



Runcorn Old Town Town Centre Strategy

Draft Supplementary Planning Document
Public Consultation Draft
January 2007



Halton Borough Council

**Runcorn Old Town :
Town Centre Strategy**

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

**Public Consultation Draft
(FOR EXECUTIVE SUB APPROVAL)**

January 2007

to Operational Director ~ Environmental & Regulatory Services
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

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Operational Director
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
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This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

I Purpose



Introduction

- 1.1 Runcorn is one of three main shopping centres within Halton Borough. This Town Centre Strategy has been prepared to update and build upon the previous Town Centre Strategy adopted by the Council in 1997, and deals with land use planning matters for the centre. It provides additional guidance to that contained in the now saved policies adopted in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. This document is being prepared under the provisions of the 2004 Planning and Compensation Act and will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which will form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Halton.
- 1.2 The Council has also prepared an updated Strategy for Halton Lea at this time. Widnes Town Centre will be the

subject of a later Area Action Plan (Development Plan Document).

- 1.3 These documents do not deal explicitly with non-land use planning matters such as marketing and visitor information, promotion of business, day to day town centre management, car parking management, crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.4 This document is the draft SPD relating to **Runcorn Old Town**.

Purpose

- 1.5 The purpose of this SPD is to complement policies adopted within the Halton UDP and saved as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), to provide additional practical guidance and support for those involved in the planning of new development within Halton Borough to:

- a Enable the town centres to prosper without damaging the health of any other;
- b Safeguard and strengthen the individual role of each town centre as safe and accessible places to shop, work and enjoy;
- c Co-ordinate public and private investment decisions;
- d Improve the economic prosperity of the borough through the creation of employment opportunities; and
- e Ensure the highest standard of design and architecture within each town centre.

1.6 By stating this purpose, the Council will seek to improve through its function as a Local Planning Authority any development proposal that does not provide for, or meet the principles encouraged and required within this SPD and the Halton UDP or as replaced by the Halton LDF.

1.7 This SPD is also intended to encourage all of those who have or will have an interest in the vitality and viability of the town centre to follow the practical guidance it contains wherever opportunities arise whether or not planning permission or other consents are required.

Structure of the document

1.8 In the following sections, this document will set the Old Town in the context of national planning policy and national trends in town centre type uses, before locally specific factors such as historical circumstances and recent and future planned developments. A SWOT analysis (Appendix B) identifies current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the future of the centre, and an assessment is made on progress regarding the recommendations from the original 1997 Town Centre Strategy (Appendix C) completes the evidence

and contextual base. From this the strategy identifies:

- Strategic policies and proposals which will be applied across the centre, and;
- Sub-area policies and proposals, which will apply within each of the sub-areas.

2 Policy Background

2.1 This SPD revises and updates the previous Runcorn Old Town: Town Centre Strategy. It has been produced to ensure that through its function as a Local Planning Authority, the Council is in accordance with national and regional guidance and advice and contributes, wherever possible, to meeting the priorities of the community it serves.

National Policy

2.2 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development, states that planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. It also highlights the need to focus developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development.



2.3 PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres, states that the Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:

- planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and
- promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide

range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

2.4 It affirms that it is essential that town centres provide a high-quality and safe environment if they are to remain attractive and competitive. Policies for the design of development for main town centre uses, regardless of location, and for development in town centres, should promote high quality and inclusive design, in order to improve the character, quality and function of areas.

2.5 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) imposes a duty of the Local Authority to exercise its functions with due regards to the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. The SPD deals with the matter in relation to land use planning considerations only.

Regional Policy

2.6 Policy SD2 Other Settlements within the North West Metropolitan Area, highlights Runcorn and Widnes as areas where wide-ranging regeneration and environmental enhancement should be secured.

2.7 Policy EC8 Town Centres – Retail, Leisure and Office Development states that Development Plans, town centre management initiatives and other strategies should recognise the continued need to protect, sustain and improve all of the town and city centres in the Region.

Local Policy



2.8 The Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) currently provides the Development Plan Framework for Halton. However, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced major changes to the way the planning system operates, with each Local Authority now required to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). As part of the transitional arrangement for the new planning system the Halton UDP will be automatically saved for a period of three years from the date of adoption. This allows SPDs to be linked to existing 'saved' UDP policies.

2.9 The UDP contains a number of strategic aims and objectives, which are set out in Part I of the UDP. In relation to Halton's town centres they include the aim to increase their vitality and viability and the need to ensure that no retail development is allowed in one town centre that would seriously harm another.

2.10 Part 2 UDP policies seek to implement the broad aims and objectives contained within Part Proposal I. Those that are directly relevant to this SPD are:

- **Policy TCI: Retail & Leisure Allocations**, provides a list of sites that are allocated for specific uses, on the basis of both an assessment of need for new retail and leisure facilities in the Borough and a sequential approach to site selection. In Runcorn Old Town sites are allocated at

- Site 1 : Central Area
- Site 5 : Rear of High Street and
- Site 6 : Camden Gardens
- Site 7 : Crosville Bus Depot site

The latter 3 of these sites now being dealt with under the 'Canal Quarter' development scheme (see Chapter 12).

- **Policy TC2: Retail Development to the Edge Of Designated Shopping Centres**, introduces criteria for assessing when development will be permitted on the edge of centre locations.
- **Policy TC4: Retail development within designated shopping centres**, allows for retail development that contributes to the centre's vitality and viability.
- **Policy TC5: Design of Retail Development**, provides the design criteria for considering new retail development and extensions.
- **Policy TC6: Out of Centre Retail Development**, provides the criteria to assess out of centre retail proposals including small scale retail developments to meet local needs.
- **Policy TC8: Non-Retail Uses within Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas**, provides the requirements for Class A2 (financial and professional services) and Class A3 (sale of food and drink) uses and other appropriate non-retail town centre uses, at ground floor level in Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas.
- **Policy TCI0: Runcorn Town Centre Mixed Uses Area**, identifies the main uses that would be appropriate within the area defined on the Proposals Map. These do not include retail (except for local needs) as it is considered that this could result in a more dispersed retail function to the detriment of the centre as a whole.
- **Policies LTCl, LTC2 and LTC3** in the Leisure, Tourism and Community Facilities chapter provide the criteria to assess major

leisure and community facilities that are located in town centre, edge of town centre and out of centre locations respectively.

- **Policy TPI6: Green Travel Plans**, states that green travel plans will be required as part of all new development which would comprise jobs, shopping and services and which would generate significant jobs.

Community Strategy

2.11 This SPD is intended to contribute to the implementation of the Halton Community Strategy 2006. This strategy co-ordinates the resources of the local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes. The vision of the Strategy is that *"Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods."*

2.12 Within the 'Halton's urban renewal' priority of the Community Strategy there is an objective "to revitalise the town centres to create dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors."

2.13 Halton Borough Council is committed to contributing to achieving the priorities of the Community Strategy. The Council's priorities are set out in

the Corporate Plan. This plan also has five priorities, including 'urban renewal'.

2.14 The priorities in the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan are based on the priorities set by the people of Halton. These were identified through community involvement via area panels, focus groups, and a telephone survey. The Corporate Plan was based on the same community involvement and statistical information compiled for the State of the Borough Report, 2005.

Waterside Strategy

2.15 The Waterside Strategy was launched in March 2005. As relates to Runcorn Old Town, it seeks to achieve the better integration of the waterside frontages into the town centre to achieve the following broad aims;

- Environmental improvements
- Generate additional economic activity
- Bring derelict and underused sites into active high quality uses
- Develop a brand image for the Old Town based upon its canal heritage
- Create a leisure, retail and commercial focus on the Bridgewater Canal with secondary residential
- Create a residential focus on the Manchester Ship Canal with ancillary retail and commercial

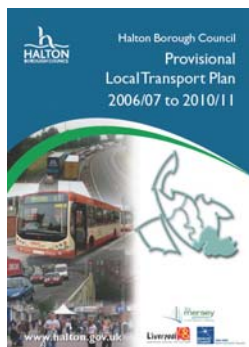
The Town Centre Strategy seeks to build upon the strategic aims of the Waterside Strategy, with amendments, to help achieve a more cohesive town centre that relates better to its canal frontages.



Waterside Development Strategy for Halton: Runcorn Historic Canal Town Masterplan / Development Brief (Key Diagram).

Local Transport Plan

2.16 The Halton Local Transport Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 (LTP2) states that the ability of local people to access work, learning, health care, shopping, leisure and exercise can significantly impact on their quality of life and life chances.



2.17 Helping to ensure that people can access the services they need and want, is not just a matter of improving local transport, but also of improving the provision of other services and developments in more accessible places and ways, and at more accessible times. In addition to this, good access is a critical element in attracting new businesses to relocate to the area or to establish themselves. The LTP includes the Bus, Cycling, Parking and Walking Strategy as well as a draft Access Plan.

2.18 The LTP is aimed at meeting the targets in the Community Strategy, clearly this means that both this SPD and the LTP are ultimately trying to achieve the same goals and each will benefit the other

Supplementary Planning Documents

2.19 There are a number of other Supplementary Planning Documents (either adopted or emerging) that will be of relevance to developments within Runcorn Old Town centre.

Key amongst these are;

- Shop Fronts, Signage and Advertising.
- Designing for Community Safety.
- Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development.
- Design of New Residential Development.
- Transport and Accessibility

3 Guiding Principles

Introduction

3.1 In addition to formal policy Government has produced a number of documents that provide additional relevant guidance, some of these are detailed below.

Vital and Viable Town Centres

3.2 'Vital and Viable town centres: meeting the challenge' (DOE 1994) provides, through the use of a town centre health check, a method for evaluating town centre vitality and viability. It suggests collating a whole host of indicators, and analysing them using a variety of different techniques such as 4 'A's (attractions, accessibility, amenity and action) approach and swot (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

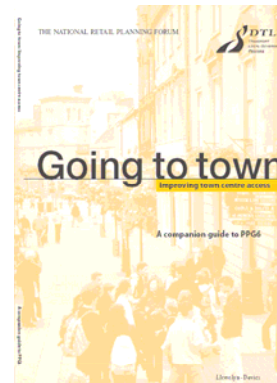
Planning for Town Centres

3.3 Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation tools provides further detailed design guidance, stating that the issues which should be considered for inclusion in local development documents, include:

- identifying the capacity of each centre to accommodate growth, and making provision for this;
- providing a comprehensive plan for any area of renewal or development;
- addressing the location and layout of new development;
- developing an urban design strategy, which establishes a comprehensive urban design vision and is supported by specific urban design policies, guidelines or proposals for specific sites;
- addressing the spatial implications of strategies for parking, traffic management and improvement of the pedestrian environment; and
- setting out a detailed implementation programme for bringing forward development on key sites, including, where appropriate, proposals for

addressing issues such as land assembly through compulsory purchase orders.

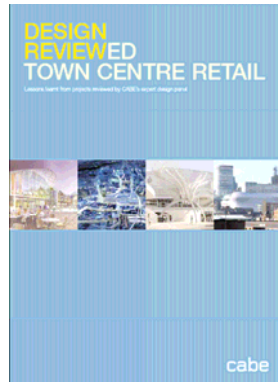
Going to Town



3.4 Going to town – Improving town centre access is a good practice guide and was published in 2002 by ODPM. It highlights what can be done to improve the key routes from the arrival points to the main attractions and provides the principles of route quality these are:

- **Connected:** good pedestrian routes which link the places where people want to go, and form a network
- **Convenient:** direct routes following desire lines, with easy-to-use crossings
- **Comfortable:** good quality footways, with adequate widths and without obstructions
- **Convivial:** attractive well lit and safe, and with variety along the route
- **Conspicuous:** legible routes easy to find and follow, with surface treatments and signs to guide pedestrians

Design Reviewed –Town Centre Retail



3.5 Design Reviewed states that when translated to town centre retail development, we can judge proposed designs against a number of key principles:

- Good urban design – the principles of which are set out in ‘By Design’, and include the importance of character, legibility, ease of movement, adaptability and a mix of uses.
- Good architecture – buildings with civic quality that enhance their internal and external environments through their scale, massing, proportions and detailing.
- Good for retail – the development must work for retail and leisure providers in their core business, selling products to customers.
- Good for everyone – the development must minimise any negative impacts on the environment and promote a safe and inclusive environment for all who want to use the town centre, including those with special access needs.

Planning and Access for Disabled People

3.6 Contains several good practice points of relevance to this document. Including that all parties involved in the planning and development process should recognise the benefits of, and endeavour to bring about inclusive design.

Building in Context



3.7 The belief underlying ‘Building in context’ (English Heritage/CABI 2002) is that the right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal. It suggests that a successful project will:

- relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it;
- respect important views;
- respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings; and
- create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

4 Understanding the Issues

History and context within the Borough

4.1 Halton Borough has three town centres at Widnes, Runcorn Old Town and Halton Lea, and the quality and image of these shopping centres plays an important role in securing economic growth and providing wider community services. Runcorn Old Town is the smallest of the three town centres being about a quarter the size of Widnes and Halton Lea, comprising approximately 14,000 Sq.M. (150,000 Sq.Ft.) of retail floorspace in 160+ separate units.

4.2 The Town Centre initially developed to serve the commercial and industrial settlement of Runcorn that grew up on the south bank of the Mersey promoted by the development of the Bridgewater Canal in the 1770's, the mainline railway and the Manchester Ship Canal in the latter half of the 17th century.

4.3 The opening of the transporter bridge in 1905 gave the development of the town centre a further boost, helping consolidate it as the main town centre for Runcorn which was by then home to a population of approximately 30,000.



View of the approach to the Transporter Bridge, which provided the sole vehicular link between Runcorn and Widnes until 1961.



Aerial view of Runcorn Old Town in 1945 Showing original street pattern with Transporter Bridge (top left)

4.4 In 1964 Runcorn was designated as a New Town and the New Town Development Corporation sought to significantly expand the town to the south and east, creating new homes, jobs and facilities for up to an additional 70,000 people bringing the total population to 100,000.

