



Executive Board

**Thursday, 17 April 2025 2.00 p.m.
The Boardroom, Municipal Building**

S. Young

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

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1. MINUTES	1 - 13
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
3. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO (A) URGENT DECISIONS	14 - 15

*Please contact Gill Ferguson 0151 511 8059 or
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Tuesday, 13 May 2025*

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4. DEPUTY LEADER'S AND CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIOS	
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PART II	
<p>In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public and, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is RECOMMENDED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
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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.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 13 March 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Ball, Dennett, Harris, T. McInerney, Nelson, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors M. Lloyd Jones and P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, G. Ferguson, D. Cooke, J Stevens and S. McDonald

Also in attendance: None

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

Action

EXB97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB98 URGENT DECISIONS

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided information on urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.

It was noted that the Council's Constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB99 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report of the Director - Finance, on the review of the Council wide fees and charges for 2025/26 for services provided by the Council's Directorates.

The Board was advised that, as part of the budget preparations for 2025/26, a review of fees and charges had been carried out. The aim in setting fees and charges was to ensure that the Council fully recovered the cost incurred in providing the service, although this was dependent on a number of factors outside of the agreed charge. These were detailed in the report and noted as including demand, which could change year on year and be affected by weather, economy, regional and national events and demographics; competition, where there may be a strong competitive market; and a statutory element, where some charges were outside the control of the Council and there was no discretion to what could be charged.

Attached at Appendix A was the proposed schedule of statutory fees for 2025/26 and the chargeable rates for The Brindley Theatre and the Registrar's Service were attached at Appendix B and C respectively, for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The Board noted that the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) had considered a proposal for the pest control fee for rat treatments on domestic properties. The PPB had endorsed the proposal to introduce a new fee that recovered the full cost of rat treatments on domestic properties, with the exception for those in receipt of benefits (subject to proof). It was agreed that this would be explored.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A and for 2026/27, as set out in Appendices B and C, be approved.

Director of Finance

EXB100 2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2025

The Board received a report from the Director - Finance, which advised on the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position as at 31 January 2025, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending

against the operational revenue budget up to 31 January 2025 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £15.487m. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 January 2025, highlighting the schemes, which had been revised.

RESOLVED: That

Director of
Finance

- 1) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to reduce the councilwide forecast outturn overspend position;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved savings proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 4;
- 3) Council be asked to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.22 and incorporated within Appendix 3; and
- 4) This report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board, in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

EXB101 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2025/26

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26 for Halton Borough Council.

The Council was required to publish a Pension Discretion Statement annually, to advise the discretions it intended to exercise under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – this was appended to the report.

It was reported that the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2025-26 was based upon the statement for 2024-25, which was approved by Executive Board in February 2024. It was noted that no new discretions had been added.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB102 CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF DAY, RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOME CARE CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which sought an extension of the current contract for the provision of day, residential and nursing home care. The current contract was due to expire on 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the contents of the report; and
- 2) confirms their approval for an extension to the current contract for the provision of day, residential and nursing home care for a period of two years from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027 for care homes in the Borough to continue placements on a spot purchase basis.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB103 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL & NHS CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT (BETTER CARE (POOLED) FUND) - KEY DECISION

The Board considered report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which sought approval for the new Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between Halton Borough Council and the NHS Cheshire & Merseyside taking effect from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027, which replaced the previous JWA. A copy of the new JWA was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

It was noted that when information on possible future implications to the Council on the Government decision to abolish NHS England was known, a report would be brought to Board members.

Reason(s) for Decision

Approval of the Agreement will continue to support both the Council and NHS CM in developing our integrated approach to service delivery and transformation to improve the health and wellbeing of Halton residents.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Allow the JWA to cease

Implementation Date

The two-year JWA takes effect from 1 April 2025

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the contents of the report and associated Appendix; and
- 2) approve the Agreement, with delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Adults Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, to finalise the new JWA.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB104 DEMENTIA ADVISOR SERVICE - ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which sought approval for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for a further 12-month contract renewal, through a direct award, to the Alzheimer's Society for the provision of a Dementia Advisor Service in Halton. Adult Social Care had previously commissioned Alzheimer's Society to provide a community support service across Halton to those pre and post dementia diagnosis and their carers'.

The current contract was issued on 1 April 2024 and ran for 12 months. The Board was advised that a further 12-month contract was recommended to run from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The current contract value was £77,173 per annum, remaining unchanged since 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for a direct award to support the continuation of the provision of the Dementia Advisor Service in Halton delivered through contract with Alzheimer's Society for the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

**EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND
COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO**

EXB105 HALTON LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the library service consultation exercise, which took place from 27 August to 8 October 2024. Questions

were posed around changes to opening hours and the reasons why people use or do not use the library service with consultations submitted both online and via hard copies at a variety of sites to ensure the engagement approach was inclusive. A copy of the public consultation survey, current and proposed opening hours and a complete summary of findings was attached to the report as Appendix A.

It was noted that the proposals provided a budget saving in year one of £49,599.97. With reduced costs in subsequent years of £91,599 less than £2,666 increased outreach costs, a net position of £88.933.87 per annum.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves

- 1) the amended library opening hours; including closure of Runcorn Old Town & Ditton library on Saturdays; and
- 2) amending the 'Home Library' delivery service model, with the acquisition of an electric vehicle to increase service reach.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

N.B. Councillors Thompson and Wharton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following item of business as they are a Non-Executive Director of Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and left the meeting for the duration of the item. Councillor Nelson declared a Disclosable Other Interest as a member of the Environmental Trust Board.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS IN THE CHAIR

EXB106 MERSEY GATEWAY

The Board considered a report of the Director, Legal and Democratic Services, which recommended that the Council enter into a new provision of services contract with Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust. The Trust was set up as the long-term vehicle for the Environment Mitigation Plan to deliver lasting benefits associated with the Project and related environmental initiatives. On 19 November 2015, Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd appointed the Trust to carry out the responsibility for the environmental services.

The Trust, the Board and the Council were now proposed to enter the second phase of the Environmental Services Contract to maintain the environmental monitoring and environmental improvement of the Mersey estuary

through the implementation of the Trust's charitable objectives that were agreed in the Project Agreement. The report highlighted the reflected changes in the proposed agreement for the following Scheme Titles:

- Business Operation;
- Environmental Monitoring;
- Wigg Island; and
- Saltmarsh

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) give authority for the Council to enter into a new contract for the provision of services by Mersey Gateway Environment Trust; and
- 2) authorises the Director, Legal and Democratic Services to take all necessary steps to bring the contract into effect by 1 April 2025.

Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

EXB107 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION SPD AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION SPD

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to adopt the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) SPD; and
- Climate Change and Adaptation SPD

Once agreed, the SPDs would be sent to the Secretary of State as part of the adoption process, made publicly available and used as a material consideration in planning decisions in addition to the Local Plan.

RESOLVED: That the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Documents is approved.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB108 ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY GRANT ALLOCATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to accept capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in compliance with Council Standing Orders. The Council had received from the LCRCA a grant of £1,233,766 for the Runcorn Busway and expected funding of £995,895.90 for Local Highways Maintenance Funding Allocations. The LCRCA had requested formal grant acceptance for the highway funding

in advance of receipt to ensure funding expenditure could start as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the grants for Runcorn Busway and the Local Highway Maintenance Funding 2025/26 are formally accepted;
- 2) delegated powers are provided to the Director Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, to deal with the Grant Funding Agreement(s) described in the report; and
- 3) delegated powers are provided to the Director Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, to deal with any matters relating to procurement and the operation and delivery of these agreements.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB109 ROADSIDE MEMORIALS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to formally adopt a new Roadside Memorial Policy. It was noted that several local authorities had established policies and protocol relating to the placement and removal of roadside floral tributes and other memorials placed at the scene of fatal road crashes, and other fatalities adjacent to the highway.

The purpose of the policy would be to provide a formal framework which would enable the management of roadside memorials in a way which best served the community. A copy of the policy was attached at Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board adopt the policy contained in Appendix A.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB110 SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE FOR HALTON, CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AND WARRINGTON: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of

part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders to allow the continuation of a contract with We are With You to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Tri-Party Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. We are With You was commissioned to deliver the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service across Warrington, Cheshire West and Halton.

RESOLVED: The Board approve that the contract with We are With You should be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB111 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB112 HIGH STREET RUNCORN

The Board considered a report which sought authority to acquire with Town Deal funding 77 High Street, also known as Chambers.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director for Environment and Regeneration (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects) to take such action as necessary to acquire 77 High Street, also known as Chambers; and
- 2) the Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property be authorised to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB113 ASTMOOR MASTERPLAN UPDATE

The Board considered a report which provided an update on progress in delivering the Astmoor Masterplan.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) authority is delegated to the Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to continue the negotiations to enable the disposal of the land identified in the report; and
- 2) Council amends the Capital Programme to include the Astmoor Masterplan capital receipt as set out in paragraph 3.13.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

N.B Councillor Wright declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as a member of the Halton Housing Trust Board.

EXB114 RUNCORN WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to progress delivery of the Runcorn Waterfront

development. Delivery being enabled through entering into a Development Agreement with Halton Housing for the disposal of Council Land to unlock this regeneration and housing renewal project within Runcorn Town Centre.

The Board discussed the recent developments which were ongoing in Runcorn Town Centre and it was agreed that a report would be brought to the next meeting together with all the current and future developments in the area.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the progress being made to realise the Runcorn Waterfront development;
- 2) approves delegated authority to Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to agree final details of the terms of the Development Agreement with Halton Housing for disposal of Council Land to enable delivery of the Runcorn Waterfront development; and
- 3) authorises the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB115 CARE PROVIDER CONTRACT UPLIFT 2025/26 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which advised on the outcome of the consultation with domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton, in respect of the Care Provider Contract Uplift for 2025/26.

Reason(s) for Decision

Section 5 of the Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to ensure that the care market as a whole remains viable and sustainable, any uplift is essential to support this market.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not offering an uplift for the care market would jeopardise

market sustainability and potentially see providers leaving the Borough.

Ceasing delivery of the services would impact negatively on a vulnerable cohort of the borough's population and likely result in more costly, crisis intervention being.

Implementation Date

1st April 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) considers the recommendations and risks; and
- 3) approval to be given to offer the recommended uplift to care providers for 2025/26

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB116 DOMICILIARY CARE SERVICE TENDER: WAIVER TO
EXTEND CURRENT CONTRACT TERM - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report which sought approval for a Non-Emergency Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 2 to allow the continuation of a contract with the current provider under the new Domiciliary Care Service contract to commence on 28 April 2025. This would ensure business continuity.

Reason(s) for Decision

- The decision relates to a service which is statutorily required.
- The contract value is above £5m.
- The decision impacts on all wards and communities within the borough.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There are no alternative options. The Council must award contracts to providers for the supply of a Domiciliary Care Service in compliance with its regulatory duties to ensure continuity of service once the current contract ceases on 1st April 2025.

Implementation Date

The proposed contract will be for an initial five years commencing 28th April 2025 until 27th April 2030 with the

option to extend by 2 x 12-month periods, 28th April 2030 until 27th April 2031 and 28th April 2031 until 27th April 2032.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves a Non-Emergency Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 2, to grant an extension to the current Domiciliary Care Service contract as per sections 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

MINUTES ISSUED: 18 March 2025

CALL-IN: 25 March 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 25 March 2025.

Meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 April 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: Urgent Decisions

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of Executive Board urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution gives authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decision/s which are required before the next formal meeting of Executive Board.

These must be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council where practicable, and with the Operational Director – Finance and/or Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary. They must also be reported for information to the next practically available meeting of the Board.

- 3.2 More information on each can be found on the Council's website:

<http://councillors.halton.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1>

- 3.3 The urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting of Executive Board:

Date Decision taken	Decision details
17 March	Household Support Fund – 2025/26 Scheme and Spending Plan
27 March	Homelessness Grant Funding

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none other than the constitutional requirement to report urgent decisions for information.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

None.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The report is for information, and there are no risk issues arising from it.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no climate change implications.

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

10.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report. Further information on the decision/s taken is available from the link in Paragraph 3.2.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 April 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Leader and Climate Change

SUBJECT: Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework Key Decision

WARD(S) Appleton and Central & West Bank

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members for approval, the Regeneration Framework for Widnes Town Centre.
- 1.2 The Regeneration Framework sets out a set of spatial strategies and deliverables to drive the future of Widnes Town Centre. It creates an ambitious picture of the future which, with the support from partners and stakeholders, can become a deliverable and implementable programme to benefit all who live, work and visit Widnes Town Centre. However, it is for the Council to determine whether it chooses to accept some, or all of the recommendations made in the document.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework, the spatial strategies and projects outlined within it be supported and approved by the Executive Board;**
- 2) the Board approves next steps to delivery as outlined in section 7 of the Framework;**
- 3) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director for Environment and Regeneration (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects and Climate Change) to pursue further investigations into identified project areas as opportunities come forward;**
- 4) to move towards establishing a Widnes Town Centre Strategic Board comprising relevant public and private sector partners, to have direct oversight of the delivery of projects; and**

5) the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework and its two supporting documents be published on the Halton Borough Council website.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In December 2023, the Executive Board was presented with the Widnes Town Centre Vision. The aim of the Vision was to guide the regeneration of the Town Centre and to identify opportunities and priorities for development. The Vision presented had earlier been considered at a Members Seminar which to gauge the feelings of the wider membership of the Council and this influenced the final report then presented to Executive Board in December 2023.
- 3.2 The Regeneration Framework was also presented to a selection of Halton Borough Council staff through two dedicated workshops, as well as to the Widnes Town Centre Panel, which was established following the recommendation of the previously approved Vision document. The Panel was established to comprise one member per ward from each of the electoral wards in Widnes, so are to receive a board range of views during the early stages of work as the Council develops a Vision and moves towards formally adopting a Development Framework. These sessions provided an opportunity for review and feedback.
- 3.3 The Executive board endorsed the Vision and the recommended next steps. The Framework before the board today is the result of the approval of the 'next steps.'
- 3.4 The Framework itself is supported by two evidence-based documents which have been composed by industry specialists to inform the special strategies and projects. These are:
- Widnes Town Centre Parking, Active Travel and Movement Study (produced by WSP); and
 - Widnes Town Centre Engagement Feedback Report (produced by Placed).
- 3.5 **The Framework** contains a comprehensive review of the context within which the town centre sits. It summarises the evolution of the town centre over the years, and some of the challenges which will need to be overcome, before setting out the where the development opportunities will likely lie.
- 3.6 The Framework sets out the Vision and Objectives that were previously agreed at the Council's Executive Board (December 2023) and builds on these to develop nine spatial strategies.

- 3.7 The objectives and spatial strategies seek to make Widnes Town Centre:
1. More sustainable through providing a more holistic approach to the town centre, providing an attractive high street and a greener town centre.
 2. More cohesive through rebalancing movement across the town centre, simplifying the vehicle network and repairing connections to and from the town centre.
 3. More diverse through providing diverse uses for diverse users, promoting town centre living and celebrating and enhancing Widnes' heritage and identity.
- 3.8 The above three aims were first presented at a Members Seminar in August 2023 and have formed the basis of the Vision that was subsequently developed.
- 3.9 The projects that have been identified in the Regeneration Framework to achieve this are detailed in section 6 of the Framework.
- 3.10 **The Widnes Town Centre Parking, Active Travel and Movement Study** has been composed to inform the identification of the projects included in the Framework, specifically relating to movement and connectivity. The Study highlights challenges and opportunities that are crucial for the successful development of a thriving town centre.
- 3.11 The Study makes the following recommendations that flow through to The Framework strategies and projects:
- Increase Visitor Traffic: By maximising the town centre's strategic location, more footfall boosting local businesses and the economy.
 - Sustainable Transport Promotion: Encouraging the use of buses, trains, walking, and cycling can reduce traffic congestion and reduce the environmental impact of transport.
 - Space Reallocation: Reallocating vehicle-dominated spaces can free up land for new developments, such as parks, community centres, or commercial spaces.
 - Community Benefits: Development of freed-up land can lead to enhanced community amenities and services, improving the quality of life for residents.
 - Transport Hierarchy: Establishing a transport hierarchy can prioritise sustainable modes of transport, ensuring a balanced and safer transport system and improving the choice of travel for all.
- 3.12 **The Widnes Town Centre Engagement Feedback Report** has also been compiled to summarise the public engagement programme that engagement specialists PLACED delivered during

October and November 2024 and feed into the strategies and projects in The Framework.

- 3.13 The Feedback Report provides an overview of the different engagement activities delivered and how they were promoted, details on who participated, and a comprehensive outline of the engagement findings.
- 3.14 Those who participated in PLACED's engagement programme highlighted a range of issues from the need for a more diverse retail offer, to the importance of making the town centre a safer, better connected, and more attractive area.
- 3.15 Throughout all workstreams, a dominant theme was the desire for an attractive and bustling high street. Residents expressed concerns about the current state of the high street, with its appearance issues, low footfall, poor quality retail, and lack of variety.
- 3.16 Safety and Security was another prominent theme with participants flagging anti-social behaviour, dangerous cycling, vandalism, and youth crime.
- 3.17 The findings also indicate that the town centre is currently car-centric with various barriers to active travel such as unreliable public transport, poorly maintained routes and complex crossings. There were calls for improved public transport links and connectivity.
- 3.18 Response to the engagement delivered was, on the whole, positive with residents and stakeholders keen to see projects delivered that transform Widnes Town Centre into a safe, attractive and well-connected area with a busy high street and diverse retail offer. These aspirations for transformation, however, coincide with hopes for future funding to enhance and preserve existing assets such as the market area and parking facilities.
- 3.19 The Regeneration Framework was also presented to a selection of Halton Borough Council staff through two dedicated workshops, as well as to the Widnes Town Centre Panel, which was established following the recommendation of the previously approved Vision document. The Panel was established to comprise one member per ward from each of the electoral wards in Widnes, so are to receive a board range of views during the early stages of work as the Council develops a Vision and moves towards formally adopting a Development Framework. These sessions provided an opportunity for review and feedback.
- 3.20 Overall, the response was positive, with attendees generally expressing support for the proposed approach. Members were

encouraged to share their views at the meeting or follow up directly with officers. Some members provided additional feedback via emails and further discussions.

- 3.21 At the most recent Panel meeting, there were differing opinions regarding the availability of car parking spaces in the Town Centre. Some members felt that developing surplus spaces would be a more effective use of land, while others believed there was no surplus at all.
- 3.22 There was strong support for enhancing the transport hierarchy, particularly in ensuring that cycling infrastructure is safe for both cyclists and pedestrians.
- 3.23 Members also highlighted the need for the town to cater to both younger and older demographics, noting that younger people's interests have shifted away from a traditional drinking culture.
- 3.24 Other suggestions included improving the general cleanliness and maintenance of the public realm, making Council services and financial advice resources more visible and accessible, and promoting the concept of a 'smart town.' Additionally, there was discussion around ensuring the Framework includes clear references to climate change and sustainability.
- 3.25 Comments and suggestions provided by Members were carefully considered and have been incorporated into the Framework where relevant, ensuring it reflects local priorities and aligns with community needs. Suggestions not directly included in the Framework are being explored as 'meanwhile projects' to be pursued alongside the Framework's proposed initiatives.
- 3.26 Members will be aware that progress has been made to bring forward the former Leisure Centre, Magistrate's Court and Police Station site and it will be important that any future development reflects the key priorities outlined in the town centre framework being presented.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Framework aligns with existing local and national policy objectives, supporting economic growth, sustainability, and community well-being. Its implementation may require updates to planning policies, investment strategies, and partnership agreements to ensure effective delivery.
- 4.2 Consideration will also need to be given to how the Framework interacts with emerging policies, including those related to housing, transport and environmental sustainability.

- 4.3 Ensuring alignment with the Local Plan and broader strategic priorities will be essential to securing funding and stakeholder support.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At this point, the financial implications relating to possible Town Centre interventions are not known.
- 5.2 However, it is clear that the projects contained within the Framework will need to be prioritised, as it will not be feasible to develop them all simultaneously.
- 5.3 Further site acquisitions may be required to facilitate key developments, and any future bids for funding will need to be supported by a Green Book appraisal to ensure robust economic justification.
- 5.4 A phased approach to delivery will be essential, aligning investment with available resources and funding opportunities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Possible positive implications depending on what developments and programmes are implemented.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Potential for job creation and inward investment.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Possible positive implications depending on what developments and programmes are implemented.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Possible positive implications depending on what developments and programmes are implemented.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Any development that comes forward through the Framework will be built to environmentally friendly building regulation standards and biodiversity net gain.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The future projects can help create assets and public realm for local people to enjoy.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Each project within the Framework will be subject to individual risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential challenges.
- 7.2 A key risk is maintaining public confidence. Extensive consultation has taken place, and there is a risk that stakeholders and residents may lose faith in the process if tangible progress is not made.
- 7.3 Additionally, the success of the Framework is dependent on external factors such as the state of the property market and the ability to attract private sector investment.
- 7.4 Economic fluctuations and shifts in investor confidence could impact the viability and timing of projects, making it essential to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to delivery.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Higher unemployment levels and lower health outcomes are close to the Town Centre. The regeneration of Widnes Town Centre should look to support and improve social outcomes in these areas. This would include better access to a broad range of employment opportunities, and access to a wide range of health, community, public transport, and support services.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Consideration of the impacts of climate change, including reducing the carbon footprint, mitigation and adaptation will be required. At the Town Centre level, this would include such considerations such as reduced private transport use, provision of local renewable energy sources, alternative heating sources, Electric Vehicle charging points, appropriate building design, innovative construction methods, shading and planting. The Framework can have a role to reduce the Town Centre's impact on the climate as well as promoting good practices for residents and businesses. Furthermore in regards to the Kingsway Quarter site referenced above there is an opportunity to explore the use of the energy supply to be provided from the propose Solar Farm extension, as previously reported to Executive Board in July 2024.

