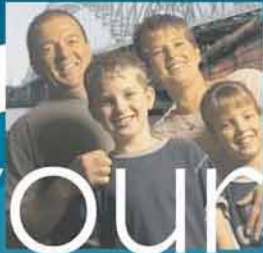




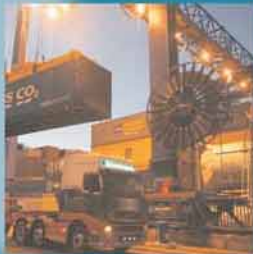
# Core Strategy

Halton's Local Development Framework  
Preferred Options

August 2009



your halton  
your vision  
your thoughts



**It's all happening IN HALTON**

A Spatial Strategy  
for Halton 2026 and Beyond



Halton Borough Council

# CORE STRATEGY

Preferred Options

Public Consultation Draft

August 2009

Operational Director  
Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW



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## 0 Foreword

- 0.1 Welcome to Halton Borough Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. This document is the latest version of production of the Halton Core Strategy, a Development Plan Document which will play a crucial role in shaping the spatial development of Halton up to 2026 and beyond. The Core Strategy is the central document in the Halton Local Development Framework, the folder of development plans and other documents which will replace the Halton Unitary Development Plan.
- 0.2 Within the document you will find a wide variety of information, structured into broad sections. The document introduces the broad issues, challenges and opportunities for Halton, including those currently affecting Halton and those likely to have an impact during the period to 2026. The document then introduces a vision and strategic goals for the Borough, imagining what Halton will be like by 2026, and stating goals for improvements in housing, the economy, the environment, design, community facilities and transportation. A Spatial Strategy for the development of Halton is included, showing how development will be distributed throughout the Borough, and indicating which areas will be subject to the most substantial change. The bulk of the Preferred Options document is taken up by a series of preferred policies, including those relating to Key Areas of Change and relating to key themes of development. The document is supported by a variety of material, including an Infrastructure Plan, Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulation Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and a Statement of Consultation.
- 0.3 This Core Strategy Preferred Options document is a public consultation document, which means that the Council invites your views on the strategies and policies contained within the document. We would like to hear any suggestions for improvement to the document's content, as well as recommendations for alternative strategies and policies which you think would better support the development of the Borough over the Core Strategy period. We have produced a Representation Form, which is available at the deposit locations of this document, and also online on the Council's website, aimed at aiding respondents in sharing their views.
- 0.4 You can submit your comments in a variety of ways.

By Post:

Halton Core Strategy  
FREEPOST RLXK-TLZG-EJGS  
Planning and Policy Division  
Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
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Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW



By Email:

[forward.planning@halton.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@halton.gov.uk)

In Person:

Runcorn Town Hall; Widnes and Halton Lea libraries, and; Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes - Halton Direct Links.

- 0.5 If you would like any further information about the Halton Core Strategy or about the Halton Local Development Framework, please contact us at the email address above, or:

By Telephone:

Local Development Framework Team on 0151 906 4884.

On the Web:

An electronic version of this document and accompanying supporting information is available from the Council's website at:

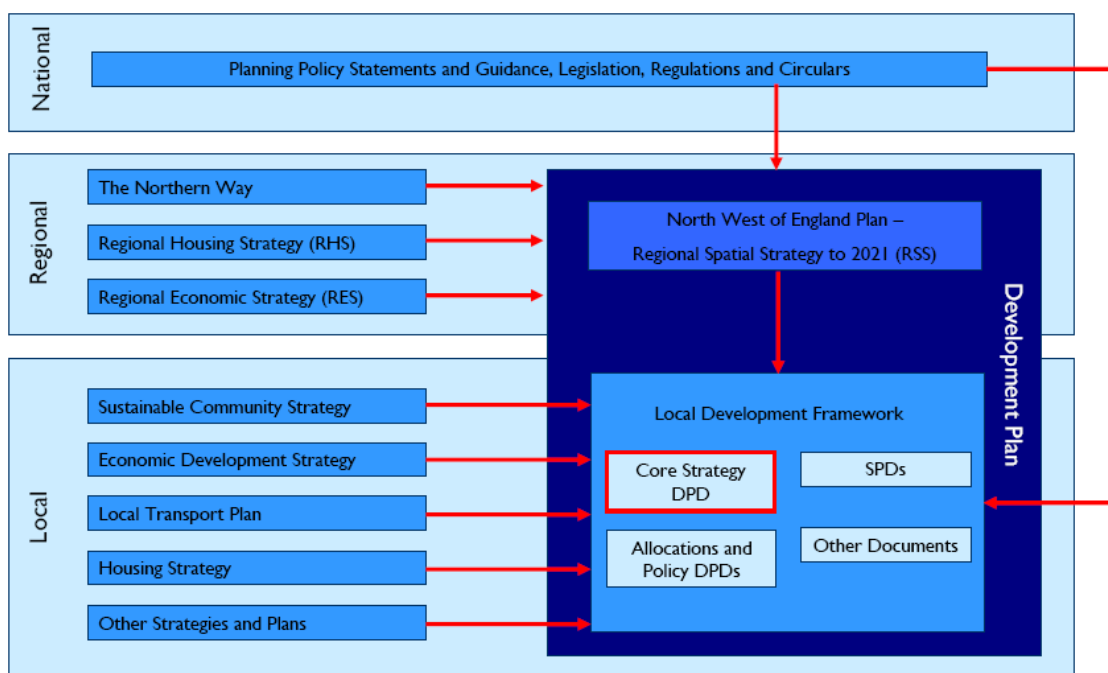
[www.halton.gov.uk/forwardplanning](http://www.halton.gov.uk/forwardplanning).

# I Introduction

- I.1 This Preferred Options Report sets out Halton Borough Council’s preferred planning policy options for the Halton Core Strategy. This is first formal stage of consultation on the potential content of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is the central Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF). This document has been prepared in accordance with the Council’s adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS), which was published in March 2009.
- I.2 Consultation on the preferred policy options moves the production of the Core Strategy forward, from the initial informal public consultation on the ‘Issues’ facing Halton, and potential ‘Options’ for how spatial planning can contribute to addressing these issues.

## Purpose of the Core Strategy and the Halton LDF

- I.3 The purpose of the Core Strategy is to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development within Halton. This is to be achieved through setting out the vision, objectives and strategic approach for the spatial development of the Borough until 2026. The Core Strategy will therefore provide the over-arching policy for the Halton LDF.
- I.4 The Halton LDF is the name given to the collection of planning documents that will replace the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Saved Policies of the Halton UDP, along with the saved UDP Proposals Map, currently provide a local development plan for the Borough until 2016. This Preferred Options document sets out which UDP policies are intended to be replaced by the Core Strategy upon adoption.



**Fig I: National, Regional and Local Policy Framework for the LDF**

- 1.5 Figure 1 illustrates the national, regional and local policy framework for the LDF and shows where the Core Strategy sits within that framework. Accompanying each individual preferred policy option within this document is an explanation of how that policy takes into account this policy framework.
- 1.6 Published by central Government, the national planning policy framework for England is composed of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and their replacement documents, Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). Covering a range of topics, from sustainable development, to the historic environment, to flood risk, PPGs and PPSs establish high-level planning principles and set out requirements for local development plans. The Government also publishes legislation, regulations and circulars which set the legal framework for the planning process, including the production of Local Development Documents (LDDs) within the LDF.
- 1.7 The regional planning policy framework is constituted by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which sets out the spatial framework for development of the region. The RSS is part of the “development plan” alongside the documents of the LDF, and hence must be taken into account in planning decisions and the development of planning policy at the local level. The RSS is complemented by the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), which sets regional priorities for economic development, and the RSS also feeds down into sub-regional policy documents. Nationally, proposals are in place to replace RSSs with new “Regional Strategies”, which will join together policies within the RSS and the RES.
- 1.8 A policy framework exists at the local level, made up of adopted LDF documents, the Saved Policies of the UDP, and other non-planning documents, such as the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and local economic development and housing strategies, produced by different functions of the Local Authority. An important document for the local policy framework is “A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton (2006 – 2011): Making It Happen in Halton” (the Sustainable Community Strategy), which sets out the aims and objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 1.9 In addition to considering the planning policy framework in terms of a hierarchy from the national to the local level, it is important that the Halton LDF has regard to the LDFs being prepared by neighbouring authorities. The Council works closely with other authorities within the Liverpool City Region, as well as Warrington Borough Council and the Cheshire authorities. Where possible, opportunities to engage in joint working with neighbouring authorities have been sought, including the preparation of jointly commissioned studies.

### **Core Strategy Production To-Date**

- 1.10 Production work on the Core Strategy commenced in January 2006 and is on-going. This process has evolved to take account of:
- a) Emerging guidance on the new plan making process;
  - b) Lessons learnt from experiences of other Local Authorities producing Core Strategies;
  - c) Changing national and regional planning policy and strategies;

- d) Continuous dialogue with key stakeholders and partners; and
  - e) New local plans and strategies.
- I.11 Production of the Core Strategy has benefited from the fact that the Halton UDP was adopted on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2005. The UDP is considered to be generally up-to-date, with a sound evidence base. Particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring that this evidence base has been brought up to date to inform the production of the Halton LDF.
- I.12 Between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006, the Council consulted on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers. These two documents represented the first informal stage of community involvement on the Core Strategy and the spatial planning approach that should be taken within it.
- I.13 The Issues Paper began by introducing the new plan making system and what the meaning and purpose of 'spatial planning' was. It then set out the broad issues that planning policy within the Borough will need to help address, including those issues identified by the Sustainable Community Strategy. The need for linkages between the Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy was firmly established. This document also explored some of the context and constraints that will have to be taken into account when developing Core Strategy policies.
- I.14 The Options Paper began to establish the role of planning policy in addressing the issues (identified within the Issues Paper) and introduced some of the broad policy options that the Core Strategy could adopt. This included three alternative spatial development scenarios for the Borough and seven spatial themes dealing with specific policy areas relevant to Halton. Throughout the Options Paper various questions were asked to assess what respondents considered to be important. Respondents were also encouraged to supplement their answers with additional comments or raise any issue that they felt had been omitted.
- I.15 An interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was published alongside the Issues and Options Paper to compare and test the sustainability of respective policy approaches and options. The SA process continues to progress as the Core Strategy evolves.
- I.16 A wide range of views were sought, through engagement with public, private, and community and voluntary organisations; people who live, work or visit Halton, and statutory consultees. This included the publication of the first Issue of the Halton LDF Magazine, with a shorter questionnaire to encourage participation.
- I.17 All consultation and community involvement has been conducted in accordance with national policy and advice, and the adopted Halton Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). To accompany this Preferred Options document a Statement of Consultation has been produced. This sets out all the key points from the comments received at Issues and Options consultation stage, and how the Council has taken account of these in developing the preferred policy options.
- I.18 The Statement of Consultation also includes information on how we engaged with the community, both at the Issues and Options stage and the preceding Stakeholder Consultation Stage. In some instances comments received related to the production

of other Halton LDF documents. Where appropriate such comments have been highlighted and will feed into the production of those documents. Supporting Document J is a copy of the up-to-date Statement of Consultation.

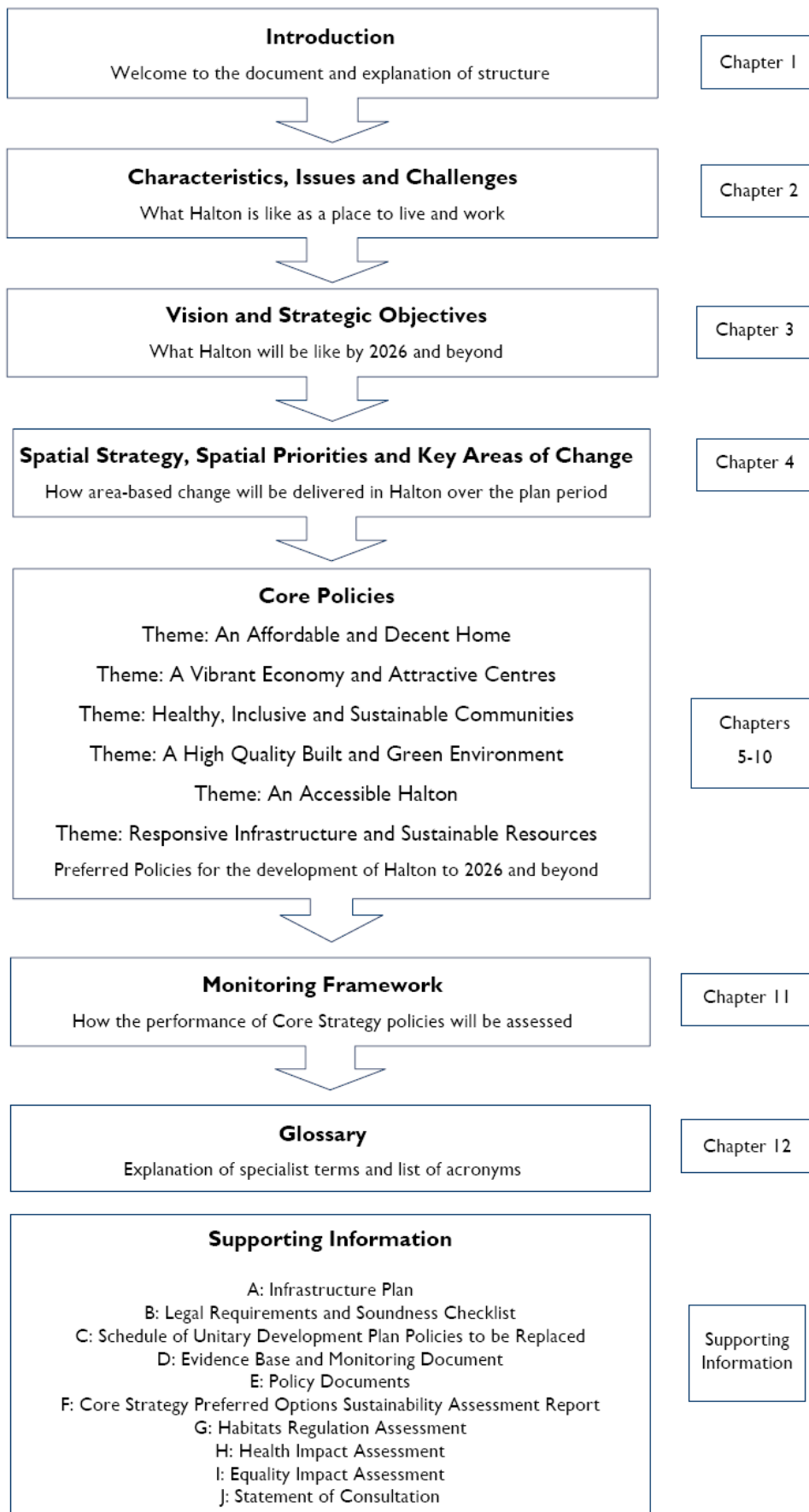
### **About this Preferred Options Stage**

- I.19 The main purpose of this stage is to provide everyone with an opportunity to tell us their views on the preferred policy options set out within this document. This is to enable the Council to consider your comments before planning policies are worked up in more detail at the publication and submission stages of the Halton Core Strategy. The ‘How You Can Get Involved’ section which follows explains more about how you can contribute to the production of the Core Strategy.
- I.20 It is important to remember that any representation made at this Preferred Options stage will not be taken forward as a representation to be considered at the independent examination of the Halton Core Strategy. Only representations formally made at the publication stage will be considered at the independent examination, however, there are limitations about what these representations can relate to. The Council is obliged to show how representations at all stages of production have been considered. The ‘What Happens Next’ section provides details of how comments supplied at this stage will be taken into account and how the production of Core Strategy moves forward.

### **Structure and Content of the Preferred Options Document**

- I.21 This Preferred Options Report begins at Chapter 2: Characteristics, Issues and Challenges, by providing an overview of the characteristics of Halton, and the issues and challenges facing the Borough as a place to live and work. This chapter is a spatial portrait of Halton and has played an important role in the policy drafting which has lead to the production of this Preferred Options document.
- I.22 This document then goes on in Chapter 3 to set out the Council’s preferred Mission Statement, Visions, and Strategic Objectives for Halton.
- I.23 Chapter 4 sets out the preferred Spatial Strategy for the development of Halton to 2026. The Chapter contains overarching “spatial strategy” and “spatial priority” policies, as well as area-based policies, forming preferred strategies for areas subject to substantial change over the plan period.
- I.24 The remainder of the preferred policy options are contained within the “spatial themes” of:
- A Decent Home and Neighbourhood
  - A Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres
  - Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities
  - A High Quality Built and Green Environment
  - An Accessible Halton
  - Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources

- I.25 Each of the themes contains a series of preferred policy options, preceded by the following information:
- **Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme:** This section bears a strong relationship to Chapter 2, summarising the most important considerations arising for the theme from the existing situation in Halton. This includes issues identified by research and data collection which need to be addressed, problems and challenges which need to be tackled, and opportunities for development which should be an important consideration in policy development.
  - **National and Regional Policy Context:** This section is a summary of the most pertinent points relating to the theme arising from a review of the national and regional policy context. This section includes a summary of high level policy, whether this is policy guidance which must be adhered to, or policy requirements which the Core Strategy must satisfy.
  - **What you said in 2006 at the Issues and Options stage...:** This section serves as a reminder of the consultation responses received at the Issues and Options public consultation undertaken in 2006, summarising some of the most important points made by respondent relating to the chapter theme. This includes aspects of the consultation documents which were supported, and suggestions for changes to be made to the Core Strategy policy framework.
- I.26 The presentation of the preferred policy options within the six themes is followed in Chapter 11 by a proposed monitoring framework, which sets out the ways in which the performance of the preferred options can be monitored.
- I.27 Chapter 12, the final chapter of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document, sets out an extensive glossary of specialist terms used throughout the document, as well as a list of acronyms employed.
- I.28 Figure 2 provides an overview of the structure and content of the Halton Core Strategy Preferred Options Stage.



**Fig 2: Structure of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document**

## Supporting Information

- I.29 The Core Strategy Preferred Options document is accompanied by a number of important supporting documents, which perform a variety of roles. These documents will be available for reference during the Preferred Options consultation period.
- I.30 The **Infrastructure Plan** sets out the major infrastructure projects (physical, social and environmental), which are planned by the Council, its partners and third party agencies, detailing delivery mechanisms, timescales and funding for these projects.
- I.31 It is helpful to consider at each stage of Core Strategy preparation the legal and soundness requirements, which will need to be met if the Core Strategy is to be adopted by the Council. The **Legal Requirements and Soundness Checklist**, produced by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) indicates how consideration of these requirements has been incorporated into the Preferred Options document.
- I.32 The **Schedule of UDP Policies to be Replaced** shows which of the Saved UDP policies, currently forming the development plan for Halton, would be expected to be deleted, if the preferred policy options were adopted by the Council. The schedule serves a useful purpose in indicating how the Core Strategy policies and the UDP policies will be able to work together as a comprehensive development plan for Halton.
- I.33 The **Evidence Base and Monitoring Documents** schedule lists all of the evidence base documents used and referred to in the preparation of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document. Also included in the schedule is a list of all of the monitoring documents produced during the preparation of the document. The documents contained within the schedule will be available online during the public consultation period.
- I.34 The **Policy Documents** list summarises of all of the national, regional and local policy and legislation which formed the policy framework for the preparation of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document, including details of who published them, when they were published and where they can be found online.
- I.35 A **Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**, assessing the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the preferred policy options and their alternatives, has been published alongside this document for consultation. This document ensures that the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive have been complied with during DPD production. The document relies on the Halton LDF Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which sets out baseline data and the sustainability assessment framework for the Preferred Options SA. The recommendations of the Preferred Options SA will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the Publication version of the Halton Core Strategy.
- I.36 Also published as appendices to this document are details of work undertaken on **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)**. This document serves to meet the requirements of the HRA Directive for DPD preparation. The document incorporates the first stage of the HRA, known as “screening”, which has shown that



an “Appropriate Assessment” (HRA stages 2 and 3) will be required to assess the impacts of the final versions of the Core Strategy policies on European wildlife sites.

- I.37 A rapid **Health Impact Assessment** (HIA) was undertaken on the Preferred Options document to ascertain the impacts of the preferred policies on the issue of health in Halton. The rapid assessment indicated that there was no need for a “full”, more detailed HIA to be undertaken, as the policies were not anticipated to have any major detrimental effects on health. The recommendations of the report will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the Core Strategy Publication document.
- I.38 An **Equality Impact Assessment** (EqIA) was undertaken on the Preferred Options document to understand its potential impacts on Halton’s diverse communities, including minority and vulnerable groups. The recommendations of the resulting report will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the Core Strategy Publication document.
- I.39 The **Statement of Consultation** document summarises the responses received from the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation, and highlights how these have been taken into account in the drafting of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

### **Presenting the Preferred Policy Options**

- I.40 The preferred policy options for the development of Halton to 2026 are set out across a series of individual policies, labelled as CS1 through to CS35. These policies are set out within boxes across Chapters 4 – 10. The policy boxes are set out within in a uniform manner across the document. Notably, they are accompanied by the following:
- **Alternatives:** in most cases, several alternative policy options which have been considered for inclusion in the Preferred Options document but not taken forward are summarised.
  - **Justification / Explanation:** this section explains in more detail some aspects of the preferred policy option, justifying chosen content and providing further information about the preferred approach
  - **Compliance Table:** this table shows how the preferred policy option is in conformity with, and helps to deliver within Halton, aspects of national and regional policy, sustainability objectives (from the Halton LDF Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report), and local area agreement targets. The table also demonstrates cross-cutting links across the Preferred Options document, highlighting which policies are closely related.
  - **Delivery:** these sections are included individually for Policies CS3 to CS10, and at the end of each of Chapters 5 to 10, explaining how policy content will be supported by other LDF documentation, delivered through partnership working and private sector development and supported by new infrastructure.
- I.41 At this stage the Council has given some consideration to the detailed policy wording but the focus of this Preferred Options document is on the direction and thrust of

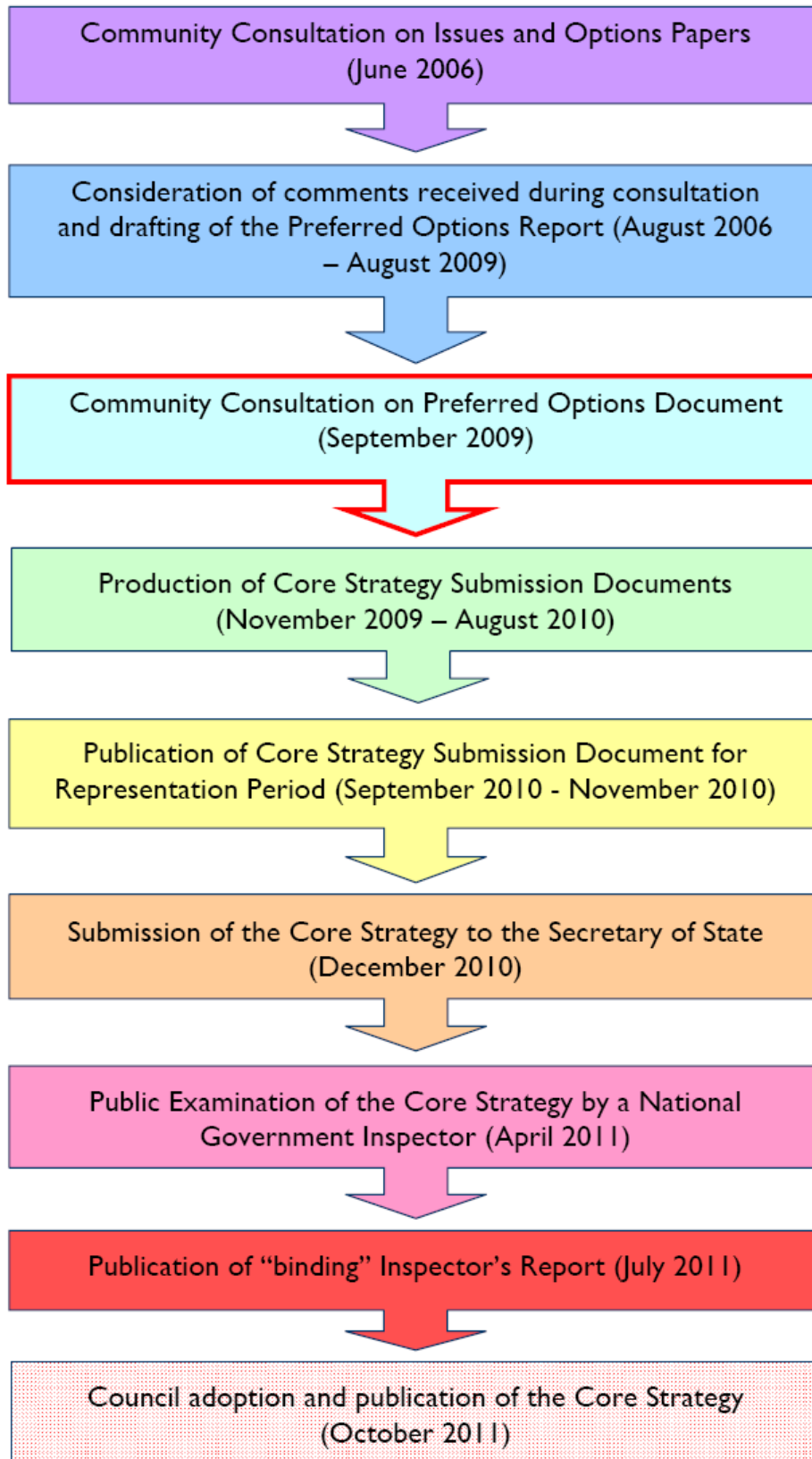
each preferred policy. Every effort has been made to ensure that the preferred policies have a degree of resilience and flexibility to changing circumstances.

### **Ensuring a Sound Core Strategy**

- I.42 The new planning system requires that all DPDs are sound. In respect of the Halton Core Strategy this means that the preferred policy options that it contains and the process for its production has been undertaken in compliance with the statutory requirements and expectations for a Core Strategy set out in national planning policies and legislation. These requirements and expectations are expressed in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) by a series of “legal requirements” and requirements for “soundness” which will be examined independently by a government appointed inspector at the submission stage of the Core Strategy production process.
- I.43 To summarise, PPS12 states that Core Strategies must meet legal requirements to ensure that the plan:
- Has been prepared in accordance with the adopted LDS and in compliance with the SCI and the Regulations;
  - Has been subject to sustainability appraisal;
  - Has regard to national policy;
  - Conforms generally to the RSS; and
  - Has regard to any Sustainable Community Strategy for its area.
- I.44 PPS12 also states that to be “sound”, a Core Strategy should be justified, effective and consistent with national policy. “Justified” means that the document must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base and the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives. “Effective” means that the document must be deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored.
- I.45 As explained earlier, Supporting Document B shows how the Core Strategy to-date has been produced in accordance with these legal and soundness requirements.

### **What Happens Next**

- I.46 Once all comments have been received on this Preferred Options document, and the consultation period has ended, representations will be considered by the Council during the preparation of the formal Core Strategy Publication document, for a final period of consultation and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State. The Statement of Consultation will also be updated and published for this final stage. This will set out all the representations received at this Preferred Options stage (as well as preceding stages) and set out how they have been considered. Figure 3 summarises the process leading to the formal adoption of the Core Strategy.



**Fig 3: Core Strategy Production Process**

## How You Can Get Involved

- I.47 The Preferred Options document is available on the Council's website, or as paper copies from Runcorn Town Hall, Widnes and Halton Lea libraries, and Runcorn Old Town, Halton Lea and Widnes Halton Direct Links.
- I.48 Comments should be made using the Representation Form that accompanies this document. Please submit your comments and suggestions during the consultation period, which runs from **24th September 2009** until **5.00 pm on 5th November 2009**.
- I.49 As explained earlier, this document is supported by a wide variety of Supporting Information, across a series of documents. You are also able to comment, and on all available supporting evidence base document as well, which are available from the same locations.
- I.50 Your views will be reported to the Council and will be taken into consideration when developing the submission stage of Core Strategy, which is the next stage of production. As with the previous stage all comments will be set out within an accompanying Statement of Consultation, with a formal Council response.
- I.51 There are a number of ways in which you can get in touch with us. You can send your completed representation form and any additional comments to:

### By Post:

Halton Core Strategy  
FREEPOST RLXK-TLZG-EJGS  
Planning and Policy Division  
Environmental and Regulatory Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Rutland House  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GW

### By Email:

[forward.planning@halton.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@halton.gov.uk)

### Further Information:

If you would like to discuss any matters relating to the Core Strategy consultation process, please call the Planning and Policy Division on 0151 906 4884.

### On the Web:

An electronic version of this document and accompanying supporting information is available from the Council's website at:  
[www.halton.gov.uk/forwardplanning](http://www.halton.gov.uk/forwardplanning)

## 2 Characteristics, Issues and Challenges

- 2.1 The following section provides a brief overview of the historic development and current characteristics of Halton, and the issues and challenges facing the Borough as a place to live and work.

### Spatial Portrait of Halton

#### **Borough Profile**

- 2.2 Halton is a Unitary Authority located in the North West of England straddling the upper estuary of the River Mersey to the east of Liverpool. The North West RSS identifies the Borough as lying within the Liverpool City Region. The Borough of St. Helens lies to the north, with Warrington to the east and rural north Cheshire to the south.
- 2.3 Covering 90 km<sup>2</sup> (9,033 Ha.) the Borough comprises of the principal settlements of Widnes and Runcorn located on opposite banks of the Mersey surrounded by Green Belt that provides a buffer to built-up areas in adjoining authorities (most notably Liverpool and Warrington). The Green Belt covers approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the land area of the borough (2,555 Ha.) and contains the smaller settlements of Hale, Moore, Daresbury, and Preston-on-the-Hill as well as significant areas covered by environmental protection designations, including the internationally designated 'Ramsar' wet-land site.
- 2.4 The Borough enjoys excellent communication links at the heart of the region's transport network. The M56 motorway runs through the south of the Borough and the M62 is located just to the north, both a short drive from the main M6 north-south route whilst A Class routes converge on the Silver Jubilee Bridge river crossing. The Liverpool branch of the West Coast Main Line railway offers regular services from Runcorn station delivering passengers to London in less than 2 hours, and to Liverpool in around 20 minutes, whilst local and trans-Pennine services run from Widnes, Hough Green and Runcorn East stations to destinations across the north of England, including notably Liverpool, Manchester, Chester and Warrington.
- 2.5 Widnes expanded northwards from the waterfront, and today industrial areas, including areas of derelict and contaminated land still front the River Mersey with the Town Centre flanked by Victorian and interwar housing forming a middle swathe of development. This middle band including small hamlets that have been subsumed into the urban area which are a focus for local service provision. 1970's social housing estates and later private sector developments to the north and north-west complete the urban form.

- 2.6 Runcorn similarly, expanded away from the river, with industrial and port facilities fronting onto the river and the Manchester Ship Canal, with the centre and Victorian housing extending southwards up Runcorn Hill. Later the New Town developed to the south and east, including a number of residential and commercial areas, a highly segregated transport network centred on a bespoke new town centre at Halton Lea.
- 2.7 The smaller outlying settlements contain a mix of traditional and more modern housing developments supported by few local services and essentially act as dormitory settlements.

### **Population**

- 2.8 The district has a population of 119,500 (2007 mid year estimate) with the towns of Widnes and Runcorn having respective populations of 57,660 and 61,250, which has increased slowly since the 2001 Census and is projected to continue to increase to 124,200 in 2016 and to 128,000 by 2016. This follows a period of marked decline in the population during the 1990s, largely driven by net outward migration, which continues to be an issue for the Borough. Census figures show that outward migration was comparably below that of our neighbours; however Halton was failing to attract sufficient new residents into the Borough.
- 2.9 Halton has a comparatively young population structure, largely as a legacy of the arrival of young families with the development of Runcorn New Town. However, first generation New Town residents are getting older, currently swelling the 45-54 age band, and will reach retirement age during the plan period creating a projected 55% increase in the numbers aged 65 or over (+9,200 people) by 2026 with the numbers aged 85 or over increasing by 78% of +1,400 people. Ethnic minorities accounted for just 1.1% of the Borough's population at the time of the 2001 Census, compared with 9.2% in England as a whole.

### **Economy**

- 2.10 The Borough forms an integral part of the wider regional economy and labour market with strong commuting links to surrounding towns, especially with Warrington and Liverpool. With 22,358 jobs and 24,346 employed residents (at 2001) Widnes was a net exporter of labour whilst 30,426 jobs and 26,330 employed residents made Runcorn a net importer.
- 2.11 There has been a dramatic restructuring of Halton's economy over the last 20 or 30 years with the decline of the traditional chemical manufacturing industries that dominated employment in both Widnes and Runcorn. Over recent years there has been a general upward trend in employment within the Borough with the number of employees increasing by around 10% in the period 1999 to 2005, with continued falls in manufacturing outweighed by growth in the banking, finance and insurance, distribution, hotels and catering and transport and

communications sectors. Production of industrial chemicals however remains a key component of Halton's economy, with the remaining chemical plants amongst the largest individual private sector employers.

## **Deprivation**

- 2.12 Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2007, is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation and shows Halton is ranked 30th nationally (1 being most deprived), which is third highest rank on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10th highest in the North West, although this is an improvement on being 5<sup>th</sup> in the NW and 21<sup>st</sup> nationally in 2004. Other authorities, St Helens (47th), Wirral (60th) and Sefton (83rd), are all way down the table compared to Halton.
- 2.13 The proportion of Halton's population in the top 20% of areas has also decreased from 50% in 2004 to 47 % in 2007, whilst Halton's concentration of deprivation has improved from 20th worst in England in 2004 to 27<sup>th</sup> in 2007. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. Of the 975 areas which form the top 3% most deprived areas within England, eight are situated in Halton, with the most deprived neighbourhood situated in Central Runcorn ranked 306th out of 32,482:

## **Housing**

- 2.14 A wide range of housing of different types and different prices is available across the Borough. House prices are still below regional and national averages but rose significantly over recent years such that affordability has now emerged as a major issue. Compared with the regional and national picture there are more terraced properties in Halton and fewer purpose built flats or maisonettes. Rates of home ownership are below regional and national levels.

## **Travel**

- 2.15 Halton's position provides excellent access to all parts of the UK by road and rail. The Mersey Gateway Priority Project is seeking to provide a new road crossing of the River Mersey in the Borough, easing cross river congestion, providing a boost to the regional economy and facilitating improvements to the Halton Sustainable Transport Network. The average level of car ownership in Halton is slightly lower than the regional level but ahead of the average for England as a whole, however the rate varies markedly across the borough with ownership levels being markedly lower in inner more deprived wards. 71% of commuting is by car or van either as driver or passenger.

## **Environment**

- 2.16 In the past the environment of much of the Borough, particularly southern Widnes has been damaged by the early chemical industry which has left a legacy of pollution, very heavily contaminated sites and dereliction. However, much has been done to rectify this in recent years. Dereliction has been cleared, land restored and new environmental assets created, like Wigg Island and Pickerings Pasture. Much remains to be done but there is a growing appreciation by residents and visitors of the character and quality of the local landscape, and the need to protect important features.

## **Issues Facing the Borough**

- 2.17 In order to inform the Core Strategy there needs to be a good understanding of the needs, constraints and issues facing the Borough, particularly those which are relevant to the LDF. Many of the strategies and other documents published by the Council and its partners refer to the issues and concerns facing the District which need to be tackled, but the main ones are drawn together in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 2.18 The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes:
- A Healthy Halton
  - Halton's Urban Renewal
  - Children and Young People in Halton
  - Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
  - A Safer Halton
- 2.19 Closing the gap between the poorer and richer parts of the Borough embraces many of these issues because the spatial pattern is repeated. The worst health, the lower employment levels and lower skill levels are concentrated in the more deprived areas. Initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management with the backing of the Halton Strategic Partnership are very important in tackling these issues.

## **Housing**

- 2.20 Prior to the recent market slump the rate of new house-building in the Borough had been higher than allowed for in the previous RSS and the Halton UDP (330 units pa), but below the level on the revised RSS (500 pa). Recent development activity concentrated on larger house styles in northern Widnes, principally at Upton Rocks with smaller dwelling types and apartments in central Widnes and especially around Runcorn Old Town, including the flagship development at 'The Deck'. The provision of larger, more aspirational house types addressed an identified deficiency in the local stock and may have contributed to the recent upturn in population numbers.



- 2.21 Future development is likely to be constrained by market conditions over the short term with the focus of development likely to swing back from Widnes which has dominated new supply over recent years to Runcorn as sites, especially in east Runcorn and Runcorn Docks come on stream.
- 2.22 In line with national trends, house prices have risen significantly leading to unmet demand for affordable housing in most parts of the Borough. There are a number of areas of poor housing and deprivation that have been identified as sharing characteristics with areas of previous market failure (the Pathfinder areas). These include the New Town districts of Runcorn, including Castlefields, where an intervention programme to remove difficult to let stock and diversify tenure is underway, and interwar Council estates in Widnes. Neighbourhood Management Areas have been established and former Council stock transferred to Halton Housing Trust with works underway to meet the Decent Homes standard. Ongoing action to tackle the differing problems will be required.

### **Economy**

- 2.23 A robust economy lays the foundation for any prosperous and successful place and provides jobs, opportunities, wealth and aspirations for local people. Historically, in Halton there has been a sustained mismatch between the needs of local business and the skills of local people, low rates of entrepreneurship and high levels of welfare dependency, meaning that opportunity and need are out of balance, contributing to the widespread deprivation.
- 2.24 Sustainable economic growth and prosperity will require a commitment to encourage and support a vibrant business sector together with a renewed commitment to creating sustainable employment, and high quality learning and skills opportunities to satisfy all stakeholders in Halton.
- 2.25 Opportunities exist to address the poor quality business accommodation and the mismatch between the stock of premises and modern demands. The rail freight development at 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway), and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus present opportunities of wider sub-regional significance whilst the redevelopment of Widnes Waterfront should provide much needed modern business accommodation north of the river.

### **Education, Training and Skills**

- 2.26 GCSE passes in the borough are improving, between 1997 and 2008, the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A\*- C increased by 38.3 percentage points to 71.1%. This is now greater than the national rate of 65.3%. Pupils gaining no GCSE passes (or equivalent) was 2% in 2008, compared

to 1.4% nationally. However, skills among the workforce remain low, with 20% of working age people lacking any qualifications in 2007.

### **Transport**

- 2.27 Congestion and the unpredictability of journey times for cross river traffic with associated problems in terms of economic impact and pollution is a major problem facing transport provision in the Borough. The development of rail based freight transport and promotion of waterborne traffic present significant opportunities.
- 2.28 Ensuring accessibility to the town centres, essential services and crucially to employment opportunities for those not having access to a private vehicle will be important for social well-being and economic aspirations.
- 2.29 The implementation of the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Master Plan to 2030 will present the Borough with both opportunities and potential problems associated with aircraft overflying the Borough.

### **Environment**

- 2.30 Modern day Halton has inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that undermines the development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is key to greater prosperity and boosting the image of the borough. This is why Urban Renewal is one of the Council's most important priorities.
- 2.31 Halton's early chemical industry has left a legacy of ageing infrastructure, obsolete and redundant buildings, a relatively poor built and natural environment, an overly mature housing stock and an under-provision of modern amenities to support a far more discerning population. Innovative New Town architectural styles and layouts have also proved unsuited to modern demands and have created further areas requiring intervention. Much has already been achieved to green the environment, both within the town centres and at our gateway approaches. The town centres have experienced new private sector investment, whilst small businesses have taken advantage of grant assistance to rejuvenate tired, rundown or unproductive premises.
- 2.32 There is a need to protect the identity of individual settlements in the Borough by maintaining the Green Belt wherever possible. The character of many areas has also been lost or spoilt over the years by poor quality development. This trend needs to be reversed.

### **Community Safety**

- 2.33 Crime and the fear of crime affect everybody's lives and is a major concern according to surveys of Halton residents. The Council want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and an

excellent local environment however, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in Halton's neighbourhoods.

- 2.34 Recent years have seen a 16% reduction in total recorded crime from 2005 and 2008, with vehicle crime falling by 29% and criminal damage by 34%. However, this remains a pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives.

### **Health**

- 2.35 Life expectancy in the Borough has improved in the past decade. Between 2001-2003 and 2004-2006 female life expectancy in the borough increased from 78.2 years to 78.4 years. Life expectancy at birth for men in Halton also increased over the same time period from 73.9 in 2001-2003 to 74.3 in 2004-2006. This increase in life expectancy in Halton has kept pace with other Authorities.
- 2.36 Between 2001 and 2006 Halton health rankings have risen from a rank of 374 for females to 370 out of 376 authorities with 376 being the lowest rank. For men the ranking has risen from 371 to 356. Standardised Mortality Rates for all causes, all ages, ranks Halton 2<sup>nd</sup> highest (i.e. worst) out of 354 English Local Authorities for 2006. At 127 it is 27% above the national average.

### **National, Regional and Local Policy Context**

- 2.37 Preparation of Halton's LDF will take place within the context provided by Government Planning Policy Statements and Guidance, the RSS including the ongoing Partial Review and Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 2.38 Together, these provide a clear framework for preparation of the more detailed policies and proposals contained in the LDF. The LDF needs to take account of national planning policy, it must be in general conformity with RSS and has to demonstrate clear links with the Sustainable Community Strategy. In turn, the LDF will be an important means by which these higher level strategies and policies are implemented. In addition, the LDF has a key role in helping to co-ordinate and deliver many other strategies and programmes at regional, borough and local level.

### 3 Making It Happen in Halton: Vision and Strategic Objectives

#### Halton Sustainable Community Strategy

3.1 The Halton Sustainable Community Strategy Vision 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 to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.”**

3.2 The Core Strategy Mission Statement and Visions take this Sustainable Community Strategy forward, adding important spatial elements based on the characteristics, issues and challenges outlined in Chapter 2.

#### Core Strategy Mission Statement

3.3 The Core Strategy Mission Statement sets out the main goals for the Core Strategy, identifying what is aimed to be achieved by 2026.

#### Halton Core Strategy Mission Statement

**By 2026, Halton will:**

- **Provide affordable and decent homes;**
- **Have a vibrant economy and attractive centres;**
- **Support healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities;**
- **Maintain a high quality built and green environment;**
- **Be highly accessible; and**
- **Have a responsive infrastructure and sustainable resources.**

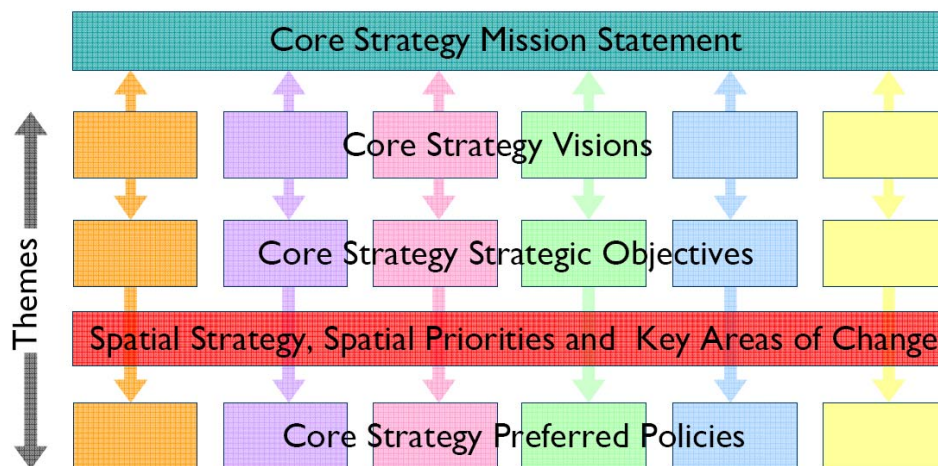
## Core Strategy Themes

- 3.4 The Mission Statement has been translated into six broad “themes” around which Preferred Policy Options have been developed. These themes are:



**Figure 4: Themes of the Halton Core Strategy**

- 3.5 The themes form the structure of this Core Strategy Preferred Options document and a basis for the organisation and grouping of policies, with each theme having a clearly related Vision comprising of strategic goals and a set of Strategic Objectives setting out how these goals will be delivered. Flowing from this is the Spatial Strategy for Halton showing the Spatial Priorities for how change will be delivered over the plan period and highlighting the Borough’s key areas of change. The Core Strategy is then supported by a series of core, non-area-based policies which will help to deliver the vision, objectives and the Spatial Strategy followed by a number of Core Strategy Preferred Policies.



**Figure 5: Structure of the Halton Core Strategy, by Theme**

- 3.6 The following sections set out both the Vision for each theme, as well as the theme’s Strategic Objectives. These can be followed throughout the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report to the preferred policy options themselves. The themes are colour-coded for ease of use.

### **Core Strategy Visions for 2026**

- 3.7 Leading directly from the Core Strategy Mission Statement, ‘Visions’ have been prepared that look forward to 2026, the end of the Core Strategy Period, and describe how the Borough has developed and what life is like in Halton. The Visions are intended to be bold and ambitious in their outlook, but not utopian, and efforts have been made to ensure that they are balanced, realistic and flexible. They describe the effects of major new developments and projects, as well as improvements to existing facilities and infrastructure in the Borough, and describe the overall improvement in quality of life for those living, working and visiting Halton. These descriptions provide a basis for what the Core Strategy is aiming to have achieved by 2026.
- 3.8 From this a number of Strategic Objectives have been identified that describe the direction of travel, or actions that the Core Strategy policies will need to deliver in order to achieve the overall Vision. Efforts have been made to ensure that the Strategic Objectives are ‘SMART’ (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). This will allow progress in delivering the Vision to be measured over time and highlight the need for any changes. The Vision and Strategic Objectives for each theme are translated through to the preferred policy options in Chapters 5 to 10.

