HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Third Local Transport Plan for Halton

Transport: Providing for Halton's Needs

2011/12 to 2026/27

LTP3 Executive Summary

Local Transport Plans are required of every transport authority. Halton Borough Council as a Unitary Authority is the transport authority for the area of Halton.

Halton has a substantial transport network that is constantly undergoing improvement. During the period of LTP1 and 2 we have made substantial progress in delivering integrated and sustainable transport for Halton. This includes obtaining legal powers and initial funding for the prestigious Mersey Gateway Project that gained Ministerial approval in December 2010 following the public inquiry in 2009. There was also an announcement in June 2010 that the Government will provide £18.6 million of funding for the Silver Jubilee Bridge Major Maintenance Scheme.

A large measure of our success has been due to the support of our many stakeholders and partners. Our collective ability to deliver improvements was acknowledged by the Government through the Department for Transport, (DfT) which recognises Halton as 'excellent' in the quality of delivery of transport as well as our forward planning. We now need to deliver LTP3 to the same high standard.

Transport planning cannot be considered in isolation as its purpose is to serve society. The preparation of LTP3 therefore has been built upon wider policy documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy.

LTP3, which runs from 2011, presents itself in two parts; the first sets out a strategy for Halton until 2026. The second part lies beneath the long term strategy and it is an Implementation Plan, which sets out in detail how the strategy will be delivered in the first four years.

We know, despite our extensive successes, there is much more to be done. The circumstances in which we find ourselves are very different to those of even a relatively short while ago. There will be much less public finance available, but we must ensure that Halton and the Liverpool City Region's aspirations for regeneration and growth continue to be supported by a high quality, low carbon and efficient transport network.

In January 2011 the Government's Transport White Paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen' was published; the White Paper States:

The Government will be targeting investment in new projects that can help build the dynamic low carbon economy that is essential for our economic prosperity. The White Paper is about providing the early reduction in carbon emissions that local action is best placed to deliver, whilst facilitating the access to local jobs that will boost economic growth.

Halton recognises the Government's main transport objectives of creating economic growth and reducing carbon emissions. In addition to these, Halton has set its own transport goals, these are:

Ensure transport network resilience with particular regard to enhancing cross Mersey linkages, by the implementation of the Mersey Gateway project and the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Ensure the transport system supports the priorities of the Halton's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Liverpool City Region (LCR).

Provide and promote a clean and low carbon transport system.

Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing.

Ensure the transport system allows people to connect easily with employment, services and social activities.

Ensure the transport network supports the economic success of Halton and the LCR by the efficient movement of people and goods.

Maintain our transport and highway assets to a high standard.

Following the Spending Review on 20 October 2010, which included the national totals for future transport grants, Ministers announced on 13th December 2010 the final local transport capital block settlement for 2011/12 to 2012/13, and indicative allocations for 2013/14 to 2014/15 for transport authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities. The settlement for Halton is as follows:

Block – Final Allocations	**2011/12 £000s**	**2012/13 £000s**
Integrated Transport	680	725
Highways Capital Maintenance	1,983*	2,078

- This figure will have to accommodate the loss of £0.219m of grant funding previously available from the DfT for the maintenance of Watkinson Way.

Block – Indicative Allocations	**2013/14 £000s**	**2014/15 £000s**
Integrated Transport	725	1,020
Highways Capital Maintenance	1,960	1,816

In the light of the above, final and indicative transport financial settlements for the following four year implementation programme have been derived. This has been determined in line with national and local transport goals and the Government's priorities to enhance economic growth whilst reducing carbon emissions from transport. The table below gives a summary of the proposed four year implementation programme.

	2011/12 £,000	2012/13 £,000	2013/14 £,000	2014/15 £,000	Total
Transport Integration • Halton Sustainable Transport Network Signage / Branding, Publicity & Promotion • Cycle Secure Parking Lockers	150	160	160	225	£695,000
Measures to Assist Walking • Neighbourhood Centres – Pedestrian Access, signage & Public Realm Improvements • PRoW Improvement Programme	125	130	130	185	£570,000
Measures to Assist Cycling • Neighbourhood Centre Cycle Access, signage & Public Realm Improvements • Halton Cycleway & Greenway Links	100	100	100	140	£440,000
Measures to Assist Buses • Halton Neighbourhood Centres Accessible Bus Stop Improvements • Bus Priority at Junctions • Widnes Road Bus Lane and Stops	160	170	170	240	£740,000
Local Safety Schemes • Residential Area 20mph Zones • Casualty Reduction • Safety Improvement Schemes	125	140	140	180	£585,000
Intelligent Transport Systems • Expansion of VMS • Improve traffic and travel information	20	25	25	50	£120,000
Total	**£680**	**£725**	**£725**	**£1,020**	**£3,150,000**

For transport integration the following types of scheme will be considered for implementation:

- Halton Sustainable Transport Network – Public Rights of Way, Cycleways and Greenways; and
- Cycle Secure Parking Lockers.

For measures to assist walking the following types of scheme will be considered for implementation:

- Pedestrian access, signage & public realm improvements around neighbourhood centres; and
- Implementation of the public rights of way improvement programme.

For measures to assist cycling the following types of scheme will be considered for implementation:

- Neighbourhood centre cycle access, signage and public realm improvements; and
- Further improvement to Halton cycleway and greenway links.

For measures to assist buses the following types of scheme will be considered for implementation:

- Halton Neighbourhood Centres Accessible Bus Stop Improvements;
- Implementation of Widnes Road bus lane and bus stop improvements; and
- Bus priority at junctions

For measures to assist road safety the measures proposed include:

- Residential Area 20mph Zones, this is a programme of works to implement 20mph speed limits in existing residential streets. In Halton, all new estates are having this 20 mph lower speed limit implemented in line with existing practice.

For Intelligent Transport Systems the measures proposed include:

- Expand Variable Message Signing and webcams to cover more of the network. Improvements to traffic signal installations to enhance efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

The following highway maintenance schemes which are greater than £250K in estimated cost are to be funded through the highways capital maintenance block:

- 2011/12 - A557 Weston Point Expressway, Weston Village to A5126 Link – Northbound and Southbound;
- 2012/13 - A557 Widnes Eastern By Pass, Ashley Way to Traffic Light Gyratory – Northbound and Southbound;
- 2013/14 - A557 Weston Point Expressway, Picow Farm Junction to Sandy Lane Bridge – Southbound; and
- 2014/15 - A557 Weston Point Expressway, Weston Village to Bankes Lane – Northbound and Southbound.

In addition to those highway maintenance schemes mentioned above there will be several of less than £250k in cost.

The programme of bridge maintenance activity intended to be funded through the highways capital maintenance block allocation will include several schemes separate from the SJB major maintenance scheme.

The Mersey Gateway Project received planning approval on 20th December 2010. This means that the project team is now able to commence with the preparations for the procurement process.

The planning decision notice has also triggered a number of statutory processes including the Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO's) which will allow the project team to acquire the necessary land required for the construction of the project.

The team will now carry out work comprising of the development and implementation of both the commercial and procurement strategies. It is likely that the procurement process will last approximately two years during which the team enter into a competitive dialogue with potential concessionaires.

DfT have given full approval for 5 year programme of major bridge maintenance activity for the SJB and its approach structures. The first 4 years of SJB Complex Bridge Maintenance Grant availability is as follows:

❖ SJB Complex Major Bridge Maintenance	
2011/12	£4,416m
2012/13	£3,495m
2013/14	£3,711m
2014/15	£2,030m

In its previous LTPs, Halton set itself challenging goals which it has gone a long way to achieving, as reflected in the 'Excellent' status awarded to LTP1 delivery and the development of LTP 2. We now enter a new phase of transport delivery in the face of a much more demanding economic climate and when faced with delivering what is one of the most significant transport projects in the country. We hope to be able to continue to provide not just for Halton's transport needs but also for those of the wider sub-region. This will be done, not by working in isolation, but in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including our communities, the voluntary sector, external agencies and neighbouring authorities.

THE THIRD LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN FOR HALTON

TRANSPORT: PROVIDING FOR HALTON'S NEEDS

1 Introduction

Halton's Approach to Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)

Local Transport Plans are required of every transport authority. Halton Borough Council as a Unitary Authority is the transport authority for the area of Halton. In drawing up its LTP, Halton must reflect the views of a wide range of stakeholders and the public from within and outside its boundaries.

The previous two Local Transport Plans (LTP1 and LTP2 respectively) were prepared by working with our Merseyside partners to ensure that transport policies for Halton and Merseyside were closely aligned. Halton is now recognised as being part of the Liverpool City Region, (LCR). As a result, whilst the LTPs for Halton and Merseyside are again separate documents, they have been prepared jointly as we face similar challenges and opportunities. As transport needs extend across administrative boundaries this will ensure that the needs of the LCR are considered in an integrated manner. In preparing LTP3, Halton has also liaised with other local authorities, including Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington.

LTP3, which runs from 2011, presents itself in two parts; the first sets out a strategy for Halton until 2026. The second part lies beneath the long term strategy and it is an Implementation Plan, which sets out in detail how the strategy will be delivered in the first four years. The role of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will be very important in shaping our policies and plans and ensuring their successful delivery.

A good quality transport system is critical in continuing to build a strong and vibrant Halton. Transport plays a vital role in connecting our everyday activities together, from cycling to school, catching the bus to work or using the train to visit friends and family in neighbouring towns and cities.

Halton has a substantial transport network that is constantly undergoing improvement. Significant public investment matched by the train and bus companies over the past 10 years has provided a modern and extensive public transport network. Examples include a modernised railway station at Runcorn and a newer accessible bus fleet. During the period of LTP1 and 2 we have also implemented quality transport corridors where provision for bus, walking and cycling has been greatly enhanced.

There are improved rail links to other parts of the country, a road network where safety and maintenance are improving along with new infrastructure for freight distribution. A comprehensive 'greenways' network is being delivered that provides for generally car free routes for walking, cycling and sometimes horse riding. Also many streets have had enhanced pedestrian provision.

We have seen the development of the Mersey Gateway Project that gained Ministerial approval in December 2010 following the public inquiry in 2009. This will provide a new road crossing of the River Mersey and free the existing congested Silver Jubilee Bridge for use by local traffic, public transport, walking and cycling. This announcement was preceded by the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review where the

Government announced their intention to provide initial funding of £80m for the Mersey Gateway.

There was also an announcement in June 2010 that the Government will provide £18.6 million of funding for the Silver Jubilee Bridge Major Maintenance Scheme. However, in the light of the subsequent approval of the Mersey Gateway Project not all the works to the Silver Jubilee Bridge may be required and the proposed programme of work may need to be reviewed.

A large measure of our success has been due to the support of our many stakeholders and partners. Our collective ability to deliver improvements was acknowledged by the Government through the Department for Transport, (DfT) which recognises Halton as 'excellent' in the quality of delivery of transport as well as our forward planning. Halton and Merseyside were also awarded ‘Beacon’ status for accessibility in 2008. We now need to deliver LTP3 to the same high standard.

Transport planning cannot be considered in isolation as its purpose is to serve society. The preparation of LTP3 therefore has been built upon wider policy documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Children and Young Peoples Plan. LTP3 also needs to connect into the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR) and the Northwest. This makes it possible for the people of Halton to access a wide range of employment, leisure, education opportunities.

A strong transport network can attract investment, new businesses and jobs to Halton, and can contribute to a stronger and healthier borough, by providing transport links not only to the residents of Halton but also allowing for an increase in the number of visitors to the area.

The Mersey Multi Modal Gateway (3MG) in Widnes is now a reality and will provide up to 5,000 new jobs in the freight and logistics sector. Transport is a key element to emerging commercial sites such as the 3MG, where new road access has been provided along with proposed new rail sidings. Road improvements have also been implemented for Widnes Waterfront and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. These sites are bringing significant new employment opportunities for Halton.

In preparing LTP3 it was important that Halton took account not only of regional and national policies, but also of European initiatives, all of which ultimately determine what happens in Halton. They include a whole range of areas such as education, social services, the economy and environment, regeneration, health, planning, safety and leisure.

In this document, we set out some of the challenges and opportunities that face us as we look ahead to 2026. Building on our past success, we now need to plan for the next 16 years.

This time period coincides with Halton’s Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Both documents aim to ensure transport and land use planning is fully integrated. We know, despite our extensive successes, there is much more to be done. The circumstances in which we find ourselves are very different to those of even a relatively short while ago.

There will be much less public finance available, but we must ensure that Halton and the Liverpool City Region’s aspirations for regeneration and growth continue to be supported by a high quality, low carbon and efficient transport network.

2 Setting our goals

In July 2009 the then Government established five national priorities for transport, these were:

Addressing climate change, by reducing carbon emissions from transport

Supporting economic regeneration by helping competitiveness and productivity

Ensuring equality of opportunity

Protecting Health, Safety and Security

Promoting Quality of Life and the Natural Environment.

These transport priorities remain consistent with the current Government policy, however, they have emphasised the importance of the first two goals in the January 2011 Transport White Paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen'. This White Paper States:

The Government will be targeting investment in new projects that can help build the dynamic low carbon economy that is essential for our economic prosperity. The White Paper is about providing the early reduction in carbon emissions that local action is best placed to deliver, whilst facilitating the access to local jobs that will boost economic growth.

Modern and efficient transport systems can also support a wide range of other priorities in urban areas including healthier communities, supporting the local economy and providing a high quality urban environment. The DfT's 2009 report, 'The Future of Urban Transport' highlights the prospect of a 'triple win' if good quality transport is provided:

'The challenge for decisions makers at all levels is to find ways of improving the outcomes for economy, health and urban environment simultaneously: a 'triple win' outcome.

This report was a response to the Cabinet Office's, 'An Analysis of Urban Transport', which supported the integration of transport into wider economic and spatial planning issues.

Again, the current Government's policy on transport is in line with broad policy for transport of the previous Government.

We support this approach as it reflects our long standing belief that safe and efficient transport is essential to Halton's health, economic and social life, and to its future well being. We shall highlight later in this section what we believe should be particular local priorities.

The Government has signalled its intention that the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) will be revoked and will no longer form part of statutory development plans in the North West.. Work on it's intended replacement the Regional Strategy (RS2010) has been discontinued and in its place the NWDA and the NW Regional Leaders Board are preparing 'Future North West, Our Shared Priorities'. Halton has given due consideration to the content of this emerging document whilst preparing its LTP.

Local and Sub Regional Priorities

The Liverpool City Region, which includes Halton, has set as its Vision:

'To establish our status as a thriving international City Region by 2030'

The LCR has adopted a Strategic Framework which has four core priorities which Halton shares:

Jobs: - To transform the City Region's prospects by increasing the scale of economic activity by raising and growing business levels and securing jobs. This will be achieved through the 'four transformational' activities relating to:

1. Building a low carbon economy

2. Developing the City Region's assets including the proposed Mersey Gateway, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, and the extensive logistics industry that forms the 'Liverpool SuperPort' including Halton's Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) and the 'Liverpool SuperPort' which incorporates the Mersey Gateway Port.

3. Building on Capital of Culture to build and develop the Culture and Visitor Economy

4. Creating a Knowledge-based economy

Worklessness & Skills: - To radically redraw the deprivation map in the City Region, halving the number of LCR wards ranked in the UK's most deprived 10% wards.

Health: - To develop collaboration to reduce health inequalities and address the challenges these present across the City Region.

Efficiency: To develop a sustainable structure of collaboration and shared services across the City Region.

Transport is seen as a key enabling measure within these priorities.

In Halton and across Merseyside we are also working with partners within the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to ensure we place transport at the heart of the Sustainable Community Strategies and support the key priorities at local level. All LSPs have at least one direct transport target and we have shown in our work with the LSP how effective transport can help deliver a wide range of other priorities, ranging from addressing obesity to encouraging greater levels of learning.

These are a major challenge and responsibility. Halton's LTP along with that for Merseyside are therefore vital elements in helping achieve the City Region's ambitions. There is therefore a large measure of common ground within the two LTPs.

For Halton we have set out the following goals to guide our third Plan. These are consistent with, and add to the national transport goals.

Our Goals

Ensure transport network resilience with particular regard to enhancing cross Mersey linkages, by the implementation of the Mersey Gateway project and the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Ensure the transport system supports the priorities of the Halton's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Liverpool City Region (LCR).

Provide and promote a clean and low carbon transport system.

Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing.

Ensure the transport system allows people to connect easily with employment, services and social activities.

Ensure the transport network supports the economic success of Halton and the LCR by the efficient movement of people and goods.

Maintain our transport and highway assets to a high standard.

3 What do we mean by 'Transport: Providing for Halton's needs?'

In transport terms, the overriding challenges for the Government lie around creating the conditions for economic growth whilst addressing carbon reductions and climate change.

'The Future of Urban Transport' produced by the Department for Transport in November 2009 set out the importance of good urban transport and how it could have triple benefits across health, regeneration and urban environments. In Halton, we believe the impacts of good urban transport are more wide ranging, but in order to achieve such gains we need our strategy and policies to work to deliver on multiple objectives. Any one measure, policy or intervention must work to deliver results on as many headline themes as possible.

The world we have to plan for is likely to be very different to the one we have now. By 2020 we must plan for a 34% reduction in carbon levels compared with those of 1990 and an 80% reduction by 2050, with consideration to be given to the following emerging issues:

The possibility of increased climate change incidents;
Rising fuel prices, perhaps as a result of more limited future production;
The impact of new technologies in areas such as vehicle fuel and communications;
The possibility of new communications systems leading to a reduced need to travel or significantly changing travel patterns;
The possibility of imposed or planned different food distribution patterns; and
A growing health crisis as a result of rising levels of obesity and lack of activity.

At a local level, Halton also faces many specific issues. Whilst a great deal of progress has been made there is much more to do. This will be particularly challenging as less funding will be available for transport in, at least, the near future.

Halton has had a good recent track record in providing urban regeneration after years of economic decline and the loss of employment in traditional industries. The creation of new jobs has gone hand in hand with major new investments in:

- Halton's town centres including Widnes Shopping Park and the Brindley theatre;
- The Widnes Waterfront development;
- The 3MG site; and
- The Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre.

Next to Halton's boundary there is the expanding Liverpool John Lennon Airport. These successes should be seen as the forerunner to the next phase in the development of a dynamic borough well prepared to thrive in the new future we face. We need to understand that change is within our power and we in Halton can shape our own destiny.

Transport is not an end in itself; it needs to serve the wider needs of society. The specific transport challenges and opportunities are detailed in Section 6 and many of these are in line with national transport issues, these include:

The need to support economic growth whilst tackling climate change;
Rising car ownership and usage;
The need for more joined up land use and transport planning;
The health impacts of transport are not fully acknowledged;
Low levels of walking and cycling;
The cost of bus transport;

Rail capacity; and not least
Finance will be limited.

Halton also has significant socio-economic issues to address including:

Lower than average levels of educational attainment and skills;
Higher than average levels of unemployment;
A high level of dependency on state benefits;
Many areas of the borough have very high levels of social deprivation; and
The health of people in Halton is generally worse than the average for England.

These challenges must inspire constant review and questioning of strategies underpinning economic revitalisation, renewal and regeneration. Regeneration must seek to benefit everyone.

Halton's goals for LTP3 are detailed in Section 2 and include issues that are of international, national, regional and local significance,

It is by pursuing these goals that Halton will provide a transport system that will support its needs.

4 Planning for the future

It is recognised that the changes required to the transport system and indeed the way in which the system is used, cannot all be achieved in the first four years of implementation of this LTP.

Limitations on availability of funding, staff resources, planning considerations and indeed the challenges involved in winning the 'hearts and minds' of the public, require the development of a much longer term transport strategy. The LTP3 strategy has therefore been developed up to the year 2026 in order to be consistent with timescales of Halton's land use plan. This LTP has also been carefully developed to ensure that it is consistent with and supportive of the transport plans of Merseyside and other adjoining authorities, and is seen as the next essential stage in the achievement of a transport system that is fit for purpose. This purpose is expressed in terms of a Long Term Vision, which is:

"To achieve sustainable, inclusive, accessible and fuel efficient transport systems that improve the quality of life for people living in Halton by sustaining economic growth and regeneration, whilst ensuring we address climate change, by reducing carbon emissions from transport."

5. What We Know

This chapter gives a brief overview of statistical information relating to Halton's economy and transport needs. Full information is provided in the supporting Evidence Base document prepared by Mott McDonald..

Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants increased substantially after July 2008 and reached a peak in January 2010 (rising roughly 90% in that time). This trajectory broadly followed that of both the North West and the UK, though it peaked higher in Halton. The number of claimants has subsided noticeably since March 2010 (by roughly 33%), though levels are still considerably higher than prior to July 2008. This reflection of the contraction in the economy is likely to place challenges on local transport networks and systems. Ensuring that transport supports access to employment centres is likely to have renewed importance.

House prices fell by 16% across England & Wales and by 20% in Halton between April 2008 and July 2009. Since mid 2009 and throughout 2010 however, there have been signs of house prices beginning to recover.

Between 1989 and 2002 Halton experienced a 6.4% fall in population. However, since 2006, Halton's population has slowly begun to increase to around 119,000, approaching levels recorded in 2000.

The proportion of Halton's population above retirement age has increased by 2.3% since 1998. An ageing population will place further challenges on local public transport systems and concessionary travel.

Full-time gross weekly pay in Halton has increased largely in line with that of the North West and Great Britain. However, pay in Halton has consistently been below that of the North West and Great Britain median, by approximately 5% and 11% respectively. Accordingly, there is potentially less income to spend on transport.

A larger proportion (16.8%) of Halton's working age population has no formal qualifications in comparison to the North West (13.8%) and Great Britain (12.3%). Less than a fifth (18.3%) of the working age population in Halton possess 'NVQ4 and above' qualifications, whereas 27% and 29.9% of the North West and Great Britain population respectively hold such qualifications. Ensuring that lack of public transport provision does not act as a barrier to pursuing further education is essential to the development of a higher skilled workforce.

Halton's leisure and tourism industry now competes with neighbouring boroughs in terms of economic delivery, employing some 3,000 full-time equivalent jobs and contributing over £200m to the local economy, making it one of the Borough's major employers and economic drivers. Areas astride the new bridge corridor have opened up opportunities for key complementary investment in leisure facilities and employment including an ice skating rink and smaller leisure and retail developments. Transport must play a key role in responding to the needs for travel to leisure and retail facilities.

Halton has high levels of social deprivation which tend to have particular transport characteristics associated with them, namely low car ownership, low travel horizons, and poor accessibility to key services and opportunities. An accessible and inclusive transport system is essential to facilitate mobility and social inclusion for such areas.

Transport has the potential to be both a positive and negative influence on people's health. Fossil fuel powered modes can emit levels of pollution that are detrimental to air

quality and health. Equally, regular walking and cycling can reduce people's risk of illness and disease. A key health issue facing the Borough and indeed the UK as a whole is childhood obesity. Halton has a higher proportion of children classified as obese and overweight than in the North West and England.

In 2008 road transport contributed 15.6% of total CO2 emissions in Halton; this is less than the UK average level of 18.8%. However, it has a relatively high per capita level of CO2 emissions from road transport.

Air quality concerns in Halton have led to the declaration of two Air Quality Management Areas in Widnes town centre. This is believed to be due to the volume of traffic accessing the town centre. Air Quality Action Plans will therefore need to be implemented to address pollution.

In terms of road casualty reduction, Halton has made greater progress than that made nationally. By 2009, it had the lowest levels of casualties in over 20 years. However, current casualty rates remain higher than the national average and therefore the good progress needs to be maintained.

The road system in Halton generally has the capacity to cope with demand. The notable exceptions are the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the Weston Point Expressway approach to M56 Junction 12. At these locations, the factor of difference in journey time between the morning peak and free flow conditions exceeds a factor of three. The construction of the Mersey Gateway will address these issues.

There has been a steady increase in usage of railway stations in Halton. The greatest increase has been at Runcorn station where usage has increased by approximately 50% between 2004/05 and 2008/09.

In 2010, a detailed travel survey involving Halton residents was undertaken to better understand the travel choices that they make. Notable trends identified included the extent to which the train is used for long distance travel, and the significant number of car journeys (around 60%) that are made for trips under 5km. For travel to work trips of under 2km, 43% are made by car, where presumably many of these trips could be made by walking or cycling. A high proportion of trips to school are also made by car. However, in recent years there has been a small decrease in trips made by car and public transport to schools and an increase in trips by walking.

DfT vehicle licensing statistics show that the number of cars licensed in Halton has increased by 27% between 2001 and 2008, but recently ownership levels have stabilised. In terms of vehicle kilometres travelled in Halton, this flow has increased by 27% between 1993 and 2009 compared with 23% for the North West as a whole. This increase in road traffic across the Liverpool City Region corresponds with long-term trends of rising affluence, car ownership, trip-making and longer commuting distances.

Halton has low levels of cycling, with only 1% of trips made by bicycle. However, this reflects regional and national levels, for example only 1% of people are recorded as cycling across all trips that are undertaken in Merseyside.

6. The challenges and opportunities

The aspirations for economic growth that have been identified bring with them major implications for transport requirements in Halton and the City Region. However, planning and providing for transport will in turn be dependent upon what is happening in other policy areas.

We must endeavour to understand the underlying changes that may be taking place within the region. Examples are;

> As the economy becomes more knowledge-based, workers' propensity to travel longer distances to work may be likely to increase. Therefore, surprisingly, whilst the City Region may secure significant growth in employment, there is a risk that adjacent areas will benefit from the resulting housing demand.
> Equally, if the skills of the workforce are not improved then job creation within the LCR may be reliant upon drawing in workers from outside causing the increase in longer distance commuting and increasing disadvantage in the centre of the City Region.
> Likewise, employment creation at locations that are not well served by public transport, such as Deeside Industrial Park and Omega could begin to reverse traditional travel patterns. More widely, new business models (such as remote working, and 'double – hubbing' – that is having more than one formal workplace with a single employer) are likely to give rise to still more complicated travel-to-work patterns.

Taking this into account, our assessment of the current situation allied to forecasts for the longer term leads to the following broad conclusions.

i) We have been successful in our delivery of LTP2, and are meeting most of our targets.

ii) Congestion is not yet generally a critical issue, although there are some problems at specific times of day or at certain locations. There are, however, ongoing congestion issues to address which will need enhanced highway infrastructure. For example, the SJB remains a serious congestion problem despite slightly lower traffic flows as a result of the economic downturn. In order to address this problem the construction of the Mersey Gateway project will be of the upmost importance. The maintenance of the SJB also remains a major issue even with the Mersey Gateway project in place.

iii) Our transport infrastructure is a valuable asset and must be maintained to high standards, and appropriate measures taken to ensure mitigation of adverse weather conditions, for instance.

iv) Halton's economy has been growing, but there has been an uneven distribution of increasing prosperity, leading to:

- Continued increase in car trips and travel distances. This has been exacerbated by the continuing fall in the cost of motoring compared particularly to the cost of using the bus.
- Past planning and housing policies have also led to a reliance on car for access to key services and opportunities and increased commuting over longer distances.
- There is also the problem of providing more housing in areas with no services or facilities or with poor public transport to and from them. The integration of land use planning and transport as a result becomes ever more important.

- This growth in car use and distance travelled by the mobility rich, leads to more congestion, road casualties and pollution and leads to negative consequences that bear most heavily in disadvantaged areas.
- Conversely, for these communities, high public transport costs and poor transport options lead to short travel horizons, and reduced choice.

v) There has been continued growth in rail use partly as a result of increased longer distance commuting but growth is seen across all income bands, leading to capacity constraints at certain key locations.

vi) There has been a continuing reduction in bus use across Merseyside, but there has been a recent slight increase in Halton.

vii) Health concerns must shape future transport policies given, for example, the threat to public health and the economy of the Liverpool City Region from a projected rise in obesity (60% of adults by 2050). Greater car dependency will only make this problem worse.

viii) Over the past five years we have seen some increase in cycle usage but a decrease in walking. Linking health and transport concerns suggests clear common goals around cycling and walking to address obesity and health, assist with creating a low carbon economy and provide cheap and convenient access to jobs and services.

ix) The ports and logistics centres of the Liverpool City Region plus Liverpool John Lennon Airport have continued to grow leading to:-
- Growing tourism sector;
- The potential growth of strategic freight distribution across the LCR as a result of the 3MG; and
- Continued increase in general freight movement, which includes particularly strong growth in usage of vans.

x) There is clear support from many quarters for supporting the role of transport in shaping many aspects of the life of the City Region.

xi) Across the world, Sustainable Cities are economically successful cities. Halton being part of the LCR will benefit from this association.

Arising from our assessment of the current situation, allied to forecasts for the longer term, we believe there are a number of key messages that inform our future direction with LTP3. These are:

Halton must continue its efforts to secure the Mersey Gateway because of the substantial benefits it can bring to the borough and sub-region in terms of reduced congestion, economic regeneration, environmental improvement and sustainable transport.

We have a large and valuable asset that must be maintained.

Not to adapt and change is not an option. We must support continuing regeneration, reduce our carbon levels and promote a healthy lifestyle.

At least in the short term we must do this with less funding, as we will not have the same levels of government transport funding in LTP3 as we have had to date. We will need to be smarter and more creative with the funding we have.

We have a unique opportunity to use LTP3 as a catalyst to create a sustainable borough and successful City Region.

Halton will want to continue to regenerate its town centres.

Halton will want to build on the recent successes of investment in Widnes town centre and apply the same principles to Runcorn Town Centre, but this will put further pressure on the transport network.

Economic regeneration brings pressures on the highway network due to increased traffic growth and on the need to provide good quality public transport and improve air quality; this will necessitate changes and additions to critical sections of the highway.
It will want to ensure the successful development and implementation of major developments including 3MG, HBC Fields, Runcorn Docks, Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre and Building Schools for the Future.
Increased demand for trips will necessitate more investigation and provision of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), Smartcard technology, Demand Responsive Transport and parking management.
Halton has developed the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy; this will inform the strategy for Halton's LTP3.
There is the opportunity to receive extra funding through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
Sustainable modes of travel (public transport, cycling and walking) must be promoted and supported by the LSP partner agencies to allow the Borough and Merseyside to contribute to Government priorities for Transport and thus achieve a healthier, safer and more prosperous environment for all.
Halton is seeking to deliver improvements to railway infrastructure and rail services; examples include improvements to stations at Hough Green, Widnes, Runcorn and Runcorn East; working with Network Rail to improve frequency of rail services and; working with Merseytravel to improve cross boundary rail services.

We are now able to define the key challenges and opportunities we must address.

Table One – Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
• New Government policy • Funding is being substantially reduced • Changes in Liverpool City Region • Changes to regional structures and the introduction of LEPs • New legislation e.g. flood management • Ensuring road traffic casualty rates do not deteriorate in the light of reduced funding • Greater need to work with the voluntary sector • Need to engage with partners and share information • Supporting economic regeneration and growth whilst reducing carbon levels • Significant pressures of potential rising car ownership and car usage • Increasing levels of long distance	• Progress the development of the Mersey Gateway Project which has gained the necessary legal powers for construction and deliver the benefits offered by the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy • Working with the LEP to develop transport priorities • New funding opportunities e.g. the Local Sustainable Transport Fund • Widespread support for effective transport can provide a catalyst and competitive edge • Agreement with all Local Authorities to the 'Choice of Travel' Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD), which provides a framework for promoting sustainable travel choices • Integration with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to ensure better land use and transport integration • Completion of schemes such as the SJB major maintenance scheme and Halton

commuting into the region • Rising freight demand on the roads, particularly vans • In the longer term rising demand will impact on business efficiency and environment • Continuing lack of integration of land use and location choice for services and employment, leading to inaccessible sites for those without access to a car and unnecessary levels of road traffic and parking requirements • Challenges in securing consideration and provision for sustainable modes in the design of new developments • Reducing the negative transport impacts on disadvantaged communities • Health impacts of transport not fully acknowledged. Increasing levels of cycling and walking is essential against current low levels of use. • Parental choice - Access to schools leading to high levels of car use.	Curve • Improved park and ride at rail stations • The use of major developments to promote sustainable travel, for example the possible new railway station to serve Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus • Potential for bus quality partnerships and introduction of smartcard technology • To work with our LSP partners to identify accessibility issues and to promote joint working and funding of initiatives that provides improved access to initiatives • High numbers of short trips offer opportunities for shift to sustainable modes linked to a transformational public health programme via walking and cycling • A sustainable travel city region can generate investment and jobs • A clear opportunity for lower cost sustainable solutions and Smarter Choices
• Image of bus remains a barrier to future growth • Costs of bus transport • Rail capacity may act as a constraint on future growth • Using evidence to justify actions, together with clear prioritisation will be critical	• New technologies offer potential to cut travel and reduce carbon levels and poor air quality e.g. working from home • The Rail network is a major asset and rail improvements such as the Northern Hub, rail electrification and Halton curve provide potential new and more frequent services that in turn will encourage greater use of this mode of travel • The growing recognition of the climate change agenda and the opportunities afforded by it for sustainable travel initiatives, green travel plans, workplace travel planning, biofuels, electric vehicle technology and the wider green technology market

Halton's Goals
Halton's Challenges

New Government policy

Funding is being substantially reduced

Changes in Liverpool City Region

Changes to regional structures and the introduction of LEPs

New legislation e.g. flood management

Greater need to work with the voluntary sector

Need to engage with partners and share information

Supporting economic regeneration and growth whilst reducing carbon levels

Significant pressures of potential rising car ownership and car usage

Increasing levels of long distance commuting into the region

Rising freight demand on the roads, particularly vans

In the longer term rising demand will impact on business efficiency and environment

Halton's Goals
Halton's Challenges

Continuing lack of integration of land use and location choice for services and employment, leading to inaccessible sites for those without access to a car and unnecessary levels of road trafic and parking requirements

Challenges in securing consideration and provision for sustainable modes in the design of new developments

Reducing the negative transport impacts on disadvantaged communities

Health impacts of transport not fully acknowledged. Increasing levels of cycling and walking is essential against current low levels of use.

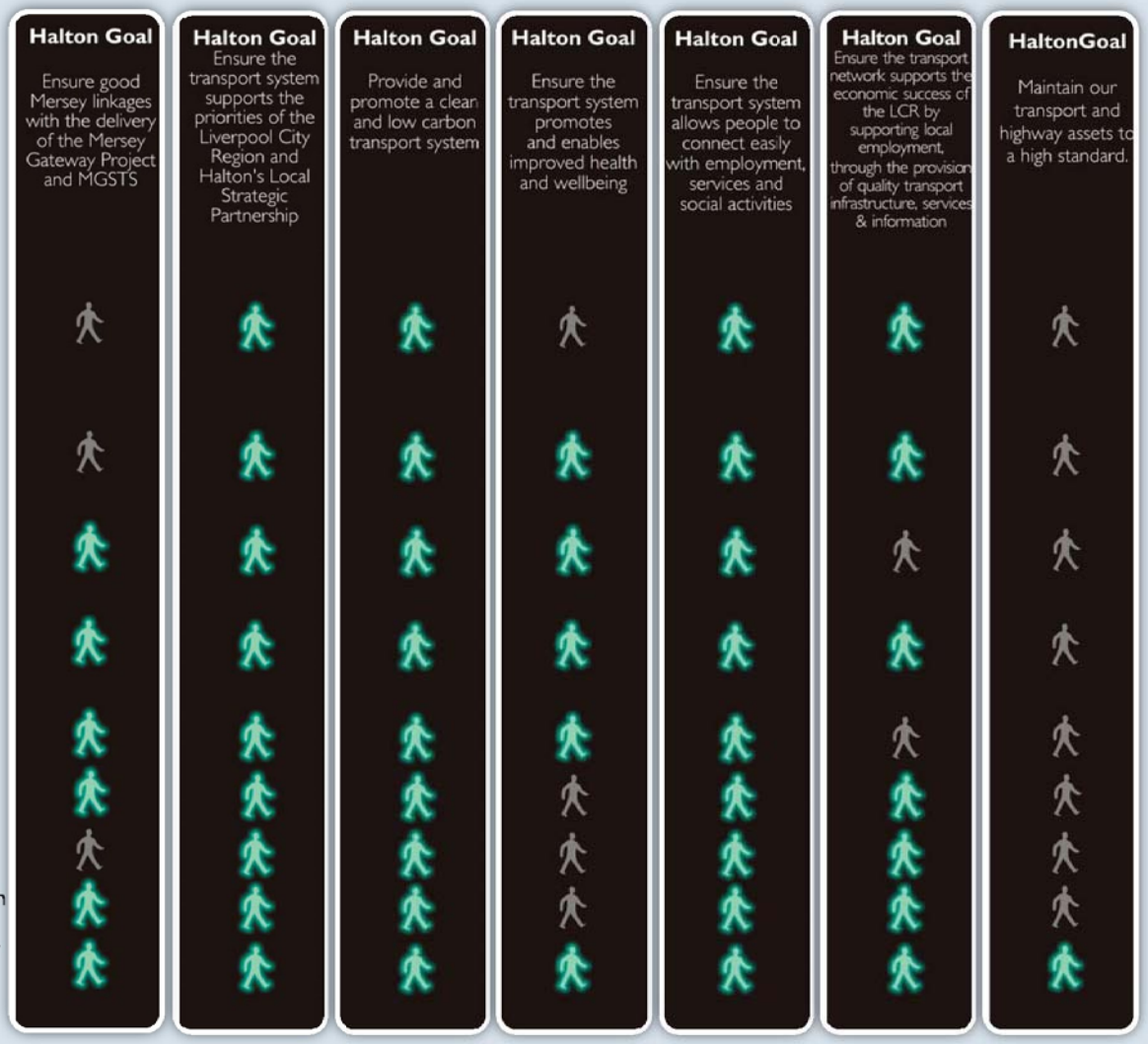
Parental choice - Access to schools leading to high levels car use.

Image of bus remains a barrier to future growth

Costs of public transport

Rail capacity may act as a constraint on future growth

Using evidence to justify actions, together with clear prioritisation will be critical



Halton's Goals
Halton's Opportunities

Progress the development of the Mersey Gateway Project which has gained the necessary legal powers for construction and deliver the benefits offered by the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy

Working with the LEP to develop transport priorities

New funding opportunities e.g. the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

Widespread support for effective transport can provide a catalyst and competitive edge

Agreement with all Local Authorities to the 'Choice of Travel' Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD), which provides a framework for promoting sustainable travel choices

Integration with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to ensure better land use and transport integration

Completion of schemes such as the SJB major maintenance scheme and Halton Curve

Improved park and ride at rail stations

The use of major developments to promote sustainable travel, for example the possible new railway station to serve Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus

Halton's Goals
Halton's Opportunities

Potential for bus quality partnerships and introduction of smartcard technology

To work with our LSP partners to identify accessibility issues and to promote joint working and funding of initiatives that provides improved access to initiatives

High numbers of short trips offer opportunities for shift to sustainable modes linked to a transformational public health programme via walking and cycling

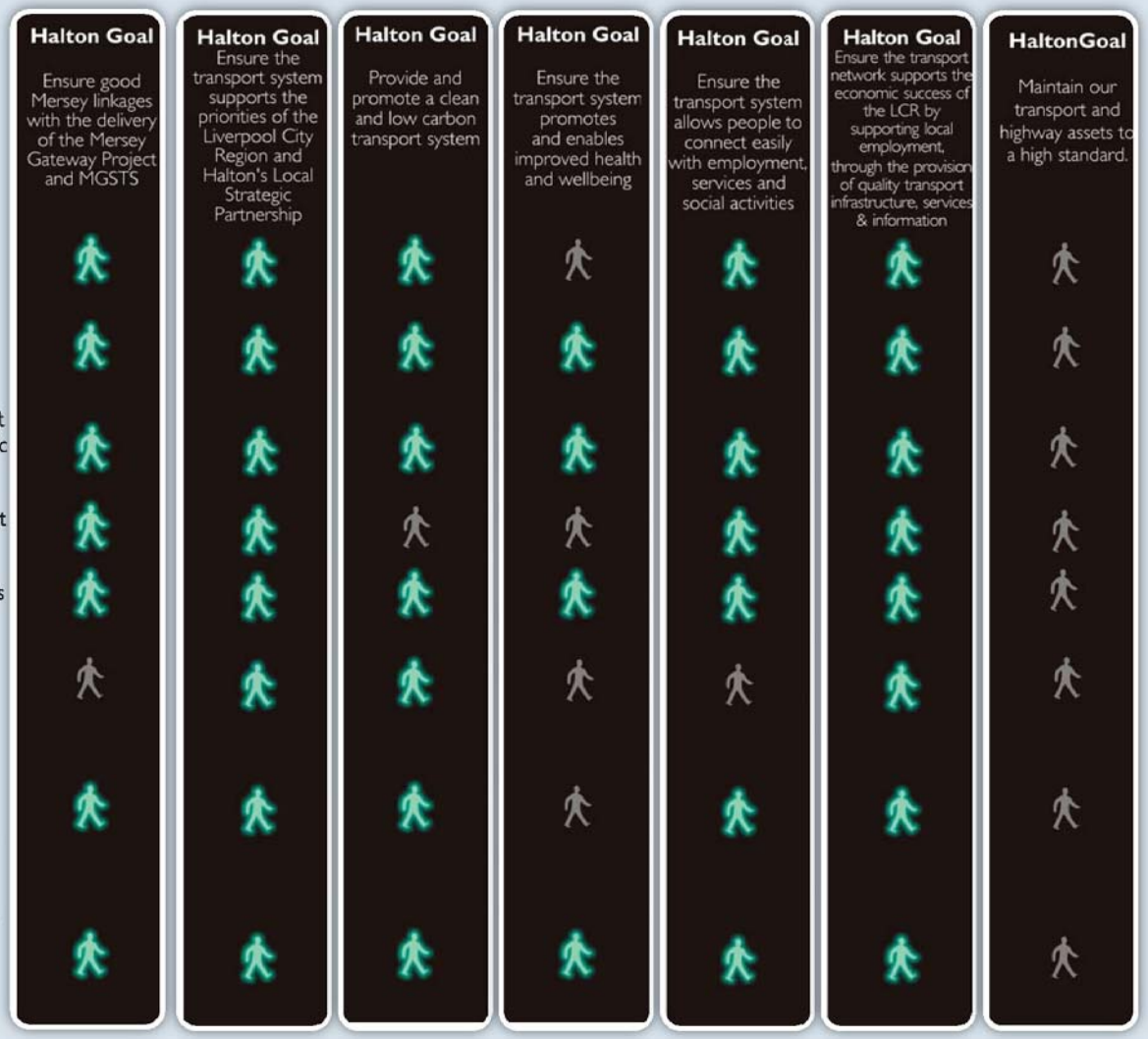
A sustainable travel city region can generate investment and jobs

A clear opportunity for lower cost sustainable solutions and Smarter Choices

New technologies offer potential to cut travel and reduce carbon levels and poor air quality e.g. working from home

The Rail network is a major asset and rail improvements such as the Northern Hub, rail electrification and Halton curve provide potential new and more frequent services that in turn will encourage greater use of this mode of travel

The growing recognition of the climate change agenda and the opportunities afforded by it for sustainable travel initiatives, green travel plans, workplace travel planning, biofuels, electric vehicle technology and the wider green technology market



7 National, regional & local transport policy and links to other policy areas

Since Halton began developing its LTP3 there have been major changes at both national and regional level, following the General Election in May 2010.

Government's overarching transport priorities

The Government's priorities for transport are to help deliver economic growth and tackle climate change

Transport Commitments

The Government has set out the following commitments for transport:

- The Government believes that modern transport infrastructure is essential for a dynamic and entrepreneurial economy, as well as to improve well-being and quality of life. We need to make the transport sector greener and more sustainable, with tougher emission standards and support for new transport technologies;
- It will mandate a national recharging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles;
- It will grant longer rail franchises in order to give operators the incentive to invest in the improvements passengers want like better services, better stations, longer trains and better rolling stock;
- It will reform the way decisions are made on which transport projects to prioritise, so that the benefits of low carbon proposals (including light rail schemes) are fully recognised;
- It will make Network Rail more accountable to its customers;
- It will establish a high speed rail network as part of its programme of measures to fulfil our joint ambitions for creating a low carbon economy. Its vision is of a truly national high speed rail network for the whole of Britain. Given financial constraints, it believes that we will have to achieve this in phases.
- It supports Crossrail and further electrification of the rail network;
- It will turn the rail regulator into a powerful passenger champion;
- It will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities;
- It is committed to fair pricing for rail travel;
- It will work towards the introduction of a new system of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) road user charging to ensure a fairer arrangement for UK hauliers;
- It will stop Central Government funding for new fixed speed cameras and switch to more effective ways of making our roads safer, including authorising 'drugalyser' technology; and
- It will tackle rogue private sector wheel clampers.

These initial commitments were followed by the DfT Business Plan of November 2010.

Department for Transport (DfT) Business Plan 2011 – 2015

In November 2010 the DfT produced its business plan for 2011 to 2015. Whilst this covers a four year period it will be refreshed annually. It states:

'Our vision is for a transport system that is an engine for economic growth but one that is also greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities. By improving the links that help to move goods and people around, and by targeting investment in new projects that promote green growth, the Government can help to build the balanced, dynamic and low-carbon economy that is essential for our future prosperity.'

Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Transport

The Government is proposing a series of Structural Reform Plans designed to hold departments to account for the implementation of Government commitments. The Structural Reform Priorities for transport are as follows:

- Deliver the Coalition's commitments on high speed rail;
- Secure our railways for the future;
- Encourage sustainable local travel;
- Tackle carbon and congestion on our roads; and
- Promote sustainable aviation.

The Structural Reform Priority for transport states:
Encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion.

Other major responsibilities include:

- Change DfT and its agencies to deliver excellent service;
- Contribute to a successful 2012 Olympics;
- Promote the marine sector; and
- Ensure the security of transport industries.

White Paper, 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen'

In January 2011 the DfT launched its White Paper, 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen'. The White Paper focuses on the Government's transport priorities of economic growth and carbon reduction. Whilst longer distance trips are acknowledged the Paper concentrates on shorter distance trips where action at a local level is emphasised. Bidding guidance for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) was published alongside the White Paper.

A summary of the White Paper is as follows:

Introduction

Two thirds of all journeys are less than five miles and many of these trips could be easily cycled, walked or undertaken by public transport. For longer distance journeys and those taken in rural areas, the use of the private car is often the most suitable modal choice.

The reduction of carbon impact for longer journeys needs to be addressed and rail, particularly high speed rail has a critical role to play.

The biggest opportunities for encouraging sustainable travel lie in short, local journeys; therefore the empowering of local authorities and others in the community is critical. The White Paper describes how localism and the Big Society will work for transport.

Smaller-scale sustainable transport schemes can offer high value for money, encourage growth, reduce carbon emissions, address public health and well-being as well as reducing road accidents.

Partnership working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises sector and local communities can make an important contribution to local economies and individual's quality of life by enabling access to employment and key services.

The Government will be targeting investment in new projects that can help build the dynamic low carbon economy that is essential for our economic prosperity. The White Paper is about providing the early reduction in carbon emissions that local action is best placed to deliver, whilst facilitating the access to local jobs that will boost economic growth.

The Government is committed to making car travel greener and therefore, is supporting the development of the early market in electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles. In the longer term it is seen that the progressive electrification of passenger cars will play an important role in decarbonising transport. This will be supported by policies to increase generation capacity and decarbonise the grid. Eliminating the use of passenger cars altogether would be the wrong approach.

Rail projects such as high speed rail and Crossrail will also provide commuters and intercity travellers with attractive new options instead of the car.

Alongside technological change to address carbon output the issue of congestion needs to be tackled. It is short-distance, local trips where the biggest opportunities for people to make more sustainable transport choices exist. It is at a local level where most can be done and local authorities can tailor the specific needs of their own communities.

Local Transport – choices and implications

Local transport faces a sustainability challenge:

- Excess delay is costing our urban economies £11 billion per annum;
- Carbon emissions impose a cost to society equivalent to £4 billion per annum;
- The costs to the health of our communities are up to £25 billion per annum due to physical inactivity, air quality and noise; and
- Road traffic accidents cost £9 billion per annum.

Yet there are ways in which sustainable transport can enable growth, for instance by improving access to work, to shops and other services, at the same time as cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. Certain interventions can also make a significant contribution to public health and quality of life.

Economic growth is one of our biggest challenges and transport's role in this is hugely important. Transport is also a major employer in its own right as there are some 1.7 million transport related jobs. Businesses can also benefit from allowing flexible working that reduces employee travel; evidence suggests that home workers take fewer sick days and can be up to 30% more productive.

What is more, research has identified that high street turnover increases by 5% and 15% following investment in schemes to improve public realm and that people who travel to the shops on foot, by cycle or by public transport spend as much, if not more than those who travel by car.

Resilience to extreme weather, especially in the face of changing climate patterns is also important. The Winter Resilience Review found that, even for an average winter in England, the economic and social costs of disruption are of the order of £1 billion over an average winter.

Transport is important to the access to employment and key services. Studies have revealed that 2 out of 5 jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job and 1 in 4 jobseekers said the cost of transport is a significant issue. Also, 6% of 16 to 24 year olds turn down training or further education because of transport problems. The Government will continue to provide data for local authorities to undertake accessibility planning, focusing particularly on disadvantaged groups or areas with poor access to key services.

The Government is committed to cut emissions by at least 80% by 2050 and transport needs to be largely decarbonised by then. In 2011 the Government expects to publish a Carbon Plan to set out, department by department, policies and deadlines to ensure real action on climate change.

Domestic transport accounts for 21% of the UK's total CO2 emissions, and more than half of these are from the private car. Trips of less than 10 miles account for 40% of the UK's transport carbon emissions.

Lack of physical activity and poor physical fitness can contribute to obesity, cardiovascular disease, strokes, diabetes and some cancers, as well as to poorer mental well being. Walking and cycling offers an easy way for people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives.

While Britain's road safety record is very good, we cannot afford to be complacent when there are, on average, more than 5 deaths and 60 serious injuries per day. The value of preventing all the accidents that were reported in 2009 is estimated at £16 billion per annum.

Air quality has improved significantly in recent decades, but levels of pollution in some areas remain harmful to health. Air pollution from man made particulate matter is estimated to cut life expectancy by six months, averaged across the UK population. This equates to health costs as high as £19 billion per year.

Sustainable transport can also bring wider environmental benefits such as: reducing the heat island effect in towns, improving air quality, provide space for sustainable urban drainage and increase biodiversity.

The mode of travel varies depending on the distance or the journey purpose, examples are as follows:

- Walking is the most common mode for trips of less than one mile (79%). As trip length increases, walking becomes less prevalent, accounting for approximately one third of 1 to 2 mile trips and just 5% of 2 to 5 mile trips;
- Cycling is at its highest where trips are 1 to 2 miles long (3%) and 2 to 5 miles long (2%);
- Bus use is at its highest (12%) where trips are 2 to 5 miles in length;
- Rail becomes increasingly popular for longer trips, ranging from 4% of trips of 5 to 10 miles in length to 12% of trips of 25 miles and over; and
- Cars/vans are used for the majority of trips of more than one mile in length, 56% of trips of 1 to 2 miles and 77% of trips of 2 to 5 miles.

Decentralising power – enabling local delivery

The Government wants to end the era of top-down government by providing devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local authorities and communities. Progress has been made in decentralising power in key areas:

- Decentralising economic power;

- Decentralising planning;
- Simplifying transport funding; and
- Improving transparency and local accountability.

These are proposed as follows:

- Decentralising economic power:
- The Regional Growth Fund (RGF) will provide £1.4 billion over three years. It is available to support transport infrastructure which, as part of a wider investment, unlocks specific business investments;
- The new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); and
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) will support key infrastructure and capital projects that drive economic growth.

- Decentralising land use planning:
- A new National Planning Policy Framework will transform national planning policy into a streamlined framework that will bring social, economic and environmental priorities in one place.

- Improving transparency and local accountability:
- Central Government will no longer intervene in the way local authorities review progress on local transport;
- However, local authorities will be required to provide data on transport to compare performance with others.

- Simplifying local transport funding into four main streams:
- £1.5 billion for major schemes (more than £5 million capital);
- More than £3 billion (capital) for local highway maintenance over four years;
- £1.3 billion (capital) for the Integrated Transport Block (ITB); and
- £560 million of capital and revenue funding over four years for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

The Government also recognises that some initiatives need a single national approach and these include: Bikeability, smart ticketing, road safety strategy and traffic signs policy.

Details of proposed Local Transport funding 2011/12 to 2014/15 are given below:

Spend Item £m	**2011/12**	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**
Committed major schemes	418	160	29	10
New Major schemes	0	204	306	417
Maintenance	806	779	750	707
Integrated Transport Block	300	320	320	450
LSTF	80	140	160	180
of which revenue	*50*	*100*	*100*	*100*
of which capital	*30*	*40*	*60*	*80*
Total	**1,604**	**1,603**	**1,565**	**1,764**

In addition to this transport funding there will be the RGF that will provide £1.4 billion over three years. The fund is available to support transport infrastructure which as part of a wider investment unlocks specific business investments. It is expected that LEPs will form a view on the strategic transport priorities which best support sustainable economic

growth in their areas. LEPs will play a role in co-ordinating across areas and communities in bidding for the RGF.

Enabling sustainable transport choices

Packages of measures, designed to complement one another, often work well in encouraging people to make sustainable travel choices. The effectiveness of this approach was explored by the Sustainable Travel Towns (STTs) over a five year period between 2004 and 2009. The interventions were high value for money, resulting in reductions in congestion and carbon dioxide emissions, and increases in physical activity. STTs explored the effectiveness of Smarter Choice measures.