KEY DECISIONS ON THE FORWARD PLAN

The definition of a key decision is as follows:

A decision which is likely to

- a) result in the local authority incurring expenditure or make savings which are significant; and/or*
- b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities.*

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

The Framework has the potential to impact the wider Halton community.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

N/A

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Subject to obtaining the necessary permissions and securing funding, the period from 2025 to 2035.

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

- Widnes Town Centre Vision 2023 (Previously approved)
[Widnes Town Centre Vision.pdf](#)
- Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework 2025
[3591-ID-004-01-Town-Centre-Regeneration-Framework-WEB.pdf](#)
- The Widnes Town Centre Parking, Active Travel and Movement Study 2025
[Widnes Town Centre Parking, Active Travel and Movement Study v02 \(1\).pdf](#)
- The Widnes Town Centre Engagement Feedback Report 2025
[240601_PLACED Widnes Town Centre Engagement Feedback Report \(1\).pdf](#)
[PLACED WidnesTC Engagement Summary.pdf](#)

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 April 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Taxi Licensing Matter

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive a report from the Regulatory Committee recommending that the Executive Board approve the amendments to the Councils existing Hackney Carriage Stands Order.

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

It is recommended that:-

- 1. The proposals detailed in Appendix A of the Regulatory Report (see Appendix 1) dated 12 March 2025 in respect of stands 11, 13, 17 and 19 to be approved by the Executive Board, considering any representations which may be made in respect thereof; and**
- 2. The Director Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to fulfil all procedural requirements in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and to make the taxi stands order accordingly.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Details of the current taxi rank provisions can be found in the Regulatory Committee Report (See Appendix 1). Included in the report are the details of the proposed amendments along with consultation exercise which was undertaken with the Halton Taxi Trade, Cheshire Police and members of the public, the findings can be found in the report.
- 3.2 On 12th March 2025, the Regulatory Committee considered the proposals as detailed in the aforementioned report (See Appendix 1) and accordingly recommended the position set out in Section 2 of this report be adopted by The Executive Board (see the draft minutes at Appendix 2).

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The subject matter of this report is to adopt the amendments to the current Councils Taxi Rank Order as set out herein.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The cost of implementing the recommended changes, by way of providing new signage to be displayed at the site of each amended hackney carriage rank, must be met through the Taxi Licensing budget.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
None
- 6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
None
- 6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families
None
- 6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
None
- 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
None
- 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
None

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 None

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 None

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None

REPORT: Regulatory Committee

DATE: 12th March 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Taxi Licensing Matter

WARDS: Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update and provide information to members on the outcome of the consultation for taxi rank provision within the geographical boundaries of Halton, and to seek approval for the suggested amendments to the Council's existing hackney carriage stands (referred to as taxi ranks throughout this report)

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. That the Committee considers the contents of this report and the information detailed in the attached appendices;
- 2.2 That the proposals detailed in **Appendix A** (showing proposed amendments in red, in respect of Stands 11, 13, 17 and 19) be referred to the Executive Board with a recommendation for approval, taking into consideration any representations which may be made by the Regulatory Committee in respect thereof;
- 2.3 That the Executive Board authorise the Director, Legal and Democratic Services to fulfil all procedural requirements and relating to the proposals detailed in Appendix A in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's current taxi rank provision is attached to this report at **Appendix B**
- 3.2 Details of the proposed amendments to the taxi ranks, alongside the Council's current taxi rank provision, have been provided to Cheshire Police (including Local Policing Units in Runcorn and Widnes), to allow for comments or objections. No objections to the amendments have been received.

- 3.3 A consultation exercise has been undertaken which included representatives of the Halton Borough Council taxi trade on the provision of taxi ranks throughout the borough, and the amendment to said ranks. Details of the consultation together with the responses received are attached to this report at **Appendix C**
- 3.4 A notice was published in the 'Public Notice Portal' of Runcorn and Widnes Weekly News dated 20th January 2025 and published 23rd January 2025, stating that the Council intends to amend the existing hackney carriage stands order. The notice advised that full details of the proposed changes could be found at HDL offices in both Runcorn and Widnes sites, and an email address was provided to allow objections to be received by the Licensing Manager. The same notice was also displayed on the Councils Website. No objections were received. A copy of the notice is attached to this report at **Appendix D**
- 3.5 The proposed amendments to the Taxi Rank Orders are set out below;

Runcorn

Stand Number	Location	Current Times	Amended proposal
17	High Street (in front of Chambers	22.00 – 06.00	Rescind
19	High Street (outside Bargain Booze and Mersey Road	20.00 – 06.00	Anytime

Widnes

Stand Number	Location	Current Times	Amended proposal
11	Albert Road (outside Wetherspools)	18.00 to 06.00	Anytime
13	Albert Road (outside Imperial)	18.00 to 06.00	Anytime

- 3.6 Stand 17 has been suspended as a taxi rank since building works commenced in May 2024. During this time, the licensed premises that provided the rank with the majority of customers has closed, reducing the demand for hackney carriages on High Street (East). There will continue to be a designated rank for 5 vehicles opposite where this one is proposed to be rescinded, with operational hours of 22:00 – 06:00.

- 3.7 The increase in operation times for stands 19, 11 and 13 will improve service to customers due to their central and busy locations.
- 3.8 Increasing the operation times for stands 19,11 and 13 will not affect the parking provision for local businesses. A loading bay is already incorporated into stand 19 on High Street for deliveries, with parking bays and car parks for customers available within close proximity of all stands.

4. JURISDICTION OF THE COMMITTEE

- 4.1. The Committee is responsible for determining the Council's policies in connection with the grant, variation, suspension or revocation of licences relating to taxi and private matters (see Terms of Reference of the Regulatory Committee part 17B Council Constitution).
- 4.2. The Constitution must now be interpreted in accordance with the case of R (on the application of 007 Stratford Taxis Limited v Stratford on Avon District Council 2011). This Court of Appeal decision interpreted the meaning of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities)(England) Regulations 2000 in respect of matters which must be dealt with by a Council's Executive or by a Committee of its Council. Essentially, the Court held that; (1) It was clear that individual applications relating to taxi matters must be dealt with by the equivalent of this Council's Regulatory Committee and (2) matters calculated to facilitate, or be conducive or incidental to such applications must also be dealt with in the same way but (3) any 'plan or strategy' associated with such a function would be an executive function and therefore have to be determined by a Council's Executive. The Stratford case concerned the introduction of a wheelchair access policy. The decision was taken by the Council's Cabinet rather than its Licensing Committee. The challenge from the taxi trade was that the Licensing Committee should have adopted the policy. This element of the challenge was rejected by the court.
- 4.3. Consequently, any decision of the Regulatory Committee on matters contained in this agenda will be by the recommendation to the Executive Board.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. If approved by the Executive Board, the Council's Taxi Ranks Sealed Order will be superseded by a new Taxi Ranks Order, which would be sealed and adopted by the Council.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of implementing the recommended changes, by way of providing new signage to be displayed at the site of each amended hackney carriage rank, must be met through the Taxi Licensing budget.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

7.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None

7.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None

7.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None

7.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None

7.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

7.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None

8. RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1. None

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 9.1. There are no equality or diversity issues related to the review.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no climate change implications since the decision will have no effect on the environment.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Application Documents	Legal Services	Wendy Pringle

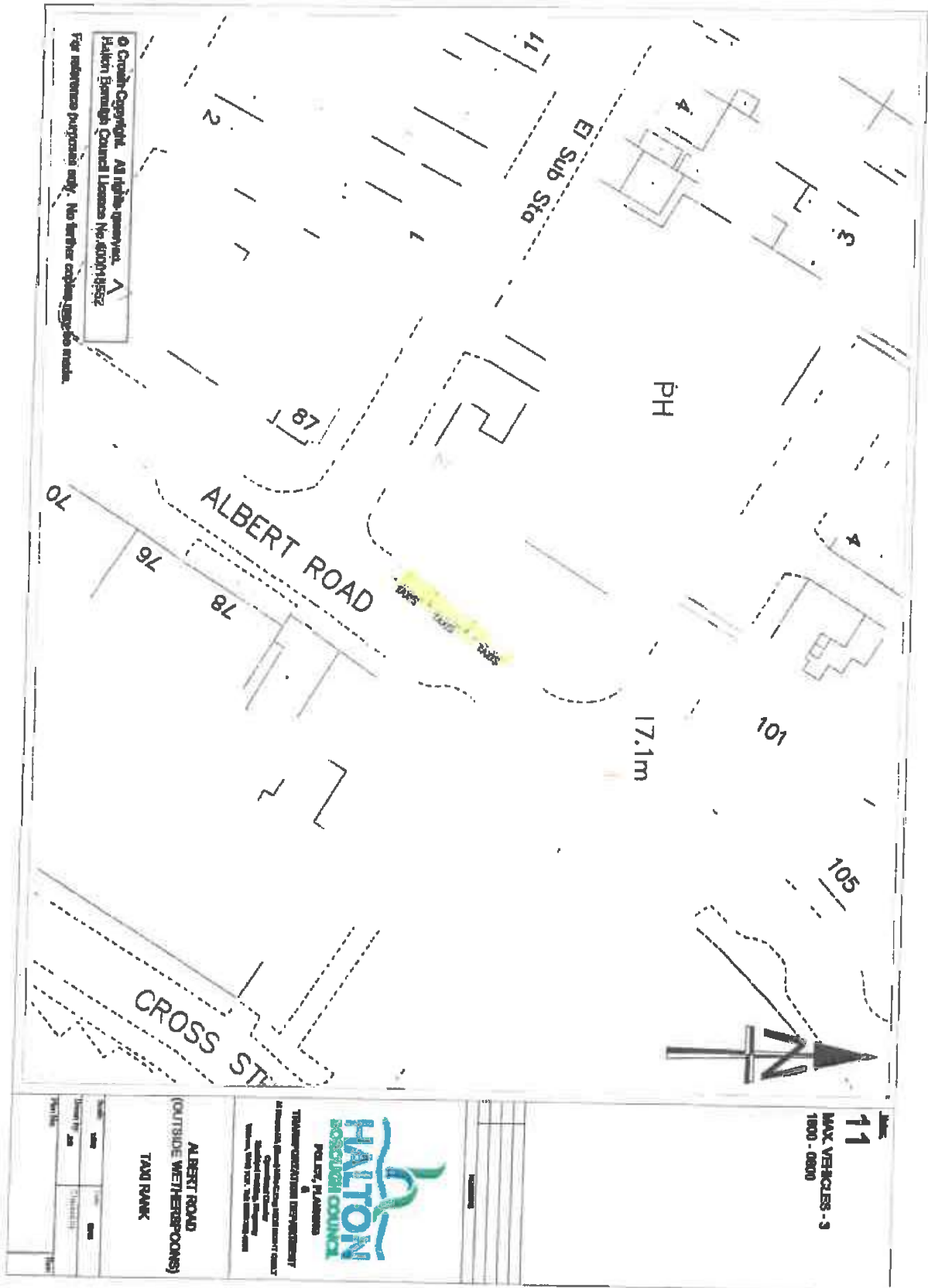
**OFFICIAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS REGULATED BY
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 63 OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1970**

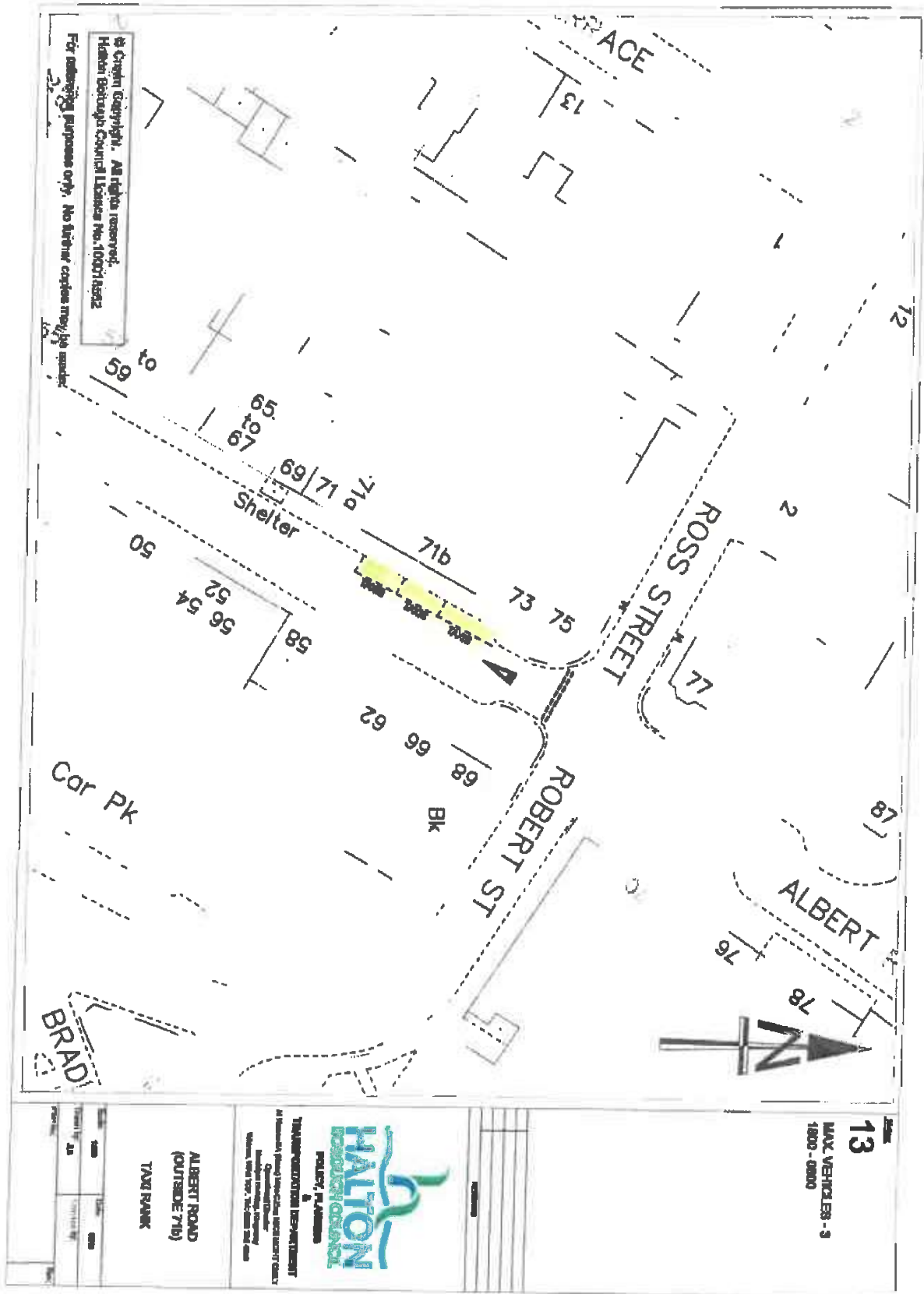
WIDNES

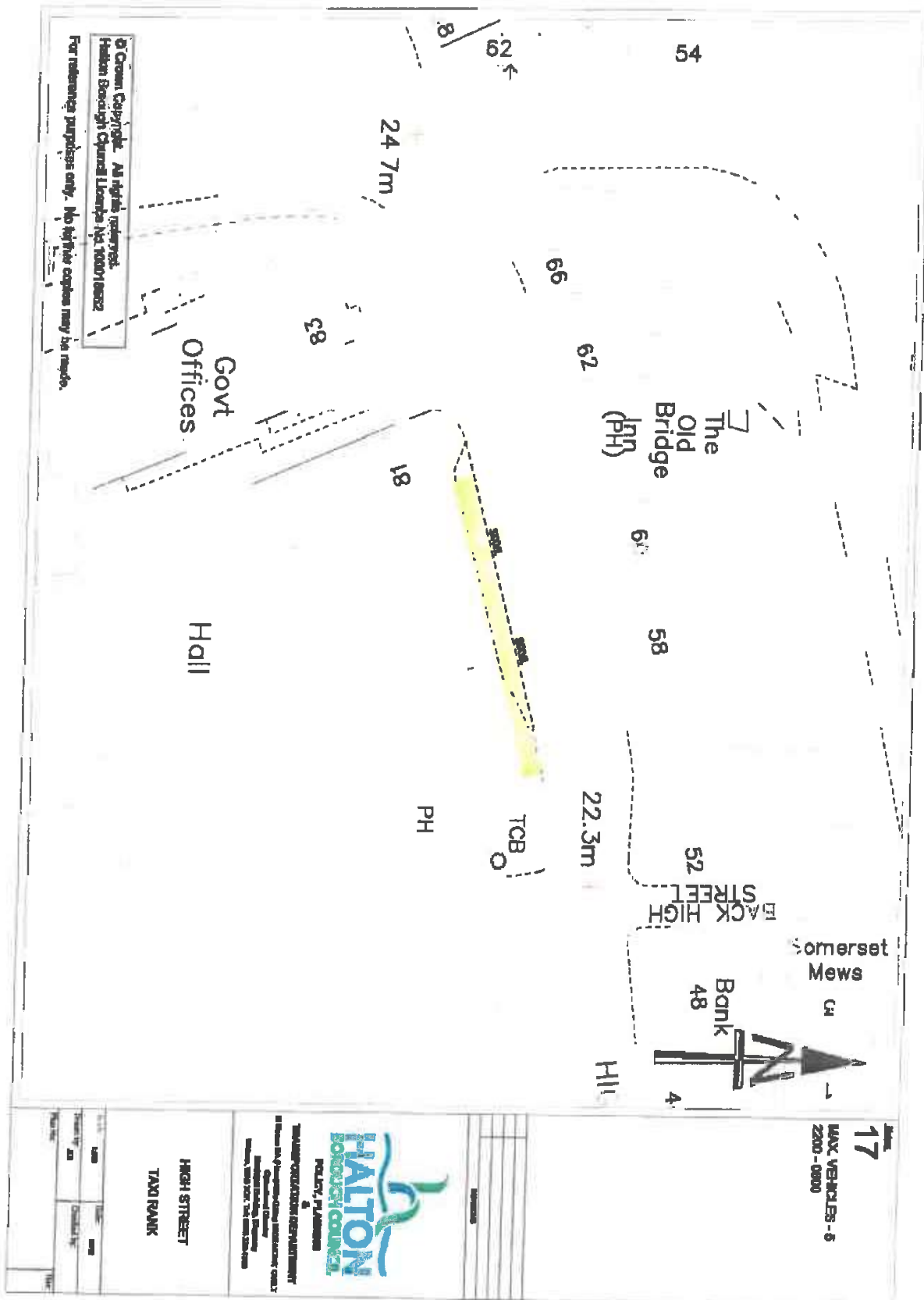
Stand number	Location	Order plan number	Permitted maximum number of vehicles	Permitted times of use
1	Market Street	HCS 1	7	2100 - 0600
2	Alford Street	HCS 2	6	2100 - 0600
3	Hale Road	HCS 3	8	Any
4	Upton Lane	HCS 4	3	Any
5	Dickson Street	HCS 5	5	Any
6	Victoria Square	HCS 6	8	2100 - 0600
7	Prescot Road	HCS 7	4	Any
8	Appleton Village	HCS 8	10	0000 - 0600 & 0630 - 1430 & 1630 - 0000
9	Cronton Lane	HCS 9	4	Any
10	Widnes Road	HCS 10	8	2300 - 0600
11	Albert Road (outside Wetherspoons)	HCS 11	3	Anytime
12	Albert Road (feeder rank to Wetherspoons)	HCS 12	3	1800 - 0600
13	Albert Road (outside Imperial)	HCS 13	3	Anytime

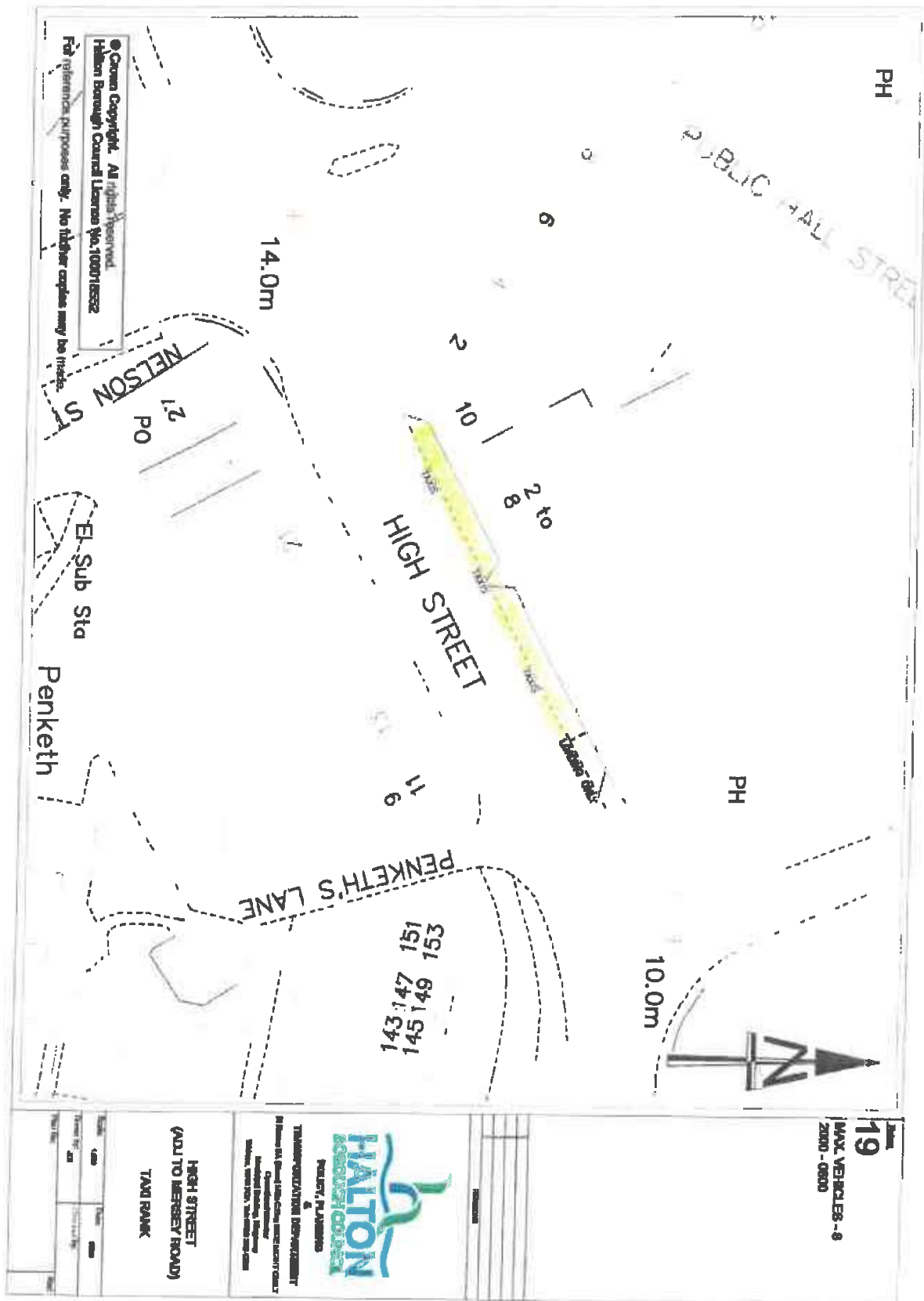
RUNCORN

Stand number	Location	Order Plan number	Permitted maximum number of vehicles	Permitted times of use
14	Public Hall Street	HCS 14	8	Any
15	Shopping City (off Second Avenue)	HCS 15	3	Any
16	High Street (opposite side of road from Chambers)	HCS 16	5	2200 - 0600
17	High Street (in front of Chambers)	HCS 17	5	Rescind
18	Bridge Street (in front of The Wilsons)	HCS 18	4	2200 - 0600
19	High Street (outside Bargain Booze and Mersey Road)	HCS 19	8	Anytime
20	High Street lay-by immediately east of entrance to Co-op car park	HCS 20	6	2000 - 0600
21	Shaw Street	HCS 21	2	Anytime
22	Shaw Street	HCS 22	5	Anytime









**OFFICIAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS REGULATED BY
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 63 OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976**

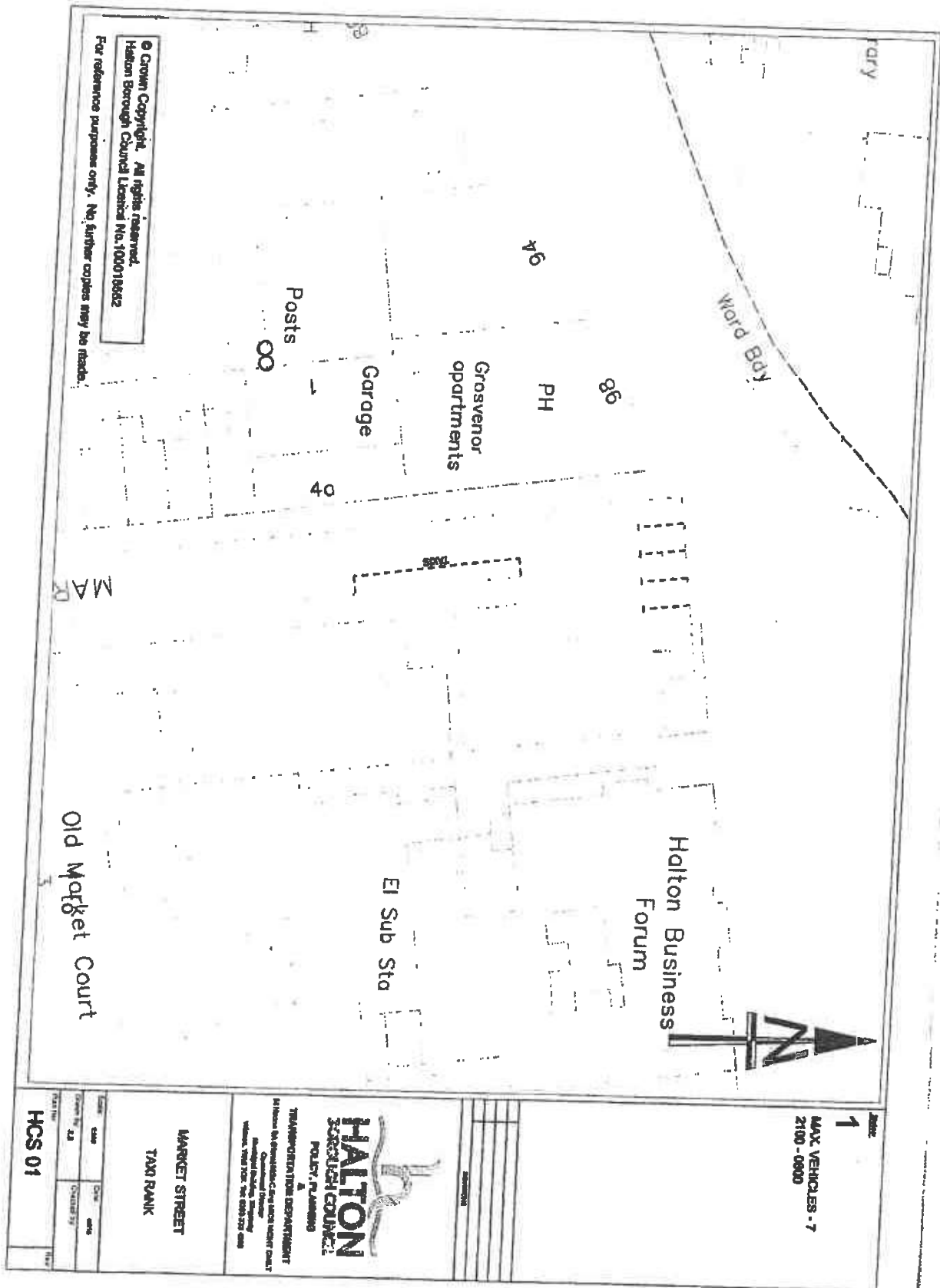
WIDNES

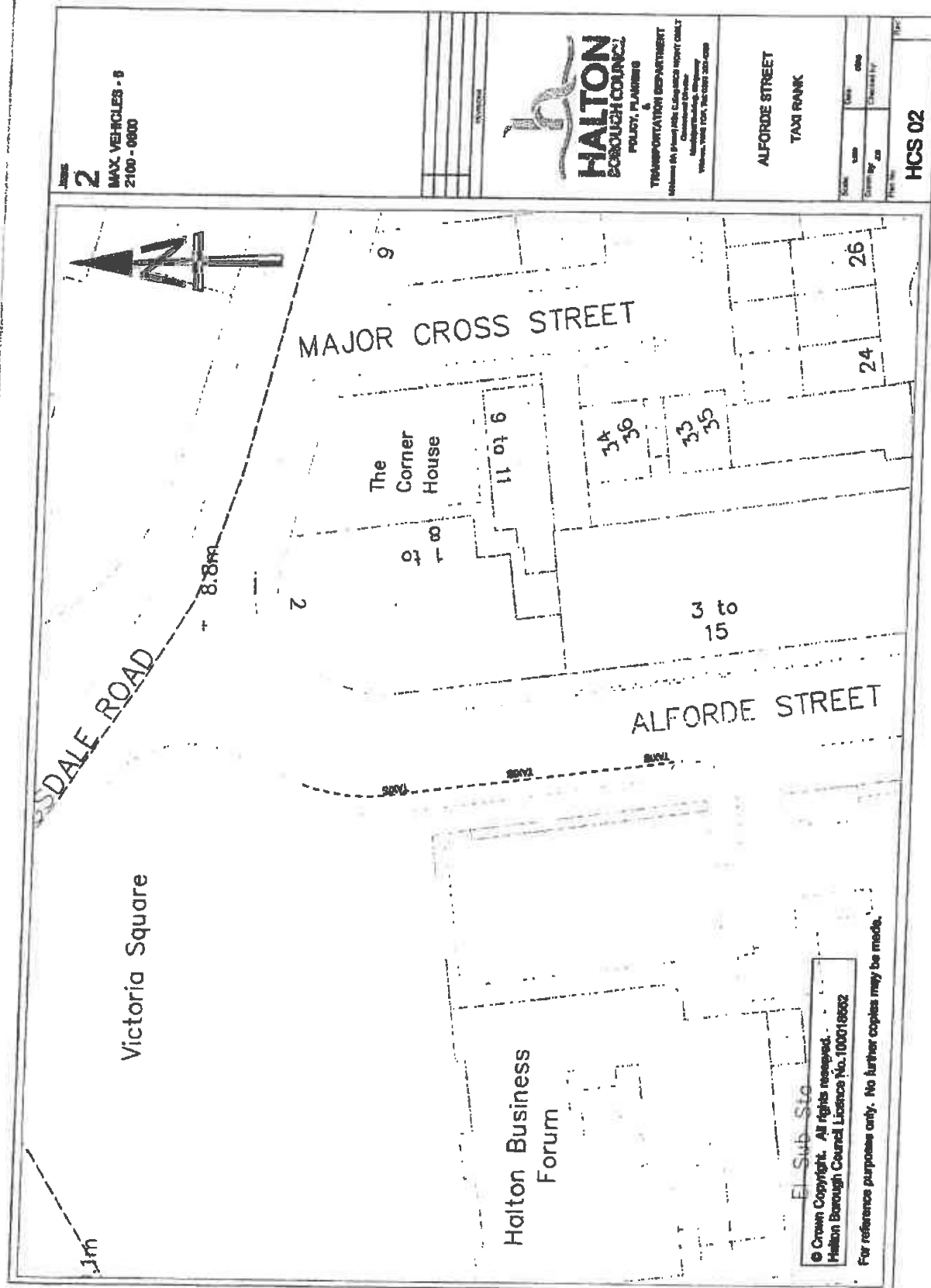
Stand Number	Location	Order Plan Number	Permitted Maximum Number of Vehicles	Permitted Times of Use
1	Market Street	HCS 1	7	2100 - 0600
2	Alford Street	HCS 2	6	2100 - 0600
3	Hale Road	HCS 3	8	Any
4	Upton Lane	HCS 4	3	Any
5	Dickson Street	HCS 5	5	Any
6	Victoria Square	HCS 6	8	2100 - 0600
7	Prescot Road	HCS 7	4	Any
8	Appleton Village	HCS 8	10	0000 - 0800 & 0930 - 1430 & 1630 - 0000
9	Cronton Lane	HCS 9	4	Any
10	Widnes Road	HCS 10	8	2300 - 0600
11	Albert Road (outside Wetherspoons)	HCS 11	3	1800 - 0600
12	Albert Road (feeder rank to Wetherspoons)	HCS 12	3	1800 - 0600
13	Albert Road (outside Imperial)	HCS 13	3	1800 - 0600

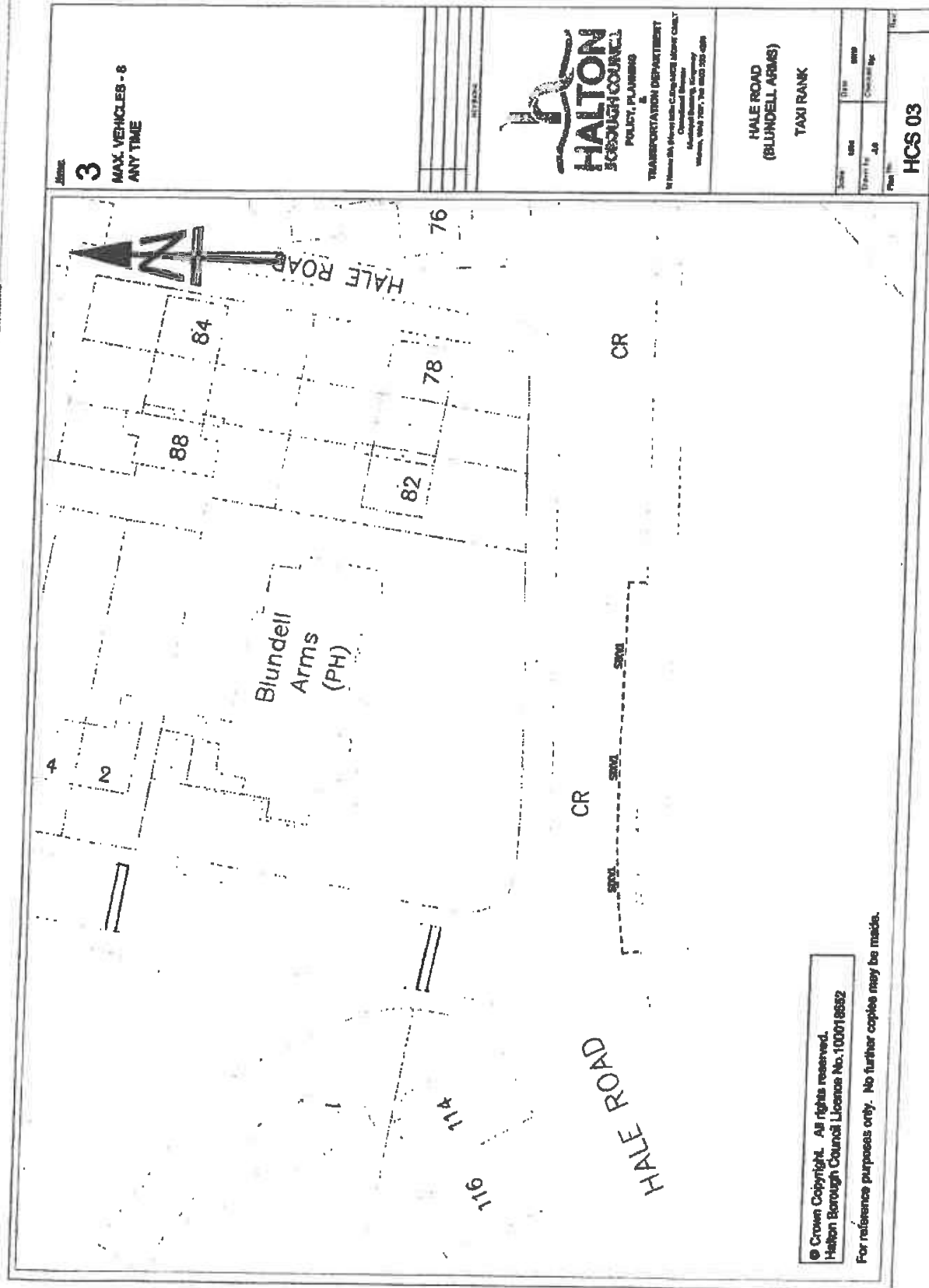
RUNCORN

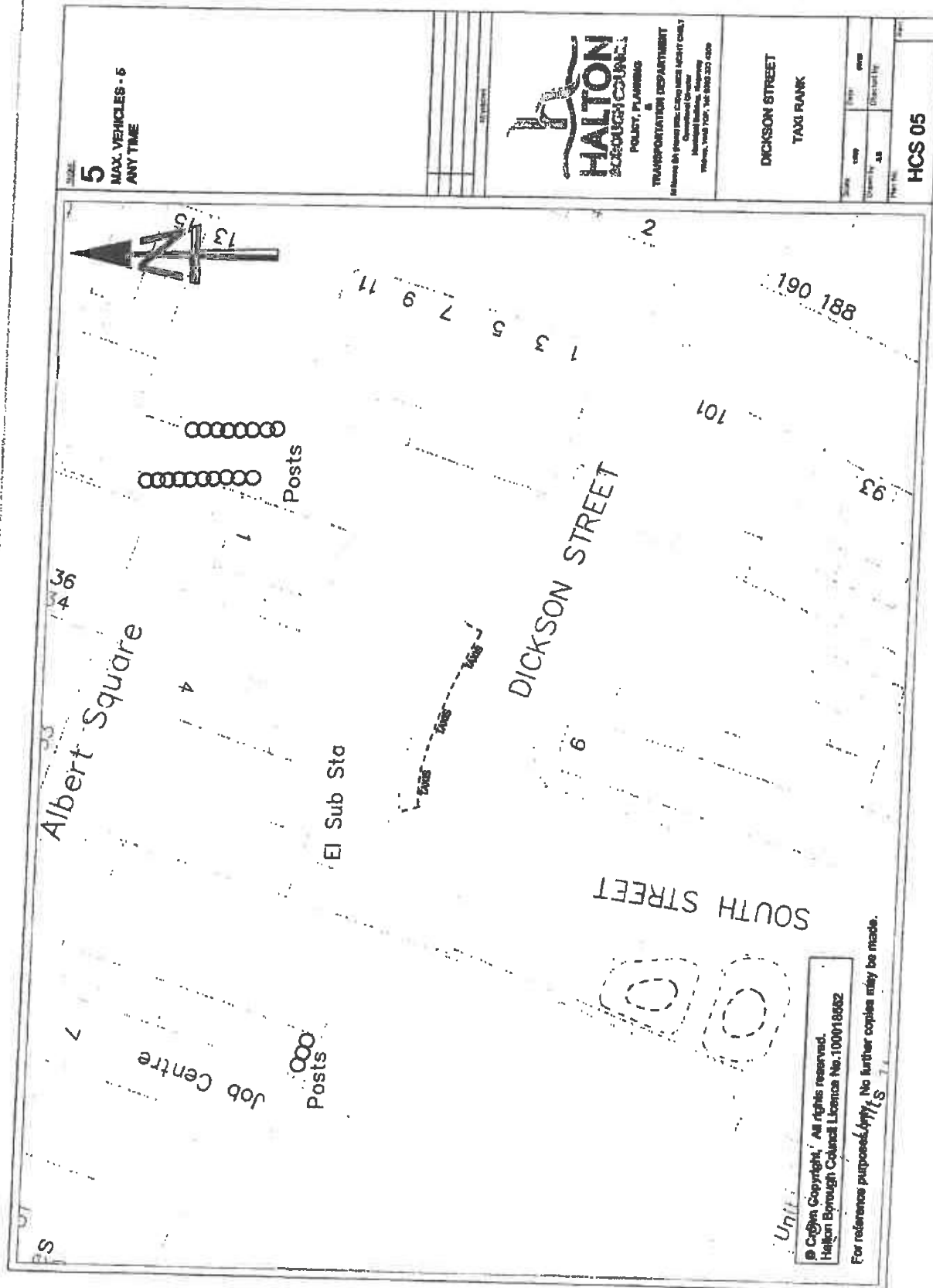
Stand Number	Location	Order Plan Number	Permitted Maximum Number of Vehicles	Permitted Times of Use
14	Public Hall Street	HCS 14	8	Any
15	Shopping City (off Second Avenue)	HCS 15	3	Any
16	High Street (opposite side of road from Chambers)	HCS 16	5	2200 - 0600
17	High Street (in front of Chambers)	HCS 17	5	2200 - 0600
18	Bridge Street (in front of The Wilsons)	HCS 18	4	2200 - 0600
19	High Street (outside Bargain Booze adj Mersey Road)	HCS 19	8	2000 - 0600
20	High Street lay-by immediately east of entrance to Co-op car-park	HCS 20	6	2000 - 0600