### **3.10 A Decent Home and Neighbourhood**

#### **A Vision for... A Decent Home and Neighbourhood**

- **New homes are being completed, in accordance with the Borough’s housing requirements and Growth Point status.**
- **Housing provision is focussed on sustainable locations including new sustainable neighbourhoods at East Runcorn and Runcorn Docks.**
- **The Borough offers a diverse mix of housing and accommodation types and tenures, catering for the needs of the whole community.**

#### **Strategic Objectives to deliver A Decent Home and Neighbourhood:**

- SO1) Create and support safe, attractive and accessible residential neighbourhoods with balanced communities, where people want to live.**
- SO2) Create a greater diversity of housing tenure particularly in the less affluent neighbourhoods.**

**SO3) Provide good quality, affordable accommodation to meet the needs of all sections of society.**

### **3.11 Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres**

#### **A Vision for... A Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres**

- **Halton's employment sites are improved and enhanced, providing attractive accommodation for a wide variety of businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises helping the economy to grow and boosting levels of innovation and entrepreneurship.**
- **Halton has a successful creative and knowledge economy, strongly supported by its education institutions and activities at Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus.**
- **The Borough is established as a major hub for distribution and logistics and has capitalised on the potential offered by its rail links, waterways, ports, roads and other facilities, including 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway).**
- **Unemployment in Halton has been significantly reduced relative to national rates, with a greater number of educated and skilled residents employed locally.**
- **Education delivery in the Borough is of a high standard, meeting the needs of local children and young people, as well as the wider community, and raising aspirations for greater levels of educational attainment and skill development.**
- **The Borough's town and district centres, Widnes, Halton Lea and Runcorn Old Town, have been protected and enhanced, and are vital and vibrant centres of retail, commerce and social and cultural activities, as well as accessible public transport hubs.**
- **The network of neighbourhood shopping centres has been protected and improved to meet local needs**

#### **Strategic Objectives to deliver A Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres:**

**SO4) Create and sustain a competitive and diverse business environment offering a variety of quality sites and premises.**

**SO5) Develop Halton's economy around the logistics and distribution sector and expand the science, creative and knowledge based business cluster(s).**

- SO6) Revitalise vacant and underused designated employment areas, in order to support investment, entrepreneurship and economic growth.**
- SO7) Maximise educational attainment for residents of all ages, in order to develop skills sets relevant to the needs of present and future employers, boosting employability.**
- SO8) Promote and enhance Halton’s centres to create high quality, commercial, social and cultural areas that meet the needs of the local population and business community, and positively contribute to the image of the Borough.**

### **3.12 Healthy Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**

**A Vision for... Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**

- **The Borough’s population enjoy healthier and more active lifestyles, with raised levels of physical and mental wellbeing.**
- **All residents enjoy excellent access to integrated community services and facilities, supported by frequent sustainable transport links to shopping, employment, and education and health services.**
- **The needs of Halton’s diverse communities are being met, resulting in high levels of social inclusion and community cohesion.**
- **Problems in Halton’s least affluent neighbourhoods are alleviated, with a high quality of life for residents and an improved local environment.**
- **Halton’s communities, businesses and visitors enjoy access to a safe and sustainable physical environment, with natural and man- made risks having been minimised.**

#### **Strategic Objectives to deliver Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities:**

- SO9) Improve the health and well being of Halton’s residents throughout each of their life stages, particularly in less affluent areas experiencing poorer health outcomes**
- SO10) Ensure all Halton’s residents enjoy access to a network of community services and facilities providing opportunities to pursue active and healthy lifestyles and allowing them to participate fully in their local community.**
- SO11) Ensure development does not create and is not subject to undue foreseeable risks from natural or man-made hazards, or pollution.**



### 3.13 A High Quality Built and Green Environment

#### **A Vision for... A High Quality Built and Green Environment**

- **Design principles are consistently applied in the Borough, which reinforce local character, respect important local features, ensure safety and security, provide a high quality public realm, and contribute to a “sense of place”.**
- **Climatic risks are being managed and mitigated and Halton’s carbon footprint continues to be minimised.**
- **The Borough’s historic and natural environment continues to be protected and enhanced, with development respecting and positively contributing to its character.**
- **The Green Infrastructure Network in Halton continues to be enhanced, offering opportunities for physical activity and recreation, supporting local wildlife and biodiversity and continually fulfilling its potential as a valuable asset.**
- **Halton’s rural villages and its Green Belt areas have been protected from development and their character has been enhanced.**
- **Contaminated land has been remediated and regenerated, capitalising on its strategic location and meeting employment, housing and leisure needs.**

#### **Strategic Objectives to deliver A High Quality Built and Green Environment:**

- SO12) Ensure that development achieves high standards of design and sustainability including in regard to its contribution to, and effects of, climate change and provides a positive contribution to its locality.**
- SO13) Conserve, manage and enhance the historic and natural environment in order to maximise the social, cultural and environmental benefits.**
- SO14) Manage and enhance the multifunctional value of the Borough’s Green Infrastructure resource, whilst protecting and seeking enhancements to important local habitats, geology and landscapes, aquatic environments and species.**
- SO15) Remediate and regenerate Halton’s legacy of contaminated land for beneficial uses.**

### 3.14 An Accessible Halton

#### **A Vision for... An Accessible Halton**

- **New development is located in the most accessible locations in the Borough, with excellent access to the Halton Sustainable Transport Network.**
- **The needs of local people, businesses and visitors are being met through Halton's transport facilities and a greater proportion of journeys are made by sustainable travel modes, including public transport, walking and cycling.**
- **Congestion levels in the Borough are reduced, resulting in more reliable journey times, less transport related greenhouse gas emissions and a reduction in local air and noise pollution.**
- **The Mersey Gateway is providing a strategic transport route across the River Mersey, reducing congestion and allowing the Silver Jubilee Bridge to play an important role for local sustainable transport modes between Widnes and Runcorn.**
- **The Borough has a highly successful and reliable freight transportation network, which supports its role as a major hub for distribution and logistics.**

#### **Strategic Objectives to deliver An Accessible Halton:**

- SO16) Provide safe, efficient, inclusive and accessible travel options for people, goods and freight, ensuring a better connected, less congested and more sustainable Halton.**
- SO17) Realise the potential of the Mersey Gateway Project and the Silver Jubilee Bridge in Halton in order to fully deliver sustainable travel options, achieve regeneration and environmental benefits, and reduce congestion.**

### 3.15 Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources

#### **A Vision for... Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources**

- **Halton is benefiting from both high quality physical and digital infrastructure serving new and existing development. The Mersey Gateway Project has been successfully delivered, providing improved transport linkages between Runcorn and Widnes and providing a catalyst for regeneration across the borough. Sufficient utilities provision continues to be a prerequisite of all new development, including the ability for supply to be supplemented by sustainable sources.**

- **The amount of waste generated in Halton is being reduced, supported by an accessible and well-used network of recycling facilities and effective waste disposal facilities and minerals management.**

**Strategic Objective to deliver Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources:**

**SO18) Ensure all development is supported by the timely provision of adequate infrastructure, with sufficient capacity to accommodate additional future growth and technological advancements.**

**SO19) Minimise waste generation and maximise reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery within the Halton waste stream and to support sustainable and effective waste and minerals management.**

## 4 Making It Happen in Halton: The Spatial Strategy

### Setting the Scene for the Spatial Strategy

- 4.1 The Spatial Strategy is the preferred spatial development framework for Halton over the plan period. This section, considering and building upon the material presented in the previous two chapters, explains how the preferred Spatial Strategy has been chosen, and how it will be presented in this Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

#### Issues and Options Stage

- 4.2 In 2006, a public consultation was undertaken on the Halton Core Strategy Issues and Options Papers. The purpose of this consultation was to gather the views of stakeholders and those living and working in Halton on the broad options for the future development of the Borough and hence the broad basis for the Core Strategy's Spatial Strategy. The Issues and Options papers highlighted that Halton is a compact and highly urbanised district with relatively tightly drawn Green Belt boundaries and that high level options for the future development of the Borough are limited. At this Issues and Options stage, three different spatial options were presented as to how Halton could develop over the Core Strategy plan period. Briefly, the three alternative spatial options considered were:

- **Sustainable Urban Extensions:** the urban expansion of Runcorn and Widnes, including towards eastern Runcorn and North Widnes, for both residential and employment uses. Land involved in these extensions would be existing greenfield sites adjoining but not including the Green Belt.
- **Brownfield Focus:** new development would be focussed on previously developed land within the urban area, including vacant and underused land and premises. A particular focus would be on waterfront areas, former industrial areas and near to town centres.
- **Mix of Brownfield and Urban Extension:** a combination of the other options, prioritising development on brownfield land but recognising that urban extensions will be necessary to accommodate future development.

- 4.3 The consultation responses received from the Issues and Options stage generally favoured the Brownfield focus option, recognising that regeneration of the Borough's urban areas should be a priority for the Core Strategy plan period. However, in addition to responding to the results of the Issues and Options consultation, the preferred Spatial Strategy must be responsive to the supporting information and evidence for the Core Strategy including studies, plans, proposals and delivery strategies for development.

#### Constraints and Evidence Base

- 4.4 Through the consideration of information and evidence collected for the LDF, it is apparent that the expansion of Halton's urban areas is limited. With large amounts of Green Belt land, a major river and estuary dissecting the Borough, extensive areas of existing development as well as conservation assets, strategic options for the development of Halton are severely constrained. However, Halton must accommodate the required levels of residential and employment development set

out within the RSS, and hence, sufficient land to deliver the required levels of development, including that required to meet the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives, must be identified.

- 4.5 The findings of the following key pieces of evidence for the Spatial Strategy illustrate the level of constraint on land supply, and form an important element in deciding which spatial option will be appropriate to take forward into the Spatial Strategy in conjunction with consultation responses.

### **Halton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

- 4.6 Planning Policy Statement 3 sets out the requirements for Local Authorities to demonstrate a 5-year deliverable and 6-15 year developable supply of housing. Local Authorities are required to demonstrate that they have a sufficient supply of potential sites suitable for residential development to meet the annual housing requirements set out in the RSS. It notes how LDF policies should be informed by a robust, shared evidence base of land availability through a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and highlights the SHLAA as the main mechanism through which to identify a deliverable and developable supply of sites in conjunction with a housing market partnership.
- 4.7 Halton is a relatively small Borough of 35 square miles, and as described above, is characteristically urban, and tightly constrained by its Green Belt. Halton has a strong record in bringing brownfield land back into beneficial use. The remaining brownfield sites are concentrated either side of the River Mersey, within the urban areas, and these sites represent the Boroughs hardcore of previously developed land, often contaminated with difficult ground conditions. The SHLAA must categorise sites as deliverable and developable. Unfortunately, many brownfield sites in the riverside belt are developable but not deliverable due to economic viability factors.
- 4.8 The conclusion of the 2009/10 SHLAA is that the Borough has sufficient land to deliver policy requirements, however there is little 'flexibility factor' in the supply to deal with a scenario where sites fail to be delivered, for example if an owner decides not to develop a site. This is because the SHLAA identifies all of the sites in the planning process plus many sites that have deliverability potential. The remaining land areas are either already developed, are difficult brownfield sites with a question mark over economic viability, are green space sites or are under green belt.

### **Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (JELPS)**

- 4.9 National planning policy requires that Local Development Frameworks are underpinned by an assessment of industrial and commercial land within their areas, by undertaking an Employment Land Review. In Halton's case the employment land review was undertaken with three other Liverpool City Region local authority areas: Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire under the title Joint Employment Land and Premises Study, to provide an assessment of the quantity and quality of employment land in the area. Regional policies have important implications for employment land. In terms of quantity, RSS Policy W3, sets out employment land requirements by sub-regional area, through to 2021, and proposes disaggregation to individual Local Authority area be addressed by the respective sub-regions and 4NW. In qualitative terms, an important and long standing regional objective is to restructure the North West economy towards more productive economic, higher value, higher skilled,

activities. Employment land has a role to play in this restructuring by providing sites that are attractive to high value sectors.

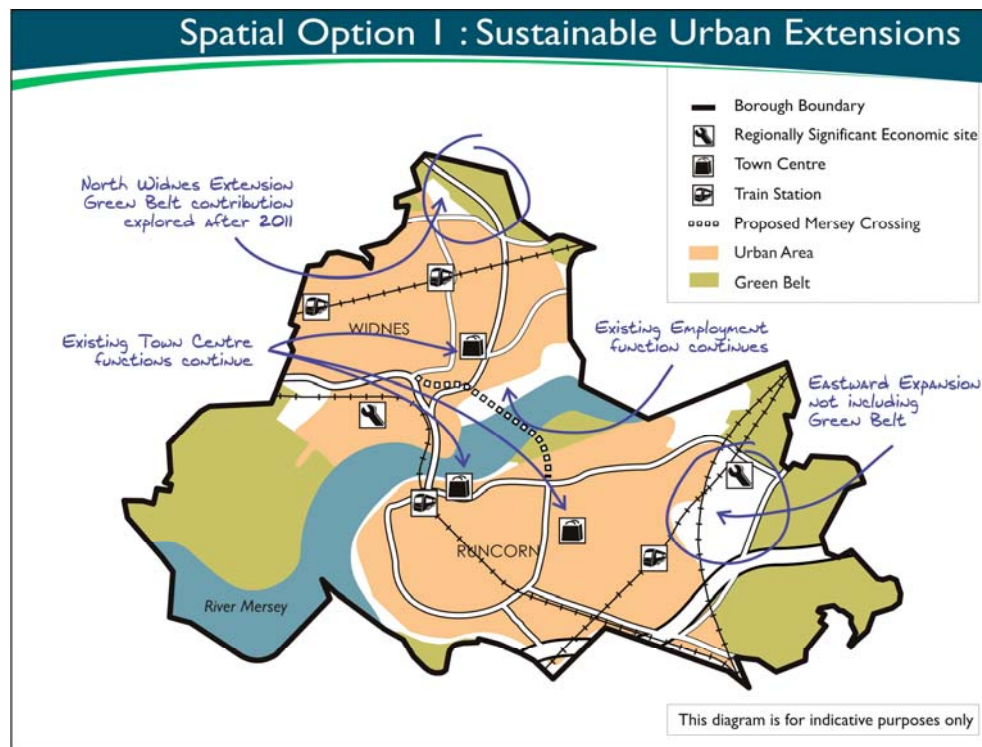
- 4.10 The draft study concludes that there are potential shortages when assessed against the known level of supply; historic take up trend data; economic forecasts and local authority aspirations for future economic growth. Office land is lacking in Widnes and industrial land is in short supply in Runcorn. Both the SHLAA and associated invitation to stakeholders, landowners and developers to submit potential development sites for consideration, known as “Call for Sites”, demonstrate pressure for alternative higher value uses on allocated employment sites and in existing employment areas.
- 4.11 The same constraints discussed under the SHLAA study also apply to the JELPS study. Halton has extreme pressure on deliverable potential development sites due to Green Belt designations, a remaining hardcore of difficult contaminated sites, competition from housing needs and therefore there is little flexibility in terms of finding land for development beyond current policy needs.

**Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

- 4.12 A Halton SFRA was published in October 2007. The key findings of this study were that the main areas at risk from flooding were around Ditton Brook in Widnes and Keckwick Brook in Sandymoor, Runcorn.

**Choosing a Spatial Option**

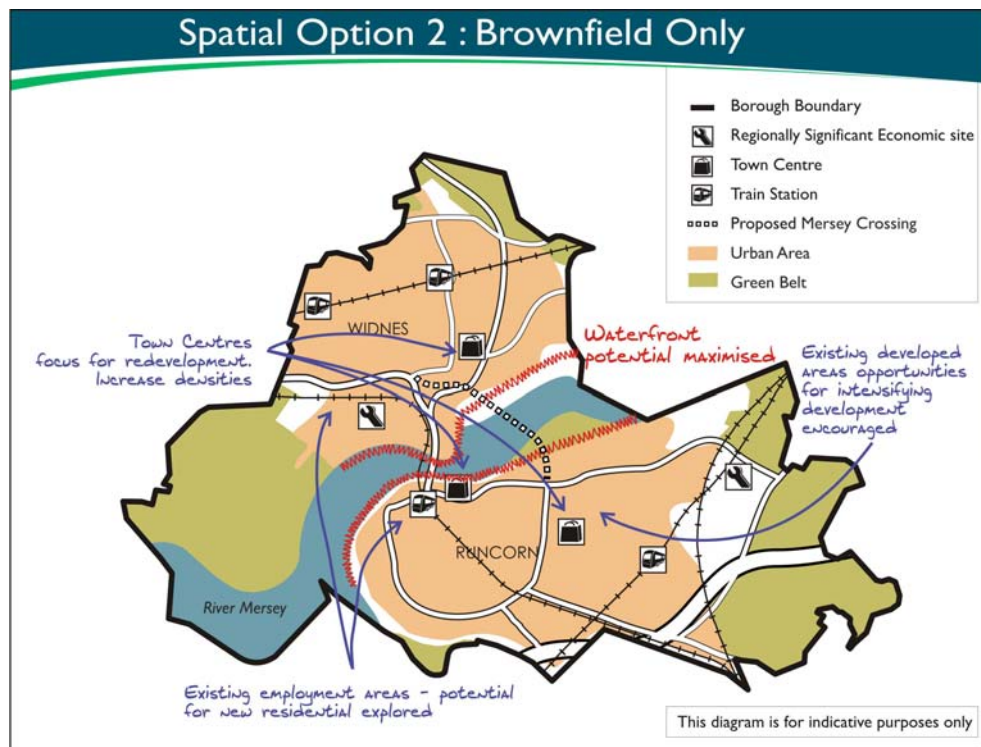
- 4.13 In response to the results of the consultation and the developing evidence base, two of the spatial options for the development of the Borough, as presented at the Issues and Options Consultation in 2006, have been rejected:



**Figure 6: Rejected Spatial Option I - Sustainable Urban Extensions**



- 4.14 This option proposed a strategy consisting of two urban extensions in the Borough, one at North Widnes and another at East Runcorn. It was recognised at the time of the Issues and Options consultation that this option would assist in the delivery of larger family homes, which are generally under-represented in the Borough’s housing stock, and also in the delivery of additional employment land. However, this approach would not assist with the required regeneration of the Borough’s urban areas, including its vacant and underused brownfield sites, and as such would not contribute to the achievement of many of the Council’s wider aims around improving quality of life for existing residents. Therefore sustainable urban extensions alone would not constitute an appropriate Spatial Strategy for Halton.



**Figure 7: Rejected Spatial Option 2 - Brownfield Only**

- 4.15 This spatial option proposed a purely brownfield focus for the future development of the Borough, which would maximise the potential offered by Halton’s waterfront areas. Whilst this represents the desired approach to achieving the regeneration of the Borough, evidence indicates that identifiable brownfield sites within the existing built-up areas do not, by themselves, have the capacity to accommodate the required levels of development for housing and employment land. There could be the potential for more development to be accommodated if higher densities were promoted, however higher density residential schemes, such as flats, would not meet the housing needs of the population. Therefore a brownfield only focus would not constitute an appropriate Spatial Strategy for Halton.

**Developing Spatial Option 3: Mix of Brownfield and Urban Extension**

- 4.16 In response to the results of the consultation and the developing evidence base, the mixed approach option, combining a brownfield focus with an extension to the urban area is to be progressed as the preferred Spatial Strategy for the Borough. This approach will be described in detail for the remainder of this chapter.

## Presenting the Spatial Strategy

### **The Purpose of the Spatial Strategy**

- 4.17 The Spatial Strategy for Halton details spatial development of the Borough over the Core Strategy plan period to 2026, broadly setting out where this development will occur and focussing on areas likely to undergo major change.
- 4.18 The Spatial Strategy is the place-based expression of the Visions presented in the previous chapter, taking into consideration the existing environment of the Borough, and seeking to achieve a number of the location-specific elements of the Strategic Objectives. The framework for development of Halton set by the Spatial Strategy will run through the Core Strategy and the wider LDF, and will be delivered through the planning policies contained within LDF documents.
- 4.19 The strategy outlines the Spatial Priorities for development, including housing and employment development priorities, incorporating issues of land supply and locational priorities. The strategy identifies parts of the Borough which require particular interventions to improve quality of life and focuses on the priority projects which will strategically change parts of Halton.
- 4.20 The strategy's integrated planning framework seeks to focus future development on a number of key sites, or Key Areas of Change, which will deliver both regeneration and contribute to the future economic prosperity of the Borough. These key areas are seen as fundamental to the longer term development of the Borough and in most cases represent existing areas where impetus for change exists. In addition to discussing areas subject to most change, the Spatial Strategy context also sets out the broad role for other areas of Halton over the plan period.

### **Role of Policy Content**

- 4.21 In order to deliver the Spatial Strategy, a number of preferred policies have been drafted. These include two central policies:
- *Preferred Policy Option CS1: Halton's Spatial Strategy*
  - *Preferred Policy Option CS2: Sustainable Development Principles*
- 4.22 CS1 sets out Halton's Spatial Strategy in terms of broad areas and locations in the Borough, while CS2 plays a complementary role in establishing the principles for sustainable development which will run through the Core Strategy. A number of subsequent policies are contained within this chapter, including those relating to Spatial Priorities and Key Areas of Change. These "Spatial Strategy" policies, the cornerstone of the Core Strategy, are supported by a series of further theme-based policies which also play a critical role in delivering the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives and hence the Spatial Strategy. Overall, the Core Strategy policies provide a coherent policy framework for the development of the Borough to 2026.
- 4.23 In addition to this framework, the Spatial Strategy will be delivered through the other Halton LDF plans and policies, with details of development management policies, site allocations and site-specific priorities provided by DPDs and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The completion and application of these policies and strategies will rely heavily on a commitment from the Council's partners and stakeholders, and will require the full employment of the development management process to this end.



### **Role of Key Diagram**

- 4.24 The Key Diagram is the diagrammatic expression of the preferred Spatial Strategy for the development of the Borough over the plan period, showing the basic features of a brownfield focus and an urban extension, including highlighting Key Areas of Change. The diagram shows the spatial relationship between different elements of the spatial strategy, as well as some of the strategic infrastructure and supporting facilities that are crucial to Halton's development. The Key Diagram should be used in conjunction with the policy content of the Spatial Strategy, so that the strategy for the development of the Borough can be understood.
- 4.25 It should be borne in mind that the Key Diagram is not a Site Allocations map and should not be viewed as such. It is not presented on an Ordnance Survey map base, and this decision is deliberate; the Key Diagram is an indicative spatial diagram. The UDP Proposals map remains as the Site Allocations document for Halton, until such a time that it is replaced by another DPD.

## SPATIAL STRATEGY POLICIES

- 4.26 This section sets out the policies that constitute the preferred Spatial Strategy for the development of Halton to 2026.

### CSI: HALTON'S SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 4.27 The Preferred Policy for Halton's Spatial Strategy establishes the spatial distribution of future growth and development in the Borough. Developing the broad concept of the option of a mix of a brownfield focus and an urban extension, this section enshrines the Spatial Strategy in policy terms and sets out the overall strategy for delivering housing and employment requirements across the Borough. Spatial Priorities for development and Key Areas of Change are also identified.

#### Preferred Policy Option CSI: Halton's Spatial Strategy

##### i. Spatial Development of Halton

The Spatial Strategy for the development of Halton is encapsulated by the concept of a mix of brownfield development and urban extensions, as follows:

###### a) Brownfield Focus

The roles of the towns of Runcorn and Widnes will be consolidated. A large proportion of development will be concentrated within the defined urban areas, including major brownfield regeneration in waterfront areas, with development on brownfield land being favoured over greenfield.

###### b) A Sustainable Urban Extension

To the east of the Runcorn urban area a sustainable urban extension, will include housing and employment development accommodated on existing greenfield sites, constituting a Strategic Site in the Borough.

###### c) The Maintenance of Rural Character and Environmental Assets

The rural character of the Borough's villages and Green Belt land will be maintained, with limits on new development in these areas. Environmental assets will be managed and enhanced.

##### ii. Spatial Priorities

Priorities of the Spatial Strategy are to:

- Support housing development, including accelerated housing growth for the first part of the plan period in line with the Mid-Mersey Growth Point;
- Deliver employment development which will revitalise existing industrial and business areas and expand their offer where appropriate;
- In Neighbourhood Priority Areas, deliver housing diversity, health improvements and employment opportunities; and
- Assist with the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Priority Project and ensure that accessibility, regeneration and development opportunities offered by the new bridge are seized.

### iii. Halton's Key Areas of Change

Key Areas of Change in Halton include:

a) 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway)

Capitalise on locational advantages to strengthen the logistics and distribution sector in Halton by further development and expansion of facilities at the key regional site at 3MG, with associated accessibility and environmental improvements.

b) South Widnes

Improve the performance of Widnes Town Centre, continue the economic development of Widnes Waterfront through the rejuvenation of brownfield and redundant sites, and support regeneration in West Bank, including increased connectivity.

c) East Runcorn

Deliver housing growth and establish sustainable communities at Sandymoor and Daresbury, and support employment growth in this location, including in the business sector at Daresbury Park and in the knowledge and research sector at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. This area will constitute a Strategic Site in Halton.

d) West Runcorn

Deliver housing growth at Runcorn Docks and employment growth at the Mersey Gateway (Weston) Port, and improve the performance of Runcorn Old Town centre, including improved linkages with residential communities.

## Realising the Spatial Strategy

- 4.28 This section explains the Spatial Strategy in more detail, providing a discussion of how the Borough as a whole will develop over the plan period, contributing to the realisation of Preferred Policy Option CSI: Halton's Spatial Strategy, and explaining how the other preferred policy options within this chapter will contribute to the delivery of the Spatial Strategy.

### Spatial Development of Halton

- 4.29 Development over the plan period will be focused on the continued regeneration of Halton, with a particular emphasis on brownfield sites, including derelict sites and those with a history of contamination, leading to their re-use and revitalisation. The roles of the towns of Runcorn and Widnes will be consolidated with a large proportion of development concentrated within the defined urban areas. This focus on the towns of Widnes and Runcorn reflects the relative importance given to them within the RSS as towns within the Liverpool City Region.
- 4.30 In Widnes, the majority of development will be directed towards the areas adjacent to the River Mersey within the urban area, with emphasis on Key Areas of Change, which include both 3MG and South Widnes. Runcorn will continue to undergo a planned sustainable urban extension towards its eastern extents, within the East Runcorn Key Area of Change. The extension represents an opportunity to integrate this important site with the rest of the borough whilst additionally making a significant contribution towards achieving targets for housing and employment

development. In West Runcorn, the focus will be within the Key Area of Change centred on the existing docklands and Runcorn Old Town centre.

- 4.31 The rural character and setting of the Borough's villages and areas of open countryside will be maintained with limits on new development. In order to achieve this, areas of Green Belt land will be protected to prevent uncoordinated expansion of urban areas involving the loss of important areas of open land, in accordance with national and regional planning policies. As the towns of Runcorn and Widnes will be the focus of development for the Core Strategy, the Green Belt area will play a pivotal role in maintaining the setting of the Borough's rural assets and providing a boundary to the built up area. The character and setting of the rural villages of Moore, Daresbury and Preston on the Hill, will be protected with the careful management of development. The character of Hale Village (a Green Belt inset), like the other villages, will need to be carefully managed, with particular respect to its proximity to Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
- 4.32 The integrity of the Borough's habitats and areas of landscape importance will be protected from the impact of development, particularly the internationally important Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), Natura 2000 and Ramsar Site. Regional Parks will be supported at the Weaver Valley, Mersey Waterfront and North West Coastal Trail. In both Widnes and Runcorn, improvements will be made to the Green Infrastructure network, centred on the Green Lungs, which will be fully integrated with other areas of recreation and existing communities to deliver open spaces which serve the needs of residents and encourage biodiversity and where appropriate, nature conservation and enhancement.
- 4.33 Halton plays an important role within the Liverpool City Region but has close links with Cheshire. Halton's strategic location in relation to the motorway, rail and waterway networks will be maximised, making the most of the links to other markets in Manchester, the Midlands, North Wales, the rest of the North West region and beyond. Efforts to maintain and improve this accessibility will be complemented by the spatial development of the Borough, with major development making the most of locational advantages and supporting the provision of sustainable travel options. Accessibility will not just be focussed on road-based transport, but also on, for example, strategic walking and cycling routes, and on water-borne connectivity.

## **Spatial Priorities**

### **Residential Development and Residential Areas**

- 4.34 Residential development in Halton over the plan period will meet regional targets for housing delivery and will contribute towards the delivery of the Mid-Mersey Growth Point. Residential development will be delivered through existing commitments and allocated sites, planned development within the Key Areas of Change, windfall development and future allocations of housing land. A five-year supply of housing land will be maintained with efficient and appropriate use of available land.
- 4.35 In Widnes, the existing residential areas of Upton, Farnworth, Crow Wood, Barrow's Green, Appleton, Halton View, Ditton, Halebank and Hough Green will not undergo substantial change, accommodating small scale development opportunities as appropriate. Upton Rocks and the area at Norlands Lane, to the

north of Widnes, will continue to accommodate larger scale housing developments, and at Upton Rocks, a new neighbourhood shopping centre will be provided to serve the local community.

- 4.36 In Runcorn, the primarily residential areas at Halton Brook, Grange, Weston, Higher Runcorn, Beechwood, The Brow, Hallwood Park, Brookvale, Norton / Norton Cross, Murdishaw, Palace Fields and Preston Brook will see small scale development on opportunity sites as appropriate. At Castlefields, the regeneration programme will continue to deliver a restructured sustainable community centred on a revitalised neighbourhood centre.

➤ See Preferred Policy Option CS3: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities

### **Employment Development and Employment Areas**

- 4.37 Employment land in Halton will meet regional targets (in partnership with Merseyside authorities). Employment land will be delivered through existing and allocated sites, planned development within the Key Areas of Change, opportunity sites within existing areas and future allocations of employment land. A diversity of type and size of employment development will be supported, with redevelopment opportunities for brownfield land being a priority.
- 4.38 In Widnes, the existing employment areas centred on Derby Road / Lunts Heath Road / Moorfield Road, and Ditchfield Road / Everite Road will be revitalised, making use of existing vacant and underused accommodation. Uses complementary to the role of 3MG, including industrial areas at Halebank, will be maintained and where appropriate expanded to complement this strategic facility. This strategy will deliver economic growth in the Borough but importantly retain areas which are crucial in providing jobs to the Borough's population. Alongside the regeneration of Widnes Waterfront, existing industrial and commercial premises in this employment area will be retained.
- 4.39 In Runcorn, the further development and expansion of the employment offer at Manor Park, Preston Brook / Whitehouse, Sutton Quays / Ashville and Picow Farm Road will be supported. The Heath Business and Technical Park will be developed and expanded, including the enhancement of its links with the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. The Rocksavage area will be protected for employment use in the long term. The accessibility and performance of the industrial estate at Astmoor will be improved, with the employment role of this area protected and improved. Halton Lea Town Centre will develop a complementary role to Runcorn Old Town centre, maintaining its focus as the primary destination for retail and leisure in the town and increasing levels of accessibility and permeability. The existing employment areas surrounding the retail core will be revitalised and the hospital facilities at Halton General will be safeguarded.

➤ See Preferred Policy Approach CS4: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities

### **Neighbourhood Priority Areas**

- 4.40 A number of Neighbourhood Priority Areas have been identified across the Borough, where demographic and socio-economic factors coincide with negative quality of life indicators to suggest localised concentrations of multiple deprivation. Given the complex social issues such communities face, there is a need to improve

the quality of life of the Borough's residents and narrow the gap between the richest and poorest. These areas, spread throughout urban neighbourhoods in both Widnes and Runcorn, will be subject to enhanced intervention, including a focus on delivering a range of housing and employment opportunities and improvements in terms of the local environment, accessibility, social inclusion and health. Opportunities for the coordination of interventions and partnership working will be sought in these locations.

- See Preferred Policy Approach CS5: Neighbourhood Priority Areas

### **The Mersey Gateway Priority Project**

4.41 Having major impacts upon the Borough, the Mersey Gateway Project will provide strategic cross-river accessibility improvements and the impetus for wide-ranging regeneration in Halton. A new road bridge connecting Runcorn and Widnes across the Mersey Estuary will be constructed, alongside the Silver Jubilee Bridge, whose role will be focussed upon local sustainable transport. Regeneration impact areas in both Runcorn and Widnes, will offer economic, social and environmental opportunities for improvement.

- See Preferred Policy Approach CS6: The Mersey Gateway Priority Project

## **Halton's Key Areas of Change**

### **3MG**

4.42 The 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) freight facility at Ditton will continue as one of the region's key employment sites, fully utilising the site's existing rail infrastructure and access to the road network to develop a multimodal distribution facility of regional importance. Related businesses associated with the operations at 3MG will be encouraged to locate in the surrounding business areas. The new link road joining the site with the Knowsley Expressway and the motorway network will provide access to the western end of the site, enabling the expansion of 3MG and also assisting in reducing freight movements through the adjacent area of Halebank.

- See Preferred Policy Approach CS7: 3MG

### **South Widnes**

4.43 Widnes Town Centre will develop its retail role and continue to be the focus for shopping, services and evening entertainment in the town. The redevelopment of the Windmill Centre will strengthen the retail offer in Widnes and develop its sub-regional role. Improved sustainable transport links will be integral to connecting the rest of the town, particularly Southern Widnes, and the Waterfront with the Town Centre. New leisure facilities in Widnes will be focused on the town centre and the Venture Fields site at Widnes Waterfront. Widnes Waterfront employment area will be developed to make the most of its prominent location, delivering employment opportunities for Halton's residents whilst also encouraging informal leisure related to the Trans Pennine Trail and linking in with the greenspace at Widnes Warth and Spike Island.

- See Preferred Policy Approach CS8: South Widnes

## **East Runcorn**

- 4.44 Land at East Runcorn will continue to be used in creating a sustainable urban extension, delivering a diverse mix of uses, constituting a Strategic Site in Halton. Further development of the employment offer, at both the world class science and research facilities at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and the high-specification business area at Daresbury Park, will be complemented by a mixed use area developing as a new focus for the wider area. New housing development will supplement the expanded employment offer at Daresbury, and at Sandymoor, the completion of further homes will be supported by a new neighbourhood centre. A new sustainable transport interchange to serve the area will also be created.

➤ See Preferred Policy Approach CS9: East Runcorn

## **West Runcorn**

- 4.45 Runcorn docklands will accommodate major residential development on existing waterside employment sites, playing a key role in the delivery of the Growth Point agenda for the Mid-Mersey area. The docklands will also deliver a modern employment area to the south of the area, providing a buffer to further industrial development at the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks). The Port will develop as a multimodal facility utilising the Manchester Ship Canal, road and rail infrastructure and will further strengthen Halton's role as a centre for logistics and distribution. The local linkages between Runcorn docklands and Runcorn Old Town centre will be improved, including linking the residential community at the docklands with the Old Town centre, ensuring the vitality and viability of the area in the longer term. The Old Town centre itself will undergo a renaissance, and develop as a focus for independent shops and niche retailers. The centre will be reconnected with the existing waterways by realising the development of the Canal Quarter for a mixed commercial and residential scheme.

➤ See Preferred Policy Approach CS10: West Runcorn

## **Explaining the Key Diagram**

- 4.46 As the diagrammatic expression of the Spatial Strategy, the Key Diagram is an important accompaniment to the text of the Spatial Strategy policies. The Key Diagram identifies a number of important aspects of the Spatial Strategy, including:
- The Borough boundary and the broad location of surrounding settlements
  - The spatial location of Halton's main retail centres, including Widnes Town Centre, Halton Lea Town Centre and Runcorn Old Town centre
  - A major focus, through the Key Areas of Change, on delivering change in urban areas, particularly in waterside locations
  - The role of the sustainable urban extension in linking Runcorn's neighbourhoods with the Strategic Site at Daresbury
  - The spatial distribution of the Neighbourhood Priority Areas spread throughout both Runcorn and Widnes
  - The broad route of the proposed Mersey Gateway Bridge between Widnes and Runcorn, including where this will connect with the existing principal road network
  - The extent of the Green Belt boundary around the towns and Runcorn and Widnes, and the location of the Borough's rural villages within the Green Belt

- The location of the strategic Green Lungs within and adjacent to the urban areas of Runcorn and Widnes
- The role of the strategic road, bus and rail network in connecting different parts of the Borough as well as connecting Halton with the surrounding area



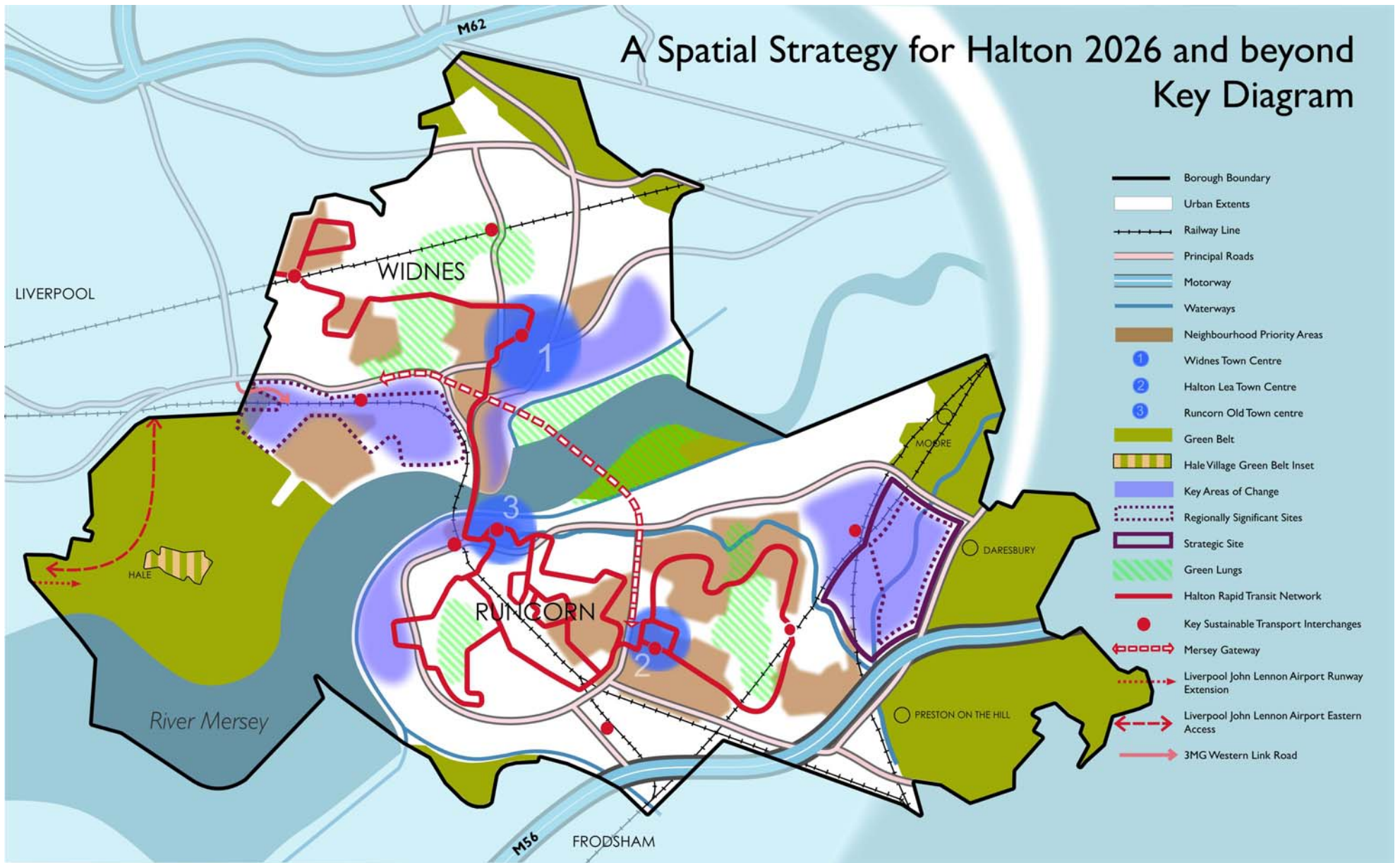


Figure 8: Key Diagram – A Spatial Strategy for Halton to 2026

## **CS2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

- 4.47 The Overall Spatial Strategy as set out in CS1 establishes the spatial distribution of future growth and development in the Borough. The Sustainable Development Principles exist alongside this Spatial Strategy in order to ensure that growth and development is sustainable, meeting the needs of Halton's present communities, and planning for the needs of future generations. All development in the Borough is therefore required to be in compliance with these principles in order to ensure a sustainable Halton, now and in the future.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS2: Sustainable Development Principles**

Over the lifetime of the Halton Core Strategy, development in the Borough should be in compliance with the following principles:

- Improve the quality of life for the borough's communities;
- Contribute to improvements in the health, education and safety of the Borough's communities;
- Increase accessibility and support sustainable transport options;
- Build on Halton's role in the city region and the North West economy, supporting and complementing Liverpool as the city regional centre;
- Regenerate Halton, bringing noticeable improvements to the Borough's urban areas;
- Minimise factors which contribute to climate change and plan for the potential effects of a changing climate on the Borough's populations and environments;
- Reflect the character and quality of Halton's local landscapes, including the Borough's historic and natural assets; and
- Make efficient use of resources and ensure infrastructure needs are met.

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Sustainable Development Principles**

No alternative policy approaches have been considered for CS2: Sustainable Development Principles, as the preferred approach supports the overarching priority given to achieving sustainable development in Halton.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 4.48 Principles of sustainable development can be found at every spatial scale in the UK, from national, to regional and finally to local levels. The following paragraphs summarise the current sustainability principles both nationally and regionally which are applicable to Halton and explains how these have been used to inform the locally specific principles of sustainable development for the Borough.

### **Sustainable Development in the UK**

- 4.49 'Sustainable development' is defined as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.50 National guidance in the form of PPS I: 'Delivering Sustainable Development' cements this aim and sets out the Government's objective for the planning system to be a key means of delivering sustainable development through achieving:
- **social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;**
  - **protection and enhancement of the environment;**
  - **prudent use of natural resources; and,**
  - **sustainable economic development.**
- 4.51 These national planning principles of sustainable development were developed from the UK's 1999 strategy 'A Better Quality of Life'. In 2005 these guiding principles were further developed in the strategy 'Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy'. This 2005 strategy aims to bring together and build on the previous principles to set out an overarching approach and evolve sustainable development policy. The guiding principles of Sustainable Development as detailed in the 'Securing the Future' strategy are as follows:
- **Living within environmental limits:** Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity.
  - **Ensuring a strong healthy and just society:** Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities.
  - **Achieving a sustainable economy:** Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all.
  - **Promoting good governance:** Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance.
  - **Using sound science responsibly:** Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific basis.
- 4.52 These principles form the basis for policy in the UK (including planning policy). For a policy to be sustainable, it must respect all five of these principles, though it should be recognised that some policies, while underpinned by all five, will place more emphasis on certain principles than others.

### **Sustainable Development in the North West**

- 4.53 At the regional level these guiding principles have been reflected in the RSS which sets out the overarching planning policy framework for the North West region. The RSS states a series of spatial principles for sustainable development in the North West, aiming to:
- **promote sustainable communities;**
  - **promote sustainable economic development;**
  - **make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure;**
  - **manage travel demand, reduce the need to travel, and increase accessibility;**
  - **marry opportunity to need;**

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<sup>1</sup> HM Government (2005), *Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*, available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/publications/uk-strategy/>

- **promote environmental quality;**
- **mainstreaming rural issues; and**
- **reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.**

### **Sustainable Development in Halton**

- 4.54 In response to national and regional policy, and to complement Halton’s Spatial Strategy, a number of principles for sustainable development at the borough level have been agreed.
- 4.55 These locally distinctive principles are informed by local issues, challenges and opportunities, as discussed through the spatial portrait in chapter 2, and Halton’s Sustainable Community Strategy. As a result the sustainable development principles set out in the preferred policy reflect the current social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough whilst building upon the aims of sustainable development at the national and regional level.
- 4.56 In order to achieve sustainable development in Halton in the period up to 2026, all development, where appropriate, will be assessed against these principles.
- 4.57 The Sustainable Development Principles are therefore integral to the Core Strategy Preferred Policies and should be read alongside them. This will ensure that all development in Halton meets the needs of the borough’s present communities and future generations.

## 4A. SPATIAL STRATEGY POLICIES: SPATIAL PRIORITIES

### CS3: HOUSING SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES

- 4.58 The RSS requires that Halton makes provision for the development of 500 dwellings per annum (net gain) between 2003 and 2021, however Halton gained Growth Point Status in 2008, as part of the mid-Mersey Growth Point area, which includes a commitment to provide for new housing at 20% above this level (600 units per annum) over the period to 2017.
- 4.59 The supply of available development land in Halton is becoming increasingly constrained and it is important to identify both the quantity and broad locational priorities for new development. The following is proposed as the preferred policy option for the supply and locational priorities for housing in accordance with Halton's Spatial Strategy (CS1).

#### Preferred Policy Option CS3: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities

##### i. Housing Requirement

Additional housing (net of clearance) should be provided at an average annual rate of;

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| • 500 units per annum between 2003 and 2008 | ( 2,500) |
| • 600 units per annum between 2008 and 2017 | ( 5,400) |
| • 400 units per annum between 2017 and 2026 | ( 3,600) |
|   | (11,500) |

Beyond 2026 development should continue at an average of 400 units per annum (net gain) until such time as this policy requirement is amended.

##### ii. Managing the Housing Supply; Meeting the Housing Requirement

The housing requirement will be met through;

1. Net dwelling gain since 2003 (2,449 units '03~'09)
2. Currently allocated and committed sites.
3. Identified housing opportunities within the Key Areas of Change.
4. Additional allocations in subsequent DPDs
5. Appropriate windfall development (subject to the criteria below)

The release of land for housing will be managed to ensure a minimum of a 5 year supply of available and developable sites. The release of sites for development may be phased where;

6. there is significant local over-supply detrimental to local or regional policy objectives.
7. necessary infrastructure is not available to support the development.

Land will be used efficiently. The minimum average net density of new housing development across the Borough will be 30 dwellings per hectare.(dph) Within 5 minute walk (400m) of a defined town, district or neighbourhood centre or the Halton Sustainable Transport Network the presumption will be for densities of 40 dph or greater.

Where there is an identified deficiency in total supply to meet the housing requirement;

8. The Council will undertake a review of land supply through the Strategic Housing Land Availability (SHLAA) process, or as replaced, and where necessary will seek to allocate additional land in a DPD; and,
9. the Council will undertake a review of development densities and seek to increase minimum requirements where appropriate.

### **iii. Additional Allocations**

The search sequence for additional housing allocations will conform to the principles set out in Policy CSI, with broad priorities being;

10. Brownfield sites within Key Areas of Change or Neighbourhood Priority Areas
11. Brownfield sites, elsewhere within the settlement boundaries.
12. Greenfield sites within the urban area

### **iv. Windfall (Brownfield) Development Proposals**

Brownfield windfalls on sites allocated or already in other uses may only be considered where all the following criteria are satisfied:

13. The existing use / allocation is demonstrably no longer required, and
14. Development would not undermine delivery of a more sustainable housing allocation or result in the housing supply exceeding the requirement, and
15. There is no conflict with other development plan policies

### **v. Greenfield sites**

Release of greenfield sites for housing may be supported where all the following criteria are satisfied;

16. There is an overriding requirement to maintain a 5 year supply of deliverable sites

## **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities**

### **Do not specify quantitative housing requirement and rely on RSS Policy L4 (Regional Housing Provision):**

This approach does not adequately support the Borough's recently awarded Growth Point Status (2008~2017) and the associated commitment to pursue accelerated delivery rates during the life of this programme.

### **Set enhanced policy requirement of 600pa during Growth Point Period (2008~17), reverting to 500pa from 2018:**

This would be consistent with the RSS policy requirement and address our Growth Point commitments but would result in an enhanced land requirement for housing which may not be identifiable at this time raising pressures on urban green space and employment sites or for Green Belt release.

### **Set Policy requirements but falling to 250 per annum from 2017:**

This would be consistent with the RSS policy requirement to 2021 (9,000 dwellings) but would result in a deficit if the RSS requirement of 500pa is carried forward beyond this date.



## Justification / Explanation

- 4.60 The preferred option relating to quantifying the housing requirement has been chosen as it strikes a balance between the commitment to pursue accelerated housing provision during the life of the Growth Point programme (2008~17) and the currently identifiable supply of developable land for housing, having regard to environmental constraints and Green Belt boundaries. The policy seeks to deliver an additional 9,500 dwellings (net gain) (500 x 18 yrs) over the period from 2003-2021 in line with RSS requirements, with 400 per annum from 2018, following the Growth Point period of accelerated growth. In total this would see the addition of 11,500 units from 2003.
- 4.61 The most recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2009) shows that there is sufficient land to meet the housing requirement to 2026, however a proportion of currently identified sites may not come forward for development during the plan period or may be lost to other uses, and as such the situation will be reviewed annually and where necessary, the Council may need to take action to ensure a continued supply of readily available and deliverable sites. The preferred policy sets out the mechanisms the Council will employ to address any significant over or under supply including the priorities for identifying new sites and dealing with unforeseen or ‘windfall’ proposals that may emerge.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3
<b>Regional Policy</b>	DP2, L2,L3, L4, L5,
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton’s Housing Strategy
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO8, SO9, SO10, SO12, SO15, SO17, SO18 and SO20.
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton’s Urban Renewal; Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 154 – Net additional homes provided
<b>SA Objectives</b>	10 - Housing
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CSI, CSI1, CSI2, CSI3, CSI4

## DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR HOUSING SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES

- 4.62 Land for housing development is identified in Saved Policies of the Halton UDP which will be supplemented or superseded by the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD programmed to be adopted in 2013. Various area specific Master Plans, an AAP and SPDs have or will be produced to guide future residential development in specific areas of the Borough, including those supplementary to the “Key Areas of Change” preferred policy options.
- 4.63 The Council’s development management process will necessarily have a role in the delivery of this preferred policy option, in the determination of planning applications for residential development and the assessment of their suitability in terms of, for example, accessibility levels, or on-site densities. The Council’s mechanisms in monitoring residential completions and assessing housing land supply, including through the SHLAA process, will be extremely important in effectively implementing this approach and ensuring that a sufficient supply of housing land can be identified.

