

APPENDIX A

Core Strategy policies subject to the most extensive changes.

(Presented as 'track changes' as proposed to be published for a 6 week period of public consultation)

CS1 – Halton's Spatial Strategy

CS2 – Sustainable Development

CS3 – Housing Supply and Locational Priorities

CS6 – Green Belt

4 CSI: HALTON'S SPATIAL STRATEGY

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

Policy CSI: Halton's Spatial Strategy

To achieve the Vision for Halton to 2028, new development should deliver:

- ~~9,000~~ 9,930 net additional dwellings
- Approximately ~~295~~ 313 ha (gross) of land for employment purposes
- About 35,000 sqm of town centre convenience /comparison goods retailing
- About 22,000 sqm of retail warehousing

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

1. Urban Regeneration and Key Areas of Change

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

a) 3MG, (Ditton) in Widnes,

b) South Widnes,

c) West Runcorn,

~~Involving the~~ (a) — rRegeneration of previously developed (brownfield) land within the existing urban area as Key Areas of Change, ~~at:~~

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

d) East Runcorn

~~Delivering~~ Greenfield expansion ~~involving including~~ the completion of the proposals for Runcorn New Town and further extension to the east of Runcorn, ~~as a Key Area of Change at:~~

• ~~East Runcorn~~

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

Specific proposals for these areas and the type and amount of development they will accommodate are set out in policies CS8-CS11.

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

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

3. **Halton's rural areas and Green Belt**

The rural character and green infrastructure of the Borough's villages and Green Belt will predominantly be maintained. ~~In addition, the~~ The housing land supply position ~~may warrant a general~~ indicates that a partial review of Green Belt boundaries to serve the development needs of Widnes and Hale will be required in the early part of the plan period prior to 2028. ~~Additionally, A~~ An area of search for a possible minor amendment of the Green Belt boundary is proposed in the west of the Borough to facilitate the planned runway extension at Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

More detail regarding Halton's Green Belt is set out in CS6.

Specific proposals relating to Liverpool John Lennon Airport are set out in CS17.

Justification

- 4.2 Informed by Halton's existing characteristics, issues and opportunities as detailed in Halton's Story of Place, the Spatial Strategy has been developed to focus future development on areas where there is an impetus or a need for change. A number of areas of the Borough such as industrial parts of Widnes and New Town areas in Runcorn have not benefitted from sufficient investment for a number of years and are now in need of renewal. Development over the plan period ~~will predominantly be should~~ be should focused on renewing Halton's urban landscape through the re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land, including derelict sites and those with a history of contamination particularly at South Widnes and West Runcorn. Specific policies deal with when this change will happen. By seeking wherever possible to concentrate development in brownfield regeneration areas, the roles of Runcorn and Widnes as important towns in the sub-region will be maintained and secured for the future. This will ensure that the Borough is able to meet the day-to-day needs of its current and future population by providing ample employment opportunities, a range of high quality services and facilities and a choice of homes.
- 4.3 Despite the priority to renew and improve the Borough's urban landscape through new development, it is apparent ~~through the evidence base~~ that not all future development can be delivered on brownfield land. Despite the Borough's strong record for bringing brownfield land back into use, much of the remaining previously developed land is highly constrained through contamination or other factors which affect development viability, ~~therefore~~ reducing the ~~realistic~~ amount of brownfield land which can realistically be brought back into beneficial use. At 2010, there ~~are~~ were no further housing renewal programmes, such as that nearing completion at Castlefields (Runcorn), which are planned to take place within the lifetime of the Core Strategy. In addition to the limitations on the re-use of brownfield land, development opportunities in the Borough are constrained (particularly in Widnes) by tightly defined Green Belt boundaries, limited scope for infilling, coupled with the Mersey Estuary dissecting the Borough, it follows that there are not a wide variety of strategic options available to accommodate future growth requirements. However, Halton must plan for the level of development needed to secure the future prosperity of the Borough and to ensure that the services, facilities and opportunities on offer serve Halton's population over the lifetime of the plan.
- 4.4 During the earlier stages of the Core Strategy's production, three different options to deliver the required level of growth were consulted on; **Sustainable Urban Extensions, Brownfield Only Focus** and a **Mix of Brownfield and Urban Extension**. Following public consultation, the development of the evidence base and refinement of the options, the option of combining a brownfield approach,

coupled with an extension of the Borough’s existing built up area to the east of Runcorn emerged as the preferred option, and the most balanced approach to both deliver the amount of new development needed whilst contributing towards the achievement of the Vision and Strategic Objectives for the Borough. ~~Alongside the Council deciding to adopt this approach, the housing land supply in Widnes/Hale, has been demonstrated to be under pressure over the Core Strategy plan period, leading to the requirement to review the existing Green Belt boundaries around these communities.~~ However, the Examination into this Plan concluded that the land supply position was such that the preferred approach be modified to include the provision for further greenfield extension(s) to meet the needs of Widnes / Hale through an early partial Green Belt review as part of the subsequent Site Allocations Local Plan

4.5 The land proposed to be developed at East Runcorn is predominantly greenfield land beyond Runcorn’s current built up urban area. Evidence from both the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment¹ (SHLAA) (2010) and the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study² (JELPS) (2010) indicate that without the inclusion of this area of the Borough, there would be insufficient land for new residential and employment development needed over the plan period. ~~Similarly, the housing land supply evidenced in the SHLAA 2010 (as summarised in Table 1 below) details that just over a quarter of the Borough’s potential supply lies in Widnes/Hale. The land supply position highlights the need to review Widnes’ Green Belt boundaries to consider making further land available for housing development.~~ Similarly, the housing land supply evidenced in the SHLAA 2010 (as summarised in Table 1 below) details that just over a quarter of the Borough’s potential supply lies in Widnes/Hale. This supply is to be bolstered by the identification and release of additional land for development currently within the adopted Green Belt. The scale and location of this release will be determined in a partial Green Belt review as part of the subsequent Site Allocations Local Plan.

	Greenfield / Brownfield land	Potential Housing Supply (SHLAA 2010)			Identified Employment Land Supply 2010		
		Dwellings	Halton %	Area %	Ha.	Halton %	Area %
3MG	Green	0		0%	24.8		26%
	Brown	0		0%	70.0		74%
		0	0%		94.8	48%	
South Widnes	Green	0		0%	15.8		61%
	Brown	876 741		100%	9.9		39%
		876 741	8% 7%		25.7	13%	
Widnes / Hale (ALL)	Green	1,466		48% 50%	40.6		32%
	Brown	1,595 1,460		52% 50%	86.8		68%
		3,061 2,926	27%		127.4	64%	
East Runcorn	Green	3,024		100%	49.2		100%
	Brown	0		0%	0		0%
					49.2	25%	