Smarter Choices are packages of measures tailored to each area, comprising both 'soft' measures such as marketing and information to encourage people to use sustainable transport modes, and 'hard' measures such as improvements to infrastructure and services.

The following results were observed as a result of STTs:

- A reduction in the number of car driver trips (down by 8%) and car driver distance (down by 5% to 7%) per resident;
- The overall reduction in traffic was 2% and 8% in inner areas;
- Bus and other public transport trips per resident increased in two out of three towns and by 14% overall;
- Cycle trips per resident increased by 26% overall; and
- Walking trips per resident increased by 13% across the towns.

Comparing these results with available data on national trends suggested that such outcomes were not observed in similar towns without these sustainable travel measures in place.

The Government believes that statutory LTPs remain the best means of delivering sustainable transport however, transport planning needs to be integrated with development plan preparation. As part of this planning process the Government expect local authorities to look at small scale transport improvements, which can be high value for money. Sustainable transport solutions are best developed at the early stages of planning to allow greater opportunity for behavioural change.

Active travel

Cycling and walking present an easy and cheap way for people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives. As well as the health benefits, they offer other benefits when they replace vehicle trips, including reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion. Improving the walking and cycling environment can dramatically improve local accessibility with positive benefits for growth and the local economy.

The Department of Health's Public White Paper also emphasises this, stating that active travel and physical activity need to become the norm in communities.

Evaluation of the DfT's Cycling Demonstration Towns (CDTs) initiative shows that the health benefits of increasing cycling are considerable; outweighing the costs of the programme threefold. The initiative invested the equivalent of £10 per citizen per year on measures to promote cycling, including both infrastructure and smarter measures. These measures included cycle training for children and adults, Bike It/Go Ride officers in schools, the installation of secure cycle parking, safe and well maintained cycle routes with improved signage and maps for cyclists. Evaluation of the first six CDTs indicated an

average increase in cycling levels of 27% and in schools, where towns invested most in children cycling, cycling to school more than doubled.

Evidence from Europe is that the popularity of electric assisted bikes is increasing rapidly. With their longer range compared to normal bikes, e-bikes could make cycling more viable in hilly and more sparsely populated areas.

The journey to school is a significant contributor to local congestion particularly in the morning peak. Sustainable, active travel for journeys to school therefore, makes a major contribution to supporting the economy and reducing carbon emissions. In addition, there is a growing volume of evidence supporting the link between physical activity and improved cognitive performance and academic achievement.

Bikeability is the 'Cycling Proficiency for the 21st Century' and the DfT will support this until 2015. Local authorities will be encouraged to integrate Bikeability fully into their local transport planning.

Links to School is a programme run by and administered by Sustrans, a national charity, and provides safe walking and cycling routes to schools. From 2012 onwards, local authorities may choose to support Links to Schools through their bids to the LSTF.

The Government is encouraging improved cycle facilities at rail stations, this includes providing £4 million of funding for four flagship Bike'n'Ride train operating companies.

As well as considering packages of sustainable transport measures, consideration should be given to not travelling at all. Information and communications technology now provides the means to reduce or remove the need to travel in a number of situations. Benefits can include;

- Reduced congestion;
- Reduced carbon emissions;
- Business benefits such as improved productivity, staff retention and recruitment, as well as reduced travel costs and overheads;
- Strengthened communities through increased home working; and
- Improvements to quality of life.

Making public transport more attractive

The public transport offer needs to be made more attractive if it is to provide a viable alternative to car travel.

The 'end to end' journey concept is about making the entire journey experience, from door to door, better for passengers. Factors that can contribute to this are listed as follows:

- Timetable integration;
- Rail franchising;
- Rail station travel plans;
- Real time information;
- Bus stop siting;
- Walking as part of the end to end journey experience; and
- Cycling as part of the end to end journey experience.

Smart tickets are tickets held electronically on a microchip. Integrated tickets (which may or may not be smart) facilitate more seamless travel through enabling passengers to use

the same ticket on the services of different operators, and/or modes of transport without having to buy separate tickets. The advantages of these can include:

- Increased public transport patronage;
- Less car use;
- Reduced congestion and improved air quality;
- Ticket retailing more passenger friendly;
- Improved boarding speeds;
- Improved reliability; and
- A reduction in fraud where smart tickets are used.

The Government is committed to delivering, with operators and public sector bodies, the infrastructure to enable most public transport journeys to be undertaken using smart ticketing technology by December 2014.

Partnership working is an important aspect of local transport. The Government is therefore encouraging local transport authorities to consider and choose some form of partnership working with bus operators.

The Government has decided that bus subsidy should remain, reflecting its importance in supporting services. However, as part of the Spending Review, the Government announced that the subsidy paid to bus operators would be reduced by 20% from 2012/13. The DfT will work with bus operators and local government to look at smarter ways of delivering this subsidy.

Low carbon buses emit around 30% less greenhouse gas emissions than standard diesel buses and use around a third less fuel. These are mainly hybrid (diesel/electric) buses, but include some electric buses.

Concessionary travel schemes enable those less able to afford bus services to use them. The Government committed in the 2010 Spending Review to protect key benefits for older people, such as free bus travel. In England, the statutory minimum that Travel Concessions Authorities must offer is free off-peak travel on local buses.

The rail network in England is funded primarily by the DfT through franchise agreements with Train Operating Companies for the provision of rail services and through Network Grant to Network Rail for infrastructure provision. Some of the funding for local rail services in major cities is channelled through Passenger Transport Executives (PTE) and in the case of Merseytravel the local PTE, it receives its funding through a block grant.

Local authorities have the power to fund improvements to rail services and facilities, such as new stations, interchanges and improved access. Some of this funding may be a contribution to a Government sponsored initiative such as Access for All and the National Stations Improvement Programme.

Local authorities have access to a variety of funding sources which can help fund rail related schemes; these include the LSTF, RGF and ITB fund. Rail schemes are also eligible for funding through the Major Transport Scheme budget but no new applications for funding through this mechanism were accepted at the start of LTP3.

Where commercial bus services are not viable, local authorities may tender for subsidised socially important services, but it may be that other more flexible services provided by the council or the voluntary sector are more sustainable. Local authorities will be able to bid to the LSTF for time-limited funding to kick-start new community transport services.

The Government has been continuing its support of Community Rail in which local people are enabled to have an input into the planning and development of local rail services and infrastructure. They have also used local resources to improve stations and make use of redundant railway building for community purposes.

The DfT seeks to ensure that those who travel have sufficient and appropriate information to use particular modes of transport, as well as the confidence and basic skills to do so. The DfT is looking at how to encourage more travel training schemes across the country and how to accredit these schemes.

Managing traffic to reduce carbon emissions and tackle congestion

The Government is committed to supporting the market in electric, and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Through the Plugged-In Places scheme the Government are providing match funding to roll-out electric vehicle recharging infrastructure in eight places throughout the UK.

Car sharing; giving someone a lift, can help to alleviate the problems of congestion and carbon emissions. Pay-as-you-go car clubs provide members with quick and easy access to a car. Cars are located at designated parking bays in the local area and members can book them on-line. Vehicles can then be accessed using a smart card. Research suggests car clubs are on average 33% more efficient in terms of CO2 emissions and each car can potentially displace more than 20 private vehicles.

The way local roads are designed and managed is critical to how they are used and how they look. There are several aspects to this, with fuller guidance set out in ‘Manual for Streets’ and elsewhere. The vast majority of these measures work best if introduced together, in a co-ordinated way.

Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) is increasingly the preferred Intelligent Transport System Platform for towns and cities in the UK to help traffic flow more smoothly. It allows a number of traffic management technologies to be integrated at relatively low cost.

Local authorities set their own parking policies and charges to meet the needs of the local area. Changes to Planning Policy Guidance 13 amendment in January 2011 further free local authorities to adopt the right policies for their area. The need for parking in city centres may be reduced through well placed and well used Park and Ride schemes. For new residential developments, a parking strategy can include setting minimum and maximum levels of parking places, depending on what is right for the area. To create the parking provision for electric vehicles, local authorities are encouraged to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new developments, where this does not affect the development’s overall viability. Local authorities also may wish to set aside some residential car parking spaces solely for club vehicles.

Pedestrian and public realm improvement schemes can have a positive effect on a town centre’s vitality and viability. As previously described; pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users provide as much if not more spending power than car users. Therefore, the quality of the town centre is much more important than the ability to drive past or park near shops.

Traffic signs are currently either prescribed through the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) or are authorised by the Secretary of State. The DfT is reviewing the traffic signs policy with a view to significantly deregulate traffic signs, providing more freedom for local authorities to reduce the number of signs they put up and to develop innovate traffic management solutions. It will recommend proposals to

significantly streamline the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, reforming the way consultation is carried out. For some commonly signed restrictions, this will remove the need for an Order completely. The review will also provide measures to help to improve the environment, such as providing new advice on auditing and removing unnecessary signs, and reduce the regulatory requirement for highway authorities to directly illuminate some of their traffic signs. The review will be completed by the end of May 2011.

The Government is encouraging local authorities to actively reduce carbon emissions from their street lighting. This could be achieved by reducing the operating hours of street lighting, dimming lighting levels or investing in newer more energy efficient equipment.

Low Emission Zones can form part of an effective action plan to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions. This can be achieved by the use of cleaner vehicles, limiting access to certain vehicle types or reducing the number of vehicles overall.

The DfT currently holds responsibility for classifying every road in England as an A road, a B road or a minor road. The Government believes that local authorities are best placed to make these decisions and the DfT will therefore give them the responsibility for classification in their area.

Congestion is seen as a shared problem for local authorities, businesses and Government, and requires shared solutions. The expectation is that the LEPs should identify their strategic transport priorities across their areas. These could, in particular, contribute to the next Spending Review period, after 2015.

The Highways Agency manages an Influencing Travel Behaviour programme, working with local authorities and the private sector to produce voluntary area travel plans. The benefits of these plans include a reduction in congestion on both local and national roads, as well as a reduction in carbon emissions.

The DfT will be publishing a new strategic framework for road safety in spring 2011. Speed cameras should not be seen as the primary tool to improve road safety and interventions need to be targeted to address the underlying safety problems. The DfT wants to encourage local authorities to consider the full range of local safety interventions of which speed cameras are but one tool amongst many which could be used.

Local authorities have implemented engineering solutions to successfully improve road safety by making alterations to local roads including signing, lining and surface changes, as well as revised layouts and traffic calming. Local authorities have the power to introduce 20 mph speed limit zones. The evidence suggests that in residential streets, and in town centres where there is likely to be a conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, carefully implemented 20 mph zones can contribute to an improvement in road safety.

Effective road safety is not, however, solely a matter of engineering; education, training and publicity also have a central role to play. An example of good practice has been Kerbcraft training which has been proven to improve the awareness and skills of child pedestrians, equipping them to cross roads more safely and confidently.

Local transport in society

Partnership working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) and local communities can make an important contribution to local economies and to individual's quality of life. Schemes such as demand responsive minibuses or wheels to work schemes in rural areas can deliver a lifeline to those who would not ordinarily have regular access to transport, enabling access to employment and key local services.

Under the LSTF, the Government will look favourably on those proposals from local authorities that demonstrate strong partnerships with VCSEs in the design and delivery of local transport solutions. This approach will ensure VCSEs can make a full contribution to delivering tailored transport solutions that they are best placed to do.

The Community Right to Challenge in the Localism Bill will enable voluntary and community bodies, as well as local authority employees and parish councils, to express interest in running a local authority service. The authority will need to consider this, and where it accepts it, run a procurement exercise for the service in which the challenging organisation can bid.

New Strategic Framework for Road Safety (DfT)

This is under development and is planned to be published by April 2011.

The Big Society and Localism Bill

The Prime Minister announced the Big Society initiative in July 2010. It signalled the Government's intentions to develop their 'localism' agenda, by devolving as much as possible to the local level. The Government have also signalled their intention to examine where shared services can be delivered in ways that save costs and improve efficiency.

In December 2010 the Localism Bill was first published with the the main measures of the Bill set out under four headings:

- New freedoms and flexibilities for local government;
- New rights and powers for communities and individuals;
- Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective; and
- Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally.

Of particular relevance to transport the Bill gives communities the right to challenge and bid for local services such as community transport, refer to Transport White Paper summary above. The Bill also covers the abolition of regional strategies and the greater flexibility for communities in the planning system.

Transport and Health Resource Delivering Healthy Local Transport Plans

In January 2011 the DfT and the Department of Health produced a paper, 'Delivering Healthy Local Transport Plans' and provides advice on the benefits of more health conscious transport. These include:

- Measures to improve health invariably help reduce congestion, improve air quality; increase accessibility; reduce illness related absenteeism at work; and reduce risk of injury;
- Low levels of physical activity through car use in place of active travel modes contributes to the burden of chronic disease through higher levels of heart disease, stroke, cancers, diabetes and other illnesses including those resulting from obesity;
- Walking and cycling are the easiest ways for most people to increase their physical activity levels. Use of public transport can also increase levels of physical activity due to the use of active travel to reach public transport interchanges;
- Adults who cycle regularly have a longer life expectancy than those who don't;
- At school age active travel is one of the main contributors to achieving the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations for physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight;
- Reducing traffic speeds in urban areas to less than 30mph directly reduces casualties and increases opportunities for active travel; and

- Infrastructure measures to benefit the active travel modes result in an average of a 13:1 Benefit to Cost Ratio.

The key health risks associated with active transport includes an increased risk of collision with other transport modes. This LTP is designed to further remove or manage this risk in line with the hierarchy of measures as set out in the DfT publication 'Cycle Infrastructure Design':

- Providing road calming features intended to protect pedestrians and cyclists in sensitive locations (i.e. in proximity to schools, nurseries and recreational areas);
- Providing safe, visible crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Raising awareness to pedestrians, cyclists and children (passive and active signing);
- Providing cycle training for children and adults; and
- Encouraging a transfer away from private vehicle use, reducing the level of exposure and frequency of risk from road traffic collision, vehicle emissions, noise and community severance.

For further details of health related transport issues, refer to the Health Impact Assessment of this LTP3.

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS)

The Department for Transport (DfT) published the document 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System' in 2007 and was the response to the Eddington Study and the Stern Review. DaSTS followed on from this and was published by the DfT in 2008 and set out the previous Government's approach to strategic transport planning for 2014 and beyond. The document outlines the five goals/priorities for transport (described in Section 2) and focuses on the challenge of delivering strong economic growth while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Future of Urban Transport

This paper was published by the DfT in 2009 and described how the success of cities and urban areas may be maximised through an efficient and sustainable transport system. The paper highlights why cities and large towns are so important and why effective transport systems are essential to making them successful. It considers how these transport systems affect different areas; economy, health and urban environment, both negatively and positively. It then proposes solutions which can produce positive outcomes to all of them: triple win outcomes.

Planning for Sustainable Travel

This advisory paper was produced by the Commission for Integrated Transport in 2009 and describes how land use planning can help meet carbon reduction targets.

New regional and sub regional arrangements

The Coalition Government sees regional bodies as being remote from the communities they serve and inconsistent with their localism agenda. Funding has been withdrawn for the North West Leaders Forum (4NW) and the North West Development Agency (NWDA) will be wound down from 2012. With the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West adopted in 2008, work had commenced on the (integrated) Regional Strategy (RS2010). Both the NWDA and 4NW are keen to ensure that the research and work carried out for RS2010 is not lost and a slimmed down document is being prepared as a non-statutory strategic framework for the North West entitled, 'Future North West, Our Shared Priorities'. It sets out the following aspirations:

a The quality of life for the people of the North West will be excellent and the area will become more prosperous, more equitable and low carbon. By 2030 it will be a better place to live, learn, work, visit and invest in, with;

b Job opportunities for all in a highly productive, well-skilled, internationally competitive, knowledge-based and resource-efficient economy which is adapting to climate change and living within environmental limits; and
c High levels of health and social wellbeing, minimal deprivation and child poverty, good housing and excellent physical and digital connectivity.

Furthermore, and specific to the Liverpool City Region its states that:
Liverpool will be a world-class cultural city, a major driver of economic growth and an international gateway and the international potential of the Liverpool- Manchester corridor will have been developed.

The Liverpool City Region

The Liverpool City Region is made up of the five Merseyside local authorities of Liverpool, St Helens, Wirral, Knowsley and Sefton plus Halton. The Cabinet is made up of the leaders of these six authorities plus the Chair of the Mersey Partnership, (TMP).

Partnership at a city region level complements and adds value to the work of local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. It means that the city region is better positioned to attract investment and resources, ensure its residents have the skills to get the jobs that are created and that it is able to influence decisions made by Government and its agencies on issues such as housing, transport and waste.
The city region has already worked with Government to agree a number of actions set out in our Multi Area Agreement which was signed in September 2009 and the city region is currently developing proposals for a Local Enterprise Partnership which will shape specific city region activity in line with its defined priorities.

The Multi Area Agreement

Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) were established by the previous Government as the prime mechanism for supporting sub-regional working on economic issues. MAAs aimed to give local authorities more freedom from Whitehall in return for pledging a local, partnership approach to boosting economic growth and tackling deprivation and financial inequalities. The MAA was formally signed with Government in September 2009. MAAs have since been superseded and as such will fall under the remit of the newly established Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

The Government signalled its intention to create Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) in June 2010. They are designed to help tackle issues including planning and housing, local transport and infrastructure, employment, enterprise transition to a low carbon economy, small business start ups and tourism. The city region has submitted its outline proposals for a LEP and the proposed functions are as follows:

(a) To promote private sector schemes
(b) To vet bids for the Regional Growth Fund
(c) Enterprise and business support
(d) Asset management
(e) Tourism
(f) Inward investment
(g) Employment and skills
(h) Innovation and science and
(i) European funding

The LEP will be private sector led and a Board established, initially in shadow form. It is likely to comprise of prominent business leaders, representatives for small business, local authority leaders and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. It is

proposed that the shadow LEP Board would work closely with the City Region Cabinet and would be supported by the LCR thematic Boards for Transport, Employment and Skills, Housing and Planning, Environment and Health, in addition to support from the private and third sectors. The fine detail as to the role, function and make up of the LEP partnerships is still being clarified, but further detail is expected during 2011. The LEP's will be responsible for bids to the Regional Growth Fund, (RGF).

Links to Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is inextricably linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Halton. The LTP supports the delivery of the SCS by providing links to all five of the SCS themes. An effective transport system will be extremely valuable to all of us as it will enable us to provide a fully inclusive place to live, work and visit. The SCS has five priorities and it is described below how transport impacts upon these priorities.

A Healthy Halton

Investment in effective public transport links, cycle networks and enhancement of public footpaths and Public Rights of Way (PROW) access, allows all residents of Halton and its visitors the opportunity to increase their level of fitness and engage in sport and leisure pursuits. A comprehensive sustainable transport system will also address wider issues, for instance, enabling resident's easier access to health centres and hospitals by working in partnership with other agencies to provide a regular bus service. By taking advantage of these opportunities residents of Halton can improve their own health with little or no financial implications, and can actually create the opportunity to change their lifestyles.

Halton's Urban Renewal

The creation of employment parks and town centre development requires strong transport links to enable them to thrive and grow. Initiatives such as the Mersey Gateway project will enable the Borough to attract more visitors and bring investment and commercial opportunities to the area, increasing Halton's overall competiveness. The 3MG site is assisting in not only creating thousands of jobs in the Borough, but also helping to reduce carbon emissions by creating a shift in transport from road to rail. Rail station improvements have enhanced the journey experience of both leisure and business commuters to the area. By working inclusively with relevant departments, Halton can ensure excellent connectivity to places and spaces within the Borough and the wider Liverpool City Region.

Children and Young People in Halton.

To enable Children and Young people in Halton to achieve their potential, it is required that transport plays a key role in their daily routine. Whether it's cycling to school, walking to the local park or getting on the bus with friends to watch a film, transport is there connecting it together. Children and young people who have experienced independent travelling are more likely to achieve greater success in later life as they have a greater confidence to "get up and go" to new places, attend job interviews and training courses in other towns.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

To create an economically prosperous Borough that encourages investment, transport has a major role to play in many ways. It enables residents to reach employment and educational facilities, which in turn makes it possible for them to develop and deliver the knowledge and skills required by local businesses. Transport schemes such as the Mersey Gateway Project which will reduce congestion, will attract new business to the area as journey times will be reduced and journey time reliability will be improved.

A Safer Halton

With the assistance of dedicated Road Safety Grant, Halton together with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils, the Highways Agency, Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Courts Services formed the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CRSP). Its purpose was to deliver a Cheshire wide integrated programme of strategic road safety, education, training and publicity initiatives. One of its primary functions is to manage and maintain speed and red light camera operations.

Due to the withdrawal of the specific Road Safety Grants by the Government, the current partnership was wound up on 31 March 2011.

As of Spring 2011, the future form of any joint working was still to be finalised. However, all casualty reduction work will continue to be informed and targeted on the basis of accident data collected by Cheshire Constabulary and Halton has comfortably met government-set casualty reduction targets for 2010. Ongoing road traffic accident and casualty reduction work will continue to be the aim of all the work undertaken, utilising a range of traditional approaches and ground-braking initiatives aimed at the most at-risk road users in our Borough, namely car occupants, children and motorcyclists.

In recent years, Halton has operated a travel trainer service for SEN (special educational needs) children with travel confidence issues, giving trainees the ability to travel independently to school, college and ultimately work.

There are still locations in the Borough where the adoption of specific engineering solutions can pay dividends in terms of casualty reduction, and annual casualty location analysis updates the list and informs decisions on where Local Safety Scheme funds should be invested for the best incident reduction return on the investment.

Halton Core Strategy

The LTP is very closely linked to the Core Strategy for the Borough and the two documents have been developed alongside each other. The Core Strategy sets out the how the Borough will develop over the next 15 years, covering the period to 2026. It includes planning policies for key areas of the Borough such as 3MG, West Runcorn and Daresbury where there is an opportunity for change or where a policy approach is needed to stimulate development. More general policies for different types of development in the Borough are included to provide the overarching framework to guide future development in Halton. Included within these more general policies are policies on the topics of Sustainable Transport, The Mersey Gateway Project and Liverpool John Lennon Airport. The content of these policies align with the LTP as the delivery of some key transport schemes and infrastructure supporting the growth of the Borough will be dependent on strategies and projects contained within the LTP.

Construction Halton

Halton Borough Council has identified that the forecast scale of development and other construction-related activity in the area offers significant potential for moving people from benefits into work. Flagship projects in Halton such as the Mersey Gateway, highway infrastructure works relating to 3MG and the Building Schools for the Future programme have been identified as offering significant training, employment and supply chain opportunities.

The Construction Halton (CH) project seeks to secure training opportunities to help address issues of worklessness and deprivation within parts of the Borough on flagship development schemes such as these, alongside other major construction related Council tenders and as part of planning agreement for major private sector proposals.

The CH approach to delivering construction related employment and training opportunities to disadvantaged people in the borough are to:

- use procurement processes and planning to effect change by embedding employment/training related obligation clauses into public sector contracts and planning agreements to ensure that suppliers, developers, and subsequently contractors address targeted recruitment and training issues;
- engage with employers, suppliers and developers to ensure that recruitment and training provision is more relevant and demand-led – thereby providing the industry with a supply of suitably qualified labour;
- provide tailored pre-recruitment support and routeways that will enable local unemployed/workless people to access jobs within the industry – through greater integration and more flexible use of mainstream programmes and funding; and
- encourage and assist Halton based SME's to access opportunities arising from the new planned development activity in the area.

The CH function will sit within the Adult Learning and Skills Division of the Council and will work closely with the Halton Employment Partnership (HEP); as the HEP already has a model for engaging with employers and sourcing relevant training and matching people to opportunities.

8 Local Transport Plan 3 Consultation Results

Phase 1

The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) entered the first phase of a 2 stage consultation process in April 2010. A wide public consultation was held which was available in formats varying from the traditional method of paper documents to an interactive link via the Halton Borough Council website and Facebook page. A consultation event at the Stobart Stadium Halton for stakeholders, local residents and partner agencies also took place, with 28 people in attendance.

Overall we received 176 completed questionnaires and combined with the consultation event over 200 people were involved in prioritising the Goals, Challenges and Opportunities within the Local Transport Plan. The outcomes were collated and there was a resounding response that recognised that "finances are going to be tight" but this should not diminish the Borough's or the Liverpool City Region aspirations and that the LTP will help provide the means by which these aspirations can be achieved.

This document provides an overview of the first phase of consultation, however more details about the LTP 3 can be found at www.halton.gov.uk/ltp3

Electronic and Public Consultation Responses

Changes to transport over the last 10 years

Taking a longer term view of transport in Halton, more than half of the respondents thought that there had been an improvement in the availability of travel information. Respondents also thought that there were improvements in the number and quality walking and cycling routes available. Road congestion is perceived to be worse and this is a key area of concern for Halton Borough Council and partner organisations, which would largely be addressed with the implementation of the Mersey Gateway.

Halton's Transport Systems

The people of Halton want to keep their high quality transport infrastructure and are keen to play their part in a cleaner, greener environment through low carbon forms of transport. However, it is clearly evident from the results that the key priority is to ensure local people can reach work/education/training/services and social activities without restriction.

Transport that enables the residents of Halton to be healthier

There was overwhelming support for initiatives that help reduce road casualties, following by a desire to ensure ample access to both cycling and walking facilities within the borough. Working with partner organisations such as the PCT and targeting disadvantaged communities, it was acknowledged that transport has a key role to play in improving the long term health of Halton's residents.

Transport that gets us to work/education/training

Respondents were keen to see partnership working in the planning and delivery of a transport service that is accessible to Halton's residents when they need it. It was also recognised that we need to work in partnership to help deliver the employment strategy, and ensure that all residents of Halton can take full advantage of the work, education, training and leisure opportunities available to them.

Halton's Transport System as part of the Liverpool City Region and Halton Strategic Partnership Plan

Overwhelmingly, the respondents to the consultation wanted Halton's transport system to contribute to the wellbeing of its citizens. However, it was also recognised that it must support both the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy with its policy options ensuring the most appropriate initiatives are developed.

Promotion of Clean and Low Carbon forms of Transport

There is, along with the rest of the Northwest region room for improvement in air quality. The main concern is still pollution from congestion particularly in terms of commuting or the taking of children to school.

Transport that contributes to the Economic success of the Liverpool City Region

There was strong recognition of the importance of Halton Borough Council and its partners gain approval for, and successfully delivering the new Mersey crossing (Mersey Gateway). We also need to work closely with our neighbouring Cheshire and Merseyside partners to develop a park and ride strategy and the facilities to allow the residents of Halton to take full advantage of the retail and leisure opportunities in the vicinity.

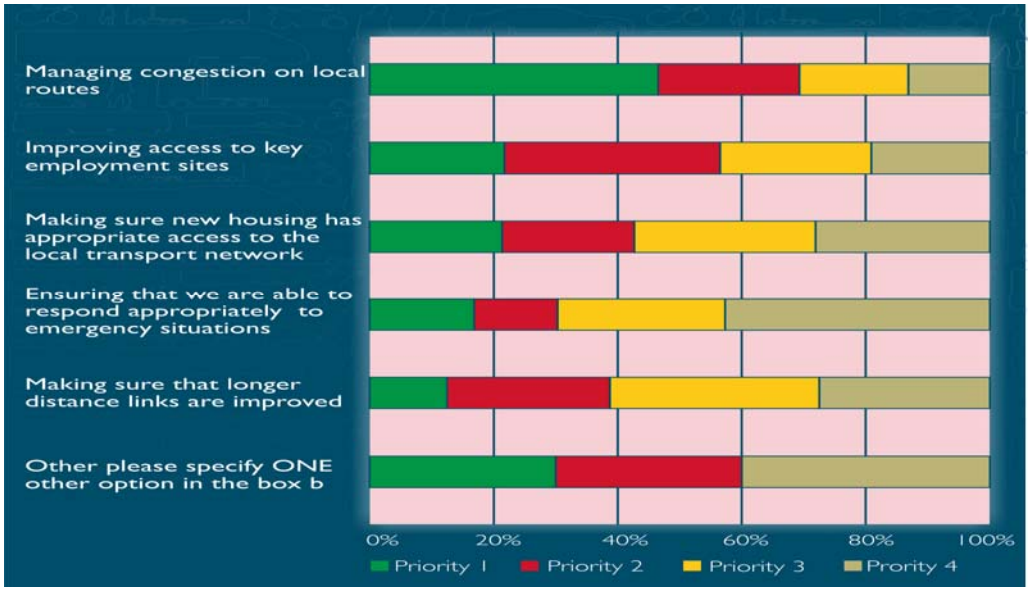
Halton's Transport Assets are well maintained

With the last winter in mind, participants felt that Halton Borough Council should ensure that we are able to respond to emergency situations such as adverse weather conditions. It was also thought we should make certain that we have adequate funding available for the maintenance of our transport network to avoid future deterioration.

Stakeholder's comments

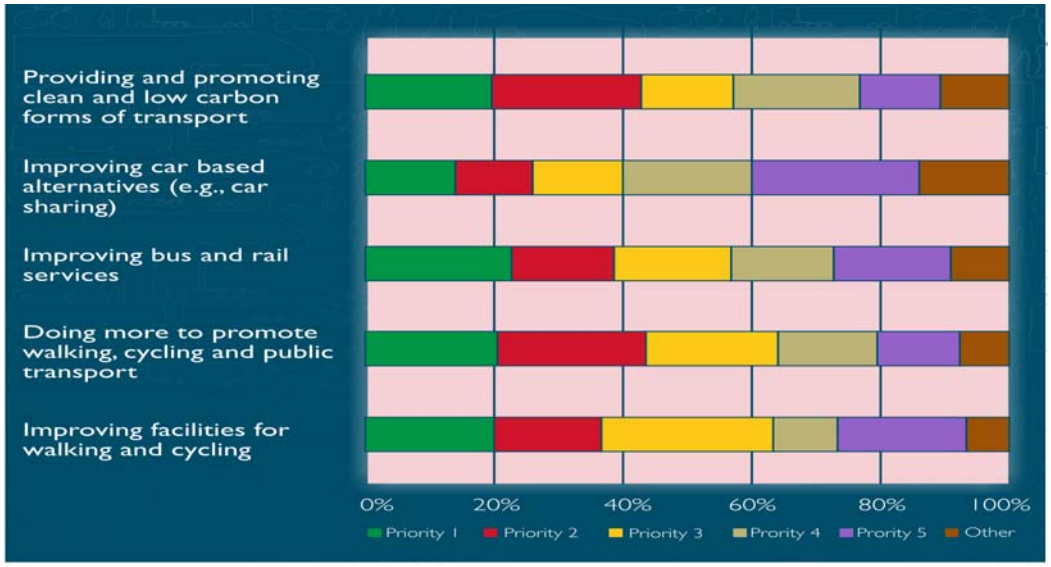
Goal 1- Supporting Economic Growth

Our Stakeholders firmly thought that a key priority for supporting economic growth was to manage congestion on local routes. We also need to ensure we provide good transport systems to employment and housing sites within the borough and wider Liverpool City region whilst also acknowledging the need to be able to respond to emergency situations appropriately.



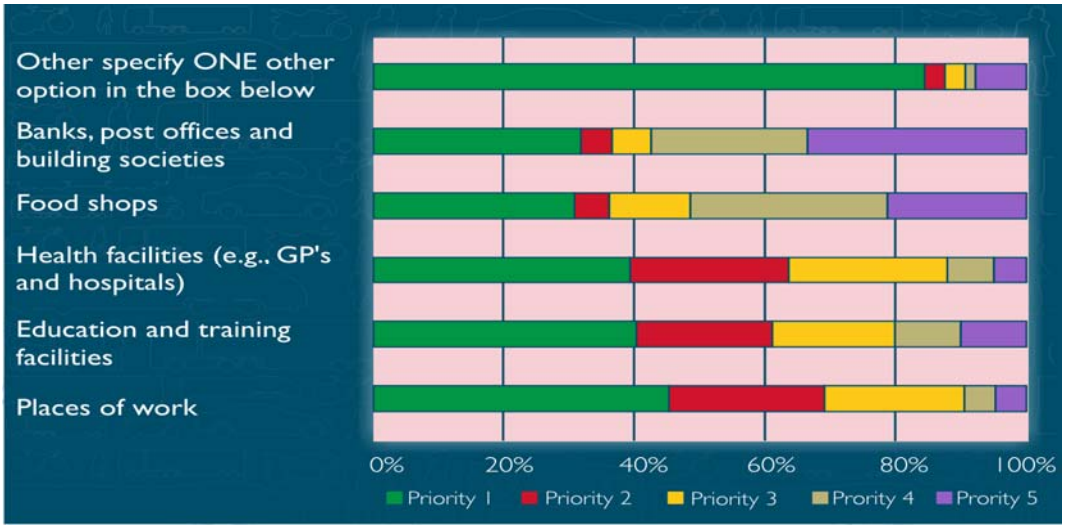
Goal 2- Tackling Climate Change

Participants of the Stakeholder consultation felt as part of the emerging LTP3, with specific reference to Climate Change, more attention should be given to walking and cycling initiatives. It was believed that promotion of walking and cycling was more important than new infrastructure. There was also emphasis on the need to promote clean and low carbon forms of transport within the Borough and wider LCR.



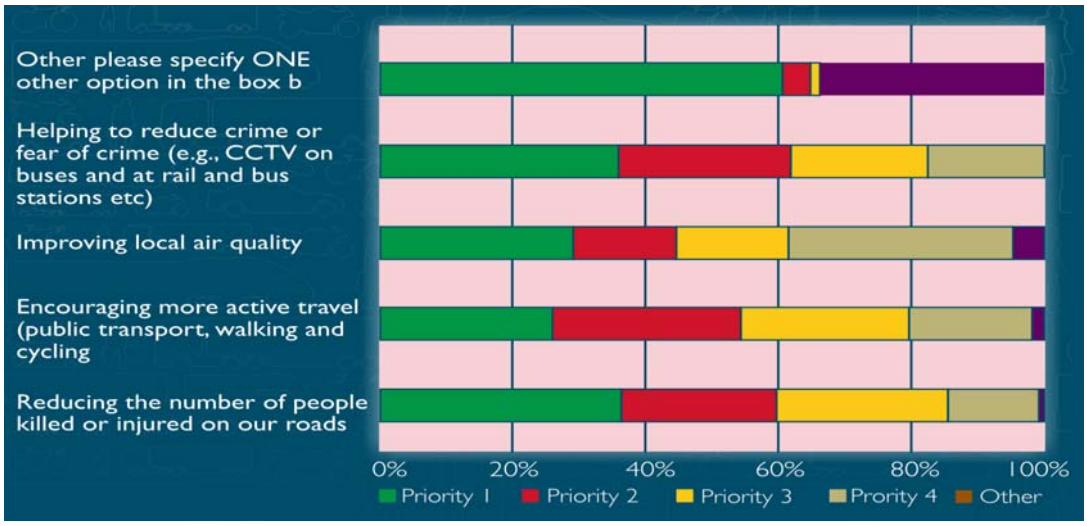
Goal 3- Ensuring equality of opportunity and accessibility

There was a general view that people wanted good access to local amenities with particular consideration given to place of work, education, health centres, and other destinations.



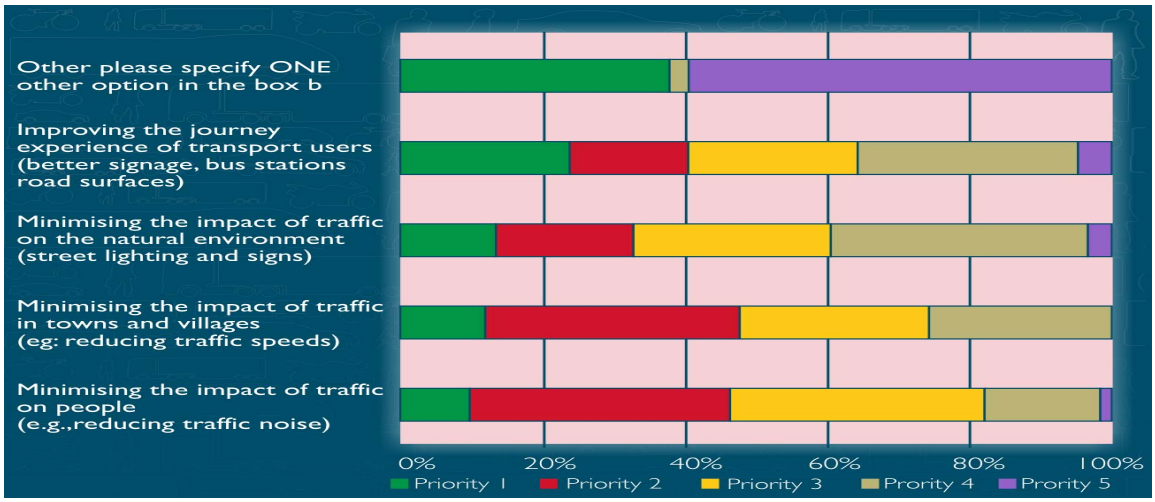
Goal 4- Protecting Health, Safety and Security

The two overwhelming themes emerging from this particular question were to ensure we continue with our successful road safety initiatives and continue to reduce the number of killed or injured on our roads. However, consideration should be given to addressing the perception of crime whilst using public transport.



Goal 5- Promoting Quality of life and the Natural Environment

Improving the journey experience of the transport user can be achieved with effective travel information, better signage, and the universal implementation of real time information at all bus stops. Efficient transport results in less congestion, less pollution, more reliable journey times, reduced noise levels and less visual intrusion.



Conclusion

Congestion on the Silver Jubilee Bridge remains a major issue and as such the provision of the Mersey Gateway Project is viewed as a top priority. It is also viewed as important that work with partners in both Merseyside and Cheshire continues during the delivery ofLTP3.

A key challenge is also ensuring that sustainable economic growth is maintained whilst tackling climate change issues. Efforts to make the road network as safe as possible will also need to continue, as will ensuring the safety of users of the public transport network.

The second stage of consultation started in October 2010 and the information gathered during this process enables the planning, implementation and support of an effective local transport system for the residents of Halton until 2026 and beyond.

Phase 2

Introduction

The second tranche of the two phased Local Transport Plan consultation took place around November 2010 and ran for 8 weeks. The consultation documents were available in various formats from the more traditional paper documents to interactive links via Halton Borough Council website and a social media network page. The consultation was advertised via Halton Direct Link, Children Centres, Libraries, local press and social media page. A launch event was held for the second stage consultation and statutory stakeholders were asked to participate in various workshops.

The second phase of consultation was to confirm the transport key issues for Halton which were initially determined from the first phase of consultation. These key issues are:

- Address and manage congestion.
- Reduce road casualties.
- Improve access to work, education, training, services (health) and social activities.
- Clean and low carbon transport.
- Enhance economic success through the Mersey Gateway and encourage better freight distribution.
- Improve maintenance of the highway network.
- Promote public transport, walking and cycling.
- Reduce crime and fear of crime on the transport system.
- Reduce traffic impact on communities in terms of pollution and noise
- Continue to maintain the transport system.

The LTP contains over 20 Primary Transport Strategies which tend to overlap each other. Therefore, for ease of engagement with consultees these Primary Transport Strategies were grouped into eight transport strategy topic areas which were:

- Bus
- Freight
- Maintenance and enhancements
- Planning for sustainability and accessibility
- Rail
- Road safety
- Traffic
- Walking and cycling.

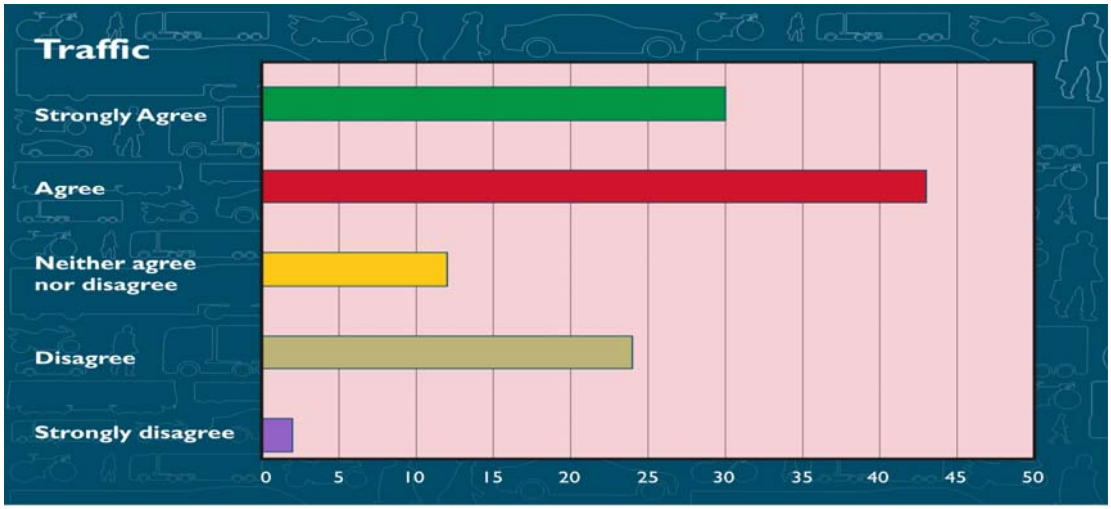
In addition to considering and confirming the previously identified transport key issues, consultees were asked to express their views on eight the transport strategy topic areas. Each of the topic areas contained a series of related transport issues to act as a guide for consultees. These transport issues and the general response to them is detailed below.

Traffic

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- Limiting the amount of parking in new developments to encourage sustainable transport transition
- Management of car parking in commercial areas by charging, or limiting duration of stay
- Ensure the adequate provision of parking for people with disabilities
- Ensure that cycle and motorcycle parking is provided in all developments
- Continue the regular review of authorised taxi ranks
- Ensure the continued maintenance of signs and traffic signals
- Provide bus priority at junctions where appropriate

- Maintain and enhance Variable Message Signs (subject to finance)

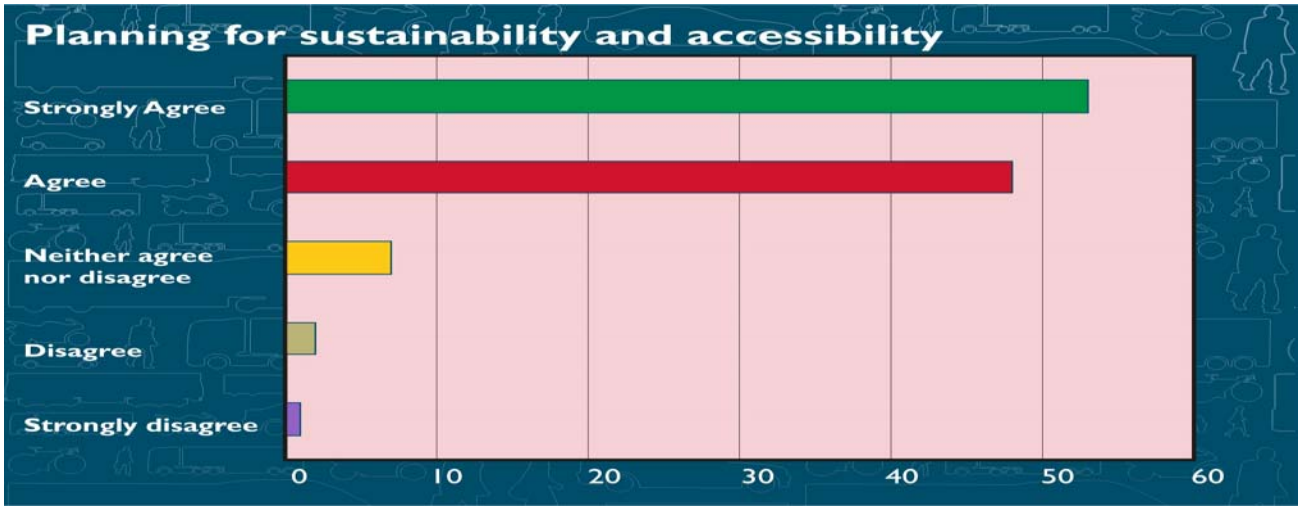


In general it was agreed that the proposed strategies were in the best interest of the borough. However concern was raised about potential car parking charges and the potential negative impact they could produce to the retail areas within the borough.

Planning for sustainability and accessibility

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- When planning new developments ensure that they are safe and attractive neighbourhoods designed not to be dominated by cars
- Ensure travel plans are considered for all new developments
- New developments to have good facilities that are accessible by walking/cycling
- Ensure all new housing and commercial developments are accessible to all members of the community
- Ensure all new developments does not create congestion
- Ensure street parking doesn't become a hazard
- Continue with school travel plans for sustainable travel methods (subject to funding)
- Work with existing employers to create sustainable travel plans
- Ensure new developments cater for emerging vehicle technology e.g. electric vehicle charging points
- Ensure the continuation of improvement schemes to make public transport more accessible
- Ensure the improvement and maintenance of highways to allow accessibility for all
- Travel training to be available for the more vulnerable members of the community (subject to funding)
- Maintain high quality standards for taxi/private hire vehicles within the borough.

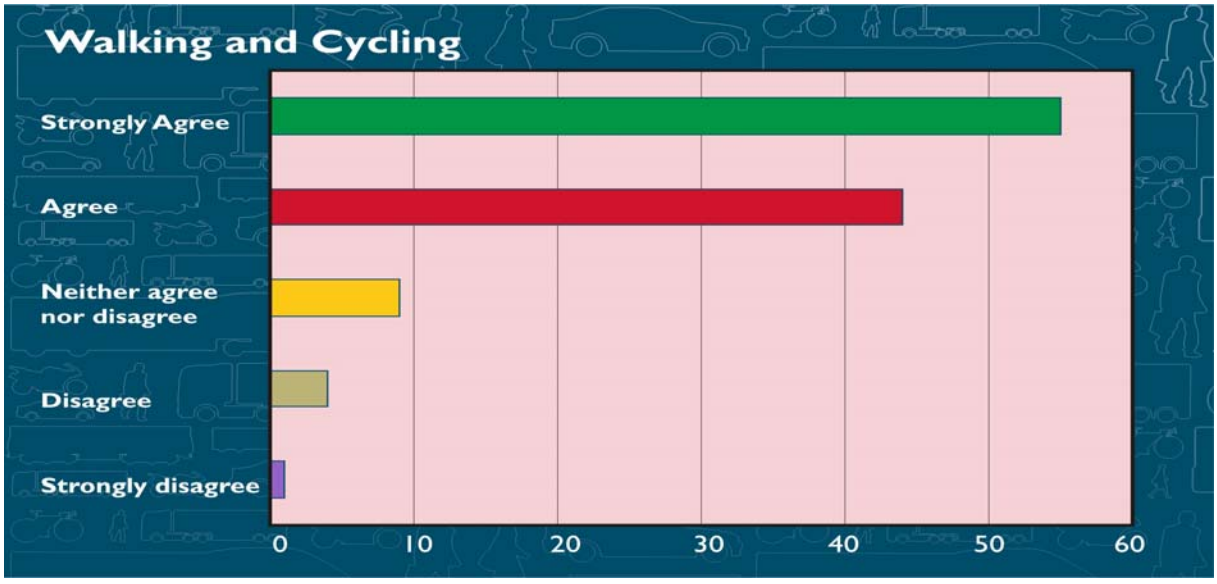


There is an overall agreement from consultees that we should do our utmost to implement more sustainable and accessible transport within the borough.

Walking and Cycling

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- Good links and provision of walking and cycling routes
- Ensuring cycle and pathways are accessible for people with disabilities
- Proactive promotion of walking and cycling routes with quality road/path signage
- Ensure the safety and security of bicycles through bike storage points throughout the borough
- Work in partnership to promote walking and cycling (health and sustainability aspects)
- Maintain road/path surfaces and surrounding vegetation to help prevent the fear of crime and potential barriers to use
- The construction of the Mersey Gateway will allow better Cross River walking and cycling opportunities
- Improvements to cross boundary cycle routes and footpaths
- Ensure the continuation of the 'Bikeability' training scheme for primary children to encourage safe cycling. (subject to funding)



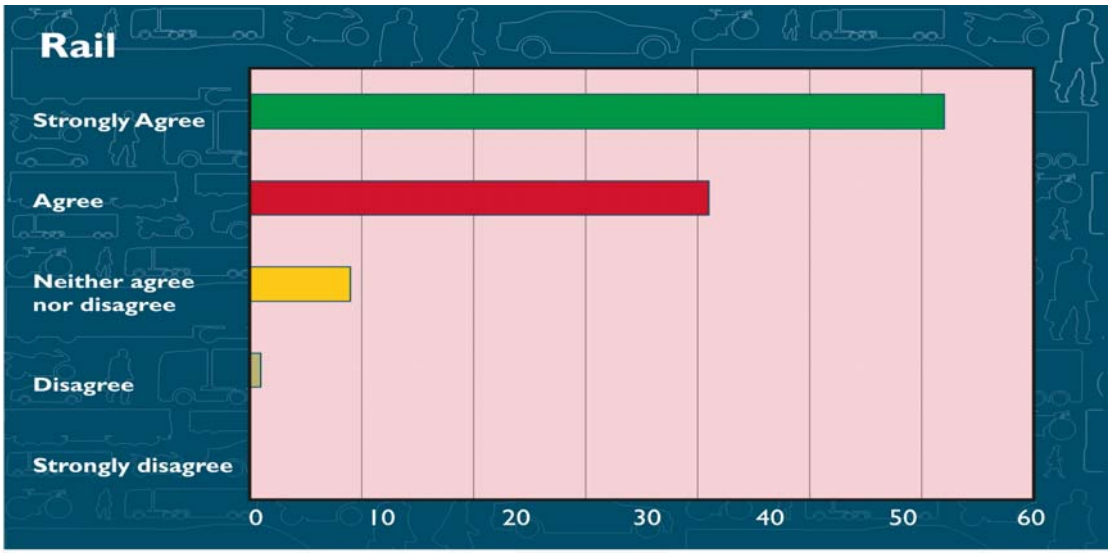
A strong positive response was received supporting the walking and cycling strategy with the implementation of better partnership working between local businesses and Halton

Borough Council. Also the implementation of green travel plans for employers/ employees was supported.

Rail

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- Encourage high frequency services on core routes within the Northwest and the rest of the UK
- Ensure quality rail stations and the facilities they provide
- Ensure the provision of new services to new and emerging business/residential sites
- Cross transport ticketing (rail to bus)
- Cycle and car parking improvements at rail stations
- The implementation of the Halton Curve to link Chester -Helsby-Frodsham-Runcorn-Liverpool
- Pursue the building of new rail stations e.g.: at Beechwood, Ditton and Daresbury



Strong support to develop the boroughs rail network was shown. Working in partnership to develop some of these initiatives in the long term is key to maintaining Halton's rail infrastructure.

Maintenance and Enhancement

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

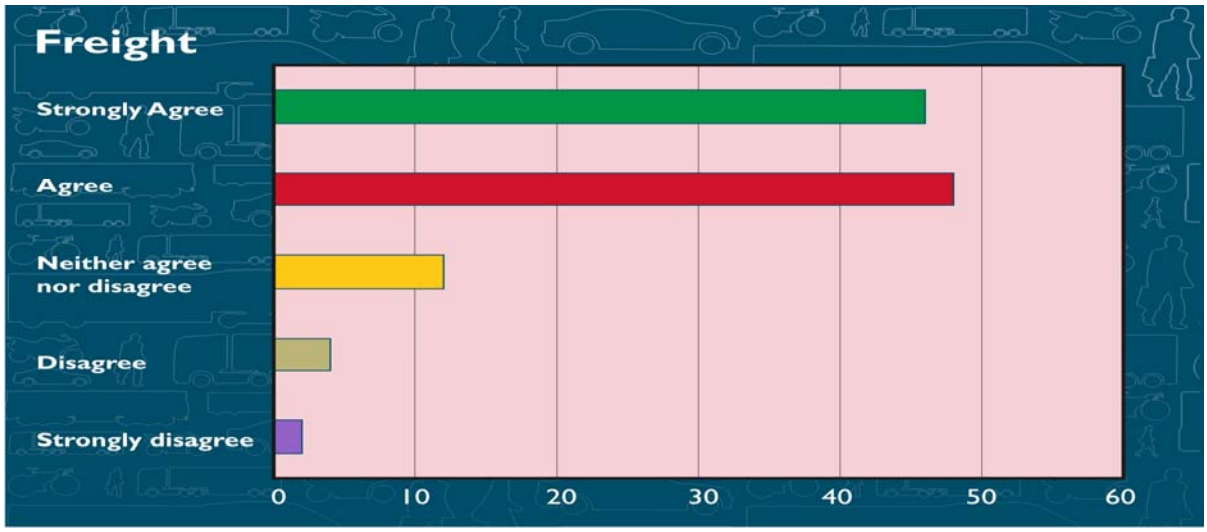
- Ensure we manage road and bridge maintenance effectively whilst minimising congestion
- Maintain road and footpaths to appropriate standards
- Endeavour to provide adequate winter maintenance to roads and footpaths
- Deliver new road schemes where appropriate and where finance is available
- Maintain street lights to best possible standard ensuring they are as energy efficient / low carbon as possible
- Ensure the continued improvement to lighting in subways
- Ensure that care is taken with the installation and use of lighting in conservation areas

The overall maintenance of our highways remains important to the consultees whilst ensuring minimum disruption and using the most low carbon/energy efficient technology available.