- 4.64 The implementation of the policy relies on landowners releasing land for development and the actions of private developers and Registered Social Landlords in providing new stock. The Council will work in partnership, where appropriate, with other public and private sector parties to promote the delivery of high quality residential development in accordance with this policy. Implementation of the policy will require the provision of additional local infrastructure to service the resultant new residential developments, which could be funded by developers as set out in CS33: Infrastructure Provision, and as the policy explains, in some cases could benefit from phasing to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place prior to the occupation of the residential development.
- 4.65 The policy sets annualised average development rates to be met for the entirety of the Core Strategy plan period to 2026 and beyond this period. Where development exceeds or runs behind target this will have a cumulative effect on the subsequent housing trajectory required to secure delivery over the policy period as a whole. It should also be borne in mind that during the Core Strategy plan period, requirements for housing provision as set out within the RSS may be subject to change, and this change would need to be reflected in a review of this policy.



## **CS4: EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES**

- 4.66 The RSS requires that employment land is provided in Halton to meet the projected level of need within the wider area of Merseyside and Halton which are considered together for the purposes of regional planning. The supply of available development land in Halton is becoming increasingly constrained and it is important to identify how provision for new employment land will be met. The following policy is proposed as the preferred policy option for the supply and locational priorities for employment in accordance with Halton's Spatial Strategy (CSI).

### **Preferred Policy Option CS4: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities**

Employment land will be provided over the lifetime of the Core Strategy to ensure that an adequate supply and range of sites are available to:

- Meet the needs of both new and existing businesses;
- Develop and strengthen Halton's economy; and
- Contribute towards sub-regional employment land supply to 2021 and continuing at appropriate levels to 2026.

The employment land requirement will be met through a portfolio of sites consisting of:

- Completed employment development 2005-2008 (74.36ha)
- Existing allocated employment sites;
- Sites benefiting from planning permission for employment use;
- Regeneration and remodelling opportunities within existing employment areas;
- Opportunities within the Key Areas of Change principally including the locations for Regionally Significant Sites for economic development at 3MG and Daresbury;
- New allocations of land for employment purposes, including:
  - Small scale development sites within Neighbourhood Priority Areas where jobs are accessible to local people;

where the reuse of brownfield land will be prioritised, thereby contributing to achievement of Halton's Spatial Strategy.

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Employment Supply and Locational Priorities**

#### **Maintaining a five year supply of land for employment**

An alternative approach was considered which would seek to maintain a minimum of a 5 year supply of sites for employment purposes. This approach would be similar to that for housing development where a 5 year supply of deliverable sites is required. The amount of employment land required could be based on the projected average take-up rate, as indicated by RSS. This approach has not been progressed as it was felt to be too prescriptive and to take a short term view of the employment land situation, when specific requirements for certain sites extend into the longer term.

#### **Identifying specific areas for employment growth**

Aside from the Key Areas of Change where it is identified that employment development will

be accommodated, the Core Strategy could have taken an approach to refer to specific sites across the borough where new employment development should be directed. Whilst this would deliver a greater level of detail and hence certainty in the Core Strategy for the development industry, closer analysis of the evidence base is required as part of the site allocations process before such sites can be identified. Therefore the above preferred option was favoured which does not identify specific employment areas at this stage.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 4.67 The emerging Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2009) which has been undertaken with Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire Councils, analyses the existing employment land situation in the Borough and the need for further land to be made available in order to meet the needs of the economy and deliver economic growth over the plan period. Key to this is the forecasted disaggregation of the additional employment land allocation of 494ha for the Merseyside and Halton authorities, as set out in the RSS. This figure was developed using existing supply at 2005, combined with a projected take-up rate per annum for 16 years for the period to 2021, with the addition of a flexibility factor to allow for changing circumstances. Further employment land is required over and above the disaggregated 494ha within RSS, to deliver sufficient employment land to cover the whole of the Core Strategy plan period to 2026.
- 4.68 It should be noted that RSS focuses the provision of employment land on the traditional employment use classes of B1, B2 and B8 as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and its subsequent amendments. Supporting text within RSS states that this includes locations for Regionally Significant Economic Development but excludes inter-modal freight terminals. However, given that the Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) is both an inter-modal freight terminal and represents a Regionally Significant Site for economic development, the land supply at 3MG in 2005 was taken into account as part of the existing situation within RSS. As such, additional land allocations at 3MG can form a legitimate part of the additional supply to deliver the required amounts of land for employment purposes across Merseyside and Halton.
- 4.69 The findings of the draft Joint Employment Land and Premises Study suggest that using a base date of April 2008, Halton required an additional 153ha of employment land, in addition to the realistic supply of employment land in the borough of 178.94ha at 2008, to meet predicted needs to 2026. This therefore totals 331.94ha of land for employment purposes which the emerging evidence base suggests needs to be made available over the Core Strategy plan period. The evidence base will be kept up to date and as such there is the potential for the forecasted need for employment land to change in response to wider economic circumstances, including a potential increase in home working within the borough, although to a certain extent this is factored into the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study. It should be noted that within RSS, emphasis is placed on ensuring that at any one time, 30% of sites are available to allow new and existing businesses to grow. As such, it is important to maintain a reasonable supply of sites throughout the plan period, through the phased release of sites for development.
- 4.70 Delivering small scale development opportunities within Neighbourhood Priority Areas, coupled with the delivery of local jobs where applicable, will contribute towards the achievement of the aims of the Liverpool City Region as set out in RSS, which promote connecting areas of economic opportunity to areas of greatest need.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPG4, Draft PPS4
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies W1, W3, LCR1, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	Economic and Tourism Development Strategy, Halton Economic Review
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO4, SO5, SO6
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal, Employment, Learning & Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 171 – VAT registration rate
<b>SA Objectives</b>	7 – Land Quality, 14 - Economy
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS15, CS16

## **DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY AND LOCATIONAL PRIORITIES**

- 4.71 As this policy relates to the supply of land for employment purposes, it has close links to the specific allocation of land for employment use. Therefore, the implementation of this policy is reliant on the Site Allocations DPD, which will identify the location of land required to be allocated as employment land in order to meet the appropriate regional targets over the plan period. Prior to the adoption of this document, the policy is linked to the UDP Proposals Map, and other LDF policies that will deliver employment land, such as CS7: 3MG and CS9: East Runcorn, which are the locations of regionally significant economic development sites, and the Widnes Town Centre AAP which will present a detailed master plan, including employment areas, for the Town Centre. SPDs will also have an important supporting role, specifically those relating to the development of employment land at specific locations, including the employment aspects at Daresbury, 3MG and Widnes Waterfront. Aspects of this policy are also reliant on the development management policies which will be contained within the Detailed Development Policy DPD, and other Core Strategy employment policies, including CS15: Safeguarding Existing Employment Areas.
- 4.72 Implementation of this policy is reliant on the Council's function as Local Planning Authority in both policy and development management terms, in setting the spatial framework of sites for employment development and in determining applications for new employment uses in accordance with criteria set out in this approach. The Council's role in monitoring completed employment development and assessing employment land availability will also be important in ensuring that Halton's contribution towards the sub-regional quota of new employment land is being met.
- 4.73 New employment development will generate the need for additional infrastructure, for example, physical infrastructure to support new buildings, transport infrastructure to ensure accessibility, digital infrastructure to ensure online connectivity, and social infrastructure to support those working within and visiting employment areas. This infrastructure should be delivered by developers in accordance with CS33: Infrastructure Provision.
- 4.74 The delivery of this policy will depend upon the actions of private sector developers, acting in partnership, where appropriate, with public sector agencies including the Council to promote high quality employment land developments. The delivery also depends on landowners making their sites ready for development or redevelopment of land for employment purposes.

- 4.75 The preferred policy option aims to deliver employment land in Halton over the Core Strategy plan period to 2026, with an emphasis on the need for Halton to contribute an appropriate amount of employment land to meet the sub-regional allocation to 2021, as set out in the RSS. The delivery of some of this employment land will depend on the delivery of some of the larger projects in Halton, for example, the extensive development at East Runcorn (CS9), or the Mersey Gateway Priority Project (CS6) and hence delivery will be staggered over the plan period.

## CS5: NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITY AREAS

4.76 Neighbourhood Priority Areas have been identified for enhanced support in terms of improving health and reducing worklessness. These areas reflect a predominance of demographic and socio-economic factors coinciding with negative quality of life indicators suggesting localised concentrations of multiple deprivation. This policy intends to address problems in these Neighbourhood Priority Areas by managing and co-ordinating resources and services to achieve a greater combined impact.

### Location of Current Neighbourhood Priority Areas:

#### 4.77 1) Widnes:

- a) Westside of Hough Green
- b) Ditton
- c) West Bank, South Kingsway, South Appleton and Crow Wood
- d) Broadheath and North Riverside

#### 2) Runcorn:

- e) Runcorn Old Town
- f) Castlefields and Windmill Hill
- g) Halton Lea, Grange and Halton Brook
- h) Northern part of Norton South

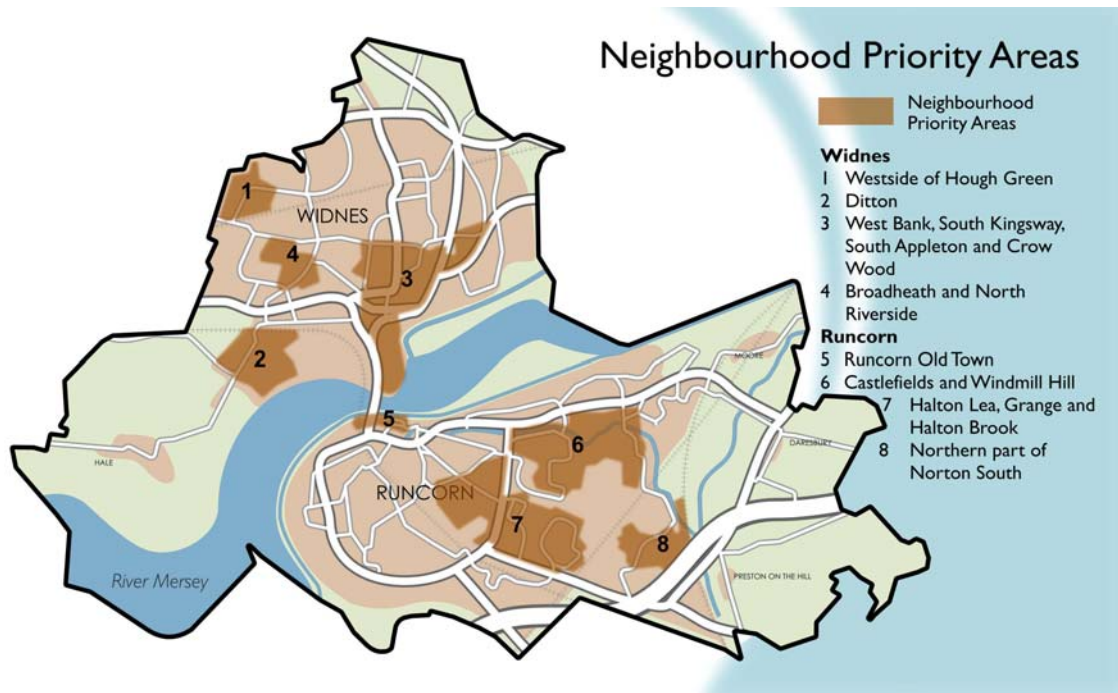


Figure 9: Neighbourhood Priority Areas

## **Preferred Policy Option CS5: Neighbourhood Priority Areas**

### **i. Neighbourhood Priority Areas**

Development proposals that can bring health improvements or local employment opportunities and are suitable for integration into these areas should be located within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Priority Areas unless there are overriding factors for the development to be located elsewhere, for example:

- Land use would be inappropriate within the Neighbourhood Priority Areas or surrounding area.
- Overriding reasons require the development to be located in an alternative location.

### **ii. Delivering Community Benefits**

Where appropriate to the proposed use, development within, or adjacent to, the Neighbourhood Priority Areas should contribute to the enhancement of these communities by ensuring that community benefits from development are maximised as follows:

- Diversify the housing type and tenure to provide a greater range of housing than the area currently provides.
- Enhance the social and health care infrastructure and improve access to community services and facilities that will further the quality of life of the local community. This will primarily be delivered through developer contributions and / or infrastructure tariffs.
- Deliver improvements to the local environment that will contribute towards reducing levels of crime, fear of crime and tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Make improvements to the overall quality of the built environment in the area.
- Include appropriate landscaping measures to improve the quality of the environment in the area.
- Relate well to the Green Infrastructure network in the vicinity for the provision / enhancement of a network of open spaces for play, sport and recreation.
- Where appropriate, create local employment opportunities directly accessible by people within the Neighbourhood Priority Area.
- Seek opportunities to enter into Local Labour and Local Business Agreements to secure training and employment benefits for local people and offer stronger chances for local business to compete for contracts.
- Integrate walking and cycling routes to provide clear and safe links to surrounding communities, including new pedestrian, public transport and vehicular links to local employment opportunities.
- Seek opportunities to provide and promote digital inclusivity through increased Internet access options in these areas.

### **iii. Policy Integration**

Strategies and initiatives for intervention in the proximity of the Neighbourhood Priority Areas should be coordinated to ensure that opportunities for improving health, reducing worklessness, and improving the overall quality of the environment are considered as part of the intervention. This policy provides the basis for the co-ordination of Council, Local Strategic Partnership, and other plans and strategies that seek to tackle the factors that produce negative quality of life indicators.

## **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Neighbourhood Priority Areas**

The purpose of this policy is to target specific locations within the Borough that require improvements in quality of life with a particular focus on improving health and reducing worklessness. Alternative policy options to achieve this improvement are:

### **Alternative statistical basis of selection**

A single specific indicator or custom set of indicators could have been chosen as the selection tool for choosing Neighbourhood Priority Areas. The Most Deprived (Top 10%) of the Index of Multiple Deprivation' is considered to be the most appropriate trigger mechanism for neighbourhoods to be considered 'Neighbourhood Priority Areas'. This is because the IMD covers a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England.

### **Alternative spatial scale for intervention**

Rather than Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) used as the tool to identify Neighbourhood Priority Area locations, another boundary, such as ward, area forum, or a custom definition could have been used. LSOA are considered to be at the most appropriate spatial scale for the level of intervention involved. LSOA are also compatible with the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which has been selected as the trigger mechanism for selecting areas to be included within the Neighbourhood Priority Area policy.

### **No Policy**

Other policies within the Core Strategy seek many of the same outcomes but apply holistically across the Borough. Consideration was given to having no policy, with no locations singled out. This approach was discarded as certain locations should be a priority for locating developments that can improve health and reduce worklessness amongst other community benefits. There is also a need to provide a policy basis for the co-ordination of plans and strategies that seek to tackle the factors that produce negative quality of life indicators.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 4.78 The focus for this policy is the targeted improvement of the quality of life of the communities within the identified Neighbourhood Priority Areas. Specifically this means improving the health and welfare of residents, tackling poverty and boosting contributions to economic activity. This policy allows the spatial implementation of strategies and initiatives that operate within the Neighbourhood Priority Areas to be co-ordinated to deliver maximum community benefits.
- 4.79 Within Halton there are certain areas that stand out particularly prominently by scoring poorly in terms of statistical measures of performance when benchmarked against other areas of Halton and also nationally between Local Authorities. To tackle these specific issues Neighbourhood Priority Areas have been defined that will be the first choice in terms of locating development, where this can be done sensitively, to tackle issues such as diversity of housing tenure, above average unemployment rates, and the necessity to broaden the socio-economic base of these areas.
- 4.80 Developments in digital technologies over the last decade have generated a period of extraordinary social and cultural change. Digital technologies impact on almost



every aspect of modern society, creating huge social benefits. They can improve how we work, how we are entertained, how we communicate with each other, the healthcare available to us, and how information and knowledge can be brought together and used for our benefit. While the majority of people in the UK are active participants in the digital revolution, these benefits are not distributed equally to all groups and communities. Inequality in the use and application of digital technologies is a new driver of social exclusion in the 21st century, which risks accelerating existing social divides and creating new ones. Digital exclusion is a symptom of wider exclusion, but also a cause.

- 4.81 This policy will enable requirements for development, not only within the Neighbourhood Priority Area, but also outside its boundary to demonstrate benefit residents of Neighbourhood Priority Areas. The approach should therefore lay the foundations for delivery of improvements to liveability, public services and the transformation of Halton's neighbourhoods.

### **Definition of Priority Areas / Relationship to the Evidence**

- 4.82 Following a review of the area boundaries that have been used in 2009 for defining locations within the Borough that could benefit from enhanced support, the 'Most Deprived (Top 10%) of the Index of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD Top 10%) is the most appropriate choice for beginning to define the Neighbourhood Priority Areas. The boundaries formed by the IMD Top 10% closely mirror the other designations, for example, Employment Priority Areas (National Indicator 153), the Halton Borough Council Neighbourhood Management Areas, the Vulnerable Housing Market Areas (based on Lower Super Output Areas covering the areas defined in the 'Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy: Identification of Vulnerable Housing Markets, March 2007') (with the exception of the area at Runcorn Docks and Weston), and areas designated as eligible to receive the Disadvantaged Areas Fund.
- 4.83 The IMD 2007 combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation.
- 4.84 The Priority Areas have been defined by amending the boundaries for the most deprived 10% LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) nationally according to the 2007 IMD. The Neighbourhood Priority Areas originally matched the LSOA boundaries however it is logical to use real world physical boundaries for the representation of areas (for example, roads and railways, and enclose whole housing areas rather than use the statistical boundaries of the LSOAs). It was also deemed desirable to amend the original LSOA boundaries to include only areas of residential or mixed use land areas. Exclusively employment areas and open spaces have been excluded from the Neighbourhood Priority Areas. Finally the original LSOAs were extended to include some minor areas identified as Employment Priority Areas and Neighbourhood Management Areas to ensure consistency in boundary definition.

### **Policy Flexibility**

- 4.85 As policy based intervention and improved service delivery within the Neighbourhood Priority Areas improves the demographic and socio-economic factors it will be necessary to keep under review the statistical measures, such as the IMD, that led to the initial designation of an area as a Neighbourhood Priority Area. It is expected that this policy will be reviewed after five years to ensure the



designation is still appropriate for each area. This policy will utilise the government's favoured measure of poverty and deprivation, in 2009 this is the Index IMD. If this changes in the future then the accepted common method of comparison and benchmarking will be adopted for the purposes of defining Neighbourhood Priority Areas.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPSI
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policy DP2, LI, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	SCS
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO4, SO8, SO9, SO10, SO12, SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Halton's Urban Renewal, Employment Learning and Skills in Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area, NI17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour, NI153: Working age claiming out of work benefits
<b>SA Objectives</b>	10 – Housing, 11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health, 13 – Education, 14 – Economy, 16 – Town Centres, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS3, CS11, CS12, CS19, CS20, CS21, CS28, CS30

## **DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITY AREAS**

- 4.86 This policy will be supported by SPDs aimed at particular Neighbourhood Priority Areas, including the Castlefields and Norton Priory SPD and the West Bank SPD. The policy will also be supported by other development plan policies within the LDF, such as those Core Strategy policies containing actions in Neighbourhood Priority Areas, and further development management policies within other forthcoming DPDs.
- 4.87 The successful implementation of this policy is heavily reliant upon different Council service areas and on the actions of the Council's partners. The successful delivery of change in Neighbourhood Priority Areas, as indicated in part iii) of the policy will require closely coordinated policy approaches and action plans across the range of agencies involved in neighbourhood interventions. Partners ranging from health service providers, education specialists, house builders to communications providers must work together to ensure that improvements are made to the social and physical environment of the Neighbourhood Priority Areas.
- 4.88 Addressing problems in Neighbourhood Priority Areas will require measures to provide new and improved social, digital, physical and green infrastructure. An integrated approach to the provision of new infrastructure in Neighbourhood Priority Areas is central to ensuring that the neighbourhoods develop in a sustainable way: sufficient, high quality infrastructure must be in place to support the most vulnerable communities. In accordance with CS33: Infrastructure Provision, where appropriate, the requirement for new infrastructure should be met by developers.
- 4.89 This policy will be implemented over the plan period, although Neighbourhood Priority Areas should experience noticeable quality of life improvements. If areas improve to a level at which they are no longer considered to a priority for change and investment, then other, consequently more vulnerable areas may be identified as

Neighbourhood Priority Areas. This policy contains the flexibility required to make feasible its implementation for an extended period to 2026.

## **CS6: THE MERSEY GATEWAY PRIORITY PROJECT**

- 4.90 The Mersey Gateway Project is of strategic importance to Halton, the wider Liverpool City Region and the North West. In order to realise the spatial opportunities afforded by the construction of the new river crossing, the Council is committed to safeguarding and supporting the development of major transportation infrastructure associated with the implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS6: The Mersey Gateway Priority Project**

#### **i. Delivering the Mersey Gateway Priority Project**

Any proposals that would impinge upon or prevent the successful implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project, with a particular emphasis on the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and its associated infrastructure, will not be permitted.

The Mersey Gateway Bridge will be highly integrated with the strategic highway network in Halton and the wider sub-region, improving connectivity between key areas, aiding the flow of cross-river traffic and reducing congestion for road users, including local traffic, businesses, commuters and road-based freight.

#### **ii. Enhancing Sustainable Transport Opportunities**

Following the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, opportunities to secure improved cross-river sustainable transport options will be capitalised upon, including sustainable transport opportunities associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

#### **iii. Regeneration and Development Opportunities**

Development proposals should seek to take advantage of the regeneration and development opportunities attributable to the Mersey Gateway Project and must not prejudice the social, physical and environmental potential of the project. The following areas in Halton have been identified for their regeneration and development potential:

##### *Primary Areas:*

- West Bank
- Runcorn Old Town centre
- Astmoor Industrial Estate
- Widnes Town Centre & Widnes Waterfront

##### *Secondary Areas:*

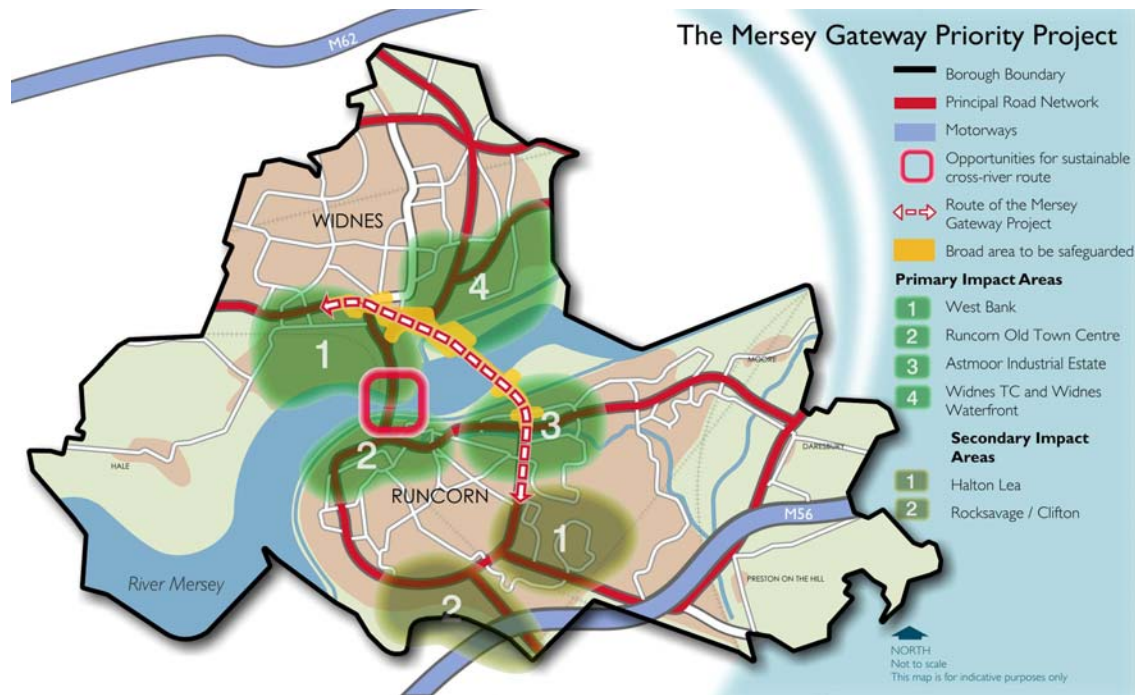
- Halton Lea
- Rocksavage / Clifton

Other areas where regeneration and development opportunities arise as a result of the catalytic effect of the Mersey Gateway Project and the re-defined pattern of movement will be encouraged and supported where appropriate.

#### **iv. Environmental Mitigation and Enhancement**

Negative environmental impacts caused by the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge will be mitigated and opportunities to enhance the natural environment sought where

appropriate. This is particularly applicable to the Mersey Estuary area and other areas of significant environmental value.



**Figure 10: The Mersey Gateway Priority Project**

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: The Mersey Gateway Priority Project**

#### **Safeguarding the Mersey Gateway Project**

This approach would have safeguarded all of the land required for the successful implementation of the Mersey Gateway Project but would not have considered supporting delivery or highlighting other opportunities in any detail. This policy was not employed in isolation as it did not explicitly support the delivery of the Project and did not sufficiently emphasise the importance of the Mersey Gateway Bridge for the development of the Borough over the plan period.

#### **No Policy for the Mersey Gateway Project**

This approach would have relied on guidance from other sources to successfully implement the Mersey Gateway Project, or relied on the incorporation of considerations into other policy areas and/or LDF documents. This was not considered to be a viable option due to the strategic importance of the Project for the Borough and the need to recognise this importance centrally within the Core Strategy.

#### **Justification / Explanation**

4.91 The preferred policy option recognises that the Mersey Gateway Priority Project is 'more than just a new bridge', but the 'catalyst' that will connect communities and

lead to regeneration and investment throughout Halton, the Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and the North West<sup>2</sup>.

- 4.92 The policy therefore aims to realise the spatial opportunities afforded by the construction of the new river crossing in addition to safeguarding land and infrastructure required for the delivery of the project. As part of this the preferred policy option will support the advancement of sustainable travel options in the Borough including the re-designation of the Silver Jubilee Bridge as a reliable and well-integrated local route increasing local connectivity between Runcorn and Widnes.
- 4.93 The preferred policy option also recognises that it will be important for areas in Halton to capitalise on the regeneration and development opportunities presented by the Mersey Gateway Priority Project. Such opportunities are identified in the areas of Runcorn Old Town centre, West Bank, Astmoor Industrial Estate and South Widnes. Other areas in the Borough that may present secondary regeneration and development opportunities as a result of the catalytic effect of the Mersey Gateway Priority Project are also supported, for instance Halton Lea and Rocksavage / Clifton.
- 4.94 Where applicable the preferred policy option will ensure that opportunities to enhance the environmental quality of the impact areas are taken, and that any potential negative environmental impacts associated with the Mersey Gateway Project are mitigated. This will be especially important during the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and its associated infrastructure.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	TaSTS, The Future of Transport White Paper: A Network to 2030
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RES; Regional Freight Strategy
<b>Local Policy</b>	LTP2; MGRS; MGSTS
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO5, SO6, SO17, SO18, SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal; Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area, NI175: Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling; NI 186 Per capital CO2 emissions in LA area;
<b>SA Objectives</b>	8 – Air Quality, 11 – Accessibility, 14 - Economy, 16 – Town Centres, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS28, CS29, CS31

## **DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR THE MERSEY GATEWAY PRIORITY PROJECT**

- 4.95 This policy is supported by the Council's adopted Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy and Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy, in addition to the Council's wider approach for the Mersey Gateway Project. Area-specific aspects of the policy will be supported by the Runcorn Old Town centre SPD and the West Bank SPD. The transport related aspects of the policy are supported by the policies of the adopted Local Transport Plan and by the transport policies contained within

<sup>2</sup> Halton Borough Council (2008), The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, available at: <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/merseygateway/docs/regenstrategy>

the Core Strategy, notably CS28: Encouraging Sustainable Transport and CS29: Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions.

- 4.96 As the lead organisation for the Mersey Gateway Project, Halton Borough Council will continue to have a large role in its delivery. The Local Planning Authority in particular will have a progressive role in ensuring that the successful implementation of the project is not prejudiced by nearby new development. However, the successful delivery of the Project, and hence the successful application of this policy, will rely on partnership working with the Council's public and private sector partners, including notably the Mersey Gateway Concessionaire, on matters of transportation, regeneration and environmental mitigation.
- 4.97 At the heart of this policy is a large physical infrastructure project, and hence its implementation will have an impact on transport infrastructure in Halton. Existing infrastructure required for the successful delivery of the Project will be safeguarded for that purpose. Through the provision of a new road bridge and associated works to existing highway infrastructure, changes will be made to the strategic crossing of the River Mersey in Halton. The implementation of the regeneration-related aspects of the policy will have implications for local infrastructure in areas identified, including that associated with physical re-development of areas.
- 4.98 As the policy is intended to support the Mersey Gateway Project during and after its implementation, the policy outcome is not required by a particular time. Aspects of the policy will be relevant at different junctures during the Project process, for example: planning for environmental mitigation at the Project design stage; safeguarding land prior to the construction of the new bridge and supporting sustainable transport improvements on the Silver Jubilee Bridge after the new bridge is completed. While the Mersey Gateway Bridge is expected to be opened in 2014, this policy contains the flexibility to accommodate changes to the Project schedule.

## 4B. SPATIAL STRATEGY POLICIES: KEY AREAS OF CHANGE

4.99 As detailed in the Spatial Strategy, a number of Key Areas of Change have been identified as important to delivering the anticipated levels of development to be brought forward over the lifetime of the strategy. Through examination of the evidence base and in response to higher level planning policy and guidance, four key areas have emerged as clear choices to deliver the forecast growth.

### Where are the Key Areas of Change?

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

- **3MG** (the Mersey Multimodal Gateway) at Ditton in Widnes.
- **South Widnes** – including Widnes Town Centre, Widnes Waterfront and the regeneration area of West Bank.
- **East Runcorn** – covering Daresbury Park, Science and Innovation Campus and Sandymoor.
- **West Runcorn** – including Runcorn Old Town centre, Runcorn Docks and the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks).

4.101 The broad areas to be covered by the Key Areas of Change are shown on the Key Diagram which illustrates the Spatial Strategy for Halton to 2026. For ease of reference, the location of the four Key Areas of Change is depicted on Figure 11 below.

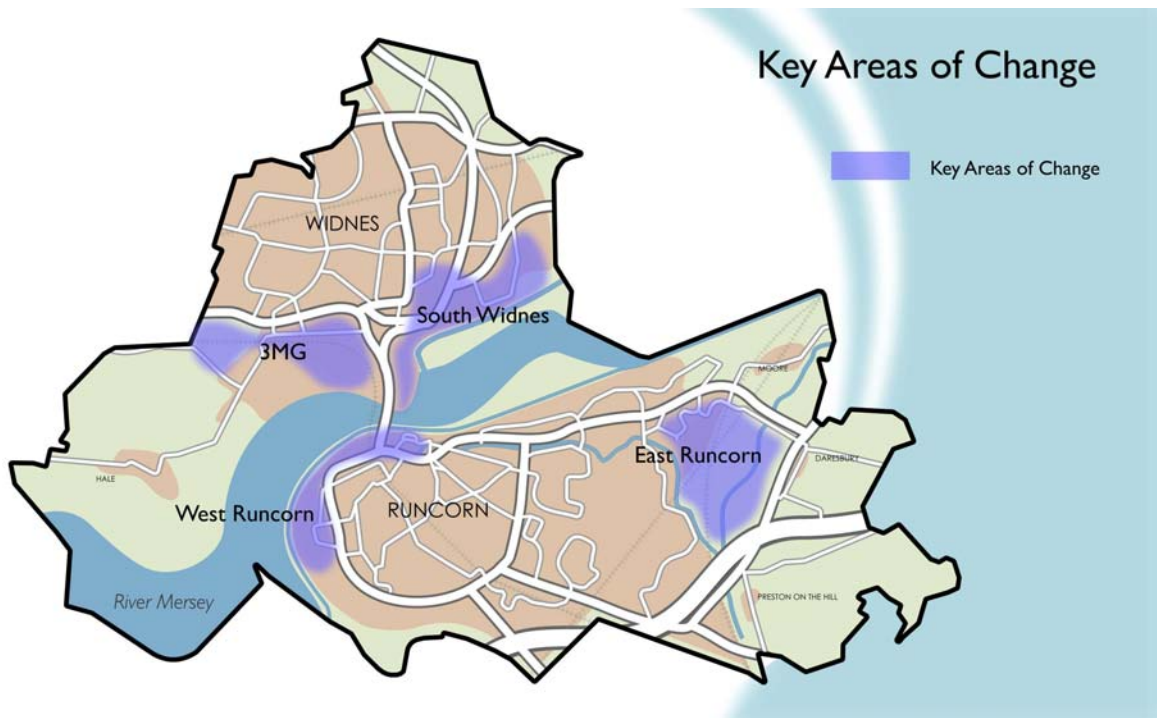


Figure 11: The Key Areas of Change

## Why have these areas been chosen?

### 3MG

- 4.102 The **multimodal logistics and distribution facility** in Ditton, Widnes, is well located in relation to the strategic road network, West Coast Main Line rail access, the Port of Liverpool, the developing Mersey Gateway Port served by the Manchester Ship Canal and Liverpool John Lennon Airport. The site offers the **potential to deliver up to 5,000 jobs** in the Borough in an expanding sector.
- 4.103 Support for the development and expansion of intermodal freight facilities reflects national and regional priorities to facilitate **a shift in the movement of freight from road based transportation to sustainable modes**. The RSS specifically identifies the broad location of the West Coast mainline as it passes through Widnes as a key location for an intermodal freight terminal and goes on to detail a number of criteria to be satisfied in delivering such a facility. In addition to this recognition in the development plan, the site is also identified within the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) (2006) as a **Strategic Regional Site in the North West**, for its potential to provide a modern intermodal facility to serve Merseyside, North Wales and Cheshire.
- 4.104 **Comments made in 2006 at the Issues and Options consultation which are relevant to this Key Area of Change were as follows:**
- Support was given to the development of the Regionally Significant intermodal freight terminal at **3MG** in Widnes, including opportunities to increase local employment and to ensure that a greater proportion of freight travels by rail and water.
  - The safeguarding and re-opening of **Ditton Station** in Widnes was supported by a number of respondents.
  - Concern was voiced about the impact of expansion of the 3MG and Halebank employment areas in terms of secondary impacts on **traffic movements**.

### South Widnes

- 4.105 Widnes is the **largest Town Centre** in the Borough and historically developed in a linear fashion due to the physical constraints imposed by residential and industrial areas to the east and west. Developments have in the past taken place in a piecemeal manner which has resulted in a **disconnected** centre, comprising several distinct and partially separate sub-areas. An important and complex challenge is to **improve circulation** within the centre to connect the different elements of the Town Centre, including the areas which provide the evening economy for Widnes. It will also be vital to **connect the Town Centre** to Widnes Waterfront and the West Bank regeneration area to ensure accessibility and sustainable movement across the wider area.
- 4.106 The area known as **Widnes Waterfront** adjoins the Town Centre and covers the area south of Fiddlers Ferry Road and east of Ashley Way. Future development in the area is subject to a number of **challenges**, particularly in relation to the area's industrial past where many potential development sites are affected by contamination, presenting potentially prohibitive remediation requirements. Western most areas of the site are also affected by flood risk, falling within Flood Zone 3 with some sections at risk in the event of an extreme flood. However, the prominent site offers a number of **opportunities**, notably unlocking the potential offered by the **waterfront location** of the site and additionally, the site's proximity



to the new river crossing after the implementation of the **Mersey Gateway Priority Project**.

- 4.107 The **West Bank** area is situated to the west of Widnes Waterfront and currently comprises a **variety of different land uses**, with industrial and commercial to the north and the West Bank residential neighbourhood to the south. The area is characterised by poor circulation and connectivity, domination of vehicles and road infrastructure, and a lack of safe and secure routes. However a number of **opportunities** have been identified for the West Bank area including regeneration and development opportunities associated with the Mersey Gateway Priority Project. Building upon these opportunities, the regeneration of the area aims to create a **high quality mixed-use environment**.
- 4.108 **Comments made in 2006 at the Issues and Options consultation which are relevant to this Key Area of Change were as follows:**
- Widnes Waterfront was recognised as a strategic area for economic investment and support was given to the intention to maximise **regeneration in waterfront areas**, but one respondent felt that economic development in Widnes would result in the prejudicing of existing business operations or potential conflicts with neighbouring hazardous land uses.

#### **East Runcorn**

- 4.109 The East Runcorn area can be split into two distinct sections – the predominantly **residential area at Sandymoor** and **area of employment focus at Daresbury**, divided between the business community at Daresbury Park and the science and research centre at Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus.
- 4.110 Within the East Runcorn Key Area of Change, the **Daresbury area represents a Strategic Site** which the council is promoting for significant change through the Core Strategy. The RES recognises the business, science and innovation cluster at Daresbury Park and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus as a **Strategic Regional Site in the North West**.
- 4.111 The residential area at **Sandymoor**, to the west of Daresbury, comprises approximately 147 hectares of land, of which 46 hectares have already been developed<sup>1</sup>. The area offers the opportunity to continue this comprehensive development creating a **mixed and sustainable community**, responding to the image and character of the area whilst taking account of the many physical constraints in the area including flood risks, the existing road infrastructure and railway lines.
- 4.112 **Comments made in 2006 at the Issues and Options consultation which are relevant to this Key Area of Change were as follows:**
- There was support for economic activity and skill development opportunities at **Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus**, although respondents mentioned a need to better connect communities with the facility through the development of new nearby housing and the safeguarding of a site for a new railway station.
  - Some respondents mentioned that **Daresbury Park** was an unattractive development, while others supported the expansion and diversification of the site to a wider mix of uses.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document – Interim Publication Draft (2008)

- The contribution made by **Sandymoor** to the Borough's low and medium density housing stock was recognised, although a need was identified for better community services, including local shops.

### **West Runcorn**

- 4.113 The West Runcorn Key Area of Change includes **Runcorn Old Town centre** on the banks of the Mersey Estuary. Although Runcorn Old Town centre is the dominant convenience centre in its local catchment, the centre was adversely affected by the development of its larger New Town neighbour, Halton Lea, and at present **lacks a defined role**. However, there is scope to build upon a **complementary relationship with Halton Lea**, developing the evening economy and cultural uses in Runcorn Old Town centre.
- 4.114 Longer term redevelopment opportunities for Runcorn Old Town centre are related to the **Mersey Gateway Project** which offers the potential to create **better linkages and connectivity** between Runcorn Docks, Runcorn Train Station and the central core of the centre.
- 4.115 Lying to the west of Runcorn Old Town centre, adjacent to the Riverside College Campus and recent waterside housing developments, **Runcorn Docks** is a key development site for the delivery of the **Mid-Mersey Growth Point** programme. Integral to the development of the site is the area's **locational advantages** offering a waterside setting close to strategic and local transport networks.
- 4.116 Towards the south of this Key Area of Change, the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) offers the opportunity to create an **intermodal transport facility** offering improved road, rail, inland waterway and sea freight logistics.
- 4.117 **Comments made in 2006 at the Issues and Options consultation which are relevant to this key area of change were as follows:**
- **Waterfront development** in Runcorn, including the Runcorn Docks area, was recognised as providing new residential accommodation, but concern was raised about addressing development in the centre of Runcorn Old Town.
- 4.118 Taking the above issues, policy context and comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for the Key Areas of Change:

**CS7:** 3MG

**CS8:** South Widnes

**CS9:** East Runcorn

**CS10:** West Runcorn

## **CS7: 3MG**

- 4.119 The council recognises the contribution that the existing Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) at Ditton makes to the economy of Halton and the wider region. There are opportunities to build upon this role and ensure that 3MG remains an important site for facilitating the movement of freight between modes in the North West. The policy below aims to ensure that the area maintains its status as a leading multimodal freight facility in the region by setting out a framework for its future development.

### **Preferred Area of Change CS7: 3MG**

Development within the Regionally Significant Economic Development site at 3MG should meet the broad criteria set out within policy RT8 of the Regional Spatial Strategy: Inter-Modal Freight Terminals and should contribute to the prime purpose of facilitating the movement of freight by rail.

In addition to these broad criteria, key elements of the future development of 3MG will be:

- a) The development of the Halton Borough Council Field site for over 18ha of B8, rail served warehousing units
- b) The provision of a western road link to connect the site with the A562 Speke Road and A5300 Knowsley Expressway, thus discouraging the movement of freight on the local road network
- c) Ensuring that the potential to reopen the passenger station at Ditton remains
- d) Contributing towards improving the quality of life of residents in the adjoining areas at Ditton and Halebank in line with policy CS10 Neighbourhood Priority Areas
- e) Ensuring that development does not prejudice the ability to better connect 3MG with other freight facilities in the sub-region
- f) Respecting local features of visual, environmental and historic importance, notably Lovells Hall Scheduled Ancient Monument, Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and the surrounding Green Belt.

Development opportunities in the surrounding employment areas should seek to complement the operation of 3MG, whilst protecting the amenity of existing and future residents, most notably those within the adjacent community at Halebank.

## **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: 3MG**

### **Rely upon policy RT8 from the Regional Spatial Strategy**

Given the detail included within RSS with regards to Inter-Modal Freight Terminals, policy RT8 could be used for the Regionally Significant Site at 3MG without the need for a separate policy, as this forms part of the wider development plan. However, the emphasis in the RSS policy is on new freight facilities, rather than those already in existence and operational. As such, although policy RT8 can be applied to a certain degree in setting the principles for strategic inter-modal facilities, it is not sufficient to guide the forthcoming phases of development on this site. As such, the above policy for 3MG has been drafted to be used in conjunction with RT8.

### **Continue to use policy E7 from the adopted Halton UDP**

Policy E7 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan is a detailed policy which concerns the operation of the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park (now known as 3MG). Whilst the essence of the policy is similar to the preferred policy drafted above, significant progress has been made on the site since the policy was drafted. Therefore it is now appropriate to update the policy framework for the site through the Core Strategy. In addition to updating the policy, much of the detail currently contained in UDP policy E7 has now been transferred to the 3MG Supplementary Planning Document and is therefore still valid.

### **Incorporate adjoining areas into the Key Area of Change**

An approach which drew a wider boundary for this Key Area of Change to include adjoining employment and residential areas at Halebank and Ditton was considered. The aim of such an approach was to ensure the benefits of additional development at 3MG are passed to nearby communities within identified Neighbourhood Priority Areas and that employment areas surrounding the multimodal facility provide uses which complement and support 3MG. This approach has not been taken forward as it was felt that limited change will occur in the wider areas surrounding 3MG and therefore these areas were best dealt with through other policies in the Core Strategy, rather than within a specified Key Area of Change.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 4.120 The implementation of this policy will help to achieve the Strategic Visions and Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy in the following ways:
- 4.121 **A Decent Home and Neighbourhood**  
The above policy requires that the amenity of existing and future residents surrounding this Key Area of Change be protected. Ensuring that people can live in a home and neighbourhood where they can enjoy a good standard of living, unaffected by issues such as noise disturbance or odour is a key part of delivering sustainable communities.
- 4.122 **Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres**  
The freight facility at 3MG represents one of the Borough's key employment sites with the potential, when fully developed, to deliver 5,000 jobs. Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy recognises the importance of the 3MG facility at Ditton to the Borough's economy and in delivering jobs both now and in the future. The further development of a strategic rail freight facility at Ditton builds on the locational advantages that the Borough and this site in particular possess. Policy RT8

of the RSS specifically refers to Widnes as a key location for an inter-modal freight terminal. As such, the above policy for 3MG is in accordance with regional policy by promoting the 3MG site for the movement of freight between modes. In addition to the recognition of the potential at this location in Widnes in RSS, it has been noted above that the site at Ditton is referred to within RES as a key location in the economy of the region.

**4.123 Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**

Risk arising from hazardous installations in the Key Area of Change will be managed in line with policy CS22 Protecting Halton from Major Hazards

**4.124 A High Quality Built and Green Environment**

The 3MG site is in close proximity to a number of natural features of strategic importance to the Borough, namely the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area, and Ramsar and adjoining areas of greenbelt which extend to the Borough's boundary. It is important that the strategic gap between the built up area at Halebank and the closest built up area in Speke within the Borough of Knowsley is maintained and that the amenity of the Green Belt designation is upheld. As such policy CS7 contains reference to respecting the greenbelt areas which surround the 3MG site. In close proximity to the site is Lovells Hall scheduled ancient monument. Development of the Halton Borough Council Field site to the west of the existing development at 3MG should seek to improve the current setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument including the provision of landscape buffers. Further detail on the treatment of Lovells Hall is contained within the 3MG SPD.

**4.125 An Accessible Halton**

Designating the 3MG area as a Key Area of Change reflects the importance given to Halton as a location for inter-modal freight transfer in the Regional Freight Strategy, RSS and Merseyside Freight Strategy. As detailed above, the logistics and distribution sectors are core elements of Halton's economy and much of this is centred on the regionally significant multimodal freight transfer facility at 3MG.

4.126 The proposed new western link road which benefits from planning permission from both Halton and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Councils will improve access to the site for road transport and better connect the site with the national motorway network, specifically the M57 and M62.

4.127 Both within and outside of the Borough there are proposals to increase the amount of freight being handled by non-road based freight facilities, both in relation to air freight and water-borne freight along the Manchester Ship Canal. As such, the policy makes reference to improving connections to nearby freight facilities which would include Liverpool John Lennon Airport in Knowsley and the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks).

**4.128 Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources**

Proposals within the Key Area of Change will generate the need for additional infrastructure, specifically the Western Link Road, rail sidings to serve the Halton Borough Council Field Site and works to reopen Ditton station as a passenger facility. Additional infrastructure may also need to be delivered to avoid placing undue strain on existing roads and other forms of infrastructure.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG4; PPG13; Future of Transport White Paper: Network to 2030

<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP3, DP4, RDF1, W1, W2, W3, RT1, RT7, RT8, LCR1, LCR3; Regional Economic Strategy; Regional Freight Strategy; Merseyside Freight Strategy
<b>Local Policy</b>	LTP2, Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008, 3MG Masterplan, 3MG Supplementary Planning Document
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO4, SO5, SO16, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Urban Renewal, Employment Learning and Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 186 - Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area, NI 171 – VAT registration rate
<b>SA Objectives</b>	4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 8 – Air Quality, 14 - Economy
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS4, CS5, CS10, CS15, CS31

## **DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR 3MG**

- 4.129 The SPD for 3MG provides further detail to implement the above policy. In combination with this document specifically for 3MG, a SPD has been drafted for the adjoining area of Halebank which, when adopted, will continue to assist in assessing any development proposals in this area. Further support for freight activities at the 3MG site is given with Core Strategy preferred policy option CS31: Freight Transportation. The Council's development management process will also have an important role to play in determining planning applications for developments at 3MG, and ensuring, through negotiating developer contributions, that sufficient infrastructure is provided to support activities at the multimodal freight facility.
- 4.130 Further to previous NWDA and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding allocated for the development of 3MG, in spring 2009, the NWDA awarded a further £1.74m to deliver Phase Two of the project, principally to bring forward the site to the west of the existing multimodal facilities, referred to in the policy as Halton Borough Council Field. It is anticipated that there will be more than £100m of investment into the 3MG site over the period 2009 to 2014. Additional investment is largely dependent on the private sector organisations which use the facility, principally the Stobart Group and their partners.
- 4.131 Partnership working with both the development industry, principal landowners (namely the Stobart Group), Network Rail and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council will be required in order to deliver the various elements of the above policy. Co-ordination with Network Rail and the Department for Transport will be required in order to deliver additional rail infrastructure to serve the Halton Borough Council Field site and the logistical arrangements around increasing the number of trains using the site on a daily basis.
- 4.132 Details of the proposed phasing of development and related infrastructure at 3MG are provided within the SPD, while other aspects of the preferred policy option will be continuous over the plan period, such as respecting the value of local environmental features.

## CS8: SOUTH WIDNES

- 4.133 Widnes Town Centre and waterfront have undergone considerable change in recent years, with a number of prominent developments on key sites in the area. The area at Southern Widnes which includes the communities at West Bank offers the potential for revitalisation following realisation of the Mersey Gateway Priority Project. To enable the Town Centre to compete more effectively with neighbouring centres outside of the Borough, uses need to be strengthened and diversified. The area has much to offer given its setting alongside less affluent areas and further physical transformation should both internally reconnect the town centre and improve connections with surrounding areas. The current momentum for change in Widnes Town Centre and at the Waterfront should be maintained, and the regeneration potential offered by the planned restructuring in the West Bank area should be seized, during the lifetime of the Core Strategy and this will be achieved through the implementation of the following strategy.