¹ HBC (2010) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010/11

² BE Group (2010) Joint Employment Land and Premises Study

	Greenfield / Brownfield land	Potential Housing Supply (SHLAA 2010)			Identified Employment Land Supply 2010		
		Dwellings	Halton %	Area %	Ha.	Halton %	Area %
		3,024	27% 28%				
West Runcorn	Green	75		4%	0		0%
	Brown	2,058 2,013		96%	0.3		100%
		2,133 2,088	19%		0.3	0%	
Runcorn (ALL)	Green	5,409 5,276		66% 67%	7.0		10%
	Brown	2,798 2,653		34% 33%	63.4		90%
		8,207 7,929	73%		70.4	36%	
HALTON (ALL)	Green	6,875 6,742		61% 62%	47.6		24%
	Brown	4,393 4,113		39% 38%	150.2		76%
		11,268 10,855	100%		197.8	100%	

Table I: Distribution of Identified Development Potential as at April 2010

4.6 The strategy for development in Halton over the Core Strategy period should be viewed as the next phase in the development of the Borough, and a continuation of previous strategies as implemented in the 2005 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the 1996 Halton Local Plan. For instance, the impetus to develop land at East Runcorn dates back to the New Town Master Plan and its amendments³, where the proposals were extended to incorporate land beyond the areas of Windmill Hill and Murdishaw primarily to accommodate a greater number and range of dwellings. This area began to be developed in the late 1980s to form the residential area of Sandymoor. In Widnes, pockets of greenfield land lay between the existing urban area and the Green Belt surrounding the north of the Borough, and these areas were released for development in the later phases of the 2005 UDP, where sites within the urban area were brought forward first. Aside from the urban Key Areas of Change which present opportunities for brownfield development, there is not an abundance of sites within the urban area with the ability to deliver significant development, particularly residential development.

4.7 Table I sets out the land supply position for residential and employment purposes at April 2010. This demonstrates that almost three quarters of the potential housing supply identified lies south of the river, with previously identified land accounting for only ~~38~~ 39% of the potential total. For employment land there is marginally more land available in Widnes, however this supply is concentrated in a limited number of large sites forming the 3MG development, much of which is expected to be developed within the first five years of the plan period.

4.8 The Council has commissioned a number of research studies to quantify the demand and need for different classes of development across the Borough. ~~For housing, these indicate that demand for additional~~ These demonstrate that the

³ Runcorn Development Corporation (1967) Runcorn New Town Master Plan

provision of new housing can have wider benefits than simply providing accommodation and that over the plan period new supply is likely to be skewed to should favour Runcorn which should account for about 57% of the total, with Widnes and Hale accounting for accommodating the remaining 43%.

4.9 Housing delivery over the current RSS policy period from 2003 to 2010 has seen marginally more dwellings constructed in Widnes (2,135) than in Runcorn (1,469), however Runcorn has seen 974 demolitions and other losses compared to only 65 in Widnes, leaving a large disparity in the net dwelling gain. This differential sees Widnes some 570 units ahead of target (assuming a 43:57 split from 2003) and Runcorn some 1,500 behind target giving an overall borough shortfall of 930 units.

4.8.4.10ⁱ For retail, the studies indicate greater expenditure headroom to support new floorspace arising in Widnes.

4.11 The strategy identifies four **Key Areas of Change** that will be the initial focus for new development and where the biggest transformation of the ~~current~~ Borough's landscape at 2010 is expected to occur. These key areas are seen as fundamental to the longer term development of the Borough and in most cases represent existing areas where impetus for change already exists, through priority projects or support from the development industry. Table 2 below illustrates the anticipated quantum and distribution of development / development land across Halton to 2028.

	WIDNES / HALE				RUNCORN				TOTAL
	KEY Key Area of Change		Other *	TOTAL	Key Area of Change		Other *	TOTAL	
	3MG	South Widnes			West Runcorn	East Runcorn			
Housing (net dwelling gain)	--	400	3,500 3,470	3,900 3,870 (43%)	1,500	2,800	800 1,760	5,100 6,060 (57%)	9,000 9,930 (100%)
Employment (Ha)	99 103	30 54	28 32	189 (61%)	27 26	66	45 32	124 (39%)	295.0 313
'Town Centre' Retail (sqm)		25,000		25,000	5,000		5,000	10,000	35,000
Retail Warehousing (sqm)		19,000		19,000			3,000	3,000	22,000

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

Table 2: Anticipated Distribution of Development / Development Land 2010 to 2028

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

4.9.4.12 The Key Areas of Change in Halton have been identified as:

- **3MG** (the Mersey Multimodal Gateway) at Ditton in Widnes.
- **South Widnes** – including Widnes Town Centre, Widnes Waterfront and the regeneration area of West Bank.
- **West Runcorn** – including Runcorn Old Town, Runcorn Waterfront and the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks).

- **East Runcorn** – covering Daresbury Park, Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and Sandymoor.

3MG, Widnes

~~4.10~~4.13 The existing strategic rail freight interchange in Ditton, Widnes known as **3MG** (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) has been operational since 2006, and is well located in relation to the strategic road network, West Coast Main Line (WCML) rail access, the Port of Liverpool, and the expanding cargo facility at Liverpool John Lennon Airport. The site is a key location for logistics and distribution in the North West and when fully developed, offers the potential to deliver up to 5,000 jobs in this expanding sector. Whilst part of the site is already well established as an operational freight facility, there remains significant development potential to the west of the existing rail freight facility where there is scope for similar employment uses.

~~4.11~~4.14 Support for the development and expansion of intermodal freight facilities such as 3MG reflects national and regional priorities to facilitate a shift in the movement of freight from road based transportation to sustainable modes. The 3MG site is currently connected via the WCML to the markets of the South East of England and to the European continent and its importance and continued expansion is supported by the ~~shadow~~ Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership who secured Regional Growth Fund monies in 2011 to further enhance its connectivity and capacity.

South Widnes

~~4.12~~4.15 The South Widnes Key Area Change is made up of three component parts which abut each other along the southern edge of Widnes, adjacent to the key route of the A568. **Widnes Town Centre** is the largest Town Centre in the Borough and home to a substantial retail offer. Evidence from Halton's Retail and Leisure Study⁴ suggests that there is potential to expand the ~~bulky goods~~ retail warehousing (DIY and gardening products, furniture, carpets, electrical goods, office supplies and toys) retail offer in the town centre, hence the requirement for the identified level of additional floorspace.

~~4.13~~4.16 The area known as **Widnes Waterfront** adjoins the Town Centre and covers the area south of Fiddlers Ferry Road and east of Ashley Way. Predominantly an employment area, the site's prominence in the Borough will be boosted in the future given the area's proximity to the new river crossing after the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project. The area has been the focus of regeneration efforts in recent years, mainly towards the west, however, there is potential for the remainder of the area to offer a renewed employment offer.

~~4.14~~4.17 The **West Bank** area is situated to the west of Widnes Waterfront and currently comprises a variety of different land uses, with industrial and commercial to the north and a residential neighbourhood to the south. There is the scope for substantial reconfiguration of this area following the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project.