Freight

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- Development of Mersey Gateway
- Ensure the continued development of the 3MG site
- Ensure the use of Brownfield sites for freight developments have minimal environmental impacts
- Encourage overnight parking of heavy goods vehicles (HGV's) in appropriate locations
- All freight sites to be located next to or as close as possible to major rail/road or water links

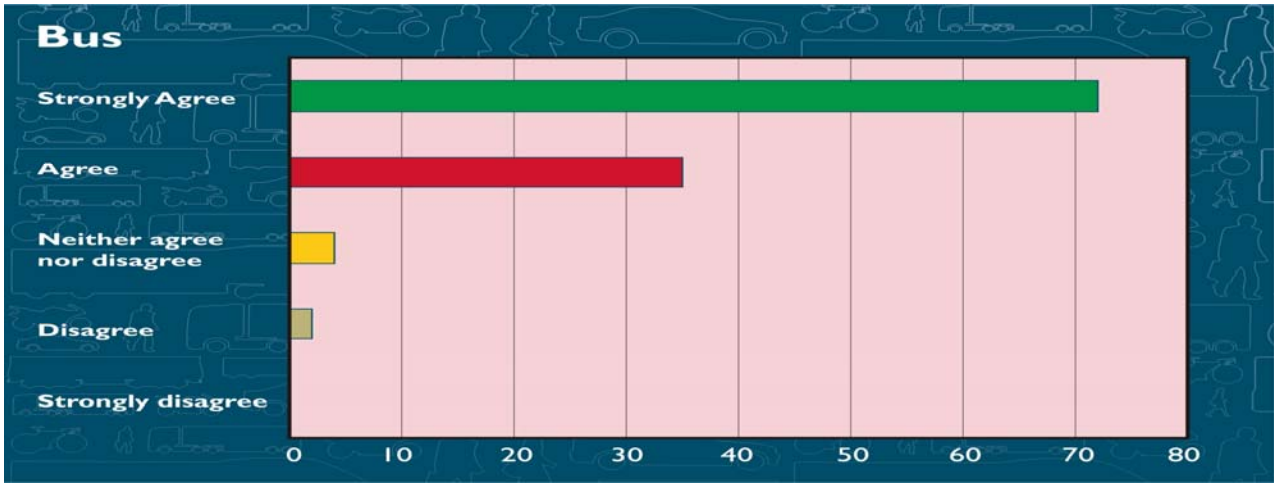


There was a resounding confirmation to ensure we continue to support the Mersey Gateway project. Also there was support for the continuing development of the 3MG site, enabling freight to move around the borough and onto regional, national and international hubs more efficiently.

Bus

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- Ensure a good, reliable and affordable bus service, which is accessible to all
- Good quality timetable information, available in various formats
- High frequency services on core bus routes
- Strong cross boundary bus links to neighbouring boroughs



The respondents to the consultation agreed with the proposed strategy. The overall result being to improve bus linkages where possible ensuring access to all and improve the way we disseminate information.

Road Safety

Proposed Strategies/Implementation:

- Continue with road improvements to enhance road safety (subject to finance)
- Continue to provide road safety training and publicity (subject to finance)
- Continue with traffic enforcement initiatives including speed cameras (subject to finance)

The support for the continuation of road safety initiatives still remains a priority for stakeholders. However, new and emerging ways of delivering the road safety strategy will need to be found due to a reduction in finance.

Conclusion

Halton's residents and its Stakeholders have shown that they wish to follow the "low carbon" and "facilitating long term sustainable economic growth" priorities, by the implementation or improvement to our existing transport networks.

With heavily reduced budgets, Halton and the Liverpool City Region face tough financial challenges in the interim term for their LTP3 plans. It is recognised that the public and stakeholders within Halton are fully accepting of the financial situation and the limitations in which the Local Transport Plan can deliver its four year implementation plan. However, Halton Borough Council will seek to work in partnership with the community, statutory organisations and local businesses to deliver its shared aspirations.

In the longer term, the Mersey Gateway project will help address many of the challenges we face within transport, e.g. helping to reduce congestion and improving cross river linkages.

9 Primary Transport Strategies

No. 1 Airport Surface Access

No. 2 Bus Strategy

No. 3 Cycling

No. 4 Demand Management

No. 5 Development Control

No. 6 Freight Distribution

No. 7 Intelligent Transport Systems and Traffic Management

No. 8 Maintenance of Transport Assets

No. 9 Network Management

No. 10 Parking

No. 11 Passenger Rail

No. 12 Peak Oil Production and Emerging Vehicle Technology

No. 13 Provision for People with Disabilities

No. 14 Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Greenways

No. 15 Quality Transport Corridors

No. 16 Road Improvements

No. 17 Road Safety

No. 18 Street Lighting

No. 19 Taxi/private Hire Vehicles

No. 20 Travel Plans

No. 21 Walking

No. 22 Waterborne Transport

Primary Transport Strategy No. 1

Airport Surface Access

Introduction

The Government White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport', published by the DfT in December 2003, set out a strategic framework for the development of airport capacity in the UK over the following 30 year period. The White Paper specifically targeted the regional airports of Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) has continued to experience rapid growth in passenger numbers in recent years and remains one of the UK's fastest growing regional airports. In 2010 LJLA handled 5 million passengers compared to 3.4 million in 2004. The Airport published its Master Plan to 2030 in 2007 (available on www.liverpoolairport.com).

Manchester Airport in 2009 handled over 18.6 million passengers using 170,474 passenger air movements. Airfreight throughput in 2009 was 103,400 tonnes with 50% transported in the holds of passenger aircraft. The airport operates with a workforce of approximately 18,000. The White Paper indicates a possible capacity of 50 million beyond 2030.

In July 2004, the Government produced its White Paper, 'The Future of Transport', which included references to aviation and travel by air. The Paper confirmed the Government's support for implementing the findings of the Air Transport White Paper and indicated its wishes to ensure that:

i) Aviation over time meets its external costs; and
ii) The impact on the environment and communities is minimised with appropriate mitigation and compensation measures put in place.

With the expansion of Liverpool and Manchester Airports, it needs to be ensured that the transport network is in place to accommodate this growth.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Facilities at LJLA are being enhanced to cope with the projected increases in activity. 2009 saw the opening of a new 157-bed hotel and multi-storey car park, and Terminal works commenced the following year to improve retail, security and baggage areas. It is forecast that LJLA will be handling 8.3 million passengers per annum in 2016 and 12.3 mppa by 2030. The LJLA Master Plan describes further airport infrastructure improvements including a runway extension, the development of enhanced freight facilities and a new eastern access road.

The Masterplan seeks to facilitate the expected further growth in the low cost airline business market and to play an important role in the longer term in the carriage of freight. LJLA has proven to be a catalyst for regeneration in the region. Significant investment in the South Liverpool area may also increase business through the airport. Currently there is a workforce of about 2,500 based at the Speke site, distributed amongst a variety of airport related companies.

It is clear that travel to and from LJLA will continue to grow rapidly with respect to both passengers and workforce. Measures will therefore be required to improve transportation links.

A commercial service bus service, the 82A, operates between Runcorn, Widnes, the airport and Liverpool City Centre. With the forecast expansion in travel to and from the Airport and the limitations of the Borough's public transport connections with it, measures will have to be taken to improve transport links. There will need to be a particular emphasis on public transport, especially rail.

Halton Borough Council is taking an active role in the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Transport Forum (ATF), which includes representation from a wide range of bodies including local authorities, transport operators and many other interested organisations. The ATF has set itself the aim: "to ensure that the airport maximises the opportunities for sustainable and inclusive transport access for passengers and staff".

LJLA, through its ATF, has produced an Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS) to establish the following:

- Set challenging short and long term targets for increasing the proportion of journeys made to the airport by sustainable transport (sustainable transport includes the use of public transport, walking, cycling, car sharing and other similar transport initiatives);
- A strategy to achieve these targets, taking into account prospective growth at the airport and background growth in traffic; and
- A system whereby the ATF can oversee the implementation of the strategy and monitor its degree of success.

The ASAS contains strategies in the following areas:

- Bus and coach services;
- Rail services;
- Roads, car parking and taxis;
- Walking and cycling; and
- Sustainable transport awareness and information.

The ASAS covers many Liverpool City Region issues; however those, which relate specifically to Halton include:

- The road infrastructure linking LJLA at present is generally good with the exception of the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Therefore, the provision of the New Mersey Gateway Crossing would be beneficial;
- The provision of a regular passenger service on the Halton Curve would open up rail travel to the airport from Halton and the Cheshire and North Wales areas. This would utilise Liverpool South Parkway Station; and
- In the longer term a new access road (known in the Master Plan as the Eastern Access Transport Corridor (EATC)) is proposed from the A562 to LJLA to cater for traffic approaching from the east.

The Liverpool John Lennon Airport ASAS can be found on www.liverpooljohnlennonairport.com. Comprehensive details of passenger and staff travel to work surveys, and the Travel Plan, which sets out strategies for sustainable and inclusive transport, are also provided.

Manchester Airport

Manchester Airport is the largest UK airport outside the South East of England, and is the major airport for the North of England offering a wide range of UK domestic, European scheduled and charter flights, and long haul flights to the USA, Asia and the Middle East.

In 1997, the airport launched its Ground Transport Strategy (GTS) which resulted in the formation in 1999 of the Manchester Airport Transport Forum. This was established to investigate ways of improving transport and service provision to the airport.

The current Manchester Airport Ground Transport Strategy was published in 2007, and is one of a series of documents that make up the Manchester Airport Masterplan to 2030. This can be viewed on www.manchesterairport.co.uk

Manchester Airport's approach to surface access is to:

- Reduce the need to travel by car to the airport;
- Improve public transport products and services;
- Make best use of its roads and car parks;
- Expand local footpath and cycle path networks; and
- Change behaviour and influence demand for travel in favour of sustainable modes.

There has been significant investment in transport infrastructure at Manchester airport. Its rail link and station opened in 1993 that enabled direct trains to run through Manchester City Centre to many destinations in Northern England. A south facing chord was opened in 1996 to enable trains to access Crewe. The lack of capacity at the Airport station was eased in December 2008 with the opening of a third rail platform. The additional platform alongside the completion of the West Coast Main Line upgrade has contributed to a significant improvement in rail performance and reliability. However, continued growth in rail use is constrained by the lack of capacity in Manchester and the North as a whole. Network Rail's Northern Hub and electrification proposals will open the way for better Manchester Airport services from its western catchment area, Merseyside, Halton, Chester and North Wales.

The Station, a £60 million project to create a multi modal transport interchange around the rail station at Manchester Airport opened in 2003 through the addition of an airport standard bus and coach station linked to commercial retail and business offices. Plans to bring Metrolink to Manchester Airport are progressing and the Station has reserved space for platforms. Metrolink is expected to be operational in 2016.

The airport, in general, has good public transport links. Rail connections from the Borough to the Airport are good with frequent services from Runcorn East, Widnes and Hough Green. These rail journeys however usually require a change in Manchester to one of the frequent airport train services.

Road links to Manchester Airport via the M56 are good, and will support a fast interurban bus or express coach service. However, attempts to develop a service linking Halton have proved difficult to sustain. Most recently Excel ran an X2 service linking Liverpool and Manchester Airports with the two cities plus Widnes and Warrington. However, it was unable to generate sufficient passengers to sustain it as a commercial operation, and the service stopped in 2009. Manchester Airport remains committed to developing its coach network, and is exploring further service opportunities.

Surface Access Data

Liverpool John Lennon Airport

A Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) airport passenger survey of final travel mode conducted in 2010 produced the following results.

Passenger Final Mode Airport Access

Mode	Passengers (%) 1999	2002	2003	2005	2007	2008	2010[1]
Private Car	64.8	65.1	63.5	63.2	72.3	59.3	60.8
Taxi / Minicab	27.0	20.1	20.9	19.7	9.8	18.2	16.5
Hire Car	3.4	3.8	4.9	3.4	3.8	2.8	3.6
Bus/Coach/Train	4.5	9.1	10.0	9.7	5.2	16.7	17.7
Other	0.5	1.9	0.9	1.5	0.15	2.4	1.4
No response						0.7	
Total No. of passengers	1.31m	2.84m	3.18m	4.42m	5.5m	5.4m	5.0m

The current data highlights the great strides taken in achieving shift to more sustainable modes of transport. The six month figure for 2010 of the number of passengers choosing to use public transport (bus /coach /train) as their final mode to the Airport (19.6%) is significantly higher than the 2008 figure of 16.7%. The opening of the Liverpool South Parkway railway station in 2006, and regular bus services to and from the Airport, appears to have given the public transport figures a major boost. Delivery of the ASAS has been excellent with the actual (nine month) figure for 2010 exceeding the 2011 target (14%) as well as the 2015 target of 17%. There has been a slight increase in final mode private car use by passengers from 59.3% in 2008 to 60.8% in 2010, but this is significantly below the 1999 figure of 64.8%.

Modes of staff transport to work 2000-2009

	Usual Mode (%)					Occasional Mode (%)				
Mode	2000	2003	2005	2007	2009	2000	2003	2005	2007	2009
Bus	8	12	7	13	13	12	12	10	12	12
Bicycle	5	2	1	2	2	5	4	5	3	5
Car (on own)	63	67	67	65	59	19	5	8	6	8
Car (with others)	10	10	17	13	15	25	9	12	13	16
Walk	8	5	3	5	7	9	5	5	3	4
Motorbike	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	3	3	1
Train	1	0	1	0	1	5	2	2	1	3
Taxi	4	2	1	0	3	16	9	4	0	9
Other	0	0.3	-	2	1	0	0	1	5	0
No alternative used	-	-	-	-	-	4	53	48	52	45

[1] Based on CAA data January to September 2010

A number of Airport wide staff travel surveys have been undertaken between 2000 and 2009. Table 1.1 indicates the trends in travel to work mode by staff during this time period.

The results from the most recent Staff Travel Survey i.e. 2009 indicate that there has been an encouraging decrease in staff choosing to travel by car on their own. This trend has reduced from 65% in 2007 to 59% in 2009. In addition, there has been a slight increase in the number of employees car sharing and walking to work (note – the mode share by walking is the highest percentage achieved since 2003). From 2007 to 2009 the number of staff choosing to use the bus or bicycle to travel to their workplace has remained steady.

Manchester Airport

CAA Air Passenger Survey 2009 – Air Passenger Final Mode of Access

Mode	Mode %
Private Car Drop Off	34
Taxi	27
On airport parking	11
Off Airport parking	13
Hire Car	2
Rail	10
Bus and Coach	3

Compared to 2008, taxi modal share has reduced by 2%, and train has increased by 2%.On airport parking has also increased by 2% to 11%.

Manchester Airport Employee Travel Survey 2009

Mode	Mode%
Car (drive alone)	73
Bus / Coach	9
Car (as passenger)	6
Car (with passenger)	3
Train	4
Bicycle	2
Walk	2
Taxi	1
Motorcycle / Moped	1

The major change in employee modal share has been the increase in drive alone use, up 5% from 68% to 73% with a corresponding reduction in car sharing.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Halton is working with the regional airports in particular LJLA to deliver a sustainable Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS), designed to promote the use of sustainable transport.

Economic regeneration: The airports are major economic generators. The Mersey Gateway will help to facilitate economic growth, by enhancing access to the airport.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of transport, particularly in deprived areas, will assist access to LJLA which is a major employer.

Health, safety and security: Halton supports the provision of healthy and safe modes of transport to LJLA.

Quality of life: Promotion of sustainable transport modes, including public transport encourages the provision of low emission transport and provides opportunities for employment.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway and the maintenance of SJB will improve journey time reliability to LJLA.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of sustainable airport surface access will help the development of LJLA which in turn would provide economic growth in the LCR. Development of LJLA would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal and Employment, Learning and Skills priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Halton will aim to assist with the provision of improved bus services to LJLA from the borough.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The sustainable ASAS will encourage the use of more healthy modes of transport to airports.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The ASAS will enable better access to LJLA for purposes of employment and leisure. The Mersey Gateway will also enable the Silver Jubilee Bridge to be freed up for public transport which will facilitate access by this mode to LJLA.

LCR wider links: The airports, in particular LJLA are a major contributor to the economic success of the LCR by supporting local employment, the efficient movement of people and goods, including access to international, national and regional networks, through the provision of high quality transport infrastructure, services and information.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its transport assets, in particular the SJB, to minimise delays to traffic accessing LJLA.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

Pursue the provision of the new Mersey Gateway crossing of the Mersey in order to ease congestion on the major road link to LJLA from Cheshire and North Wales;
Pursue the proposal to allow bi-directional working on the Halton Curve in order to facilitate a regular passenger service to link North Wales, Chester, Halton, LJLA via Liverpool South Parkway, Liverpool Lime Street;
Support the LJLA and the Merseyside Authorities in delivering the Eastern Access Transport Corridor (EATC) to link the A562 to the Airport;
Support the proposals for highway capacity improvements to the A562/A5300 junction which lies along the route from Halton to LJLA;

Develop freight distribution links between the airports and the Mersey Multimodal Gateway, Widnes waterfront and Mersey Gateway Port;
Assist with the provision of improved bus services to LJLA from the Borough;
Investigate the provision of a shuttle bus service between Runcorn Railway Station and both LJLA and Manchester Airport;
Support a planning policy to presume against the provision of off site airport car parks in the Borough;
Work in partnership with bus and train operating companies to improve existing services in terms of quality and frequency;
Support the Western Rail Link which will improve links with Manchester Airport and Merseyside; and
Market existing services to the airport through advertisement and highlight services in timetable booklets.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 2

Bus

Introduction

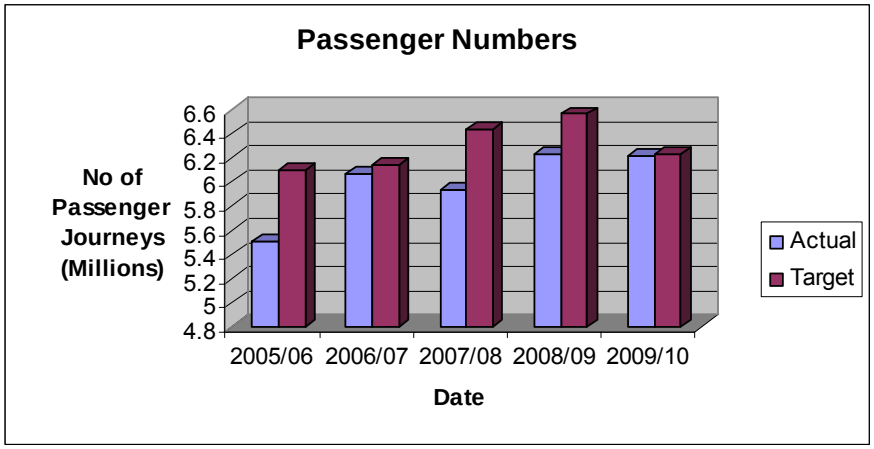
The Government's Transport White Paper, 'The Local Transport Act 2008', states that local bus services should:

> Give local authorities the right mix of powers to improve the quality of local bus services, as proposed in "Putting Passengers First" (December 2006) following an extensive bus policy review;
> Allow for the creation of an influential new bus passenger champion to represent the interests of bus passengers;
> Give local authorities the power to review and propose their own arrangements for local transport governance to support more coherent planning and delivery of local transport;
> Update existing legal powers so that, where local areas wish to develop proposals for local road pricing schemes, they have the freedom and flexibility to do so in a way that best meets local needs - whilst ensuring schemes are consistent and interoperable.

The Local Transport Act 2008 includes provisions designed to make bus quality contracts schemes - the London-style model of bus contracts - a more realistic option for local transport authorities throughout England and Wales. Those provisions came into force, in England, on 11 January 2010.

Key Trends in the Provision of Local Bus Services within the Borough

The vast majority of the bus network within the Borough is operated commercially with the remainder supported by Halton Borough Council. The general trend of patronage for local bus services has been one of fluctuation, over recent years with a small growth in passengers of 0.3% last year. Although the overall local bus network has been relatively stable in terms of route / timetable changes, the commercial operators have been relatively slow to introduce innovative new services or respond to new opportunities. The Council, using a mixture of public funding sources, has taken the lead on 'pump priming' new services within the Borough.



The provision of commercial bus services is dominated by two main bus companies (Halton Transport and Arriva North West). Both operators have depots within the Borough. Halton Transport operates the majority of their mileage within Widnes and a series of cross boundary routes into Merseyside, whereas Arriva North West is the dominant operator within Runcorn. Halton Transport is a local municipal operator,

whereas Arriva North West are part of a major public limited company with significant national and international interests.

Over the last few years the investment path of both operators has significantly increased. Both Halton Transport and Arriva have invested considerable sums in purchasing new low floor fully accessible vehicles. Currently, the average age of the bus fleet within Halton is 5.6 years old; 2.7 years below the national average fleet age of 8.3 years (DfT 2008). The average fleet age was significantly reduced in 2006 following investment by both companies. Prior to this investment, the average fleet age equated to 9.0 years old.

Euro emission standards began in 1992 and define acceptable exhaust limits for new vehicles sold in EU member states. These emission standards are defined in a series of European Directives which stage the progressive introduction of stringent standards to reduce pollution from heavy duty diesel engines. Current directive is Level 5 with level 6 due in January 2014.

The fleet currently consists of:

Euro 5	6%
Euro 4	19%
Euro 3	44%
Euro 2	25%
Euro 1	6%
Non Compilant	0

Note: the vehicles of Euro 1 standard with both companies are planned to be replaced by the end of 2011. A number of the Euro 3 standard vehicles are fitted with a particulate trap which takes them almost to a Euro 4 standard, a 'low pollution' certificate has been issued for these vehicles.

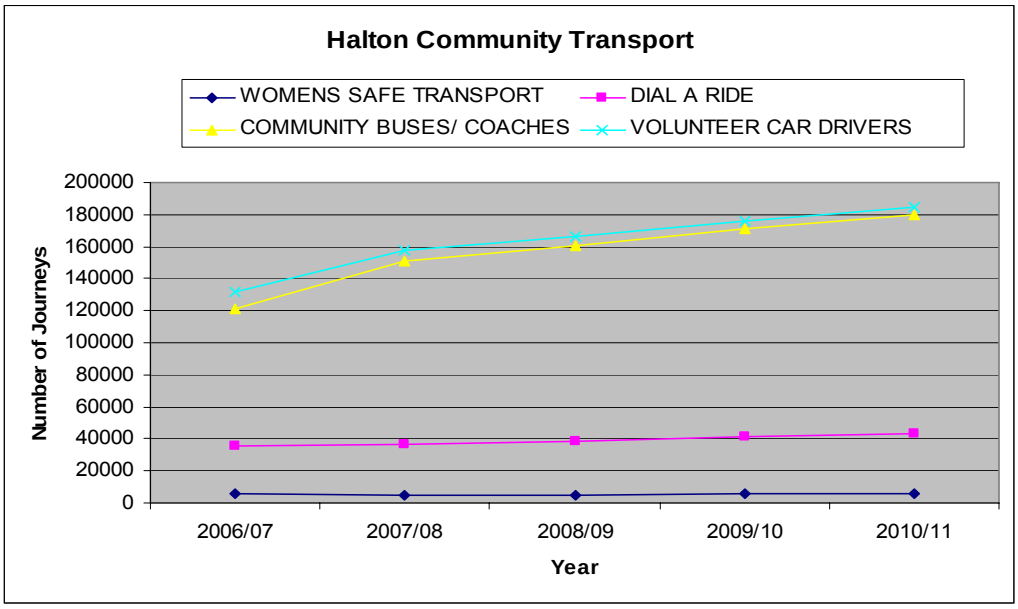
The majority of the 3.45 million passenger miles operated in the Borough are operated on a commercial basis with the remaining mileage operated through support by Halton Borough Council. In addition to the two main operators, there are over ten other operators who currently provide local bus services within the Borough both commercially and for the Council or other public sector agencies on contracted work.

Despite the provisions of the 1985 Transport Act, (which deregulated bus services in Great Britain outside London), the bus network in Halton has been reasonably stable in recent years. The bus operators are required to give the Traffic Commissioners 56 days notice if they intend to introduce a new commercial bus service or amend/withdraw an existing service.

Over the last five years Halton Community Transport has matured and grown as a local social business providing a wide range of community based transport services.

Halton Borough Council's supported bus services are generally based upon historical patterns of operation with Council subsidy being used to support 'socially necessary' services typically:-

- Early mornings;
- Evenings; and
- Sundays.

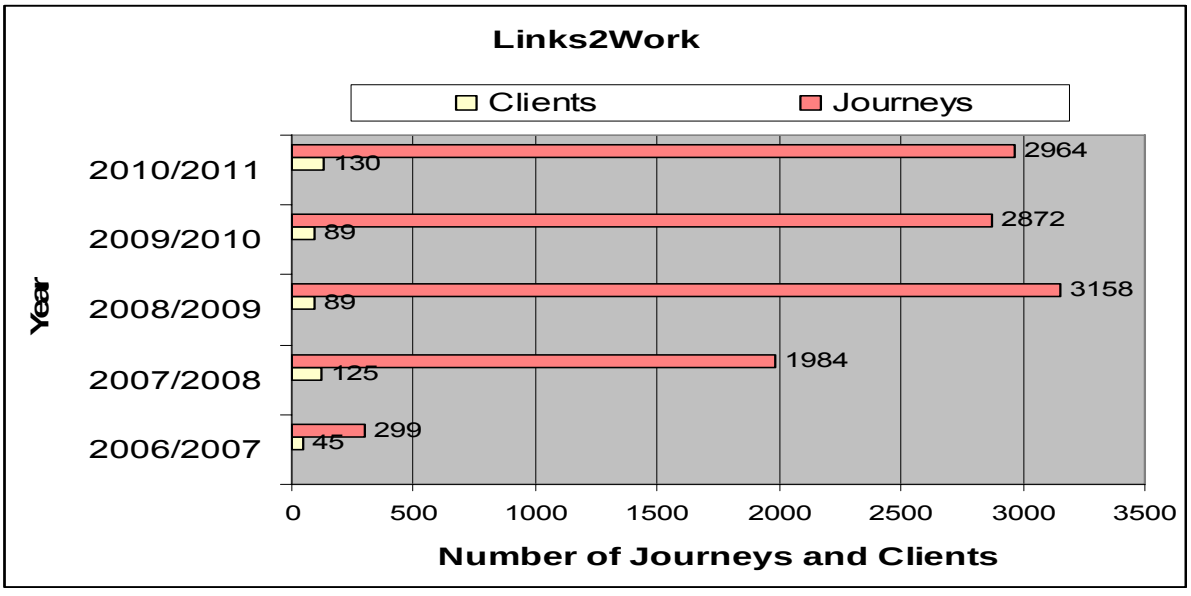


However in order to better target resources, the Council is seeking to move towards supporting bus services which most closely meet specific needs identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough and the national and Local Transport Goals. This means that priority will be given to routes providing:-

- Access to healthcare;
- Access to key service locations;
- Access to employment sites;
- Specialist services, providing access for disabled people;
- Access to parts of the Borough that are not well served by current public transport provision; and
- Evening access to social activities.

The service Halton currently facilitates –

Links2Work A demand responsive taxi service, available at all times when public transport services are not in operation. The service is booked through the Council's Direct Link offices (HDL) or Contact Centre. It was noted that 56% of clients using the scheme during 2009/10 lived within one of the seven most deprived super output areas within Halton.



Meeting Changing Demands and Needs

The State of the Borough Report (August 2009) identified the following trends in terms of the socio-demographic base of the Borough:-

- Population of the Borough has been gradually declining since 1991 but has stabilised in recent years;
- The proportion of young people in the Borough has now moved closer to the regional average, however the proportion of 0-15 year olds is still relatively high-ranked at 38th nationally.
- Population projections to 2012 suggest that the population of the Borough will fall slowly each year to reach 112,000, along with a small rise in the number of households, especially single person households;
- The number of households without access to a car currently stands at 29.4% (however in some wards such as Halton Castle Ward and Windmill Hill the figure is nearer 50%);
- Between 2002 and 2012 total employment within the Borough is projected to increase by 4,000 new jobs, with the bulk of these jobs being created in the business sector. In contrast manufacturing employment is expected to fall by –4%;
- The Borough's Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking is showing signs of improvement reducing from 14th to 21st most deprived in the country;
- 47% of economically active people work within 5 km of home; and
- 7% of Halton residents travel to and from work by local bus services.

Delivering the Vision

In delivering the Vision, the Council and its partners have developed a set of strong and robust policies/service standards we expect for the network. In addition to this, Halton through the Mersey Gateway Project, commissioned 'The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy' (MGSTS). This details schemes which could be delivered through LTP3 and/or through the Mersey Gateway concession. Many of these schemes relate to bus services and infrastructure.

Service Provision

The following service quality standards have been developed for different parts of the network, which will be divided up into: -

- Core Bus Network;
- Strategic Employment Links;
- Local Community Services;
- Coach travel; and
- Cross Boundary Services.

Core Bus Network

The Core Bus Network – will include all the main routes within the Borough linking the main town and commercial centres of Widnes, Runcorn town centre and Halton Lea with the various District Centres and other key facilities (health, education).

It is suggested that all the following minimum service levels be pursued for the Core Bus Network:-

‘Turn up and go’ frequencies of every 15 minutes (or better) between 7.00 am and 7.30 pm;
At least 30 minute frequency Monday to Saturday evenings and Sundays;
Guaranteed connections to Local Community Services, Strategic Employment Links and Cross Boundary services at key interchange points;
Individual routes on the network to be clearly branded and marketed;
All services to be operated by fully accessible low floor vehicles (operated with environmentally friendly fuels and /or by low emission engines); and
Reliability of services to be ensured by the continued ‘roll out’ of bus priority measures.

In addition, as part of the MGSTS, the following schemes have been identified for the core network:

Extension of bus quality corridors;
Improvements to Murdishaw Interchange;
Improvements to Halton Lea South Bus Station;
Improved passenger information in Halton Lea shopping centre;
Improvements to Halton Hospital Interchange;
Improvements to other stops on the Runcorn Busway Loop;
Establishment of a bus quality partnership; and
The implementation of a study into Green Oaks Bus Station and Widnes Town Centre Access.

Strategic Employment Links

This defines a network of services linking key communities within Halton and strategic employment sites both within the Borough and in surrounding areas.

This part of the network will also be developed to support the regeneration of key sites within the Borough.

It is intended that:-

Services be operated to meet the main employment patterns of major employers within the Borough and those key employment sites in surrounding areas;
All services to be operated by low floor fully accessible vehicles;
Services will be carefully designed to provide good interchange opportunities with the Core Bus Route Network and Local Community Services; and
Depending upon demand, these services could be operated by a mixture of fixed route and demand responsive style services.

The network will need to encompass emerging proposals being developed for a new bus based public transport network to serve the Omega development in north Warrington. Part of this proposal includes a new high frequency bus service between Widnes and Runcorn with Omega. However, this new network may take several years to develop (in line with employment generation at the site), and therefore will be built up over a number of stages.

Similarly, development is proposed over a longer term at Daresbury, and a number of proposals are being explored to ensure that development in this area is well served by public transport.

Local Community Services

The bus strategy should recognise the importance of providing a good network of local community services, which provide convenient, attractive and affordable links to a range of local community facilities, and interchange locations with the Core Bus Network and rail stations. By its very nature, the majority of the network needs to be funded publicly with contributions from a range of other agencies.

Local community services typically provide access to the following key facilities:-

Primary health care facilities;
Key local service facilities (retail etc.);
Specialised social/community services;
Evening/Sunday access to social facilities.

The MGSTS has also identified a range of measures that relate to community services, these include:

A new mobility smartcard;
Expansion of the Neighbourhood Travel Team;
Travel safe;
Coordination and marketing of community transport services; and
Network development of bus services.

Coach Travel

As part of the Halton Tourism Strategy Action Plan, Halton Borough Council and partners are developing a strategy for coach parking and coach hosting. This is designed to encourage more inclusive tour operators to visit attractions within the Borough and use hotels in Halton as a central base in which to explore attractions in the wider North West region. Of particular relevance here, are ongoing plans being developed by the Council in partnership with other local authorities within the Greater Merseyside sub region to developing a comprehensive plan to maximize the potential benefits associated with the Liverpool European Capital of Culture legacy.

Cross Boundary Services

Given the Borough's strategic location in the heart of the Mersey Belt, it is important to develop a robust policy to develop and improve key cross boundary bus network links. This will need to include: -

- Links to Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington, Chester, St. Helens, Knowsley, Northwich; and
- Regional and National coach networks.

The Borough is very poorly served at present by regional and longer distance coach services. There is great potential to improve coach links to other major centres across the northwest as part of the Local Transport Plan. As a member of the Merseyside Bus Board we will continue to work with our neighbouring authorities and bus operators to maintain and improve services.

Identified gaps in services

An initial 'gap analysis' of current and future access needs of communities within the Borough has highlighted the following key priorities:

- Need for improved direct links between key communities within both Runcorn and Widnes to Warrington and Whiston Hospitals;

- Need for improved links between key communities within both Widnes and Runcorn to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the wider Speke/ Halewood employment zone;
- Need for better links to key employment areas within the Widnes Economic Development Zone and Omega (Warrington); and
- Lack of direct links from the Borough to key employment sites in Deeside and Broughton etc.
- Ensuring there is adequate transport infrastructure to the Widnes Waterfront development.

Review of Achievements delivered during the Second Local Transport Plan

- During LTP 2 significant improvements have been completed. For example, a £450K upgrade of the Halton Lea North Bus Station with improvements for Halton Lea South currently at design stage and consultation with operators underway. Improvements to Green Oaks are also at the design stage and consultation with operators is underway.
- £160K has been invested in upgrading bus stops to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995) standards.
- Approximately £200k has been invested in new bus shelters, with new locations now having shelters installed and the majority of old style shelters at existing locations have been replaced.

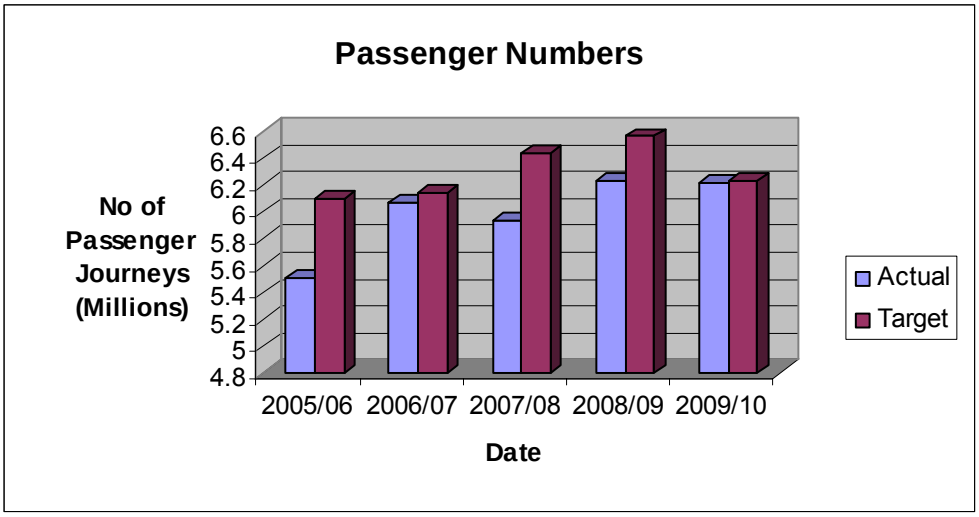
Infrastructure

- Sections of Runcorn busway have been upgraded; all old style bus shelters have been replaced with new style shelters, creating an improved waiting environment for the public transport user. The new shelters have a poly-carbonate roof allowing more light into the shelter and also perforated steel sides again letting in more light and improving visibility from the shelter. The shelters also have provision for information and perch style seating. All of the bus stops on the main circular section of the busway also have bus border kerbs to allow for easy access when boarding and alighting.
- Three Quality Bus Corridors introduced;
- Access improvements at key interchanges and busy bus stop across the Borough and;
- Accessibility review of interchanges and allocation of funds to address issues identified.

Ticketing and Information

- Programme of bus stop and interchange information improvements;
- Real Time Bus Passenger Information system introduced on a key bus corridor within the Borough;
- In 2005 Halton Borough Council in partnership with Halton's bus operators, introduced the Halton Hopper ticket.
- The Council will look to extend the new ticketing scheme to improve cross boundary travel opportunities.
- Launch of the National Traveline scheme as part of the Government's Transport Direct initiative; and
- Halton Borough Council's innovative Neighbourhood Travel Team.

As you can see below the introduction of the Hopper ticket has been successful. However with the opportunity to purchase a monthly Hopper ticket which was launched in late 2009 the weekly Hopper ticket sales fell, however a number of passengers chose to purchase a monthly ticket. Overall sales of the Hopper ticket have steadily increased.



Halton Hopper Ticket sales.

2006/07 = 3609 weekly tickets sold	
2007/08 = 7906 weekly tickets sold	
2008/09 = 7571 weekly tickets sold	637 monthly tickets sold
2009/10 = 3398 weekly tickets sold	1671 monthly tickets sold
2010/11 = 4980 weekly tickets sold	1875 monthly tickets sold

Other Opportunities

- Working with Bus Companies

The Council remains committed to working in partnership with the local bus operators to deliver the above network improvements through either a voluntary or statutory Bus Quality Partnership. However, the Transport Act 2008 enables Halton Borough Council to apply to the Government for Quality Contract powers if sufficient progress is not being made to meet the wider Local Transport Plan and Bus Strategy objectives.

Section 124 (1) provides that:

A local transport authority, or two or more authorities acting jointly, may make a quality contracts scheme covering the whole or any part of their area, or combined area, if they are satisfied that:

- A quality contracts scheme is the only practicable way of implementing the policies set out in their bus strategy or strategies in the area to which the proposed scheme relates;
- The proposed scheme will implement those policies in such a way, which is economic, efficient and effective.

The Government have reduced the notice period local authorities have to comply with when introducing Quality Contract powers under the terms of the Transport Act 2000 to 21 months. Under Quality Contract powers the local authority tenders out the operation of whole or parts of the local bus network, whilst maintaining control of frequencies, fares and standards of service. The provisions of the regulations relating to Quality Contracts

enable local authorities to purchase vehicles and lease these to successful tendering operators.

Ticketing and Affordability

Halton Borough Council offer concessionary travel in line with the national scheme as set out in the Transport Act 2000. It currently provides half price concessionary travel for elderly and disabled residents in the Borough. This concession is available for journeys both within the Borough and cross boundary journeys.

In addition, Halton residents who are registered as blind persons are eligible for a free local bus pass. Children under 5 years of age are also eligible for free travel, and half price travel is offered for children aged 5-16 years of age. The Council has currently issued 18,500 Pensioners half price bus passes, and 1,978 bus passes for the disabled. In addition, 380 Pensioners residents have taken up an offer for a discounted Senior Citizen Railcard, which is administered by National Rail.
All of the above concessionary travel passes are based on a smart card based system. Cheshire County Council administers the scheme on behalf of Halton Borough Council.

Pre-Paid Ticketing

Arriva North West offer the passenger the choice of area based pre-paid tickets – all of which can only be purchased on board bus services, offers a mixture of day, weekly and tickets valid both for journeys within Halton on Arriva North West services and on any Arriva service within the North West and Wales. Halton Transport offers the Halton Hopper pre-paid ticket is available in two formats (weekly and monthly), and can be purchased at any of the Halton Direct Link offices. The Hopper ticket only covers travel within the borough. Over the period of LTP3, the Council and its partners will seek to secure funding to enhance the network of ticket sales outlets, potentially through the use of new smartcard technology.

Travelsafe

Halton Borough Council recognises the importance of an effective public transport network as a tool to reduce social exclusion. However, crime and disorder on the public transport network is perceived as a barrier to greater use. The Council, local bus operators and Cheshire Police a Halton Travelsafe initiative, which aims to:-

- Stem the rise in crime associated with public transport;
- Rebuild confidence in the safety of the system by both operators and passengers;
- Better targeting of resources to address crime and disorder across the public transport network.

Key initiatives to date include:

- Installation of close circuit TV cameras and coverage on parts of the bus network;
- The introduction of a ‘Women’s Safe Transport ‘door to door’ transport scheme in partnership with Halton Community Transport;
- Safer Waiting Areas.

Therefore, as part of the Bus Strategy the Council and partners will seek to:

- Consolidate and expand the successful Travelsafe initiative;
- Further develop and improve the ‘Safer Waiting Areas’ initiative (communications, CCTV and staff presence);
- Work in partnership with other local authorities as part of the North West Travelsafe Forum;

- Set up a dedicated freephone telephone line to report vandalism or anti-social behaviour/crime on the public transport network;
- Involve of the wider business community; and
- Work in partnership with community organisations and youth groups to reduce anti-social behaviour on the public transport network.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to bus would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport. However, it should be noted that low bus occupancy could have a detrimental effect.

Economic regeneration: The use of buses and improved bus infrastructure would increase accessibility particularly in deprived communities allowing people to access employment more easily, by enhancing access to the airports, retail parks and other facilities.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of bus transport, particularly in deprived areas, will assist in providing access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The provision of enhanced visibility around bus stops, the greater use of CCTV at transport interchanges and on board buses, along with increased use of bus transport, will help improve personal security and perceptions of crime.

Quality of life: The provision of low emission buses should help improve air quality.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for buses on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider bus infrastructure enhancements across Halton.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of cross boundary bus services will help promote economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of the bus strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal, Children and Young People, Employment, Learning and Skills and Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The Council financially supports a number of bus services which in partnership with local bus operators can be effective in reducing carbon emissions through investment and a package of sustainable measures.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The provision of better bus services and infrastructure, particularly in deprived areas, will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of better bus services and infrastructure, particularly in deprived areas, will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The provision of better bus services and infrastructure will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its bus infrastructure to ensure that bus usage is an efficient and desirable form of transport.

Bus Strategy

The Council is vision for the continued development of the local bus network within the Borough is.

To work with bus operators, neighbouring authorities and the voluntary sector continuing to develop and improve an accessible, integrated bus network that ensures that all residents have good access to key facilities and opportunities both within Halton and across the wider travel work area and. benefit from a choice of high quality, low carbon and safe bus based public transport services and facilities."

The Council will strive to:

Ensure the provision of reliable services which are attractive to use;
Ensure services are fully accessible to all members of the community;
Provide high quality information on passenger transport services within the Borough provided through a variety of channels to suit the needs of the user;
Provide safe services and infrastructure;
Work to make services affordable to use;
Provide a minimum level of service to communities across the network;
Continue to provide Travel Training for vulnerable young people and adults;
Continue to develop demand responsive "Door to Door" type services;
Ensure better utilisation of passenger transport provision for Halton Borough residents through the better co-ordination of different vehicle fleets;
Provide excellent interchange opportunities across the network;
Ensure user and stakeholder involvement on the continued development of the network;
Give priority to the development of new improved services to enable Halton residents to access health facilities and employment, training and work based learning opportunities; and
Make improvements to key cross boundary bus services.
Work with neighbouring authorities and the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority in developing and improving bus service provision and facilities to encourage greater use of public transport.

Each of these commitments will be backed up by a series of passenger service quality guarantees jointly developed by Halton Council and the bus operators.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 3

Cycling

Introduction

Cycling is a key mode of transport that can offer a sustainable transport alternative to the car and has many of the same benefits as walking; refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 21. In Halton, this is particularly important, as the area suffers generally from high levels of deprivation. Cycling can offer a safe and affordable means of accessing key services and thereby can overcome many of the transport barriers often faced by people who do not own or have access to a car.

The latest Transport White Paper, 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Transport Happen' recognises that cycling and walking present an easy and cheap way to incorporate physical activity into people's everyday lives. As well as the health benefits, they offer other benefits when they replace vehicle trips, including reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion. Improving the walking and cycling environment can dramatically improve local accessibility with positive benefits for growth and the local economy.

The Department of Health's Public White Paper also emphasises this, stating that active travel and physical activity need to become the norm in communities.

The previous Government in its White Paper on the Future of Transport: A Network for 2030 recognised the important contributions that cycling can have on reducing pollution and congestion and increasing physical activity and committed itself to encouraging more people to cycle. The recent Government publication the 'Future of Urban Transport' also makes reference to the benefits of cycling and compares England's low rate of cycling with much higher rates in other European countries.

Throughout the period of LTP1 and LTP2 substantial investment has been made to develop a network of routes within the borough with funding provided from the LTP and many other partner organisations. Footway conversions, to combined shared use footway/cycleways and cycle lanes have been installed as part of quality corridor improvements. Significant lengths of Greenway have also been constructed throughout the Borough.

Whilst the network has been developed significantly in recent years, there is still a great deal of work that needs to be undertaken to establish a fully connective cycle route network throughout the whole of the Borough. There is also much that could be done to encourage the use of cycling.

Halton now has a number strategically placed cycle counters, which constantly monitor cycling trips in the Borough. The resulting data provides a sound basis on which to set our performance targets and to monitor progress. However, it is recognised that Halton's monitoring of cycling needs to be extended, as the sample sizes are still relatively small. It is therefore our intention to increase the number of counters deployed and look at alternative types of counts such as cycle parking counts to enable a more informed picture of cycling in the Borough to be obtained.

Prior to the commencement of the first LTP, Runcorn had the basis of a good network of cycleways (18km) but this was in need of maintenance, with much of it overgrown with vegetation. Widnes, on the other hand, only had a few on highway cycle-lanes, which

failed to meet the need for a comprehensive network. Therefore, it was necessary during the course of our first and second LTPs to carryout a substantial amount of work to establish a basic and useable cycle network. In order to achieve this, the Council, in conjunction with its partners, took every opportunity to integrate improvements to cycling routes and facilities, with other funding and proposals. This approach to improving the facilities available for cyclists has proven to be very cost effective and has enabled significant improvements to be made in a relatively short time span. It is intended to continue this approach and use measures identified by Cycle England's benchmarking and demonstration towns and cities.

In the first phase of the Cycling Demonstration Towns programme six towns were selected. They were each funded at a rate of £5 per head of population for each of the three years of the programme between October 2005 and October 2008. The local authority match funded the programme to give a rate of £10 per annum for each head of population. A summary of the principal findings from the first phase of the programme is as follows:

- There was an average increase in cycling across all six towns of 27%;
- The increase is the result of more people starting to cycle, or returning to cycling again, not just the result of cyclists using their bikes for more trips;
- Cycling to school has more than doubled where towns invested most in children;
- Cycling investment generates town-wide increase in physical activity;
- These results were not found in comparable towns that were not involved in the first phase of the programme; and
- Investment in cycling pays back at least 3:1, as significant health benefits can be gained from cycling.

Whilst Cycling Demonstration Towns have proven that significant increases in cycling can be achieved through such initiatives, it should be recognised that we are starting from a very low base when compared with other parts of Europe. In order to achieve such higher levels of cycling, significant investment needs to be made over a sustained period of decades. If the £10 level of spend was used by Halton it would equate to approximately £1.2m per annum which would be difficult to afford, at least in the shorter term.

Consultation was carried out by Mott McDonald as part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2007 with cycle user groups. The outcome of these surveys showed that 50% of respondents used the off carriageway cycle routes to travel to work.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to cycle for relatively short trips would make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of cycling can provide accessibility to local employment sites, for example, the rapidly developing 3MG site.

Equality of opportunity: The use of cycling, particularly in deprived areas, will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The use of cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The greater use of cycling would provide a critical mass of cyclists whereby cycling on the highway would be seen as the norm and other road users would therefore have a far greater awareness of cyclists; this would enhance road safety for cyclists along with the continued promotion of Bikeability, the National Standards for Cycle Training. Greater use of cycling on routes remote from motorised transport would also enhance the security of the individual.

Quality of life: Cycling would assist with the provision of quiet and pollution free transport.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for cyclists on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider cycle infrastructure enhancements.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of cross boundary cycle routes will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR; it would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programmes, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the cycle strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Halton is developing its Greenway routes in order to promote and enable the greater use of cycling.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of cycling has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The encouragement of the use of cycling along with infrastructure enhancements, particularly in deprived areas, will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The use of cycling, particularly in deprived areas, will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The encouragement of the use of cycling and enhanced infrastructure, for example, Greenways, that connect with destinations out of the Borough will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas. Cross boundary working is a strategic aim of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This can be delivered through partnership working with neighbouring authorities, as one of the Housing Growth Point legacies

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its cycling and highway infrastructure, for example, by cutting back vegetation on segregated routes to ensure that cycle use is desirable and safe.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

Construct the New Mersey Gateway to enable improvements to be made in the provision of cross Mersey cycling trips on the SJB and implementation of the recommendations of the Sustainable Transport Strategy;
Use accessibility planning to identify and develop a network of cycle routes, both on and off road, that complement the existing network and which target routes that link residential areas with local facilities and services such as employment, educational establishments, health and welfare services, shops, public transport interchanges, recreational facilities, and routes that link communities;
Learn from cycling demonstration towns and cities and their successes in encouraging more people to cycle more safely, more often;
Consider the implementation of 20mph zones in residential areas;
Continue to identify and implement cross boundary routes; and other actions of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).
Continue the development of multi-user routes such as Greenways to meet cyclists' needs;
Consider the needs of cyclists on all new and improved highway schemes, including those proposed by developers, and where appropriate incorporate cycle improvements into these schemes;
Ensure that the network is formed of high quality routes to a consistent standard that the cyclists can become familiar with, taking into account the need to accommodate the local environment;
Identify and implement a strong identifiable signage strategy of all new and existing routes, and continue to promote these routes through the publication of cycle maps;
Promote and provide the three levels of the National Standards Bikeability cycle training for all ages through Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity;
Ensure that all cycle tracks are maintained, inspected and cleaned on a regular basis to ensure that any debris, which would discourage cyclists, is removed, e.g., glass.
Implement a programme of high quality long and short stay cycle parking facilities in town centres, at public transport interchanges and at other appropriate public locations, to help cycling feature as part of end-to-end public transport journeys;
Ensure through the planning application process that all development sites both residential and commercial, have appropriate levels of cycle parking provision in accordance with the Transport Supplementary Planning Document of the LDF;
Provide the opportunity for liaison with all relevant parties on the development and promotion of all cycle activities and encourage the establishment of bicycle user groups;
Promote and encourage cycling through the development of Commuter and School Travel Plans. Promote and publicise cycling as a sustainable and healthy alternative to the private car;
Support, promote and publicise campaigns and other strategies (e.g., National Bike Week, Green Transport initiatives) to encourage more people to cycle safely;
Work in partnership with other organisations in order to promote cycling and develop the cycle route network; and
Work in partnership with the Police to ensure effective enforcement to protect cyclists and cycling facilities.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 4

Demand Management

Introduction

Demand management provides an active means to control demand for travel and thereby reduce congestion. In addition, the control of demand for travel has the benefits of reducing air pollution and the production of greenhouse gases resulting from a reduction in unnecessary trips.

Demand management can be implemented in a number of ways, for example:

- Limiting the duration of stay for car parking, particularly in town centre areas, both on and off street;
- Charging for car parking;
- Limiting road space, in particular allocating existing all purpose road space to bus and cycle lanes;
- Road user charging, for example, the charging of tolls as proposed as part of the Mersey Gateway Project;
- Smarter choice measures and incentives; and
- The use of planning conditions to ensure smarter choice measures.

Where demand management is put in place there needs to be an enhancement of provision for other sustainable modes of transport.

Parking

Throughout the periods of LTP1 and 2, the Council pursued a free to user car parking strategy. Parking studies had shown there were no significant capacity issues in the town centre car parks other than in Runcorn Town Centre where there was a case for better management of short stay/long stay provision, once the impact of town centre regeneration schemes was known. The effects of regeneration in all three town centres are now starting to impact on parking and congestion. There is therefore an opportunity to review this strategy. However, as the majority of the off street car parks are not in the Council's ownership, any changes to the way in which car parks operate will have to be developed in partnership with the relevant private sector agencies. The parking strategy is described in detail in Primary Transport Strategy No.10.

Development Control

In recent years, the Council has managed new developments by setting maximum limits on parking spaces to be provided as part of the development. The standards applied have been based on those established in the Transport Supplementary Planning Document of the LDF .

To complement these measures, Section 106 agreement contributions conditions are sought for public transport improvements and implementation of travel plans, which will assist to minimise traffic growth. Further information on these matters is available in Primary Transport Strategy No: 5.

Mersey Gateway: Road User Charging

Road user charging is central to the Council's strategy for tackling congestion. The Mersey Gateway intervention to tackle congestion is set in the context of a complementary road-user charging regime ensuring that the maximum benefits are fully realised. DfT originally requested that tolling be explored as a means of supporting the delivery of the Mersey Gateway (MG) project.

The proposed charging regime has been developed through the modelling of trips using the extended SATURN computer model. In addition to generating the investment required to deliver the new bridge, the tolling regime will provide a lever to manage demand, so that free flow traffic conditions are maintained on the new link, thereby locking in the delivery of the projected service reliability and standards throughout the concession period. The level of charges modelled has been based on the current Mersey Tunnel tolls with a local resident's/frequent user discount.