### Preferred Area of Change CS8: South Widnes

#### i. Widnes Town Centre

The Town Centre currently consists of a number of distinct areas, each with their own character and predominant uses. A key element in improving the Town Centre and increasing its attractiveness is ensuring that new development assists in connecting the separate elements of the Town Centre and building upon their individual identities to provide a fully integrated Town Centre which serves the needs of surrounding communities.

The following principles should be used to guide the future development of Widnes Town Centre:

- a) The role of Widnes Town Centre in Halton's retail hierarchy, as set out in policy CS17 A Network of Centres, should be maintained and enhanced through the provision for additional town centre uses of a type and scale befitting its role
- b) Primary and secondary shopping areas within the Town Centre will be defined to deliver both convenience and comparison goods shopping within a retail core, supported a more diverse area delivering a good mix of town centre uses, services and facilities in areas around the primary shopping area
- c) New and improved facilities for sustainable transport across the Town Centre, including enhancements to the interchange at Green Oaks Shopping Centre in the short term
- d) Continue to develop activities associated with the evening economy in the Victoria Square area, with scope for supplementary provision in the North Albert Road area
- e) Opportunities through new development to improve the general attractiveness of the Town Centre should be sought. Specific schemes such as the Council led programme of environmental improvements at Victoria Road South will be supported

- f) Outside of the retail and shopping core, the area around Kingsway should maintain its focus as the town's Civic Quarter, with potential for new office and administrative buildings. The existing leisure and education facilities in this area, including Riverside college, Kingsway Learning Centre and Kingsway Leisure Centre will be retained and their role enhanced by complementary development.

## **ii. Widnes Waterfront**

Widnes Waterfront will retain its focus as a centre for business, delivering a significant number of jobs in the Borough. Alongside this employment focus, there is potential to increase activity in the area through formal and informal leisure and recreation. The area is seen as a gateway into the heart of the Borough and by reconnecting the area with its surroundings, the potential of this area can be fully realised.

The following principles will apply:

- a) Development within the area should contribute to and not detract from the employment focus of the area. The area should retain its status as an area of sub-regional importance for industry and business, with the provision of a variety of premises to meet the needs of emerging and expanding businesses
- b) Existing employment uses will be protected from development which could jeopardise their operations
- c) The informal leisure offer should be enhanced where opportunities arise, particularly in relation to the Sankey Canal and Mersey Estuary, including opportunities to connect the developed area with both National Cycle Network route 62 and the Trans Pennine Trail
- d) The incorporation of a formal leisure led attraction on the Venture Fields site will be supported, ensuring that the leisure offer fully integrates with the adjacent Town Centre
- e) The inclusion of residential development in the longer term as part of the regeneration of the wider waterfront which continues through to West Bank, where there is the ability to create sustainable communities which will combine well with existing and proposed employment development
- f) Enhancing green infrastructure by improving the nature conservation value and attraction of Widnes Warth and the adjoining undeveloped coastline contributing to the wider Regional Parks in the area
- g) Giving priority to improving sustainable transport provision in the area, improving linkages both within and through the area, particularly connecting through to the Town Centre and along the Mersey waterfront
- h) Capitalising on the locational advantages of the site adjacent to the River Mersey and striving for the highest possible standards in sustainable design in accordance with policy CS24, including the incorporation of schemes of exemplar design and sustainability.

## **iii. West Bank**

The Mersey Gateway Priority Project will bring considerable physical changes to the area



at West Bank, coupled with wider regeneration.

The following principles will be important in achieving the desired form and standard of new development in the area:

- a) Capitalising on the opportunities offered by the Mersey Gateway Priority Project, as identified in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy to deliver a mixed use area including a combination of residential and employment uses which will improve linkages with the adjoining Town Centre and nearby employment areas at Widnes Waterfront
- b) Provision of a new neighbourhood centre that will deliver a good mix of uses to meet the needs of the surrounding community
- c) Promoting design of a high standard which recognises the character of the area to uplift the built environment
- d) Protect and improve the existing residential area of West Bank.

#### **iv. Integrating the South Widnes Key Area of Change**

- a) Development proposals should not prejudice the ability to implement long term aims to provide linkages across the area included within but not limited to Masterplans and SPDs for the area
- b) Improve connections through to residential and commercial areas surrounding the South Widnes Key Area of Change to promote integration across the wider area, sustainable travel options and healthy lifestyles.

## Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: South Widnes

### Define a Wider Town Centre

An approach could have been progressed which seeks to designate a wider area as an appropriate location for town centre uses. With the promotion of leisure uses within Widnes Waterfront and the recognised mixed use areas extending along Victoria Road/Moor Lane, there is scope to formalise the uses within this area as suitable for all town centre uses. However, the results of the Halton Retail Study indicate that the town centre boundary should not be expanded as a larger town centre would not be able to achieve the required levels of investment and footfall in order to make this viable in the long term.

### Stronger Promotion of Employment Development at Widnes Waterfront

The role the existing employment uses at Waterfront play in underpinning Halton's economy should not be underestimated or undervalued. Therefore, to recognise the area's importance to business and industry in the Borough, a policy approach could have been developed which looked to strengthen the area's employment generating role by restricting other forms of development, such as residential. Such an approach was considered as part of the Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan work, but was deemed undeliverable as there is potential to deliver residential development in the area. Additionally, the proposals to deliver both a formal and informal leisure offer within the waterfront area are well developed and benefit from significant support, therefore an environment dominated by business and industrial uses may not accord well with this proposal.

### No Specific Policy Covering West Bank

An approach was considered which excluded West Bank from the Key Area of Change. However, giving the proposed route of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the consequent implications and opportunities in this area arising from the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, it was decided to widen the Key Area of Change boundary to create a co-ordinated strategy for the area.

## Justification / Explanation

- 4.134 The implementation of this policy will help to achieve the Strategic Visions and Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy in the following ways:
- 4.135 **A Decent Home and Neighbourhood**  
The South Widnes Key Area of Change offers the potential to deliver residential development alongside a mix of other forms of development. In the Town Centre, residential development will be promoted above ground floor level in line with national planning policy. In the West Bank area the policy seeks to ensure the sustainability of the West Bank residential neighbourhood through diversifying the current housing offer and through the introduction of a neighbourhood centre. As recognised in the longer term, there is the opportunity to create truly sustainable communities at Widnes Waterfront as part of the changing landscape of the area. This strategy reflects the Phase 2 Masterplan for Widnes Waterfront.
- 4.136 **A Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres**  
Over recent years, the employment land offer at Widnes Waterfront has been revitalised by a number of new, high quality developments. The Preferred Policy Option aims to maintain this current momentum by both retaining existing uses and

delivering new. The site has growing importance in the sub-regional economy as it offers the potential to accommodate the Liverpool City Region growth sectors. The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2009) highlights the importance of Widnes Waterfront in delivering both the Borough and sub-region's employment land requirements. The potential of the site to deliver much needed BI office development in Widnes is particularly emphasised. There is limited scope or demand for office development with the core of the Town Centre. However, the above strategy recognises that there is potential around the municipal centre of Widnes at Kingsway to expand the office sector. A new neighbourhood centre is proposed at West Bank where a need to improve the retail and service offer currently exists.

**4.137 Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**

Incorporating informal leisure and recreation at Widnes Waterfront and combining with regional walking and cycle routes will promote opportunities for sport and leisure. Improved accessibility across the whole of the Key Area of Change and improving connections between neighbourhoods and commercial areas will make walking and cycling a more attractive and realistic option. Risk arising from hazardous installations in South Widnes will be managed in line with Preferred Policy Option CS22: Protecting Halton from Major Hazards.

**4.138 A High Quality Built and Green Environment**

The area's setting adjacent to the Mersey should inform the design of new development in the area, ensuring important points for strategic views are not comprised and are utilised by development where possible. The high level of footfall in Widnes Town Centre calls for a good standard of design in new town centre developments and in the surrounding physical environment.

4.139 The policy makes provision for improvements to the green infrastructure network which will feed into the wider network of biodiversity assets as part of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park and North West Coastal Trail. The potential to deliver highly sustainable development at Widnes Waterfront has been incorporated into the policy through reference to Preferred Policy Option CS24: Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development, and related standards to be met against the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM.

**4.140 An Accessible Halton**

Widnes Town Centre will continue to be a key hub for sustainable transport connections and the preferred policy option seeks to strengthen this role through improvements to the existing bus interchange at Green Oaks and new interchange facilities in the longer term. Improving connectivity both within and through the Key Area of Change is a common thread throughout the policy. In the West Bank area in particular, this will be aided by the removal of highways infrastructure in relation to the Mersey Gateway Priority Project. In line with Preferred Policy Option CS31: Freight Transportation, the existing Shell Green railway will continue to be safeguarded for the movement of freight.

**4.141 Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources**

Proposals within the Key Area of Change will generate the need for additional infrastructure in order to avoid placing strain on existing infrastructure and meet the needs of the local population.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3; PPG4; Draft PPS4; PPS6; PPS9
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP2, DP3, RDF1, W1, W3, LCR1, LCR3;

	Regional Economic Strategy;
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy; LTP2; Widnes Waterfront Phase 2 Masterplan; Widnes Waterfront SPD; Widnes Town Centre Strategy; Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy; Draft West Bank SPD
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO4, SO6, SO8, SO15, SO16, SO17, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Urban Renewal, Employment Learning and Skills, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 154 – Net additional new homes provided, VAT registration rate, NI 175 -
<b>SA Objectives</b>	7 – Land Quality, 11 – Accessibility, 14 - Economy, 15 – Leisure and Tourism, 16 – Town Centres, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS15, CS17, CS26, CS27, CS28, CS31

## DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR SOUTH WIDNES

- 4.142 Identification of development sites and a more detailed strategy to enhance and reconnect the elements of Widnes Town Centre will emerge through the programmed Widnes Town Centre AAP. Work is due to commence on this DPD in summer 2010, with adoption of the Widnes Town Centre AAP planned for winter 2013. A Conservation Area Appraisal for Victoria Square will be produced to supplement the LDF and to guide development proposals in this historically important area of Widnes Town Centre. The Council is currently working on a programme of environmental improvements for the Victoria Road area of the Town Centre to be implemented in the early years of the Core Strategy plan period. Upgrading the bus interchange at the Green Oaks shopping centre is included within the LTP2 as a key action, with this work programmed to take place in 2010. Longer term, the Council's aspirations are to provide new bus interchange facilities within the Town Centre. The North-South bus route, designed to link Runcorn and Widnes centres plus their respective stations will improve accessibility and provide sustainable transport links between these key areas. Improvements to Victoria Road are being developed in conjunction with the proposals which are considering the wider regeneration of the area.
- 4.143 The future development of Widnes Waterfront is currently guided by an adopted SPD. To reflect the second phase of the revival of the area, a new masterplan was produced in 2008-09. There is scope for the existing adopted SPD to be updated to reflect the most recent work on the master plan. Widnes Waterfront has benefitted from significant amounts of inward investment in its recent history. This has recently been boosted by £6.1 million of NWDA funding which has enabled Halton Borough Council to purchase the 16ha Bayer Crop Science site. This and similar funding gives the potential for the waterfront area to safeguard and generate approximately one thousand jobs.
- 4.144 The regeneration of the West Bank area will be supported by the emerging SPD for the area. This in turn draws heavily on the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy which is integral to the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Priority Project. The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy underpins this SPD and sets out the wider regeneration proposals arising from the Mersey Gateway Priority Project. The

strategy is to be implemented alongside and after the construction of the new bridge.

- 4.145 The enhancement of the nature conservation value of the Upper Mersey Estuary area is being progressed in partnership with Warrington Borough Council. The enhancement of this area and creating desired habitats has been identified as an essential mitigatory measure for the delivery of the Mersey Gateway bridge.
- 4.146 As with the development of the other Key Areas of Change, the Council's development management process will have an important role to play in the determination of planning applications in accordance with the measures set out in this policy. As part of the implementation of CS8, new infrastructure will be required to support the development proposed. This infrastructure will include physical measures, such as new roads and utilities required to support new employment development or social measures, such as schemes to ensure that new jobs are taken up by local people. Where appropriate, as set out in preferred policy CS33, developers will be expected to contribute towards this infrastructure provision.

## CS9: EAST RUNCORN

- 4.147 The Key Area of Change at East Runcorn offers a real opportunity to create a new sustainable community in Halton, encompassing a diverse mix of uses. This Key Area brings together the new residential community at Sandymoor with the existing employment offer at Daresbury, where there is the potential for significant expansion. The Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (SIC), together with the Business Park and interconnecting areas, represents a Core Strategy Strategic Site, central to the Borough's future development. At this Strategic Site there is the potential to accommodate significant amounts of development and green infrastructure creating both a living and working environment that will support the Borough's population in future years.
- 4.148 Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and Daresbury Business Park are identified in the North West RES as a single Strategic Regional Site and this designation can be translated to become a location for Regionally Significant Economic Development, as detailed within the recently adopted RSS.

### Preferred Area of Change CS9: East Runcorn

#### Daresbury

There is considerable impetus for expansion at Daresbury, which represents the largest comprehensive development site in the Borough, and as such, a Strategic Site being promoted through the Core Strategy.

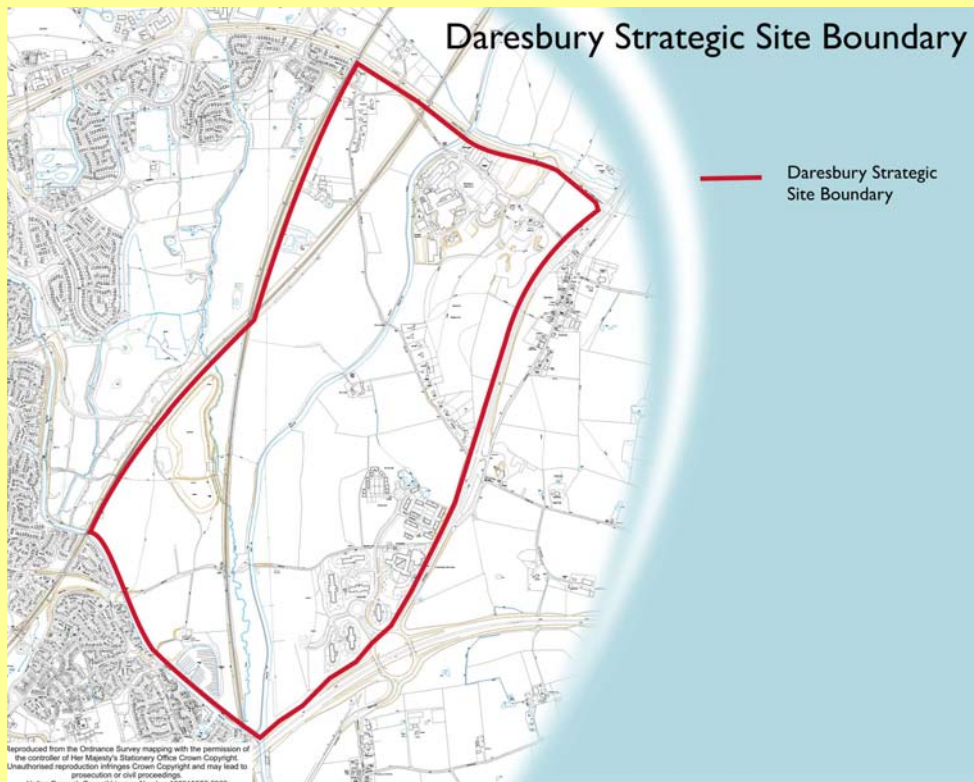


Figure 12: Daresbury Strategic Site boundary

The following principles should inform the development of the Daresbury area over the lifetime of the Core Strategy:

#### **i. Delivering an Area of Excellence for Science, Innovation and Business**

- a) The role of the area as Regionally Significant Economic Development site should be enhanced through the expansion of the science, research and knowledge based economy and accompanying employment opportunities through:
  - (i) the delivery of 9.3 ha of BI development at Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (SIC); and
  - (ii) increasing the profile of the office and knowledge based facilities at Daresbury Business Park through the delivery of approximately 10.2ha of BI(a) development.
- b) Support should be given to the development of transport connections and shared support facilities which will bring Daresbury SIC and Business Park together to create a network of businesses and research establishments which are integrated.

#### **ii. Creating a New Living Environment**

- a) Phased delivery of 1750 dwellings across the Strategic Site at Daresbury, to provide a broad range of housing by size, type and tenure, including affordable housing. Desired phasing of the residential element will be set out in the associated Daresbury SPD.
- b) The incorporation of a mixed use development area of no greater than 3.25ha at the heart of the site, including an appropriate level of retail, leisure, community and health facilities to that found in a neighbourhood centre. Any such provision should predominantly meet the needs of the new development with a specific focus on providing ancillary services for the business and research community. Any unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of existing and proposed centres should be avoided.
- c) Ensuring that new communities are integrated with surrounding areas through the delivery of both social and physical infrastructure which serves the new development, in accordance with both the phasing of the area and Preferred Policy Option CS33: Infrastructure Provision.
- d) A network of open spaces for nature conservation and recreation should be provided, including the retention of Daresbury Firs, the creation of a linear country park along the Bridgewater canal corridor, formal green space within the heart of the site, new parkland south of Delph Lane, and green spaces integral to individual developments.

#### **iii. A Highly Accessible Destination**

- a) Access improvements from the strategic road network through the provision of connected new access routes off the A56 and A558, together with junction improvements, access roads and a park and ride facility, which will link the various parts of the urban extension to each other.
- b) Promoting accessibility through attractive, convenient, safe and sustainable means of travel to Daresbury, including:
  - (i) a new public transport interchange at the intersection of the two railway lines; and



- (ii) integrating walking and cycling routes to provide clear and safe links to surrounding communities, including new pedestrian and vehicular links to Sandymoor and improvements to the canal corridor.

#### **iv. High Quality, Innovative Design Respecting its Location**

- a) Incorporating a strong urban design framework which will integrate the development with features of natural, environmental or manmade value including surrounding areas of Green Belt, the Bridgewater Canal, Keckwick Hill and Daresbury Firs.
- b) Aspiring to exemplar design that demonstrates a strong recognition of the rural identity of this part of the Borough, creating a location with a strong sense of place, and meeting the highest design standards in line with Preferred Policy Option CS23: High Quality Design.
- c) Delivering sustainable design solutions with a particular focus on residential development achieving a minimum of the required levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM equivalent status for commercial development, in accordance with Preferred Policy Option CS24.

## **Sandymoor**

Development of the Strategic Site at Daresbury should integrate with the adjacent community at Sandymoor. Completion of the Sandymoor housing development will be achieved through the delivery of 1400 additional units including a new neighbourhood centre and connecting infrastructure. The delivery of further development at Sandymoor should have regard to the existing planning framework provided through the adopted Halton UDP and Sandymoor SPD, alongside Preferred Policy Option CS5: Neighbourhood Priority Areas for other key principles relevant to improving the quality of life of the adjacent community at Windmill Hill.

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: East Runcorn**

#### **A Policy for Daresbury Park and SIC**

An alternative to the preferred policy option would have been to develop a policy for the Strategic Regional Site at Daresbury in isolation from Sandymoor. As much of the land at Sandymoor benefits from extant New Town planning permissions, the development of this area could proceed without the benefit of an area based policy in the Core Strategy to guide its further development. However, this approach would not integrate the two areas of Daresbury and Sandymoor and could result in two very separate communities being created.

#### **Reliance on Policy W2 from Regional Spatial Strategy**

Policy W2 from RSS concerns Locations for Regionally Significant Economic Development and contains a number of criteria to be complied with in delivering such types of development. This policy could have been used as a basis for development at Daresbury Park and the Science and Innovation Campus. However, given that Daresbury has been combined with Sandymoor in this Key Area of Change, this approach could only have been used for part of the site. Additionally, as the proposals for Daresbury incorporate a mix of uses including residential development, policy W2 would not provide sufficient coverage to guide future development.



## **Justification / Explanation**

4.149 The implementation of this policy will help to achieve the Strategic Visions and Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy in the following ways:

### **4.150 A Decent Home and Neighbourhood**

Whilst the whole of the Daresbury and Sandymoor area constitutes a Key Area of Change within the Core Strategy, it is proposed that the Daresbury area be allocated as a Strategic Site in the Core Strategy. Achieving the development of this area will deliver many of the required outcomes intrinsic to the success and future prosperity of Halton. The area is the largest single development area in the Borough and has the potential to deliver significant amounts of both housing and employment development which will contribute to meeting the regional targets for the Borough. The existing residential community at Sandymoor represents an excellent example of a modern residential development, with the development of further housing to be completed over coming years. As such, delivery of additional housing and employment development will contribute towards the achievement of Preferred Policy Option CS1: Halton's Spatial Strategy, Preferred Policy Option CS3: Housing Supply and Locational Priorities and Preferred Policy Option CS4: Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities.

### **4.151 A Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres**

The policy provides a framework for the expansion of the employment offer at Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus which accords with the national Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014<sup>2</sup> which identifies the potential to create a campus around Daresbury Laboratories and its associated facilities. Broadening the appeal of the Daresbury site will assist with protecting Daresbury SIC's role as a primary national site for world-class science and create an environment which encourages knowledge transfer.

4.152 Daresbury Park and SIC also constitutes a location for Regionally Significant Economic Development, in accordance with RSS policy W2. The policy identifies the opportunity for regionally significant knowledge based services to form clusters around existing research facilities. The Key Area of Change is also compliant with the criteria of policy W2 as:

- The partnership approach behind the Daresbury Framework illustrates the commitment to achieving development at the site within and beyond the plan period;
- The intention to develop a public transport interchange, centred on the existing railway lines at the site, which will offer sustainable options for accessing the site, combined with proposals for improved walking and cycling links to surrounding areas of the Borough;
- The site's proximity to areas characterised by high levels of worklessness illustrates that there is potential for the development to be of benefit to Halton's surrounding communities; and
- The high level of importance given to maintaining the rural identity of the area and its setting on Halton's urban fringe by maintaining a network of open spaces through the site, demonstrates that consideration has been given to how the development will relate to surrounding uses.

### **4.153 Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**

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<sup>2</sup> HM Treasury (2006) Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014: Next Steps

The proposed mixed use 'heart' at Daresbury, offering facilities and services of a similar type and scale to that of a neighbourhood centre, coupled with the realisation of the proposed neighbourhood centre at Sandymoor, will provide facilities which meet the needs of the development, whilst also offering a greater choice of shops and services to the surrounding communities. The mixed use heart at Daresbury is designed to act as both a focus for the new residential community and to bring together the science and business communities from Daresbury Park and SIC through the use of shared support facilities, to deliver a truly integrated business and research environment.

#### 4.154 **A High Quality Built and Green Environment**

The East Runcorn area is currently rich with environmental and landscape assets, most notably the area's setting on the urban fringe of Runcorn, adjacent to large areas of Green Belt which give the area a rural outlook. The Key Area of Change is dissected by the Bridgewater Canal and two railway lines, which present both barriers to be overcome and opportunities to improve amenity and sustainable transport respectively. The changing topography across the site gives prominence to Daresbury Firs, giving a strong visual identity to this part of the site. As such, the policy calls for the protection of this area. A strong urban design framework is required, based around a new spine route which will draw visitors through the Daresbury area. A strong design framework will both ensure new development positively relates to its surrounding context and help to deliver co-ordination between the different elements and uses within the area.

4.155 Development at East Runcorn offers the potential to incorporate sustainable design principles into new development, and this has been emphasised in the strategy for East Runcorn through reference to Preferred Policy Option CS24: Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development and the related standards as set out in this policy. The adopted SPD for Sandymoor specifies the current sustainability requirements that new housing development should meet, setting the standard at Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 up to 2010.

#### 4.156 **An Accessible Halton**

Improving the sustainable transport offer at both Sandymoor and Daresbury is an aspiration of both the Sandymoor SPD and the Daresbury Framework. Given the location of these areas towards the periphery of the Borough, they do not currently benefit from a good provision of public transport services. Further development at Sandymoor will include necessary extensions to the existing highways network which presents an opportunity to promote sustainable travel amongst local residents by incorporating adequate provision for public transport, walking and cycling.

4.157 The above policy for East Runcorn includes the provision of a public transport interchange at the intersection of the two railway lines which run through the site. This will initially provide bus interchange facilities to serve the employment and residential areas with the aspiration of delivering a railway station to serve either one or both of the railway lines. There is also the potential for a Park and Ride facility of strategic importance to serve both Daresbury and the wider area to be delivered as part of this public transport hub.

4.158 Substantial new highways infrastructure will be needed to provide sufficient access to the site, including a new spine link road to join the Daresbury Park and SIC sites, new primary link route to the A56, road linkages to the Sandymoor area and associated footpaths and cycleways.

#### 4.159 **Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources**

Given the scale of development envisaged at both Sandymoor and Daresbury, there will be significant requirements for infrastructure to both enable and support the development of this Key Area of Change. Consideration of infrastructure requirements for the area are included within the emerging Daresbury Framework and Sandymoor SPD, and these have been translated into the Infrastructure Plan which accompanies the Core Strategy. As indicated in the Preferred Policy, the forthcoming Daresbury SPD will also set the likely phasing of development, including how and when related infrastructure will be delivered.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3; PPG4; Draft PPS4 PPS12; National Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP2, DP3, RDF1, W1, W2, W3, LCR1, LCR3; Regional Economic Strategy;
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008, Halton Science Report
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO4, SO5, SO8, SO10, SO12, SO13, SO14, SO16, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Urban Renewal, Employment Learning and Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 154 – Net additional homes provided, NI 171 – VAT registration rate, NI 186 – Per capita CO <sub>2</sub> emissions
<b>SA Objectives</b>	2 – Biodiversity, 6 – Energy Efficiency, 11 – Accessibility, 14 – Economy, 16 – Town Centres, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS3, CS4, CS5, CS15, CS17, CS26

## **DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR EAST RUNCORN**

- 4.160 The area at East Runcorn identified on the Key Diagram has been considered as a potential area of expansion for a considerable period of time with associated policies and land allocations forming part of the Halton UDP. The Daresbury Framework provides a detailed masterplan for progressing development in the area and as such will provide a renewed impetus for realising the long term goal of comprehensive development in the area. Given the designation in the North West RES of the two sites at Daresbury as a single Strategic Regional Site, it follows that the aim should be to better integrate operations at the two sites of Daresbury Park and Science and Innovation Campus through a co-ordinated approach to development.
- 4.161 As stated above, renewed impetus for development at Daresbury is drawn from the Daresbury Framework, produced between 2007-9 with co-ordination from a number of partner organisations and stakeholders to promote the development of the area in a coordinated manner. The Daresbury Framework sets out a thirty year masterplan for the development of the area between the business community at Daresbury Park and the nationally significant centre for research and development at Daresbury SIC. Given the scale of development envisaged at the strategic site in Daresbury, achievement of the vision and aims of the Daresbury Framework will extend over a number of decades and therefore both within and beyond the lifetime of the Core Strategy plan period.

- 4.162 Two SPDs support the delivery of development at East Runcorn. An adopted SPD exists for the Sandymoor area of the site to the west of the railway lines. An SPD will also be produced for the area covering Daresbury Park and Daresbury SIC, including the intervening areas. Both the Core Strategy and the emerging SPD for Daresbury are underpinned by the Daresbury Framework. In addition to the policy functions of the Council, development at East Runcorn will be supported by the Council's development management role, which will play an important role in ensuring that development proposals for the area are in accordance with this policy.
- 4.163 The extent of the changes proposed at East Runcorn necessarily mean that new infrastructure will be required to support development, including sufficient physical infrastructure such as utilities provision, new roads and a new public transport interchange and social infrastructure to support the new residential communities. New and improved green infrastructure will also play an important role in integrating development area with green and open spaces. More detail of specific projects is given in the Infrastructure Plan. Some of this new infrastructure is mentioned specifically within the preferred policy option wording, while other infrastructure will be provided by developers in conjunction with new development in the East Runcorn area. Due to the size of the development area at East Runcorn, it may also be appropriate for new development to be phased over an extended period to ensure that supporting infrastructure can be provided in a timely manner.
- 4.164 In order to achieve the desired aims for the Daresbury area, partnership working will need to continue over the lifetime of the plan and beyond. To assist with this, a number of partner organisations have come together to form both a Joint Venture company for the SIC and a Strategic Development Partnership. It is estimated that £600m will be invested in the area during the realisation of the master plan and partnership working will be essential in channelling investment into the correct proposals to deliver maximum benefits. Government funding has been earmarked for specific projects at the SIC, including the Hartree Centre for Computational Science and Engineering. Investment of this type will be necessary to maintain and improve the site's profile as a focus for business, science and advanced engineering into the future and create the optimum environment for further inward investment.

## CS10: WEST RUNCORN

- 4.165 West Runcorn contains a number of areas and development opportunities, including Runcorn Old Town centre, Runcorn Docks and Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) that will directly contribute towards the delivery of the Spatial Strategy. The following policy is proposed as the preferred option for West Runcorn.

### Preferred Area of Change CS10: West Runcorn

#### i. Runcorn Old Town centre

Runcorn Old Town centre's role and position as a second tier centre within the Borough's retail hierarchy will be retained and protected. The focus will be on re-establishing the centre as a vibrant waterside location that provides for the day to day shopping needs of its immediate catchment whilst offering a wider complementary function to Halton Lea, as a focus for local independent shops, niche retailers and service providers, and as a centre for cultural and leisure activity.

The following will apply:

- a) Principal retail and secondary areas providing for retail, service and leisure uses will be defined and a balanced range of uses maintained. Additional provision in keeping with the scale and role of the centre should be provided prioritising redevelopment of vacant and underused sites, particularly around High Street, including the Canal Quarter opportunity, securing further environmental improvements.
- b) Opportunities for additional residential development as part of mixed use schemes or in peripheral areas will be supported.
- c) The centre will continue to be a key hub in the Sustainable Transport Network and improved services, facilities and interconnections, including Runcorn train station, the Old Town bus station, across the Silver Jubilee Bridge and to the Riverside College Campus will be supported.
- d) Improved pedestrian and cycle connections within the centre and to the surrounding residential areas to the south and west will be promoted, particularly with the reconfiguration and removal of highway infrastructure associated with the Mersey Gateway Priority Project.
- e) The line of the former Runcorn Locks will be protected, with the aim of re-instatement which offers the potential to complete a second Cheshire canal ring and provide local canal based leisure development opportunities.

#### ii. Runcorn Docks

Runcorn Docks will be subject to comprehensive redevelopment for a residential led, mixed use development. The following will apply:

- a) Redevelopment will be centred on the creation of a new residential community with supporting retail and community facilities, open space, and a commercial area forming a buffer to the industrial area to the south.
- b) Innovative measures to minimise car borne trip generation will be explored as will opportunities to effectively link the development to Runcorn Old Town centre with

its main public transport interchanges.

- c) The feasibility of establishing a new access and through route from the south of the site will be fully investigated.
- d) High quality design should be used to create a modern, innovative and distinctive residential development enjoying views across the Mersey Estuary, opening up access to the waterfront to create a destination in the Borough with a real sense of place boasting a highly attractive public realm
- e) Design of buildings and spaces will seek to maximise the benefit of the sites waterfront location.
- f) As a key component in the delivery of the Growth Point programme, the development will seek to achieve a high rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes and opportunities to exploit renewable energy sources, district heating or decentralised generation will be exploited where practicable.

### **iii. Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks)**

Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) will be developed to form a modern freight facility catering for waterborne and inter-modal freight. The following will apply;

- a) Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) should be developed to increase its waterborne freight handling capacity.
- b) Opportunities to develop the role of the site as part of a co-ordinated freight strategy will be explored.
- c) Improvements to the local road network to facilitate improved access and minimise disruption to nearby residential areas should be fully investigated.
- d) Supporting development to increase the capacity or efficiency of the operation of the Manchester Ship Canal should be pursued.

## **Alternative Policy Options Considered: West Runcorn**

### **Managed Decline of Runcorn Old Town Centre**

Runcorn Old Town centre is the traditional heart of pre-New Town Runcorn, however it was replaced as the main retail centre in the town by Shopping City, now branded Halton Lea. As such the centre has very few national multiple or comparison goods retailers, and now functions as a large district centre. An option to see managed decline has been rejected as the centre still performs a valuable complementary role to Halton Lea and has the potential to become a specialist retail and leisure destination as well as serving the day-to-day needs of the local populous.

### **Continuation of Runcorn Docks Employment led Regeneration Area**

The Runcorn Docks area has been identified as a mixed use regeneration area for a number of years. The option to retain this designation has been rejected as the site owners are keen to progress a landmark residential development that will directly contribute to the Borough's Growth Point programme and see an area of underused waterfront land opened up to make best use of its natural potential.

### **No Specific Policy Covering Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks)**

The option of omitting Weston Docks from the Preferred Area of Change was rejected as the area is subject to development proposals that will see the site's role and importance as a freight handling centre increase. The timely delivery of these proposals in conjunction with the 3MG development in Widnes form an important element of the overall Spatial Strategy.

#### **Justification / Explanation**

- 4.166 The implementation of this policy will help to achieve the Strategic Visions and Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy in the following ways:
- 4.167 **A Decent Home and Neighbourhood**  
West Runcorn and Runcorn Docks in particular have the capacity to contribute to our affordable and decent home objectives by creating a wholly new high quality waterfront residential community of up to 4,000 households that will expand the Borough's residential offer, make a major contribution to the Borough's housing requirements and deliver against Growth Point aspirations by incorporating sustainable design principles.
- 4.168 **A Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres**  
Whilst the Runcorn Docks redevelopment will entail the loss of employment land and dock facilities; the dock facilities will be relocated to other Manchester Ship Canal Company (MSCC) land and the employment land affected is generally low grade with low job densities. The proposals for Runcorn Old Town centre and Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) will directly contribute to the overall economic objectives while Runcorn Docks will provide additional local population to support the district centre, support improved connections to the new Riverside College Campus and contribute to improving the image of the Borough.
- 4.169 **Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**  
Development of improved commercial and community facilities, including as part of the Canal Quarter scheme and as part of the residential development together with improved overall accessibility to those services through sustainable travel options will create additional opportunities for residents to pursue healthier lifestyles.
- 4.170 **A High Quality Built and Green Environment**  
The residential development at Runcorn Docks will be an exemplar development where high quality design will be used to create an attractive waterside environment, with good pedestrian and cycle linkages that seek to reduce its environmental impact. The development should achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 rating or higher. The energy from waste facility within the Ineos complex will both help divert waste from landfill and reduce the site's demand for electricity from non-renewable sources.
- 4.171 **An Accessible Halton**  
Runcorn Old Town centre will continue to be a key hub within the Sustainable Transport Network and the preferred option seeks to support and strengthen this role. Opportunities presented by the opening of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the subsequent 'de-linking' of the Silver Jubilee Bridge which will see the removal of redundant highway infrastructure will allow further improvements to local travel linkages and create regeneration opportunities, including the re-establishment of Runcorn Docks.

#### 4.172 **Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources**

Successful delivery of key aspects of the preferred policy option may raise requirements for, or be dependant upon new infrastructure provision. Elements of the strategy for Runcorn Old Town centre are dependant upon the removal of highway infrastructure as part of ‘delinking’ the Silver Jubilee Bridge following the opening of the proposed new Mersey Gateway Bridge. Full delivery of the residential redevelopment of Runcorn Docks may be dependent upon the provision of a vehicle route from the south and through the site. This would require a new bridge linking to Picow Farm Road interchange that would have to be funded from the development. The need, or otherwise, for this will be established through detailed traffic modelling.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS6
<b>Regional Policy</b>	Expands upon RSS Policy W5, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO3, SO4, SO8, SO9, SO12, SO16, SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton’s Urban Renewal, a Healthy Halton
<b>SCS Improvement Targets</b>	Halton’s Urban Renewal: Vitality, Premises, Town Centre Footfall
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	3 – Water, 5 – Flood Risk, 6 – Energy Efficiency, 7 – Land Quality, 9 – Waste
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS11, CS12, CS14, CS15, CS17, CS23, CS24, CS28, CS30, CS31

## **DELIVERING A STRATEGY FOR WEST RUNCORN**

4.173 The Runcorn Docks area has been identified as a proposed Regeneration Area for a number of years, with the UDP promoting commercial-lead redevelopment. The now proposed residential development will initially be progressed by the site owners, Peel Holdings. The Council will work with Peel to develop a master plan to guide the development of the site which may form the basis of a Runcorn Docks SPD. Proposals for Runcorn Old Town centre will be supported by an SPD, whose aim is to build upon measures proposed in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy in order to provide a detailed policy framework for the Old Town. The Canal Quarter is a key development within the Old Town centre, and is being promoted by the Council in conjunction with its development partners. Elsewhere, development sites will be dependent upon private investment. The Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) largely comprises of dockside development by a single land owner. The development of this site in accordance with the preferred policy option can progress as a stand-alone development, however, there may be scope for linkages of co-operation with adjacent land owners concerning access arrangements, including the operation or development of the existing freight rail line feeding into the area. In addition to these locally-based developments, the Site Allocations DPD will have an important role to play in determining which of the West Runcorn sites will be used for particular purposes.

4.174 The preferred strategy contains a number of proposals, which, when delivered, will require the provision of supporting infrastructure. This includes physical



infrastructure, such as transport improvements, in Runcorn Old Town centre, and retail and community infrastructure, to support the planned residential community at Runcorn Docks. Some of the infrastructure required to achieve the strategy for West Runcorn is detailed within the preferred strategy, such as improving the waterborne freight handling capacity at Mersey Gateway Port, while other infrastructure will need to be provided by developers in association with new development. In particular, this includes the infrastructure that will be required to turn Runcorn Docks from an underused employment area to a thriving sustainable community.

- 4.175 In delivering the strategy for West Runcorn, there will be a major necessity for the Council to work with its partners, including public agencies, private sector developers and private landowners, in order to deliver the aspirations of this policy. The principles set out in the preferred strategy will apply to the West Runcorn area continuously over the plan period, bearing in mind the large-scale nature of some of the projects proposed and the need to maintain flexibility about delivery timescales.

## 5. A DECENT HOME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

- 5.1 The Strategic Objectives of direct relevance to providing Decent Homes and Neighbourhoods are SO1, SO2 and SO3. Other Objectives of relevance are SO8, SO9, SO10, SO12, SO14, SO18 and SO19.

### Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme

- 5.2 Halton has to make provision for approximately **11,500 additional dwellings** in the period 2003 to 2026 (9,500 to 2021) and is likely also be given a requirement to find additional transit and residential pitches for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the current Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
- 5.3 Halton together with St.Helens and Warrington (Mid-Mersey) have been awarded Growth Point Status, whereby the 3 Authorities have committed to working in partnership with Central Government to pursue **accelerated housing growth** at levels at least 20% above previous policy targets over the period to 2017.
- 5.4 The Borough has **above average levels of social rented** housing, with concentrations of worklessness, deprivation and poor health prevalent.
- 5.5 The Borough has an identified **shortage of upper market housing** required to support economic development aspirations and stem outward migration, and good **quality affordable housing** to meet locally arising need.
- 5.6 In line with national trends, **Halton's population is ageing** with the numbers aged over 65 forecast to increase by 35% (9,200 persons) and those aged over 85 set to increase by 44% (1,400 persons) between 2008 and 2026 creating **additional demand for adapted and specialist housing**.
- 5.7 Falling average household sizes and peripheral housing development are contributing to a **decentralisation of the population** with consequential impact on locational demand for infrastructure and services.

### National and Regional Policy Context

- 5.8 The Government's key housing policy goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a **decent home, which they can afford**, in a **community where they want to live**. To achieve this, the Government is seeking:
- to achieve a **wide choice of high quality homes**, both affordable and market housing, to address the requirements of the community.
  - to widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure **high quality housing for those who cannot afford market housing**, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need.
  - to **improve affordability** across the housing market, including by **increasing the supply of housing**.
  - to create sustainable, inclusive, **mixed communities** in all areas, both urban and rural.

- 5.9 Regional guidance promotes sustainable principles for new housing as with other development and seeks development in sustainable locations, outside of high risk flood areas that is well related to employment and services which can be well served by existing infrastructure.
- 5.10 Halton is to provide for an average of 500 (net) new dwellings per annum from 2003 to 2021 (and beyond) with a focus on supporting economic growth and urban regeneration. Under the Growth Point programme, Halton has committed to seeking to secure accelerated housing delivery, including for affordable housing through to 2017 with a target of 600 units per annum. At least 65% of the new dwellings across Halton and St.Helens should be on previously developed land.
- 5.11 National guidance requires that Core Strategies address the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities and the Regional Spatial Strategy is currently (at September 2009) undergoing a Partial Review to provide district policy figures for additional accommodation that will need to be addressed by the LDF in the future.
- 5.12 With housing accounting for **25%** of the nations energy use, **improving the energy efficiency of new and existing stock** and providing **energy from renewable sources** will help reduce housing's contribution to climate change and regional policy seeks to introduce a requirement that developments involving 1,000 sqm or 10 dwellings should source 10% of their energy requirements from decentralised renewable or low carbon sources.

#### **What you said in 2006 at Issues and Options Stage...**

- 5.13 Responses to the Issues and Options stage highlighted the diverse nature of housing issues and interests in Halton. Comments relating to location of new housing included that development cannot continue to expand outwards and that building up to our Green Belt boundaries will increase pressure for further expansion onto Green Belt land. Others stated that inner urban sites are more sustainable and the Council should adopt a sequential approach to site selection, whilst some cautioned against town cramming and the loss of children's play space. Redevelopment of employment sites for housing was advocated and rejected by different respondents. Similarly, the continuation of previous focused regeneration efforts was praised but also criticised for limiting borough-wide regeneration. Doubts were expressed about the deliverability of some urban brownfield sites, while others thought opportunities should be sought to maximise the proportion of housing on such sites though concerns about protecting their ecological value were also raised.
- 5.14 Some people felt that we should be building larger family homes to attract new families into the Borough to support services, whilst others felt Halton needs additional smaller or cheaper homes to meet local needs, including apartments if this would stop the need for Green Belt release. Some were concerned about oversupply of new apartments. Some said there is a need to provide affordable housing as people cannot afford the cost of a new home, with a mix of opinion between delivering affordable units 'on-site' with market housing or seeking contributions to target delivery to areas of highest demand. Some felt that housing should incorporate water saving measures and be more sustainable and promote a "green vision" for Halton.
- 5.15 Support was given to seeking higher densities close to transport corridors or service centres whilst concern was raised about this leading to too many apartments.

Matching supply to demand was identified with a word of caution about repeating the mistakes of the past and building what will become unpopular, difficult to let stock. A need for specialist accommodation was identified, including for Extra Care and Single Homeless accommodation (especially in Widnes) and supported housing for those with mental health issues. Similarly the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community were also raised.

- 5.16 Some respondents suggested allocating particular areas such as Manor Park IV or Daresbury Park in eastern Runcorn, while others recognised constraints such as the need to make contaminated land safe if to be used for residential and safety issues surrounding certain industrial complexes. Another view was that the Core Strategy should not seek to prohibit development but should be flexible and encourage economic growth.
- 5.17 Taking the above issues, policy context and comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for this theme:

**CS11:** Addressing Housing Needs

**CS12:** Affordable Housing

**CS13:** Meeting the Needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People

**CS14:** Design of New Residential Development

## CSI I: ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS

- 5.18 Halton has a limited supply of land available for residential development, so it is important that this land is used efficiently by ensuring that new development addresses any imbalance in the existing housing stock and actually meets the needs of the local community. Previously the choice of house sizes and styles has been left to private developers to determine, however the preferred policy option is to require that developers have regard to identified housing needs when planning new development.

### Preferred Policy Option CSI I: Addressing Housing Needs

Proposals for housing must have regard to identified local needs in terms of size, type and tenure of dwellings required and the most appropriate use for the site.

Housing proposals of 10 dwellings or more will be required to provide an appropriate mix of housing on site. The final mix will be negotiated with the developer based on an up to date assessment of housing needs. On housing sites of less than 10 dwellings it may be more appropriate to address a single identified local requirement.

Priority will be given to Extra Care or supported housing on sites adjacent to defined district or neighbourhood centres providing easy, level access to local services.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Addressing Housing Needs

#### **Do Not Have a Policy and Continue to Rely on the Market to Determine Supply**

A continuation of this 'laissez-faire' approach where the mix of new housing provision is left wholly to the market risks supply not addressing identified needs. This approach may also prejudice the successful identification and delivery of sites for specialist housing.

#### **Specify the Type and Mix of Housing within the Core Strategy Policy:**

A policy setting out the type, size and tenure of housing required would not be appropriate in the Core Strategy as it would be overly prescriptive, would be based on identified requirements at a single point in time and would not be relevant for the life of the Plan. Similarly, setting requirements for specialist housing would be overly prescriptive and not be responsive to changing funding regimes, demographics and care needs.

### Justification / Explanation

- 5.19 Land for residential development is a finite resource and it is important that it is used sustainably and efficiently to meet the needs of the whole community. By requiring that developers have regard to the identified needs within Halton, new development should be tailored towards satisfying that need, whilst the preferred policy still allows sufficient flexibility with regard to individual site characteristics and market conditions.
- 5.20 This preferred policy option will be dependant upon the ongoing provision of up-to-date information on housing needs. Current information is contained in the Halton

Housing Needs Study 2006 however this is to be replaced in due course by a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This will be undertaken in consultation with 4NW and neighbouring Local Authorities at the strategic housing market level, covering Halton, St.Helens and Warrington (collectively referred to as the Mid-Mersey area) and is expected to be report in 2010 in line with the Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy Action Plan.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3, Growth Point Programme
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DPI, DP2, DP4, L4, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Housing Strategy 2008-11
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton; Halton's Urban Renewal;
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 154 - Net additional homes provided NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	SA10, SA11, SA16
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS3, CS5, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS12, CS13, CS21

## CS12: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.21 Access to market housing has become increasingly difficult for many Halton residents as the gap between housing costs and earnings widened throughout the 1990 and early 2000s. The recent market 'adjustment' resulting from the recent financial situation has done little to improve access as lending criteria and access to mortgages has tightened. As such there is a need to supplement the supply of affordable housing units by seeking contributions from new private housing developments. The preferred policy option is to include the following policy in the Core Strategy seeking affordable housing contributions.

### Preferred Policy Option CS12: Affordable Housing

Affordable housing units will be provided (in perpetuity) within all new residential development, including as part of mixed use schemes on sites which:

- have a capacity for 15 or more dwellings; or
- comprise an area of 0.4 Ha. or more, if located within a 5 minute walk (400m) of a defined town, district or neighbourhood centre (CS17) or from the Halton Sustainable Travel Network (CS28); or
- comprise a site area of 0.5 Ha. or more.

Where a site is subdivided or is not developed to its full potential so as to be below these thresholds, planning permission will be refused, unless the affordable contribution matches in total the provision that would otherwise have been required on the site as a whole.

Affordable housing will be sought at not less than 25% of the total number of units provided and the Council will seek to ensure a 50:50 split between new social rent and intermediate affordable supply across the Borough.

The affordable housing element must;

- be of a similar size and type to the overall mix on site, unless it is agreed with the Council to target a specific identified category of greatest housing need in the locality; and
- comprise a mix of social rented and intermediate housing appropriate to the sites location and identified housing priorities; and
- be fully integrated so as to avoid the over concentration of affordable housing in any particular location within the development site and in order to achieve seamless design

A financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances or where on-site provision is not achievable and where equivalent provision cannot readily be provided by the developer on an alternative site.

The minimum contribution may only be reduced where it is demonstrated that existing physical constraints on the site will result in extraordinary costs, or competing use value in addition to the affordable housing requirement would render the development unviable.

## **Alternative Policy Options Considered: Affordable Housing**

### **Do not have an affordable housing policy:**

Halton has an identified annual shortfall in the provision of affordable housing supply which is not being addressed in current planning policy. RSS Policy L5: Affordable Housing requires Local Authorities to seek to address any quantified shortfall. The Core Strategy represents the most appropriate opportunity to address this policy deficiency and as such the omission of a policy is not appropriate.

