintering, passage and breeding bird community. In particular, there are significant wintering populations of Bewick's swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*) and whooper swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*), pink-footed goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) and pintail (*Anas acuta*). There is considerable movement of wintering birds between this site and the nearby Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA.

### Reasons for Designation

- 15.4 This site qualifies for SPA under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following over wintering birds listed on Annex I of the Directive:
- Bewick's swan, 449 individuals representing at least 6.4% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6);
  - whooper swan 621 individuals representing at least 11.3% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)
- 15.5 This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following over wintering migratory species:
- pink-footed goose, 25,779 individuals representing at least 11.5% of the wintering Eastern Greenland/Iceland/UK population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

- pintail 978 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering North western Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

15.6 The assemblage of birds present makes the site a wetland of international importance. The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl. Over winter, the area regularly supports 46,196 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) including: pochard (*Aythya farina*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), teal (*Anas crecca*), wigeon (*Anas penelope*), pintail pink-footed goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), whooper swan, and bewick's swan.

15.7 It is additionally designated as a Ramsar site in accordance with Criterion 5 (UN, 2005) for supporting up to 25,306 waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03) in winter, and in accordance with Criterion 6 for supporting internationally important populations of pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus* ssp. *bewickii*, whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, Eurasian wigeon *Anas penelope* and northern pintail *Anas acuta*.

## Historic Trends and Existing Pressures

15.8 Since the site's designation as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as a Special Protection Area in 1985 there has been a gradual increase in the usage of the mere by certain species of wildfowl and wading birds as a direct consequence of positive management. The site is geared towards attracting visitors, with a number of hides from which the Mere and its birds may be viewed. In addition to the wild species for which it is designated, the site holds a collection of about 1,500 captive birds of 125 species from around the world, as well as a number of other visitor attractions. This is because the site is a Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve.

15.9 The environmental pressures experienced by Martin Mere in terms of its bird community are likely to be those common to all reedbed habitat. The refuge is vulnerable to the following:

- direct loss of characteristic species as a result of nutrient enrichment from agricultural fertilisers and run-off;
- loss of reedbed due to weakening of stems through poor growth conditions;
- natural succession to woodland through lack of active management;
- changes in farming practice. grazing management is largely dependent upon cattle from surrounding farms;
- reduced water level by surface and ground water abstractions or agricultural drainage, which causes the habitat to dry out and begin succession towards 'alder/willow carr woodland, hastening the overall process of succession towards broadleaved woodland' (Lancashire BAP);
- removal of reeds and other vegetation from whole stretches of watercourses (e.g. neighbouring the site) through routine management of ditches and riverbanks (in some instances);
- erosion of reedbeds due to increased recreational use of waterbodies and waterways (notably canals);

- habitat loss or degradation due to the isolation of reedbeds as a result of losses elsewhere, in turn due to the above or other factors (Lancashire BAP).

15.10 In addition, the following pressures have been documented :

- invasive plant species: Regular herbicide control of trifid burr marigold is necessary in order to prevent this plant from invading lake/scape margins to the detriment of bird populations;
- water borne disease that could affect wildfowl: water levels on the Mere are controlled to maintain optimum levels throughout the winter period, then lowered progressively in summer to expose marginal mud and the underlying damp pastures and maintain a mosaic of shallow pools. Ditches are regularly cut and dredged and all areas of pasture are positively managed under a Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Nutrients brought in with the water supply from the surrounding arable farmland and inadequate sewage treatment adds considerably to the large deposits of guano from wintering waterfowl. This results in the refuge being highly eutrophic with extremely poor water quality conditions and creates the possible risk of water borne diseases which could affect waterfowl, although no such outbreaks have been recorded. The Wildlife Trust have started to address this issue with the creation of reedbed water filtration systems and a series of settlement lagoons helps to reduce suspended solids of effluent water arising from waterfowl areas
- due to the eutrophication (described above) Martin Mere is also experiencing water quality issues.

## Key Pressures from Halton

15.11 The only potential pathway in which development within Halton could lead to effects on Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar sites is through development of wind turbines, depending on the location of the turbines and flight paths of qualifying bird species at Martin Mere.

## Likely Significant Effects of the Core Strategy

15.12 Halton is located approximately 20km south of Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site. It is possible that the construction of wind turbines (both onshore and offshore) within Merseyside has the potential to displace the flight path of qualifying bird species, depending on their location. It would be more appropriate to consider these likely significant effects as an 'in combination effect' with other policies that may contribute to the construction of wind turbines in the region.

15.13 The Core Strategy promotes renewable and low carbon energy within Halton (policy **CS18**). HRA Screening identified that, should this include wind turbine construction, a pathway exists for the construction of onshore/offshore turbines to disrupt flight paths and displace qualifying bird species. Disturbance issues associated with maintenance activities were also identified. The policy states that subject to successful assessment and mitigation of impacts of development proposals, Halton would seek to direct proposals for grid-connected renewable energy infrastructure and equipment, including, but not limited to: wind, solar PV and biomass CHP, to the identified priority zone areas.

- 15.14 This policy is being informed by The Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options<sup>81</sup> which identifies three priority zone areas for wind energy, none of which are located within the Borough of Halton. It is therefore unlikely that the Policy **CS18** of the Halton Core Strategy will result in the development of wind turbines.

## Likely Significant Effects of Other Projects and Plans

- 15.15 The Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Study (ongoing) is identifying the location 'Wind Priority Zones'. It is reasonable to assume that a significant cumulative 'in combination' disturbance to qualifying bird species may arise, depending on the findings of this study and subsequent policy.

## Conclusion

- 15.15.1 It can be concluded that Halton Core Strategy will not lead to adverse effects on Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar.

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<sup>81</sup> Arup (2001) Liverpool City Regional Renewable Energy Options Stage 2 (Drawing Title CHP/DH & Wind Priority Zones, Final Issue) (date 27/5/2010)

## 16 Summary of Appropriate Assessment

- 16.1 Although the Core Strategy was screened for likely significant effects upon River Dee & Bala Lake SAC, River Eden SAC, Oak Mere SAC, Martin Mere SAC and Sefton Coast SAC it was ultimately concluded that the Core Strategy was unlikely to lead to significant effects on these sites, even when considered in combination with other projects and plans.
- 16.2 The Core Strategy was screened in for Appropriate Assessment relating to likely significant effects 'in combination' with other projects and plans upon the following European sites: Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar Site, Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar, Dee Estuary SAC/SPA & Ramsar site, Ribble & Alt SPA/Ramsar and Manchester Mosses SAC.
- 16.3 The Appropriate Assessment identified the following impact pathways from the Halton Core Strategy to these European Sites, particularly when considered 'in combination' with other projects and plans:
- Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar Site - Disturbance to qualifying bird species (from recreational pressure and other sources), deterioration in water quality, impacts due to possible changes in sediment associated with shipping and loss of supporting habitat;
  - Liverpool Bay SPA/pRamsar, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore pSPA/pRamsar, and Ribble & Alt SPA/Ramsar - Water quality effects 'in combination'; and
  - Manchester Mosses SAC - Air quality effects 'in combination'.
- 16.4 These effects will result from the following policies:
- Halton's Spatial Strategy CS1;
  - Housing Supply and Locational Priorities CS3;
  - Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities CS3;
  - A Network of Centres for Halton CS4;
  - Infrastructure Provision CS5;
  - 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) CS6;
  - South Widnes CS7;
  - East Runcorn CS8;
  - West Runcorn CS9;
  - Minerals CS26;
  - Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People CS12;
  - The Mersey Gateway Project CS15;
  - Liverpool John Lennon Airport CS16; and
  - Sustainable Development and Climate Change CS18.



- 16.5 Recommendations for amendments to policy to enable the delivery of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate the adverse effects are set out below.

## Disturbance

- 16.6 To ensure direct disturbance to qualifying bird species as a result of Policy CS12 (Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Traveller and Travelling Show People) is avoided, additional text proposed: *'sites that would lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site would not be taken forward'*.
- 16.7 Additional wording is also recommended for Liverpool John Lennon Airport expansion (Policy CS16). Policy CS16 currently states that negative environmental and social issues associated with the operation and expansion of JLA should be satisfactorily addressed including measures to reduce or alleviate the impacts on the natural environment, including locally, nationally and internationally important sites. We would recommend adding: *'With respect to internationally important sites such measures will need to be sufficiently extensive to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity unless it can be demonstrated that there are both no alternatives and Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest'*. This would make clear the high standards that would need to be achieved in order for mitigation to be deemed acceptable.
- 16.8 **Policy CS25** 'Green Infrastructure' states with regarding to protecting and enhancing the green infrastructure network in the Borough that *'Halton Borough Council working alongside other partners and agencies responsible for the delivery and maintenance of green infrastructure will achieve this through ... sustaining the protection afforded to internationally important sites for biodiversity by managing recreational impacts and encouraging the use of the wider green infrastructure network which is less sensitive to recreational pressure'*. This specifically places management of the GI network within the context of sustaining the protection of European sites by directing recreational activity to less sensitive areas. However, it is considered that some amendments would be desirable.
- 16.9 Any strategy that follows on from this policy commitment will need to be sufficiently developed (or at least there will need to be a clear timescale for the introduction of such a strategy) by the time the Site Allocations DPD is adopted such that there is at least a funded mechanism to monitor recreational activity and trigger the introduction of enhanced management, since the delivery of enhanced access management and Green Infrastructure will need to be phased alongside delivery of housing. The contribution of each authority should be based upon their contribution to recreational activity in each site or (where this information is not yet available) their relative populations and proximity to the site. In general therefore the devising of such a strategy (whether it is part of a specific future SPD or not) will need to be well advanced by the time the Site Allocations DPD is adopted as some strategic greenspace and a possible contribution to funding access management may need to be associated with particular sites. It would be preferable for this to be mentioned in the Core Strategy policy or supporting text, or alternatively for the Core Strategy supporting text to cross-refer to this HRA report.
- 16.10 For the Mersey Estuary an appropriate detailed framework that encompasses the management of recreation may exist through a European Marine Site Management Scheme, which, if it follows the pattern of other EMS Management Schemes would include recreation/access management within its remit. If this does prove to be the case then the commitment given in the Green

Infrastructure policy cited above could be explicitly linked to a commitment to support and participate (financially as required) this Management Scheme, in conjunction with the other Merseyside authorities and stakeholders.

- 16.11 If the above recommendations to manage access are implemented, it is concluded that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar through direct disturbance as a result of any of the policies proposed within the Core Strategy.

## Water Quality

- 16.12 Policy CS23 (Protection from Risk and Pollution) states that proposals will be encouraged which ensure that development does not result in unacceptable levels of pollution (including air, odour, water, ground, noise and light) through its location, design, construction and operation. Avoiding an adverse effect is largely in the hands of the water companies (through their investment in future sewage treatment infrastructure) and Environment Agency (through their role in consenting effluent discharges). However, local authorities can also contribute through ensuring that sufficient wastewater treatment infrastructure is in place prior to development being delivered through the Core Strategy. In the case of Halton, this is alluded to in Policy CS15 (Infrastructure provision):
- 16.13 *“Development proposals will be supported by the timely provision of appropriate infrastructure including... physical/environmental e.g. water supply/treatment and energy supply...”*
- 16.14 However, it is considered that this allusion needs to be slightly expanded upon in order to provide a firm commitment with regard to the linking of housing delivery to delivery of necessary infrastructure that will ensure that an adverse effect on European sites is avoided. A policy in the Core Strategy will need to make specific reference to the fact that the delivery of development will be phased in order to ensure that it only takes place once any new water treatment infrastructure or appropriate retro-fitted technology (e.g. nitrate stripping) necessary to service the development while avoiding an adverse effect on European sites is in place. The Core Strategy should also indicate how this need will be determined and delivered through interaction with other authorities (United Utilities, the Environment Agency etc) i.e. through a Water Cycle Strategy.

## Dock, port and channel construction, maintenance shipping and dredging

- 16.15 Policy CS22 (Protection from Risk and Pollution) already makes provision to ensure risk levels from existing installations or facilities with the potential to create major accidents are recognised and that development proposals for new or expanded installations that increase risk levels do not take place on such sites. The same policy also seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable levels of pollution (including air, odour, water, ground, noise and light) through its location, design, construction and operation. Additionally policy CS6 (3MG) makes particular regards to respecting the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. It can therefore be demonstrated that the Core Strategy already includes inherent mitigation to avoid these potentially significant effects on the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.

- 16.16 However it is considered that a greater commitment to this is required to ensure the development of Docks and Ports within the Mersey Estuary, and any associated channel construction or dredging activity will be permitted subject only to the completion of a project based Appropriate Assessment. This would include a thorough consideration of impacts relating to construction (including potential disturbance of sediments and hydrodynamic modelling if required), operational impacts (including anticipated changes in boat traffic and associated impacts) with necessary mitigation in construction, design and management. This particularly applicable to policies CS7 (South Widnes); CS9 (West Runcorn) Mersey Gateway Port (3MG Western Docks) to be develop as multimodal facility using Manchester Ship canal, rail/road infrastructure (CS6).

## Coastal Squeeze

- 16.17 The Core Strategy should prevent any development being delivered in areas that may exacerbate coastal squeeze. The policy should:
- Ensure that new development is not delivered in locations which would require a change in coastal defence policy that might compromise natural coastal processes (e.g. from No Active Intervention to Hold the Line or Advance the Line); and
  - Prevent development being delivered in areas that may compromise locations identified for managed retreat as set out in the Environment Agency Coastal Habitats Management Plan (CHaMP) and Regional Habitat Creation Programme.
- 16.18 In addition, to ensure that loss of supporting habitat for SPA waterfowl is considered in strategic planning the policy should ensure that:
- If habitat which is suitable for supporting the species for which the SPA was designated were to be lost to any development, then the applicant would need to determine (a) how significant it was (i.e. whether it was used by more than 1% of the population of qualifying bird species) and (b) provide alternative habitat to replace it in an location that was reasonably close to the Estuary; and
  - the development of the site allocation DPD would includes the identification of areas outside of the SPA/Ramsar designation that serve as important supporting habitat for qualifying bird species. The Site Allocation DPD should include appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the loss of such sites is adequately assessed and mitigated.

## Local Air Quality (Manchester Mosses SAC)

- 16.19 The only further measure that we would recommend for inclusion in policy is to make it clear that since the Manchester Mosses SAC is already exceeding its critical load any project/development within the Borough which would increase nitrogen inputs into the SAC by more than 1% will require a project level Appropriate Assessment. This will include traffic movements associated with housing. In order to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on small scale housing development proposals it may be appropriate to restrict this requirement to developments of more than 50 dwellings.

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# APPENDIX F

Halton Borough Council

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document

November 2010

Operational Director  
Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW

<b>Directorate</b>	Resources	<b>Division / Team</b>	Policy and Strategy
<b>Job Title of persons completing form</b>	Senior Policy Officer and Policy Officer	<b>Date of screening</b>	15/10/10
<b>Name of policy / strategy / function</b>	Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document	<b>Is this a new or existing policy?</b>	New

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## **I. Introduction**

- I.1 The Equalities Review (2007) says that “an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be”.
- I.2 To ensure the Core Strategy Publication Document contributes to an equal society, an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been used to highlight the likely impact of the Core Strategy Policies have on different groups, and to show how the needs of such groups have been taken into account in relation to the development of the policies. By doing this, ways can be found to improve the policies such that areas of discrimination are eliminated and the needs of Halton’s communities are better served.
- I.3 The need for an EqIA to be undertaken stems from the duty placed on Public Authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination in carrying out their function, and promoting equality of access and opportunity for all communities. Local Authorities are also specifically required to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and how they promote equality in all aspects of strategic decision making and service provision. EqIA’s are considered the best way to do this. The Equality Act (2010), brings disability, sex, race and other grounds of discrimination within one piece of legislation and places a new duty on Local Authorities to consider what actions they can take to reduce socio-economic equalities people face. The Borough’s Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012 also highlights the importance of equality being mainstreamed in the delivery of all council services.

## 2. The Approach and Structure of the Equality Impact Assessment

- 2.1 The publication version of the Core Strategy EqIA follows a similar approach and structure to that set out in national guidance and particularly the guidance from the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA)<sup>1</sup>. A brief summary is included below.

### Stage 1: Initial Screening

- 2.2 Initial screening of all new or revised policies, strategies, procedures and functions should determine whether or not it is necessary to carry out a full EqIA. This is based on whether the area of work will have the potential to cause adverse impacts or discriminate against different groups in the community described in the Act as protected characteristics.
- 2.3 Due to the scope of the Core Strategy there may be potential to cause adverse impacts or to discriminate against different groups. It was therefore considered appropriate to carry out an EqIA screening of the Core Strategy Publication document.

### Stage 2: Scoping and Defining

- 2.4 Different perspectives and experiences are used in undertaking an EqIA. As a result the team involved in the Core Strategy Publication Document assessment which took place between 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010, employed technical expertise and specialist knowledge from across the Council divisions including:
- Environment and Regulatory Services;
  - Children and Young People;
  - Adults and Community;
  - Major Projects; and,
  - Policy and Strategy;

### Stage 3: Information Gathering

- 2.5 Stage 3 of the assessment aims to identify the sources of information which will be used to assist in the determination of whether the Core Strategy Publication Document is likely to have an adverse impact or discriminate against different groups. The information used for this stage of the EqIA of the Core Strategy Publication document has drawn upon a wide evidence base including:
- Census data
  - National and Local Statistics
  - Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), (2007)
  - Halton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), (2009)
  - Halton State of the Borough Report, (2010)
  - Halton's Economic Profile, (2009)

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<sup>1</sup> IDeA (2009) The EqIA Process: Six-Step Guide, available at: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8017502>

- 2.6 Using the information gathered from the sources listed above, section 3 provides some base-line information on the different protected characteristic focused upon in this assessment.

**Stage 4: Making a Judgement**

- 2.7 This stage is used to decide whether or not there is potential for a strategy or policy to result in a less favourable outcome or discrimination of any kind on any group in a community.
- 2.8 As the Core Strategy Publication document contains numerous policies dealing with a diversity of topics this stage has been broken into two parts. The first part of the assessment (section 5) focuses on the individual policies and the second part (section 6) assesses the policies in combination, summarising the effects of the Core Strategy Publication document.

**Stage 5: Action Planning**

- 2.9 The real value of completing an EqIA comes from the actions that will take place and the positive changes that will emerge through conducting the assessment. A recommendations section has been included in section 8.

**Stage 6: Publication and Review**

- 2.10 It is recommended best practice to publish EqIA to ensure transparency. It is also important to show the local community that the Council is actively engaged and committed to challenging potential discrimination, as well as improving its service delivery in relation to equalities.
- 2.11 The Council will be consulting on the contents of this EqIA at the same time as it is inviting representations on the Publication Version of the Core Strategy document, from the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011. Any comments on this assessment can be returned:

**Online at:** [www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning](http://www.halton.gov.uk/spatialplanning) where an online form can be completed

**By emailing:** [forward.planning@halton.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@halton.gov.uk)

**In writing to:** Halton Core Strategy  
Environment and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW

**By phoning:** 0303 333 4300

### 3. Protected Characteristic

3.1 The EqlA focuses on specific protected characteristics in the Borough and includes:

- Race and Ethnicity;
- Gender;
- Disability;
- Sexual Orientation;
- Transgender;
- Age;
- Religion/Belief;
- Pregnancy/Maternity;
- Marital/Civil Partnerships status
- Carers; and,
- Socio Economic Disadvantage

3.2 It should be acknowledged through the EqlA that these groups are not homogeneous. People within these equality groups may have different and individual needs and many of the members of one group may also be members of several groups. Additionally, the implementation of the policies within the Core Strategy will have an impact on Halton's communities as a whole and not just those identified in the different protected characteristic.

3.3 The table below (table 1) presents some base-line information on the different protected characteristic focused upon in this EqlA.

Protected Characteristic	Explanation/Comments
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2001 census showed that Halton at that time had a low proportion of people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, 2.4% of the total population. This compares to the England average of 10%.</li> <li>• Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are recognised ethnic minority groups. In the North West these groups are identified as having less access to healthcare, are less well supported by unemployment services and suffer from educational exclusion.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender is essentially balanced in Halton with 51.7% of residents being female and 48.3% male.</li> <li>• Research<sup>3</sup> shows that women are likely to spend more time in and around the home and the local community. Therefore the provision of locally accessible services, and a good quality and safe environment is particularly important.</li> </ul>
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although there is no single measure of the proportion of the</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> NWDA (2005) North West Action for Equality Report.

