

**REPORT TO:** Mersey Gateway Executive Board

**DATE:** 20 November 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Mersey Gateway Project Director

**SUBJECT:** Preparations for the Mersey Gateway Public Inquiry

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To advise Members of the progress made in preparing for the Public Inquiry which has now been announced.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

The Mersey Gateway Executive Board:-

- i) note the progress made in general and that the Council Statement of Case for the Inquiry has now been published.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The formal objection period for the Orders and Applications submitted for Mersey Gateway ended in July and on 30 September the Secretary of State announced that a conjoined Public Inquiry would be held to consider these statutory applications. The announcement of the Public Inquiry established the procedural timetable and the first key event took place on 11 November when the Council submitted its Statement of Case (Appendix 1). All parties wishing to present evidence at the Inquiry are required to submit a Statement of Case.

3.2 The date for the Inquiry has not yet been confirmed but March 2008 is still a possibility. Any developments in confirming the Inquiry date will be reported orally at the meeting.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The project is a key priority for the Council which will deliver benefits locally and across the wider region.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The cost of preparing for the Public Inquiry is covered by the approved Mersey Gateway development budget.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 6.1 The timing of the Public Inquiry is a critical event in the project programme and the Council is pressing for an early commencement so that the delivery objectives can be achieved.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 7.1 Mersey Gateway provides an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for all.

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

- 8.1 Files maintained by the Mersey Gateway Project Team and by the Highways and Transportation Department.