

# **APPENDIX C**

Halton Borough Council

## **INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document

November 2010

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Infrastructure Delivery Plan is one of a series of evidence documents, which supplement and support Halton's Core Strategy. This infrastructure plan provides more detail on the necessary infrastructure provision to enable the delivery of the policies contained in the Core Strategy. It is a living document and will be kept under review over the plan period and updated on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Planning for the future through the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy must be supported by evidence of what physical, social and environmental infrastructure is needed to enable the necessary development to progress. At the same time existing infrastructure deficiencies need to be identified and addressed.
- 1.3 The IDP identifies what infrastructure is required, when it is needed, who is responsible for its provision and how it will be funded. It draws on and influences the investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.
- 1.4 Planning Policy Statement 12 describes the role of the infrastructure delivery plan as follows:

The core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The Core Strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.

## **2.0 Methodology**

- 2.1 To ensure effective engagement of the key agencies was achieved at the most senior level, the Chief Executive contacted partner organisations and members of the Local Strategic Partnership. The partnership capital programme was supplied to inform the Core Strategy IDP. This approach was then shared and reported with the Liverpool City Region authorities.
- 2.2 Eight Councils comprising the majority of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) agreed to work together to address the issue of sub regional infrastructure planning within the LCR through a single joint approach. A Regional Sub-Group was formed to approach infrastructure planning collaboratively and avoid the need for repetition. Membership of that group included:

- Halton
- Knowsley
- Liverpool
- Sefton
- St Helens
- Warrington
- West Lancashire
- Wirral

- 2.3 Information relating to capital programmes and asset management strategies of partner organisations was sought in April 2009 from infrastructure providers (physical, social, green and digital infrastructure) a total of XX in the Greater Merseyside and surrounding areas. Following a further request sent in July 2009, 33 responses were received. The information if supplied would assist in ensuring that any schemes for public infrastructure would be included within Local Development Frameworks, specifically the Core Strategies of each local planning authority (LPA).
- 2.4 To further this joint approach and to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plans a number of meetings were arranged with the main electricity, gas and utility infrastructure providers to discuss the specifics of servicing the proposed areas of growth (housing and employment land) in the sub region.
- 2.5 Infrastructure providers contacted included:
- Electricity: Scottish Power (all authorities)
  - Electricity: Electricity North West (St Helens / Sefton / West Lancs. / Warrington)
  - Gas: National Grid (all authorities)
  - United Utilities (Warrington, St Helens and Halton)
- 2.6 Responses received and Information supplied by the main electricity, gas and utility providers has been used to inform this infrastructure plan.

### **3.0 Structure**

- 3.1 There are three parts to this document: section 1, describing the current situation, section 2, describes addressing future provision and anticipated needs, and section 3, a full schedule that describes the „what’, ‘how’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ of infrastructure requirements.

## **4.0 Section I. Halton's Current Situation**

### **4.1 Physical Infrastructure**

#### **4.2 Highway Network**

4.3 Access is available to both the M56 and M62 motorways within the Borough. This is supported by the Primary Route Network, which consists of the A533, A557, A56, A558 and A562 which are maintained by Halton Borough Council. In recent years two major road projects have been completed at the A56 / A558 / M56 link.

4.4 Parts of the highway network in Halton are under stress from volume of vehicle movements causing serious congestion problems. Areas particularly susceptible to congestion include the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which provides a road crossing of the River Mersey in Halton across the Runcorn gap, and the M56 junctions in Halton.

4.5 Problems associated with cross-river congestion and network capacity at the river crossing pinch-point will be addressed as part of the Mersey Gateway Project. This is the multi-million pound scheme to create a new road crossing of the River Mersey in Halton, upstream from the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. The 6-lane road crossing will connect the Speke Road in Widnes with the Central Expressway in Runcorn and will involve works to connect road infrastructure. The scheme is more than just a new bridge: it is anticipated to have major regeneration benefits for Halton, both in areas of Widnes and Runcorn, and will also result in improvements to sustainable transport in the Borough, with works to the Silver Jubilee Bridge allowing for increased levels public transport, walking and cycling. As well as being of major significance for Halton, the Mersey Gateway represents a scheme of sub-regional importance, which will result in accessibility benefits for the Liverpool City Region and the wider area. The Mersey Gateway Project was the subject of a Public Inquiry in June 2009, the results of which are expected in early 2010.

4.6 Ongoing and forthcoming major developments in Halton will necessarily have impacts upon the highway network, due to increased traffic movements, including those attributable to new residents and new employees. In order to cater for these impacts, improvements to the existing network may be required, and where appropriate new road infrastructure may be necessary. Examples of this include proposals for a new spine road for the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus, and new road access to the 3MG site from the Knowsley Expressway.

#### **4.7 Rail**

4.8 Halton is served by four passenger railway stations, including Runcorn, Runcorn East, Widnes and Hough Green. The West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch) runs through the Borough, together with the Liverpool to

Manchester, and North Wales to Manchester lines. This means that Halton as a whole has excellent rail connectivity to Liverpool, Manchester and London.