<sup>3</sup> DCLG (2004) Planning and Diversity: Research into policies

	<p>population with a disability, the 2001 census identified that 21.5% of the population in Halton indicated that they had a limiting long-term illness. This is significantly higher than the average for England and Wales which is 18.2%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall pattern shows a strong relationship between levels of learning disability with areas of deprivation in Halton.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although there are no definite statistics about sexuality, the Government estimates that between 5 and 7% of the population are gay men, lesbian or trans-sexual.</li> </ul>
<b>Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although there are no definite statistics about sexuality, the Government estimates that between 5 and 7% of the population are gay men, lesbian or trans-sexual.</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At present Halton has a younger population profile than the national and regional averages. However, Halton mirrors the national picture of an ageing population, with projections indicating that the population of the Borough will age at a faster rate than the national average.</li> <li>• Halton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>4</sup> states that in 1996 12.9% of the total population were aged 65 and over, by 2006 this had increased to nearly 14% and by 2015 this is projected to have increased to 17%.</li> <li>• The assessment also identifies that in Halton almost 6,000 adults live alone and it is projected by 2025 that over 8,500 pensioners will be living alone.</li> </ul>
<b>Religion/Belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community in Halton is made up of a number of different religions and beliefs.</li> <li>• Over recent years there has been a growth in realisation that faith communities may play a vital role in building community networks<sup>5</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the elderly population in Halton increases there is also predicted to be a steady increase in the number of carers. The Halton JSNA (2009) indicates an increased demand for services to support carers in Halton.</li> </ul>
<b>Marital Status/Civil Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2001 Census data reveals that with regard to same-sex couples 45.4% of Halton's residents are single, 34.2% are married, 1.8% are separated (but still legally married) and 5.2% are re-married. Compared to the regional and national figures Halton has a slightly higher percentage of single people.</li> <li>• The 2001 Census identifies a very small percentage of people aged over 16 were in a same-sex relationship, only 0.1% of Halton's residents. This is similar to regional (0.16%) and national (0.2%) figures. Data is also available from ONS on the number of civil partnerships formed in Halton.</li> </ul>
<b>Pregnancy/Maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Office for National Statistics provides vital statistic information (including births) down to ward level on an annual basis. The data shows that there were 1,656 live births in Halton in 2008, 833 of these were male whilst 823 were female.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Halton Borough Council (2009), Health and Wellbeing in Halton 2009: Halton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Summary of Findings, available at: <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/pdfs/socialcareandhealth/Healthwellbeinginhalton2009>

<sup>5</sup> CLG (2004) Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures, available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/planningdiversity>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with the birth statistics, ONS also provide numbers of teenage conceptions at local authority level. In 2008 there were 131 conceptions to women aged under 18 in Halton (52.2 births per 1,000 women aged 15-17). The latest figures show that Halton has a higher rate of teenage conception when compared to the North West and England &amp; Wales.</li> </ul>
<b>Socio – Economic Disadvantage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD) can be used to identify disadvantaged groups and areas in Halton.</li> <li>Halton’s overall deprivation score and rank have improved since the previous IMD in 2004, with the proportion of Halton’s population living in the worst 20% of SOAs<sup>6</sup> nationally falling to 48.5% in 2007 from 50% in 2004. However, Halton’s rank of 30 out of 376 English Local Authorities, with a rank of 1 being the most deprived, and the Borough’s comparison to Merseyside Authorities illustrates that the Borough is still performing poorly in terms of overall deprivation.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Health Deprivation &amp; Disability Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The health and disability domain of the Halton IMD is the one which shows the most SOAs in the most deprived 4% nationally. Although this has increased from 2004, the number of wards in the top 20% has decreased. Overall this is showing that the gap is widening between the healthiest and least healthy parts of the Borough and a clear link to ill health and deprivation.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Employment Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment deprivation is the second most severe deprivation within Halton (after health) and has also risen in the highest 4% bracket, from 12 SOAs to 14, illustrating again the gap is widening between the most and least deprived areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Income Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income deprivation has broadly improved. However, income deprivation is still a severe problem in the wards of Windmill Hill, Halton Castle, Halton Lea, and Kingsway, i.e. the current Neighbourhood Management Areas, and to some extent Halton Brook.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Education &amp; Skills Training Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The education, skills and training domain includes average points for key stages 2, 3 and 4, plus young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). At the time of the IMD the results for this domain had declined.</li> <li>In relation to NEET’s the current rate in Halton according to the Economic Profile (2008)<sup>7</sup> is 9.5% of people aged 16-18, with the highest rate and the highest number of NEET’s currently being in the Kingsway ward. For comparison the NEET figures for Merseyside and the North West for 2006 were 10.9% and 9.4% respectively.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Crime &amp; Disorder Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The crime domain shows an increase in the number of SOAs in the worst 20% nationally from 10 to 25.</li> <li>Overall, Halton ranks 65<sup>th</sup> out of 376 English Local Authorities in</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> SOAs (Super Output Areas) are small geographical units used as the building blocks for the IMD. Since they are smaller than wards, SOAs enable a finer level of data analysis to be carried out.

<sup>7</sup> Halton Borough Council (2008), Halton Economic Profile, available at: [http://www2.halton.gov.uk/pdfs/councilanddemocracy/research/hep\\_mar08](http://www2.halton.gov.uk/pdfs/councilanddemocracy/research/hep_mar08)

	<p>terms of total offences per 1000 population, compared to 140<sup>th</sup> in 2004 showing a significant increase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Consulting the Communities of Halton survey<sup>8</sup> also highlights how fear of crime in the Borough is a large concern for residents. The need to reduce crime was mentioned by around one in six (16.4%) residents as a factor that would be most effective in making the local area a better place to live.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Living Environment Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The living environment domain includes housing in poor condition and houses without central heating, as well as poor air quality and accidents to pedestrians and cyclists. This domain remains largely unchanged since 2004, with the number of SOAs in the worst 20% nationally remaining at 12.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Barriers to Housing and Service Domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This domain includes housing affordability and distance to local facilities as well as overcrowding or homeless applications. For these reasons the SOAs exhibit a broadly different pattern as compared to other domains. For instance Daresbury and Heath are amongst top ranking wards due to potentially higher house prices and greater distances to local amenities.</li> </ul>
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**Table 1: Protected Characteristics within Halton**

## 4. The Core Strategy Development Plan Document

- 4.1 Once adopted, the Halton Core Strategy will be the central document within the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF), providing the overarching strategy for the development of Halton to 2026 and beyond. The policies within the Core Strategy, along with those from the other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) will eventually replace the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the adopted planning framework for Halton. This “Publication” stage constitutes the final round of public consultation on the preparation of the Core Strategy, following on from the “Issues and Options” and “Preferred Options” consultation, which took place in 2006 and 2009 respectively.
- 4.2 The Core Strategy Publication document follows a structure that can be traced through the entire document. The document begins with highlighting Halton’s existing characteristics, and the issues and challenges facing the Borough as a place to live and work. A future vision and a number of strategic objectives are then expressed, setting out the core policy directions for the document. Flowing from this is the Spatial Strategy for Halton showing how change will be delivered over the plan period and highlighting the Borough’s Key Areas of Change. The Core Strategy is then supported by a series of core, non-area-based policies which will help to deliver the vision, objectives and spatial strategy.

<sup>8</sup> Halton Strategic Partnership (2005), Consulting the Communities of Halton 2005, available at: <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/pdfs/councilanddemocracy/521389>

I	<p><b>What are the aims and objectives of the strategy?</b></p>	<p>The purpose of the Core Strategy is to establish the spatial distribution of future growth and development in the Borough.</p> <p>The Core Strategy vision or “Mission Statement” is for Halton in 2026 to:      “In 2026, Halton is well equipped to meet its own needs with housing for all sections of society, a range of employment opportunities, plus retail and leisure facilities for everyone. Halton continues to contribute positively to achieving the economic, environmental and social potential of the Liverpool City Region and the North West.</p> <p>Thriving and diverse residential communities are emerging at Sandymoor, Daresbury and Runcorn Waterfront while additional high quality housing in other locations across Runcorn and Widnes are reinforcing and diversifying the Borough’s residential offer, responding to the needs of the Borough’s communities. There has been a renewed emphasis on the delivery of affordable housing providing accommodation for those who were previously unable to access the type of home they required.</p> <p>The Borough’s economy has been strengthened by the expansion of key employment areas at Daresbury, 3MG, Mersey Gateway Port and Widnes Waterfront, and Halton has developed an important role in the sub-region for sustainable distribution and logistics and in high-tech science and research. Halton’s residents are well equipped with the skills needed to compete for jobs in all sectors and locations throughout the Borough, where existing employment areas have been retained and improved through appropriate regeneration to meet the needs of modern employers. The Borough’s traditional industries, centred on the chemicals sector, continue to play a key role in both Runcorn and Widnes.</p> <p>Retail and leisure centres in the Borough maintain their function as key areas for the provision of shops, services and community facilities. The town centres at Widnes and Halton Lea offer vibrant and busy destinations for people to do their shopping, access services and meet one another. Runcorn Old Town has developed into a unique location for shopping and leisure, with a niche role compared to the two main town centres in the Borough.</p> <p>Development across the Borough is highly sustainable and contributes to the health and well-being of Halton’s communities, has made the best use of previously developed land and has utilised infrastructure and resources efficiently. Climatic risks continue to be managed and mitigated and development has contributed to minimising Halton’s carbon footprint. Additionally, Halton benefits from high quality infrastructure serving new and existing development.</p>
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		<p>The rural character and setting of the Borough's villages of Moore, Daresbury and Preston on the Hill within the Green Belt has been retained through restrictions on new development. The character of Hale Village (inset within the Green Belt), has also been protected, and any negative impacts associated with the expansion at Liverpool John Lennon Airport are minimised. The Borough's Green Belt continues to provide a vital resource for current and future residents and keeping important spaces between settlements.</p> <p>The historic and natural environments across Halton have been conserved and enhanced for future generations and the Borough's multifunctional Green Infrastructure network fulfils the recreational needs of residents, contributes to general well-being and provides important linked diverse habitats. Additionally, Halton's legacy of contaminated land continues to be remediated and regenerated, and development responds to the potential risks of major accidents and flooding.</p> <p>Transport routes both through the Borough and to surrounding areas are intrinsic to how the Borough functions on its own and as part of the sub-region, for the movement of goods and people. A second river crossing between the Borough's towns of Runcorn and Widnes, in the form of the Mersey Gateway Project, has been secured, improving connections and acting as a major sub-regional catalyst for development and regeneration".</p> <p>In order for Halton to achieve this vision, the Core Strategy sets out a series of strategic objectives.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>What outcomes are wanted from the strategy?</b>	<p>The Core Strategy intends to deliver a number of outcomes over the period to 2026, all of which will help to deliver the Core Strategy vision as set out above.</p> <p>More detail relating to the anticipated outcomes of the individual policies can be found in the monitoring framework of the Core Strategy Publication document.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Who is intended to benefit from the strategy?</b>	<p>The outcomes intended by the Core Strategy are wide ranging and are envisaged to benefit all of Halton's residents, visitors and businesses.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Who are the main stakeholders, and who has lead responsibility for delivery of the strategy?</b>	<p>Halton Borough Council will be primarily responsible for the delivery of the strategy; however, commitment from other stakeholders will be fundamental to ensure the Core Strategy's implementation. This may involve partnership working between the Council, Halton Strategic Partnership, national agencies like English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency, the voluntary and community sector, and land owning interests such as water companies, transport bodies and private landowners.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Please list any policies related to the one being assessed:</b>	<p>The Core Strategy, once adopted, will form the central document of Halton's LDF which will also include all DPDs and SPDs.</p>

		<p>The Core Strategy is an important corporate Council document and will be closely related to a number of policies and strategies across the Council including Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy, economic strategies, the Children and Young People's Plan and many more.</p> <p>The Core Strategy also has regard to, and is in compliance with, a number of national policies including national Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Guidance Notes (PPG )</p>
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**Table 2: Core Strategy Summary**

## 5. Screening the Publication version of the Core Strategy

- 5.1 As the previous section has highlighted, the Core Strategy Publication document includes a diversity of topics and covers a wide range of issues. The first part of this section therefore focuses on assessing the individual policies of the Core Strategy Publication document, screening their potential impacts on each of the protected characteristic.
- 5.2 Table 3 outlines the key characteristics of each policy and summarises whether there is the potential for the policy to have a positive or negative impact on each of the protected characteristic identified in section 1.3. Please note that for the purposes of the screening, the policies from the Core Strategy Publication document have been used and the policy summaries provided in the table are only to be used as a quick point of reference.
- 5.3 The key below identifies the symbols used to highlight the likely impact on each of the groups that an individual policy may have. Where a policy is likely to impact upon all of Halton's communities this has been identified as neutral, as there is no disproportionate impact for any specific group.

Symbol	Likely Impact
+	Positive
o	Neutral
-	Negative

Core Strategy Policy	Race	Gender	Disability	Sexual orientation	Age	Religion / belief	Carers	Socio-economic Disadvantage	Transgender	Marital Status/Civil Partnerships	Pregnancy/Maternity	Commentary
<p><b>CSI: Halton's Spatial Strategy</b>  This policy sets out the overall strategy for delivering housing and employment requirements across the Borough and starts to identify priorities and key locations for development.</p>	○	○	+	○	+	○	○	+	○	○	○	<p>Halton's Spatial Strategy establishes the spatial distribution of future growth and development in the Borough and so flows into all policies within the Core Strategy. The three groups highlighted through the assessment of the Spatial Strategy (disability, age and disadvantaged groups) therefore reflect the key groups that have been repeatedly identified as having positive impacts through the Core Strategy Policy.</p> <p>The Spatial Strategy focuses on development in defined urban areas close to existing services and facilities increasing access and connectivity and reducing the need to travel. This will have a positive impact for those with a disability, disadvantaged groups and will take into account the needs of an ageing population. Delivering housing diversity, health improvements and employment opportunities in the Key Areas of Change will also benefit those in disadvantaged groups. These positive effects are repeated throughout the Core Strategy policies in the assessment.</p>

<p><b>CS2: Sustainable Development Principles</b>  In order to ensure that growth and development in the Borough is sustainable, this policy establishes a number of principles for all development to meet. These principles reflect the current social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	<p>Achieving sustainable development will have a significant positive impact for all members of Halton’s communities including the identified protected characteristic of each equality group. There is therefore no disproportionate impact for any of the protected characteristic.</p>
<p><b>CS3: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities</b>  This policy seeks to make provision for housing supply in the Borough and the broad locational priorities for new housing development.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	+	○	○	○	○	<p>One of the locational priorities for housing supply is to consider additional housing allocations in Key Areas of change. This intervention could potentially improve housing diversity in these areas with the potential to benefit disadvantaged groups and ultimately ensure balanced and sustainable communities.</p>
<p><b>CS4: Employment Supply and Locational Priorities</b>  This policy seeks to make provision for new employment land in the Borough and broad locational priorities for new development, including expanding the number of start-up units and grow-on space to support entrepreneurs in the Borough, and to facilitate the growth of fledgling companies.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	+	○	○	○	○	<p>As with housing supply, one of the priorities for employment supply is to search for small scale development sites within Key areas of Change with the aim of providing local jobs which are accessible for local people. This should benefit local residents within these areas, improving the skills base, lowering unemployment and increasing income.</p>
<p><b>CS5: A Network of Centres for Halton</b>  This policy establishes a hierarchy for retail centres in Halton, categorising them and broadly defining their roles.</p>	○	○	+	○	+	○	○	+	○	○	○	○	<p>A Network of centres for Halton focuses on improving resident’s accessibility to services and facilities. Improving the health and welfare of residents in these areas will also have a positive impact on addressing the needs. Key benefits include improved access to services and facilities, and opportunities to provide and promote digital inclusivity.</p>

<p><b>CS6: Green Belt</b> This policy seeks to ensure that the green belt will remain largely unchanged with the exception of LJLA runway expansion.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	No significant impacts are anticipated for the equality groups.
<p><b>CS7: Infrastructure Provision</b> This policy recognises the strategic importance of ensuring that Halton’s infrastructure is both modern and of a high quality, as it is essential to deliver necessary improvements to the Borough’s existing infrastructure and to provide new infrastructure able to accommodate the needs of Halton’s communities.</p>	○	○	+	○	+	○	○	+	○	○	○	By taking advantage of development and regeneration opportunities attributable to new development in the Borough there may be a number of positive impacts for the equality groups. For instance the delivery of additional infrastructure will assist in improved accessibility and connectivity across the Borough, benefitting people with mobility issues including people with a disability and the elderly. Employment opportunities may also potentially benefit disadvantaged groups in the Borough by providing additional high quality infrastructure.
<p><b>CS8: Key Area of Change – 3MG</b> This policy seeks to capitalise on locational advantages to strengthen the logistics and distribution sector in Halton by further development and expansion of facilities at the Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) at Ditton, with associated accessibility and environmental improvements.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	+	○	○	○	By contributing towards improving the quality of life of residents at Ditton and Halebank the policy will positively impact upon disadvantaged groups in these areas. The 3MG Key Area of Change may also provide employment opportunities for local people in the Borough.
<p><b>CS9: Key Area of Change – South Widnes</b> This policy seeks to improve the</p>	○	+	+	○	+	○	○	+	○	○	○	By improving connectivity and access across this Key Area of Change, there will be a

<p>performance of Widnes Town Centre, continue the economic development of Widnes Waterfront through the rejuvenation of brownfield and redundant sites, and support regeneration in West Bank, including increased connectivity.</p>													<p>positive benefit for a number of equality groups including those with a disability and women with young children. Increasing connectivity and access may also support healthy activities for instance walking and cycling which would potentially benefit all ages including the active elderly. Disadvantaged groups would also benefit, especially in regard to the regeneration opportunities connected to the West Bank residential neighbourhood (one of the proposed Neighbourhood Priority Areas) and potential local employment opportunities in the Town Centre and at Widnes Waterfront.</p>
<p><b>CS10: Key Area of Change – West Runcorn</b> This policy seeks to deliver housing growth at Runcorn Docks, employment growth at the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks), and improve the performance of Runcorn Old Town centre, including improved linkages with residential communities.</p>	○	+	+	○	+	○	○	+	○	○	○	○	<p>Improved access and connectivity across this Key Area of Change will have a positive impact for members of the population including those with a disability, the elderly and women with young children. This will be especially beneficial for those groups accessing community services and facilities including Riverside College.</p>
<p><b>CS11: Key Area of Change – East Runcorn</b> This policy seeks to deliver housing growth and establish sustainable communities at Sandymoor and Daresbury, and support employment growth in this location, including in the business sector at Daresbury Park and in the knowledge and research sector at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	<p>No significant impacts are anticipated for the protected characteristics.</p>

<p><b>CS12: Housing Mix</b> This policy ensures that housing proposals have regard to identified local needs in terms of size, type and tenure of dwellings.</p>	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	+	o	o	o	<p>Housing which meets the needs of the whole community will have a significant positive impact for all. In terms of the equality groups providing a diversity of houses will specifically address the needs of those on low incomes, people with disabilities, an ageing population, young families and BME groups.</p>
<p><b>CS13: Affordable Housing</b> This policy aims to ensure that all (qualifying) housing developments make provision for an element of affordable housing.</p>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	+	o	o	o	<p>Affordable housing provision will especially benefit those on low incomes identified through the IMD.</p>
<p><b>CS14: Meeting the Needs of Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Communities</b> This policy seeks to ensure that adequate pitch provision is made across the Borough for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People. The policy reflects locational requirements for sites, including the need to offer convenient access to education, health and retail services.</p>	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	<p>Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are recognised ethnic minority groups, and so providing adequate pitch and site provision will have a positive impact on the 'race' equality strand. Ensuring good access to health facilities from new pitches and sites will positively benefit the elderly, young people and those with a disability within this minority group. Educational access should also benefit the younger age groups and there may also be opportunities for life long learning.</p>
<p><b>CS15: Sustainable Transport</b> This policy seeks to enhance the sustainable travel options available in Halton including walking, cycling and public transport. By doing so, the policy should make journeys easier, healthier and more reliable for</p>	o	o	+	o	+	o	o	+	o	o	o	<p>Encouraging sustainable transport will benefit those with disabilities, older and younger people without access to a private vehicle, and people on low incomes.</p>

residents, businesses and visitors. In addition the policy seeks to support and increase transport options for those without access to a private vehicle.												
<b>CS16: The Mersey Gateway Project</b> This policy seeks to promote the Mersey Gateway project which will connect communities and lead to regeneration and investment throughout the Borough and the wider North West Region.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	No significant impacts are anticipated for the protected characteristic.
<b>CS17: Liverpool John Lennon Airport</b> This policy relates to the operation and planned expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	No significant impacts are anticipated for the protected characteristic.
<b>CS18: High Quality Design</b> This policy sets out a number of design principles that all development should meet with the aim of creating high quality environments where people want to live, work and play.	o	o	+	o	+	o	o	+	o	o	o	New development which is accessible, adaptable and which seeks to design out crime and the risk of crime will have a beneficial impact for all members of Halton's communities and in particular those with a disability, the elderly and disadvantaged groups.
<b>CS19: Sustainable Development and Climate Change</b> This policy seeks to reduce the causes and tackle the effects of climate change by ensuring developments contribute to reductions in carbon emissions, are adaptable to the effects of a changing climate, and are sustainable for current communities and future generations.	o	o	o	o	+	o	o	+	o	o	o	In the long term the increased use of sustainable design and construction methods/technologies could decrease the cost of heating and servicing a home. This will particularly benefit the elderly and those on low incomes who are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.