The tolling objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project are as follows:

- To manage demand to ensure the delivery of transport and environment benefits, by maintaining free flow traffic conditions on the MG and SJB and delivering initiatives to encourage greater levels of public transport use, walking and cycling on the SJB;
- To allow successful delivery of the Mersey Gateway (MG) scheme within funding limits agreed with Ministers and Councillors;
- To operate a concession scheme, within the limits of affordability, so as to mitigate the impact of tolls on local users who are currently able to use the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) free of charge, many of whom are frequently crossing the river and some fall within social inclusion target groups; and
- To transfer demand risk to the concessionaire for the duration of the concession, by allowing the operator to manage that demand through the toll charged, within the constraints of the legal powers and consistent with the objective of protecting local users.

Demand management objectives coupled with affordability considerations, dictate that most or all private car and commercial cross-river traffic between Runcorn and Widnes must be subject to tolls. This includes traffic across the previously free-to-use SJB. Its proximity to the new MG means that if left un-tolled it would be impossible to maintain free flow traffic conditions and prevent substantial revenue leakage, thereby jeopardising the demand management objectives and the funding projections explained above.

The alternative, albeit much less effective than tolling the SJB, was to impose significant traffic restrictions on the SJB, to protect the delivery of free flow traffic conditions and prevent revenue leakage; effectively forcing most cross-river traffic to use the tolled MG.

As identified in the third tolling objective above (local residents tolls), Halton Borough Council is firm in its commitment to reduce the burden of tolls on local residents. Many of these residents are on low incomes and need to cross the river on a frequent basis for work, health or family reasons. They are currently able to use the SJB free of charge, and the imposition of tolls may be a significant additional financial burden for many. Any discounted or concession scheme for toll charging will need to be constructed so as to be acceptable within the terms of UK and EU law in respect of discriminatory pricing and State Aid.

Discussions on the impact of tolling on adjacent highway authorities will of course continue, to ensure that the demand for travel is addressed and managed at all road

crossings of the Mersey, in the sub region. In the proposed concession scheme the toll levels assumed by bidders will determine the overall project revenue required to support a bid. In addition to presenting the overall project revenue required to finance their bid, bidders will also have to take into account the extent of the economic interest in the forecast toll revenue they are prepared to offer to Halton Borough Council. Halton Borough Council will use their share of toll revenue to fund any discounts on tolls for local residents or frequent users through a separate concession scheme run by the authority.

It is accepted by HBC that the protection of local users must not undermine the overall successful delivery of the first tolling objective above (demand management). In other words, should funding and affordability issues arise due to unforeseen cost increases, HBC recognise that any discount or concession scheme may have to be pared back to ensure the delivery of the Mersey Gateway project.

The Mersey Gateway project received approval of its orders and applications on 20th December 2010. These included confirmation of the Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 for the tolling of the proposed bridge and confirmation of a Road User Charging Order for the SJB.

Mersey Gateway: Reallocation of Road Space

The removal of through traffic from the SJB will provide an opportunity to re-establish the existing bridge for local transport use and sustainable methods of transport such as cycling and walking together with public transport. Complementary measures include priority schemes for public transport, cyclist and pedestrians, reducing the road space available to general-purpose traffic and down grading linkages to the strategic highway network. Details of these sustainable transport proposals are described in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy. Extending the tolling charge to SJB protects these rebalanced local transport priorities against future congestion on the local road network connecting to SJB.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The implementation of road user charging for both the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and the SJB would be a means of controlling motorised vehicle use. Car parking management in town centres would also encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes.

Economic regeneration: Income raised through Mersey Gateway would help fund sustainable transport infrastructure that will encourage economic growth.

Equality of opportunity: Income raised through Mersey Gateway would help fund sustainable transport infrastructure which would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: Less car dominated travel will encourage healthy modes of travel along with greater road and personal safety.

Quality of life: Road user charging as part of the Mersey Gateway proposals will ensure that traffic growth can be controlled. Also less car dominated travel will create a more pleasant environment.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will be largely financed through the charging of tolls.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The reduction of congestion will help provide economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of the demand management strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The use of tolling as part of the Mersey Gateway Project will help to regulate possible growth in traffic and encourage trips by more sustainable modes.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The encouragement of non car modes such as walking and cycling will promote more healthy lifestyles

Access to employment, services and social activities: Income raised through Mersey Gateway would help fund sustainable transport infrastructure that would enhance accessibility in general.

LCR wider links: Road user charging for Mersey Gateway could be operated in a complementary manner with the Mersey Tunnels.

Maintain transport assets: The Mersey Gateway Project will be largely funded through tolls charged by the concessionaire. The concessionaire will be responsible for the maintenance of the Mersey Gateway

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

Deliver the parking strategy, refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 10;
Implement the road user charging for the new Mersey Bridge and the existing SJB as part of the Mersey Gateway Project;
Implement a road user charging policy for Mersey Gateway in a complementary manner with the Mersey Tunnels; and
Ensure that where private car use is managed there are suitable sustainable modes of travel available.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 5

Development Control

Introduction

The synchronisation of transport policies and land use planning is one of the key measures available to minimise the need to travel and to encourage travel by more sustainable modes.

Halton's current planning framework is set out in the saved policies from the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in April 2005, which was prepared in conjunction with LTP1. The UDP set out the spatial priorities for new development across the Borough, sought to ensure accessibility to new development including the use of transport assessments / travel plans and safeguarded land for key transport schemes.

The overarching spatial strategy focused on promoting urban regeneration supported by sustainable urban extensions at Upton Rocks (Widnes) and Sandymoor / Runcorn East. The former has largely been delivered, whilst Runcorn East is being progressed as a mixed use development with new housing, office and science based employment together with new sustainable transport infrastructure. The UDP also included proposals for the rail linked freight park at Ditton currently being developed as the Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) which will allow the transfer of long distance freight from road to rail.

The UDP policies will be replaced by the new Local Development Framework (LDF), with the Core Strategy document providing the strategic overview to guide development across the Borough in the period to 2026. Development of the Core Strategy and the LTP3 are being progressed in tandem to ensure ongoing policy co-ordination.

The Core Strategy seeks to build upon the successes of the UDP and LTP2, and LTP3 will contribute towards the completion of regeneration projects currently underway and the delivery of the wider Core Strategy objectives, including;

<u>Key Areas of Change at:</u>

- East Runcorn including Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (DSIC);
- West Runcorn (including Runcorn Old Town centre, Runcorn Waterfront and Mersey Gateway Port)
- Southern Widnes (including Widnes Waterfront and Widnes Town Centre)
- 3MG; the Mersey Multimodal Gateway

<u>Ongoing regeneration objectives.</u>

- Castlefields regeneration;
- Regeneration areas associated with the Mersey Gateway Project including West Bank, Runcorn Old Town and Astmoor
- New housing areas such as North Widnes and Runcorn Waterfront

The development management process will rigorously apply the relevant planning policies to ensure that development is accessible, safe and limits the need to travel whilst supporting modal shift to less polluting travel modes.

Appropriate policy and guidance will be produced and made available to developers to guide the design and delivery of high quality schemes incorporating appropriate transport measures and infrastructure.

Partnership working has been shown to maximise the effectiveness of expertise and resources, and help deliver higher quality developments. This approach has proved successful on developments such as Castlefields and Sandymoor, where the Council worked with others to prepare detailed masterplans that were subsequently adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and used to guide the development. On smaller scale developments early engagement by way of pre-application discussions may be sufficient to avoid abortive work and secure the highest quality outcomes.

Infrastructure capacity is a problem at certain locations in the Borough, however constantly expecting developers to build extra capacity into the network is not always a sustainable option. In certain cases, demand reduction through travel plans, modal shift and other demand management approaches may be more appropriate. Where new infrastructure is provided the Council may have to have regard to ongoing maintenance and running costs e.g. traffic signals, retaining walls, street furniture.

Travel plans, which encourage 'smarter' more sustainable, travel choices, are recognised as playing a major role in promoting modal shift and improving accessibility. The Council will develop guidance for applicants on the form and requirement for travel plans that will be required to support certain development proposals.

Parking availability can have a major influence on modal choice and assist with demand management, but this needs to be carefully balanced with the availability of alternative forms of access, and resulting highway safety issues:

New highways will only be adopted by the Council where they are designed and constricted to appropriate standards, and where required are supported by independent Road Safety Audits.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Development control will play a vital role in creating sustainable communities whereby the need to travel is reduced and where travel can be undertaken by more sustainable modes.

Economic regeneration: Development control will play a vital role in creating sustainable economic growth where travel to new developments can be made by sustainable modes.

Equality of opportunity: New developments that allow ready access to employment and services will benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: New developments that encourage the use of sustainable travel modes particularly, walking and cycling will encourage healthier lifestyles. New housing developments will be designed to have self-enforcing low speed limits to enhance road safety. The greater presence of people on street in non- car dominated developments will also enhance security for the individual.

Quality of life: Developments which are designed to encourage the use of walking and cycling will be better in terms of noise and air quality. The lack of dominance of the car will also make them a far more pleasant environment.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy and Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy, will ensure that sustainable transport access is enhanced both for cross river movements and within Runcorn and Widnes.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of major development schemes such as 3MG, Widnes Waterfront, DSIC and new housing areas help provide economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of a sustainable development strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The application of adopted planning policy though development control will play an important role in facilitating travel by sustainable modes.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The incorporation of facilities in developments to encourage use of cycling will have significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health.

Access to employment, services and social activities: New developments will be designed to allow ready access to employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: Developments will be located to provide easy access to transport hubs in order to link with the wider LCR, including St. Helens and Warrington through the Mid Mersey Growth Point legacy

Maintain transport assets: Developments will be designed to ensure easy and minimal maintenance of the transport infrastructure provided as part of them.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

Provide suitable guidance

Produce a Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document.

Investigate the production of a design guide, possibly in co-operation with neighbouring authorities, to reflect the principles set out in 'Manual for Streets volumes 1 & 2', and apply these principles as appropriate to the local network, to improve the public realm, whilst aiming to reduce carbon emissions.

Produce a summary Guide to Travel Planning document outlining what is expected of developers when producing a travel plan, and how these will be secured through conditions or agreements, including for speculative commercial and larger or higher density residential developments

Incorporate lessons form the Merseyside SPD on accessibility requirements, into guidance for this particular element of transport assessments (also reflecting DfT's 'Guidance on Transport Assessments'), to ensure that all new developments are accessible to all, and developers understand the detail required of a transport assessment for a particular development, and where appropriate make use of the Council's accessibility planning software, where appropriate.

Safety

Ensure that development proposals incorporate appropriate on and off-site traffic management measures to ensure highway safety and encourage walking, cycling and improve the quality of local neighbourhoods; and

Apply the principles of set out in the Designing for Community Safety SDP in developing site layouts and detailed design of new highway infrastructure.

Partnership working

Continue to develop existing partnerships with organisations such as the Homes and Communities Agency and seek new partnership arrangements where beneficial; and

Work with adjoining authorities in developing guidance documents.

Travel Plans

Secure travel plans relating to developments, through planning conditions, with conditions for specific measures where appropriate, along with a Section 106 agreement with agreed outcomes for larger developments requiring an agreement for other issues.

Seek Section 106 contributions for the monitoring of travel plans.

Concentrate travel plan resources on developments where there are congestion problems or likely problems as a result of the development, and where the development of travel plans will have maximum impact (e.g. sites with high numbers of employees).

Secure residential travel plans where appropriate (e.g. high densities/accessible locations).

Aim to secure area wide travel plans, where a larger area may benefit from a single development taking responsibility for co-ordinating the travel plan

Adoptions

Require that developers commission independent Road Safety Audits for new highways or alterations to existing highways, and implement their recommendations as appropriate;

Apply 20mph speed limits in new residential areas;

When enacted, implement legislation contained within the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, to secure Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) for the management of surface water, and apply the principles contained in Planning Policy Statement 25 on surface water management; and

Materials used for the construction of new highways should be sustainable, durable, easy to maintain, fit for purpose and appropriate to local character.

Parking standards

Continue to impose maximum parking standards where appropriate. Minimum standards may also be appropriate for some types of development and location;

Accept reduced parking levels in more accessible locations, related to the level of accessibility resulting from the transport assessment (and possibly SPD assessment) and/or where public transport is improved through a Section 106 agreement and it can be proven that this will reduce parking demand;

Encourage shared parking between uses at different times of the day;

Implement parking standards for those with disabilities, cycles and motorcycles;

Develop a development control policy on electric vehicle charging points and;

Aim to ensure that on street parking relating to a development does not pose a hazard to highway safety.

Securing enhanced capacity

Capacity improvements will continue to be sought through Section 106 planning agreements where appropriate, to cater for traffic movements associated with major developments;

This approach will be balanced with demand management, and more investment sought through planning agreements in improved accessibility by healthier and less polluting modes e.g. walking, cycling, public transport facilities , further implementation and expansion of the greenway network and other Rights of Way Improvement Plan interventions, and links between employment sites and areas of high deprivation. Developers will be encouraged to explore these solutions in the early stages of planning;

Developers will be encouraged to make better use of existing infrastructure;

Contributions will be sought to help subsidise bus (and other public transport) services, where appropriate commercial services do not exist;

Commuted sums will be sought through Section 106 agreements for operation and maintenance of new transport infrastructure;

In certain areas, a holistic approach will be taken to the assessment of infrastructure needs, with contributions being sought from a number of developments towards a package of transport improvements, to deal with the overall impact; and

The Council will seek to use the Advance Payment Codes (APC) process, and impose additional administration and supervision fees in relation to highway adoption agreements, after the initial agreed timescale has expired, to encourage timely adoption of highways.

Added value can be gained from investment in infrastructure by pooling requirements from a number of developments, including those outside the Borough, in a single improvement. Therefore a wider “joined up” view will be taken where possible, with a single improvement developed to include the needs of a number of developments.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 6

Freight Distribution

Introduction

This freight strategy has been informed by the Department for Transport's 'guidance on Local Transport Plans' 2009 and the DfT's 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS): The Logistics Perspective' 2008.

It is recognised that freight distribution lies predominately within the private sector, but a local authority can influence the provision of effective freight movement through highway and planning powers and also through freight quality partnerships. To ensure that the freight strategy best serves the needs of both the freight industry and local communities, consultation has taken place with local authorities, representatives of the freight and logistics industry through the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership and the Freight Working Group.

The movement of goods is vitally important in supporting the economic success of Halton and the Liverpool City Region. In the Liverpool City Region the Port of Liverpool, the airport and associated infrastructure, contributes 34,000 jobs and £1.1 billion of the GVA every year.

The strategy has pursued the dual theme of freight's importance to the economy, and the need to reduce the environmental and social costs of freight: noise, congestion, air pollution, accidents and carbon emissions as highlighted within 'DaSTS: The Logistics Perspective'. Provided that freight distribution facilities are suitably sited then this industry provides an economic opportunity rather than an environmental problem.

To inform Halton's first LTP, Halton and the Merseyside Authorities commissioned the Merseyside Freight Study in order to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding freight. LTP2 updated and built upon this as the initial freight strategies began to be implemented. The freight strategy for LTP3 has again built on past success, for example the developing Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG), by working closely with Merseyside.

There are two, freight only lines within the Borough; the line from Ditton to Warrington Arpley, with its various siding connections serving a number of sites, including Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, and the line from Runcorn Station down to the industrial sites adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal. The Ditton to Warrington Arpley line is important for trans-modal rail freight. There are already rail-linked sites in the Ditton and South Widnes areas which are now incorporated into the growing 3MG freight park.

The Manchester Ship Canal is a unique inland waterway. It is capable of handling vessels of up to 15,000 tonnes to Runcorn. Runcorn Docks can accommodate vessels up to 6,500 tonnes and specialises in the import and export of bulk minerals for the chemical, glass and pottery industries. The port, with its excellent road connections has strong location advantages for these industries.

Runcorn lay-by, adjoining Runcorn Docks is the seaward end of feedstock pipelines, serving the North West's chemical industry. Large volumes of hazardous chemicals are imported and exported in this way, without impact on the local highway network.

The Mersey Gateway Port (formerly known as the Port of Weston) also lies alongside the Manchester Ship Canal and is being considered for redevelopment.

The Mersey Gateway Port located just a couple of miles from the 3MG terminal is within easy reach of Manchester and Liverpool, as well as being in close proximity to the M62, M57 and M56 motorway hub, the West Coast Main Line, the increasingly important Manchester Ship Canal and the Mersey Gateway Crossing. The site was recently awarded its Harbour Revision Order, giving the go ahead for developments that will realise the full potential of the long-under-utilised site. Following the planned developments, the Mersey Gateway Port will be capable of handling ocean-going container ships. With its extensive road and rail connections, the Mersey Gateway Port has the potential to be a major new facility for the North West. Having this complimentary facility in the borough only strengthens the position of 3MG as a freight hub for the region.

The River Weaver Canal can only accommodate smaller sea vessels of up to 1,000 tonnes and therefore with ships becoming larger this canal has less potential. Traditional canals of up to 50 tonnes capacity cannot be expected to have any significant freight future.

The Port of Liverpool is of key economic significance to the LCR and the North West in general. The Port carried 34 million tonnes in 2008 and is ranked 4th in the UK for container traffic. Over 3,000 people are employed in the 200 organisations within the dock complex.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport lies to the western side of the Borough, north of the River Mersey. With a runway length of 2,286 metres it can accommodate all but the largest heavily laden planes. The inability to cater for fully laded 747-400 planes on trans-Atlantic flights without a longer runway excludes the airport to a larger extent from the long haul market, but in the longer term the Airport Master plan makes provision for a runway extension. The airport however benefits from being able to cater for night flights, an essential feature of air cargo capability. In 2008 the airport handled 3,740 tonnes of air freight.

Halton along with the Merseyside Authorities has created the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership (MHFQP). The MHFQP is designed to act as a forum for liaison between the private sector freight operators and the Local Authorities who can assist with sustainable distribution through their powers as Highway and Planning Authorities. The MHFQP has also set up a web site known as Merseyfreight (www.merseyfreight.org) aimed to assist the private sector with such issues as roadwork's information.

Multimodal Freight

The LCR are planning to deliver the concept of SuperPort which will integrate many existing and proposed freight developments. The vision for SuperPort is: 'To bring together the strengths of the ports, airports and freight community to create a 'SuperPort' for freight and passenger operations within the LCR that will become a key driver of its economy. It will create the most effective and cost efficient environment for freight cargo logistics and passenger transit in the UK'.

The SuperPort concept encompasses ICT, professional services, transportation and skills development. Transport infrastructure includes the strategic freight network and rail network. Passenger transport services linking the airport, cruise liner terminal and city centre will also be important for the passenger element of SuperPort. Enabling people to access work and education will be important in skills development and employment.

SuperPort will include the following existing freight facilities:

- Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG);
- Mersey Gateway Port;
- Port of Liverpool;
- Manchester Ship Canal;
- Cruise liner facility;
- Knowsley rail freight terminal;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport; and
- Port of Garston.

It is also intended that SuperPort would include the following proposed freight developments and transport infrastructure:

- Expansion of 3MG;
- Mersey Gateway;
- Port of Weston;
- Expansion of LJLA;
- Post Panamax facility; and
- Langdon River Berth.

Atlantic Gateway is a framework for collaboration with the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions to enhance sustainable economic growth. The framework will support and enhance the SuperPort proposals.

The framework looks to promote collaboration to add value and improve effective implementation through the identification of strategic priorities, advocacy and case making, coordination and collaborative leadership, developing new actions and solutions, and informing emerging policy.

The Atlantic Gateway framework is based around four themes:

- Innovation in key sectors;
- Global gateway;
- Sustainable infrastructure; and
- Creating places that attract and retain talent.

The Global Gateway theme is of particular significance to the freight strategy. The key elements within it are:

- Port and Ship Canal facilities;
- Northern Hub;
- Rail Freight Logistics Network;
- Manchester and Liverpool Airports development;
- High Speed 2; and
- Next generation access digital infrastructure.

3MG is a project of great importance not just for the Borough of Halton but also at a national, regional and sub-regional level. Building upon the existing rail related commerce the 3MG Masterplan adopted in 2004 puts in place the project infrastructure to develop a rail freight park for the 21st century. This will allow the park to meet its full regenerative potential, creating jobs in the local community, transforming the built environment by bringing into productive use derelict sites along with productive sites and

creating a high quality facility. 3MG has several distinct advantages over other potential sites, which include:

- Existing inter-modal users;
- Direct access onto the West Coast Main Line (WCML) capable of accommodating long intermodal trains at a competitive loading gauge;
- Close proximity to the Port of Weston;
- The opportunity to reuse previously developed land; and
- The opportunity to achieve critical mass by extending the existing rail linked developments.

Further support for the Council's position was provided by the Northwest Development Agency's designation of 3MG as a Strategic Regional Site.

The masterplan for 3MG has been developed collaboratively between public and private sector partners. Its delivery will also be dependent upon a collaborative approach that utilises the statutory powers and project management skill of the public sector and the commercial drive and insight of the private sector.

At a more local level the provision of 3MG will:

- Bring into use extensive areas of derelict and contaminated land that currently act as a deterrent to most forms of new investment;
- Create a significant number of jobs for local people; and
- Provide a real opportunity to make lasting improvements in the quality of the built environment.

The objectives of the 3MG project are:

- To meet the NWDA and the former SRA's objectives of realising the potential of this existing rail interchange site to the full, in order to underpin the economy of the region (and the Merseyside sub region) and to respect national policy on rail freight as a means of reducing emissions to the atmosphere and widening our rail infrastructure.
- To develop up to 3.5m sq.ft. of warehousing, reclaiming brownfield land, providing new rail and road infrastructure.
- To promote Halton as a logistics hub for the region.
- A co-ordinated approach, working in partnership with the public and private sector.
- The creation of up to 5000 new jobs and maximise the employment opportunities for local people.
- Attract private investment and blue chip retailers.

The progress to date and future developments for the 3MG project are as follows:

- The Masterplan was adopted by Halton Borough Council in 2004
- Funding has been secured from NWDA - £7.9 million, ERDF Objective 2 - £2 million, WREN - £72,000 and £50,000 from Biffa.
- £100 million Private sector investment
- The operational Intermodal terminal facility handles in excess of 120,000 containers per year including over 65,000 containers by rail
- The site has daily links to / from key deep sea ports in Tilbury and Felixstowe
- The rail freight park covers 200 hectares

- There is 750,000 sq. ft. of existing distribution warehouses, with ongoing construction of 800,000 sq. ft. of new buildings, potentially rising to 3.5 million sq. ft in the future
- Construction of four new rail reception sidings will allow an increased terminal capacity of up to 16 trains per day
- Building up to 60,000 sq. ft of prestigious office space

As part of the development a new 21-acre park on former farmland adjacent to the residential community of Halebank has been completed. The new park includes woodland planting and a wildlife water feature, which incorporates a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS), and noise attenuation measures. Over 1000 metres of new 3-metre wide footpath and cycleway linking Halebank Road through to Hale Road have also been provided.

- Agreement has been reached with Network Rail for provision of new rail sidings
- Agreement has been reached with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council for works to be carried out as part of the A5300 link to the western part of the site and agreement with Network Rail for the link road to bridge over the Liverpool Branch of the WCML. The design of this link road was completed in December 2009
- In May 2010 the first 528,000 ft2 of distribution space became operational and;
- 442 jobs have recently been created.

Waterborne Freight

Government planning and transport policy supports and encourages the use of inland waterways, particularly for the transport of freight. 'DaSTS: The Logistics Perspective' states "It is Government policy to promote alternatives to road transport for both passenger and freight movements. This is partly to reduce congestion and partly to reduce the environmental impact of road transport. Inland waterways have the potential to assist in both these objectives".

High capacity inland waterways, which allow the penetration of shipping inland, such as the Manchester Ship Canal, can compete with the road network provided that the destination is close to the canal.

Regionally, the role of the Manchester Ship Canal in the transport of freight is supported within Regional Planning Guidance, the Regional Transport Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy. The Canal and its corridor is regarded as a key regional and national asset.

Currently, the Canal transports some 7 million tonnes of freight per annum, but with the assistance of a supportive policy framework, it could transport 16 million tonnes per annum. The canal operator is working actively to enhance carriage on the canal and has a number of ongoing projects and initiatives. One such initiative is the development of coastal shipping activity between south coast container ports, Clydeport and the Manchester Ship Canal.

The Mersey Gateway Port (formerly known as the Port of Weston) was recently awarded its Harbour Revision Order – recognising The Stobart Group as the Harbour Authority and giving the approval for redevelopment into a new civil waterway port linked directly to the Manchester Ship Canal and the sea via the Mersey. It lies in close proximity to 3MG.

In addition to the physical carriage of freight, there are significant employment and regenerative opportunities along the Manchester Ship Canal Corridor, which will assist with wider economic and social objectives.

The Port of Liverpool is expected to expand with the development of facilities to serve the largest container ships (post panamax) which will serve the UK by one stop at Liverpool rather than using one of the ports in the greater south east. This will increase the national distribution potential of the port. In order to understand the full significance of this and other developments at the port, a study to investigate access to the Port of Liverpool (Port of Liverpool Access Study 2010) has been carried out to identify the required access improvements by road, rail and water.

The 'Port of Liverpool Access Study' identifies that of HGV trips generated by the port:

- 22% go within the LCR to destinations such as 3MG, Knowsley Industrial Park and Liverpool City Centre;
- 35% go to destinations in the North West; and
- 43% are outside the North West.

Road Freight

Road haulage allows operators ease of access into the market as they do not have the relatively high infrastructure costs that, for instance, rail operators have. The Council, in its planning policies, can provide land allocations for freight distribution where practical and economically viable. The provision of overnight parking in appropriate locations for HGVs is being actively investigated. It is therefore important that close liaison takes place between the private sector and the Council to ensure that appropriate sites are identified for distribution. The Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership is designed to assist in this process.

The largest single issue in relation to road freight is the congestion on the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the need for the Mersey Gateway. Progress with the Mersey Gateway and the SJB are detailed later in Section 10.

A number of road improvements have taken place in Halton in recent years that have assisted with road freight movements including the A56/A558 junction and Watkinson Way/Fiddlers Ferry Road Junction. Other road improvements will be made to improve safety and relieve congestion, subject to feasibility and funding being available.

The European Parliament has voted to adopt a target for CO2 emissions from vans of 175 grams per kilometre from 2017 and 147g/km from 2020. The 2020 target is subject to a 2013 review. The light commercial vehicle (LCV) legislation mirrors the New Car CO2 Regulation with each manufacturer having its own overall European fleet average CO2 target. Each manufacturer's target is based on the weight of each new LCV it registers in the EU in a given year. The initial target will be phased-in from 2014 to 2017 with 70%, 75% and 80% of each manufacturers' fleet complying in 2014-16 respectively and 100% from 2017 onwards.

Rail Freight

The freight only line running from Ditton to Warrington Arpley has various siding connections to a variety of firms. At Ditton, this line links with the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Main Line. Along the freight line in the Ditton area there are sidings that currently provide rail access to 3MG with proposals for a further 4 sidings taking capacity from 6 trains per day to 16.

Although not essential for the development of 3MG and Mersey Gateway Port, it would be an advantage to have bi-directional working on the Halton Curve.

The freight only line from Runcorn Station serves industrial sites at Runcorn and Mersey Gateway Port that adjoin the Manchester Ship Canal. There is approval for redevelopment the Mersey Gateway Port and this freight line could serve the site.

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with freight operators throughout the LCR. Through the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership a number of meetings and workshops have been organised with freight operators.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Halton is working with Merseyside through the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership (MHFQP) to encourage the use of efficient and cleaner movement of freight; this can also be supplemented through development control measures. Schemes such as 3MG will also encourage a modal shift of road freight onto rail. With the introduction of lower CO2 targets for light commercial vehicles 175g/km (from 2017) and 147g/km (from 2020) can only assist to reduce pollution from carbon emissions

Economic regeneration: Freight is a significant contributor to the economy. The continued development of the 3MG site and proposed Mersey Gateway Port will assist greatly in enhancing Halton's economy.

Equality of opportunity: The 3MG development will provide major job opportunities, with a significant proportion 'entry level' jobs'. The proposed Mersey Gateway Port will also provide further employment opportunities.

Health, safety and security: Halton with Merseyside is investigating possible secure sites with adequate overnight facilities for HGV parking.

Quality of life: The MHFQP along with development control measures will encourage the provision of low emission transport and discourage inappropriate parking of HGVs. The modal shift from road to rail will also provide environmental benefits.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The SJB has substandard width lanes making it undesirable for HGV movements. The provision of the Mersey Gateway is critical to ensuring safe and reliable movement of road freight across the Mersey.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of freight related development schemes such as the expansion of 3MG and the proposed Mersey Gateway Port will serve and help provide economic growth in the LCR. The SuperPort concept also contains the Mersey Gateway as supportive transport infrastructure. Implementation of a

sustainable development strategy would also have a major positive impact upon the Urban Renewal and Employment, Learning and Skills priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The 3MG development will enable a shift from road to rail which will help to reduce carbon emissions. Development control measures can also assist in providing the more efficient movement of freight. The implementation of new EU CO2 targets for light commercial vehicles from 2017 will help reduce future carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Freight distribution is essential for all our daily needs, however through the use of development control conditions and other measures such as MHFQP the negative impacts of freight can be minimised.

Access to employment, services and social activities: In new freight related developments, for example, 3MG, Halton will ensure that appropriate measures are in place for people to access employment.

LCR wider links: It is recognised that freight distribution is of local, regional, national and international significance. Halton therefore, is working with Merseyside through the MHFQP to ensure these links. The 3MG and Mersey Gateway Port sites form part of the 'Superport' proposals.

Maintain transport assets: HGVs are the most significant contributor to deterioration of carriageways, Halton will seek to ensure that carriageways are maintained to a level that can accommodate HGV movements.

Strategy

It is Halton Borough Council's overriding objective on freight to assist economic regeneration with minimal environmental cost. To achieve this, the following strategy is proposed:

The provision of the Mersey Gateway Project;
Continue with the implementation of 3MG;
Progress the proposals for the Mersey Gateway Port;
Priority will be given to develop brownfield sites for freight distribution;
Freight distribution sites to be located next to rail linkages and docks where possible, and in all cases to be accessed by suitable roads;
To implement road and junction improvements to assist HGV movements where technically feasible and where funding permits;
To pursue the scheme to reinstate the Halton Curve.
To ensure that the site traffic generated from developments involving modal change (road to rail/water) has a minimal environmental impact;
To liaise with the Highways Agency to assist with the implementation of motorway junction improvements and motorway signing;
To promote and assist in the upgrading of existing railway lines and safeguard disused railway lines for possible future use;
To promote the Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnerships to the commercial sector;
To enhance HGV routing and signing; and
The provision for overnight HGV parking in appropriate locations; and
To continue to work with our partners and neighbouring authorities in developing a freight strategy that meets both national and local transport goals.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 7

Intelligent Transport Systems and Traffic Management

Introduction

This area of highway infrastructure covers the following main topics:

- Traffic signals;
- Road signing & carriageway markings;
- Variable message signs;
- Journey time monitoring systems; and
- Real time bus passenger information system.

Traffic management covers the traditional methods of controlling traffic, such as fixed signs and carriageway markings, and Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) covers the use of technology to control traffic, such as traffic signals, Variable Message Signs (VMS) and automated warning systems.

The Primary highway network within the Borough consists mainly of dual carriageways; however, most of the traffic signals and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system are on the local network. Variable Message Signs (VMS) have been installed and are used for providing information to drivers, particularly about traffic conditions and planned works on the Silver Jubilee Bridge, but also other parts of the network.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals provide a safe and efficient means of managing opposing traffic movements at junctions, and this is done by sharing time between the various road users including pedestrians and cyclists. Signal controlled junctions are most common where traffic flows are relatively high and space is limited and a ‘space share’ junction such as a roundabout cannot be provided. They are also useful to enhance capacity and to regulate queues on roundabouts. Traffic signals also provide for pedestrian, cyclist and even equestrian movements either at stand alone crossings or as a separate stage within traffic signal controlled junctions.

Over recent years the number of traffic signal installations (including pedestrian crossings) has increased to 83 installations (including 1 Pelican, 20 Puffin and 5 Toucan crossings). All the signal controllers are now microprocessors and the reliability has improved. A tag based Bus Priority system has been installed at two sites (Castlefields Avenue and High Street in Runcorn) to assist buses and this will continue to be expanded to other suitable sites, as most of the buses in the area have been equipped with tags. When improvements have been carried out to pedestrian crossings, the opportunity has been taken to upgrade to Puffin or Toucan type control for drivers and pedestrians/cyclists. At the present time there is only one Pelican crossing left in the Borough and it is proposed to upgrade this to a Puffin crossing in the near future. However, the street furniture and cabling on a number of sites is obsolete and is in urgent need of replacement, to improve reliability and the conspicuousness of the signal heads. In order to monitor the state of the traffic signals, a remote monitoring system has been installed and currently 46 junctions are monitored and all new junction installations are added to the system. This system enables faults to be reported earlier and helps maintain the efficient operation of the junctions.

Traffic signals on the Runcorn Busway system are triggered by buses passing over loop detectors on the bus way approaching signal controlled junctions, to give bus priority through all intersections. This arrangement permits shorter bus journey times.

All new installations are now Extra Low Voltage (ELV) to reduce energy costs and provide a safer installation. LED signal heads are being installed to reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs. The latest design of signal head aspect is also being used to ensure maximum conspicuousness. The equipment on each site is reviewed annually as part of the annual inspection process and the inventory is being added to our Mayrise system, where any reported faults are recorded. When an installation is refurbished the opportunity is taken to review the facilities and add pedestrian crossing and/or bus priority facilities where appropriate. The use of MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) is now considered for all junctions, including refurbishments, and currently five intersections include this facility to reduce delays and congestion. In most areas the traffic signals are too far apart to gain benefits from linking, however the use of UTMC (Urban Traffic Management Control) compliant equipment will be considered to allow future linking.

Road Signing & Carriageway Markings

Signs and carriageway markings are a visual means of conveying information to a driver relating to the highway on which they are travelling, and therefore should promote the safe and efficient use of the highway. Directional signing is used to guide drivers to their destination by the most appropriate route.

The broad approach is to first guide traffic towards a general destination then, at the appropriate point, to direct them to a more specific area and finally to local destinations. The design of the roads in Runcorn has resulted in an Expressway system with motorway characteristics, which acts as both a strategic and local distributor road. With several grade separated junctions, the signing of local destinations poses problems not normally encountered in the urban setting and at some locations there are still an excess of signs and destination options presented to drivers. The comprehensive programme of signing improvements undertaken in recent years has in the main addressed this issue, but problems are still experienced in finding destinations and there are constant demands from facility representatives to add more locations.

Variable Message Signs (VMS)

Whilst conventional road signs are effective in normal traffic flow conditions they are ineffective in providing useful information in the event of incidents and delays. Variable message signs (VMS) can give current information about prevailing highway conditions, give drivers advice on an appropriate course of action and provide advance notification of planned works/events.

The most congested location in Halton is the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and a system of VMS has been installed on the approaches to the SJB and at key locations in the Borough. Currently, there are ten signs installed and these are used to provide information to drivers of works on the SJB plus other works/incidents in the area. An anemometer has been installed on the south side of the SJB, and when the wind speeds reach predetermined speeds from the East or West; this is then linked through the common database (Comet) to set predetermined legends on the VMS and send emails to appropriate staff. The protocol for this system has been agreed in consultation with Cheshire Police.

The common database now links to our Streetworks system and Trafficlink to provide a graphical display on the Council's website of roadwork's and traffic delays/incidents. The display also allows the public to view the current legends on the VMS, the current view from the webcams on the SJB and selected tourist attractions within the Borough.

The Highways Agency has installed variable message signs on the M6, M56 and M62 approaches to the M6, and when there is an incident on the SJB these signs are also set if not required for the motorway network. At the present time, the expansion of this network of signs to include the M56 and M62 has been postponed by the Highways Agency.

The VMS are compatible with the systems installed by Liverpool City and Wirral Borough Councils, with whom discussions are taking place to improve the supply of information within the Liverpool City Region. Liaison also takes place with the National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) and the Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC) at Robb Lane near Newton-le-Willows on the M6.

Journey Time Monitoring System

A Journey Time Monitoring System (JTMS) has been installed using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. Initially six cameras were installed in total on either side of the Silver Jubilee Bridge to monitor journey times across the bridge. This is being linked through the common database (Comet) to our graphical display system (eMerge). Cheshire Police have installed similar cameras in the area and the system is being developed to allow data to be shared between the two systems. The technical issues of data transfer have been agreed and it is hoped the system will be operational soon. The journey time data will then be published to the Council's website to provide guidance on current delays on the network. Consideration is also being given to displaying journey times on the VMS.

Real Time Bus Passenger Information System

The Council has implemented Real Time Bus Passenger Information, in partnership with Arriva, Halton Transport and Merseytravel (who are the Integrated Transport Authority for Merseyside). Real time displays have been installed at key bus stops and interchanges along the route of the main bus service linking Hough Green – Widnes and Runcorn town centres. With the help of satellite technology, the system informs passengers waiting at bus stops of the actual arrival time of the next service. On board bus displays also inform passengers of the name of the next stop along with any expected delays to the service. It was hoped to expand this system to help improve the way in which information is provided to passengers at all stages of their journey by public transport, but due to ongoing revenue costs this has not been possible and the future of the system in now being reviewed by Merseytravel.

Monitoring Cameras

Monitoring cameras have been installed on the approaches to the SJB and these can be viewed via the Council's website. These allow motorists to check traffic conditions on the SJB and make informed decisions on the route for their journey and if required change their route to avoid congestion. The cameras utilise wireless technology to reduce revenue costs. Further cameras will be installed as resources permit.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The use of intelligent transport systems (ITS) can reduce delays by providing information on road conditions such as on the SJB or on availability of

parking. The use of MOVA at traffic signal control junctions, will assist in reducing queues and delays, and hence pollution. UTMC can also be used to reduce queues and delays.

Economic regeneration: Improved efficiency of the road network will assist with reducing delays and give more predictable journey times which will allow businesses to operate more efficiently.

Equality of opportunity: A more efficient transport system is beneficial to all users and non users.

Health, safety and security: ITS can help reduce congestion and hence vehicle emissions; it can also provide warnings of incidents and thereby contribute to road safety by reducing delays and frustration. The VMS can be used for incidents within the Borough to warn the public and the Town Centre CCTV system has been enhanced to include a speaker system, which can be used if it is necessary to evacuate the town centres.

Quality of life: Improved efficiency of the road network benefits users and non users.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: ITS is effective as a traffic management measure during maintenance works on the SJB and can also give advance warning of such works.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: Halton's system of VMS is compatible with the systems installed by Liverpool City and Wirral Borough Councils, discussions are taking place with all authorities within the LCR to improve the sharing of information. Implementation of effective ITS and Signing will also have a positive impact upon the Safer Halton priority of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The use of a range of ITS in Halton can reduce congestion and improve efficiency of the transport system; this in turn will reduce carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: ITS can help reduce vehicle emissions and can contribute to a less stressful journey. RTPI can also encourage the use of public transport.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Improved efficiency of the road network will improve access for all.

LCR wider links: Halton's ITS can link with those of the Highways Agency, Police authorities, Merseyside authorities and the wider North West region.

Maintain transport assets: ITS is effective as a traffic management measure during maintenance works and can also give advance warning of such works.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Review signs and markings to ensure they are applicable and necessary, including removing redundant street furniture to improve the street scene and reduce clutter;
- Monitor journey times to identify trends and appropriate improvements and/or adjusts strategies for routing traffic and signal timings;
- Ensure ITS is used to assist in fulfilling the Network Management Duty, as required by the Traffic Management Act 2004;

- Expand ITS to maximise benefits when the Mersey Gateway is constructed and in the short term, review the systems to maximise capacity;
- Review existing traffic signal installations to determine whether they are still needed in order to reduce energy consumption and unnecessary delays;
- Monitor improvements in traffic signal control and VMS technologies and establish the viability of using them on Halton's highways;
- Review the need for and viability of introducing a car park guidance system; and
- Adopt a flexible and innovative approach to provide signing that aids economic regeneration (e.g. through sponsorship signing) or provides public information.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 8

Maintenance of Transport Assets

Introduction

This strategy looks at the Maintenance of the road, bridge and footpath networks within the Borough.

A well maintained and managed highway network contributes to the delivery of the Council's main aims, particularly those pertaining to transportation policies. It is, therefore, vital to produce and adopt a comprehensive and effective maintenance strategy for the highway network throughout the Borough.

The Highway network supports and encourages a thriving economy by enabling the flow of people, goods and services. It also promotes safer communities through safer conditions for drivers and pedestrians and through effective Street Lighting to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

The Highway Network in Halton

Within Halton, there are good quality dual carriageway road links with Motorways and with Warrington, Liverpool & Manchester. In Runcorn, the Expressway network is of high quality, grade separated at most junctions and is relatively economical to maintain at the present time. However, as the core element of the expressway network was originally constructed within a relatively short period of time in the 1970s, future maintenance requirements will be demanding as the asset life of these elements of the network approach intervention levels for major structural maintenance in a similarly short timescale.

The Borough also facilitates a multi-modal hub on the national and regional transport system, including the following:

- The M62, which runs to the north of the Borough and the M56 to the south;
- The SJB crossing of the Mersey, which provides an important strategic route;
- The West Coast Main Line railway, which runs through the Borough and incorporates a main line station at Runcorn;
- The Borough is also located within easy travelling distance of both Liverpool and Manchester Airports; and
- The Manchester Ship Canal, which runs through Runcorn with existing port facilities.

Key Statistics:

- Length of principal roads maintained: 49km
- Length of non –principal classified roads maintained: 79km
- Length of other unclassified roads maintained: 432km
- Length of independent footpaths maintained:226km
- Length of Runcorn Busway: 17km
- Number of Highway Bridges: 179
- Number of Highway Retaining Walls: 59

The above strategic networks provide opportunities but, in some cases, also present serious restraints to the Borough's economic and social development.

Halton Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance of the strategically important crossing of the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal comprised by the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and the additional forty one viaducts, bridges, subways and retaining walls on its approaches. These are collectively known as the SJB Complex and together they allow the crossing of the Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal to tie into the major road network on either side of the river.

In addition there are approximately a further two hundred highway structures distributed throughout the Borough, including expressway and busway bridges. The upkeep of these bridges is vital for the economic and effective delivery of the Council's transport objectives.

Congestion in the Borough is largely restricted to the approaches to the SJB. The Bridge provides the only link within the Borough between Widnes & Runcorn and also serves as the strategic route from the M56 to Merseyside. In excess of 85,000 vehicles can cross the bridge each working day, which is comparable to the volume of traffic which uses the M56 in the section running to the south of the Borough. This traffic is required to utilise a reduced number of lanes, 2 in each direction, coupled with substandard lane widths of 3.05m. This can be the cause of severe congestion on the approaches to the Bridge in both directions during peak periods.

Challenges

The challenges faced by the Borough Council in maintaining its Highway and Bridge network, are significant. Keeping the network functioning at as high a level of performance as possible, and preserving the asset value at the same time, is a substantial task the Authority has to face over the period of LTP3. Regular and effective maintenance must, therefore, be undertaken.

The highway network is the most valuable asset that the Council manages and maintains. It is the key to achieving nearly all of the Council's business objectives, providing the backbone to public transport, the means by which children get to school safely, the elderly receive their home help, waste is transported and industry and retail parks get serviced.

The condition of road surfaces and structures is of critical importance to all modes of road transport in Halton. Deteriorating road surfaces have an adverse impact on:

- Road safety: due to an increasing likelihood of skidding, loss of control and other types of accident caused by worn out surfaces, potholes etc;
- Injuries to vehicular and pedestrian users of the highway network and consequential and consequent claims for compensation against the Council;
- Damage to vehicles and consequent claims for compensation against the Council;
- Discomfort to passengers in vehicles, in particular buses;
- Discomfort and hazards for cyclists and motorcyclists and;
- Difficulties for pedestrians crossing roads or walking along roads, particularly in rural areas where there are no footways.

Maintenance of the highway network within the SJB complex is a particular challenge as the high volume of traffic, numbers of approach slip roads and narrow lane widths all contribute to the extreme sensitivity of traffic using the SJB complex to any form of traffic management. To avoid the extreme congestion which would otherwise be created all major road or bridge maintenance which would involve imposition of temporary traffic management within the SJB complex is undertaken overnight or at weekends, although even at weekends the disruption can be significant.

Having to break down maintenance activity into small elements of work which may confidently be completed within small windows of opportunity can be difficult and usually is to the detriment of efficiency.

Bridges Issues

All HBC bridges have been assessed to establish their ability to carry the 40 tonne European vehicle and any which failed this assessment have now either been strengthened, managed or restricted accordingly.

Of the 19 Network Rail bridges carrying highways in the Borough all have been assessed. All bridges which failed to satisfy 40 tonne loading have been strengthened, managed or restricted. However, the management measures associated with two of these structures are not viewed to be long term. Network Rail is being consulted to ascertain what the long term strengthening options would be for these bridges. Due to the backlog of work nationally in this area it is difficult to predict when this will be finalised.

Through Primary Route Network (PRN) Grant and Highway Maintenance Block funding, HBC have completed a significant programme of major maintenance works on the SJB and its approach structures. This forms part of the delivery of a long term maintenance strategy for the complex of bridges which allow the crossing of the Mersey to link into the principal road network either side of the river.

Delivery of the remainder of the work programme to address the bridge maintenance backlog on the SJB and its approaches will continue through DfT approval of the HBC's Major Maintenance Scheme Bid which provides a maximum funding availability of £18.6m over a 5 year period commencing 2011/2012.

However, the recent Government approval of the Mersey Gateway project has allowed HBC to review the funding requirement for SJB complex major bridge maintenance in the context of work no longer required and any possible to be deferred until post Mersey Gateway opening.

Performance Management

Halton proposes to continue to report performance against LTP Indicators LTP5 and LTP6 which provide an indication of the condition of principal (A Road) and non-principal (B & C Road) carriageways respectively.

Current PI results for highway condition lie within the top quartile for most categories. The intent of the Council is to equal or better previous results in all areas. However, the lack of funding available for schemes over £250,000 particularly to accommodate the maintenance required of the deteriorating expressway network has meant that trajectories for these indicators have been set to maintain the condition of highways and footways, rather than to improve the overall condition. Detailed analysis of current condition using the United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS) ensures that maintenance priorities are focused into key areas in line with achieving the steady state of maintenance target.

The current accident data has highlighted locations susceptible to skidding accidents and this has been confirmed through SCRIM data from UKPMS. Low cost surface treatment to these locations has resulted in substantial improvement to statistics directly as a result of these measures.

Performance Management currently concentrates on condition assessment and reduction of accident statistics. Due to targeting of specific public liability claims "hotspots" and implementation of a programme of "flags to flexible" footway reconstruction, there has

been a significant reduction in the number of highway related claims received. However, a recent increase in the total cost to the Council of claims awarded has also been noted.

The Code of Practice for the Management of Highway Structures includes definition of strategic performance measures for highway structures. HBC is committed to providing management and maintenance of its bridge stock at a commensurate level of service which satisfies the demands of the Code of Practice.

Maximising Value from Resource

It is essential that any development of Halton's Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) delivers improved management resources but at the same time delivers verifiable value for money. Data has been collected, classified and reviewed to compliment that already available within the original archives. The Council recognises its obligation to continue to improve the existing TAMP but considers that a review of the scope of the document is required to ensure that the data collection process only concentrates on those areas where improved information will realise tangible improvements. There is, for example, an acknowledged weakness in the quality of highway drainage data and this is a common problem for many highway authorities. Halton will in the short term concentrate much of its effort in this area. Other information whilst desirable is less beneficial to the efficient delivery of the maintenance function.

The requirement to report the asset value of the highway network is underpinned by the publication of revised valuation guidance to ensure that the reporting meets the needs of Whole of Government Accounting. The quality of the reported base value will be reflected in the depreciated costs predicted in the future. The Council will devote resources to this area whilst avoiding the temptation to accumulate data for its own sake to ensure a proportionate response to this important area of work.

The data collection and classification together with the network valuation process will result in publication of a revised and updated TAMP. The document will need to deliver tangible benefits from its production and the Council is investigating the need to procure external assistance to achieve this aim. The cost of such an exercise will have to be balanced against the available financial resource and the need to manage savings in the overall budget.

Static asset data must be supplemented by ongoing information on current highway condition. This requirement allows for efficient setting of maintenance targets and concentrates on those areas most in need. In addition, the data is used to calculate the performance statistics that demonstrate Halton's continuing delivery of a well maintained highway network. The collection and processing of this data is currently carried out by a bureau arrangement that has been in place for the past five years. The current agreement is reaching its expiry date and matters are in hand to ensure that this vital operation will continue in the future. The new arrangement will be in place by April 2011.

Halton has instituted a review of its winter maintenance function in the light of the exceptionally severe conditions experienced in 2008/9 and 2009/10. As a result there are proposals to make a number of changes to the service delivery which has been severely strained over the past two winters. One area has been the issue of supply and storage of salt stocks. Despite significantly exceeding the recommended resilience levels for salt supplies it has been apparent that further improvements would be beneficial and to this extent additional storage is being commissioned that will increase stock capacity by approximately 33%. This is an area where additional funding can be justified and is seen as a necessary investment to deliver the service.

As the network management duty is not at the expense of other duties and objectives it is clearly important to continue to obtain Best Value from expenditure. Nothing in the Traffic Management Act allows disregard of value for money and the proportionality of any response. The creation of a comprehensive and effective TAMP is a stated aim of the Council that will directly complement and assist the work of the Traffic Manager in providing a tool to accurately assess the effectiveness of policies and programmes of traffic management and control.

The creation of a TAMP will involve the collection and organisation of significant quantities of data from a number of diverse departments of the Authority. It will also require the collection of new inventory data where this does not exist at present. To achieve these aims it is proposed to appoint a specialist consultant to oversee and supervise the creation of the TAMP. A first stage will be the collection of data for the Highways element of the Plan (HAMP). Much of this work has already been done but exists in various locations and in differing formats.

Improvements to cost effectiveness are also achieved through joint purchase programmes in line with the Council's Procurement Strategy. For example, (see above), Halton uses a salt bulk purchase contract in conjunction with Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington Councils. The analysis of weather forecasts uses a similar joint arrangement. Long-term arrangements are also in place for the collection and processing of highway condition data and the use of consultancy framework agreements facilitate the placing of staff on a temporary basis to even out peaks in workload.

In April 2005 the council entered into a five year Highway Term Maintenance Contract. This contract was subsequently extended to March 2013.

In April 2009, the council entered into a four year contract (with possible 2 year extension) to deliver all major bridge maintenance activity in the Borough through the Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract.

This is a modern, collaborative form of engagement based upon adoption of open book working and collaborative working practices.

The unique nature of the SJB and its approach structures and the intense programme of work made possible through DfT Grant funding dictated that procurement of a contract which promoted flexibility, quality and value for money was essential. The Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract also aligns with the Office of Government Commerce Achieving Excellence in Construction initiative and the Latham and Egan Reports which recognised that building longer term, collaborative relationships with suppliers helps to build trust and in turn deliver an enhanced product through better experience and understanding.

Consultation

To further progress the preparation of a relevant and contemporary TAMP, use has been made of various consultees and contacts. Feedback from these will assist in the document preparation. Regular meetings are already in place with North West Unitary authorities as members of the North West Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee who are closely involved with the implementation of the changes to the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRASWA).

A close working relationship exists with Cheshire Police who assist with traffic accident data and analysis and in the conduct of safety audits for highway adoption. The Council have representation on the Merseyside District Engineers Group who provide valuable insight into the preparation of the Merseyside LTP and its implementation.

Locally the, relevant council departments provide support and representation on the Locality Area Forums and a number of residents groups within the Borough allowing direct assessment of local needs balanced against available resources and priorities. A 'Halton 2000' survey of the effectiveness of Highway and Street Lighting has been completed and gives useful comparison with a previous survey into the use and accessibility of the Highways Service.

In addition, extensive public consultation has been undertaken on all strategies contained within the LTP.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Roadwork's, especially within the SJB complex will be planned in order to minimise congestion and hence carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The effective maintenance of the transport network will assist with connectivity to commerce and industry.

Equality of opportunity: An effective, well maintained transport system would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: Roadworks will be implemented in a safe manner. Well maintained roads can reduce casualties and improve network resilience especially during severe weather.

Quality of life: A well maintained, effective transport system is beneficial to all users.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The SJB will be maintained in line with the SJB major maintenance scheme for which funding has been granted for a five year period starting in 2011/12.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The maintenance of Halton's transport infrastructure, in particular the SJB, will help sustain economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of effective maintenance would also have a positive impact upon the Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Roadworks in Halton, especially on the SJB will be planned in order to minimise congestion and hence carbon emissions. The recycling of materials can also cut overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Roadworks will be carried out to minimise noise and dust. Footways and cycle ways will be maintained to encourage more walking and cycling and reduce tripping incidents.

Access to employment, services and social activities: An effective, well maintained transport system would allow access for all purposes.

LCR wider links: Maintenance will be planned to minimise disruption on the wider network.

Maintain transport assets: The maintenance strategy contained in this section details how this will be carried out.