### **Generic affordable housing policy and defer details to a subsequent SPD:**

A generic policy could set the principle for affordable housing contributions to be sought but defer the details of how and where this would be applied to a subsequent document. This would satisfy RSS Policy L5, but would fail to fully address an important issue affecting the Borough that is more appropriately dealt with in the Core Strategy. In addition, it would lead to a delay in the adoption of policy to address a pressing need.

### **Policy seeking contributions as a percentage of development floorspace:**

A policy seeking affordable housing contributions as a percentage of the development floorspace rather than number of units would allow the Council together with the affordable housing provider greater flexibility to decide the form any provision should take, including for 4 bed properties etc. by removing the incentive for the developer to promote only the smallest affordable unit sizes. This approach may be more appropriate to circumstances where the private market is skewed towards larger unit sizes.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 5.22 Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Social rented housing is rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above, including shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy) other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.'
- 5.23 The Halton Housing Needs Study 2006 identifies a shortfall of 176 units per annum in the supply of affordable housing across the Borough. The preferred policy option implements this report's recommendations by seeking to secure the provision of new affordable units with a target requirement that 25% of new housing on suitable sites should be affordable, with a 50:50 split across the Borough between social rented and intermediate supply.
- 5.24 The type of affordable supply sought on individual sites will be a matter for negotiation at the time of a planning application depending on the site location, the local housing mix and identified housing priorities to meet local needs.
- 5.25 In line with national guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing) the policy seeks contributions from sites of 15 or more units which in Halton are expected to deliver over 90% of all new housing. The site size thresholds correspond to the requisite density requirements set out in Policy CS3.



- 5.26 Despite this, the preferred policy option will not deliver sufficient new supply to fully address the identified need, which is 29% of the proposed total housing target for 2008-17 (176 shortfall / 600 pa); however, the policy must balance the need for new affordable housing against the economic viability of developments to provide contributions. The precise level of contribution will be a matter of negotiation at the time of a planning application and will consider abnormal costs and competing use value i.e. the value of existing or allocated land uses. Such negotiations will be on an 'open book' basis. The actual cost paid for a site will not be relevant.
- 5.27 In line with national guidance, there will be a presumption that any affordable supply will be provided on site. Exceptions may be considered in Neighbourhood Priority areas, where there is a predominance of social stock or where negotiation confirms alternative provision will make a larger contribution towards identified housing priorities or secure better management arrangements for the RSL provider.
- 5.28 This policy and the evidence base that supports it will be subject to regular review to ensure it remains relevant to current market conditions. The Housing Needs Study 2006 will be replaced by a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to be commissioned jointly with our Growth Point partners, St.Helens and Warrington and due to report in 2010.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3, Growth Point Programme
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP2, DP4, L4, L5, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Housing Strategy 2008-11
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO3
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 154 – Net additional homes provided NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	SA10, SA16
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS3, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS14, CS21

## **CS13: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE COMMUNITIES**

- 5.29 Halton currently has two private gypsy and traveller sites and a local authority residential site (Widnes) and a newly opened transit site (Runcorn). Recent studies have indicated a requirement for further provision in the sub-region, and this is being looked at as part of the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which should confirm District policy targets for the provision of new residential and transit pitches for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpeople.
- 5.30 This is likely to lead to a requirement to allocate sites in a subsequent DPD, however, Government guidance requires that Core Strategies address this issue, and as such the Council cannot simply rely on the saved policy (H5) from the Halton UDP. The preferred policy option is therefore to carry forward the previous policy approach into the Core Strategy, defining the broad criteria for assessing any proposals that emerge for new provision.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS13 : Meeting the Needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Communities**

- I Proposals for the development of sites to meet identified accommodate needs of gypsies residing in or resorting to Halton will be permitted provided that all of the following criteria can be satisfied:
- a The site would not be affected by pollution or other environmental factors that would result in unacceptable living conditions.
  - b The site is well designed and landscaped to give privacy between pitches and, where appropriate, between the site and adjacent users.
  - c The site has adequate vehicular access and provision for parking and circulation.
  - d The site has appropriate work areas, where required, so long as their use would not create unacceptable air or noise pollution or other nuisance, or present a risk to the health and safety of those living on or near the site.
  - e The site is capable of facilitating adequate sanitation.
  - f The proposals would not be detrimental to the amenity or character of the surrounding area or be visually intrusive.

Where there is an identified policy requirement, additional sites for transit or residential pitched will be identified in a subsequent Site Allocations DPDs.

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Meeting the Needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Communities**

#### **Incorporate provisions for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Communities in generic Housing Requirements Policy**

This approach has the advantage of not discriminating between the specialist needs of the 'travelling' community and the general 'settled' population, but risks not adequately addressing the specific requirements of these communities and may prejudice future

provision by forcing it to compete for scarce residential land.

### **Identify specific sites or ‘areas of search’ for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople provision**

The number of ‘pitches’ to be made available is currently the subject of review at the regional level. Until this is fully resolved, it is not possible to identify the number and size of potential additional site requirements, and as such a detailed ‘allocations’ approach would be premature and risk not conforming with regional policy when adopted.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 5.31 The preferred policy option is a continuation of the approach in the Halton UDP and has been chosen as it allows the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities to be specifically catered for (in compliance with Central Government requirements) pending the adoption of numeric policy requirements at the regional level. The policy stops short of identifying specific sites or areas of search as currently the evidence base is not fully in place.
- 5.32 This approach is consistent with national guidance in PPS3 (Housing) and in fulfils the requirement of Circular 01/2006 that the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities are specifically addressed in the Core Strategy.
- 5.33 The preferred policy option provides sufficient flexibility to deal with any development proposals for new provision that emerge prior to any required allocations being adopted. The need for any such allocations will be confirmed in the current Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Partial Review informed by the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Needs Survey and regional studies.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3, DCLG Circular 01 / 2006
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: DP1, DP2
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Housing Strategy 2008-11
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO7, SO10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton’s Urban Renewal; Children and Young People in Halton; Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	SA10, SA11, SA13
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS11, CS12, CS16, CS20, CS21

## CSI4: DESIGN OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.34 Good quality design can improve social well-being and quality of life by reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and increasing property values and should be the norm, not the exception. Quality of design is not the same as taste, it need not be a wholly subjective judgement, but instead structured appraisals of design quality can be employed to more rigorously and consistently assess development proposals against set criteria.
- 5.35 The Building for Life Standard has been developed by CABI to allow an assessment based on 20 factors, applicable to housing schemes of 10 or more units. The preferred option is to supplement the other design policies within this document, and in particular CS23 – High Quality Design and include the following policy requirement specifically relating to the design of new residential development.

### Preferred Policy Option CSI4: Design of New Residential Development

Development proposals, including mixed use developments, incorporating 10 or more dwellings should embrace 'Building for Life' criteria and should aim to achieve;

- Building for Life, Silver standard (14 out of 20), rising to
- Building for Life, Gold Standard (16 out of 20) from 2012

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Design of New Residential Development

#### Do Not Have a Specific Residential Design Policy

Design issues could be deferred to a generic Development Management DPD, however securing good design is fundamental to many of the aims of the Core Strategy.

#### Incorporate Housing Design Standards within a Generic Design Policy

Housing design could be incorporated in a generic design policy; however, the Building for Life measure is a national standard applicable specifically to housing and offers the opportunity to apply a quantifiable and measurable standard for development in Halton. Given the cross-cutting nature of the elements covered and that the standard applies to a single land-use it is more appropriate to include as a stand-alone policy.

#### Include a Building for Life Compliance Policy with Gold Standard Required Immediately

Building for Life is a relatively new national standard that developers are learning to address in their designs for new development. A phased introduction of the requirement will allow the development industry a 'grace period' to adapt.

#### Include Other National Design Codes

Other national design codes covering residential development exist which could be incorporated into the specific residential design policy, including Code for Sustainable Homes and the Lifetime Homes Standard. The former is covered by policy CS24 whilst the latter has not been picked up as it incorporates technically detailed internal and external elements that would be difficult to apply and effectively monitor.

## Justification / Explanation

- 5.36 The Building for Life Standard has been developed by the Government's architectural advisors, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) together with the Home Builders Federation, Homes and Communities Agency and the Civic Trust, to provide a more structured method of assessing the quality of medium or large residential developments and has been included by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as a Core National Output Indicator for local authorities' LDFs, to be reported in the AMR.
- 5.37 Comprising 20 criteria embodying what a housing development should be (functional, attractive and sustainable) the measure incorporates many of the preferred policy options contained within this Core Strategy document into a single measure. Adopting this standard as a discrete policy requirement will contribute towards the delivery of many of the Strategic Objectives of this Core Strategy.

<b>BUILDING FOR LIFE CRITERIA</b>		Related Policies
<b>Environment and community</b>		
<b>1</b>	Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?	CS2, CS30, CS33
<b>2</b>	Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?	CS11
<b>3</b>	Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?	CS11
<b>4</b>	Does the development have easy access to public transport?	CS30
<b>5</b>	Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impact?	CS2, CS24
<b>Character</b>		
<b>6</b>	Is the design specific to the scheme?	CS23, CS25
<b>7</b>	Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape or topography?	CS23, CS25
<b>8</b>	Does the scheme feel like a place with distinctive character?	CS23, CS25
<b>9</b>	Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?	CS23
<b>10</b>	Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout? Streets, parking and pedestrianisation?	CS23, CS28, CS30
<b>Streets, parking and pedestrianisation</b>		
<b>11</b>	Does the building layout take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?	CS23
<b>12</b>	Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene?	CS23, CS28
<b>13</b>	Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?	CS30
<b>14</b>	Does the scheme integrate with existing streets, paths and surrounding development?	CS30
<b>15</b>	Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?	CS23
<b>Design and construction</b>		
<b>16</b>	Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?	CS23
<b>17</b>	Do the buildings exhibit architectural quality?	CS23
<b>18</b>	Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?	CS23
<b>19</b>	Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhance its performance, quality and attractiveness?	CS24
<b>20</b>	Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as building regulations?	CS24

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS3, Circular 01 / 2006
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS policies: DPI, DP2, L3
<b>Local Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO10, SO12, SO13, SO14, SO16
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton; Halton's Urban Renewal; A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	SA1, SA10, SA11, SA16, SA17
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS5, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS20, CS21, CS23, CS24, CS25, CS26, CS28, CS30

## **DELIVERING A DECENT HOME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD**

- 5.38 Policies within this theme will be supported by various DPDs and SPDs, including the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD and Detailed Development Policies DPD, as well as the Design of New Residential SPD, the Design for Community Safety SPD and the forthcoming Affordable Housing SPD which will all either identify land for housing development or influence the location or design and delivery of new residential developments
- 5.39 Affordable Housing policy requirements will need to be supported by evidence of both unmet need for affordable accommodation and an appraisal of the economic viability of developments to support any policy requirement. Updated evidence of need will be commissioned in 2010 as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and where necessary, an appraisal of economic viability will also be undertaken. This will support detailed policy in the forthcoming Affordable Housing SPD, and will be subject to periodic review throughout the life of the Core Strategy, in order that the Council maintain an up-to-date record of housing needs in the Borough.
- 5.40 The securing of good design will be delivered through the development management process with the granting or otherwise of planning permission. Information in support of the preferred policy approach is contained in the Building for Life (CABE) guidance and supplementary policy will be contained in the Design of New Residential Development SPD. It will be important for the Council to engage in partnership working with private sector developers and Registered Social Landlords in order to determine how good quality design can be incorporated into residential development proposals.
- 5.41 Control over the location of additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople will be through the development management process. Any required new provision (to be determined by RSS) is likely to be delivered either by the Council or from within the communities themselves, and there may be modest infrastructure provision implications in the development of sites for the purposes of accommodating Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

## 6. A VIBRANT ECONOMY AND ATTRACTIVE CENTRES

- 6.0 The Strategic Objectives of direct relevance to delivering a Vibrant Economy and Attractive Centres are SO4, SO5, SO6, SO7 and SO8.

### Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme

- 6.1 The **quality** of existing industrial and office premises in the Borough is generally low and does not meet the needs of modern occupiers. As a result of this, on some of the Borough's industrial estates there is pressure to allow **non-employment uses**, such as leisure and community uses which frequently need large sites that cannot be accommodated in town centres. As outlined in the generation of the Spatial Strategy for Halton, the Borough faces significant constraints with regards to future land supply for both housing and employment uses. This places significant onus on **maintaining a balance** between sites available for future housing and employment development, including making the most efficient use of those sites which are best suited to employment uses.
- 6.2 The draft Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2009) recommends that the Borough's portfolio of **existing employment sites are retained** for employment purposes, with some scope for remodelling to incorporate a wider mix of uses where the site forms part of a wider regeneration scheme such as at Widnes Waterfront and Runcorn Docks.
- 6.3 Halton has been identified as a district within the North West with a high percentage of working age population **without qualifications**, coupled with particularly **high unemployment rates**. As such there is a **mismatch in the skills** of residents and the skills sought by employers, and many of the more skilled jobs in the borough are filled by people who don't live in Halton.
- 6.4 Over the plan period it is likely that an increasing number of people will opt to work at home. A flexible approach and an emphasis on infrastructure provision, notably digital connectivity will help to facilitate this.
- 6.5 In relation to the retail and leisure offer in Halton, the Borough's larger centres experience **competition from surrounding towns and cities**, such as Warrington and Liverpool, resulting in a sizable outflow of retail and leisure trips by the Borough's residents. Therefore a key challenge is to encourage people to shop and spend more of their leisure time in Halton's centres.
- 6.6 Nationally, recent development of large units as part of **out of centre retail parks**, accessible by car and with abundant free parking, has given them competitive advantages over town centres. A further challenge for town centres is competition from the growth of **internet shopping**.
- 6.7 The Borough's three main centres of Widnes, Halton Lea and Runcorn Old Town have all experienced **significant new development** over the last 15 years, however, their future growth and expansion is dependent on the provision of sufficient sites for new development in suitable locations. However, overall,



Halton's main centres **underperform**, in part due to competition as outlined above, a lack of diversity and variety, an underdeveloped evening economy and vacancies and blank frontages detracting from their image.

- 6.8 The Borough's network of **neighbourhood centres** perform an important role as focal points within the residential areas they serve, meeting predominantly local needs. A key challenge is to retain a network of neighbourhood centres to meet the service and shopping needs of all residents. This includes ensuring that **new neighbourhood centres** are provided, where appropriate, in localities of significant population growth.
- 6.9 Specific issues, challenges and opportunities in relation to Widnes Town Centre and Runcorn Old Town centre are listed within the Key Areas of Change section of the document, where strategies for the future of these centres is included. As Halton Lea does not fall within an identified Key Area of Change, context relevant to the associated Core Strategy policy is outlined below.
- 6.10 Halton Lea is the **principal retail centre in Runcorn** and was developed as part of the commercial heart of an expanding New Town. The Town Centre has **underperformed** to the extent that it retains a low level of retail spending within its catchment, and there is potential to improve its performance given the wide catchment that the centre covers.
- 6.11 Halton Lea was designed with the notion of segregating vehicles and those on foot. Following the development of the Trident Retail Park and other surrounding areas, access problems between different parts of the town centre for pedestrians have become more of an issue. A key challenge is to **improve access** to the centre and **circulation** around it, including better linkages to the nearby Green Lung at Town Park.
- 6.12 Surrounding Halton Lea are a number of **vacant or underused sites**. Most notable of these is the area at East Lane currently mostly occupied by the vacant and dilapidated East Lane House. This site benefits from planning permission for an extension to the covered shopping area and therefore represents a clear development opportunity.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

- 6.13 A key aim at both the national and regional level is the continued economic development of areas in a way that does **not compromise the environment**. Adequate provision should be made for industries which may be **detrimental to amenity**, away from sensitive land uses. Nationally, the key objectives for town centres are to promote the vitality and viability of existing centres by focusing development in existing centres and **encouraging a wide range of services** in an environment that is accessible to all.
- 6.14 **Reducing the need to travel** for employees, suppliers and visitors to businesses is another important element of national policy. In line with this aim, Government guidance recognises the potential for employment development to be incorporated alongside a **mix of uses**, including residential, where the operation of commercial and industrial activities would not impact on the amenity of residents.
- 6.15 Local Authorities are required to develop a **hierarchy and network of centres** and develop strategies for developing and strengthening centres within their area,

where each centres performs an **appropriate role** and meets the needs of their catchments. **Primary and secondary shopping areas** and town centre boundaries should be identified for major centres to facilitate the assessment of potential new development sites and the provision of suitable ones.

- 6.16 The need for **further town centre uses** should be assessed as part of the plan making process, including by identifying deficiencies in existing provision and assessing the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new development. Uses appropriate to a town centre are namely retail, leisure, entertainment facilities, offices, arts, culture and tourism.
- 6.17 At the regional level, policies for the economy are guided by a number of key principles including fostering **sustainable relationships** between homes, workplaces and key facilities and reviving local economies. Alongside this, a common thread evident throughout the plan is the need to **link areas of economic opportunity** with areas in greatest need of regeneration, where worklessness can be a large problem. Plans and strategies should seek to strengthen the regional economy including through the further development of the strengths within the **Liverpool City Region** and the improvement of the **skills base**.
- 6.18 **Regionally Significant Sites** for economic development sites should be located close to sustainable transport nodes, within key conurbations, which include the Liverpool City Region. Aside from regionally significant locations, brownfield land use for employment purposes should be maximised, with a good proportion of sites available at any one time to allow for sufficient flexibility within the market. A comprehensive review of existing employment land commitments should also be undertaken to deliver a **portfolio of sites** which accords with the wider principles for development within the region.
- 6.19 In relation to town centres, a regional network of retail centres is identified by the RSS; however, none of Halton's centres are identified within this framework. As such, the existing centres in Halton are not a focus in the region for an expansion of their comparison retail goods offer
- 6.20 Plans and proposals should ensure the delivery of **education facilities, training and skills provision** for all members of the community.

#### **What you said in 2006 at the Issues and Options Stage...**

- 6.21 A wide variety of comments were made at the Issues and Options stage in 2006. A number of pertinent points are summarised below.
- 6.29 There was widespread support for prioritising the re-use of **previously developed land** and **empty buildings** for employment uses, with Green Belt land protected from development. However, brownfield land should not be promoted to the detriment of existing occupiers. **Sensitive uses**, such as housing should be carefully located in relation to existing industrial uses so as not to jeopardise the future operation of businesses.
- 6.30 Halton's **legacy of industrial land**, predominantly in Widnes, should be addressed in the Core Strategy, with contaminated sites adequately remediated prior to redevelopment. Partnerships between the public and private sector will be required to achieve this.

- 6.31 New employment development should be located in **sustainable locations** where congestion is minimised and opportunities to travel by public transport are maximised. Wherever possible, employment development in the Borough should deliver **jobs for local people**. Encouragement should be given to **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)** in the Borough, as they represent the future of the Borough's economy and have the potential to offer training opportunities.
- 6.32 The role that **non-employment uses**, such as retail, can play in the economy and in providing vital jobs for residents should be recognised. Acknowledgment that retail uses cannot always be accommodated within existing town centres, through reference to the role of **edge and out of centre** locations, was called for.
- 6.33 There was consistent support for a **hierarchy of centres** to be defined in the Core Strategy including ensuring the **scale of development** is in keeping with the centre hierarchy, adopting a **sequential approach** to development site and premise selection, as advocated in PPS6.
- 6.34 The need to safeguard the viability of **local/neighbourhood centres** particularly through the presence of foodstores was mentioned, as was the need to provide services for new housing areas, such as Sandymoor.
- 6.35 Taking the above issues, policy context and comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for this theme:

**CS15:** Safeguarding and Regenerating Existing Employment Areas

**CS16:** Increasing Employment Opportunities

**CS17:** A Network of Centres

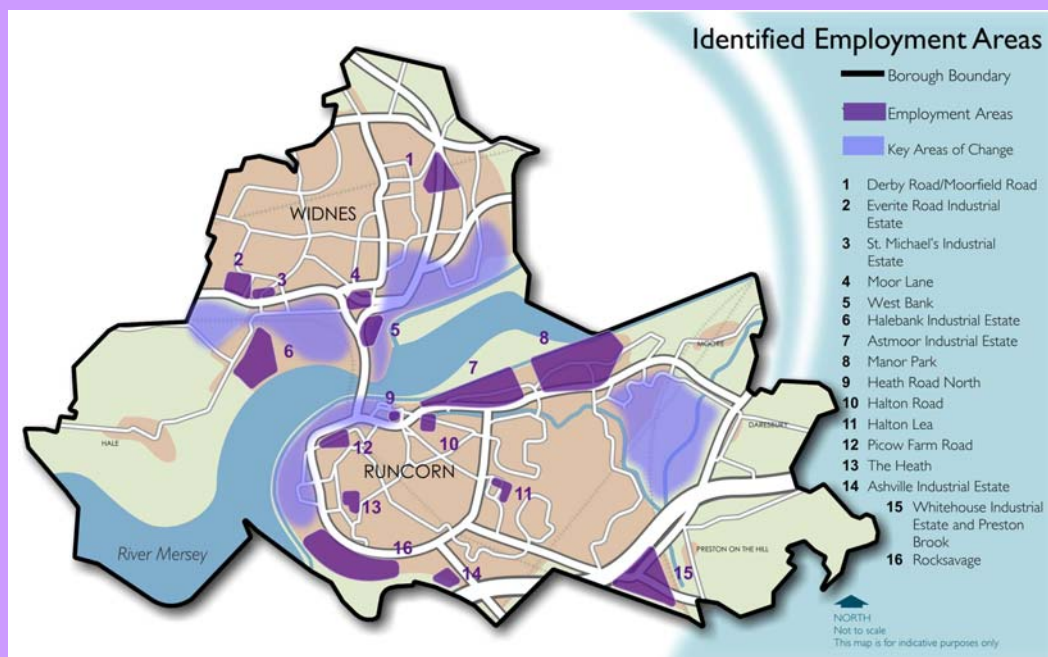
**CS18:** Halton Lea Town Centre

## CSI5: SAFEGUARDING AND REGENERATING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREAS

- 6.36 Halton's employment areas are an integral part of the Borough, both historically and today. They play an important role in the sub-regional and regional economy, and assist in delivering many of the economic priorities of the Liverpool City Region. The Borough is home to over 2,500 individual companies which gives an indication as to the significance of Halton's employment areas in supporting industry and the economy of the wider region.
- 6.37 Supplementing the key areas for new employment growth as detailed in policy CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy and in the relevant Key Area of Change policies CS7-CS10, proposals concerning areas of existing employment development should have regard to the principles of policy CS15 below.

### Preferred Policy Option CS15: Safeguarding and Regenerating Existing Employment Areas

Proposals for uses within the B use classes and sui generis employment uses will be directed towards the identified employment areas and Key Areas of Change within the Borough. Opportunities to improve and remodel existing employment areas, delivering more efficient and effective use of land for business and employment purposes should be sought.



**Figure I3: Identified Employment Areas**

Proposals for any alternative, non-employment uses within identified employment areas will generally not be permitted, unless they can be proven to be of greater benefit to the Borough than retaining the land for employment purposes. Any such proposals should be accompanied by an examination of the wider employment land situation in the Borough, including a consideration of:

- the overall supply of employment land in the Borough (including amount, type,

quality, availability and size of premises), in accordance with CS4 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities;

- the relative suitability and sustainability of the site for the employment uses and for the proposed alternative use;
- the location of the site and its relationship to other uses; and
- the need for the proposed use.

N.B. The following existing employment areas are covered by other policies in the document which also allow for both safeguarding and further employment development:

- 3MG
- Widnes Waterfront
- Daresbury Park and SIC
- Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks)

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Safeguarding and Regenerating Existing Employment Areas**

#### **Defining a Hierarchy of Employment Sites**

An approach of defining a hierarchy of employment sites with differing levels of protection afforded to the various tiers within the hierarchy was considered for the Preferred Options document. This could have detailed the employment sites to be afforded the greatest level of protection for business and industry, and those where there is a recognised opportunity to incorporate a wider mix of uses. However, in light of the emerging findings of the draft Joint Employment Land and Premises Study which suggests that the vast majority of employment sites in the borough should be protected for continued use for employment over the lifetime of the Core Strategy, such an approach would not reflect the emerging evidence. It was also felt that defining specific roles for individual employment areas was the role of the Site Allocations DPD, rather than a matter for inclusion in the Core Strategy.

#### **Priority Employment Areas**

One approach considered was to target the protection of employment sites at those areas in need of the greatest intervention where focus has been lost to the employment role of the area and where there are particular pressures for non-employment uses. Whilst this approach would give greater consideration to the employment areas in need of a renewed focus, it was felt that such a policy would give inadequate coverage to other employment areas in the borough. As such, this approach was discarded as the future role of all of the Borough's employment areas should be covered in the Core Strategy to ensure that the employment offer in Halton is not compromised.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 6.38 The above preferred policy option has been drafted to respond to the need to protect existing employment land in the Borough. As stated within the policy, the employment areas within the Key Areas of Change are covered by individual strategies in policies CS7-CS10. An overall loss of employment land in the Borough would undermine the local economy and the delivery of the wider aims of the Core Strategy. As such, a loss of employment land will not be permitted apart from in circumstances where the loss can be justified with reference to the overall supply of employment land in the Borough. Additionally, the alternative form of development

should be proven to be of benefit to the Borough, over and above the benefits of retaining the site in employment use.

- 6.39 Maintaining the current level of jobs in the Borough is a necessary basis for delivering an increase in the total number of jobs as identified as a target in the Sustainable Community Strategy. To assist with the overall aim of growing the economy, land needs to be protected for employment purposes to facilitate this. A precursor of economic growth is maintaining the existing level of employment land and either using it more effectively or building upon the existing supply. Whilst there are recognised pressures to allow non-employment uses on some of the Borough’s industrial and commercial estates, this does not present a justifiable argument for allowing the employment areas to lose their focus and become mixed use areas. However, the policy does allow for non-employment uses within such areas where there a specific circumstances which justify such an approach.
- 6.40 The draft Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2009) recommends that the vast majority of Halton’s existing employment sites are retained for industrial and business purposes, whilst recognising that there is some potential for remodelling on sites where change and wider redevelopment is anticipated in the long term. The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study recognises the contribution that existing employment areas, such as Manor Park and the Heath make to the borough’s economy and it is important to ensure such areas are supported, in addition to those employment areas that fall within an identified Key Area of Change and benefit from a specific strategy for change. Overall, the findings of the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study indicate a shortage in the current supply of employment land over the plan period to 2026. Given the land constraints facing the Borough, and the difficulties associated with identifying further sites to be allocated for employment land to 2026 as outlined in the Spatial Strategy, a high level of protection should be afforded to land in existing employment use so that future needs are not compromised.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPG4, Draft PPS4
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies W1, W3, W4, LCR1, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008; Halton Economic Review 2008
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO4, SO6
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton’s Urban Renewal. Employment, Learning & Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5: Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 171: VAT registration rate
<b>SA Objectives</b>	14 - Economy
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS4, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10

## CSI6: INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.41 An important aspect of delivering new employment development in the Borough is ensuring that new development translates into jobs for the people of Halton. Expansion of Halton's economy across a number of key sectors offers the potential to deliver much needed employment opportunities. Key to this will be ensuring that Halton's workforce are equipped with the appropriate skills and qualifications to allow them to access the jobs which accompany new employment development both within and outside of the Borough.

### Preferred Policy Option CSI6: Increasing Employment Opportunities

#### Increasing economic activity

In order to increase economic activity amongst Halton's existing population, particularly the number of residents employed locally, proposals for employment development should:

- Encourage the employment of local people in the Borough's businesses through the promotion of local labour agreements as part of the planning application process;
- Support initiatives for on the job training and developing skills, particularly in areas of the borough where there are the greatest disparities between the skills of residents and those required by the jobs generated by the development; and
- Be located so as to ensure good, affordable and convenient access by sustainable modes of transport, or contribute towards the achievement of this.

#### Improving educational attainment

To improve the educational attainment and skills base of the Borough's population and increase chances to benefit from the Borough's economic prosperity, development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy will:

- Support the remodelling of the Borough's educational establishments through the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programme initiatives; and
- Safeguard colleges and other facilities such as extended schools which deliver initiatives to support the lifelong learning of Halton's residents.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Increasing Employment Opportunities

#### Protection of Educational Establishments

An alternative policy approach considered affording specific protection to all existing educational establishments in the Borough. However, this would not support the council's aspirations within the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programme projects, which looks to use and redevelop the Borough's educational infrastructure in the most efficient way. Additionally, such an approach would not build upon the opportunities for schools to act as hubs within their communities, providing extended services for the wider population. By purely dealing with educational establishments, this policy approach would not deal with increasing economic activity amongst existing residents.

#### Targeted Approach – Neighbourhood Priority Areas

An alternative approach would be to target the above preferred policy option purely at the Borough's Neighbourhood Priority Areas, specifically seeking additional benefits from employment development and safeguarding educational establishments within Halton's less

affluent neighbourhoods. As there are benefits to such an approach, specific elements of the above policy such as the use of local labour agreements, have been incorporated into the strategy Neighbourhood Priority Areas at policy CS5. However, as the benefits of such a policy could additionally be felt boroughwide, the above policy has been drafted which incorporates the protection of the Borough's education facilities.

### Justification / Explanation

- 6.42 In order to boost economic activity in the Borough, a policy is needed to address the disparities between the skills of residents and those skills sought by employers in the Borough. A key objective of RSS and Liverpool City Region policies is to link areas of opportunity to areas of need. This policy seeks to link the opportunities presented by new employment development to the Borough's communities. Additionally, it is important to safeguard existing education facilities from development and support the programmes to remodel the borough's network of schools.
- 6.43 The State of the Borough Report (2009) identifies that although improvements have been made in recent years to Halton's economic performance, the ability of people to access new job opportunities is governed by the skills and qualifications they possess. The most recent data available<sup>1</sup> reveals that Halton performs poorly in skills and education, ranking in the bottom 5% of local authorities in the country in terms of the qualifications of residents. The Preferred Policy Option seeks to address the skills and qualifications deficit by ensuring there are linkages between new employment development and local people, whether this is good access to places of work or encouraging the employment of the local workforce.
- 6.44 Local Labour Agreements are commitments between employers or developers and local authorities to recruit and train local residents for jobs being created either in the construction or operational phase of employment development. They are therefore a useful and effective mechanism for ensuring the direct benefits from new employment uses in the Borough reach local people. Data on the level of skills and qualifications within specific wards is available from the Council.
- 6.45 Building Schools for the Future is a nationwide programme centred on rebuilding or upgrading the country's secondary schools. The programme in Halton will enable schools to significantly improve facilities, delivering benefits for educational attainment and allowing schools to offer a widened range of opportunities beyond those traditionally delivered during a school day. As such, it is important that the programme is supported across the Council and that its intentions for the eleven secondary schools concerned are not prejudiced by development.
- 6.46 The Primary Capital Programme is a nationwide project, similar to Building Schools for the Future but concerning the renewal of the country's primary schools. The aim is to create modern, well equipped primary schools which deliver the facilities for teaching and learning alongside being at the heart of communities, delivering children's services for all.

### Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:

<b>National Policy</b>	PPSI, Draft PPS4, PPG4, PPG13
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies WI, LI, LCRI, LCR3

<sup>1</sup> The State of the Borough in Halton - An Economic, Social and Environmental Audit of Halton (January 2009) *Table 6: Education and Skills*



<b>Local Policy</b>	A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton 2006-2011, Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008; Halton Economic Review 2008, Halton Children and Young People's Plan
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO7, SO10
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Children and Young People, Employment, Learning & Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 117: 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment, NI 153: Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods, NI 163: Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher, NI 175: Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling, namely Runcorn College and Widnes College
<b>SA Objectives</b>	12 - Health, 13 - Education, 14 - Economy
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS4, CS5, CS20, CS30

## CS17: A NETWORK OF CENTRES

- 6.47 Shopping and commercial centres play an important role in the Borough, not least contributing to Halton's economy, but acting as a focus for communities, providing vital goods, services and facilities. The Borough's town centres are where the majority of shopping, leisure, other retail services and the delivery of municipal functions can be found. They are also home to public transport interchanges, where bus services which serve the Borough and the wider area come together, allowing users to connect with other routes. Neighbourhood centres offer localised facilities within the communities they serve, giving a supplementary service to the larger town centres, typically day-to-day "top up" shopping and specialised services.

### Preferred Policy Option CS17: A Network of Centres

The vitality and viability of the following network of centres will be sustained and enhanced in order to provide access to a wide range of shops and associated services for all sections of the community.

#### i. TOWN CENTRES

Town centres are the principal centres of retail and leisure, attracting larger retailers and establishing themselves as destinations for shopping, cultural, leisure activities. The town centres will be the primary focus for additional retail and leisure development designed to serve a wide catchment. Halton's town centres are:

- a) **Widnes Town Centre** (see CS8: South Widnes)
- b) **Halton Lea Town Centre** (see CS18: Halton Lea Town Centre)

#### ii. DISTRICT CENTRE

Although housing some larger retail and leisure development, the district centre in the Borough will play a complementary role to the town centres, serving localised everyday shopping needs and delivering a niche market for comparison shopping. Halton's district centre is:

- a) **Runcorn Old Town centre** (see CS10: West Runcorn)

#### iii. NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

The Borough's network of neighbourhood centres perform an important role as focal points within the residential areas they serve, where people can meet and access a good mix of services and small-scale retail development. The neighbourhood centres are frequently the locations of community services and facilities, and as such, should be read in conjunction with policy CS20. The Borough's neighbourhood centres are:

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a) <b>Ascot Avenue, Runcorn</b>  | <b>Alexander Drive, Widnes</b> |
| <b>Bancroft Road, Widnes</b>     | <b>Beechers, Widnes</b>        |
| <b>Beechwood, Runcorn</b>        | <b>Brook Vale, Runcorn</b>     |
| <b>Castle Rise, Runcorn</b>      | <b>Castlefields, Runcorn</b>   |
| <b>Cronton Lane, Widnes</b>      | <b>Ditchfield Road, Widnes</b> |
| <b>Farnworth, Widnes</b>         | <b>Greenway Road</b>           |
| <b>Hale Bank, Widnes</b>         | <b>Hale Parade, Hale</b>       |
| <b>Hale Road, Widnes</b>         | <b>Halton Brook, Runcorn</b>   |
| <b>Halton Lodge, Runcorn</b>     | <b>Halton Road, Runcorn</b>    |
| <b>Halton View Road, Runcorn</b> | <b>Halton Village, Runcorn</b> |

**Langdale Road, Widnes**  
**Moorfield Road, Widnes**  
**Palacefields**  
**Preston Brook, Runcorn**  
**Russell Road, Runcorn**  
**Warrington Road, Widnes**  
**West Bank**

**Liverpool Road, Widnes**  
**Murdishaw Centre, Runcorn**  
**Picton Avenue, Runcorn**  
**Queens Avenue, Widnes**  
**The Grange, Runcorn**  
**Windmill Hill, Runcorn**

b) Additional or replacement neighbourhood centres will be supported at **Upton Rocks, Sandymoor, Daresbury, West Bank**, and **Runcorn Docks** where they are required to support new development.

#### **iv. Development in Halton's Centres**

In accordance with national planning policy, development proposals concerning town centre uses should firstly consider sites within the above town centres as these are priority locations for the future development of active, trip generating uses. The scale and function of the individual centres considered for each development proposal should be in keeping with the likely catchment area of the proposed use.

Proposals for town centre uses that do not accord with this policy or the Preferred Policy Options which incorporate strategies for the Borough's centres, namely CS8: South Widnes, CS18: Halton Lea Town Centre and CS10: West Runcorn within this document, the Site Allocations DPD or the Widnes Town Centre AAP will, in general, not receive support. Such proposals for out of centre development which are not in accordance with the development plan should have regard to national planning advice, particularly the matters detailed in PPS6 (2005) or successor.

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: A Network of Centres**

#### **Maintain Runcorn as a Town Centre**

In the previous retail hierarchy for Halton as included within the UDP, Runcorn Old Town was recognised as a town centre. One option would have been to continue this approach through to the Core Strategy, designating three town centres in the Borough. Given the limited town centre uses that have been developed in Runcorn Old Town in the intervening period since the adoption of the UDP, it is now deemed more appropriate to reclassify Runcorn Old Town as a district centre. This will allow development to be steered towards the correct level of centre within the Borough's retail hierarchy, and thus developing a distinct role for Runcorn Old Town centre, as set out in the Key Area of Change Preferred Policy Option CS10: West Runcorn.

#### **Detailed Policy Setting Out the Type and Scale of Appropriate Development**

An alternative approach considered was to develop a more detailed policy, setting out the type and scale of retail and leisure developments that would be appropriate to each level of centre within the retail hierarchy. This approach would have gone on to detail the sequential approach towards looking at appropriate sites in turn for town centre uses. This approach has not been progressed as it was felt that it would repeat national policy without adding a local perspective. There is the potential to develop more detailed policies for dealing with town centre uses within the Detailed Development Policies DPD, which will be produced in due course.

## Justification / Explanation

- 6.48 The policy is required in order to accord with national planning policy which requires the establishment of a hierarchy of retail centres. Given the number and variety of retail areas within Halton, it is important to set out a strategy for the network of centres in the Borough. This will help to ensure that they do not compete with each other, that development is steered towards the appropriate type of centre and that they provide a complementary range of shops and services which meet the needs of the populations they serve. The policy performs an important role alongside the Halton's Spatial Strategy in confirming and consolidating the role of the Borough's centres, categorising them and broadly defining their roles.
- 6.49 Preferred Policy Option CS17 also links to the provision of sites for new town centre uses to meet needs, detailed within the strategies for the three higher order centres in the borough. It also supports key objectives within the Sustainable Community Strategy's Urban Renewal priority, including the revitalisation of town centres and the need to support and sustain thriving neighbourhoods. The chosen hierarchy is supported by emerging findings from the draft Halton Retail and Leisure Study (2009) and the Halton Neighbourhood Centres Survey update (2009).
- 6.50 The policy sets out how the centres relate to one another in the hierarchy, detailing that Widnes and Halton Lea will continue to function as town centres in accordance with national retail policy. It is proposed that Runcorn Old Town be reclassified as a district centre, reflecting the complementary role to Halton Lea it currently plays in Runcorn, where Halton Lea is recognised as the main focus for retail and leisure functions in the town. Below the district centre are a series of neighbourhood centres of varying size and diversity of uses. It is important that the neighbourhood centres retain their retail function to assist in providing local access to goods and thus reducing the need to travel a disproportionate distance for day-to-day shopping needs.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	Draft PPS4, PPS6
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS policies DPI, DP6, RDF1, W5, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO4, SO8, SO12, SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	11 - Accessibility, 14 - Economy, 15 – Leisure and Tourism, 16 – Town Centres
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS8, CS10, CS20

## CS18: HALTON LEA TOWN CENTRE

- 6.51 Halton Lea is one of the three main centres in Halton, joining Widnes as a Town Centre and playing a complementary role to nearby Runcorn Old Town centre. As a Town Centre with retail, community and leisure uses, as well as adjoining employment development, Halton Lea is an important centre for those living and working in Runcorn and as such, should be improved to better serve these groups and to attract new users.

### Preferred Policy Option CS18: Halton Lea Town Centre

Halton Lea will strengthen its role as the main retail centre within the town of Runcorn. It will attract increased custom from a wider geographical area whilst continuing to develop a complementary role with Runcorn Old Town centre. This will be achieved by:

#### i. Strengthening Uses at Halton Lea

- Improving the retail and leisure choice at Halton Lea, including seeking active uses for vacant units
- Prioritising the vacant East Lane site for use as a complementary extension to the existing centre
- Capitalising upon other redevelopment opportunities as they arise, including complementary employment uses on adjacent sites, where appropriate

#### ii. Improving Town Centre Circulation, Linkage and Accessibility

- Improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the centre from surrounding residential and commercial areas
- Enhancing public transport infrastructure facilities, including bus stations
- Improving external access by motor vehicle and increasing the visibility of the centre to capture additional passing trade
- Improving both the level and standard of parking for cyclists and motorcyclists and improve the quality of multi-storey vehicle parking facilities
- Reviewing and improving existing arrangements at ground level, creating a new gateway entrance and improving permeability.

#### iii. Connecting with Green Infrastructure

Enhancing the attraction and prominence of Town Park as a resource for local residents, employees and visitors, complementary to the role of the Town Centre

#### iv. Seeking Developer Contributions

Where appropriate, seeking developer contributions to improve the accessibility and amenity of the Town Centre and its associated facilities.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Halton Lea Town Centre

#### Seeking diversification of uses at Halton Lea

This approach would have looked to increase the types of uses occupying sites at Halton Lea, diversifying from a retail and leisure based focus. This approach would have undermined the role of the Town Centre as a main retail centre in Runcorn, and would have damaged commercial vitality in the area, and therefore was not taken forward.

## Justification / Explanation

- 6.52 The policy is needed to detail a preferred approach to the development of Halton Lea Town Centre over the plan period. This policy is directly linked to Preferred Policy Option CS17: A Network of Centres for Halton, and displays a similar level of detail to the content within Preferred Policy Options CS8: South Widnes and CS10: West Runcorn, both of which contain policies relating to the Borough's other centres of Widnes and Runcorn Old Town centre respectively.
- 6.53 The primary aim of the policy is to consolidate and strengthen the retail role of Halton Lea Town Centre and its complementary leisure uses, ensuring viability of the centre for use by the surrounding population and by visitors from a wider area. Seeking re-use of vacant units and appropriate expansion should ensure that the performance of Halton Lea is improved, allowing the centre to play an appropriate role within the retail hierarchy over the plan period. The policy also aims to tackle one of the major problems of the centre, namely accessibility and circulation, hence aiming to overcome permeability issues, particularly from the ground level. In addition, the policy seeks to connect the centre with a strategic part of the Green Infrastructure network, namely the Green Lung at Town Park, capitalising on opportunities to integrate the built environment and open green space.
- 6.54 The preferred policy option for Halton Lea Town Centre accords with national planning policy in that it develops a strategy for developing and strengthening a centre within the local area. It is also in accordance with regional and sub-regional policy, which promotes retail investment which is consistent with the scale and function of the centre and that does not undermine the role of any other centre or create unsustainable shopping patterns. It is supported by the evidence base in the form of the draft Halton Retail and Leisure Study 2009.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	Draft PPS4, PPS6
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DPI, DP6, RDF1, W5, LCR3
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO4, SO8, SO12, SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	I1 - Accessibility, I4 – Economy, I5 – Leisure and tourism, I6 – Town Centres
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS17

## **DELIVERING A VIBRANT ECONOMY AND ATTRACTIVE CENTRES**

- 6.55 The preferred policy options included within the vibrant economy and attractive centres theme will be supported by a range of LDF documents and policies. This will include the Site Allocations DPD, which will set out the precise boundaries of the areas to be protected for employment uses. In the interim period, the detailed boundaries shown on the Proposals Map within the Halton UDP will supplement the identified employment areas shown in figure 13 within Preferred Policy Option CS15: Safeguarding and Regenerating Existing Employment Areas. The Site Allocations DPD will also detail sites to be promoted for town centre uses and the proposed AAP for Widnes Town Centre which will identify specific sites in Widnes alongside a framework to enhance the Town Centre. Forthcoming SPDs detailing strategies for Runcorn Old Town centre and Halton Lea Town Centre will provide more detailed policy guidance for the development of these centres. The forthcoming SPD on Planning Obligations will provide further detail on the mechanism for securing Local Labour Agreements and work based training schemes. The policies for a vibrant economy and attractive town centres will also be supported by the Detailed Development Policy DPD.
- 6.56 Implementation of the preferred policies will be largely dependent on development management decisions through relevant planning applications, for example in deciding on appropriate town centre uses. There is an important role for Council functions, including economic development, town centre management, education, training and skill development in supporting and delivering the actions within the policies. The Council's partners in these service areas will also be extremely important in the delivery of the policies over the plan period. In maintaining the role of established employment areas, coordination with the Economic Development Service will be required to ensure that prospective investors are steered towards appropriate sites and areas within the Borough.
- 6.57 Ensuring town, district and neighbourhood centres maintain their appropriate roles and levels of development is a matter for Council wide strategy to address, with a particular focus on planning policy and the planning application process. Again, the role of town centre management will be an important one in delivering the vision for the centres and delivering environmental improvements. In addition, at Halton Lea, the centre's management company will be an important partner in ensuring that the aims and objectives for the consolidation of the centre and the delivery of increased accessibility and circulation can be achieved. The development of an approach for negotiating Local Labour Agreements and work based training will be developed in partnership with Halton People Into Jobs, a Council service offering information, advice and guidance on employment, learning and skills opportunities.
- 6.58 The policies by themselves do not generate the need for significant amounts of additional infrastructure. However, they are supportive of the Council's strategies to upgrade and remodel existing school infrastructure through both the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programme agendas. A Detailed Planning Brief was produced in 2009 to support the implementation of the Building Schools for the Future initiative in Halton, by setting out a framework for the redevelopment of relevant school sites. The policies are also supportive of the provision of new neighbourhood centres and other social infrastructure associated with the implementation of the strategies for the Borough's centres. This includes environmental improvements within the centres, including improved signage and

public transport infrastructure. Specific details of such schemes will be dealt with in town centre SPDs and the Widnes Town Centre AAP.

- 6.59 Ensuring the vibrancy and strength of Halton's economy, coupled with sustaining the attractiveness of its centres will be ongoing aims over the entire plan period. Maintaining the existing important employment areas in the Borough is of prime importance in retaining jobs within the Borough, and building upon the number currently being delivered. Any change in the policy approach for employment land will be informed by updated employment land and retail and leisure studies as part of the evolving evidence base for the LDF.



## 7. HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- 7.0 The Strategic Objectives of direct relevance to delivering Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities are SO1, SO8, SO9, SO10, SO11, SO16 and SO18.

### Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme

- 7.1 Halton's population has poorer than average health. There are problems relating to health inequalities, primary care provision and winter and summer mortality rates. Some particularly **prevalent health problems** include obesity and diabetes, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, cancers, alcohol abuse, depression and mental illness and smoking.
- 7.2 Halton residents should have excellent access to **health care provision** and a **healthy local environment** and the prospect of enjoying a **healthy, active lifestyle**.
- 7.3 Another important factor in the quality of life for Halton's residents is the **accessibility and connectivity of community services and facilities**. There is a need to build upon and improve access to a whole range of services and facilities across the Borough addressing and breaking down barriers that can cause social exclusion.
- 7.4 To create a socially inclusive environment the needs of **Halton's diverse communities** must be identified and addressed. This may include the needs stemming from social disadvantage, people with a disabilities, older people, children and young people and black and ethnic minority groups.
- 7.5 Ensuring **the safety of Halton's communities** is a fundamental concern for the Borough. To ensure a safer Halton there must be a commitment to reducing the risk levels from development with the potential to create major accidents, ensure that unsuitable development does not take place on or near to sites with the potential to create major accidents.
- 7.6 The reported effects of **climate change** include warmer summers and wetter winters, rising sea levels, increasing storm frequencies and a significant increase in flood risk. These **risks must be positively managed and mitigated** in Halton.
- 7.7 The planning process can potentially help to tackle local problems of **air, water, noise and light pollution** caused by development and ensure new housing and sensitive uses are not permitted where pollution levels are unacceptable and cannot be mitigated by design

### National and Regional Policy Context

- 7.8 The need to create and sustain **healthy environments** with opportunities for physical activity is reflected across policy documentation, as is the need to encourage the use of walking and cycling for short journeys, including commuting. The value of **open green space** and healthy, functional ecosystems are recognised as impacting positively upon local people's health and well-being.