<p><b>CS20: Halton’s Natural and Historic Environment</b> This policy requires all new development to conserve, manage and enhance Halton’s historic and natural environments for current and future generations and to ensure a strong sense of place, enhance local distinctiveness and improve environmental quality.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	<p>This policy will have a positive impact for those with a disability and the elderly as conserving and managing the historic and natural environment will assist in improving access for all.</p>
<p><b>CS21: Green Infrastructure</b> This policy recognises the multi-functionality of Halton’s Green Infrastructure and its contribution to improving the quality of life of Halton’s residents. The policy aims to manage, expand and improve Green Infrastructure in the Borough.</p>	○	○	+	○	+	○	○	+	○	○	○	<p>Multi-functional Green Infrastructure will increase opportunities for formal and informal recreation supporting residents of all ages and improving resident’s health and well-being. Enhancing connectivity and access will also ensure that the Borough’s Green Infrastructure is accessible for all.</p>
<p><b>CS22: Health and Well-Being</b> This policy emphasises the need to support healthy environments, encourage healthy lifestyles and ensure adequate provision of health care facilities in order to achieve and</p>												<p>Measures which support healthy lifestyles will positively benefit all of the Borough’s residents, of all ages from children of school age to the needs of an ageing population. Providing adequate health care services and</p>
<p><b>CS23: Managing Pollution and Risk</b> This policy aims to make a significant contribution to making Halton a safer place to live, work and visit by protecting people and the environment from the consequences of natural or other forces, such as hazardous activities, flooding and the consequences of pollution.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	<p>This policy will benefit all members of Halton’s communities; however, there must be consideration of those with a disability and the elderly as these groups may be at the greatest risk in the event of a major hazard. Tackling pollution will benefit all of the Borough’s communities.</p>

<p><b>CS24: Waste</b> This policy promotes sustainable waste management to ensure that waste generated in Halton is treated and disposed of in a sustainable and environmentally acceptable way, balancing the economic, social and environmental needs of the Borough.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	No significant impacts are anticipated for the equality groups.
<p><b>CS25: Minerals</b> This policy aims to manage the Borough’s mineral resources through minimising the need for minerals extraction and where proposals for minerals extractions do occur, ensuring that economic, social and environmental issues and impacts are fully considered.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	No significant impacts are anticipated for the equality groups.

**Table 3: Screening the Proposed Submission Document**

## 6. Summary of Impacts

6.1 This section focuses on the overall impact of the Core Strategy policy in combination for each of the protected characteristic.

Protected Characteristic	+ve	o	-ve	Comment
<b>Race</b>	+			Addressing housing needs will have a positive impact on the 'race' equality group especially for BME groups and also in terms of providing adequate pitch and site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
<b>Gender</b>	+			The proposed submission document should have a positive impact on gender in terms of improving access and connectivity for men and women with young children.
<b>Disability</b>	++			A key theme across all of the policies in the proposed submission document is to improve access for all, especially to community services and facilities. This will have particular positive benefits for people with mobility issues including those with a disability.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		o		The policies are not envisaged to have any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
<b>Transgender</b>		o		The policies are not envisaged to have any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
<b>Age</b>	++			The policies are likely to have a positive benefit on younger people and on the elderly due to the emphasis on ensuring access to community services and facilities and affordable housing of the right type, size and mix.
<b>Religion / Belief</b>		o		The policies are not envisaged to have any disproportionate impact on this equalities group, apart from positively contributing to the improvement of community networks.
<b>Carers</b>		o		Addressing housing needs through the Core Strategy may result in a positive impact on this protected characteristic. However, when the policies are considered in combination there will be no overall disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic
<b>Marital Status/Civil Partnerships</b>		o		The policy is not envisaged to have any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
<b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b>		o		Ensuring access to community services and facilities and affordable housing of the right type, size and mix will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic

<b>Socio Economic Disadvantage</b>	++			Delivering housing diversity, health improvements and employment opportunities across the Borough, and with a particular emphasis on the Key areas of change, will have a very positive impact for those in disadvantaged groups, including those on low incomes, those seeking to gain access to employment, training and skills, and those with poor health.
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**Table 4: Assessment of the Core Strategy Submission Document Policy**  
(++ significant positive impact)

- 6.2 Overall, the EqIA reveals that the majority of policies are likely to have a positive or neutral impact on different groups in the community. Positive benefits have been especially identified for the young, elderly, disabled and those identified within deprived groups including the socially excluded. This is because the Core Strategy seek to:
- ensure access and connectivity across the Borough for all, especially in terms of access to community services and facilities;
  - deliver housing diversity, health improvements and employment opportunities for Halton’s residents and to focus these improvements and interventions in the key areas of change; and,
  - ensure that the needs of Halton’s diverse communities are fully considered by development.
- 6.3 The overall summary has not identified any disproportionate negative impacts for any of the protected characteristics.

## 7. Consultation

- 7.1 In addition to determining the likely impact of the policy on the protected characteristic, it is important to consider whether the Core Strategy consultation arrangements have, or will cause, an adverse impact or discriminate against any group in the community.
- 7.2 The Core Strategy has been prepared and developed in partnership with a number of consultees, key stakeholders and through public consultation of the Issues and Options stage in 2006 and Preferred Options Stage 2009. This has provided opportunities for the needs of all the protected characteristics in the Borough to be considered and for individuals and communities to comment.
- 7.3 In considering the particular needs of various protected characteristics in the Borough the Core Strategy Submission document has drawn upon a number of policies, guidance and background documents at all spatial levels in the UK, from national to the Borough level. For further information regarding the evidence base and policy documents used for developing the submission document please refer to supporting document 'G' of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission document.
- 7.4 Additionally, there have been a range of consultation events and mechanisms used for preparing the Core Strategy document. This includes the 2006 Issues and Options consultation and the (2009) Preferred Options consultation which were prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2006). The Core Strategy Proposed submission document has also been prepared in accordance with the SCI and is therefore unlikely to cause any adverse impacts or discriminate against any group in the community, including the protected characteristics.
- 7.5 For further information regarding consultation of the Core Strategy please refer to the Statement of Consultation, supporting document 'D' of the Core Strategy proposed submission document.

## 8. General, Socio Economic Duty and Recommendations

- 8.1 This EqlA concludes that the 'Core Strategy proposed submission document' is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the protected characteristics and recommends that a full EqlA is not needed at this stage. This has been ascertained by following the general duty of the Equality Act 2010 (para 8.1.1 – 8.1.3 below) and the Socio Economic duty (para 8.1.4 below) in which the submission document policy has taken account of the need to:-
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conflict that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and;
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  - For decisions of a strategic nature had due regard been taken to the desirability of exercising it in a way that is designated to reduce the inequalities of outcome that result from social –economic disadvantage.
- 8.2 The Council will monitor the implementation and impact of the Core Strategy policies through the LDF's Annual Monitoring Report. A framework for the monitoring of policies can be found in appendix 2 of the Core Strategy proposed submission document. This will provide a robust basis for future monitoring and assessment of the Core Strategy policies.
- 8.3 Following on from the eight week consultation period, the Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to examine the soundness of the plan. Any representations received at the Publication stage will be submitted to the Planning Inspector to be considered alongside the soundness of the plan at the Examination in Public.
- 8.4 The timetable for the remaining key stages in the production of the Core Strategy is shown in the table below.

<b>Core Strategy Production Process</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Commencement	<b>March 2006</b>
Issues and Options Consultation	<b>June – Sept 2006</b>
Preferred Options Consultation	<b>Sept – Nov 2009</b>
Publication	November 2010
Submission to Secretary of State	February 2011
Pre-Hearing Meeting	April 2011
Hearing Session Opens	June 2011
Inspectors Binding Report	September 2011
Adoption	December 2011

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 18 November 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend the Council to adopt a Statement of Licensing Policy.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Council be recommended to

**1) adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy attached to this report; and**

**2) defer consideration of the cumulative impact special policy as proposed by Cheshire Constabulary.**

### 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010 the Council's Executive Board authorised a consultation exercise to be undertaken to review the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy (Minute EXB 37).
- 3.2 A consultation exercise was then undertaken in respect of the draft statement. The consultation period ended on 15 October 2010. The consultation draft of the Statement of Licensing Policy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 3.3 Only one response was received to the consultation exercise and this was from Cheshire Constabulary writing in support of its own proposed cumulative impact policy (described below). It is perhaps not surprising that no other responses have been received since the Council's proposals represent no change to the existing policy except for any decision made on the proposed cumulative impact policy.
- 3.4 For the first time since the introduction of Statements of Licensing Policies the Council has received a request from Cheshire Constabulary to include a Cumulative Impact Policy in respect of the Victoria Square Area in Widnes. This request is set out at **Appendix 2** to this report.
- 3.5 The rules relating to Cumulative Impact Policies are set out in statutory guidance issued under section 182 Licensing Act 2003: these are set out at **Appendix 3** to this report.
- 3.6 The provisions regarding cumulative impact in the proposed revised Statement of Licensing Policy are set out at paragraphs 23 – 26 in **Appendix 1** to this report

and remains unchanged from earlier versions of the Policy. But see section 6 below for matters relating to the request by Cheshire Constabulary for a special policy on cumulative impact.

- 3.7 The Council is under a duty to have an adopted Statement of Licensing Policy in place by 7<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and there must be a newspaper advertisement confirming the adoption prior to that date. This means that a decision must be made by the Council at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Once adopted, the policy will remain for a three year period unless amended before that time. Any changes in legislation or in the Statutory Guidance would also override the policy.

#### **4.0 ISSUES FOR THE COUNCIL TO DETERMINE**

- 4.1 No representations have been received in respect of any aspect of the draft Policy other than cumulative impact.
- 4.2 The main issue for the Council to determine is about cumulative impact.
- 4.3 The options are (1) to reject the request for the cumulative impact policy requested by Cheshire Constabulary; (2) adopt the cumulative impact policy as requested, (3) adopt a modified form of the requested policy or (4) defer a decision on the requested cumulative impact policy.

#### **5.0 RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The Statutory Guidance in **Appendix 3** sets out the correct approach to cumulative impact policies. No cumulative impact policy should be introduced except on firm evidence for the need for such a policy. The question is whether Cheshire Constabulary have made out a valid case for such a policy.
- 5.2 The Council has an existing policy regarding the night time economy in Victoria Square which goes back to 2007 (Minute EXB 79). The proposals from Cheshire Constabulary would appear to be at odds with that policy. The Council should consider whether Cheshire Constabulary have made a sufficient case to justify a departure from existing policy.

#### **6.0 THE REQUEST MADE BY CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY FOR A CULMULATIVE IMPACT SPECIAL POLICY**

- 6.1 The proposal divides Widnes Town Centre as defined in Table 1 into streets within the proposed Cumulative Impact Special Policy area ("CISP") and those outside.
- 6.2 The Members should assess whether the "non-CISP" area within Widnes Town Centre ought reasonably to be compared with CISP area.
- 6.3 The capacities set out in Table 2 should be seen as approximations since there are no capacity limits on a number of licensed premises.
- 6.4 Charts 1, 2 and 3 and Tables 3 and 4 deal with the numbers of incidents, "calls to service" and arrests during the 12 month period April 2009 to March 2010. Members will need to consider whether this data warrants the imposition of a Cumulative Impact Policy.



- 6.5 The policy requested is “to prevent any further licensed premises from opening up, or existing licences being extended, which will aid in preventing a further rise in alcohol related violent crime and anti-social behaviour.”
- 6.6 As currently stated the request clearly breaches the Statutory Guidance.
- 6.7 Should the Council be minded to introduce a policy it would need to be worded differently to comply with the Statutory Guidance as follows;

*Delete paragraphs 30 to 32 of the Council's existing Statement of Licensing Policy and substitute*

**“30. The Council has adopted a special policy relating to cumulative impact within the area of Victoria Square Widnes. The area (“the Cumulative Impact Policy Area”) to which this special policy applies is described in Appendix XXX.**

**31. Within the Cumulative Impact Policy Area there will be a rebuttable presumption that applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates or variations that are likely to add to the existing cumulative impact will normally be refused, following relevant representations, unless the applicant can demonstrate in their operating schedule that there will be no negative cumulative impact on one or more of the licensing objectives.**

**32. However, The Statutory Guidance requires the Council to stress that this presumption does not relieve responsible authorities or interested parties of the need to make a relevant representation, referring to information which had been before the licensing authority when it developed its statement of licensing policy, before a licensing authority may lawfully consider giving effect to its special policy. If there are no representations, the licensing authority must grant the application in terms that are consistent with the operating schedule submitted.”**

- 6.8 Since it might reasonably assumed that relatively few new premises are likely to come forward in what Cheshire Constabulary describe as a “saturated area” a new cumulative impact policy would be expected to impact principally on variation applications relating to existing premises.
- 6.9 Another matter to consider is that there are premises within the proposed policy area which have planning permissions for licensed premises but which have not had premises licences. The question is whether a policy should apply to these premises.
- 6.10 Although the statutory consultation has been concluded the proposed policy warrants additional consideration and input from within the Council and outside. Further clarification on the data provided by Cheshire Constabulary would assist this process.
- 6.11 Since the adoption of the Statement of Licensing Policy cannot be delayed it is recommended that consideration of the Cumulative Impact Special Policy be deferred to a later date.

## **7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Once adopted, the statement of licensing policy will be used by applicants and the Regulatory Committee in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003.

## **8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no other implications arising out of this report.

## **9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES**

### **9.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

There are no new implications arising out of this report

### **9.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

There are no new implications arising out of this report

### **9.3 A Healthy Halton**

There are no new implications arising out of this report

### **9.4 A Safer Halton**

There are no new implications arising out of this report

### **9.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

There are no new implications arising out of this report

## **10.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

N/A

## **11.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

N/A

## **12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

12.1 This report is based on the Licensing Act 2003 and the written responses to the consultation exercise. In addition the DCMS/Home Office and LACORS web-sites have provided background information.

## Consultation draft of the Statement of Licensing Policy

**This Statement of Licensing Policy was adopted by Halton Borough Council on**

15th December 2010

(Minute No. xxx)

LICENSING ACT 2003

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Government has modernised the legislation governing the sale and supply of alcohol, the control of public entertainment, cinemas and theatres and the provision of late night refreshment. There will be a fundamental change in the responsibility for licensing, the personnel and premises involved in these activities. These changes are contained in the Licensing Act 2003 ("the Act"). It requires Licensing Authorities, in our case Halton Borough Council ("the Council"), to provide a Statement of Licensing Policy before it can make any decisions on licence applications.

2. The Council's Statement of Licensing Policy is set out in this document. It details the general principles that the Council will take into account when making its licensing decisions. In drawing up the policy the Council is required to have regard to 'Government Guidance' produced under Section 182 of the Act. If the Statement of Licensing Policy departs from the guidance the Council must be able to justify its decision should there be a legal challenge.

3. The aim of the policy is to promote the four licensing objectives set out in the Act, namely:-

- The prevention of crime and disorder;
- Public safety;
- The prevention of public nuisance; and
- The protection of children from harm

4. The Council wish to promote these objectives whilst still encouraging a vibrant and sustainable entertainment and leisure industry. The Council recognises both the needs of local residents for a safe and healthy environment in which to work and live and the importance of safe and well-run entertainment and leisure facilities to the area.

5. The policy aims to provide guidance to applicants, responsible authorities and interested parties on the general approach to licensing in the area. Although each and every application will be dealt with separately and on its own individual merits, the Council in writing this policy is offering guidance on the wider considerations that will be taken into account.

6. The policy comes into force on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2011, and will be reviewed at least every three years. The policy is intended for the guidance of the Council's Regulatory Committee (which has responsibility for the Council's Licensing functions) as well as to assist applicants in presenting their application. It is not intended to limit the power or fetter the discretion of the Regulatory Committee who will listen to, and determine on its own individual merits, any application placed before it.

### **SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

7. The policy covers applications, reviews, transfers and variations of licences for the following licensable activities:

- The sale by retail of alcohol

- The supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of a member of that club
- The provision of regulated entertainment, and
- The provision of late night refreshment

## **LICENSING OBJECTIVES**

8. The Council will carry out its functions under the Act with a view to promoting the licensing objectives, namely;

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance, and
- The protection of children from harm

9. No one objective is considered to be of any more importance than any other.

10. In carrying out its functions the Council will also have regard to this Policy and to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the Act (“the Guidance”).

11. Individual applicants will be required to address the licensing objectives and address the issues of the needs of the local community, the way in which the premises is to operate, the size, location and type of premises, and any entertainment which is to be provided.

12. The Council has identified 5 objectives of its own for the area. These objectives are:

1. Improving health
2. Promoting urban renewal
3. Enhancing life chances and employment
4. Increasing prosperity and equality
5. Ensuring safe and attractive neighbourhoods

13. So far as is consistent with the licensing objectives, the Council will carry out its licensing functions with a view to promoting these objectives.

14. The Council will encourage the provision of a wide range of entertainment activities within the Halton area including promotion of live music, dance and so on, in the interests of broadening cultural opportunities within the local community.

## **INTEGRATING STRATEGIES**

15. The Council’s core plans and strategies are set out in the Corporate Plan, the Community Strategy.

16. The Council will secure the proper integration of its licensing policy with its core plans and strategies as well as its local crime prevention, planning, transport, tourism, equal opportunities, race equality schemes, and cultural strategies and any other plans introduced for the management of town centres and the night-time economy (as to which, see below).

17. This will be achieved by ensuring that the Council’s Regulatory Committee receive appropriate reports on all relevant strategies, plans and policies. Many of these strategies are not directly related to the promotion of the four licensing objectives, but, indirectly, impact upon them. Co-ordination and integration of such policies, strategies and initiatives are therefore important.

18. Many licensable activities take place at night-time: when much of the rest of the economy has closed down. It follows that licensable activities can contribute a very significant element of the night-time economy, particularly within town centres. Emerging Town Centre Strategies for Widnes and Runcorn will contribute to the development of the night-time economy and assist the Council in exercising its licensing functions.

19. This statement sets out the Council's general approach to the making of licensing decisions. It does not override the right of any person to make representations on an application or to seek a review of a licence or certificate where provision has been made for them to do so in the Act.

20. Licensing is about regulating the carrying on of licensable activities on licensed premises, by qualifying clubs and at temporary events within the terms of the Act. Conditions attached to various authorisations will be focused on matters which are within the control of individual licensees and others in possession of relevant authorisations. Accordingly, the Council will focus its attention on the premises being used for licensable activities and the vicinity of those premises.

21. In addressing this matter, the Council will primarily focus on the direct impact of the activities taking place at the licensed premises on members of public living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area concerned. Licensing law is not the primary mechanism for the general control of nuisance and anti-social behaviour by individuals once they are away from the licensed premises and, therefore, beyond the direct control of the individual, club or business holding the licence, certificate or authorisation concerned. Nonetheless, it is a key aspect of such control and licensing law will always be part of a holistic approach to the management of the evening and night-time economy in town and city centres.

### **THE NEED FOR LICENSED PREMISES**

22. There can be confusion about the difference between "need" and the "cumulative impact" of premises on the licensing objectives, for example, on crime and disorder. "Need" concerns the commercial demand for another pub or restaurant or hotel. This is not a matter for the Council in discharging its licensing functions. "Need" is a matter for planning committees and for the market.

### **THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF A CONCENTRATION OF LICENSED PREMISES**

23. "Cumulative impact" is not mentioned specifically in the Act but means in the Guidance the potential impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives of a significant number of licensed premises concentrated in one area. For example, the potential impact on crime and disorder or public nuisance on a town or city centre of a large concentration of licensed premises in that part of the Council's area. The cumulative impact of licensed premises on the promotion of the licensing objectives is a proper matter for the Council to consider in developing its licensing policy statement.

24. The Council will not, impose any arbitrary quotas on numbers of licensed premises, nor will it impose any restriction or limitation on trading hours in a particular area.

25. The Council considers that there are presently no areas within the Borough of Halton which can be considered to be causing cumulative impact on one or more of the licensing objectives.

26. However, the absence of a special policy does not prevent the Council or any responsible authority or interested party making representations on a new application for the grant of a licence on the grounds that the premises will give rise to a negative cumulative impact on one or more of the licensing objectives.

27. Notwithstanding what is set out in this statement about other mechanisms for controlling cumulative impact, applicants will be expected to demonstrate (where appropriate) how their proposals are consistent with dealing with crime and disorder and nuisance in the vicinity of their premises. Attention should be paid to their proposals in respect of hours of operation and the management of their premises generally. Regard should be had to issues such as taxis and transportation and the pattern of licensed premises and food premises in the vicinity, and, not least, the distribution of residential premises in the vicinity.

28. Other mechanisms for controlling cumulative effect .

29. Once away from the licensed premises, a minority of consumers will behave badly and unlawfully. The general public needs to be made aware that there is a much broader strategy for addressing these problems than the licensing regime of the Act. There are other mechanisms both within and outside the licensing regime that are available for addressing such issues. For example:

- planning controls;
- positive measures to create a safe and clean town centre environment in partnership with local businesses, transport operators and other departments of the local authority;
- the provision of CCTV surveillance in town centres, ample taxi ranks, provision of public conveniences open late at night, street cleaning and litter patrols;
- powers of local authorities to designate parts of the local authority area as places where alcohol may not be consumed publicly;
- police enforcement of the general law concerning disorder and anti-social behaviour, including the issuing of fixed penalty notices;
- the prosecution of any personal licence holder or member of staff at such premises who is selling alcohol to people who are drunk;
- the confiscation of alcohol from adults and children in designated areas;
- police powers to close down instantly for up to 24 hours any licensed premises or temporary event on grounds of disorder, the likelihood of disorder or noise emanating from the premises causing a nuisance; and
- the power of the police, other responsible authorities or a local resident or business to seek a review of the licence or certificate in question.