4.5 Developments by the New Town Development Corporation and others around this time would have significant impacts upon the *old* town centre. Chief amongst these were;

- The construction on Shopping City (since re-branded Halton Lea), a purpose built shopping and commercial centre located 2½km to the south east of the old town at the heart of the new town intended to serve Runcorn and a wider sub-regional role. As a consequence of this the existing town centre effectively became a district or large neighbourhood centre.
- The creation of a segregated busway network that cut through the old town centre between Church Street and High Street effectively cutting the centre in two.
- The creation of a grade separated expressway road network, linked to the new Silver Jubilee Bridge across the Mersey. This effectively bypassed the old town centre and

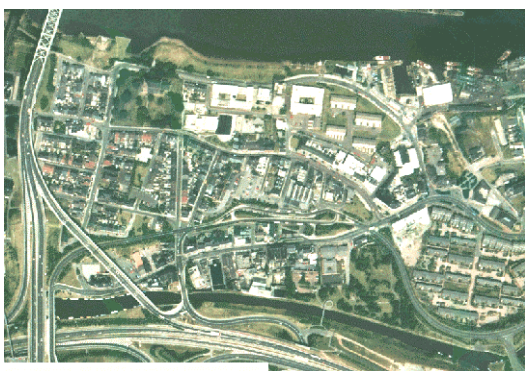
created a large impenetrable barrier between the centre and the surrounding residential areas to the south.

- Redevelopment of the land to the south of Church Street to provide a covered market hall and surface level open car park.
- Redevelopment of the buildings along the north side of Church Street, and southern Bridge Street to provide modern flexible unit shops with rear servicing,



Aerial view of Central Area in 1983 showing the elaborate busway interchange severing linkages between Church Street (top) and High Street (bottom).

- 4.6 For a number of years the Old Town struggled with its redefined role within the retail hierarchy, not aided by a poorly defined and disjointed physical environment ultimately leading to a period of neglect and decline.



Aerial view of Runcorn Old Town in 1983 showing new Silver Jubilee Bridge (top left) and expressway network (bottom) effectively bypassing the town centre.

Renaissance (1996~)

- 4.7 4.10 In 1996 Halton Partnership (a precursor to the Halton Strategic

Partnership), comprising public, private and voluntary sector organisations secured £13 million from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Challenge Fund for a package of projects aimed at tackling the historical legacy of industrial decline and the negative effects of the new town expansion.

- 4.8 4.11 The bid established four main areas for improvement:

- **To revitalise commercial activity.** Reinstating the 'old town' as the centre of Runcorn and an important hub of commercial activity;
- **To revitalise housing stock.** Improve existing housing stock and provide new housing with greater variety.
- **To revitalise the community.** Tackling wide-ranging issues such as confidence, health, employment and skills.
- **To revitalise the environment.** Improving morale and confidence, making the most of the attractive location and existing assets, including the waterfronts.



Expressway signage advertising Old Town SRB funded improvements.

- 4.9 4.12 The bid supported 39 projects between 1996~2003 with 75% of the

funding being spent on capital projects including:

- Improving road access and the layout of the old town centre and creating linkages to, and throughout, the area including footpaths and cycle ways;
- Levering in new retail investment;
- Improving the physical appearance of the town centre and shop fronts, and canal side improvements; and
- Improving levels of activity within the Old Town through new housing, a local college and a new arts centre;

Town Centre Strategy (1997~)

4.10 In 1997 Halton Borough adopted the Town Centre Strategy for Runcorn Old Town as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This sought to revitalise the centre with objectives including maintaining and enhancing the range of attractions and facilities, improving accessibility and promoting the centre in a positive light. The relevant land use objectives (including site allocations) were subsequently incorporated into the Halton UDP. Appendix C summarises the proposals in the 1997 Strategy and their outcomes.



Aerial view of Town Centre in 2000 showing new access road from Daresbury expressway (bottom right) and construction of new bus station (top centre left).

National issues

4.11 There are several national trends regarding shopping and town centres

that are of significance to Runcorn Old Town. These include:

- Competition from **retail parks** which have a competitive advantage in terms of ease of access and abundant free surface level car parking can result in loss of trade or relocation of traders (c.f. loss of Blockbusters to Trident Retail Park);
- **Superstores** selling an **increased range of non-food goods** (including clothing) as they seek new profit and growth opportunities;
- **Growth in unit sizes** to meet occupier requirements for fewer, larger units;
- **Growing disparity between large destination centres and medium and smaller centres** as key operators focus their attention on a limited number of locations.

Local issues

4.12 Three different sources of information have been used to pull together the principal local issues. These are:

- The Halton Town Centre Baseline Report 2004
- SWOT Analysis 2005
- Old Town Town Centre Survey

4.13 The progress against the proposed actions and recommendations in the previous Town Centre Strategy (1997), and their continuing relevance has been assessed in Appendix C.

Runcorn Old Town: Town Centre Baseline Report 2004

4.14 The Town Centres Baseline Report considered a suite of socio-economic and vitality & viability indicators to assess the key strengths and weaknesses of the 3 centres and provide a sound basis to re-evaluate their strategic direction.

- **Rental yields** are calculated as annual rental income as a percentage of capital investment, and are an indicator of investor confidence in a

centre (the lower the confidence, the higher the perceived investment risk and the higher the yield sought). The national data source used for this information only provides information for “Runcorn” and it is unclear whether this relates to Halton Lea, the Old Town or both. Between 1997 and 2001 the yield is quoted as being 11.5% and from 2001 to 2004 as being “10% or over”. This compares with a figure of 8.5% for Widnes over the same period and reflects comparatively poor investor confidence in the centres.

- The immediate **catchment population** of the Old Town seemed to be declining marginally (though recent housing completions and proposals are expected to reverse this trend). The catchment population differs from that for Halton Lea by having a higher ratio of homeowners, mainly in the ‘Blue Collar’, ‘Victorian Low Status’ and ‘Mortgaged Families’ social sub-groupings. Thus, whilst the localised housing stock is predominately owner-occupied, this appears to be dominated by lower market properties and is not indicative of high disposable incomes.
- Recorded **Crime levels** within the town centre have fluctuated slightly in recent years but the latest figures are some 20% lower than in the year 2000. Theft of and from motor vehicles showing a 50% drop (2000~2003). Unfortunately, the recorded incidences of assault have increased over this period, though this is in line with national trends and the number of incidents is still fairly low. However, any incidence of violent crime detracts from people’s perceptions of the centre and willingness to consider it as an evening destination. 23% of people indicated that they had felt intimidated using the centre.

- Perceptions of the evening entertainment offered by the centre were split with 37% saying the offer was Good or Very Good and the same number saying the offer was Poor or Very Poor. At 37% the number of respondents saying they never visit the centre of an evening was lower than that for Widnes (46%) and Halton Lea (59%).
- Respondents to the Town Centres Users Survey highlighted anomalies regarding **car parking** within the centre. Only 39% of respondents said they parked for 2 hours or less, against 73% for Halton Lea and 69% for Widnes. Over 30% identified that they parked for 7 or more hours, indicating that many people are using the car parks for all day parking, presumably whilst at work. This is likely to include a significant proportion that are using the free town centre car parks and commuting elsewhere by train (rather than using the pay & display rail station car parks). This is a problem for the town centre as it reduces the spaces and convenience for shoppers, whilst not contributing to the vitality of the centre by generating lunch-time trade. Over 34% of respondents rated parking as ‘fairly’ or ‘very difficult’. This appears to raise significant issues for the management of the parking provision.
- At almost 50% the proportion of visitors arriving by bus was the highest of the 3 town centres as was the proportion of those arriving on foot (circa 17%).

SWOT Analysis

4.15 A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the Old Town has been undertaken and is reproduced at Appendix B. The main findings from the SWOT analysis are:

Strengths

- Runcorn Old Town is the dominant convenience centre within its local catchment. The centre has developed a strong complementary role to Halton Lea specialising in financial and professional services with specialist traders also increasingly evident. Shop fronts and environment are generally very good and there are below average vacancies. Recent developments have improved the centres appeal.

Weaknesses

- The town centre lacks mainstream offer with few national multiples present. The centre lacks identity or prominence and suffers from convoluted access routes, poor legibility (differentiation & linkages between areas), poor signage and fails to maximise on its key environmental assets.

Opportunities

- There is remaining capacity to support additional convenience goods retailing to further consolidate the centres strength in this area. Current development proposals at the Canal Quarter and The Deck together with remaining central development sites present great opportunities to build upon the recent successes of the Central Area redevelopment and the Brindley Arts Centre. These should create a more cohesive and attractive centre, consolidating its retail role and developing an enhanced leisure and cultural functions throughout the day and into the evening.

Threats

- Increased retail competition from surrounding centres (Halton Lea, Widnes and Liverpool), and in leisure terms from Widnes, Frodsham and Stockton Heath. Failure to fully integrate new developments whereby they act as stand-alone developments without

generating wider 'spin-off' benefits for the centre as a whole. The need to build on and carry forward the achievements from the previous SRB backed investment (i.e. maintaining the shop frontages/ street scene improvements to the same high standard).

Runcorn Old Town Centre Survey 2005

- 4.16 In 2005 the Council undertook a unit survey of the three main town centres within the borough. The purpose of this was to update previous work done by consultants in 1994 and 1999 and supplement the town centre baseline study, undertaken in 2004.
- 4.17 The most striking feature of the floorspace distribution within the Old Town is the very low percentage given over to food and convenience goods, which at just 18% is lower than in Halton Lea (24%) and Widnes (30%). Generally the lower a centre's position within the retail hierarchy the greater is its dependence on food and convenience goods retailing.
- 4.18 The recent addition of the new (relocated) Kwik Save foodstore (now re-branded Somerfield) and the adjacent Cool Trader has strengthened the centres' convenience goods offer. However, there is calculated to be remaining capacity for some 1,000+ Sq.M. (10,700+ Sq.Ft.) of additional convenience floorspace (Source: Chesterton Study 2002), possibly in the form of a discount operator. Securing this investment will require the careful identification of a suitable site and careful design to maximise its integration into the centre and to make the most of the potential for linked trips.
- 4.19 In the Old Town, the dominant use is financial and professional services, which account for 21% of the total floorspace. This highlights the complementary relationship that the Old Town has with Halton Lea, which with its larger unit

sizes, institutional leases and restricted opening hours provides limited accommodation for hairdressers, estate agents, solicitors etc.

4.20 In addition, at 16½%, the proportion of floorspace given over to food and drink uses is double that of Widnes and four times that of Halton Lea, again highlighting the complementary nature of the Old Town to its larger neighbour. The current range of such uses is predominately in the form of traditional and music orientated pubs and hot food take-aways (many open only during evening hours). There is potential to address this quality gap in the market with additional cafés, restaurants and more food orientated drinking establishments. The recently opened Brindley Gallery Café is reporting healthy patronage, particularly from lunchtime trade, and the opening of J.D. Wetherspoons in November 2006 further adds to the daytime offer.

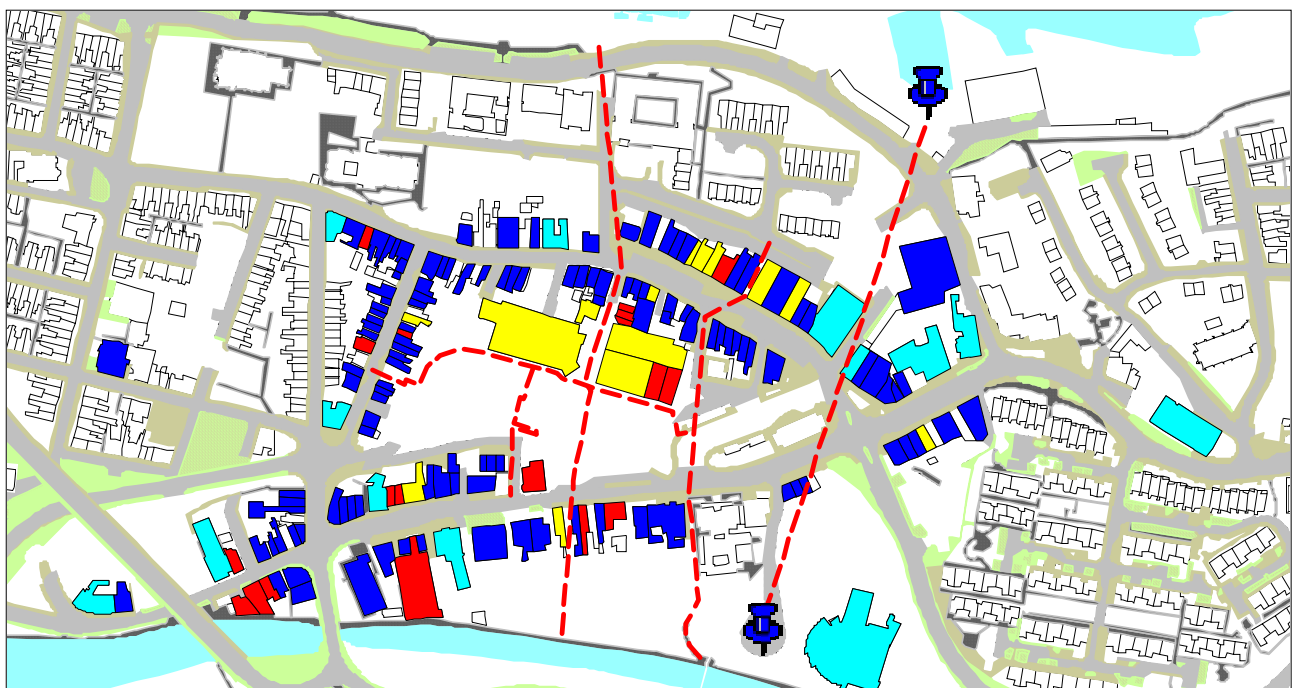
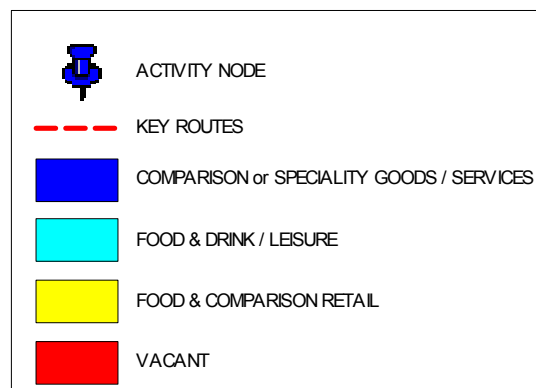
4.21 At 5% the amount of vacant floorspace is similar to the last survey, in 1999 (6%), but the number of vacant units has actually decreased (from 17 to 11).



Vacant Retail Units (2005 Trader Survey).

4.22 Of the current recorded vacancies, only 2 units were also vacant at the previous survey.

4.23 The survey also assessed the quality of the shop fronts within the centre with over three quarters being adjudged 'Good' or 'Excellent', with over 40% being in the top category. This again, largely being a legacy of the SRB funded investment.



Surveved Uses (HBC Retail Unit Survey).