West Runcorn

~~4.15~~4.18 The West Runcorn Key Area of Change includes the retail and leisure area of **Runcorn Old Town**. Although Runcorn Old Town centre is an important convenience centre in its local catchment, the centre was adversely affected by the

⁴ GVA (2009) Halton Retail and Leisure Study, para 11.42, page 132

development of its larger New Town neighbour, Halton Lea, and at present lacks a defined role. There is definite scope and impetus to build a complementary relationship for Runcorn Old Town with Halton Lea, centred ~~around on~~ the evening economy and cultural uses in the centre. Longer term redevelopment opportunities for Runcorn Old Town centre are related to the Mersey Gateway Project which will create better linkages and connectivity between the waterfront area and Runcorn Train Station on the WCML.

~~4.164.19~~ Lying to the west of Runcorn Old Town centre, adjacent to ~~the Riverside College Campus and~~ recent waterside housing developments, lies **Runcorn Waterfront** a key development site anticipated to come forward for a mix of residential and commercial uses during the plan period.

~~4.174.20~~ Towards the south of the West Runcorn Key Area of Change, the **Mersey Gateway Port** (previously known as Weston Docks) offers the opportunity to create a civil waterway port offering improved road, rail, inland waterway and sea freight logistics. The realisation of this site's potential will further strengthen and expand the Borough's growing specialism in the logistics and distribution sector.

East Runcorn

~~4.184.21~~ The East Runcorn area can be split into two distinct sections – the predominantly residential area at **Sandymoor** and the area of employment focus at Daresbury, divided between the business community at **Daresbury Park** and the nationally significant science and research centre at **Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus**. The delivery of an extension to Runcorn's urban area represents an opportunity to integrate the existing employment area with the rest of the Borough, whilst additionally making a significant contribution towards achieving the Borough's aims in terms of securing future economic prosperity and offering opportunities to diversify the skills base.

~~4.194.22~~ Within the East Runcorn Key Area of Change, part of the ~~Daresbury~~ area is being allocated as a Strategic Site as it is a key component in Halton's future development and will see substantial change over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. Alongside the expansion of the employment offer, a new residential community is also being promoted at Daresbury Strategic Site, which will not only help to meet the housing needs of the Borough's residents, but will also connect the two existing employment areas through shared amenities and new transport routes. The residential area at Sandymoor, to the west of Daresbury, comprises approximately 147 hectares of land, of which 46 hectares have already been developed⁵. This comprehensive ~~re~~development of the Sandymoor area will continue, creating a mixed and sustainable community supported by the facilities and services needed by local residents.

Outside of the Key Areas of Change

~~4.204.23~~ Outside of the identified Key Areas of Change, the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy indicates that there is scope to make more efficient use of already developed areas of the Borough, bringing benefits to the Borough's existing communities. In line with the spatial priorities enshrined in national planning policy, the reuse of previously used land and buildings ~~in across~~ the rest of Halton are high priorities for accommodating new development. Bringing underused and

⁵ HBC (2009) Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document

redundant sites back into beneficial use will have positive effects on existing surrounding communities.

4.21.4.24 Halton’s ~~existing~~ network of green infrastructure will ~~continue~~ **remain and be expanded, where appropriate**, to serve the leisure and recreation needs of the population and support the Borough’s biodiversity.

4.22.4.25 The rural character and setting of the Borough’s villages and areas of open countryside will be maintained with limits on new development. In order to achieve this, the Green Belt will continue to be **largely** protected in accordance with national planning policy to prevent uncoordinated expansion of urban areas which result in the loss of strategic gaps between settlements. ~~In addition, should the~~ **The existing housing** land supply within the Borough ~~warrant it, indicates that~~ a partial review of the extent of the Green Belt ~~may will~~ be required during the plan period, ~~particularly~~ to ensure adequate land to meet development needs of the communities ~~north of the river of~~ **Widnes and Hale**. **It is proposed that Any** such a review will be undertaken **in the early part of the Core Strategy plan period** as part of ~~the a subsequent Site Allocations DPD Local Plan~~. **Further detail on the future role of Halton’s Green Belt is detailed in policy CS6**. **In addition, M**inor changes to the Green Belt boundary at the western extent of the Borough will be considered to facilitate the proposed runway extension at Liverpool John Lennon Airport, and this issue will be addressed in a later DPD. **Greater detail on the development of the airport is provided in policy CS17**.

4.23.4.26 The character of Hale Village which is inset within the Green Belt, will need to be carefully managed like the other villages, with particular respect to its close proximity to Liverpool John Lennon Airport. As the towns of Runcorn and Widnes will be the focus of development for the Core Strategy, the Green Belt will play a pivotal role in maintaining the setting of the Borough’s rural assets and providing a distinct boundary to the built up area. The character and setting of the rural villages of Moore, Daresbury and Preston on the Hill, will be protected with the careful management of development.

POLICY FRAMEWORK:		
National Policy	PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (CLG, 2005); PPS3: Housing (CLG, 2010); PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (CLG, 2009) NPF (Particularly para.s 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 28, 29, 42, 47, 50, 79, 151, 154 and 156)	
Local Evidence	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010/11 (HBC, 2010), Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2010), Halton Retail and Leisure Study (GVA, 2009), Runcorn New Town Masterplan and Amendments (Runcorn Development Corporation, 1976, 1971 and 1975)	
Strategic Objectives	ALL	
SCS Priorities	Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton, Environment and Regeneration in Halton	
SA Objectives	10 - Housing 11 - Accessibility 13 - Education	14 - Economy 16 - Town Centres
SA Outcome	Overall, the SA considers this policy to be positive in sustainability terms. Although the level of development set out	

	within some of the policies could have <u>significant</u> negative impacts on some environmental factors, these are sufficiently mitigated by other policy content.
--	---