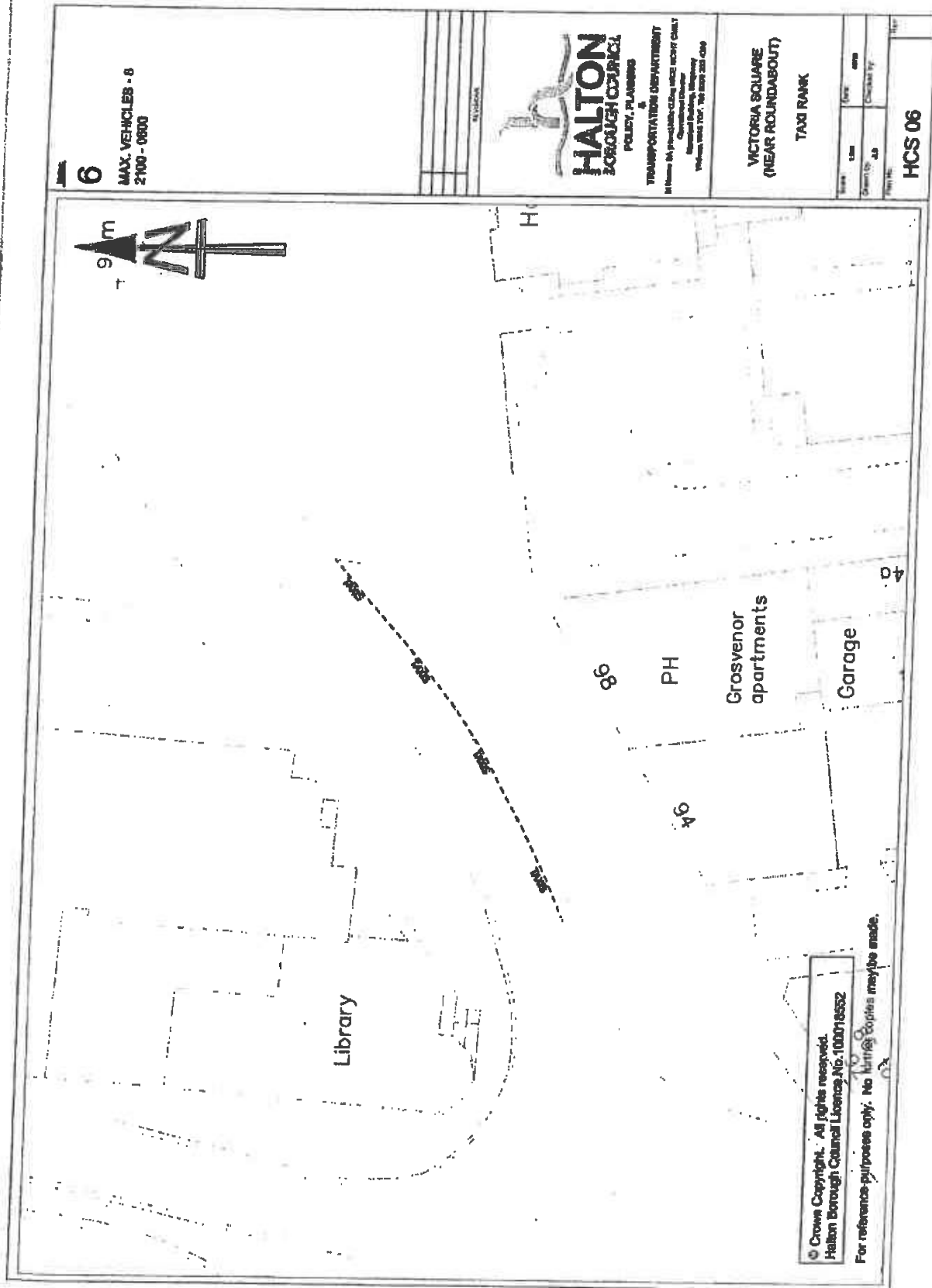
Appendix B

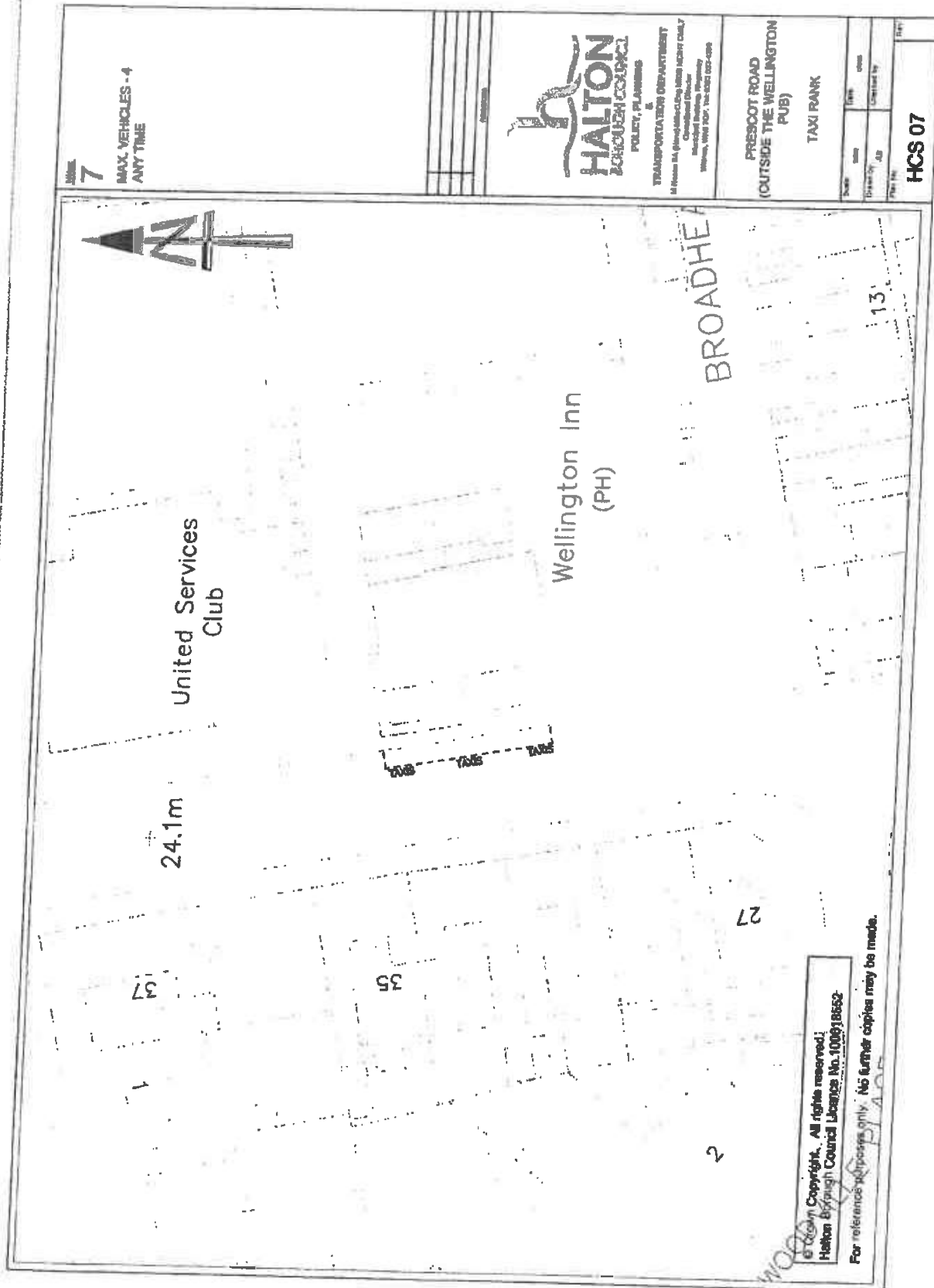












7

MAX. VEHICLES - 4
ANY TIME



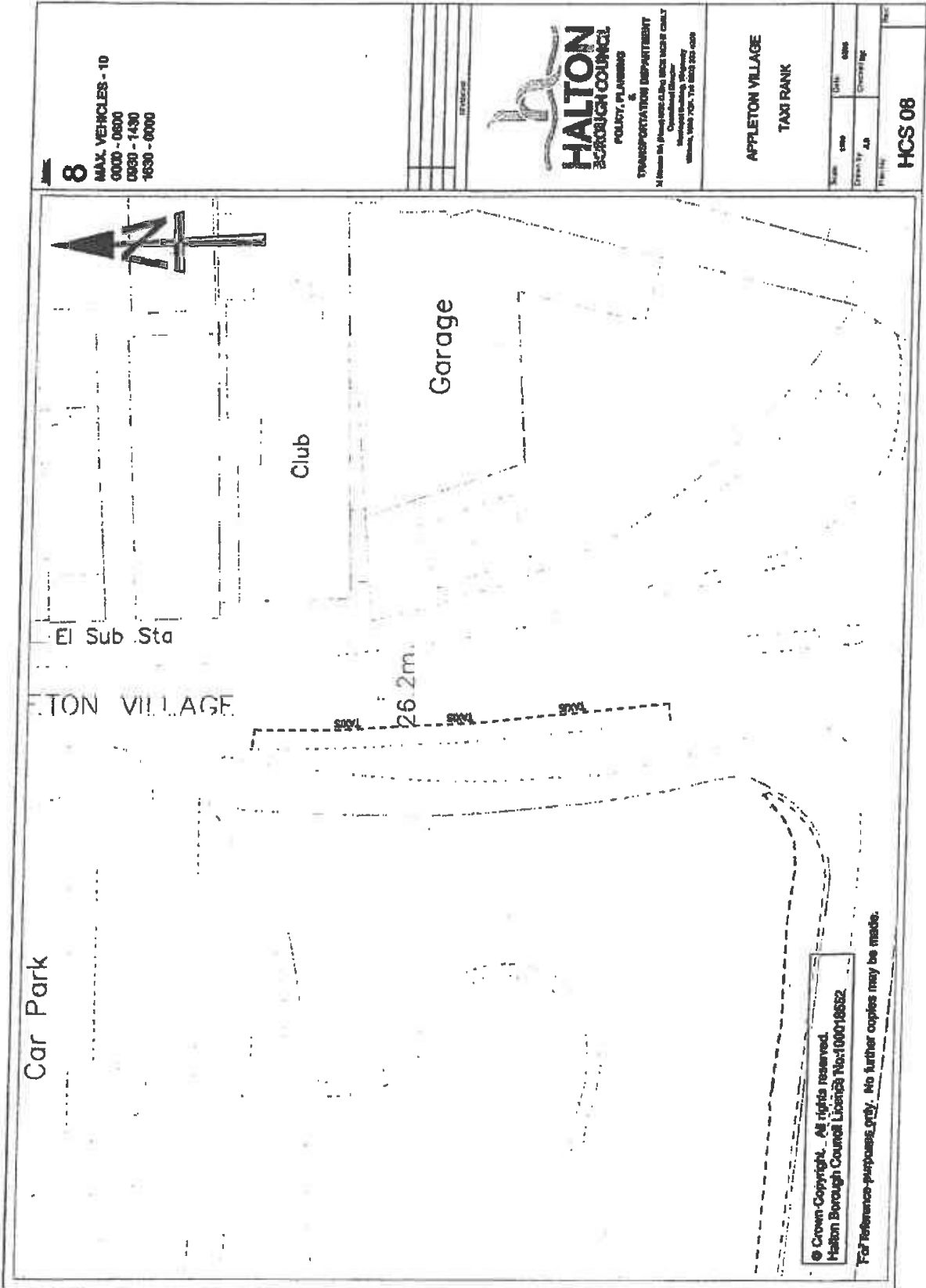
POLICE, PLANNING
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
11 Hume St, Broadhead, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 3JY
Tel: 01257 855111
Fax: 01257 855112
Email: info@halton.gov.uk

PRESOOT ROAD
(OUTSIDE THE WELLINGTON
PUB)

TAXI RANK

Date	Time	Class	Class by	Classed by
		AD		

HCS 07



8
MAX VEHICLES - 10
0000 - 0600
0600 - 1430
1430 - 0000

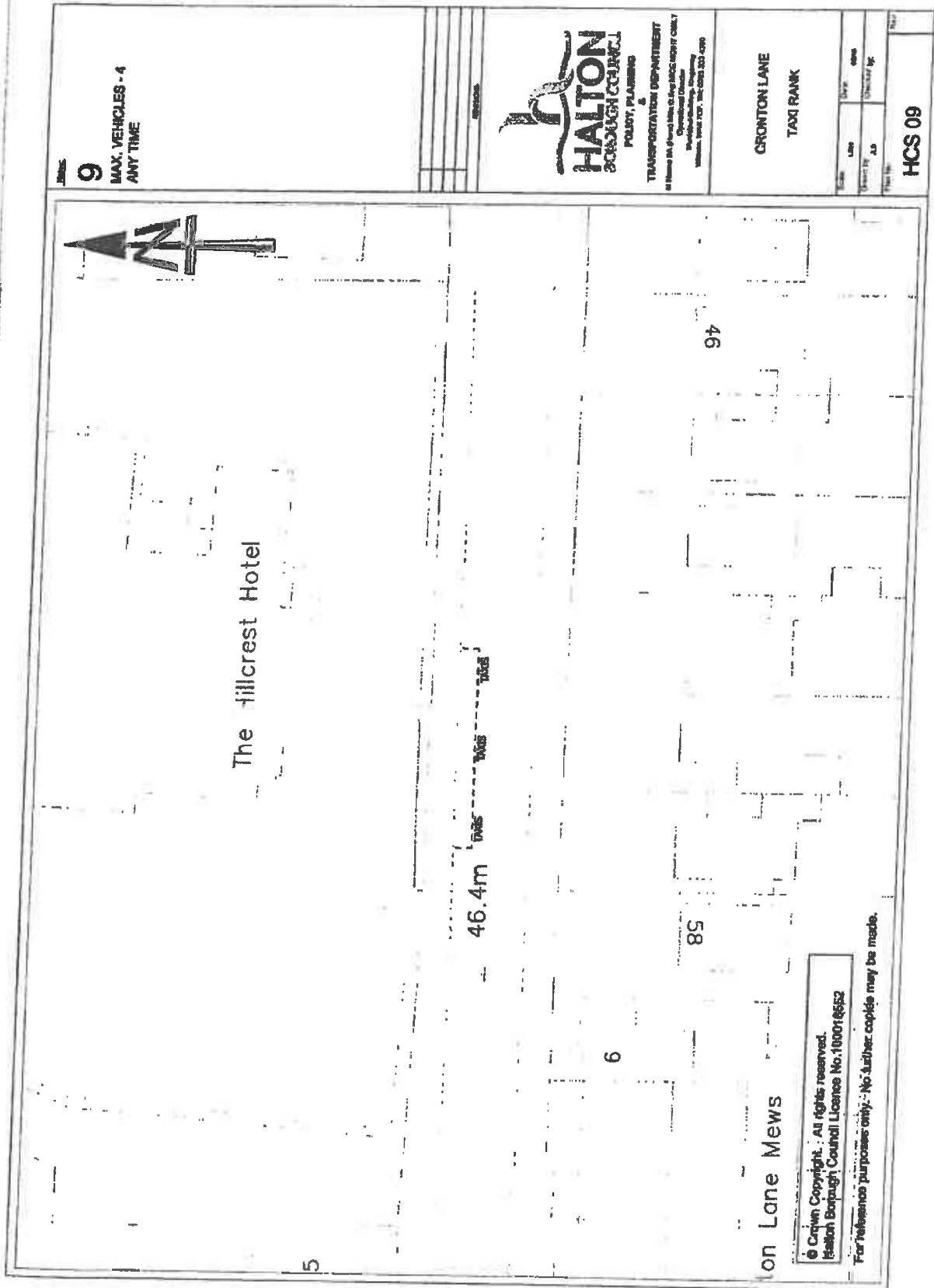


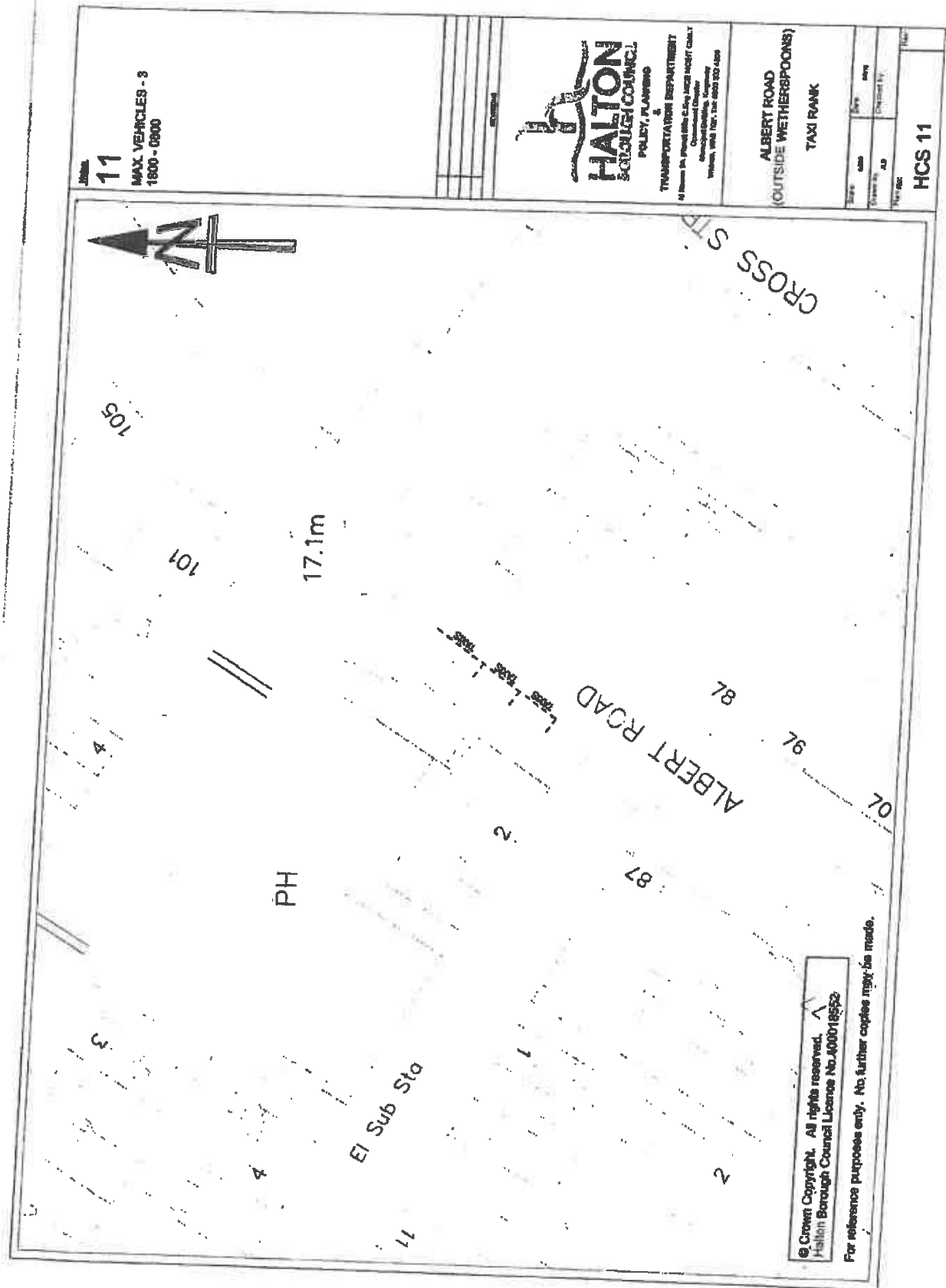
APPLETON VILLAGE
TAXI RANK

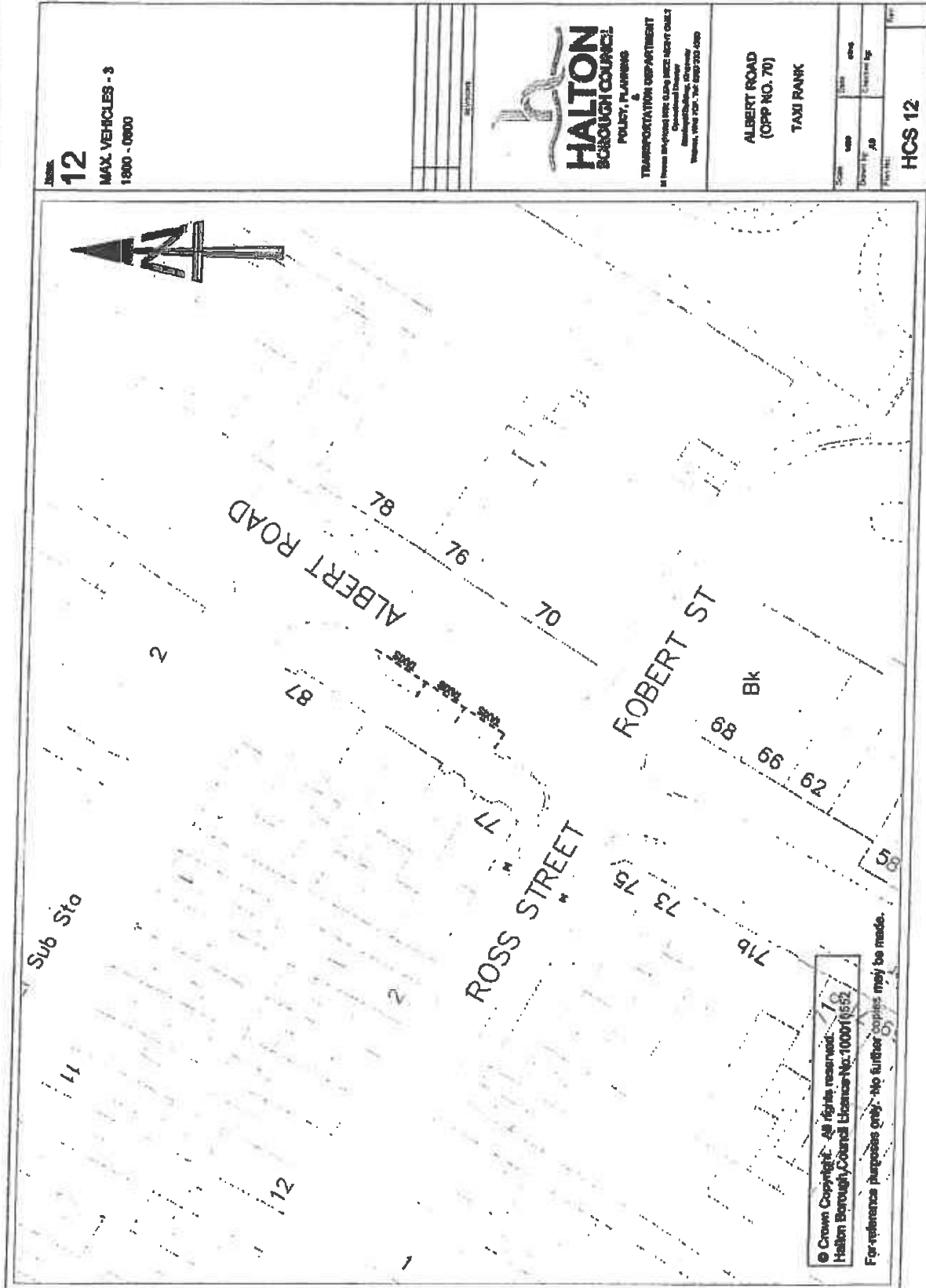
Name	Case	Date	Class
Drawn by	AS		Checked by
Project			