5 Strategic Policies

Vision for Runcorn Old Town centre

Runcorn 'Old Town' Centre is a vibrant waterside location that provides for the day to day shopping needs of it's immediate catchment whilst offering a wider complementary function to the neighbouring town centre, as a focus for local independent shops, niche retailers and service providers, and as a centre for cultural and leisure activity.

Current Situation

- 5.1 The following set of policies and proposals will be applied to Runcorn Old Town town centre. They are not presented in any particular order either in terms of importance, timetable or deliverability.
- 5.2 Section 5 below contains strategic polices that apply across the centre as a whole whereas polices in following sections 7~13 apply to specific sub areas in the centre.
- 5.3 It is also of note that there are several polices, both strategic and specific to the sub areas, which promote the use of planning obligations to assist in the improvement of the town centre. These improvements fall into four categories, which are in relation to transport accessibility, linkages, the local environment and functional improvement of the town centre. For ease of reference, Appendix D contains details of all policies that have reference to planning obligations and therefore indicates the type of activities for which obligations could be used. This document cannot prescribe the exact nature of obligations being sought, as this must be done on a case-by-case basis in compliance with Circular 05/05. However, as a generality prioritisation will initially be given to schemes directed towards the improvement of accessibility and linkage to the centre.
- 5.4 As a Supplementary Planning Document, this Town Centre Strategy is unable to

formally designate sites for development. However, it is able to identify development principles for existing opportunities (such as UDP allocations and planning permissions). Sites that are identified as new opportunities can, if necessary, be taken forward as designations through the New Retail and Leisure Development DPD.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI

Review the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), Secondary Shopping Area (SSA) and Mixed Uses area boundaries as part of a future Development Plan Document (DPD).

- 5.5 The UDP defines Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas together with an area for mixed uses within the Old Town, to which different policies relating to the mix of retail and non-retail uses apply. The aim of these policies is to protect active retail frontages and restrict the proliferation of non-retail and other uses that could detract from the vitality of the retail core. Changes to the Use Classes Order¹, which now differentiates between Restaurants / Cafés (A3); Pubs / Bars (A4); and Hot Food Take Aways (A5) allows for the development of a more refined policy approach that will help deliver the broader aims for the centre as a whole.

¹ Circular 05/2005 (March 2005)

Implementation:

- 5.6 This SPD can only identify this issue. Any amendment to the Primary Shopping, Secondary Shopping and Mixed Use Area boundaries shown on the Proposals Map of the UDP must be progressed by Halton Borough Council, in conjunction with interested parties, as part of the forthcoming New Retail and Leisure Development Plan Document (DPD). Development control decisions will continue to be made on the basis of the approved development plan.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP2

Opportunities to enhance the environment and increase the localised population by infill residential development (including as part of appropriate mixed use schemes) should be identified and promoted.

- 5.7 Opportunities to increase the population living within and in and around the Old Town should be encouraged. An increased population will provide additional customers for convenience businesses, increase footfall and activity levels and provide for a more vibrant atmosphere.

Implementation

- 5.8 This SPD can only identify this issue. Any allocation of land for residential purposes must be progressed by Halton Borough Council, in conjunction with interested parties, as part of the forthcoming New Residential Development (DPD).

CONVENIENCE RETAIL ROLE

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP3

The Old Town centres role within its localised catchment as the dominant convenience centre should be protected and enhanced wherever possible.

Opportunities for additional convenience provision (in line with identified capacity) should be identified and promoted.

Implementation

- 5.9 The Council will exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development and/or change of use accord with the approved policies of the development plan. The Council will undertake periodic retail capacity studies to identify any quantitative or qualitative gaps in provision to inform the provision of up-to-date development plan policies (initially through the New Retail and Leisure DPD).

SPECIALIST RETAIL ROLE

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP4

The Old Town centre should build upon its strong complementary retail role to Halton Lea, providing a location for uses not well catered for within its larger neighbours, particularly retail services (e.g. hairdressers / estate agents / solicitors etc) and specialist or niche retailers, serving the needs of the whole community.

Implementation

- 5.10 The council will exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development and/or change of use accord with the approved policies of the development plan.

CULTURAL / LEISURE / ENVIRONMENTAL ROLE

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP5

The Old Town centre should build upon its strong complementary leisure role to Halton Lea, providing a location for uses not well catered for within its larger neighbour, particularly entertainment, leisure and food and drink. Opportunities exist building on the success of the Brindley Arts Centre to develop the cultural and leisure role of the centre creating a safe and attractive day and evening destination serving the needs of the whole community

(particularly those south of the Mersey) and reducing the need to travel out of the borough to competing destinations.

Implementation

- 5.11 The council will exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development and/or change of use accord with the approved policies of the development plan.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP6

The Canal Quarter and The Deck developments should facilitate the introduction of a new north / south activity corridor, incorporating Public Hall Street, capable of attracting and supporting food, drink and complementary uses building upon the successes of the Brindley Arts Centre, waterside environmental improvements and promoting the Old Town as a cultural, leisure and entertainment destination to the benefit of the whole community.

Implementation

- 5.12 The Council sees a strong opportunity for the development of enhanced leisure facilities within the centre, building upon the success of the Brindley Arts Centre and utilising the areas waterside frontages and other environmental assets.
- 5.13 The commercial and passive leisure developments and improvements at the Canal Quarter and The Deck / Promenade provide an opportunity to establish better links between the 2 waterside locations, helping to better integrate the centre as a whole and introducing a north-south leisure orientated activity corridor.
- 5.14 The Council will exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development and/or change of use accord with the approved policies of the development plan. The Council will undertake periodic retail capacity studies to identify any

quantitative of qualitative gaps in provision to inform the provision of up-to-date development plan policies (initially as the New Retail and Leisure DPD). The Council will further seek to use its powers and influence in conjunction with other stakeholders to promote suitable convenience goods developments beneficial to the centre as a whole.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP7

Opportunities to develop new leisure based activities based around or on the Bridgewater Canal, including developments associated with the potential re-opening of the Runcorn Locks and/or the creation of a second Cheshire (Canal) Ring should be encouraged and supported.

- 5.15 The Bridgewater Canal is navigable and provides valuable opportunities for waterborne and waterside leisure activities.
- 5.16 Revised access arrangements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge may remove the current highway that blocks the route of the Bridgewater Canal. Should this occur, the Council will support proposals for the re-instatement of this section of canal.,
- 5.17 In the longer term, there is the possibility of re-establishing the Runcorn Locks, linking Runcorn Basin with the Manchester Ship Canal and via the Weaver Navigation recreating a second 'Cheshire Ring'. Such a route is likely to be very attractive to leisure craft and holiday-makers. Runcorn basin would become a layover point for craft waiting to enter the lock 'staircase' creating opportunities for commercial activities to service the needs of waterborne and other visitors.

Implementation.

- 5.18 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure

proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policy GE29 of the Halton UDP places a presumption against development that would prejudice the operation or attractiveness of the canal environments.

AMENITY / ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP8

Improve pedestrian and cycling linkages within the centre and from surrounding areas by:

- **the enhancement of existing pedestrian and cycling routes; and**
- **the creation of new pedestrian footpaths within the centre, including along the proposed new north ~ south activity corridor from the Brindley Arts Centre to the Promenade.**

The Council will seek contributions for this from all new developments within the Old Town through planning obligations.

5.19 Recent improvements generated by the central area redevelopment have created the opportunity to fully integrate the different elements of the town centre. Further improvements to the footpath and cycle network are required to fully realise this aim.

Implementation:

5.20 The Council will seek planning obligations from all major new developments within the town centre areas to provide contributions towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment. This will include the improvement of linkages to surrounding areas by the enhancement of footpaths and cycle linkages.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP9

Development of sites incorporating or adjoining greenways should be in accordance with UDP Policy TP9.

5.21 The greenway network is made up of proposed and potential off road routes for walking, cycling and, where appropriate, horse-riding. These connect people to facilities and greenspaces.

Implementation:

5.22 Development of sites that incorporate a greenway will be expected to enhance the condition and appearance of proposed routes and implement potential routes. Where proposed development adjoins a greenway, extensions and improvements to the network will be sought through negotiation.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI0

The supply of safe and attractive short stay shopper's car parking is essential to the vitality of the centre. The Canal Quarter redevelopment and/or other schemes significantly affecting the existing provision or likely demand for parking should contribute to or conform to a comprehensive access and parking study. This study will also need to address issues of long stay parking for traders and commuters.

5.23 The supply of safe, convenient and attractive car parking for short stay shopping trips has been identified as a major issue for the centre. Almost a third of cars are parked for 7 or more hours, limiting the spaces available to other visitors during the day.

Implementation

5.24 Any development scheme likely to significantly alter the existing parking provision or the demand for parking spaces will be expected to contribute to, or conform to, a comprehensive Access and Parking Study.

5.25 The results of this Study will be used as a basis for informing the work of the proposed Parking Partnership. (See Policy SPI1)

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 1

Develop a Parking Partnership with all private car park operators within the centre that will review and monitor the demand for, provision and management of car parking spaces, .

- 5.26 The Local Transport Plan indicates that the Council will seek to develop a Parking Partnerships with private car parking operators. This is important in and around town centres where much of the car parking provision is in private rather than Council ownership, particularly in and around the Old Town.
- 5.27 Long stay parking, either by rail commuters or local shop staff is believed to be a significant issue affecting the centre. Long stay parking obviously restricts the availability and convenience of parking for shoppers and others visiting the centre during the day to conduct their business.



Southern section of Central area / Somerfield car park almost fully occupied by 8.45am.

- 5.28 The largest Council owned car park (to the rear of High Street) is scheduled for redevelopment. Whilst the Canal Quarter development will be expected to provide a level of replacement provision, this will probably be in private hands.

Implementation:

- 5.29 The Council will seek to facilitate the development of a co-ordinated approach to parking management within the centre by developing a Parking Partnership,

involving the main parking providers within the centre.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 2

Environmental and frontage improvements secured through the previous SRB programme should be maintained and where possible enhanced by public and private sector partners and stakeholders as appropriate.

- 5.30 The frontage improvements secured during the SRB programme continue to have a beneficial effect on the centre, with very few individual shop fronts being adjudged to be of poor quality.

Implementation

- 5.31 The Council will exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development and/or change of use accord with the approved policies of the development plan (including the recently adopted Shop Fronts, Advertisements and Signage SPD).
- 5.32 The Council will administer its Shop Fronts Grants Scheme to award grants to partially fund qualifying enhancements.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 3

All new developments must include secure, concealed bin storage, and all existing units will be encouraged to create secure, concealed bin storage areas.

- 5.33 Secure, concealed bin storage areas are required within the town centre to reduce the risk of arson and to improve the general appearance of the area.
- 5.34 The cleanliness and maintenance of the town centre is one of the most visible measures of how well the centre is being cared for. Many people subjectively measure the quality of the area according to how well litter and refuse are collected. The public will no

longer tolerate litter, disrepair and a generally un-cared for environment.

Implementation:

5.35 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policy BE1 of the Halton UDP requires that development must be designed to minimise the risk of crime (2e); must not cause unacceptable pollution or nuisance (2f) and must provide for waste storage and collection in a suitably screened and enclosed area (6e).

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 4

Increase in quality and quantity of public art within the Old Town, town centre.

5.36 Halton UDP policy BE2 states that development should take account of the provision of public art and the integration of art and craft work into the design of the development scheme. Supporting text to the policy explains that the Council will actively encourage developers to spend a percentage of the total development cost or a fixed amount of money on providing art and craftwork and on seeking the influence of artists and craft skills alongside architects and building professionals, to ensure integration of art and craftwork features as an essential part of the design.

5.37 Public art is particularly important within town centres as it contributes to improving the quality of the environment. Good public art helps create a sense of place, identity and community, it also adds to the cultural capital of a locality, all vital to making a town centre an attractive and vibrant place to visit. Public art embraces many aspects of the public realm including sculptures, murals, water features and lighting. It can stand alone or be incorporated into the design of buildings and spaces around them, such as through the use of decorative boundary treatments or patterned floorscapes.

Implementation:

5.38 In accordance with UDP policy BE2, the Council will seek all new development (including change of use), within the centre, to allocate 1% of the total development costs (defined as construction costs) towards the enhancement of public art within the Old Town. The one percent approach is a standard national and international recognised figure. This will be required to be either directly provided on or off site; or via a commuted sum towards the provision of public art in the defined area. All public art must be demonstrated to be provided within a publicly accessible or visible locality, where appropriate, maintenance and other revenue implications will be taken into account when provision relates to a specific work of public art.

5.39 The Council is currently developing a public art strategy, this will provide further information on the provision of public art in Halton. This will identify key locations, such as gateways to the town centre, where commuted sums will be directed, and if necessary accumulated to ensure high quality public art is achieved.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 5

Provide a co-ordinated approach to the future provision of street furniture and ensure that it is usable by all members of the public, is well located and does not cause a safety issue. The Council will consider the development of a 'design palette' to secure uniformity to create a better visually more integrated centre.

5.40 The provision of street furniture needs to be well managed and coordinated. It will also need to be durable, easy to maintain and fit for purpose, and placed with consideration to ensure that it will contribute to the aesthetic and functional qualities of public spaces. The Designing for Community Safety

SPD provides further advice and guidance on these matters.

5.41 Furthermore, the use of a co-ordinated 'design palette' will help visually integrate the centre, reduce visual clutter and produce a more welcoming environment.

Implementation:

5.42 The Council can assist in the provision of a co-ordinated approach to the provision of high quality street furniture within and around the Old Town.

5.43 The Council will seek planning obligations from all new developments within the town centre to provide monies towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of high quality and co-ordinated street furniture.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 6

Key points of vehicular and pedestrian access into the town centre should be enhanced with attractive entrance features such as landscaping, art forms or other 'gateway' features.

5.44 These gateways should also be well linked to the town centre through the use of appropriate routes, signage and lighting.

5.45 Key vehicular and cycle 'gateways' include:

- Bridge Street
- Leiria Way
- Greenway Road / Devonshire Place
- Station Road / Devonshire Place

Additional key pedestrian access 'gateways' include:

- High Street Bus Station
- Bridgewater Canal footbridge
- Bridgewater Canal towpaths
- St. John's Brow
- Victoria Road / Runcorn Spur Road underpass
- Mersey Road (from College)
- Station Road (from train station)

Key internal nodes, sub-zone interfaces include;

- High Street / Church Street junction
- Church Street / Granville Street / King Street
- Regent Street
- High Street / Canal Quarter routes
- Central Area Car Park / entrances.
- The Mound site / Brindley Plaza (subject to future development).