Strategy

In order to deliver its objectives and priorities, the Council will strive to:

- Co-ordinate and manage roads and bridge works to minimise delays, congestion and pollution;
- Continue to undertake inspection of road and footways to identify defects and programme repairs;
- Develop current maintenance programmes taking into account casualty data to give priority to works that contribute towards casualty reduction;
- Continue to take appropriate enforcement action to remove illegal obstructions to the highway;
- Continue to take appropriate enforcement action in regards to illegal access crossings;
- Continue to ensure that maintenance works are implemented to maximise efficiency and minimise disruption to the public;
- Implement a comprehensive programme of maintenance schemes over the period of the plan to ensure that the strategic routes within the Borough can operate safely and efficiently, taking into account the need to minimise disruption to highway users;
- Ensure that opportunities are taken when implementing maintenance schemes to improve facilities for people with disabilities and the mobility impaired;
- Develop performance indicator targets to monitor the effectiveness of the highway maintenance programmes;
- Ensure that winter maintenance continues to be undertaken in order that main roads and footpaths are kept open and safe to use during the winter period;
- Develop the role of the Traffic Manager to co-ordinate and manage works on the highway to ensure the minimum of delay to road users;
- Continue to monitor and repair trip hazards and loose flags on the footway network;
- Ensure that targets for emergency repairs and replacement of damaged street furniture are met;
- Give particular attention to the Runcorn Expressway network, which although currently is in good condition, will become a maintenance liability in future due to the fact that all the roads within the network were constructed at the same time;
- Utilise surveys, records and maintenance plans at strategic locations, and in particular, culverts, watercourses, and flood attenuation tanks in order to reduce the risk of flooding;
- Continue to seek funding through Local Safety Schemes and set in place programmes for erection of safety fencing to the central reserve of the Runcorn Expressways that are not currently protected;
- Incorporate maintenance schemes with Quality Corridor works which combine measures to improve walking, cycling, bus infrastructure, safe routes to school and safety improvements;
- Utilise the output from the Transport Asset Management Plan to ensure that the maximum effect can be achieved through the careful use of funding;
- Through the data collected and processed in UKPMS software, identify additional areas of the highway network that are substandard and seek sufficient funding to upgrade to current standards.

- Identify scheme priorities to both meet our Key Performance Indicators and achieve a level of targeted maintenance that produces safer highways and safeguards the highway assets.
- Continue to apply the CSS developed “Bridge Condition Indicator” methodology as a Performance Indicator means of effectively identifying, prioritising and implementing a programme of structural maintenance on the other highway structures in the Borough.
- Continue to apply the principles of the Code of Practice for the Management of Highway Structures.
- Work in partnership with others to identify any savings associated with procurement or supply chain management;
- Improve the supply and analysis of data relating to the condition of the highway network assets, and to identify priorities;
- Implement the Departmental Service Plan, and to maintain highways to ensure that they provide an effective system for transport;
- Upgrade existing blocked out beam safety fencing identified in existing surveys as being below current standards;
- Continue to liaise with Network Rail to identify locations of “Road on Rail Incursion” sites and develop the programme for protective measures;
- Identify any additional locations of “Road on Road incursion” sites, mainly on the Runcorn Expressway, and make provision for the provision of appropriate remedies;
- Identify, prioritise and implement carriageway schemes to reduce road casualties associated with poor skid resistance of the surface course;
- Identify, prioritise, design, programme and implement repairs to failing roads to both improve safety and prolong the “life” of carriageways;
- Identify “hot-spots” of footway and footpath claims against the authority due to tripping and use the data to develop programmes of work;
- Identify, prioritise, design, programme and implement repairs to failing footways, footpaths and cycleways to both improve safety and prolong the “life” of footways, footpaths and cycleways;
- Continue regular surveys and maintenance to highway drainage of pipes, culverts, watercourses, and flood attenuation systems to develop drainage and flood defence programmes of work;
- Further improve co-operation with other agencies, e.g. United Utilities and the Environment Agency or with riparian owners to plan, programme and implement flood alleviation schemes;
- Time works to minimise traffic disruption generally and for specific local events;
- Give special consideration when maintaining highways in conservation areas and in locations close to historic structures;
- Make use of recycled materials where appropriate;
- Co-ordinate works to minimise the impact on the environment, and where appropriate make use of materials to reduce traffic noise.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 9

Network Management

Introduction

On 22 July 2004 the Traffic Management Act received Royal Assent. The Government at the time said it would like the Act to be implemented as quickly as possible. The aims of the Act are to tackle congestion and reduce disruption by:

- Pro-active management of national and local roads and traffic
- Better co-ordination and management of works and other activities on the road network
- More effective powers and sanctions over Utilities Streetworks
- Wider civil enforcement powers for traffic contraventions
- More strategic approach in London

Within the Act there are several parts and the implementation of Part 2 of the Act placed new duties on each traffic authority to reduce causes of congestion and the Act applies to all traffic, including pedestrians. A Traffic Manager was appointed, who is the focal point within the authority, for championing the need to consider the duty in all areas of work. The manager works closely with other authorities (e.g. neighbouring authorities, the National and Regional Traffic Control Centres (NTCC and RTCC) and partners such as the Police, utilities, bus operators, etc). The Manager needs to be independent of the Authority's Highway works.

Since the implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004, Halton Borough Council has actively implemented the requirements of the Act, in particular in relation to Network Management Duty and liaising with neighbouring authorities and relevant organisations. Efficient management of the highway network is essential to ensure the safe and efficient movement of all road users. More detailed information on ITS & Traffic Management and Highway Maintenance can be found in Toolbox Strategies: 7 &15

Intelligent Transport Systems are employed to make the most effective use of the Silver Jubilee Bridge. A system of variable message signs (VMS) has been installed to provide real time information to drivers and to advise of delays/proposed lane closures on the Silver Jubilee Bridge. These are compatible with the systems installed by Liverpool City and Wirral Borough Councils, with whom discussions are taking place to share resources. Liaison also takes place with the National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) and the Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC) to utilise the VMS on the motorway network, when possible. Monitoring systems have been installed to enable information to be automatically displayed to the variable message signs to warn motorists of approaching hazards or diversions. Further investigations are underway to consider linking the Journey Time Monitoring System (JTMS) to the VMS and to link the Cheshire Police Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, although this is taking longer than anticipated due to problems with exchanging data. In addition, web cam links enable people with access to the internet to view the traffic situation on the SJB before embarking on their journey.

Following an incident in January 2007 when a vehicle was blown over on the SJB, an anemometer (device for measuring wind speeds) has been installed and linked to the VMS. When the wind speeds reach a predetermined speed from the east or west, as the SJB lies in an approximately north-south direction, legends are automatically set on the VMS to advise drivers of high sided vehicles of the potential risk. This protocol has been written in conjunction with Cheshire Police and the Council's Risk & Emergency Planning

Division and using research undertaken by Highways Agency and TRL. Also links with external media organisations, such as Trafficlink have been enhanced to enable more accurate information to be supplied to the travelling public and the information on our website has been improved.

The Transport White Paper of 2011 gives local authorities the power to determine the classification of roads within their boundary.

Performance Management

The effectiveness of the Network Management function relies upon the measurement and analysis of local conditions by the use of local indicators and monitoring delays. There are no formal BVPI's which are applicable to Halton, thus it is more subjective and information collected through local representation. The Traffic Manager monitors all current data to establish clear management needs including other relevant data such traffic flow from traffic counter sites.

Maximising Value from Resource

The Network Management duty is not to be undertaken at the expense of other duties and objectives, it is therefore, clearly important to continue to obtain Best Value for expenditure. Nothing in the Act allows disregard of value for money and the proportionality of any response. The Council is preparing a Network Management Plan and this will directly complement and assist the work of the Traffic Manager in providing a strategy to accurately assess the effectiveness of policies and programmes of traffic management and control.

Consultation

Regular meetings take place with other North West authorities as members of the North West Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee, who are closely involved with the implementation of changes to the New Roads and Streetworks Act. A close working relationship exists with Cheshire Police who provide traffic collision data. Highway staff use this information to determine priorities for highway improvement schemes. When major works are planned that will have significant impact upon the highway network, then consultation is undertaken with bus operators, emergency services and other relevant organisations/residents. The Council have representation on several sub-groups within the Merseyside District Engineers Group which provides valuable insight into the preparation of the joint policies and their implementation.

This authority is an active member of both the North West and Merseyside Traffic Managers Groups, which jointly explore common areas of responsibility and establish clear lines of communication and common methods of working. An example of this is the proposal to link the Streetworks systems within the LCR to provide better information to the public. A common permit scheme is being promoted by St Helens MBC and this may be used by other authorities.

Locally the Environment & Economy Directorate provides support and representation on Local Area Forums and a number of residents and road users groups (e.g. taxies and buses) within the Borough, allowing direct assessment of local needs to be balanced against available resources and priorities. Further surveys are planned to create a database from which trends may be extrapolated allowing improved decision making and to assess the effectiveness of our information dissemination.

Halton Borough Council has an Event Safety Advisory Group (HESAG) composed of members of the Traffic, Environmental Health, Risk Management and Event Promotions Divisions within the Council and also the emergency services together with other co-opted members. The group considers all major events planned or promoted within the area that can impact upon the public. It provides advice on the planning and organisation of events and also ensures that promoters are aware of their obligations to comply with legislation. The Traffic Manager attends these meetings and provides input and advice as necessary.

Within Halton there are several major chemical and manufacturing organisations. The potential for incidents and emergency situations is significant and the Council have in place emergency plans to deal with such possibilities. Updates and reviews of the Emergency Plans are carried out in conjunction with Risk & Emergency Planning Division.

If a Major Incident occurs within the Borough then there are Multi Agency Plans to cover joint working between the Emergency Services and other appropriate agencies, including other sections within the Authority. An example is the Silver Jubilee Bridge Multi Agency Plan, which has been developed to cover several scenarios that can affect the bridge from adverse weather conditions to incidents which can result in the bridge being closed. This plan includes all the emergency services (Police, Fire and Ambulance services plus Coastguard).

The Authority has staff and contractors on standby to deal with incidents, which can range from collisions to chemical leaks, and the level of response will be tailored to the needs of the incident. This can be clearing up after a collision to opening an Emergency Centre to co-ordinate the response required and provide Business Continuity for the Authority.

A Bus Operators Forum meets quarterly to review public transport operations. The Traffic Manager attends to receive and comment upon current highway issues.

The methods by which information is passed to the highway user are constantly changing. Most are dependant upon the circumstances. Links exist through the Council's Marketing and Communications Division to distribute details of current and forthcoming highway works to the media and a relationship is being developed with Trafficlink, who provide travel information to most broadcasting organisations, to share information.

The Council's Website contains a section that is devoted to road closures and diversions both by the Council's own operations and those carried out on behalf of other bodies. Web cams are already in place specifically covering the SJB complex.

Details of major works are also circulated to elected members and Council Departments by e-mail and the Direct Link front office provides information to personal callers.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The use of variable message signs (VMS), and improved dissemination of possible delays especially in the vicinity of the SJB will help reduce congestion and hence carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The effective management of the transport network will assist with connectivity to commerce and industry and the movement of employees, visitors and freight.

Equality of opportunity: An effective, well managed transport system benefits all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: The use of VMS and other information systems will improve journey planning and be able to warn of incidents in advance.

Quality of life: A well managed, effective transport system is beneficial to all users. Effective network management can reduce delays and improve journey time reliability.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The use of VMS and journey time information will allow people to plan their journeys more effectively, particularly when crossing the SJB.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: By providing quality information to inform members of the public regarding the potential issues of congestion and/or road maintenance will help provide more reliable journey times that will assist with economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The supply of improved quality of travel information, including the use of VMS, will help reduce congestion and hence carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: By improving the management of traffic this will reduce emissions. Effective network management can improve journey time reliability and provide slightly greater confidence in the use of electric or hybrid vehicles.

Access to employment, services and social activities: An effective, well managed transport system will allow access for all purposes. In particular the use of VMS and journey time information will allow people to plan their journeys more effectively.

LCR wider links: Management of maintenance activities will be planned to minimise disruption on the wider network. Also the use of VMS and journey time information across the LCR will allow people to plan their journeys more efficiently.

Maintain transport assets: Effective network management will allow maintenance to be carried out with reduced disruption.

Strategy

The approach to Network Management proposed for the future will involve the following specific areas.

- The creation and maintenance of a Network Management Plan will assist with identifying strategies to manage traffic and measure and monitor key congestion data and set targets;
- Keeping the TAMP up to date will clearly identify the resources required to keep the network in an efficient and serviceable condition;

- To continue to maintain and maximise the use of the Local Street Gazetteer to assist with network management;
- Consider the reclassification of roads within the borough with particular regard to the Mersey Gateway project;
- The continuation and development of links with neighbouring authorities and organisations that influence or are affected by the changes to the network; and
- The dissemination of traffic management data to the Public will continue to be developed and expanded. The use of Variable Message Signing will be added to and enhanced in conjunction with the National and Regional Traffic Control Centres and neighbouring local authorities.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 10

Parking

Introduction

Halton Council has to date operated a free and uncontrolled car parking policy in support of its over-riding economic regeneration objective. This has been seen as a vital contribution to attracting inward investment, maintaining employment levels and helping to ensure the viability and competitiveness of its retail centres.

Car parking studies had been carried for the first LTP in 2000 and these indicated that whilst there was not a significant parking problem, there was potential to manage car parking to optimise economic regeneration. A town centre car parking strategy was included in the LTP submission. The key points were:

- • Apply maximum standards limiting spaces on new town centre developments.
- • Ensure adequate availability of short and long stay parking for retail, business, employment and residential use.
- • Ensure provision of adequate dedicated parking spaces for the disabled.
- • Ensure the provision of secure cycling and motorcycle parking in central locations.
- • Develop a Parking Management Strategy for Runcorn Town Centre in conjunction with the operator of the central area car park for implementation within the five-year plan period.
- • Monitor the impact on parking of Renewal proposals in Widnes Town Centre.
- • Monitor the availability of car parking at Halton Lea and the associated Trident Leisure and Retail Park.

In 2008, consultants Mott MacDonald (MM) were commissioned to undertake an assessment of on and off street parking in Runcorn town centre, Widnes town centre and Halton Lea, with a view to recommending a strategy for managing parking across the Borough.

In relation to Widnes, MM reported that “According to the parking surveys undertaken in Widnes town centre, there appears to be sufficient capacity overall to meet present demand at most times. However, within that context, there are also areas which could be addressed.” The surveys confirmed a minimum of about 200 easily accessible spaces at peak times even on a Saturday, the busiest day with an average user response of ‘satisfied’ though there was a problem with long-stay visitors taking up customer space within the car parks of major retail outlets and restricting availability for some users. With on-street parking, there was evidence of habitual misuse due to poor enforcement levels.

Other problems noted from the MM survey were that car park users were least satisfied with car park security, quality and cleanliness, but there was a lack of disabled spaces

Runcorn town centre was found to have sufficient car parking space for present demand, but future development work could rapidly lead to the need to create extra parking provision. In terms of managing car park usage, whilst businesses and users are almost universally against the introduction of charging, there is a need to control long-stay visitor parking as, for much of the time, customer space within the car parks adjacent to central retail outlets is severely restricted and affecting store viability, with no ‘turnover’ of the most in-demand and convenient parking areas. Recent Police action has been undertaken to reduce the level of parking restriction abuse on the highway.

In relation to Halton Lea, MM reported that the Asda car park regularly operated at or over capacity with the Trident car park at about 80% but the multi-storey car parks were at no more than 50% much of the time. Again, the main problem was long-stay parking in prime areas.

Present Position

In Widnes Town Centre the largest car parks are all under private control:
Morrisons manages the central 1090 space Green Oaks car park.

- The Council manages (only) a 313 space car park at the Albert Square centre.
- ASDA opened their Simms Cross store in 2004 with a 503 space car park.
- Windmill (Widnes Shopping Park) centre has a 608 space private car park.
- At Albert Road, DW sports manage a 162 space car park.

There is no consistent management of short and long term parking in any of the car parks though time limited arrangements have been used intermittently to address short term local issues.

In Runcorn Town Centre there are:

- Four separate HBC owned public car parks, totaling 273 spaces;
- Wetherspoons car park with 20 spaces; and
- The Cooperative store car park which opened in 2004, with 189 spaces.

Again, there is no management of stay duration and the Co-operative, in particular, suffers from long stay parking, with the owners considering a parking management scheme.

At Halton Lea there are:

- 600 multi-storey car park (MSCP) spaces owned by Fordgate, former owner of the shopping centre;
- 1800 MSCP spaces owned by Halton Lea administrators;
- 500 spaces at Trident Retail Park; and
- 520 spaces at the extended ASDA car park.

The prime shopping levels of the MSCPs are limited to 3 hour parking duration enforced by contractors/clamping, and Asda limit customer parking to 2 hours. These are the only controls.

Context with National Issues

Parking management sits in the context of demand management measures that are designed to address congestion and hence improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, refer to PTS 4. Parking standards are applied to new developments in accordance with maximum limits established in Halton's adopted Unitary Development Plan. These were based on the then Regional Planning Guidance for the North West RPG13.

Recent and Planned Developments

The three main retail centres within Halton continue to host new developments though progress has been slower than anticipated, probably due to the national economic downturn. It is generally the case that the new developments have lead to marked increases in overall parking demand.

Widnes

Following the 2004 opening of new retail units in Widnes, March 2010 saw the opening of phase 1 of the Widnes Shopping Park, hosting primarily clothing outlet stores such as Marks & Spencer. Much of the site area was previously used for retail, and the car park capacity was increased locally from 550 spaces to 608 during the course of the redevelopment. Phase 2 is currently under construction and this will add further clothing retail units, though no extra parking space. It is not anticipated that the phase 2 development will lead to a shortage of parking space. The existing parking areas are in theory subject to a 4 hour waiting limit though this is not enforced as demand in the existing car park does not reach capacity, even on a Saturday.

On the former B&Q DIY store site, immediately next to the town centre, a planning application for a large (primarily) food retail outlet has been lodged which will include construction of dedicated parking facilities. The existing Asda store has applied to construct a mezzanine floor within its existing store, but without increasing the size of their car park. The extra store space will be utilized to increase the range of goods stocked.

The popular superstore and fitness centre in the north of the town centre has now been open for a number of years with its own dedicated parking, and this operates without any reported problems. This store is part of a regeneration process which has in effect, extended the core retail area to the north and south of the town centre.

A little further south the transformation of the Victoria Square area into a vibrant culture and entertainment centre continues as an evolutionary process with new wine bars and residential accommodation. In this volatile market, businesses change hands and styles regularly, yet demand for parking remains limited and stable. A prime location for the emerging night time economy, the public areas of the Square have been extensively redesigned and reconstructed. Most of the available parking is on-street with the spaces closest to the Square limited to short-stay only, with time unrestricted space within a minute's walk. On a day-to-day basis this parking regime is effective, the more so after limited engineering works served to remove the need for what at one stage became regular Police action that was necessary to keep some "hotspots" clear.

Some 'Out of centre' parking, away from the retail area, is increasingly under pressure adjacent to the Municipal Building, Kingsway Leisure Centre and other locations as car ownership gradually increases. One attraction which does generate intermittent parking problems, being situated in a residential area, is the Halton home of the Widnes Vikings rugby league team. On match days the surrounding area is severely congested though the stadium safety management team in conjunction with the Police, have taken all available steps to address the difficulties including the operation of Park and Ride access, and the recent introduction of waiting restrictions.

Runcorn Town Centre

Intended development of the Canal Quarter has not to date occurred and there are now no firm developer plans in hand. Hence the existing St. Paul’s Health Centre/Brindley car park will remain unaltered for now and the future of this site is probably linked to the state of the national economy. The same is the case for the adjacent La Scala and job centre sites.

Wetherspoons bar is the first car park owner to commence charging for use of its car park, but at only 20 spaces maximum this will have minimal impact unless this acts as a catalyst in Runcorn town centre. To date it has not.

This Council has formalised parking on vacant land in Council ownership adjacent to the central Cooperative supermarket. This provides a properly built car park over an area currently used informally; 38 parking spaces have been created.

Halton Lea

With the downturn in business associated with the recession, a number of retailers have left Halton Lea (Woolworths, Ethel Austin etc.) and replacement business has been slow to arrive. Units in the adjacent Trident retail park have slowly filled over the years and the park is now fully occupied and there are no plans for future expansion.

North of Asda, demolition to clear an adjacent site is complete but construction of a new development for employment use has been delayed. Parking space will be provided within the site.

Parking Partnerships

Generally, earlier parking surveys that were undertaken for the previous LTP have not been updated as the major regeneration projects have not materially affected the overall parking situation. However, the success of the Council's regeneration efforts is putting pressure on a few specific locations, which requires a review in the provision, location and management of car parking in Halton. Given the diverse ownership of car parks and interests, discussions have commenced with car park operators to establish a Parking Partnership. This will ensure a regular dialogue on car parking issues and enable a thorough review of car parking in Halton to be undertaken. Currently though, the overall pattern has not yet changed markedly from that measured in the surveys of 2000 and other years. As further regeneration is delivered the situation will be closely monitored and further targeted surveys undertaken as necessary.

Residents Only Parking Schemes (ROPS)

The increasing numbers of vehicles on our roads is creating more and more pressure on parking space on the highway. The problems are at their worst adjacent to schools, shops, transport hubs and other key destinations, but there is also a growing problem within residential areas, partly due to multiple car ownership in some households.

Within Halton, there have been intermittent requests over the years for ROPS to be introduced in individual streets in the Borough; usually triggered by residents being unable to park immediately outside their homes. However, even taking into consideration the town centres and other areas subject to high levels of often transitory demand for parking space, it is clear that the area around Runcorn mainline rail station is the one most under pressure. This is due to the 'on-street' parking by rail users, who wish to avoid paying the daily parking charges at the station's car parks and the practical difficulties facing householders in constructing 'off-road' parking.

The situation has been much worse over the past year as construction of a new multi-storey car park at the station required the temporary closure of the main car park. A large proportion of the usual parking demand was displaced onto the surrounding streets and this is still continuing after the opening of the multi storey car park. Some rail passengers are parking outside resident's homes for several days.

Many residents see the introduction of ROPS as a simple solution provided that the restrictions are enforced robustly. However, based on the reported experiences of other local authorities, such schemes have a number of associated problems and impacts that must be considered and in Halton ROPS could only operate under the umbrella of a wider Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) regime. As indicated below, the cost implications and enforcement advantages of adopting CPE powers are currently in the process of being evaluated, but given the potential cost implications to the Council, it is likely that the cost

of implementing, administrating and enforcing a ROPS would have to be borne by the holders of the parking permits.

In other towns and cities where there is pressure on parking space in residential areas this has been compounded by commuter or shopping parking, but these situations are rare in Halton being limited to the areas around Runcorn and Widnes North (Farnworth) rail stations.

Cheshire Police have been consulted to ascertain if they would be prepared to enforce a Residents Only Parking (ROPS) scheme in Halton, if one were introduced. This request has been declined as the Police have indicated that the "Force's position on residents only parking is that it is solely a local authority issue……" Extensive internet research and contact with other local authorities confirms that this Force's view is consistent with those of other Forces in the country. The Police were also not prepared to enforce ROPS, even if the funding was provided by the Council to enable officers to work overtime.

It remains the case that owning and running a car is a lifestyle choice that residents make and, therefore, it is their responsibility to ensure they can legally park their vehicle when not in use. In September 2009 this Council again decided against the introduction of ROPS.

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

Consultants have been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study for the potential adoption of CPE in Halton, powers under which responsibility for the enforcement of virtually all parking issues both on and off street would pass from the Police to this Council as highway authority. Locally, due to resource restrictions, Cheshire Police are gradually carrying out less routine enforcement action in relation to parking offences and nowadays require specific requests for action at defined locations before taking limited action. There is now no traffic warden service in operation in Halton. Most authorities with greater charging income potential have already applied to the DfT for CPE and up to April 2010, 268 out of 326 highway authorities outside London have gone down this route but once CPE powers are assumed, they cannot be 'given back'.

With CPE, income from parking tickets issued (PCNs) and parking levies would be retained by Halton and used to cover the cost of the scheme. However, the prime consideration in carrying out the feasibility study was to determine the financial viability of this arrangement in Halton where the majority of relevant car parking provision is in private ownership and currently none of it charged, other than at Runcorn mainline station, Halton hospital and Wetherspoons in Runcorn. Any CPE scheme would have to be self financing and have the support of all the operators of privately owned car parks, to whom a financial benefit could accrue. A valid case would also have to be put to and approved by the Secretary of State.

The consultant's report on this issue is complex with inter-dependent options explored for methods of parking enforcement, fixed penalty notice levels, administration and legal follow-up being run in-house and or externalised. It is based on a large number of assumptions, ranging from the level of use of car parks to administration costs, PCN levels, parking charges and infringement rates. In choosing values for these factors, which can affect the whole economic basis for the analysis, the consultants have chosen what they believe are reasonable values but there are risks attached to each that need to be carefully evaluated. A short evaluation was also conducted into the financial impact of converting 6 streets already covered by limited waiting restrictions, to on-street pay and display charging.

Other factors to be taken into consideration include:

- With the Police already having withdrawn from routine parking restriction enforcement, adopting CPE in Halton would not now lead to any increase in the availability of the Police from other duties. As the Police will still handle requests to deal with problem locations and since actual congestion due to parking issues are rare, in terms of improving traffic flows CPE appears to offer limited benefits.

- Widespread or persistent infringement of existing waiting restrictions is not common practice in Halton, apart from at a relatively few, well known locations which the Police should deal with when asked.

- A review of all existing traffic regulation orders in the Borough would have to be undertaken to determine their accuracy and whether they are still pertinent in their current form. Any review of existing traffic regulation Orders would surely include a consideration for the continued need for many of our existing restrictions. Removal of restrictions could jeopardise the case for CPE.

- For this Council to commence charging for use of its car parks it would require parallel action from the owners of the far greater number of those in private ownership. Under these circumstances it would be necessary to form a parking partnership with private industry to agree common actions. For car park owners, charging would be a fundamental marketing decision affecting inter-business competition, with knock-on effects for smaller retailers not owning their own customer parking.

- Most significantly, abandoning this Council's free parking policy risks damaging the attractiveness of the shopping centres to visitors and the potential for this to occur will be a major factor when determining whether the Council should apply for CPE

Within Halton, there have been intermittent requests over the years for residents-only parking schemes (ROPS). However, even with affordable permit charging, ROPS would add another financial burden to CPE for which the consultant's fundamental finding is that "The introduction of CPE on its own is not financially attractive if the pay back has to cover set up costs…..the return on the investment is not enough…..." This position could possibly only be balanced by the simultaneous introduction of pay and display charging for on-street parking in the town centres and CPE cost shortfalls would have to be met from other Council resources.

The consultant's feasibility study into CPE is currently being evaluated in detail in order to see whether an application to the Secretary of State for CPE powers can be recommended. If CPE cannot be pursued it will still be necessary for the Council to review all other possible options for resolving parking issues at identified problem sites.

Parking for the Disabled

New dedicated parking bays for the disabled have continued to be introduced on the highway as close as possible to the town centres of Widnes and Runcorn and increasing the numbers of such spaces remains a priority. Due to their preferential siting as close to the shops as possible, regular enforcement action to prevent misuse of these bays by nondisabled drivers has been requested from Cheshire Police but with the gradual withdrawal of Police personnel away from routine parking enforcement, such bays are regularly occupied by non-disabled drivers with impunity. Generally though, off-street car parks in both private and public ownership have a good and convenient number of parking bays for the disabled.

The Council continues to provide free parking bays outside the homes of disabled people in the Borough, but has found it necessary to introduce qualifying criteria to prioritise installation as the number of such bays was causing cost and parking space problems in

some locations hosting large numbers of disabled drivers. The primary requirements are that applicants should be on higher rate mobility allowance, own a vehicle at the premises and should not have anywhere off-road to park.

Although of no legal standing, these bays are generally honoured by other motorists and are generally much appreciated by their users.

Taxi Stands

There are currently 21 public and 4 private taxi ranks within the Borough. In 2010, all taxi ranks in the Borough were reviewed and redefined with new ranks being added close to centres of demand especially associated with the night time economy.

With extensive redevelopment underway some ranks have been moved in recent years, but care has been taken to ensure that replacements are conveniently close to attractions such as pubs, clubs and shopping centres. Further reviews will be undertaken to ensure that the public's needs continue to be met.

Parking for Electric and Hybrid Vehicles

Halton will consider the provision of parking for electric and hybrid vehicles which will provide battery charging facilities. These could be located on-street, in Council and private car parks, places of employment and residential properties. This provision could be made in part through planning conditions in the development control process.

Strategic Park and Ride

Halton has been party to a study which has investigated possible strategic park and ride sites within and between the Cheshire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester areas. Several sites have been investigated that provide ready access to the motorway network and will serve city and town centres along with other major developments such as airports.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Car parking management would encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes.

Economic regeneration: The provision of free car parking can contribute to assist with the regeneration of the town centres. Experience has shown that less car dominated town centres can encourage the economic vibrancy of the centre.

Equality of opportunity: Stricter parking controls may encourage more use of sustainable transport modes which would be beneficial to all.

Health, safety and security: Less car dominated town centres will encourage healthy modes of travel along with greater road and personal safety. Also control of inconsiderate parking could improve quality of life in residential areas. Security of car parks could be enhanced through a possible parking partnership.

Quality of life: Less car dominated town centres will create a more pleasant environment. Also control of inconsiderate parking could improve quality of life in residential areas. Parking controls can improve access for short stay trips.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Any car park management measures should be applied on a proportional basis so as not to encourage additional cross river journeys.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The management of parking will help tackle congestion and encourage more sustainable transport in the LCR. Implementation of the parking strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Healthy Halton and Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Car parking management would encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Less car dominated town centres and residential areas will create a more pleasant environment.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The management of car parking could allow better access to services in town centres for people visiting on a short stay basis.

LCR wider links: The management of parking will be considered in line with neighbouring authorities.

Maintain transport assets: Any possible income raised through parking charges could help finance car park management and infrastructure.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Review the findings of the consultant's report on the feasibility of applying for Civil Parking Enforcement Powers and determine the most appropriate way forward;
- Develop a Parking Partnership with all private car park operators that will review and monitor the impact of the emerging regeneration of the town centres on the demand for and provision of car parking;
- The Partnership will consider the management of car parks including the possibility of the introduction of limiting duration of stay in town centres areas and/or car parking charging;
- Continue to monitor the levels of on-street parking within the Borough in terms of congestion and road safety and introduce parking restrictions as necessary and appropriate;
- Review all existing traffic regulation orders and amend or revoke as necessary;
- Continue to impose maximum parking standards on new developments as appropriate. Minimum standards may also be appropriate for some types of development and location;
- Continue to require 10% of all parking spaces to be accessible for disabled parking and half of these to be marked as such on new developments, as appropriate;
- Continue to require cycle parking at a minimum level of 10% of the 'actual parking standard' on all new developments;
- Continue to ensure that motorcycle spaces are provided at all new developments at a level of 4% of the 'actual parking standard' as appropriate;

- Develop a policy on parking spaces with charging points for electric and hybrid vehicles;
- Review parking standards as necessary through the LDF;
- Accept lower car parking levels in more accessible locations, related to the level of accessibility resulting from a transport assessment;
- Encourage shared parking between uses at different times of the day;
- Accept lower car parking levels where public transport is improved through a Section 106 agreement and it can be proven that this will reduce parking demand;
- Aim to ensure that on street parking relating to a development does not pose a hazard to highway safety; and
- Continue to review the provision of taxi ranks to address changing demands.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 11

Passenger Rail

Introduction

The Government White Paper on the Future of Transport: A Network for 2030, recognised that the railways are an important part of the country's infrastructure, carrying large amounts of passengers. It saw that the challenge was to ensure that the recent growth in passengers on railways continued and accelerated and identified amongst other things the need for increased reliability and the need to concentrate investment on those schemes that delivered the most benefit.

The Government has made the following commitments in relation to rail:

- It will make Network Rail more accountable to its customers;
- It will establish a high speed rail network as part of its programme of measures to fulfil our joint ambitions for creating a low carbon economy. Its vision is of a truly high speed rail network for the whole of Britain;
- It supports Crossrail and further electrification of the rail network; and
- It will turn the rail regulator into a powerful champion.

It can therefore be seen that passenger rail issues feature strongly in national policies and are considered important to the achievement of a low carbon economy.

Halton has a fairly extensive rail network with the following passenger rail lines passing through the Borough:

- Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline, passing through the West of Runcorn and South West Widnes;
- West Coast Mainline (to Warrington), but with no stations in the Borough;
- North Wales, Chester, Warrington, Manchester Line, passing through East Runcorn, and,
- Transpennine Line, passing through Hough Green and Farnworth in North Widnes.

In addition to these lines there is a link of single track between the Chester-Manchester Line and Liverpool Branch of the WCML known as the Halton Curve.

There are currently four operational stations in the Borough these comprise:

- Hough Green on the Transpennine Line;
- Widnes (Farnworth), on the Transpennine Line;
- Runcorn, on the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline; and
- Runcorn East, on the Chester to Manchester Line.

The rail network in Halton provides good links to places outside the Borough but the low number of local stations means that the network serves limited useful purpose for trips within the Borough, with no provision for cross river journeys.

Generally, the facilities at the stations are basic and often with a run down appearance. Apart from Runcorn Station, the stations tend to have a remote feel to them, particularly the car parks and station forecourts. Access for people with disabilities is generally possible but often indirect.

Progress on Delivery to Date

Halton is the Highway Authority and the Planning Authority for the area, but has no direct authority on rail issues. Since the production of the LTP Halton has produced it's Unitary Development Plan which has safeguarded land for new stations at the following locations.

- Upton Rocks, on the Transpennine Line;
- Barrows Green, on the Transpennine Line;
- Ditton (re-open), on the Liverpool Branch of the WCML;
- South Widnes on the Liverpool to Warrington Freight Line;
- Beechwood, on the Halton Curve; and
- Daresbury, on the WCML/Chester to Manchester Line.

In addition to safeguarding land for new stations, land has also been safeguarded in the Unitary Development Plan UDP for the reopening of a closed section of line in South Widnes that would connect the Liverpool to Warrington Freight Line with the Transpennine Line. This would allow a route to be provided which would serve the proposed South Widnes Station.

However the problems and costs associated with providing new rail stations means that the sites safeguarded for Upton Rocks, Barrow Green and South Widnes are likely to ne reviewed during the course of this plan.

In 2009 Virgin Trains completed a programme of works to Runcorn Station. This included modernisation of the station buildings, the provision of a multi storey car park that provided an additional 307 spaces and new cycle parking facilities.

During LTP1, Runcorn East Station was provided with CCTV coverage of the car park, station and Busway stops, and improved signing and lighting. Halton also provided enhanced bus/rail interchange between Runcorn East Station and Runcorn East Busway stop.

In 2010, Halton part funded improvements to Runcorn East Station working in partnership with Arriva Trains Wales. The works include enhanced CCTV coverage, real time information, new signing, removal of dense low vegetation and repainting of the station office.

In February 2011, access improvements to Hough Green Station started to be implemented, these included:

- Improved highway visibility;
- Modified access to the highway;
- Extended and enhanced car parking facilities, with spaces being increased to 50 and scope remaining for a further extension;
- Secure cycle parking; and
- Improved lighting and security including CCTV.

Similar access improvements to Widnes Station started to be implemented in January 2011, these included:

- Extended and enhanced car parking facilities, with spaces being increased to 100 and scope remaining for a further extension;
- Provision of a drop off and pick up area;
- Secure cycle parking; and
- Improved lighting and security including CCTV.

Improvements to Hough Green Station and Widnes stations are being funded through a combination of LTP and developer Section 106 contributions.

The provision of these improved parking facilities at both Hough Green and Widnes Station will enable these sites to act as 'park-and-ride' to Liverpool.

The Halton Curve is a section of railway line that provides a connection between the Chester to Manchester Line and the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Main Line.

Currently, the Halton Curve only has points and signalling for rail traffic in the Liverpool direction. The line currently carries a very limited passenger service running once a week in the summer months. Since LTP1, Halton has been working with the Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales local authorities to provide a regular bi-directional passenger service between Chester and Liverpool via Runcorn.

The scheme has progressed through Network Rail's Guide to Rail Investment Projects (GRIP) stage 3. Following on from GRIP stage 3 a demand study was carried out which indicated that there was an economic case for a new hourly or half hourly service in each direction. There is a proposal for a new station on the Halton Curve at Beechwood which is strongest in the event of a half hourly service being operated. Should the Halton Curve be implemented there is a case for reopening the station at Ditton, but the benefit to cost ratio for this is not as robust as at Beechwood. (Refer to Major Schemes).

Improve the Frequency of Train Services

The Council will be working with Network Rail, Train Operating Companies, Merseyrail and neighbouring authorities to improve frequency of train services through the Borough. Services which are considered to have the most potential for improvement include:

- The Chester – Runcorn East – Warrington – Manchester hourly service;
- Hough Green – Widnes service; and
- The Runcorn – Liverpool service.

Network Rail has carried out a study to identify problems of rail capacity and possible improvements around the Manchester area. This area is referred to as the 'Manchester Hub' with the final study entitled 'The Northern Hub' due to Manchester Hub issues having implications for rail capacity over the whole of Northern England. The study indicated that with improvements to the Northern Hub, there could be the possibility of a half hourly service between Chester and Manchester. There could also be improvements in frequency of services through Hough Green and Widnes. Two options were considered:

- Option 1 would enhance facilities at Manchester Piccadilly; and
- Option 2 would make greater use of Manchester Victoria.

Option 2 was selected due to it having wider economic benefits to the north of England than Option 1. Option 2 would allow a half hourly service between Chester and Manchester (although alternately at Piccadilly and Victoria stations) and a half hourly service between Manchester and Liverpool calling at Widnes.

Station Improvements

The Passenger Rail Study

In July 1999, Halton Borough Council commissioned a passenger rail study to explore the various prospects for the further development and integration of rail services for the

period of the first LTP and beyond. Whilst this study contains recommendations that are 12 years old many of the findings remain relevant to the current time.

The main aspects of the study comprised:

- The setting out of a prospective action plan from which the Council could develop its strategy over and beyond the first LTP period;
- A report on the prospects of partnership with the then Railtrack and Rail Operators to improve facilities in general and at the four existing stations, and in particular on the development of interchange facilities with other transport modes;
- An evaluation of the prospect of improving rail services at existing stations;
- An analysis of the realistic prospects for the opening of new stations at Moore, Daresbury, Sutton Weaver, Beechwood, Widnes South, Upton Rocks and Barrows Green;
- An analysis of the prospect of re-opening Ditton Station;
- An analysis of the development of the North Wales, Chester, Runcorn, Liverpool connection via the Halton Curve;
- A review of the re-introduction of services on unused and dismantled railways; and
- A review and analysis of the use of rail for inter-Borough travel, particularly across the river.

Passenger surveys were undertaken at the four existing stations to establish passenger origins and the mode by which they access the stations.

The key facts that arose from the surveys were:

- Most passengers at Hough Green, Widnes and Runcorn East come from within 1.5km;
- Most passengers at Runcorn Station come from over 5km away;
- Most passengers are making local journeys, but Runcorn station attracts longer distance business;
- There is little bus-rail interchange except at Runcorn East where there is a nearby stop on the Busway; and
- The importance of access by cycle and walking up to 1.5km away.

The study highlighted a number of opportunities for the improvement of stations within the Borough in terms of access and safety. These included:

- Improved pedestrian access;
- Improved road access;
- Enhanced car parking facilities;
- Enhanced public transport interchange;
- The provision of secure cycle storage facilities; and
- Improved signing to the stations.

The provision of a new access road between Runcorn Station and the Bridgewater Expressway is proposed as a scheme that could be implemented during the LTP3 period. (Refer to Major Schemes Section 10)

Through Bus/Rail Ticketing

The provision of bus/rail through ticketing works best on a "rail to bus" basis, with an add-on ticket to a rail ticket, rather than the other way around, (it is difficult for bus drivers to issue rail tickets except to very few destinations). The concept works well where there are many arriving passengers from outside the area, such as at Brighton or Edinburgh. It

is unlikely to work well in Halton as the majority (more than 80%) of train passengers are local.

There is however, the possibility that Merseytravel would be willing to include Halton within their TRIO ticketing system (unlimited zonal travel by bus/rail/ferry), though Halton Transport and Arriva would have to be committed to this option. Discussions will therefore take place with all parties to identify the feasibility of this option.

Halton's Passenger Rail study recommended a number of lower cost improvements to existing stations as follows:

- Refurbishment of station buildings and shelters;
- Resurfacing of platforms and the footways of the surrounding highways;
- Renewal of fencing to the rear of platforms;
- Cutting back of vegetation or removing obstructions where it will improve security by opening up spaces and increasing visibility;
- Install/improve station public address systems;
- Improved station lighting;
- Improved toilet facilities;
- Improved pedestrian signing; and
- Additional seating.

In the longer term the study recommended the following more substantial station improvements:

- Alter/provide access ramps to stations to improve access to those with disabilities;
- Provision of lifts at Runcorn East;
- Provision of a multi-storey car park at Runcorn Station;
- Find tenants for unused parts of station buildings; and
- Upgrade shelter (eastbound platform) and provide cross-track access for disabled at Widnes Station.

These lists are a summary of the recommendations for station improvements and are not comprehensive, nor applicable to every station. A programme of station improvements is detailed in the full passenger rail study report. The Council will promote, where applicable, these improvements by working in partnership with Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies.

Re-opening Existing Closed Stations and Opening New Stations

The study investigated the feasibility of re-opening closed stations and opening new stations and as a result of this six station sites have been safeguarded from development in Halton's Unitary Development Plan. The feasibility of implementing these proposals is outlined below. Engineering constraints, high costs of provision and acceptance by train operating companies are all problems that would need to be overcome before the proposals could be taken forward. One or a combination of these factors is regrettably likely to mean that some sites do not prove feasible and there continuance in the UDP may need to be reviewed

Daresbury

A masterplan exercise was completed for Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (SIC) in February 2009. The favoured option included the provision of a new railway station in proximity of the site. The masterplan suggests that capital investment of £600 million will generate up to 12,000 new jobs over the next 30 years. It is anticipated that

5,000 of these new jobs could come in the next 10 to 15 years. Overall, the draft Halton Core Strategy envisages development of:

- An additional 9.3 ha. at the Daresbury SIC;
- An additional 16.6 ha. at the Daresbury Business Park;
- Approximately 1750 dwellings across the strategic site; and
- A mixed use development of 3.25 ha. as a neighbourhood centre.

A GRIP Stage 1, 2 and 3 analysis is being carried out to provide the first stage in examining the feasibility & cost of a new station at Daresbury. This new station could be located on the WCML or the Chester/Manchester line or both lines at the point where they cross. If progressed, the scheme would provide for sustainable access to the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (SIC), residential, employment and educational development and its surrounding area. It would therefore reduce potential traffic generation, reducing traffic congestion on routes into Warrington, Manchester and Chester.

In addition to the GRIP analysis wider studies will look at public transport access to the station and development of a strategic transport interchange /regional park and ride facility at the site.

Widnes South

The site for this station is located on the Liverpool-Warrington Freight Line. Whilst it is not particularly convenient for Widnes town centre, which is approximately 1km to the north, it is well served by bus. Car parking could be provided between the line and Widnes Eastern Relief Road.

To the east of the protected site for the station lies one of the Borough's major regeneration areas, the Widnes Waterfront site. The masterplan for Widnes Waterfront indicated the aspiration to have the South Widnes Station within the regeneration area.

Upton Rocks

The new housing developments in Upton Rocks were designed to facilitate a railway station on the Liverpool-Warrington (Trans Pennine) Line with good footpath links to a high-density residential housing area. There is adequate land for a suitable level of car parking and provision could be made for bus services. The construction of a station here would require some additional footpath links to connect some of the development.

The new station would be too close to Hough Green Station for them both to be served by the trains, but if the frequency of the service along the line was increased both stations could be served by alternate trains.

Barrows Green

This protected site lies on the Liverpool-Warrington (Transpennine) Line in the North East of Widnes. Like the station proposals at Upton Rocks there would need to be an increase in the frequency of services along this line in order to justify the construction of this station.

Beechwood

The protected site lies along the Halton Curve. The station would have a large catchment area and have excellent access from the busway. There is space for parking on either side of the railway if some of the bus depot land can be used. The track runs in cutting at this location and therefore lifts and steps would be required to allow access to the platform.

Ditton

The station was closed in 1994 due to the low level of patronage and is on the Liverpool Branch of the WCML. The site has a limited catchment area mainly consisting of low-density industries and could provide a small amount of parking provision. Currently the train operating companies would have little incentive to stop at this station.

Although the site is not viable at this time, it has potential should the Halton Curve reopen to bi-directional working with a new passenger service provided linking North Wales-Chester-Frodsham-Beechwood-Runcorn-Ditton-Liverpool South Parkway-Liverpool Lime Street. This new service would provide for Ditton, but the Ditton area itself must provide an increase in density of the catchment area. This would be achieved through a greater residential and industrial land use in the catchment. Such land use would be created by means of increased housing at Hale Bank and the delivery of 3MG.

The provision of a rail service through South Widnes would be of a nature that would stop at Ditton. The South Widnes proposal would however probably be implemented at a later stage to the re-opening of the Halton Curve.

The chance of opening some stations(even if found feasible), for example, Widnes South, Upton Rocks and Barrows Green may be longer term aspirations that could fall beyond the 2026 time horizon for LTP3.

New Lines and Services

Trans-Pennine Upgrade

The Trans - Pennine corridor, which includes the Liverpool - Hough Green - Widnes Line, is nearing capacity. Railtrack is committed to developing the corridor in partnership with others to ensure that rail plays its part in an integrated solution for the north of England. This will involve major expenditure on many parts of the route such as the ‘Northern Hub’.

In order to allow increased stops and frequency of service the provision of passing loops on this line will be considered. This will allow for improved high speed and frequent express services to be operated between Liverpool - Manchester - and beyond to Newcastle, Nottingham, Manchester Airport and Stoke-on-Trent, and possibly include Widnes as an intermediate stop. Other express services could be operated between Liverpool and Manchester with an intermediate stop at either Widnes or Hough Green.

Network Rail has announced its intention to electrify the Liverpool to Manchester Chat Moss Line. Halton is supportive of the general principle of enhanced rail electrification as it offers many benefits including:

- Lower overall energy requirements;
- Lighter weight of trains and hence less wear on the infrastructure;
- Faster accelerating trains which give overall reduced journey times;
- Quieter performance; and
- Zero emissions at the trackside.

The Chat Moss Line does not pass directly through Halton but we will be supportive of proposals to electrify lines within the Borough, for example the Liverpool to Manchester Line through Widnes and the Chester to Manchester Line through Runcorn East.

High Speed Rail

A number of proposals are emerging at a national level for High Speed Rail. The first section of high speed rail was implemented between London and the Channel Tunnel; this is known as High Speed 1. There are proposals to extend high speed rail north of

London, this is known as High Speed 2. The emerging studies indicate the possibility of a high speed line as far as the Midlands with the possibility of extending it to the North West and ultimately Glasgow and Edinburgh. Other studies indicate the possibility of high speed lines along both the west and east coasts. At present there is no defined proposal for a high speed route north of the Midlands, but journey times as little as 1 hour 6 minutes are being quoted for high speed rail journeys from both Warrington and Manchester to London. Halton is supportive of the principles of high speed rail as this will assist with economic growth and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Ditton - Widnes South - Fiddlers Ferry - Warrington Bank Quay

Under present arrangements this service would be a 'dead end' service, terminating either at Bank Quay or Arpley Close, depending on the function of the line at the Warrington end.

This service would only work if there were a major redevelopment between Widnes and Warrington.

Halton Curve: Chester-Runcorn-Liverpool

The Halton Curve connects the Chester-Manchester Line with the Liverpool Branch of the WCML. It is used only by a once per week service in the summer months and only has signals and points installed for movements in the Liverpool direction. An upgrade of signals and points would be needed to allow two way working.

The opening of this line would allow the provision of a new train service linking North-Wales-Chester-Frodsham-Beechwood-Runcorn-Ditton-Liverpool South Parkway-Liverpool Lime Street. It might also promote some interchange at Runcorn between WCML trains and enable a local service to Ellesmere Port via Helsby.

The full opening of the Halton Curve could enable the opening of the proposed new station at Beechwood and also the reopening of the station at Ditton. In addition to benefits to Halton the new service would also be of wider benefit to North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside and in particular would be an important new rail link to Liverpool John Lennon Airport by use of Liverpool South Parkway station.

Shell Green Route: Ditton-Widnes South-Warrington Central

The reopening of this route would allow improved opportunities for travel between Widnes and Warrington, and could form part of the Trans-Pennine linkage. Unfortunately, the track bed to the east of Widnes has been sold but on the whole is still intact.

In the very long term, with some significant investment, the route could allow for the provision of a number of services, such as a Trans-Pennine service via Widnes South and the WCML to Liverpool South Parkway, should the Liverpool-Widnes-Warrington Central line prove to be unsuitable for improvement to take this service.

Consultation

Extensive consultation has been carried out prior to and during the preparation of the LTP and comments have been incorporated, where appropriate. Further consultation on new proposals will be undertaken as the need arises.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: In terms of passenger kilometres rail has less carbon emissions than the private car. A modal shift from car to rail would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Economic regeneration: Rail has the advantage of ease of direct access to large commercial centres without problems of road congestion.

Equality of opportunity: An effective railway network is beneficial to all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: In terms of injury accidents per kilometre travelled, rail travel is safer than road transport.

Quality of life: A modal shift from car to rail would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport. Where rail electrification is used there would be zero emissions at the point of delivery.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The reinstatement of the Halton Curve to bi-directional working would allow the provision of a new cross Mersey passenger rail service connecting North Wales, Chester, Frodsham, Runcorn and Liverpool Lime Street.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The enhancement of rail services will help provide economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of the rail strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal, Employment, Learning and Skills priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Through its station and station access improvements, Halton is encouraging a modal shift from car to rail which would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of rail travel will often involve the greater use of walking and sometimes cycling as part of the overall journey. The use of rail travel would also play a part in reducing pollutants from transport.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of better rail services and infrastructure, would allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The provision of better rail services and infrastructure would allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its transport infrastructure to ensure that rail usage is an efficient and desirable form of transport.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Work with the Train Operating Companies (TOC's) to improve existing train services through increased and more regular frequency;
- Work with Merseytravel and seek extension of the Merseyrail Electrics service from Hunts Cross to Hough Green;
- Work with Network Rail and the TOC's to implement programme of station improvements;
- Discuss with Merseytravel the extension of their TRIO ticketing system to all stations within the Borough;
- Pursue the opening of the Halton Curve to a bi-directional service between Liverpool-Runcorn-Chester-North Wales;
- Determine the possibility of new rail stations and access to them at Beechwood (on the Halton Curve), Daresbury, Upton Rocks and Barrows Green; Widnes South and Ditton;
- Remove the protection against development of station sites at Moore, Sutton Weaver (on the Liverpool branch of the WCML);
- Safeguard against further development on the Shell Green Route (Ditton - Widnes South - Warrington Central);
- Lobby for action by Network Rail, TOC's Merseytravel and other rail related organisations for the improvement of services and infrastructure within and around the Borough;
- Continue with all interested parties to secure improvements in services on the trans-Pennine rail line;
- Work with the surrounding local authorities in lobbying for improvements and investing in the rail network;
- Continue to be an active member of the North West Rail Campaign (NWRC), lobbying for improvements and investment in the North West rail network;
- Support the proposals for the Northern Hub capacity improvements; and
- Support proposals for high speed rail to serve the North West.
- Work with local businesses who may wish to develop more fuel efficient, low carbon vehicle technologies or install electric charging points on their premises.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 12

Peak Oil Production and Emerging Vehicle Technology

Introduction

The repercussions of a heavy reliance on fossil fuels are significant and our transport system is at particular risk. We know that the point at which fossil fuel resources can no longer meet demand is getting nearer and that this is likely to lead to volatile prices and restrictions in availability.

The transport system is reliant on oil for 97% of the energy it uses and is highly susceptible to these pressures; through this strategy the measures we will take to reduce emissions and provide a low carbon transport system will go some way towards minimising the negative consequences resulting from price increases and inconsistent supplies.

However, we recognise that the approach outlined here is unlikely to be sufficient to insulate the transport system against the severe impacts of oil shortages and this is something we intend to address as a priority.

The case for supporting alternative fuel and vehicle companies is strong; the sector is showing sustained growth which is likely to increase and locally we have two vehicle manufacturers - Jaguar-Landrover in Halewood and General Motors in Ellesmere Port who are both pursuing low carbon vehicles and are significant local employers.

The currently emerging vehicle technologies include electric vehicles, internal combustion/electric hybrids (including plug-in hybrids and Range Extended Electric Vehicles), advanced internal combustion engines and gearboxes, vehicles capable of using high blend biofuels such as biomethane, bioethanol/biobutanol and biodiesel, and hydrogen powered vehicles (both internal combustion engines and fuel cells).

The Coalition Government has expressed the following overarching national objective for transport as:

‘To support economic growth and contribute to the 2020 carbon reduction targets.’

The Government has also set out the following transport commitments in relation to new transport technologies:

- ’The Government believes that a modern transport infrastructure is essential for a dynamic and entrepreneurial economy, as well as to improve well-being and quality of life. We need to make the transport sector greener and more sustainable, with tougher emission standards and support for new technologies; and
- We will mandate a national recharging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.’

It is therefore believed that emerging vehicle technology will play a substantial role in LTP3 to reduce oil consumption, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The use of low carbon emission vehicles, in particular electrically powered vehicles will enable a significant reduction in overall transport carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of electrically powered vehicles will have significantly lower running costs. Whilst purchase costs are higher than comparable conventionally powered vehicles, it is anticipated that as sales rise the cost will reduce. This in the longer term will reduce transport costs for businesses. The expansion of this evolving area of technology also provides new business opportunities.