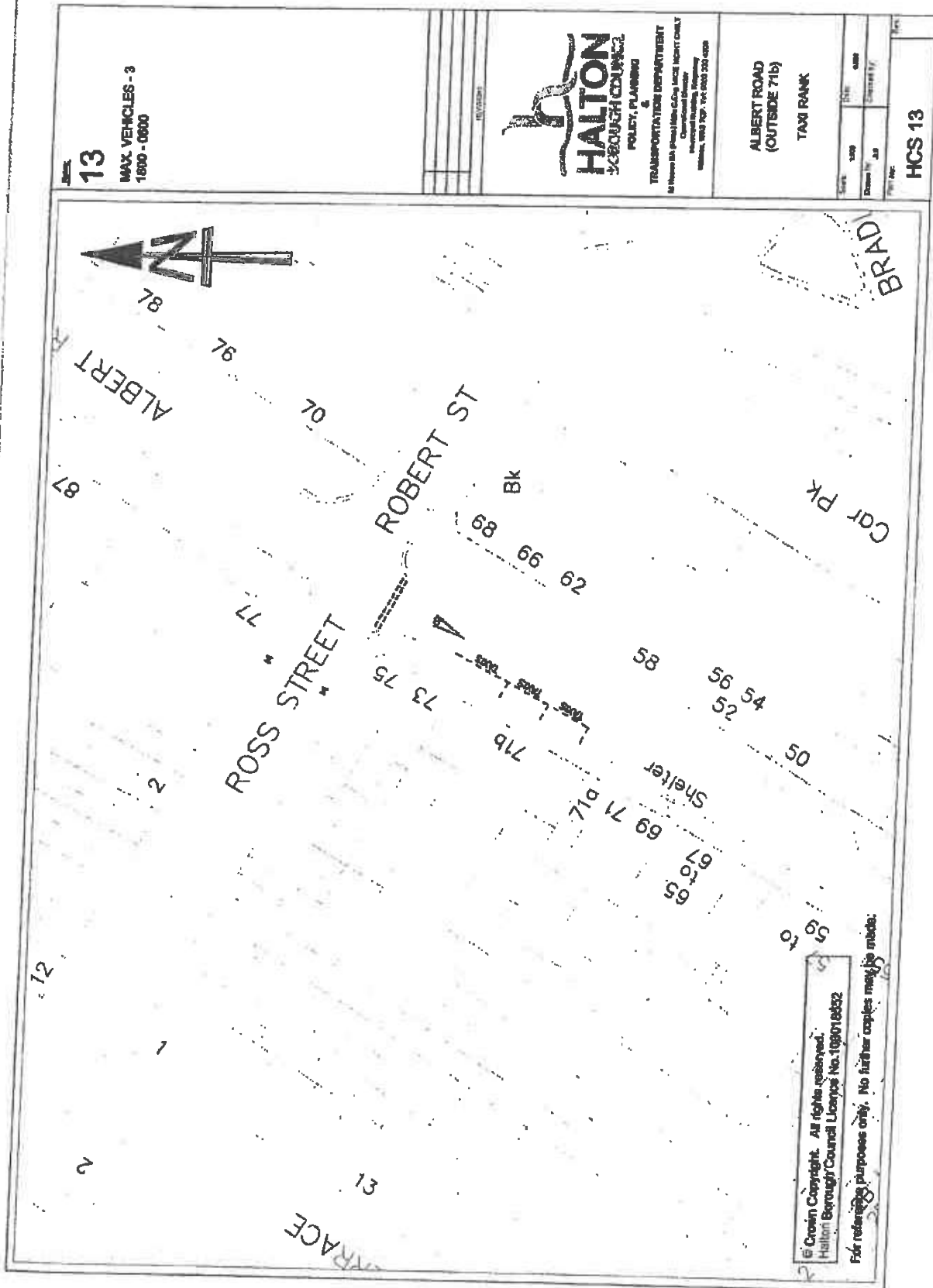
HCS 08

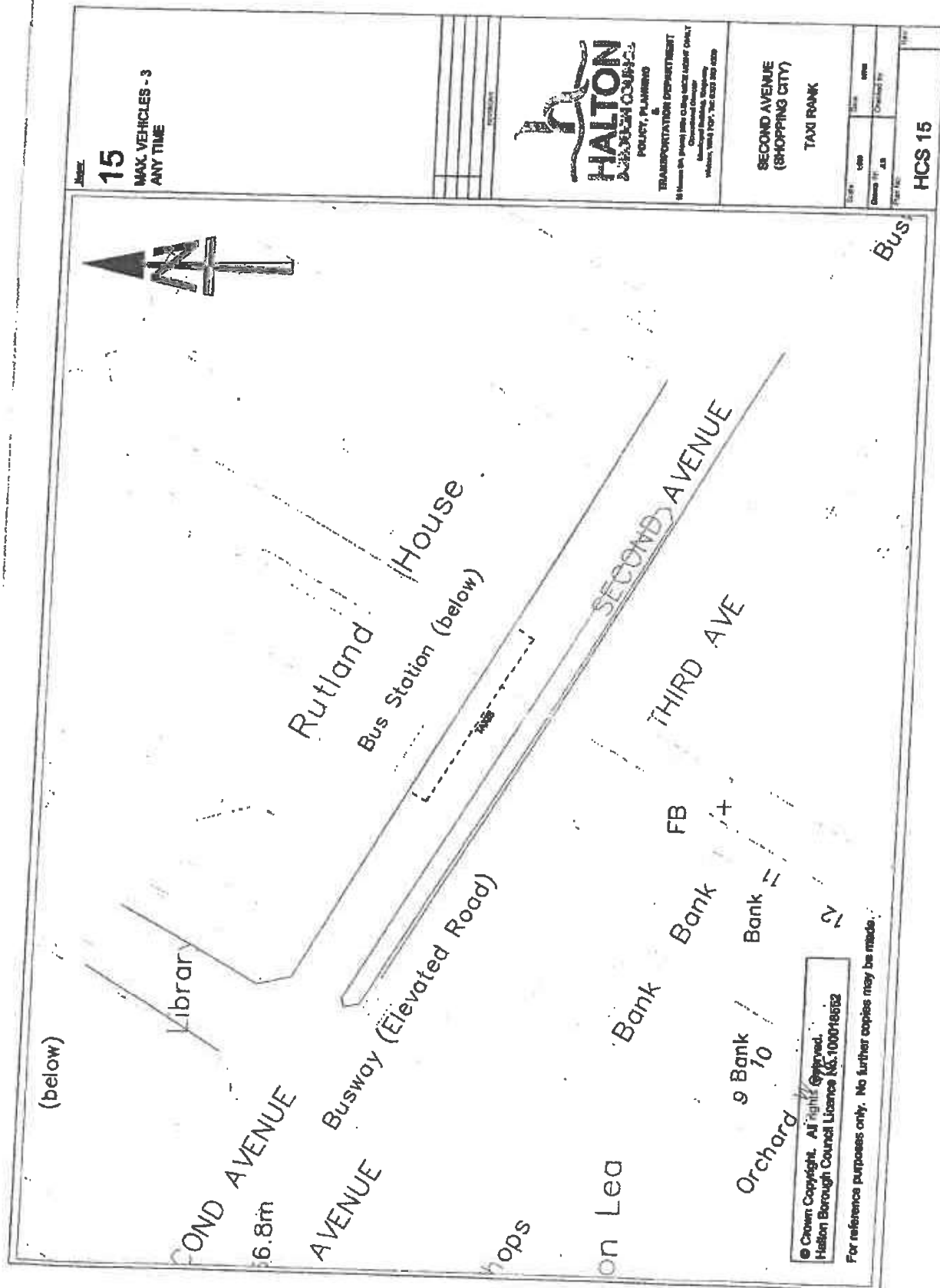
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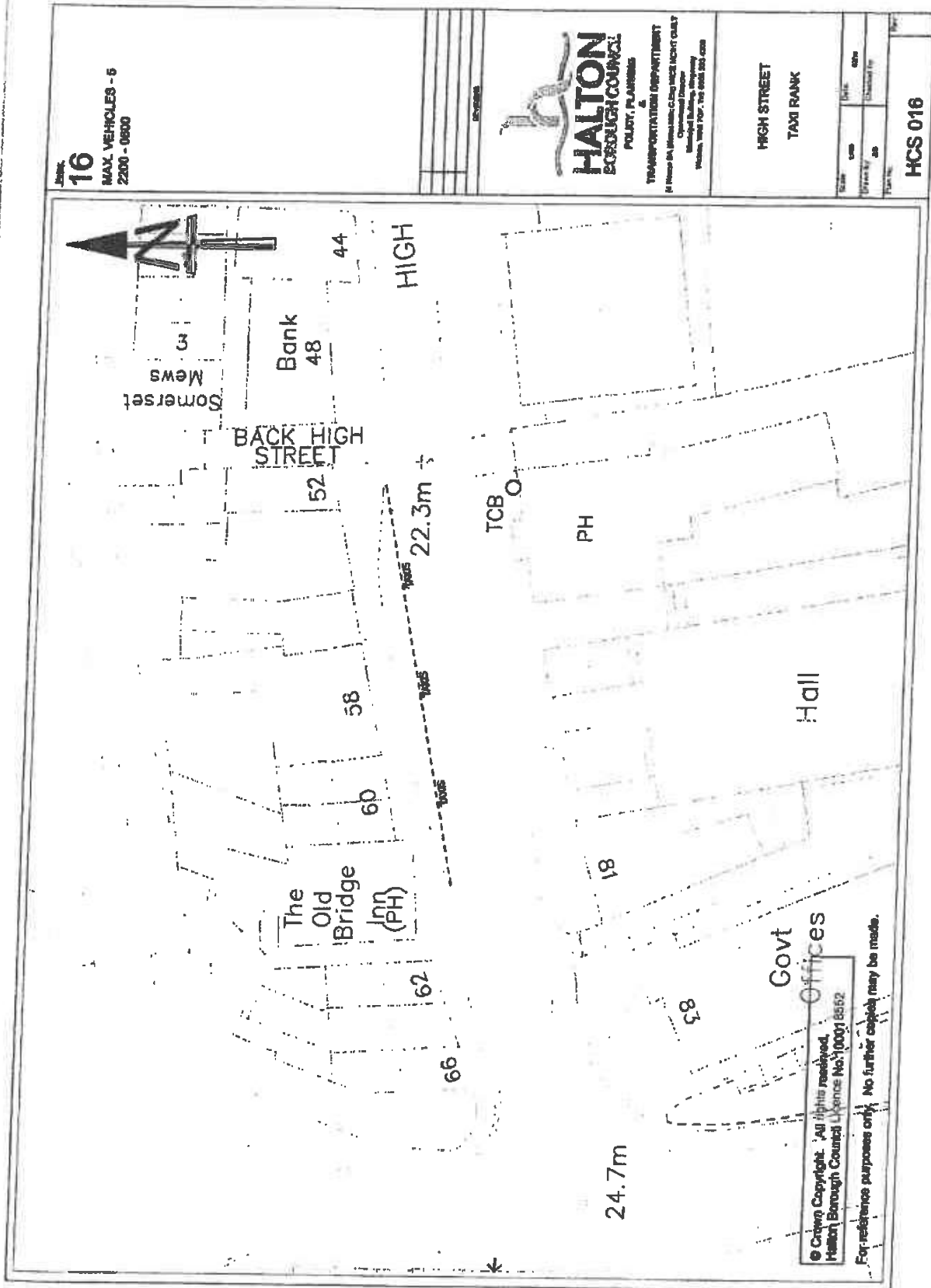