- 4.9 In addition to the existing railway stations, Halton also has underused or disused railway infrastructure which could be reinstated, as well as locations which could cater to new railway stations. Reinstated or new railway stations could be created at Barrow's Green, Beechwood, Daresbury, Ditton, Upton Rocks and Widnes South. Safeguarded railway lines include the Halton Curve in south-west Runcorn, which offers potential to increase connectivity from Cheshire to south Liverpool, and the Shell Green line, which could better connect the Ditton area of Widnes to Warrington.
- 4.10 Rail infrastructure plays an important role in the Borough's logistics and freight sector, with particular reference to the multimodal freight terminal at 3MG in Widnes, which has access to the West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch). 3MG offers road-to-rail freight transfer facilities and hence benefits from rail links to Liverpool and to the South, with scope for increased rail freight use to other freight facilities in Halton, including the Manchester Ship Canal ports.
- 4.11 Support will be given for improvements and expansion to rail facilities in Halton, to ensure sufficient capacity is maintained and to capitalise opportunities afforded by the re-use and reinstatement of existing infrastructure.
- 4.12 Buses**
- 4.13 Halton is generally well-served by bus routes and infrastructure, with a good dispersion of services, stops and interchanges across the Borough. There are bus interchanges in Runcorn Old Town centre, Halton Lea and in Widnes. There are bus-based links from residential areas to town centres and employment areas in Halton and in the wider area, including cross-boundary routes to Liverpool, Warrington, St. Helens and towns in Cheshire.
- 4.14 The majority of commercial bus services in Halton are provided by the two main bus operators in the Borough: Arriva North West and Halton Transport. The Council does subsidise some services when low passenger numbers would result in a lack of commercial viability.
- 4.15 Runcorn has an unusual bus infrastructure, with the New Town initiative of the Runcorn Busway, a bus-only route around the town, segregated from other traffic. While offering excellent bus connectivity for the New Town residential areas, there is scope for the Busway to be improved through physical works to tackle problems associated with isolation and antisocial behaviour. Smaller scale community transport operations provide specialist services, for example for older or disabled people.
- 4.16 Existing projects and programmes to improve bus transportation in Halton are contained within the adopted Local Transport Plan, and include the provision of Quality Bus Corridors, accessible services and improved stops

and interchanges. There are also proposals to improve bus services and routes as part of the Mersey Gateway Project,

- 4.17 Continual support will be given to improvements and expansion to the bus network in Halton, with efforts to improve frequency and quality of service and to seek expansions to the network to reach existing under-served areas and major new developments. The provision of innovations in bus transport, including ticketing measures and vehicle advances, will also be supported.

#### **4.18 Walking and Cycling**

- 4.19 Halton's public rights of way network extends to 74km and comprises public footpaths and bridleways which the Council is responsible for. These routes are of importance in terms of on-foot connectivity for short journeys and also in terms of leisure uses.

- 4.20 There are approximately 42km of both "on road" and "off road" cycle routes within the Borough, including stretches on the carriageway, on converted footways and on traffic-free routes, including the Runcorn Cycleway, a New Town legacy. There are also 232 cycle parking spaces.

- 4.21 Halton is crossed by a number of regionally and nationally significant walking and cycling routes, including the Trans Pennine Trail, the Mersey Way, the Mersey Valley Timberland Trail and the Bridgewater Way. Most significant of these, the Trans Pennine Trail, is an extensive network of multi-user paths connecting the Liverpool City Region with the east coast of England across the Pennines, which also forms part of the National Cycle Network.

#### **4.22 Waterways and Ports**

- 4.23 Halton benefits from waterborne connectivity by virtue of the location of the towns of Runcorn and Widnes adjacent to the River Mersey, and also due to the several waterways which cross through the Borough, including the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal, the Sankey Canal and the Weaver Navigation.

- 4.24 The Manchester Ship Canal is an inland waterway stretching from the Wirral to Salford and connecting the Liverpool and Manchester areas. Once extensively used for shipping and freight transfer, there is scope for the Ship Canal to be used as part of a sustainable freight transportation network, benefitting ports on to the Canal in Halton, including the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks). The Ship Canal has scope to accommodate vessels of up to 15,000 tonnes.

- 4.25 The Borough's other canals are now less likely to be used for commercial purposes, but play an extremely important role for leisure and recreation uses. This includes their role as "blue infrastructure" and as wildlife habitats, as well as the role of their footpaths as walking and cycling routes (such as the Bridgewater Way, adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal).

4.26 Halton's ports and freight terminals are well positioned in relation to other freight assets in the North West, including the Port of Liverpool and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

#### **4.27 Airports**

4.28 Liverpool John Lennon Airport is located just outside of Halton, directly to the west of Hale Village. The Airport is a significant transport advantage to the Borough, both in terms of passenger transport and in terms of freight transport. The Airport's expansion plans to 2030 anticipate major increases in passenger numbers, and also include proposals for a new World Cargo Centre to the south of the existing Airport, which would cater for a major expansion to the Airport's freight handling capacity. The expansion plans also include proposals for a new eastern access road and a runway extension, both of which are located within Halton's boundaries.

#### **4.29 Water**

4.30 United Utilities (UU) are responsible for the supply of water and for wastewater across the Borough with the Environment Agency having responsibility for flood and pollution prevention.

4.31 Halton is not known to have any capacity issues, either for treatment works, mains supply, or sewers. However, due to climate change and continually increasing demand, reduction in water consumption needs to be promoted.

4.32 The Environment Agency has indicated that it is commissioning a Water Cycle Study to examine the major issues surrounding sourcing of potable water, through to issues of disposal and flood risk. This is being undertaken as part of the Growth Point delivery.