30. These can be supplemented by other local initiatives that similarly address these problems.

### **LICENSING HOURS**

31. With regard to licensing hours, consideration will be given to the individual merits of an application.

- The Council recognises that, in certain circumstances, longer licensing hours with regard to the sale of alcohol can help to ensure that concentrations of customers leaving premises simultaneously are avoided. This is necessary to reduce the friction at late night fast food outlets, taxi ranks and other sources of transport which lead to disorder and disturbance.
- The Council also wants to ensure that licensing hours should not inhibit the development of a thriving and safe evening and night-time local economy.

32. The term “zoning” is used in the Guidance to refer to the setting of fixed trading hours within a designated area. The Council has followed the advice in the Guidance and will not be adopting such a policy within the Borough. However, stricter conditions with regard to noise control will be expected in areas which have denser residential accommodation, but this will not limit opening hours without regard to the individual merits of any application.

### **SHOPS STORES AND SUPERMARKETS**

33. With regard to shops, stores and supermarkets, the norm will be for such premises to be free to provide sales of alcohol for consumption off the premises at any times when the retail outlet is open for shopping unless there are very good reasons for restricting those hours. For example, a limitation may be appropriate following police representations in the case of some shops known to be a focus of disorder and disturbance because youths gather there.

### **CHILDREN**

34. The Council considers that children and family groups in general should be encouraged to be present in places subject to premises licences unless the environment in those premises (by nature of the activities carried on) is unsuitable. As a general principle, the presence of children and family groups is felt to have a positive influence on the atmosphere within such premises and to produce a more balanced age range within the premises.

35. The Council will not seek to limit the access of children to any premises unless it is necessary for the prevention of physical, moral or psychological harm to them. The Council will not attempt to anticipate every issue of concern that could arise in respect of children with regard to individual premises and as such, general rules will be avoided. Consideration of the individual merits of each application remains the best mechanism for judging such matters.

36. The Act makes it an offence to permit children under the age of 16 who are not accompanied by an adult to be present on premises being used exclusively or primarily for supply of alcohol for consumption on those premises under the authorisation of a premises licence, club premises certificate or where that activity is carried on under the authority of a temporary event notice. In addition, it is an offence to permit the presence of children under 16 who are not accompanied by an adult between midnight and 5am at other premises supplying alcohol for consumption on the premises under the authority of any premises licence, club premises certificate or temporary event notice.

37. Outside of these hours, the offence does not prevent the admission of unaccompanied children under 16 to the wide variety of premises where the consumption of alcohol is not the exclusive or primary activity at those venues. Accordingly, between 5am and midnight the offence would not necessarily apply to many restaurants, hotels, cinemas and even many pubs where the main business activity is the consumption of both food and drink. This does not mean that children should automatically be admitted to such premises and the following paragraphs are therefore of great importance notwithstanding the new offences created by the Act.

38. The fact that the Act may effectively bar children under 16 unaccompanied by an adult from premises where the consumption of alcohol is the exclusive or primary activity does not mean that the Act automatically permits unaccompanied children under the age of 18 to have free access to other premises or to the same premises even if they are accompanied or to premises where the consumption of alcohol is not involved.

39. Subject only to the provisions of the Act and any licence or certificate conditions, admission will always be at the discretion of those managing the premises. The Act includes on the one hand, no presumption of giving children access or on the other hand, no presumption of preventing their access to licensed premises. Each application and the circumstances obtaining at each premises will be considered on its own merits.

40. Certain areas need to be highlighted that will give rise to particular concern in respect of children. For example, these will include premises:

- where entertainment or services of an adult or sexual nature are commonly provided;
- where there have been convictions of members of the current staff at the premises for serving alcohol to minors or with a reputation for underage drinking;
- with a known association with drug taking or dealing;
- where there is a strong element of gambling on the premises (but not, for example, the simple presence of a small number of cash prize gaming machines); and
- where the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises is the exclusive or primary purpose of the services provided at the premises.

41. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of what amounts to entertainment or services of an adult or sexual nature. The Council, applicants, and responsible authorities will need to apply common sense to this matter. However, such entertainment or services, for example, would generally include topless bar staff, striptease, lap-, table- or poledancing, performances involving feigned violence or horrific incidents, feigned or actual sexual acts or fetishism, or entertainment involving strong and offensive language.

42. There are a number of alternatives which may be considered for limiting the access of children where that is necessary for the prevention of harm to children. These, which can be adopted in combination, include:

- limitations on the hours when children may be present;
- limitations on the exclusion of the presence of children under certain ages when particular specified activities are taking place;
- limitations on the parts of premises to which children might be given access;
- age limitations (below 18);
- requirements for accompanying adults (including for example, a combination of requirements which provide that children under a particular age must be accompanied by an adult); and

- full exclusion of those people under 18 from the premises when any licensable activities are taking place.

43. Conditions requiring the admission of children to any premises cannot be attached to licences or certificates.

44. Where no licensing restriction is necessary, this will remain a matter for the discretion of the individual licensee or club or person who has given a temporary event notice.

Venue operators seeking premises licences and club premises certificates may also volunteer such prohibitions and restrictions in their operating schedules because their own risk assessments have determined that the presence of children is undesirable or inappropriate. Where no relevant representations are made to the Council, these volunteered prohibitions and restrictions will become conditions attaching to the licence or certificate and will be enforceable as such. No other conditions concerning the presence of children on premises may be imposed by the Council in these circumstances.

45. In connection with the protection of children from harm, the responsible authorities include a body that represents those who are responsible for, or interested in, matters relating to the protection of children from harm and is recognised by the licensing authority for that area as being competent to advise it on such matters. The Council is a unitary authority and competent in this area. Applications will therefore not need to be copied to any other competent authority in this area: the Council will liaise where appropriate with its own social services department.

### **PROOF OF AGE**

46. It is unlawful for children under 18 to attempt to buy alcohol just as it is unlawful to sell or supply alcohol to them. To prevent such crimes, it may be necessary to require a policy to be applied at certain licensed premises requiring the production of "proof of age" before such sales are made. This should not be limited to recognised "proof of age" cards, but allow for the production of other proof, such as photo-driving licences, student cards and passports.

### **RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES**

47. A full list of the responsible authorities in the area and appropriate contact details are set out at **Appendix A**.

### **THE PORTMAN GROUP CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE NAMING, PACKAGING AND PROMOTION OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS**

48. The Portman Group operates, on behalf of the alcohol industry, a Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks. The Code seeks to ensure that drinks are packaged and promoted in a socially responsible manner and only to those who are 18 years old or older. Complaints about products under the Code are considered by an Independent Complaints Panel and the Panel's decisions are published on the Portman Group's website, in the trade press and in an annual report. If a product's packaging or point-of-sale advertising is found to be in breach of the Code, the Portman Group may issue a Retailer Alert Bulletin to notify retailers of the decision and ask them not to replenish stocks of any such product or to display such point-of-sale material, until the decision has been complied with.

49. The Code is an important weapon in protecting children from harm because it addresses the naming, marketing and promotion of alcohol products sold in licensed premises in a manner which may appeal to or attract minors. The Council commends the Code and applicants will be expected to state how they intend to apply the Code.

### **PLASTIC CONTAINERS AND TOUGHENED GLASS**

50. The Council has concerns about the dangers of bottles and glasses being used as weapons. It believes that the use of safer forms of glasses can help to reduce injuries and will expect applicants to state in their



operating schedule what proposals they have to minimise such injuries through the use of safer forms of glasses, bottles and other means.

51. Consideration will therefore be given to conditions requiring either the use of plastic containers or toughened glass which inflicts less severe injuries. Location and style of the venue, the activities carried on there, and the hours of operation, would be particularly important in assessing whether a condition is necessary.. For example, the use of glass containers on the terraces of outdoor sports grounds may be of concern.

### **CCTV**

52. The presence of CCTV cameras can be an important means of deterring and detecting crime at and immediately outside licensed premises. Conditions should not just consider a requirement to have CCTV on the premises, but also the precise siting of each camera, the requirement to maintain cameras in working order, and to retain recordings for an appropriate period of time.

The police should provide individuals conducting risk assessments when preparing operating schedules with advice on the use of CCTV to prevent crime.

### **CHILDREN AND CINEMAS**

53. In the case of premises giving film exhibitions, the Council will expect licensees or clubs to include in their operating schedules arrangements for restricting children from viewing age restricted films classified according to the recommendations of the British Board of Film Classification or the Council itself. The Council has no current plans to adopt its own system of classification.

54. The Act also provides that it is mandatory for a condition to be included in all premises licences and club premises certificates authorising the exhibition of films for the admission of children to the exhibition of any film to be restricted in accordance with the recommendations given to films either by a body designated under section 4 of the Video Recordings Act 1984 - the British Board of Film Classification is the only body which has been so designated – or by the licensing authority itself.

### **CRIME PREVENTION**

55. Conditions attached to premises licences and club premises certificates will, so far as possible, reflect local crime prevention strategies. For example, the provision of closed circuit television cameras in certain premises. Conditions will, where appropriate, also reflect the input of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

### **CAPACITY LIMITS**

56. Although most commonly made a condition of a licence on public safety grounds, consideration should also be given to conditions which set capacity limits for licensed premises or clubs where it may be necessary to prevent overcrowding which can lead to disorder and violence. Where such a condition is considered necessary, consideration should also be given to whether door supervisors would be needed to ensure that the numbers are appropriately controlled.

### **GOOD MANAGEMENT**

57. Certain kinds of physical environment within places subject to premises licences (such as an over preponderance of vertical drinking) are generally thought be less conducive to avoiding crime and disorder. Good management and adequate staff training are vital. Where appropriate the provision of food in addition to alcohol can have a beneficial effect. Where food is provided it is good practice (but not mandatory under the licensing system) to have regard to current practice on healthy eating.

58. Another aspect of good management in relation to door supervision is to have proper systems in place to comply with the Private Security Industry Act 2001 and to think about how good door supervision systems

can contribute to crime reduction both within and outside of premises. Applicants will be expected to have considered these and all relevant issues and to reflect these within their operating schedules.

### **CULTURAL STRATEGIES**

59. In connection with cultural strategies, the Council will monitor the impact of licensing on the provision of regulated entertainment, and particularly live music and dancing. Only necessary, proportionate and reasonable licensing conditions will be applied on such events. Where there is any indication that such events are being deterred by licensing requirements, the statement be re-visited with a view to investigating how the situation might be reversed.

60. The United Kingdom ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1976. Article 15 of the Covenant requires that progressive measures be taken to ensure that everyone can participate in the cultural life of the community and enjoy the arts. It is therefore important that the principles underpinning ICESCR will be integrated, where possible, with the Council's approach to the licensing of regulated entertainment.

### **TRANSPORT**

61. The Council proposes, through its Local Transport Plan, to develop protocols to be agreed between the local police and other partners that have due regard to the need to disperse people from town centres swiftly and safely to avoid concentrations which produce disorder and disturbance. Applicants will be expected to have considered this issue, and their operating schedule should reflect their proposals for how they might assist in this process.

### **TOURISM, EMPLOYMENT, PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL, AND HIGHWAYS**

62. The following matters should be noted in relation to tourism, employment, planning and building control, and highways:

- arrangements have been made for the Council's Regulatory Committee to receive, when appropriate, reports on the needs of the local tourist economy for the area to ensure that these are reflected in their considerations;
- the Council intends to keep the Regulatory Committee apprised of the employment situation in the area and the need for new investment and employment where appropriate;

63. Planning, building control and licensing regimes will be properly separated to avoid duplication and inefficiency. Except in cases where planning permission is not required, applications for premises licences for permanent commercial premises should normally be from businesses with planning permission in place for the property concerned.

64. Licensing applications will not be a re-run of the planning application and should not cut across decisions taken by the Council's Development Control Committee or following appeals against decisions taken by that 11 Adopted by Halton Borough Council 12th December 2007 committee. Nevertheless, applicants should be aware that because the rules applicable and the range of matters to be taken into account are not identical, it is possible for planning permission to be granted and a licence application to be refused (and vice versa) in respect of the same premises. The same applies to the conditions which may be applied to planning permissions and premises licences.

65. Similarly, the granting by the licensing committee of any variation of a licence which involves a material alteration to a building would not relieve the applicant of the need to apply for planning permission or building control where appropriate.

66. Planning obligations under section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 warrant special mention. The Council as licensing authority can neither demand that a planning obligation be entered into nor be party to a planning obligation. However, applicants are free to enter into such agreements with the Council as planning authority if they so wish. Such agreements could potentially deal with a wide range of matters such as contributions to town centre policing and litter control.

67. Proper integration will be assured by the Regulatory Committee, where appropriate, providing regular reports to the Development Control Committee on the situation regarding licensed premises in the area, including the general impact of alcohol related crime and disorder. This will enable the Development Control Committee to have regard to such matters when taking its decisions and avoid any unnecessary overlap.

68. The Council's Local Transport Plan is the mechanism by which the Council will work in partnership with all appropriate bodies to deliver effective local transport strategies. Effective strategies will include provision of night-time and evening services, where this is appropriate to the local situation.

69. Where applicants seek premises licences in respect of pavement cafes and the like, they will have to have satisfied the Council (as Highway Authority) of the appropriateness and legality of any proposal prior to any application to the Licensing Authority.

### **PROMOTION OF RACE EQUALITY**

70. The Council recognises that the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, places a legal obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination; and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

71. Local authorities are also required under the 1976 Act, as amended, to produce a race equality scheme, assess and consult on the likely impact of proposed policies on race equality, monitor policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality, and publish the results of such consultations, assessments and monitoring.

72. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have taken this issue into account.

### **DUPLICATION**

73. The Council will avoid duplication with other regulatory regimes so far as possible. For example, legislation governing health and safety at work and fire safety will place a range of general duties on the self-employed, employers and operators of venues both in respect of employees and of the general public when on the premises in question. Similarly, many aspects of fire safety will be covered by existing and future legislation.

74. Conditions in respect of public safety will only be attached to premises licences and club premises certificates that are "necessary" for the promotion of that licensing objective and if already provided for in other legislation, they cannot be considered necessary in the context of licensing law. Such regulations will not however always cover the unique circumstances that arise in connection with licensable activities, particularly regulated entertainment, at specific premises and tailored conditions may be necessary. It should be borne in mind that an alteration is "material" for the purposes of the Building Regulations if it has the potential to affect structural stability, fire safety or access.

75. The Council appreciates that regulations under which a fire safety inspection would normally be carried out do not apply to ships/boats unless they are in dry dock. The safety regime for passenger vessels is enforced under the Merchant Shipping Acts by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency who operate a passenger ship certification scheme. Accordingly, it will not normally be necessary to duplicate the controls imposed through the certification scheme.

76. Certain health and safety issues can be taken into account despite apparent duplication. For example, applicants will be expected to consider the appropriate types of drinking containers (i.e glass or plastic) within premises or parts of premises. This example can only be considered under the crime and disorder heading.

## **STANDARDISED CONDITIONS**

77. The Guidance states that a key concept underscoring the Act is for conditions to be attached to licences and certificates which are tailored to the individual style and characteristics of the premises and events concerned. This can be important to avoid the imposition of disproportionate and overly burdensome conditions on premises where there is no need for such conditions. The Guidance states that standardised conditions should therefore be avoided and indeed, may be unlawful where they cannot be shown to be necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives in any individual case.

78. The Guidance states that it is acceptable for licensing authorities to draw attention in their statements of policy to pools of conditions from which necessary and proportionate conditions may be drawn in particular circumstances. The Council considers that standardised wording of conditions (but not universally applied block conditions) are acceptable when dealing with the same or very similar situations.

79. There will be circumstances where no additional conditions may be necessary in circumstances where existing legislation and regulation already effectively promote the licensing objectives.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

80. The Council intends to establish protocols with the local police on enforcement issues.

81. In particular, these protocols are intended to provide for the targeting of agreed problem and high risk premises which require greater attention, while providing a lighter touch in respect of low risk premises which are well run. The Act does not require inspections to take place save at the discretion of those charged with this role. The principle of risk assessment and targeting should prevail and inspections should not be undertaken routinely but when and if they are judged necessary. This should ensure that resources are more effectively concentrated on problem premises.

## **LIVE MUSIC, DANCING AND THEATRE**

82. The Council recognises that as part of implementing the Council's cultural strategies, proper account should be taken of the need to encourage and promote a broad range of entertainment, particularly live music, dancing and theatre, including the performance of a wide range of traditional and historic plays, for the wider cultural benefit of communities. Concern to prevent disturbance in neighbourhoods will always be carefully balanced with these wider cultural benefits, particularly the cultural benefits for children.

83. In determining what conditions should be attached to licences and certificates as a matter of necessity for the promotion of the licensing objectives, the Council will be aware of the need to avoid measures which deter live music, dancing and theatre by imposing indirect costs of a disproportionate nature. It is noted that the absence of cultural provision in any area can itself lead to the young people being diverted into anti-social activities that damage communities and the young people involved themselves.

84. To ensure that cultural diversity thrives, the Council will have a policy of seeking premises licences where appropriate for public spaces within the community in their own name. This could include, for example, village greens, market squares, promenades, community halls, Council owned art centres and similar public areas. Performers and entertainers would then have no need to obtain a licence or give a temporary event notice themselves to enable them to give a performance in these places. They would still require the permission of the Council as the premises licence holder for any regulated entertainment that it was proposed should take place in these areas.

85. It should be noted that when one part of the Council seeks a premises licence of this kind from the Council in its capacity of licensing authority, the Regulatory Committee and its officers will consider the matter from an entirely neutral standpoint. If relevant representations are made, for example, by local residents or the police, they will be considered fairly by the Committee. Those making representations genuinely aggrieved by a positive decision in favour of the Council application by the Council in its capacity of licensing authority would be entitled to appeal to the magistrates' court and thereby receive an independent review of any decision made.

### **PREPARATION OF OPERATING SCHEDULES**

86 Applicants are strongly advised to obtain proper professional advice in the preparation of operating schedules and in particular are strongly advised to seek advice from the police on matters relating to crime prevention (including CCTV) to ensure a proper link between Crime and Disorder Strategies and Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategies.

### **CONTACT POINTS**

87. Appendix B gives details of contact points where members of public can obtain advice about whether or not activities fall to be licensed.

### **ADMINISTRATION, EXERCISE AND DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS**

88. The Council's Regulatory Committee (and Regulatory Sub-Committees) will carry out all of the Council's licensing functions under the Act except those relating to the making of statements of licensing policy. A full delegation scheme is in place. The scheme of delegation relating to matters which will be dealt with by the Regulatory Sub-committee(s) and officers of the Council are set out at **Appendix C**.

### **MONITORING/REVIEW**

89. The Council will carry out a review of the statement in accordance with the Guidance and the Act.

**LIST OF RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES AND CONTACT DETAILS****All premises**

- 1) Chief Officer of Police  
Police Licensing Officer  
Cheshire Constabulary  
Halton and Vale Royal Divisions  
Widnes Police Station  
Kingsway  
Widnes WA8 7QJ
- 2) Cheshire Fire Authority  
Fire Station  
Winwick Road  
Warrington WA2 8HH
- 3) Local Enforcement Agency for Health & Safety (normally the Council\*, otherwise the HSE)
- 4) Environmental Health Authority\*
- 5) Local Planning Authority\*
- 6) Recognised Child Protection Body\*
- 7) Consumer Protection/Trading Standards\*
- 8) Any licensing authority other than the Council in whose area part of the premises are situated  
  
Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership

\* In all these cases the Council is the responsible authority and a single notice to the Licensing Section will be forwarded to all relevant sections of the Council

**Vessels**

- 1) The navigation authority in relation to the waters where the vessel is usually moored or berthed or any waters where it is proposed to be navigated when it is used for licensable activities
- 2) Environment Agency
- 3) British Waterways Board
- 4) The Secretary of State for Transport through the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

**CONTACT POINTS WHERE THE PUBLIC MAY OBTAIN ADVICE FROM THE COUNCIL**

Council Website [www.halton.gov.uk](http://www.halton.gov.uk)

Email address: [legal.services@halton.gov.uk](mailto:legal.services@halton.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0303 333 4300 ext. 1054, 1055 and 1056

Fax No. 0151 471 7527

Postal Address: Licensing Section  
Legal Services  
Municipal Building  
Kingsway  
Widnes  
WA8 7QF

**SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

<b>Matter to be dealt with</b>	<b>Full Committee</b>	<b>Sub Committee</b>	<b>Officers</b>
Application for personal licence		If an objection made	If no objection made
Application for personal licence with unspent convictions		All cases	
Application for premises licence/club premises certificate		If a representation made	If no representation made
Application for provisional statement		If a representation made	If no representation made
Application to vary premises licence/club premises certificate		If a representation made	If no representation made
Application to vary designated premises supervisor		If a police objection	All other cases
Request to be removed as designated premises supervisor			All cases
Application for transfer of premises licence		If a police objection	All other cases
Applications for interim authorities		If a police objection	All other cases
Application to review premises licence/club premises certificate		All cases	
Decision on whether a complaint is irrelevant, frivolous, vexatious etc.			All cases
Decision to object when local authority is a consultee and not the relevant authority considering the application		All cases	
Determination of a police objection to a temporary event notice		All cases	



**Appendix 2**

**Police  
Cumulative**



**representations requesting a  
Impact Policy**

**OF A  
IMPACT POLICY**

**EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT  
SPECIAL CUMULATIVE**

**Victoria Square area, Widnes.**

**On behalf of Chief Superintendent Richard Strachan**

**September 2010**

**Ian Seville, Licensing Officer.  
Widnes Police Station.  
Mark Riley, CDRPAnalyst  
Waterfront Office**

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## 1. Purpose of Report.