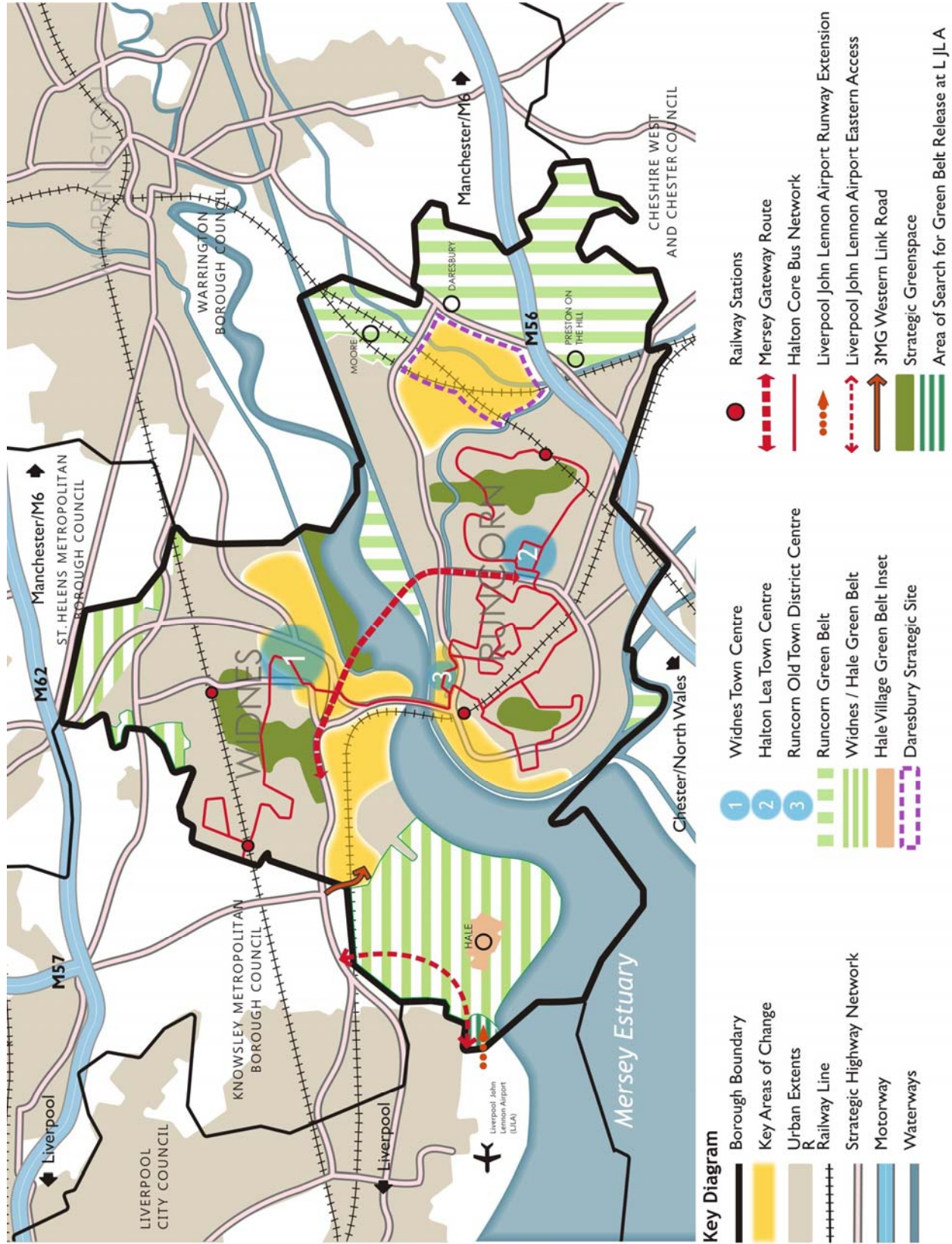


Figure 6: Key Diagram

5 CS2: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 The overall Spatial Strategy as set out in CS1 establishes the spatial distribution of future growth and development in the Borough. The presumption in favour of Sustainable Development Principles exists alongside the Spatial Strategy in order to ensure that a positive approach is taken to development proposals, delivering growth and development that is sustainable, and will meeting the needs of Halton's present communities, and planning whilst considering for the needs of future communities over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. All development in the Borough is required to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework contribute towards these principles in order to ensure a sustainable Halton, now and in the future.

Policy CS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Principles

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan¹ (and, where relevant, with policies in Halton's other Local Plans and neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

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

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

¹ The Halton Core Strategy is a Local Plan under the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Regulations 2012. For the purposes of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Local Plans are prescribed as Development Plan Documents.

- ~~• minimise energy and water use and make efficient use of natural resources including through sustainable waste management and maximising the re-use of recycled products; and,~~
- ~~• ensure that the infrastructure needs of the Borough are met.~~

Justification

5.2 'Sustainable development' is defined as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"². ~~The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National guidance in the form of PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development³ states that emphasises the three dimensions to sustainable development, these being should be delivered through achieving:~~

- ~~• social progress which recognises the needs of everyone~~ An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- ~~• protection and enhancement of the environment~~ A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and,
- ~~• prudent use of natural resources; and~~ An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.;
- ~~• sustainable economic development.~~

5.3 The NPPF introduced the presumption in favour of sustainable development which emphasises the Government's positive attitude to development that is sustainable, impressing on Local Planning Authorities the importance of expediting planning applications which are in conformity. The whole of the NPPF sets out the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practical terms for the planning process. The Core Strategy (as part of Halton's development plan) is the first reference point for those involved in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF makes it clear that local planning documents should reflect the presumption and hence the above policy fulfils this requirement. In accordance with other policies in the NPPF, it should be noted that the presumption does not apply to development where Appropriate Assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directive is required or for development proposals on land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Green Belt, Local Green Space, designated heritage assets or locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion. ~~To achieve sustainable development across Halton a number of principles have been agreed. These sustainable development principles are informed by the Borough's drivers of change and respond to Halton's challenges as set out in Halton's Story of Place. As a result the Sustainable Development Principles reflect the current social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough whilst building upon the aims of sustainable development at the national level.~~

5.4 The aims of the NPPF will be delivered through development in Halton:

- contributing towards the delivery of mixed and balanced communities;
- increasing the quality of life for the Borough's communities, contributing to long term improvements in health and well-being, educational attainment and skill development;

² HM Government (2005) Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy

³ ~~CLG (2005) Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development~~

- contributing towards a strong, stable and more competitive economy, responding to Halton’s needs and building upon Halton’s strengths;
- being located to minimise the need to travel, increasing accessibility and supporting sustainable transport options;
- regenerating and remediating Halton, bringing noticeable improvements to the Borough’s urban areas and green spaces;
- conserving and enhancing the character and quality of Halton’s natural and historic environment and green infrastructure network;
- minimising factors which contribute to climate change and plan for the potential effects of a changing climate on the Borough’s communities and environments;
- minimising energy and water use and making efficient use of natural resources including through sustainable waste management and maximising the re-use of recycled products; and,
- ensuring that the infrastructure needs of the Borough are met.

5.3.5.5 In order to achieve sustainable development in Halton over the plan period, all development proposals ~~where appropriate,~~ will be assessed against the above policy and against the ~~these~~ principles in the NPPF. ~~The other policies in the Core Strategy set out how the NPPF will be applied locally. The Sustainable Development Principles are therefore integral to the delivery of the Core Strategy and are amplified throughout the plan.~~

POLICY FRAMEWORK:		
National Policy	PPSI: Delivering Sustainable Development (CLG, 2005); <u>NPPF (Principally paras 6-16).</u> Securing the Future (HM Gov, 2005)	
Local Evidence	Halton - State of the Borough (HBC, 2010 <u>2011</u>)	
Strategic Objectives	ALL	
SCS Priorities	A Healthy Halton; Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton; Environment and Regeneration in Halton	
SA Objectives	1 – Cultural Heritage	10 – Housing
	2 – Biodiversity	11 – Accessibility
	3 – Water Quality	12 – Health
	4 – Climate Change	13 – Education
	5 – Flood Risk	14 – Economy
	6 – Energy Efficiency	15 – Leisure and Tourism
	7 – Land Quality	16 – Town Centres
	8 – Air Quality	17 – Transport
	9 – Waste	
SA Outcome	The SA considers this policy to be positive in sustainability terms as it has positive benefits for all of the SA objectives.	