4.33 The Draft Water Resources Management Plan indicates sufficient capacity for water provision. The supply in Halton is obtained from North Wales and the Lake District.

4.34 United Utilities have confirmed that there are no capacity issues either for treatment works or sewers and that they do not have any concerns with the level or location of growth proposed. However, the potential effect of water abstraction on the Natura 2000 sites remains unresolved. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) discusses this in detail.

#### **4.35 Flooding and Drainage**

4.36 The strategic flood risk assessments show where areas of higher flood risk arise, and where development is proposed in these areas, make recommendations about what mitigation is required. A level I Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken for Halton identifying a relatively small area of the Borough as being at risk from flooding. The main source of flood risk is fluvial flooding from Keckwick Brook (Sandymoor, Runcorn) and Ditton Brook (Ditton, Widnes). The largest potential flood risk across the Borough



is that of tidal flood events from the River Mersey. A level 2 SFRA was undertaken in 2010 and concluded that flood risk is not considered to constrain the delivery of future development in the Borough. . Core strategy policies aim to minimise the run-off from new developments. Where development takes place in areas of higher flood risk, then developers will need to fund the required flood risk infrastructure as the Environment Agency is responsible for flood defence work. The SFRA will be updated on a regular basis.

#### **4.37 Gas**

4.38 National Grid Gas owns and operates the National Transmission System throughout Great Britain and owns and operates a significant gas distribution network that delivers gas to homes and businesses throughout central England, including Halton and the wider Liverpool City Region.

4.39 The national transmission system connections are only suitable for large scale industrial uses of gas e.g. connections of major power stations to the network where there is a need to connect to high pressure flows. National transmission system connections are also suitable for large scale gas storage facilities and operators wishing to put gas into the national transmission system.

4.40 The local gas distribution network operates at a lower pressure eventually supplying the customer. Low pressure connections are usually required for housing developments up to around 1000 dwellings. Medium pressure connections will be more appropriate for very large urban extensions or shopping centres.

4.41 Any changes to the local network will arise from National Grid's mains replacement programme in addition to requests for customer connections and/or significant changes in demand requiring reinforcements to the local network as required. Discussions held with National Grid regarding future development in Halton and the wider Liverpool City Region raised no significant concerns regarding adequate pressure to service new development in the area. However, further analysis of Halton's Key Areas of Change has identified where reinforcement may be required over the lifetime of the Core Strategy.

#### **4.42 Electricity**

4.43 Energy North West and Scottish Power operate the primary and secondary electricity networks within the Liverpool City Region. Main transmission networks are operated by National Grid. Electricity North West operates around the periphery of the City Region, in some areas of Warrington, Sefton, West Lancashire and St Helens. All other authorities are operated wholly by Scottish Power, including Halton.

4.44 Scottish Power (and Electricity North West) is generally reactive providing the necessary infrastructure as required to serve development and meet demand. However, long term development statements are produced which

provide information on the operation and development of the distribution systems and how the system is expected to develop.

- 4.45 Discussions have been held with Scottish Power to ensure sufficient supply capacity is available for proposed growth in the Borough particularly within the Key Areas of Change. Further analysis is currently being undertaken to identify areas where there may be insufficient capacity in the network for future development. This includes Widnes Waterfront where existing electricity infrastructure constraints have been identified.
- 4.46 In considering the future of electricity distribution and supply it is envisaged that there will be change due to energy efficiency measures and renewable technologies. This presents opportunities to alleviating potential electricity infrastructure issues across the Borough.
- 4.47 Renewable Energy**
- 4.48 Halton Borough Council in partnership with the Liverpool City Region (including Warrington and St Helens) commissioned Arup to undertake a Renewable Energy Study in 2009<sup>1</sup> with the primary aim to identify future potential for renewable energy across the sub-region and provide evidence to support the emerging Local Development Frameworks.
- 4.49 The commission was split into two distinct stages. Stage One (completed in December 2009) provided an introduction to renewable energy technologies and targets, the key issues associated with them and how suitable they are in the context of the partner authority areas. The purpose of Stage Two was to provide more detailed spatial evidence for each planning authority, identifying Energy Priority Zones for delivery of low and zero carbon technologies and to provide a policy framework to enable the partner authorities to achieve consistency at a strategic sub-regional level.
- 4.50 Based on the available data, the critical mass of heat demand and development growth, the study indicated prospective areas for district heating networks for Halton. This primarily identified Daresbury and Runcorn Waterfront as Energy Priority Zones but also considered Widnes Waterfront and 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) as having potential for district heating networks. Further site specific investigation is recommended into the feasibility and viability of these zones and the delivery of renewable energy.
- 4.51 Although the Renewable Energy Capacity Study did not identify significant scope for large scale renewable energy developments in Halton, future potential may exist as renewable technology advances and economies of scale become more widely realistic.
- 4.52 Waste**

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<sup>1</sup> Arup (2010) Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study

4.53 Currently Halton is part of the sub-regional group of local authorities who are producing the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Development Plan Document (Waste DPD). This grouping includes the following Councils: Halton; Knowsley; Liverpool; Sefton; St. Helens; and Wirral. The Preferred Options version of the Waste DPD went out to public consultation in May 2010. This document contained a range of specific sites across the six districts suitable for a variety of waste management needs. The proposed Waste DPD will enable implementation of the principles of sustainable waste management for all waste streams.