Equality of opportunity: It is often the case that air quality is worse in deprived areas compared with more affluent areas and transport is a major contributor to this situation. The use of low emission, in particular, electric vehicles will assist in improving air quality in these areas.

Health, safety and security: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will improve air quality and hence the health of people in proximity of traffic.

Quality of life: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will improve air quality and hence the wellbeing of people in proximity of traffic.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Fuel efficient vehicles, especially electric vehicles may be subject to financial incentives. This may need consideration in any tolling or road pricing policy**.**

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR. This strategy would also have a positive impact upon A Healthy Halton and Halton's Urban Renewal LSP's SCS priorities.

Low carbon transport: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will assist in tackling any possible Air Quality Action Areas in Halton.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of low emission and electric vehicles will improve air quality and hence the health and wellbeing of people in proximity of traffic.

Access to employment, services and social activities: It is anticipated in the longer term that low emission vehicles will have low overall running costs and this will allow more people to access the destinations that they require.

LCR wider links: The use of fuel efficient vehicles, especially electric vehicles will help sustain oil supplies and reduce our dependency on oil thereby sustaining transport's ability to move people around the LCR and wider destinations.

Maintain transport assets: Whilst there are currently no on-highway charging points for electric vehicles in Halton this situation could change, whereby such charging points would need to be maintained to a safe and serviceable condition.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Produce a development control policy whereby electric vehicle charging points are provided where appropriate in new developments;
- Pursue bids to Government where available for the provision of electric vehicle charging points at existing developments;
- Consider financial incentives for fuel efficient vehicles, especially electric vehicles in any tolling or road pricing policy;
- Consider a policy on the use of fuel efficient vehicles for its own fleet and other vehicles used for Council business; and
- Publicise any Government incentives for the purchase and use of fuel efficient vehicles.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 13

Provision for People with Disabilities

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed in 1995 to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. It protects disabled people in:

- Employment
- Access to goods, facilities and services
- The management, buying or renting of land or property and;
- Education

The Employment Rights and First Rights of Access came into force on 2 December, 1996; further rights of access came into force on 1 October, 1999; and the final rights of access came into force in October 2004.

In addition this Act: allows the Government to set minimum standards so that disabled people can use public transport easily. It should be noted that when reference is made to 'all' disabled people in statements that this includes those who are users of mental health services.

In July 2003, we commissioned consultants to carry out a Public Transport Accessibility review which involved:

- An assessment of the Council's responsibilities under the disability
- Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995;
- An accessibility audit of public transport interchanges to ensure compliance with DDA, involving a group of people with mobility problems; and
- A review of accessibility of public transport operators' buses.

The results of this review have proved invaluable in addressing our responsibilities under the DDA and in developing work programmes to improve accessibility. The needs of those who are semi ambulant, and blind or partially sighted, or wheelchair-bound are fully considered in the design of all highway improvement measures with the aim of removing unnecessary obstructions, easing gradients and the provision of safe crossing places.

The common aim of all these facilities being to make the transport network accessible to the mobility impaired and as such help to address problems of social exclusion and deprivation within communities.

The improvements to the major pedestrian access routes into the town centres, targeted for improvement, are the first phase of a series of actions that will be rolled out to the pedestrian route hierarchy in the coming years. Further provision of seats in pedestrian areas etc. also forms part of the general improvement strategy.

Wheels For All

Wheels for all provides a range of adapted bikes giving an opportunity for people of all ages, abilities and needs to cycle – supporting people to stay independent, healthy and have fun. Wheels for all is organised by registered charity Cycling Projects which aims to ensure that cycling is accessible for all. Sessions are run every Wednesday in Victoria Park, Widnes between 10am and 3pm. (insert photo)

Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The badge enables holders to park close to where they need to go. The scheme operates throughout the UK, and is administered by local authorities who deal with applications and issue badges. Halton currently has 7860 blue badge holders in the borough.

Standards of Provision

At present, with respect to parking provision at new (non residential) developments, the Council's planning requirements, saved from the Unitary Development Plan, stipulate 10% of parking provided will be to mobility standard width of 3.6m, and that half of these will be signed as being exclusively for the use of people with disabilities. Where there is less

than 10 spaces in the development's car park, at least one space is to be provided to mobility standard. This standard is to be reviewed and changed if necessary during the development of the Local Development Framework, to ensure that it reflects current national parking standards and takes account of local variations in the percentage of registered disabled persons, so that the needs of local people are met.

Public Transport Provision

The Bus Quality Partnership has delivered a more accessible bus network with low floor buses and raised kerbs at bus stops. A fully accessible Community Transport Fleet that has been reorganised in order to improve its efficiency and value for those in need of its services assists those who remain unable to use conventional public transport. The study into accessibility problems has enabled us to focus on those issues which are of importance to people with mobility problems.

Numerous bus stops and shelters have been upgraded beyond the initial target of 30%. In fact, approximately 50% have received improvements such as tactile flooring, drop down kerbs, controlled puffin/ signalised crossings along the North-South Route and the "zoned" corridors Grange/ Halton Brook and Ditton/Halebank.

The disabled park and ride facilities at Hough Green and Widnes Rail stations will be improved to enhance the "journey experience".

Driver and Passenger Assistant Training

Following the successful provision of the PATS (Passenger Assistants Training Scheme) course for all drivers and passenger assistants providing transport services over the past several years, a new 'SAFER' training course which was developed in-house has been provided since Summer 2009. This has now been delivered to some 275 delegates over 21 course dates so far. This specialised training course has been very well received and feedback from delegates, through Reactionaires, has been extremely positive. The course covers dedicated topics that drivers and passenger assistants encounter on a regular basis including: Child Protection, Adult Abuse Awareness, Epilepsy/Seizures, Autism/ADHD, Behavioural issues, Dementia/Memory Loss and Deaf Awareness. This course has been delivered through in-house trainers and has been made compulsory to attend for all contractor's staff. Work has recently been carried out with Safeguarding units to strengthen the course content around child protection and abuse awareness. This up-to-date detail has also been included in a revised code of practice document which will be issued out to all contractors as well as parents/carers, this replaces the existing document dated April 2007.

Consultation

Representatives of disability groups who took part in the Accessibility Study of 2003 are included in the Council's consultee panels in order that their views can be expressed in detail and evaluated in the development of improved measures. In addition, an extensive consultation exercise has been undertaken prior to and during the development of this LTP and comments received have been used to help formulate our strategies.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Ensuring that people with disabilities have access to sustainable modes of travel that will reduce the need to travel by car.

Economic regeneration: Ensure equal access to all modes of transport for employment, training and education.

Equality of opportunity: Providing transport and facilities that allow all members of the community to access employment and services.

Health, safety and security: The provision of transport infrastructure that is suitable for people with disabilities is safer to use by all sections of society.

Quality of life: Provide transport infrastructure that allows people with disabilities to access a full range of services and activities.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway and the Halton Curve scheme will enhance access for all.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of Halton's strategy will enable greater accessibility within the LCR. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton and Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Low carbon transport: Halton will continue to provide for the travel needs for people with disabilities whilst reducing the need for travel.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Access to services and social networks is vital for health, in particular mental wellbeing for all sections of society.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Halton will continue to make its transport infrastructure accessible to all.

LCR wider links: Halton will continue to make improvements in access for the disabled at transport interchanges such as at railway stations.

Maintain transport assets: Transport infrastructure will be maintained to ensure network access for all.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Continue to provide improvements in the accessibility of the public transport system delivered through Quality Partnerships with public transport operators; (see Bus Strategy in PTS No.2)
- Continue to provide improvements to access rail infrastructure;
- Continue to carry out improvements to the highway network to remove obstructions and facilitate movements by the mobility impaired;
- Provide a network of safe and well maintained pedestrian routes in and around town centres;
- Provide disabled parking provision to meet demand at new developments; (see Development Control Strategy and Parking Strategy);
- Implement it's ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) which aims to ensure that Halton's Public Rights of Way network is as accessible for all users under the policy of "Access for All", along with the actions contained within Strategic Aim 4 which relates to the needs of people with disabilities;
- Support the provision of a fully accessible Community Transport Scheme;
- Adopt a system of formal liaison with Halton Disability Information services on improvement schemes to the highway;
  Continue to provide Travel Training for vulnerable young people and adults, (subject to funding support for this service);
- Continue to provide bespoke travel advice to people with mobility problems;
- Seek to ensure that the maintenance regime for the highway network will facilitate the safe and convenient passage of people with mobility problems; and
- Implement Section 69 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (amends section 147 of the Highways Act 1980, and introduces a new section 147ZA), to provide that stock-proof furniture (principally stiles and gates) across public footpaths and bridleways will be better suited to the needs of people with mobility problems.

The needs of vulnerable adults will be considered through:

- Community transport schemes, including Dial a Ride;
- Concessionary travel for people with sensory and physical but also psychiatric impairments;
- Clear, unambiguous signage.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 14

Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Greenways

Introduction

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are routes over which the public have the right to pass and re-pass. They are made up of a number of facilities, these being:

i) Public footpaths – for pedestrian use only;
ii) Public bridleway – for use by pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists; and
iii) Public byways - for use by pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and motorised vehicles, dependent on the character of the way.

In addition, there are Greenways which have no legal status but have the definition as being a network of largely car free off-road routes connecting people to facilities and open spaces in and around towns and cities and to the countryside; for shared use by people of all abilities on foot, cycle or horseback for commuting, play or leisure. It is important that they are well managed and provide a co-ordinated network, formed through the use of off-road routes, routes adjacent to carriageways and 'Quiet Roads'. Quiet Roads should offer the non-motorised traveller an attractive route, which is largely free from intimidation from the traffic, with lower flows and vehicles speeds encouraging more people to walk, cycle or ride instead of drive. Prior to the implementation of LTP1, the PRoW and the Greenways network had been neglected over the years. Whilst much work has subsequently been undertaken under the LTP 2 there still remains a lot to do to provide a comprehensive and attractive network of routes for use by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a requirement that all highway authorities in England and Wales prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). Halton's RoWIP was adopted in September 2009 following extensive consultation

The RoWIP is not about rights of way in isolation, but is intended to deliver an integrated network of routes in and between town and country. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are a fundamental element of an integrated transport system. These contributions are summarised in this PTS.

Progress on delivery

Halton has approximately 74km of PRoW; this includes 71km of footpath and 3km of Bridleways. Following the publication of a 'Milestone Statement' in 2003, which highlighted our approach to ensuring the PRoW are legally defined, properly maintained and well advertised and enabled us to develop a list of priorities to help ensure that the maximum benefits are derived from the network of routes, the Council has recently published a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), in response to the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that a ROWIP must assess:

- Present and likely future needs of the public
- Opportunities for exercise and recreation
- Accessibility of local rights of way to the blind / partially sighted and those with mobility problems.

The ROWIP is not site specific, but draws together an assessment of user needs and demands and consideration of network opportunities to establish nineteen policies and

ten strategic aims, and then develops a number of action plan points under each strategic aim, which will then be reviewed within 10 years.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) has the following vision statement

"Halton Borough Council aims to develop, promote and protect a local rights of way network that meets the needs and likely future needs of the public for outdoor recreation, exercise and access to services. Through the preparation and implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) the Council will evaluate and improve access to local rights of way and other access routes, the countryside, and services within and around Halton for residents and visitors."

Halton Borough Council has made a significant number of improvements to the non-motorised user networks over the last LTP period, and a number of these schemes have enabled resources to be drawn in from external sources. For example, greenway routes providing access to and through the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone and Castlefields regeneration areas, have been constructed using European and Regional funding, and the Council have been working with developers to deliver or improve sections of the network. One particular intervention is the newly completed 21 acre park on former farmland, adjacent to the residential area of Halebank. The new park includes woodland planting and wildlife water feature, which incorporates a SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System). Over 1000 metres of a new 3 metre wide footpath and cycleway linking Halebank Road through to Hale Road have also been provided.

Consultation

The Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan was used as the basis for a 12 week consultation and the document, along with a questionnaire, was sent out to a wide range of users and stakeholders to enable their views to be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final document. The consultation exercise was also advertised in the local papers and copies of the document were available on the Council's website and in the local libraries and Direct Links. Questionnaires were also deposited at nearly 100 locations including health centres, shops, businesses, Norton Priory, visitor centres, post offices, community centres etc. Fourteen formal written responses and twenty seven questionnaires were returned.

In developing the ROWIP, a Rights of Way User Survey was commissioned in 2007 to establish the key factors influencing the use of the rights of way network and other access routes. As well as the general walker survey it also incorporated detailed cyclist and equestrian surveys.

Halton Borough Council will aim to continue to develop communication with local communities about the PRoW network and other access routes. Inline with the Government's 'Big Society' agenda, it will also provide opportunities, wherever practical and possible, for volunteers to be involved in PRoW management and maintenance. Although not an exhaustive list the following partners will be consulted.

- Local Authorities;
- Parish Councils;
- Countryside Agency;
- Prescribed organisations;
- Local User Groups;
- Interest Groups; and
- Other Sections within the Council.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to walking and cycling for relatively short trips would make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of walking and cycling can provide accessibility to local employment sites. Halton will continue to invest in infrastructure, such as greenways, to access employment sites, for example, to the Widnes Waterfront site. The rural economy is also supported through a high standard PRoW network.

Equality of opportunity: The use of walking and cycling routes, particularly in deprived areas will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The use of walking and cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. Greater use of walking and cycling on routes remote from motorised transport would also enhance the security of the individual. (RoWIP strategic aim 3)

Quality of life: Walking and cycling would assist with the provision of quiet and pollution free transport.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on the SJB and would allow a connection between two national cycle routes to the north and south of the Mersey.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of cross boundary greenway routes will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR. Implementation of the PRoW and greenway strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Through its policy to maintain, upgrade and where possible provide new infrastructure for walking and cycling, Halton is encouraging a modal shift from car for shorter journeys which would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of walking and cycling for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The promotion of the use of walking and cycling on PRoW and greenways respectively along with infrastructure enhancements will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The use of walking and cycling, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The promotion of the use of PRoW and greenways along with enhanced infrastructure, for example, greenways that connect with destinations out of the

Borough, will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas. (RoWIP strategic aim 10)

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its PRoW and greenways, for example by, the cutting back of vegetation and enforcement of illegal encroachments to ensure that their use is viable and desirable.

Strategy

Through the Public Rights of Way and Greenways Strategy the Council will strive to:

- Deliver the actions contained in the ROWIP Action Plan, working in partnership with a range of organisations where necessary, and including details of site specific schemes within the Milestone Statement Progress Report.
- Continue to identify potential Greenway routes and links within the Borough;
- Provide off-road Greenways including routes that develop existing footpaths and bridleways as well as creating entirely new routes;
- Where appropriate provide Greenway routes along “quiet roads”;
- Develop Greenways adjacent to roads, where there is no alternative;
- Ensure that where new developments can be served by the proposed Greenways network, that the opportunity is taken to require the developer to fund the cost of any works deemed necessary;
- Target routes that link communities with facilities and services such as employment sites, schools, shops, leisure centres and health centres;
- Ensure that the network is used to its full potential by constructing quality routes appropriate to the location and proposed use;
- Ensure where possible, that routes are accessible to all users including the mobility impaired;
- Where possible, provide a network that incorporates circular routes that not only provide access to facilities and services but can also be used for recreation and leisure;
- Work in partnership with adjacent authorities to develop long distance routes that tie into the wider network and provide cross boundary linkages;
- Ensure that it fulfils its statutory duty to maintain and protect Public Rights of Way;
- Ensure that the Definitive Maps and Statements for the Borough are kept up to date and correctly record the line and legal status of all highways required to be shown on them;
- Ensure that all footpaths and bridleways are correctly signed where they leave a metalled road;
- Ensure that the surface of every Public Right of Way is in proper repair, reasonably safe and suitable for its expected use;
- Ensure that all Public Rights of Way are inspected regularly by, or on behalf of, the authority;
- Continue to produce an annual works programme for the maintenance of the Public Rights of Way network;
- Develop a ‘rolling’ annual programme of improvement works for the Public Right of Way network;
- Ensure that the Public Rights of Way and Greenways networks are well publicised and promoted;
- Continue to identify new routes and missing links within the network and will where necessary negotiate with landowners to provide these;
- Provide pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian crossing facilities(i.e. Puffin, Toucan and Pegasus crossings) on priority routes and sites where they are justified;

- Implement measures along equestrian routes to increase both road and personal safety;
- Maintain bridleways and cycleways to an acceptable standard; and
- Implement the PRoW and Greenway interventions detailed in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 15

Quality Transport Corridors

Introduction

A “Quality Corridor Strategy” was adopted in LTP1 as an effective method of bringing about highway infrastructure improvements, designed to encourage bus patronage through improved bus stops and bus priority measures. This strategy was further developed to co-ordinate other transport improvements such as measures to encourage walking and cycling, catering for needs of people with disabilities and to integrate road safety schemes and traffic calming measures within an identified route or corridor.

Progress during LTP1 and LTP2

The work on Quality Corridors has been prioritised to address those routes, which would benefit most from the initiative.

During LTP1 two corridors were implemented:

- In Widnes, the west – east corridor – a high frequency bus route linking to Warrington and Liverpool with good opportunities for passenger growth and provision of walking and cycling routes; and
- In Runcorn, a corridor was treated that linked schools and residential areas to the town centre and integrated traffic safety improvements and “safe routes to school” measures.

This strategy was then built upon during LTP2 with the implementation of corridors to connect Widnes and Runcorn railway stations via an improved “Quality Transport Corridor” making best use of existing, established bus priority lanes and providing links to the areas of Runcorn and Widnes town centres where urban regeneration is still underway.

Two “zone” based schemes were also implemented in LTP2: Ditton and Halebank housing area in Widnes and the central housing area of Runcorn encompassing Heath, Grange and Halton Brook.

The “Zone” based transport improvements in Widnes and Runcorn focused on residential areas where some degree of traffic management and calming measures had previously been introduced to improve safety. Both areas comprise post-war housing with traditional street layout, providing excellent opportunities for cycle and pedestrian improvements alongside access improvements to public transport. Schemes within these zones were co-ordinated with highway maintenance and footway reconstruction schemes to further maximise the benefits. Halton Housing Trust is also investing heavily in existing housing stock, transferred from the Council, raising the standard and quality of these areas. The extent of highway land and housing amenity areas are extensive and streetscape environmental improvements can have a major impact on people’s quality of life in these deprived neighbourhoods.

The combination “Corridor” and “Zone” approaches have enabled us to complete highway infrastructure improvements to the remaining “high use” bus routes and provide opportunities for a wide range of integrated transport minor works.

Enhancement of Public Transport Infrastructure and Interchange

Improvements to the Widnes – Runcorn North South Quality Transport Corridor include:

- SJB approach and bus stop upgrades;

- Kingsway pedestrian and cycle links; and
- Birchfield Road bus stop upgrades, pedestrian and cycle improvements linking to the Greenway network and access improvements to Widnes Railway Station, this work is complementary to the Widnes Station improvements.

Proposals for QTC interventions along Waterloo Road / Victoria Road Widnes have been on hold pending progress of the Mersey Gateway project which affects the local road network through this area and pending the redevelopment of the Queens Hall site. However, bus stop improvements and cycleway links have been implemented to support the opening of the 3MG goods distribution development at Desoto Road. Similarly, in Runcorn, the opportunity to complete links to the Riverside College campus have been explored and designed ready for implementation should funding be available.

The Widnes zone based scheme has included the implementation of bus stop and pedestrian route upgrades from Hale Road to Halebank and a full range of improvements to the streetscape in Coronation Drive.

The Runcorn zone based scheme has included the implementation of a full range of QTC improvements in Grange and Halton Brook residential areas along Grangeway, Boston Avenue with linkages to QTC on Heath Road.

LTP3 Proposals

The implementation of QTCs during LTP 1 and 2 has delivered integrated and sustainable transport improvements right across the Borough, along the busiest routes, although some gaps remain. Therefore, a new approach is to be adopted to build upon the QTC philosophy, utilising the same comprehensive / co-ordinated approach, to maximise the benefit of the range of improvements to safety, walking, cycling and public transport, but focused on accessibility in and around specific centres, which provide services to the local communities. This would enable more flexibility in the targeting of schemes to areas with particular access problems and areas of change or new development, and address quality of life issues. For example:

- Accessibility (incorporating public realm improvements) concentrated on and around neighbourhood centres. This would allow work to be targeted to local ‘destinations’ rather than transport routes and enable us to ‘fill the gaps’ otherwise missed by the QTC approach. Improving the ‘public realm’ and the built environment in some of these areas in need of improvement would encourage business and support local economic growth. The approach mirrors the original improvements that were focused on improving walking & cycling routes to the main Town Centres, implemented prior to LTP1 and 2 and would incorporate traffic management and road safety measures where necessary.
- There is potential for further employment site access improvements, following the successful quality corridor practice, and co-ordinating the range of walking / cycling / public transport improvements, within and along routes serving older, established, commercial / industrial areas of Widnes and Runcorn. Other major sites such as Widnes Waterfront EDZ and 3MG have benefited from comprehensive regeneration programmes during earlier LTPs funded through a combination of public and private investment. However, existing employment sites at Ditton / Halebank, Waterloo Road, Picow Farm, Astmoor and Rocksavage J Clifton have fallen outside integrated transport initiatives to date. The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy focuses on several of these areas and will inform the Council priorities for regeneration and accessibility of these areas post 2015.
- The ‘targeted’ neighbourhood approach would enable access routes to health services to be improved, as some important centres have previously fallen ‘outside corridor’. QTC type interventions in the immediate locality around the Hospital, Health Centres

and clinics would allow us to fill in the gaps and provide walking, enhanced mobility measures and links to public transport improvements at these locations.

- Improvements could also be made to older established residential areas with traffic, parking and safety problems. A 'retro-fit home zone' type approach in local areas would (with sufficient funding) enable problems in areas like Appleton and Kingsway estates to be tackled comprehensively, as well as delivering streetscape enhancements and improving the 'sense of place' in these densely populated areas.

Allied to QTC improvements there are Primary Transport Strategies on walking, cycling, PROW, greenways and public transport. There are a few key 'missing links' in our cycleway and greenway network which, if tackled during the early stages of LTP3 would provide full connectivity across the Borough.

Consultation

Community engagement has been used extensively to assist in the successful delivery of QTC schemes. Providing residents who may be directly affected by proposals, with the opportunity to contribute to scheme design has shaped and helped the implementation of a range of transport improvements.

Consultation events and conferences hosted by HBC were successful in allowing the public to voice any opinions they had, both on specific schemes and transport strategies. The results of the conferences along with the results from the HBC Household survey have been analysed and shown in the annex document accompanying this toolbox strategy document.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to walking, cycling and bus would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions from transport.

Economic regeneration: The use of walking, cycling and buses and improved associated infrastructure would increase accessibility in particular in deprived communities allowing people to access employment more easily.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure particularly in deprived areas will assist in access to employment, education and training. QTC schemes also enhance provision for people with disabilities.

Health, safety and security: The provision of enhanced visibility around walking and cycling routes along with bus stops will help improve personal security and perceptions of crime.

Quality of life: Improvements to the 'public realm' targeted at neighbourhood destinations will improve 'sense of place' and peoples quality of life. QTC schemes can also assist with the provision of low emission transport.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for buses on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider bus infrastructure enhancements.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of quality transport corridors such as the route passing through Hough Green to Liverpool will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Through its provision of quality transport corridors, Halton is encouraging a modal shift from car to walking, cycling and public transport which would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The provision of better cycling and bus infrastructure will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its pedestrian, cycling and bus infrastructure to ensure that such usage is an efficient and desirable form of transport.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Enhance bus stop waiting areas provide access improvements and creation of footway/cycle paths on areas of footway and verge;
- Integrate the PROW, greenway and cycleway network to create comprehensive sustainable transport routes;
- Co-ordinate an approach to speed reduction/traffic calming and management in the area of the QTCs and at schools;
- Integrate transport links to major employment sites;
- Provide streetscape improvements at district centres;
- Maximise the use of bus priority facilities; and
- Provide improvements to street lighting.
- Work with businesses, other agencies and the voluntary sector to bring about additional improvements in sustainable modes of transport and the public realm by pooling resources where possible and by exploring all additional funding opportunities.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 16

Road Improvements

Introduction

The road network serving Runcorn and Widnes is extensive, of reasonable standard and has significant spare capacity in most places. This is particularly true of the Runcorn Expressways, which are generally dual carriageways with grade-separated junctions. The Expressways encircle Runcorn connecting the M56 motorway to the south of Runcorn with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. To the north of the bridge the A562/A5300 and the A557 Widnes Eastern Relief Road connect to the M62. The only significant sources of congestion within the Borough are the A533 Silver Jubilee Bridge and the A557 approach to M56 Junction 12 at Clifton, although at peak times, there are several local congestion 'hotspots', such as in north Widnes, at Murdishaw Avenue and in the road network around Widnes town centre.

The M56 and the M62 provide the main motorway access to the Borough. The M56 provides a strategic link between North Wales, North Cheshire and the Greater Manchester Conurbation. The M62 provides a strategic link between Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Hull, and is the only all weather route across the Pennines linking East and West coast ports. Within the Borough, there is a network of primary routes comprising of the A56, A557, A562 and A533. The network is supported by principal and other roads which link communities within the Borough and provide access to residential, industrial, commercial, educational and other property.

During the course of previous LTPs the Council has implemented a wide range of road improvement schemes which include:

- The provision of bus lanes to the Silver Jubilee Bridge;
- The reallocation of road space for cycle lanes;
- Various road safety enhancement schemes;
- The A56 Chester Road / A558 Daresbury Expressway junction improvement and Expressway dualling to Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre roundabout junction;
- The improvement of the A558 Watkinson Way junction with Fiddlers Ferry Road;
- The Gerrard Street / Lugsdale Road junction improvement;
- The provision of an new all purpose link road as part of the Castlefields regeneration programme;
- The provision of the Peelhouse Lane Link Road as part of a wider range of road improvements for Widnes Town Centre Regeneration;
- Traffic re-routing and public transport enhancement in Runcorn Old Town as part of a Single Regeneration Bid works;
- Kingsway / Milton Road Junction Improvement;
- Capacity improvements to Murdishaw Roundabout Junction; and
- The provision of the Upton Rocks Distributor Road, as well as other developer funded road improvements.

In December 2001, the Widnes Eastern Bypass was de-trunked whereby responsibility was transferred from the Highways Agency to Halton. Currently, the M56 is the only adopted road in the Borough for which Halton Council is not the Highway Authority.

Details of road schemes that have been implemented during the course of LTP2 are as follows:

- Upton Rocks Distributor Road. Completion of the link to A5080 Cronton Road (Queensbury Way) provides an alternative route to the principal road network from west Widnes, Upton and Hough Green. This scheme, funded principally from developer S106 contributions, provides walking & cycling routes and new bus stop facilities to serve Cronton Campus of Riverside College. New public open space was also provided along with funding for a nature reserve.
- A56 Chester Road / A558 Daresbury Expressway junction improvement and Expressway dualling to Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre roundabout junction. This scheme relieves congestion at the former roundabout junction, addresses the accident record and provides increased traffic capacity for the further development of Daresbury SIC. The scheme has been funded from ERDF, NWDA, S106, LTP2 Integrated Transport Programme and HBC Capital programme funding and has also enabled the closure of a section Keckwick Lane to through traffic and its conversion to 'Greenway', linking the Daresbury development area to the village centre and services.
- A558 Watkinson Way junction with Fiddlers Ferry Road. The scheme relieves congestion at this busy junction by converting the former signal junction to a full gyratory layout with traffic signal control. The junction now provides increased capacity for the further development of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone and Widnes Town Centre retail developments. There has been scheme funding from S106 Developer contributions, ERDF and HBC Capital Programme.
- Gerrard Street / Lugsdale Road junction improvement. This includes modifications to the existing roundabout layout and priorities, to relieve congestion and provide improved access to Widnes Shopping Park. This has been funded by S106 contributions from developers, Section 278 (Highway Act) improvements and LTP2 Integrated Transport programme.
- As part of the Castlefields regeneration programme the new all-purpose link road replacing a section of Busway to the planned Castlefields Village Square was completed in 2006.

In addition, a range of highway improvement schemes have been implemented in connection with industrial and commercial developments at major employment sites across the Borough, principally through Section 278 and Section 38 Highways Act agreements, these include:

- Desoto Road junction and McDermott Road providing access to the 3MG regional freight distribution site;
- Picow Farm Road improvement and junction providing access to IneosChlor Energy From Waste plant in Runcorn;
- First section of a new access road to Runcorn Station connecting to Bridgewater Expressway has been constructed as part of the Bridge Retail Park development; and
- Road and access improvements to Keckwick Lane, Mersey Road and Clifton Road in Runcorn in connection with residential and commercial developments.

Through LTP2 we have tackled major sources of congestion at Daresbury Expressway and Watkinson Way. The remaining principal sources of congestion are the SJB and M56 J12; both of these will be addressed through implementation of the Mersey Gateway.

Major Road Schemes

Major Road Schemes planned during the course of LTP3 include:

The Mersey Gateway

The Mersey Gateway new crossing of the River Mersey is planned for construction between 2012 and 2015, this is detailed in section 10. The scheme will provide relief to the SJB and provide much greater network resilience. With the new bridge in place the SJB would be used as a local link with enhanced facilities for public transport and walking along with new facilities for cycling. A Sustainable Transport Strategy has been prepared to support the case for the Mersey Gateway and to maximise the local transport benefits arising from this major scheme.

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy is an important element of the Project. Based upon the adopted vision of 'more than just a bridge' it will set the agenda for a sustained economic, social and environmental programme for the period following the opening of the Gateway. It focuses on five distinct areas of the Borough and includes a range of road and transport improvements to promote development and maximise opportunities for improved accessibility. More details are provided within section: 10, Non-Detailed Schemes

The Mersey Gateway will not be completed until 2015 and therefore there will still be the necessity for major maintenance works to continue on the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Details of the strategy for maintaining the SJB are described in section 10.

A557 Approach to M56 Junction 12

The A557 is a two-lane dual carriageway with a two-lane approach to the roundabout at Junction 12. At peak times this approach arm is over capacity and long queues form. A modification to this approach would reduce delays and congestion. Although initially considered as an independent scheme it is now proposed that this improvement be implemented as part of a more comprehensive junction capacity improvement within the Mersey Gateway proposals.

3MG Access Road

As part of the 3MG development a new link road is to be constructed between the site and the A562 Speke Road / A5300 Knowsley Expressway Junction, crossing over the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline. The road is to be funded by the Developer. The design of the link road is complete and agreement has been reached with Knowsley Council regarding the construction and future management and maintenance of the proposed road. Planning permission was granted in 2008. Approval in Principle for the bridge over the railway has been granted, a Basic Asset Protection Agreement is in place with Network Rail and negotiations are well advanced in respect of an Overbridge Agreement and for the planning of the bridge construction works. It is expected that the 3MG Access Road will be constructed by Halton's development partner early during the LTP3 programme.

Johnson's Lane Employment Site Access Road

The Johnson's Lane site is a 19 acre site within the Widnes Waterfront EDZ, on the eastern side of Widnes. The site is owned by Halton Council and is identified for employment uses in Halton's Core Strategy. The site lies immediately to the south of the existing Johnson's Lane but in order to open up the site for development, the provision of approximately 300 metres of spine road infrastructure is required to enable access to individual employment site plots. The site has been identified as having the potential for relocation of businesses displaced from southern Widnes due to the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge Project.

Widnes Town Centre Access Road and Fiddlers Ferry Road to Greenoaks Way

The Widnes town centre highway circulatory system is partially in place, utilising the Green Oaks Centre and associated road system immediately to the east of the Town Centre. The construction of the Peelhouse Lane link road, and recent modifications to Watkinson Way traffic signal gyratory and Gerrard Street roundabout have improved traffic circulation in and around this rapidly developing area of the town centre. However, continuing commercial and retail development on the eastern side of the town centre and within the Widnes Waterfront EDZ, will continue to place increasing traffic demands on this major gateway to the town.

Halton's LDF includes a potential scheme to provide a road link north of the Gyratory from Greenoaks Way to Tanhouse Lane that would provide relief to the existing gyratory junction as economic development continues on the eastern side of Widnes following the opening of the Mersey Gateway. The Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan contains ideas for development site access to the sites on Tanhouse Lane north. Completion of the Circulatory System will aid ease of movement into and around the Town Centre for all means of transport.

A Widnes town centre traffic model is being developed to help determine the impact of traffic generated by planned and future town centre developments on the road network and to enable the testing of proposed road and junction improvements

Runcorn Station Access Road

Access to Runcorn Station from the Expressway system is poor. There is no direct route for traffic approaching from the east and traffic from other directions must use the network of industrial and narrow residential streets, which surround the station. A new junction on the Expressway has provided the opportunity for construction of a new link road allowing the station to be accessed more easily for traffic from any direction.

The first section of the route has been constructed and utilises the access road provided as part of the commercial development, between the expressway junction and Greenway Road. Land has been reserved at Okell Street for a junction to be constructed, linking the development through to Greenway Road. This will enable traffic from higher Runcorn to join the Expressway in either direction at the new traffic signal junction. The existing slip road from Greenway Road onto the Silver Jubilee Bridge northbound carriageway can then be closed and a new section of carriageway constructed approximately on the line of the slip road to Shaw Street. Alterations to an existing structure and construction of a new retaining wall will be necessary to make full use of the available highway land.

The new access road will enable the station to be signed directly from the Expressway, along a single preferred route, thus reducing the existing array of confusing directional signing. Improved accessibility to the station, together with the station improvements already implemented, will help encourage rail use.

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy contains further options to improve accessibility and movement in Runcorn town centre following the rationalisation of the existing road network and modifications to the SJB approaches as it reverts to a 'local' bridge. Within the regeneration proposals there are opportunities for better connectivity between the town centre, the railway station and the new developments that may come forward following completion of the Gateway.

Hale Bank Relief Road

The Hale Bank Supplementary Planning Document outlined the principle of a relief road for Hale Bank to the east of Hale Road. It is intended that this relief road would be funded primarily through developer contributions but with some possible LTP contribution in the future. Completion of the relief road and removal of HGVs from a section of Hale Road, would enable traffic management and streetscape improvements through this expanding residential area of Halebank.

Widnes Waterfront EDZ – Bayer Employment Site Access Road and New Junctions.

The Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan framework now includes the former Bayer Crop Science Site. Recently decommissioned, this 40 acre site is currently undergoing remediation and is earmarked for new employment uses as part of the wider Widnes Waterfront Masterplan area. The accessibility of the site needs to be addressed as its re-development will inevitably generate new traffic which needs accommodating. Halton have commissioned an Access Study which has considered options for new junctions and access roads to serve the site, public transport provision and pedestrian and cycle routes in the vicinity. Options include the provision of a new route through the site, either as an all-purpose road or with restricted through access for buses only, and separate access roads to serve the western and eastern parts of the site separately. Preferred junction layouts are for new roundabouts on Fiddlers Ferry Road and Gorsey Lane.

The decision over which of the access options is chosen will be largely influenced by the mix of uses to be sited there, the size of individual developments and their location.

Junction and Other Improvement Schemes.

The following schemes are currently under consideration and investigation. Note: it is expected that some will be funded and delivered in partnership with developers and through S106 and S278 agreements. These include:

- A558 Daresbury Expressway – Origin Roundabout junction capacity improvements;
- Kingsway / Milton Road junction capacity and pedestrian crossing improvements;
- Bus Priority route Widnes - Gerrard Street to Widnes Road;
- Earle Road access widening to Watkinson way Gyratory (EDZ);
- Leigh Avenue / Deacon Road / Appleton Village junction improvement;
- Derby Road / Peelhouse Lane / Farnworth Street junction improvement;
- Cronton Road / Birchfield Road;
- Wilmere Lane / Lunts Heath Road junction improvement to resolve capacity and safety issues;
- Upton Rocks – Additional routes for East – West Traffic ; and
- Access improvements to the Daresbury sites.

Non-Detailed Schemes

Road schemes where a potential need has been identified but a layout has yet to be detailed include the following:

M56 Junction 11A

The concept of a new motorway junction on the M56 located between existing Junctions 11 and 12 was first put forward in LTP1. Since Mersey Gateway Project gained Programme Entry, M56 Junction 11A, as it is now referred to, has been given further consideration. In the Mersey Gateway public consultation exercise of 2007, Junction 11A was illustrated as a non defined but possible part of the scheme. As proposals for the development of Junction 11A were at a much earlier stage of development compared to

the rest of the Mersey Gateway Project it was not included in the draft orders and applications for Mersey Gateway in 2008. Whilst the Junction 11A proposals still have yet to be defined, it could still be included as a later stage of the Mersey Gateway Project. The principle of this new junction is supported by the Highways Agency, and further investigation is required to examine how the proposal would fit into the Agency's management of the wider network. The Highways Agency is prepared to work with the Council in establishing the feasibly of junction 11A.

Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy - Accessibility Improvements

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy is concerned with how the new bridge can deliver a new context for place shaping and set the agenda for sustained economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration programme of over the next 20 to 30 years. It aims to inform the Council's priorities for physical investment and urban and neighbourhood renewal going forward.

The Mersey Gateway will allow the Silver Jubilee Bridge, to become a local bridge, delivering substantial improvements in public transport, walking and cycling. This will be achieved through the transfer of approximately 80% of existing SJB traffic to the new bridge and the de-linking, down grading and removal of some of the existing SJB infrastructure that carried strategic routes. This removal of these 'physical barriers', which currently constrain access and connectivity in specific areas of Runcorn and Widnes, will in turn, provide opportunity for significant regeneration, including major additions and revisions to the existing highway network. A strategy has been developed to support changes to the transport network and promote development in five distinct areas of the Borough following the opening of the Gateway Bridge:

- At West Bank, downgrading the existing road infrastructure that forms the Widnes approaches would enable improved linkages for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists incorporating new at-grade junctions and additional connectivity to the town centre for sustainable transport modes;
- Around Runcorn Town Centre, a rationalisation and remodelling of the Expressway approaches and junctions would simplify movement into and out of the town centre and to the railway station for all transport modes, as well as enabling new junctions on the Expressway network to improve accessibility to new and existing industrial, commercial and residential developments;
- The Astmoor employment area would be served by new connections to Runcorn Town centre, providing new and improved pedestrian and cycle linkages to and through the estate, and new junctions to the Expressway, together with the re-integration of bus movements through the area will provide the opportunity for re-development;
- Rationalisation of the road infrastructure surrounding Halton Lea retail and commercial town centre will increase awareness of Halton Lea and facilitate simplified pedestrian and cycle access to and from neighbouring residential areas;
- At Rocksavage and Clifton, the promotion of improved access for all modes of transport will facilitate redevelopment and encourage leisure use in the area.
- The options for regeneration and changes to the highway network will continue to be explored as the MG Project and will of course be subject to funding availability, planning controls and developer interest.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport Eastern Access Road

Halton Council is supportive of the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport. In order for further growth to take place road access needs to be enhanced from the east. The construction of a link road from the A562 to the airport would deliver the highway capacity required for the growth in air travel. The Eastern Access Road would be promoted by the

airport but in turn would be supported in principle by Halton and the Merseyside Authorities. Primary Transport Strategy No. 1 provides more information on this proposal.

Widening of the A558

The ongoing developments in East Runcorn, for example, Daresbury Park and the Daresbury Science Innovation Campus will create a need for improves access. As part of a possible range of measures being considered, the widening of the A558 Daresbury Expressway and the provision of an additional roundabout has been identified.

Minor Improvements

In addition to the schemes described in this section, which would have a significant effect in terms of access, other more modest schemes may be implemented which would achieve the following:

- Junction and carriageway modifications to improve safety and address regeneration and environmental issues;
- Construction of minor roads to provide access to new residential and commercial developments;
- Protection of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians;
- Local road safety schemes;
- General integrated and sustainable transport works; and
- Works as part of Quality Transport Corridors.

Consultation

Consultation conferences hosted by HBC were successful in allowing the public to voice any opinions they had. The results of these conferences and other stakeholder input are detailed in the front of the document.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The Mersey Gateway will relieve congestion on the SJB and hence carbon emissions. As tolls will be charged on both bridges there is the means available to regulate any traffic growth.

Economic regeneration: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will assist with connectivity to commerce and industry at a local, regional and national scale. The project in itself will enable the redevelopment of large areas of land in its proximity.

Equality of opportunity: An effective road system would benefit all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: New roads and road improvements will be designed to current standards which have been derived based upon highway safety.

Quality of life: Schemes such as the Mersey Gateway will reduce congestion and provide an overall improvement in air quality.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The Mersey Gateway will provide a new key strategic cross river link with LCR, the north-west and beyond.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of road improvements where appropriate can enhance the transport network within the LCR. In particular, the Mersey Gateway will help provide a new strategic connection within the LCR providing faster and more reliable journey times. The SuperPort proposal includes Mersey Gateway as an important supportive piece of transport infrastructure. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular Urban Renewal.

Low carbon transport: The implementation of the Mersey Gateway project would reduce congestion and the charging of tolls would enable the regulation of traffic this would be beneficial in reducing overall carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: New roads and road improvements will be designed to current standards which have been derived based upon highway safety. The Mersey Gateway will also provide an overall improvement in air quality.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will assist with connectivity to employment, services and social activities at a local and regional scale.

LCR wider links: The Mersey Gateway will provide a new key strategic link with LCR, the north-west and beyond.

Maintain transport assets: New highway infrastructure will be designed in order to reduce the need for future maintenance.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Continue to pursue the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project which will provide a new crossing of the River Mersey, free up the SJB to become a more local river crossing catering for sustainable modes and deliver improvements to Junction 12 of the M56.
- Enter into partnerships with developers and other agencies to promote highway improvements that contribute to the economic regeneration and renewal of the Borough;
- Implement minor improvements to address road safety issues and enable regeneration and reallocation of road space to more sustainable modes of transport; and
- Ensure that improvements are designed so as to minimise environmental impact and where possible utilise sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).

Primary Transport Strategy No. 17

Road Safety

Introduction

Halton became a unitary authority in 1998 at which time it became responsible for road safety education, training and publicity (RSETP), employing specialist road safety staff to work in parallel with existing engineering colleagues to deliver road casualty reduction. This new organisational arrangement brought a more 'hands on' approach to RSETP work than had traditionally been operated when Cheshire County Council delivered the service, to it being more locally based. Road safety education, training and publicity initiatives are tailored to meet local needs using relevant data as the platform for target setting it has been embraced in schools and colleges and has become embedded and integrated across the various ages, groups and curriculum areas.

In 2001, Halton installed its first 8 fixed safety cameras as a Local Transport Plan funded safety initiative. In 2002, the Cheshire Area Safety Camera Partnership (CASCP) was formed and accredited under the national hypothecation programme. The project has continued to develop and until recently Halton had 21 safety camera sites in the Borough, a mixture of fixed and mobile enforcement sites, all positioned at sites which complied with the national guidelines at the time of their installation.

In December 2005, the Secretary of State announced changes in the organisation of camera partnerships. As from April 2007, the management and operation of the safety cameras was required to be integrated into the delivery of each highway authority's road safety strategy. There was also a major change in the funding arrangements, with highway authorities being allocated Road Safety Grants, which could be used to fund a wide range of safety initiatives complementary to the safety cameras. In response to these changes, the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRP) was established in April 2007 comprising representatives from the five highway authorities (Halton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils and the Highways Agency), the Police**,** Fire and Courts Services. With a remit that not only included the management and development of Greater Cheshire's speed and red light cameras, but also delivering wider Cheshire strategic road safety, education, training and publicity initiatives through thematic groups, the work undertaken by CSRP complemented that undertaken by each of the partner organisations which was important in driving progress on road casualty reductions.

Prior to 2011, the four local authority highway authorities received both capital and revenue Road Safety Grants (RSG) from the Government, each retaining an element of the RSG and putting the remainder into a pooled CSRP budget for speed and red light camera enforcement and for strategic RSETP initiatives. In Halton, the retained element was utilised locally to fund two specialised Road Safety Officer posts targeting vulnerable road user groups. The Police and Fire Service provided no financial support, but did provide officer and accommodation resources. However, as from April 2011 these grants will no longer be available. One consequence of this is that the CSRP will be dissolved and the partners will need to develop a new model for the delivery for camera and speed enforcement as well as strategic RSETP Not contributing financially to a central organisation will bring a more local focus to RSETP activities in Halton with work that is guided by local accident/casualty analysis, but speed enforcement will still need to be provided by the Police and the levels of which this can be done still need to be determined in the light of much reduced resources. Through Road Safety Great Britain and regional contacts we will continue to remain abreast of current issues and developing trends and we will work with our neighbours on areas of common interest.

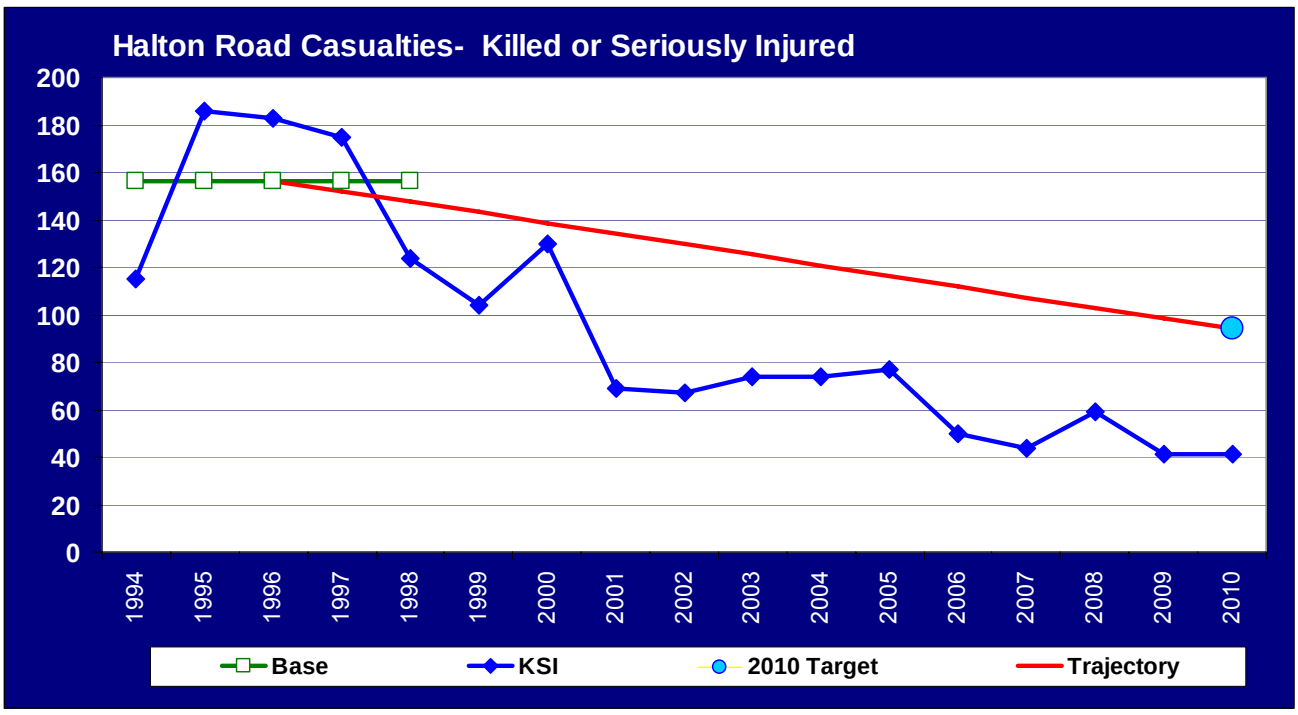
Context

Although traditionally Britain has one of the best road safety records in the world, in 2000 the Government set challenging new casualty reduction targets in its strategy document 'Tomorrow's Roads - Safer for Everyone'. This set targets to be achieved by April 2010, compared with a baseline average of 1994-98 including a:40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road accidents; 50% reduction in the number of child KSIs (CKSI); 10% reduction in the slight casualty (SLI) rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometers. Due to difficulties in producing this figure, Halton uses the pure number of SLI casualties alone, not expressed as a rate.

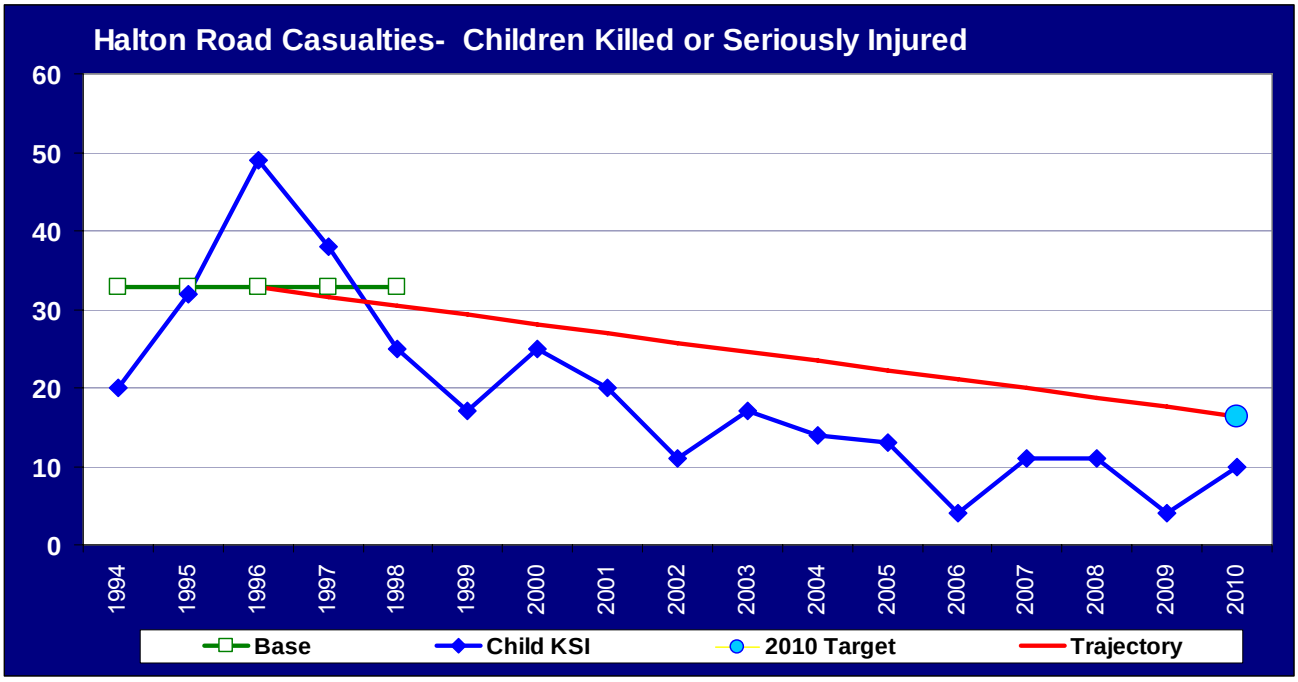
Analysis

As Halton is a relatively small unitary authority with a population a little under 120,000, the annual number of casualties generated is relatively low in the KSI category and even more so for the CKSI class though not as a proportion of the population. The stability of the data is consequently reduced and vulnerable to being distorted by individual incidents generating multiple casualties. The value of the statistical data relating to each individual year is reduced and therefore is felt to be more representative to base the main statistical analysis on a five-year rolling average (e.g. 2006-10). However, for clarity and consistency with the reports from neighboring authorities, individual year data is generally used.

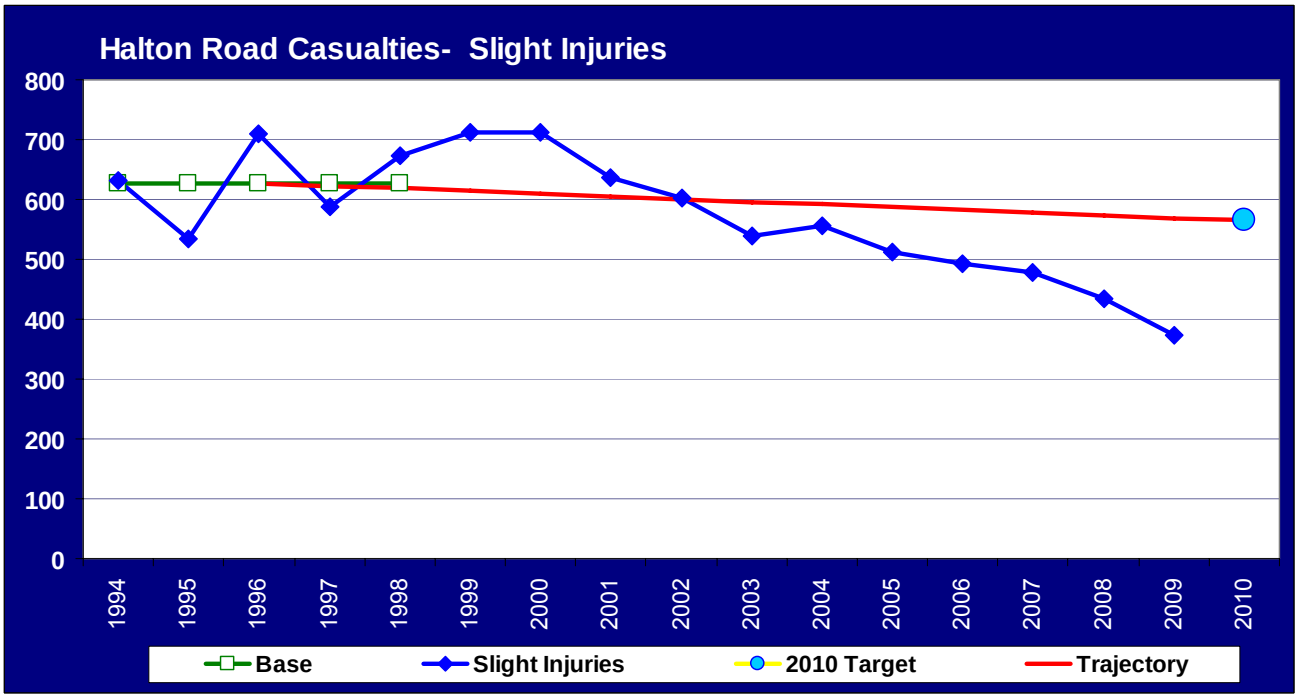
Since 2000, immense progress has been made with large reductions in the number of traffic accidents and of casualties of all severities being achieved. Halton has comfortably met all three of its 2010 targets and welcomes the opportunity to continue to reduce the number of casualties in future years in line with the New Strategic Framework for Road Safety which is due to be published in April. However, removal of the Road Safety Grant and other budget cuts could well reverse recent trends in years ahead.