The purpose of this report is to request that the defined area of Victoria Square in Widnes be included within a new special cumulative impact policy in the current review of the Halton Borough Council Licensing Policy. This report is intended to provide evidence and information to the Licensing Committee and Full Council to support this request by providing relevant crime and disorder statistics.

## 2. Background.

Under the Licensing Act 2003 there is a presumption to grant all applications and, only once operating, should any individual premises be identified as being poorly managed, action to review that licence should then be taken, based on evidence collated and presented. There is an expectation that the review of a licence should only take place once all other options had been explored. The Act does not, in ordinary circumstances, address Crime and Disorder issues which cannot be tied to any individual licensed premises.

Where a specific defined area has so many licensed premises that it becomes impossible to identify where incidents of crime and disorder originated then the area may be defined as saturated and a cumulative impact special policy may be included in the Council's Licensing Policy.

This report highlights the crime and disorder issues and demand currently associated with the night-time economy within the Victoria Square area of Widnes.

## 3. The Licensing Act 2003.

### 3.1 Special Policy and Licensing Policy.

A Cumulative Impact Special Policy (CISP) is not absolute. Each application must still be considered on its own merits and will not impact on those applications where it is believed that there will not be an adverse impact on crime and disorder within the stress area. Therefore any applications for licences and certificates that are unlikely to add to the cumulative impact on the licensing objectives will still be granted.

The statement of policy states that Licensing Law is not the primary mechanism for the general control of anti-social behaviour and nuisance by individuals once they are away from the licensed premises and beyond the direct control of the individual business or club holding the licence, certificate or authorisation concerned. Nevertheless, it is a key aspect of such control, and the licensing law will continue to be an integral part of the overall management of the evening and night-time economy in town centres.

### **3.2 Effect of a Cumulative Impact Special Policy.**

The effect of adopting a CISP will be to create a rebuttable presumption that an application for a new premises licence or club premises certificate or a variation application for an existing premises licence or club premises certificate will normally be refused. However this special policy will only come into effect once a relevant representation has been submitted by a relevant authority or interested party. Whilst such a policy is in place any applicant would have to clearly demonstrate why the operation of those premises would not add to the cumulative impact already being experienced.

### **3.3 Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) Guidelines: Steps to be taken.**

DCMS guidelines state that certain steps need to be taken when considering whether to adopt a CISP within the statement of Licensing Policy: -

- Identification of concern about Crime and Disorder or Public Nuisance.
- Consideration of whether it can be demonstrated that the Crime and Disorder and Public Nuisance are occurring and are caused by customers of licensed premises. If so, then identifying the area or areas from which those problems are arising and the boundaries of the area or areas, or that the risk factors are such that the area or areas are reaching such a point that cumulative impact is imminent.
- Consultation with other relevant bodies. Subject to that consultation, inclusion of a special policy about future premises licence or club premises certificate applications from within that area or areas within the terms of this Guidance in the statement of Licensing policy; resulting in,
- The publication of the CISP as part of the statement of the Licensing policy.

## **4. Identification of concern with regards to Crime and Disorder Problem Identification.**

### **4.1 Problem Identification.**

In considering whether a CISP is appropriate for the Victoria Square area, it needs to be shown that the Crime and Disorder problems are caused by the patrons of a number of premises rather than any one individual premise. It is not so much owing to the concentration of licensed premises in the affected areas, but rather the total impact of those combined licensed premises on Crime and Disorder.

Within the Victoria Square area the majority of the Crime and Disorder problems occur close to licensed premises, but because of their proximity it is often not possible to attach those incidents to the customers from any particular premises. Because of the proximity of the premises, there is a culture of circuit drinking, patrons are constantly visiting and then leaving numerous premises, at the same time making it almost impossible to identify

those premises they may have visited during the course of the evening. Once these venues have closed the associated problems simply transfer to the late night refreshment venues.

Although the current legislation allows the Police to deal with individual premises which may be poorly managed, it does not allow, other than by the introduction of a special policy, the Police to deal with the larger problem of the total impact of having too many licensed premises concentrated into small areas.

The area defined for inclusion in a CISP has been identified, through the use of crime analysis figures, as suffering from Crime and Disorder issues. The geographical analysis clearly shows a pattern of reported Crime and Disorder in the defined areas.

#### **4.2 Area to be covered.**

The attached map (Appendix A: Map 2 p10) delineates the proposed area.

#### **Victoria Square, Widnes.**

The Victoria Square area of Widnes, with its large number of licensed premises, has very high crime and disorder figures and is a heavy drain on police resources. Within the defined stress area there are currently 16 Pubs, bars and night clubs, 2 restaurant style premises and 5 late night refreshment premises. The overall potential capacity for the area is 4958. This reduces to 4570 between 12 midnight and 1am, reducing to 3920 between 2am and 3am, 1020 between 3am and 4am and finally reducing to 800 between 4am and 5am. These venues are concentrated in an area that is only 1.2 square kilometres in area and 560 meters in length at its longest point. Within this overall CISP area is a concentrated centre section that encompasses seven venues with a total capacity, up to 3am, of 2820. This reduces to 1,020 at 4am and 800 up to 5am. These venues are only **250 meters** apart at their furthest point and sit in an area of only **0.8 square km**.

The area proposed for the CISP amounts to only 16 roads compared to the 41 total roads of the wider Town Centre area. Thus the area of the CISP covers 39% of the roads in the town centre. At the same time 82% of all alcohol related violent crime and 63% of all alcohol related anti-social behaviour.

In August 2008 a new full time Licensing Enforcement police post was created, which was followed in September 2009 by the creation of a similar post within the local authority framework. More recently an Enforcement Officer has been employed to work in conjunction with Trading Standards in alcohol enforcement matters. Further, specific, licensing operations have been carried out, by both additional Government and Partnership funding, which has concentrated specifically within the area designated by this CISP, to police the night-time economy and maintain effective public safety. Since 2008 a specific Alcohol Enforcement Task Group has been set up in order to manage and police the night time economy, particularly in the area designated by this proposed CISP. This group has set out and is guided in its operations by a dynamic Action Plan that continually reviews alcohol related issues and identifies actions to reduce alcohol harm.

There have also been a number of directed operations and initiatives carried out, generated by the above Action Plan. Each quarter police and partner agencies now undertake around 30 one-day, weekend licensing operations, with a clear focus on the CISP area. These operations have included the use of mounted police and police dogs to address public disorder and drug concerns, whilst providing public reassurance. Owing to necessity, much of the licensing enforcement efforts centre on the CISP area. In the twelve month period between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2009 and the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2010, there have been a total of 456 alcohol-related arrests in the area defined as Widnes Town Centre. Of these, 251 came from the CISP area. This means that a total of **56% of arrests** in the Town Centre come from within the CISP zone, an area of only 1.2 square kilometres.

Approximately £100,000 per annum of additional resourcing, above core agency resources, is the minimum figure that is needed to provide this high visibility Police/Partnership presence.

Even with this additional resource, this stress area currently accounts for **71.4% of the recorded violent crime** within the indicated Town Centre of Widnes.

Because so many of the bars are similar in what they provide, with very little in the way of differentiation, they currently tend to compete on price, a factor that may come under Government regulation. As the only other practical way that they can compete is by being open later than their competitors, we are now finding that premises are submitting variation applications to extend their hours in an attempt to capture a larger share of the

customer base. Many of the premises offer little in the way of seating and there is a strong culture of vertical drinking.

An additional problem is the number of licensed late night refreshment premises, which have proved to be a flash-point for crime and disorder. As applications have been made to extend the hours of licensed bars so have the applications to extend the hours of these premises as they rely on the custom of patrons from the bars to provide their customer base. Some level of control has been exercised on these refreshment venues but as the club venues start to operate beyond 5am they are no longer within the licensable times laid down in the Act and can therefore open without restriction and outside the terms of any Conditions on their Premises Licence.

Experience has shown that customers are arriving in the town centre much later than pre-Licensing Act 2003 with many of the bars being virtually empty until the early hours. Once they leave these customers then tend to hang around in the town centre, even in poor weather conditions, requiring policing of the area to continue well past the time that many of the bars have closed.

The policing of the night-time economy involves the use of all the 'tools' available, including Section 27 (Violent Reduction Act 2006) - Requirement to leave the area notices. This Section gives the police the power, where appropriate, to require an individual to leave a particular location or area for a specified period of time (up to 48 hours). If the individual does not comply or returns to the specified area within the time period they become liable to be arrested. This enables police officers to intervene at an early stage and before a minor case of disorder becomes a more serious incident.

Since the introduction of these S.27 notices two years ago there have been 202 notices issued within the Widnes Town Centre and CISP areas combined. Of these, 126 were issued to people within the Victoria Square area alone. This represents an average of **62.3% of S.27 notices** issued within the town centre are issued within the proposed CISP area.

The current average hour for closure of licensed premises is 3:00am; experience and analysis of incidents show that the demand on Police resources continues past this time to at least 4:00am during the weekend periods. In order to manage the night-time economy within the area of the proposed CISP, police resources are focused between midnight and 5am each weekend night. Despite this focused activity, violent crime and ASB has continued to rise. Current Partnership funding arrangements are unsustainable and, inevitably, the concentration of resources that will have to be maintained to manage the effect of the expanding and increasing impact of the night-time economy will adversely effect the remainder of Halton, increasing response times to incidents in the remainder of the NPU and wider borough.

## **5. Consultation with relevant other bodies.**

Section 5 (3) of the Licensing Act 2003 states that before determining that a Cumulative Impact Special Impact policy is appropriate and necessary, the Local Authority must consult with specific persons, including the Chief Officer of Police, for each area.

## **6. Conclusion.**

If a CISP for Victoria Square is included within the review of the Licensing Policy it will not change the robust, measured manner in which the Licensing team at Widnes deal with the current licensed premises or the limitations currently placed on any applications. The *status quo* will remain. Its primary value will be to prevent any additional premises being licensed or existing licensed premises extending their hours or applying for a change of use without first addressing the cumulative impact problems within those areas.

Without such a policy an applicant is only required to consider the four Licensing Objectives relating to their individual premises or it's very near vicinity. **They are not currently required to consider the negative impact their businesses may have on the town. No consideration or responsibility has to be given to**

**customer dispersal or any of the extra demands that would be placed on the limited resources or amenities in the area. Any responsibility or contribution ends at their front door.**

The proposed CISP will remain flexible, thus allowing those applicants who address the policy or are not deemed to create an increase in crime and disorder, to obtain licences, but it will greatly assist in preventing premises from opening where there would be a high probability of adding to Widnes' late night Crime and Disorder problems.

## **Appendix A**

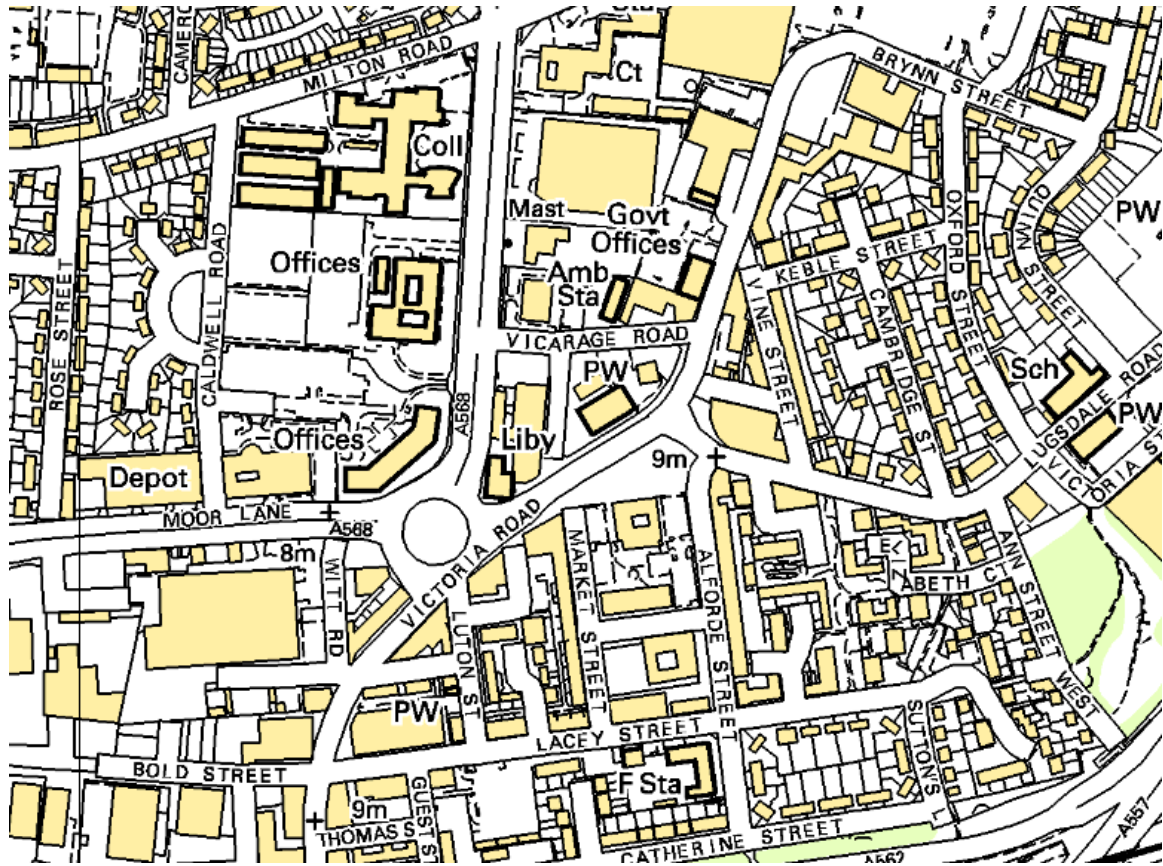
### **Widnes Town Centre Area**

### **Widnes CISP Area**

**Map 1 – Widnes Town Centre Area**



Map 2 – Widnes CISP Area





## Appendix B

Northern BCU  
Incidents Associated with  
Night Time Economy



### Incidents Associated with Victoria square area of Widnes. Night-Time Economy

disclosed other than to the agreed readership/handling code recipient without prior reference to the document's owner or manager.

Within the United Kingdom, this report is subject to consideration for disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. It may also be subject to consideration under the Environmental Information Regulations and the Data Protection Act 1988.

This report may contain 'Sensitive Material' as defined in the Attorney General's guidelines for the disclosure of 'Unused Material' to the defence, and is therefore subject to the concept of Public Interest Immunity. No part of this report should be disclosed to the defence without prior consultation with the originator.

**This sheet must not be detached from the report to which it refers.**

venues in the two town centres of the Borough of Halton.

- The most common streets where crime occurs within CISP area are Victoria Square, Victoria Road.
- If all licensed premises (directly within the CISP) reached capacity and closed between 2am and 4am, we expect to have over 3,920 people travelling around the Town Centre at one time.
- Over a 12 month period Widnes Town Centre (within the 'selected' areas) has been the subject of police service, an average of 95 offences per month.
- On average the 'selected' locations of the proposed CISP area (i.e. areas saturated with licensed premises) account for **64-71% of ALL VIOLENT CRIME** offences within Widnes Town Centre, showing **the last 12 months**.
- Peak hours for the arrest of offenders within Widnes town centre were 0:00 – 4:00am.
- The demand on police resources stretch to at least 4:00am during the weekend periods, with the demand at least 6am with the recent increase in operating hours for The Establishment.
- Of **ALL Violent Crime** offences across the whole of Widnes, Widnes Town Centre, and in particular the Victoria Square area, is highlighted as having the largest number of offences.

#### Inference

Throughout this report Widnes town centre, and in particular the Victoria Square area, is continually highlighted as a peak area for violent crime, ASB and calls to police service, which is primarily owing to the large number of pubs and clubs within this area. The peak hours identified within this report (00:00 – 03:00am) show that police resources for Widnes are primarily directed to the 'selected' locations of the Town Centre (area saturated with licensed premises) to contain and control the levels of offences, leaving other areas potentially vulnerable to offences.

#### Key Findings

##### Premises

- Widnes Town Centre is a peak area for violent crime, clubs and is the most common streets within the Borough of Halton.
- The most common streets where crime occurs within CISP area are Victoria Square, Victoria Road.
- If all licensed premises (directly within the CISP) reached capacity and closed between 2am and 4am, we expect to have over 3,920 people travelling around the Town Centre at one time.
- Over a 12 month period Widnes Town Centre (within the 'selected' areas) has been the subject of police service, an average of 95 offences per month.
- On average the 'selected' locations of the proposed CISP area (i.e. areas saturated with licensed premises) account for 64-71% of ALL VIOLENT CRIME offences within Widnes Town Centre, showing the last 12 months.
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##### Inference

Throughout this report Widnes town centre, and in particular the Victoria Square area, is continually highlighted as a peak area for violent crime, ASB and calls to police service, which is primarily owing to the large number of pubs and clubs within this area. The peak hours identified within this report (00:00 – 03:00am) show that police resources for Widnes are primarily directed to the 'selected' locations of the Town Centre (area saturated with licensed premises) to contain and control the levels of offences, leaving other areas potentially vulnerable to offences.

A Cumulative Impact Assessment (Widnes Town Centre Victoria Square area) is currently being undertaken to assess the impact of additional licences being extended to the area. The report will identify the peak hours for the existing premises and the impact of additional resources having the capacity to contain and control the levels of public and public confidence.

A Cumulative Impact Policy is strongly recommended (within the selected locations of the Victoria Square area) to prevent any further licensed premises from opening up, or existing licences being extended, which will aid in preventing a further rise in alcohol related violent crime and ASB. The potential risk facing the Widnes NPU if more premises were to open, or the existing premises were to extend their hours, is huge in respect of police and ambulance resources having the capacity to deal with the increased numbers, and the risks posed to the public and public confidence.

## Objectives

This report is to confirm suggestion that Widnes Town Centre has reached saturation with licensed premises, and support an application for a Cumulative Impact Policy.

Basic volume Crime Pattern Analysis has been conducted on all calls to service and ASB for the period April 2009 – March 2010.

## Analytical Report – Victoria Square, Widnes.

Widnes town centre, in particular the Victoria Square area, is host to a wide selection of clubs, pubs and bars, the map in appendix A shows the area that has been analyzed for the purpose of this report and includes the majority of the Town Centre's night-time economy, including the most common streets where crime occurs namely Victoria Sq, Victoria Road etc (specific roads shown in red below)

This area is also under consideration for becoming a Cumulative Impact Area, the ultimate aim being to reduce the risk of a potential increase in the number of violent offences, it is understood that whilst the night time economy in these areas cannot be forcibly reduced, it can be more effectively contained and further growth more effectively scrutinised.

**Table 1: Street names within the 'Selected' Town Centre location:**

<b>Street names within Widnes Town Centre</b>			
Albert Road	Emily Street	Market Street	Vicarage Road
Albert Square	Farrant Street	Marzahn Way	Victoria Road
Alexandra Street	Fredrick Street	Miners Way	Victoria Square
Alforde Street	Gerrard Street	Moor Lane	Vine Street
Bradley Way	Green Oaks Way	Robert Street	Widnes Road
Cross Street	Grenfell Street	Rylands Street	Winfield Way
Deacon Road	Hibbert Street	Salisbury Street	Witt Road
Dickinson Street	Kent Street	St Pauls Road	Lacey Street
Eleanor Street	Kingsway	South Street	Luton Street
Elliot Street	Lugsdale Road	Travis Street	Chapel Street
			Bold Street

The roads in red above are classified as the Cumulative Impact Special Policy area (CISP)  
For the remainder of this report the above will be classed as the 'CISP' area.

The following sections of this report will show peak times for service and the issues the Northern BCU face with the current number of licensed premises and the demand on already stretched resources.