4.54 Halton has a substantial proportion of the waste facilities that serve the Liverpool City Region and wider geographical area. Halton has a hazardous landfill site at Randall's Island, Runcorn operated by Ineos Chlor Ltd. This deals with waste from the Ineos Estate. The Government's aim is to reduce reliance on landfill in preference for more sustainable methods of waste treatment. At Shell Green, in Widnes, sewage sludge is taken from seven wastewater treatment plants across the northwest. This is then processed by de-watering and incineration. When operational, Ineos Chlor's combined heat and power plant at Weston Point, Runcorn, will be able to process 850,000 tonnes of solid recovered fuel from waste each year. In addition to these large scale secondary treatment and disposal facilities, Halton has 18 waste transfer stations located in the Borough. This gives Halton the largest concentration of waste transfer stations, per head of population, in the North West. Halton therefore currently makes a significant contribution to the waste treatment and disposal needs of the Merseyside sub-region.

#### **4.55 Minerals**

4.56 The Urban Vision Study on Mineral Planning in Merseyside (2008) has shown that Halton does not contain a significant amount of high quality minerals. There are currently no operational mineral sites in Halton and limited evidence of previous activity. The study did identify sand and gravel deposits in four small disparate locations in east Runcorn. The potential of these becoming mineral extraction sites is limited and as no commercial viability analysis has been produced it is proposed to address the safeguarding of the sites in a Site Allocations DPD.

#### **4.57 Communications**

4.58 The Core Strategy recognises the growing importance of digital infrastructure and that access to digital technologies is vital for the Borough's residents and businesses. An Interim Digital Britain Report was published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in conjunction with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in June 2009. One of the main objectives included within this report is to modernise and upgrade the wired, wireless and broadcasting infrastructure to sustain Britain's position as a leading digital economy.

4.59 Availability of broadband has two components: the right network today and the right network tomorrow. To ensure all can access and benefit from the

network of today, the government confirms its intention to deliver the Universal Service Broadband Commitment at 2Mbps by 2012. This can be delivered through upgrades to the existing copper and wireless networks.

- 4.60 The government also proposes public support for the network of tomorrow so that consumers who will not be reached by the market can enjoy next generation broadband. This support amounts to installing a new network and is known as the 'Next Generation Final Third' project. True superfast broadband will be concentrated in the first two thirds of the market leaving the 'final third' served only with current generation broadband.
- 4.61 For wireless infrastructure, Digital Britain sets out three objectives: firstly, a rapid transition to next generation high-speed mobile broadband; secondly, progress towards universal coverage in 3G and Next Generation Mobile, reliable coverage throughout the rail network; thirdly, maintaining a highly competitive mobile market. One other aspect of infrastructure, sound radio, is considered and the report proposes digital upgrade of all national broadcast radio stations to DAB-only (Digital Audio Broadcasting) from the end of 2015.
- 4.62 The implications of this digital infrastructure for Halton's homes and businesses will be investigated further over the development of the Core Strategy.

#### **4.63 Social Infrastructure**

#### **4.64 Health**

- 4.65 Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust manages two hospitals that are accessible to Halton's residents – Warrington Hospital and Halton General Hospital.
- 4.66 The Halton and St. Helens PCT also provide NHS services to the community. The PCT's Community Services operate from a number of health centres and clinics across the Borough including Widnes Healthcare Resource centre which was developed as part of the LIFT programme. The PCT also provides hospital facilities at St Helens, Newton-le-Willows and Whiston Hospital.
- 4.67 Developments proposed through the Core Strategy have been taken into account in the preparation of the NHS Strategic Service Development Plan (SSDP) and Strategic Commissioning Plans. As such, new planned primary care developments are programmed to match the potential for increased demand.
- 4.68 The Directors of Adult Social Services, Public Health and Children and Young People's Services and Primary Care Trust (PCT) have worked together to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The document identifies key priorities that will form the basis of planning service development, which

will be a key part of the commissioning process. As yet there is no infrastructure need identified from this process.

#### **4.69 Education**

- 4.70 Halton has four nursery schools, 52 primary schools, seven secondary schools, four special schools and two pupil referral units offering secondary provision. The Borough also has sixth form and further education provision through Riverside College and further adult and community learning facilities throughout Halton.
- 4.71 Halton has been allocated to Wave 6 of the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF), the programme have been stopped by the Coalition Government in the announcement on the 5 July and 6 August. Based upon these announcement only the sample schemes will go ahead The capital value of the Outline Business Case submission for the samples only is £59m along with plus ICT.
- 4.72 Halton's Primary Strategy for Change sets out the strategic approach to capital investment in the Borough's primary education facilities this capital program has been stopped by Coalition Government. The Authority are using Primary Capital funding they have received to date for the All Saints Upton (£3,566,736 of which PCP make up £750,000 New build), Our Lady Mother of the Saviour (£1,153,280 of which PCP make up £578,000 refurbishment scheme) and The Grange Primary element of the BSF scheme (£6,500,000 for the Nursery, Infant and Junior parts of the school).

#### **4.73 Affordable Housing**

- 4.74 Sufficient affordable housing is necessary to avoid homelessness, and housing overcrowding and the associated various problems such as anti-social behaviour reduced educational achievement and poor health. The provision of housing that is affordable to occupants, and is of decent quality is therefore a valuable tool in supporting the needs of society.