5.46 The overall importance and significance of key gateways into and out of town centres are often overlooked.

5.47 The first impressions of visitors to the town centre, whether arriving by car, public transport, on foot or bicycle is of great importance. The quality and appearance of approach routes and the outer edge that the town centre presents to the 'outside world' are crucial to the formation of a positive town centre image and identity.

Implementation:

5.48 In its role as both highways authority and local planning authority the Council will seek to improve these gateways into the town centre, to make the town centre more attractive to both pedestrians and car users.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 7

All new developments should make suitable provision for safe and convenient cycle access linked to existing or proposed routes (where opportunities exist) and provide for convenient, safe, secure and covered cycle parking that is likely to be attractive to potential users in line with UDP Policy TP6.

5.49 This will encourage the greater use of this more sustainable form of transport and should ensure that any bicycles are safe from theft and are not causing a hazard to other road/footpath users.

5.50 Where provision of cycle lockers is not practicable, for reasons of security, 'Sheffield' style bicycle racks will be required in preference to the less secure 'butterfly' designs.

Implementation:

5.51 Where the development proposed requires off-site access improvements or the development is incapable or unsuitable for the on-site provision of cycle parking either due to site constraints or highway safety issues, payment in lieu of on-site provision as part of a planning obligation may be acceptable.

5.52 Further information with regard to cycle storage, facilities and networks will be provided in the forthcoming Transport and Accessibility SPD.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 8

Improve directional signage to and within the town centre. All signage should be co-ordinated to ensure a consistent approach is taken to design, location and naming across the town centre.

5.53 Road linkages into and around the Old Town can be very confusing for visitors. The problems created by interlinking the original highway network to the newer bridge approaches, expressways and busways and traversing the canal, utilising have created a number of confusing routes and junctions.

5.54 This can made it very difficult for visitors to find there way into the centre and then gain a sense of where they are in relation to other parts of the centre or how to find their way back out. Whilst some improvements have taken place already to improve accessibility, better directional signage would be beneficial both in terms of updating and further additions.

5.55 The development of the Mersey Gateway Bridge (MGB) and the resultant de-coupling of the Silver Jubilee Bridge will prompt a comprehensive overhaul of the

current key vehicular access points, which should streamline the arrangements.

Implementation:

5.56 Halton Borough Council will seek planning obligations from all new developments within the town centre to provide monies towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of appropriate signage.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SPI 9

Applications for new development, likely to attract significant visitor numbers (particularly during evening hours) will be expected to provide locations for, or contribute towards, the maintenance or enhancement of the centres CCTV security system to the benefit of the public safety and the operation of the centre as a whole.

5.57 The provision of CCTV coverage helps both in deterring crime and anti-social behaviour and in reducing the fear of crime.

5.58 New development may aid the provision of an effective CCTV network by providing mounting or fixing points for cameras or contributing to the provision of the service. This matters is dealt with in more detail in the Community Safety SPD.

Implementation

5.59 Halton Borough Council will seek planning obligations from all new developments within the town centre likely to attract significant visitor numbers (particularly during evening hours) to provide monies towards the creation of a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of appropriate signage.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP20

All developments should comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDAs).

5.60 There are Disability Discrimination Acts (DDAs) of 1995 and 2005. The need to comply with the DDA should be considered as inherent within all policies that promote development within the centre where there is access to buildings and public areas. There is also a need to comply with the DDA for improvements that are outwith of the planning system, for example in relation to existing buildings. Consideration should be given to the requirements of DDA in the early stages of drawing up a proposal, alongside access requirements identified by UDP policies BE18-20.

Implementation:

5.61 Initial contact regarding DDA should be with the Council's Building Control Service, details of which are given at Appendix A.

STRATEGIC POLICY: SP21

Recycling facilities should be rationalised and / or improved.

5.62 Currently there are public recycling facilities located to the rear of Somerfield in the Central Area Car Park and a smaller facility at Lieria Way Car Park.

5.63 The Leiria Way facility in particular is not ideal, having a limited capacity and would benefit from replacement or improvement. This policy does not preclude the development of additional recycling facilities, as appropriate, in connection with further developments.

Implementation:

5.64 The Council will seek opportunities, possibly in conjunction with existing operators or new developments to secure the rationalisation or improvement to recycling facilities provided within the centre.

6 Sub Areas Analysis

6.1 Runcorn Town Centre comprises of a number of distinct areas :

- **Church Street** is the principal shopping street in the Old Town, providing accommodation for a range of traders mostly in 1960's style 2 storey, custom built shop units.
- **Central Area** is the recently reconfigured area between Church Street and High Street including new premises for Somerfields, Price Freeze and the Indoor Market Hall together with substantial open parking and the reconfigured bus station;
- **Regent Street and western approaches;** comprises of the historic, now secondary retail frontages on Regent Street with predominately residential areas behind, including interspersed community uses
- **Bridge Street and eastern approaches;** comprises of the secondary retail frontages on eastern High Street, with predominately residential areas beyond with interspersed community and commercial uses along Bridge Street;
- **High Street,** contains a mix of historic and more modern buildings housing a mix of predominately commercial and service uses;
- **Canal Quarter and southern fringes** comprises of underused land on either bank of the Bridgewater Canal to the rear of High Street. This is a key development opportunity site that the Council is currently seeking to promote for mixed uses with its selected development partner.

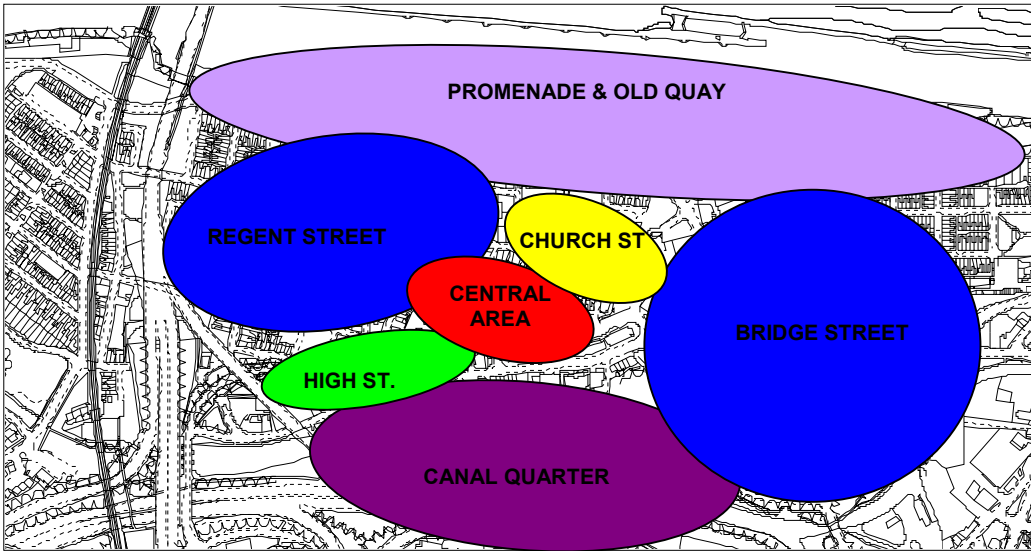
- **Promenade and The Deck,** is the northern extent of the town centre fronting the Manchester Ship Canal with the River Mersey beyond. The area encompasses the recently improved promenade stretching to Dukesfield to the west and Bryant Homes "The Deck" residential development site extending to the east.

6.2 Each of the sub areas have been considered in more detail in the next section. They have all been set out in a similar format. This entails explaining the current situation in terms of details of the present condition of the sub-area and existing planning policy. From the issues for the centre that have been identified, Policy Proposals and their implementation strategies are promoted to overcome these issues.

6.3 As indicated at paragraph 5.4, as a Supplementary Planning Document, this Town Centre Strategy is unable to formally designate sites for development.

6.4 It is able to identify development principles for existing opportunities (such as UDP allocations and planning permissions). Sites that are identified as new opportunities can, if necessary, be taken forward as designations through a future Development Plan Document (DPD).

6.5 The map below shows the separate town centres areas with the clear focus around Church Street, Central Core and High Street.



Runcorn Old Town Sub-areas.

7 Church Street

7.1 Church Street was designated as the Primary Shopping Area within the UDP, with Policy TC8 limiting units for class A2 (financial & professional services), A3 (food & drink)² and other appropriate not-retail town centre uses to approximately 20% of outlets with a restriction against more than 2 adjacent non-retail uses.

7.2 There are currently³ 6 non-retail units within the defined primary shopping area on Church Street limiting the scope for further diversification.

7.3 Running east to west, Church Street forms the retail heart of the Old Town. Prior to the relocation of Kwik Save (now re-branded Somerfield) it contained the centres' main food and convenience goods retail provision.



Typical unit :
Church Street
North West
frontage

Typical unit :
Church Street
North East
frontage



7.4 The street consists of 1960's style 2 storey retail units to the north, the easternmost having flat roofs and the westernmost having brick fascias to the second floor and traditional pitched roofs. These units, whilst being visually nondescript, appear mostly well maintained and offer modern accommodation (including rear

servicing) and house a mix of national multiple and independent traders. This area forms the backbone of the centres offer for day-to-day shopping needs.



Church Street :
Southern units
showing uniform
frontage treatment

Church Street
South side unit
with non- standard
Frontage treatment



7.5 The southern side of the street comprises of 19th century 2 and 3 storey buildings, which are mostly well maintained and have benefited from, part publicly funded, improvements to the ground floor fascias. These units are typically smaller than those opposite and house a range of mostly independent traders including a range of service providers.

7.6 The street comprises a traffic-calmed road with approximately 39 on-street short stay parking spaces. The road layout whilst not fully pedestrianised does incorporate traffic calming design elements and appears to represent an appropriate balance between access and the shopping environment. The unified paving treatment and decorative street furniture are attractive and of high quality.

7.7 Whilst there are no dedicated cycle routes accessing Church Street, there are 'Sheffield style' cycle racks accommodated within the main pedestrian areas.

²Refers to Use Classes Order 1987 (superseded April 2006)

³HBC Retail Unit Survey (2005-06)



View westwards along Church Street showing street furniture, surface treatments and on-street parking provision

CHURCH STREET POLICY: CSI

Church Streets' role as the Primary Retail Area for day-to-day (convenience) goods within the Old Town should be maintained and enhanced wherever possible.

7.8 Strategic Policy: SPI states that the Council will revise the Primary (PSA) and Secondary Shopping Area (SSA) boundaries as part of a future Development Plan Document (DPD). This review may affect the units on the fringes of Church Street where it may be appropriate to allow other uses that support the wider strategy for the centre.

7.9 Notwithstanding this, the majority of Church Street represents the retail core for day-to-day shopping needs and the Council will seek to maintain its vitality and viability.

Implementation.

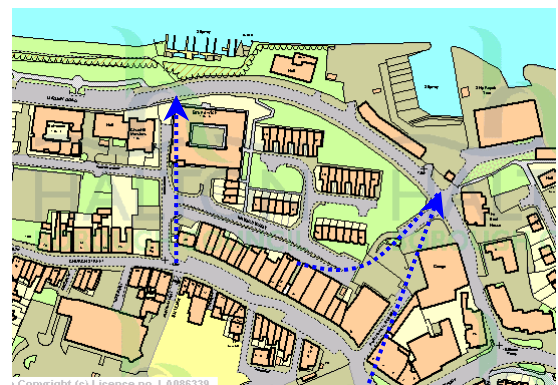
7.10 The Council will monitor land-uses within this area and planning applications for change of use will be judged against the approved policies in the development plan.

CHURCH STREET: CS2

Pedestrian routes from Church Street northwards to the Promenade and southwards to the bus station, new retail market development and beyond should be improved and upgraded as part of any scheme of development within these areas.

7.11 A key element of this strategy is to improve north south pedestrian linkages with the route between the Canal Quarter and The Deck having potential to become a key activity corridor accommodating leisure opportunities.

7.12 The recent central area developments have only been partially successful in creating a cohesive hub to the centre and the pedestrian links from Church Street would benefit from further improvements. Pedestrian linkages from the bus station to Church Street are particularly unattractive and detract from the image of the centre.



Possible pedestrian routes to Promenade.

Implementation.

7.13 The Council will expect any proposals for redevelopment affecting or adjoining key pedestrian routes to enhance the street scene and fully consider the needs of the pedestrian, providing safe and attractive through routes across the centre.

CHURCH STREET POLICY: CS3

Re-use of 19~23 Church Street for A1 (Retail), A3 (Restaurant / Café) or A4 (Drinking Establishments)

uses is preferable and will be supported.

7.14 No.19~23 Church Street is an imposing art-deco style building that though in need of significant improvements retains many original features, including turned mullions, decorative transoms, stall risers and a feature curved glass corner window. The building has most recently been used as a furniture showroom and general goods store, but has a history of A4 uses having previously been the Blue Lagoon club.

7.15 The development opportunities presented by the underused units at the eastern end of Church Street, may be fundamental to achieving the wider vision of Runcorn Old Town as a cultural and leisure destination.



19~23 Church Street.

Implementation.

7.16 The Council will support re-use of this building for A1 retail use and will consider favourably any planning application for change of use for A3 (Restaurant / Café), A4 (Drinking Establishments) or other use that would support the day-time economy or the establishment of the leisure based activity corridor (subject to other policy provisions of the approved development plan).

CHURCH STREET POLICY: CS4

Notwithstanding Policy 03, whilst 19~23 Church Street is an interesting building and its'

retention would be preferable, it is not listed, presents a blank frontage to the eastern approach and its' retention should not stand in the way of any redevelopment proposals should it prove unattractive or uneconomic for future re-use. Upper floor uses will be expected to complement or be compatible with the full range of ground floor uses proposed.

Implementation.

7.17 The Council will support the redevelopment of this site for A1 retail use and will consider favourably any proposals for change of use for A3 (Restaurant/Café), A4 (Drinking Establishments) or other use, or mixed uses, that would support the daytime economy or the establishment of the leisure based 'activity corridor' (subject to other policy provisions of the approved development plan). Any proposals for redevelopment will be expected to be of high quality in accordance with policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the UDP.

CHURCH STREET POLICY: CS5

The redevelopment of the No. 48~50 at the western end of Church Street presents an opportunity to create a landmark building and create an improved sense of place close to the junction with Granville Street (and the link through to the Market and central car park.

7.18 This site occupies a prominent location at the western end of the main pedestrian area of Church Street, and its redevelopment presents an opportunity to create a landmark building, of suitable massing (3 or 4 storeys), preferably with 'active' commercial uses to the ground floor.



Shapers Hair, 48~50 Church Street.
Consent for 3 & 4 storey landmark building.