**Table 2: Licensed Premises List, Capacity and Opening Times:**

**Licensed premises capacity at each hour (Bank Holidays normally extended by one hour)**

Premises	Address	Midnight	1am	2am	3am	4am	5am
Kellys	65 Victoria Road	238					
BBs	86 - 92 Victoria Road	200	200	200	200		
Cornerhouse	1 Alforde Street	350	350	350	350		
Doctors	67 Victoria Road	150	150				
Kingsway	66 - 70 Victoria Road	100	100				
Bar Ha	5 Widnes Road	350	350	350	350		
Bar Fresh	72 - 74 Victoria Road	220	220	220	220	220	
Beat	98 Victoria Road	500	500	500	500		
Rui's Bar	85-87 Victoiria Road	120	120	120	120		
The Square	2 Lugsdale Road	630	630	630	630		
Tilly Mints	Alforde Street	150	150	150	150		
Breezes/Level Bar	Widnes Road	400	400	400	400		
Seccombs Piano Bar	Victoria Road	200	200	200	200		
Establishment	Victoria Square	800	800	800	800	800	800
Queens Hall Studio	Lacey Street	400	400				
Grapes Inn	Widnes Road	150					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4958</b>	<b>4570</b>	<b>3920</b>	<b>3920</b>	<b>1020</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>Late Night Refreshment in CISP area</b>							
		<b>Midnight</b>	<b>1am</b>	<b>2am</b>	<b>3am</b>	<b>4am</b>	<b>Close</b>
Aladdin Pizza	Victoria Road	Open	Open	Open	Open		3am
Miami Pizza	Victoria Road	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	4am
Widnes Kebab	Victoria Road	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	4.15am
Yummy Hut	Victoria Road	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	4am
Champions Pizza	Widnes Road	Open	Open	Open			2am
Desii Restaurant	Aldforde Street	Open	Open				1am
Balti King	Widnes Road	Open	Open				12.30am

The above tables show Widnes Town Centre licensed premises, capacity and opening times. There are a number of premises currently closed this is likely to change when new licensees revamp and take over running the premises. There are others that have secured licenses and are due to open in the near future. **Taking into account the capacity and closing times above if all licensed premises (directly within the Town Centre) reached capacity and closed between 2am and 3am we could expect to have over 3,920 people travelling around the Town Centre at one time**, this has huge implications in respect of the levels of violence and ASB and the police and ambulance services ability to respond.

**Table 3: CRIME: All Violent Crime Widnes Town Centre against 'CISP' areas**

Crime <b>VIOLENT Crime</b> in Widnes Town Centre against Widnes 'selected area'				
Year	Widnes TC	CISP Area	% of	Yearly Increase/decrease
2008/2009	250	161	64.4%	-1.6%
2009/2010	196	140	71.4%	7.0%

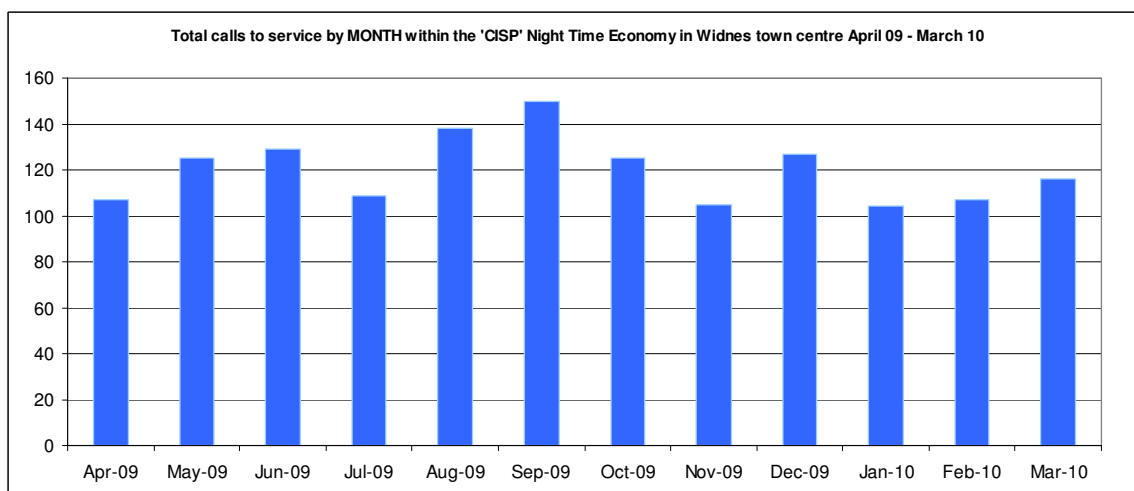
Crime <b>ALCOHOL RELATED VIOLENT Crime</b> in Widnes Town Centre against Widnes 'selected area'				
Year	Widnes TC	CISP Area	% of	Yearly Increase/decrease
2008/2009	80	62	77.5%	6.1%
2009/2010	81	66	81.5%	4.0%

Anti Social Behaviour <b>ALCOHOL RELATED ASB</b> in Widnes Town Centre against Widnes 'selected area'				
Year	Widnes TC	CISP Area	% of	Yearly Increase/decrease
2008/2009	230	125	54.3%	-6.7%
2009/2010	219	138	63.0%	13.0%

The above table compares 2 fiscal years data. On average the 'CISP' area of Widnes Town Centre (i.e. areas saturated with licensed pubs and clubs) account for:-

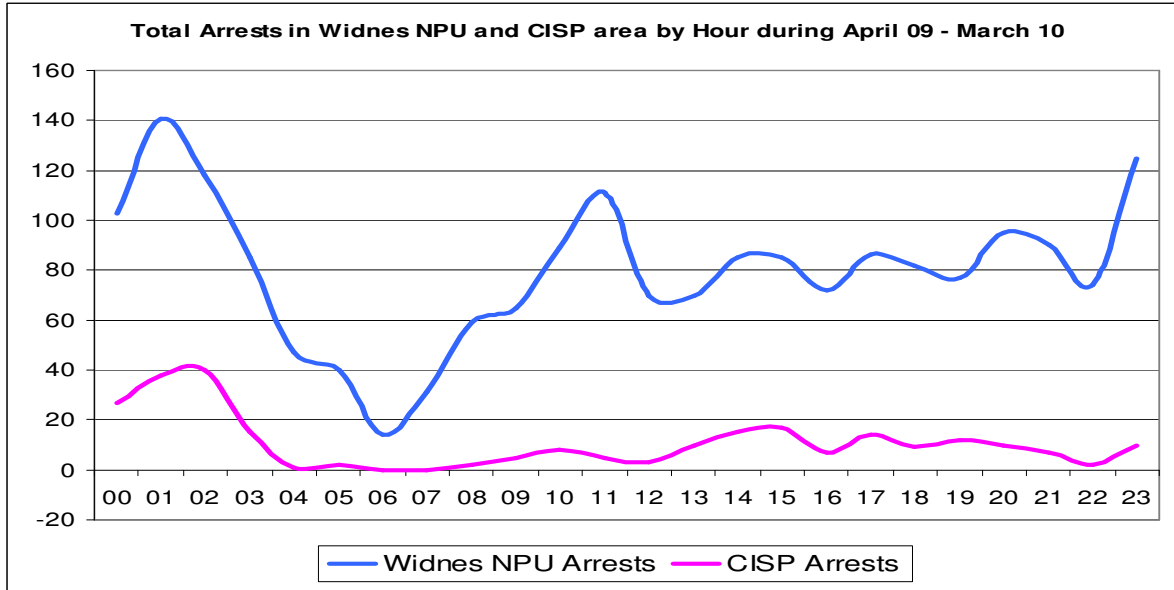
64-71% of ALL VIOLENT CRIME OFFENCES,  
77- 82% of ALL ALCOHOL-RELATED VIOLENT CRIME and  
54-63% of ALL ALCOHOL-RELATED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR,  
within the Town Centre.

**Chart 1: Monthly calls to Service within the 'CISP' Night-Time Economy area of Widnes**



Over this 12 month period Widnes Town Centre (within the 'CISP' area) has been the subject of 1142 calls to service, an average of 95 offences per month. As can be seen from the above chart the demand on resources remains static across a 12 month period April 09 – March 10.

Chart 2: Total Arrests within Widnes NPU and the CISP area April 09 – March 10



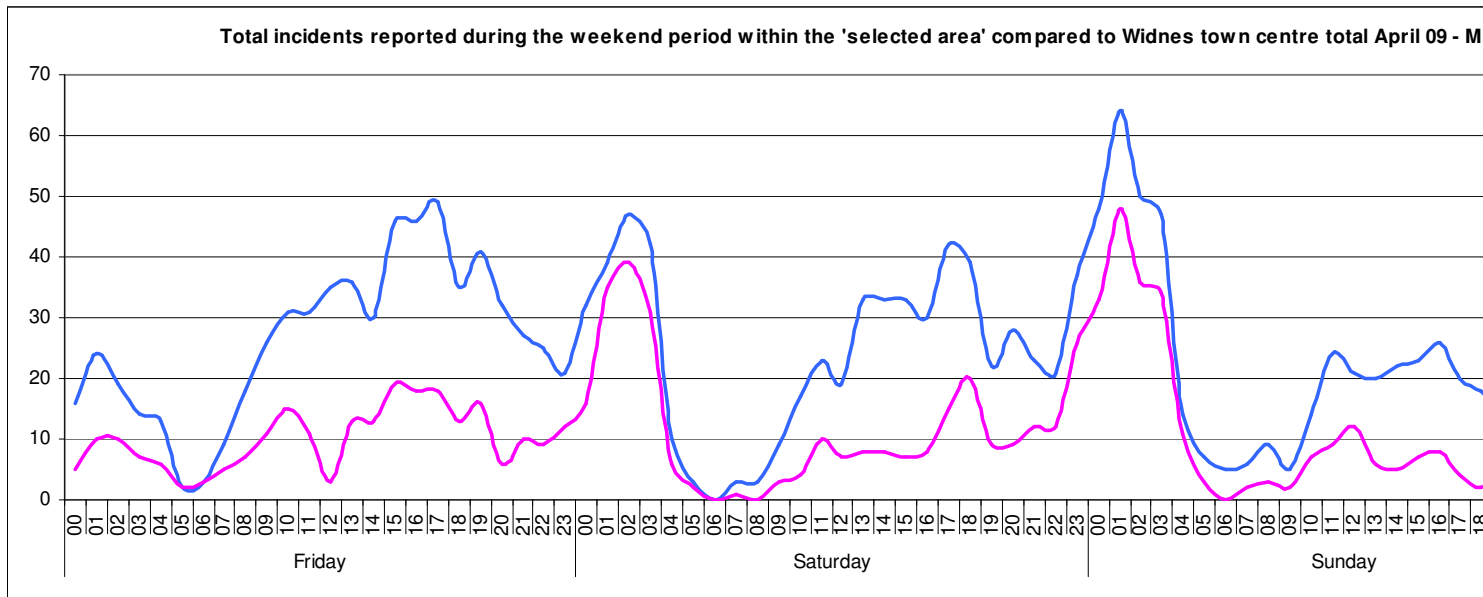
The chart above shows the most prominent hours offenders were arrested within Widnes during April 09 – March 10. The chart clearly identifies the problems associated with policing Widnes during the times 00:00 – 04:00am identifying the association with night-time economy and alcohol related offences, arrests are particularly high during 01:00am – 02:00am. **Table 4: Total incidents reported during APRIL 2009 to MARCH 2010 within WIDNES TOWN CENTRE - highlighting late night economy**

Total Incidents reported within Widnes Town Centre area during 2009/10 by DAY and HOUR								
Incident Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Grand Total
0	12	7	9	18	16	32	48	142
1	12	6	4	15	24	39	64	164
2	18	3	2	5	19	47	50	144
3	10	3	1	6	14	42	47	123
4	3	2	3	3	13	10	14	48
5		3	1	1	2	3	7	17
6	2	1	2	1	3		5	14
7	4	4	3	4	9	3	6	33
8	9	13	12	14	18	3	9	78
9	11	16	15	14	26	9	5	96
10	26	26	24	26	31	17	14	164
11	33	40	18	22	31	23	24	191
12	27	36	33	27	35	19	21	198
13	38	41	34	28	36	33	20	230
14	29	45	47	28	30	33	22	234
15	47	45	41	26	46	33	23	261
16	38	37	33	37	46	30	26	247
17	36	33	35	35	49	42	20	250
18	30	26	29	43	35	39	18	220
19	26	31	29	33	41	22	16	198
20	24	33	19	27	32	28	27	190
21	18	14	19	19	27	23	20	140
22	13	14	24	20	25	21	13	130
23	16	10	12	19	21	37	11	126
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>3638</b>

Total incidents reported within the Widnes CISP area by DAY and HOUR							
Incident Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0	8	3	2	8	5	1	1
1	8	1	1	6	10	3	3
2	7	1	0	3	10	3	3
3	6	0	0	2	7	3	3
4	3	1	0	0	6	6	6
5	0	3	0	1	2	2	2
6	1	1	1	0	3	0	0
7	1	1	0	0	5	1	1
8	3	9	1	4	7	0	0
9	3	10	7	5	11	3	3
10	12	16	5	4	15	4	4
11	10	19	5	5	11	1	1
12	10	10	10	8	3	7	7
13	14	14	6	8	13	8	8
14	12	15	16	10	13	8	8
15	15	15	10	4	19	7	7
16	12	11	18	13	18	8	8
17	10	8	8	13	18	1	1
18	11	6	12	8	13	2	2
19	14	9	15	12	16	9	9
20	7	9	5	8	6	9	9
21	4	3	8	7	10	1	1
22	6	5	8	11	9	1	1
23	6	2	7	10	12	2	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>

If the current average hour for closure of licensed premises is 3:00am these tables highlight safe dispersal of our members of the public and demand on police resources stretches to at least 4:00am during weekends. We also need to consider the "knock on" effect of fast food take-away premises, taxi ranks and early morning opening hours of local business premises.

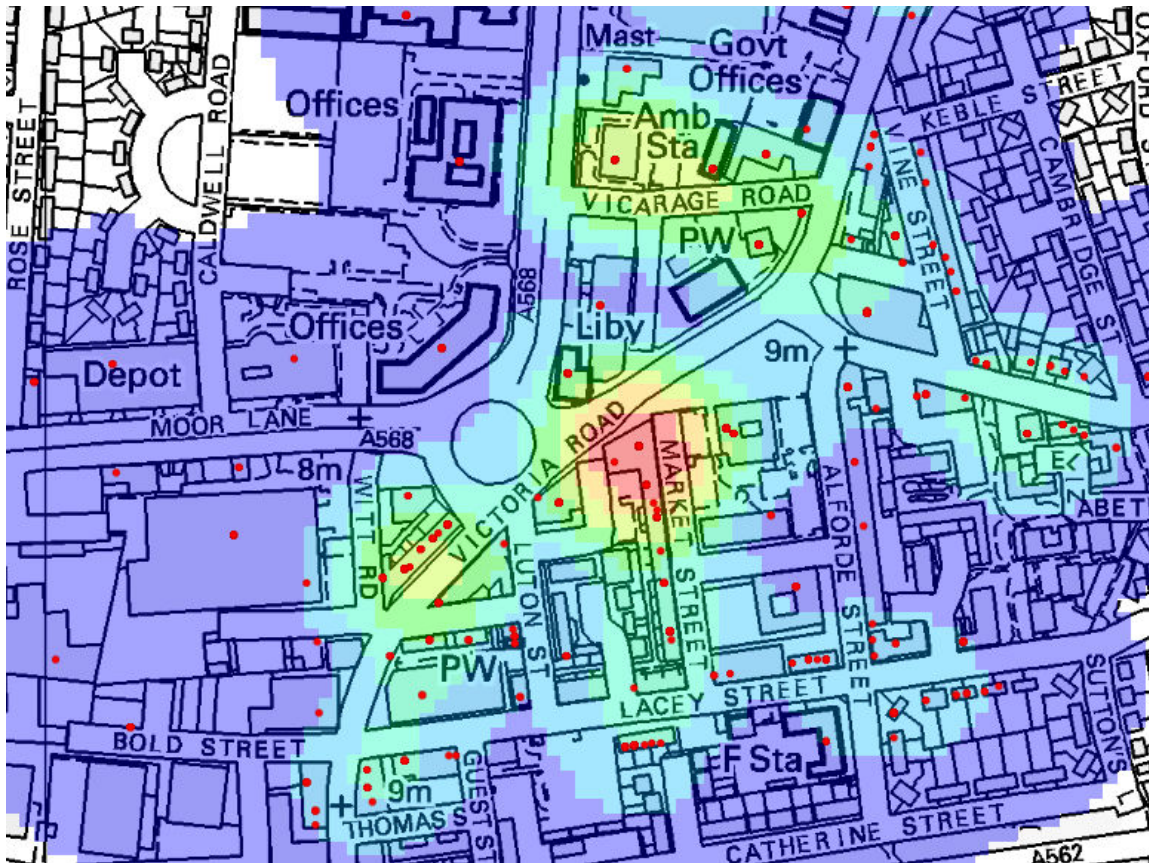
**Chart 3: Total Incidents Reported during Weekend Period within the 'CISP' area Compared to total for Widnes Town Centre April 09 – March 10**



The above chart shows the peak weekend periods and times incidents are reported within the 'selected' locations of Widnes Town Centre (Blue line) against the total for the whole of the CISP area (Pink line). **During the peak periods highlighted above the gap between the 'CISP' areas (Pink line) and the whole of the Town Centre (Blue line) is minimal meaning that the majority of resources will be directed to the 'CISP' areas to enable officers to contain and control the levels of offences, potentially leaving other areas of Widnes at an increased risk.**

The current average hour for closure of licensed premises is 3:00 am, this table highlights the demand on police resources stretch to at least 4:00am during the weekend periods. With the extension of operating hours recently granted to The Establishment, this will stretch to 6:00am and beyond. It is justified in stating that the introduction of any further licensed premises within this location would have a huge impact upon the already demanding times identified above. In addition to this, should existing venues in the CISP area also be allowed to increase their opening hours until 5:00am we are likely to experience public disorder and alcohol related crime continuing for additional hours beyond the current peak, roughly estimated at 6:00am – 7:00am placing even more demand on police, ambulance services and Halton Borough Council.

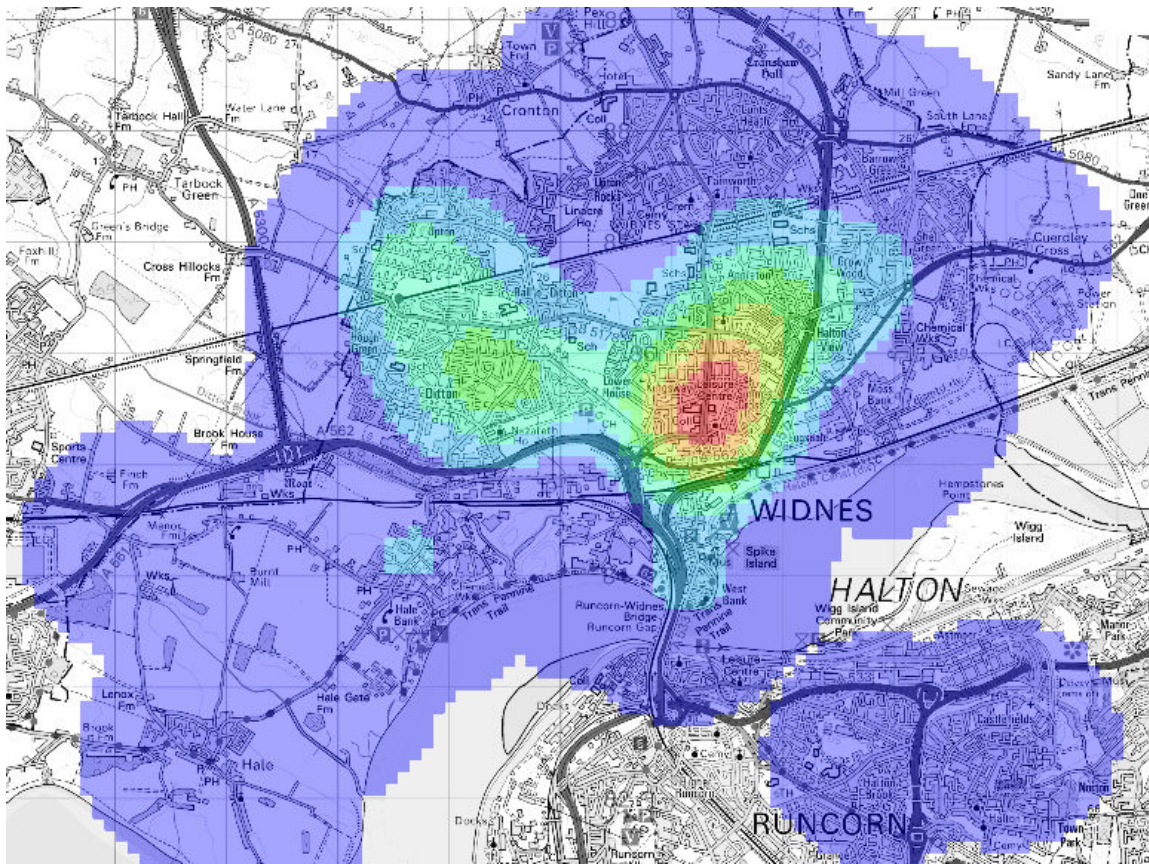
## Mapping



**Map 1: All incidents Hot spot mapping for 'CISP' areas of Widnes Town Centre**

Hotspot mapping has been completed for the 'selected' locations and clearly highlights the main problem area for the Town Centre. The small red dots replicate the location of each incident (some will be repeated but will still only appear as 1 dot, all dots are used within the hotspot analysis), these points show that whilst the main hotspot area is identified within the red/orange/yellow blocks there is still a large number of offences within the surrounding areas, this shows that it is imperative when requesting a Cumulative Impact Area it should also include these immediately surrounding areas to avoid displacement and creating a further problematic area.