#### **4.75 Emergency Services**

- 4.76 Consultation have been undertaken with Merseyside Police and Cheshire Police, their main concern is to ensure that due consideration is given to the prevention of crime in the Core Strategy. Halton will continue to work with the Police to ensure their views are taken into consideration.
- 4.77 Halton will continue to work with Merseyside and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure their views are taken into consideration.

#### **4.78 Community Facilities**

4.79 Halton has 4 community libraries distributed across the Borough and one mobile library, ensuring that residents have access to services and to the Internet. There are 11 Community Centres supporting programmes and services for groups and individuals, and 12 designated children's centres located across the Borough. There are also a range of play areas for Halton's young people including outdoor play areas at children's centres

## **4.80 Green Infrastructure**

### **4.81 Green Infrastructure**

4.82 The landscape of England has been classified into 181 different 'natural areas' by the Countryside Commission (now Natural England). Halton is mainly within the 'Mersey Valley' Character Area, but some outlying parts have more in common with the character of the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain/Cheshire Sandstone Ridge Area.

4.83 The Mersey Estuary has been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), for its internationally important numbers of migratory species and waterfowl. A site is considered to be of international importance for any species of bird if it supports more than one per cent of the total European population. The Mersey Estuary is internationally important for three species of duck and four species of wading bird and so qualifies as a Special Protection Area, a status reserved for only the most important bird sites in Europe. The Mersey Estuary also qualifies as a Ramsar site; a wetland of international importance. The SPA and the Ramsar Site form part of a network of sites that are collectively known as Natura 2000.

4.84 Halton has three SSSIs: Flood Brook Clough SSSI, Mersey Estuary SSSI and Red Brow Cutting SSSI. Flood Brook Clough is currently considered to be in unfavourable condition, whilst the Mersey Estuary and Red Brow Cutting are considered to be 99.95% and 100% favourable respectively.

4.85 The Borough Council has 10 Local Nature Reserve's (LNRs) which amounts to 142.02 hectares of land or the equivalent of 1 hectare per 837 head of population (2004 population estimate). This figure exceeds the Natural England standard.

4.86 There are also a number of locally designated non-statutory sites in the Borough which were re-named in 2007 as Local Wildlife Sites. The adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005) recognises 47 such sites under the old name as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

4.87 Other designations in Halton that are of local significance include areas and sites designated as Areas of Special Landscape and Important Landscape Features.

4.88 The Green Flag Award scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces across England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a

means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas. Halton Borough Council currently has 12 Green Flag Parks.

- 4.89 There are 2 habitats and 7 species identified in the Halton Biodiversity Action Plan that are of particular interest within Halton these are: Saltmarsh, Reedbed, Bluebell, Purple Hairstreak, Great Crested Newt, Redshank, Skylark, Song Thrush and Reed Bunting.
- 4.90 Only 7% of England's surface area is made up of woodland (greater than 0.25 hectare in size) and Halton has less than half of the national average. The resource of smaller wooded areas (less than 0.25 hectare in size) and individual trees in Halton is very varied, with some parts of the Borough being very poor in tree cover whilst other parts have relatively high numbers of trees. Runcorn New Town has an abundance of both mature woodlands and developing semi-mature trees, and is a good example of an urban forest.
- 4.91 Halton is situated at the heart of The Mersey Forest, the largest of England's twelve designated community forests. The Council is an active partner in this project, which was launched in 1994 with the aim of dramatically increasing woodland cover in the region over the next 30 years. In Halton, the successful outcome has been the creation of more than 100 hectares of new woodland to date.
- 4.92 An important part of the Borough's Green Infrastructure is the greenway network, which is a series of walking and cycling routes through and connecting the Borough's green and open spaces. This includes existing, proposed and potential routes as identified by the UDP.
- 4.93 Halton's blue infrastructure which includes the River Mersey, the Weaver Navigation, the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal and the Sankey Canal also provides opportunities for formal and informal recreation and tourism, contributing to urban regeneration and biodiversity protection/enhancement.
- 4.94 Future Green Infrastructure proposals include the creation of an upper Mersey Valley Park. This is a large, landscape-scale response to economic and social changes that are being proposed within Halton. An Upper Mersey Green Lung has also been identified, providing recreation and tourism opportunities to encompass both sides of the estuary. This is the unifying ecological feature to bring together the components within the Natural Assets Strategy to connect the existing system of 10 Local Nature Reserves and over 40 Local Wildlife Sites which spread across the whole of Halton.
- 4.95 Open Space**
- 4.96 An Open Space Study, undertaken in 2006, concluded that Halton has predominantly good quality and accessible open spaces although there are specific areas of priority that need resourcing. The study identified that:

- The overall quality of parks is good; however there is a potential need for a small park within the south and east of Runcorn
- Halton is well provided for in terms of natural and semi natural open spaces and is fortunate to have a number of regionally significant sites within its boundaries. It may be appropriate to investigate the protection of existing good quality sites and increase accessibility to sites.
- There is a small overall deficiency of amenity greenspace and there are a number of areas outside appropriate catchment areas. Areas in Widnes were identified as priorities
- The quality of young people's areas is variable across the Borough and the report highlights some of the higher and lower quality sites. There is also high demand for additional provision borough wide, particularly in Farnworth
- There is a shortage of junior sports pitches, other types of outdoor sports facilities are very accessible within the Borough
- Consultation highlighted that allotments are a valuable form of recreation and are currently 100% full. Although there is limited additional demand at present for further provision, some residents are outside the defined catchment area, particularly in the east of Runcorn.