Implementation.

7.19 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

CHURCH STREET POLICY: CS6

Re-use of 4~8 Church Street for A1 (Retail), A3 (Restaurant / Café) or A4 (Drinking Establishments) uses will be supported. Upper floor uses will be expected to complement or be compatible with the full range of ground floor uses proposed.

7.20 No.s 4~8 Church Street occupy an important position within the centre sitting at the heart of the north~south axis between the Canal Quarter and The Deck on the interface between the primary retail area on Church Street and the secondary frontages fronting Bridge Street.

7.21 The units are currently occupied by Church Street Café/Wine Bar (No.8), the former Tourist Information Centre (No.6) and the Co-operative Funeral Services (No.4).⁴ The upper floors to no.s 6 and 8 contain office space occupied by community organisations; however, the accommodation is believed to be difficult to upgrade to

modern accessibility and service standards.

7.22 The future use of units on this site may be fundamental to achieving the wider vision of the Old Town as a cultural and leisure destination.

Implementation.

7.23 The Council will support re-use of this location for A1 retail use and will consider favourably any planning application for changes of use for A3 (Restaurant/Café), A4 (Drinking Establishments) or other use that would support the day-time and evening economy or the establishment of the leisure based activity corridor (subject to other policy provisions of the approved development plan). Upper floor uses will be expected to be compatible with the full range of ground floor uses proposed.

CHURCH STREET POLICY: CS7

Proposals to increase the visibility of the New Market Hall from the main shopping areas in Church Street will be supported.



Views of Market Hall from Church Street.

7.24 The Market Hall and central core retail development is not highly visible from Church Street. Prominent, feature signage, gateway arches or street

⁴ Halton Retail Unit Survey

furniture could be used to highlight linkages and better tie the retail zones together.

Implementation.

- 7.25 Proposals for improving the visibility of the retail market from the adjoining retail areas, particularly Church Street, will be supported.

- 7.26 Proposals could include improved signage, paving treatments or the creation of interlinked public focal points (perhaps including public art). Proposals should be of a high quality and actively add to the street scene.

8 Central Area

8.1 The Central area has been subject to various redevelopment schemes over the years. The most recent SRB funded program reclaimed land previously given over to the grandiose busway interchange, creating a new more compact bus station (to the east), new premises for the Council's Direct Link (One-Stop-Shop), new retail stores housing the relocated Kwik Save (now re-branded Somerfield), Cool Trader and a number of as yet un-let retail units (to the north), a new indoor market hall together with an enlarged and reconfigured central car park, incorporating a taxi rank.



New Kwik Save store (now rebranded Somerfield) on Central Redevelopment site with canopy entrance feature to Indoor Market Hall on pedestrianised Granville Street visible to the right.

8.2 The central core now represents the main point of arrival for those travelling by bus, taxi or private car.

8.3 The new Somerfield with its adjacent customer car park provides the centre with a much-needed convenience anchor store, which should attract new customers to the centre, increasing patronage and thereby adding to the centres overall vitality and viability. The site contains the main central shoppers parking area (though issues exist regarding commuter parking on this site).

8.4 This redevelopment has provided the opportunity to re-establish attractive pedestrian links between Church Street and High Street, helping unify the centre around a new core without sacrificing accessibility. This will help integrate and connect the proposed Canal Quarter development with the rest of the centre.

CENTRAL AREA POLICY: CA1

The development of the remaining undeveloped site fronting High Street presents a number of challenges that the design must address. Any development proposal will be expected to:

- a) relate well to the new retail units to the north, including providing a safe and attractive pedestrian route between Granville Street and the bus station;
- b) relate well to the buildings and redevelopment on the opposite side of High Street in the Canal Quarter;
- c) accommodate an enhanced pedestrian route running north-south along Granville Street linking the Market / Somerfield frontages to High Street (and beyond); and
- d) avoid presenting blank frontages onto main pedestrian routes.

8.5 It is important to deliver a quality redevelopment or environmental improvements to the remaining central site as this is currently detracting from the wider central core improvements. Being centrally located in a highly visible and accessible location the site presents a significant opportunity and a significant design challenge.

Implementation.

- 8.6 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

CENTRAL AREA POLICY: CA2

The Council will support proposals that enhance the operational efficiency, convenience and attractiveness to passengers of the centre's bus station facilities.

- 8.7 The bus station is an essential component of a vital and vibrant town centre and the current facility is conveniently located to serve most uses. The current bus stations layout has recently been improved to aid buses accessing and egressing individual bays, however operational issues regarding buses entering and exiting the site remain.
- 8.8 The current layout is somewhat compromised by providing access and screening to the semi-enclosed service yard on Alcock Street. A public entrance to the Market Hall, and short cuts to Church Street create informal pedestrian routes through this backland area, presenting those alighting from buses at this principle access gateway with a poor first impression of the centre.

Implementation.

- 8.9 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

CENTRAL AREA POLICY: CA3

Any development of the remaining undeveloped site fronting High Street should have regard to the requirements for the future

operational development of the adjacent bus station site.

- 8.10 Together, the bus station, Alcock Street service area and the central area redevelopment site present developers with the opportunity to bring forward a comprehensive scheme for this highly visible, accessible site, improving facilities for public transport, localised servicing arrangements and pedestrian routes whilst delivering an enhanced commercial development package.
- 8.11 The Council expect any development proposals within this area to have given full regard to the possibilities for a comprehensive development package involving the wider area. To this end developers will be expected to have consulted fully with the Council, and other relevant stakeholders, prior to submission of development proposals to ensure that their proposals represent the most efficient use of these central areas.

Implementation.

- 8.12 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

CENTRAL AREA POLICY: CA4

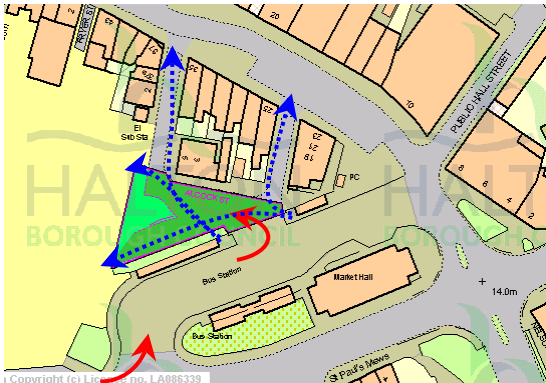
Key pedestrian routes linking Church Street to High Street and beyond should be protected and wherever possible enhanced:

- a) **Granville Street:** The northern section of this street has been pedestrianised and now forms the principle pedestrian through-route from Church Street to the new indoor market and Somerfield units. The southern section of the street runs along the side of the main access to the central car park to the west of the remaining central development site.



Entrance to central car park with Kwik Save now Somerfield (left), Indoor Market entrance canopy (central) and Cool Trader (right) on alignment of Granville Street.

- b) Alcock Street / Vicar Street:** These routes currently provide valuable but rather substandard pedestrian routes between Church Street and the bus station.



Alcock Street Service Yard (Green), vehicle access through bus station (red) and pedestrian routes from bus station (Blue)



View of Alcock Street 'service yard' from bus station.

- c) Princess Street:** Princess Street affords a valuable but less attractive pedestrian route from the rear of the car park (behind Somerfields service yard and recycling centre) to the

western end of Church Street. This has the look and feel of being very much secondary route but provides a valuable cut-through.



Views north and south along Princess Street. Secondary pedestrian route around Somerfield to western Church Street.

Implementation.

- 8.13 The Council will expect any proposals for redevelopment affecting or adjoining key pedestrian routes to enhance the streetscene and fully consider the needs of the pedestrian, providing safe and attractive through routes across the centre.

9 Regent Street and western approaches.

- 9.1 Regent Street and the western fringes of the centre comprise a predominately secondary retail and commercial area and transition zone to the residential areas to the west.
- 9.2 Regent Street and western Church Street comprise of a number of small retail units, many apparently converted from an original residential use. The area is allocated as part of the Secondary Shopping Area in the Halton UDP. The policy seeks to restrict A2 (professional services) and A3 (food & drink) and other appropriate town centre uses to no more than about 50% of outlets. The current ratio of such units within this area currently stands at approximately 30%.⁵
- 9.3 Regent Street comprises about 30, small, 2 storey shop units, which are generally of good quality, housing a mix of uses including specialist retail traders, retail services (hairdressers / tanning salons etc.), and hot food take-aways. At 2005 there were only 2 vacancies and 1 charity shop present.
- 9.4 Church Street narrows as it heads westwards away from the Primary Retail Area having a mixture of mostly 2 and 3 storey buildings in a mix of uses, including A3 (Food and Drink), retail service uses and Charity shops and specialist retail. Commercial uses on the north side of Church Street do not extend west of Regent Street with this area being a landscaped buffer to the primary school behind.
- 9.5 With a few exceptions, the units on Church Street to the east of Regent Street are mostly in good or excellent condition aided by take up of the Council's shop front improvement scheme. The quality of the units to the west of this point is poorer with a few poor frontages.
- 9.6 Regent Street slopes uphill from its junction with Church Street to Devonshire Place (the key western gateway and primary access point to the town centre). The roadway has been converted to one way running (uphill from Church Street) and includes valuable on-street short stay parking places provided to one side of the carriageway along most of its length. In addition to the pedestrian access at either end of the street, there is a link through to the revamped central area car park.
- 9.7 Bridgewater Street, behind and broadly parallel to Regent Street carries one-way traffic in the opposite direction (i.e. downhill from Devonshire Place) and provides the thoroughfare for traffic heading to Church Street (retail) and Dukesfield (residential) from the south and west via Station Road and Greenway Road.
- 9.8 The area to the west of Bridgewater Street mainly comprises of residential areas (with some interspersed commercial uses) arranged around a basic grid road layout including traffic calming and some one-way running.

REGENT STREET POLICY: RSI

Key pedestrian routes linking Regent Street to Church Street, High Street and the central retail area should be protected and wherever possible enhanced.

- 9.9 Whilst Regent Street contains its own on-street parking provision and many of the units serve a predominately evening trade, connectivity with the rest of the centre (including the access to the central area parking / shopping areas) are important for the areas continued success. The pedestrian link-through

⁵ 2005 Halton Retail Unit Survey

to the revamped central area car park is particularly valuable. This area would however benefit from some cosmetic improvement.



Regent Street / Kwik Save car park linkway

Implementation.

- 9.10 The Council, through the exercise of its Development Control powers and powers as the Highways Authority will seek to protect and where appropriate improve the pedestrian connectivity of Regent Street with the surrounding commercial and residential areas.

REGENT STREET POLICY: RS2

The ‘gap site’ at 57-61 Church Street represents a development opportunity site. The Council will support its development for suitable uses as defined in the development plan.

- 9.11 The building frontage on Church Street has been punctured by the removal of units on the corner of Loch Street and this area is now used as an informal private parking area accommodating in the region of 15 vehicles. This is a development opportunity site and would appear suitable for a wide range of uses including A3 (Restaurant/Café), A4 (Drinking Establishment), A5 (Hot food take-away), or A2/B1 office type uses.

Implementation.

- 9.12 Development of this site will be for the private market. The Council will exercise its development control powers.

REGENT STREET POLICY: RS3

Proposals for the redevelopment of the library site (Egerton Street) should either:

- a) Provide for a sympathetic re-use of the existing building; or
- b) Investigate the possibility of marrying this site with adjacent land holdings, potentially incorporating the adjacent former College Annex buildings and open car park land to form a comprehensive development package.

- 9.13 The Council has been investigating opportunities to relocate the library to newer premises in a more central, accessible location. The current Egerton Street site is therefore liable to become redundant and available for alternative uses.

- 9.14 The site together with the adjoining community centre, former Halton College Annex and Egerton Street car park present a significant opportunity for a comprehensive commercial or residential conversion or redevelopment. Such development could, if possible, provide for the retention of the existing attractive Victorian buildings or their facades.



Library / former College site, Egerton Street.
Potential development site.

Implementation.

- 9.15 The Council as partial landowner will seek to secure a suitable alternative use for the library site should the library facility be relocated.

10 Bridge Street and eastern approaches

- 10.1 Bridge Street and the eastern approaches extend eastwards from the cross roads created by High Street, Church Street and Leiria Way.
- 10.2 Retail units extend eastwards downhill for approximately 60m along High Street, comprising of 2 and 3 storey 1960's style blocks on the southern frontage with a mix of 1960's style units and older properties on the north.
- 10.3 The units on the south of the road mostly house service outlets (employment agencies etc) along with 1 restaurant and 1 hot food take-away with a gym across the upper floor. There is a post office on the corner with Leiria Way. Buildings of this style of construction are known to often suffer from a poor physical fabric and therefore may be expected to have a limited commercial lifespan.
- 10.4 The northern units include 2 large public houses (New York & The Last Orders Inn), a Chinese restaurant (above) a hot-food take away, off licence, and upper floor gym and a hotel, all of which back onto the Sefton House (Public Hall Street) service yard.



The New York & Last Orders Inn,
(North Eastern) High Street

- 10.5 The area was allocated as part of the Secondary Shopping Area in the Halton UDP. The policy seeks to restrict A2 (professional services) and A3 (food & drink)⁶ and other appropriate town centre uses to no more than about 50% of outlets. The current ratio⁷ of such units within this area currently stands at approximately 83%.
- 10.6 High Street gives way to the block paved Bridge Street that winds its way uphill past residential properties to the south and a decoratively paved St Johns Mews square and the public swimming baths to the north. Mersey Road heads north to the Promenade and The Deck development site.
- 10.7 Further to the east lies a mix of established traditional, new town and modern infill housing developments, including the recently completed (Persimmon Homes) Linnets Park development.
- 10.8 Bridge Street has excellent accessibility lying on the principal access routes from the east and the new Leiria Way access road from the Daresbury Expressway. The central bus station lies opposite the area, across Church Street.
- 10.9 There is on-street parking on either side of High Street and a council operated free car park sits behind the units on the south side of High Street. An informal taxis rank operates in front of the New York public house.
- 10.10 There is little further development opportunity on the principal frontages in this area. However the area is situated in the heart of the proposed new activity corridor stretching between 'The Deck' redevelopment to the north and the Canal Quarter to the south.

⁶ Refers to Use Classes Order 1987 (superseded April 2006)

⁷ Halton Retail Unit Survey 2005/06

This presents an opportunity for new development along the route between these 2 sites, with the underused area around Public Hall Street offering particular scope for the creation of a new link route, which could support new A3 (Restaurant/Café), A4 (Drinking Establishments) and complementary uses, thereby combining with the existing leisure provision on High Street to create a circuit.