- 7.9 The priority of ensuring **high quality, accessible health care facilities** is also highlighted across national and regional policy and guidance. Health centres should be located, where possible, in town, district or local centres and should maximise accessibility by sustainable travel options, as well as providing good emergency access. They should also be complementary to the mix of uses in such centres, and link with other community facilities where possible.
- 7.10 Regional policy emphasises the need to ensure that there is **provision for all members of the community** to access community services and facilities including health facilities, and that in planning for such provision, the views and needs of the local community should be taken into consideration and that particular attention should be paid to addressing spatial disparities particularly in areas which have the greatest needs. Regional policy also recommends that proposals and schemes, for all major developments and regeneration schemes and particularly for residential uses, **highlight the need** for community service and facilities provision from the outset.
- 7.11 **Promoting thriving communities** is a core message which can be achieved through recognising the diverse needs of all, promoting social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunity for all citizens.
- 7.12 The quality of the local environment, fear of crime and the social and economic vibrancy of their area can impact on people's health. National and Regional Planning Policy aims to contribute to the creation of a **safe, healthy and prosperous economy, environment and society**

#### **What you said in 2006 at Issues and Options Stage...**

- 7.13 The concept of **infrastructure supporting healthy lifestyles** was mentioned, including the promotion of walking and cycling as modes of local transport. The concept of healthier lifestyles being supported by the provision of sports and leisure facilities was also substantiated. **Natural greenspaces, trees and woodland and linking Green Infrastructure** were highlighted as being very important for the improvement of quality of life in terms of mental and physical health, social interaction, play and education.
- 7.14 The need to **deliver new, highly accessible health facilities** was mentioned, and the concept of ensuring that new residential development does not place undue strain on existing services was also supported. The potential use of **planning conditions** and legislation to create better environments for healthier living was mentioned.
- 7.15 Responses were also made concerning the accessibility of community services and facilities and supporting a range of provisions to cover all ages and needs in order to **avoid social exclusion** and to help **foster a stronger sense of community** across the Borough.
- 7.16 **Improving the natural and urban environment** within existing neighbourhoods was identified as being an effective way of making them a better place to live.
- 7.17 **Flooding, Air Quality, and Pollution** was not sufficiently addressed in the 2006 issues and options paper.

7.18 Taking the above goals, objectives, issues, policy context and comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for this theme:

**CS19:** Health and Well-Being

**CS20:** Community Services and Facilities

**CS21:** Inclusive Communities

**CS22:** Protecting Halton from Major Hazards

## **CSI9: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

- 7.19 Quality of life is heavily dependent on achieving and sustaining a good standard of health and well-being, helping to facilitate a long life with full social and economic participation. Poor health outcomes are a major issue for the people of Halton, and therefore it is essential that policies are put in place that tackle the underlying causes of the health problems afflicting the Borough and facilitate the provision of healthy lifestyles and healthy environments for all.

### **Preferred Policy Option CSI9: Health and Well-Being**

#### **i. Supporting Healthy Environments and Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles**

The Borough's residents, businesses and visitors will have access to a local environment which facilitates and encourages healthy lifestyles and ensures well-being for all, and includes:

- open spaces, sport and play facilities for formal and informal physical recreation, meeting the needs of all
- green and wooded areas, with active habitats and ecosystems, linked to waterside areas
- accessible and safe active travel routes for walking and cycling
- accessible culture and leisure facilities
- well designed places and spaces with sustainable, low carbon and adaptable buildings
- minimised levels of noise and air pollution

Opportunities to encourage healthy lifestyles among those living and working in Halton will be supported, including:

- partnership working to tackle and alleviate identified health problems
- improvements to the provision of, and access to, local shopping facilities offering fresh food and to opportunities for the growing of produce, and a presumption against the expansion of unhealthy eating options
- the dissemination of improved information about healthy lifestyles through Council service areas, including schools.

#### **ii. Provision of Health Care Facilities**

To ensure the provision of high quality health care facilities and services accessible to all, the Council will:

- work with its partners to pursue opportunities for improved provision including co-location of services with other community facilities.
- support the provision of new facilities in sustainable locations within the service centres identified in the retail hierarchy, particularly those located within or easily accessible to the Neighbourhood Priority Areas.
- support improved access to facilities by sustainable travel modes including to the hospitals and other facilities serving Halton but located outside of the Borough.
- seek developer contributions for the provision of new or improved facilities required to serve the needs of the development proposed.

#### **iii. Health Impact Assessments**

Applications for major development should be supported by a Health Impact Assessments identify the potential impacts of development on local health and well-being, to identify how

any negative impacts can be mitigated and how any positive impacts can be enhanced.

## **Alternative Policy Options Considered: Health and Well-Being**

### **Specific Policy for the Provision of Health Care Facilities**

This approach would have named and specified the location of all of the health care facilities to be provided in Halton over the plan period. This option was not taken forward as it is more appropriate for the Core Strategy to support and aid the delivery of the plans of the Council's health partners continually over the plan period, allowing for flexibility in provision. The existing plans of our health partners are detailed in the Infrastructure Plan.

### **No Policy for Health and Well-Being**

This option would have relied on other policies, plans and strategies to provide guidance on health and well-being. It was not considered to be appropriate for the Core Strategy to be without a policy on health and well-being, considering this is identified as the primary issue for the Council, the LSP and for the Borough's residents.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 7.20 Poor lifestyle choices are the underlying cause of many of the Borough's worst health results. The preferred option seeks to address the significant problem of health and well-being in Halton, emphasising the need to improve lifestyles in the Borough and supporting measures to tackle the causes of the health problems which detrimentally affect the Borough's residents. The policy also brings together actions from other policy areas within the Core Strategy to consolidate the priority being given to providing healthy environments which promote healthy living, physical activity, mental well-being and improved diets.
- 7.21 The policy supports the actions of the Council's health partners, to improve health services and facilities in Halton, making them responsive to community needs. By enhancing accessibility and ensuring that new services are provided where most needed, the approach ensures residents can readily access health care facilities.
- 7.22 Partnership working with health care agencies with the aim of tackling and / or alleviating some of the worst health problems in the Borough is an important component of the policy. The production of Health Impact Assessments for larger developments will ensure that development does not exacerbate health issues and that opportunities to address health issues are not missed.
- 7.23 The identification of health problems and priorities in Halton is drawn from the Halton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008, the NHS Health Profile for Halton 2008, the Halton and St.Helens NHS PCT Ambition for Health Strategy and Commissioning Strategic Plan and the Lancaster University Health Study. The preferred policy option also helps to deliver actions set out in various government white papers and health strategies, as well as delivering health priorities set out in national and regional planning guidance and at the local level.

## **Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:**

### **National Policy**

PPS1, PPS6, PPG13, PPG17, Public Health White Paper,

	Health and Social Care White Paper
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP7, LI, EM3, EM15, EM16
<b>Local Policy</b>	SCS, LTP2, Children and Young People's Plan, Halton Sports Strategy
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO9, SO10, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 8 – Adult participation in sport, NI 120 - All-age all cause mortality; NI 123 – 16+ current smoking rate prevalence, NI 139 – people over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise control to live independently, NI 142 – Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living, NI 150 – Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment.
<b>SA Objectives</b>	11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS5, CS20, CS21, CS24, CS26, CS30, CS33

## **CS20: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

7.24 Access to good quality community services and facilities makes an important contribution towards people's quality of life, throughout their lives. They support child development through play and socialisation, educational attainment and informal learning, adult sport and recreation, health and well-being, provide accommodation for community groups and community participation and support the active elderly as well as providing care and services for the less able and the infirm. Halton's range of community services and facilities are therefore an invaluable resource and should be responsive to the Borough's needs and easily accessible by all members of society.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS20: Community Services and Facilities**

#### **i. Provision of Community Services and Facilities**

The Council will work with its partners to ensure an adequate provision of community services and facilities supporting proposals for new and improved as well as the continued use of existing services and facilities.

Particular attention will be given to:

- retention of existing services and facilities, except where adequate compensatory provision of equal or greater value is to be provided elsewhere or where there is demonstrably insufficient demand to support its continuation;
- addressing identified unmet demand or deficiency;
- providing and improving services and facilities within identified Neighbourhood Priority Areas and other areas of identified need;
- ensuring community services and facilities are designed to be accessible by all members of society; and
- ensuring that the locations of community services and facilities are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

#### **ii. "Community Hubs"**

The Council and its partners will support and encourage "community hubs" where complementary community services and facilities are co-located either on one site or in close proximity focusing a range of services and facilities in a more sustainable and accessible way that addresses and is flexible to the changing needs of local communities.

#### **iii. New Development**

New development, and in particular residential development, should be located in areas served by a range of existing local community services and facilities easily accessible via sustainable transport options including cycling or on foot.

Proposals that create or exacerbate local service deficiencies will be required where appropriate to make contributions towards improved or additional provision to meet anticipated demands arising from the development.

## **Alternative Policy Options Considered: Community Services and Facilities**

### **Location Specific Community Services and Facilities Policy**

This policy approach would identify locations where current or forecast deficiencies require new provision or improvements to existing services and facilities including potential locations for 'community hubs'. This approach however would be very unwieldy in trying to specify targets and deficiencies for the full range of community services would not be adaptable to changing circumstances and requirements across the Borough and over the full life of the plan.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 7.25 All members of the population should have access to good quality community services and facilities including:
- Schools, colleges and other education and training facilities
  - Community centres, young people's centres and child care centres
  - Doctor's surgeries, medical centres, hospitals and health centres
  - Sport and recreation facilities
  - Parks, play areas and other green and open spaces
  - Libraries
  - Places of worship
  - Police, fire and ambulance services
- 7.26 To achieve this, the preferred policy option seeks to ensure adequate provision of community services and facilities across the Borough. The Council will work with its partners to identify appropriate service standards and seek to identify and address any shortfalls relative to the needs of the community.
- 7.27 Particular attention will be given to the Neighbourhood Priority Areas where there is a fundamental need to reduce social disparities by improving the health and welfare of residents, tackling poverty and boosting contributions to economic activity in accordance with Preferred Policy Option CS5: Neighbourhood Priority Areas.
- 7.28 The preferred policy also emphasises the importance of ensuring community services and facilities are accessible by all members of society and by a range of sustainable transport options, including walking and cycling.
- 7.29 The second part of the preferred policy approach supports and encourages opportunities for the co-location of complementary community services and facilities in 'community hubs'. The concept of 'community hubs' seeks to ensure that services and facilities are sustainable, support innovation in service delivery, are efficient and ultimately result in a focus of community activity.
- 7.30 Community hubs may emerge around the Neighbourhood Priority Areas where there may be a greater community need for revised or additional service delivery / access points.



7.31 The third element of the preferred policy relates to ensuring that new development has regard to community need for services and facilities. Developments should therefore be located where services and facilities are easily accessible for all members of society. The approach will also ensure that new development, where it is appropriate, makes contributions towards improvements or additional provision of community services and facilities forming an important part of the Borough's social infrastructure. Developer contributions will be sought in accordance with preferred policy CS33: Infrastructure Provision and the forthcoming Planning Obligations SPD.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3, PPG13, CLG, Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper (2006),
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policy L1: Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural and Education Services Provision
<b>Local Policy</b>	SCS, LTP2
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO8, SO10, SO16, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 8 – Adult participation in sport, NI 120 - All-age all cause mortality, NI 123 – 16+ current smoking rate prevalence, NI 124 – people with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition, NI 139 – people over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise control to live independently, NI 142 – Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living, NI 150 – Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment, NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling
<b>SA Objectives</b>	11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health, 16 – Town Centres, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS3, CS5, CS17, CS19, CS21, CS30, CS32, CS33

## CS21: INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

7.32 Positive measures should be encouraged which support the creation of a safe, and accessible physical and social environment in which discrimination has no part and where everyone can achieve their full potential.

### Preferred Policy Option CS21: Inclusive Communities

Development proposals which help to create a socially inclusive environment meeting the current and future needs of all sections of society will be encouraged and supported. In particular, development proposals should have regard to the different needs of groups including:

- people with a disability;
- an ageing population;
- black and ethnic minority groups;
- children and young people; and,
- communities within the Neighbourhood Priority Areas;

### Alternative Policy Options Considered: Inclusive Communities

#### No Policy for Inclusive Communities

This option would have no policy relating to inclusive communities in Halton, however this would fail to emphasise the importance of an inclusive environment or the role of spatial planning in ensuring development in Halton considers the needs of all members of society.

### Justification / Explanation

7.33 National and regional policy encourages the creation of socially inclusive communities by ensuring that the social fabric of communities is considered and the diverse needs of these communities are taken into account. Accordingly the preferred policy option requires development proposals to fully consider the diverse needs of Halton’s residents and communities, and to respond positively to them so that unnecessary barriers and exclusions are broken down. By doing so, development can contribute to improving individuals quality of life and the creation of sustainable and inclusive communities.

7.34 Possible ways for development to respond to the needs of Halton’s residents and communities include: improving access to health services and facilities; ensuring residential developments are adaptable and flexible for all members of society; ensure safe and secure environments through reducing the risk and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; and, improving opportunities to access continued education, training and work based learning opportunities in the Borough.

### Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:

<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3, PPG13, Strong and Prosperous Communities
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	White Paper (2006),
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policy LI: Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural and Education Services Provision Northwest Equality and Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (NWDA, 2006)
<b>Local Policy</b>	SCS, Halton Children and Young Peoples Plan (2006), Halton's Housing Strategy (2008/09-2010/11)
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO2, SO7, SO10, SO9, SO11
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Children and Young People in Halton, Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 8 – Adult participation in sport; NI 120, All-age all cause mortality; NI 123 – 16+ current smoking rate prevalence, NI 124 – people with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition, NI 139 – people over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise control to live independently, NI 142 – Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living, NI 150 – Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment, NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling
<b>SA Objectives</b>	10 – Housing, 11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS5, CS11, CS14, CS16, CS19, CS20, CS28, CS30, CS33

## **CS22: PROTECTING HALTON FROM MAJOR HAZARDS**

- 7.35 Halton contains or is affected by a number of areas, potentially posing a threat to wider community safety in the event of a major accident. These include facilities identified under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (Planning) Regulations 1999 (known as COMAH sites), major pipelines and Liverpool John Lennon Airport, where a Public Safety Zone (PSZ) covering the routes taken by aircraft approaching or leaving the airport extends from the runway into Halton.
- 7.36 The COMAH sites and the airport include major employers that make a substantial contribution to the local and regional economies, therefore it is important to ensure that risks to the wider public from their operation are minimised by prohibiting inappropriate development within prescribed areas affected by elevated risk levels. These sites and the associated consultation zones are identified in the Planning for Risk SPD.
- 7.37 Flooding events also present a major potential risk to person and property. To minimise this, development should not usually be allowed in areas known to be at risk of flooding.
- 7.38 CS22: Protecting Halton From Major Hazards aims to make a significant contribution to making Halton a safer place to live work and visit by protecting people and the environment from the consequences of natural or other forces, such as flooding, hazardous activities and pollution.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS22: Protecting Halton from Major Hazards**

#### **i. Safety from Major Hazards**

Development proposals will be expected to:

- Ensure that risk levels from existing installations or facilities with the potential to create major accidents are recognised and that development proposals that increase risk levels do not take place on or near such sites.
- Seek to decrease wider off-site public safety risk levels and minimise the risk wherever practicable.

#### **ii. Flooding**

All development will be required to demonstrate that it does not result in unacceptable flood risk or drainage problems and is compliant with guidance set out in PPS 25 and the Water Framework Directive. All new development will be required to

- Have regard to the Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Surface Water Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, Catchment Flood Management Plans and Water Company Asset Management Plans;
- Be directed away from flood risk areas where possible;
- Ensure that mitigation measures are taken to protect developments which take place within flood risk areas through the use of developer contributions;
- Minimise the impact of development on surface water run-off and encourage the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

### iii. Pollution

Proposals will be encouraged which ensure that development does not result in unacceptable levels of pollution (including air, odour, water, ground, noise and light) through its location, design, construction and operation. Where practicable any potential pollution should be minimised through good design.

### Alternative Policy Options Considered: Adopting the Health and Safety Executive Consultation Zones

The national Health and Safety Executive (HSE) utilises national standards to assess potential risk from hazardous installations which Halton could apply. However, this does not properly or adequately reflect the legacy of Halton's industrial development and importance of our chemical industry. Lengthy research commissioned by the Council with the full involvement of the HSE has informed the development of specific policies appropriate to Halton's circumstances.

#### Justification / Explanation

- 7.39 This preferred policy option seeks to deal with actual or potential conflicts between sources of risk, such as potentially hazardous industrial installations or flooding, and surrounding land uses and the safety of the wider communities.
- 7.40 The Halton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (endorsed by the Environment Agency) was finalised October 2007 and provides a detailed and robust assessment of the extent and nature of flood risk in Halton. This provides the key source of information to ensure that future development does take place in areas at risk of flooding, or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Any development proposal in a sensitive area will need to be supported by a suitable Flood Risk Assessment.
- 7.41 The preferred policy option recognises the significance of a range of potential pollution which can arise from development and establishes the principle of minimising pollution through the planning process with the ultimate aim of achieving no net increase in pollution through development. The policy option recognises the importance of ensuring that future development does not result in any further deterioration of air and water quality and where possible, results in an improvement in overall quality.
- 7.42 The preferred policy is consistent with national policy and takes into account policies and guidance at the regional and local level which recognise the importance of providing a safe environment for Halton's communities. The policy is also consistent with the local evidence base including the Halton strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

#### Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:

National Policy	PPS1, PPS23 , PPG24 , PPG25
Regional Policy	Policy DP7, DP9, EM2, EM5
Local Policy	LTP2, Catchment Food Management Plan - River

	Mersey, River Weaver and River Gowy; Water Cycle Study, Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy, The Lower Mersey and Alt Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO11, SO12, SO15
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 186 – Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area, NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	1 – Built Environment and Landscape, 3 – Water Quality, 4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 5 – Flood Risk, 8 – Air Quality, 12 – Health, 14 – Economy
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10 CS23, CS24, CS26, CS27

## **DELIVERING HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

- 7.43 The policy approaches included within the Healthy, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities theme will be supported by a range of LDF documents and policies to ensure delivery, including; the Planning Obligations SPD, which will detail the contributions required from developers to ensure sufficient community services and facilities provision; the Provision of Open Space SPD, which will set guidelines for the provision of urban green space, including walking and cycling routes, and in terms of Protecting Halton from Major Hazards, the Planning for Risk SPD. All of the preferred policies will also be supported by the Detailed Development Policy DPD.
- 7.44 In terms of additional infrastructure, the policy approaches in this theme will generate the need for additional social infrastructure especially in relation to community services and facilities, including health care facilities, and supports the development of community hubs. Additional physical infrastructure may also be required to ensure access to community services and facilities. This infrastructure will be required in conjunction with individual development applications, and where particular community needs dictate. In some cases, it will be appropriate for developers to provide social and health infrastructure and/or contribute to its provision, as detailed in the preferred policies and within CS33: Infrastructure Provision.
- 7.45 Ensuring the delivery and implementation of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities in Halton will require joint working between the Council, its partners (including Halton Strategic Partnership), the community and voluntary sector, health providers (including the Primary Care Trust), service providers and private sector developers. There is an important role for regulatory agencies such as the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive in the implementation of these policies, in conjunction with Council functions. Cross boundary working with neighbouring authorities will also be vital in terms of ensuring that more sustainable transport linkages to enable access to health facilities outside of the Borough and the appropriate use of other social infrastructure facilities in surrounding areas.
- 7.46 The principles outlined in the preferred policy options within this theme are appropriate for implementation over the Core Strategy plan period, particularly those relating to actions to support health improvements and social inclusion. However, it will be important to reflect on the changing social situations in Halton, whether these relate to increased risk to communities of flooding, due to climate change, or to a changing demographic make up of the population.

## 8. A HIGH QUALITY BUILT AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT

- 8.0 The Strategic Objectives of direct relevance to delivering a high quality built and green environment are SO1, SO4, SO8, SO9, SO12, SO13, SO14 and SO15 also of relevance are SO10, SO11, SO16 and SO18.

### Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme

- 8.1 Halton's places and spaces should have their own **character**, be well related to their **context** and be able to **adapt** to changing social, technological and climatic conditions. It is therefore imperative to ensure the **highest quality of design and sustainability** to create attractive, more sustainable places where people want to live, work and play.
- 8.2 **Residential developments** should be appropriate to their context and take full advantage of opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. **Industrial and commercial developments** should create attractive locations for a range of businesses that value a quality environment.
- 8.3 The Borough's **public places and spaces** must be safe, secure and ultimately provide a high quality environment for all members of society.
- 8.4 Greenhouse gas emissions including carbon dioxide are leading to global warming and changed to the climate. There must be a commitment to **reducing carbon emissions** by reducing the demand for energy, incorporating energy efficiency into development design and increasing renewable energy generation.
- 8.5 Halton has a number of positive assets including its **historic and natural environment**, waterfronts, a number of landmark buildings and important views. Opportunities should be taken to benefit from and **contribute positively to these assets**.
- 8.6 **Halton's Green Infrastructure** provides positive opportunities and challenges for building sustainable communities, ensuring economic and social regeneration, adapting to climate change, improving the quality of the local environment, contributing to the health and well-being of Halton's residents, visitors and workforce and integrated land and water management.
- 8.7 Halton has a legacy of **contaminated land** which imposes a strong constraint to development and is a wasted land resource this must be addressed in order to achieve a high quality built and green environment.

### National and Regional Policy Context

- 8.8 National and regional policy and guidance emphasises the importance of creating **high quality environments that are well designed and sustainable** where people want to live, work and play.
- 8.9 To ensure sustainable development the requirement to **reduce carbon emissions** and **integrate climate change considerations** into all spatial planning concerns is significantly strengthened through national and regional policy. **Exemplar**



**projects** which incorporate energy efficiency, low carbon development and climate change adaptation measures are also supported through good practice guidance.

- 8.10 As part of achieving higher standards of design and ensuring sustainable development, national and regional policy concerning the historic and natural environment seeks to ensure that areas of heritage, biological and geological value are positively **conserved, managed and enhanced**.
- 8.11 National and regional policy highlights and supports the multiple functions and benefits of **green infrastructure** including its important recreational resource and promotes the **sustainable use of natural land resources and bringing contaminated land back into productive use**.

#### **What you said in 2006 at Issues and Options Stage...**

- 8.12 There was wide support for the inclusion of a policy dealing with **high quality and locally distinctive design** in the Borough.
- 8.13 Requirements for sustainable design were supported and seen as a priority for the Council to demonstrate its 'green' vision and **actively promote sustainable development**.
- 8.14 The **role and importance of the historic environment** and its contribution to sustainable development was seen not to be sufficiently addressed in the 2006 issues and options paper.
- 8.15 The **quantity and quality of the natural environment** and bringing **contaminated land back into beneficial** use was widely supported.
- 8.16 Taking the above comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for this theme:

**CS23:** High Quality Design

**CS24:** Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development

**CS25:** Conserve, Manage and Enhance

**CS26:** Green Infrastructure

**CS27:** Contaminated Land

## CS23: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

- 8.17 The design of places and spaces can have a profound effect on the way that we live, how we understand an area, the way that we treat an area and the way that we move through it. It is therefore crucial for development design to be of a high quality, build upon an areas character, be adaptable to changing situations, and provide safe, healthy and accessible environments for all members of society.

### Preferred Policy Option CS23: High Quality Design

Proposals that are consistent with the following design principles will be supported.

Development proposals, where applicable, will be expected to:

- provide attractive and well designed residential, commercial and industrial developments appropriate to it's setting;
- enhance and reinforce positive elements of an areas character contributing to a 'sense of place', including the incorporation of public art where appropriate;
- respect and respond positively to their setting, including important views and vistas, landmark buildings, features and focal points that have been identified in a proper context appraisal;
- be flexible and adaptable to respond to future social, technological and economic needs of the Borough;
- promote safe and secure environments through the inclusion of measures to address crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- create public spaces which are attractive, promote active lifestyles and work effectively for all members of society;
- incorporate appropriate landscape schemes into development designs, integrating local habitats and biodiversity;
- provide safe, secure and accessible routes for all members of society, with particular emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport;
- be well integrated and connected with existing development; and,
- be designed with future management and maintenance in mind.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: High Quality Design

#### Detailed Design Principles Policy

This policy would set out detailed criteria in order for development to meet the required principles for high quality design in the Borough. However, a highly detailed policy in the Core

Strategy would be restrictive, not allowing design to adapt to changing circumstances or different locations across the Borough. This would also restrict more innovative design solutions.

### Justification / Explanation

- 8.18 The preferred policy option establishes the fundamental need for high quality design for all development in Halton with the aim of creating high quality environments where people want to live, work and play. This reflects national and regional policy and guidance which puts good design at the centre of delivering sustainable communities and a high quality environment.
- 8.19 In order to adhere to a number of these design principles the preferred policy option will require development proposals to use and have a good understanding of national and regional guidance and principles. This will include publications and documents from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Homes and Community Agency (HCA) and English Heritage, alongside national standards for instance the 'Building for Life' standard, to ensure that housing designs are adaptable and accessible, and the use of the 'Secured by Design' principles which focuses on crime prevention through development design for homes and commercial premises.
- 8.20 In addition to these key design principles, and where appropriate, development in the Borough will be expected to demonstrate through its design, construction and lifetime, that it would achieve the required sustainability standards, reduce carbon emissions and help to manage and mitigate the risks of climate change in accordance with Preferred Policy Option CS24: Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3, PPS6, PPS7, Planning for a Sustainable Future (2007)
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: DPI, DP2, DP7
<b>Local Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO12, SO13, SO1, SO3, SO4, SO8, SO16, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 154 – Net additional homes provided NI 17 – Perceptions of anti-social behaviour NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	1 – Built Environment and Landscape, 2 – Biodiversity, 11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health, 16 – Town Centres, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS5, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS14, CS20, CS21, CS24, CS25, CS32

## CS24: SUSTAINABLE, LOW CARBON AND ADAPTABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 8.21 There is general scientific consensus that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are producing global warming leading to pronounced changes in the climate. All new development should therefore seek to minimise its contribution to further emissions and be designed, or be adaptable, to respond to the effects of climate change.

### Preferred Policy Option CS24: Sustainable, Low Carbon and Adaptable Development

All development will be required to demonstrate through its design, construction and lifetime, that it is sustainable and will mitigate and manage the risks of climate change through contributing to reductions in carbon emissions and ensuring development is adaptable to a changing climate.

#### i. Reducing Carbon Emissions

To contribute towards carbon emission reductions, all development proposals should comply with the following priorities in the energy hierarchy:

- 1) **Reduce the demand for energy:** Make the best use of solar energy, passive heating and cooling, natural light and natural ventilation.
- 2) **Use energy more efficiently:** Where possible, utilise technologies to use energy more efficiently, through measures such as enhanced insulation to improve thermal efficiency.
- 3) **Utilise energy from renewable sources:** Applications for 10 or more dwellings or in excess of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> (gross) will be required to source 10% or greater of their predicted energy usage from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, rising to at least 15% from April 2015, and at least 20% from April 2020\*.
- 4) **Use remaining fossil and other fuels cleanly and efficiently:** Where opportunities exist, development should connect to or incorporate Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems or equivalent.

#### ii. Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change

Development proposals should take account of the impacts of climate change and will be required to demonstrate, where appropriate, the incorporation of:

- Water efficiency and conservation measures including rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling systems.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and other measures to manage surface run-off including the use of permeable surfaces.
- Passive Solar Design Techniques.

#### iii. Achieving Sustainable Development

Development proposals should adhere to sustainable design principles. Proposals for new residential, commercial and industrial developments will be required, where appropriate, to meet the following standards\*:

Standard to be achieved from...	Residential Development to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes...	Commercial and Industrial Development to achieve BREEAM...
April 2011	Level 3	'Very Good' Standard
April 2013	Level 4	'Excellent' Standard
April 2016	Level 6 (zero carbon)	'Excellent' Standard

In addition to these sustainability standards the Council will expect the adoption of sustainable construction practices for all development including the recycling of materials.

#### iv. Emerging Practices

Environmental 'exemplar projects' utilising emerging technologies and innovative solutions will be supported where appropriate.

\*Subject to revision and confirmation as per the forthcoming Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study. See Alternative Policy Approaches Considered

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Sustainable, Low Carbon & Adaptable Development**

#### **Broad Sustainable Development Policy**

A broad sustainable design policy would explain the broad requirements for development in terms of sustainability standards, managing climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. However, a broad policy would not set out key requirements and targets that should be achieved and may result in uneven results with some developments achieving high levels of sustainability with others failing to show their commitment. This policy approach may also present issues in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

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**The following alternative policy approaches although currently discarded may potentially be amalgamated within the preferred policy option in response to the findings of the forthcoming Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study.**

#### **Local Criteria / Target Based Policy**

This approach would set out Halton specific criteria and targets relating to sustainable, low carbon and adaptable development. This would require a locally specific evidence base upon which the criteria and targets could be formed. This could allow, for instance, a different requirement to be set for certain areas or types of development. However, evidence to support this approach is currently not available.

#### **Challenging Criteria / Target Based Policy**

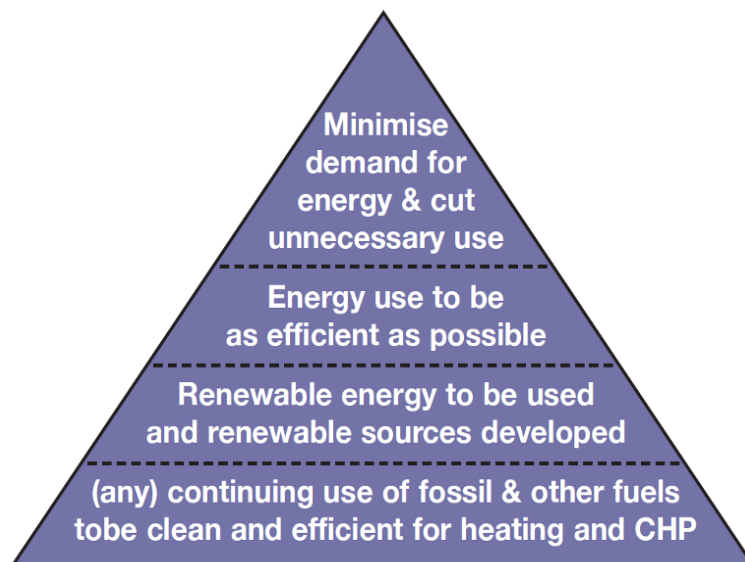
This policy approach would apply more challenging criteria and targets across the whole borough or raise/lower the thresholds. For instance this could require all residential

development to be built to code level 4 immediately, or reduce the minimum size threshold of developments to which the policy applies. This approach has been discarded as there is currently no evidence base to support it at the local level.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 8.22 Development should be designed to ensure a more sustainable Halton. The preferred policy option therefore recognises the importance of promoting sustainable development, contributing to carbon emission reductions and responding to existing and anticipated climate change risks.
- 8.23 In terms of reducing our carbon emissions the policy takes into consideration current UK legislation included within the Climate Change Act (2008) and the Planning and Energy Act (2008), which set legally binding targets to cut carbon emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050. This will require a commitment to reducing our energy use and increasing low carbon and renewable energy production.
- 8.24 The energy hierarchy as shown in Figure 14 offers an integrated approach to achieving this carbon reduction by setting priorities for sustainably managing energy demand and supply. The preferred policy will require proposals to ensure that the energy hierarchy is incorporated into development design through the development criteria relating to these four priorities.

**Figure 14: The Energy Hierarchy (adapted from NW Sustainable Energy Strategy)**



- 8.25 A higher renewable energy requirement than that included in the preferred policy may be sought, where appropriate, in accordance with the findings of the forthcoming Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study.
- 8.26 It should also be acknowledged that the Energy hierarchy does not allow trade offs to be made between the criteria. For instance developments built with a high level of energy efficiency cannot trade this for a reduced renewable requirement. However,

reducing the overall predicted energy requirement for a development will similarly reduce the amount of energy to be delivered from renewable sources.

- 8.27 Contributing to mitigating the effects of climate change through reducing carbon emissions is not our only challenge, adaptation measures must also be put in place. Climate change scenarios for the North West predict a rise in annual average temperatures, a decrease in summer rainfall and a rise in sea levels. Extreme weather events including flash floods and heatwaves are also likely to become more common. The preferred policy option therefore requires all new development to positively adapt to the risks of climate change through improved water efficiency and conservation techniques, managing surface run-off and controlling rising temperatures through passive design techniques.
- 8.28 To ensure the sustainability of developments, including the reduction of carbon emissions and climate change adaptation measures, the preferred policy option will require all residential, commercial and industrial developments to achieve the applicable sustainability standards.
- 8.29 For residential developments this is the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) which sets a national standard to guide all new developments through their design, construction and lifetime. The CSH sets individual 'sustainability ratings' covering performance across a number of sustainable design principles on a scale from 1 up to code level 6, which is in effect a zero-carbon home. To achieve sustainable development the preferred policy requires all new housing in the Borough to be built to level 3 as a minimum standard by 2010, level 4 by 2013 and level 6 by 2016.
- 8.30 In terms of non-residential development the Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method (BREEAM) remains the most applicable national standard for assessing environmental performance. The preferred policy therefore requires all new non-residential developments to be built to BREEAM 'very good' standard rising to 'excellent' from 2013.
- 8.31 It should be acknowledged that these standards may be subject to revision in accordance with the forthcoming Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Study, to ensure, where applicable, that the standards are locally specific to Halton Borough Council.
- 8.32 Finally, to encourage and promote sustainability standards in Halton, the preferred policy option encourages 'exemplar projects' utilising emerging technologies and innovative solutions which, over the plan period, are likely to become more widely available. This will be crucial in ensuring the Borough is an attractive environment for innovation and investment in sustainable development.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS 1, PPS Planning and Climate Change, PPS22, PPS25, Meeting the Energy Challenge (2007), Our Energy Future (2007), the draft UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2008), Climate Change Act (2008), the Energy Act (2008)
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: DPI, DP9, EM15, EM16, EM17, EM18 NW Charter on Climate Change (2006), NW Sustainable Energy Strategy (2006), Rising to the Challenge (2006)

<b>Local Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO12
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 186 – Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area NI 188 – Planning to adapt to climate change
<b>SA Objectives</b>	3 – Water, 4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 5 – Flood Risk, 6 – Energy Efficiency
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS23, CS28, CS29



## **CS25: CONSERVE, MANAGE AND ENHANCE**

- 8.33 Halton's historic and natural assets are not only of environmental value but provide us with a valuable source of social, economic, environmental and educational resources for all the borough's residents, visitors and businesses. These assets should therefore be conserved, managed and enhanced for current and future generations and to ensure a strong sense of place, enhance local distinctiveness and improve environmental quality.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS25: Conserve, Manage and Enhance**

#### **i. Conserve**

Development proposals must have due regard to, and where applicable adequately protect and preserve the borough's network of historic and natural assets including:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Areas of archaeological interest;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Historic parks and gardens;
- Buildings and structures of local architectural or historical interest;
- Sites of international importance including the Mersey Estuary 'Ramsar' site and Special Protection Area (SPA);
- Sites of national importance for biodiversity or geodiversity including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)
- Statutory and local areas of wildlife and ecological value including Local Wildlife Sites which include Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Ancient Woodland, veteran trees and habitats and species identified in the Halton Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP); and
- Areas of high landscape value as identified by the Halton Landscape Character Assessment 2009.

#### **ii. Manage**

The development and implementation of Management Plans, Action Plans and area appraisals for Halton's historic and environmental assets will be supported. Development proposals for such sites should therefore:

- incorporate appropriate management and maintenance into design schemes;
- improve site management and maintenance where possible; and
- employ replacement or compensatory measures to ensure that there is no net loss of environmental assets as a result of development.

#### **iii. Enhance**

Development should seek opportunities where appropriate to enhance the value of Halton's historic and natural assets through:

- ensuring high quality design based on a thorough understanding of the context, significance and distinctiveness of a site / surroundings;
- raising environmental and educational awareness;

- improving access where appropriate;
- encouraging schemes which support biodiversity and geodiversity; and,
- contributing towards the restoration and enhancement of existing sites.

## Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Conserve, Manage & Enhance

### Reliance on Other Guidance

This approach would rely solely on national and regional guidance for the protection, conservation and management of the Borough's historic and natural environment. This policy approach was discarded as this would fail to take into account important local circumstances, locally designated sites and features and would not emphasise the value of Halton's historic and natural environment for Halton's communities.

### Justification / Explanation

- 8.34 The preferred policy option highlights the importance of Halton's historic and natural environment and the Council's commitment to the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of these assets as a key aspect of achieving sustainable development and in accordance with international, national and regional guidance and legislation.
- 8.35 In terms of conserving Halton's historic and natural environment, statutory protected sites and species are afforded the highest level of protection. In addition to this, the preferred policy option gives a high priority to those that are locally significant and which provide an important source of environmental, social and economic benefits for the Borough. This includes buildings and structures of local architectural or historical interest, and areas of significant landscape character identified by Halton's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).
- 8.36 The preferred policy option also importantly emphasises the need to manage and enhance Halton's historic and natural environment. This will be crucial to ensure that sites, areas, habitats and species are able to adapt to changing circumstances and situations and to guarantee that their value is sustained and appreciated by generations to come.
- 8.37 The preferred policy therefore aims to ensure that all development will protect, respect and contribute positively to the Borough's historic and natural assets ensuring that they are positively safeguarded for the benefit of Halton's future.

Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:	
National Policy	PPS1, PPS9, PPS15, PPS16
Regional Policy	RSS Policies: DPI, DP7, EMI
Local Policy	Halton Natural Assets Strategy, Halton Biodiversity Action Plan
Strategic Objectives	SO12, SO13, SO14
SCS Priorities	Halton's Urban Renewal, A Safer Halton, A Healthy Halton
LAA Improvement Indicators	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area NI 186 – Per capital CO2 emissions in LA area NI 188 – Planning to adapt to climate change

<b>SA Objectives</b>	1 – Built Environment and Landscape, 2 – Biodiversity, 3 – Water Quality
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS23, CS26

## CS26: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 8.38 Green Infrastructure is a concept that seeks to properly value the multi-functional nature and benefits generated by the living environment. Green Infrastructure consists of large features such as parks, nature reserves and woodland; rivers, canals and ponds; informal open spaces and landscaping, wildlife corridors large hedgerows, woodland and individual trees. It is of importance providing health benefits through improved air quality, providing opportunities for physical activity and recreation and provides positive effects on mental health. It also contributes towards greenhouse gas absorption, can help reduce flooding and provide shade and cooling on hot days. Green infrastructure therefore contributes to achieving sustainability and the quality of life of Halton residents.

### Preferred Policy Option CS26: Green Infrastructure

#### i. Managing Green Infrastructure

In managing the Borough's Green Infrastructure, the following principles will be upheld:

- Recognition of the importance of Halton's Green Infrastructure, including the Green Belt, Green Lungs, designated environmental assets, veteran trees and woodlands, parks and open green spaces, allotments, coastline, waterways, ponds, the river Mersey Estuary and smaller incidental green spaces, in delivering local environmental, socio-economic and health benefits.
- Acknowledgement of the function of Halton's Green Infrastructure in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity levels in the Borough, particularly in areas recognised as being of specific value to habitat and wildlife conservation, and its function in mitigating and adapting to the effects of local pollution and climate change.
- Understanding of the important role of Green Infrastructure in providing an environment for leisure uses, including formal and informal recreation, sport and play and growing produce and hence its role in contributing to physical and mental well being.
- Promotion and enhancement of the connectivity of Green Infrastructure, including through the Greenway Network and walking and cycling sustainable transport routes, both within Halton and with the wider sub-region, including as part of the Regional Parks.
- Protection of linkages between Halton's Green Infrastructure network and the Borough's local communities, enhancing accessibility and functionality. Particular attention should be paid to enhancing accessibility to Green Infrastructure for residents of Halton's Neighbourhood Priority Areas and other disadvantaged groups.

#### ii. The Role of Green Lungs in the Green Infrastructure Network

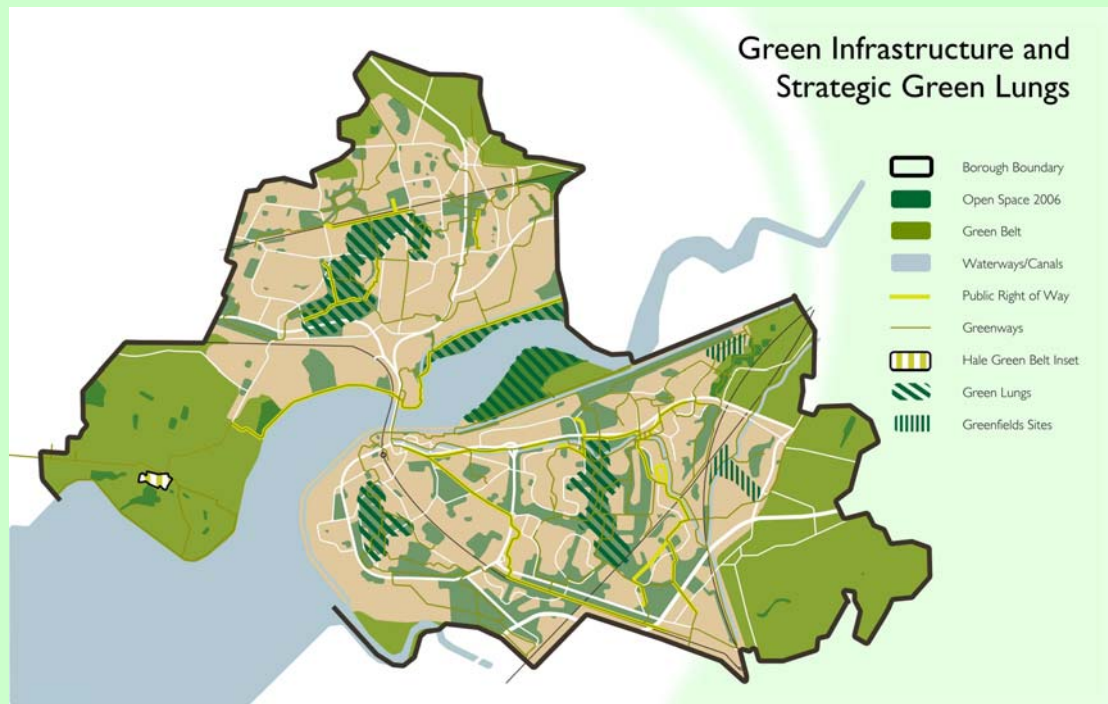
The strategic multifunctional role of the Borough's Green Lungs, including Town Park, Wigg Island and Runcorn Hill in Runcorn, Widnes Golf Course, Victoria Park and Widnes Wharf in Widnes, as key aspects in the Borough's Green Infrastructure will be recognised and supported. Efforts to enhance these assets will be focussed on improving accessibility where appropriate and on encouraging multifunctional use, delivering maximum benefits to those living in, working in or visiting Halton.

#### iii. Expanding and Improving Green Infrastructure

In order to expand and improve Halton's Green Infrastructure, the following principles will be established and supported:

- New development will provide open space to meet its needs in accordance with prescribed standards.
- Development will not sever existing linkages or create blockages existing Green Infrastructure, and where appropriate, should seek to create additional linkages between sites in Halton and to nearby sub-regional Green Infrastructure and environmental assets.

**Figure 15 Green Infrastructure and Strategic Green Lungs**



### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Green Infrastructure**

#### **Name Every Aspect of Green Infrastructure to be Protected**

This approach was not taken forward as it would not be practical to name every aspect of the multi-functional and wide-ranging Green Infrastructure network within the Core Strategy. This approach would also overlook the role of non-strategic, incidental green spaces which make a large contribution to the network, particularly in terms of community access and connectivity.

#### **Justification / Explanation**

8.39 The preferred policy option has been chosen to reflect that Green Infrastructure, which is highly accessible and well integrated into development, can improve people's health and sense of well-being and promote a sense of place and community identity. In recognising the multi-functionality of Green Infrastructure, the policy seeks to define the full range of sites and areas from internationally designated wildlife sites, to agricultural land, to playing pitches, all making important contributions to the Green Infrastructure provision. In conjunction with Policy CS25, the Borough's environmental assets will be identified, conserved, managed and enhanced while also contributing to Green Infrastructure in the Borough. In addition to this, other features of Halton's Green Infrastructure will be defined in the Site Allocations DPD and the Detailed Development Policy DPD, including a hierarchy of

parks and open spaces, the role of playing pitches and sports facilities and the developed and undeveloped coast.

- 8.40 In addition to the open spaces recognised as contributing to Green Infrastructure in the Borough, the importance of linear green spaces within Halton, classified as green corridors or greenways, is recognised, complementing other types of open space and contributing to the provision of cross-borough sustainable transport routes.
- 8.41 The policy approach seeks to utilise and capitalise upon the Borough’s waterways, recognising their important role in enhancing biodiversity and also providing linear cross-borough walking and cycling routes.
- 8.42 Both Runcorn and Widnes also include substantial strategic green space areas, labelled as Green Lungs on the Key Diagram and illustrated in figure 15 above. These areas provide multi-functional, highly attractive continuous swathes of Green Infrastructure that help to define and enhance the setting of the urban structure. Their central location and important role in the lives of Halton’s residents, including those living in some of the Borough’s Neighbourhood Priority Areas, means that the policy focuses on ensuring their increased use where appropriate and connectivity.
- 8.43 The Preferred Policy CS26 seeks to provide and enhance linkages to Green Infrastructure assets in neighbouring local authority areas and with the wider sub-region. This ensures that Halton’s Green Infrastructure can play a role in cross-boundary initiatives, including the Mersey Forest and Regional Parks.
- 8.44 The preferred policy recognises that it may not be possible to create new areas of strategically important Green Infrastructure within the existing urban area and within all new developments or make physical connections with existing assets. Therefore, where this is not possible the emphasis will be on securing developer contributions to maintain existing strategic Green Infrastructure resources and manage the provision of future supply.
- 8.45 Existing and new Green Infrastructure can play a complementary and positive role in helping to ameliorate the effects of climate change and local air pollution. This policy also brings together actions from other policy areas within the Core Strategy to consolidate the priority of providing healthy environments which promote healthy living, physical activity, mental well-being and improved diets.
- 8.46 The quantity and typologies of open space provision in Halton is assessed and documented in the Borough’s Open Space Study (2004 and as updated 2006), which provides the basis for calculations for shortfalls and excesses in different parts of Halton, in accordance with national standards as set out in PPG17. In addition the Provision of Open Space SPD and Planning Obligations SPD provide more detailed guidance.
- 8.47 Areas of the Green Infrastructure network making a particular contribution to the Halton’s landscape character are identified in the Borough’s Landscape Character Assessment (2009). Additionally, the policy supports the approach in the Borough’s National Assets Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) which seek to connect Local Wildlife Sites in a coherent network.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3, PPS9, PPG17, PPS22, PPS23, PPS25
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: DP7, RDF2, RDF3, RDF4, EM1, EM3, EM4,

	LI
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Natural Assets Strategy; Halton Biodiversity Action Plan; Halton Open Space Study; Halton Playing Pitch Strategy; Halton Sports Strategy; Halton Local Transport Plan; Rights of Way Improvement Plan; Access Plan
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO4, SO8, SO9, SO10, SO11, SO12, SO13, SO14 SO15, SO16 SO18.
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area NI 8 – Adult participation in sport NI 186 – Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling NI 188 – Planning to adapt to climate change
<b>SA Objectives</b>	1 – Built Environment and Landscape, 2 – Biodiversity, 3 – Water, 4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 5 – Flood Risk, 7 – Land Quality, 8 – Air Quality, 13 – Education, 14 – Economy, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS2, CS5, CS6, CS8, CS9, CS19 CS20 CS21, CS25 CS27, CS28, CS29, CS34

## CS27: CONTAMINATED LAND

- 8.48 Many sites in Halton have been contaminated by previous industrial use, often associated with traditional processes which are no longer used. Therefore contaminated land is an established issue of strategic importance in Halton. It is essential that policies are adopted which target this wasted land resource and bring it back into beneficial use.

### Preferred Policy Option CS27: Contaminated Land

In order to address the problems associated with contaminated land in Halton, the following actions will be supported:

- The assessment of all potentially contaminated land to discern the type and degree of its contamination
- The safe remediation of identified contaminated sites, particularly where a serious threat is potentially posed to public health or the local environment
- The promotion of derelict and disused contaminated sites in Halton for new uses, particularly within the Borough's Key Areas of Change
- Following remediation, the re-use of Halton's derelict contaminated land for beneficial after use, including both hard-end and soft-end uses as appropriate
- In association with new development and where appropriate, the seeking of developer contributions to fund the remediation of contaminated land and safe disposal or treatment of the contaminants where applicable.
- The advancement and employment of sustainable, innovative technologies and techniques for the remediation of contaminated land

Development that is likely to have an unacceptable effect on the condition and contamination levels of land in Halton will actively be discouraged.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Contaminated Land

#### No policy for Contaminated Land in the Core Strategy

This approach was not taken forwards as it does not sufficiently recognise the important problem of land contamination in Halton. Reliance on other policy and guidance would also not recognise the role of contaminated land in some of the Borough's key locations for change over the plan period.