## **5.0 Section 2. Addressing Future Provision**

- 5.1 An integral part of the Core Strategy is to ensure that development proposals are supported by the timely provision of an appropriate level of infrastructure including:
- transport infrastructure such as roads, railways, public transport, and cycling and walking routes;
  - physical and environmental infrastructure such as water supply and treatment, and energy supply;
  - Green Infrastructure such as public greenspaces;
  - social and health infrastructure including community services and facilities; and,
  - digital infrastructure such as internet supply.
- 5.2 In developing the Core Strategy it was essential to assess the capacity of existing infrastructure and what the future needs of infrastructure will be to achieve the plan's vision and strategic objectives. The previous section outlines existing provision in the Borough, together with significant planned schemes.
- 5.3 The Core Strategy is expected to deliver the needs of the Borough to 2026. This includes the provision of 8000 residential units (net of demolitions), and 260 hectares of employment land to facilitate the sustainable growth of Halton's economy. In order to ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place to facilitate this growth several policies have been included.
- 5.4 The council currently secures monies through section 106 agreements, and these are used for various purposes, including paying for the provision of



infrastructure deficits that arise as a result of new development. These monies can not be used to address existing gaps in provision. They are primarily based on a per dwelling basis for residential development and square metre gross floor space for commercial development. Obligations include

- Community Facilities and Infrastructure e.g. education and health care facilities
- Transport & Travel e.g. pedestrian and cycling facilities, public and community transport, travel plans.
- Recreation and Environment e.g. amenity open space, sports provision, the Mersey Community Forest, nature conservation.
- Affordable Housing
- Social Progress e.g. increased employment opportunities for the disadvantaged and economically inactive.
- Utility Infrastructure e.g. foul sewage and water drainage.

5.5 Halton have previously negotiated a 'roof-tax' type Section 106 agreement with English Partnerships to fund infrastructure improvements to support the delivery of the Sandymoor development in the East Runcorn key area of change further details of the infrastructure provision can be found in Section 3.

5.6 The current coalition government has indicated that it wants to look at the CIL process with a view to simplifying it. Once the national situation has been clarified, the council will re-evaluate its own situation on the use of CIL, tariffs, or whatever new system is introduced, in a future Planning Obligations DPD.

## **6.0 Section 3: Delivery Schedule**

6.1 The following schedule of infrastructure schemes provides the details of the projects that will support the delivery of the Core Strategy. The information presented here has been drawn from the Council's capital programme, internal departments, and also from consultation with a wide range of partners. Annex 1 provides details of infrastructure providers contacted, copies of correspondence sent and copies of responses received to inform the Infrastructure Plan.

6.2 The schedule specifically looks at planned infrastructure across the Borough with a specific reference to the Key Areas of Change where a range of infrastructure will be required to support new development. For each project the schedule identifies the policy link, lead agencies, phasing and timescales, funding sources, the desired outcome, potential risks and possible interventions or alternative scenarios.

6.3 Phasing has been broken down into the below time periods to give an indication of the timeframe that the project is envisaged to be delivered within:

Short term 0-5 years (2012-16) = **P1**  
Medium term 6-10 years (2017-21) = **P2**  
Long term 11-15 years (2022-26) = **P3**

Some projects span all three phased periods therefore this is indicated in the final year columns of the schedule.

6.4 This schedule is effectively a 'living document' and is subject to change over the Core Strategy preparation process. Flexibility is required to take account of changing conditions and other possible opportunities that may arise.

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
<b>Mersey Gateway Bridge</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	Bridge Construction	CS8 CS9	Bridge concessionaire (yet to be appointed) HBC, Department for Transport	PI	Regional Funding Allocation of £86m – remainder through Private Finance and tolls  Est. Cost: £604m	Provision of second river crossing to ease congestion, increase network resilience, improve journey times and make improvements to public transport and cycling/walking facilities.	Insufficient funding  Unable to secure a Concessionaire  Planning applications turned down	Continue with Silver Jubilee Bridge as single mode for vehicles to cross river.  Regeneration at West Bank and Runcorn Old Town can continue without the construction of the new bridge, but at a slower pace. Larger scale redevelopment sites will not become available.	Construction due to start in 2012 – road open in 2015.
	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>								
		CS15 CS19	HBC, Natural England, Environment Agency, Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust		Not yet known: to be included in the procurement process	1. a new 28 hectare saltmarsh nature reserve 2. additional nature management to Wigg Island	Insufficient funding  Unable to secure a Concessionaire		Phased delivery, majority to be delivered in time for the Operational Phase

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
						3. The Mersey Gateway is to act as a catalyst for wider environmental initiatives in the Upper Mersey Estuary.			
	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>								
<b>Building Schools for the Future</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>								
	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>								
	Educational Establishments	CS7 CS22			Est. Cost: £167 million				
<b>3MG</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	Rail sidings connected to West Coast Main Line	CS8	Private Sector	PI	Private sector and Halton Borough Council  Est. Cost: £4 million	4 new rail sidings to serve the whole of 3MG and increasing capacity of 5 trains per day to 16.	Market conditions.		
	Western Link Road	CS8	Private Sector	PI	Private sector	Ensure	Desired route		