Map 2: All Violent Crime within Widnes April 2009 – March 2010



The above map shows the location of **ALL Violent Crime** across the whole of Widnes. The density of crime is shown with hot spot mapping and highlights Widnes Town Centre as the pinnacle area affected by these offences.

It was identified that Widnes Town Centre was a hot spot area for these types of offences, the density of crime was identified as greater in a smaller location within the Town Centre. When reviewing serious violent offences it was identified that 'alcohol' affected 33% of the total.

#### **Risk Assessment:**

As identified within this report Victoria Square area of Widnes is already saturated with a large number of licensed pubs and clubs and late night refreshment premises with opening times having increased over the last few years making policing the town centre exceedingly more difficult. If opening hours are increased to later times (5.00am) policing these times will stretch to at least 6.30/7am, having a huge impact upon staffing and the ability to keep town centre violence and ASB under control, leading to a greater risk to the public and public confidence. Introducing further licensed premises will have a further more significant impact as the number of 'revellers' is likely to increase as will the risk of an increase in violence and disorder.

#### **Recommendations:**

- To reduce the risk of a potential rise in the number of violent offences and disorder within Widnes Town Centre it is strongly recommended that the 'selected' area of Victoria Square area (Map – Appendix A) becomes a Cumulative Impact Area, preventing any further licensed premises applications from opening in an area already saturated with pubs and clubs and late night refreshment premises.



**Extract from section 13 of the Statutory Guidance (October 2010)****THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF A CONCENTRATION OF LICENSED PREMISES**

## What is cumulative impact?

13.24 “Cumulative impact” is not mentioned specifically in the 2003 Act but means in this Guidance the potential impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives of a significant number of licensed premises concentrated in one area. The cumulative impact of licensed premises on the promotion of the licensing objectives is a proper matter for a licensing authority to consider in developing its licensing policy statement.

13.25 In some areas, where the number, type and density of premises selling alcohol for consumption on the premises are unusual, serious problems of nuisance and disorder may be arising or have begun to arise outside or some distance from licensed premises. For example, concentrations of young drinkers can result in queues at fast food outlets and for public transport. Queuing in turn may be leading to conflict, disorder and anti-social behaviour. While more flexible licensing hours may reduce this impact by allowing a more gradual dispersal of customers from premises, it is possible that the impact on surrounding areas of the behaviour of the customers of all premises taken together will still be greater in these cases than the impact of customers of individual premises. These conditions are more likely to occur in town and city centres, but may also arise in other urban centres and the suburbs.

## Evidence of cumulative impact

13.26 There should be an evidential basis for the decision to include a special policy within the statement of licensing policy. For example, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships will often have collated information which demonstrates cumulative impact as part of their general role on anti-social behaviour; and crime prevention strategies may have already identified cumulative impact as a local problem. Similarly, environmental health officers may be able to demonstrate concentrations of valid complaints relating to noise disturbance. The open meetings recommended at paragraph 1.22 of this Guidance should also assist licensing authorities in keeping the situation as to whether an area is nearing this point under review.

13.27 After considering the available evidence and consulting those individuals and organisations listed in section 5(3) of the 2003 Act and any others, a licensing authority may be satisfied that it is appropriate and necessary to include an approach to cumulative impact in the licensing policy statement. In this case, it should indicate in the statement that it is adopting a special policy of refusing new licences whenever it receives relevant representations about the cumulative impact on the licensing objectives which it concludes after hearing those representations should lead to refusal (see paragraphs 13.29 – 13.32 below).

13.28 The steps to be followed in considering whether to adopt a special policy within the statement of licensing policy are summarised below.

## Steps to a special policy

- Identify concern about crime and disorder or public nuisance
- Consider whether there is good evidence that crime and disorder or nuisance are happening and are caused by the customers of licensed premises, or that the risk of cumulative impact is imminent
- Identify the boundaries of the area where problems are occurring
- Consult with those specified in section 5(3) of the 2003 Act, and subject to the outcome of the consultation

- Include and publish details of special policy in licensing policy statement

#### Effect of special policies

13.29 The effect of adopting a special policy of this kind is to create a rebuttable presumption that applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates or variations that are likely to add to the existing cumulative impact will normally be refused, following relevant representations, unless the applicant can demonstrate in their operating schedule that there will be no negative cumulative impact on one or more of the licensing objectives.

13.30 However, a special policy must stress that this presumption does not relieve responsible authorities or interested parties of the need to make a relevant representation, referring to information which had been before the licensing authority when it developed its statement of licensing policy, before a licensing authority may lawfully consider giving effect to its special policy. If there are no representations, the licensing authority must grant the application in terms that are consistent with the operating schedule submitted.

13.31 Once adopted, special policies should be reviewed regularly to assess whether they are needed any longer or need expanding.

13.32 The absence of a special policy does not prevent any responsible authority or interested party making representations on a new application for the grant, or variation, of a licence on the grounds that the premises will give rise to a negative cumulative impact on one or more of the licensing objectives.

#### LIMITATIONS ON SPECIAL POLICIES RELATING TO CUMULATIVE IMPACT

13.33 It would normally not be justifiable to adopt a special policy on the basis of a concentration of shops, stores or supermarkets selling alcohol for consumption off the premises. Special policies will usually address the impact of a concentration of licensed premises selling alcohol for consumption on the premises.

13.34 A special policy should never be absolute. Statements of licensing policy should always allow for the circumstances of each application to be considered properly and for licences and certificates that are unlikely to add to the cumulative impact on the licensing objectives to be granted. After receiving representations in relation to a new application for or a variation of a licence or certificate, the licensing authority must consider whether it would be justified in departing from its special policy in the light of the individual circumstances of the case. The impact can be expected to be different for premises with different styles and characteristics. For example, while a large nightclub or high capacity public house might add to problems of cumulative impact, a small restaurant or a theatre may not. If the licensing authority decides that an application should be refused, it will still need to show that the grant of the application would undermine the promotion of one of the licensing objectives and that necessary conditions would be ineffective in preventing the problems involved

13.35 Special policies should never be used as a ground for revoking an existing licence or certificate when representations are received about problems with those premises.

The “cumulative impact” on the promotion of the licensing objectives of a concentration of multiple licensed premises should only give rise to a relevant representation when an application for the grant or variation of a licence or certificate is being considered.

A review must relate specifically to individual premises, and by its nature, “cumulative impact” relates to the effect of a concentration of many premises. Identifying individual premises in the context of a review would inevitably be arbitrary.

13.36 Special policies can also not be used to justify rejecting applications to vary an existing licence or certificate except where those modifications are directly relevant to the policy (as would be the case with an application to vary a licence with a view to increasing the capacity limits of the premises) and are strictly necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

13.37 A special policy relating to cumulative impact cannot justify and should not include provisions for a terminal hour in a particular area. For example, it would be wrong not to apply the special policy to applications

that include provision to open no later than, for example, midnight, but to apply the policy to any other premises that propose opening later. The effect would be to impose a fixed closing time akin to that under the “permitted hours” provisions of the Licensing Act 1964. Terminal hours dictated by the Licensing Act 1964 were abolished to avoid the serious problems that arise when customers exit licensed premises simultaneously. Attempting to fix a terminal hour in any area would therefore directly undermine a key purpose of the 2003 Act.

13.38 Special policies must not impose quotas – based on either the number of premises or the capacity of those premises – that restrict the consideration of any application on its individual merits or which seek to impose limitations on trading hours in particular areas. Quotas that indirectly have the effect of pre-determining the outcome of any application should not be used because they have no regard to the individual characteristics of the premises concerned. Public houses, nightclubs, restaurants, hotels, theatres, concert halls and cinemas all could sell alcohol, serve food and provide entertainment but with contrasting styles and characteristics. Proper regard should be given to those differences and the differing impact they will have on the promotion of the licensing objectives.

### OTHER MECHANISMS FOR CONTROLLING CUMULATIVE IMPACT

13.39 Once away from the licensed premises, a minority of consumers will behave badly and unlawfully. To enable the general public to appreciate the breadth of the strategy for addressing these problems, statements of policy should also indicate the other mechanisms both within and outside the licensing regime that are available for addressing such issues. For example:

#### Other measures to control cumulative impact

- Planning controls.
- Positive measures to create a safe and clean town centre environment in partnership with local businesses, transport operators and other departments of the local authority.
- The provision of CCTV surveillance in town centres, ample taxi ranks, provision of public conveniences open late at night, street cleaning and litter patrols.
- Powers of local authorities to designate parts of the local authority area as places where alcohol may not be consumed publicly.
- Police enforcement of the general law concerning disorder and anti-social behaviour, including the issuing of fixed penalty notices.
- The prosecution of any personal licence holder or member of staff at such premises who is selling alcohol to people who are drunk.
- The confiscation of alcohol from adults and children in designated areas.
- Police powers to close down instantly for up to 24 hours any licensed premises or temporary event on grounds of disorder, the likelihood of disorder or noise emanating from the premises causing a nuisance.
- The power of the police, other responsible authorities or a local resident or business to seek a review of the licence or certificate in question.
- Other local initiatives that similarly address these problems.

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 18th November 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director- Finance

**SUBJECT:** Medium Term Financial Strategy

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To establish the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2011/12 to 2013/14.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- (1) the Medium Term Financial Forecast be noted;**
- (2) the base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Forecast;**
- (3) the Budget Strategy and Capital Strategy be approved;**
- (4) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and**
- (5) further reports be considered by the Executive Board on the budget.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) sets out a three-year projection of resources and spending. It has been based on information that is currently available following the Comprehensive Spending Review but there is information yet to be received and revisions will need to be made as new information becomes available.

3.2 Although the projections in the forecast must be treated with a considerable degree of caution, they clearly show there is need to make a significant level of savings over the next 3 years. As such, they provide initial guidance to the Council on its financial position into the medium term.

3.3 Revenue savings of up to £20m, £16m and £12m are required over the next 3 years. As a result a total of £48m will need to be cut from the council's budget. This represents 37%, or more than one third, of the current budget and consequently no area of Council spending can be unaffected.

- 3.4 The Council's current financial position is sound. The District Auditor has found the Council manages its finances well. Even so, savings of this magnitude are unprecedented and it is a significant challenge to find sufficient savings over the next 3 years to balance the budget.
- 3.5 In setting its revenue and capital budgets, the Council will need to have regard to its priority areas, namely:
- Healthy Halton
  - Halton's Urban Renewal
  - Children and Young People in Halton
  - Employment Learning and Skills in Halton; and
  - Safer Halton
- 3.6 These priorities are set out in more detail in the Council's Corporate Plan and in Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy. The latest draft Sustainable Community Strategy is currently out for consultation.
- 3.7 In summary, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy has the following objectives:
- To deliver a balanced and sustainable budget.
  - To prioritise spending towards the Council's five priority areas.
  - To avoid excessive Council Tax increase.
  - To achieve significant cashable efficiency gains.
  - To protect front line services as far as possible.

### **Budget Strategy**

- 3.8 The MTFE shows that in order to balance the budget there is a requirement to make significant cost savings of up to £20m in 2011/12 and £16m and £12m for the following two years respectively. In making these savings the Council will need to have in mind the objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out above.
- 3.9 The Council will identify savings by:
- Progressing Waves 2 and 3 of the Efficiency Programme.
  - Reviewing the portfolio of land and other assets, including its use of buildings in accordance with the Accommodation Strategy.
  - Better procurement.
  - Reviewing (subject to negotiations) the terms and conditions of staff.
  - Offering staff voluntary early retirement and voluntary redundancy under the terms of the Staffing Protocol.
  - Reducing the cost of services either by reducing spend or increasing income.
  - Stopping some lower priority services.
- 3.10 Over the years the Council has prided itself that compulsory redundancies have been avoided. Given the scale of the savings

facing the Council this is extremely unlikely to be the case over the next 3 years. It is recognised that this problem is not of the Council's making but one the Council has to deal with.

### **Capital Strategy**

- 3.11 The Asset Management Strategy sets out how the land and buildings that are in Council ownership or occupation are structured to support the Council's priorities. The capital programme is a major part of the strategy.
- 3.12 The MTFF shows that there is sufficient resource to cover the cost of the current Capital Programme. However, in the current economic climate it is unlikely that the Council will receive significant levels of capital receipts. As such the opportunity for additional capital spending is severely limited and therefore, new spending can only take place for schemes that come with funding.
- 3.13 Prudential borrowing remains an option but the financing costs as a result of the borrowing will need to be found from savings within the revenue budget. Supported capital expenditure allocations will be passported to the relevant service.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The MTFS represents the "finance guidelines" that form part of the medium term corporate planning process. These guidelines identify the financial constraints that the Council will face in delivering its key objectives, and are an important influence on the development of the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and Strategies.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 5.1 There are no direct implications on the Council's priorities. However, the revenue budget and capital programme support the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities and reductions of the magnitude identified are bound to have a negative impact on those priorities.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 6.1 The MTFS is a key part of the Council's financial planning process, and as such minimises the risk that the Council fails to achieve a balanced budget.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Formula Grant 2010/11	Kingsway House	Steve Baker
Formula Grant Consultation 2011/12	”	”
Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 (CSR2010)	”	”

**MEDIUM TERM  
FINANCIAL FORECAST**

**2011/12 TO 2013/14**

**Finance Department  
November 2010**



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) sets out a three-year projection of resources and spending covering the period 2011/12 to 2013/14 and forms the background for the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The projections made within the MTFF must be treated with caution and require continuous updating as the underlying assumptions behind them become clearer.
- 1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy represents the "finance guidelines" that form part of the medium term corporate planning process. These guidelines identify the financial constraints that the Council will face in delivering its key objectives, and are an important influence on the development of the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and Strategies.

## 2.0 COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

- 2.1 The financial year 2011/12 is the first year covered by the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR 10) which was announced on the 20th October 2010, setting out the Government's planned public sector spending for the four-year period up to 2014/15.
- 2.2 The CSR 10 sets out how the coalition government will carry out the deficit reduction plan. Overall government departments will face a loss of funding of an average of 19% over the four years of the review in order to save £83 billion. This is in keeping with the Government's policy to wipe out the structural deficit by 2014/15. Local Government will face above average cuts of 7.25% in real terms, in each of the next four years. Each government department will set out a business plan in November 2010 to set out how the savings will be achieved.
- 2.3 The cuts for Local Government funding are front loaded meaning that the greatest percentage will happen in the first year of the review (2011/12). Table 1 below shows the formula grant in cash terms available to Local Government over the four years of the review.

**Table 1 – National Formula Grant 2010/11 to 2014/15**

£billion	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Annual Funding	28.0	25.0	23.4	23.2	21.9
Year on Year Cut		3.0(10.7%)	1.6 (6.4%)	0.2 (.09%)	1.3 (5.6%)

- 2.4 The provisional figures for the Local Government Finance Settlement are due to be announced in early December. It is only then when the Council will know how it has been affected. Included in the Settlement will be the removal of ringfencing of most revenue grants. The intention of this is to provide greater financial control to authorities. The

number of separate core grants will be reduced from 90 to fewer than 10, with more than £4 billion of core grants rolled into formula grant or school grant. More information is required to identify the complete list of grants which will roll into formula or schools grants, those that will remain and those which will disappear altogether. The Dedicated Schools Grant will be simplified and there will be a new Public Health Grant to reflect the new responsibilities for local authorities.

- 2.5 Department of Communities and Local Government have confirmed as part of the CSR10 they will make a grant available to local authorities to freeze council tax in 2011/12 at their 2010/11 levels. The scheme will be voluntary and will also apply to police and fire and rescue authorities but not to Parish Councils. The funding available will be equivalent to a 2.5% increase on 2010/11 council tax levels and will be paid in each of the four years of the spending review to compensate for council tax income foregone during this period.
- 2.6 An additional 2 billion will be made available over the next four years to support social care; £1.35 billion will be available in the 2011/12. £1 billion of this will come from the NHS to promote joint working and the additional £1 billion will be additional personal social services grant.
- 2.7 The Government announced in the spending review their intention to abolish Council Tax Benefit in 2013/14 and replace it with a new rebate scheme. The new scheme will be localised to local authorities with the Government considering providing greater flexibilities to authorities to manage pressures on Council Tax. The scheme will reduce spending on Council Tax Benefit by 10% from April 2013.
- 2.8 Capital funding from all departments to local authorities will fall by an average of 30% over the period of the spending review. Further details will be published later this year on the Tax Increment Financing programme (TIF). New powers will allow local authorities to borrow against predicted growth in their locally raised business rates, the cash would be used to fund local regeneration schemes. TIF's are likely to be implemented in 2013/14 and the Treasury will look at a number of key tests to be met before a scheme is approved.
- 2.9 The CSR10 reported the Carbon Reduction Scheme will be simplified. Revenues from allowance sales will be used to support the public finances, including spending on the environment, rather than recycled to participants.
- 2.10 Sixteen pilots of pooled community budgets will be introduced from April 2011, which will bring together government spending that is aimed at families with complex needs. It will require authorities to commission some local health, police, criminal justice, education, transport and benefits services, with a view to improving outcomes within their area. It is expected that the scheme will be rolled out nationally from 2013/14.

### **3.0 EXTERNAL SUPPORT**

3.1 The 2011/12 Local Government Finance Settlement is the first year of the CSR10 and as such it brings considerable uncertainty. The provisional settlement is expected to be announced in early December providing local authorities with proposed figures for consultation. It is only in January 2011 that firm and final figures are expected to be confirmed.

3.2 Although the forthcoming settlement will be based on the details announced in the CSR10 there is a great deal of uncertainty on the level of the settlement for Halton. This has made forecasting the level of grant funding included in the forecast very difficult, therefore, the projections must be treated with a considerable degree of caution. As most core grants will roll into formula grant in 2011/12 this may result in an asymmetric impact across local authorities and therefore, unless protection is given, deprived authorities such as Halton will lose out disproportionately.

#### **Formula Grant and Area Based Grant**

3.3 The main source of Government funding to local authorities is through Formula Grant, which comprises Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and redistributed National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR). Distribution of the grant to local authorities is based on what is known as the “four block model”. It distributes grant split over three blocks with the amount allocated to each block, at the national level, based on Ministerial judgement. The system is not transparent making it difficult to identify the amount of grant received by individual authorities for new functions or grant transfers.

3.4 The fourth block is the damping mechanism to ensure that all authorities receive at least the minimum increase or maximum decrease in grant, known as the floor. In this way Authorities are protected from significant detrimental grant changes. The floor levels for the next three years of the settlement are unknown, for forecasting purposes the floor has been assumed to be 12.5%, 10% and 5% over the three years. Without the floor Halton’s grant could be reduced by a further £5m in 2011/12.

3.5 The expectation when the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December is that it will provide settlement amounts for the next two years which will aid financial planning certainty to 2012/13. For the period beyond then a review of Local Government Finance is anticipated. Its impact may have possible adverse affects on Halton’s future settlements caused by changes to the methodology used to distribute formula grant.

- 3.6 The level of specific grants received by Halton in 2010/11 is £108m, including the Dedicated School Grant of £81m. The Department of Communities and Local Government have announced that specific grants totalling £0.8m will be rolled into formula grant in 2011/12. It is envisaged that most other specific grants will also be rolled into formula or schools grant.
- 3.7 Area Based Grant (ABG) is a non ringed fenced general grant allocated directly to local authorities as additional revenue funding and has been allocated to specific policy areas rather than general formulae. The allocation of ABG's to Halton for 2010/11 is £19.9m. The Working Neighbourhoods Fund grant is an ABG and the CSR10 has made it clear that this grant will cease at the end of this financial year.
- 3.8 As with specific grants it is expected that most ABG's will be rolled into formula and schools grant in 2011/12. For forecast purposes we have assumed a decrease to the 2010/11 ABG levels in line with the floor levels set for formula grant.
- 3.9 Following on from the Emergency Budget delivered by the Government in June 2010 cuts were made to various Area Based Grants and Specific Grants. As a result savings were made to the 2010/11 revenue budget totalling £3.174m, this was split between ABG savings of £2.017m and specific grant savings of £1.127m.
- 3.10 The decrease in the level of Formula and Area Based Grant for Halton is shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2 – Formula Grant and Area Based Grant Forecast 2011/12 to 2013/14**

	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's
Formula Grant and Area Based Grant	85,878	83,831	74,062	66,656
2010/11 In Year Grant Cut	- 2,047			
Specific Grants Rolled Into RSG		812		
<b>Formula Grant Decrease</b>		<b>- 8,098</b>	<b>- 5,668</b>	<b>- 2,551</b>
<b>Area Based Grant Decrease</b>		<b>- 2,483</b>	<b>- 1,738</b>	<b>- 782</b>
<b>Formula Grant and Area Based Grant</b>	83,831	<b>74,062</b>	<b>66,656</b>	<b>63,323</b>
In Year Reduction	2.4%	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Cumulated Reduction	2.4%	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>

3.11 The table shows that the MTFF is showing a loss of over £22m in grants, which represents a cut of over 26%.

#### **4.0 COUNCIL TAX FORECAST**

4.1 For 2010/11 the Council Tax for a Band D property in Halton is £1,137.91 (excluding police, fire and parish precepts), which will generate income of £43.5m. Each 1% increase in Council Tax generates approximately £435,000 in spending power.