#### Promoting Only One Type of End Use for Contaminated Land

The approach was not adopted because it was deemed to be too prescriptive about the role of contaminated land following its remediation. The approach of recognising that de-contaminated land can be used for both hard end and soft end uses recognises the contribution the land can make to the development of both the built and natural environment in Halton.

### Justification / Explanation

- 8.49 Contaminated Land is any piece of land that poses a real risk to health, property or the environment due to the nature and concentration of chemicals within it. It is



important to remember that in some cases a contaminant may be present, but may not be a significant risk, for example the contamination may be sealed beneath a thick concrete surface.

- 8.50 Due to the past development of Halton, including the legacy of its chemical industry, the Borough has a well-documented problem with contaminated land. In its dealing with the issue contaminated land over the last twenty years the Council has amassed specialist knowledge and experience in site surveys, reclamation engineering and delivering reclamation schemes. Traditional techniques to cap and stabilise or in some cases remove contamination have been employed. While the Borough has had some major successes with de-contamination and re-use of such land, there remain some parts of the Borough which are too contaminated to develop.
- 8.51 Many areas of contamination in Halton represent a wasted land resource, particularly with reference to their location in waterside areas or close to major regeneration areas, and are at risk from the effects of blighting. Hence, priority is given in Preferred Policy Option CS27 to focus de-contamination efforts in the Borough's Key Areas of Change where they are affected by contamination. The re-use of previously developed and contaminated land has the potential to link into other regional projects and partners, such as the development of a linked Green Infrastructure network.
- 8.52 Due to the impacts of climate change, areas of industrial and brownfield land currently not considered to be at risk of flooding may be at risk in the future. This means that some of the engineering solutions used to remediate contamination, may not be appropriate for use on the site in the future; hence the preferred policy promotes the use of new and innovative remediation technologies.
- 8.53 The preferred policy also seeks to ensure that any development does not contribute to or exacerbate the problems associated with contaminated land in the Borough, aiming for a reduction and ultimate eradication of the problem of contamination in Halton, securing a safe and clean environment for the development of the Borough.
- 8.54 Under legislation that came into force in 2000 (Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act), all Councils have a responsibility to actively search for and make safe contaminated land. This includes assessing all land in the Borough, both derelict and land currently in use. If the Council determines that a piece of land meets the definition of contaminated land it will formally record it as such and will then seek remediation, in accordance with the adopted Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy
- 8.55 The policy also takes into account policies and guidance at the national, regional and local level which recognise the importance of transforming areas of poor quality, where dereliction and contamination create unattractive environments in accordance with Halton's Contaminated Land Strategy.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS3, PPS9, PPS23, PPS25
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: DP4, DP7, EM2
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy, Halton Biodiversity Action Plan
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO6, SO11, SO15
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	2 – Biodiversity, 7 – Land Quality
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS6, CS7, CS9, CS19, CS22, CS26

## **DELIVERING A HIGH QUALITY BUILT AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.56 The preferred policies within this theme will be supported by a range of DPDs and SPDs within the LDF. This will importantly include the Detailed Development Policy DPD and Site Allocations DPD, but will also include a range of SPDs, notably the Design of New Residential Development SPD, the Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development SPD, the Provision of Open Space SPD and the Planning Obligations SPD. Various other Council-produced documents support and/or delivery aspects of this theme, including the Natural Assets Strategy, the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Contaminated Land Strategy, as well as historic environment-related documents such as Conservation Area Appraisals and listing schedules.
- 8.57 Development management processes will play an important role in the delivery of these preferred policies, through upholding design standards, ensuring provision of open space as part of new development and in ensuring connectivity within the Green Infrastructure network. The delivery of these policies will also require the provision of new infrastructure, notably Green Infrastructure in accordance with the guidelines set out in CS26, and where appropriate, the collection of developer contributions to meeting Green Infrastructure requirements of new development. It will be important to ensure that planning policy outcomes related to these preferred policies are monitored and reported annually, and that the work of the Council's service areas, including Landscapes and Environmental Health are involved in delivery.
- 8.58 Due to the wide ranging nature of this policy theme, delivering a high quality built and green environment will require the commitment of the Council, its partners and individual developers. This will involve partnership working between the Council, Halton Strategic Partnership, national agencies like English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency, the voluntary and community sector, and land owners such as infrastructure providers, transport bodies and private landowners. There should be a common vision and commitment to achieve effective cross-sector partnership working to ensure delivery on the ground of a high quality built and green environment.
- 8.59 It will be extremely important to uphold the policy principles outlined in this theme over the Core Strategy plan period and beyond, particularly where natural and historic environmental assets are being protected. Some aspects of the policies may benefit from review over the plan period, to ensure that they accurately reflect the up-to-date policy and guidance frameworks, particularly with regard to design standards and adaptable development and the provision of new techniques and technologies, for example for the remediation of contaminated land.

## 9. AN ACCESSIBLE HALTON

- 9.0 The Strategic Objectives of direct relevance to delivering An Accessible Halton are SO16 and SO17.

### **Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme**

- 9.1 The overall aim of increasing the proportion of journeys made by **sustainable modes**, including public transport, walking and cycling is important in Halton. In addition to the positive local environmental impacts this shift in modal use would have, the use of walking and cycling for local journeys presents opportunities to tackle some of the Borough's health problems.
- 9.2 There is a need to ensure high levels of **accessibility for all** to key locations and developments in the Borough, by reducing the need to travel and improving the delivery of local services and social opportunities, particularly in Halton's vulnerable areas, as well as improving the quality of Halton's transport system. This is an established local priority within the Council's Local Transport Plan and at the sub-regional level.
- 9.3 Halton has relatively **low levels of car ownership**, particularly in some of the Borough's vulnerable and deprived areas. This places emphasis on the need for a reliable public transport network, which must serve local needs.
- 9.4 Parts of the Borough suffer with **road congestion problems**, which have detrimental impacts on journey reliability, ease of access to key locations, road safety levels and the local environment. Congestion hotspots include the Silver Jubilee Bridge and Junction 12 of the M56, as well as local hotspots around key town centre locations. Recent progress has been made in improving Halton's record of **road safety**, with reductions in most casualty classes; however, there is still work to do.
- 9.5 The delivery of the **Mersey Gateway Priority Project** will provide a second strategic road crossing of the River Mersey in Halton, helping to alleviate cross-river congestion problems. The Project will enable the Silver Jubilee Bridge to cater for sustainable local cross River journeys, whilst providing a strategic link to the sub region and wider transport networks. The Project, in conjunction with the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy (MGSTS), will also facilitate a wide range of sustainable transport initiatives to increase sustainable connectivity within the Borough.
- 9.6 The Borough has several key **freight transportation facilities**, including the multimodal freight terminal at 3MG. There are established opportunities to expand Halton's role in freight transportation, particularly in rail and water-based modes, and to link to the wider sub-regional freight transportation network.
- 9.7 There are parts of the Borough with **disused or underused transportation infrastructure**, which could be brought back into full use to improve local accessibility and connectivity. This includes the underused rail routes such as the Halton Curve, parts of the Runcorn Busway, and freight facilities.

- 9.8 **Liverpool John Lennon Airport** is located at the boundary of Halton, with its public safety zone operating within the Borough. The Airport Master Plan details expansion proposals directly affecting Halton, including a new access road and runway extension.
- 9.9 The Council's adopted **Local Transport Plan (LTP2)** sets out the priorities for transport planning between 2006-07 and 2010-11; there is an opportunity for alignment of Core Strategy policy with this document.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

- 9.10 **Sustainable transport** is a major theme on the national and regional transport policy agenda. This focuses on promoting sustainable travel choices, including public transport, walking and cycling, protecting existing sustainable transport routes and services and working with partners to create continuous and attractive routes. Positive impacts of such policy include reducing carbon emissions, improving the local environment, improving opportunities for healthy lifestyles and reducing reliance on the private car.
- 9.11 National and regional policy also promotes **sustainable freight transportation**, including rail and water-based modes and associated multimodal facilities. Regional policy recognises the strategic role of the inter-modal freight terminal in Widnes, with access to the West Coast Main Line, and sets out criteria for the development of the site. Sub-regional guidance highlights the role of Halton's freight transportation infrastructure in the development of the Liverpool "SuperPort".
- 9.12 In addition to its emphasis on environmental sustainability, national and regional policy also focuses on the economic and social sustainability associated with highly accessible development. Hence, **reducing the need to travel** is an important objective, through actively managing urban growth in terms of accessibility. Regional policy specifically draws attention to the need to provide well **integrated transport networks**, supporting ease of movement between key locations. **Travel planning**, including the production of Travel Plans, is a recognised method of reducing the need to travel and promoting more sustainable methods, particularly where these are tied to new development or large organisations. Such Travel Plans should include objectives, outcomes, targets and indicators as well as a management plan and should explicitly involve the local authority, the developer/occupier and other interested parties.
- 9.13 National and regional policy also promotes **equality of transport opportunity** and increased mobility for all, recognising the importance of ensuring that key locations are highly accessible and marrying transport opportunity with local needs. Road safety is also highlighted as an important consideration.
- 9.14 **Physical transportation infrastructure**, including the road network, rail network and ports and waterways are highlighted as being worthy of maintenance and enhancement, particularly where this encourages the local use of sustainable modes, aids freight transportation and tackles congestion problems. The need for improved rail reliability and capacity is emphasised, as is the need for effective management of the highway network.
- 9.15 National and regional policy supports the **role of local airports**, highlighting the need for partnership working, and recognising the benefits associated with airport expansion for local employment and freight transportation. Both national and

regional policies support the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport, highlighting its important role in the Liverpool City Region and emphasising the need for it to grow to meet anticipated demand.

### **What you said in 2006 at Issues and Options Stage...**

- 9.16 The promotion of **sustainable transport** was supported, and the potential health benefits of walking and cycling were highlighted. The important role of green travel networks, including those forming part of the Borough's Green Infrastructure, was also emphasised. Respondents stated that development should be located in the most accessible and sustainable locations.
- 9.17 Support was given for the **Mersey Gateway Project**, but there were some concerns about environmental impacts associated with the scheme and contingency plans should construction be delayed.
- 9.18 Support was also given to the proposed expansion of **Liverpool John Lennon Airport**, but respondents voiced concern over potential local impacts.
- 9.19 There was recognition among responses of the potential offered by the Borough's **waterways**, including their potential role in multimodal freight transfer.
- 9.20 The need for more **railway stations** and the need to improve levels of accessibility to such facilities were highlighted.
- 9.21 Largely, support was given to complementary transport measures, including **travel planning**, as well as joint working with partners and other local authorities regarding transport issues.
- 9.22 Respondents drew attention to a lack of consideration for **car users** and the operation of the strategic road network.
- 9.23 Taking the above issues, policy context and comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for this theme:

**CS28:** Encouraging Sustainable Transport

**CS29:** Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions

**CS30:** Accessibility of New Development

**CS31:** Freight Transportation

**CS32:** Liverpool John Lennon Airport

## **CS28: ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

- 9.24 Increasing the proportion of passenger journeys made by sustainable modes including walking, cycling and public transport is an important priority. Advantages of using sustainable transport are many and varied, from reducing the number of private vehicles on the road and hence reducing congestion and exhaust emissions, to encouraging healthy lifestyles through walking and cycling routes, to facilitating access to key services and facilities for those without access to a car.
- 9.25 Halton already benefits from well-established sustainable facilities, including public transport infrastructure such as the Runcorn Busway, and walking and cycling routes, including the Greenway Network. However, these existing facilities need to be protected, adapted and enhanced to meet changing aspirations and to better encourage the use of sustainable modes.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS28: Encouraging Sustainable Transport**

#### **i. Halton Sustainable Transport Network**

The Halton Sustainable Transport Network will be protected as an integrated network of sustainable routes through the Borough, comprising both public transport routes and facilities and integrated walking and cycling routes. The network will connect neighbourhoods with key places of activity in the Borough, including town and district centres, neighbourhood centres and key employment centres, as well as education and recreation facilities.

The Halton Sustainable Transport Network will comprise the following:

- Halton Core Bus Network
- Halton Rapid Transit Network
- Railway routes and stations
- Bus interchanges and bus stops
- Halton Greenway Network
- Silver Jubilee Bridge public transport, walking and cycling route
- Other walking and cycling routes

#### **ii. Existing Halton Sustainable Transport Network Facilities**

Existing strategic sustainable transport facilities in Halton will be safeguarded, where appropriate, and will contribute to the Halton Sustainable Transport Network, including:

- Stations and interchanges
- The West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch) railway line; the Chester to Warrington railway line; the Liverpool to Manchester Trans-Pennine railway line; and the under-used Halton Curve (South-West Runcorn) railway line
- The Runcorn Busway and Bus Priority Routes
- The Greenway Network
- The Bridgewater Way, Mersey Way, Mersey Valley Timberland Trail and Trans Pennine Trail
- The Public Rights of Way and other access networks
- The Cycle network, including part of the National Cycle Network
- Waterways, including towpaths
- Links to sub-regionally and regionally significant sustainable transport routes and facilities

The following facilities will be safeguarded for potential future use within the Halton Sustainable Transport Network:

- Disused or underused facilities including the Ditton Station, the Shell Green (Ditton to Warrington) rail route and Runcorn Locks
- Sites which could be used for new or reinstated railway stations, bus interchanges or park and ride facilities

Existing sustainable transport schemes and services, travel planning and training, mobility schemes and travel information will be supported, where appropriate, to ensure their continued viability, and to maximise their potential to promote sustainable travel options.

### **iii. New Halton Sustainable Transport Network Facilities**

The following new sustainable transport facilities will be sought in Halton:

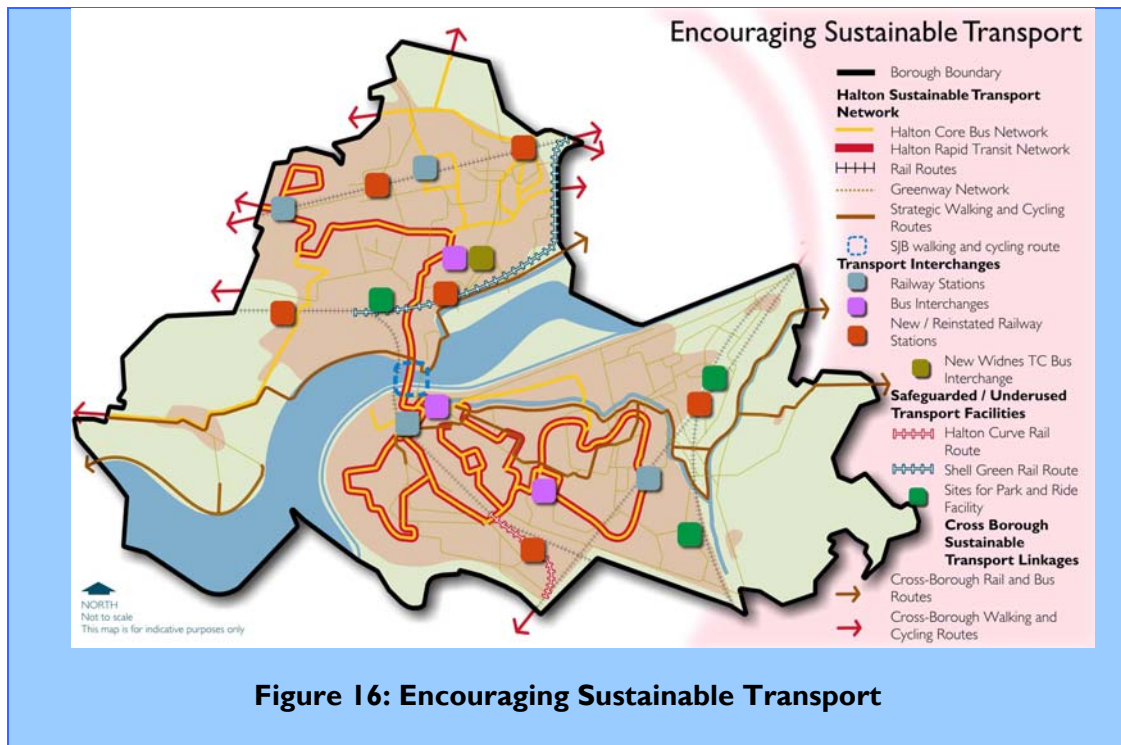
- A cross-river sustainable transport route prioritising public transport, walking and cycling on the Silver Jubilee Bridge, in association with the Mersey Gateway Priority Project
- Increased use of the Halton Curve rail route (South-West Runcorn) and reinstatement and re-use of the Shell Green (Ditton to Warrington) rail route
- Park and ride facilities in appropriate locations
- Reinstated or new railway stations at Beechwood, Daresbury, Ditton, Widnes South, Upton Rocks and Barrow's Green
- An improved bus station in central Widnes
- Introduction of public transport service improvements, including extension of Door2Door; community transport services; concessionary travel scheme for young people; a new mobility Smartcard
- Capacity for innovative transport technology, including the use of alternative fuels
- Re-opening of Runcorn Locks

Further sustainable transport improvements will be supported in locations where it is considered to be appropriate and where it can be demonstrated that they increase the choice of sustainable travel modes or that they practically link areas with the Halton Sustainable Transport Network. New sustainable transport facilities will be designed to maintain or improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and drivers. New travel information will be provided, where appropriate, in conjunction with any such new facilities.

### **iv. Supporting Other Plans and Strategies**

Existing transport plans and strategies affecting Halton and recognised or endorsed by the Council will be supported, including the adopted Local Transport Plan, the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy, and the transport plans of the Borough's neighbouring local authorities.





**Figure 16: Encouraging Sustainable Transport**

**Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Encouraging Sustainable Transport**

**Criteria-based Policy for the Safeguarding of Existing and Provision of New Sustainable Transport Facilities:**

A general policy for the provision of new sustainable transport facilities would have set out criteria which would have to be met in order to determine the transport facilities that are worthy of protection, and also the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to provide new sustainable transport facilities. This approach was not employed in isolation, as it did not allow for the naming of facilities considered to be of strategic importance in encouraging sustainable transport in the Borough, including those central to bus and rail movements, and the maintenance of walking and cycling access.

**Identification of All Sustainable Transport Facilities to be Safeguarded and Provided:**

This policy would have set out and mapped all of the sustainable transport facilities considered to be of value in Halton. This specific approach naming all facilities and infrastructure was not employed because it did not cater for the other, less strategic but still important facilities, including those not yet planned, but with potential to encourage sustainable transport in the Borough. Therefore, it was not practical to attempt to name all of the facilities. It was also considered to be inflexible and not forward-looking enough to set out the principles for the development of sustainable transport in Halton over the plan period.

**Justification / Explanation**

9.26 Preferred Policy Option CS28 has been chosen because it enables the protection of Halton’s sustainable transport facilities, recognising those of strategic significance. The policy also supports the provision of new sustainable transport infrastructure

and services, increasing the availability and efficiency of sustainable transport in Halton, particularly on cross-river routes. This is recognised in the policy’s support of the Mersey Gateway Project, including a focus on the utilisation of the Silver Jubilee Bridge for local cross-river journeys. In tying the existing and proposed facilities together in the Halton Sustainable Transport Network, the approach links key locations throughout the Borough and integrates facilities including interchanges and cross-river routes in a connected and coherent manner. The approach also incorporates initiatives such as bus priority routes, and walking and cycling routes, implemented by the Council or by other agencies. There is a particular role for the bus networks and the extensive Greenway Network in improving local-level connectivity. Overall, the policy seeks to enhance the sustainable travel options available in Halton to make journeys easier, healthier and more reliable for residents, businesses and visitors, hence delivering local mobility, supporting the local economy and enhancing the Borough’s environment. In addition, the policy seeks to support and increase transport options for those without access to a car.

- 9.27 Proposals for new transport interchanges are included in the policy, including an improved bus station in Widnes Town Centre and strategic plans for new or reinstated railway stations at Beechwood, Daresbury and Ditton. Long term aspirations for the re-opening of other railway stations, including those at Barrow’s Green, Upton Rocks and Southern Widnes are reflected in actions to safeguard these sites for railway stations. Similarly, the proposals for the increased use of the Halton Curve rail route and the safeguarding of the Shell Green Route reflect the importance of this underused and disused infrastructure.
- 9.28 In addition to the safeguarding of existing physical transportation infrastructure and planning for the provision of new physical facilities, the policy approach supports the continued provision of so-called “soft” measures, including travel planning and travel training and the provision of information about what sustainable travel options are available. Travel Plans are also highlighted as a method of reducing dependency on car travel and promoting the use of alternative modes, as well as promoting ways of working which reduce the need to travel by car. These measures will help to support the public in their use of existing and future networks, helping those living and working in Halton to access sustainable modes of transport within and across the Borough.
- 9.29 The approach within Preferred Policy Option CS28 is complementary to that within the Local Transport Plan and its Access Plan, and also capitalises on opportunities to address areas in need of new sustainable travel options. The approach complements the adopted Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy and affirms some of the approaches in this document, notably the concepts of the Halton Core Bus Network and the Halton Rapid Transit Network.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS1, PPS Climate Change, PPG13, TaSTS, DaSTS, The Future of Transport White Paper: Network to 2030, Delivering a Sustainable Railway White Paper
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP5, RT1, RT3, RT9
<b>Local Policy</b>	MGSTS, LTP2, LTP2 Access Plan, ROWIP
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO10, SO16, SO17
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Healthy Halton, Halton’s Urban Renewal, Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area, NI175: Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

<b>SA Objectives</b>	4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 8 – Air Quality, 11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS19, CS20, CS21, CS26, CS29, CS30, CS33

## **CS29: TACKLING CONGESTION, POLLUTION AND EMISSIONS**

- 9.30 Halton's road network plays a crucial role in the economic and social life of the Borough and the wider sub-region, supporting local, sub-regional and international passenger, goods and freight transportation. Combating congestion problems on the road network will help to improve accessibility and journey time reliability, supporting both local mobility and economic growth. Tackling transport-related pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, including CO<sub>2</sub>, is a closely related priority, focussing on reducing exhaust emissions from private vehicles and improving air quality in congested areas.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS29: Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions**

#### **i. Addressing Congestion Hotspots**

New road infrastructure will be provided as part of the Mersey Gateway Priority Project, which will provide a second road crossing of the River Mersey in Halton and will address cross-river road congestion. Before, during and after its construction, this project will be supported and opportunities to relieve congestion will be capitalised upon. As part of the Mersey Gateway Project, works to the M56 will be supported, with a particular focus on its junctions in Halton, with the aim of reducing congestion and increasing accessibility to the motorway.

Other efforts to tackle congestion in the Borough will be focussed on areas with developing congestion problems. Processes centred on joint working with partners and developers will be maintained, developing a coordinated approach to dealing with congestion and transport-related pollution, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that further congestion hotspots do not develop.

#### **ii. Securing and Managing Network Capacity**

The function of the principal road network in Halton, will be safeguarded, managed, maintained and improved to a high standard to ensure its continued efficient operation. The remainder of Halton's road network, including minor roads, will be safeguarded and improved where necessary.

New road infrastructure should be provided by the appropriate agency in locations where there is an identified need, particularly in association with major development within the Borough's Key Areas of Change. Where the need for new road infrastructure is attributable to the effects of development, developer contributions will be sought.

The employment of new and innovative technologies to help tackle congestion and effectively aid in traffic management will be supported, including the use of traffic signal software and Variable Message Signs. Developer contributions may be sought where negative impacts on the transport network are anticipated as a result of new development.

The role of Halton's road network within the sub-region and the wider North West region will be recognised, in particular its role in cross-river connectivity. Regard will be given to the plans of neighbouring local authorities and proposals that may have a specific impact on Halton's road network.

### iii. Reducing Traffic Arising

Methods aimed at reducing the number of private vehicles on Halton's roads will contribute to the minimisation of congestion, pollution and emissions in the Borough and will be supported. Measures may include:

- Support for development which reduces the need to travel, such as that located in central locations highly accessible by sustainable transport modes
- The promotion of job flexibility, for example through home working initiatives
- Encouragement of the use of environmentally friendly and sustainable alternatives to the use of the private car, particularly for short journeys
- The requirement for the production of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, in association with major new development and in accordance with the Council's adopted thresholds.

### iv. Managing Pollution and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The significant negative social and environmental consequences of the operation of the road network in Halton, including freight movements and including the effects of both pollutants and greenhouse gases, will be monitored and where appropriate, mitigation measures put into place. Monitoring will be focussed on areas with higher than average pollution levels, particularly within and near to the Borough's centres.

### v. Making Halton's Roads Safer

Road safety interventions will be supported, including physical infrastructure projects, local safety schemes, and education, training and publicity programmes. This will include initiatives and projects that promote and disseminate information about travel safety, particularly to children and young people. Developers will be required to provide safety audits of major new schemes.

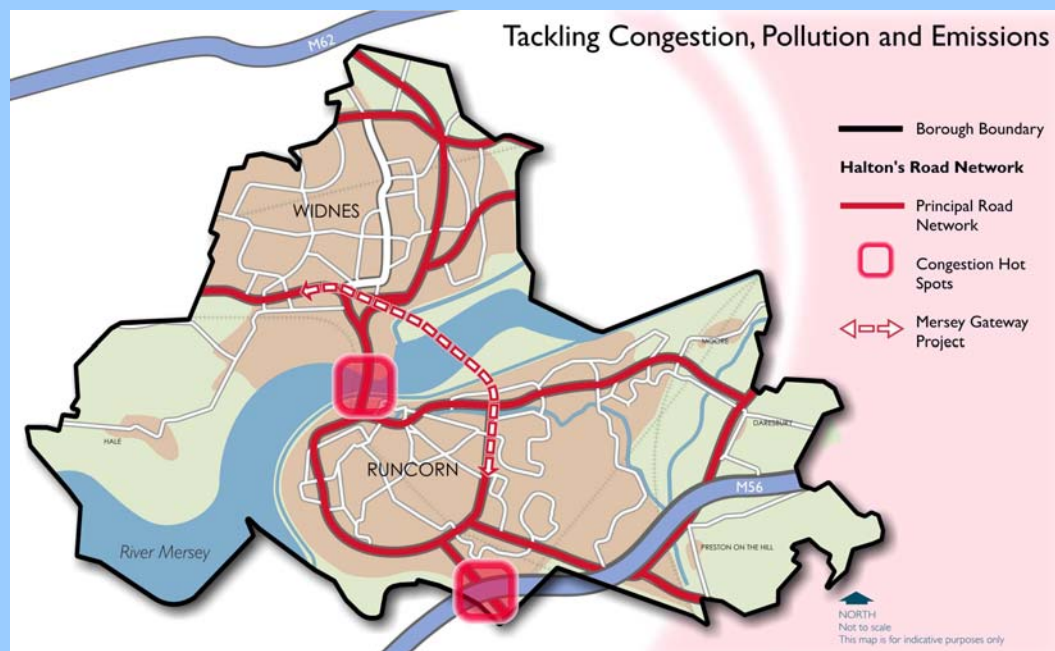


Figure 17: Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions

## **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Tackling Congestion, Pollution and Emissions**

### **Safeguarding all of the Existing Road Network in Halton**

This approach would have stated that all of the roads in Halton are worthy of strict protection from detrimental development. This approach was not employed, as it does not enable parts of the road infrastructure which are thought to be of strategic importance to be highlighted and it could be interpreted as a vehicle-user focussed policy, not sufficiently tackling the problem of congestion and related pollution, and overlooking the priority for the establishment of an effective sustainable transport system. The approach also lacks the flexibility to deal with the development of the road network to meet the objectives of the Core Strategy.

### **No Policy for Tackling Congestion and Pollution in the Core Strategy**

This approach would rely on existing mechanisms to deal with congestion and pollution, including the provision of new road infrastructure. As explained, congestion is a major problem in some parts of the Borough, and hence the option to have no policy for this matter was rejected. Having no policy would also not provide for road infrastructure which is well established as a vital component of ensuring accessibility for all, including by road-based public transport.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 9.31 Preferred Policy Option CS29 has been chosen because it supports efficient function and improvement of the road network in Halton and contributes to reducing congestion and associated local pollution. It contains measures to tackle congestion through effective management of the highway network (utilising new technology), to provide new road infrastructure where appropriate, and to promote alternatives to the use of the private car. The policy highlights areas with particular congestion difficulties, aiming to alleviate any acute problems negatively affecting the Borough's road network. It also supports the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Priority Project (in conjunction with Preferred Policy Option CS6) and its associated works aimed at overcoming congestion problems.
- 9.32 The approach recognises the strategic role played by Halton's road network in ensuring sub-regionally and regionally important connectivity, and particularly in providing routes across the River Mersey for road users. This connectivity helps to support continued economic development in the North West region, particularly for businesses relying on road based transportation for the movement of people and goods.
- 9.33 Preferred Policy Option CS29 also has an important component improving safety, having regard to both road safety risk of injury and accident, and also to the environmental risk which could be posed in terms of road-based pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In setting out measures to tackle these problems, the policy option recognises the potential negative impacts of road operation in Halton, seeking to proactively address these in conjunction with the Council's partners.
- 9.34 The approach within Preferred Policy Option CS29 addresses issues identified in the Local Transport Plan and in the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy. Other local evidence, including Air

Quality Management Data, confirms the need to tackle the Borough's localised congestion and pollution problems.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPSI, PPG13, Future of Transport White Paper
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP5, RT1, RT2, RT4, RT7, RT10
<b>Local Policy</b>	MGSTS, LTP2
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO16, SO17, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Safer Halton, Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area, NI186, Per capita CO2 emissions for the LA Area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 8 – Air Quality, 11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health, 14 – Economy, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS6, CS28, CS30, CS31, CS33



## **CS30: ACCESSIBILITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

- 9.35 The sustainability of new development is dependent upon levels and types of access to it, and hence development in Halton needs to be easily accessible, and capitalise on the Borough's transport links. For example, development likely to generate a lot of visits, such as retail or leisure facility, should be located where they will be well served by public transport. This type of good accessibility can be achieved through locating development in an established accessible place, close to various transport networks, or by improving and extending transport networks to meet development needs.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS30: Accessibility of New Development**

#### **i. Location of New Development**

New development should be located where possible on sites with high levels of accessibility. This includes, where appropriate, satisfactory access from the road network, as well as access by bus, rail, walking and cycling. New development which generates a large number of trips, particularly through journeys to work, should be located on sites in highly accessible locations, well served by public transport. Where appropriate, opportunities for development to be located so as to exploit the potential for linked trips, will be supported.

#### **ii. Accessibility of New Development**

New development in Halton should be easily accessible by a variety of modes of transportation and in particular for people with mobility difficulties. No development should be more than 400 metres walking distance from a bus stop or railway station.

Where it is anticipated that new development will impact negatively on the operation of the transportation network, including the road network, measures will be required to mitigate and minimise this impact. Measures that reduce the need to travel, for example through flexible working arrangements, and make the best use of existing sustainable transport facilities will be supported in principle. Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required for major new developments in accordance with the Council's adopted thresholds.

The design of new development must make provision for safe access by a variety of modes, including walking and cycling. Where applicable, connections to the Halton Sustainable Transport Network should be provided, and provision made for safe circulation routes within development sites.

#### **iii. Developer Contributions**

Developers will be required to contribute to the improvement and expansion of existing and, where appropriate, the provision of new sustainable transport facilities and road infrastructure, to service their new development. Where safety implications are envisaged off-site, developer contributions will be sought for remedial measures. Such measures should be in line with the recommendations of a robust Transport Assessment. Particular attention will be given to developments which are located more than 400m walking distance from a bus stop or railway station and are not adequately served by a bus service and cycling or walking facilities.

#### **v. Parking Facilities**



New parking facilities that are provided as part of new development will adhere to the Council's adopted parking standards. The establishment of working partnerships between the different providers of public car parking facilities will be encouraged.

### **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Accessibility of New Development**

#### **General Policy for Accessing New Development**

A general policy would establish the principle of ensuring that new development is accessible, and would briefly explain the priorities for ensuring the development could be reached by a variety of modes. A general policy supporting the provision of accessibility to new development has not been taken forward because the approach could result in uncertainty about what is considered to be sufficient access to the sustainable transport network, and hence a variable approach to accessibility throughout the Borough could be adopted.

#### **General Policy for Achieving Accessibility Standards without Developer Contributions**

This approach would set out accessibility standards but would not make direct reference to the role of developer contributions in ensuring that new development meets this standard, hence placing too great a degree of delivery responsibility on the Council and its role in developing the transportation network in Halton. The policy approach has not been taken forward because it would not be feasible to expect that standards could be achieved in all locations, particularly for larger developments, or those in less central locations, without seeking contributions from developers towards the provision of road and sustainable transport access to the development.

### **Justification / Explanation**

- 9.36 Preferred Policy Option CS30 has been chosen because it highlights and addresses the accessibility needs of new development. This includes the principles of first trying to ensure that new development is located in the most accessible location by a variety of modes, and second, if this is not possible, ensuring that provision for suitable access can be made. Focussing in particular on trip-generating development will aid in easing congestion and the policy could also have an impact on the Borough's town centres and key transport interchanges, consolidating these area's roles and increasing their vitality and vibrancy. Overall, the policy aims to ensure that new developments of all kinds will be accessible by a variety of modes of transport, including by road-based transport, by walking and cycling, and by public transport.
- 9.37 The policy establishes the principle of developers ensuring accessibility through the determination of the location of their development, or where this is not possible, contributing towards the provision of access by a variety of modes, most notably by public transport. The policy also refers to the established standards for parking provision in use by the Council (as set out in the RSS), and to the thresholds utilised to establish whether a development proposals should be subject to a Transport Assessment and Travel Plans (as set out in UDP Appendix I),

9.38 This approach supports the content of the Halton LTP2, and will help to tackle some of the established accessibility and congestion problems in the Borough.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPSI, PPG13
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP5, RT1, RT2, RT10
<b>Local Policy</b>	LTP2, LTP2 Access Plan
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO10, SO17, SO18
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI5: Overall satisfaction with area, NI175: Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
<b>SA Objectives</b>	4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 10 – Housing, 11 – Accessibility, 14 – Economy, 16 – Town Centres , 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS50, CS23, CS28, CS29

## CS31: FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

- 9.39 Halton is developing an increasingly important role as a sub-regional freight transport hub and accordingly, freight transportation is an important sector of Halton's economy. Halton's existing freight transportation facilities, as well as planned and potential new facilities, along with its road and rail network and links to other facilities outside of the Borough, need to be supported in order to capitalise on opportunities to deliver economic benefits in Halton.

### Preferred Policy Option CS31: Freight Transportation

Halton's strategic role in freight transportation, distribution and logistics will be supported. The function of the Borough's freight transportation infrastructure, including multimodal facilities utilising sustainable rail and waterborne modes, will be protected. Development should also support and contribute to the safe and where possible, environmentally friendly, operation of the Borough's freight transportation network.

The following freight transportation facilities in Halton will be safeguarded and enhanced:

- The regionally significant inter-modal freight terminal at 3MG and existing and potential transportation links to and from the site (in conjunction with Preferred Policy Option CS7: 3MG)
- Rail freight facilities, including: the West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch) railway line; the disused Ditton to Warrington (Shell Green) railway line; Runcorn Station to the Manchester Ship Canal ports railway line; the stretch of underused rail track known as the Halton Curve (the potential for future accommodation of rail freight interchanges both at and adjacent to these sites and routes will also be safeguarded)
- Road and rail links to other freight transportation facilities in or near to Halton including the Manchester Ship Canal, Halton's ports, the Port of Liverpool and Liverpool John Lennon Airport. This includes recognition of Halton's role in the development of the Liverpool "SuperPort"

Opportunities to build upon Halton's role in the freight transportation and distribution industries will be supported, where appropriate, including:

- Increased use of the Manchester Ship Canal for multimodal freight transportation;
- Building upon the role of the Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks) for multimodal freight transportation;
- Links to the freight transport facilities proposed as part of the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport, including multimodal freight transportation;
- Improvements to the freight capacity of the rail network in Halton; and
- Improvements to ancillary facilities, including provision of freight parking and drivers' amenities in appropriate locations, and improvements to signage
- Other freight transportation facilities and ancillary developments across the Borough.

In supporting and developing Halton's freight transportation network, opportunities to work in partnership with public and private sector agencies, including neighbouring local authorities, will be sought.

## **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Freight Transportation**

### **General Policy for the Protection of Existing Freight Transportation Facilities in Halton:**

A general policy to protect all of the facilities currently employed in freight transportation in Halton would have wholly protected all of the freight facilities in the Borough, implying that they are of equal significance. This approach was not employed because it did not allow for specific facilities of strategic importance to be identified for safeguarding and enhancement. It also did not allow for the identification of sites and land which should be safeguarded for their potential future use in freight transportation, and hence would not have fully met objectives to expand and enhance Halton's freight transportation and logistics industries.

### **Criteria-based Policy for the Provision of New Freight Transportation Facilities in Halton:**

This approach would have described criteria by which proposals for new facilities would be assessed. A criteria based policy for identifying where new freight transportation facilities should be located was not employed in isolation, because it did not identify locations of planned facilities, such as locations to be used for multimodal transfer, and hence did not fully recognise the importance of particular locations in the Borough in terms of strategic connectivity. Not naming the key freight transport facilities within the Core Strategy could have been interpreted as undermining their extremely important role.

### **No Policy for Freight Transportation in the Core Strategy:**

This approach would have relied on existing policy to provide guidance for the maintenance and development of the freight transportation sector in Halton. The option of having no policy for freight transportation was discounted because there is a need for a specific focus on the importance of freight facilities and distribution to the economy of Halton. There is also a need to have an additional policy approach, over and above those described by national and regional policy, to ensure that the freight transportation sector develops in a coordinated and connected way.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 9.40 Preferred Policy Option CS31 has been chosen to support Halton's freight transportation sector, and to ensure that the strategic facilities and development opportunities are protected to secure the sectors enhanced economic performance. The policy builds on Preferred Policy Option CS7: 3MG, naming the most important existing facilities, including transportation infrastructure and distribution and multimodal facilities, ensuring that the importance of their role is emphasised. It is particularly important to ensure that facilities and linkages which could be used or further exploited to expand Halton's freight and logistics sector are safeguarded for this purpose, and hence strategic opportunities to expand this role are stated. The policy also draws attention to the importance of multimodal freight transportation, increasing the flexibility of modes by which freight can be transferred, and supporting the sustainability agenda.
- 9.41 This approach relies on a variety of evidence, including the Regional Freight Strategy, RSS and Merseyside Freight Strategy, all of which highlight Halton's importance as a location for freight transportation and inter-modal freight transfer. The policy recognises the importance of working with partners in developing Halton's freight transportation functions, in particular recognising the cross-borough nature of freight transportation and potential impacts on neighbouring authorities.

- 9.42 The concept of encouraging sustainable, multimodal freight transportation is supported in national policy, including PPG13: Transport, The Future of Transport: A Network to 2030 White Paper and the Eddington Study.
- 9.43 Where the policy relates to 3MG, management and expansion plans are detailed in the 3MG Master Plan and associated SPD.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG13, Future of Transport White Paper: Network to 2030
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP4, RT1, RT4, RT6, RT7, RT8; RES; Regional Freight Strategy
<b>Local Policy</b>	LTP2, Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO5, SO16, SO17
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Urban Renewal, Employment Learning and Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 8 – Air Quality, 14 – Economy, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS6, CS7, CS29, CS33

## **CS32: LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT**

- 9.44 Although not directly located in Halton, the operation and planned expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport have important impacts for the Borough. The Borough is affected by ongoing aircraft movement, proposals for expansion of the Airport to the east, encroaching on Borough boundaries, and also in terms of flights providing national and international accessibility for residents and businesses.

### **Preferred Policy Option CS32: Liverpool John Lennon Airport**

#### **i. Airport Operation**

The operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport will be supported. New development in Halton will not impinge on the safe and effective operation the aircraft using the site, with applications for development exceeding height thresholds other specified notification criteria being referred to the appropriate aviation authority for comment. The restrictions associated with the designated Public Safety Zone associated with Airport, which affects part of Halton, will be upheld.

#### **ii. Airport Expansion**

The principle of expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport in line with its Master Plan will be generally supported, including proposals for a runway extension and new surface access road. Where appropriate, measures within the Airport Surface Access Strategy will also be supported, with a particular emphasis on improved access by sustainable transport modes.

Social and economic opportunities associated with Airport expansion, including those relating to job creation, increased national and international connectivity and expansion of the freight transportation and logistics sectors will be capitalised upon in Halton.

#### **iii. Monitoring and Mitigation**

Monitoring should be undertaken and mitigation sought for negative environmental and social impacts associated with the operation and expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport, including increased levels of noise, road traffic and localised pollution, loss of habitats and greenspace, and loss of quality in the built environment.

Opportunities to work jointly on proposals associated with Liverpool John Lennon Airport's expansion and its associated implications for Halton, including with Airport authorities, neighbouring local authorities and other partners, should be sought.

## **Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Liverpool John Lennon Airport**

### **General Policy Supporting the Ongoing Operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport:**

This approach would have focussed on ensuring that development in Halton would not detrimentally affect the operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport. A general policy was not chosen in isolation because it does not cater for the expansion plans for the Airport, and would not identify land or proposals in Halton which are particularly important to the success of the Airport. This approach is also relatively one-dimensional as would not recognise the importance of the Airport to Halton in terms of economic development and locational advantages, and overlooks the need to monitor and mitigate some of the environmental impacts of Airport operation over the plan period.

### **No Policy for Liverpool John Lennon Airport in the Core Strategy:**

This approach would result in the reliance on existing policies to deal with the issue of Liverpool John Lennon Airport, with no specific policy relating to the facility being featured within the Core Strategy. Liverpool John Lennon Airport is an important facility for Halton, particularly with reference to its expansion plans, which would directly affect the Borough, hence the option to have no policy for the Airport was rejected.

## **Justification / Explanation**

- 9.45 Preferred Policy Option CS32 has been selected to provide a policy approach to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the effects of its operation and expansion (in line with its 2007 Master Plan) on Halton. The Airport is valuable to Halton in terms of both economic and social potential, but there are also potentially important environmental impacts of its operation.
- 9.46 Opportunities to capitalise on improved transport connections and establish links to proposed logistics facilities to deliver new jobs in Halton are also recognised in the policy, helping to deliver economic benefits in Halton and making the Borough a more attractive location for businesses requiring proximity to air transport links. The need to work with partners, including neighbouring authorities and the Airport operator, in the delivery of expansion plans is also highlighted, seeking a joined-up approach to the process.
- 9.47 The evidence for this policy approach comes primarily from the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Master Plan, which details the Airport's expansion plans to 2030. The approach also relies on evidence provided by national and regional policy and studies, including notably the Future of Air Transport White Paper and the Regional Spatial Strategy, both of which prioritise the Airport's expansion.
- 9.48 The policy includes reference to environmental monitoring and mitigation which may be required to combat the negative effects of Airport operation, including notably, local noise pollution. The policy highlights the need to ensure that development in Halton does not prejudice the safe operation of the Airport, and also reflects the vital importance of the continual upholding of the Public Safety Zone, as it affects the Borough. The approach lends support to the expansion plans of the Airport, including proposals directly affecting Green Belt land in Halton for a new road and runway extension, and recognises the exceptional circumstances which such proposals bring (in accordance with Regional Policy).

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPG13, Future of Air Transport White Paper
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies DP4, RT5, RT7, LCRI, RES
<b>Local Policy</b>	LTP2
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO11, SO16, SO17
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Safer Halton, Urban Renewal, Employment Learning and Skills
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	11 – Accessibility, 14 – Economy, 15 – Leisure and Tourism, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS16, CS22, CS31, CS33



## DELIVERING AN ACCESSIBLE HALTON

- 9.49 Policies within this theme will be supported by various SPDs and DPDs, including the Detailed Development Policy DPD, Transport and Accessibility SPD, Planning Obligations SPD, Planning for Open Space SPD, Design of New Residential Development SPD and Planning for Risk SPD. The Transport and Accessibility SPD will play a particular role in clearly setting out the Council's adopted parking standards and in explaining in more detail the thresholds of development above which Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required, leading on from policy CS30. While some policy content relates to development management decisions, further detail of how the development management process will deal with matters related to transportation in Halton will be given in the Detailed Development Policy DPD. Where sites or broad locations for transport-related developments have been identified, these will be highlighted and developments described further in the Site Allocations DPD and/or in other site specific documents, including adopted and forthcoming location-based SPDs or the Widnes Town Centre AAP DPD. Further guidance on location-based proposals can also be found in Council-approved or third party master plans for these areas.
- 9.50 Policies CS28, 29 and 30 relate closely to measures outlined within the adopted Halton Local Transport Plan, hence the content of these policies will be implemented in part by transport planning processes. Some aspects of the policy approaches could also rely on LTP funding for their delivery, in accordance with the policies set out at the local level, or rely on delivery mechanisms associated with larger planned interventions, such as the Mersey Gateway Project and the actions of the project Concessionaire. Policy outcomes which relate to efficient monitoring processes, including of air quality, will rely on existing Council Environmental Health functions, where as policy outcomes relating to traffic management and highways works will relate to the Council's statutory functions in these areas. Where policy outcomes relate to cross-boundary transport routes or infrastructure, such as the expansion of Liverpool John Lennon Airport, it will be particularly important to work jointly with neighbouring authorities on delivery.
- 9.51 A great proportion of policy content in this theme relates to the safeguarding of existing transportation infrastructure, ranging from walking and cycling routes, to bus stations and the Runcorn Busway. Notable new infrastructure includes that associated with the Mersey Gateway Project, expansion of 3MG and Liverpool John Lennon Airport, and facilities in other Key Areas of Change featured in the Core Strategy. New infrastructure will also be required incrementally over the plan period in association with smaller developments and with actions of the Council and its partners to improve and expand existing networks. Some of this infrastructure will be provided by the Council and its partners, while others will be paid for by developer contributions.
- 9.52 While parts of the policies relate broadly to functions undertaken by the Council, some parts of policies rely on actions from the Council's partners, notably public and community transport operators, as well as private sector developers and freight operators. Some other proposals and developments will be delivered by the public-private sector partnerships associated with the development of the Borough's Key Areas of Change. The provision of a safe, efficient and sustainable transport network to support new development will be reliant upon developers providing facilities and new infrastructure as part of their development, and where appropriate, such developers contributing towards the maintenance and expansion of the existing network through the Council's development management process.

9.53 The priority of ensuring an accessible Halton will be continuous over the plan period. The outcome of safeguarding existing sustainable travel options and providing new options will also be strived for over the plan period. Key outcomes include the completion of the Mersey Gateway Project and works to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, improvement of the public transport, walking and cycling networks, as well as the provision of sufficient accessibility and new transport facilities in association with major new development.

## 10. RESPONSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

- 10.0 The Strategic Objectives of direct relevance to delivering Responsive Infrastructure and Sustainable Resources are SO1, SO4, SO10, SO14, SO17, SO18 and SO19.

### **Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities relevant to the theme**

- 10.1 **A high quality infrastructure** to support development is essential for the creation of sustainable communities.
- 10.2 Infrastructure includes: **transport infrastructure** such as roads, railways, public transport, cycling and walking; **physical and environmental infrastructure** such as water supply and treatment, and waste treatment; **Green Infrastructure** such as public greenspaces; and, **social and health infrastructure** including community services and facilities.
- 10.3 The growing importance of **digital infrastructure** has also been identified as a key challenge and opportunity for Halton in helping people gain access to employment and skills, improved services, and social, financial, informational and entertainment benefits. It is therefore vital that the Borough's residents and businesses have **access to digital technologies** such as the Internet.
- 10.4 It is important for development in Halton to make the **most efficient use of the Borough's existing infrastructure** and to invest in this to ensure that it can cope with additional demand. It will also be important to identify what new infrastructure will be **crucial to serve the overall growth of the Borough** through the plan period, as detailed in the Spatial Strategy.
- 10.5 In providing a high quality infrastructure for Halton, it will be essential to **secure developer contributions** to meet the necessary on and off-site infrastructure requirements arising from new development.
- 10.6 In the interests of responsible and sustainable use of resources, the Borough must **reduce the amount of waste** going to landfill and **increase the amount of waste being recycled**. Opportunities should therefore be taken to promote **sustainable waste management**.
- 10.7 **Minerals are a finite resource** and can only be worked where they exist. In Halton, the only mineral resources highlighted in the evidence base titled Minerals Planning in Merseyside (Urban Vision, August 2008) were sand and gravel deposits in four small disparate locations in east Runcorn. This means that possible minerals extraction sites in Halton are limited and possibly commercially unviable due to the size, depth and location of the deposits.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

- 10.8 National and regional policy places a **high priority on the timely provision of infrastructure to support development**. National policy requires the Core Strategy to identify what **physical, social and Green Infrastructure** is required to support the amount of residential and commercial development identified. At the regional level there is a requirement for priority to be given to sites that are already **well served by infrastructure** and which do not require significant additional investment.