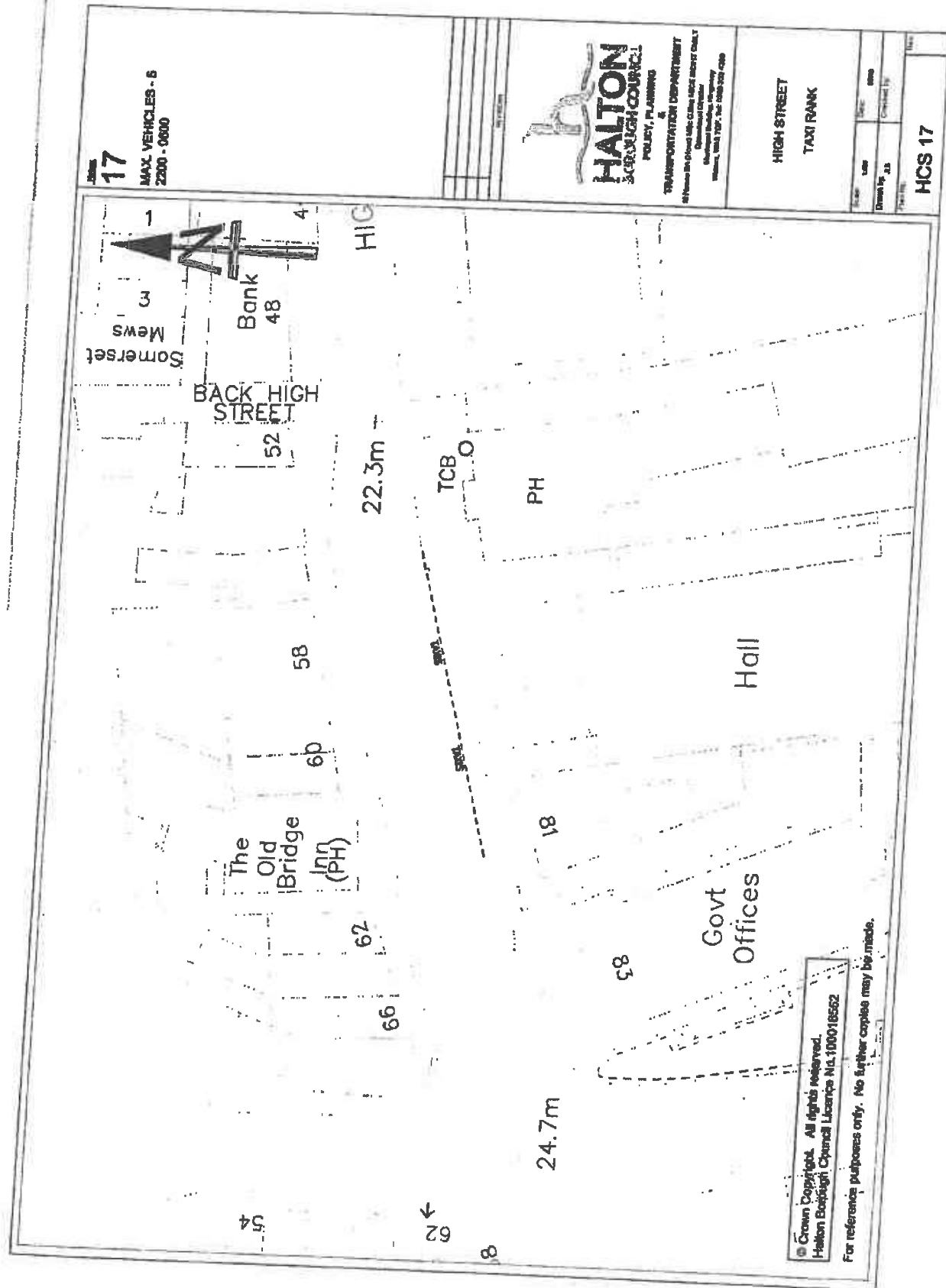


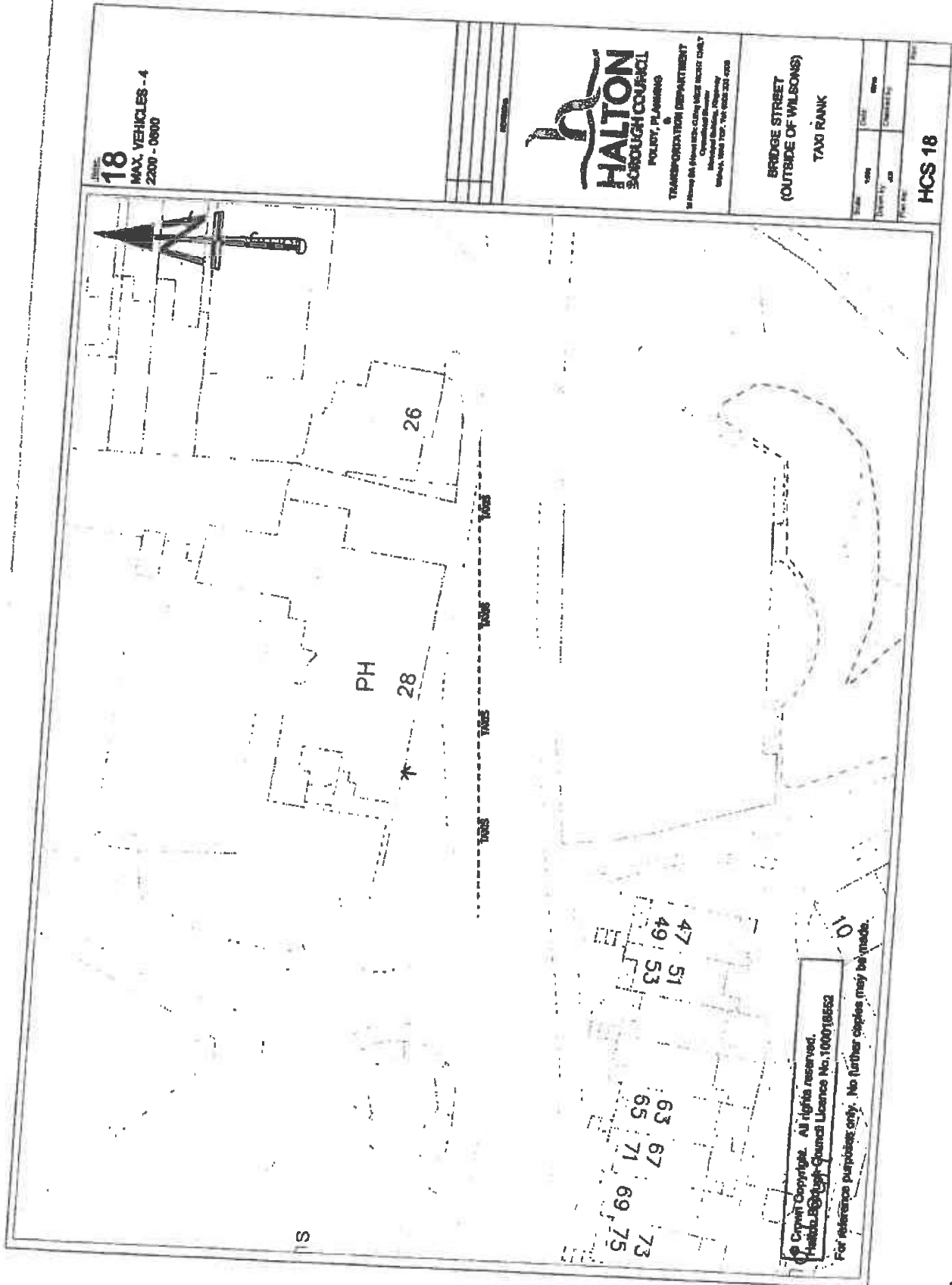


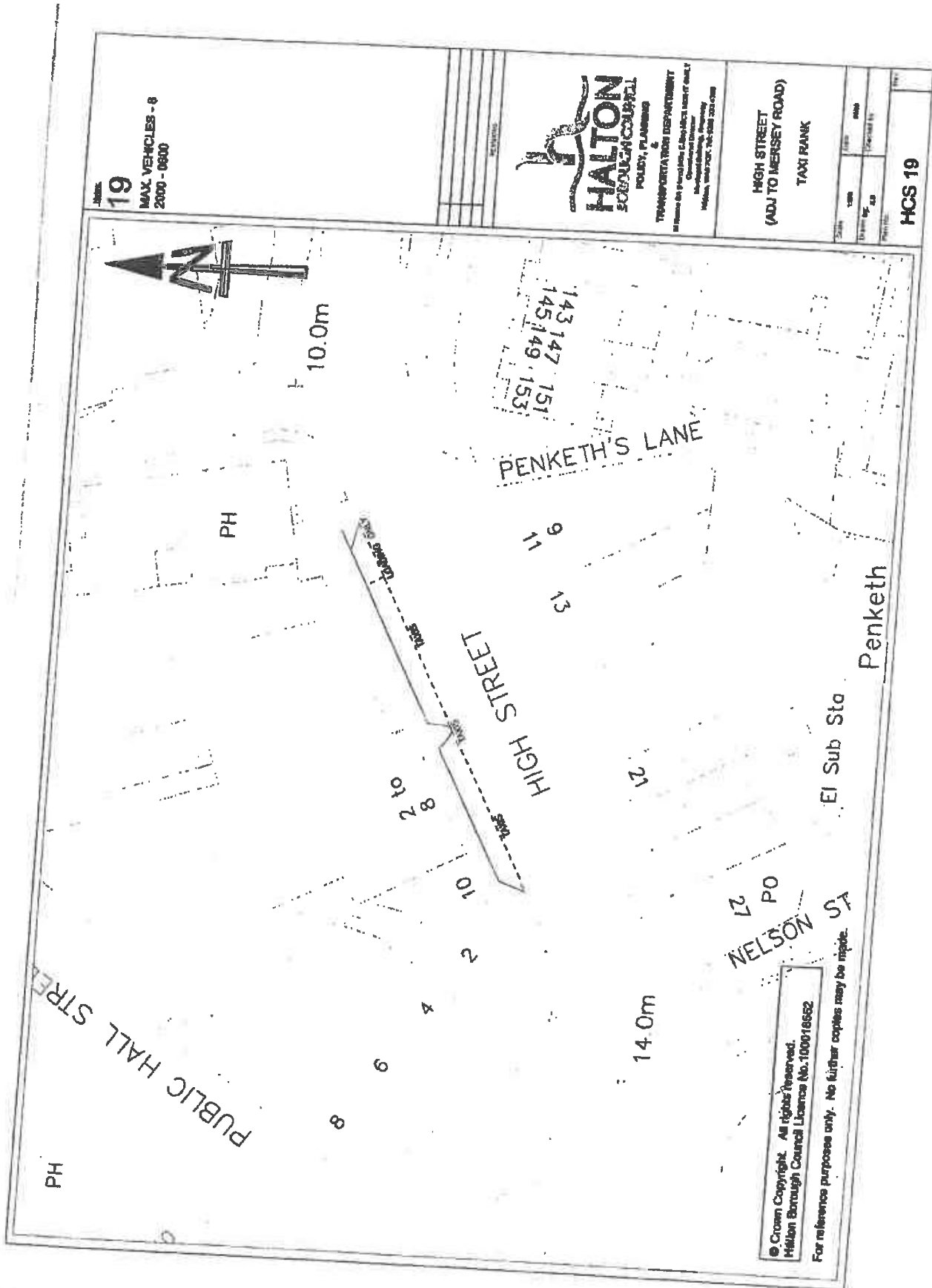


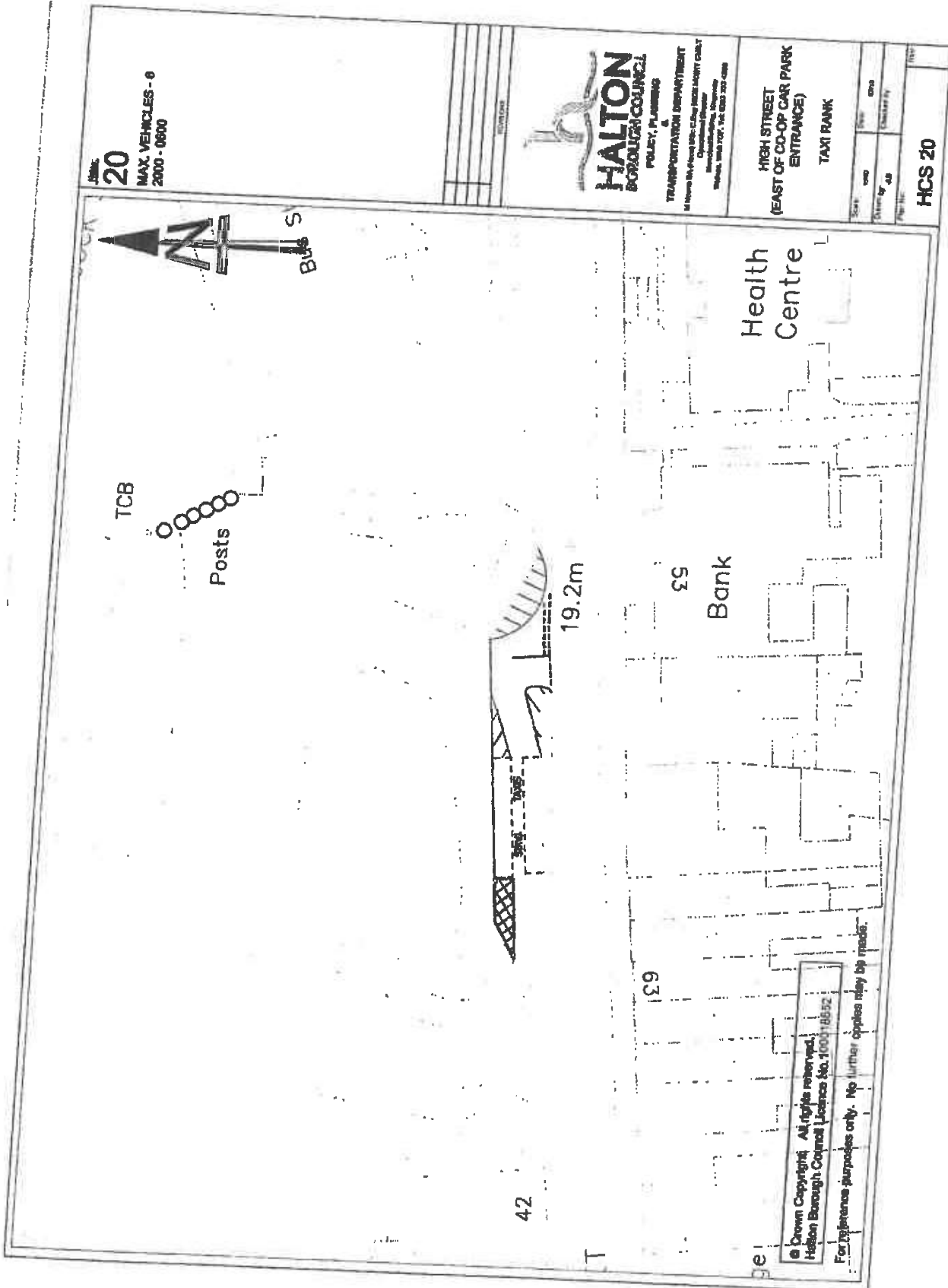












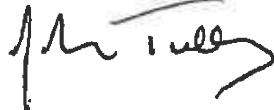
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**THE HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (VARIOUS HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS,
WIDNES AND RUNCORN) ORDER, 2018**

The Halton Borough Council in exercise of the powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Sections 63 ("the 1976 Act") and all other enabling powers, after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police hereby makes the following Order:-

1. The Order was made on 18 October 2018 shall come into operation on 1 November 2018 and may be cited as the Halton Borough Council (Various Hackney Carriage Stands, Widnes and Runcorn) Order 2018.
2. In this Order:-
 - "the Council" means the Council of the Borough of Halton
 - "hackney carriage" has the same meaning as in the 1847 Act
 - "the 1847 Act" means the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 with respect to hackney carriages
 - "the 1984 Act" means the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or any enactment which the 1984 Act superseded
 - "the Order Plan" means the plans attached to this Order the numbers of which are listed in the Schedule to this Order.
3. The stands described in the Schedule to this Order on the Order Plan are hereby appointed stands for hackney carriages for the whole or any part of a day as therein described and for the numbers of vehicles therein described.
4. No person shall cause or permit any vehicle other than a hackney carriage to wait on any stand for hackney carriages during any period for which that stand has been appointed, or is deemed to have been appointed by the Council under the provisions of section 63 of the 1976 Act.
5. All previous orders made by the Council under section 63 of the 1976 Act are hereby revoked.
6. Any provisions contained in any existing Order made by the Council under the 1984 Act which is inconsistent with any of the provisions contained in this Order are hereby revoked solely to that extent.

THE COMMON SEAL of THE COUNCIL
of THE BOROUGH of HALTON was
hereunto affixed in the presence of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. M. Tully', written over a horizontal line.

Authorised Signatory



Consultation on Taxi Ranks replies

Taxi Drivers comments

1. Yes this is what we need in Halton great work
2. Good luck with making the rank work outside Bargain Booze in High Street an anytime ranks people will take no notice evenings/nighttime is a nightmare people park in the ranks at Runcorn stn and outside the Wilsons pub and opp the old Natwest bank in high street all the times evenings and nights are a joke most nights but a good idea if we can keep people off them maybe a fine instead of a warning word would soon get round good luck with it.

Police comments

1. Widnes Police – no objections good to see they are being maintained.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2025 WEEKLY NEWS

Public Notice Portal

at: publicnoticesteam@reachplc.com visit publicnoticeportal.uk

The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015 Notice of Application for Hazardous Substances Consent

I give notice that Suttons International Storage Limited is applying to Halton Borough Council for Hazardous Substances Consent at Gateway 100, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 0WB. Members of the public may inspect a copy of the application at Gateway Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 0GG between reasonable hours, Monday to Friday, until 31/01/2025. Anyone who wishes to make representations about this application should write to Halton Borough Council, Municipal Building, Kingway, Widnes, WA8 7QE within 21 days of the publication of this notice. Signed: H. Barker on behalf of Suttons International Storage Limited dated 10th January 2025.

APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION
A list of all current applications of public interest can be found at: www.halton.gov.uk/publicnotice
It should be noted at:
Halton Direct Link or Tel 0202 333 4300
URN: 0018030



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Traffic & Roads

Halton Borough Council Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 15 NOTICE

The Council intends to amend the existing Hackney carriage stands order which applies in the Borough. Full details can be found at the Halton Direct Link Offices at Halton Lea, Runcorn and at Halton Direct Link Offices at Brook Street, Widnes during normal office hours. Any person may object to these proposals by writing to the Licensing Manager, Legal Services, Municipal Buildings, Kingway, Widnes, WA8 7QE or by email at licensing@halton.gov.uk provided that the objection is received within 28 days from the date of the publication of this notice.
Dated: 20 January 2025

Good Vehicle Operator's Licence

ADRIANS COURIERS 24 LTD of 1A Langton Green, Woodson, Warrington WA1 4BU is applying to change its existing licence as follows: To add an operating centre to keep 5 good vehicles and 4 trailers at Premier Point, Wash Lane, Preston Brook, Runcorn, WA7 3GG.
Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representations must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

Statutory

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of the Proposed Disposal of Land at Chester Road, Mordishaw, Runcorn

Notice is hereby given that the Halton Borough Council (the Council) in pursuance of the powers vested in it by virtue of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, intends to dispose of a parcel of land situated on the North East side of Chester Road, Mordishaw, Runcorn containing in the whole 5 acres or thereabouts (the Land).
A plan showing the Land is available for inspection at: Halton Direct Link, 7 Brook Street, Widnes - between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday or Halton Direct Link, Halton Lea, Runcorn - between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.
Any person wishing to object to the disposal of the Land by the Council should do so in writing to the undersigned by 6th March 2025.
Dated this 23rd January 2025.

Mark Raftery
Licensing & Legal Services
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingway
Widnes,
Cheshire,
WA8 7QE

The recycled paper content of UK newspapers in 2016 was 62.8%

papers
or Recycling

Wild lifted

Widnes Wild NPHL team have their play-off over a boost with a important 3-5 win away against Lions on Saturday.

The first period played out well and it remained goalless until Nottingham finally broke the deadlock with the first goal in the 28th minute.

Minutes later the score was 2-1 to the Lions and it was the Wild could be down. However, they rallied and a goal late in the third period by Bailey Thompson put them in contention.

The score stood at 2-1 at the interval.
Nottingham edged further ahead in the second half but a goal from Ben McEllan in the 45th minute reduced the lead to one.

There were on a roll by the time Alton fired in a goal on 49 minutes to level the score. A heavy challenge from the referee saw the referee send a player from the game for a foul on the head on the ice.

Spilling deep and in the weather the evening's powerplay and game ended in the lead.

It was a 1-1 draw at the end of the game.

Widnes Wild NPHL team have their play-off over a boost with a important 3-5 win away against Lions on Saturday.

Halton Borough Council

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 63

NOTICE

The Council intends to amend the existing hackney carriage stands order which applies in the Borough. Full details can be found at the Halton Direct Link Offices at Halton Lea, Runcorn and at Halton Direct Link Offices at Brook Street, Widnes during normal office hours. Any person may object to these proposals by writing to the Licensing Manager, Legal Services, Municipal Buildings, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF or legalservices@halton.gov.uk provided that the objection is received within 28 days from the date of the publication of this notice.

Dated: 20 January 2025

APPENDIX 2

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on Wednesday 12 March 2025 in the Council Chamber. Town Hall Heath Road Runcorn commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: Wallace Chairman), Abbott, Bramwell, Dourley, Fry, V. Hill, K.Loftus, A McInerney, Stockton and Teeling

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Hughes

Absence declared on Council Business: None

Officers present: Alex Strickland (Legal Advisor), Kim Hesketh (Licensing Manager), Wendy Pringle (Enforcement Officer) and Craig Ward (Licensing Enforcement Officer)

Also in attendance: None

REG MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 were taken as read and will be signed as a correct record.

1. Taxi Ranks

The Committee considered the proposed amendments to the current Taxi Ranks Order, a consultation exercise has been undertaken with the Halton Taxi Trade, Cheshire Police and members of the public.

The Committee approved the proposed amendments to the current order.

RESOLVED: that:-

1. the information set out in the report and attached appendices were noted by the Committee; and
2. The proposals set out in Appendix A to be referred to the Executive Board with a recommendation for approval subject to the Executive Board considering any representations which may be made in respect thereof; and
3. The Executive Board authorises the Director, Legal and Democratic Service to fulfil all procedural requirements relating to the proposals contained within the report in accordance with Section 63 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

2. Institute of Licensing – Suitability Guidance

The committee considered the contents of the report and that the information contained to be noted.

RESOLVED: that:-

The Committee approved and noted the report.

Meeting ended: 18.52

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 April 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Annual Review of Constitution 2025

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask the Board to seek the approval of the Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board recommends Council to approve the changes to the Constitution including the matters set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The revised version of the Constitution picks up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that have taken place during the year, as well as other changes which are intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.
- 3.2 The proposals for change have been considered by the Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services in accordance with Article 16.02. Apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that are considered to be of particular significance are listed in Appendix A to this report.

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All legislative changes have been considered. However, no further amendments, over and above those already outlined, are required at the present time. Any other required changes during the period 2025/26 will be the subject of further reports when dates and details are available.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 5.1 **Children and Young People in Halton.**
- 5.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.**
- 5.3 **A Healthy Halton.**

5.4 A Safer Halton.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal.

The changes proposed are designed to support the continued delivery of the Council's priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 The Council needs to ensure that its Constitution is regularly updated so that it continues to support efficient, transparent and accountable decision-making by the authority.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no implications.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix 1

Proposed Significant Changes to the Constitution

Finance Standing Orders

See attachment.

Procurement Standing Orders

1.1.13 Out of Scope of Procurement Standing Orders - For the avoidance of doubt, Procurement Standing Orders shall not apply to:

- contracts of employment
- certain contracts for legal services
- the delegation of function between local authorities
- certain financial services and debt finance
- agreements for the sale, disposal or acquisition of land (including leases)
- other exclusions as amended from time to time within procurement legislation

1.3.5 – Preliminary Estimate Report – Contracts exceeding £5,000,000 in Value, the PPA23 introduces a new requirement under section 52(2) for contracting authorities to set a minimum of 3 key performance indicators for contracts exceeding £5 million, except in respect of a framework or light touch contract or where the contracting authority considers that a supplier's performance cannot be assessed by reference to key performance indicators.

The Preliminary Estimate Report will now include the point below to comply with the PPA23:

(viii) Identification of at least three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for contracts exceeding £5 million, unless the contract is a call-off from a Framework or Light Touch Regime (LTR) or where the contracting authority considers that a supplier's performance cannot be assessed by reference to key performance indicators.

1.5 - Tendering Procedures – The procedures have been reduced from 6 to 3, a key change is the introduction of a new Competitive Flexible Procedure (CPF) which allows contracting authorities the flexibility to create their own compliant procedure and provide the option to consider steps for Negotiation and Dialogue with suppliers to be included where relevant and proportionate to the goods, services or works to be procured.

1.9.5 – New Delegation of tender acceptance decision to Executive Director, Delegation of approval process updated to include an option for Executive Board to delegate approval to the relevant Executive Director for contract values exceeding £5 million

1.15.2 – Referral of pre-determined contract extension to Executive Board, has been removed, this amendment considers that pre-determined extensions above £5 million have already been approved by Executive Board in compliance with PSO1.3.5, approval of the Preliminary Estimates Report and budget allocation approved as part of pre-procurement stage.

1.15.3 – Acceptance of pre-determined contract extension by Executive Board – as above point.

Audit and Governance Board – Revised Powers and Duties

The new powers and duties of the Audit and Governance Board were agreed by the Audit and Governance Board at its meeting on 20 November 2024. See document attached.

Chapter 6 Members Allowances

Following a recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel, revised Members Allowances were agreed at Council on 5 March 2025. Chapter 6 would be replaced with the revised version.

Chapter 2 Area Forums

Article 10 reference to Area Forums will be removed.

Appendix A (relating to Paragraph 174 of the Scheme of Delegation

Add Competition and Consumers Act 2024 and remove reference to the Enterprise Act.

Delegation to Officers – Page 302

Replace 98 with the following addition:

(g) involves any new floorspace within the defined town centre boundaries as set out in the local plan

(h) involves retrospective applications in relation to (e) and (f) above.

Appendix 6 Public Speaking on Planning Application – Page 358

Replace with new version (See attached)

Policy and Performance Boards

The Policy and Performance Board titles are proposed to be amended following consideration and approval by the Scrutiny Chairs Group. The proposed new titles are attached and there will be some consequential minor amendments to terms of reference

Constitution Review Proposed amendments to Finance Standing Orders

Section	Existing Wording	Proposed Wording	Reason for Change
All	Remove references to Operational Director and Divisional Manager job titles	Replace with Directors and Heads of Service	Updated job titles introduced during 2024
4.1.1	The financial implications of any proposed scheme shall be clearly set out by the appropriate Executive Director. Each Executive Director shall consult with the relevant accountant on the funding arrangements and financial consequences before it is submitted to the Executive Board or Policy and Performance Board.	The financial implications of any proposed scheme shall be clearly set out by the appropriate Executive Director. Each Executive Director shall consult with the relevant accountant on the funding arrangements and financial consequences before it is submitted to the Executive Board.	Reference to Policy and Performance Board removed as approval of proposed schemes which have financial implications ultimately sits with Executive Board.
5.1.2	The approval, funding, monitoring, control and accounting treatment of all capital expenditure shall be in accordance with the Capital Guidance reported annually to Executive Board as part of the Council's Capital Strategy.	The approval, funding, monitoring, control and accounting treatment of all capital expenditure shall be in accordance with the Capital Guidance reported annually to Council as part of the Council's Capital Strategy.	Reporting arrangements updated to reflect what actually happens in practice.
5.1.5	Variations in the cost of approved schemes up to £500,000 may be addressed by capital virement under the powers delegated to the Operational Director – Finance, as set out in Standing Order 4.2.3. Virement exceeding £500,000 may only be approved by the Executive Board. Virements within a programme may only be authorised with the written approval of the Operational Director – Finance or by the Executive Board.	Variations in the cost of approved schemes up to £500,000 may be addressed by capital virement under the powers delegated to the Operational Director – Finance, as set out in Standing Order 4.2.3. Virement exceeding £500,000 may only be approved by Council. Virements within a programme may only be authorised with the written approval of the Director – Finance or by the Council.	Reporting arrangements updated to reflect what actually happens in practice.

Section	Existing Wording	Proposed Wording	Reason for Change
5.1.6	The appropriate Executive Director must immediately produce a report for the Executive Board where the total cost of an individual scheme is forecast to exceed the figure approved for that scheme by 10% on schemes costing less than £5m and £500,000 on schemes costing £5m and above (subject to a minimum of £25,000). The report shall identify how the increased cost of the scheme will be dealt with.	The appropriate Executive Director must immediately produce a report for Council where the total cost of an individual scheme is forecast to exceed the figure approved for that scheme by 10% on schemes costing less than £5m and £500,000 on schemes costing £5m and above (subject to a minimum of £25,000). The report shall identify how the increased cost of the scheme will be dealt with.	Reporting arrangements updated to reflect what actually happens in practice.
5.1.8	The Operational Director - Finance shall report quarterly to the Executive Board on capital spends.	The Director - Finance shall report quarterly to Council on capital spending.	Reporting arrangements updated to reflect what actually happens in practice.
5.2.1 (first para)	The approved Revenue Budget shall be deemed to give authority to the Executive Directors to expend or incur liabilities, during the period covered by that budget, to the extent of the detailed provisions contained therein. In accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation, these deemed authorities shall be exercisable by the Operational Directors.	The approved Revenue Budget authorises Executive Directors to incur expenses or liabilities within the budget's provisions for the period covered by the budget. Under the Council's scheme of delegation, Directors may also exercise this authority.	Simplification of wording

Section	Existing Wording	Proposed Wording	Reason for Change
5.2.2.2 (para 5)	No virement is permitted which involves a change in policy or commits expenditure into future years without the specific approval of the Executive Board. Virements which commit expenditure into future years should not be done so without the prior approval of the Operational Director – Finance.	No virement is permitted which involves a change in policy without the specific approval of the Executive Board. Virements which commit expenditure into future years should not be done so without the prior approval of the Director – Finance, carrying forward balances through earmarked reserves.	Clarification on process for virements which commit expenditure into future years.
6.3.4	Each Operational Director shall notify the Operational Director – Finance of new risks or properties which require insurance, and of any alterations affecting existing risks or insurance in advance of the changes to cover being required.	Each Director shall notify the Director – Finance of new risks or assets which require insurance, and of any alterations affecting existing risks or insurance in advance of the changes to cover being required.	Replace ‘property’ with ‘assets’ as insurance cover is also placed for non-property assets
6.5.4	The Council nominates the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.	The Council nominates the Audit and Governance Board to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.	Audit and Governance Board has oversight of the Council’s financial management arrangements.
8.3.4	Payment will be made by the Operational Director – Finance in the manner considered most appropriate e.g. BACS payment or payment by government procurement card. Other cost effective methods of payment may also be considered as and when required.	Payment will be made by the Director – Finance in the manner considered most appropriate, e.g. BACS payment, payment by government procurement card, payment by corporate credit card. Other cost effective methods of payment may also be considered as and when required.	Payment by corporate credit card added as an example of an acceptable payment method.

Section	Existing Wording	Proposed Wording	Reason for Change
9.1.1	Any proposal to introduce a new source of income or to vary any existing source of income, shall, before implementation, be submitted to the Executive Board. Fees and charges are to be set in accordance with the principles set out in the Corporate Charging Policy Framework.	Fees and Charges are to be set out in accordance with the principles set out in the Corporate Charging Policy Framework and reported annually to Executive Board, prior to the start of a financial year.	It is impractical for Executive Board to be informed of all new sources of income or variations to existing sources of income prior to implementation. However, the annual report reviewing all fees and charges ensures that Executive Board is consulted.

Audit and Governance Board

Composition, meetings, and reporting arrangements

1. The membership of the Board shall not include any members of the Executive Board.
2. The Audit and Governance Board will comprise:
 - Seven elected members in accordance with the current political balance rules.
 - A qualified independent member, who will be a non-voting member.
3. A minimum of three elected members of the Audit and Governance Board must be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate.
4. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit and Governance Board will be independent of the Executive Board and will not be a Chair of a Policy and Performance Board.
5. The Audit and Governance Board shall meet four times a year. The Chair of the Board may convene additional meetings as they deem necessary.
6. The Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, or the Head of Internal Audit may ask the Chair of the Audit and Governance Board to convene further meetings to discuss issues on which they wish to seek the Board's advice.
7. Meetings will be open to the public, but the public may be excluded where information of an exempt nature is being discussed.
8. The Board, External Audit, and the Head of Internal Audit shall have the opportunity for private discussions without the Section 151 Officer or other officers present if issues need exploring in such a forum.
9. The Chair of the Audit and Governance Board reports to Full Council, as necessary.