6 CS3: HOUSING SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 New homes must be provided to ensure an adequate supply of suitable housing for the Borough's existing communities and to accommodate projected growth in the Borough's population. Whilst the resident population has stabilised over recent years ~~and it~~ is projected to experience modest growth ~~rates~~ to 2028, ~~however~~ changing ~~demographics~~ ~~age structures~~, ~~and housing needs of residents~~ ~~and decreasing size of the average household~~ has meant even faster growth in the number of households, placing pressure on Halton's current housing stock.
- 6.2 As indicated in both Halton's Story of Place and the Spatial Strategy, over the Borough's history development has taken place in distinct waves of urban expansion with large scale regeneration schemes often involving the replacement of unsuitable New Town estates, ~~coupled with growth of the Borough onto expansion land at the edges of the urban area~~. Whilst this pattern of development will continue to a certain extent, housing renewal projects are likely to ~~will~~ play less of a role in the future and the Borough will be more dependent on delivering housing on ~~Halton's~~ remaining greenfield sites at the periphery of the urban area. In Runcorn this will be achieved by the delivery of an extension to the east of Runcorn on greenfield land within the existing settlement boundary. In Widnes and Hale the existing Green Belt boundaries are tight to the existing built-up area and any further outward expansion will necessitate a review of the Green Belt to identify additional developable and deliverable land, whilst not undermining the continued priority to regenerate the Borough's urban areas.

Policy CS3: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities

Housing Requirement

- ~~A minimum of 9,000~~ 9,930 net additional new homes ~~(net of demolitions)~~ should be provided between 2010 and 2028 at ~~a minimum~~ an average rate of 552 dwellings per annum, with the following overall distribution:
 - Runcorn = about 6,060 dwellings
 - Widnes = about 3,870 dwellings
 - ~~400 units per annum for the period Apr 2010-Mar 2015~~
 - ~~600 units per annum for the period Apr 2015-Mar 2020~~
 - ~~500 units per annum for the period Apr 2020-Mar 2028~~
- Beyond 2028, development should continue at a minimum rate of 500 units per annum (net gain) unless this is superseded by a change to policy.

Potential Housing Supply

- New homes will be delivered from a variety of sources, including:
 - Sites which are currently available for housing development:
 - Housing sites which have been completed since 1st April 2010
 - Sites under construction for housing development
 - Sites with planning permission for housing
 - Sites allocated in an adopted Plan¹

Comment [AC1]:
 DISTRIBUTION BASED ON 43:57%
 SPLIT OF DEVELOPMENT FROM 2010
 WITH 930 BACKLOG ATTRIBUTED TO
 RUNCORN.
 FIGURES TO BE CONFIRMED WITH
 INSPECTOR PRIOR TO COMMITTEE /
 PUBLICATION.

¹ Including undeveloped sites allocated for housing in policy H1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan. The phasing element of this policy no longer applies.

- Sites which have the potential to contribute to housing land supply:
 - Identified housing opportunities within the Key Areas of Change
 - New housing or mixed-use allocations in subsequent DPDs
 - Appropriate windfall development
 - ~~Areas of Search within the Green Belt (subject to identification in a Strategic Green Belt Review)~~
- A partial Green Belt Review will be necessary during the early part of the plan period to ensure a sufficient ongoing supply of deliverable development land to meet the housing requirements of the Borough's separate communities as set out in CSI and CS6

In order to deliver sites that are identified as having the potential to contribute to housing supply, ~~are available and will realistically deliver housing development~~, specific sites will be identified in the Site Allocations ~~and Development Management~~ DPD or other applicable DPDs.

Maintaining a 5 year supply

- ~~In accordance with the relevant annual target(s) for housing delivery, t~~The Council will seek to maintain a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land across the Borough in accordance with Government guidance.
- ~~In addition, the Council will seek to maintain a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites to meet the identified needs of Runcorn and Widnes / Hale.~~
- ~~If the Council is unable to identify an ongoing 5-year supply of sites for residential development, there will be a presumption in favour of the development of suitable 'windfall' sites and if necessary, the Council may undertake a Strategic Green Belt Review to inform a Site Allocations DPD in line with the provisions in Policy CS6.~~

Brownfield land

- An average of at least 40% of new residential development should be delivered on previously developed (brownfield) land over the plan period.

Density

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

Justification

- 6.3 ~~Setting a housing target~~ Housing Requirement**
- The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West set a housing policy target for Halton of 500 units (net dwelling gain) per annum ~~for over~~ the period 2003 to 2021 ~~and for any period thereafter until such time as the policy is reviewed~~. As highlighted in policy CS1, the Government has indicated its intention to abolish Regional Strategies, however, until such time as RSS for the North West is legally revoked, it remains part of the Development Plan and the Halton Core Strategy must be in general conformity with its provisions. In the initial RSS period to 2010, Halton had delivered a total of 2,570 units (net gain) representing a shortfall of 930 dwellings against the RSS requirement of 3,500 (500 x 7 years). -In order to comply with the RSS, Halton will need to deliver 9,000 dwellings (500 x 18 years) plus the pre-existing backlog, equating to an annual average of 552 (9,930 / 18 years) dwellings (net gain).

6.4

~~Whilst this RSS remains part of the Development Plan for Halton at May 2011, the Coalition Government has indicated its intention to revoke all regional strategies with After the abolition of RSS, the role of determining an appropriate number of homes to be built within each district will fall to the local authority through the Core Strategy or Local Plan. This policy, together with CSI may therefore be subject to an early review dependent on the date and circumstances at the time the powers to revoke are enacted. Local housing targets are necessary to help deliver the required level of house building to meet local needs whilst giving certainty for both residents and the development industry in terms of how much residential development a local area should accommodate in future years.~~

~~6.3 The housing target of 9,000 new homes at an average rate of 500 homes per year in Halton over the Core Strategy plan period to 2028 has been determined by considering data and research from a variety of sources, including predicted population, household and economic growth. The process for reaching this target is set out in the supporting document "Housing Topic Paper".²~~

~~6.46.5 The RSS housing policy is at targets which have been set represent a level which will meet forecasted locally arising household growth over the plan period, whilst also allowing for a degree of further growth across the Borough. Halton's population is anticipated to rise to 123,900 persons by 2028, a rise of approximately 5,200 persons over the plan period, whilst 2006 based household projections predicted growth of 8,920 households between 2006-2030, an average of 372 households per annum.³~~

~~6.56.6 The proposed housing figure is marginally above the projected growth in households, however this level has been set to promote modest growth in Halton and to enable a range of housing types to be provided. This will allow a continuation of recent trends which will see diversification in the housing offer, which it is hoped will assist in reducing or stemming net out migration that has been prevalent over recent years. Whilst sufficient land to accommodate the bulk of this growth exists in Runcorn, the Examination into this Plan concluded that an early review of the Green Belt around Widnes and Hale is required to meet the needs of these populations.~~

~~6.6 Housing delivery and demand is strongly correlated with the state of the economy; Economic forecasts vary in their predictions for when the economy will recover from the effects of the 'credit crunch' and resultant economic downturn, and for when capacity within the house building industry will return to pre-recession levels. In setting the housing targets, the effects of the economic downturn have been acknowledged with a lower target set for the initial 5 years (in line with the approach for employment land as set out in CS4), before increasing in the following period to deliver the overall quantum required to 2028.~~