BRIDGE STREET POLICY: BS1

The Council will seek to establish a direct pedestrian footpath between The Deck (Mersey Street) and Church Street.

10.11 As part of the planning approval for the Deck residential development, the developers will make a financial contribution towards the establishment of an improved pedestrian footpath linkage between the site and the town centre immediately to the south.

10.12 Ideally, the Council would like to see this proposed footpath run to the northern end of Public Hall Street, establishing a direct and attractive pedestrian link. Unfortunately, the land required to implement this direct route is not fully in Council control, and as such a less preferable route via Water Street may have to be implemented.

Implementation.

10.13 The Council will endeavour to secure the best practicable alignment for the improved footpath linkage between the Deck and Church Street.

BRIDGE STREET POLICY: BS2

The Council will support proposals for development and conversions to suitable uses in support of the development of a leisure corridor between the Canal Quarter and The Deck. Upper floor uses will be expected to complement or be compatible with the full range of ground floor uses proposed.

10.14 The Council has supported the redevelopment of the Canal Quarter and The Deck, as being intrinsic elements of the wider town centre renaissance. The redevelopment of these areas should be fully integrated into the wider centre and form key attractions at either end of a new activity corridor.

10.15 The Council will seek to secure improvements to the axis between these two major development sites and considers that Public Hall Street offers an ideal opportunity to establish a direct pedestrian link supporting an enhanced leisure quarter.



Public Hall Court (Sefton House)
Possible conversion to A3 and A4 uses.



Courtyard to rear of Public Hall Court (Sefton House). Potential to be used as open air bistro area / 'beer garden'.



Rear of The Last Orders Inn
With access from courtyard to rear of Sefton House
(Photo 18)

10.16 National pub chain, JD Wetherspoons has recently opened new public house (The Ferry Inn), including a rear beer garden at the heart of this axis in the former Kwik Save unit on the corner of Church Street / Public Hall Street.

10.17 The rear courtyard to Sefton House, appears to offer particular opportunities to establish an open-air 'bistro type' area, possibly linked to or shared between a number of units on Public Hall Street, Bridge Street and Mersey Street. To a lesser extent, Public Hall Street is a cul-de-sac that could also lend itself to being given over an open-air 'bistro type' area, during certain periods of the week (*Subject to Highways Orders and Licensing*).

10.18 The other existing buildings along Public Hall Street appear to be of little particular architectural merit and their demolition and replacement could be appropriate should they prove unsuitable for conversion. However given their positioning and basic form, it seems most likely that they could be retained and incorporated into an attractive and characterful development involving improvements to the street scene and lighting.

[Implementation.](#)

10.19 The development of this site will be for the private market.

[BRIDGE STREET POLICY: BS3](#)

The Council will support a suitable comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the units fronting Bridge Street and Leiria Way provided that the resultant development provides:

- a) **an improved elevational and corner treatments, particularly to the key Bridge Street / Church Street intersection;**
- b) **for uses in conformity to the prevailing development plan policy;**
- c) **active frontages onto Bridge Street;**

- d) **a more efficient use of the site (potentially including a single large space user on the upper level accessed from the higher southern elevation); and**
- e) **sufficient parking spaces to service the development in accordance with Highway Authority requirements.**

10.20 With the redevelopment of the Canal Quarter including the proposed removal of the corner 'mound' and its replacement with active uses, the site currently occupied by Leiria Way Car Park should increase in prominence and with increased activity in the area, may become an attractive development site. Together with the adjacent units fronting High Street, potential exists for the creation of a significant development parcel capable of exploiting the sites natural topography to accommodate retail units fronting High Street with a large space user fronting the rear car park above.

10.21 Any changes affecting parking provision will need to be considered in the light of the Access & Parking Study.

[Implementation.](#)

10.22 Development of this site will be for the private market.

[BRIDGE STREET POLICY: BS4](#)

The Council will consider favourably any proposals that individually or cumulatively can make better use of the section of busway between Bridge Street and Leiria Way, to the benefit of the wider area.

10.23 The section of busway between Bridge Street and Leiria Way appears to offer very little in the way of improved running times to bus operators. The route involves buses running a total distance of 500m, and negotiating the roundabout junction at Leiria Way. Only 40% of this route is dedicated busway, with the other 60% being shared with general traffic. The

removal of this section of busway would require buses to be diverted along Bridge Street, a distance of only 350m.



Aerial view of section of busway running parallel to north bank of Bridgewater Canal between Bridge Street and Leiria Way and former Petrol Filling Station that may be suitable for future housing development.

deemed necessary by the Highways Authority).

Implementation.

10.27 Development of this site will be for the private market.

10.24 The removal of the busway, could allow for a number of development options, with the busway corridor possibly developed individually or amalgamated with the adjacent (vacant) Bridge Street Petrol Filling Station site to create an opportunity site of approximately 1 ha. including over 200m of waterside frontage.

10.25 Acceptable uses are likely to be residential or commercial uses exploiting the canal side location. General retail uses will not be acceptable.

10.26 Any such development would be expected to:

- a) include suitable traffic control measures for buses entering and exiting the remaining busway at Bridge Street;
- b) incorporate any residual requirements for a through route between Bridge Street and Leiria Way, as determined necessary by the local Highways Authority;
- c) support the Bridgewater Way by providing upgraded public access along an improved towpath; and
- d) accommodate a replacement bus stop on the Bridge Street frontage (if

11 High Street

- 11.1 High Street is occupied by a mix of uses accommodated in a variety of building types and architectural styles. The daytime economy is dominated by A2 (professional services) uses comprising of banks, estate agents and solicitors. The evening economy comprises of 2 public houses, and a number of hot food takeaways.
- 11.2 The quality of the frontages along the street varies with the eastern end being dominated by the open central redevelopment site (see section 9) and the semi-derelict 3 storey building containing nos 59~69. The western end, particularly at its junction with Greenway Road / Devonshire Place contains a number of very attractive Victorian Buildings. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings and features located along the street.
- 11.3 The area was allocated in the Halton UDP under policy TC10: Runcorn Town Centre Mixed Use Area where a broad range of non-retail uses that contribute to the wider vitality of the centre will be allowed. The policy seeks to restrict retail uses as this area is intended to complement the shopping areas within the centre rather than compete with them as this would result in more dispersed retail function to the detriment of the centre as a whole
- 11.4 The area enjoys excellent accessibility being the main east-west route through the town centre linking directly with the main access points from the south. The centre's bus station; central car park and taxi rank are all accessed from High Street. A Council owned car park lies behind High Street accessed via a number of pedestrian routes (see Chapter 13). In addition, Runcorn's mainline Railway Station lies about a 5 minute walk to the south-west.
- 11.5 The development opportunities within this area are all inexorably linked to the future development of the Canal Quarter, lying immediately behind to the south. The Canal Quarter redevelopment will need to include certain of the properties currently fronting onto High Street. Precisely which buildings and what uses their sites will be put to will be determined as site feasibility studies and detailed design work is progressed. Successful implementation of the Canal Quarter scheme will act as a springboard for wider regeneration activities.
- 11.6 In addition, the proposed construction of the new Mersey Gateway Bridge will result in significant changes to the highway network and access routes into the Old Town as the Silver Jubilee Bridge is "de-coupled" from its high capacity feeder roads. This is likely to affect local traffic management and access arrangements and may result in additional development opportunities as land is released from highway use and other land has constraints from development lifted.
- 11.7 Another positive outcome from the revised bridge access arrangements may be the removal of the current highway blocking the former route of the Bridgewater Canal (west of Runcorn Basin to the head of Runcorn Locks) thereby creating the potential for this waterway to be re-instated.

HIGH STREET POLICY: HSI

The Council will support development that utilises or enhances the canal side environment, or supports waterborne leisure activities.

- 11.8 The Bridgewater Canal and Runcorn Basin provide a valuable asset for the town centre that is currently somewhat under-utilised.

11.9 The Council will support proposals for development around the canal that help deliver the aims of the Waterside Strategy and accord with UDP policy TC10. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought to support the 'Bridgewater Way' by providing upgraded public access along an improved towpath

Implementation.

11.10 The Council will expect any proposals for development affecting or adjoining the Bridgewater Canal to enhance leisure opportunities and fully consider the needs of the canal users, including providing for safe and attractive pedestrian access to the waterside.

HIGH STREET POLICY: HS2

The Council will consider favourably any proposals for the re-instatement of the Bridgewater Canal to the west of Runcorn Basin. The restoration of Runcorn Locks and the connection of the Bridgewater Canal to the Manchester Ship Canal / Weaver Navigation will be supported.

11.11 Revised access arrangements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge may remove the current highway that blocks the route of the Bridgewater Canal. Should this occur, the Council will support proposals for the re-instatement of this section of canal.,

11.12 In the longer term, there is the possibility of re-establishing the Runcorn Locks, linking Runcorn Basin with the Manchester Ship Canal and via the Weaver Navigation recreating a second 'Cheshire Ring'. Such a route is likely to be very attractive to leisure craft and holiday-makers. Runcorn basin would become a layover point for craft waiting to enter the lock 'staircase' creating opportunities for service industries to service the needs of waterborne and other visitors.

Implementation.

11.13 Development to implemented by the private sector.

HIGH STREET POLICY: HS3

87~89 High Street represents a development opportunity site. The Council will support its development for suitable uses as defined in the development plan.

11.14 87~89 Church Street has been lying vacant for some time. This is a development opportunity site with an attractive outlook over Runcorn Basin and would appear suitable for a range of uses. In 2005 consent was granted for the redevelopment of the site to accommodate 11 apartments.

11.15 An elevated highway 'off-ramp' from the Silver Jubilee Bridge passes very close to this site at about 3rd storey level and currently presents a technical and psychological constraint to its development. The future of this structure will be determined as part of a review of access arrangements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge following the opening of the Mersey Gateway Bridge.

Implementation.

11.16 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

HIGH STREET POLICY: HS4

The units at 79~83 High Street contain a number of vacancies and represents a significant development opportunity. The Council will support proposals for its comprehensive redevelopment for suitable uses as defined in the development plan.

11.17 The sites at the corner of High Street and Greenway Road / Devonshire Place lie outside of the Canal Quarter redevelopment area. This is however

an important gateway site for pedestrian and vehicular traffic entering the Old Town from the south.

11.18A development opportunity has arisen with the closure of two large facilities in this area; La Scala Bingo (No.79) and the Employment Service Offices (No. 83)

11.19 Whilst these sites are currently in different ownerships and may come forward for redevelopment individually, the Council considers that a comprehensive redevelopment package should a better outcome than piecemeal development on this site given its constrained vehicular access and differential heights.



La Scala Bingo which has approval for residential redevelopment plus Cheshire Building Society and former Job Centre offices (to right) which together present large development opportunity,

11.20 The Council expect any development proposals within this area to have given full regard to the possibilities for a comprehensive development package involving the wider area. To this end developers will be expected to have consulted fully with the Council, and other relevant stakeholders, prior to submission of development proposals to ensure that their proposals represent the most efficient use of this site.

Implementation.

11.21 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that

development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

HIGH STREET POLICY: HS5

42 High Street represents a development opportunity. The Council will support proposals for the re-use or redevelopment of this site. The site presents a number of challenges that any proposals for redevelopment must address. Redevelopment proposals will be expected to:

- a) **present an active frontage onto High Street;**
- b) **present an improved aspect, possibly incorporating an active ground floor frontage to the important pedestrian route along Granville Street;**
- c) **relate well to the buildings and redevelopment on the opposite side of High Street in the Canal Quarter;**
- d) **ensure that any rear servicing area from Loch Street is suitably screened from public view; and**
- e) **if possible and appropriate, provide a pedestrian route from Granville Street to Loch Street.**

11.22 No. 42 High Street is a reasonably sized, 3 storey building, previously occupied by ProntaPrint, which presents elevations to High Street, Granville Street and the central area (Somerfield) car park. The site lies within the Primary Shopping Area as defined in the Halton UDP, and would appear suitable for a number of retail or commercial uses.

11.23 Should the site come forward for redevelopment, any proposals must be carefully designed to maximise the sites location and fulfil its potential.

Implementation.

11.24 The council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan. Policies BE1, BE2

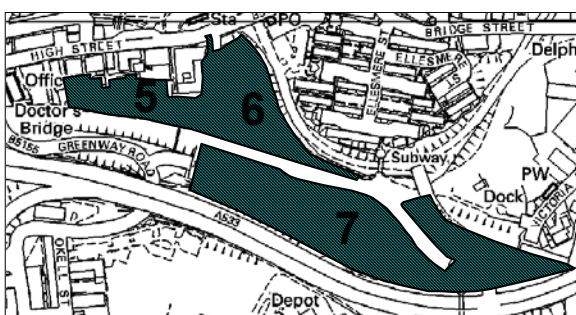
and BE3 of the Halton UDP require that development must be designed to a high standard having due regard to its setting.

12 Canal Quarter

12.1 The Canal Quarter straddles the Bridgewater Canal to the immediate south of the Old Town town centre including the backland area to the rear of High Street.

12.2 The area includes 3 areas allocated variously for retail and leisure uses in Halton UDP;

- Site 5: Rear of High Street.
- Site 6: Camden Gardens.
- Site 7: Crosville Bus Depot Site.



UDP Retail and Leisure Allocations

12.3 Site 6 now houses the multi-award winning Brindley Arts Centre, which offers a wide ranging programme of events including live theatre, music, participatory workshops and art-house cinema. The building respects the site topography (which slopes from the south) presenting its main entrance to the approach from High Street and including an upper level terrace café overlooking the canal to the north. The area between the Brindley and High Street is occupied by a large grassed mound that has been contoured create an informal amphitheatre facing the main entrance, but otherwise acts as a visual barrier, hiding the Brindley from much of the centre. A neon art installation mounted on top of the Brindley is mirrored by a similar street installation on High Street to provide a visual reference.



Matching Neon Installations on Roof of Brindley Arts Centre and mirrored opposite High Street vehicular access

12.4 Sites 5 and 7 represent key development opportunity sites for the delivery of the main strategic objectives of this Town Centre Strategy and will support wider aims and strategies of the Council and its strategic partners.

12.5 Development will be expected to build upon the successes of the Brindley Art Centre, fully utilise the environmental and leisure opportunities presented by the canal and contribute to the revitalisation of the centre as a whole.

12.6 In 2005 the Council undertook a developer competition to select a preferred development partner to devise and implement a suitable programme of redevelopment to rejuvenate the Canal Quarter, introducing new uses and creating a quality, well-connected environment where people will want to live, work and visit.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ1

The Council will work closely with its selected development partners, (or their successors) to achieve a comprehensive redevelopment of the Canal Quarter area to the benefit of the Old Town and the borough as a whole.