Statement of purpose

10. The Board's purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk, and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control gives greater confidence to the Council that those arrangements are effective.
11. The Board has responsibility for oversight of both internal and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

12. The Board also has responsibility for oversight of member standards.

Powers and duties

Governance, risk, and control

13. To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework, and consider the local code of corporate governance.
14. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council.
15. To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Board.
16. To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
17. To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.
18. To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money, including the Council's procurement arrangements, and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
19. To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

Governance reporting

20. To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account the Head of Internal Audit's opinion.
21. To consider whether the annual evaluation of the Annual Governance Statement fairly concludes that the arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the Council's objectives.

Financial reporting

22. To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
23. To review and approve the annual statement of accounts and specifically to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed, and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or audit process that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.

24. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

External Audit

25. To recommend to Full Council the appointment of the Council's External Auditors under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and provide assurance that the External Audit team's independence is safeguarded.
26. To consider the External Auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
27. To consider specific reports as agreed with the External Auditor.
28. To support the quality and depth of external audit process and to ensure that it gives value for money.
29. To commission additional work from external audit as required.
30. To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external audit and internal audit, and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

Internal Audit

31. To approve the internal audit charter.
32. To review proposals made in relation to the provision of internal audit services and to make recommendations
33. To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirement, the approach to using other sources of assurance, and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
34. To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
35. To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Internal Audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
36. To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Head of Internal Audit. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
37. To consider reports from the Head of Internal Audit on internal audit's performance, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services if applicable. This will include:
 - Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern, and action in hand as a result of internal audit work

- Reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme
 - Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application
38. To consider the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, specifically:
- The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement (to provide assurance over the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit)
 - The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion (to assist the Board in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement)
39. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports.
40. To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Internal Audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the Council, or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
41. To contribute to the external assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
42. To support the development of effective communication with the Head of Internal Audit, including providing free and unfettered access to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Board.

Counter fraud and corruption

43. To review the assessment of risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.
44. To review, approve and monitor the Council's counter-fraud policies and strategies, counter fraud activity, and associated resourcing.

Standards

45. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members and co opted members of the authority.
46. To assist members and co-opted members of the authority to observe the authority's Code of Conduct.
47. To advise the authority on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct.

48. To monitor the operation of the authority's Code of Conduct.
49. To advise, train or arrange to train members of the authority on matters relating to the authority's Code of Conduct.
50. To maintain a Hearings Panel (comprised of 3 members of the Board drawn from 2 political groups if possible) to hear allegations made against an Elected Member or a Parish Councillor within the Borough Council's area.
51. To investigate or arrange investigation of any complaints made by Members, Officers, or members of the public in relation to the authority's Code of Conduct.
52. To decide disciplinary matters within the competence of the Committee.
53. To consider applications from local authority employees for exemption from political restriction in respect of their posts.
54. Where appropriate, to issue directions requiring a local authority to include a post in the list of politically restricted posts it maintains.
55. To give general advice, following consultation with appropriate parties, on the application of criteria for designation of a politically restricted post.
56. To consider applications for dispensations from Members where appropriate.

APPENDIX 6

PUBLIC SPEAKING ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

An explanation of the system for those wishing to speak

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY AT A DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

This information explains how the scheme operates and answers some of the questions you may have about procedures and what to expect at the meeting. It is based on simple rules agreed by the Council to make the system as fair and easy to operate as possible, so please read all of the information.

How does the Development Management Committee work?

Not all applications are determined by the Committee. The majority of straightforward applications are decided under the Council's delegation scheme and are not subject to procedures described here. Please telephone the case officer dealing with the application to see whether the application in which you are interested is to be considered by the Development Management Committee or discuss its progress.

The Committee is made up of a Chair, Vice-Chair and 9 other Councillors. The Press may attend the meetings. Committee Members receive written reports on planning applications being considered by the Committee.

Do I need to attend the meeting to make any comments known to the Committee?

No - your written comments will have been briefly summarised in the officer report and will be considered by the Committee anyway. As the meetings are open to the public you may, if you wish, attend the meeting just to see what happens.

How can I find out when an application will be considered?

A Development Management Committee is usually held on a Monday evening once a month. It can, however, be held on other days of the week. The Committee agenda is normally published at the latest 5 clear working days before the Committee meeting. The dates and times of meetings are available on request together with a list of Members. Please telephone the Committee Services Section on 0151 511 8276.

How do I arrange to speak at a meeting?

When an application is to be considered by the Committee, the applicant, objectors and supporters will be notified of the meeting and may request or download a form which will need to be completed if they wish to speak at the meeting.

- In cases where a petition or in excess of 25 standardised letters are received only the lead name and/or the first ten letters received in respect of the application will be notified.
- The form must be received by the Planning Department by 16:00 on the working day (normally a Friday) before the Committee meeting, at the very latest.
- On the day of the Committee please arrive at the venue between 18:00 and 18:15 to register your intention to speak. It may be difficult to accommodate late arrivals.

A Council Officer will explain to those wishing to speak how the Committee procedures are organised.

- If there are several objectors and/or supporters who wish to speak on an application each group will need to organise a spokesperson. Only one person from the objectors and one from the supporters will be allowed to speak. However, even though you have given notice that you wish to speak at the meeting you can change your mind and decide not to speak.
- Only one person can speak in support on behalf of the applicant, either the applicant or agent.

What is the order of speaking on each application?

The Chair will, if necessary, explain the process and introduce each planning application by referring to the application number and details of it.

Members of the public can then speak in the following order:

- Objector (5 minutes)
- Supporter (5 minutes)
- Parish Council (5 Minutes)
- Ward Councillors (maximum of 10 minutes)
- Applicant/Agent (5 minutes)

You will be asked by the Chair of the Development Management Committee to move to a designated seat before you speak. The five-minute limit will be strictly applied by the Chair and you will be asked to return to the public seating after that time.

The Operational Director – Policy, Planning and Transportation will then bring any necessary information, in addition to that in the Officer report, to the Committee's attention. Members of the Development Management Committee will then debate the matter either to approve, refuse or defer it for amendments/further information. The public cannot take part, and a decision will be made. Any points of clarification raised by Members will be dealt with by Officers. Delegated authority may also be given to the Operational Director to deal with the application e.g. following negotiations and amendments.

Can I use slides or overhead transparencies, video presentations or circulate supporting documents?

No - slides or overhead transparencies or video presentations are not allowed. If you wish to circulate supporting documents you must discuss this with the case officer in the first instance. If you decide to send information direct to Councillors that is your responsibility. A list of Councillors names is available from the Members' Office on 0151 511 8276. Please do not send documents to the Council for this purpose.

What can I say at the meeting?

You are advised to make a statement of fact or opinion, but you are likely to have the greatest impact if you:

- Are brief and to the point
- Limit your views to the planning application
- Focus on the relevant planning issues which may help the Committee reach their decision.

What are the relevant issues in considering proposals?

The relevant issues will vary with the nature of the proposal and the date, but examples include the following:

- ✓ The Council's Development Plan
- ✓ Planning Practice Guidance
- ✓ National Planning Policy Framework
- ✓ Planning Law and Legal Precedents
- ✓ Noise, disturbance, smells
- ✓ Residential amenity
- ✓ Design, appearance and layout
- ✓ Impact on trees, listed buildings, conservation areas, and archaeological heritage
- ✓ Public open space provision

What issues are usually irrelevant in considering proposals?

These will vary from case to case but the following are usually irrelevant:

- ✓ Matters covered by other laws, licences and environmental controls
- ✓ Boundary or area disputes
- ✓ The developer's morals or motives
- ✓ Suspected further development
- ✓ Loss of view over other people's land
- ✓ Effects on value of property
- ✓ Personal matters
- ✓ Land ownership

You should particularly note that the laws of slander are very strict. If you say something defamatory in public about a person that is untrue, even if you believe it to be true, you may be at risk of legal action. You should therefore think carefully about any criticisms you may wish to make about people when speaking at the Committee.

Where are the Committee meetings held?

The venue alternates between Runcorn Town Hall and Municipal Building Widnes. You can check this on the Council's web site. Meetings usually start at 18:30. If you have completed a form asking to speak you must arrive at the venue between 18:00 and 18:15 to register your intention to speak.

Attendees should be aware that members of the press and public who are present during the public part of a meeting, have the right to film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media (such as tweeting and blogging) to report proceedings of meetings.

How are Parish Councils involved?

Parish Councils are consulted on all relevant planning applications within their area. For details of your Parish Council clerk please contact Democratic Services on 0151 511 8380.

The role of Borough Councillors:

You may like to contact your Councillor to discuss a planning application. If you wish a Councillor to represent your views at the Committee then it is advisable to contact a Councillor who is not on the Committee itself. Any Councillor who sits on the Committee will not be able to commit him or herself to a decision before hearing all the evidence and debate at the relevant Development Management Committee meeting.

Who do I ask if I have any other queries?

If you have any questions or any other comments please contact the case officer responsible for the planning applications or:

Operational Director –Planning and Transport
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QF

Tel: 0151 511 6160

Email: dev.control@halton.gov.uk

**Alignment of Policy and Performance Board titles to
the New Corporate Plan: (March 2025)**

Current PPB title	New Priority	Suggested new PPB title	Rationale
CYP&F	Supporting Children, Young People and Families	Children, Young People and Families	No change required
Health	Improving Health, promoting Wellbeing and supporting greater independence	Health & Social Care	Incorporating the words Social Care reflects better the scope of this Board's work
ELS&C	Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy	Local Economy	An all-encompassing term for investing in education and new skills and encouraging business growth and retention within Halton
Environment & Urban Renewal	Working towards a Greener Future	Environment and Regeneration	Reflects the new generic focus on the Borough's overall natural environment
Corporate	Ensuring a resilient and reliable organisation / Tackling inequality and helping those who are most in need	Corporate and Inclusion	All embracing theme of the Corporate Plan, and which also provides equal access to opportunities and resources for all
Safer	Valuing and appreciating Halton and our Community	Housing and Safer	Brings operational housing together with safe and thriving communities

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REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 April 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director, Children's Services

PORTFOLIO: Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Specialist Foster Carers

WARD(S) Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Council approve the invest to save proposal of recruiting 2 Specialist Foster Carer's as an additional care option for our Children & Young People with complex needs in Care.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) note the contents of the report; and
- 2) approve recruitment of 2 Specialist Foster Carers as part of a scheme that aims to move children and or young people from high cost residential placements into a foster care, family environment.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 What are Specialist Foster Carers?

Specialist Foster Carers for children & young people with complex needs, such as trauma, behavioural issues, disabilities or any other kind of sever disruption prior to being placed into foster care.

Specialist Foster Carers are required to have specific qualifications and experience:

- Have experience of working with children & young people in a professional capacity i.e., Youth Workers, Social Workers, Teachers, Allied Health Professionals, Emergency Services personnel, Therapeutic practitioners etc.
- Experience of working with children & young people with complex needs.
- Understanding of how trauma, attachment, and neglect affect children and adolescents.

- Understanding of child development and effects of life experience.

Specialist Foster Carer scheme aims to enable young people to step down from residential care and move to a family environment that can continue to meet their needs.

Specialist fosters carers are expected to include one non-working carer and to hold demonstrable skills and experience. They will be paid an enhanced allowance “fixed fee” to provide 24/7, long & or short-term care to our children aged mainly between 6 and 16 with complex needs.

3.2 **Benefits of Specialist Foster Carers Scheme**

For the Child

The benefits to a child of foster care are many, as follows:

- **Stability:** Foster care provides a stable home for children.
- **Trust Building:** It helps children rebuild trust, especially if they have experienced trauma.
- **Educational Support:** Foster care services may assist with educational needs.
- **Social and Emotional Skills:** Children learn social and emotional skills.
- **Nurturing and Loving Environment:** Foster homes provide a caring atmosphere.
- **Opportunity to Break Negative Cycles:** Foster care offers a chance to end negative family patterns.
- **Second Chance and Basic Life Skills:** Children get a fresh start and develop life skills.

For the Council

Moving children from high cost placements into foster care will reduce costs for the Council. In some cases, children with complex needs cost the Council up to £16,000 per person per week. Regionally, the allowance for Specialist Foster Carers is around £1000 each week. The savings potential has been expanded upon below.

3.3 **Which cohort of Children are suited to Specialist Foster Care?**

Children with complex needs. Those in solo and unregulated residential placements, that due to National sufficiency challenges are not able to live with family's who foster, typically aged between 6 and 16.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Placements for Children in Care are fluid so the financial information in each option below identified average costs associated for illustration purposes.

5.2 **Option 1 Do Nothing / Rely on long-term impact of Sufficiency Strategy**

Doing nothing isn't an option.

If we rely solely on the medium to long term sufficiency plan to take effect, and embed cost savings will no doubt be achieved through initiatives such as:

- Continued weekly scrutiny, tracking & monitoring of placement and support package requests via Resource Panel.
- Re-design of internal residential estate between now and 2028.
- Targeted review of those children subject to 'Placement with Parents' with the aim to discharged care orders.
- The development of Edge of Care service and therefore aim to divert children & young people from entering care.
- Targeted review of those young people appropriate for step down into supported accommodations (age 16+)

The Specialist Foster Carer Scheme is simply another initiative that compliments the above and provides the Local Authority with more ways to improve the lives of children in care whilst significantly reducing current forecasted overspend on placements.

5.3 **Option 2 Recruit Two Specialist Foster Carers**

This option builds on the already agreed cost saving initiatives and strengthens the Local Authorities range of options available to them when placing children with complex needs into care settings. Often these decisions are made in times of crisis and when 'placement choices' are either nil or limited to National sufficiency challenges.

Recruiting two Specialist Foster Carers (self-employed as per existing 60 Mainstream Foster carers) and paying them an annual fee of £52,000 per year (£1000 per week) will incur a total baseline annual cost of £104,000.

Using the average per person per week residential placement cost (£7,000), the forecasted minimum cost savings per Specialist Foster Carer household over a three year period would be **£936,000** (this has not factored in further year on year inflation uplifts). This equates to £312,000 per child per year, saving. One child being

considered for a specialist foster home is currently costing £676,000 per year resulting in a potential saving of £624,000.

NB

- Specialist Foster Carers will receive council tax exemption (value subject to Halton's banding).
- Specialist Foster Carers will receive phone allowance £15 each month.
- Children in Care continue to receive birthday/Christmas/holiday allowances as per Fostering Allowance Guide 23-24 this should not be seen as an allowance for the carer.
- Wrap around support from internal/external sources i.e. EDT/Virtual School, Emotional Wellbeing will need to become part of the scheme but in terms of funding these children & people should be in receipt of these services already. This will enable us to co-ordinate and utilise existing resources more efficiently.

Proceeding with this option will result in significant reduction in placement spend. Impact will be from when the first child moves into the Specialist Foster Carers care. If the placement breaks down or the child or young person moves on in planned way in line with their care/transition plan then the carer would be introduced to another young person and so on.

Estimated time for mobilisation of the scheme is 6-9 months from decision to fund (this allows time for safe recruitment, assessment, approval, training, matching & placing).

Through initial screening of high costs placement data (ranging from £7,000 - £16,000 per person per week) we have at least 17 individuals at the moment (this figure is fluid and will fluctuate) who would need assessing against these two Specialist Foster Carers homes/beds. The information available in relation to the cohort will enable us to design and run a targeted and planned recruitment campaign with specific children and young people in mind.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The specialist foster care model focuses on improving health, promoting wellbeing, and fostering independence through specialist foster carers. This approach could involve:

- Training foster carers to support children with specific health or emotional needs, such as those with disabilities, trauma, or complex medical conditions.
- Providing therapeutic support to help children develop resilience and emotional stability.
- Encouraging independence by equipping young people with life skills, confidence, and support networks to transition successfully into adulthood.
- Collaborating with healthcare professionals to ensure the best possible physical and mental health outcomes.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**
N/A

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

Supporting children, young people, and families through specialist foster carers to improve health, promote wellbeing, and encourage greater independence.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**
N/A

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**
N/A

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**
N/A

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Without careful and considerate communication with Halton's current cohort of Mainstream Foster Carers there is a risk that the Specialist Foster Care Scheme, in particular the annual fee of £52,000 will result in animosity and even resignations of existing carers.

7.2 This risk is low because the current cohort of Mainstream Foster Carers in Halton do not meet the proposed Specialist Foster Carer specification and role description. And it is proposed a series of engagement and awareness sessions be delivered to overcome any hostility / myth bust.

7.3 Despite there being several cost saving projects underway aimed at reducing placement costs. There is no risk of double count savings as the number of children in need of such specialist provision significantly out weights internal bed occupancy now and this will continue to be the case even when the proposed long term sufficiency strategy becomes a reality.

7.4 Risk the Specialist Carers will be paid and not have a child or young person in placement, this will not be the case. Halton's need for specialist foster care placements far out weights the current level of sufficiency.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

8.2 Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

8.3 If the recommendations in this report are agreed we are committing to positive outcomes for young people from across a range of protected characteristics by ensuring they have access to the best care we can offer.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 N/A

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	17 April 2025
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director, Children's Services
PORTFOLIO:	Children and Young People
SUBJECT:	Halton Provision of Internal Supported Accommodation
WARD(S)	All Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to outline the background, and current situation, around the supported accommodation contract and proposes several options around re-procurement of the service.

1.2 Request for Waiver of Standing Orders:

A request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders is sought to allow the continuation of a contract with People, Potential, Possibilities (P3) to deliver, on behalf of the Council, the Provision of A Leaving Care Support Service, for a period of twelve months from 4th April 2025 to 3rd April 2026.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted and options appraised;**
- 2) approval is granted to the recommendation that the contract with People, Potential, Possibilities (P3) should be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;**
- 3) approve a 12 month extension of the internal Supported Accommodation Contract, inclusive of the inflationary uplift;**
- 4) grant permission for the Head of Commissioning and Placement, and the Head of Children in Care and Care Leavers, to implement the building transfer; and**
- 5) authorise the re-commission of the service, via open competitive tender by March 2026. And delegate responsibility to the Head of Commissioning and Placement to undertake.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Lavender House is a council owned asset attached to the short breaks service Inglefield House, all utilities are funded by the LA. The provision of support to the young people who reside there is provided by a commissioned provider, who currently support five care leavers at any one time, within a mixed model, under a block contract with HBC, across Lavender House (3 children in care/care leavers with 24/7 support within group living) and two additional “trainer flats” (2 children in care/care leavers within a tailored floating support model of up to 10 hours per week, dependent on need). The current contract has been in place since April 2022 and has an annual value of £218,900 per annum. The contract is due to expire in March 2025. When this occurs, the council will retain the property, however, any young people resident will require new placements due to the support element of the provision ending.
- 3.2 The current provider have been approached regarding an extension to the contract, and are willing to continue providing support, however, they have highlighted that there were no inflationary uplifts during the course of the current contract, and to continue, they would require an inflationary uplift which will bring them in line with projected costs in the current climate. The requested uplift is £56,212 taking the overall contract value to £275,112 per annum. Supporting 5 young people within the mixed model, within this new budget would equate to a equal weekly fee of £1146.30 per week, as opposed to the regional average weekly fee of £1582.00 per week (as of September 2024 – Placements Northwest).
- 3.3 Placements Northwest, have indicated that an indicative uplift of 5.6% is available for providers on the Northwest Framework, for new placements after 1 April 2025. This is not expected to be requested by all providers. Some may request higher, however, these will be subject to additional scrutiny. Providers can also request uplifts on existing placements, however these are at the discretion of placing authorities.
- 3.4 Lavender House has been assessed and identified as not being fit for purpose, due to its size and configuration. This has meant that a new building needed to be sought which better met the needs of the young people. Recently, a building has been acquired and, with some minor cosmetic adaptations, will be ready for use early in 2025. This will enable the current cohort of young people to be involved in service design prior to transition to a more suitable building and living environment.
- 3.5 The current provider are, and always have, been ready to accept the use of additional trainer flats, within the current contract price, unfortunately, this has not developed to date and the organisation now have excess staff in employment. Current developments within the Sufficiency Strategy have opened up this possibility, and there is a tangible option of reconfiguring the proposed residential estate to accommodate further placements within newly developed flats, within the newly proposed contract value.

- 3.6 When this occurs, the increase of young people will theoretically reduce the perceived weekly placement fee significantly, due to the numbers of young people being supported by the organisation overall within additional trainer flats.
- 3.7 There are several options available to the local authority at this juncture:
- 3.8 **Option 1:** Extend the contract for 12 months, with a view to fully re-commission the service via open competitive tender, by March 2026

Benefits:

- There will be no break in service for Care Leavers in Halton.
- All young current young people's placements will remain stable, without the need for transition to a new provider company, and allow for the continuity of stable and known support from the current provider.
- This will support the principles outlined in the Children and Young Peoples Partnership Plan, in addition to supporting the long-term vision of the Sufficiency Strategy, in line with Ofsted expectations.
- The transfer of buildings, and the development of the additional flats, will be uninterrupted, and will benefit from the insight of young people through co-production.
- The proposed weekly fee is comparably less than current average market value.

Risks:

- The service specification requires an update to incorporate the expectations of the Supported Accommodation Regulation 2023.
- 3.9 **Option 2:** End the contract at its natural termination point and look to re-commission the new service at a later date

Benefits:

- The local authority would avoid the initial uplift request as a contract value.

Risks:

- Existing young people in placements would be required to transition to different providers.
- There would be a break in service provision, given a full open and competitive tender is likely to run until August/September 2025.
- A lack of internal provision for up to six months would mean that a mixture of external providers, for the same five young people, could charge £168,000 over the break in service.
- This approach could significantly impact on the Sufficiency Strategy timelines, given the readjustments required.
- Any new service specification will require an update to incorporate the expectations of the Supported Accommodation Regulation 2023.

- 3.10 **Option 3:** End the contract at its natural termination point and do not re-commission the service

Benefits:

- The local authority would not need to budget for the service in subsequent years.