Potential housing supply

² HBC (2011) Halton Housing Topic Paper

³ 4NW (2010) Technical Background Paper - Initial Technical work on Housing Provision and Job Growth Figures for the North West
(www.4nw.org.uk/downloads/documents/jul_10/4nw_1279264181_RS2010_Part_2_Housing_provisio.pdf)

6.7 Table I in the preceding section summarises the predicted potential housing supply at 2010 across the Borough. The [2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment \(SHLAA\)](#) indicated ~~ds that~~ there is identified ~~land in the Borough with the~~ capacity to deliver ~~11,269~~ [10,855 dwellings \(gross\)](#). [Whilst this is in excess of the \(net\) policy requirement to 2028, it allows little flexibility to accommodate changes in demolition rates or identified sites not coming forward as forecast. Whilst the SHLAA process seeks to provide a robust 'snap-shot' estimate of potential housing supply, it](#) ~~This appears sufficient to meet the Borough's housing requirement to 2028 and potentially for a number of years beyond, however the distribution is heavily skewed to south of the river and it~~ must be ~~accepted~~ noted that not all of the [identified sites in the SHLAA](#) will be delivered for housing or come forward in the timeframes indicated. Indeed, it may ~~not~~ be desirable for certain sites to be developed for ~~housing uses other than rather than other uses housing~~. [The identified supply is heavily skewed towards Runcorn, particularly due to the Key Area of Change at East Runcorn which includes Sandymoor and Daresbury.](#)

[6.8](#) In addition to identified sites, windfall sites (not previously identified in the SHLAA as having the potential to deliver housing) and therefore not factored into [the potential housing supply figure](#)) continue to come forward and generate units. Whilst no specific allowance is made for windfall supply in Table I, it is likely that sites will come forward which have not been included within the SHLAA, because of unforeseen circumstances such as the redevelopment of commercial buildings or the release of Council owned land. Urban windfall sites also have the potential to boost the delivery of residential development on brownfield land, supplementing those brownfield sites identified within the SHLAA.

[Maintaining a five year supply](#)

~~6.86.9~~ [NPPF requires local authorities ensure that a rolling five year supply \(+5%\) of deliverable housing sites can be demonstrated. This is increased to 5 years +20% where there is a consistent under-delivery⁴. Halton's five year supply of housing land is detailed within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which is updated regularly and performance is also reported through Annual Monitoring Reports.](#)

[Brownfield land](#)

~~6.96.10~~ [To support urban renewal within Halton, maximise the sustainable use of existing infrastructure and minimise the need to release Green Belt land priority will be given to ~~Developers are encouraged to prioritise~~ the development of previously developed land in accordance with \[the target and principles set out in\]\(#\) Policy CSI. Halton has long worked in partnership with others, including the Homes and Communities Agency \(and its predecessors\) to pioneer new and innovative ways of tackling the Borough's particular brownfield legacy.⁵⁶](#)

~~6.106.11~~ [Previously PPS3: Housing sets a national minimum standard for development on brownfield land of 60%⁷, whilst Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West \(RSS\) set a shared target of ~~80~~ \[65%\]\(#\) for Halton and St.Helens. The Coalition Government ~~amended PPG3 in 2010 to delete this requirement and~~ has stated its intentions \[to revoke RSS and to remove the national target for the amount of housing\]\(#\)](#)

⁴ [National Planning Policy Framework \(para. 47\)](#)

⁵ [HCA \(2010\) Halton Local Brownfield Strategy](#)

⁶ [Arup \(2010\) Greenfield: Brownfield Exchange Concept](#)

⁷ [CLG \(2011\) Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, paragraph 41](#)

development that should take place on previously developed land⁸. Figure 7 below illustrates past rates of delivery of new homes on previously developed land in Halton. Delivery over the previous 15 years has varied significantly, with a high of almost 90% of new dwellings built on brownfield land in 2008/09, compared to a low of only 8% delivered in ~~1997/98~~ 1998/99, averaging 49% over the 15 years. Delivery of housing on brownfield land delivery has varied over this period reflecting the focus of delivery year to year, with greenfield sites in locations such as Upton Rocks, Widnes being balanced with urban regeneration schemes such as Castlefields, Runcorn.

~~6.11~~ 6.12 As discussed in the Spatial Strategy, due to the phased approach in which the Runcorn New Town has been constructed, development on greenfield sites has formed a key part of Halton's housing delivery over many years. The approach taken in previous local plans has been to phase the release of greenfield sites, to prioritise development within the built up areas in the first instance. These long term patterns of development are reflected in the split between greenfield and brownfield delivery in Figure 7 below, and in the identified stock of ongoing supply as set out in Table I and Appendix I.

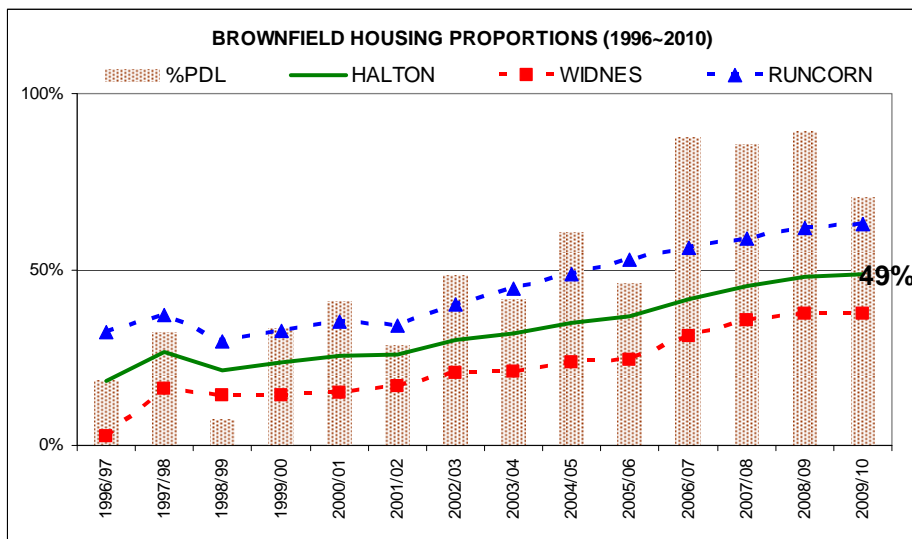


Figure 7: Historical Previously Developed Land (Brownfield) Performance

6.13 The target of 40% of housing development to be delivered on previously developed (brownfield) land is below both the previous national minimum target and the proportion achieved in Halton over the longer term. It is evident that Halton has achieved higher rates of brownfield delivery over the 5 or 6 years to 2010. Of the housing expected to come forward during the plan period or being promoted through the Core Strategy, a high proportion is safe on greenfield sites. Evidence base documents⁹⁻¹⁰ and Appendix I contain an assessment of the

⁸ CLG (2011) Letter to Chief Planning Officers: Planning for Growth 31 March 2011 (available at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1878047.pdf)

⁹ HBC (2011) Housing Topic Paper

proportion of ongoing supply forecast to arise on previously developed land. This shows that of the identified supply (before any allowance for additional greenfield supply through Green Belt release), only 38.39% is on previously developed land. As such setting a higher target for brownfield development would not be realistic or achievable. Net dwelling change and the performance in delivering on previous developed land will continue to be monitored annually and will influence the allocation of sites in later DPDs.