Year	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Base	157	157	157	157	157												
KSI	115	186	183	175	124	104	130	69	67	74	74	77	50	44	59	41	41
2010 Target			157														94
Trajectory			157	152	148	143	139	134	130	125	121	116	112	107	103	98	94



Year	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Base	33	33	33	33	33												
Child KSI	20	32	49	38	25	17	25	20	11	17	14	13	4	11	11	4	10
2010 Target			33														16
Trajectory			33	32	30	29	28	27	26	25	23	22	21	20	19	18	16



Year	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Base	627	627	627	627	627												
Slight Injuries	631	534	710	589	673	712	712	637	603	538	555	513	493	477	435	374	N/A
2010 Target																	565
Trajectory			627	623	618	614	609	605	601	596	592	587	583	578	574	569	565

These casualty reductions have not been achieved across all transport modes, as there has been a notable increase in the number of two wheeled motor vehicle (TWMV) users being injured in recent years. Although the actual numbers are relatively small, this is still a growth area and one of concern.

Halton Casualty Profile (2005-2009 data)

The four key modes of transport for KSI casualties in Halton are car occupants, pedestrians, motorcyclists an pedal cyclists, together accounting for 96% of the KSI casualties between 2005 and 2009

	Category total	Of which:	
Car Occupants	105 (39%)	Children (0-15y)	5 (2%)
		Young Adults (16-25y)	29 (11%)
		Older Adults (26y+)	71 (26%)
Pedestrians	61 (23%)	Children (0-15y)	28 (10%)
		Young Adults (16-25y)	8(3%)
		Older Adults (26y+)	25 (9%)
High Powered-two-wheelers (P2W; >125cc)	35 (13%)	Children (0-15y)	0
		Young Adults (16-25y)	7 (3%)
		Older Adults (26y+)	28 (10%)
Low powered-two-wheelers (P2W; <125cc)	37 (14%)	Children (0-15y)	2 (1%)
		Young Adults (16-25y)	27 (10%)
		Older Adults (26y+)	8 (3%)
Pedal Cyclists	18 (7%)	Children (0-15y)	6 (2%)
		Young Adults (16-25y)	5 (2%)
		Older Adults (26y+)	7 (3%)

Opportunities

The Audit Commission's Report, 'Changing Lanes' 2007 recognised that sustained and embedded road safety education, training and publicity are essential in order to have a lasting effect on road user attitudes and behaviour.

Whilst Halton has enjoyed success in reducing the numbers of all severities of casualties, there has been parallel progress at a national level. Taking the average of Halton's casualty totals for the three years 2007 to 2009 and comparing this to Great Britain rates for 2009:

- the KSI rate per capita was 0.9 times the national average (previously 1.6 times higher through 1994-98 baseline period);
- the CKSI was 1.6 times the national average (previously 2.3 times higher through 1994-98 baseline period); and
- the SLI injury numbers were 1.1 times higher than the national rate per capita (previously 1.1 times higher through 1994-98 baseline period)

	Great Britain	Halton	Great Britain	Halton	Halton to GB Ratio
			Rate	Rate	
Population	60,000,000	118,700			
KSI Casualties	26.912	48	*1 per* 2,229	*1 per* 2,473	0.9
Child KSI	2,671	8.7	*1 per* 22,463	*1 per* 13,644	1.6
Slight Injuries	195,234	428.7	*1 per* 307	*1 per* 277	1.1

The progress that has been made in Halton thus exceeds that made nationally up to the end of 2009 in terms of all-age KSI and child KSI casualties, but the rate of child death/serious injury for those under 16 years old remains much higher than the current national norm, despite the work that has been done locally since the 1990s. There is some evidence that the trend for the annual CKSI total was to 'flatline' at around its 2007 & 2008 level despite a range of targeted initiatives, and reducing the numbers appreciably looks to be a real challenge. But the 2006 number was matched in 2009 having previously been seen as a ‘blip’ so there is a certain lack of stability in the CKSI totals. However, with no ‘silver bullet’ on the horizon, established methods for reducing child casualties will have to be refined and efforts redoubled. Given the reduced resources in this area with removal of the Road Safety Grant, problems could arise in years ahead.

Education Training and Publicity.

Resources are allocated relative to the number of KSIs occurring, providing that collisions are being caused by preventative factors. A great deal of work is undertaken in schools and colleges during the informative years of attitudinal development as well as targeting specific groups of all ages. Specific initiatives have been developed and undertaken to influence attitudes and their associated behaviours depending on necessity and within the constraints of finite resources.

The following road user groups are key priority areas for education, training and publicity activity:

Car Occupants

Car occupant injury prevention is a priority as they account for 40% of all KSIs in the Halton area, where the 16-35 age group are most at risk and are identified as over-represented per head of population. Halton's position on this echoes that of the rest of Cheshire.
Peer pressure education is a particular element of the strategy to influence passenger safety.

Children

Evidence suggests that current targeted activities within Halton are working. However, despite an overall downwards trend in CKSI road casualties, as a percentage of Halton's total KSI, children are being over represented with approximately a fifth of KSI casualties involving children (compared with a tenth of the Cheshire Police Force Wide area picture). Again, increased resources and targeted activity are needed at a local level.

The successful Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme and Crucial Crew involve over 50 schools and 1500 pupils annually. Their unique approaches have ensured that road safety messages are received by all primary school children in the borough each year. Pedestrian training has developed from the Kerbcraft Scheme into a bespoke package that is appropriate for the local area. Additionally, specific issues relating to bridges and the result of dropping objects has also been targeted through specific pedestrian related educational packages with key partners.

Work in Secondary schools and Colleges has been intensified over the past few years to reflect the need. The LPSA Grant and later Road Safety Grant provided funding for two specialised Road Safety Officers who worked exclusively with young people and to tackle the over representation of casualties that this age group pose. This intensive approach has resulted in a great number of bespoke initiatives and has included Megadrive: (a pre-driver and passenger event); Petrolheadz (a car show attended by over 3000 young drivers and passengers); and Drama students who studied local road safety problems for

their GCSE's; and students from two schools who have studied road safety through their Creative Media Diploma.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian injury prevention is also needed; they are the second largest KSI casualty road user group, with 61 pedestrian KSIs on average per year. Resources invested into reducing adult pedestrian casualties also need continued investment as they account for approximately10% of pedestrian KSIs. Young adult males (16-35) are more prevalent than other adults and those aged over 76 are more over-represented per head of population than other age groups, however actual numbers are still relatively low.

Motorcyclists

The number of motorcyclist KSI casualties in Halton is increasing, despite the wider Cheshire situation reducing. However, Halton's key casualty demographic in this group does not match that of the wider Cheshire Police Force Area (i.e. middle aged males on high powered bikes). The proportion of KSI casualties within Halton are low Powered 2 Wheelers (P2W) compared to the overall CSRP picture. Casualties are concentrated in the 16-25 age group and therefore have a high risk per head of population. Halton and Warrington share similar problems and work in partnership to develop strategies to tackle the issues. The Powerbikes Event, aimed at all types of rider (scooter riders, motorcyclists, novice and experienced) saw over 1600 attendees at last year's event which signposts and supports riders into developing their riding skills through a variety of training options. Over 70 local riders benefitted from additional safety training as a result of this initiative in 2010.

Pedal Cyclists

Although pedal cyclist injury is relatively low within the Halton area, safety and sustainability are intrinsically linked. The provision of the Bikeability National standards cycle training scheme supports the values associated with the implementation of School Travel Plans to encourage an increase in cycling to school. Cycle instructors are recruited from the local area and include a community bike project, Park Rangers and local PCSO's.

Cycle training is not just aimed at children. Adults are also provided with support and have received training to ride a bike for the first time to increase confidence on local roads and commuter training for more advanced cyclists on primary traffic routes.

Occupational Road Risk

Those drivers who are employed to drive, or who drive as part of their duties, account for 17% of KSI causalities in Halton in 2009. As a responsible employer, Halton has developed a robust Driver Policy and associated procedures, including a Geared Up for Work Course' for its employees who drive as part of their work. The template package of policies and training is also available to local businesses in the area.
Over half of road deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with 30mph limits. A properly enforced 20mph speed limit on built up roads can reduce these casualty rates considerably and in particular, improve the safety conditions for pedestrians and cyclists who are nearly 20 times more likely to be killed per mile travelled than car occupants.

The disproportionate threat of death and injury for pedestrians and cyclists is compounded by poverty and age and deprived areas bear the brunt of road danger. Child pedestrians from less advantaged households are five times more likely to become road casualties than their more affluent counterparts.

20 mph Zones

20mph speed limits also reduce social exclusion. Lower speed limits reduce noise and severance, and by encouraging walking and chatting, help to increase social interaction and health. The DfT's 'Manual for Streets' makes the case for 20mph limits for residential streets with greater significance attached to the environmental living conditions and a redressing of the balance between people and traffic.

Without the wholesale installation of measures to reduce traffic speeds, 20mph areas are necessarily going to be limited to primarily lightly trafficked roads in new developments in which the highway layout has been designed to intrinsically limit mean traffic speeds to this level.

In Halton, all new estates are having this lower speed limit implemented, but there is scope for 20mph limits on many of the established estates and residential areas which consist of terraced housing in the older parts of Widnes and Runcorn town centres, and also on the New Town estates which carry integral traffic calming measures. A programme to implement 20mph limits would concentrate on such areas, to give the greatest impact for the minimum outlay, coincidentally over many of the most deprived areas of the Borough.

Performance Management

The DfT is due to publish its Road Safety Strategy in April 2011. Halton achieved the challenging targets set as part of the 'Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone' and will find it extremely difficult to further reduce these figures in future years. The removal of the RSG will undoubtedly have far reaching consequences as the delivery of local initiatives by the two specialised Road Safety Officers has ceased and the coordinated partnership activities supported by the CSRP will also come to an end as this particular partnership is dissolved. (Although Halton does intend continuing to work in partnership with the appropriate agencies of CSRP).

Vehicle user education, training, publicity and enforcement

This should focus on preventing accidents where contributory factors include:

- Failed to look properly;
- Careless/reckless in a hurry;
- Loss of control;
- Impaired by alcohol and/or drugs; and
- Exceeding speed limit.

Coordinated activities with key players including the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service will continue to develop and benefit the local community. Core offences addressed by way of enforcement will also be highlighted through road safety activities and events.

Maximising Value from Resource

The work undertaken on casualty reduction is targeted through regular reviews of casualty data to identify patterns of treatable casualty problems and areas. The analysis is then used to develop a ranked priority list, which informs the preparation of our action programme.

After 2010 - Government targets through to 2020 (As detailed in 'A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World')

The DfT has recently consulted on a series of road casualty reduction targets that it is proposing to set for the year 2020, based on the 2004-08 baseline average. The targets are to reduce:

- Road deaths by at least 33%;
- Road serious injuries by at least 33%;
- Road deaths and serious injuries to children and young people (aged 0–17) by at least 50%; and
- The rate of KSI per kilometre travelled by pedestrians and cyclists by 50%.

Halton Borough Council has lodged a series of responses to the Government's proposals, including:

'It is remiss that given the availability of data on past performance on casualty reduction that you have chosen to implement a 'one size fits all' approach to target setting. These targets fail to recognize the substantial reductions already achieved in some areas (authorities) and the inability of other areas to achieve the 2010 targets. This places unrealistic expectations on the 'high' performing authorities (such as Halton), whilst the lower performing authorities are 'let off the hook'.
Furthermore, no mention is made of increased levels of funding being made available to address the enhanced targets. This will present particular difficulties for smaller authorities that are facing huge cutbacks in public sector spending.'

The DfT have indicated that there is a belief that high casualty reductions in the future can be achieved through addressing the high casualty rate on rural national speed limit roads. In relation to this, Halton responded:

'It also needs to be acknowledged that small urban authorities that have a low proportion of the high casualty rural roads will find it more difficult to achieve the enhanced targets.'
In response to a target based on KSI casualties per kilometre travelled by pedestrians and cyclists:
'The reasons for introducing casualty rates into the performance indicators are well understood, but no mention is made of how the base data on distance travelled for each mode will be provided. If left to local authorities, this will place an unreasonable burden on smaller authorities to collect this data.'

As to date Halton Borough Council has not received any detailed response from the Government about our concerns.

Consultation

Extensive consultation has been carried out prior to and during the preparation of the LTP and comments have been incorporated, where appropriate. Further consultation on new proposals will be undertaken as the need arises.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The introduction and enforcement of speed limits will reduce carbon emissions by curbing traffic speeds and encouraging smoother driving

practices. The encouragement of more fuel efficient driving techniques is linked with safer driving practices.

Economic regeneration: Road traffic accidents generate high costs to the community, particularly in terms of lost output and 'human costs'. On roads with high traffic flows such as the SJB, the cost of delays to other road users can be considerable; it is estimated that a full closure of the SJB costs £160,000 per hour. The reduction of such accidents therefore, would be beneficial to the wider economy.

Equality of opportunity: Although nationally there is evidence of a link between deprivation and traffic accident casualty rates, investigation indicates this is not the case in Halton. In the case of child casualties, ward design, layout and planning could prove to be of greater significance and can also be more of a key to identifying road safety education, training and publicity priorities.

Health, safety and security: Road safety relates to all these issues. The provision of a variety of road safety measures such as road improvements at accident 'hotspots', speed limit enforcement, traffic calming, pedestrianisation schemes in town centres and road safety education, training and publicity can all play a major part in improving road safety.

Quality of life: A safer highway environment improves quality of life for all.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: There is currently a high accident record associated with the SJB, the provision of the Mersey Gateway will reduce accidents and provide a far safer environment for cyclists.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The implementation of Halton's road safety strategy will be of benefit to those travelling across the LCR. Implementation of the strategy would also have a significant positive impact upon Children and Young People in Halton and A Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The introduction and enforcement of speed limits in Halton will encourage more fuel efficient driving and hence less carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Safer roads have benefits for all users. In many situations safer roads can encourage people to make use of more healthy options of transport such as walking and cycling.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Safer roads encourage access to a variety of destinations by sustainable modes.

LCR wider links: Halton has been a member of the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, and will continue to work in partnership with the relevant agencies and also works closely with the Merseyside authorities on road safety policies.

Maintain transport assets: Transport infrastructure will be maintained in a manner to enhance road safety and reduce accidents by maintenance of the road surface, white lining and signing.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Minimise the number of traffic accidents on Halton's roads by continuing to identify casualty problems and develop road improvements and road safety, education, training and publicity programmes to address the problems;
- Continue to monitor the impact of deprivation on road casualties and take appropriate action to address problems should any correlation be found;
- Utilise new technology to reduce the potential for and severity of road casualties;
- Continue to work with Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire Services to ensure that targeted enforcement action and publicity campaigns are undertaken to maximise the potential for casualty reduction;
- Continue to adopt and implement the latest guidance on road safety measures and interventions, which have proven to be effective, ensuring that all new developments meet these requirements;
- Work with our LSP partners to utilise funding that these and other agencies have access to;
    - Continue to find common areas with LSP partners to address road safety issues (e.g. Stop the Drop and mini moto nuisance / safety concerns); and
    - Continue to promote safer driving practices to all its staff and support the Driving for Work Policy and related procedures.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 18

Street Lighting

Introduction

A large amount of the street lighting equipment in Halton is in need of replacement, although good progress has been made during LTP2 in improving the area. The continuous process of replacing old and worn out equipment, particularly unsafe columns, making use of more efficient sources of lighting and upgrading the general standard of street lighting requires a significant annual programme.

The Council's aim is to provide, maintain and improve the Borough's highway lighting systems in accordance with current legislation and the relevant British Standards, with the objective of improving amenity, public security and road safety. Quality lighting has been installed for a long time, as a known accident prevention measure, but more recent surveys have shown that improved lighting also has crime reduction effects, and makes residents less fearful of crime and more confident of their own safety at night.

At the present time there are about 20,200 lighting units in the Borough and about 2500 illuminated signs, bollards and traffic signals), and about 38% have reached the end of their design life (over 30 years old). The funding over recent years has not been sufficient to make any impact on clearing the backlog of potentially dangerous units. Priority has been given to the columns giving the most cause for concern on main roads.

The high mast lighting is a particular area of concern because the majority of them were installed in the 1970's as part of the Runcorn New Town development. It was designed to light the expressways and the adjacent footways. However the large amount of planting (carried out as part of the New Town) has now grown and is obscuring the lights, resulting in poorly lit paths. The majority of the high mast lighting has reached the end of its design life and needs to be refurbished or replaced; this will take about 7 years if £200,000 is allocated per annum. In the meantime they need maintaining and a full structural inspection every six years, which requires funding of £50,000 per year. This inspection period could be reduced if the inspector deems this necessary, resulting in the annual cost increasing. If this becomes the situation then it may be necessary to remove the high masts and leave the roads unlit to reduce the liability of the Authority. This could have a significant impact on safety on the Expressways. During the period of last LTP a number of high masts have been replaced, generally with conventional lighting. The exception was around the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, where due to the number of structures the high masts were replaced. It was necessary to replace existing high masts with new ones as the existence of engineering structures precluded the use of conventional columns.

The Council from its own resources has provided funding, for additional lighting installations throughout the Borough. Due to the large increases in energy charges and the increased inventory resulting from new developments and improvements, the revenue budget is struggling to cope with the demands put on it. Over the last few years energy rates have increased, which has impacted upon the maintenance that has been carried out. The increased number of traffic signal installations, illuminated bollards and signs has an impact on our energy costs, although non illuminated bollards have been installed and the use of LEDs within illuminated bollards and traffic signals are being provided to reduce energy costs. When the energy supply was last tendered the opportunity was taken to obtain all energy from green sources.

Performance Management
There are no Performance Indicators for street lighting monitored through the Local Transport Plan. However the Council undertakes ongoing monitoring of costs and on the percentage of street lights not working as planned.

Maximising value from resources
Halton, like many other authorities has had considerably higher than inflation increases in energy charges and indications are that higher increases will occur. This places further pressures on the already tight revenue budgets.

The fault recording system (Mayrise) also includes additional inventory information and further information is being collected. The active management of assets involving coherent and clear policies for street lighting is contained in the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP).

Consultation
Extensive public consultation exercises have been undertaken on all the policies and strategies contained within the LTP and comments have been incorporated, where appropriate.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Halton will work to install more energy efficient lighting as part of its maintenance strategy.

Economic regeneration: A well lit urban environment encourages usage of the highway network during periods of darkness. This could support Halton's night time economy and allow shift workers to move about in greater safety.

Equality of opportunity: A safe lit urban environment is beneficial to all members of society.

Health, safety and security: Lighting is a known accident prevention measure, but also is an effective crime reduction measure reducing the fear of crime and more people feel confident of their personal safety during darkness.

Quality of life: A safer highway environment improves quality of life for all.

Halton Goals

Support priorities of the LCR and LSP: The provision of quality street lighting where appropriate can benefit those living and travelling across the borough. Using energy efficient technology to it's full potential, will help to address issues of crime and the perception of crime, increasing the confidence of residents and their personal safety. It will also the contribute to road safety and the reduction of traffic accidents. The strategy would also build upon one of the MAA transformational programme, i.e. Low Carbon Economy. Implementation of the strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton and A Safer Halton.

Low carbon transport: Efficient street lighting can encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport especially walking.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Safer roads have benefits for all users. In many situations safer roads can encourage people to make use of more healthy options of transport such as walking and cycling.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Safer roads encourage access to a variety of destinations by sustainable modes.

LCR wider links: Halton works closely with the Merseyside authorities on highway lighting policies.

Maintain transport assets: Lighting infrastructure will be maintained in a manner to enhance road safety and to give the public a reduced fear of crime. Maintaining lighting to the desired standard will however be a challenge due to the degree of life expired equipment, limited budgets and increasing energy costs.

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Lighting needs to be replaced, in particular around the SJB.

Strategy

To delivery the street lighting strategy the Council will strive to:

- Maintain the street lighting to the best possible standard, subject to finance being available;
- Review equipment and the latest technology to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions;
- Continue with the conversion from SOX (low pressure sodium; yellow in colour) to SON (High pressure sodium; white in colour) lighting;
- Replace high mast lighting with conventional lighting, where possible, to reduce maintenance costs and improve lighting levels and efficiency;
- Improve the lighting in subways;
- Upgrade the lighting to current design standards;
- Give special consideration to lighting in conservation areas and other sensitive locations; and
- Evaluate the potential to remove street lighting, use of solar power or introduce dimming and/or reduce hours of operation, in order to save energy and costs.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 19

Taxi/private Hire Vehicles

Introduction

Taxis (i.e. Hackney Carriages) and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) are separate and distinct in law but both make important contributions to public transport. The Borough currently licenses 267 Taxis and 158 PHVs. The Borough has 21 public taxi ranks and four under private control. For a large and growing number of elderly and disabled people, they are, literally, a lifeline. In addition to this, taxis and private hire vehicles also provide:

• Local authority contracts for social services and education transport;
• Transport for visitors unfamiliar with the area;
• A high level of accessibility to other transport modes and amenities; and
• An indispensable 'out-of-hours' service for members of the public.

The taxi trade employs in the order of 500 people in the Borough and is an important part of the local economy.

Performance Management

Through its licensing procedures the Council has been able to improve the service standards to members of the public in terms of vehicle conditions and drivers. Relevant standards and conditions are kept under review and are scrutinised by the Council's Regulatory Committee.

The amount of information which is available to the trade and the public is substantial. Anyone who is interested in reading this information will find it on the Council's website.

Maximising Value from Resources

Since 2000, all taxi ranks in the Borough have been reviewed and redefined. (See Parking Strategy) With extensive redevelopment under way, some ranks have been moved, but care has been taken to ensure the replacements are conveniently close to attractions such as pubs, clubs and shopping centres. A recent review was initiated on existing ranks

Consultation

The Council has established a non statutory group called the Taxi Consultative Group (TCG), which meets three times a year. The TCG comprises:

- A representative from each of the Private Hire "System" Operators;
- A member from each of the four taxis Representative groups;
- Council Officers
- Members of the Council act as Chair and Vice Chair
- Local Police liaison Officer

The TCG provides the Council with an opportunity to consult the taxi organisations on any relevant proposals, address specific problems in relation to the taxi service and to identify opportunities for improvements where appropriate.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: Taxis in urban areas can be an efficient form of transport as they can directly access a location without the need to travel to park provided that there is a return fare. If there is mileage travelled without a passenger then this would be counter productive.

Economic regeneration: Taxi's and private hire vehicles contribute to economic regeneration by providing a flexible mode of transport for shorter journeys. They can assist with the night time economy as a primary means of transport to and from entertainment venues.

Equality of opportunity: The provision of taxi/private hire vehicles are, particularly valuable for addressing some of the issues of accessibility to facilities and activities. This is particularly true for areas of low car ownership where people will often share taxis to access facilities such as larger retail premises.

Health, safety and security: The use of taxis is viewed as a safe form of transport particularly during hours of darkness.

Quality of life: A wide variety of flexible transport modes is beneficial to all.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: Taxis provide a mode of transport across the SJB, particularly when public transport is not available and walking or cycling is viewed as undesirable.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of Taxi/Private hire vehicles will help provide economic growth in the Borough. Implementation of the Taxi/Private hire vehicle strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal, Children and Young People, Employment, Learning and Skills and Safer Halton priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: Halton requires that all taxi/private hire vehicles that are over 3 years old have a 6 monthly MOT/VOSA test, and as part of that test engine emissions are checked and must be within DfT/VOSA guidelines.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Taxis can provide access to health care and social networks.

Access to employment, services and social activities: Taxis can provide a flexible mode of transport to employment, services and social activities. They are of particular benefit at times when public transport is not available.

LCR wider links: Taxis provide a mode of transport that can provide cross boundary linkages.

Strategy

To deliver the Taxi/Private hire strategy the Council will strive to:

- Continue to undertake an assessment of the existing taxi stands within the Borough in order to develop a programme of works, which when implemented, will ensure that

the stands are accessible to all members of the public including the mobility impaired;

- Ensure that any future taxi provisions are accessible for all members of the public;
- Continue to use taxis where they are an optional means of accessible transport available to special needs and social services clients, in order to ensure that their accessibility to education and other essential amenities/services is not compromised;
- Ensure, where possible, that taxis have access to all public transport priority measures where safe and appropriate;
- Continue to ensure, through its licensing regulations, the highest possible standards of safety, security and reliability in its taxi provision in terms of vehicles and drivers;
- Actively promote the provision of taxi stands for the convenience of users and the benefit of the trade;
- Continue to review the provision of fully accessible taxis to wheelchair users and develop a mechanism to meet their needs.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 20

Travel Plans

Introduction

Travel plans have been used successfully for many years, whether secured through planning or prepared on a voluntary basis. They are an important tool for promoting sustainable travel, e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, and help to reduce single occupancy car use. They also encourage effective use of current transport networks and support their enhancement. Travel plans are now being used to secure the provision of sustainable travel choices, both to new developments and to extensions of existing sites, whatever their function. However, there is scope to make travel planning still more integral to the activities of local authorities and developers alike.

Travel plans can be a key tool in achieving national, regional and local objectives to manage the demand for movement and improve accessibility for everyone.

Definition: A travel plan (TP) is a long-term management strategy for an occupier or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

The journey to work has become increasingly frustrating. During peak periods approximately 80% of cars are single occupancy and road journeys are becoming slow and unpredictable contributing significantly to increases in traffic congestion, journey times and air pollution. Car dependency is now so high that it is affecting health, the environment and the economy. The Government White Paper “A New Deal for Transport” (1998) aimed to change the future and how we get from A to B. The Transport 10 year plan published in 2000 set out clear policies on the reduction of car use. The Government's Coalition Agreement transport section includes:

'We will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking, and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities’.

The 2011 Transport White Paper, ‘Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Transport Happen’ calls on local authorities to develop ‘smarter choices’, reducing the need to travel, integrating walking and cycling into an ‘end to end’ public transport journey, and work towards outcomes where active travel is considered the ‘norm’ with resulting benefits for health. School, workplace and residential travel plans all help deliver these aims.

The Travel to School Initiative, funded by Department for Children Schools and Families (now known as the DfE) and Department for Transport, has run from 2003 to 2011. The initiative has provided bursary funding for School Travel Plan Officers and school travel capital grants of £5,000 for a typical primary school and £10,000 for a typical secondary school. These capital funds have helped schools upgrade their travel facilities.

The programme has involved looking in detail at children’s needs on the school journey resulting in the production of a School Travel Plan for each school. Parents, teachers, governors and children have worked together to find the right solutions for their schools with the support of the School Travel Plan Officer.

By involving the local authority and other outside agencies it has been made safer and easier for children to walk, cycle or use public transport. School Travel Plans have been geared to the needs of Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Special or Independent Schools.

There has been a national trend for an increase in the use of the private car for the journey to and from school. It is estimated that the 'school run' has been responsible for 1 in 5 cars being on the roads during peak traffic times. The Council is committed to promoting alternatives to the private car by building on current provision and working with schools and the community using School Travel Plans, (subject to funding) to develop new initiatives.

The January national school census has been used as a key tool for providing data on the usual mode of travel to school for all pupils and provides an indicator of the impact so far of the School Travel Plan (STP) initiative. Government data shows a decrease in car travel in Halton from 34.7% in 2006/07 to 33.9% in 2009/10 whilst walking has increased from 47.8% in 2006/07 to 50.7% in 2009/10.

Continuous monitoring and review of each STP is conducted by the STP Officers, consulting with the school community, to drive forward the fledgling changes in patterns of travel behaviour. However, as Government funding for the STP officers and the service they provide is due to expire without replacement in March 2011, it is anticipated that the modal shift gains of recent times will be difficult to sustain.

Completed School Travel Plans

Between September 2003 and March 2010, 75 School Travel Plans have been completed, one for each relevant school in the Borough. These are as follows:

- 52 Primary Schools
- 8 High Schools
- 4 Special Schools
- 4 Nursery Schools
- 2 Pupil Referral Units
- 5 Independent Schools

In addition, STP Officers provide a crucial source of information and advice regarding external funding opportunities available to schools.

Over the course of the programme STP Officers have been successful in obtaining the following funding for schools which otherwise would not have been accessed:

Living Streets	(Match Funding)	£ 4,000
Sustrans	(Match Funding)	£13,370
Walking Initiatives Grant		£13,500
Capital Grant	2004	£52,862
	2005	£53,936
	2006	£18,786
	2007	£76,493
	2008	£65,176
	2009	£62,605

Future Expenditure

Specific funding for the School Travel initiative has been discontinued from March 2011 and this action could well lead to a reversal of the beneficial effects of previous work in this area.

Although it may be possible to gain support for the service through the future Local Sustainable Transport Fund bidding process, there is effectively a gap between the termination of one funding stream and the possible commencement of another.

Consultation

School Travel Survey

During the annual school January census, all pupils are asked their usual mode of transport to school. The survey has been a key tool in providing the data for N.I. 198 Children travelling to school- usual mode of travel, one of the indicators which has recently been abandoned by Government. As referred to above, the data shows a decrease in car travel from 34.7% in 2006/07 to 33.9% in 2009/10. Walking has increased from 47.8% in 2006/07 to 50.7% in 2009/10.

Each June a further detailed survey was produced by the School Travel Plan Officers, which provided data on how children travel to and from school and the preferred method of transport to school. This information was used to monitor targets in the School's Travel Plan.

A continued Monitoring and Review of each School Travel Plan was supported by the STP Officers, consulting with the school community. Regrettably it is not clear how this data gathering and STP monitoring can be sustained in the future.

The Walking Bus Scheme

Following the Government's Walking Initiative grant in 2007 four schools have set up walking buses. Volunteer parents or paid school support staff escort a line of children on their journey to school. They walk along a set route collecting pupils at 'pick up points' along the way. The Walking Bus Scheme helps to increase healthy exercise by encouraging walking, whilst reducing traffic and pollution near schools. Schools also see an improvement in pupil's attendance and punctuality levels.

Halton Borough Council is now looking at new ways to encourage more schools to develop the scheme, though with removal of the STP officers through funding cuts, the key staff to promote such projects will not be in post any longer.

The Cycle Permit Scheme

The Cycle to School Scheme is a cycling initiative aimed at promoting good practice and safer cycling. Halton Borough Council's Road Safety Unit, worked together with the School Travel Plan Officer to ensure that children are encouraged to cycle to school in a responsible way. So far in Halton:

- 19 Primary schools, 2 Nursery, and 5 High Schools have successfully implemented the Cycle Permit Scheme with a further 4 schools planning to implement the scheme during 2010/11; and
- 19 schools have received funding from the Local Transport Plan to install cycle facilities.

School Travel Plan Initiatives

All schools have been invited to participate in the School Travel Plan Calendar of Events. These events supported schools in promoting walking and cycling to school.

Other Initiatives that were promoted in all schools included:

- The Park and Walk Scheme

- Scooter & Cycle to School Weeks
- Walk on Wednesday
- Jingle Bell Walk Week
- Walk in your Wellies Week
- Step into Spring Week
- Walk the Bridge Week
- Walking Zone Week
- Healthy School Week
- Eco Schools Week
- National walking and cycling campaigns and events.
- Safer Parking Week.

School Bus

As part of Daresbury Primary School Travel Plan, a new school bus, specifically for transporting primary school pupils from a rural area of Halton was launched in 2006 by Halton Borough Council. A travel survey undertaken in the school revealed that previously 100% of pupils travelled to and from the school by car. By this has reduced to 84%.

WoW Scheme

WoW (Walk once a Week) is a proven way to increase walking levels.
The scheme runs from September to July with a different theme each year. It encourages parents and pupils to walk to school at least once a week throughout the school year. Children record how they travel to school, on a class wall chart, if they walk at least four times a month; they receive a badge, all of which are highly collectable.

22 schools have been taking part in this national scheme part funded by Living Streets.

Workplace and Residential Travel Plans

Travel plans, which encourage 'smarter', more sustainable, travel choices are recognised as playing a major role in modal shift and improving accessibility, but limited resources can limit the quality and effectiveness of plans.

During LTP1 and LTP2 the Council has worked to secure a significant number of Travel Plans for major developments (with 100 employees or more). Planning conditions or obligations are attached which ensure that targets are set and regularly monitored. Conditions are also applied for specific measures where appropriate.

Currently the Halton Borough council facilitates the following:

- Bike User Group (BUG) is a group of Halton Borough Council cyclists who have come together to try to improve cycle facilities and address cycling concerns. They aim to encourage more Halton Borough Council employees to commute by bike and/or use their bike for business purposes. Employees who cycle, wish to cycle or have an interest in cycling are welcome to join the group.
- Staff cycle mileage scheme -As part of its commitment to supporting sustainable transport and 'Improve Working Lives', Halton Borough Council has agreed to pay cycle mileage for official business journeys. This does not include commuting to and from work. Currently 20 pence a mile may be claimed for business related miles. This rate is accepted by the Inland Revenue as payment that does attract tax or National Insurance contributions.

- PoolBikes - A range of pool bikes are available to Halton Borough Council staff for business use and can also be used for leisure rides during lunch breaks. Each poolbike comes with a helmet and high visibility vest, which must be worn for all journeys undertaken on Halton Borough Council business.
- Scooter Commuter service loans eligible people a scooter for 6 months at a cost of £15 a week. The person must live in Halton, be over 16 years old, have a provisional licence, work within 20 miles of their home and have no other public transport option. Everyone who is accepted onto the service will be required to sign a contract, pay £15 a week and successfully complete a 1 day Compulsory Basic Training Course (CBT). Throughout the CBT course the client will be continually assessed to ensure they have not only the necessary skills but also an appropriate attitude to ensure they are safe on the roads. The NTT currently fund the CBT and provide safety equipment and insurance for the scooter, the client pays for fuel and is advised to take out personal insurance (loss or damage of personal possessions). To date five Halton residents have used the scooters to travel to and from work with another three people waiting for the vehicles to become available.

Guidance to assist employers in producing travel plans is available on the Council's website, and it is proposed to enhance this during the period of LTP3. It is also proposed, as part of the Development Control Strategy to:

seek contributions from developers for the monitoring of plans
concentrate travel plan resources on developments where there are congestion problems or likely problems as a result of the development, and where the development of travel plans will have maximum impact (e.g. sites with high numbers of employees).
secure residential travel plans where appropriate (e.g. high densities/accessible locations).
aim to secure area wide travel plans, where a larger area may benefit from a single development taking responsibility for coordinating the travel plan.

The Council's Travel plan was updated in 2006 and is due for review during 2011. This includes initiatives such as a Boroughwide car sharing database, Council Staff Bike User Group. Facilities such as showers and cycle storage have been provided at Council premises. Regular travel surveys are also undertaken.

Performance Management

In order to maximise value from existing resources we are:

- Assisting local businesses in producing travel plans;
- Promoting and encouraging sustainable transport such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing;
- Offering a car share scheme to local organisations as well as Council staff;
- Updating and implementing the Council's own Travel Plan; and
- Providing cycle storage at various Council sites.

What the Authority is aiming to achieve:

- Adopt healthier lifestyles.
- Develop a sustainable transport policy.
- Reduce problems of congestion, pollution and safety.
- Promote the use of workplace travel plans to local businesses and organisations.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: The implementation of travel plans will encourage less car use and a shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

Economic regeneration: An increased choice of transport modes to employment sites and other facilities will enable greater accessibility.

Equality of opportunity: An increased choice of transport modes to employment sites and other facilities will enable people to travel by walking, cycling and public transport; this is of particular importance for people living in deprived areas.

Health, safety and security: Less car dominated centres will encourage healthy modes of travel, along with greater road and personal safety.

Quality of life: A greater choice of transport, along with less car dominated centres and less congestion will be of benefit to all.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will enable less congested journeys and greater journey time reliability.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The continuation of travel plans will assist the reduction of car based congestion, thus this will help provide economic growth in the LCR. Implementation of the travel plan strategy would also have a positive impact upon the Urban Renewal priorities of the LSP's SCS.

Low carbon transport: The implementation of travel plans for education and employment related activities will encourage a modal shift towards low carbon transport.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of walking and cycling promoted through travel plans will be of great benefit in terms of health and wellbeing.

Access to employment, services and social activities: An increased choice of transport modes to employment sites and other facilities will enable a wider range of people to have access. It can also give people the choice of more healthy travel options.

LCR wider links: Travel to work patterns and other journeys often extend across local authority boundaries. Travel plans will therefore be of benefit to the wider area.

Maintain transport assets: Transport assets will be maintained to encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Assist local businesses in producing travel plans;
- Promote and encourage sustainable transport such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing;
- Continue to provide travel training for vulnerable young people and adults;
- Offer a car share scheme to local organisations as well as Council staff;
- Update and implement the Council's own Travel Plan;
- Provide cycle storage at various Council sites;
- Look at personal safety issues (training, personal alarms) for staff;
- Look at ways to invest in cycle, and implement cycle allowances for business use;
- Encourage all local businesses and organisations to implement Travel Plans;
- Encourage new developments in the Borough to develop Travel Plans through the planning process (see Development Control Strategy); and
- Work with our partners to secure additional funding to implement travel plans and promote their use.
- Safely reduce the number of people who travel to the school by car in favour of using more sustainable modes of transport;
- Increase the proportion of school journeys undertaken on foot, cycle and public transport;
- Reduce congestion, pollution, traffic danger and road casualty figures around the school;
- Contribute to pupils' health and personal development by encouraging increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport use so that they carry such habits into adulthood;
- Minimise the negative environmental impacts of school travel by increasing the number of staff and pupils travelling sustainably to school;
- Increase the numbers of pupils participating in road safety education through core curriculum activities;

HBC will provide advice to employers who wish to explore the feasibility of travel plans for their organisation. This will include measures such as:

- Company car share schemes;
- Company car share database.
- Individual employee journey plans;
- Job Link travel service;
- Allaying employees concerns regarding public transport e.g. reliability and cost;
- Looking at personal safety issues for employees; and
- Investigating the feasibility of incentives, which encourage employees to use bicycles to get to work.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 21

Walking

Introduction

Walking is a form of travel that has the least environmental impact and a form of exercise that has significant benefits to health. It is therefore an extremely important mode of travel.

The latest Transport White Paper, 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen' recognises that cycling and walking present an easy and cheap way for people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives. As well as the health benefits, they offer other benefits when they replace vehicle trips, including reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion. Improving the walking and cycling environment can dramatically improve local accessibility with positive benefits for growth and the local economy.

The Department of Health's Public White Paper also emphasises this, stating that active travel and physical activity need to become the norm in communities.

In 2007 the Government's Foresight obesity review was explicit in advocating active travel for health: "the top five policy responses assessed as having the greatest average impact on levels of obesity [include] increasing walkability / cycle ability of the built environment". The Chief Medical Officer for England, in his 2009 Annual Report, went further, calling for a doubling of walking and eight-fold increase in cycling, "win-win actions [to] both slow climate change and substantially improve England's health".

More recently, in 2009 the DfT produced the paper 'The Future of Urban Transport' which describes how transport contributes to the success of cities and urban areas, and how it can be maximised through an efficient and sustainable transport system. The paper describes how the proportion of trips by walking has fallen significantly in the last 20 years and how there has been corresponding levels of obesity. It stated that: 'Two thirds of the adult population do not meet recommended activity levels. Obesity is rising rapidly, with 30% of children and 60% of adults defined as either overweight or obese in 2007.' In Halton, levels of childhood obesity are generally much worse than the England average; this is demonstrated by the Evidence Base of this LTP. Halton currently ranks second highest for Coronary heart disease within the LCR compared with other authorities. With links to long term obesity and Coronary heart disease, there is much to be done to encourage walking as a healthy and sustainable mode of transport, especially as nearly 40% of all trips are less than two miles in length.

Many new areas of land have been opened to walkers for the first time as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. This provides further opportunities for local authorities to promote walking in the countryside.

In addition to these there is the Public Right of Way network and a developing network of Greenways and a series of Bridleways (see Primary Transport Strategy No.14 for further information).

It is also important to note that the footway cantilevered on the side of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and the approaches to the bridge are not an attractive route for pedestrians, resulting in the river acting as a real barrier between the extensive footpath networks in Runcorn and Widnes. The delivery of the Mersey Gateway Project would however, allow the SJB to have its current four lanes of traffic reduced to two and thereby allow the

space to be reallocated for the provision of walking and cycling facilities. The cantilevered walkway could then be withdrawn for pedestrian use. The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy also contains proposals to enhance facilities for pedestrians.

Walking is an extremely important mode of travel and it is recognised that pedestrians are a particularly vulnerable road user group that require special consideration, especially at places of potentially high vehicle conflict. It is also recognised that pedestrian improvements should also consider the needs of the widest range of people with disabilities – not just wheelchair users.

The LTP household survey carried out in March 2004, shows that 4.1% of the 1302 responding households said walking was their usual mode of transport to work, a further survey was complied in 2006 via the Household needs assessment, 3621 residents responded that they walked to work this equates to 7.3% of the modal share. 12.5% indicated walking was their usual mode of travel to Doctors/Hospital.

Performance Management

Walking is monitored directly through targets set in terms of journeys to work or school.

Maximising Value from Resource

Halton has two distinct types of pedestrian provision, the traditional network of footways alongside carriageways predominantly in Widnes and the older areas of Runcorn, and an independent network of footpaths separating pedestrians from vehicles predominantly in the new town areas of Runcorn. The independent footpath network amounts to around 200km of segregated footpath.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in physical activity and the environment (2008), called for a wide range of pro-active-travel measures, including road space reallocation from motor traffic to walking and cycling, road user charging, traffic calming and a shift in priorities towards the healthy travel modes.

The PRoW and Greenways network has been invested in over the past few years, and continual investment is required to address barriers and gaps in the network and cross boundary linkages as per the policies and actions identified in the Rights of Way Improvement plan.

Consultation

An extensive public consultation exercise has been undertaken on all the policies and strategies contained within LTP3 and comments have been incorporated, where appropriate.

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from car to walking for short trips would make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of walking can provide accessibility to local employment sites, for example the rapidly developing 3MG site and Widnes Waterfront.

Equality of opportunity: The use of walking, particularly in deprived areas, will assist in access to employment, education and training.

Health, safety and security: The use of walking for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. Greater use of walking on routes remote from motorised transport would also enhance the security of the individual.

Quality of life: Walking would assist with the provision of quiet and pollution free transport and is also means of recreation and exercise.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for pedestrians on the SJB and would also provide a means of funding for wider pedestrian infrastructure enhancements.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The provision of walking facilities will help provide sustainable transport connections within the LCR. Implementation of the walking strategy would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's and SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: Halton, through its implementation of infrastructure improvements for walking would encourage less car use and hence less carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: The use of walking for both leisure and travel to work has significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The encouragement of the use of walking along with infrastructure enhancements, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect both socially and with other needs.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The use of walking, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: The encouragement of the use of walking and enhanced infrastructure, for example, greenways that connect with destinations out of the Borough will allow people to connect with the LCR and wider areas.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain its pedestrian infrastructure, for example, the cutting back of vegetation on segregated routes to ensure that walking as a travel mode is desirable.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

- Continue to identify and develop, through analysis and consultation, a strategic network of pedestrian routes and links that connect into facilities such as employment, educational establishments, health and welfare services, shops, public transport interchanges, and recreational facilities, and routes that link communities;

- Ensure that any new or improved footways and footpaths are accessible to people with disabilities through the provision of measures such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving and safe crossing provision;
- Continue to identify and develop off-road routes such as Public Rights of Way, Greenways and Bridleways with reference to the action points set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Target routes that complement the developing network identified within the Quality Transport Corridor and area approach;
- Improve and maintain effective directional signing along pedestrian routes;
- Ensure that developers incorporate safe and convenient pedestrian footways or other safe pedestrian routes within the design and layout of new developments, and where required, provide new or improved routes to provide pedestrian access to the site;
- Ensure that land use plans deliver developments that minimise the need to travel longer distances and encourage the use of walking;
- Ensure that new routes are designed to minimise crime and the fear of crime and when in urban areas, offer natural surveillance from adjacent buildings whenever possible;
- Ensure that adopted footways and footpaths are adequately maintained
- Work in partnership with other organisations such as Groundwork Merseyside to develop, promote and publicise walking within the Borough;
- Work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that the wider network of pedestrian routes is maintained and developed;
- Consult with the Merseyside and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Access Forums where appropriate;
- Promote walking as a sustainable alternative to the private car through publicity and marketing of new and improved routes;
- Promote walking through the development of Commuter and School Travel Plans that emphasise the environmental and health benefits of walking;
- Support, promote and publicise national campaigns and strategies such as Green Transport Week and Car Free Day;
- Make available opportunities for measures such as information boards to provide visual maps of pedestrian routes and key locations and seating facilities to afford resting points along pedestrian routes;
- Ensure, where possible, that maintenance works to the highway incorporate improved crossing provision with wheelchair friendly dropped kerbs and tactile paving;

  Ensure walking routes are integrated with public transport infrastructure to encourage walking as part of an end to end journey which may include public transport;
- Implement proposals for walking contained within the Mersey Sustainable Transport Strategy; and
- Implement the policies and actions identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Primary Transport Strategy No. 22

Waterborne Transport

Introduction

This PTS covers both leisure and commercial waterborne transport. A large proportion of commercial waterborne transport is related to freight distribution and this is covered in greater detail in PTS No. 6.

The main watercourses in Halton that can be considered for navigation purposes are:

- The River Mersey;
- The Manchester Ship Canal (MSC);
- The Weaver Navigation;
- The Bridgewater Canal; and
- The Sankey Canal (sometimes referred to as the St Helens Canal).

The River Mersey is a natural waterway whilst the other four are man made.

Government planning and transport policy supports and encourages the use of inland waterways, particularly for the transport of freight. 'DaSTS: The Logistics Perspective' states "It is Government policy to promote alternatives to road transport for both passenger and freight movements. This is partly to reduce congestion and partly to reduce the environmental impact of road transport. Inland waterways have the potential to assist in both these objectives".

River Mersey

The River Mersey provides significant international port facilities on both the Liverpool and Wirral banks of the Mersey. The Mersey Ferries play an important role in Merseyside passenger cross river transport. At Liverpool there is also the cruise liner facility.

The Mersey has a very high tidal range which reduces the ability of vessels to navigate the river due to minimal levels of water at low tide when upstream as far as Halton. This fact and the construction of the MSC, has lead to low levels of commercial shipping on the Mersey in Halton. The river, however, is used by the Fiddlers Ferry Sailing Club for leisure purposes.

The Manchester Ship Canal

The MSC is a unique inland waterway. It commences at Eastham on the Wirral and passes around the west and north sides of Runcorn on its route to Manchester. It is capable of handling vessels of up to 15,000 tonnes to Runcorn. In addition to freight transport the MSC also accommodates occasional leisure cruises by the Mersey Ferries. Other leisure uses are restricted and minimal.

The Weaver Navigation Canal

The inland end of the Weaver Navigation Canal commences in Winsford, Cheshire and connects with the MSC in the west of Runcorn. It was originally constructed to link the mid Cheshire salt industry with the early chemical industry in Runcorn. The Weaver Navigation can only accommodate smaller sea vessels of up to 1,000 tonnes and therefore with ships becoming larger this canal has more limited potential in terms of freight transport but it has emerging potential for leisure uses. At present a rowing club is situated on the Halton side of its bank at Clifton, Runcorn.

The Bridgewater Canal

The main alignment of the Bridgewater Canal passes through the east of Runcorn and is a traditionally constructed 18th century waterway. It is intended that the use of the Bridgewater Canal will be enhanced for leisure purposes. A branch of the canal heads west from close to Preston Brook and terminates in a basin at Runcorn Old Town. In the past this branch connected through a series of locks to docks on the Runcorn and Weston Canal which linked to the Weaver Navigation. Further locks provided connection to the Manchester Ship Canal. The locks and much of the Runcorn and Weston Canal have been backfilled, however it is a longstanding aspiration that the Runcorn Locks may be reinstated at some point to provide a navigable connection (via the MSC) completing the second Cheshire canal ring, though navigation would be dependant upon the operational and safety requirements of the Ship Canal Company. This construction of the approaches to the SJB in the 1970s restricted potential navigable headroom, with the slip for westbound Weston Expressway traffic to the SJB severing the route precluding reinstatement.. With the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project some of the road approaches to the SJB could be removed and this could allow for the restoration of the locks. This initiative is contained in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy.

There is a perceived demand for additional marina facilities on the Bridgewater Canal in Halton, and alternative proposals are being investigated, potentially on the main canal alignment at Daresbury.

The Sankey Canal

The Sankey Canal (sometimes referred to as the St Helens Canal) has for many years been inoperable for water transport. The southern stretches of the canal within Halton and Warrington received restoration works in the 1980s that reinstated locks to the River Mersey creating marinas for pleasure craft at Spike Island (Widnes) and Fiddlers Ferry (Warrington) and providing a pleasant setting for the Trans Pennine Trail (National Cycle Route 22) that utilises the canal towpath. A number of low level structures cross the canal preventing navigation and sections between Warrington and St.Helens are not currently in water, though there are aspirational proposals to reinstate this canal for waterborne leisure use.

Waterside Ground Transport

The proximity of water is often viewed as a positive visual feature in landscape terms, and waterside walking and cycling routes can be particularly attractive especially to potential leisure users, however the advantages for improving waterside access will need to be tempered in certain environmentally sensitive locations within the Borough. Additional detail on improving footways and cycleways alongside rivers and canals can be found in PTS21 (Walking), PTS3 (Cycling) and PTS14 (PRoW and Greenways).

Links to National and Local Transport Goals

The manner in which this Primary Transport Strategy links with national and local transport goals is described below.

National Transport Goals

Reducing carbon emissions: A modal shift from road transport to water borne transport would make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Economic regeneration: The use of water borne freight transport is important for Halton and the LCR as such a mode will assist with the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Port.

Equality of opportunity: The development of water borne transport will assist in economic development that will be beneficial to all. There will also be enhanced leisure and connectivity for all sections of society.

Health, safety and security: There are proven health benefits of exercise both on and off water that will have significant positive health impacts in terms of physical and mental health. The greater use of waterways will enhance personal safety and security.

Quality of life: Water transport would assist with the provision of quiet and low pollution transport. Water courses also provide additional opportunities for leisure use.

Halton Goals

Enhance cross Mersey linkages: The provision of the Mersey Gateway will allow enhanced facilities for people to access water and waterside facilities.

Support priorities of LCR and LSP: The greater use of the MSC for freight transport will aid the delivery of the SuperPort concept. This will help provide sustainable fright transport connections within the LCR. Implementation of the water transport strategy for leisure would also have a positive impact upon all five of the LSP's SCS priorities, in particular A Healthy Halton.

Low carbon transport: A modal shift from road to water transport for freight distribution will contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Transport to promote health and wellbeing: Leisure uses of waterways for physical activities such as rowing and canoeing have significant positive health impacts in terms of both physical and mental health.

Access to employment, services and social activities: The use of cycling, in particular in deprived areas will allow people to connect with opportunities for employment, services and social activities.

LCR wider links: Improvements to the Mersey Gateway Port (at Weston) and other facilities along the Ship Canal that may arise within the life of this Strategy will directly contribute to the delivery of the wider Liverpool SuperPort and Atlantic Gateway proposals, facilitating the intermodal transfer of goods and support a sustainable transport and logistics sector.

Maintain transport assets: Halton will maintain the waterside infrastructure for which it is responsible, for example, by ensuring that the surfacing of greenways remains in a fit for purpose condition and vegetation is cut back where appropriate.

Strategy

The Council will strive to:

Construct the New Mersey Gateway to enable improvements to be made in the provision of cross Mersey access to watercourses and waterside facilities;
Progress waterborne freight transport strategies;
Maintain waterside transport infrastructure where appropriate;
Encourage physical waterborne leisure activities in appropriate locations, boosting the tourism economy and promoting health improvements;
Work with developers to enhance watercourses, the waterside environment and related infrastructure where appropriate; and

Enhance watercourses and related infrastructure where appropriate and where funding permits.

10 Major schemes

Priority 1 – Mersey Gateway

The need for a new crossing was established as a Major Objective in the Borough's Local Plan adopted in 1996. The case for a new crossing became central to policies and strategies of LTP1 and the Council's long term (30 year) Transport Strategy. This policy was further confirmed in the Unitary Development Plan formerly adopted in April 2005.

The construction of a new Mersey crossing has been strongly supported across the Liverpool City Region. The Mersey Gateway is the prime intervention to tackle congestion in Halton and is set in the context of a complementary road-user charging regime ensuring that the maximum benefits are fully realised.

The justification for the crossing has extensively been examined and detailed in a full Major Scheme Appraisal, submitted to DfT in July 2003, when it was judged to be "Super" Work in Progress. Subsequently, a revised and expanded appraisal was resubmitted in December 2004. Detailed appraisal work continued throughout 2005. In March 2006, the Government announced that the scheme had gained 'Programme Entry' in the DfT's major schemes programme.

In September 2006, the Mersey Gateway Team was formed to deliver the scheme through the approvals process. In the summer of 2007, a major public consultation exercise took place which indicated general widespread support for the project; however some concerns were expressed in relation to localised impacts. During 2007 and the early part of 2008, an extensive traffic model was built to inform the project and the design progressed accordingly. Changes to the design included alterations to the Runcorn Expressways and M56 Junction 12 to take account of redistribution of traffic that the new crossing would induce. The possibility of a direct link from the Southern Expressway to a new junction on the M56 (Junction 11A) was also considered.

The DfT granted permission to use the Transport and Works Act (TWA) for the new bridge whilst the legal powers for changes to the approach roads were covered by a planning application to Halton Borough Council. The TWA, however, due to its own legal process had to progress through a public inquiry with a subsequent recommendation to Government ministers. The proposals include the tolling of both the new bridge and the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). The TWA provides the legal mechanism for tolling the new bridge whilst a separate Road User Charging order is required for tolling the SJB.

The need for the 'Mersey Gateway' scheme results from the fact that the only road crossing of the Mersey, in the Borough, is provided by the SJB. Traffic flows on the SJB can exceed 90,000 vehicles per day and congestion, particularly in the peaks, is severe and results routinely in long queues. The SJB is an important alternative crossing route for the M6 Thelwall Viaduct and provides strategic links between M56 and M62 serving as an important gateway to Liverpool John Lennon Airport from the south and east and the Mersey region.

The strategic importance of SJB cannot be over-emphasised. All but 18% of the vehicles crossing the bridge are either in or out of the Borough or pass through the Borough. The continuing availability of SJB is dependent in the more immediate term on the funding for maintenance that was recently secured for the five year period starting 2011/12. In the longer term, Mersey Gateway will provide the essential alternative strategic route to permit the more complex structural maintenance works to be undertaken without lengthy and disruptive lane closures and possibly total closures. The construction of the Mersey

Gateway will address the prime cause of congestion in the Borough and enable the SJB to provide for local sustainable travel within the Borough. Road user charging, in addition to generating the investment required to deliver the new bridge, will provide a mechanism to manage demand, so that free flow traffic conditions are maintained on the new link, thereby locking in the delivery of the projected service reliability and standards. Complementary measures on SJB will include priority schemes for public transport, cyclist and pedestrians, reducing the road space available to general purpose traffic and down grading linkages to the strategic highway network. Extending the tolling charge to SJB protects these rebalanced local transport priorities against future congestion on the local road network connecting to SJB. The scheme will also address safety issues on the SJB, primarily caused by inadequate road width.

In July 2008 a planning application was determined by Halton Borough Council where it was resolved that 'The Council was minded to approve the application, but would defer the decision to be made as part of the TWA application'.

A summary of the impact of the Mersey Gateway Project is as follows:

- Is a major economic driver delivering new jobs and increased economic opportunities which is a priority for government. An estimated 4,640 new jobs would be created through direct employment, regeneration activity and inward investment. It would also generate an estimated £61.9 million a year in Gross Value Added from new jobs by 2030;
- Is predominantly private sector funded (over 70% of the total costs);
- Is a "user pays" infrastructure proposition;
- Reduces the current carbon footprint generated by vehicles crossing the River Mersey;
- It provides a significant overall improvement in air quality particularly in Runcorn Old Town and West Bank;
- Offers excellent value for money for government and the public purse as it brings benefits four times greater than the cost
- Significantly enhances network resilience; and
- Significantly enhances regional resilience. It has recently been calculated that the economic cost to the north west of closing the SJB is £160,000 per hour at peak time.

The public inquiry was held during the Summer of 2009. The Inspector then subsequently submitted his recommendations to ministers. On Thursday 10 June 2010, the government announced a delay to all transport schemes currently progressing through the planning process; this included the Mersey Gateway Project.

Subsequent to this Chancellor George Osborne MP confirmed the government's commitment to the Mersey Gateway Project during his Comprehensive Spending Review speech on 20th October 2010, saying: "We should prioritise those areas of public spending which are most likely to generate growth." He then went on to say that the government would "provide funding for the new bridge over the River Mersey" which will run between Runcorn and Widnes.

The Mersey Gateway Project received planning approval on 20th December 2010. The approval was signed off by the Transport Secretary Philip Hammond MP and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles MP. This means that the project team is now able to commence with the preparations for the procurement process.

The planning decision notice has also triggered a number of statutory processes including the Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO's) which will allow the project team to acquire the necessary land required for the construction of the project.

The compulsory acquisition of land is divided into three components, two CPOs (Queensway & Central Expressway) and an Order under the Transport and Work Act 1992.

Next Steps

The team will now carry out work comprising of the development and implementation of both the Commercial and Procurement Strategies. It is likely that the procurement process will last approximately 2 years during which the team enter into a competitive dialogue with potential concessionaires.

SJB maintenance

The Scheme: The Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) is a Grade 2 listed, largely steel structure opened in 1961. The bridge was widened in 1977 in order to increase its capacity to 65,000 vehicles per day (vpd) but currently the bridge operates at flows that can exceed 90,000 vpd, considerably in excess of its design capacity. The bridge and the associated complex of approach structures, function as both a local and strategic link.

Maintaining the availability of the SJB is critical to the local area, the Liverpool City Region and beyond. This impacts heavily on how and when the work can be undertaken.

With such high traffic flows and lack of an alternative route, except in very exceptional circumstances, lane closures have to be restricted to only two lanes at any one time and to overnight and/or weekends, (the SJB carries a 4 lane single carriageway). Inevitably this results in work taking longer and incurring significantly higher costs.

Prior to 1998 Local Government Reorganisation there had been significant underfunding of the maintenance of the Silver Jubilee Bridge and its adjacent structures. As a result, HBC recognised that there was a need to address this neglect as a matter of priority.

This culminated in the preparation of a 10-year maintenance strategy document which identified, costed and programmed the structural maintenance activity necessary to bring the condition of the structures to a steady state of maintenance.

The first LTP capital settlement included a major maintenance scheme for SJB, initially for £6.3m. As reported in successive Annual Progress Report (APR's), expenditure on the major scheme increased to over £9m spent on essential structural maintenance, much of which involved innovative and groundbreaking engineering. The parapets were brought up to modern standards, the upper surface of the concrete deck was completely repaired and waterproofed, the expansion joints were replaced and a completely new running surface installed.

Utilising experience gained in the initial stages of maintaining the bridge, a revised 10 year maintenance strategy was developed and included with the 2004 Annual Progress Report submission. This identified significant further works required to bring the bridge and complex to a sustainable steady state of maintenance.

The scale of work involved to address the maintenance backlog was so great that it fell within the DfT's definition of a Major Scheme.

The final draft of the Major Maintenance Scheme Bid was formally submitted to DfT in March 2006 and comprised a bid for funding over a 10 year period totalling £42.7m (excluding optimism bias).

In late 2007, as part of the DfT's LTP announcement, it was confirmed that HBC had been awarded PRN Grant funding totalling £14.3m for the years commencing 2008/09 which, in addition to other funding sources, would allow them to address the first four years of work included in the maintenance strategy.

This allowed HBC to consider the procurement of a long term contracting service to deliver all major bridge maintenance in the Borough. This option would involve engagement of a single "partnering" contractor using a construction framework form of contract based upon the NEC (ECC) suite of Contracts. Within the context of the 10-year time frame of the Major Scheme Bid, this arrangement is viewed to be advantageous in terms of its overall flexibility, quality and value for money through continuity of service.

This resulted in the award of the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract to Balvac Ltd in April 2009 and delivery of the programme of work through the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership is ongoing.

2010/11 is the final year of PRN Grant funding and by this time, through PRN Grant and Highway Maintenance Block funding we will have completed a significant programme of major maintenance works. Some of the more significant achievements are listed as follows:

a) SJB – Major painting, structural steelwork repairs, reinforced concrete deck repairs and installation of cathodic protection for the soffit of the entire suspended span;
b) SJB – Major painting of all above deck level steelwork in both Runcorn and Widnes end spans;
c) SJB – Major painting, structural steelwork repairs, reinforced concrete deck repairs and installation of cathodic protection in the Runcorn spandrel area;
d) SJB – Installation of protective wrapping and other measures for the hanger cables on both elevations of the SJB;
e) SJB – Completion of Principal Bridge Inspection of the entire suspended span below deck and all structural steelwork above deck;
f) SJB – Complete refurbishment of overhead inspection gantries;
g) Widnes Approach Viaduct – Completion of deck waterproofing, joint replacement & resurfacing;
h) Widnes Approach Viaduct – Completion of outstanding below deck concrete repairs;
i) Runcorn Approach Viaduct - Deck waterproofing, joint replacement & resurfacing;
j) Hutchinson's Sidings Bridge - Deck waterproofing, joint replacement & resurfacing;
k) Station Road Bridge & Footbridge – Strengthening of Piers to accommodate impact loading;
l) Desoto Road Railway Bridge – Major painting and refurbishment.

HBC revised the SJB Complex Major Maintenance Bid to reflect the work which the Grant and Block funding have allowed us to address in advance of any Major scheme funding award. This involved rationalising the remaining programme of work in the context of more detailed condition information available and also reviewing the economic appraisal and value for money assessment;

This review of the remaining element of the programme reduced the Bid's funding profile over a five year period to £18.6m total (excluding optimism bias).

The Secretary of State granted Full Approval to the SJB Major Maintenance Scheme in late March 2010 though this was subsequently advised as being subject to review following the May 2010 change in Government; however in June 2010, DfT confirmed that the SJB Major Maintenance Scheme was not subject to cancellation or suspension and HBC is gearing up to deliver the remainder of the works required to complete the Maintenance Strategy programme commencing in 2011/12.

HBC are committed to delivering this programme of work commencing in April 2011 and will consider all opportunities to rationalise works delivery in the context of the Government's approval of the Mersey Gateway project.

Halton Curve

This scheme is supported by Halton Borough Council as it will benefit the community and provide a rail alternative to the SJB and Mersey Gateway. Whilst the scheme is within Halton, the main benefits of the scheme will be gained in Merseyside and therefore the scheme is being promoted by Merseytravel.

The Halton Curve connects the Chester-Warrington Line with the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline (WCML). The local passenger service Chester-Runcorn-Liverpool was withdrawn in the mid 1970's. The track infrastructure was retained as a diversionary route with only a weekly train service that is operated in the summer on Saturdays. Subsequent decisions taken to reduce renewal costs resulted in the Halton Curve being reduced to single track with points and signalling only operating in the Liverpool direction. In its current form, the line is of limited use to either passengers or freight. The proposed scheme involves the reinstatement of the points at Halton and Frodsham junctions with some upgrade to the track. The scheme has been developed in partnership with Merseytravel, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the TAITH consortium of North Wales authorities. The partnership together with Network Rail, believe that with the improvements, the Halton Curve could be operated to allow the provision of a new frequent local passenger train service that would serve Liverpool Lime Street – Liverpool South Parkway – Runcorn – Frodsham – Helsby – Chester and then onwards to North Wales. The Halton Curve could also assist with freight movements.

The provision of a new station at Beechwood on the Halton Curve and the reopening of Ditton Station are being considered as part of the proposals. The enhancement of the train service from Ellesmere Port to Helsby and then onto Runcorn and Liverpool is also under consideration in the proposals.

The improvements to Halton Curve would help to reduce the demand for travel across the Silver Jubilee Bridge and as such would help to address the acute problems of congestion. A new rail service crossing the Mersey would give an alternative choice to paying bridge tolls once the Mersey Gateway project has been implemented. In addition, the scheme would increase rail accessibility both within Halton and also to the wider region, by providing a direct link between Liverpool and North Wales. Also, the scheme would be supportive of the development of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

A Demand Study (business case) was completed in 2009 and considered the following issues:

- Options for new services using the Halton Curve;
- Options for services between Ellesmere Port and Helsby;
- Possible new stations at Beechwood and Ditton;
- Possible improved connections at Chester;
- Improved access to Daresbury Business Parks; and

- Opportunities for rail freight.

The options considered for Halton Curve were:

- Option 1 – An hourly service between Liverpool Lime St – Runcorn – Chester (stopping at all stations)
- Option 2 – As Option 1 plus extending the service to Wrexham General
- Option 3 – As Option 1 plus extending the service to Llandudno Junction
- Option 4 – As Option 1 but with a half hourly service

The benefits to cost ratios (BCR) for each option are as follows:

Option	**BCR**
1	1.5
2	1.9
3	1.3
4	1.7

Note: a BCR of 2 or more represents high value for money.

Historically, an hourly service operated between Helsby, Ellesmere Port and Hooton. Following the extension of the electrified Merseyrail network from Hooton to Ellesmere Port in 1994 the service between Helsby and Ellesmere Port has been greatly reduced. Although stakeholders would wish to see this service reinstated BCRs for options considered are between 0.1 and 0.4.

In terms of BCRs for the station options:

- Beechwood, Runcorn – single platform on a single track (passive provision for passing loop)
  ½ hourly service BCR 1.7;
  Hourly service BCR 1.1.

- Ditton, Widnes – new or replacement station
  ½ hourly service BCR 1.0;
  Hourly service BCR 0.8.

Options were investigated to link up the existing Merseyrail services on the Wirral Line services to Chester with onward services using the Halton Curve. The optimum option is to have a service every 15 minutes between Liverpool and Chester.

The demand study looked at the wider issue of possible bus links from existing railway stations in Halton and Warrington to the Daresbury Business Parks. This area includes:

- Daresbury Laboratory;
- The Cockcroft Institute;
- Daresbury Innovation Campus; and
- Daresbury Park.

Options also included a brief assessment of a new railway station at Daresbury on the Chester to Manchester line and/or the West Coast Main Line, (refer to Passenger Rail Strategy). The study concluded that in the short term a bus service from existing stations may be more effective; however a new station could be viable in the longer term as the developments become operational.

The Demand Study indicates that Halton Curve would have limited benefit for rail freight, however as Network Rail move towards a 24/7 railway the curve could offer a useful

diversionary route at times when the West Coast Main Line between Weaver Junction and Crewe may be closed.

The Halton Curve proposal has not yet achieved ‘Programme Entry’ and therefore, it is unlikely to receive major scheme funding from Government in the short term. Merseytravel have indicated that due to the economic recession and cuts in funding for transport schemes, the Halton Curve will not be able to receive high priority in the first two to three years of this LTP.

11. Implementation Options

A wide range of options for interventions, projects or initiatives are being considered for both the shorter term implementation plan and the longer term implementation of this LTP3 strategy.

These options may help attain the national and local goals and must respond to the challenges and opportunities and are also guided by our Primary Transport Strategies. A range of options have been considered that were originally identified in LTP1 and 2, have been identified in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS) or will meet more recently identified needs including Phases 1 and 2 of the consultation.

As part of the Phase 1 consultation it was emphasised that there would be less funding available, at least in the near future, and the following issues were viewed as emerging priorities:

- Address/manage congestion, in particular through the construction of Mersey Gateway and addressing the 'school run';
- Enhance economic success through the Mersey Gateway and through better freight distribution;
- Reduce delays due to maintenance works – with more particular reference here to the Silver Jubilee Bridge;
- Improve access to work, education, training, services (including health) and social activities, targeting disadvantaged communities;
- Reduce road casualties;
- Cleaner, low carbon transport;
- Continue to maintain the highway and transport infrastructure to avoid further deterioration and ensure there is the ability to respond to emergency situations e.g. adverse winter weather;
- Reduce delays due to maintenance works – with more particular reference here to the Silver Jubilee Bridge;
- Promote public transport, walking and cycling and improve access thereto;
- Reduce perceptions of crime on public transport and improve safety and security of users; and
- Reduce traffic impact on communities in terms of pollution and noise.

The MGSTS aims to deliver the following key vision for sustainable travel options within Halton:

To identify and promote a network of high quality, safe, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly travel measures for local residents, businesses and visitors to Halton, which support the key objectives of the LTP and the Mersey Gateway Project."

The MGSTS has two component parts which are:

- The identification of schemes for LTP3 that could be delivered with or without Mersey Gateway; and
- The identification of schemes that could be delivered through the Mersey Gateway concessionaire.

Alongside sustainable transport measures, maintenance of transport infrastructure will be a key priority and the degree to which this is carried out will be dependent on available funding. The proportion of funding actually spent on maintenance will be balanced against the need for new schemes. With the current financial pressures on local

authorities, there may in the short term, be a presumption against new schemes in favour of maintaining existing assets.

Options for the new schemes will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Need;
- Strategic fit;
- Value for money;
- Maintenance or whole life costs; and
- The ease of delivery and affordability.

Taking into account all of the above we must ensure that our schemes meet as many national and local goals as possible. The adoption of a long term strategy does, however, enable us to consider a range of options at this stage. Again, in view of the financially challenging times that lie ahead, affordability will be a major consideration.

Taking into account the above criteria an initial subjective assessment has been carried out for each of the schemes and initiatives so far identified. This outlines the likelihood of delivery during the period of LTP3 with a grading of unlikely, possible or probable. This is determined for both the 4 year implementation period 2011/12 to 2014/15 and the 15 year strategy period 2011/12 to 2025/26.

Identified schemes and initiatives for LTP3 are as follows:

Mersey Gateway (Major Scheme)

The Mersey Gateway Project received planning approval on 20th December 2010. The approval was signed off by the Transport Secretary Philip Hammond MP and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles MP. This means that the project team is now able to commence with the preparations for the procurement process.

Refer to Major Schemes Section 10.

Likelihood of completion by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of completion by 2025/26: probable

SJB Maintenance (Major Maintenance Scheme)

£18.6 million of funding for this scheme was confirmed by Government in June 2009 covering a five year period commencing in 2011/12.

Refer to Major Schemes Section 10.

Likelihood of completion by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of completion by 2025/26: probable

Halton Curve (Major Rail Scheme)

This scheme has a positive economic case and is progressing on through the development stage. New legal powers will not be required but no firm source of funding has been identified. Refer to Major Schemes Section 10.

Likelihood of completion by 2013/14: unlikely

Likelihood of completion by 2025/26: possible

Improvements for Pedestrians (General)

These include roadside footways, crossing facilities and off road facilities including Public Rights of Way and Greenways, the extent of such schemes will depend on funding. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy Nos. 13 and 21.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: probable (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements for Cyclists (General)

These include on road and off road improvements such as bridleways and Greenways, the extent of such schemes will depend on funding. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy Nos. 3 and 14.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: probable (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements for Walking and Cycling Delivered Through the Mersey Gateway Project

A number of pedestrian and cycling schemes have been identified that could be delivered as part of the Mersey Gateway Project or through income generated from tolls charged for use of the Mersey Gateway.

As an integral part of the project, the Mersey Gateway will deliver the strategic and important sustainable transport corridor over the SJB between the regeneration areas of West Bank and Runcorn Old Town.

Specific walking and cycling improvements to be delivered through the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy have been identified with the first priority being the improvement of links to the highly strategic NCN 62. Several Greenways have also been identified and these are detailed in the strategy section for PROW and Greenways.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy Nos. 3, 14 and 21.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Rail Improvements (excluding Halton Curve)

Hough Green Station Access Improvement

This includes improved junction visibility at Liverpool Road and increased and enhanced parking facilities including better security. This scheme was started in February 2010/11 and will be completed in 2011/12.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: probable (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Widnes Station Access Improvement

This includes increased and enhanced parking including better security. This scheme was started in 2010/11 and will be completed in 2011/12.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: probable
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

New Railway Stations

New stations are proposed at Barrows Green, Upton Rocks, Widnes South Ditton, and Beechwood. Land has been safeguarded in development plans for these stations but the status of the first three maybe reviewedhave yet to reach detailed design stage and funding for them has yet to be identified. A further proposal at Daresbury is currently progressing through GRIP 1, 2 and 3 stages of development; no exact location or funding has been identified.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible (in part)

New Railway Sidings 3MG

New railway sidings are proposed as part of the 3MG development; it is intended that these will be funded through the development.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 6.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: probable
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

New Railway Lines

The Shell Green Route and the Ditton – Widnes South – Fiddlers Ferry – Warrington Bank Quay proposals have had no design carried out and no funding has been identified. Similarly the Trans Pennine Line through Widnes has had no design carried out to upgrade it and no funding has been identified.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: unlikely

Rail Improvement Schemes to be Delivered Through Mersey Gateway

The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy has identified a number of possible rail improvement schemes that could be delivered through income generated from tolls charged for use of the Mersey Gateway; these include:

- Bus, pedestrian and cycling improvements at Runcorn Railway Station as part of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy;
- New railway station booking offices and passenger waiting facilities (with enhanced opening hours);
- Improved bus/railway interchange facilities at all railway stations;
- Measures to enhance pedestrian and cycling facilities within 800 metres of railway stations;

- Improved passenger information.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Bus Infrastructure and Services

There are many improvements that could be made to bus infrastructure and services, examples of these are outlined below. However, with the likelihood of reduced future funding it is important to note that a substantial proportion of such improvements can only be funded through income generated through tolls charged as part of the Mersey Gateway Project.

Extension of Bus Quality Corridors

The implementation of Quality Transport Corridors (QTC) has largely been completed during LTP 1 and 2, although some gaps remain. Therefore, a new approach is to be adopted to build upon the QTC philosophy utilising the same comprehensive / co-ordinated approach to maximising the benefits that are possible from a range of improvements to safety, walking, cycling and public transport but which are now focused on accessibility in and around specific centres, which provide services to the local communities.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2 and No. 15.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements to Murdishaw Interchange

This scheme encompasses a range of improvements and enhancements to Murdishaw Interchange. This is one of the busiest bus stops on the Runcorn Busway in terms of departures and passenger use. The scheme builds on a range of improvements that have previously been introduced to enhance safety and security of passengers and improve bus operations. Proposed improvements include higher quality stops, better lighting, CCTV and real time information.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Improvements to Halton Lea South Bus Station

Halton Lea North Bus Station has recently been extensively improved to create a safe, secure and highly attractive passenger waiting environment. Similar improvements are proposed for Halton Lea South but physical constraints at the site may limit the extent of improvement and facilities that can be provided.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2013/14: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Improved Passenger Information in Halton Lea Shopping Centre as part of the Bus Station Improvements

To enhance passenger information for public transport it is proposed that a large plasma screen display is installed in the central concourse of Halton Lea shopping centre, where maximum footfall occurs. The screen would show scheduled timetable information for buses serving Halton Lea North and South as well other prominent destinations.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2 and No. 7

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Improvements to Halton Hospital Interchange

It is proposed that similar improvements be made to Halton Hospital Interchange to those at Murdishaw Interchange. This would include improved passenger shelters, better lighting and real time information. Improvements to footways between the interchange and the hospital are also proposed.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Improvements to Other Stops on the Runcorn Busway Loop

The components of this proposal are to enhance safety and security of bus users and improve passenger information. The following 16 pairs of stops have been identified for enhancement:

- Parkgate Way;
- Runcorn East;
- Norton Village;
- Goosebury Green;
- Windmill Hill;
- Southwood Avenue;
- Norton Priory;
- The Park;
- Castle Ward;
- Rowlands Walk;
- The Brow;
- Palacefields;
- Parkside;
- Brook Lane;
- Stockham Lane; and
- Barnfield Avenue.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Green Oaks Bus Station and Widnes Town Centre Public Transport Access Strategy

Widnes Town Centre has seen considerable growth in the last 15 years. In order to optimise public transport access to the centre it is proposed that a study is carried out to develop a new access strategy which recognises the new and proposed developments.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

New Mobility Smartcard

The potential for smartcards to offer a quick, easy and attractive method of paying for a range of goods and services is now well understood. The cashless transactions possible through smartcards can be applied to a range of functions, including public transport. The Liverpool City Region authorities are developing a proposal for a smartcard system. Halton is well positioned to pilot the introduction of the scheme on the back of the Mersey Gateway Project in advance of the rest of the City Region and to pioneer its use to wider applications across the Borough as a true 'Citizen Card', which could also be used for the payment of bridge tolls.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Bus Quality Partnership

The Council already has a good working relationship with both of the principal bus operators in the Borough, and has made significant progress in the development and improvement of the network. However, it is believed that further significant improvements to the bus network can be accelerated if the commercial bus operators and Council commit to work in partnership to deliver the enhancements. The lead for taking forward a Quality Partnership would be taken by Halton in conjunction with operators and the Merseyside Bus Board.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Expansion of the Neighbourhood Travel Team

Halton's Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT) was formed in August 2002 to respond to the findings of a comprehensive study examining access to employment opportunities in the Borough, carried out in 2000. The original remit of the NTT was to work collaboratively with local communities, employers, employment organisations, schools, colleges and other bodies to identify and reduce transport barriers that prevent people living and working in Halton from accessing education, employment and training opportunities. However, as the NTT evolved the work of the team expanded to promote improved access to local facilities and services in general. Due to budget pressures however, the scale of the work carried out by NTT has been reduced and its future appears uncertain.

It is proposed if possible the NTT initiative is reinvigorated if possible using other funding sources. It is also proposed that other potential sources of funding be explored to enable the good work of the initiative to continue. Refer to Primary Transport initiative Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

TravelSafe

If growth in bus patronage is to be achieved, it will be important that users, and potential users, have confidence in the network and feel safe whilst accessing and using it. Halton introduced the TravelSafe initiative in 2002 to address crime against the public transport network and concerns from the community about personal safety. TravelSafe was funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Cheshire Police and bus operator contributions. Due to budget pressures however, the TravelSafe initiative has lapsed, but other sources of appropriate funding will be considered. It is proposed that the TravelSafe initiative is reinvigorated using funding provided through charging tolls on the Mersey Gateway Project.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Coordination and Marketing of Community Transport Services

There are a number of community transport services available in Halton, these include:

- Halton Dial-a-Ride;
- Community Car Scheme;
- Vehicle Group Hire;
- Links2Work; and
- Hospital Link.

Each scheme presently operates under a different name, although often providing the same function. This could lead to confusion amongst users and the potential target groups, and makes marketing and promotion more difficult and disjointed. It is therefore, recommended that all such schemes be promoted under the generic Door2Door banner. It is also recommended that a full feasibility study is carried out to identify the potential for the expansion of the Community Transport provision in Halton including full consultation with users and other stakeholders. The availability of funding may impact on the provision of community transport.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Network Development of Bus Services

Different bus routes can follow the same section of road along much of the total route length. Where more than one operator provides a service along the same section of road there can be a duplication of service where buses travel at the same time. By staggering the timings of services the frequency of the service can be effectively doubled. Such services include Widnes to Hough Green and Widnes to St Helens.

It is proposed that a number of services could be enhanced, these could include:

- An extension to Busway services 1 and 2 to provide a full intra-Runcorn service as a 'figure of eight' loop;
- A revised service joining Hough Green, Chestnut Lodge, Widnes Green Oaks, SJB and Runcorn High Street;
- A circular route between Runcorn High Street, Halton Lodge, Halton Lea, Halton Brook, The Grange and back to Runcorn High Street;
- Access to the Bridge Retail Park;
- Access improvements to Runcorn Railway Station;
- Access to Old Coach Road, Runcorn;
- Access to Halton Independent Living Centre;
- Access to the Promenade and Deck residential Developments;
- Access improvements to Mersey Road, Bridge Street and the Runcorn Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre;
- Stops on Picow Farm Road for Runcorn Railway Station;
- Access to Lugsdale Road between Gerrard Street and the Town Hall;
- Access improvements to West Bank;
- Access to 3MG;
- Expansion of the Route 66 service that serves East Runcorn; and
- Bus/rail interchange to the commercial sites around Daresbury.

Many of these listed above will however be dependent on the Mersey Gateway Project and the revenue made available to the Council. They will also depend on the support and cooperation of the bus operators in Halton.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 2.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible (in part)
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Road Improvement Schemes (excluding Mersey Gateway and SJB major maintenance scheme)

A557 Approach to M56 Junction 12

The A557 is a two-lane dual carriageway with a two-lane approach to the roundabout at Junction 12. At peak times this approach arm is over capacity and long queues form. A modification to this approach would reduce delays and congestion. It is intended that this junction capacity improvement will delivered as part of the Mersey Gateway project that is due to be completed in 2015; however, a smaller scale scheme could be constructed separately from Mersey Gateway. The Highways Agency are also planning capacity improvements at Junction 12.
Refer to Major Schemes Strategy No 10 and Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

3MG Access Road

As part of the 3MG development a new link road is to be constructed between the site and the A562 Speke Road / A5300 Knowsley Expressway Junction, crossing over the Liverpool Branch of the West Coast Mainline. The road is to be funded by the developer. The design of the link road is complete and planning approval was granted in 2008. It is expected that the 3MG Access Road will be constructed by Halton's development partner early during the LTP3 programme.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 6 and 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: probable
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Johnsons Lane Improvement

The Johnson's Lane site is a 19 acre site within the Widnes Waterfront EDZ, but in order to open up the site for development, the provision of approximately 300 metres of spine road infrastructure is required to enable access to individual employment site plots. The site has been identified as having the potential for relocation of businesses displaced from southern Widnes due to the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge approach roads.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: probable

Widnes Town Centre Access Road

Halton's UDP includes a potential scheme to provide a road link, north of the Gyratory, from Greenoaks Way, to Tanhouse Lane that would provide relief to the gyratory junction at A557 Wilkinson Way/Fiddlers Ferry Road/Earle Road. The Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan also contains ideas for access to the development sites on Tanhouse Lane north. Completion of this Circulatory System will aid ease of movement into and around the Town Centre for all means of transport.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Runcorn Station Access Road

Access to Runcorn Station from the Expressway system is poor. There is no direct route for traffic approaching from the east and traffic from other directions must use the network of industrial and narrow residential streets, which surround the station. A new junction on the Expressway has provided the opportunity for construction of a new link road allowing the station to be accessed more easily for traffic from any direction.

The first section of the route has been constructed and utilises the commercial development access road, as part of the commercial development between the expressway junction and Greenway Road.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 11 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Hale Bank Relief Road

The draft Hale Bank Supplementary Planning Document outlines the principle of a relief road for Hale Bank to the east of Hale Road. The aims of the scheme are to reduce the number of vehicular movements through Hale Bank, particularly heavy goods vehicles that access the industrial areas of Pickerings Road and Mersey View Road, and to improve the environment for new and existing residents through reductions in traffic, noise and by improving air quality. It is intended that the majority of funding for the new highway infrastructure will come from developer contributions.

Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Widnes Waterfront EDZ – Bayer Employment Site Access Road and New Junctions.

The re-development of the Bayer site will inevitably generate new traffic which needs to be accommodated. Halton have commissioned an Access Study which has considered options for new junctions and access roads to serve the site along with public transport provision and pedestrian and cycle routes in the vicinity. Options include the provision of a new route through the site, either as an all-purpose road or with restricted through access for sustainable modes only, and separate access roads to serve the western and eastern parts of the site separately. Preferred junction layouts are for new roundabouts on Fiddlers Ferry Road and Gorsey Lane.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Junction and Minor Improvement Schemes

The following schemes are currently under consideration and investigation. Note: it is expected that some will be funded and delivered in partnership with developers and through S106 and S278 agreements. These include:

- A558 Daresbury Expressway – Origin Roundabout junction capacity improvements;
- Kingsway / Milton Road junction capacity and pedestrian crossing improvements;
- Bus Priority route Widnes - Gerrard Street to Widnes Road;
- Earle Road access widening to Watkinson way Gyratory (EDZ);
- Leigh Avenue / Deacon Road / Appleton Village junction improvement;
- Derby Road / Peelhouse Lane / Farnworth Street junction improvement;
- Cronton Lane / Birchfield Road junction;
- Wilmere Lane / Lunts Heath Road junction improvement to resolve capacity and safety issues;
- Upton Rocks – alternative routes for East – West Traffic; and
- Access improvements to the Daresbury sites.

In addition to the above listed schemes there are a number of integrated and sustainable transport improvements, local safety schemes and works as part of Quality Transport Corridors that have yet to be defined.

Non-Detailed Schemes

Road schemes where a potential need has been identified but a layout has yet to be detailed include the following:

Liverpool John Lennon Airport Eastern Access Road

Halton Council is supportive of the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport. In order for further growth to take place road access needs to be enhanced from the east. The construction of a link road from the A562 to the airport would deliver the highway capacity

required for the growth in air travel. The Eastern Access Road would be promoted by the airport but in turn would be supported in principle by Halton and the Merseyside Authorities. Primary Transport Strategy No. 1 provides more information on these issues. Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 1 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

M56 Junction 11A

The concept of a new motorway junction on the M56 located between existing Junctions 11 and 12 was first put forward in LTP1. Since Mersey Gateway Project gained Programme Entry, M56 Junction 11A, as it is now referred to, has been given further consideration. Whilst the Junction 11A proposals still have yet to be defined, it could still be included as a later stage of the Mersey Gateway Project. The principle of this new junction is supported by the Highways Agency who are prepared to work with the council un exploring the detailed feasibility of this proposal.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

A558 Widening

The ongoing developments in East Runcorn, for example, Daresbury Park and the Daresbury Science Innovation Campus will create a need for improved access. As part of a possible range of measures being considered, the widening of the A558 Eastern Expressway and a new roundabout between Origin roundabout and Innovation Way have been identified.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: possible
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy – Accessibility Improvements

The new Mersey Gateway Bridge allows the focus on the Silver Jubilee Bridge, as a local bridge, to deliver substantial improvements in public transport, walking and cycling. A strategy has been developed to support changes to the transport network and promote development in areas of the Borough following the opening of the Gateway Bridge.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15: unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Strategic Park and Ride Facilities

Halton in conjunction with Warrington Borough Council has undertaken a Strategic Park and Ride feasibility study and this has identified a number of potential sites including one close to Junction 11 of M56. Such a site has the potential to act as a bus based park and ride facility for journeys to Manchester City Centre, Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Warrington Town Centre and Liverpool City Centre. However, all sites indentified need more detailed assessment and it is anticipated that Halton and Warrington will continue to work together on this strategic initiative.
Refer to Primary Transport Strategy No. 10 and No. 16.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15 unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS)

Improvement themes and Associated Schemes

It is proposed that the schemes below are to be delivered through the Mersey Gateway Project as part of the concessionaire agreement. Some projects could however be delivered through LTP3.

Transport Options for appraisal Phase 1of the MGSTS up to 2021/22:

- MGSTS Improvement Theme 1: Development of the proposed Halton Rapid Transit Network (HRTN);
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 2: Further development of the proposed HRTN;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 3: Introduction of a new mobility smartcard;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 4: Further development of mobility management initiatives;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 5: Walking and cycling improvements; and
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 6: Improvements to bus/rail interchange and railway stations.

Transport Options for appraisal Phase 2 of the MGSTS, after 2021/22:

- MGSTS Improvement Theme 7: Development of new strategic park and ride facilities across Halton;
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 8: Canal and waterway improvements; and
- MGSTS Improvement Theme 9: Improvements to the Halton Curve.

Many of these proposals are covered in other areas of implementation.

Likelihood of delivery by 2014/15 unlikely
Likelihood of delivery by 2025/26: possible

12. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENTS

SA/SEA;
HRA;
HIA; and
EqIA.

13. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In October 2010 the Government announced that the National Indicator Set would be replaced with a single, comprehensive list of data that they expected local government to provide to central Government.

This has allowed Halton to consider which indicators it wishes to continue to monitor. For transport many of the previous local and national indicators have been retained as local indicators that will be monitored through the Department Service Plan. For LTP3 the number of indicators that we will be monitoring has reduced considerably compared with LTP2. The indicators for LTP3 are as follows:

LTP 1 – No. of local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area in one year

LTP 2 – Bus service punctuality

LTP 3 – No. of passengers on community based accessible transport

LTP 4 - % of bus stops with Quality Corridor accessibility features

LTP 5 - % of principal road network where structural maintenance should be considered

LTP 6 - % of non-principal road network where structural maintenance should be considered

LTP 7 - New indicator – Rights of Way Accessibility Index

Targets need to be set for the above indicators for the four year period of the Implementation Plan 2011/12 to 2014/15

Target	Actual 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
LTP 1	6,219,683	6,130,000				
LTP 2						
LTP 3	241,810	255,000				
LTP 4	46	47				
LTP 5	1	2				
LTP 6	3	4				
LTP 7						

14 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

APPENDIX 1: Implementation Plan

Local Transport Settlement (2011/12 – 2012/13)

Following the Spending Review on 20 October 2010, which included the national totals for future transport grants, Ministers announced on 13th December 2010 the final local transport capital block settlement for 2011/12 to 2012/13, and indicative allocations for 2013/14 to 2014/15 for transport authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities. The settlement for Halton is as follows:

Block – Final Allocations	**2011/12** £000s	**2012/13** £000s
Integrated Transport	680	725
Highways Capital Maintenance	1,983	2,078

This figure will now also have to cover the £0.219m of funding that has ceased from DfT for maintenance of Watkinson Way.

Block – Indicative Allocations	**2013/14** £000s	**2014/15** £000s
Integrated Transport	725	1,020
Highways Capital Maintenance	1,960	1,816

Implementation Plan

In the light of the above final and indicative transport financial settlements the following four year implementation programme has been determined. This has been determined in line with national and local transport goals and the Government's priorities to enhance economic growth whilst reducing carbon emissions from transport. The table below gives a summary of the proposed four year implementation programme.

Integrated Transport Block Funding

The following schemes are to be funded through the integrated transport block.

	2011/12 £,000	**2012/13** £,000	**2013/14** £,000	**2014/15** £,000	**Total**
Transport Integration • Halton Sustainable Transport Network Signage / Branding, Publicity & Promotion • Cycle Secure Parking Lockers	150	160	160	225	£695,000
Measures to Assist Walking • Neighbourhood Centres – Pedestrian Access, signage & Public Realm Improvements • PRoW Improvement Programme	125	130	130	185	£570,000
Measures to Assist Cycling • Neighbourhood Centre Cycle Access, signage & Public Realm Improvements	100	100	100	140	£440,000

• Halton Cycleway & Greenway Links					
Measures to Assist Buses • Halton Neighbourhood Centres Accessible Bus Stop Improvements • Bus Priority at Junctions • Widnes Road Bus Lane and Stops	160	170	170	240	£740,000
Local Safety Schemes • Residential Area 20mph Zones • Casualty Reduction • Safety Improvement Schemes	125	140	140	180	£585,000
Intelligent Transport Systems • Expansion of VMS • Improve traffic and travel information	20	25	25	50	£120,000
Total	**£680**	**£725**	**£725**	**£1,020**	**£3,150,000**

Transport Integration initiatives and local safety schemes, will by their nature incorporate a variety of measures that are designed to increase public transport usage and measures to assist increased walking and cycling.

Highways capital maintenance block funding

	2011/12 £000s	**2012/13** £000s	**2013/14** £000s	**2014/15** £000s	**Total** £000s
Highway maintenance	1,483	1,478	1,360	1,216	5,537
Bridge Maintenance Non major	500	600	600	600	2,300
Maintenance sub total	**1,983**	**2,078**	**1,960**	**1,816**	**7,837**
SJB major maintenance	**4,416**	**3,495**	**3,711**	**2,030**	**13,652**

Transport Integration

The construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and approaches is anticipated to commence in late 2012. In preparation for the impact of the significant road works and consequent delays and disruption to traffic the following initiatives are proposed to build upon the array of sustainable transport infrastructure which has been built up over the period of the previous LTPs:

Halton Sustainable Transport Network – Public Rights of Way, Cycleways and Greenways

It is proposed that there will be further 'branding' and provision of information and directional signage to destinations along public rights of way, cycleways and greenways. There will be enhanced publicity and promotion of routes at public transport interchanges, employment sites, town and neighbourhood centres and leisure facilities.

Cycle Secure Parking Lockers

Two thirds of all journeys are less than five miles and there is potential for many of these trips to be made by bicycle. Schemes such as Sustrans' 'Travelsmart' have achieved on average a 10% reduction in car use, through individual travel marketing.

The provision of secure cycle parking is essential if people are to be encouraged to use a bicycle as their preferred method of transport for these journeys. Cycle lockers and additional cycle parking in the right locations, preferably with natural surveillance by the public will reduce the risk of theft and vandalism and inspire confidence to cycle to those destinations. Integrated transport funding would be used to extend and improve secure cycle parking at rail stations, town and neighbourhood centres and other community facilities. (This could be supplemented by a bid for funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for a 'Bike Locker Rental Scheme' for regular commuters.)

Measures to Assist Walking

Transport Integration initiatives and local safety schemes, will by their nature incorporate a variety of measures that are designed to increase public transport usage and measures to assist increased walking and cycling.

Improvement Theme 1 of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy includes the development of Halton's Rapid Transit (HRT) network, a network of high quality bus services across the Borough incorporating many of the best-practice features being developed across the UK and Europe. The HRT Network will build upon the Runcorn Busway, extending improved connections across the SJB into Widnes and out towards Ditton and Hough Green housing and employment centres. It will utilise the Quality Transport Corridors where improvements have been made during the previous LTPs.

Integrated Transport funding for walking improvements through the period of the implementation programme will be targeted at those Neighbourhood Centres and surrounding areas which are close to and to be served by the HRT network. This will ensure good connectivity and accessibility from the heart of the residential areas to the network as it develops post-Mersey Gateway. Measures will include the provision of drop-kerbs and pedestrian & cycle crossings, streetscape improvements and de-cluttering. Within some residential estates, directional signage and street nameplate coverage will be improved to facilitate ease of movement.

The Council is in the process of agreeing a programme of footpath maintenance with Halton Housing Trust for those paths constructed by the Council under Housing Act powers and falling within the Gulliksen ruling of highways maintainable at public expense. This work, together with continuing co-ordination with structural maintenance programmes, will complement the proposed 'walking route' improvements envisaged.

The following Neighbourhood Centres have been provisionally identified as the focus for prioritisation within the implementation programme:

2011/12
Hough Green – Bechers, Arley Drive and Liverpool Road
Ditton – Royal Avenue
Langdale Road and Grangeway, Grange, Runcorn

2012/13
Ditton – Ditchfield Road, Alexander Drive, Chesnut Lodge
Halton Lodge and Halton Brook

2013/14
Warrington Road, Moorfield Road and Bancroft Road
Russell Road, Weston

2014/15
Derby Road, Farnworth
Ascot Avenue, Palacefields Centre

Public Rights of Way Improvement Programme

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) incorporates an ambitious Action Plan to deliver a range of works and management functions aimed at the improvement and development of the Rights of Way network in Halton. An estimate of the necessary resource required to deliver the objectives and target timescales is provided within the Action Plan. This will then be used to direct funding for PROW improvements, having regard for securing best value within the current budget constraints.

Measures to Assist Cycling

Neighbourhood Centre Cycle Access, signage & Public Realm Improvements

Integrated Transport funding for cycling improvements through the period of the implementation programme will be targeted at Neighbourhood Centres to ensure good connectivity and accessibility from the heart of the residential areas to local community services. Links to the existing cycleway and Greenway network, developed during previous LTP periods will ensure fully joined-up routes to encourage home-to-work and home-to-leisure activities as a real option for all. Measures will include the provision of joint use footway/cycleways within housing areas and connecting to Quality Corridors, addressing the physical barriers to cycling, provision of cycle crossings, and route information and directional signage.

Programmes of footpath maintenance mentioned in ‘Walking’ (above) will be co-ordinated with cycleway improvements to maximise the benefits.

Halton Cycleway & Greenway Links

As a result of previous programmes implemented during LTP1 and 2, and the cycling and greenway infrastructure provided within major developments and through S106 contributions, Halton is well now served by cycle and greenway routes. However, not all routes are yet fully linked and there remain gaps in the infrastructure which are currently preventing the adoption and promotion of Halton Cycleway as a complete network, which provides a real alternative for commuting and full connectivity of leisure cycling routes.

The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy recognises the step-change that will be brought about through the adaptation of the SJB to a ‘local bridge’ with provision within the main structure for pedestrian and cyclists. Resulting from this, further developments of strategic links to neighbouring local authority areas and via the national Cycleway Network are envisaged. The provision of the ‘missing-links’ in the current network, together with the transport integration measures described above will provide the foundation for this future development on completion of the Mersey Gateway and the sustainable transport routes via the SJB.

It is proposed to programme these works, where possible, along with signage/branding/integration improvements, to complement the Neighbourhood Centre works, with an indicative implementation programme as follows:

2011/12
Hough Green/Ditton – Greenway Linkages connecting stations, college etc
Runcorn – Station links (1&2 on Widnes cycle proposals map); Runcorn cycleway and cross river signage

2012/13
Ditton – 3MG linkages (8/9)
Runcorn - Grange School and Halton High Linkages (5(part) &14 on Runcorn map)

2013/14
East Widnes - links to Wade Deacon via Bishops Way etc (5(part) &12 Widnes map)
Runcorn – Russell Road / Highlands Road, Clifton-St Chads (4&5 Runcorn map)

2014/15
North Widnes - Lunts Heath/Mineral Line connections (4/5/16 Widnes map)
Runcorn – Palacefields/Town Park link (15 Runcorn map)

In any given year it may also be necessary to implement additional scheme priorities around particular developments, depending upon the timescale of those developments coming forward. Missing links in other areas of the Borough may also be taken forward for Sustainable Transport Funding.

Measures to Assist Buses

The Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy put forward a package of infrastructure improvements for two priority bus routes as follows:

- Halton Transit Network Route 1 (HTN 1) serving West and East Runcorn; and
- Halton Transit Network Route 2 (HTN 2) serving Runcorn Town Centre and North Widnes.

These schemes form Halton's longer term priority for delivering step change improvements to the bus network which complement the Mersey Gateway scheme.

In preparation for these schemes and, as mentioned in 'Transport Integration' above, to build upon the infrastructure already put in place during the previous LTP periods, and to prepare for the impact of the significant roadwork's and consequent delays and disruption to traffic during the construction of the Mersey Gateway project, the following is proposed (which may be supplemented with funding from the Sustainable Transport Fund, for measures which reduce cross river traffic during these works and possibly commencement of HTN 2):

Halton Neighbourhood Centres Accessible Bus Stop Improvements

Previously, accessible bus stop improvements have focused mainly upon Quality Transport Corridor Routes, with some 'off-corridor' stops treated on an ad-hoc / as required basis to complete specific route improvements. This strategy has left a few gaps in the provision of fully accessible bus infrastructure on certain routes (such as Westfield & Weston, Runcorn). These locations will be addressed, with those stops serving neighbourhood centres prioritised within the programme.

Widnes Road Bus Lane and Stops

The feasibility of introducing a two-way bus-priority corridor between Gerrard Street and Widnes Road was investigated during discussions with the developer promoting the expansion of the ASDA store in Widnes. The Section 106 Agreement attached to the planning permission, has earmarked funding for traffic capacity improvements in Widnes Town Centre and the opening of the existing dedicated public transport corridor to two-way operation is expected to relieve congestion in Milton Road. Land currently occupied by the ASDA development would be required to deliver road improvements at Brynn Street and the re-routing of services and new stops would be subject to discussions with the bus operators.

Making bus journeys the 'preferred option' for cross-Borough journeys will be even more important during the construction of the Mersey Gateway, when the traffic delays and disruption associated with the road works will hopefully make public transport the smarter choice and reduce car usage. The provision of bus lanes and further bus prioritisation, linking to existing dedicated bus lanes and bus gates on the approaches to the SJB will be crucial to the success of this approach.

Bus Priority at Junctions

The investigation of bus priority and 'bus-hurry' loops will be investigated at problem junctions on the busiest bus routes as a pre-cursor to the introduction of the Halton Rapid Transit Network, which envisages more comprehensive improvements.

Local Safety Schemes

Residential Area 20mph Zones

In Halton, all new estates are having this 20 mph lower speed limit implemented, but there is scope for 20mph limits on many of the established estates and residential areas which consist of terraced housing in the older parts of Widnes and Runcorn town centres, and also on the New Town estates which carry integral traffic calming measures. A programme to implement 20mph limits would concentrate on such areas, to give the greatest impact for the minimum outlay, coincidentally over many of the most deprived areas of the Borough. Provisional locations:

- Arley Drive
- Coronation / Royal - Ditton area
- Alexander / Cunningham
- Widnes Town Centre streets off Albert Rd (Appleton)
- Grange
- Beechwood Estates
- Palacefields Estates

Intelligent Transport Systems

Expand Variable Message Signing and webcams to cover more of the network. Improvements to traffic signal installations to enhance efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Introduce car park guidance and lighting of traffic signals using UTMC compliant equipment within Widnes town centre.

Highways Capital Maintenance Block Funding

Highway Maintenance

The following highway maintenance schemes are to be funded through the highways capital maintenance block.

Major Schemes > £250k

2011/12 A557 Weston Point Expressway, Weston Village to A5126 Link – Northbound and Southbound

2012/13 A557 Widnes Eastern By Pass, Ashley Way to Traffic Light Gyratory – Northbound and Southbound

2013/14 A557 Weston Point Expressway, Picow Farm Junction to Sandy Lane Bridge – Southbound

2014/15 A557 Weston Point Expressway, Weston Village to Bankes Lane – Northbound and Southbound

Proposed Other Schemes (<£250k)

A562 Speke Road, Ditton Roundabout to Everite Road
A557 / A5080 Junction
A562 Dans Road, Roundabout to Boundary
A56 Preston Brook, Canal to Windmill Lane
A533 Bridgewater Expressway, Astmoor Junction to Bridgewater Interchange
A558 Daresbury Expressway, Bridgewater Interchange to Astmoor Clover leaf.
Astmoor Clover Leaf Junction.

Bridge Maintenance

The programme of bridge maintenance activity intended to be funded through the highways capital maintenance block allocation includes the following, note that these figures are for budgetary purposes:

Year 2011/12		
Halton East	Major concrete repairs to substructure, replace parapets, waterproof joints	£150k
Windmill Hill Avenue South	Bearing replacement, replace parapets, waterproof joints	£150k
Heath Road	Replace parapets, general refurbishment	£150k
Year 2012/13		
Halton Lea North	Waterproof, joints, concrete repairs	£200k
Rocksavage Viaduct	Repair parapets, joints, general refurbishment	£200k
Ditton Brook Old	Edge protection measures	£150k
Year 2013/14		
Boston Avenue	Repainting & refurb	£200k

Halton Lea South	Waterproof, joints, concrete repairs	£200k
Astmoor East	Replace parapets, joints, waterproof	£200k
Year 2014/15		
Halton North & South	Replace parapets, concrete repairs	£200k
Desoto Gantry	Repaint	£50k
Hutchinsons Gantry	Repaint	£50k
Astmoor	Replace parapets, concrete repairs	£150k

Programme for SJB Complex Funded Through Major Scheme Grant Funding

DfT have given full approval for 5 year programme of major bridge maintenance activity for the SJB and its approach structures. The first 4 years of SJB Complex Bridge Maintenance Grant availability is as follows:

SJB Complex Major Bridge Maintenance

2011/12	£4,416m
2012/13	£3,495m
2013/14	£3,711m
2014/15	£2,030m

15. Acronyms

ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
4NW	4 North West
APC	Advanced Payment Codes
ASAS	Airport Surface Access Strategy
ATF	Airport Transport Forum
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CDT	Cycling Demonstration Town
CH	Construction Halton
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
CRSP	Cheshire Road Safety Partnership
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DaSTS	Delivering a Sustainable Transport System
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfT	Department for Transport
DSIC	Daresbury Science Innovation Centre
EATC	Eastern Access Transport Corridor
ELV	Extra Low Voltage
GTS	Ground Transport Strategy
GVA	Gross Value Added
HAMP	Highways Asset Management Plan
HEP	Halton Enterprise Partnership
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
JTMS	Journey Time Monitoring System
LCR	Liverpool City Region
LDF	Local Development Framework
LJLA	Liverpool John Lennon Airport
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LSTF	Local Sustainable Transport Fund
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MAA	Multi Area Agreement
MG	Mersey Gateway
MGSTS	Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy
MHFQP	Merseyside and Halton Freight Quality Partnership
MM	Mott MacDonald
MMG	Multi Modal Gateway
MOVA	Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation
NRASWA	New Roads and Street Works Act
NTCC	National Traffic Control Centre
NTT	Neighbourhood Travel Team
NWDA	North West Development Agency
PRN	Primary Route Network
PROW	Public Rights of Way
RGF	Regional Growth Fund
RoWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RTCC	Regional Traffic Control Centre
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
SCRIM	Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
SJB	Silver Jubilee Bridge
SPD	Supplementary planning document

STT	Sustainable Travel Towns
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
TAMP	Transport Asset Maintenance Plan
TMP	The Merseyside Partnership
TRO	Traffic Regulations Order
TSRGD	Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UKPMS	United Kingdom Management Pavement System
UTMC	Urban Traffic Management Control
VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise
VMS	Variable Management Systems
WCML	West Coast Main Line