12.7 The Canal Quarter is the principal development in the Old Town and has the ability to build upon recent successes and transform the centre into a prime leisure and evening destination for the wider community, and together with the Deck development rejuvenate the centre by introducing new residential populations in the heart of the Old Town.

Implementation.

12.8 To be managed by the Council's Major Projects Team.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ2

The Council will, where necessary and appropriate, seek to use its compulsory purchase powers to ensure that land ownership constraints do not hinder the implementation and delivery of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Canal Quarter area.

12.9 The Canal Quarter is the principal development in the Old Town and is key to the delivery of the overall strategy and vision for the centre. The majority of the land holdings required for its delivery are in Council ownership, however, where necessary, the Council or its development partner may need to acquire additional land to fully realise the development. Where this cannot be secured through negotiation, the Council may seek to exercise its powers to compulsorily purchase the necessary land.

Implementation.

12.10 To be managed by the Council's Major Projects Team.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ3

The Canal Quarter development will be expected to contribute towards a comprehensive access and parking study for the centre as a whole and address the resulting issues in the detailed design and implementation of the scheme.

12.11 The redevelopment of the north bank sites, in particular which currently houses a large public car park, will have significant impact upon overall parking provision within the centre.

12.12 Issues regarding the attractiveness and availability of parking provision within the centre have already been identified. In order to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the centre as a retail and leisure destination it is important that it is perceived as convenient and accessible.

Implementation.

12.13 The Council will seek developer contributions towards an access and parking study for the Centre.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ4

The Canal Quarter development will be expected to provide parking spaces in accordance with Highway Authority standards. The development will be required to retain, or make alternative provision for a number of spaces throughout the construction phase. The number and location of such spaces will be informed by the Access and Parking Study and agreed with the Highway Authority prior to any existing spaces being lost to development.

12.14 The Canal Quarter north of the canal (Sites 5) currently houses a Council owned public car park providing approximately 190 free parking spaces. Originally provided as a temporary use over 20 years ago and subsequently extended, the spaces are well used and the proposed redevelopment proposals will need to address any issues around the loss or replacement of this provision, including during the construction phase.

Implementation.

12.15 The Council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord

with the approved policies of the development plan.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ5

The Council envisages a co-ordinated comprehensive approach to the delivery of the Canal Quarter scheme. The development will be expected to adhere to the development principles detailed in the ‘Runcorn Old Town Centre Canal Quarter Developer Competition Brief (January 2005) and must be of the highest standard of design, including imaginative and contemporary architectural styles that incorporates ‘iconic’ landmark buildings. Key elements of the scheme include:

- a) Extensive public realm improvements centred on the Brindley Arts Centre including improvements to the northern towpath, creation of a piazza / public square and removal /reconfiguration of the ‘mound’.
- b) North bank commercial and residential development. This will incorporate leisure and A3 (food & drink) uses originally envisaged being located on south bank site.
- c) deliver a new activity node based around the Brindley Arts Centre forming the southern extent of the new corridor of activity running via Public Hall Street towards the Promenade at The Deck. A suitable scheme of street lighting for the corridor and other improved pedestrian routes should be included.
- d) New or improved pedestrian footbridge linkages between the northern and southern canal banks.
- e) South Bank development. By relocating the intended leisure and A3 (food & drink) uses to the north bank, the south bank area is

expected to accommodate mostly residential development possibly with a hotel use included at the eastern end of the site, and a day nursery at the western end. The site should be self sufficient in terms of parking provision.

- 12.16 The delivery of the above elements may overlap or run concurrently, however it is expected that development of the southern site will not be progressed until substantive progress has been made on the delivery of the northern site.

Implementation.

- 12.17 A full phasing regime will be conditioned as part of the formal planning application process.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ6

All residential units within the Canal Quarter Development should be achieve the Code for Sustainable Homes, 4 star level or higher.

- 12.18 The Council considers the Canal Quarter to be an important flagship development. As part of the commitment to securing the highest quality of contemporary design across the site, residential units will be expected to achieve a minimum of 4 stars under the Code for Sustainable Homes Standard.
- 12.19 The previous EcoHomes Standard is being replaced with the Code for Sustainable Homes. The new system scores residential units under 6 categories;
- Energy / CO2
 - Water
 - Materials
 - Surface Water Run-off
 - Waste
 - Pollution
- 12.20 Points are awarded under each category and an overall star rating awarded (1~6). All dwellings on the site will be

expected to achieve a minimum of 4 stars with some units possibly scoring 5 or 6.

Implementation.

12.21 Achievement of a 4 star award under the Code for Sustainable Homes standard will be conditioned as part of the formal planning application process.

CANAL QUARTER POLICY: CQ7

The Canal Quarter development must create safe, attractive pedestrian and cycle routes through the site connecting to the wider pedestrian and cycle networks. Of particular importance are the linkages between :

a) The Brindley Arts Centre to Church St. / Public Hall St.:

The development is expected to create the southern section of the proposed 'corridor' linking key activity nodes at the Brindley Arts Centre towards the Promenade (via Public Hall Street)

b) Greenway Rd. to Granville St.:

The development is expected to create an attractive accessible route between, Greenway Road, across the canal (possibly utilising the existing footbridge) through the northern site to Granville Street.

c) Greenway Rd. to Alcock St.:

The development is expected to create an attractive accessible route between, Greenway Road, across the canal (possibly utilising the existing footbridge) through the northern site to Alcock Street.

d) Devonshire Place ~ Leiria Way:

The existing towpath along the northern side of the Bridgewater Canal should be respected and

where appropriate improved to form a safe, attractive and accessible pedestrian route for walkers and cyclists. Access to the towpath and the wider pedestrian and cycle network should be maximised wherever possible.



Vehicular access to Canal Quarter from High Street.



Existing pedestrian through routes which will need to be improved as part of development.

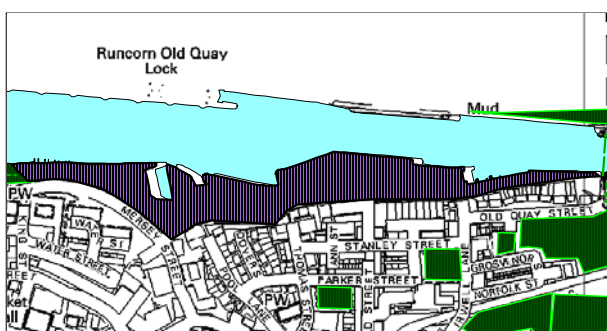
Implementation.

12.22 The Council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan.

13 Promenade and ‘The Deck’

13.1 The Old Town enjoys a large waterside frontage along the southern bank of the Manchester Ship Canal with the River Mersey beyond. Unfortunately access between and views through from the main retail and activity areas to the promenade and beyond are largely blocked by intervening development.

13.2 A ½ mile stretch of the canal frontage has been developed into the popular and well used Promenade, a linear walkway and park extending from The Deck site off Mersey Street in the east to the new Halton (Runcorn) College to the west of Dukesfield.



Bryant Homes “The Deck” Residential Development

13.3 Bryant Homes has recently commenced⁸ development of ‘The Deck’, a residential development comprising of 466 waterside apartments with 3 units for complementary commercial uses. This development represents a key opportunity for the delivery of the main strategic objectives of this Town Centre Strategy and will support wider aims and strategies of the Council and its strategic partners. The development will transform a previously industrial site affording no public access to the waterfront with a high quality, desirable residential development offering panoramic views of the Silver Jubilee Bridge and across the River Mersey. Together with the redevelopment at the Canal Quarter, this will introduce a

significant boost to the walk-in population available to the Old Town helping transform the image of the area, to become a highly desirable residential location.

13.4 By the inclusion of complementary commercial uses within the western end of The Deck site, the potential exists to create a northern node of activity to anchor the proposed new activity axis running south via Public Hall Street to High Street and the Canal Quarter / Brindley area.

13.5 Currently there is a lack of connections between the waterfront and the other town centre areas with Mersey Street acting as a town centre by-pass for traffic to and from Dukesfield & the new Waterside Place and Maritime Quay housing developments.

PROMENADE POLICY: TPI

The Council will support development proposals that maximise public access to the Promenade and the waterfront, enhancing their usage for leisure and as a safe, accessible pedestrian and cycling corridor.

13.6 The Promenade and waterfront, with their views over the Mersey and the Silver Jubilee Bridge represents a valuable environmental asset to the Old Town centre. With the location of the College and new residential developments to the west, the areas importance as an attractive pedestrian route to and past the Old Town is also enhanced.

Implementation.

13.7 The Council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan.

⁸ The Deck, construction commenced 2006

PROMENADE POLICY: TP2

Any proposals for redevelopment on land between the rear of Church Street and the Promenade will be expected to contribute positively towards increasing the pedestrian permeability of the area, establishing clear, legible and attractive pedestrian through routes.

- 13.8 Pedestrian linkages between the Promenade and Church Street are particularly poor. The existing intervening development includes elements such as undercroft parking

areas that present a strong vertical barrier to pedestrian movement.

Any proposals involving significant redevelopment within this area will be expected to address this deficiency.

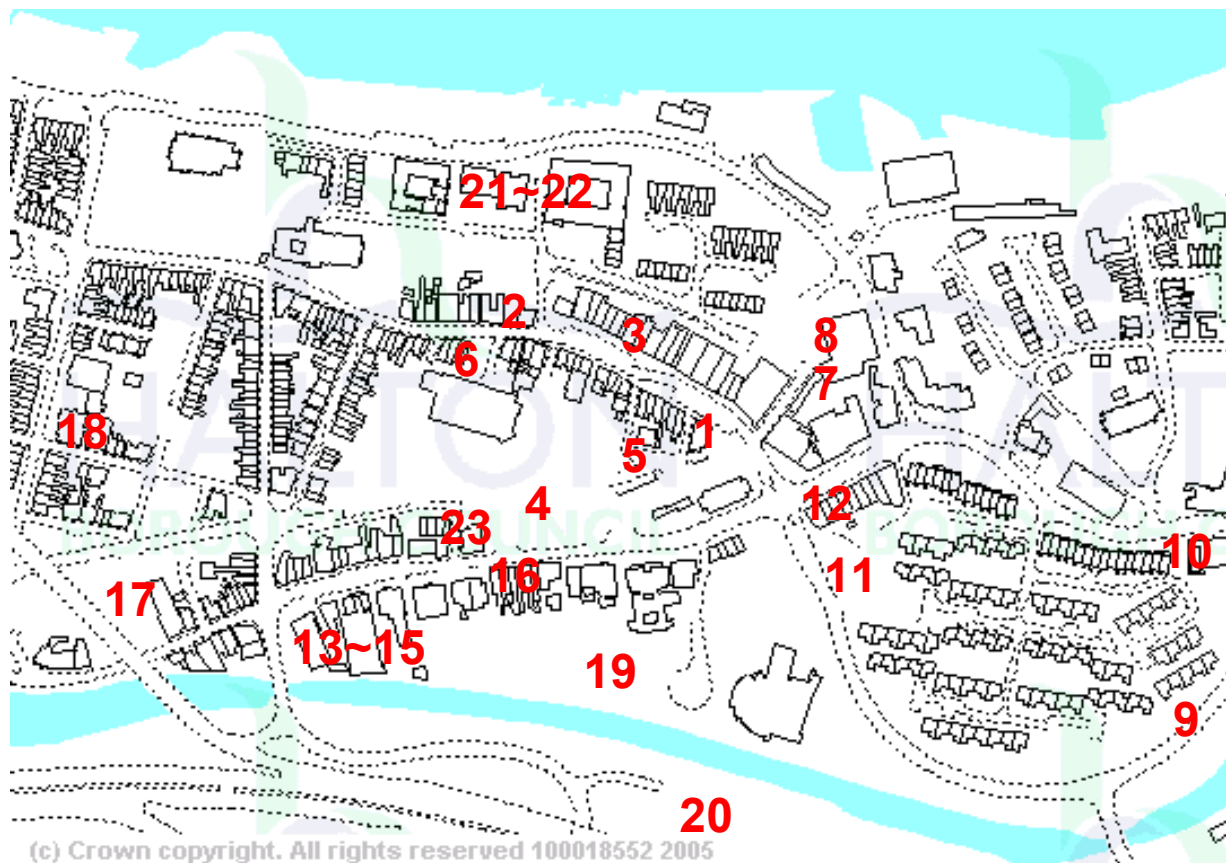
Implementation.

- 13.9 The Council will rigorously exercise its development control powers to ensure proposals for new development accord with the approved policies of the development plan.

14 Summary of Site Specific Opportunities

14.1 The preceding sections identify a number specific sites believed to have development potential, either now or in the future. The following table presents a quick summary of each site

together with a brief assessment of the potential future use and any resultant policy implications.