POLICY FRAMEWORK:		
National Policy	PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (CLG, 2005); PPS3: Housing (CLG, 2010) NPPF (Principally para.s 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 79, 159)	
Local Evidence	Halton Housing Strategy 2008-2011 (HBC, 2008); Halton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010/11 (HBC, 2010); Halton Housing Baseline Report (HBC, Annually) Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn / JGC, 2011)	
Strategic Objectives	I and 2	
SCS Priorities	Environment and Regeneration in Halton	
SA Objectives	4 – Climate Change	10 - Housing
	5 – Flood Risk	12 – Health
	7 – Land Quality	17 – Transport
SA Outcome	The SA considers this policy to be positive in sustainability terms. Although development is likely to have significant negative impacts on some environmental factors these can be managed / mitigated.	

¹⁰ [HBC \(2010\) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010](#) [GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting \(2011\) Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#)

9 CS6: GREEN BELT

- 9.1 Green Belt land covers approximately one-third of the Borough, and provides important gaps between surrounding urban areas including St Helens to the north, Liverpool to the west and Warrington to the east, and maintains distinct towns and villages with their own identities. In addition to the strategic function that areas of Green Belt play, it also has a role in Halton's Green Infrastructure network providing informal recreational opportunities for the Borough's residents and representing a significant biodiversity resource. Land within the Green Belt will come under pressure to be released for development over the plan period and it is for the Core Strategy to ensure this happens in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.

Policy CS6: Green Belt

~~The general extent of the Green Belt surrounding Halton, broadly following the line of the built up area as indicated on the Key Diagram, and as defined on the Proposals Map, will remain largely unchanged over the initial plan period. This is with the exception of the area to the east of Liverpool John Lennon Airport where an area of search is identified within which minor alterations will be considered as part of an Allocations DPD in accordance with CS17.~~

A partial Green Belt review ~~may~~ will be necessary during the early part of the plan period to ensure a sufficient ongoing supply of deliverable development land to meet the requirements of the Borough's separate communities as set out in CS1, CS3 and CS4. ~~Any This review is likely to will~~ be limited to meeting the identified needs of Widnes / Hale ~~and would be undertaken in support of a subsequent Site Allocations DPD. The development of any land released from the Green Belt will be phased towards the latter part of the plan period with the release of land in line accordance~~ with the prioritisation of urban ~~renewal~~ regeneration as set out in CS1. In addition, an Area of Search is identified to the east of Liverpool John Lennon Airport within which minor alterations will be considered in accordance with policy CS17. Green Belt boundary changes will be defined in the subsequent Site Allocations Local Plan.

The general extent of the Green Belt surrounding Runcorn, broadly following the line of the built up area as indicated on the Key Diagram, and as defined on the Halton UDP Proposals Map¹, will remain unchanged over the plan period.

Small scale development amounting to minor infilling within the 'washed over'² Green Belt settlements of Daresbury, Moore and Preston on the Hill may be permitted where it can be shown to be necessary to meet ~~identified~~ specific local needs.

Justification

Green Belt History and Purpose

- 9.2 The main purpose of Halton's Green Belt designation is to keep land open and generally free from development, maintaining strategic gaps between Runcorn and Widnes and surrounding settlements. In accordance with CS2: Sustainable Development Principles, it protects against unwanted urban sprawl, and directs

¹ For the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012, at the date of adoption of this Core Strategy the 'Halton UDP Proposals Map' was the 'Adopted Polices Map'

² CLG (2001) Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts

development to built up areas where it can assist in urban regeneration and be of benefit to existing communities.

~~9.3 Given that Widnes previously fell within the county of Lancashire, (with later changes designating surrounding authorities as the county of Merseyside) and Runcorn within Cheshire, Green Belt boundaries were first established through separate processes in different County Structure Plans. The current area of Green Belt around Widnes was set out in the Merseyside Structure Plan from 1979 and then the Merseyside Green Belt Local Plan (1983). In Cheshire, broad areas of Green Belt land were first designated as part of the 1979 Structure Plan. The extent of the Green Belt land was then embedded in the Halton Local Plan in 1996 and reconfirmed in the Unitary Development Plan of 2005.~~

9.4.3 Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (Policy RDF4) specified that there was no need for any exceptional substantial strategic change to Green Belt within Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire or Merseyside before 2011, but that Local Development Frameworks may provide for detailed changes in Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the expansion of Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon Airports.

9.4 National ~~Policy~~ planning policy for Green Belts ~~is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) which details their~~ importance ~~of Green Belts~~ and how they can contribute to achieving sustainable development. It identifies five purposes for including land in the Green Belt;

- 1) to check unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas,
- 2) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another,
- 3) to assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment,
- 4) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
- 5) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land
other urban land ~~main~~

It further states that once the general extent of the Green Belt has been approved, it should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. The proposed Green Belt Review will have full regard to these principles.

9.5 The Halton Landscape Character Assessment³ included within its assessment of the Borough's landscape, Green Belt land surrounding the urban area. The assessment categorised the three main areas of Green Belt in the Borough as having distinctive landscape characteristics and made recommendations in terms of how these areas should be managed, which will be taken forward in accordance with the approach set out in CS20: Natural and Historic Environment (unless doing so conflicts with other key objectives of the Core Strategy). The landscape characteristics of the three main areas of Green Belt are:

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

~~Development within Inset and Washed Over Villages~~

~~9.6 National policy allows for limited development within villages which are 'washed over' by a Green Belt designation. In certain instances, small scale development may be necessary to maintain or enhance the sustainability of rural communities,~~

³ TEP (2009) Halton Landscape Character Assessment

~~such as for the provision of village services or for affordable housing. Any proposals for such development within Halton's Green Belt villages would need to demonstrate specific local need, such as a requirement for affordable housing.~~

~~9.7 Hale Village is inset within the Green Belt, meaning that unlike the other villages in the Borough, Green Belt policy does not apply within the settlement boundary. Infill development within the village will be viewed as appropriate where it would enhance the character of the village.~~

Potential Need for Green Belt Review

~~9.8 In 2010, a study was undertaken across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) in respect of cross-boundary employment and housing land development issues.⁴ The aim of the study was to determine if there were land supply issues in individual authorities, and whether unmet development needs of one area could reasonably be met within the urban extents of other authorities within the sub-region, avoiding the need for a strategic review of the Green Belt. Emerging findings indicate that in relation to housing land supply there is no need for a strategic review of Green Belt across the three districts comprising the LCR Eastern Housing Market Area (Halton, St Helens and Warrington), though a number of neighbouring authorities in the Northern Housing Market Area are embarking on reviews. In relation to employment land supply, whilst the study found there to be a potential shortfall in Halton's supply in the medium to long term (to 2031), this did not take into account the remodelling and regeneration opportunities highlighted though the JELP Study⁵ and referred to in CS4. If these sites are taken into account, the study recognised there is a much more balanced position in the longer term.~~

~~9.9 The study considered land supply within local authorities as a whole and did not look at the adequacy of supply to meet future needs in separate communities within an individual authority's area.~~

~~9.10 The land supply position as detailed in CS1: Halton's Spatial Strategy and in the evidence base accompanying the Core Strategy⁶ indicate that overall Halton has an adequate supply of land to meet anticipated development needs over the plan period for both housing and employment purposes, however, this assessment of the whole Borough masks a mismatch in supply north and south of the river.~~

9.6 The housing policy figure for Halton as set out in CS1 and CS3 conforms with Policy L4 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West which required that Halton plan to provide a minimum of 500 units (net dwelling gain) over the period from 2003 to 2021 and for any period after until such time as the policy is reviewed. As highlighted in policy CS1, the Government has indicated its intention to abolish Regional Strategies, however, until such time as RSS for the North West is legally revoked, it remains part of the Development Plan and the Halton Core Strategy must be in general conformity with its provisions.