- 10.9 With regard to sustainable waste management, national and regional policy encourages the **prevention and reuse of waste** and also supports provision of a suitable infrastructure for recovery and disposal supported by an appropriate regulatory framework to protect the environment and public health.
- 10.10 In terms of minerals resources, national and regional policy emphasises that an adequate and steady supply of minerals to provide for society's needs is essential, **but this provision must be made in accordance with the principles of sustainable development**. Firstly, reducing the quantity of material used and waste generated, then to use as much recycled and secondary material as possible, before finally securing the remainder of material needed through new primary extraction. Minerals development is different from other forms of development because minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur.

**What you said in 2006 at Issues and Options Stage...**

- 10.11 Respondents stated that development should be located in the most **accessible and sustainable locations** served by adequate and essential infrastructure.
- 10.12 In terms of **transport infrastructure**, the promotion of sustainable transport was supported, and the potential health benefits of walking and cycling infrastructure were highlighted.
- 10.13 The important role of green travel networks, including **Green Infrastructure**, was also positively emphasised.
- 10.14 Support was given to the protection and enhancement of **social infrastructure**, including community services and facilities in sustainable locations.
- 10.15 Waste minimisation was widely supported and seen to contribute positively to **sustainable waste management**.
- 10.16 Taking the above issues, challenges and opportunities, policy context and comments into account, the following policies have been drafted for this theme:

**CS33:** Infrastructure Provision

**CS34:** Waste

**CS35:** Minerals

## CS33: INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

- 10.17 To support the Borough's planned growth over the plan period and to ensure that Halton's infrastructure is both modern and of a high quality, it is essential to deliver necessary improvements to the Borough's existing infrastructure and to provide new infrastructure able to accommodate the needs of Halton's communities.

### Preferred Policy Option CS33: Infrastructure Provision

The Council, its partners and developers will work together to ensure that new development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure required to meet the borough's needs, including:

- transport infrastructure;
- physical and environmental infrastructure;
- Green Infrastructure;
- social and health infrastructure; and,
- digital infrastructure.

#### i. Infrastructure Provision

To ensure that Halton's existing infrastructure is protected and enhanced, and additional infrastructure is provided to serve the needs arising from development, proposals will be expected to:

- ensure development is located in the most sustainable locations well served by existing infrastructure;
- minimise any negative impact on the existing infrastructure required to support it;
- contribute towards additional provision of infrastructure, either on or off site, to serve the needs arising from development; and,
- contribute towards improvements to existing infrastructure and the provision of new infrastructure, alongside Council initiatives and other agencies and service provider's development programmes.

#### ii. Planning Obligations

To ensure the delivery of necessary infrastructure, Infrastructure Tariffs will be introduced linked to the granting of planning permission for new development. Infrastructure tariffs will reflect the specific requirements of stakeholders, and will be directly related to the additional infrastructure identified by the Council and infrastructure providers as necessary to serve new development. The details of this approach will be defined initially in the Planning Obligations SPD.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Infrastructure Provision

#### Implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in advance of Guidance

Despite the advantages offered by this approach, CIL will not be taken forward at this time due to the risks associated with a lack of strategic guidance for the introduction of the levy

locally. It was also considered that without a jointly agreed sub-regional approach to a charging schedule in place, its implementation in Halton could result in the discouragement of development in the Borough.

**No Policy for Infrastructure Provision in the Core Strategy**

This approach was discarded because it was not considered to be appropriate to rely solely upon case-by-case basis legal agreements, or on other Local Development Framework Documents to provide for the overall infrastructure requirements of the Borough.

**Justification/Explanation**

- 10.18 An integral part of the Core Strategy is to ensure that development proposals are supported by the timely provision of an appropriate level of infrastructure including:
  - o transport infrastructure such as roads, railways, public transport, and cycling and walking routes;
  - o physical and environmental infrastructure such as water supply and treatment, and energy supply;
  - o Green Infrastructure such as public greenspaces;
  - o social infrastructure including community services and facilities; and,
  - o digital infrastructure such as internet supply.
  
- 10.19 The preferred policy option for Infrastructure Provision seeks to achieve this by expecting new developments to be located in the most sustainable location already well served by existing infrastructure. However, all new development contributes to demands on existing infrastructure and therefore developers will be expected to contribute towards any necessary improvements or new provision to serve the needs arising from their development.
  
- 10.20 A tariff based approach, detailed in the forthcoming Planning Obligations SPD, will ensure contributions are made towards these necessary improvements and/or new provision, identified through joint working between the Council, its partners, service providers and developers.
  
- 10.21 The Planning Act 2008 provides the legislative framework for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Local Authorities are empowered to seek to charge CIL and will need to identify what infrastructure is required and how much it will cost. The Regulations, providing the detail on the implementation of CIL are yet to be published, however it is envisaged that the policies and provisions of the Core Strategy DPD and the SPD on Planning Obligations could be incorporated into a future CIL, should the Council deem this a desirable approach.
  
- 10.22 The Core Strategy Infrastructure Plan (see Supporting Documents) details the plans and programmes for infrastructure provision by the Council and its partners. This includes a list of priority schemes which will be essential to the development of Halton to 2026 and beyond, including those considered to be of sub-regional significance. The preferred policy option will ensure that development contributes towards the delivery of this infrastructure.

**Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:**

<b>National Policy</b>	PPS12, PPS1, PPG13, PPG17, PPS22
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: DP4, EM3

<b>Local Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO1, SO4, SO8, SO10, SO12, SO14, SO16, SO17, SO18, SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, Halton's Urban Renewal, Children and Young People in Halton, Employment Learning and Skills in Halton and A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area, NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling
<b>SA Objectives</b>	3 – Water Quality, 10 – Housing, 11 – Accessibility, 12 – Health, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS16, CS17, CS20, CS23, CS26, CS28, CS30, CS32

## CS34: WASTE

- 10.23 The Council's aim for sustainable waste management is that an adequate range of waste management facilities will be provided to ensure that waste generated in Halton is treated and disposed of in a sustainable and environmentally acceptable way, balancing the economic, social and environmental needs of the Borough. A large proportion of Halton's waste goes to landfill. The move away from landfill disposal towards more sustainable means of dealing with waste, through promotion of waste management and recycling, brings a requirement to develop the range of facilities required to meet the Borough's needs.

### Preferred Policy Option CS34: Waste

The Council will promote sustainable waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy, to:

- identify and safeguard (where appropriate) waste management sites in appropriate locations;
- ensure that the Borough can meet the identified waste management needs;
- encourage good design in new development in order to minimise waste, promote the use of recycled materials and, to facilitate the collection and recycling of waste;
- encourage the sustainable transport of waste and promote use of site waste management plans; and
- ensure that waste management facilities are developed whilst minimising the impacts on the environment and communities of the Borough.

### Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Waste

#### Retain the Criteria Based Policy Approach

Sustainable waste management requires an approach which includes the identification of sites to accommodate new facilities to ensure national and regional targets are met. A solely criteria-based approach was rejected as it would not comply with national and regional planning policy guidance.

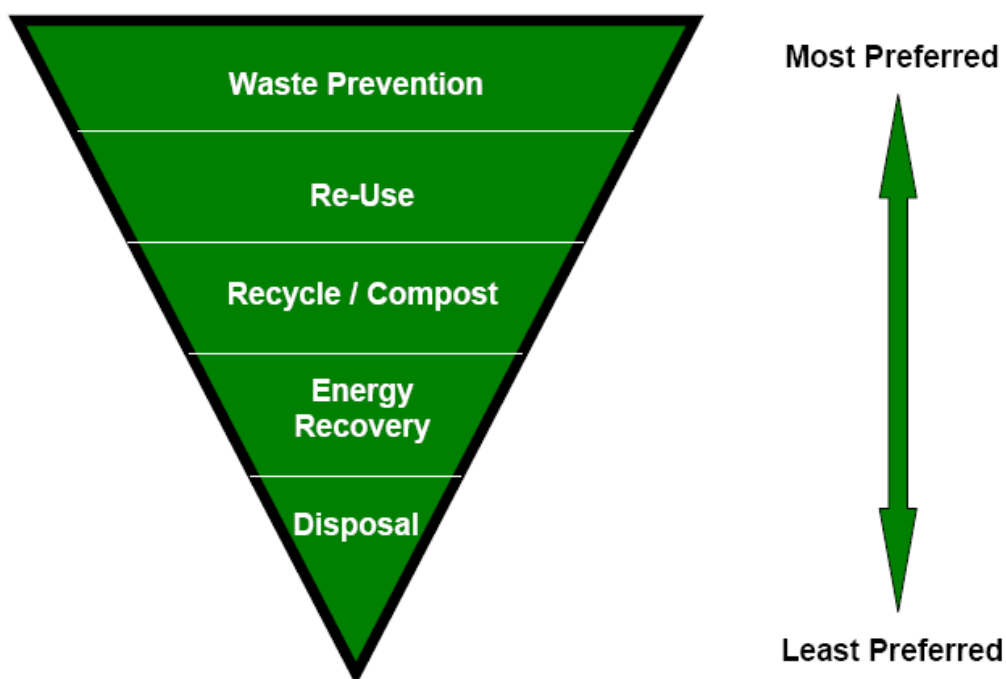
#### Justification/Explanation

- 10.24 European legislation, government targets, increased waste generation, the need for improved environmental protection, and rising public expectations all drive the need for rapid changes in our approach to managing waste. In particular, Merseyside (including Halton) needs to reduce its reliance on landfill by providing alternative facilities for recycling, reprocessing, treatment and disposal.
- 10.25 Agreement has been reached, across the authorities in the Greater Merseyside sub-region to prepare a joint Development Plan Document; The Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document (Waste DPD). The emerging Waste DPD is Halton's preferred approach to implementing the principles of sustainable waste management for all waste streams taking into account sustainable waste management principles



and ensuring that all facilities are developed in line with the principles of the waste hierarchy (see Figure 18 below).

**Figure 18: The Waste Hierarchy**



10.26 The preferred policy is in accordance with Halton’s Municipal Waste Management Strategy and recognises the importance of the sub-regional apportionment of waste and through the Joint Waste DPD. The DPD will identify and safeguard sites within appropriate locations for a range of waste management facilities, including waste disposal, to meet this need within acceptable social, economic and environmental parameters.

<b>Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	PPS10
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS Policies: EM10, EM11, EM12, EM13
<b>Local Policy</b>	Halton Municipal Waste Strategy, emerging Joint Merseyside Waste DPD
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	A Healthy Halton, A Safer Halton
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 192 – Household waste recycled and composted, NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	4 – Adaptation to Climate Change, 7 – Land Quality, 9 – Waste, 12 – Health, 17 – Sustainable Transport
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS14, CS19, CS23, CS24, CS28, CS33

## CS35: MINERALS

- 10.27 Managing the Borough's mineral resources over the plan period and beyond will ensure the maintenance of appropriate reserves to meet the future needs of the community whilst making sure that environmental impacts are properly considered.

### Preferred Policy Option CS35: Minerals

#### i. Minimising the need for Minerals Extraction

To minimise the need for minerals extraction, all new developments will be expected to maximise the use of recycled and secondary aggregates by:

- ensuring that a minimum of 20% of construction aggregates are from secondary or recycled sources, increasing to 25% by 2021;
- incorporating resource efficient design and construction techniques; and,
- ensuring waste produced during construction and demolition is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy and is treated on-site where possible to reduce transportation impacts.

#### ii. Minerals Extraction

Where mineral extraction does take place, it will be important to ensure that this is efficient, sustainable and does not adversely impact upon Halton's communities, built and green environments. To achieve this, proposals for mineral extraction in the Borough must ensure that:

- the supply of minerals contributes towards identified regional and sub-regional needs;
- the natural and historic environment is conserved, managed and enhanced.
- the health, safety and amenity of Halton's residents, visitors and businesses is fully considered and that any potential adverse impacts are minimised;
- sensitive working practices, high operating standards and environmental management systems are adopted;
- workings will not adversely effect flood risks or surface water flooding;
- essential infrastructure is protected;
- sustainable transport methods for transportation of minerals are utilised; and,
- sensitive environmental restoration and aftercare is incorporated into the lifetime of the site especially where this would improve public access and educational resources for the Borough.

#### iii. Exploiting Mineral Reserves

Where applications for new development arise, mineral resources that are identified in those locations which would contribute towards the regional and sub-regional apportionment of land-won aggregate requirements will be protected from sterilisation through their extraction, where commercially viable, prior to development. These potential deposits are approximately located at

- adjacent to Haddock's Wood, Warrington Road, Manor Park, Runcorn
- between Summer Lane and the M56, Preston on the Hill, Runcorn
- adjacent to the Weaver Navigation, Clifton, Runcorn
- agricultural land surrounding the permitted site at Bold Heath Quarry, St Helens.

## Alternative Policy Approaches Considered: Minerals

### Identify Mineral Safeguarding Areas in the Core Strategy

To ensure the safeguarding of proven deposits of minerals, that are or may become economically viable, the Core Strategy would identify specific mineral safeguarding areas. It was considered that this approach would not be appropriate for the Core Strategy as the existence of commercially viable mineral deposits in the Borough is extremely limited.

The evidence base for minerals, Mineral Planning in Merseyside (Urban Vision, August 2008) included an extensive consultation with industry. No responses were received for any of the sites within Halton's boundary (with the exception of the existing permitted site at Bold Heath Quarry in St Helens). As there is no known commercial interest in exploiting the sand deposits in Halton it is considered more appropriate to consider their extraction prior to any development rather than identify formal Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

### Justification/Explanation

- 10.28 Minerals are a finite resource and can only be worked where they exist. This means that possible extraction sites are limited. There are currently no operational mineral sites in the Borough and there is limited evidence of previous activity. The Urban Vision Study on Mineral Planning in Merseyside (August 2008) has also shown that Halton does not contain a significant amount of high quality minerals.
- 10.29 Halton and the wider Liverpool City Region are highly reliant on imports of high quality aggregate for use in the construction industry. For these reasons and to support sustainable development principles the policy emphasises and supports a reduced reliance on land-won minerals extraction by increasing the amount of recycled and secondary aggregates used in new development.
- 10.30 Where proposals for mineral extraction occur, the preferred policy option sets out criteria to ensure that environmental, social and economic issues and impacts are fully considered and where adverse affects are identified, they are effectively managed and mitigated.
- 10.31 The Preferred Policy Option for CS35: Minerals will ensure that mineral workings in the Borough are in line with Mineral Planning Guidance/Statements and policy approaches in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The policy also complements the Council's Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

### Preferred Approach is Compliant With / Helps to Deliver:

<b>National Policy</b>	MPS1, PPS1, MPS2, National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2001-2016
<b>Regional Policy</b>	RSS policies: DP7, EM7, EM8, EM9
<b>Local Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	SO19
<b>SCS Priorities</b>	Halton's Urban Renewal
<b>LAA Improvement Indicators</b>	NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the area
<b>SA Objectives</b>	1 – Built Environment and Landscape, 7 – Land Quality, 8 – Air Quality, 9 – Waste, 12 – Health
<b>Core Strategy Policy Links</b>	CS19, CS24, CS25, CS28, CS33, CS34

## **DELIVERING RESPONSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES**

- 10.32 Policy CS33: Infrastructure Provision will be delivered primarily by the measures contained within the Infrastructure Plan (see Supporting Documents) and also by the forthcoming Planning Obligations SPD, which will set the level of infrastructure tariffs linked to the granting of planning permission for new development. The Provision for Open Space SPD will provide guidance that will lead to appropriate levels of provision and design standards of open space within development. Policy CS33 will be supported by the use, where appropriate, of Section 106 Agreements.
- 10.33 The Planning Act 2008 provides the legislative framework for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Local Authorities are empowered to seek to charge CIL and will need to identify what infrastructure is required and how much it will cost. The Regulations, providing the detail on the implementation of CIL are yet to be finalised, however it is envisaged that the policies and provisions of the Core Strategy DPD and the SPD on Planning Obligations could be incorporated into a future CIL, should the Council deem this a desirable approach. Further guidance on location-based infrastructure proposals can also be found in the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan (see Supporting Documents), and Council approved or third party master plans not formally adopted as part of the LDF. The delivery of waste infrastructure and the requirements of Policy CS34 will be delivered primarily via the emerging Joint Merseyside Waste DPD. This document will see the planned provision of new waste management capacity with the spatial distribution based on clear policy objectives. The DPD will also develop agreed criteria for the identification and allocation of sites suitable for new and enhanced waste management facilities for the identified waste management needs of Merseyside. Preferred Policy Option CS35: Minerals will not be delivered through a subordinate planning document as the policy presented here is considered sufficient to deal with any application for mineral extraction that may arise.
- 10.34 Whilst parts of these policies relate to highways, transport, community services, waste and minerals functions undertaken by the Council, some aspects of policy implementation rely upon the actions from the Council's partners and private sector. Aspects of infrastructure provision will be reliant upon developers providing infrastructure as part of their development, and where appropriate, such developers contributing towards the maintenance and expansion of the existing infrastructure networks through the Council's development management process.
- 10.35 Notable new infrastructure includes that associated with the Mersey Gateway Project, expansion of 3MG and Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Building Schools for the Future, contaminated land remediation, flood defence improvement and mitigation and many other local schemes. New infrastructure will be required over the plan period in association with development schemes.
- 10.36 The priority of ensuring the right levels of supporting infrastructure will be continuous over the plan period, in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and Key Areas of Change.

## 11 Monitoring Framework

### Monitoring the Core Strategy

- 11.1 The Core Strategy must be flexible enough to respond to changing needs and circumstances at all spatial levels, including national, regional and local levels. Monitoring is therefore an extremely important part of the Spatial Planning system as it will continually assess the effectiveness of the Core Strategy in delivering the Vision and implementing the Spatial Strategy for Halton. By monitoring the Core Strategy and its policies, appropriate action can be taken to ensure its continued delivery. This may include actions to address any negative issues or enhance any positive outcomes.
- 11.2 The Core Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually using a range of indicators to assess progress against the Strategic Objectives. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will be the main mechanism to report performance and effects, and propose actions to deal with any issues or outcomes identified.

### Monitoring Indicators

- 11.3 Government guidance<sup>1</sup> advises that there are a number of different types of monitoring indicator that can be applied to LDF monitoring, and to assess the implementation and effects of policies. These are broadly separated into contextual indicators and output indicators. Contextual indicators provide the context for the development of spatial policies by describing the social, environmental and economic background of the LDF and can be found within the AMR. In addition to contextual indicators, output indicators should be identified to measure the performance of policies. There are four types of output indicator:
- National Indicators<sup>2</sup> - identified by Government and must be collected to provide a comprehensive assessment of policy performance across spatial levels working in partnership.
  - Core Output Indicators<sup>3</sup> – identified by Government and must be collected to provide a comprehensive assessment of policy performance across spatial levels.
  - Local output indicators – assess the performance of policies against indicators which respond to particular local circumstances and issues.
  - SA indicators (or significant effects indicators) – assess significant social, environmental and economic effects of policies and are linked to the SA objectives and indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> ODPM (2005) Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide, available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147438.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2007) The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/505713.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> CLG (2008) Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators – Update 2/2008  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/coreoutputindicators2.pdf>

11.4 The following table sets out the monitoring framework that will be used to assess the Core Strategy policies using applicable National, Core, Local and SA indicators. The table shows the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives and the applicable Preferred Policy Options that will help to achieve them. CS1: Halton’s Spatial Strategy and CS2: Sustainable Development Principles are not shown within the table as these are overarching policies applicable to all Strategic Objectives. The table then sets out the proposed indicators (National, Core, Local and SA) to monitor the achievement of the Strategic Objectives and the desired target or trend to be seen over the lifetime of the Core Strategy to 2026. These monitoring indicators will be refined in response to the consultation of the Preferred Policy Options.

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
SO1	Create and support safe, attractive and accessible residential neighbourhoods with balanced communities, where people want to live	CS3 CS4 CS5 CS6 CS10 CS11 CS12 CS13 CS14 CS15 CS20 CS21 CS22 CS26 CS30 CS33	H1/H2 Core /Local/ SA – Housing Trajectory  H3 Core / SA – New and converted dwellings on previously developed land  H6 Core – Housing quality: Building for Life Assessment Design  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 153 Working age claiming out of work benefits  NI 154 Net additional homes provided  NI 17 Perception of anti social behaviour	Meet the RSS annual housing provision target  RSS target  Residential development to meet specified standard  Increase  Increase  Decrease  RSS Target  Decrease
SO2	Create a greater diversity of housing tenure particularly in the less affluent neighbourhoods	CS3 CS5 CS11 CS12 CS13 CS14	Local /SA - % of new dwellings completed at less than 30dph, between 30 and 50dph, and above 50dph	35dph and 40dph when within 400m of Halton Sustainable transport network or service centre

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/Trend
			Local -Total new build completions of permanent dwellings by house type and bedroom breakdown per annum.  NI 154 Net additional homes provided	In accordance with housing needs survey  RSS Target
SO3	Provide good quality, affordable accommodation to meet the needs of all sections of society	CS3 CS5 CS11 CS12 CS13 CS14 CS21	H4 Core / SA – Net additional pitches (Gypsy and Traveller)  H5 Core / SA – Gross affordable housing completions  H6 Core – Housing quality: Building for Life Assessment Design  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 154 Net additional homes provided	RSS specified  Increase  All residential development to meet standard  Increase  RSS Target
SO4	Create and sustain a competitive and diverse business environment offering a variety of quality sites and premises	CS4 CS15 CS16 CS30 CS33	BD1 Total amount of additional employment floorspace – by type  BD2 Core / SA – Total amount of employment floorspace by type on previously developed land  BD3 Core –Amount and type of employment land available  SA – Losses of employment land in (i) employment/regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area  SA – Amount of employment land lost to residential development  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 171 VAT registration rates  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Increase  Increase  Minimise  Minimise  Increase  Increase  Increase
SO5	Develop Halton's economy around	CS7 CS8	BD1 Core / SA – Amount and type of additional employment floorspace	Increase

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
	the logistics and distribution sector and expand the science, creative and knowledge based business cluster(s)	CS9 CS10 CS15 CS16 CS17 CS30	BD2 Core / SA – Total amount of employment floorspace by type on previously developed land  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 171 VAT registration rates	Increase  Increase  Increase
SO6	Revitalise vacant and underused designated employment areas, in order to support investment, entrepreneurship and economic growth	CS4 CS15 CS16 CS26	BD1 Core / SA – Amount and type of additional employment floorspace  BD2 Core / SA – Total amount of employment floorspace by type on previously developed land  Local – Number of investment enquiries that are translated into actual investment or expansion projects  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 171 VAT registration rates  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Increase  Increase  Increase  Increase
SO7	Maximise educational attainment for children and residents of all ages, in order to develop skills sets relevant to the needs of present and future employers, boosting employability	CS5 CS16	NI 75 – Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (threshold)  NI 79/80 – Achievement of a level 3/2 qualification by the age of 19  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Increase %  Increase  Increase
SO8	Promote and enhance Halton's centres to create high quality, commercial, social and cultural areas	CS8 CS10 CS17 CS18 CS20 CS21	BD4 Core - The amount of completed floorspace (gross and net) for town centre uses within town centre areas and the local authority area and the amount of floorspace developed for each of the use class;	Increase in the town centres



Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
	that meet the needs of the local population and business community, and positively contribute to the image of the Borough	CS26	Local / SA – Vacancy rates within the town centres  Local / SA – Footfall within town centres  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 154 Net additional homes provided  NI 170 Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Decrease  Increase  Increase  RSS target  Decrease  Increase
SO9	Improve the health and well being of Halton’s residents throughout each of their life stages, particularly in less affluent areas experiencing poorer health outcomes	CS5 CS19 CS20 CS21 CS26	Local – Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP and a hospital  SA – % of households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Decrease  Increase  Increase
SO10	Ensure all Halton’s residents enjoy access to a network of community services and facilities providing opportunities to pursue active and healthy lifestyles and allowing them to participate fully in their local community	CS19 CS20 CS21 CS26 CS30 CS33	Local / SA –The number and percentages of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre.  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Increase  Increase
SO11	Ensure development does not create and is	CS22 CS27 CS29	EI Core / Local / SA – Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advise on flooding and	Decrease

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
	not subject to undue foreseeable risks from natural or man-made hazards, or pollution		water quality grounds  Local / SA – Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living on AQMAs  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area	Decrease  Increase
SO12	Ensure that development achieves high standards of design and sustainability including in regard to its contribution to, and effects of, climate change and provides a positive contribution to its locality	CS13 CS14 CS15 CS22 CS23 CS24 CS26 CS29 CS33	SA - Number of planning applications refused on the basis of poor design standards  E3 Core / Local / SA – Renewable energy capacity installed by type  EI Core / Local / SA – Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advise on flooding and water quality grounds  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 186 Per capita CO <sub>2</sub> emissions in Local Authority Area	Design improvement  New developments To meet the indicative regional / local policy target  Decrease  Increase  Decrease
SO13	Conserve, manage and enhance the historic and natural environment in order to maximise the social, cultural and environmental benefits	CS23 CS25 CS26	Local – Number of listed buildings and number and area of Conservation Areas  SA - % of Grade I and 2* listed buildings at risk  Local / SA – Condition of SSSI's  E2 Core / Local /SA - Change in areas of biodiversity importance, including: (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type); and (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites	Maintain  Decrease  Improvement / No further decline  Increase

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
			of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance.  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area	Increase
SO14	Manage and enhance the multifunctional value of the Borough's Green Infrastructure resource, whilst protecting and seeking enhancements to important local habitats, geology and landscapes, aquatic environments and species	CS25 CS26 CS28 CS33 CS35	Local / SA - % of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards  E2 Core / Local / SA – Change in areas of biodiversity importance, including: (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type); and (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance.  M1 Core / Local – Production of primary land won aggregates  M2 Core / Local – Production of secondary and recycle aggregates  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  No reduction in areas of priority habitat, species or areas designated (ha)  Increase  Increase  Increase  Increase
SO15	Remediate and regenerate Halton's legacy of contaminated land for beneficial uses	CS26 CS27	SA - % Contaminated land reclaimed in total  Local/SA – Contaminated land reclaimed as a) green infrastructure b) development  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area	Increase  Increase  Increase
SO16	Provide safe, efficient, inclusive and accessible travel options for people, goods and freight, ensuring a better connected, less congested and	CS7 CS19 CS20 CS26 CS28 CS29 CS30 CS31	LTP / SA – Number of passenger trips on accessible transport services  Local / SA – Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport of; a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment and a major retail centre(s)	Increase  Increase

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
	more sustainable Halton	CS32	NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 171 VAT registration rates  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Increase  Increase
SO17	Realise the potential of the Mersey Gateway Project and the Silver Jubilee Bridge in Halton in order to fully deliver sustainable travel options, achieve regeneration and environmental benefits, and reduce congestion	CS6 CS8 CS10 CS26 CS28 CS29 CS33	Local / SA – Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas and population living in AQMAs  NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Decrease  Increase  Increase
SO18	Ensure all development is supported by the timely provision of adequate infrastructure, with sufficient capacity to accommodate additional future growth and technological advancements	CS20 CS26 CS30 CS33 CS34	NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling	Increase  Increase
SO19	Minimise waste generation and maximise reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery within the Halton waste stream and to support sustainable and effective waste and minerals management	CS34 CS35	W1 Core / Local / SA – Capacity of new waste management facilities  W2 Core / Local / SA – Amount of municipal waste arising, and managed by management type  M1 Core / Local – Production of primary land won aggregates  M2 Core / Local – Production of secondary and recycle aggregates	RSS target  RSS target  Increase  Increase

Ref	Strategic Objective	Policy	Monitoring Indicator Bundle	Target/ Trend
			NI 5 Overall satisfaction with the area  NI 192 Household waste recycled and composted	Increase  Increase

## 12 Glossary

### 12.1 Glossary of Terms

#### **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided at below market rates to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market and includes social rented and intermediate housing. Social rent housing is rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above, including shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy) other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent. A full definition is included in Annex B to PPS3.

#### **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**

Air Quality Management Areas are declared by Local Authorities in areas where it finds that national air quality objectives are not being met. AQMAs range in size from a couple of streets to much bigger areas. Once an AQMA has been declared, the Local Authority must compile a plan to improve the air quality in this area.

#### **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) assesses the implementation of the programme of production of the Local Development Framework (LDF), as set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The AMR also monitors the extent to which the policies in the LDF are being achieved, and considers what changes, if any, need to be made.

#### **Appropriate Assessment (AA)**

Comprising the latter two stages of Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) is the assessment of likely effects of a development plan or proposal on the integrity of European wildlife sites, and the identification of mitigation measures or alternative solutions, where appropriate.

#### **Area Action Plan (AAP)**

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Local Development Framework (LDF), which provides the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed.

#### **Biodiversity**

Short for “biological diversity”, biodiversity is the term used to describe the variety of flora and fauna within an ecosystem.

#### **(Local) Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides an overarching framework for habitat and species conservation, and works on the basis of partnership to identify local priorities and targets.

#### **BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)**

BREEAM is a family of assessment methods and tools which can be used to assess the environmental performance of any type of building (new and existing).

#### **Brownfield Land**

Brownfield, or previously developed land, is land which has been previously built on, often for industrial or commercial use. Vacant brownfield land is produced when sites are derelict and unused, and hence are available for re-use. Brownfield land is often found within urban areas and is also often subject to contamination from past uses.

### **Code for Sustainable Homes**

The Code for Sustainable Homes is an environmental assessment method for new homes and contains mandatory performance levels in 7 key areas. In 2007 The Code for Sustainable Homes replaced Ecohomes for the assessment of new housing in England.

### **Conservation Area**

Local Authorities have the power to designate as Conservation Areas in any area of “special architectural or historic interest” whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This “specialness” is judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national importance, and designation leads to restrictions of permitted development. There are 10 Conservation Areas in Halton.

### **Contaminated Land**

Contaminated Land is any piece of land that poses a real risk to health, property or the environment due to the nature and concentration of chemicals within it.

### **Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations**

The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations apply mainly to the chemical and petrochemical industries, fuel storage and distribution, and aim to ensure that businesses take all necessary measures to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and limit the consequences to people and the environment of any major accidents which do occur.

### **Development Plan Document (DPD)**

Part of the LDF, Development Plan Documents (DPDs) including the Core Strategy DPD, Site Allocations DPD, Detailed Development Management DPD and Area Action Plan DPDs provide the statutory development plan policies adopted by the Local Planning Authority.

### **Economic Development Zone (EDZ)**

Economic Development Zones (EDZ) are designated areas that will receive large amounts of European funding for projects to help create jobs and investment.

### **Green Belt**

The term “Green Belt” describes the largely undeveloped wild or agricultural land surrounding urban areas. Development in the Green Belt is heavily restricted, in order to preserve and protect its quality and character, to prevent urban sprawl, to improve air quality in urban areas, to protect settlements within the Green Belt, and to ensure access for those living in urban areas to open space and countryside.

### **Green Infrastructure (GI)**

Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lie within and between towns and cities, made up of physical components including parks, rivers, trees, countryside and moorland. An important focus of the GI network is on the multi-functionality of its components, and the recognition of its environmental, social and economic value.

### **Greenway Network**

The Greenway Network is a national initiative promoted by the Countryside Agency. The network is made up of proposed and potential off-road routes for walking, cycling, and where appropriate, horse-riding, connecting people to facilities and greenspaces in and around the urban area and to the countryside.

### **Growth Point**

Growth Points is a central Government initiative designed to provide support to communities who wish to pursue large scale and sustainable growth, including a particular focus on housing provision. A Growth Point is a relationship between Central Government and local partners to help deliver this growth. Halton is within the mid-Mersey Growth Point area along with St. Helens Council and Warrington Borough Council.

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

Gypsies and Travellers are persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.

### **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)**

The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is an assessment of the potential effects of a policy contained within a Local Development Document (LDD) on one or more sites designated as important at the European Level, including Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The process of assessing development plans is split into three discrete phases: 1) Screening, or identifying whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site; 2) Ascertaining the effects on site integrity; and 3) Identification of mitigation measures and alternative solutions.

### **Halton Sustainable Transport Network (HSTN)**

The Halton Sustainable Transport Network (HSTN) is the connected network of sustainable transport facilities in Halton, linking key areas of the Borough together. The network encompasses the Core Bus Network, the Halton Rapid Transit Network, the rail network, the Greenway Network, and other walking and cycling routes. It also includes links to transport interchanges, as well as links to sub-regional sustainable transport routes.

### **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (latest version 2007) combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. Published at SOA level, the IMD allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation.

### **Key Diagram**

The Key Diagram is a diagrammatic interpretation of a spatial strategy contained within a spatial planning policy document such as a Core Strategy or a Regional Spatial Strategy.

### **Legibility**

A successful and legible development is a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.



**Listed Building**

A listed building is a building or other structure officially designated as being of special architectural, historic or cultural significance. The listing of a building or structure dramatically restricts the types of changes that can be made to the structure. There are three types of listed status, in descending order of importance: Grade I, Grade II\* and Grade II.

**Local Area Agreement (LAA)**

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement, based on the local SCS, that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government, represented by the Government Office, and a local area, represented by the local authority and other key partners through LSPs.

**Local Development Document (LDD)**

Local Development Documents (LDD), including Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), are documents containing the policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

**Local Development Framework (LDF)**

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs) which, along with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), forms the Development Plan for the Borough. The LDF includes both Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and process documents, including the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The LDF also includes the Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which will eventually be replaced by policies in LDDs.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets the timetable for the production of the Local Development Framework and its constituent documents, and provides details of all of the Local Development Documents (LDDs) to be produced.

**Local Nature Reserve (LNR)**

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. In addition to supporting bio- and geodiversity, LNRs also offer opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy the natural environment.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the Council's objectives, strategies and policies for transport, detailing the schemes and initiatives that will be delivered, together with the performance indicators and targets used to monitor progress.

**Master Plan / Masterplan**

A master plan (or masterplan) is a detailed strategy for the development of a specific, geographically defined area. Master plans for a range of areas, from individual sites to whole towns, can be employed in support of, or as part of, a planning policy framework for an area.

**Mersey Gateway Port (Weston Docks)**

Sited in west Runcorn at the Port of Weston and on the Manchester Ship Canal, there are plans to develop the Mersey Gateway Port into a major inter-modal freight facility.

### **Mersey Gateway Project (MGP)**

The Mersey Gateway Project is a major project to plan and construct a second road-based crossing of the River Mersey in Halton. The project includes modifications to the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge to improve cross-river facilities for public transport, walking and cycling, and also has impacts on local regeneration.

### **Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG)**

The Mersey Multimodal Gateway, commonly referred to as 3MG is the regionally significant inter-modal freight terminal located at Ditton, Widnes. The operations at the site capitalise on opportunities to transport freight by rail via the West Coast Main Line

### **Mersey Forest**

The Mersey Forest is a large network of woodlands and green spaces, spanning an area of 420 square miles across Merseyside and Cheshire.

### **Mersey Valley Timberland Trail**

The Mersey Valley Timberland Trail is a long distance linear walk on roads and country paths linking town and countryside to parks, woodlands and other open spaces. The Trail begins in Runcorn and runs eastwards across the Borough before entering Warrington BC.

### **Mersey Way**

The Mersey Way is a walking and cycling route and closely follows the north bank of the river and estuary of the Mersey, including a stretch alongside Halton's waterways adjacent to the River Mersey, the St. Helens Canal and Pickering Pasture.

### **Multi Area Agreement (MAA)**

A type of cross-boundary LAA, a Multi Area Agreement (MAA) strengthens partnerships across a wider spatial area than a local authority, for example across a sub-region. MAAs complement and do not duplicate the work of existing LAAs, the new performance framework or existing regional strategies, but offer opportunities for more meaningful joint working and more efficient leveraging of funding.

### **National Indicator (NI) Set**

The latest National Indicator (NI) Set was published by Government in 2007, and is the only set of indicators that Government will use to monitor the performance of local authorities and local partnerships. There are 198 NIs, covering diverse topics including education, health, environment, crime and transport.

### **Neighbourhood Priority Area (NPA)**

Neighbourhood Priority Areas (NPAs) are residential areas in Halton which have been statistically identified as being particularly vulnerable to different types of deprivation. In these areas, there is a need for concentrated intervention to help to improve quality of life, hence helping to contribute towards narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest parts of Halton.

### **Natura 2000**

Natura 2000 is the European ecological network of sites established under the Habitats Directive. Its main purpose is the protection of habitat types and plant and animal species of Community interest in the European Union.

### **Passive Solar Design**

Passive Solar Design refers to the use of solar energy for the heating and cooling of buildings reducing the need for electricity. It involves using design principles to directly take advantage of the sun's energy in terms of heating and lighting. This may include consideration of the size and positioning of windows, use of materials, insulation and air flow.

**Planning Advice for Development near Hazardous Installations (PADHI)**

Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations (PADHI) is the name given to the methodology and software decision support tool developed and used in the Health and Safety Executive. It is used to give advice on proposed developments near hazardous installations.

**Planning Inspectorate (PINs)**

The Planning Inspectorate is the Government-appointed agency with responsibility for processing of planning and enforcement appeals and holding examinations into regional spatial strategies and local development plans.

**Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) / Planning Policy Statement (PPS)**

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and their replacements Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) are prepared by the government after public consultation to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL)**

Previously developed land, often called brownfield land, is land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict, and land currently in use with known potential for redevelopment

**Primary Care Trust (PCT)**

A NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT) is a type of National Health Service (NHS) trust, part of the NHS in England, that provides some primary and community services or commission them from other providers, and are involved in commissioning secondary care.

**Public Realm**

The public realm is the space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

**Quality Corridor**

The approach involves comprehensively addressing all transport issues, associated with road safety, public transport, walking and cycling, in either a corridor or an area. Benefits include minimising disruption, greater efficiencies in design and delivery and the greater visual impact of the package of schemes on street.

**Ramsar Site**

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Sites designated under this treaty are known as Ramsar Sites.

**Regional Development Agency (RDA)**

A Regional Development Agency (RDA) is a non-departmental public body established for the purpose of development, primarily economic, of one of England's

Government Office regions. The objectives of the RDAs are set out in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) of each region.

### **Regional Economic Strategy (RES)**

Prepared by the Regional Development Agency, the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) sets out the region's economic plans, with frameworks for regional, sub-regional and local action, and relying on public and private partners for delivery.

### **Regional Freight Strategy (RFS)**

The Regional Freight Strategy (RFS) is developed from the national and regional policy framework and includes a strategy for the consolidation and expansion of the freight and logistics industry regionally.

### **Regional Park**

The North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) defines Regional Parks as expansive areas linked by various aspects of their natural landscape and/or cultural heritage. Regional Parks are envisaged to improve the drive for regeneration, ensure the protection of the environment, benefit recreation and leisure activity, and stimulate the economy of an area.

### **Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)**

Following the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) became part of the statutory development plan and was renamed as Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and eventually was replaced by the new-style RSS.

### **Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)**

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has replaced Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) as the set of regional planning policies providing the principles of development in the region. The RSS policies form part of the "development plan" at the local level, meaning they are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **Regional Strategy (RS)**

The Regional Strategy (RS) is the document which will replace the RSS and the RES, forming the overarching development strategy for the region. Like the RES, the RS will guide action and investment by business, national and local government and the voluntary and community sectors

### **Regionally Significant Sites**

Regionally Significant Sites are designated by the Regional Development Agency and employment sites of strategic importance to the region. The Regional Development Agency, working with public and private sector partners, aims to create well-designed, technology-friendly sites with sufficient infrastructure, encouraging companies, entrepreneurs and knowledge-driven industries to invest in the Northwest. In Halton, these sites include the multi-modal freight terminal at 3MG and the employment area at Daresbury (Daresbury Park and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus).

### **Registered Social Landlord (RSL)**

Also known as Housing Associations, Registered Social Landlord's (RSLs) are independent not-for-profit organisations that provide low cost "social housing" for those in housing need and are the UK's major provider of homes for rent, as well as providing opportunities for shared ownership.

### **Renewable Energy**

Renewable energy is energy generated from natural resources, including wind, sunlight, rain, tides and geothermal heat, which are natural replenished.

### **Scheduled Monument**

A Scheduled Monument is a nationally important historic building or structure or archaeological site, given protection against detrimental and unauthorised change. When designated, Scheduled Monuments are added to the schedule (which has been kept since 1882) of monuments whose preservation is given priority over other land uses. Scheduled Monuments are also sometimes referred to as “Scheduled Ancient Monuments”.

### **Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)**

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is a designation used to protect areas of importance for wildlife at a county scale. In other parts of the country the same designation is known by various other names, including Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), County Wildlife Site and Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. Overall, the designation is referred to as a "non-statutory wildlife site", or a "Local Site".

### **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A Site of Special Scientific Interest is a conservation designation denoting a protected area. SSSIs are the basis of other site-based nature and geological conservation, including National Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation .

### **Special Protection Area (SPA)**

A Special Protection Area is a designation under the European Union directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Together with Special Areas of Conservation, the SPAs form a network of protected sites across the European Union, called Natura 2000.

### **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the role that the community and other stakeholders will play in the production of all documents within the Local Development Framework (LDF), as well as their role concerning major planning applications.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. To meet the requirements of the directive, a body must prepare an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan, are identified, described and evaluated.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) are primarily produced by local planning authorities, in consultation with the Environment Agency, and are intended to form the basis for preparing appropriate policies for flood risk management at the local level.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a useful tool in understanding how housing markets operate and are likely to operate in the future. A SHMA provides an assessment of past, current and future trends in housing type and tenure, household size, and housing need, including an assessment of the needs of groups with particular housing requirements. In the preparation of the document, a consistent sub-regional approach is important, as is the involvement of key stakeholders in the local housing market.

### **Strategic Site**

A Strategic Site is an area which is considered central to the achievement of an authority's Core Strategy. National planning policy allows Core Strategies to specifically identify and allocate such sites for development.

### **Super Output Area (SOA)**

A Super Output Area (SOA) is a unit of geography used for statistical analysis. Based on 2001 Census Output Areas (OAs) they were introduced by the Office for National Statistics to create a more stable geography for the collection and publication of Government statistics.

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Part of the LDF, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide supplementary information in respect of the policies contained in DPDs, and tend to focus on particular issues or on particular places. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to an independent examination.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

Following the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), although SPGs remain adopted as part of the LDF.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

This process appraises the social, environmental and economic effects of the policies contained within Local Development Documents (LDDs), including all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and where appropriate, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

### **Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)**

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), also known as the Community Strategy, provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of the partners within a Local Strategic Partnership can contribute. An SCS must contain a vision for the area and an action plan, as well as evidence of a shared commitment to implementation and arrangements for monitoring, review and reports of progress.

### **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) provide an alternative to the traditional methods of dealing with surface water drainage, aiming to mimic the natural movement of water from a development, reducing flood risk, improving water quality and often providing attractive features that can make towns and cities more desirable places to live in.

### **Trans Pennine Trail (TPT)**

The Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) is a significant cross-country walking and cycling route, often utilising disused railway lines and canal towpaths, which forms part of the National Cycle Network.

### **Transport Assessment (TA)**

Transport Assessments (TAs) are documents prepared to better assess the transport implications of major proposals and should include illustrations of accessibility, should outline proposed measures to improve walking, cycling and public transport access to the development site and should detail measures to mitigate transport impact.

### **Travelling Showpeople**

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 1/2006.

### **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)**

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees or woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage, or wilful destruction of trees without consent.

### **Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**

A Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is an old-style development plan prepared by a Metropolitan district and some Unitary Local Authorities, which contains policies equivalent to those in both a structure plan and local plan, forming the part of the authority's statutory development plan. These plans will continue to operate for a time after the commencement of the new development plan system (the LDF), by virtue of specific transitional provisions.

### **Use Classes Order**

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and subsequent amendments, group a number of land uses into categories or 'Use Classes'. Changes of use within the same Use Class or between certain different Use Classes as set out in the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) are deemed to have consent and do not require specific planning permission.

### **Ward**

A ward is a small district into which a town, city or borough is divided for the purpose of administration and elections.

## **12.2 List of Acronyms**

<b>3MG</b>	Mersey Multimodal Gateway
<b>4NW</b>	North West Regional Leaders' Forum
<b>AA</b>	Appropriate Assessment
<b>AAP</b>	Area Action Plan

<b>AMR</b>	Annual Monitoring Report
<b>AQMA</b>	Air Quality Management Area
<b>BAP</b>	Biodiversity Action Plan
<b>BREEAM</b>	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
<b>CABE</b>	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
<b>CHP</b>	Combined Heat and Power
<b>CLG</b>	(Department for) Communities and Local Government
<b>COMAH</b>	Control of Major Accident Hazards (Regulations, 1999)
<b>CS</b>	Core Strategy
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport
<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document
<b>EDZ</b>	Economic Development Zone
<b>EqIA</b>	Equality Impact Assessment
<b>GI</b>	Green Infrastructure
<b>GONW</b>	Government Office for the North West
<b>HBC</b>	Halton Borough Council
<b>HCA</b>	Homes and Communities Agency
<b>HIA</b>	Health Impact Assessment
<b>HRA</b>	Habitats Regulation Assessment
<b>HSE</b>	Healthy and Safety Executive
<b>IMD</b>	Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>JELPS</b>	Joint Employment Land and Premises Study
<b>LAA</b>	Local Area Agreement
<b>LCA</b>	Landscape Character Assessment
<b>LCR</b>	Liverpool City Region
<b>LDD</b>	Local Development Document
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework
<b>LDS</b>	Local Development Scheme
<b>LJLA</b>	Liverpool John Lennon Airport
<b>LNR</b>	Local Natural Reserve
<b>LPA</b>	Local Planning Authority



<b>LTP</b>	Local Transport Plan
<b>MAA</b>	Multi Area Agreement
<b>MGP</b>	Mersey Gateway Project
<b>MGRS</b>	Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy
<b>MGSTS</b>	Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy
<b>MSC</b>	Manchester Ship Canal
<b>MSCC</b>	Manchester Ship Canal Company
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>NI</b>	National Indicator
<b>NWDA</b>	North West Development Agency
<b>PADHI</b>	Planning Advice for Development near Hazardous Installations
<b>PCT</b>	Primary Care Trust
<b>PDL</b>	Previously Developed Land
<b>PINs</b>	Planning Inspectorate
<b>PPG</b>	Planning Policy Guidance
<b>PPS</b>	Planning Policy Statement
<b>PSZ</b>	Public Safety Zone
<b>RDA</b>	Regional Development Agency
<b>RES</b>	Regional Economic Strategy
<b>RFS</b>	Regional Freight Strategy
<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord
<b>RSS</b>	Regional Spatial Strategy
<b>SA</b>	Sustainability Appraisal
<b>SCI</b>	Statement of Community Involvement
<b>SCS</b>	Sustainable Community Strategy
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>SFRA</b>	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
<b>SHLAA</b>	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
<b>SHMA</b>	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
<b>SIC</b>	Science and Innovation Campus
<b>SJB</b>	Silver Jubilee Bridge
<b>SINC</b>	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SO</b>	Strategic Objective
<b>SOA</b>	Super Output Area
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Area
<b>SPD</b>	Supplementary Planning Document
<b>SPG</b>	Supplementary Planning Guidance
<b>SQM</b>	Square Metres
<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>SUDS</b>	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
<b>TA</b>	Transport Assessment
<b>UDP</b>	Unitary Development Plan