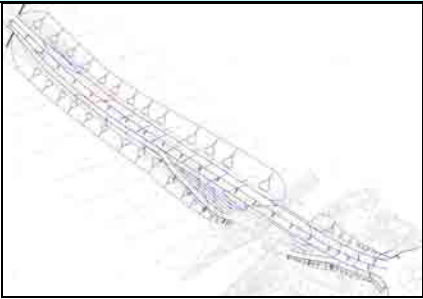

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
	to connect site with A5300				and Halton Borough Council  Est. Cost: £10 million	accessibility to the HBC Fields Site.	for link road cannot be secured.  Market conditions		
<b>South Widnes</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	Boulevard/ improved links across Watkinson Way	CS9	Private Sector		No funding identified				
Widnes Waterfront	Widnes Waterfront - Primary Substation	CS9	Private Sector	P1/2	Private Sector		Cost and timescales for delivery.	Widnes Waterfront - Primary Substation	
<b>West Runcorn</b>	<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>								
	Runcorn Docks - Southern access route	CS10	Private Sector	P2/3	Cost not yet known	Increase access to the Runcorn Docks area to ensure future development.	Costs of providing southern access route are prohibitive.	Quantum of development at Runcorn Docks is limited due to capacity constraints from a single access.	
	District Heating Networks (Runcorn Docks Energy Priority Zones)	CS10	Halton Borough Council and	P1/2/3	The Council and private developers through (re)development proposals	Reduction in carbon emissions	Feasibility and viability	Determine possible funding sources??	
<b>Borough</b>	<b>Physical</b>								

Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
<b>Wide</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>								
Halton Curve	Connecting Chester-Warrington line to Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line	CS14	Merseytravel, Merseyside LAs, Halton BC, CWaC and North Wales LAs.	PI/2	In the order of £12m.	New passenger rail service linking Chester, Helsby, Frodsham, Runcorn, LSP and Lime Street.	Funding not forthcoming from partner organisations.		
	Reinstatement and re-use of the Shell Green (Ditton to Warrington) rail route	CS14	Reinstatement and re-use of the Shell Green (Ditton to Warrington) rail route	P3+	No costs or funding identified.	New passenger service along the Transpennine rail corridor serving South Widnes.	Gaining legal powers, funding and agreement with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies.		Longer term aspiration.
	New rail station in South Widnes	CS14	Halton BC	P3+		Improved gateway into Widnes.	Gaining legal powers, funding and agreement with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies. Also dependent on the delivery of the Sheel Green rail route.	None applicable.	Longer term aspiration.



Area/Project	Infrastructure Provision	Policy link	Lead Agencies	Phasing	Funding/ Cost	Outcome/ Impact	Risks	Possible Interventions / Alternative scenarios	Time Frame
	Pedestrian, cycling and public transport routes e.g. PROW, Greenways and Quality Transport Corridors.	CS14	Halton BC	PI/2/3	Funding will primarily be through the LTP for a range of integrated transport schemes.	These schemes will assist with the increased choice of sustainable low carbon transport.	Lack of funding at least in the shorter term.	Implementation of schemes could continue but at a slower rate.	Ongoing
	Connecting Chester-Warrington line to Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line	CS14	Merseytravel, Merseyside LAs, Halton BC, CWaC and North Wales LAs.	PI/2	In the order of £12m.	New passenger rail service linking Chester, Helsby, Frodsham, Runcorn, LSP and Lime Street.	Funding not forthcoming from partner organisations.		
	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>								
	Creating or improving existing open space	CS6	Halton Borough Council	On-going	Planning contributions	Improvements to local environments.	None identified	Not applicable	
	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>								


**Current Status and Future Aspirations for Infrastructure at Daresbury**

**Daresbury Strategic Site Bridges – INDICATIVE**

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Keckwick Lane <b>*New*</b> Canal Bridge	-	Existing Daresbury SIC to SIC expansion land		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed new bridge for two-way vehicular traffic, including buses</li> </ul>	£750,000 to be funded through DSIC Joint Venture
Keckwick Lane Canal Bridge	Masonry arch over the Bridgewater Canal	Existing Daresbury SIC to SIC expansion land		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be used for pedestrians and cyclists only</li> </ul>	Minimal
Keckwick Lane <b>*NEW*</b> over- bridge	-	Daresbury SIC to Delph Lane West	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New pedestrian and cyclist bridge alongside existing Keckwick Lane vehicular overbridge</li> </ul>	Developer of Delph Lane West site





Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Delph Lane Railway Bridge	Brick arch over the Chester-Manchester line	Delph Lane West and Keckwick Hill housing area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to an all purpose route</li> <li>• Single way</li> <li>• Delph Lane would need realigning in order to incorporate single way working under the bridge to facilitate two-way traffic</li> </ul>	Developer of Delph Lane West site
Delph Lane Canal Bridge	Masonry arch over the Bridgewater Canal	Access over Bridgewater Canal within Keckwick Hill housing area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to accommodate two-way vehicular traffic</li> <li>• Realign Delph Lane to improvement approach to bridge</li> </ul>	Minimal - £150,000