9.7 Analysis of the identified supply of deliverable and developable land for residential development (at 2010)⁷ suggests that the total, whilst sufficient to meet the RSS housing requirement 'rolled forward' seven years to cover the Core Strategy plan

⁴ GVA (2011) Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study for Liverpool City Region Partners

⁵ BE Group (2010) Joint Employment Land and Premises Study

⁶ HBC (2011) Housing Topic Paper

⁷ HBC (2010) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010

period to 2028, has little margin or flexibility to cope with increased demolitions or projected supply not coming forward as anticipated.

~~9.11~~9.8 Runcorn has sufficient identified land to meet its anticipated housing needs with the supply of land for employment purposes sufficient in the short term with regeneration / redevelopment opportunities within existing protected employment areas expected to bolster long term supply and as such the previous Green Belt boundaries are reconfirmed.

~~9.12~~ — Widnes / Hale have sufficient identified land (at 2010) to meet their anticipated housing development needs⁸ in the period up to 2022⁹ with a potential shortfall of supply of around 600 units to 2028, (see Appendix I; Monitor Line Chart) with land for employment purposes sufficient in terms of overall supply for the plan period but limited in terms of range and quality. These limitations in the range of employment sites available within Widnes together with potential contamination issues limit the scope to reallocate employment land for residential purposes. Therefore at 2010, Widnes / Hale had a potential shortage of identified land for residential development in the region of around 20 Ha. (i.e. 600 units delivered at a density of 30 dph).

~~9.13~~ — The Core Strategy seeks to ensure a sufficient ongoing supply of development land to meet the needs of Halton's individual communities. Policies CS3 and CS4 define 'sufficient' supply as equating to 5 years at the prevailing policy target(s). Analysis of the position in 2010 showed that Widnes / Hale are forecast to be able to demonstrate a 5 year supply for residential development in each year until 2018 based on current build rates. Runcorn is forecast to have in excess of a 5 year supply for residential development throughout the plan period.

~~9.14~~ — Changes to build rate assumptions (reviewed annually) and new, previously unidentified or unavailable 'windfall' sites have the potential to boost supply, possibly addressing the minor shortfall at 2010, negating the need for specific policy intervention including Green Belt review. An assessment of windfall rates is contained within the 'Housing Topic Paper' paper.¹⁰

~~9.15~~ — The land supply and demand situation across Halton's communities will be kept under regular review with annual monitoring to ensure a continuing 5 year supply of developable land in line with Policies CS3 and CS4. If the situation arises where it is apparent that an ongoing 5 year supply of development land from within the existing urban extents cannot be identified for the subsequent three years and alternative solutions are not forthcoming, a Green Belt review will be triggered to inform the content of a subsequent Site Allocations DPD to ensure the future prosperity of the Borough and the wider sub-region. Land supply information at 2010 suggest this may be necessary around 2015.

9.9 Housing supply is constrained in Widnes / Hale, with the likelihood that the identified supply (at 2010) will not be sufficient to meet the defined policy requirement throughout the full plan period. The Examination into this Plan concluded that this constituted the exceptional circumstances, as required to be demonstrated by the National Planning Policy Framework, to warrant an early partial review of the Halton Green Belt around these settlements.

⁸ GL Hearn / JG Consulting (2011) Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment

⁹ HBC (2010) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010

¹⁰ HBC (2011) Housing Topic Paper

Potential Scale of Green Belt Review

~~9.16~~9.10 ~~PPG2~~ National planning policy states that Green Belt boundaries should have a degree of permanence and should endure beyond the timeframe of normal development plans. As such, ~~any the planned~~ review of Green Belt boundaries ~~as may be necessary around Widnes / Hale~~ during the ~~life of this~~ early part of this Core Strategy plan period will ~~would~~ need to look beyond 2028, addressing not only any known shortfall in development land to 2028 but also taking into account foreseeable development requirements beyond this period and ensuring that the boundaries will last and not come under undue pressure. ~~As such, it is not possible at this time to identify the total quantum of land potentially affected by any review as this will be influenced by the degree of any shortfall and the timing of the review.~~

~~9.17~~9.11 ~~Any~~ It is intended that the review will be conducted in ~~consultation~~ partnership with neighbouring authorities, particularly St Helens, Warrington, Liverpool and Knowsley to ensure that as far as can be achieved, a coordinated and strategic approach is taken. ~~Any resultant changes to the Green Belt boundary will be enacted in a subsequent Site Allocations DPD.~~

Development within Inset and Washed Over Villages

9.12 National policy allows for limited development within villages which are ‘washed over’ by a Green Belt designation. In certain instances, small scale development may be necessary to maintain or enhance the sustainability of rural communities, such as for the provision of village services or for affordable housing. Any proposals for such development within Halton’s Green Belt villages would need to demonstrate specific local need, such as a requirement for affordable housing.

9.13 Hale Village is inset within the Green Belt, meaning that unlike the other villages in the Borough, Green Belt policy does not apply within the settlement boundary. Infill development within the village will be viewed as appropriate where it would enhance the character of the village.

POLICY FRAMEWORK:							
National Policy	PPG2: Green Belts (CLG, Updated 2001) <u>NPPF (Principally para.s 17, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90, 92, 111, 112, 151)</u>						
Local Evidence	Halton Landscape Character Assessment (HBC, 2009); Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn and Justin Gardner Consulting, 2011); Halton Housing Needs Study (DCA, 2006); Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (HBC, 2010); Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study for Liverpool City Region Partners (GVA, 2010); Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2010)						
Strategic Objectives	2 and 10						
SCS Priorities	Environment and Regeneration in Halton						
SA Objectives	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1 – Cultural Heritage</td> <td>10 – Housing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 – Biodiversity</td> <td>14 – Economy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 – Land Quality</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1 – Cultural Heritage	10 – Housing	2 – Biodiversity	14 – Economy	7 – Land Quality	
1 – Cultural Heritage	10 – Housing						
2 – Biodiversity	14 – Economy						
7 – Land Quality							
SA Outcome	Overall, this policy highlights the importance of protecting Green Belt land over the plan period. This will have a positive						

impact on the relevant SA objectives.