SITE REF.	LOCATION	POTENTIAL	TIME FRAME	POLICY ISSUES
1	19~23 Church Street	Former Senga Furnishings Unit. Attractive unit in need of repair. Potential for A1 (retail) or A3 (Food & drink) refurbishment. or redevelopment.	Short / Medium Term	Policy CS3
2	48~50 Church Street	Shapers Hair unit with outstanding consent for demolition and redevelopment to form 2 no. ground floor retail units with 10 apartments across 3 floors above.	Short Term	Policy CS5
3	28 Church Street	Vacant former Superior Saving Home Furnishings. Vacant unit within Primary Retail Area requiring re-tenanting with A1 retailer.	Short Term	UDP Policy TC8 presumption against non-A1 retail use as would create more than 2 adjacent non-A1 units.
4	High Street (between entrances to bus station & Somerfield car park)	Currently vacant central area redevelopment site, available and suitable for a number of uses. Previously envisaged as being used for a drive-thru restaurant, this site is better suited to a larger built form, with retail / office or community uses to the ground floor with opportunity for residential or offices above.	Short Term	Policies CA1 and CA3

SITE REF.	LOCATION	POTENTIAL	TIME FRAME	POLICY ISSUES
5	Alcock Street / Bus Station	The area to the rear of the bus station and new indoor market hall a poor use of space and an untidy gateway to passengers arriving by bus. A reconfigured site could potentially release additional land for inclusion with site 6	Short Term	Policies CA2 and CA3
6	Church Street / Loch Street	Corner site, currently in use as informal car park. Suitable for A3 (restaurant) or A2/B1 office use or A1 retail.	Short Term	Policy RS2
7	Sefton House / Public Hall Court, Public Hall Street	Currently in mixed commercial office type use, area has potential to form heart of new leisure / cultural activity corridor between Brindley & The Deck. The buildings appear suitable for conversion to A3 (café bar) use with potential for rear courtyard use as enclosed open air eating & drinking area.	Medium Term / Long Term	Policy BS2
8	Above Kwik Fit, northern end Public Hall Street	Currently in mixed commercial office type use, building is within potential heart of new leisure / cultural activity corridor between the Brindley & The Deck. The building appears suitable for conversion to A3 (café bar) type use with potential for entrance courtyard use as semi-enclosed open air eating & drinking area.	Medium Term / Long Term	Policy BS2
9	Bridge Street ~ Leiria Way Busway	This section of busway offers little value in reducing bus journey times and subject to transport studies, should be considered to be a potential development site. Broadly linear, abutting existing residential uses and offering over 200m of waterside frontage it is suitable for residential development. (see below)	Medium / Long Term	Policy BS4
10	Bridge Street Petrol Filling Station (PFS) site	A former PFS within a defined primarily residential area. Site has so far struggled to find a suitable after use. Amalgamation with the adjacent busway site (12) could offset remediation costs and create a development opportunity of approximately 1 Ha.	Medium / Long Term	Policy BS4
11	Leiria Way Car Park	Site currently well used car park, but removal of 'mound' opposite and introduction of new uses by opening up of Canal Quarter could make this an attractive future development site (perhaps linked to redevelopment of adjacent block fronting High Street (14).	Long Term	Policy SP21 and BS3
12	High Street (Gym ~ PO)	Unappealing 1960's style building currently fully let, but thought to have redevelopment potential. Sloping site could allow for unit shops to High Street with large space user fronting rear car park & Leiria Way above.	Long Term	Policy BS3
13	La Scala Bingo Hall, High Street	Site has permission for redevelopment with residential apartment blocks located behind a commercial frontage. Potential link with 16.	Short Term	Policy HS4
14	Job Centre Building, High Street	Site is currently being marketed. Potential exists for amalgamation with adjacent La Scala Bingo (15) and Cheshire Building Society sites to create a larger, more developable land parcel.	Short / Medium Term	Policy HS4
15	59~69 High Street	An attractive building(s) in a poor state of repair. Future dependant upon emerging proposals for Canal Quarter site to its rear.	Short / Medium Term	Policy HS4
16	87~89 High Street	Currently vacant buildings between High Street and canal towpath. Could be suitable for residential use or accommodate development associated with Canal Basin initiatives.	Short / Long Term	Policy HS3
17	Top Locks Car Park	Future use dependant upon Town Centre Access and Parking Review. Could accommodate development associated with Canal Basin initiatives.	Long Term	

SITE REF.	LOCATION	POTENTIAL	TIME FRAME	POLICY ISSUES
18	Public Library / Community Centre / Former College Annexe, Egerton Street	The Council is currently investigating the relocation of the library from its current peripheral location to a more central site within the Town Centre. This relocation creates the opportunity for amalgamation with the adjacent buildings and public car park to create a large infill conversion or redevelopment site for residential or other use.	Short / Medium Term	Policy RS3
19	Canal Quarter (North)	Backland development site between High Street and canal. Preferred development partner selected and mixed use scheme incorporating cultural, leisure, residential and retail uses being designed. Development tied to Canal Quarter (South) site.	Short / Medium Term	Policies CQ1, CQ2, CQ3, CQ4, CQ5 and CQ6
20	Canal Quarter (South)	Development site between canal and Daresbury Expressway. Preferred development partner selected and mixed use scheme incorporating residential, hotel and day-nursery uses being designed. Development tied to Canal Quarter (North) site.	Medium / Long Term	Policies CQ1, CQ2, CQ3, CQ4, CQ5 and CQ6
21	Belvedere House	Current homeless persons hostel use being reviewed. Uninspired building with undercroft parking on attractively located site with views over the Mersey estuary. Potential housing land redevelopment site.	Medium Term	Policy TP2
22	Brunswick House / Chadwick House	1960's residential tower block and 1970's elderly housing. Low rise block uninspired building with undercroft parking on attractively located site with views over the Mersey estuary. Potential housing land redevelopment site.	Long Term	Policy TP2
23	42 High Street	Former Prona Print unit.	Short Term	Policy HS5

Appendix A: Contacts and Useful Information

General information

Further information relating to the purpose of the intended SPD:

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 2, or for further general planning information visit the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) website at www.communities.gov.uk or for a hard copy contact the Department for Communities and Local Government by telephone on 0870 1226 236.

To access a downloadable copy of 'By Design, Urban Design in the planning system: Towards Better Practice' and 'Safer Places', documents relating to urban renewal, urban design and creating sustainable communities, and general planning information visit the Department for Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk. 'Places, Streets & Movement. A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32' can be purchased from the DCLG for a cost of £20.00, quoting ISBN 1 85112 113 7.

Investing in the High Street can be purchased from the Civic Trust for £25.00. The Civic Trust, Winchester House, 259-269 Old Marylebone Road, London NW1 5RA.

Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access can be downloaded free of charge from the National Retail Planning Forum (NRPF) at www.nrpf.org. A hard copy can also be purchased online at the same website address.

Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge, is out of print. However, a photocopy of the original document can be purchased from The Stationery Office online at www.tso.co.uk or by phone: 0870 600 5522, Fax: 0870 600 5533 or email: customer.services@tso.co.uk.

Further information on the Secured By Design initiative, including details relating to the standards required for a development to

receive Secured By Design accreditation may be found at www.securedbydesign.com

For further information regarding any development which may affect a historic building or conservation area 'Building In Context' will be able to provide advice. It is available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment and can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.cabe.org.uk> or for a hard copy contact English Heritage at: Customer Services Department, PO Box 569, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 2YP, Tel: 0870 333 1181, Fax: 01793 414 926

Further information on the Halton UDP can be found online at www.halton.gov.uk or by phone on 0151 424 2061, email at forward.planning@halton.gov.uk or by post to Environmental and Regulatory Services, Environment Directorate, Halton Borough Council, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GW.

You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Local information

For advice relating to submitting a planning application, for pre-application discussion or to purchase a copy of this SPD or any other SPD contact:

Planning and Policy
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 907 8300

Fax: 0151 471 7304

Email: forward.planning@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further highways or transport information is required, please contact the:

Highways Division
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 424 2061

Fax: 0151 471 7521

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further access information is required, or information relating to building control please contact the;

Building Control Consultancy
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 907 8300.

Email: building.control@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

Appendix B: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant convenience centre within its catchment. • New Somerfield anchor store. • High proportion of independent / specialist shops (<i>a unique selling point</i>). • Range of professional and personal services (estate agents / hairdressers etc.). • Range of community facilities. <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved central car park. • Free parking. • On-street parking in main retail areas. • New bus interchange. • Public Transportation node / interchange. • Number of bus services (23 routes including 9 high frequency services). • Presence of nearby main line train station. • Good access by foot & bicycle <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly good quality environment. • Human scale of centre. • Attractive location (e.g. canal / river / bridges). 	<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor representation of national multiples. • Limited retail offer. • Limited leisure / entertainment offer. • Lack of prominence. • Lack of brand / image. • Limited catchment / lack of market penetration into New Town areas. • Cinema located at Halton Lea. • Few restaurants. • Over representation of service and specialist outlets generating infrequent visits. • Limited amount & variety of office / business space. <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusing traffic circulation pattern / junctions / busway etc. • Poor signage • Barriers to access; canal / expressway <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor perception of night-time offer. • Dominance of drinking establishments. • Poor perception of crime / violence. • Brindley Arts Centre hidden from view. • Undeveloped sites / semi-derelict buildings.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Brindley Arts Centre. • Remaining capacity to support additional retail floorspace (foodstore). • Success of new housing developments (Canal Street / Riverside) proving market. • Proposed The Deck redevelopment. • Canal Quarter redevelopment. • Addition of new leisure opportunities. • Bridgewater Canal proposals (Runcorn Locks and new Cheshire Loop) <p><u>Accessibility</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal Quarter redevelopment to include improved parking provision. • Peripheral developments to fund pedestrian route improvements. <p><u>Amenity</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment proposals to improve environment of Canal Quarter / The Deck and linkages to town centre. 	<p><u>Attraction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased competition – Halton Lea. • Increased competition – Widnes. • Increased competition – Other. • Internet shopping (threat to specialist retailers). • Need to generate and maintain additional footfall. <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mersey Gateway (new river crossing). • Availability of short-stay shoppers parking (issue re. commuter parking). • New town centre residential areas. • Concentration of A3 (hot food takeaways) along certain frontages. <p><u>Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector funding needed to maintain SRB aided improvements (shop fronts etc.) • Need to improve vitality and increase investor confidence to secure fresh investment.

Appendix C: Update of 1997 Town Centre Strategy

The 1997 Town Centre Strategy contained proposals for a number of actions. The following table summarises those proposals and groups them according to the level of success in their implementation over the period 1997 to date.

1997 Town Centre Strategy : Summary of Proposals.

ACHIEVED	PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	NOT ACHIEVED
Proposal 1.1 : Maintain range of retail provision on Church St. / Regent Rd through LPA functions. (ONGOING)	Proposal 1.6 : Introduce new leisure facilities including waterborne / waterside uses.	Proposal 1.5 : Introduce new business uses into centre / new units / upper floor uses
Proposal 1.2 : Introduce new retail uses into central area.	Proposal 1.7 : Enhance existing residential areas and develop new housing (Dukesfield / The Deck) (ONGOING)	Proposal 1.8 : Investigate relocation of Library into the centre (ONGOING)
Proposal 1.3 : Redevelop the site of existing covered market.	Proposal 2.5 : Encourage British Rail improve Runcorn Station and increase patronage	Proposal 2.1c : Provide new access road to service area behind Church Street.
Proposal 1.4 : Maintain High St. as business district through LPA functions (ONGOING)	Proposal 2.7 : Remove barriers to pedestrian movement and disabled access	Proposal 3.1 : Prepare an urban design guide to ensure retention of local identity
Proposal 2.1a : Provide new road link from expressway via busway.	Proposal 2.8 : Incorporate cycle access in new circulatory system and provide cycle parking	Proposal 3.4 : Create a theme for the design of new street furniture.
Proposal 2.1b : Introduce new road circulation pattern to ease congestion.	Proposal 2.9b Increase attractiveness of car parks ensuring security by design.	Proposal 3.7 : Install floral displays and hanging baskets throughout centre
Proposal 2.2 Remodel Church Street to reduce pedestrian / vehicle conflict.	Proposal 2.10 Improve signage to and within the centre including sign posts, maps and info boards.	Proposal 3.9 : Improve key gateways at; Church St/High St.; Devonshire Place; from car parks; into market area.
Proposal 2.3 Remodel busway removing physical barrier & creating developable land.	Proposal 3.2 Enhance and review street cleansing & maintenance plan	Proposal 4.2 : Create town centre guide to be included on public information boards a theme for the design of new street furniture
Proposal 2.4 Improve busway with revised shelters / information displays etc.	Proposal 3.5 : Encourage re-use of redundant buildings and vacant or underused land	Proposal 4.3 : Provide training for shop staff in customer care.
Proposal 4.1 : Create a Town Centre Working Group to deal with day-to-day issues	Proposal 3.6 : Improve landscaping and planting (inc. on Church St.) & development sites	Proposal 4.4 : Promote entertainment events, specialist market days and canal based leisure events
Proposal 4.1 : Create a Town Centre Working Group to deal with day-to-day issues	Proposal 3.8 : Improve security including use of CCTV	Proposal 4.5 : Prepare a marketing strategy
Proposal 2.9a : Increase parking availability through management of long-stay parking		

The 1997 Town Centre Strategy contained proposals for a number of specific development opportunity sites. The following table summarises those site-specific proposals together with progress to date and future direction.

1997 Town Centre Strategy : Summary of Site Specific Proposals.

SITES	PROGRESS	FUTURE
Site 1 : Central Area	Area has been largely reconfigured and redeveloped in line with stated development principals. Issues not addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian links Church St. / High St. • Pedestrian links to Regent Rd. • Rear servicing for Regent Rd. units • New multiuse Town Square 	Development of remaining land will need to address outstanding issues, particularly regarding pedestrian linkages.
Site 2 : Crosville Bus Depot	No development on site. Permission for pub / restaurant use granted. Site included in new Canal Quarter joint development partner competition.	Site included within Canal Quarter redevelopment scheme. Predominately residential use envisaged for this site.
Site 3 : 59-69 High Street & land to the rear	No development on site. Some re-use of ground floor units.. Site included in new Canal Quarter joint development partner competition.	Site included within Canal Quarter redevelopment scheme. Predominately commercial or community use envisaged for this site.
Site 4 : The Deck Yard	Previous use abandoned. Planning permission granted for 466 residential apartments.	Site currently under construction.
Site 5 : Dukesfield	Environmental improvements implemented and new (private sector) housing developments provided at Waterside Place and Maritime Quay.	Development opportunities largely taken up. Library / former College Annexe site on Waterloo Road (has potential for residential redevelopment.
Site 6 : College Campus	Halton College now occupy the new development on this site. Pedestrian linkages to town centre but no road route yet provided.	Site developed for stated use.
Site 7 : Camden Gardens	Brindley Arts Centre developed on site. A multi-award winning building and facility that is to act as a focus for wider regeneration centred on the Canal Quarter.	Site developed for stated use.
Old Police Station	Building refurbished and now occupied by Halton Strategic Partnership.	Site in active use.
Retail Units (Princess Street/ Church Street)	Units reoccupied (Charity shop).	Site in active use.
Retail Units (Various)	Most recent trader survey indicates only 2 units were vacant at both 1999 and 2005. Other vacancies have arisen which provide development opportunities.	

Appendix D: Summary of Policies in Connection with Planning Obligations

Policy Number	Policy Content
Transport Accessibility	
Strategic Policy: SP8	Cycle access
Strategic Policy: SPI0	Access and Parking Study
Canal Quarter: CQ10	Access and Parking Study
Strategic Policy: SPI7	Cycle parking
Linkages	
Strategic Policy: SP9	Improve linkages
Local Environment	
Strategic Policy:SPI4	Provision of Public Art
Strategic Policy:SPI9	Provision of CCTV
Functionality	
Strategic Policy:SP15	Provision of Street Furniture
Strategic Policy:SP18	Provision of Signage

NB. The above table acts as a checklist that illustrates specific policies within this SPD that refer to the use of planning obligations. However, it must be recognised that, as such, it is not exhaustive in terms of geographical location or uses for which obligations may be sought by Halton Borough Council.