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
George Gleaves Canal Bridge	Listed Brick arch bridge over the Bridgewater Canal	Access over Bridgewater Canal within Keckwick Hill housing area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade for use by pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>	Minimal - £150,000
Norton Level Crossing, Redbrow Lane	Level crossing over the West Coast Main Line	Daresbury Park to Wharford Farm	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve safety for use by pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>	SI06 contribution from original planning permission at Daresbury Park for the developers to provide £300,000 for a footbridge with approach ramps crossing the WCML to replace existing level crossing upon completion of floorspace (B1 (a) or (b)) exceeding 65,000sq m

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Cawleys' Bridge	Bridge over Runcorn arm of the Bridgewater Canal to Preston Brook Marina	Murdishaw to Preston Brook Marina		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial upgrading needed to improve access to Preston Brook Marina and surrounding development area</li> </ul>	Developer of land surrounding Preston Brook Marina
Borrow's Bridge, Redbrow Lane	Single span brick arch over the Runcorn arm of the Bridgewater Canal, providing access from Wharford Farm to Murdishaw	Murdishaw to Wharford Farm		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial upgrading needed to Wharford Farm to facilitate the proposed level of development</li> </ul>	Homes and Communities Agency

<sup>2</sup> Photograph taken from <http://www.canalwalking.co.uk/photograph.php?opt=runcorn&photo=301>

Bridge/ Location	Description	Connecting...	Image	Necessary improvements	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Bogwood Railway Bridge	Three span brick arch supporting the West Coast Main Line	Wharford Farm to Sandymoor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use for emergency access</li> <li>• Side spans could accommodate pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>	
Keckwick Lane Railway Bridge	Brick arch tunnel/underpass under the West Coast Main Line	Sandymoor to Delph Lane West		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial improvements to accommodate buses to give public transport connection to Delph Lane West</li> <li>• Redrow indicate 'Single way signal control underpass'</li> </ul>	Developer of Delph Lane West site

#### **Other essential transport infrastructure at Daresbury Strategic Site**

	Description	Cost	Timing	Responsible body
Internal spine road	Main internal routes running from northern portion of the site (Keckwick Lane) to Delph Lane / A56 junction.	£4- £9 million	Completion of Keckwick Hill / Central Housing Area	All parties
Signalisation and capacity improvements at Delph Lane / A56 junction				

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**Infrastructure recommendations arising from East Runcorn Sustainable Development Study 2010**

	Description	Cost	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body	
	Improvements to Junction 11 on the M56 (in addition to those already required in relation to existing development at Daresbury Park)	£2.5 million	All parties	
	Dualling of A558 between DSIC and Pitts Heath Lane	Turning the A558 into a dual carriageway between Pitts Heath Lane and the current DSIC roundabout	£1-£4.5 million	All parties
	Junction improvements at A558/A56 to increase capacity		All parties	
	Creation of a signal controlled layout at existing Daresbury SIC roundabout		All parties	
	Junction improvements at Pitts Heath Lane/A558 to increase capacity		All parties	
<b>Sustainable transport improvements</b>				
	Bus routing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improvements to routes and frequency of: Access 200, 62 services</li> <li>○ Provision of a Daresbury shuttle service from Runcorn East station</li> <li>○ Improved bus links with nearby towns (Route X30/21 and ...)</li> </ul>	£3 million (bus subsidy)	All parties	
	Incorporating the requirement for Greenway provision into masterplanning and s106 agreements		All parties	
	Pursuing workplace and personal Travel Plans		All parties	

<b>Other transport infrastructure requirements over the lifetime of the Master Plan</b>	<b>Estimated cost of work (taken from Daresbury SIC Master Plan Issues and Options Report, Feb 2008)</b>
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Other transport infrastructure requirements over the lifetime of the Master Plan	Estimated cost of work (taken from Daresbury SIC Master Plan Issues and Options Report, Feb 2008)
Transport interchange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus interchange</li> </ul>	£2.5-£3.9 million
Marina – 200 berths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New mooring points on Bridgewater Canal</li> </ul>	£500,000
Footpaths	£500,000
Bridleways	£200,000

**East Runcorn Key Area of Change bridges – Essential work**

Bridge/ Location	Description	Image	Future use	Estimated Cost of work / Responsible body
Bogwood Bridge (connection from Windmill Hill Avenue to Sandymoor)	Concrete bridge with brick cladding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade to all purpose route to provide bus access into Sandymoor from Norton/Windmill Hill</li> </ul>	<p>Minimal cost as structure is existing</p> <p>Homes and Communities Agency</p>

**Other specific transport infrastructure outside of the Strategic-Site**

- Further access points to Sandymoor
  - Windmill Hill Avenue North
  - Wharford Lane (off Pitts Heath Lane)

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Extensive consultation with infrastructure providers in the Borough revealed that Infrastructure provision is considered sufficient to meet the requirements for the planned development proposed in the Borough over the plan period.
- 7.2 Improved collaborative working with infrastructure providers will ensure that a more proactive approach will be adopted ensuring that the necessary infrastructure to support planned growth will be available when required.
- 7.3 The Council will continue to work with service providers to ensure planned developments can be accommodated within existing networks, or adequate provision can be made to service their requirements. Development will continue to be directed toward areas where infrastructure capacity exists.
- 7.4 Halton Borough Council will continue to work collaboratively with authorities in the Greater Merseyside area to address the issue of sub regional infrastructure ensuring coverage across the area is provided in a timely and effective manner.