4.2 Included within the CSR10 the Government have confirmed a grant will be paid for each of the four years of the spending review for those authorities who implement a council tax freeze for 2011/12. The grant would be equivalent to a 2.5% increase to 2010/11 council tax levels or approximately £1m. It should be noted that when the grant ends this will have to be found from either savings or increasing the Council Tax.

4.3 The Government intend to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity which would result in referendums taking place of all registered local electors for those authorities who set excessive council tax increases. The government have reserved the right to use existing

capping powers for council tax increases until the legislation has been introduced.

- 4.4 When setting Council Tax levels it is clear that higher increases reduce the requirement to make savings. However, there are other factors that need to be considered when determining the appropriate increase in Council Tax. These factors include:
- Halton has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest Council Tax level in the North West and the 34<sup>th</sup> lowest in England,
  - Halton's Council Tax is £89.18 (6.2%) below the average Council Tax set by Local Authorities in England.
  - Halton's increase in Council Tax in 2010/11 was 2.0% which was slightly above the national average of 1.8%.
  - Inflation - the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as at September 2010 is currently at 3.1% and the Retails Price Index (RPI) at 4.6%.
  - The spending review, welfare reform, the slow housing market and risk of increasing unemployment.
- 4.5 Table 3 below estimates the net amount of Council Tax income that will be produced for a given % increase in Halton's Band D Council Tax for the next 3 years and assumes no change in taxbase.

**Table 3 – Council Tax Income for 2011/12 to 2013/14**

<b>Projected Increases in Council Tax Income (£'000)</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
0%	0	0	0
1%	435	439	443
2%	869	887	904
3%	1,304	1,343	1,383
4%	1,739	1,808	1,881

## **5.0 OTHER RESOURCES**

- 5.1 As part of the Emergency Budget in June 2010 the Chancellor announced that the LPSA Reward Grant and the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Grant (LABG1) had ceased. Furthermore, the Government have also announced that the Local Area Agreement Performance Grant had also ceased.
- 5.2 In the recent Governance Report the District Auditor has commended the Council's financial management. The Council has a history of spending within budget and has a reasonable level of reserves and

balances. Balances may be used to balance the budget as a one year only solution and additional savings will therefore be necessary in the following year. Yet more savings will be needed in future years as balances are replenished.

- 5.3 As part of the half year monitoring of the 2010/11 budget it has been agreed that each Directorate will underspend its budget. This will generate approximately £2m which will provide added flexibility in managing next year's budget.
- 5.4 A potential source of resources is additional income. One of the responses from the budget survey last year with Halton 2000 was that increasing charges was more preferable than increasing the Council Tax. Additional income could be generated either by increasing existing charges, identifying new charges, sharing services or even providing services for other Authorities.

## **6.0 SPENDING FORECAST**

- 6.1 The spending forecast provides an estimate of the increase in revenue expenditure that will be required over the next three years in order to maintain existing policies and programmes. In effect this represents an early estimate of the standstill budget requirement using the information that is currently available.
- 6.2 The scope of the Forecast covers General Fund revenue activities that are financed through Formula Grant, Area Based Grant and the Council Tax. Schools budgets are considered in Section 10.
- 6.3 The Forecast includes the budgetary consequences of previous budget decisions, including one-off savings used to balance the 2010/11 budget, this adds £0.391m to the forecast for 2011/12. It also includes further increases to the Revenue Priorities Fund of £0.5m in each year.
- 6.4 Pay and price inflation is the biggest uncertainty and the single most costly factor in the forecast. As part of the 2010/11 forecast an estimate of 1% was included in the budget for the pay award, in actual terms no pay increase was implemented which has resulted in a saving of £0.651m against the budget. As part of the Emergency Budget the Government announced a two year pay freeze for public sector workers from 2011/12 with the exception of employees who earn less than £21,000 who would receive an increase of £250. This pay award has only initially been agreed for central government workers but to cover the eventuality of local government workers also being included an amount of £0.331m has been included for years 2011/12 and 2012/13. Pay inflation of 1% has been included for the final year of the forecast.
- 6.5 Over the three years of the forecast a 0.5% increase to cover the increasing costs of the superannuation scheme has been included.

This is estimated to add an additional £0.3m to each year of the forecast.

- 6.6 Inflation has increased since this time last year, currently the Consumer Price Index (CPI) – the index by which the Government measures inflation - stands at 3.1% which is above the Governments 2% target. The forecast assumes that many items of supplies and services expenditure will continue to be cash limited. In other cases the forecast assumes an appropriate rate that reflects the picture of current and future prices.
- 6.7 The impact of the recession continues to affect income levels, particularly market, commercial and industrial rents, building control and planning fees. It is anticipated that income levels will not revert to their previous levels and the forecast assumes an overall loss of income of £0.3m in 2011/12.
- 6.8 The Government have set targets for both recycling waste and limits to biodegradable municipal waste. Failure to meet these targets will result in significant financial penalties and to respond to these targets will require considerable investment. These penalties can be avoided in the short-term by buying allowances under the Local Authority Trading Scheme.
- 6.9 In addition, the disposal of waste using a landfill site is subject to Landfill Tax paid on top of landfill fees. The 2009 Budget announced that the standard rate for Landfill Tax would continue to increase annually by £8 per tonne rising from £48 per tonne to £72 by April 2013. Consequently £600,000 is included in each of the three years of the forecast to cover additional waste disposal costs from tax and LATS allowances.
- 6.10 There will be a new expense for the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme from 2011/12 onwards. The authority will need to buy allowances based on the anticipated level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The intention was for the cost of the allowances to be refunded at the end of each year, plus or minus a bonus or penalty payment dependant on the performance compared to their similar organisations. CSR10 announced a fundamental change to the scheme confirming that revenue raised would be used to support public finances rather than recycled to participants. The cost to the authority is estimated at £0.2m.
- 6.11 A key assumption that has been used in constructing the MTFE is that total spending in 2010/11 is kept within the overall budget. In particular it can be difficult to control 'demand led' budgets such as children in care and care in the community. The Forecast assumes any budgetary pressures in the demand for services or match funding will be addressed through off-setting savings.



- 6.12 In this context it is important to consider the contingency for uncertain and unexpected items. Due to the considerable uncertainty over inflation, interest rates, demand led budgets, impact of spending cuts and loss of income, the forecast includes a contingency of £1.0m in 2011/12, £1.5m in 2012/13, and £2.0m in 2013/14.
- 6.13 In March 2009 the Bank of England base interest rate fell to a historical low of 0.5%. It has remained at this level which has resulted in a large fall in the level of interest it is possible to earn on investments. The forecast includes £0.2m lost investment interest income as a result of the continuing low interest rates.
- 6.14 The Council has a significant capital programme and the forecast includes the financing costs of the existing programme. It also includes the financing costs for early land acquisition relating to the Mersey Gateway Project. The financing costs for borrowing will increase from 2010/11 as interest rates on Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans have been increased to 1 per cent above UK government gilts. The revenue costs associated with the capital programme are included in the forecast at £1.2m in 2011/12, £1.4m in 2012/13, and £0.3m in 2013/14.
- 6.15 The CSR10 confirmed that Council Tax Benefit under its new identity will be localised from 2013/14. Local authorities will be given greater flexibilities to manage the pressures on Council Tax. The new scheme will reduce overall spending on the benefit by 10%, an estimate of £0.8m has been included in the forecast to allow for future pressures.
- 6.16 Over the course of the spending review period the majority of specific grants will be rolled into formula grant and schools grant. It is assumed in the forecast that the 2010/11 funding baseline figures for specific grants will be cut in line with formula grant and Area Based Grants. The cost to maintain services funded by specific grants are £3.8m in 2011/12, £2.1m in 2012/13 and £1.4m in 2013/14.
- 6.17 New public health responsibilities will transfer to the Council from April 2011. CSR10 identifies a new grant that is intended to fund these new responsibilities. The forecast assumes the grant to Halton will be sufficient to cover the cost of these new responsibilities.
- 6.18 Table 4 outlines the Spending Forecast, which highlights likely increases in the net budget of 8.1% in 2011/12 and 7.3% and 7.8% thereafter.

**Table 4 – General Fund Medium Term Standstill Spending Forecast**

Increase in Spending required to maintain existing policies and services	Year on year change (£'000)		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
FYE of Previous Year Budget	391	-111	0
Pay Settlement below Budget 2010/11	-651	0	0
Priorities Fund	500	500	500
Pay and price inflation	1,407	1,344	1,638
Superannuation/NI	362	284	284
Pay Contingency	1,000	1,000	1,000
Waste Disposal	610	610	610
Carbon reduction Commitment	200	0	0
Contingency	1,000	1,500	2,000
Loss of Income	300	0	0
Localisation of Council Tax Benefits	0	0	800
Change of Interest Rates	183	-6	25
Capital Programme	1,227	1,354	322
Decrease in funding for Specific Grants	3,806	2,096	1,452
Other	35	52	69
<b>TOTAL INCREASE</b>	<b>10,370</b>	<b>8,623</b>	<b>8,700</b>
<b>FORECAST INCREASE (%)</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>

## 7.0 THE FUNDING GAP

7.1 At this level of spending there is a funding gap with the forecast level of resources. Table 5 demonstrates the forecast gap between spending and forecast resources in at different levels of Council Tax increase.

**Table 5: Funding Gap with a given % increase in Council Tax**

Council Tax Increase of:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
0%	20,139	16,029	12,033
1%	19,704	15,590	11,589
2%	19,269	15,142	11,128
3%	18,835	14,686	10,649
4%	18,400	14,221	10,152

7.2 The table shows that savings of up to £20m are forecast to be needed to balance next year's budget with further savings of £16m in 2012/13 and £12m in 2013/14. The total funding gap is up to £48m and represents 37% of the Council's budget.

## **8.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 8.1 Each year the Government provides supported capital expenditure (SCE) allocations for the local transport programme, housing, social services and education. These allocations can either be in grants or borrowing approvals. The formula grant system is constructed so that the funding cost associated with the allocations results in additional grant. The Forecast therefore assumes that the allocations are passported to the relevant services. However, this approach would have to be reconsidered if the Council were to find itself below the grant floor for a prolonged period since, as in these circumstances, grant is not made available to fund the borrowing costs.
- 8.2 The current system of capital controls allows local authorities to supplement the SCE allocations by way of prudential borrowing. Such borrowing is required to be:
- prudent
  - affordable, and
  - sustainable
- 8.3 The Council has used prudential borrowing provided that the cost of borrowing has been covered by savings. The Forecast continues this approach.
- 8.4 In past years the Council has been extremely successful in attracting grants and contributions. In this way the Council has been able to undertake significant capital expenditure without financing costs falling on the budget. As a result of the comprehensive spending review capital expenditure across all government departments will be cut by an average of 30% and in addition regional development agencies will be phased out over the next few years. The impact of these measures will have a significant impact on the reduced level of funding available for the capital programme.
- 8.5 The Council's capital programme is updated each year incorporating new starts approved through the budget process. The current programme is dominated by the land acquisitions for the Mersey Gateway project and several major regeneration projects designed to promote economic growth and employment opportunities. In the near future the Building Schools for the Future Programme will be major components of the capital programme.

- 8.6 Committed spending on the capital programme over the next three years is:

	£m
2011/12	70.1
2012/12	24.3
2013/14	3.6

- 8.7 This spending is fully funded from a variety of sources, including capital receipts.

- 8.8 In recent years a major source of funding the capital programme has been capital receipts. However, the number and value of assets now held is much less than it was and therefore no major capital receipts are included within the Forecast. Following the transfer of the housing stock to HHT, capital receipts from right to buys and the VAT shelter arrangement are receivable and these are included within the forecast.

- 8.9 A further major problem facing the current capital programme is accommodating the financing costs as well as the ongoing revenue costs such as maintenance of any assets. CSR 10 confirmed that interest rates on Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans have been increased to 1 per cent above UK government gilts.

## 9.0 RESERVES & BALANCES

- 9.1 The Councils Reserves and Balances Strategy is attached in the Appendix. It sets out the Council's Strategy in respect of the level of reserves and balances it wishes to maintain, by reference to the financial needs and risks associated with the Council's activities.

- 9.2 The level of balances and reserves will be reviewed as part of the budget and final accounts processes. At the moment they appear reasonable, however there are a number of uncertainties including the cost of equal pay claims which are still not clear.

- 9.3 The Capital Reserve currently totals £2.9m however, this is earmarked to meet the Mersey Gateway preparation costs.

## 10.0 SCHOOLS BUDGET

- 10.1 Schools are now fully funded by Government grants, primarily the Dedicated Schools Grant. The DSG is used to fund the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) which is allocated to schools by way of a formula, in accordance with the Local Management of Schools Financial Scheme (the formula), and the central allocation in accordance with Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidelines.

- 10.2 The Schools Forum assesses and considers current and future arrangements and changes to Schools funding, agreeing any formula changes.
- 10.3 CSR10 announced that the 5-16s schools budget would increase by 0.1% for each year of the spending review; this is inclusive of a £2.5billion pupil premium which will support the educational development of the most disadvantaged. Further information on the new pupil premium funding and how it will be allocated to schools will be published in December. As a result of the distribution it is envisaged that some schools may face a cut in real terms funding compared to previous years. There will also be a decrease in funding for 16-19 year old.
- 10.4 Announced as part of CSR10 was that Sure Start funding would remain the same in cash terms over the four years of the spending review.
- 10.5 Halton High School transferred to academy status from September 2010. Funding for the school is now paid direct to the school from the Government rather than going through the authority. Included within the grant paid to the school will be funding that previously funded central services which the authority provides. There is an element of financial risk to the authority in future years of other schools choosing to become academies which will lead to a shortfall in income to fund the expenditure for the central services.

## **11.0 PARTNERSHIPS**

- 11.1 Halton takes part in joint planning with Halton and St. Helens Primary Care Trust (H&SHPCT), and has several Pooled Budgets with H&SHPCT. Pooled budgets include the Integrated Community Equipment Service Pooled Budget and the Intermediate Care Pooled Budget.
- 11.2 April 2012 will see the start of changes to the partnerships with the Primary Care Trust. 2012/13 will see the development of GP commissioning consortia with whom local authorities will develop similar partnerships to those listed in 11.1. It is expected following the successful establishment of GP consortia PCTs will cease to exist from 2013.
- 11.3 A further pooled budget the authority has with the Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust is the Adults with Learning Disabilities (ALD) Pooled Budget. Under Valuing People Now 2009 responsibility for the funding and commissioning of social care for adults with learning disabilities will be transferred to local government and the ALD Pool will end on 31 March 2011. The forecast assumes that the transfer of funding will be on a "net nil" basis. The partnership with H&SHPCT will still exist in terms of delivering the service.

## **12.0 EFFICIENCY STRATEGY**

- 12.1 In order to maintain the level of performance and services the authority offers it needs to find new and innovative ways to deliver efficiency savings and service improvements. The Council is determined not to compromise on the quality of the services that are provided to the community. However, it recognises the need to look more radically at the way it does business in order to achieve the level of savings that will protect key services.
- 12.2 The Council has set in train the Efficiency Programme and Wave 1, which identified savings of £3.237m net (rising to £4.415m gross), has now been completed. The programme is now well into wave 2 with a number of workstreams established and others starting.

## **13.0 MONITORING**

- 13.1 Spending against each Departments revenue budget and capital programme will be monitored and reported to the Policy and Performance Boards, alongside service outcomes within the quarterly performance management reports. The Council-wide position will also be reported to the Executive Board Sub Committee.

## **14.0 SUMMARY**

- 14.1 As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review there will be severe cuts to the funding streams of the authority. Consequently there is a requirement to make significant budget savings. There are also spending pressures, not included in the forecast, which will result in the need for further savings to keep future council tax increases to reasonable levels.
- 14.2 Future levels of growth and savings will therefore be directly influenced by the decisions made concerning Council Tax increases. Higher Council Tax increases will reduce the level of savings that are required although the Government has demonstrated that it will use its reserve capping powers to limit Council Tax increases which it deems to be excessive.
- 14.3 The Medium Term Financial Forecast has been based on information that is currently available. Revisions will need to be made as new developments take place and new information becomes available.

## **APPENDIX**

### **RESERVES AND BALANCES STRATEGY**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The following sets out the Council's Strategy in respect of the level of reserves and balances it wishes to maintain, by reference to the financial needs and risks associated with the Council's activities.
- 1.2 The overall strategy is to provide the Council with an appropriate level of reserves and balances in relation to its day to day activities and to ensure the Council's financial standing is sound and supports the achievement of its long term objectives and corporate priorities.
- 1.3 The Operational Director, Financial Services will undertake quarterly reviews of the level of reserves and balances and take appropriate action in order to ensure the overall strategy is achieved. The outcome of the reviews will be reported to Executive Board Sub Committee and will be used to inform the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the annual budget setting process and the final accounts process.
- 1.4 The Strategy concentrates upon the Council's key reserves and balances, being those which may potentially have a significant affect upon the Council's financial standing and its day to day operations.

#### **2.0 GENERAL BALANCES**

- 2.1 It has been the Council's policy since it gained unitary status to increase general balances. Close monitoring and control of budgets since then has meant this policy has been successfully achieved. It is considered prudent to maintain them at a reasonable level in order to provide for any major unforeseen future events.
- 2.2 The level of revenue budget savings currently indicated by the MTFS, provides increased uncertainty in terms of the Council's ability to deliver spending in line with its annual budget, which would result in a reduction in General Balances.
- 2.3 It is therefore considered prudent to maintain sufficient general balances in order to provide for such eventualities, as well as to minimise the financial impact of any major unforeseen future events.

### **3.0 BAD DEBT PROVISION**

#### **General Debtors**

- 3.1 The Council makes provision for bad and doubtful debts based upon an annual review of outstanding debts profiled by age. The bad debt provisions in respect of general debtors currently total £7.0m.
- 3.2 Past experience has shown that after 43 days the likelihood of sundry debts being paid reduces significantly and therefore the risk of them not being recovered increases greatly. It is therefore considered prudent to make full provision for all sundry debts outstanding for more than 43 days.
- 3.3 In specific areas where historically there have been difficulties recovering sundry debts, such as with Adult Social Care, it is also considered prudent to make additional provision in order to ensure the risk of financial loss to the Council is minimised.

#### **Council Tax / Business Rates (NNDR)**

- 3.4 Bad debt provisions are also held in respect of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) debts and are based on an overall 99% collection rate. The bad debt provisions in respect of Council Tax and NNDR debtors currently total £2.7m.
- 3.5 The levels of bad debt provisions held are considered prudent in relation to the current level and age profile of outstanding debts, but will continue to be reviewed annually and appropriate action taken in order to minimise the risk of financial loss to the Council.

### **4.0 INSURANCE RESERVE**

- 4.1 The Council holds an Insurance Reserve in order to meet the cost of current and future insurance claims which exceed the level of cover provided by the Council's insurers.
- 4.2 In particular, this relates to claims for fire damage on school premises, where the Council's insurance policy has an excess of £100,000 and the Council also has to fund up to 20% of the cost of each claim (except where sprinkler systems are in existence). In addition, the cost of renewal of contents etc. following a fire often exceeds the insured costs. Past experience of major school fires in Halton has shown that the proportion of costs falling to be funded from the Insurance Reserve in these instances can be very significant.
- 4.3 The level of the Insurance Reserve is reviewed annually by comparison to the total outstanding claims and the potential cost of future major claims, particularly school fires. The Insurance Reserve currently totals £3.4m.



- 4.4 A separate Insurance Reserve exists to meet future claims in respect of the Council's previous housing stock, which was transferred to Halton Housing Trust in 2005. This reserve is primarily intended to minimise the financial risk to the Council of potential future environmental claims relating to the period prior to the transfer. This reserve currently totals £1.4m.

## **5.0 CAPITAL RESERVE**

- 5.1 The Council holds a Capital Reserve to support the financing of the Council's capital programme and currently totals £2.9m. However, following the capitalisation direction received in respect of 2008/09 Mersey Gateway preparation costs, the Capital Reserve has been earmarked to meet the remaining Mersey Gateway preparation costs in 2010/11 and beyond.

## **6.0 SINGLE STATUS**

- 6.1 The Council has set-aside funds totalling £4.1m to assist with meeting the costs of equal pay claims. The likely cost of meeting equal pay claims is as yet unknown and it is not clear whether the reserve will be sufficient to meet these costs.

## **7.0 INVEST TO SAVE FUND**

- 7.1 In 2007/08 the Council created an Invest to Save Fund which currently totals £1.3m, in order to provide one-off funding for proposals which will generate efficiencies and thereby create significant, permanent, revenue budget savings, whilst also supporting the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. In particular, the fund will meet the costs of the Efficiency Programme.
- 7.2 Applications for funding which meet specific criteria are considered by Executive Board Sub Committee and ultimately a proportion of the revenue budget savings achieved are returned in order to sustain the Fund.