Risks:

- Existing young people in placements would be required to transition to different providers.
- There would be no dedicated accommodation provision for Care Leavers in Halton, which impacts on planned transitions and pathway planning for young people who would have been identified for the service.
- Given the market trajectory, the same five placements may result in annual expenditure of above £336,000, and more if inflationary uplifts are exaggerated year on year.

The preferred Option is **Option 1**.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current service model aligns well with the Care Leavers Strategy, the Sufficiency Strategy and the overall Children and Young Peoples Partnership Plan.
- 4.2 Within a rejuvenated specification, more can be done to further embed the above into service delivery.
- 4.3 The method of procurement complies with both The Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Procurement Standing Orders.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a clear financial benefit to the block contract approach, given the below-market value of each individual placement within.
- 5.2 Going forward, the contract value will remain the same, whereas annual fee uplifts are expected from all other independent providers. This uplift is unpredictable and cannot be forecast until approximately November/December each year, when advised by Placements Northwest, making budget setting difficult. This reduced weekly fee will remain static and avoid the uplift process in 2025.
- 5.3 There is no budget set for the increase, however, the Authority are making significant savings through the High Cost Placement reductions, via a combination of step down arrangements, negotiated fee reductions, package

reductions and placement moves from high cost settings. There is agreement from Finance that this would be allocated from Corporate Contingency.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence – the service has a dedicated focus in this area under the Supported Accommodation Regulations, and the renewed service specification will be defined and triangulated around these.
- 6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy – the service is significantly beneficial in terms of finance, per placement. It also keeps young people close to home, with a view to encourage care leavers into local employment opportunities.
- 6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families – this area is self-defined in the service specification and within the ethos of the service being delivered.
- 6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need – Our Care Leavers are some of the most vulnerable residents and the service is dedicated to inclusive support which is focused on building resilience and independence, moving young people away from disadvantage, and promoting their success.
- 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future – None.
- 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community – None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Discussed in detail above within the options appraisal.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are none identified, the service is inclusive, non-discriminatory, and offers support to all young people regardless of their background or individual differences.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None identified.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17th April 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Adult Services

PORTFOLIO: Health & Wellbeing Board

SUBJECT: Homelessness Grant Funding Allocation

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report is to inform and update Executive Board of the Councils annual Homelessness funding grant award and allocated spend for 2025/26 to tackle and prevent homelessness.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- 1) note and consider the contents of this Report and**
- 2) approve the recommendations for expenditure against the grants, as described in Appendices 1 and 3**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Context

The Government confirmed the allocation of a key element of the overall investment: funding through the Homelessness Prevention Grant, which is available to local authorities in 2025/26 to support and deliver services to prevent and tackle homelessness.

- 3.2 Halton allocated homelessness grant funding award for 2025/26 is £547,706, which is an uplift of approximately £200.000, due to the prevention work achieved during 2024/25.

- 3.3 The funding grant allocation will be ring-fenced to ensure the Local Authority has the resources to take action to prevent homelessness and utilise the funding to continue to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

3.4 Purpose of the Funding Grant

The purpose of the Homelessness Prevention Grant is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness, and to deliver the following priorities:

- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention,
- Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six-week limit.

3.5 This funding will be provided upfront in April 2025 and can be used flexibly as part of the councils' resourcing to contribute to the costs of statutory duties, including implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act, domestic abuse and supporting with the costs of temporary accommodation.

3.6 **Funding Allocation**

The Homelessness Prevention Grant will be allocated to improve and deliver statutory services and develop new initiatives to prevent homelessness. A proportion of the grant will be allocated for staffing within the Housing Solutions Team, to manage the daily administration pressures and increase prevention activity to reduce homelessness within the Borough. The Prevention grant funding allocation is outlined within Appendix 1.

3.7 Prevention

Within the grant allocation funding, there is an identified amount of £70,000. It is proposed that the funding will provide financial incentives to prevent homelessness and offer vulnerable clients financial assistance, to support and prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies.

3.8 These services have proven successful during the latter years and assisted clients to remain within their homes or have the necessary assistance to move into alternative suitable housing accommodation.

3.9 Private Rented Sector

One of the biggest barriers for clients accessing private rented accommodation is the need for guarantors. The LA reviewed the Bond Guarantee Scheme in 2023 and now offers a guarantor service for clients, for a period up to 6 - 12 months. The service enables vulnerable client groups to access properties in the private rented sector, enabling officers to remove barriers and encourage landlords to work directly with the Local Authority. The scheme will also link in with the Bond Guarantee Scheme to offer longer term support and reassurance to landlords.

3.10 Debt Advice Caseworker (CAH)

The present economic crisis has affected many households, who struggle with issues of debt and affordability. Currently the Citizens Advice Halton (CAH) have a designated advice officer who works

across both services to offer a more efficient and robust service to clients. The officer works directly with the designated Housing Solutions Officer who specialises in repossession orders within the social and private rented sector and the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

- 3.11 The CAH officer has proven to be a positive addition within the Housing Solutions Team and achieved high levels of savings and debt consolidation within 2024/25. See Appendix 2
- 3.12 The joined-up approach enables both services to reach vulnerable clients, offering an accelerated approach to tackle both housing and debt related issues. 2024/25 also brought changes to insolvency legislation, increasing debt limits for Debt Relief Orders to £50,000 and removing the fee for this option. Through the Housing Solutions support, the CAB have seen an increased uptake of Debt Relief Orders for lower levels of indebtedness as a way to reduce the threat of enforcement action and allow clients to remain within their homes.
- 3.13 **Housing Solutions Activity**
The Local Authority has seen an increase in the level of clients approaching the Housing Solutions Team for support and assistance, due to many landlords issuing Section 21 no fault notices to gain possession of their properties. See Appendix 2a.
- 3.14 Within the Housing Solutions Team there is a designated officer who is actively involved in the court process. The officer works directly with lenders to reach an agreement that will allow the clients to remain within their home. The Mortgage Rescue Scheme and possession process has been identified as a priority and funding allocated to assist homeowners and tenants.
- 3.15 There is a robust process in place with the registered social landlords that notifies the housing solutions adviser at early stage of pending action. The process has proven successful with the officer achieving positive outcomes to reduce evictions and negotiations to enable the client to remain within their home. Level of activity during April 2023– February 2026 (See Appendix 2b).
- 3.16 **Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding Grant**
The Rough Sleeping Initiative Funding (RSI) will continue to run up to 31ST March 2026. The annual funding award of £139,706, plus the RSI support funding of £17,250 is ring fenced. The funding will enable the LA to retain existing services, to ensure the funds are dedicated to achieving the shared ambition of ending rough sleeping. See Appendix 1a.
- 3.17 This funding is described as being made available for local authorities to support people who are street homeless. The Local Authority funding award will enable the continuation of the identified support service delivered by Whitechapel across Halton. which has

proven successful and been highlighted as best practice. The outreach support services will work with all rough sleepers to assist them off the streets and access to short- and long-term sustainable accommodation.

3.18 The grant allocation will continue to fund the emergency crash pad accommodation provision, which is situated within Halton Lodge and managed by Changing Lives. The service provision offers 6 emergency units for rough sleepers to access and move off the streets and work with agencies to make positive lifestyle choices.

3.19 **Winter Pressures Funding**

Halton received a welcomed uplift to the winter pressures grant funding of £474.000 for 2025/26, which is ring fenced and needs to be spent or at least committed by 31st March 2025. The funding allocation, if agreeable, will be committed and allocated by the target deadline. See Appendix 1b.

3.20 The additional officers will form part of the Housing Solutions Team to address the increased work across the repossessions and discontinuation notices. Due to the increase in referrals and court attendance, it is deemed necessary to recruit another officer to manage the caseload.

3.21 Also, due the Renters Reform Bill due to be implemented in April 2025, this will add additional pressure upon the team to conduct property checks, work directly with landlords and address any property issues. The post will complement the work across Environmental Health, who are responsible for the enforcement action.

3.22 The sit up service initially provided three sit up spaced for client for up to 3 days. Due to recent issues, the provision will be increased from three to six self-contained units. The units will undergo full refurb to provide the required facilities for rough sleepers for up to five days.

3.23 There are discussions underway with private landlords who want to engage with the Local Authority and allow use of the accommodation available. Yale Housing Association have approached the Local Authority as they have a number of one and two bed apartments within Halton and will offer 12 month assured shorthold tenancies for vulnerable homelessness clients.

3.24 The accommodation rents are set at 10% above the local housing allowance, therefore, the Local Authority would cover the shortfall rent for up to 12 months. The leasing scheme would offer secure tenure to clients with additional financial support to pursue employment within the 12-month period.

- 3.25 Affordability remains an issue for many clients, who cannot afford the rent in advance. Unfortunately, Discretionary housing payment does not cover rent in advance for social landlords, which can prove difficult for clients to fund and in many cases forcing them into debt. The funding would remove further barriers and allow clients to move on quicker without the concern of the one week rent in advance. This initiative would also speed up the move on process and free up temporary accommodation provision.

3.26 **External Funding Grants**

The Local Authority has been successful in securing a number of grant funding to improve support and service delivery across Homelessness Services.

Funding Grant	Initiative	Total Award
Combined Authority Trailblazer Grant	1 x Early Intervention Officers	£39.000
Combined Authority AFEO – Ex Offenders	1 x Offender Co-ordinator Post	£60.000

- 3.27 The trailblazer funding is part of the Housing First Programme that funds one early intervention officers one officer for 2025/26. The officer is prevention focused offering early intervention measures to reduce and prevent homelessness.

- 3.28 The AFEO funding introduced a new co-ordinator post in 2021/22 to work across offender services and improve service delivery. The post has achieved successful outcomes, resulting in a vast improvement in communication, partnership working and a consistent approach across Local Authority services. Subsequently, no offender has been released back to Halton without a full pathway plan and accommodation route. The service has been deemed good practice, and the remaining Liverpool City Region Local Authorities have recently introduced the same approach. See Case Study Appendix 3

3.29 **Homelessness Priorities 2023/24**

MHCLG expect the funding allocation to be specifically used to maximise upstream homelessness prevention for low-income clients to secure and retain suitable accommodation. The funding priorities for 2025/26 will be allocated to meet the needs of all clients as detailed below.

PRIORITY	REASON	PURPOSE
Priority 1	PRS Tenancy Sustainment	Rent arrears. Minor repairs, safety certificates Create new tenancy agreement.
Priority 2	PRS New Tenancies	Rent in advance. Deposits

Priority 3	Guarantor	LA act as guarantor for 6 months
Priority 4	MRS Properties	Assist homeowners with mortgage arrears
Priority 5	Exceptional Circumstances, e.g. Hoarders	Hoarding - Fund clean-up process to support vulnerable clients and save tenancies. Clear arrears

- 3.30 Funding to be used to deliver early intervention measures, be client focused, and LA must demonstrate negotiations with landlords to increase tenancy sustainment.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The increased demand in homelessness presentations has placed additional pressure upon the team. The funding grant will provide additional staffing to deliver homelessness services and reduce/prevent homelessness. The Local Authority failure to comply with legal requirements would lead to court action, proving costly to the Local Authority.
- 5.2 The funding grant will complement the ongoing delivery of services for homelessness clients, with additional financial assistance to promote lifestyle change and sustainability.
- 5.3 In compliance with MHCLG funding instructions, the Winter Pressures grant must be spent or committed by 31st March 2025 or will be recovered by DHLUC. An emergency decision was taken to Executive Board to approve the allocated spend, to reassure MHCLG that the funding had been fully committed.

5.4 Corporate Savings.

A number of staffing posts have been moved from Base budget to grant funding, which will contribute towards the Council savings. Details

2 X Housing Officer Posts	£ 87,500
1 x Landlord Accreditation Officer	£ 48,707
B&B Allocated Budget	£ 6,500
Total Savings	£142,207

- 5.5 The funding will allow the Local Authority to improve service delivery and extend prevention incentives to encourage the private rented sector to work with the Homelessness Team

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The funding allocation is to provide vulnerable people threatened with homelessness to secure alternative suitable accommodation and promote sustainability. The grant funding supports vulnerable clients to remain within their homes by offering financial incentives to support them to resolve homelessness issues and improve health and wellbeing.

Key elements of the services for rough sleepers include the outreach team, to support entrenched rough sleepers to engage with services, move off the streets and address housing and health needs.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The Funding grant enables the Local Authority to support vulnerable homelessness clients to secure accommodation to promote sustainability within communities.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The services and support provided by the Housing Solutions Team apply to young people, families, and care leavers, as well as to individuals who find themselves homeless. These can be some of the most vulnerable groups in our communities, and many rely on accessing suitable social housing to meet their needs.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The Housing Solutions Team support vulnerable clients to resolve homelessness, tackling inequality and ensuring the relevant support is made available to meet the needs of vulnerable and complex clients.

Further financial support to ensure all homelessness clients can access all housing options and services to reduce and prevent homelessness.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1

On an individual basis, the provision of help and support from the housing and homelessness service is addressing the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our area.

- 7.2 Failure to spend or commit the funding will result in MHCLG recouping the funding and reduce the prevention activity options across the Homelessness service.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no equality implications arising from the contents of this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no implications arising from the contents of this report.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

Appendix 1 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT

Funding	Service Delivery	Purpose
£87.500	2 x Housing Solutions Adviser	HST Officers to manage the homelessness administration and prevention activity.
£32.000	Triage/Move on Officer	Triage Officer to manage homeless presentations and temporary accommodation placements.
£100.000	Temporary Accommodation	The Base budget costs are £6,500. The additional funding will cover the annual costs of hotel/B&B accommodation
£36.000	Debt Consolidation Officer	Staffing resource delivered by CAB, work alongside Housing Solutions Adviser to assist vulnerable clients facing repossession.
£70.000	Prevention Fund	Offer financial funding to prevent homelessness. E.g., rent arrears, safety certificates, deposits etc.
£12.000	No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) – Families	Assist migrant Families who have NRPF, whilst applying for immigration status.
£40.000	PRS Guarantor Scheme Bond Guarantee Scheme	The LA will act as guarantor for homelessness clients to enable them to access private rented accommodation.
£40.000	PRS Landlord Incentive Scheme.	PRS Incentive scheme, to encourage the private rented sector to engage with LA, Offering up to 3 months' rent in advance, cover rent shortfall for clients to access private rented accommodation.
£40,000	Mainstay / Jigsaw	Homelessness data reporting IT system (Jigsaw)

		Accommodation and support referral IT system across LCR
£40.000	Mortgage Rescue	Financial assistance to homeowners
£40.000	GIFT Initiative	Furniture package for homelessness clients when undertaking new tenancy.
£10.000	Staff Training	Additional training for staff

Appendix 1a - Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding Grant

Funding	Delivery	Purpose
£25.000	Changing Lives Sit up service	Provide spaces for rough sleepers for up to 5 nights and cover the rent shortfall.
£114,700	Whitechapel 1 x Intensive Support Officer 1 x Move On Officer 1 0.5 Deputy Manager	Outreach support provision for rough sleepers.
£17,250	Outreach Support Officer	Provide intensive outreach support to rough sleepers placed at Lacey Street / Market Street accommodation.

Appendix 1b - Winter Pressures Grant Funding

Funding	Delivery	Purpose
43,579	Immigration Officer	Post presently covered by agency. Recruit new post to cover the increased caseload and offer outreach advice within the IA hotel.
48,707	LAO Officer	To comply with the Renters Rights Bill, which will come into force April 2025
48,707	Repossessions Officer	Senior Officer to manage Repossessions across all sectors and attend court etc.
35.000	Early Engagement & Employment Officer	Continued outreach support for RS to support back into work/training
75.000	Rough Sleeper Crash Pads	Increase and refurb rough sleeper short term crisis accommodation
50.000	Social Rent Support	Provide one week rent in advance for clients securing social housing.
110.000	Private Leasing Scheme	Secure tenancies within the private rented sector.
£40.000	Legal Challenges	Cover future legal costs.
£15,000	RS Prevention Fund	Financial assistance for rough sleepers and ex-offenders, offering 3/6 months' rent in advance, deposits etc. Support to prevent hoarding.

Appendix 2 - CAB Cost Savings

Actions	Achievements
Clients Helped	280
Social Landlord debts written off	£562,704
Homeowner saved homes – written off debts	£627,947
Total Debts written off	£1,302.322 Average of £4,651.15 per client
Former Tenancy arrears written off	£23,620

Appendix 2a - Repossession Referrals

Year	Home Ownership	Private Rented Sector	Registered Social Landlord
April 2024 / Feb 2025	84	380	561
2023 / 24	52	384	499
2022 / 23	42	336	271

Appendix 2b - Repossession Notice Activity

Registered Social Landlord Activity	Total
Referrals	561
Evictions prevented via Crisis Interventions	98
Evictions prevented via Relief Stage	279
Property Relinquished / Tenant Deceased/ withdrew applications.	1 31
Total Eviction Loss	32
Court attendance – Suspended Orders	98
Prevention Funding Applications	45 - £24,211
Discretionary Housing Applications	63 - £66,457

Home Ownership Activity

Owner Occupier Activity	Total
Referrals	84
Total evictions prevented	59
Court attendance – Suspended Orders	12
Total eviction loss / None Engagement	12
Sold Property and rehoused via PPP	1

Appendix 3 – Case Studies

Case Study – RSL:

The RSL referred DB to HST on 31/07/2024 as part of the pre-action protocol as DB was in breach of their court order and at risk of eviction action.

On 31/07/2024, contact was made with the client and an assessment was booked.

On 02/08/2024, I met with DB, and I completed a homeless application. Having concluded a full housing assessment, it was established that the client lived at the property with their 2 dependants. DB worked part time and claimed Universal Credit. Changes in wages each month had affected her UC entitlement and so client had mismanaged her budgeting and missed/paid short payments of rent. As client was subject to a suspended possession order, any breach of this agreement can result in an eviction notice.

A prevention duty was owed to the DB as she was threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Prevention options were discussed with DB. DB was referred to CAB to get support with debts and budgeting to ensure that rent payments were prioritised. The client had her hours amended at work to ensure that they were regular, so that her UC claim could become a regular and reliant amount.

Upon negotiations, the RSL confirmed the breach of the order that was subject to eviction action was £916.33 and if this was cleared as a lump sum, then they would not pursue the eviction notice.

An income and expenditure was completed with the DB to establish affordability ongoing for a payment proposal. DB was advised on what payment proposal could be offered based on their excess income and when to start making payments. The CAB confirmed the ongoing payment plan of Current Rent + £50pcm towards the arrears was reasonable.

HST were able to secure funding to clear the breach. £350 was secured from Vicars Relief and £566.13 was secured from Prevention Funding.

As the breach was cleared, the RSL agreed to accept ongoing payment property and not pursue the eviction notice and so the client was able to remain in her home.

The case was closed as homelessness prevented.

Case Study – Mortgage:

The lender referred MU to HST on 14/05/2024 as part of the pre-action protocol as they were seeking possession of the mortgage property at a hearing on 28/06/2024. HST attempted to contact MU and a possession warning card was left at the property in a sealed envelope.

On 03/06/2024, MU responded to the card and an assessment was booked.

On 06/06/2024, I met with MU and I completed a homeless application. Having concluded a full housing assessment, it was established that the client lived at the property with his wife and their 2 non-dependants. MU worked part time as he has been engaging with mental health services following a recent suicide attempt. MU's wife had been made redundant and was actively seeking new employment, however her income was the household's main source of income. MU had accrued arrears on the mortgage due to being unable to maintain the contracted monthly instalment. These arrears resulted in the possession action from the lender.

A prevention duty was owed to the MU as he was threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Prevention options were discussed with MU. As MU's wife had the prospect of new employment, I advised we could support at court to ask for an adjournment that would allow further time for MU's wife to secure the employment, and be in a position to offer a payment plan towards the mortgage and arrears as per the terms of Norgan.

On 28/06/2024, I attended St Helens Court and the Lender was continuing to pursue with their request for a possession order. I represented MU in the hearing and was successful in obtaining an Adjournment for 56 days. MU was made aware a new hearing would be listed after 56 days; however, he had been afforded the opportunity for his wife to start her new employment.

During the adjourned period, employment commenced and an income and expenditure was completed with the MU to establish affordability ongoing for a payment proposal. MU was advised on what payment proposal could be offered based on their excess income and when to start making payments. MU was also referred to CAB for ongoing support with debts and budgeting to ensure that mortgage payments remain their priority.

On 20/09/2024, I attended the St Helens Court and the lender was continuing to pursue with their request for a possession order. I represented MU and was successful in obtaining a Suspended Possession Order which allows MU to remain in their home and prevented repossession action.

The case was closed as homelessness prevented.

Case Study

On the 08/05/2024, KM was released from custody after serving 18 months of a 32-month sentence for Stalking involving Serious Alarm/Distress. Due to risk factors, the decision was made to refer KM to an approved premises for a period of 12 weeks post-release from custody due to his high-risk nature.

A duty to refer was received by Halton Borough Council on 17/05/2024 as there was a concern that KM would be homeless when the 12-week period ceased.

On the 03/06/2024, I attended Bunbury House approved premises and completed a homeless application. A prevention duty was owed to the client as he was threatened with homelessness within 56 days and a number of options for preventing homelessness were discussed, such as social rented housing, accessing the private rented sector and supported housing. Further advice and signposting were progressed, so client was aware and could access support in relation to income (benefit entitlement) and health, as client had significant physical and mental health concerns.

Over the next two weeks, KM was supported to register for social housing, provide all proofs to progress access to AFEO funding (funding for offenders to access private rent) and referrals made to supported housing providers. At all times, updates were shared with probation so that any housing options were considered in relation to managing the risk of KM in the community.

KM identified a private rented property in Warrington. Affordability checked completed and property determined affordable. Probation confirmed property suitable in relation to risk. Landlord of property contacted and agreed the HBC would assist with the upfront costs from AFEO funding to secure the property. Client signed tenancy agreement and progressed into property. Case close as homelessness prevented.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted