Mersey Gateway Communications Strategy

Contents **Page**

1. Introduction 2
2. Vision 3
3. Objectives 4
4. Issues Analysis 5
5. Stakeholders 9
6. Key Messages 11
7. Branding and image management 14
8. Tactics 15
9. Monitoring and Evaluation 26

Appendices

Appendix A	Media Audit
Appendix B	Stakeholder Questionnaire results
Appendix C	Political Stakeholder Research
Appendix D	Legislative and Events Timetable
Appendix E	Action Plan
Appendix F	Halton Borough Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
Appendix G	Halton Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement
Appendix H	Detailed Stakeholder Breakdown

1.0 Introduction

This communications strategy outlines the approach to communications that Halton Borough Council and its partners need to take over the next five years to support the Mersey Gateway project.

The key theme throughout is the reinforcement of the Mersey Gateway project being about much more than just a bridge. This is backed by the clear need to establish the project as a way of delivering economic and social benefits for Halton, the wider city-region, the North West and beyond.

The Mersey Gateway project deals with a number of potentially sensitive political issues at a time when we are facing a changing political and policy landscape. Topics like tolling, road construction, the environment, congestion and land use are controversial, but the project cannot afford to ignore these overtly political issues.

This strategy is intended as a working document and is accompanied by an action plan leading through to the end of 2011 that outlines key communications activities, roles and responsibilities. This will ensure the project communicates well with its broad range of stakeholders and maximises its success and impact at a local, regional and national level.

The timeline of the strategy and the action plan reflects the key stages in the project lifetime as identified in the overall project programme. This ensures that communications activities are not only undertaken at the right time, but also that the strategy and action plan are flexible enough to take into account changing circumstances over the next five years.

In the course of developing this strategy key stakeholders in Halton and across the north west, as well as key decision-makers and media organisations at a national level, have all been consulted. This has included MPs, local councillors, project partners, civil servants, landowners, local, national and specialist media and the project team itself.

Summaries of individual pieces of research are included as appendices.

DTW and Politics International have developed this communications strategy in tandem with the Mersey Gateway team and Halton Borough Council's Corporate Marketing and Promotions Manager.

2.0 Vision

To build and maintain support for Mersey Gateway as a project that will transform the borough of Halton, improve the lives of local people and create new opportunities for business and investment in Halton, the Liverpool city-region, the North West and beyond.

3.0 Objectives

The objectives focus on achieving outcomes that will support the delivery of the Mersey Gateway project and the wider regeneration of Halton.

1) To develop understanding that the Mersey Gateway project is about more than just a bridge

2) To build and maintain support and awareness of the Mersey Gateway project amongst key stakeholders

3) To secure relevant formal approvals for the project from statutory consultees ahead of the public inquiry

4) To ensure an open and transparent public inquiry process with minimal objections by identifying potential opponents of the scheme and establishing ways to address their concerns

5) To provide stakeholders with appropriate opportunities to feedback on, and contribute to, the progress of the Mersey Gateway project

6) To engage and interest potential suppliers and contractors in tendering for the Mersey Gateway project

4.0 Issues Analysis

This section identifies the key issues the Mersey Gateway project will face during the period 2007-2011. It is split into four core stages that follow the same structure as the overall project programme.

To aid the communications planning process stage two, 'Statutory consents and outline business case', which runs from February 2007 to February 2010, is split into three parts. These are:

- the lead up to a likely public inquiry
- the period during the public inquiry up until a final decision is announced
- the post public inquiry period following the final decision.

4.1 Stage 1 – Business Justification March 2006 – to October 2007

- *Current low profile status* – since the government approved funding in early 2006 there has been a lull in communications activity whilst important research has been undertaken. This has led to an element of dissatisfaction amongst some stakeholders and likely confusion amongst the public as to how the project is now progressing. Some political audiences see the project as a 'done deal', a dangerous concept at a time when facing potential major political and policy changes in the next few years.

- *New research* – new research will be published into key areas like funding, tolling, scheme design and traffic modelling. The Mersey Gateway team needs to be pro-active in communicating key messages about the progress and outcome of these different pieces of research to its various groups of key stakeholders.

- *Tolling* – whilst the tolling issue is in the public domain, many people remain unaware that both crossings will be tolled. The project needs to be clear about its intentions and explain why tolling is inevitable whilst highlighting the proposed local discounts. Tolls have in the past proved controversial in Merseyside politically, e.g. the Mersey Tunnels Bill, so the political consensus that exists locally could be threatened by this issue.

- *Cost* – The estimated cost of the project has increased over time, and may do so again. Absolute clarity and agreement is needed amongst all stakeholders on the estimated cost of the project, the source of the funding and the areas of expenditure.

- *Draft Road Transport Bill* – expected to be introduced in April 2007, this will outline the government's plans to introduce road user charging across the UK, raising the profile of the issue and galvanising MPs and pressure groups opposed to both the government and this particular issue.

- *Local government reform agenda* – Central government is also currently taking forward a wide-ranging reform programme for local government through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill and the broader implementation of the Local Government White Paper. It will be looking for extensive financial efficiency savings from local authorities as part of this workstream.

- *Controversial land use* – As specifics about the land required to make the Mersey Gateway project work become public knowledge, Mersey Gateway and Halton Borough Council need to be pro-active and upfront in communicating with landowners and the public and not shy away from controversial issues.

- *Branding and identity* – greater clarity is required over the Mersey Gateway brand and in particular how it links with the Halton Borough Council brand. This links in, not only with the fact that the project is about more than just a bridge, but also to key issues such as the name of the crossing itself and the existence of other organisations with similar identities (3MG).

- *2007 Comprehensive Spending Review* – all departments are coming under threat from the Treasury to reduce spending and create efficiency savings. This, linked to a Department for Transport (DfT) Capability Review, is likely to lead to calls for changes in budgets and projects, and could threaten the Mersey Gateway.

- *Environmental impact* – The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has major concerns about DfT policy towards maritime and coastal sites and is willing to fight on the issue if necessary. It will be supported by, amongst others, Natural England and the Environment Agency. In the current climate, in which DEFRA is seen as a stronger department than the DfT, this could pose a considerable threat to the Mersey Gateway scheme if not dealt with sufficiently.

- *Affordability* – At a time in which spending is subject to tight constraints, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will be concerned about the knock-on effects of major projects on other parts of local government finance. There has also been considerable disquiet in recent months about the balance of funding between and within regions. For example, Chris Grayling MP, the Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, has expressed concern that a disproportionate number of infrastructure projects and moneys are flowing to Labour-held areas or Labour marginals.

- *National versus local* – Implicit in much of the discussion of the political issues above is the risk that the Mersey Gateway project will be used as, in effect, a local proxy for the bigger debates taking place on the national political stage. For example, at a time when DEFRA will be continuing to flight within government to ensure that the DfT adequately takes environmental issues into account, Mersey Gateway will be taking forward a project which will have a significant impact on local ecology.

- *Road charging* – At a time when national debates on road charging will be taken forward through petitions such as the Downing Street petition and the Draft Road Transport Bill, the Mersey Gateway project is proposing tolling on both the new Crossing and the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Finally, with cost high on the agenda because of tight national constraints, and the regional balance being closely examined as local and national elections approach, Mersey Gateway will be proposing expenditure on a major transport infrastructure project.

- *2012 Olympics* – The London Olympics will place pressures on funding and the availability of contractors at an important time during the Mersey Gateway project. Conversely, the government of the day is likely to want to show it is committed to investment in the regions and that existing funding commitments outside of London have not been jeopardised by any over spend in the capital.

4.2 Stage 2 – Statutory Consents and Outline Business Case – February 2007 – February 2010

4.2.1 Pre-public inquiry

- *Preparing the ground* – Regular communication with the project's broad range of stakeholders will be vital at this stage. It will ensure they are well briefed on the merits of the arguments, minimise objections based on misinformation and identify those who are likely to object and why they will do so.

- *Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008* – The city-region will be in the spotlight in 2007/08 as it gears up to become the European Capital of Culture. Should the city not deliver on all its promised activities and showpiece attractions, Mersey Gateway could become caught in the crossfire.

- *Silver Jubilee Bridge maintenance works* – If funding is approved, then planned major works for the SJB from 2008 will raise the profile of congestion as an issue locally and could bring some criticism of the length of time it is taking for the Mersey Gateway project to come to fruition.

- *Compulsory Purchase Orders* – Landowners and tenants may be unhappy with the terms of the CPOs and could try to stir up anti Mersey Gateway sentiment. Stakeholders need to hear why these CPOs are vital to the project and what Mersey Gateway is doing to mitigate the impact on landowners.

4.2.2 During public inquiry and up to decision period

This is a high profile and high-risk period for the Mersey Gateway project. Rapid response mechanisms need putting in place to ensure the team and its supporters and advocates are able to shape and respond to daily headlines and flows of information about the inquiry. This will include media relations and regular email bulletins to provide a quick response.

Mersey Gateway needs to ensure it is prepared for all likely inquiry outcomes and has clearly identified spokespeople and key messages to react to the decision.

4.2.3 Post decision on public inquiry

- *dealing with the fallout* – Whatever the outcome of the public inquiry it is likely that there will be activities that the Mersey Gateway team will need to undertake. It is essential that it communicates with stakeholders to let them know when, why and how it is undertaking this work and what the outcomes are.

- *managing and stimulating market interest* – attracting major players in a limited marketplace at a time of high demand for the construction industry (pre-London 2012) will require significant attention and investment from the Mersey Gateway team.

- *2009 general election* – with a hung parliament an increasingly likely possibility, the transport and environment policies of all three major political parties will be significant. The Mersey Gateway project needs to develop relationships with opposition parties in anticipation of future electoral change.

4.3 Stage 3 – Procurement – February 2010 – April 2011

- *Level and mechanism of tolling* – Whilst this will be a live issue throughout the project, it will become more controversial as the preferred bidder is appointed and more details about the scheme become clear.

- *Selection of preferred bidder* – The process and timetable for selecting the preferred bidder must be open and transparent to ensure the Mersey Gateway project and Halton Borough Council do not come under criticism from potential bidders or from other stakeholders.

4.4 Preparing for Stage 4 – Land Acquisition, Advanced Works, Design and Construction – 2011 – 2014

One of the key actions for the communications team in the latter part of stage three of the project will be to establish a communications strategy and protocol for the crucial three-year design and construction period.

This protocol should form part of the contractual obligations agreed with the appointed contractor, as once the appointed contractor is on site it will become formally responsible for communications activity. However, Halton Borough Council and the Mersey Gateway team must remain closely involved in the communications process. Live issues are likely to include:

- *Contractor disputes* – The Council needs to establish a clear mechanism for working through and communicating issues where there are disputes between the authority and the contractor. It will be important to present a united front wherever possible.

- *Disruption and congestion from advance works* - disruption is inevitable as works begin on the ground. Clear communication with local people and road users is essential to minimise confusion and maintain public support during this lengthy construction period.

- *Compulsory Purchase Orders* – Landowners and tenants may be unhappy with the terms of the CPOs and are likely to be continuing to stir up anti Mersey Gateway sentiment. Stakeholders need to hear why these CPOs are vital to the project and what Mersey Gateway is doing to mitigate the impact on landowners.

5.0 Stakeholders

5.1 The table below outlines the key groups of stakeholders the Mersey Gateway project will need to engage with on a variety of levels at different stages throughout the project.

Primary stakeholder groups have been identified and then divided to highlight key organisations that will require consultation. Appendix H provides a more detailed breakdown of these sub-groups into individual organisations and contacts.

KEY GROUPS	SUB GROUPS
National Decision Makers	Treasury
	DfT
	DEFRA
	DCLG
	Natural England
	Environment Agency
	DTI
	Treasury
	10 Downing Street
	English Heritage
	English Partnerships
	Highways Agency
	Regeneration bodies
	Think tanks
Regional Decision Makers	GONW
	NWDA
	North West Regional Assembly
	North West local authorities
	North West MPs
	North West MEPs
Local Audience	Halton residents
	Near neighbours
	Taxi drivers
	Schools
	Emergency services
	Leisure i.e. golf etc
	Commuters
	North West public
	Public transport providers
	Parish councils
	Airport users
	Road user groups
	Local regeneration bodies
Businesses	Landowners
	50 most affected in Halton
	Wider Halton business community
	Chamber of Commerce
	Liverpool city region businesses

Mersey Gateway Team	Local Councillors
	Exec Board
	Project Team
	Advisory panel
	Wider team – existing contractors etc
Environmental Organisations	Environment Agency
	RSPB
	Mersey Conservator
	Friends of the Earth
	Local special interest groups
Media	Local media
	Regional media
	National media
	Trade and technical media
Potential Suppliers	Utilities
	Contractors

5.2 Potential objectors

Individuals and groups will object to the project for a wide range of reasons, and could be drawn from most if not all of the categories identified above. The following groups have been identified as the most likely objectors to the Mersey Gateway project.

Likely reason for objecting	**Potential Objectors**
Environmental	DEFRA
	Environment Agency
	Natural England
	Mersey Conservator
	Friends of the Earth
	RSPB
	Local special interest groups
Tolling	Road users
	Businesses
	'Local' people who don't qualify for discounts
	Mersey Tunnel Group
Disruption/land use	Near neighbours
	Landowners
	Golf course users
Financial	HM Treasury
	DCLG
	Competitors for funding
Political	'Opposition' politicians

6.0 Key Messages

The Mersey Gateway project needs to have a set of consistent key messages that all its ambassadors buy into and can project. Whilst the messages must be supportive of each other as a whole, there is a need to target particular audiences with individual messages. This section outlines the generic key messages and some audience specific ones.

6.1 Generic

6.1.1 Mersey Gateway is about more than just a bridge – it is the catalyst that will connect communities and lead regeneration and investment throughout Halton and the Liverpool city-region.

6.1.2 Doing nothing is not an option – over 80,000 vehicles use the SJB every weekday, and its design capacity is around 60,000. Traffic levels are predicted to continue to grow and essential maintenance work will add to congestion issues.

6.1.3 Mersey Gateway will mean hundreds of new jobs and millions of pounds worth of new investment in Halton and the Liverpool city-region.

6.1.4 The Mersey Gateway project will cut journey times and improve journey reliability for local people, commuters and businesses.

6.1.5 Mersey Gateway is a green project. Extensive measures will be taken to ensure it has a positive impact on the environment in the local area. It will also allow more public transport alternatives for local people and regular commuters and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

6.1.6 The new crossing will make an important contribution to the regional and national economies by improving connectivity across the region and in particular throughout the crucial M6/M56 corridor.

6.2 National decision-makers

6.2.1 The vast majority of people in the north west are backing this project – we have the support of all political parties locally, 95% of the North West MPs, the business community throughout the region and the overwhelming backing of commuters and local people.

6.2.2 The Mersey Gateway project will bring major regeneration benefits across the North West. Halton is a major gateway to the Liverpool city-region and the Northern Way. Economic regeneration across the north west will be hampered if the project does not go ahead.

6.2.3 This project is not yet a done deal and cannot succeed without financial backing from central government.

6.2.4 Halton has a track record of delivery. It is an ‘excellent’ local authority with an excellent rated Local Transport Plan.

6.3 Regional decision-makers

6.3.1 Mersey Gateway will bring benefits to the north west, not just to Halton.

6.3.2 Your support is important as it presents a united front to central government that the whole of the region is supporting this project.

6.3.3 Without the Mersey Gateway project the current congestion that road users suffer heading in to the region via Halton will worsen.

6.3.4 The river crossing at Halton is a vital piece of strategic transport infrastructure for the North West. Without a viable and working river crossing, regional connectivity is severely impeded.

6.4 Local audience

6.4.1 We still want your support and want to know what you think about the ongoing transformation the Mersey Gateway project will mean for Halton.

6.4.2 This is a huge project and nothing is going to happen overnight – construction work won't start in earnest until 2011, but the benefits will be worth waiting for.

6.4.3 Both bridges will be tolled crossings but we are actively investigating ways to introduce discounts for regular users.

6.4.4 The Mersey Gateway project is not being financed through Council tax – the funding comes from central government, the North West Regional Assembly, the private sector and road users.

6.4.5 The Mersey Gateway project gives us a chance to remove some of Halton's biggest eyesores and transform the towns of Widnes and Runcorn.

6.5 Businesses

6.5.1 The Mersey Gateway project will attract new businesses to Halton and breathe new life into those that are already here.

6.6 Environmental organisations

6.6.1 The Mersey Gateway project will strive to improve the environment for wildlife and not harm the ecosystem of the river.

6.7 Media

6.7.1 Mersey Gateway is one of the biggest projects of its kind in the UK and will be an iconic structure for Halton, the north west and the UK.

6.7.2 The Mersey Gateway project and Halton will be a model for how local authorities should tackle sustainable transport issues in the long-term.

6.8 Potential suppliers

6.8.1 Mersey Gateway will be one of the most high profile and prestigious construction projects in the UK over the next decade.

6.9 Potential objectors

6.9.1 The Mersey Gateway team is actively seeking different views and listening to all concerns about the project.

6.9.2 Where it is possible, the results of its extensive consultations will be fed into the project plans.

7.0 Branding and image management

7.1 The Mersey Gateway project must ensure that its corporate image is maintained at all times. Corporate image is everything that stakeholders and the general public see that represents Mersey Gateway, from letters and stationery to signage and printed literature.

This strategy will not provide detailed guidance or instruction in the use of the brand or image. However, it is important to touch upon several key points.

7.2 The Mersey Gateway project will continue to sit outside of Halton Borough Council's corporate branding strategy.

7.3 Mersey Gateway will remain as the prominent brand throughout all published literature and materials. The strapline will be changed from 'A new Mersey Crossing' to 'A Bridge to Prosperity'.

The existing strapline reinforces the current impression that the project is purely about the new crossing and does not broaden out to include the wider regeneration benefits. Changing people's perceptions of this will take time, but changing the strapline is a simple and straightforward way of beginning this process. This new strapline should be used on all communications materials.

7.4 In all references to the project the name 'Mersey Gateway' must be used. However, the Mersey Gateway project has a number of individual elements to it, each of which need to have a sub-identity of their own.

The most significant of these is the bridge itself, but there are around a dozen other projects that have or need their own identity. These need clarifying and confirming at the earliest possible date.

7.5 A public naming competition should be held to identify the preferred name for the crossing and generate and maintain local interest in the project.

7.6 Basic corporate identity and style guidelines will be developed to govern the use of the brand.

7.7 When using the Mersey Gateway logo the following full colour mixes or pantone colours are to be used at all times and should be given to any agency or outside body when dealing with the logo.

Colour	Pantone Reference	Full colour Mix
Green	Pantone 355	100% cyan, 91% yellow, 6% black
Blue	Pantone Process Cyan	100% cyan

7.8 Appropriate guidelines and logo files should be stored on the Communications section of Collaborator.

8.0 Tactics

The Mersey Gateway team must ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to communications to reach out to its identified internal and external stakeholders with its key messages.

This section outlines the broad range of tactics it needs to use to achieve this.

8.1 An Inclusive Organisational Structure

This strategy is designed to make the Mersey Gateway team's communications activities as inclusive as possible. However, it is important that the structure of the organisation leads this inclusive approach.

In addition to its existing structure, the Mersey Gateway project should consider creating further advisory bodies that represent and include different stakeholders like local people and businesses.

Suggestions would be:
- Mersey Gateway Residents Panel
- Mersey Gateway Business Forum.

8.2 Mersey Gateway Tour

A bespoke Mersey Gateway tour needs to be created to show visiting politicians, journalists, prospective suppliers and other key stakeholders the importance of, and the potential for, the project.

The tour should be capable of either condensing into an hour or lasting half a day. The longer version should include:

- Briefing session with Project Director/Project Manager
- Visit to the Catalyst for a high-level perspective
- Drive around the areas being regenerated
- A look at the route the new crossing will take
- Meetings with supportive businesses/residents
- Lunch in Widnes or Runcorn.

8.3 Internal Communications Tools

The internal audience for the Mersey Gateway project is a broad one. It is far greater than the project team as it encompasses a wide range of partners and Halton Borough Council employees.

8.3.1 Key Messages and Question and Answer document

A key messages and question and answer document should be developed for senior stakeholders and supporters to ensure the Mersey Gateway team and its supporters give out consistent messages to media and other interested parties.

8.3.2 Collaborator

Collaborator is the central host for all project related information. It should remain as password-access only but have stronger links with external digital media such as the main website and the e-bulletin.

8.3.3 E-bulletin

A weekly e-bulletin should be circulated to the project team and key suppliers containing important new information and updates. This should provide an 'at a glance' summary of important new information. It should be supplemented by an e-news alert system allowing people to receive news releases as they are issued.

8.3.4 Partner publications

The Mersey Gateway project should take full advantage of the publications (both printed and digital) produced by partner organisations (principally Halton Borough Council) to inform and update people about progress on the project.

8.3.5 Briefings

Regular briefings should be organised for a variety of important staff groups, e.g.

- Leader and Chief Exec
- Senior Management Team
- key front line staff e.g. those in one stop shops throughout the borough who are in regular contact with the public

This will inform these audiences as to progress on the project and help them act as ambassadors for the Mersey Gateway project.

8.3.6 Induction materials

Suitable materials should be made available to all staff during their inductions to give them a basic understanding of the Mersey Gateway project. The same should be done for any newly elected councillors. (NB: This should be done alongside Halton Borough Council's other major projects).

8.3.7 Halton Borough Council

The Mersey Gateway project will make use of Halton Borough Council's wide range of internal communications

8.4 Literature and publications

The Mersey Gateway project needs a suite of literature and materials to explain the Mersey Gateway story to its different audiences.

The following literature should be developed:

8.4.1 Mersey Gateway Info Pack

A generic pack that contains key information and details about the Mersey Gateway project. A folder and inserts give the option for easy and regular updates and provide flexibility for appropriate content to be provided for different audiences.

8.4.2 Brochure

A high quality brochure should be the centrepiece of the info pack.

8.4.3 Inserts

Inserts should include:

- Info sheets for each key element of the Mersey Gateway project e.g. the Crossing, Ditton Junction, St Helens Canal
- information sheet for prospective suppliers
- Info sheets on what HBC is doing to minimise the impact on businesses and local people
- Info sheets on other major projects with Halton
- Mersey Gateway supporters sheet
- Mersey Gateway timetable
- Funding
- Frequently Asked Questions

8.4.4 Exhibition materials

The Mersey Gateway project will invest in three forms of exhibition materials. These are:

- static boards for unmanned use in venues across the borough such as libraries and shopping centres
- a mobile exhibition unit for use at events and exhibitions. This will be designed as an interactive exhibition that will require manning
- specific exhibition materials for display at the Catalyst Museum (this should include the 3D model).

Each exhibition format should be updated annually.

8.4.5 Maps

The Mersey Gateway project needs to have access to a series of maps that will visually illustrate the size and scale of the project (this should be backed up with aerial photography).

8.4.6 Photo library

The Mersey Gateway project needs to develop a photo library showing different elements of the project for use across the full range of printed and digital marketing materials.

8.4.7 Schools and education pack

The Mersey Gateway project should build on its existing work with local schools by reviewing and updating its existing schools pack that links in with national curriculum activities for schools across the borough.

8.4.8 Political briefs

Special briefing notes should be developed for political representatives and leaders from throughout the region – (councillors, MPs, MEPs, chief executives). A summary brief considering the projects in its totality should be accompanied by briefs on individual issues such as tolling and ecology.

8.4.9 Mersey Gateway newsletter

A quarterly printed newsletter updating decision-makers across the region and within central government on the latest developments surrounding the Mersey Gateway project.

8.4.10 3D Model

A digital 3D model will be produced for the project.

8.5 Media Relations

Media relations will play a crucial communications role, informing the public and all stakeholders about the project. The media will be engaged on all levels covering local, regional, national and technical agendas.

The following approach to media relations will be taken.

8.5.1 Media Relations Protocol

This will outline the approval process and identify the Mersey Gateway representatives who should act as media spokespeople. This will include project team representatives as well as public and private sector supporters from Halton, the wider city region and throughout the North West.

It should also detail how the project team will deal with the media in a crisis situation.

8.5.2 Media Briefings

It is vital that the media is aware of the communications team and the key figures involved in the project.

Media briefings will be held with the local, regional, trade and national media to bring the project to the forefront of their minds and ensure they are aware of the communications team and can begin to build a rapport.

Media packs will be collated to ensure that the visits translate into coverage of the project.

Details of the briefings can be found in the action plan.

8.5.3 News Releases

Regular news releases and features covering project developments, the publication of plans, the tolling debate, the appointment of suppliers and consultants and other aspects of the project will be issued to the media. In addition, national news hooks, events, legislation and other points of interest will be used to generate positive coverage for the project and maintain support among residents and stakeholders.

Such stories will include:

- MORI Delivery Index – 13 May, 4 September and 27 November 2007
- Comment around the Draft Road Transport Bill
- Announcements about key studies and research being undertaken
- Landmarks in the progress of the project

8.5.4 News Alert System

Partners need to be aware of key developments on the project as they are made public. A news alert system circulating news releases to partners as they are issued should be introduced.

8.5.5 Feature Ideas

Features complement news stories and will work in tandem and offer a controlled environment from which to deliver key messages.

a. Forward features list

A forward features list has been developed detailing suitable opportunities to contribute to pre-planned editorial in key titles spanning the national and trade media in particular. This list will be continually updated and is detailed in the action plan.

b. Feature synopses

Feature synopses will also be issued to the media on a regular basis enabling journalists to commission in-depth articles. In many cases, features will be by-lined to a third party as well as to the project team, to increase credibility.

c. Personal profiles

Personal profiles will also be created for key team members, including external consultants where appropriate, to bring to life and showcase the experience of the project team.

8.5.6 Campaigns

The Mersey Gateway project should work with local and regional media to develop themed campaigns around particular aspects of the project e.g. encouraging people to sign up as supporters. This adds emphasis to the coverage and gives the media the feeling of ownership and buy-in. Where possible and appropriate, these should be closely integrated with political events and other profile-raising activity.

8.5.7 Frequently Asked Questions

A set of publicly available frequently asked questions should be distributed to the media and made available through other communications activities to provide consistent and accurate answers to some of the most commonly asked questions.

8.5.8 Media Training

A media training programme will be devised and implemented to ensure that media opportunities are maximised and that the media can rely upon the team to provide strong comments that are on message not only for the project but also appropriate for each individual media outlet.

8.5.9 Freedom of Information

The Mersey Gateway project will follow Halton Borough Council's existing policy and procedures relating to Freedom of Information requests. All requests will be dealt with via the Project Director. A copy of Halton Borough Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme is included as Appendix G.

8.6 Face to face briefings

The Mersey Gateway project must continue to brief senior stakeholders, such as the Council Leader and Chief Executive, through face-to-face briefings. This should also be extended to other senior stakeholders as they are identified through the course of the project.

8.7 Political briefings

8.7.1 The Mersey Gateway project must continue to apply itself to the process of engaging with senior political and policy figures at a national and regional level. It should be broadened out to ensure the following:

- Ensure DEFRA and DCLG are briefed on issues but not as part of briefing solely on the Mersey Gateway project. This should be integrated with wider briefing on Halton regeneration and the wider natural environment
- Push regeneration arguments strongly with DCLG and DTI with the Mersey Gateway project seen as a pillar of this
- Don't ignore the overtly political issues, especially tolling and the environment. Where possible, the project should link into national debates to boost profile but also guard against the possibility of it being used as a Trojan horse to open up wider debates by environmental groups and opposition MPs

- MPs, peers and officials close to the Chancellor are aware of the Mersey Gateway project and the Halton story
- Develop relationships with opposition parties in anticipation of major political change over the next two to three years.

8.7.2 In order to achieve this the project needs a comprehensive scheme of public affairs activity, including:

- A Westminster dinner for North West MPs to position the Mersey Gateway project in the regeneration debate, and demonstrate to MPs that the project is far from being a 'done deal'
- Regular briefing of MPs to ensure that they both *reactively* participate in relevant debates and *proactively* sponsor debates and ask questions helpful to Halton Borough Council
- Ensure that key political figures around the Chancellor are alert to the regeneration benefits of the Mersey Gateway project through a combination of written and oral briefings, and possibly site visits. Major targets include Michael Jacobs, a member of the Chancellor's Council of Economic Advisers, Graham Turnock, responsible for transport matters in HMT, and Beth Russell, who leads on transport and the environment
- Hold a briefing event for regional trade unions. Whilst this would serve a practical purpose given the employment generation and wider economic benefits that would flow from the scheme, it would also prove useful in providing an indirect way to brief key regional and national Labour politicians.
- Regular briefing of opposition teams
- Regular updates for regional political supporters in Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties
- Participation in relevant political and specialist transport/regeneration conferences
- Participation in the debates surrounding the Draft Road Transport Bill in Parliament and through the Transport Select Committee
- A stakeholder conversation-style event for local environmental organisations, with invitees from DEFRA, Natural England and the Environment Agency to ensure they understand both the economic importance of the project and the work the Mersey Gateway team is undertaking to guard against environmental risks.

8.8 Digital Media

Digital media will become increasingly important to the Mersey Gateway communications mix as the project progresses and technology and, more importantly, people's access to and familiarity of digital media technology, improves.

8.8.1 www

A revised, more interactive website is essential and forms the bedrock to all other digital media activities outlined below which will be guiding interested parties towards the website. The site should include reciprocal links to the project's wide range of public and private sector partners throughout the region.

8.8.2 e-bulletin

A weekly e-bulletin should be circulated to the project team containing important new information and updates. This should provide an ‘at a glance’ summary of important new information.

8.8.3 E-newsletters

A monthly e-newsletter aimed at local people and businesses should be issued on an opt-in basis. As the audience grows the impact and power of the newsletter will increase over time, eventually making it an important communications tool for the project to inform local people of any activities.

8.8.4 Regeneration showreel

The Mersey Gateway project will form the cornerstone of Halton’s regeneration activity over the next seven years. An interactive showreel will highlight the project and the borough’s attractions for investors and developers and can be extended to cover other projects in the Halton area.

8.8.5 Podcasts

An online podcast that can visually show the Mersey Gateway story is essential, and will also have other uses at events and exhibitions.

8.8.6 Collaborator

Collaborator is the central host for all project related information. It should remain as password-access only but have stronger links with external digital media such as the main website and the e-bulletin.

New developments will inevitably take place over the next five years to add to the range of the digital media tactics outlined here. The Mersey Gateway project should embrace these and be at the forefront of the digital media use within the authority and within the north west region.

8.8.7 Presentations

High quality presentations make a big impact on the watching audience. The Mersey Gateway project needs to develop a mechanism for creating a range of dynamic presentations for different audiences about the project. These presentations should also be shared with key project partners.

8.9 Consultation and public engagement

8.9.1 This element of the communications strategy is crucial to ensure the success of the project through to completion. The Mersey Gateway project will follow Halton Borough Council’s Consultation Policy for all its consultation activities.

8.9.2 Consultation will be early and extensive. Stakeholders must be fully engaged with the process and be given appropriate opportunities to provide feedback on proposals and activities. This will help prevent future objections and maintain support.

8.9.3 Wherever possible existing council consultation mechanisms should be used to avoid potential consultation fatigue and ensure maximum effectiveness.

8.9.4 However, the Mersey Gateway project cannot just rely on stakeholders coming to it. The project must be pro-active in engaging with people and taking its messages out to local communities across Halton, which will require some investment in project specific materials. Consultation tactics will include:

8.9.5 Exhibitions

Exhibitions will provide a visual update for the public as well as stakeholders. The content of all exhibition materials should reflect the benefits of Mersey Gateway to Halton, the wider city region and the North West.

Static exhibitions

Materials including maps, aerial photography and progress reports will be displayed at existing public sites such as the Catalyst Museum, libraries, leisure centres, civic buildings and so on. Updated on an annual basis, the exhibitions will help maintain a level of engagement with the public and demonstrate a commitment to providing information.

Mobile exhibitions

In addition, a mobile unit will be sourced and deployed to support the public consultation programme and will look to provide a more in-depth overview of the project and the work to date and be more interactive than its static counterpart. This unit will be available to attend events throughout the borough such as school meetings, community and parish council gatherings and so on.

8.9.6 Education programme

Children will also be communicated with via an education programme designed to involve them in the project and stimulate enthusiasm at home. The programme will address the environmental and economic benefits of the project and through activities such as a naming competition and artwork competitions, it is hoped the younger residents of Halton will take the project to heart and help shape it.

8.9.7 Residents' forum

A Mersey Gateway resident forum will work alongside other organisations such as Halton 2000 to provide a grass roots perspective on the project and the general feeling among the immediate public. Attending project meetings and receiving bi-monthly progress reports the forum members will become 'on the ground' ambassadors for the project.

8.9.8 Public e-newsletter

A monthly e-newsletter will update the public and grow as a communication and consultation channel as the project develops over the next five years.

8.9.9 Existing Council consultation channels

Residents' issues and views will be evaluated and addressed through existing channels such as:

- Residents' Survey
- Halton Today
- Halton 2000 Residents' Panel
- Highway Schemes Consultation Review Panel
- Focus groups

8.10 Events

Events will provide platforms to further engage with stakeholders while generating publicity as a result.

8.10.1 Existing opportunities

There are a host of suitable events to attend either as a delegate, contributor or sponsor. Achieving a balance is important and it's crucial that all stakeholders are reached through a variety of events from transport focused conferences, through to North West initiatives.

The focus for the first year of the strategy should be on attending events as delegates rather than taking exhibition space. This will have a number of key benefits including:

- Networking
- Assessing suitability for future attendance as exhibitors.

The Mersey Gateway project should link with Halton Borough Council to achieve a co-ordinated presence at events around the country.

A detailed list of events the project team should attend in Year One is included as part of the Action Plan in Appendix F.

8.10.2 Project specific events

In addition to third party events, the Mersey Gateway project team will host a number of events in the region and in London as part of the public consultation process and wider engagement activity.

This should include:

- Breakfast briefings
- Consultation events
- Westminster dinner for north west MPs

8.11 Database management

Effective gathering of contact details is essential for a successful communications programme. The Mersey Gateway team needs to have a range of standardised and accessible databases. Clear responsibilities must be assigned for updating information. The databases should include:

- ‘Opted-in’ members of the public
- Project partners
- Political figures and influencers
- Near neighbours
- Residents in Halton
- Businesses in Halton
- Potential suppliers
- Media.

9.0 Monitoring and evaluation

9.1 The main focus of the evaluation should relate back to the objectives specified in this strategy. These are outlined below.

Objective 1: To develop understanding that the Mersey Gateway project is about more than just a bridge

Evaluation: Questions in residents and staff surveys
Regular feedback via internet
Media coverage

Objective 2: To provide an open and transparent public inquiry process with minimal objections

Evaluation: Successful public inquiry process
Minimal number of objectors
Awareness in advance of all likely objectors
Support levels amongst media, public and key stakeholders
Remain positive throughout public inquiry process

Objective 3: To secure relevant formal approvals for the project from statutory consultees ahead of the public inquiry

Evaluation: Number of relevant approvals secured

Objective 4: To provide key stakeholders with appropriate opportunities to feed back on and contribute to the progress of the Mersey Gateway project

Evaluation: Questions in residents/staff survey
Evaluation of individual communications mechanisms (see 9.2 below)

Objective 5: To engage and interest potential suppliers and contractors into tendering for the Mersey Gateway project

Evaluation: Secure expressions of interest from three major potential main contractors

Objective 6: To build and maintain support and awareness of the Mersey Gateway project amongst key stakeholders and local people

Evaluation: continued government commitment to funding the project
100% of regional MPs continue to publicly express support for the new crossing
90% of local authorities and government organisations in the region publicly support the new crossing
200 new businesses signed up to support the Mersey Crossing project by end 2007
100% of regional media express and continue to show editorial support for new crossing by end 2008
1,000 respondents signed up to Mersey Gateway e-newsletter by end 2007.

9.2 In addition to this, each Mersey Gateway channel of communication should have a mechanism for feedback and should feature an annual user survey to establish its own individual effectiveness. This will take a variety of forms as outlined by the examples below:

- The Crossing newsletter – an annual reader satisfaction survey
- Mersey Gateway e-bulletin – regular invitations for people to give feedback, annual user satisfaction survey
- Mersey Gateway website – permanent online invitation for people to give feedback, annual user satisfaction survey
- Media coverage – to be analysed for advertising value, circulation and readership using independent Cutting Edge software. Minimum take up rate of 95% of all news releases/feature materials to be achieved
- Exhibitions – feedback forms present at all exhibitions
- Events – feedback forms present at all events
- Schools – teachers involved in development process, feedback forms issued with all educational packs for teachers and pupils.

Appendix A – Media Audit

As part of the research process, a comprehensive media audit was conducted to inform the media relations activity and the wider communications remit.

Key contacts across the local, regional and national media were questioned as well as those from the trade and technical sectors.

As expected, the local and regional media were very supportive of the project. It was noted that all would be interested in covering the crossing regularly and were particularly interested in ‘people’ focused stories, expert analysis and inspirational stories of comparison.

Similarly, the trade and technical sectors were aware of the project but would welcome further and regular information. Many contacts agreed that features would be appropriate for their publications and that regular contact was preferred to ensure all opportunities were maximised.

It was discovered that a large proportion of the national media were unsure where exactly Halton was and as a result did not appreciate the scale of the project or the wider regeneration associated with it. However, many contacts believed that the project was of interest once major progress had been made or if there was a link to a wider national agenda, such as the Government Spending Review, transport bills and so on.

Each interview and its outcomes are detailed below.

National/Trade Media Audit

Suzanne Moody – BBC Radio 4

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what/where it is?
   No – assume it's a bridge over the Mersey.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?
   No – we would cover it without bias if of interest

3. What are your perceptions of the Halton area?
   LE explained where Halton was – run down not a lot to do in need of investment. Never been to Runcorn or Widnes and couldn't imagine why I ever would although Manchester and Liverpool are great.

Provide briefing for journalists unaware of project to date – along the lines of….

The Mersey Gateway is a proposed new £330million bridge that will join the two towns of Runcorn and Widnes (both in the borough of Halton) (approx 15 miles south-east of Liverpool) and provide a major new strategic access route between Merseyside and Cheshire and the south. The government has recently approved funding for the project, though due to its size and impact it is expected there will be a public inquiry before construction begins. Halton Borough Council and its partners are planning to have the new crossing open by 2014, when it will be able to relieve the pressure on the existing Silver Jubilee bridge and become a catalyst for ongoing and future regeneration in Halton and the Liverpool City Region.

Expand if necessary and also offer to send through more information

4. Is the Mersey Gateway a large and interesting enough project to interest you/your publication?
   In the right context yes – such as regeneration feature, gvt. spending, or in relation to transport legislation and so on.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication?
   When there is something to say which will have a national resonance. Linking to gvt bills and other stories would also be considered.

6. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?
   Assuming environmental groups will not be totally onboard. Residents may have an issue with work especially if it impacts upon the existing bridge.

7. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?
   I would guess the general delivery and engendering support throughout the period up until 2014.

8. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?
   As noted above.

Catherine Early – Planning

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what/where it is?

Yes – Runcorn and it's a second bridge to support the existing bridge – Silver Jubilee.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so,
   what is it?

No – we will simply cover the developments as they occur.

3.What are your perceptions of the Halton area?
In need of regeneration – wouldn't have known anything about it without the Crossing really. Would never need or really want to go to Widnes or Runcorn they seem to be places to simply pass through to get to other places.

Provide briefing for journalists unaware of project to date – along the lines of….

The Mersey Gateway is a proposed new £330million bridge that will join the two towns of Runcorn and Widnes (both in the borough of Halton) (approx 15 miles south-east of Liverpool) and provide a major new strategic access route between Merseyside and Cheshire and the south. The government has recently approved funding for the project, though due to its size and impact it is expected there will be a public inquiry before construction begins. Halton Borough Council and its partners are planning to have the new crossing open by 2014, when it will be able to relieve the pressure on the existing Silver Jubilee bridge and become a catalyst for ongoing and future regeneration in Halton and the Liverpool City Region.

Expand if necessary and also offer to send through more information

4. Is the Mersey Gateway a large and interesting enough project to interest you/your publication?

Yes. Especially moving into this next stage.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication?

As often as you have planning updates and can provide experts re quotes etc.

6. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

As usual environmental quarter such as RSPB, EA possibly and so on.
Commercial and residential properties who will be affected.

7. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Size and infrastructure. Huge undertaking and timescalses often fall by the wayside.

8. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

Planning process, approach, team involved etc

Adam Bullimore – BBC TV Planning

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what/where it is?

Yes vaguely, is it a crossing over the Mersey.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

No but would cover as appropriate.

3. What are your perceptions of the Halton area?

LE explained where Halton was exactly – not a lot to do unless you live there. Probably residential with a need for shopping and leisure to compete with North West cities.

Provide briefing for journalists unaware of project to date – along the lines of….

The Mersey Gateway is a proposed new £330million bridge that will join the two towns of Runcorn and Widnes (both in the borough of Halton) (approx 15 miles south-east of Liverpool) and provide a major new strategic access route between Merseyside and Cheshire and the south. The government has recently approved funding for the project, though due to its size and impact it is expected there will be a public inquiry before construction begins. Halton Borough Council and its partners are planning to have the new crossing open by 2014, when it will be able to relieve the pressure on the existing Silver Jubilee bridge and become a catalyst for ongoing and future regeneration in Halton and the Liverpool City Region.

Expand if necessary and also offer to send through more information

4. Is the Mersey Gateway a large and interesting enough project to interest you/your publication?

Would have to work in the right context – transport, regeneration etc. The BBC would cover it and you would be as well thinking of the wider national picture too and possibly links/similarities to Thames Gateway and so on.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication?

As and when is appropriate – will be looking at bigger picture though so 'soft angles' not our bag.

6. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

Environmental, commercial if there is a charge, residents, public transport and so on.

7. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Probably its size – there's always so much work involved with bridges such as roads, access etc.

8. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

As above.

Always contact by phone to guarantee a response

Local/Regional Media Audit

Andy Bonner – ITV

1.Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

Second crossing joining Runcorn and Widnes – regeneration project really.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

Will cover it and mainly positive.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Funding is in place and work will be completed around 2014.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Not of late – more contact needed,

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

As and when..

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Press office or a councillor – it would depend if it came from a news release or our own sources.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

On track and will give Merseyside a huge boost.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

Think they will be pleased it's happening.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

Businesses using bridges frequently, RSBP, EA, Conservator etc

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Scale.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

Regular updates and more grass roots work.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

All.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Occasionally.

Prefers to be reached by phone.

Andy Kelly – Liverpool Post

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

New bridge to support Silver Jubilee Bridge.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

We are positive about the project.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Funding is in place and work will finish around 2013.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Yes but nothing for a while. More regular updates.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

Whenever there is anything of interest.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Press office or a councillor.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

It's been successful but it's a huge undertaking and there is stll os much to do so the team needs to keep its momentum going.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

They are positive about the project but as always expect everything to happen overnight.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

On the environmental front and from residents who face disruption.

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Size of project, keeping support levels high.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

Regular updates.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

All of it – but more keen on substantial news as opposed to overly 'soft' features

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Yes.

Prefers to be reached by phone.

Barbara Jordan – Runcorn & Widnes World

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

Very aware – the development of a second crossing with new infrastructure which will alleviate congestion and then secondly regenerate the borough.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

Yes – totally supportive, encouraged readers to write to gvt to back application.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Funding is secured and planning applications now underway.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Yes but it would be better to be able to dripfeed info to the public as it seems as though nothing has happened since the funding announcement.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

Beware of overkill.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Usually go to councillors or the Exec Board in first instance.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

It's brilliant and the success to date is a great achievement. We're a small borough making a massive impact.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

The same as above but they don't appreciate the time I takes to make it happen.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

Environmental groups and some residents who don't understand tolling issues.

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Delivery – so many aspects to pull together.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

Regular updates.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

All – interested in running a profile on Steve Nicholson and other people involved. Keen on a project comparison too. Would prefer angles exclusively and will make effort to make features big and full of images if it is an exclusive.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Yes.

Contact Barbara by email on Monday and Tuesday unless urgent as she is on deadline. Otherwise phone is preferred.

Mark Bell – Wire FM

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

It's a second crossing to support the existing bridge but that will also help to take business and commuter traffic. Part of a wider social and economic regeneration plan.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

We just report the story but we are generally supportive.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Not sure where it's at right now but I know the Gvt has given it the green light and a large contribution.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Not had much lately but would cover it if we did.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

Not too sure really as we'll run what is newsworthy. Would prefer to be kept in the loop of all developments.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Press office really.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

Successful and delivering what it set out to.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

Positively but expect it to be up faster than is possible.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

People who will be disrupted by work and the RSPB, Mersey Conservator etc

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Getting it up by 2013 or whenever the deadline is.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

More public meetings and news stories, maybe a newsletter would help too.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

Interested in anything.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Once or twice.

Phone is preferred.

Andy Ball – BBC Radio Merseyside

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

Second crossing to help ease the SJB and help regeneration.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

Yes we cover it and are generally supportive.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Funding is agreed and planning underway.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Not so much really and would take more.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

As often as there are stories.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Comms team or councillors direct. If received press release then the named contact but don't know who that is now.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

Very good, much needed and a boost for Halton.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

The same with some exceptions from those who are not so aware of benefits or who don't have to use it.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

Environmental front.

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Building it and private investment. Maybe tolling too.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

More news.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

Would listen to any ideas.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Occasionally.

Phone to guarantee response.

Neil Hodgson – Liverpool Echo

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

Aware a bridge to support SJB and ease congestion.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

We think it's a good idea and needed but report fairly at all times.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Funding is there as of earlier 2006 and now planning and contracts will begin.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Yes and no as I couldn't remember last press release sent out.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

As often as there is news but beware of releases for releases sake. Calls are better to sell in than simply issuing releases, as we may be able to help you create a story.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Not a preference sometimes the press officer sometimes council – just depends.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

It's good and going to plan.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

Think it's long overdue but not sure what's next.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

Probably from environmental objectors and maybe local residents re tolls and building disruption.

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Explaining need fro major disruption and maintaining motivation and support.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

Regular updates.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

All – but will definitely report real charted progress as well as people stories too.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Sometimes. Phone or email is preferred.

Simon Drury – Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?

Very aware – the development of a second crossing with new infrastructure which will alleviate congestion and then secondly regenerate the borough.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?

Yes – very supportive and covers regularly.

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?

Money is there from gvt and now the rest will be sourced and contracts agreed etc.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?

Yes but not as much lately. Info at least once a month if not more often.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?

As often as is interesting. Better to drip feed than miss opportunities.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?

Depends – council, exec board or comms officer.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?

Needed and a good job to date.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?

As above but wondering what happens next.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?

Environmental pressure groups, Conservator etc.

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?

Keeping support and delivering on time and on budget.

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

Regular updates more on the ground consultation.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?
All. Wouldn't mind doing some profile work too.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?
Yes.

Contact by phone always and follow up with email.

Sarah Harker – Warrington Guardian

1. Are you aware of the Mersey Gateway project – could you describe what it is?
A second bridge to help ease traffic between Runcorn and Widnes.

2. Do you have an editorial policy towards the Mersey Gateway project? If so, what is it?
Supportive and will cover stories..

3. What is your understanding of the Mersey Gateway project to date?
Funding in place but more needed – assume planning is now being sought and final plans drawn up.

4. Do you feel you have received sufficient information about the project and how could this be improved going forward?
Not recently could do with more updates and quotes etc.

5. How often do you want to hear from the Mersey Gateway project/ how often do you think the Mersey Gateway project can expect to be featured in your publication/on your station?
Every couple of weeks unless there is a breaking story.

6. Where would you go/who would you approach for information about the Mersey Gateway project?
Press office or council.

7. What is your personal perception of the success of the project so far?
It will help Halton but also Warrington and the wider Merseyside area.

8. How do you feel that your readers/listeners/viewers and the general public perceive the project?
Pleased it is happening but not sure where the project is at.

9. If from anywhere, where do you think opposition to the project will arise?
Environmental groups and toll payers including businesses.

10. What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Mersey Gateway team in terms of implementation?
Size and scale of work. Maybe final funding too,

11. How do you feel the communication could be improved from the perspective of the wider public?

Public meetings and more news updates.

12. What aspects of the Mersey Gateway project interest you most?

Would be keen to hear anything as Warrington is involved and it will affect our residents.

13. Do you ever use the Mersey Gateway website?

Sometimes to back a story up.

Phone is preferred.

Appendix B - Stakeholder Questionnaire Results

Following the distribution of the questionnaire (see document below) 16 responses were recorded and subsequently analysed.

The feedback received came from a variety of stakeholder groups including councillors, regional organisations, national agencies and consultants.

Overall the Mersey Gateway project appears to have communicated effectively with its stakeholders with 50 per cent noting communication as being good and 25 per cent deeming it excellent. Furthermore, 85 percent felt that the level of communication to date had been sufficient.

Specifically, it was felt that while business briefings, political lobbying and the quality of presentations were high points, the website is in need of updating, presentation venues were often poor and marketing activity needed to have a long term vision and a more unified approach.

Respondents believe the biggest challenges facing the team include the cost of construction, maintaining support and demonstrating that while the second crossing will reduce congestion it will deliver increased employment, enhance the property market and generally improve the quality of life in the borough.

In addition, it was felt that in terms of key messages the following were important:

- The crossing will bring great economic benefits and support the wider regeneration plans for the borough.
- The bridge will change the image and experience of Runcorn and Widnes.
- The crossing will elevate the status of Halton throughout the north west and nationally.
- The crossing will become a focus for civic pride.

The audiences to be reached were widespread but respondents felt that the Liverpool city-region business community, Halton residents, environmental groups and the wider North West public were most vital in terms of engagement.

Finally, the results indicate that an improved website, regular and concise e-bulletins, innovative and informative meetings and a strong media presence are the preferred methods of communication.

The details below and the attached excel document provide a comprehensive summary of feedback.

Q2.How do you personally keep abreast of progress, changes and issues surrounding the Mersey Gateway?

2. “Through information provided by programme partners.”

3. “Email, direct discussion with other members of the project team and the project director, and through MS collaborate.”

4. “Attendance at Steering Group meetings. Regular meetings with project team.”

5. “I took responsibility for Cheshire a year ago but have to have messages passed on.”

6. “I am now part of the project team providing PM assistance.”

7. “Emails, meetings, newsletter.”

8. “Visit the website. Attend meetings/events whenever possible. Contact with officers and members at events other than those specific to the project.”

9. “1. Being copied in on much of the significant correspondence.
2. Attendance at the monthly Project Coordination meetings.
3. Regular conversations with Claire Hall and other team members.”

10. “Usually on the basis of direct, sometimes informal, communication with a relvant member of the Mersey Gateway team who are based in the same office as myself.”

11. “Briefings from my dedicated Project Manager (Steve Jones). Attendance at coordination meetings. Attendance at Mersey Crossing Group briefings.”

12. “Communications from you, media, personal contact at Gateway events.”

13. “Monthly progress meetings with client. Internally, Gifford undertake monthly progress meetings within its workstream leaders and reviews with task managers and sub-consultants.”

14. “Attendance at Group. Receipt of email communication from Project Team. Media.”

15. “Emails and web.”

16. “Liaison with Halton Council CEX and David Waugh CEX, LLDC and chair of Mersey Gateway Steering Group.”

Q4.How do you feel the Mersey Gateway project team's communications with you and your organisation could be improved going forward?

1. "As the project moves forward, the team should ensure that developments are reported timeously to ensure that all partners are abreast of issues. To date, that has happened very well. Simply, more of the same."

2. "Quarterly updates/briefings."

3. "I feel that the communications I receive are about right and have no specific recommendations for improvements."

4. "Need more information on modelling work for project."

5. "Send it to the right person."

6. "Yes, as the project gains momentum, communications will be a vital element in good project management."

7. "Dependant on the news coming in, would like to know about it as soon as possible."

8. "Possible a regular newsletter to be sent to a list of primary contacts with permission and encouragement to circulate to a wider audience. Make maximum use of regular Group members' own communications networks."

9. "It is fine in terms of our own duties. As lead consultant, it would be useful to have a little more information on the scope and work of other consultants directly engaged by Halton BC."

10. "Need to ensure that the development of all aspects of the project which have implications for the existing bridge and highway maintenance functions continue to be brought to my attention. This includes plans for de-linking the SJB, implications for responsibility for the future maintenance of the SJB complex and the interface between project funding and the Major Scheme bid for SJB maintenance which is under consideration by DfT."

11. "Regular scheme updates from each of the work streams consolidated into a monthly report."

12. "Fine as it is."

13. "There could be better transfer of information regarding the work that the other consultants are undertaking who are direct appointments to Halton."

14. "I believe there is genuine commitment to good communication. The invitation to join the Group and the support and communication received thus far from the team has been very good in my view."

16. "Regular, brief email bulletins."

Q6. Please give specific examples of what you consider to be good or poor communications practice undertaken by Mersey Gateway project team.

Examples of poor practice

"Website needs to be kept up to date."

7. "Sometimes the venue can spoil presentation i.e. not being able to view the presentation because of the lighting and sometimes not being able to hear presenter."

9. "The website is now out of date and needs to be updated more frequently."

10. "I may be wrong, but there doesn't appear to have been a prolonged high profile marketing strategy in terms of billboards, bus stops, media etc. I know there was a campaign some time ago but this seems to have fizzled out. It could be of benefit to attempt to maintain enthusiasm (especially locally) and pre-empt any negative attitudes which are bound to be engendered by an anti-tolling lobby."

11. "Difficult to identify any specific example. Communications with DfT could possibly have been better in order to garner greater support/assistance (but this may not be within the mindset of a Government Department!"

13. "Website is potentially the most accessible media within and outside Halton. It requires updating and refreshing. For the public it may be a reflection of the status of the project."

Q6. Please give specific examples of what you consider to be good or poor communications practice undertaken by Mersey Gateway project team.

Examples of good practice

6. "The events held that I have personally attended have been well organised, informative and have given ample opportunity for questions from attendees."

3. "Circulating SOFT reports. Use of MS Collaborate."

7. "Presentations are quite slick and to the point."

8. "Generally, they are very open and easy to approach. Having all the project management information accessible on the internet-based Collaborate MS is good. They are good at copying us in on correspondence."

10. "Business briefing events seem to have been well received and been very productive in terms of lobbying."

11. "The political lobbying for the scheme has been very good (and effective). The presentations made to MPs and Government Ministers have raised the profile of Mersey Gateway sufficiently to see it included in the programme of schemes to be taken forward."

12. "The Stakeholder breakfasts have been very informative."

13. "The Council has tried to keep the public aware of progress and scheme evaluation. The website does have a lot of information and is a good asset. However,

it is a bit out of date and could be more dynamic. The Crossing newsletter is well presented and provides an excellent means for reporting project changes."

14. "Email communications from Project Team. Regularity of Group meetings."

Q7. What do you believe the biggest communications challenges and issues will be for the Mersey Gateway team during the months and years to come?

1. "The cost of construction and effect on pricing policy."

2. "Keeping the project at the forefront of peoples' minds and managing expectation as there will be a significant period of time before anything is seen on the ground."

3. "Ensuring total stakeholder buy in throughout the development and procurement process from the single largest interested group – the public users of the new crossing. Effective engagement with potential users will be vital to ensure the success of the project."

4. "Understanding the amount of strategic traffic transfer from HA's network to the new crossing."

6. Keeping the public enthused bearing in mind the time to construction."

7. "Keeping up the momentum."

8. "Reaching all categories of user, ratepayer and other stakeholders. Gaining and keeping support for tolling regime."

9. "Over the next few months, the biggest challenge will be undertaking effective consultations with stakeholders. This will require high quality consistent information. A stakeholder information pack should be produced."

10. "Convincing the local public and business that the benefits of the scheme don't just involve decreased journey times but also increased property prices, inward investment, employment opportunities and general quality of life issues and that these are worthy of the imposition of a tolling regime (especially for the previous free to use SJB)."

11. "Maintaining local (public) support for a tolled scheme. Ensuring potential objectors are identified and their concerns understood."

12. "Keeping people abreast of progress and selling an unfortunate finance solution, foisted on you by central government to stakeholders."

13. "Ensuring there is no mis-information provided to the public. Avoiding 'scare' stories in the media; most likely could be cost, tolling or environmentally related."

14. "Consistent messaging. Dealing positively with mis-reporting. Dealing honestly and openly when things go wrong."

16. "Manage expectations; convince people and businesses it will happen; address environmental concerns."

Q8. What are the THREE most important key messages you believe the Mersey Gateway team should seek to promote through its communications activities?

1. The clear economic need for a second crossing
2. The benefits to commuters
3. The clear need from a congestion perspective

2. "Improvement to position of city region with regard to trade and access to goods and services. Highest quality and innovation."

3.

1. The Mersey Gateway provides excellent value for money for the public sector due to large proportion of private finance to public
2. It is an excellent opportunity for the private sector to create a fruitful long term partnership with HBC
3. It is a vital piece of infrastructure to support the continued growth and prosperity of not only Halton but the wider regions

4. "Control of costs; changes to design; effect on surrounding networks."

6.

1. Partnership
2. benefits to the Halton community
3. to manage expectations on delivery."

7.

1. It's still on track
2. Keeping public support
3. Environment friendly

9.

1. The benefits of the scheme
2. The consequences if the scheme does not go ahead
3. To prepare the expectations of the travelling public for a tolled crossing

10.

1. That the benefits of the project outweigh the tolling costs – especially at local level (see answer to Q&)
2. Further to the above, emphasising how the blighted areas of Widnes and Runcorn could spark into life and become a much more attractive place to live because the through traffic is being taken away from a congested centre of the Borough
3. That the new bridge itself will be a striking piece of architecture, a focus for civic price and will increase the profile of Halton

11.

1. The NEED for the new crossing
2. The BENEFIT to the local and travelling public
3. The OPPORTUNITY the Mersey Gateway offers to radically change the image and experience of Runcorn and Widnes.

12.

1. Need/benefit
2. Environmental protection
3. Minimum disruption

13.

1. Increasing quality of life for local residents through SJB improvements and regeneration of Halton (esp S Widnes)
2. Increasing status of Halton through the N West and nationally
3. Halton and Mersey Gateway team are following best practice in planning and design, and are attempting to avoid and reduce environmental impacts of the scheme

14.

1. The project is needed for the continuing regeneration of the sub-region
2. The project will happen
3. There are specific benefits for local people, businesses and the environment

15.

1. Economic benefit of the bridge to regeneration
2. Economic benefit of reducing congestion
3. Economic benefit of improving journey reliability

16.

1. On course in terms of its construction timetable
2. Clarity over tolls
3. It will not be an environmental disaster

Q16. I*f you have any other issues relating to the communications activities of the Mersey Gateway team that you would like to raise, please feel free to detail them.*

8. “Need to keep subject in the media – local, regional, national and international. Keep awareness in Parliament as need for project to have maximum assistance at all stages. Bulletins through e-politix, De Havilland etc.”

9. “The current political constraint on the publishing for information relating to the location of the tolling area is effecting the consultations related to the EIA. The supply of information has always been very open on this scheme; this constraint goes against that history.”

	Q1. To date, how effective do you think the Mersey Gateway project has been at communicating with you?	Q2. How do you personally keep abreast of progress, changes and issues surrounding the Mersey Gateway?	Q3. Do you personally feel you receive enough information about the Mersey Gateway?	Q5. How would you rate the Mersey Gateway project teams in the following communications area?						Q9. Do you use the Mersey Gateway website (www.merseygateway.co.uk)
				Events	Website	Media Relations	Exhibitions	*The Crossing* newsletter	Consultation publicity	
1	Good		Right amount of information	Good	Good	Good	Good	Don't know	Don't know	No
2	Fair	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Good	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	No
3	Excellent	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Excellent	Good	Don't know	Good	Good	Don't know	No
4	Good	see separate sheet	Not enough information	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Don't know	Good	Yes
5	Don't know		Not enough information	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	No
6	Good	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Don't know	Poor	Fair	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Yes
7	Good	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	No
8	Good	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Don't know	Yes
9	Excellent	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Excellent	Fair	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Fair	Yes
10	Fair	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Yes
11	Good	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Yes

	Q1. To date, how effective do you think the Mersey Gateway project has been at communicating with you?	Q2. How do you personally keep abreast of progress, changes and issues surrounding the Mersey Gateway?	Q3. Do you personally feel you receive enough information about the Mersey Gateway?	Q5. How would you rate the Mersey Gateway project teams in the following communications area?						Q9. Do you use the Mersey Gateway website (www.merseygateway.co.uk)
				Events	Website	Media Relations	Exhibitions	*The Crossing* newsletter	Consultation publicity	
12	Excellent	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Yes
13	Excellent	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Yes
14	Good	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Good	Excellent	Don't know	Good	Good	Yes
15	Good	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Yes
16	Fair	see separate sheet	Right amount of information	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Yes
	Good = 8		*Right amount = 14*	*Good =9*	*Good = 10*	*Good = 6*	*Good = 5*	*Good = 5*	*Good = 7*	*Yes = 11*
	Fair = 3		*not enough = 2*	*Excellent = 3*	*Fair = 4*	*Excellent = 3*	*Excellent = 1*	*Excellent = 2*	*Fair = 3*	*No = 5*
	Excellent = 4			*Fair = 2*	*poor = 1*	*Fair = 3*	*Fair = 5*	*Fair = 3*	*Don't know = 6*	
	Fair = 1			*Don't know = 2*	*Don't know = 1*	*Don't know = 4*	*Don't know = 5*	*Don't know = 6*		

Q12. Who do you think are the THREE most important audience groups that the Mersey Gateway team needs to focus its commnuncations activities towards?

Halton reside	N W public	Halton B C s	Liverpool city	Local/regiona	Emergency s	Potential sup	Commuters	Landowners	Halton busine	Central gove	Elected politi	Public Trans	Environmenta	Other
	yes			yes			yes							
yes							yes					yes		
	yes		yes							yes				
yes	yes									yes				
yes			yes								yes			ajoining authorities
yes			yes										yes	
			yes		yes						yes			
yes		yes		yes										
yes			yes						yes					
yes			yes	yes										

Q12. Who do you think are the THREE most important audience groups that the Mersey Gateway team needs to focus its commnuncations activities towards?

Halton reside	N W public	Halton B C s	Liverpool city	Local/regiona	Emergency s	Potential sup	Commuters	Landowners	Halton busine	Central gove	Elected politi	Public Trans	Environmenta	Other
	yes		yes										yes	
Yes										yes			yes	
	yes		yes										yes	
										yes	yes		yes	
			yes				yes						yes	
9	*5*	*1*	*10*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*3*	*0*	*2*	*4*	*3*	*1*	*6*	*1*

Q13. How would you prefer to receive you information about future Mersey Gateway developments? Please identify your preferred options from the list below?											Q14. Please use the box below to name any newsletters, publications or e-communications activities your organisation produces that could include news about Mersey Gateway activities?	Q15. Please use the box below to detail who is responsible for producing these publications in your organisation (please include telephone and/or email contact details).	Q16. If you have any other issues relating to the communications activities of the Mersey Gateway team that you would like to raise please feel free to detail them in the box below.
Website	Newsletters	Meetings	Consultatio	At events	Individual b	Advertising	E-bulletin	Public exhi	Through th	Other			
yes	yes	yes	yes										
							yes				Mersey Waterfront and Mersey Basin Campaign produce e-bulletins	Mersey Waterfront - Heather Sewell 0151 227 2727 and Mersey Basin Campaign - Matthew Sutcliffe, 0151 242 8208	
	yes	yes					yes						
		yes					yes				non directly	john.burke@cheshire.gov.uk	
yes	yes												
yes							yes						
		yes					yes						
		yes					yes				Liverpool Chamber magazine is distributed to all Liverpool Chamber members	Terry Dunne - 0151 227 1234 ext 2208 (3 days a week). Terry.dunne@liverpoolchamber.org	see separate sheet
		yes									In-house newsletter	Gifford's Project Manager, Steve Jones, 01244 6066457	see separate sheet
		yes		yes		yes							
					yes						Contributions to the engineering press eg NCE, Structures Magazine, Construction News, Contract Journal etc.Gifford website	No one individual. Easiest contact is through Gifford's PM - Steve Jones (01244 311855)	

Q13. How would you prefer to receive you information about future Mersey Gateway developments? Please identify your preferred options from the list below?											Q14. Please use the box below to name any newsletters, publications or e-communications activities your organisation produces that could include news about Mersey Gateway activities?	Q15. Please use the box below to detail who is responsible for producing these publications in your organisation (please include telephone and/or email contact details).	Q16. If you have any other issues relating to the communications activities of the Mersey Gateway team that you would like to raise please feel free to detail them in the box below.
Website	Newsletters	Meetings	Consultatio	At events	Individual b	Advertising	E-bulletin	Public exhi	Through th	Other			
		yes		yes			yes				Comment Extra	Kevin McCallum, 01744 742000. kevin.mccallum@sthelenschamber.com	
yes	yes							yes			New web page that has opportunity to provide update on progress of current projects.	Please contact me for further information on 01244 683655	
yes		yes					yes				Council maagzine is currently circulated to all homes in Liverpool. Already linkages from Council website.	Jason Harbrow (jason.harbrow@liverpool.gov.uk	
yes		yes					yes						
							yes				Our Communications Manager, Ian Hamilton, should be contacted regularly to see if he can include pieces in GONW's publications and ministerial briefings.	Ian Hamilton	
6	*4*	*10*	*1*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*10*	*1*					

Appendix C: Political stakeholder desk research and interview results

Politics International conducted oral interviews with a number of officials and politicians to ascertain opinions regarding the Mersey Gateway's communications to date and potential risks and opportunities for the project likely to arise over the next five years.

MPs/politicians

There seems to be a lack of awareness of next steps amongst MPs. Whilst there is broad support for the overall concept of the bridge, we would note the potential for wider issues to impact on progress as the broader implications of the project become clearer. Therefore, MPs should be briefed in order to reinvigorate them with a special focus on those who are likely to be champions of the scheme. Derek Twigg has proved useful in this regard in the past, but his ability to raise the project in the Commons is severely limited by his ministerial status. Other MPs who would be supportive on the basis of our oral and desk research are as follows:

- Mike Hall MP (Lab, Weaver Vale): Halton's second MP in effect. A strong supporter of a new crossing from an economic perspective and stresses the importance of the project for the North West as a whole.
- Louise Ellman MP (Lab, Liverpool Riverside);
- Dave Watts MP (Lab, St Helens North);
- George Howarth MP (Lab, Knowsley North and Sefton East): Another strong supporter, although he may be concerned about the loss of the tramlink.
- Ben Chapman MP (Lab, Wirral South): Welcomes the idea of a further Mersey Crossing, although he is concerned about tolling.
- Andrew Miller MP (Lab, Ellesmere Port and Neston): Has publicly spoken in favour of a further Mersey Crossing, incorporated into a strategic review of the area's transport needs.
- Peter Kilfoyle MP (Lab, Liverpool Walton): Said in May 2004, "[The Mersey] is not a piddling little stream like the river here in London. Its geography, submarine morphology and hydrology mean that the only practical place to build a crossing is from Halton, going upstream. The need for an extra crossing is without question."
- Ian Stewart MP (Lab, Eccles): Has stressed the importance of the crossing to the whole of the North West, but has expressed opposition to the tolling option.

Tolling and road charging continue to prove controversial politically, and whilst MPs may support the principle of road charging for environmental reasons, they could prove fierce in their opposition to local charging regimes that would impact on their constituents. This has come through both in comments made to us by local politicians and in parliamentary debate. For example, the following comments were made on the record by Merseyside MPs during the July 2002 parliamentary debates on the Mersey Tunnels Bill:

- Ben Chapman MP (Lab, Wirral South): “Ample money is available in Merseyside PTA, and indeed on Merseyside, which benefits from Objective 1 status. Money is now chasing projects rather than projects chasing money…I want to limit the [toll] increases not to place a burden on business, but to take account of the profits said to be inherent in the accounts of Merseytravel.”
- Claire Curtis Thomas MP (Lab, Crosby): “Objective 1 money cannot be used to fund revenue-based projects, which include health and safety projects. Moreover, in the absence of toll increases, the burden of financing substantial improvements will fall on Merseyside’s ratepayers, including vast numbers of people who do not currently use the tunnel.”
- Frank Field MP (Lab, Birkenhead): “The objection that many of us have to the Bill is that it taxes the limited number of people who use the tunnel and that the money will be used to finance transport projects far away, which our constituents will not use. If the amendment were carried, there might not be enough money in the tunnel’s budget to pay for basic repairs and health and safety work. The sponsor of the Bill says that it would be unfair if taxpayers who never use the tunnel had to foot that bill, but the point behind all our amendments is that those who support the Bill wish to tax our constituents for the benefit of other constituents who never use the tunnel.”
- Robert Wareing MP (Lab, Liverpool West Derby): “If it is really true that Merseytravel wishes to reduce road traffic, it is going about it the wrong way. An increase in tolls will not be like a congestion charge, because demand to use the Mersey tunnels is inelastic. In fact, such an increase will simply raise the authority's revenue without cutting traffic, because there is no alternative and there are no plans to help public transport going through the Mersey tunnels.”

Our discussions and research with Conservative audiences have confirmed that the Conservative Party view is tied up with the electoral timetable – looking forward to both the local elections in May and the General Election expected in 2009 - and is likely to be quite fluid. Whilst the party has previously supported road charging and tolling, it will be quiet on such issues in the run-up to local elections, whilst supporting the broad principle of a new Mersey Crossing.

It should also be noted that, whilst Merseyside consists on the whole of relatively safe Labour constituencies, there are a number of more marginal seats, including Southport, Wirral South and Wirral North. However, Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling MP is also the party’s spokesperson for Merseyside and is keen to ensure that the city regions of the UK are recognised by the Conservative Party as important areas in their own right. This is reinforced by the work of the party’s Cities Taskforce under the chairmanship of Lord Heseltine.

DEFRA officials we spoke to were aware of the Mersey Crossing proposal; indeed, it was on the department’s long-term roadmap of potentially difficult

issues to be negotiated on a cross-departmental basis. Their view was that the DfT was poor at handling the environmental consequences of major maritime developments and is widely viewed as only being interested in transport. The DfT has “consistently failed to deal with the sustainable development aspects of projects properly”. The UK is, therefore, constantly being castigated by the European Commission on maritime and coastal development issues, especially those relating to RAMSAR sites. This is potentially hugely embarrassing for government at a time when the UK is trying to claim global leadership on climate change issues. DfT officials acknowledged the environmental challenges, but were less concerned about their scale.

The fraught nature of the DfT/DEFRA relationship should be seen as a potential threat to the Mersey Gateway project. DEFRA has made a decision at a ministerial level to increase the resources it dedicates to transport cases, and, whilst it is willing to work with the DfT, it will pull rank if it needs to on environmental issues. In such circumstances, other departments will have to arbitrate with HM Treasury, the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister's Office playing a key role. It should be noted that at the moment, DEFRA has greater power than the DfT in the government machine.

DCLG officials were unsurprisingly unaware of the project, but confirmed that it would eventually cross DCLG desks from a finance perspective. We spoke to members of the local government finance team and other parts of Halton Borough Council will no doubt be in regular contact with such officials on council tax. However, they are likely to have longer-term concerns about the affordability of the crossing project, especially whether PFI credits and predicted revenue streams will prove sufficient, and the potential for costs to leak onto council tax and local government grants. DCLG are unlikely to be sympathetic to additional calls on revenue.

Given the Treasury's overarching interest in all government expenditure, it will take a keen interest in projects such as the Mersey Gateway. Whilst the overall cost of the project is small compared to some of the other major infrastructure projects with which HMT is engaged, such as Crossrail and Thameslink 2000, our soundings show that the department will still monitor the project closely for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there will still be an interest on the marginal impact of all major expenditure, especially that by local authorities. This attention could heighten in the run-up to the publication of the Comprehensive Spending Review in July.

Secondly, the project has intimate connections with a number of other key Treasury workstreams, particularly road charging and urban regeneration. Finally, at a political level, Gordon Brown and his close advisers will be concerned about the electoral fortunes of the Labour Party in Merseyside in the next general election.

APPENDIX D: Legislative and events timetable

A number of external political events are likely to impact on the Mersey Gateway project over the coming years and the workstreams Halton Borough Council are taking forward. Some of these will pose potential risks for the new crossing, and others will create positive opportunities to promote both the bridge and the council itself. We summarise the major milestones below.

DATE	EVENT	RELEVANCE
2007		
2-4 March	Liberal Democrat Spring Conference, Harrogate	
16-18 March	Conservative Spring Conference, Nottingham	
April	Possible publication of Draft Road Transport Bill	Will outline the Government's plans to introduce road user charging into the UK.
April (TBC)	Budget	May provide indication of Government's balance between environmental and transport needs.
April	Purdah starts for elections in May	
3 May	Local elections in England	The project may become a political issue in elections on Merseyside, allows greater publicity for Gateway, but in turn allows opposition to the project to become more vocal.
May	Prime Minister announces decision to stand down as Leader of the Labour Party (TBC)	
May	Possible start of Transport Select Committee inquiry into Draft Road Transport Bill (as part of pre-legislative scrutiny).	National debate on car usage surrounding costs (financial and environmental) Future of road building may be debated as a related issue.
31 May	David Rowlands retires; Robert Devereux takes over as Permanent Secretary of Department for Transport	Changes in personnel at senior Civil Service level may take place to accommodate new appointment. Possible

		changes to internal departmental procedures.
June	Possible announcement of results of DfT reorganisation	Possible changes to personnel and procedures within the department. May need to re-examine contacts within DfT and its agencies.
3-5 July	Local Government Association Annual Conference, Birmingham	Raises issues around local government funding/planning/local government environmental policy/use of revenues
July	Comprehensive Spending Review	Will provide an overview of where the Government is keen to make efficiency savings in the DfT and other areas. DfT may wish to reduce spending in some areas to placate HMT.
July	Publication of DfT Capability Review (TBC)	DfT may feel threatened by possible calls for changes in procedures, budgets, projects undertaken.
July	Publication of results of Conservative Quality of Life Policy Review	The policy review has a road building working group and will produce proposals which may suggest changes to land use planning policy.
July	Gordon Brown becomes Prime Minister (TBC)	Changes in ministerial personnel, special advisers. General shift in Government policy as a whole.
30 August – 2 September	Green Party Annual Conference	Debate on road building probable, especially given the Government's stance on climate change. However, unlikely to generate major news coverage.
15-20 September	Liberal Democrat Annual Conference,	National coverage, but little impact politically.

	Brighton	May highlight the government commitment to both road-building and reduction of emissions. Green agenda likely to be highly visible.
23-27 September	Labour Party Conference, Bournemouth	New PM provides first major speech, outlining priorities and challenges.
30 September – 3 October	Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool	Opposition likely to maintain the high status it gives to environmental policies. May outline more detailed transport/planning policies as a result of the policy review report.

November	Queen's Speech	Government sets out proposals for next parliament, may introduce further environmental policies as response to Conservative progress on the issue.
November	Introduction of Road Transport Bill (TBC)	Little impact from first reading.
November	Pre-Budget Report (TBC)	New Chancellor may outline changes to taxes on motoring and changes to local government finance.
December	Second Reading of Road Transport Bill (TBC)	Commons debate the possible introduction of road user charging in the UK, may be issue regarding the dual-use of both tolls and road user charging simultaneously.
2008	Liverpool Capital of Culture	National focus on Liverpool likely during major events in the CofC calendar.
2009		
May	General Election	
June	European Parliament Elections	

2012	London Olympic Games	

Appendix E - Communications Action Plan

DATE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	AUDIENCE	OWNER	COST	DEADLINE	STATUS
PROJECT MANAGEMENT				**Steve Nicholson**	**£10,200**		
1-Mar-07	Formally adopt communications strategy	2	Project team and partners	Exec Board		1-Apr-07	Complete
Monthly from Apr 07	Review Comms Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		N/A	
1-Mar-07	Create approval protocol for all materials	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		31-Mar-07	Complete
Monthly from Apr 07	Internal meeting to review/plan comms activity	1,2,3,4,5,6	DTW/PI/Project team	DTW		N/A	In progress
1-Mar-07	Review need for new/role of existing representative forums	2, 5	Halton residents and businesses	Project team		1-Apr-07	In progress
1-Apr-07	Create new forums if appropriate	2, 5	Halton residents and businesses	Project team		30-Sep-07	
Monthly from Mar '07	Exec Board informal briefings	2, 5	Exec Board	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
Weekly from Mar '07	SMT updates	2, 5	HBC Senior Management Team	David Parr/DickTregea		N/A	
12-Mar-07	Prep for Mersey Gateway Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		16-Mar-07	Complete
22-Mar-07	MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
13-Apr-07	Prep for MG Project Group	2, 5	MG Project Group	Steve Nicholson		18-Apr-07	
23-Apr-07	MG Project Group	2, 5	MG Project Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
30-Apr-07	Prep for Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	DTW		9-May-07	
10-May-07	Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
14-May-07	Prep for MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		18-May-07	
24-May-07	MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
25-May-07	Prep for Advisory Panel	2, 5	MG Advisory Panel	Steve Nicholson		4-Jun-07	
4-Jun-07	Prep for Mersey Gateway Exec Board	2, 5	Mersey Gateway Board	DTW		14-Jun-07	
5-Jun-07	MG Advisory Panel	2, 5	MG Advisory Panel	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
18-Jun-07	Mersey Gateway Exec Board	2, 5	Mersey Gateway Board	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
06-Jul-07	Prep for Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	DTW		13-Jul-07	
16-Jul-07	Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
13-Jul-07	Prep for MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		18-Jul-07	
23-Jul-07	MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
12-Aug-07	Prep for MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		16-Aug-07	
22-Aug-07	MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
14-Sep-07	Prep for MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		20-Sep-07	
24-Sep-07	MG Exec Group	2, 5	MG Exec Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
20-Sep-07	Prep for Advisory Panel	2, 5	MG Advisory Panel	Steve Nicholson		2-Oct-07	
02-Oct-07	MG Advisory Panel	2, 5	MG Advisory Panel	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
05-Oct-07	Prep for Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	DTW		12-Oct-07	
15-Oct-07	Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
07-Dec-07	Prep for Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	DTW		14-Dec-07	
17-Dec-07	Mersey Crossing Group	2, 5	Mersey Crossing Group	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
25-Jan-08	Prep for MG Advisory Panel	2, 5	MG Advisory Panel	Steve Nicholson		05-Feb-08	
05-Feb-08	MG Advisory Panel	2, 5	MG Advisory Panel	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
BRANDING				**Michelle Baker**	**£500**		
01-Feb-07	Agree new strapline	1, 2	All	Exec Board		01-Mar-07	Complete
01-Mar-07	Develop new corporate identity and guidelines for use	1, 2	All	DTW/MB		01-Mar-07	In progress
Ongoing from Apr 07	Review and monitor use of identity	1, 2	All	Michelle Baker		N/A	In progress
01-Mar-07	Clarify different subidentities of MG projects	1, 2	All	DTW/MB		01-Apr-07	In progress
MERSEY GATEWAY TOUR				**DTW**	**£1,000**		
01-Mar-07	Development of Mersey Gateway tour	1,2,3,4,5,6	All visitors - inc. media, politicians, partners	DTW		30-Mar-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Source required supporting materials - maps, photos etc	1,2,3,4,5,6	All visitors - inc. media, politicians, partners	DTW		10-Apr-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Develop tour guidelines	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team/partners	DTW		30-Apr-07	
Ongoing from May 07	Take visitors on tour	1,2,3,4,5,6		DTW/Project team		N/A	
01-Dec-07	Review tour effectiveness	1,2,3,4,5,6		DTW		31-Dec-07	
INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS				**Michelle Baker**	**£4,900**		
01-Mar-07	Create key messages and Q&A document	1,2,5	Project partners	DTW		15-Apr-07	In progress
Bi-monthly from Apr 07	Review Q&A document	1,2,5	Project partners	DTW		N/A	In progress
01-Mar-07	Review of current HBC induction process	1,2,5	New HBC employees and members	Michelle Baker		01-May-07	

DATE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	AUDIENCE	OWNER	COST	DEADLINE	STATUS
01-May-07	Develop induction materials	1,2,5	New HBC employees and members	Michelle Baker		30-May-07	
01-May-07	Mersey Gateway briefings for One Stop Shop staff	1,2,4,5	One Stop Shop staff	Customer Centre Manager		31-May-07	
01-May-07	Mersey Gateway briefings for Contact Centre staff	1,2,4,5	Contact Centre staff	Customer Centre Manager		31-May-07	
Weekly from Mar 07	Leader's Briefing - include Mersey Gateway update	1,2,5	HBC employees	Cllr McDermott		N/A	In progress
Quarterly from Apr 07	Include Mersey Gateway update in Team Brief	1,2,5	HBC employees	Michelle Baker		N/A	
01-May-07	Write In-touch featue for June issue	1,2,5	HBC employees	DTW		29-May-07	
01-Aug-07	Write In-touch featue for September issue	1,2,5	HBC employees	DTW		28-Aug-07	
01-Nov-07	Write In-touch feature for December issue	1,2,5	HBC employees	DTW		23-Nov-07	
01-Feb-08	Write In-touch feature for March issue	1,2,5	HBC employees	DTW		20-Feb-08	
01-Apr-07	Review partners publications and deadlines	1,2,4,5	Regional stakeholders and decision-makers	DTW		30-Apr-07	In progress
LITERATURE AND PUBLICATIONS				**DTW**	**£28,055**		
01-Mar-07	Review existing photography and maps	1,2,4,5	All stakeholders	DTW		31-Mar-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Commission new photography/maps	1,2,4,5	All stakeholders	DTW		30-Apr-07	
01-Mar-07	Develop photo image library	1,2	Project team and partners	DTW		30-Apr-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Maintain photo image library	1,2	Project team and partners	Matthew Fearnhead		N/A	
01-Mar-07	Create Mersey Gateway info pack	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project partners	DTW/MB		30-Apr-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Create Mersey Gateway brochure	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project partners, potential suppliers	DTW/MB		30-Apr-07	
01-Mar-07	Agree inserts	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project partners, potential suppliers	DTW/MB		30-Apr-07	
01-Apr-07	Create inserts	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project partners, potential suppliers	DTW/MB		31-May-07	
01-Mar-07	Agree new design for letterhead and business cards	1,2	All stakeholders	DTW		30-Apr-07	
01-Mar-07	Publish The Gateway newsletter	1,2,3,4,5	Regional stakeholders and decision-makers	DTW		01-Apr-07	In progress
01-Jun-07	Publish The Gateway newsletter	1,2,3,4,5	Regional stakeholders and decision-makers	DTW		01-Jul-07	
01-Sep-07	Publish The Gateway newsletter	1,2,3,4,5	Regional stakeholders and decision-makers	DTW		01-Oct-07	
01-Dec-07	Publish The Gateway newsletter	1,2,3,4,5	Regional stakeholders and decision-makers	DTW		01-Jan-08	
01-Mar-08	Publish The Gateway newsletter	1,2,3,4,5	Regional stakeholders and decision-makers	DTW		01-Mar-08	
01-May-07	Create 'public' newsletter/leaflet	1,2,3,4,5	Halton residents, business and visitors	DTW		31-May-07	
18-Jun-08	Public newsletter/leaflet distributed	1,2,3,4,5	Halton residents, business and visitors	DTW		30-Jun-07	
01-Nov-07	Public newsletter/leaflet distributed	1,2,3,4,5	Halton residents, business and visitors	DTW		15-Dec-07	

MEDIA RELATIONS				**DTW**	**£19,600**		
Monthly from Apr 07	Update forward features list	1,2,3,4,5,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		1st of the month	
01-Mar-07	Develop Mersey Gateway news group	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		15-Apr-07	In progess
01-Mar-07	Develop FAQs	1,2,3,4,5,6	All media and other stakeholders	DTW		12-Apr-07	In progess
01-Mar-07	Develop media relations protocol	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		12-Apr-07	Complete
01-Apr-07	Development of personal profiles	1,2,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		30-Apr-07	
01-Apr-07	Media training	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and select consultants	DTW/MB		30-Apr-07	
01-May-07	Regional media briefings	1,2,4,5	Regional and local press including …	DTW		31-May-07	
01-May-07	National media briefings	1,2,3,4,5,6	National press including …	DTW		31-May-07	
01-May-07	Trade media briefings	1,2,6	Sector press including …	DTW		31-May-07	
01-May-07	Feature synopses	1,2,3,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		31-May-07	
01-Sep-07	Feature synopses	1,2,3,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		10-Sep-07	
01-Dec-07	Feature synopses	1,2,3,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		10-Dec-07	
01-Mar-08	Feature synopses	1,2,3,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		10-Mar-08	
Monthy from May 07	Issue news releases on developments and activities:	1,2,3,4,5,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		01-May-07	
01-Jun-07	Launch summer consultation	1,2,3,4,5	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		18-Jun-07	
01-Jun-07	Publicise scoping report	1,2,3,4,5	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		30-Jun-07	
01-Dec-07	Submission of Environmental Statement	1,2,3,4,5,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		30-Dec-07	

DATE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	AUDIENCE	OWNER	COST	DEADLINE	STATUS
01-Jan-07	Submission of planning application	1,2,3,4,5,6	National, regional, local and trade media	DTW		30-Jan-08	
PUBLIC AFFAIRS				**Politics International**	**£39,025**		
Fortnightly	Political intelligence update	2,5	Project team	PI		Ongoing	In progress
01-May-07	Production of political briefs on key topics	1,2,3,4,5	All MPs, DfT, DEFRA civil servants etc.	PI/DTW		01-Jun-07	
01-May-07	Rsponse to Draft Road Transport Bill inquiry	1,2	All MPs, Transport Select Committee, DfT	Project team		01-May-07	
As appropriate	Brief MPs/Peers to participate in parliamentary debates	1,2,3,4,5	All MPs, media	Cllr McDermott/Steve N		N/A	
As appropriate	Participate in Select Committee hearings	1,2,3,5	MPs, civil servants, media	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
3-5 July 07	Attend LGA conference	1,2,5	Other local authorities and regional governance b	Steve Nicholson		01-Jun-07	
01-Jul-07	Brief Conservatives to feed into Cities Taskforce report	1,2,4,5	Conservative MPs	PI		01-May-07	
01-Aug-07	Introductory letters to new ministers in DfT,DEFRA etc.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Departmental ministers	PI		01-Aug-07	
15-20 September	Attend LibDem Annual Conference	1,2,4,5	LibDem MPs	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
23-27 September	Attend Labour Annual Conference	1,2,4,5	Labour MPs	Cllr McDermott/Steve N		N/A	
30 Sept - 3 Oct	Attend Conservative Annual Conference	1,2,4,5	Conservative MPs	Steve Nicholson		N/A	
01-Oct-07	Trade Union briefing event	1,2,3,4,5	Trade Unions	PI		30-Dec-07	
01-Nov-07	MPs dinners	1,2,3,4,5	Regional MPs	PI		01-Oct-07	
01-Dec-07	Meetings with opposition MPs	1,2,3,4,5	Conservative and LibDem MPs	PI/David Parr/Steve N		01-Nov-07	
01-Jan-08	Political visits programme	1,2,3,4,5	MPs, civil servants	PI		01-Dec-08	
01-Mar-08	Host Environment Conversation event	1,2,3,4,5	Environmental stakeholders	DTW/PI/Steve Eccles		31-May-08	
DIGITAL MEDIA					**£15,910**		
01-Feb-07	Review and update existing website	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	DTW/MB		23-Mar-07	Complete
01-Mar-07	Agree spec + suppliers for new website	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	SE/MB/DTW		15-Apr-07	In progress
01-Apr-07	Design new website	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	TBC		30-Apr-07	
01-Mar-07	Review and develop presentation materials	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	DTW/MB		31-Mar-07	Complete
01-Apr-07	Build new website	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	TBC		31-May-07	
May/Jun 07	Testing of website	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Project team		10-Jun-07	
18-Jun-07	New website goes live	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	TBC		18-Jun-07	
Ongoing from May-07	Website updates and maintenance	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	MF/HBC Comms & Mkting		N/A	
01-Mar-07	Review Collaborator structure	5	Project partners	DTW/MF/MB		30-Apr-07	In progress
01-May-07	Update Collaborator structure as appropriate	5	Project partners	MB		30-May-07	
01-Mar-07	Develop e-bulletin	1,2,4,5	Project partners	DTW		01-May-07	
Weekly from May 07	Write/Issue e-bulletin	1,2,4,5	Project partners	Matthew Fearnhead		01-May-07	
01-Apr-07	Develop Mersey Gateway intranet content	1,2,5	HBC employees	DTW		30-Apr-07	
Ongoing from May 07	Update Mersey Gateway intranet content	1,2,5	HBC employees	Matthew Fearnhead		N/A	
As appropriate	Include Mersey Gateway on intranet latest news	1,2,5	HBC employees	Michelle Baker		N/A	
01-Apr-07	Design new monthly e-newsletter	1,2,5	General public and businesses	DTW		30-Apr-07	
18-May-07	Launch new monthly e-newsletter	1,2,5	General public and businesses	DTW		18-May-07	
Monthly from May 07	Issue e-newsletter	1,2,5	General public and businesses	DTW		N/A	
01-Mar-07	Agree spec + suppliers for digital 3D model	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Steve Eccles		31-Mar-07	In progress
01-Apr-07	Build digital 3D Model	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	TBC		01-Jun-07	
01-Jun-07	Test new model	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Project team		10-Jun-07	
18-Jun-07	Model goes live as part of website/exhibition materials	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	TBC		18-Jun-07	
01-Oct-07	Clarify brief for regeneration showreel/podcasts	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Steve Eccles		31-Oct-07	
01-Nov-07	Develop regeneration showreel/podcasts	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	TBC		30-Jan-08	

DATE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	AUDIENCE	OWNER	COST	DEADLINE	STATUS
CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT				**Steve Eccles**	**£17,000**		
01-Mar-07	Summarise consultation activity to date	3,4,5	Project team and partners	Andy Russell		31-Mar-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Create consultation framework for Mersey Gateway	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		16-Mar-07	Complete
Ongoing from Mar 07	Update consultation matrix	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Steve Jones		N/A	In progress
01-Mar-07	Outline plan for summer '07 consultation + engagement	1,2,3,4,5,6	Local people	DTW/Steve Eccles		31-Mar-07	Complete
01-Mar-07	Agree on spec for summer 07 consultation materials	1,2,3,4,5	All stakeholders	DTW/Steve Eccles		10-Apr-07	In progress
01-Apr-07	Create summer 07 consultation materials	1,2,3,4,5	All stakeholders	DTW		31-May-07	
01-Apr-07	Book required venues	1,2,3,4,5	All stakeholders	Steve Eccles		31-May-07	
18-Jun-07	Consultation activity formally approved	1,2,3,4,5	MG Executive Board	Steve Eccles		18-Jun-07	
19-Jun-07	12 week consultation period starts	1,2,3,4,5	All stakeholders	Steve Eccles		19-Jun-07	
11-Sep-07	12 week consultation period ends	1,2,3,4,5	All stakeholders	Steve Eccles		11-Sep-07	
01-Oct-07	Feedback on consultation outcomes disseminated	1,2,3,4,5	All stakeholders	Steve Eccles		30-Dec-07	
01-Mar-07	Outline plan for consultation re: land acquisition	1,2,3,4,5,6	Landowners, leaseholders and tenants	Steve Eccles		31-Mar-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Outline plan for consultation re: planning application	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Iain Jenkinson		31 Jun 07	In progress
01-Sep-07	Start of consultation re: planning application	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Iain Jenkinson		01-Sep-07	
31-Jan-08	End of consultation re: planning application	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Iain Jenkinson		31-Jan-08	
01-Feb-08	Feedback given on planning app consultations	1,2,3,4,5,6	All stakeholders	Iain Jenkinson		31-Mar-08	
01-Apr-07	Write Inside Halton feature for June issue		Halton residents	DTW		27-Apr-07	
01-Jul-07	Write Inside Halton feature for September issue		Halton residents	DTW		27-Jul-07	
01-Oct-07	Write Inside Halton feature for December issue		Halton residents	DTW		19-Oct-07	
01-Jan-08	Write Inside Halton feature for March issue		Halton residents	DTW		01-Feb-08	
01-Apr-07	Write Halton Today feature for June issue		Halton businesses	DTW		27-Apr-07	
01-Jul-07	Write Halton Today feature for September issue		Halton businesses	DTW		27-Jul-07	
01-Oct-07	Write Halton Today feature for December issue		Halton businesses	DTW		19-Oct-07	
01-Jan-08	Write Halton Today feature for March issue		Halton businesses	DTW		01-Feb-08	
May '07	Agree info required for Schools packs	1,2,5	HBC students	Michelle Baker		30-Jun-07	
EVENTS				**Steve Eccles**	**£7,500**		
01-Mar-07	Create events attendance list for 2007/08	1,2,5,6	Project team	DTW/PI/Project team		30-Apr-07	In progress
01-Jul-07	Host Breakfast briefing event	1,2,4,5	Businesses in the region	DTW		31-Jul-07	
01-Nov-07	Host Breakfast briefing event	1,2,4,5	Businesses in the region	DTW		30-Nov-07	
01-Feb-08	Host Breakfast briefing event	1,2,4,5	Businesses in the region	DTW		28-Feb-08	
DATABASE MANAGEMENT				**DTW**	**£1,000**		
01-Mar-07	Review existing databases	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		30-Mar-07	In progress
01-Mar-07	Agree required set of databases	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	DTW		30-Mar-07	In progress
01-Apr-07	Consolidate existing databases in to agreed new format	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	Matthew Fearnhead		30-Apr-07	In progress
Ongoing	Update of media database	1,2,3,4,5,6	Media	DTW		N/A	
Ongoing	Update all other databases	1,2,3,4,5,6	Project team and partners	Matthew Fearnhead		N/A	

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Freedom of Information: Publication Scheme

[Section 19 Freedom of Information Act 2000]

Ian Leivesley
Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
Halton Borough Council

2 January 2007

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PUBLICATION SCHEME

IDENTITY OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY

Halton Borough Council

INTRODUCTION

In preparing and approving this Scheme the Council has had regard to the public interest: (a) in allowing public access to information held by the Council, and (b) in the publication of reasons for decisions made by the Council.

Halton Borough Council welcomes public scrutiny. It is as open as possible consistent with its legal duties.

This openness is consistent with the Council's commitment to openness, transparency, accountability and responsiveness, working in partnership with the Community and providing responsible local decision-making. It is an integral aspect of the Council's Best Value duties.

The Council will continue to be proactive and examine further scope for making information available to the public and act upon opportunities wherever possible.

The Council keeps this Scheme under review and will from time to time submit amendments to the Information Commissioner.

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Council's Principles of Decision-making (Constitution, Article 14 - Principles of decision making) indicate that in all decisions, there will be a presumption in favour of openness.

The section of the Constitution detailing the Access to Information Procedure Rules is set out as an Appendix to this Publication Scheme.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Council is accountable to the public for its actions and the manner in which it carries out responsibilities and will co-operate fully and honestly with public scrutiny requirements.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLICATION SCHEME

Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes WA8 7QF

DAY TO DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING AND REVIEWING THE SCHEME

Information Manager
Halton Direct Link (HDL)
Halton Borough Council
Catalyst House
Catalyst Trading Park
Sankey Street
Widnes WA8 0GH
tel: 0151 907 8300
email: info@halton.gov.uk

PURPOSES OF SCHEME

To specify:-

(a) classes of information that the public authority publishes or intends to publish;
(b) the manner in which information of each class is, or is intended to be, published; and
(c) whether the material is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.

CLASSES OF INFORMATION WHICH THE AUTHORITY PUBLISHES AND MANNER OF PUBLICATION

Class of Information	Manner of Publication
1. Consultation Documents	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
2. Strategic/Policy Documents *	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
3. Performance Documents	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
4. Annual Report	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests

Class of Information	Manner of Publication
	Website
5. Constitution	Website
6. Annual Accounts	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
7. Information publications *	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
8. Information posters	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
9. Promotional publications	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
10. Promotional posters	Reception areas, libraries and other public sites throughout the Borough
11. Guidance to users of any Council functions	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
12. Guidance to those regulated by any Council functions	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
13. Application forms	HDL Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
14. Minutes, Agendas, Reports of the Council and its Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels (from 1991)	Phone, e-mail and written requests Website
15. All information set out in statutory registers, related information or licensing records *	Variously as indicated in the legislation governing the relevant registration and licensing legislation
16. All information required by law to be made available to the public *	Variously as indicated in the legislation governing the particular types of information and document.

'Website': www.halton.gov.uk

'HDL': refers to Halton Direct Link.

'Phone' by phone call to: 0151 907 8300

[All the above classes of information are subject to the exemptions referred to below]

EXEMPTIONS

The above information is, to the extent that it falls into any of the following descriptions, excluded from this Scheme:-

1. Drafts of documents or any document not in its final form;

2. Any information or document to the extent that it falls into any of the categories of Exempt Information listed in the Freedom of Information Act 2000; Data Protection Act 1998 or Part VA and the revised Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972; and

3. Where a fee or other conditions are prescribed in relation to any or all of inspection, disclosure or copying then that fee or those conditions must be met before inspection, disclosure or copying can be permitted.

The Exemptions relevant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are listed in Part II of that Act: http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm

CHARGES

The publications are all free unless otherwise stated (indicated by asterisk in the above table) where a varying charge is applicable dependant on the publication. The Council in any event reserves the right to request a copying and administrative charge in cases of large volume requests or requests that involve extensive research. Charges will also be made in line with any legislation applying to that particular category of information. An example would be the statutory charges required for those making local land charges property searches.

PUBLICATION OF THIS SCHEME

The Council has published this Scheme as follows:-

1. Paper – a printed copy of the Scheme is available **to callers** from

   Halton Direct Link
   One-stop shop
   Halton Lea Shopping Centre
   Runcorn WA7 3JF

   [note: this is located near Halton Lea Public Library]

   Halton Direct Link
   One-stop shop
   Widnes Road
   Widnes
   Widnes WA8 4TR

[note: this is located near Widnes Market]

2. Paper – on request to:-

   Information Manager
   Halton Direct Link
   Halton Borough Council
   Catalyst House
   Catalyst Trading Park
   Sankey Street
   Widnes WA8 0GH
   tel: 0151 424 2061
   email: info@halton.gov.uk

3. Website: www.halton.gov.uk

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICE I RECEIVE WHEN I REQUEST INFORMATION?

Halton Borough Council aims to provide its customers with economic, effective and efficient services responsive to their needs. Where we do not meet your expectations or the standards we set for ourselves then a complaints procedure is available.

If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service provided by the Council, you have the right to complain. However, we ask that in the first instance you go direct to the department providing the service to give them a chance to resolve your complaint – this is called the informal stage. If you are still not satisfied with the response you can then make a formal corporate complaint which follows a set process.

The Council will not act on anonymous complaints in relation to the Publication Scheme.

If you are not happy with the response made by the department, pick up a Corporate Complaint Form from HDL, any Council office, or library, or call us on 0151 907 8300 or email us at corporate.complaints@halton-borough.gov.uk.

Hand the completed form to any member of staff or return it to:

The Policy Division
Chief Executive's Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes WA8 7QF

Your complaint will be formally acknowledged by the Chief Executive's staff. This acknowledgement will give you the name and contact number of the complaint co-ordinator in the relevant Directorate, should you wish to check on progress with your complaint. A senior member of staff will investigate the complaint itself and you will receive a written response within 14 days.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This Publication Scheme is kept under continuous review. If you have any comments regarding the structure or content of the Scheme we would be pleased to hear them. We are particularly interested in your views and ask you to consider the following when commenting:

- Did you know what types of information you were entitled to request?
- Did you find the structure clear and easy to navigate?
- Were you using the Scheme to find something specific?
- If so, did you find it or find where to apply for it?
- If you were browsing, was the information available useful?
- What types of information or topics would you like to see in this Publication Scheme that are not currently covered?
- Any other comments you would like to make.

Please send your comments by e-mail to the Council's Information Manager stating your name, organisation (if relevant) and contact details. Alternatively you may prefer to contact the Information Commissioner's Office direct at the address given below:

Information Manager
Halton Direct Link
Halton Borough Council
Catalyst House
Catalyst Trading Park
Sankey Street
Widnes WA8 0GH
tel: 0151 424 2061
email: info@halton.gov.uk

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Fax: 01625 524 510

DX: 20819 Wilmslow

Telephone:

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745
Notification Line: 01625 545 740
Switchboard: 01625 545 700

Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
Halton Borough Council

APPENDIX

(extract from Halton Borough Council 2006 Constitution)

ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

1. **SCOPE**

These rules apply to all meetings of the Council, Policy and Performance Boards, Area Forums, the Standards Committee, the Best Value Committee and Regulatory Committees and public meetings of the Executive or its Sub-Committee. (together called meetings).

2. **ADDITIONAL RIGHTS TO INFORMATION**

These rules do not affect any more specific rights to information contained elsewhere in this Constitution or the law.

3. **RIGHTS TO ATTEND MEETINGS**

Members of the public may attend all meetings subject only to the exceptions in these rules i.e. meetings dealing with exempt and confidential items.

4. **NOTICES OF MEETING**

The Council will give at least five clear days notice of any meeting by posting details of the meeting at the Municipal Building and all reception points of the council.

5. **ACCESS TO AGENDA AND REPORTS BEFORE THE MEETING**

The Council will make copies of the agenda and reports open to the public available for inspection at the designated office at least five clear days before the meeting. If an item is added to the agenda later, the revised agenda (where reports are prepared after the summons has been sent out, the designated officer shall make each such report available to the public as soon as the report is completed and sent to councillors) will be open to inspection from the time the item was added to the agenda.

6. **SUPPLY OF COPIES**

The Council will supply copies of:

(a) any agenda and reports which are open to public inspection;

(b) any further statements or particulars necessary to indicate the nature of the items in the agenda; and

(c) if the Chief Executive thinks fit, copies of any other documents supplied to councillors in connection with an item

to any person on payment of a charge for postage and any other costs.

7. **ACCESS TO MINUTES ETC AFTER THE MEETING**

The Council will make available copies of the following for six years after a meeting:

(a) the minutes of the meeting or records of decisions taken, together with reasons, for all meetings of the Executive – excluding any part of the minutes of proceedings when the meeting was not open to the public or which disclose exempt or confidential information;

(b) a summary of any proceedings not open to the public where the minutes open to inspection would not provide a reasonably fair and coherent record;

(c) the agenda for the meeting; and

(d) reports relating to items when the meeting was open to the public

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 **List of background papers**

The officer compiling the report will set out in every report a list of those documents (called background papers) relating to the subject matter of the report which in his/her opinion:

(a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and

(b) which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report but does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10 below) and in respect of Executive reports, the advice of a political advisor, (if any).

8.2 **Public inspection of background papers**

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

9. **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC'S RIGHTS**

A written summary of the public's rights to attend meetings and to inspect and copy documents must be kept at and available to the public at the Council's main offices.

10. **EXCLUSION OF ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC TO MEETINGS**

10.1 **Confidential information – requirement to exclude public**

The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed.

10.2 **Exempt information – discretion to exclude public**

The public may be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed.

Where the meeting will determine any person's civil rights or obligations, or adversely affect their possessions, Article 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 establishes a presumption that the meeting will be held in public unless a private hearing is necessary for one of the reasons specified in Article 6.

10.3 **Meaning of confidential information**

Confidential information means information given to the Council by a Government Department on terms which forbid its public disclosure or information which cannot be publicly disclosed by Court Order.

10.4 **Meaning of exempt information**

Exempt information means:

(i) information falling within the categories 1 to 7 below; and
(ii) which does not also fall within one or more of the categories 8 to 9 below; and
(iii) in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption (ie withholding the information from the public and press) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Categories of information which may be treated as exempt:

1. Information relating to any individual.

2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:

(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or

(b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.

7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Categories of information which may not be treated as exempt under paragraphs 1 to 7 above:

8. Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under:

(a) the Companies Act 1985;
(b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
(c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
(d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
(e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
(f) the Charities Act 1993.

9. Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

11. **EXCLUSION OF ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC TO REPORTS**

If the Chief Executive thinks fit, the Council may exclude access by the public to reports which in his or her opinion relate to items during which, in accordance with Rule 10, the meeting is likely not to be open to the public. Such reports will be marked “Not for publication” together with the category of information likely to be disclosed.

12. **APPLICATION OF RULES TO THE EXECUTIVE**

Rules 13 – 24 apply to the executive and its committees. If the executive or its committees meet to take a key decision then it must also comply with Rules 1 – 11 unless Rule 15 (general exception) or Rule 16 (special urgency) apply. A key decision is as defined in Article 13.03 of this Constitution. If the executive or its committees meet to discuss a key decision to be taken collectively, with an officer other than a political assistant present, within 28 days of the date according to the Forward Plan by which it is to be decided, then it must also comply with Rules 1 – 11 unless Rule 15 (general exception) or Rule 16 (special urgency) apply. A key decision is as defined in Article 13.03 of this Constitution. This requirement does not include meetings, whose sole purpose is for officers to brief members.

13. **PROCEDURE BEFORE TAKING KEY DECISIONS**

Subject to Rule 15 (general exception) and Rule 16 (special urgency), a key decision may not be taken unless:

(a) a notice (called here a Forward Plan) has been published in connection with the matter in question;

(b) at least 5 clear days have elapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and

(c) where the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Executive or its committees, notice of the meeting has been given in accordance with Rule 4 (notice of meetings).

PROCEDURE

1. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer will devise a register of all key decisions which will be kept in Committee Section in the directorate of the Chief Executive. The responsibility to ensure the register is completed is an individual member/officer responsibility. The register must be completed as soon as reasonably practicable after a decision is taken.

The register will include:

(i) The decision;

(ii) A reason for the decision;

(iii) Relevant interests of members involved;

(iv) Consultation undertaken including named officers from which advice was taken and the advice given;

(v) Dispensations granted;

(vi) The date the decision is to become effective.

2. Register must be publicly available.

3. There must be a Forward Plan of key decisions. The plan must contain the proposed key decisions for the next four months. The Plan is available on the internet/intranet and must be made available to the public and Policy & Performance Boards at least two weeks in advance of the period covered.

4. The Plan must set out:

(i) A short description of matters under consideration and when key decisions are expected to be taken;

(ii) Who is responsible for taking the decisions and how they can be contacted;

(iii) What relevant reports and background papers are available;

(iv) How and when the decision maker intends to involve local stakeholders in the decision making process.

14. **THE FORWARD PLAN**

14.1 **Period of forward plan**

Forward Plans will be prepared by the leader to cover a period of four months, beginning with the first day of any month. They will be prepared on a monthly basis and subsequent Plans will cover a period beginning with the first day of the second month covered in the preceding Plan.

14.2 **Contents of forward plan**

The Forward Plan will contain matters which the leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken by the Executive, a committee of the Executive, individual members of the Executive, officers, or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an Executive function during the period covered by the Plan. It will describe the following particulars in so far as the information is available or might reasonably be obtained:

(a) the matter in respect of which a decision is to be made;

(b) where the decision taker is an individual, his/her name and title, if any and where the decision taker is a body, its name and details of membership;

(c) the date on which, or the period within which, the decision will be taken;

(d) the identity of the principal groups whom the decision taker proposes to consult before taking the decision;

(e) the means by which any such consultation is proposed to be undertaken;

(f) the steps any person might take who wishes to make representations to the Executive or decision taker about the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made, and the date by which those steps must be taken; and

(g) a list of the documents submitted to the decision taker for consideration in relation to the matter.

The Forward Plan must be published at least 14 days before the start of the period covered. The Chief Executive will publish once a year a notice in at least one newspaper circulating in the area, stating:

(a) that key decisions are to be taken on behalf of the Council;

(b) that a Forward Plan containing particulars of the matters on which decisions are to be taken will be prepared on a monthly basis;

(c) that the Plan will contain details of the key decisions to be made for the four month period following its publication;

(d) that each Plan will be available for inspection at reasonable hours free of charge at the Council's offices at the Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes

(e) that each Plan will contain a list of the documents submitted to the decision takers for consideration in relation to the key decisions on the Plan;

(f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of, or extracts from, any document listed in the Forward Plan is available;

(g) that other documents may be submitted to decision takers;

(h) the procedure for requesting details of documents (if any) as they become available; and

(i) the dates on each month in the following year on which each Forward Plan will be published and available to the public at the Council's offices.

Exempt information need not be included in a Forward Plan and confidential information cannot be included.

15. **GENERAL EXCEPTION**

If a matter which is likely to be a key decision has not been included in the Forward Plan, then subject to Rule 16 (special urgency), the decision may still be taken if:

(a) the decision must be taken by such a date that it is impracticable to defer the decision until it has been included in the next Forward Plan and until the start of the first month to which the next Forward Plan relates;

(b) the proper officer has informed the chair of a relevant Policy and Performance Board, or if there is no such person, each member of that committee in writing, by notice, of the matter about which the decision is to be made;

(c) the proper officer has made copies of that notice available to the public at the offices of the Council; and

(d) at least 3 clear days have elapsed since the proper officer complied with (a) and (b).
Where such a decision is taken collectively, it must be taken in public.

16. **SPECIAL URGENCY**

If by virtue of the date by which a decision must be taken Rule 15 (General Exception) cannot be followed, then the decision can only be taken if the decision taker (if an individual) or the chair of the body making the decision, obtains the agreement of the chair of a relevant Policy and Performance Board that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred. If there is no chair of a relevant Policy and Performance Board, or if the chair of each relevant Policy and Performance Board is unable to act, then the agreement of the Mayor of the Council, or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor will suffice.

17. **REPORT TO COUNCIL**

17.1 **When a Policy and Performance Board can require a report**

If a Policy and Performance Board thinks that a key decision has been taken which was not:

(a) included in the Forward Plan; or

(b) the subject of the general exception procedure; or

(c) the subject of an agreement with a relevant Policy and Performance Board chair, or the Mayor/Deputy Mayor of the Council under Rule 16; the Policy and Performance Board may, after liaising with the Monitoring Officer, and taking his/her advice, require the Executive to submit a report to the Council within such reasonable time as the Policy and Performance Board specifies. The power to require a report rests with the Policy and Performance Board, but is also delegated to the proper officer, who shall require such a report on behalf of the Policy and Performance Board when so requested by the chairman or any 5 members.

Alternatively the requirement may be raised by resolution passed at a meeting of the relevant Policy and Performance Board.

17.2 **Executive's report to Council**

The Executive will prepare a report for submission to the next available meeting of the Council. However, if the next meeting of the Council is within 7 days of receipt of the written notice, or the resolution of the Policy and Performance Board, then the report may be submitted to the meeting after that. The report to Council will set out particulars of the decision, the individual or body making the decision, and if the leader is of the opinion that it was not a key decision the reasons for that opinion.

17.3 **Quarterly reports on special urgency decisions**

In any event the leader will submit quarterly reports to the Council on the Executive decisions taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 16 (Special Urgency) in the preceding three months. The report will include the number of decisions so taken and a summary of the matters in respect of which those decisions were taken.

18. **RECORD OF DECISIONS**

After any meeting of the Executive or any of its committees, whether held in public or private, the proper officer or, where no officer was present, the person presiding at the meeting, will produce a record of every decision taken at that meeting as soon as practicable. The record will include a statement of the reasons for each decision and any alternative options considered and rejected at that meeting.

19. **EXECUTIVE MEETINGS RELATING TO MATTERS WHICH ARE NOT KEY DECISIONS**

The Executive will decide whether meetings relating to matters which are not key decisions will be held in public or private.

20. **NOTICE OF PRIVATE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Members of the Executive or its committees will be entitled to receive three clear working days notice of a meeting to which they are summoned, unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice as a matter of urgency.

21. **ATTENDANCE AT PRIVATE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

(a) The Head of the Paid Service, the Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer, or their nominees are entitled to attend any meeting of the Executive and its Committees. The Executive may not meet unless the proper officer has been given reasonable notice that a meeting is to take place.

(b) A private Executive meeting may only take place in the presence of the proper officer or his/her nominee with responsibility for recording and publicising the decisions.

22. **DECISIONS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

22.1 **Reports intended to be taken into account**

Where an individual member of the Executive receives a report which he/she intends to take into account in making any key decision, then he/she will not make the decision until at least 5 clear days after receipt of that report.

22.2 **Provision of copies of reports to Policy and Performance Board**

On giving of such a report to an individual decision maker, the person who prepared the report will give a copy of it to the chair of every relevant Policy and Performance Board before a decision is taken and make it publicly available at the same time.

22.3 **Record of individual decision**

As soon as reasonably practicable after an Executive decision has been taken by an individual member of the Executive or a key decision has been taken by an officer, he/she will prepare, or instruct the proper officer to prepare, a record of the decision, a statement of the reasons for it and any alternative options considered and rejected. The provisions of Rules 7 and 8 (inspection of documents after meetings) will also apply to the making of decisions by individual members of the Executive. This does not require the disclosure of exempt or confidential information or advice from a political assistant (if any).

23. **POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS**

23.1 **Rights to copies**

Subject to Rule 23.2 below, a Policy and Performance Board will be entitled to copies of any document which is in the possession or control of the Executive and which contains material relating to

(a) any business transacted at a public or private meeting of the Executive; or
(b) any decision taken by an individual member of the Executive.

23.2 **Limit on rights**

A Policy and Performance Board will not be entitled to:

(a) any document that is in draft form;

(b) any part of a document that contains exempt or confidential information, unless that information is relevant to an action or decision they are reviewing or scrutinising or intend to scrutinise; or

(c) the advice of a political adviser (if any).

24. **ADDITIONAL RIGHTS OF ACCESS FOR MEMBERS**

24.1 **Material relating to previous business**

All members will be entitled to inspect any document which is in the possession or under the control of the Executive and contains material relating to any business previously transacted at a private meeting unless either (a) or (b) below applies.

(a) it contains exempt information falling within paragraph 3 (except to the extent that the information relates to any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority in the course of negotiations for a contract) or paragraph 6 of the categories of exempt information; or

(b) it contains the advice of a political adviser (if any).

24.2 **Material relating to key decisions**

All members of the Council will be entitled to inspect any document (except those available only in draft form) in the possession or under the control of the Executive which relates to any key decision unless paragraph (a) or (b) above applies.

24.3 **Nature of rights**

These rights of a member are additional to any other right he/she may have.

Halton Borough Council

Statement of Community Involvement

Adopted 19th July 2006

Halton Borough Council

Statement of Community Involvement

July 2006

P. Watts
Operational Director -
Environmental and Regulatory Services
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Contents

3 Introduction
5 Vision
5 Benefits of A Statement Of Community Involvement
6 Community Strategy
8 Standards Of Good Practice
9 Resolution Of Problems
10 Local Development Documents
12 The Process of Involvement
16 Feedback To Participants
17 Planning Applications
19 Further Information
21 Conservation Areas
21 Internal Consultation
22 Methods of Consultation
- Informing & Educating
- Persuading
- Listening & Learning
- Dialogue, Debate, Exchange & Negotiation
- Deliberation
- Building Capacity And Mutual Confidence

24 How We Will Consult
26 Target Groups
28 Monitoring
29 Access To Information
30 Appendix A Members of The Halton Strategic Partnership Board
30 Appendix B Procedure for adoption of DPD or SPD (simplified format)
34 Appendix C Types of Consultation Group
- Specific Consultation Bodies
- Government Departments & Other Consultees
- Voluntary Sector
- Residents Association
- Parish Councils
- Other Interest Groups
- Recreation
- Disability Groups
- Commercial Employment
- Retail
- Conservation & Heritage
- Natural Environment

36 Appendix D Resource Implications
37 Appendix E Tests of Soundness for the SCI
38 Appendix F Maps of the borough -
Map 1 Area Forum Boundaries
Map 2 Action Areas
Map 3 Town Centres
41 Glossary

閣下如在中文語言上需要任何幫助，請致電下列號碼。

अगर आपको हिन्दी मे सहायता चाहिए तो कृपया नीचे दिये गये नम्बर पर फोन कीजिए।

আপনি যদি বাংলায় সাহায্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে নীচে দেওয়া নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

اگر آپ انگریزی میں بات چیت نہیں کر سکتے اور آپ کو اردو میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے۔

If you find it difficult to communicate in English ☎ 0845 600 0106

1 Introduction and Purpose

1.0 This document is the Halton Borough Council Statement Of Community Involvement (SCI), and makes up the part of the LDF that encourages the best possible involvement of the public when adopting new plans or determining planning applications. This document is part of a portfolio of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents that will help to deliver appropriate land use and development within Halton borough.

1.1 Although every new development is different, this SCI outlines the best practice for when to consult, who to consult and how to consult. At the time of writing this document Halton Borough Council consultation practice currently surpasses government guidance so this document formalises and enhances current practice. Once adopted, the Council will be required to comply with the guidance set out in this document.

1.2 The SCI will help achieve the production of all types of Development Plan Documents including the Core Strategy and Area Action Plans as well as Supplementary Planning Documents. It gives a level of certainty to key stakeholders and the general public as to how they can be involved in each stage of the plan making and development process.

1.3 The key documents that make up the Halton Borough Local Development Framework are illustrated in Diagram 1 below. For a more detailed explanation please see the Halton Borough Council Local Development Scheme. This is available on the Council's website at:

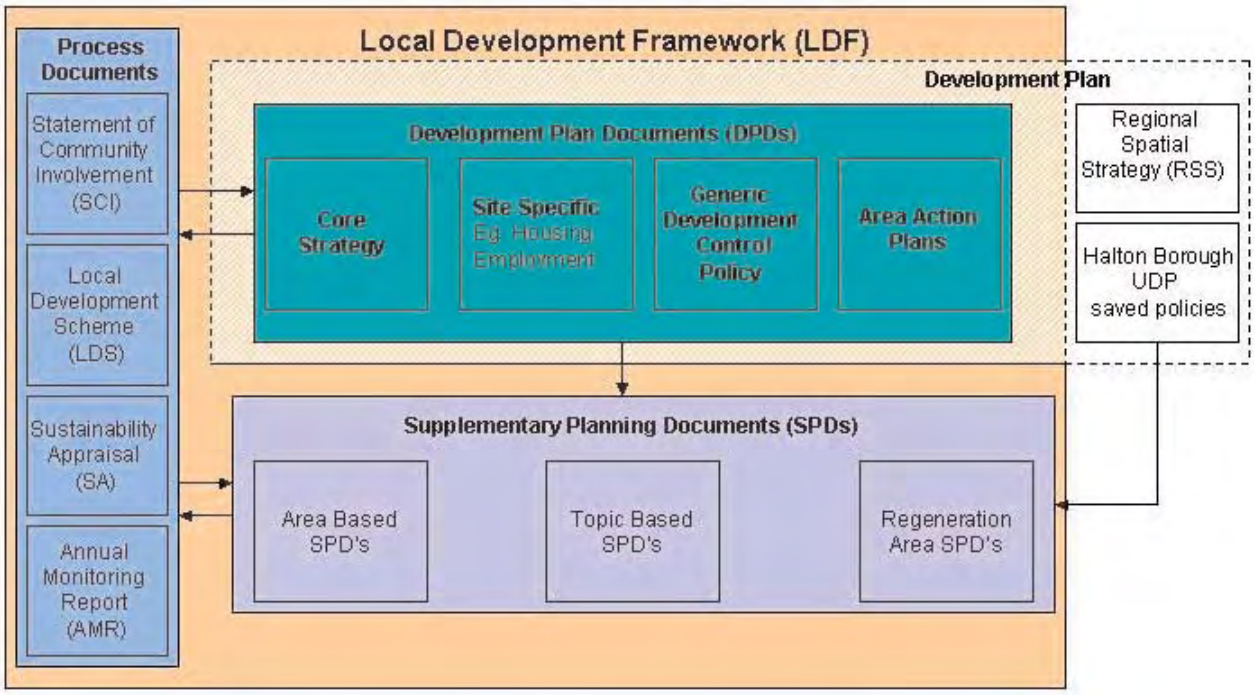


Diagram 1 LDF structure

(www2.halton.gov.uk/content/environment/planning/forwardplanning). Printed copies are also available at deposit locations (see section 18) and upon request.

1.4 The spatial extent of some of the documents the Council will produce can be seen on maps 2 and 3 in appendix F of this document. In particular, the land covered by Regeneration Areas is shown, as are the three town centre strategy areas. At present these maps are only indicative.

1.5 The SCI aims to develop continuous community involvement in an effort to improve the effectiveness of consultation. At the same time it aims to ensure the public is satisfied with the type and quality of development that results. The SCI sets out the standards the Council is committed to achieving in involving all stakeholders in the local planning process.

1.6 The SCI seeks to front load consultation for planning documents and planning applications in an effort to achieve the greatest level of consensus possible between interested parties. This will speed up the plan making process, for example, allowing plans to be created and updated more quickly, in response to local circumstances. Participants in planning consultations are therefore encouraged to make comments & representations as early as possible.

2 Vision

2.0 In its role as community leader the Council wants to bring ever-greater transparency to its decision making processes. This SCI is an important part of achieving that goal. The vision that underpins this Statement is that, in a cost effective way, the Council will:

i. Ensure people are aware of the issues in their local area and aware of how they can access information.

ii. Ensure information is available to people when they need it, making full use of electronic communication.

iii. Use the correct consultation method to suit the situation & achieve consensus.

iv. Positively react to the needs of the community.

v. Encourage new links with organisations not yet involved in planning.

vi. Provide explanations and reasons for prescribing courses of action.

vii. Enable a greater level of participation in decision making for local people.

3 Benefits of a SCI

3.0 The aim of the SCI is to ensure that the planning process is seen to be less adversarial and more consensual. As such it will generate a significant range of benefits for everybody. These include:

- More attention to public priorities
- Provision of services that are more representative of local needs
- Increased opportunity for cooperation and collaboration
- Increased democracy and sense of ownership for local people
- Greater understanding of projects and processes for all involved
- Production of higher quality developments and documents
- More efficient use of resources
- Developing a more manageable experience for future consultation
- Added support for council activity
- Greater understanding about the needs and workings of the Borough
- A broader sharing of responsibilities
- Problem solving at an increased pace

4 Community Strategy

4.0 The Local Government Act (2000) placed a statutory duty on local authorities to set up Local Strategic Partnerships and produce a Community Strategy in an effort to promote the three tenets of spatial planning (Social, Economic & Environmental factors) and sustainable development.

4.1 The Halton Strategic Partnership Board was formed in 2001 and is the Local Strategic Partnership for the area. It brings together Halton's main service providers and agencies from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The list of members is given in appendix A.

4.2 A Community Strategy has been drawn up for Halton to provide a framework in which the many different organisations and groups of the partnership can work together. The strategy sets out a plan to tackle five priority areas to improve quality of life in Halton and runs until 2011.

4.3 Added to this the Halton Compact is a strategic framework for partnership working between the voluntary, community and public sectors in Halton.

4.4 The Community Strategy is underpinned by the State of the Borough Review - a major research project that looked at the social, economic and environmental conditions in the borough, identifying needs and underlying causes. The partnership identified five key strategic priorities, which aim to make Halton a better place to live and work. As mentioned, these have been derived from public consultation and from facts and figures about conditions in Halton and are:

- A Health Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Halton's Children & Young People
- Employment Learning & Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton

4.5 The Community Strategy has been developed and implemented by a broad based partnership. Each of the five themes is driven by its own multi agency Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP), each of which has developed its own strategy and action plan.

4.6 To increase the impact of partnership work and engagement at a local level a series of Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies (LNRS) were developed and Community Area Forums have been set up. The LNRS provide a focus for local debate on problems and solutions within the framework of the Community and other Strategies. Seven area forums have been set up, led by local Councillors and involving officers of the Council and other partners. The messages being put across by the public at these area forums are then fed into the Halton Strategic Partnership Board as those Council Members which attend the area forums also attend the LSP meetings. Area forums can be viewed on map 1 in appendix F.

4.7 Clearly the LDF is a key mechanism, for the delivery of land use related Community Strategy objectives. Likewise the Community Strategy is an important mechanism for taking forward many of the

tenets of the LDF. The integral involvement of communities and stakeholders in the Community Strategy structure can be a powerful driver for ensuring planning policies and decisions have the requisite buy-in from communities. There are crucial synergies between the Community Strategy and the LDF structures and procedures. A prime example of this in practice, is in the testing of LDF documents. The Sustainability Appraisal process incorporates the aims and objectives within each of the five strategic priorities in the Community Strategy, to assess all of the Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents produced.

5 Standards of good practice

5.0 The Cabinet Office has disseminated a code of good practice on consultation. Where possible Halton Borough Council will use this guidance as a standard for their consultation. These criteria are summarised below:

- Consultation should be undertaken widely throughout the process. The proactive identification of both interested and affected parties is critical at an early stage. This ensures more informed participation but also allows a clearer understanding from a time when policy is in its most simplistic form.

- Clarity of information provided to those involved is highly important, in particular what the proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and what time scale is in place.
  Being specific about the policy or application on which views are sought is imperative, as is encouraging respondents to provide evidence to support their opinion. An open discussion is required and can be aided by participants providing a list of assumptions they may have about other participants. Reference to earlier consultations may be appropriate, in this case the UDP Statement of Public Participation 2000 is a useful document as it provides lists of consultees and methods used. Finally, as a means of increasing communication, alternative ways of sharing information should be clearly stated.

- Lengthy statements with many technical terms should be avoided as much as possible. Consultation documents should be made accessible by all available means, and likewise, respondents should be able to give their reply via the same means. Consultation criteria should be reproduced in all documents, stating briefly what criteria needs to be adhered to throughout the process.

- As part of opening up the process of public consultation, making it more transparent, feedback on responses should be provided detailing how the ideas and comments made by participants have or have not been used.

- Monitoring the effectiveness of consultation, through the use of a designated co-ordinator, is achieved by examining effectiveness, numbers and types of responses and studies of whether some methods are more successful than others in influencing policy.

5.1 Further information on the consultation criteria can be found at the cabinet office website. (www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/consultation)

6 Resolution of Problems

6.0 The aim of the SCI is to set out a clear set of guidelines on how the consultation process will take place. This is to ensure that all parties are aware of their rights and responsibilities throughout the process and to shift to a system of earlier and more open engagement on planning issues. However, it must be recognised that consensus will not always be possible in every instance.

6.1 Engagement, negotiation and discussion activities are at the heart of participatory planning. Furthermore, skills in these fields are not always available within the planning profession. Past experience has highlighted that planning concepts can be difficult to explain to the community. Often planners themselves are not adequately trained in conveying this information. The extent of this evidence will vary from authority to authority but in general Halton has managed to engage the community with measured success.

6.2 In the first instance every effort will be made to resolve difficulties by the Council and stakeholders themselves as stated in the local compact. If this proves unworkable, a third party mediator might be used to resolve conflicts and interpret each parties needs. This third party might be a professional mediator or an independent planner from a consultancy.

6.4 The RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute) is helping to encourage public participation in planning issues by setting up a Planning Aid system in every region. Halton Council will work closely with North West Planning Aid to look at innovative ways of developing the community engagement process. The advice offered to community groups and individuals is complementary to the advice given by the local authority.

North West Planning Aid Co-Ordinator
Royal Town Planning Institute
2nd Floor Friars Court
Sibson Road
Sale
M33 7SF

Tel 0161 969 3672
(www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice)

6.5 The planning portal is another avenue the public can take in enquiring about planning information (www.planningportal.gov.uk). This allows members of the public to learn more about how the planning system works and find out how they can become involved. The planning portal is mostly used for minor development control related situations but can still provide a vital source of information to those unfamiliar with planning.

7 Local Development Documents

7.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS (DPD'S)

Development Plan Documents make up the main part of the statutory development plan along with the Regional Spatial Strategy. They are subject to rigorous tests of soundness through community involvement, consultation and independent examination. With reference to Planning Policy Statement 12, paragraph 4.24, at the examination stage it will be presumed that the DPD is sound unless it is shown to be otherwise. The tests of soundness will be applied by the Inspector to both the plan as a whole and individual policies within. DPDs will set out the Council's policies relating to the development and use of land within the Borough and are as follows:

- **Core Strategy.** This will set out the objectives for the spatial development of the borough, along with a long term vision. It is the over arching policy document for the LDF and all other DPD's must be in conformity with it once it is adopted.

- **Area Action Plans.** These documents will provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. Their particular focus will be on implementation and they should:

1. Deliver planned growth areas
2. Stimulate regeneration
3. Protect areas particularly sensitive to change
4. Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures
5. Focus delivery of area based regeneration initiatives

- **Site Specific Allocations.** These will allocate land for specific uses (including mixed use) and can include policies relating to the delivery of the site specific allocations.

- **Generic Development Control DPD.** This will provide additional policies to set the criteria against which planning applications will be decided. Policies within this document will be topic related and will explain how they apply to the local area .

- **Proposals Map (with Inset Maps where necessary).** An adopted proposals map will identify areas of protection such as Conservations Areas, Green Belt land and protected landscape. It will also illustrate any adopted development plan policies and thus will need revising as each new DPD is adopted.

7.1 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPD'S).

7.2 This type of document does not form part of the statutory development plan, instead it is intended to strengthen development plan policy with added detail. As such, they will not be subject to independent examination but should be clearly cross referenced back to a DPD policy, be reviewed on a regular basis and be consistent with national and regional policy. Where a DPD is not yet in place, the SPD should refer back to a saved UDP policy.

7.3 SPD's may not be used to allocate land but should rather take the form of design guides, development briefs or master plans.

7.4 Upon their production they should have an accompanying statement of compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement.

7.5 As previously mentioned, appendix F shows maps of the spatial extent of area forum boundaries, town centres and regeneration action areas. This gives readers an opportunity to identify where area based plans will be focused.

7.6 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

7.7 Under the new planning Act, Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents, as a method of achieving the objectives of sustainable development.

7.8 Planning authorities must also undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) upon documents which are likely to have significant environmental effects under European Directive 2001/42/EC. Whilst the two tests are distinct, it is possible to carry them out in one appraisal process.

7.9 In preparing its forthcoming DPD's and SPD's the Council will undertake Sustainability Appraisal from the outset (see diagrams in appendix B). Every local development document will be accompanied by its corresponding Sustainability Appraisal at each stage of the consultation and involvement process.

8 The Process of Involvement

8.0 Appendix B sets out the process the Council will use in the production of Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents. This process can be broken down into several stages, with community involvement important at each of them. Below is a breakdown of the stages of document preparation. Note, the process for supplementary planning documents is more simplified and does not have an examination stage, the basic principles are however similar.

i. Pre-production - survey and evidence gathering leading to a decision to include a development plan document in the local development scheme.

ii. Production - preparation of issues and options and consultation. The pre submission consultation and submission of development plan document.

iii. Examination - the independent examination into the soundness of the plan & any representations not yet resolved in i. or ii.

iv. Adoption - the binding report and adoption.

8.1 The new planning system now operates a policy of focusing on early consultation before the majority of plans are drawn up. Added to this, the focus of the consultation can vary according to the scale and type of DPD or SPD. As mentioned previously, planning documents can be subject or area based therefore the type and scale of involvement will be tailored to the content of the particular document. This does not however exclude any person from making comments at any stage of consultation.

8.2 The basic principles are as follows:

Wide Community Involvement

Where proposals cover a large geographical area or contain issues that can be applied borough wide, consultation will be aimed at the wider community across the borough.

Consultation will begin as early as possible to raise awareness across the borough. This gives all interested parties adequate opportunity to have their say.

Focused Community Involvement

The more specific the issue or the smaller the geographical area, the more targeted the involvement.

For specific issues, targeting those organisations and individuals to which there is the most direct relevance allows a more efficient use of resources. The same is true for documents with smaller geographical areas, specific communities that are most directly affected will be targeted from the outset.

Where the Council is concentrating on involvement with specific groups this will not exclude neighbouring or wider communities from taking part in any dialogue.

8.3 Development Plan Documents

8.4 **Pre-Production.** The Council will seek the involvement of the relevant groups in the formation of evidence which will be used to support planning policies. The topics of this information will be; Core Strategy, Housing, Waste, Employment, Retail & Leisure, Generic Development Control Policy and Action Areas (as shown in diagram 1). The Council will select from the list in appendix C, those groups and organisations most relevant to the subject of the DPD for initial consultation. Information will be made available for viewing at deposit locations and on the Council website for all other interested parties. As a method of reducing duplication and achieving greater efficiency, the Council predicts that where topics overlap it will be possible to consult jointly on two or more documents.

8.5 At this stage, a scoping exercise for Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment will be running in parallel. This document will be sent out to specific consultation bodies and made available for viewing by the public.

8.6 **Production.** Using evidence previously gathered, the Council will begin work on preparing issues and options on the proposed DPD. During this time local small communities and stakeholders will be continuously involved in a process of informal consultation. Those people with relevant interests in the particular document will be consulted via circular letter and or public notices. Information will be made available at deposit locations and on the Council website (www.halton.gov.uk)

8.7 If the DPD is the Core Strategy the wider community will be invited to take part. For DPD's with thematic themes such as Housing, Waste or Employment then consultation will take place with statutory consultees and relevant general consultees from the LDF consultation database. If the DPD is an Area Action Plan then those within the local vicinity will be contacted in addition to those on the LDF database.

8.8 The next step is to produce a preferred options document together with a formal Sustainability Appraisal, which considers the likely effects of the preferred options. These two documents will be put on deposit for a period of 6 weeks to allow for formal representations to be made. As before those directly affected will be contacted via letter and the necessary documents will be placed at deposit locations and on the council website for viewing and comment. Where groups of people share a common view it is preferable to send a single representation rather than many. In such cases the group should indicate how many people are involved.

8.9 Representations for support of a document or policy are also welcome and should be made in the same way as any other representation.

8.10 After the 6 week consultation all comments received will be put into a concise report, (which will be made public) this will be used to prepare the final draft of the DPD.

8.11 A submission draft of the DPD will then be written and placed on deposit, along with a formal Sustainability Appraisal and Statement of Compliance (with the SCI) for a further 6 week period. Representations can be made at this stage.

8.12 These documents will also be sent to the Secretary of State and the relevant regional planning body. As previously, the

documents will be placed at deposit locations and on the Council website with facilities available for representations to be made. The comments received during this period will not however be considered by the Council, but an independent inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State. All representations received at the end of this six week period will be put into a report and made available to the public.

8.13 The likely dates of the independent examination are included in the Halton Borough Council Local Development Scheme.

8.14 **Examination.** At least six weeks before the examination begins all details of the examination will be advertised in the local newspapers and on the Council website. This information will include times, dates, locations and the name of the Inspector.

8.15 Where representations are made on a submitted DPD for alternative site allocations or changes to a site boundary, the Council will advertise these proposals for a period of six weeks, after the previous 6 week period for making representations has expired. The Council will then be able to receive representations on the proposed alternative sites. The onus will however be on those promoting an alternative site to prove that it meets the tests of soundness and that the Sustainability Appraisal process has been undertaken.

8.16 It is also possible that the Inspector will hold a pre examination meeting 8 weeks before the start of the examination

8.17 Those issues that have not been resolved at previous stages of the document preparation are to be resolved at an independent examination. It is anticipated that, for reasons of efficiency, the majority of representations will be considered by the inspector by way of written representations.

8.18 **Adoption.** Following the independent examination the Inspector will produce a report of his recommendations which will be binding upon the Council. The Council will publish notice that the plan has been adopted and inform interested parties. No further consultation will take place.

8.19 Supplementary Planning Documents

8.20 The process for adopting SPD's is more simplified than that of adopting DPD's. The process follows a similar pattern but there is no requirement for the production of issues and options and there is no public examination as the content of the SPD will be linked to that of a DPD which will have undergone public examination.

8.21 **Pre Production.** At this stage evidence is gathered to support policies to be written and a sustainability scoping appraisal report is undertaken. As SPD policies relate to DPD policies or saved UDP policies there is a lesser requirement to undertake consultation to gather evidence. Where this is not the case, consultation will occur with selected groups determined by the Council on their relevancy to the SPD content. The SA Scoping report will go out to consultation to a selected group for a period of 5 weeks.

8.22 **Production.** A draft SPD is prepared along with a Sustainability Appraisal. The Council will then invite representations over a 6 week period. The Draft SPD, the SA and the Statement of Consultation will

be placed at deposit locations in paper format and electronically on the Council's website. Representations will be taken into consideration and the SPD altered as appropriate. A concise report will be written summarising the representations and how they are to be addressed.

8.23 **Adoption.** The Council will advertise the adoption of the SPD upon the Council website and by writing to those groups and individuals that have taken part. The following documents will also be made available to the public:

- An adoption Statement
- The adopted SPD
- A statement detailing the representations and how they were handled
- The Sustainability Appraisal

9 Feedback to Participants

9.0 Providing feedback to those who have taken part in the consultation to demonstrate how the communities views have been acted upon is also a component of the consultation toolkit. Added to this the Council should make every effort to implement changes that reflect the community view, subject to practical and legal limitations.

9.1 In reporting back after consultation it is vital to summarise the views gathered and the methods used, along with the processes used to make decisions and the Council's intended response. The response should further address what the Council will not be able to change and why.

9.2 The Council will continue to set up a dedicated database of respondees. The system will generate responses to all respondees on every participation exercise they are involved with.

9.3 Establishing a phasing programme for engagement, negotiation and mediation should be planned to give all participants a clear indication of the time scales of events. The time scales involved for participation are sometimes the reason for unsuccessful representations.

9.4 Indicating the likely projection of events gives participants time to plan their involvement. Added to this the mediation process should be started early by contacting those people who might be affected by planning decisions. This process will generate trust by showing public officials are considering residents and their concerns.

9.5 With regard to the paragraph above, stakeholders are more likely to remain involved if they can be shown how their input and opinions are having an effect on policy making.

9.6 The precepts of the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act 1998 will be paramount. Those undertaking consultation should check they are only divulging information to the public that will not jeopardise others privacy or confidential details.

10 Planning Applications

10.0 The financial consequences that can flow from the granting of planning permission and the impacts on the setting of landholdings can sometimes be interpreted poorly by the public. It is therefore vital that future development is given justifiable reasons and that discussion and consultation is held in an open and impartial manner. While it is vital to consult as widely as possible, this should not come at the cost of making speedier decisions on planning applications. The methods outlined below will allow the Council to consult as widely as possible yet retaining an ability to be responsive and process planning applications as quickly as possible.

10.1 This section of the SCI will detail how the Council intends to consult on all planning applications and how members of the public can become informed of details of any application made.

10.2 Developments may take several forms and will require varying levels of public consultation according to the size and scale of the proposal.

10.3 Government guidance has categorised significant/major developments into three tiers. As stated above each of these tiers will require a different level of consultation. The first tier will require consultation carried out at a Borough wide level, reaching as many people across Halton as possible. Whilst each application will probably be consulted on differently, the public can expect to be informed by way of newsletters, public notices, media campaigns and through the use of the internet. The types of major development included in **Tier 1** are:

- Development Plan Departures.
- Schedule 1 developments - as defined by EIA regulations 1999. This includes waste disposal facilities, aggregates extraction and other major industrial developments.
- Proposals for over 20,000 square metres of gross shopping floor space

10.4 **Tier 2** developments are defined as those major developments which are likely to require wider community involvement except where the local planning authority can demonstrate that this is not necessary. In a case such as this, involvement of the community in the area of the proposal will be more appropriate. Types of Tier 2 development include:

- Schedule 2 developments - as defined in EIA regulations 1999. Those developments which will have a significant effect on the environment but to a lesser extent than those in Schedule 1.
- Residential development on greenfield land which consists of proposals for over 150 dwellings, or residential sites over 5 hectares on greenfield land.
- Any development on any playing field owned by the local authority or used by an educational institution.
- Planning applications which require full transport assessment - i.e. any development which is likely to have significant transport implications.

10.5 The final level of consultation is for **Tier 3** developments and all other planning

applications. These are developments which will only have implications at a local level on a site-by-site basis and therefore only the local community near the proposal site need be involved through consultation. The types of development include:

- Any development proposal which falls marginally below the thresholds set in tiers 1 & 2 but has requirements for affordable housing or major developer contributions.
- Development that falls on or adjacent to sites of particular sensitivity i.e. conservation areas or listed buildings, loss of employment land for housing or development on windfall sites.
- Certain developments that fall outside the main use of the area they are situated, for example business development in a predominantly residential area.

10.6 The consultation methods given for each of the tiers within Table 1 are an indicative list and the Council recognises that the list is not exhaustive and that each application should be judged on its merits. Therefore, in pre-application discussions with the Council applicants should use Table 1 as a guide to the appropriate type and level of public consultation for Tier 1 and Tier 2 developments. This exercise should outline the chosen methods of consultation and provide reasoned justification for the inclusion and exclusion of each method.

Community Involvement in Planning Applications			
Method	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3 & All other applications
Public Meetings	✓		
Public Exhibition	✓	✓	
Surgeries	✓	✓	
Development Briefs	✓		
Workshops	✓		
Enquiry by Design / Planning For Real	✓	✓	
Citizen panels	✓	✓	✓
Consultation Panel	✓		
Town / Parish Councils	✓	✓	✓
Media	✓		
Website	✓	✓	✓
Planning Aid	✓	✓	✓
Local Architectural or Design Panel	✓	✓	

Table 1: Consultation appropriate for different types of planning application

11 Further Information

PRE-APPLICATION

11.0 It is the Council's intention that the public should be given opportunity to comment on and influence any planning application that could affect them. Closer work with landowners and developers, as well as the public at the pre-application stage is therefore a high priority. It is envisaged that developers will take the lead in the pre-application consultations, with guidance from the Council.

11.1 The existing consultation database and address management system, used by the Forward Planning section, can be used as a starting point to contact those interest groups directly affected by a proposal. Before this the Council will expect developers to assess the scale and nature of any consultation they will undertake.

11.2 Any developer wishing to undertake consultation before applying for planning permission should first approach the Council to decide on the best course of action. Should the developer undertake a consultation exercise they will be required to submit along with their planning application, the following details:

- Name and contact details of developer:
- Address & description of proposed development:
- Details of the effects the proposal(s) might have;- With particular reference to Conservation, Design, Pollution, Public Amenities and Transport
- A detailed record of consultation techniques used (selected from section 14)
- A summary of responses outlining points of objection or support
- A summary of the changes made (if any) to the proposal as a result of the consultation exercise.
- A brief evaluation of the consultation exercise as a whole

Upon undertaking the consultation exercise the Council would request that developers bear the following in mind:

- The extent of the community that may be affected (i.e. immediate vicinity nearby centres, any particular communities or groups of people)
- Before consultation begins you should inform in advance Councillors, Parish Councils and neighbouring individuals.
- Keep records of all publicity documents letters and notices sent out along with any responses received.

11.3 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PROCESS

11.4 The weekly list of all planning applications received is placed on the Council website (www.halton.gov.uk) for viewing and comment. Various local interest groups are also provided with this weekly list.

11.5 Where required Statutory consultees are consulted on planning applications and given 21 days to respond (28 days for English Nature in the case of a planning application potentially affecting a SSSI or in a SSSI consultation area). Not all of the

bodies in Appendix C are contacted for each application. This varies according to the details of the proposal. Once planning applications have been processed and validated, site notices will be placed at the application site - also for a period of 21 days.

11.6 Neighbours adjoining the application site receive an individual letter explaining the application and advice on how to obtain further information and make comments.

11.7 Notice of significant weekly planning applications, such as developments of more than 10 dwellings or 0.5ha, all developments over 1000sq.m gross floor area and listed building applications, are printed in the local newspapers (Widnes Weekly News, Runcorn Weekly News). Copies of all types of planning application are sent to Parish Councils and relevant local Councillors.

11.8 Throughout the course of a planning application there are likely to be various changes that occur after the initial submission, brought about by negotiation. This negotiation can often lead to a resubmission or amendments to iron out any potential problems. Where an improvement has been secured, re-notification of neighbours is often unnecssary as amendments will often be as a result of specific objections.

11.9 Re-notification responses are ususally given 7 - 14 days to arrive.

11.10 COMMITTEE

11.11 The majority of planning applications are dealt with by delegation to officers. Applications which are considered more complex or controversial are referred to the Development Control Committee which is held at Runcorn Town Hall.

11.12 A Development Control Committee is usually held once a month. The agenda for this committee is normally published five working days before the meeting.

11.13 Dates and times of meetings are sent to all individuals who have commented on applications and are also available upon request. Any comments made on a planning application are summarised in an officer report and will be considered by the committee.

11.14 Anyone wishing to speak at Committee should contact the Environmental Health & Planning Department and request a form. This form contains guidance on speaking and should be submitted to the planning department by 4.00pm on the last working day before the committee meeting. If there are several objectors / supporters who wish to speak on any particular application, each group will need to organise a spokesperson as only one person is allowed to speak.

11.15 Minutes and agendas from each Committee are available on the Council Website.

11.16 DECISIONS

11.17 Parish Councils and any persons / organisations who makes comments on a planning applications are notified of the decision.

11.18 If an appeal is lodged as a result of the decision, anyone who submitted comments will be notified. Additional comments can then be made to the Planning Inspectorate

12 Conservation areas and Listed Buildings

12.0 In considering development/applications involving the removal of hedgerows, tree preservation orders, conservation areas and Listed Buildings, the Parish Council and adjoining land owner will be informed along with statutory consultees, who have 21 days to respond. Added to this any development likley to affect the character or appearance a conservation area or setting of a Listed Building will also be publicised in the local newspapers.

12.1 Applications for works undertaken on trees within conservation areas will be determined within 6 weeks from the date of receipt. Applications for works to trees already with a Tree Preservation Order covering them will be determined within 8 weeks from the date of receipt.

13 Internal Consultation

13.0 Whilst consulting the public is the main priority it is important not to undervalue the resources within the Council. Planning policy officers already have a close working relationship with development control officers through regular dialogue. Similarly DC officers have a regular dialogue with other divisions within the Council. This practice will be continued at regular intervals whilst plans are being created and beyond.

13.1 Recent improvements in Council departments such as Policy and Research, have meant the Council can now consult the public and analyse data far more efficiently. In terms of monitoring the success of consultation, questionnaires can be designed, sent out, and results analysed electronically. This process will save time and money and will also mean consultations will not be repeated as results will be reused, if appropriate.

14 Methods of Consultation

14.0 For Halton Borough Council community engagement is a means to involve people in addressing the issues which affect their neighbourhoods and lives. The Council has a stakeholder involvement toolkit which ensures that residents and other stakeholders are involved in setting priorities for action in their areas as well as implementing solutions. This can be found on the Council's website (www.halton.gov.uk).

14.1 In line with best practice in the field, engagement in Halton can be seen at five levels:

- Information provision
- Consultation
- Deciding together
- Acting together
- Supporting local initiatives.

14.2 This toolkit is but a means to an end. It recognises that the real value of engagement is in improving the design and delivery of effective public services. It harnesses the knowledge and experience of local people to help others really understand local needs and aspirations. It enables services to deliver in a responsive way and provide feedback when problems occur.

14.3 The toolkit provides for a consistent approach to engagement. It ensures that the process is properly coordinated and managed. It encourages partners to collaborate and work together to share skills and experience. It also helps to avoid duplication and "consultation fatigue". It makes the most of peoples time and resources, but gives communities a sense of ownership.

14.4 There is no need to reinvent the consultation process. Instead it is more important to show the public how their views have been used, this requires the correct use of the term consultation. If you only need to market research public opinion about a certain issue then those who contribute should be made aware of why they are being questioned, and to what ends.

14.5 Targeting the correct group of people is critical in producing an effective result. The initial exercise for consulting the public might involve questioning participants to identify particular concerns; categorise those people with similar concerns and then create flexible solutions to fairly and appropriately address those concerns. Difficulties can arise from the fact that participants can be reluctant to participate in what can be, at times, quite a hostile environment with many people arguing for personal rather than community provisions.

14.6 The corporate consultation toolkit highlights the fact that consultation can be undertaken to achieve different goals - Informing & Educating, Persuading, Listening & Learning, Dialogue, Debate, Exchange & Negotiation, Deliberation, Building Capacity & Mutual Confidence.

14.7 Under each of these headings there are styles of consultation and advertising that work best. A brief summary of the methodologies covered by the toolkit is given below.

INFORMING & EDUCATING

- Media coverage/Publicity
- Newsletter
- Letters to statutory consultees
- Exhibitions
- Public Meetings
- Consultation Documents
- Interactive IT/ Internet

LISTENING & LEARNING

- Interactive IT/Internet
- Postal Opinion Surveys
- Question & Answer Sessions
- Face To Face Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Halton 2000 Panel
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Exhibitions

DIALOGUE, DEBATE, EXCHANGE & NEGOTIATION

- Conferences, Seminars, Workshops
- Question & Answer Sessions
- Focus Groups
- Citizens Juries
- Neighbourhood/Local Forums
- Topic Based Forums

DELIBERATION

- Halton 2000 Panel
- Topic Based Forums
- User Panels

BUILDING CAPACITY AND MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

- Community Development Initiatives i.e. Action Planning, Planning For Real
- Regeneration Strategies

15 How we will consult

15.1 **Website (www.halton.gov.uk)**
The Council considers its website a massive resource and will make full use of this media for consultation purposes. At every stage of consultation all LDF documents will be made available for downloading along with associated Sustainability Appraisals and response forms. The Council will also publish on its website, any public notices that appear in local newspapers.

- The Council website will be used to provide information on any other events related to planning, such as forthcoming consultation events.
- Comments received at consultation events will be summarised and placed on the internet together with a Council response.
- All planning documents and correspondence will contain details of a relevant web address.
- The internet is now used for viewing planning applications and making comment. Guidance is given on how to fill in planning application forms for anyone wishing to do so, online.

15.2 **Individual Letters**
An LDF consultation database has been created to register the names and addresses of any organisation or individual that wishes to be kept informed of one or more planning documents. At each consultation stage this database will be interrogated for those people that have requested to be informed. It is likely that the Council will use individual letters as an initial contact method at the very start of the process.

15.3 **Email (with Links)**
Making full use of emails as a method for initial consultation and regular updates will mean massive resource savings. The Council will use emails to contact those major groups, such as statutory consultees, at the earliest possible stage.

15.4 **Inside Halton Newsletter**
Once every quarter the Council produces an informative newsletter which is distributed to every household in the borough. This is therefore an ideal opportunity to promote a large scale consultation exercise. Any articles placed in this newsletter will contain details of the proposed development plan or planning application, how to obtain further information and a list of contact details.

15.5 **Public Notices & Press Releases**
The Council has a statutory responsibility to publish notification of planning applications and LDF documents in its local newspapers. Where relevant it will also place press releases advertising some of its major consultation exercises.

15.6 **Exhibitions & Open days**
For those planning applications or Local Development Documents that are likely to require the greatest level of consultation, exhibitions will be held at well known locations throughout the borough.

Times, dates and locations will be advertised well in advance of these events. Council officers will also be available at these events to provide assistance to anyone who attends.

15.7 **Area Forums & Citizens Panels**

Area forums provide the opportunity for local people with certain issues to make their case known directly to local Councillors and Council officers. They also provide the opportunity for Council officers to disseminate information directly to local people.

Halton 2000 is an ongoing panel of 1,500 Halton residents who are broadly representative of the local authority area. The panel provides the authority with regular customer feedback on the service currently provided. The Council is able to book space for surveys in the planned programme.

Further information on the panel and how to become a panel member is available on the Council website.

15.8 **Local Councillors**

The role of elected members in community involvement is a central element of this SCI. From a planning perspective in particular, the Council Members are involved in various issues through a series of working parties and area forums as mentioned above. These working parties have been particularly useful in driving the progress of the Unitary Development Plan and have enabled local opinion to be communicated directly to planning officers.

15.9 **Deposit Locations**

Shown in section 18, all documents and correspondence including public notices and newsletters will be placed at deposit locations throughout the borough. Comments forms will also be made available at these locations as will consultation responses.

15.10 **Face to Face Consultation**

This type of method can involve in depth interviews and focus groups along with arts and creative consultation using video and photography. It may be achieved using existing community networks or establishing a new line of communication where interest is expressed in a particular project. Consultation of this nature can be particularly useful for engaging with hard to reach groups such as black and ethnic minorities, children and young people, faith communities, people in deprived areas, those with disabilities or young and adult offenders.

16 Target Groups

16.0 It is possible to identify a broad range of target groups for consultation:

Public
Members
Businesses
Public agencies
Community and voluntary sector
Statutory bodies
Minority Groups (Ethnic groups, Gypsies Etc.)
Developers
Partners

16.1 Appendix C gives a list of potential consultees, in addition to this the planning department keeps a list of over 250 consultees for planning applications. This list includes specific officers from the Council that can make information available to minority groups, for example the Council has a gypsy liaison officer and social services officer(s). To make the process efficient it makes sense to utilise these established networks and methodologies to avoid consultation overload.

16.2 The Council has a consultation timetable which coordinates planned exercises throughout the year. Planning consultations will be coordinated through this mechanism.

16.3 The methods used to advertise community participation to the public in Halton will see information available to most people in the Borough, however it is particularly important not to miss out groups such as schools, school children, the disabled and ethnic minorities. If it is found that a certain group is under represented then efforts shall be made to engage the public at various schools, citizens panels and organisations. In contrast to this, it needs to be acknowledged that people may not wish to be involved as they are content with current plans. So long as there is opportunity for them to become involved if they wish, this should be a more than adequate basis for consultation.

16.4 Added to this, those undertaking a consultation should consider, in detail, those groups they wish to involve, particularly if they are recognised as 'hard to reach'. Getting to know groups is an important primary step and should be applied to any groups not just those considered in the minority or hard to reach. Realising that a group might have issues with access to transport or potential language barriers is imperative in achieving access and avoiding confusion.

16.5 The Council has an arrangement with Manchester City Council's MFour Translation and Interpretation service, this allows those groups for whom English is not their first language to gain access to this and other Council documents. The Council also has a robust equality and diversity strategy and takes its role in promoting equity seriously. Section 21(4) of the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 states that accessibility of information to people with disabilities is a statutory requirement. This means considerations such as providing information in Audio, Braille or large print etc. Information in these formats will be made available upon request.

16.6 Further detail on how the Council will contact hard to reach groups is available in the stakeholder involvement toolkit. This document can be found on the

Council's website under the heading of Council Plans & Strategies. This document is particularly useful as it identifies the minority or hard to reach groups in the borough and describes the most useful methods for consulting with them.

16.7 The Halton Together Partnership is a network that enables voluntary and community groups to have a collective voice at all levels. It is an ideal starting point to target specific 'hard to reach' groups as outlined above.

16.8 Those who wish to learn more about this organisation should see the following website. (www.haltonva.org.uk)

16.9 Issues raised as a result of discussion of the Halton Together Partnership can be fed into the Local Strategic Partnership (mentioned in section 4) by way of representatives that sit on both boards

16.10 EQUALITY

16.11 The Council is committed to ensuring that care is taken to comply with all legal duties, such as those that arise under the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and laws against discrimination and defamation. The Council has a robust Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and will monitor the implementation of the SCI to ensure fairness to all categories of citizens and stakeholders.

17 Monitoring

17.0 In undertaking the consultation activities outlined in this SCI it is highly important to gage what kind of success we are achieving. Whilst by far the major aim of the consultation process is to discuss the project in hand, there needs to be an evaluation exercise at the end.

17.1 To a certain extent the quality of the outcome will rate the quality of the consultation process, however, more is required.

17.2 As each project will be different it is likely that some will throw up more problems than others, therefore comparing consultations may not always be ideal and each one should be evaluated on its own merits. Time and cost constraints may not lend themselves to an in depth evaluation exercise.

17.3 Consultation success can be measured from the following sources:

- Evaluation forms and feedback from all participants
- Checking on progress throughout the project (Everyone is satisfied with how much they have participated)
- Number of instances where people have come forward unhappy
- Are standards being met - evaluated through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)
- Number of people making representations
- Are certain types of consultation achieving better results than others

17.4 Where the procedures in the SCI prove to be unsuccessful or where revised procedures are needed to meet new circumstances a formal review of the SCI and resubmission to the Secretary of State will be undertaken.

18 Access to Information

18.0 Information relating to drafting new local development documents, supplementary planning documents and major developments will be made available, where possible, through a variety of methods.

- In electronic format from the Council website (www.halton.gov.uk)
- In paper format at the sites named below
- Made available upon request in large print, Braille and audio format

Runcorn Town Hall, Heath Road, Runcorn

9.00am-5.30pm	Mondays-Thursdays
9.00am-5.00pm	Fridays

Widnes Library, Victoria Road, Widnes

9.00am-9.00pm	Mondays -Thursdays
9.00am-9.00pm	Fridays
9.00am - 4.00pm	Saturdays

Halton Lea Library, Runcorn

9.00am-5.30pm	Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays
9.00am-7.00pm	Thursdays, Fridays
9.00am-4.00pm	Saturdays

Ditton Library, Widnes

9.30am-5.00pm	Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays
9.30am-7.00pm	Tuesdays
9.00am-4.00pm	Saturdays
	Closed Thursdays

Runcorn Information Centre, Church Street

8.45am-5.15pm	Mondays-Thursdays
8.45am-4.30pm	Fridays
10.00am-12.30pm	Saturdays

Halton Direct Link, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn

9.00am-5.30pm	Mondays-Wednesdays
9.00am-7.00pm	Thursdays, Fridays
9.00am-1.00pm	Saturdays

Halton Direct Link, Widnes

9.00am-5.30pm	Mondays-Wednesdays
9.00am-7.00pm	Thursdays, Fridays
9.00am-1.00pm	Saturdays

Halton Borough Council Web Site
http://www.halton.gov.uk

Comment forms can also be obtained from the above locations. There is also an electronic response facility on the Council's website.

If you require further information or have any questions about the consultation exercise, please telephone Forward Planning on 0151 907 8300.

Comments must be sent to the following address:
Phil Watts
Operational Director (Environmental Health & Planning)
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GW
Telephone: 0151 424 2061
Fax: 0151 471 7314
E-mail: forward.planning@halton.gov.uk

Appendix A - Members Of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board.

Business Link for
Greater Merseyside

Cheshire Church Leaders

Community Safety Strategy
Group/Drug Action Team
(Cheshire Constabulary)

Greater Merseyside
Connexions Service

Greater Merseyside Learning
and Skills Council

Halton Borough Council
Halton Chamber of Commerce
and Enterprise

Halton Health Partnership
(Halton Primary Care Trust)

Halton Housing Partnership
(Liverpool Housing Trust)

Halton Learning Partnership
(Halton College)

Halton Schools Sector

Halton Sports Partnership

Halton Together (Community
Empowerment Network)

Jobcentre Plus

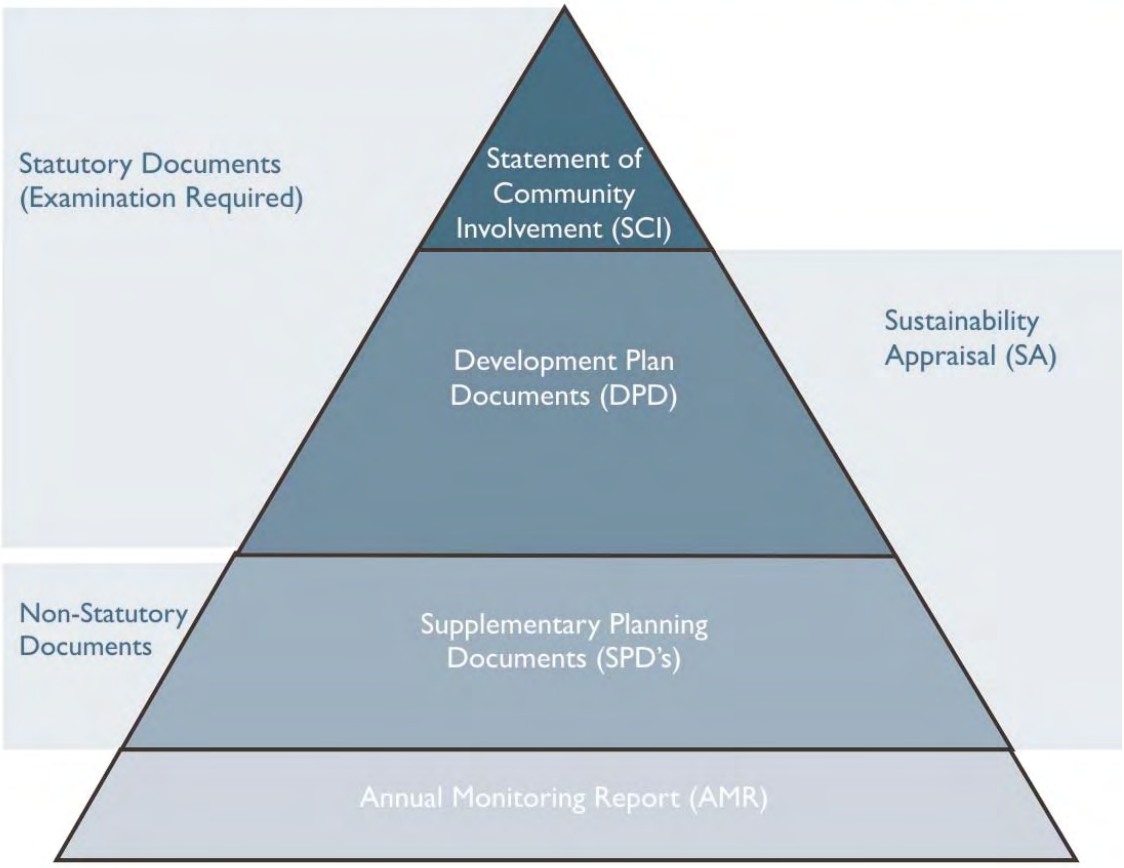
Northwest Development
Agency

Urban Renewal Specialist
Strategic Partnership
(Halton Borough Council)

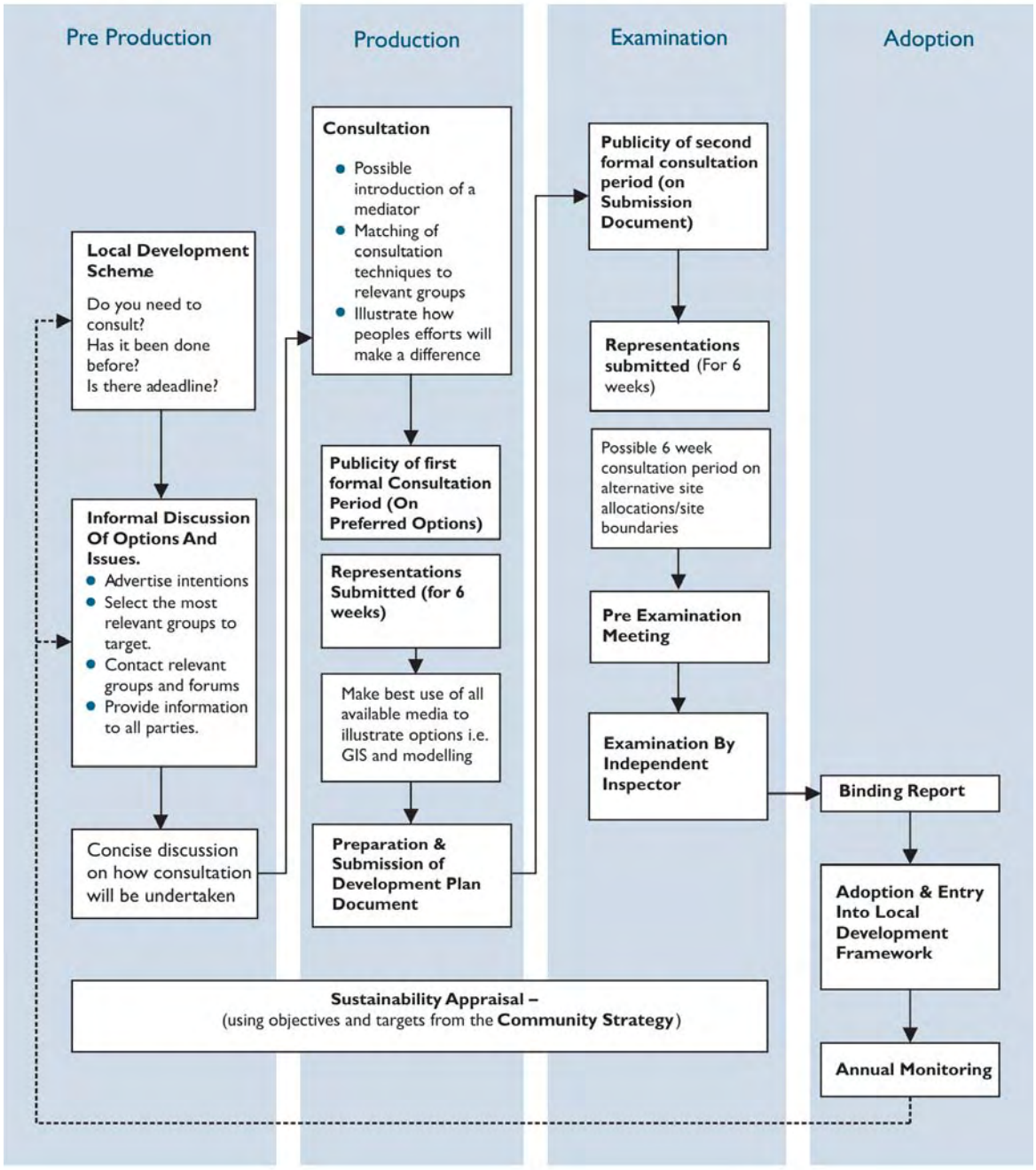
Wealth and Equality
Specialist Strategic
Partnership
(Halton Children's Fund)

Appendix B

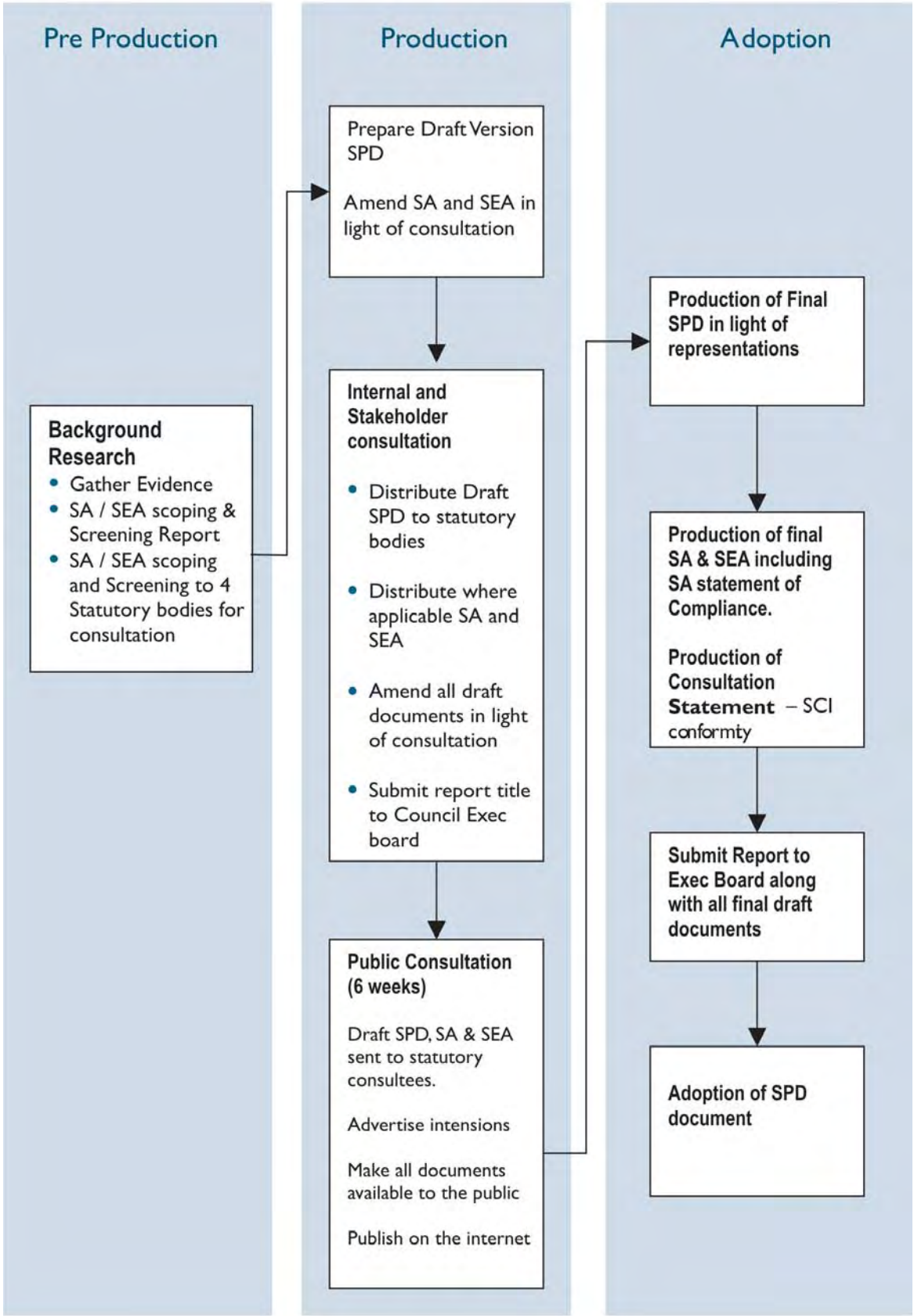
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SIMPLIFIED FORMAT



PROCEDURE FOR DPD CONSULTATION & ADOPTION



PROCEDURE FOR SPD CONSULTATION & ADOPTION



Appendix C - List of Consultees: Names of Organisations by Type

As per government guidance, the following list of contacts is not definitive, but rather shows the types of groups the council proposes to consult. A precise list of names might change too quickly. Where bodies listed cease to exist, successor bodies will be consulted.

Specific Consultation Bodies

North West Regional Assembly
Cheshire County Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Liverpool City Council
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Vale Royal Borough Council
Warrington Borough Council
Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council
Highways Agency
Countryside Agency North West Region
Environment Agency
English Heritage North West Region
English Nature Cheshire to Lancashire Team
The Strategic Rail Authority
North West Development Agency
Transco
United Utilities
Primary Care Trust
Daresbury Parish Council
Hale Parish Council
Preston Brook Parish Council
Moore Parish Council
Adjoining Town & Parish Councils
Mobile Operators Association
British Telecommunications plc

Government Departments & Other Consultees

Government Office North West
Home Office
Department for Education & Skills
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Transport
Department of Health
Department of Trade and Industry
Ministry of Defence
Department of Work and Pensions
Department of Constitutional Affairs
Department for Culture Media and Sport
Office of Government and Commerce
British Waterways Board
Civil Aviation Authority / Liverpool Airport Plc
Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment
Safer Halton Partnership
Employment Service
English Partnerships
Equal Opportunities Commission
Halton Police
Health and Safety Executive
Mersey Conservancy
Ministry of Defence
Post Office
MP's & MEP's

Halton Borough Council Departments

Chief Executive; All Director's and Assistant Directors
All Halton Councillors
Recreation & Leisure Centres
Community Forums
Education Dept establishments: All Schools; Youth Centres; Colleges; Various other sites
Fire Service
Libraries

Voluntary Sector

Age Concern Runcorn
Bridgewater Meeting Room Trust
British Red Cross Society - Runcorn

British Red Cross Society - Widnes
Citizens Advice Bureau
Disability Information Service
Disabled Access Group
Dukesfield Action Group
Guide Dogs for the Blind
Halton Voluntary Action
Inner Wheel Club
Kingfisher Womens Club
National Womens Register
NSPCC
Round Table - all districts
Soroptimists International - all districts
Steam Railway Group
Womens Institute - all districts

Residents Association
Residents Associations
Tenants Associations
Community Action Groups

Liverpool Diocese
Chester Diocese

Other Interest Groups
Community
Gypsy Council
St Johns Ambulance

Recreation
North West Sports Council
North West Tourist Board
Football Clubs (professional & amateur)
Golf Clubs
Cricket Clubs
Ramblers Associations
Sport England
Rugby Clubs (professional & amateur)

Disability Groups
Cheshire Panel of REMAP
Halton Disability Information Centre
Vision Resource Centre
Widnes Disabled Club

Commercial
Employment
Halton Businesses
Landowners
Industry

Retail / Development
Major supermarkets
Land owners
Housing associations
All major housing developers

Conservation & Heritage societies
Historical Society - Widnes and District
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

Natural Environment
Cheshire Landscape Trust
Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Halton Friends of the Earth
Mersey Estuary Conservation Group
Groundwork Mersey Valley
RSPB
Rural Development Commission
The Mersey Forest
The Woodland Trust
Wildlife Habitat Trust

Appendix D - Resource Implications

This SCI represents a formal statement of activities that have been undertaken in the past and an expression of the Council's intentions to continue managing resources for consultation in the same manner as it has previously done. Whilst consultation is viewed as a crucial exercise it should not be over emphasised as this can lead to delays in document production, inefficient use of resources and consultation overload. Care must be taken to balance the level of consultation with the speed of document production and the resources available.

STAFF

The time taken to undertake consultation on both Local Development Documents and planning applications places the greatest constraint on overall resources.
The Council's Development Plans team currently contains 5 members, this therefore represents a strong ability to deal with consultation over the number of documents proposed in the LDS. Should consultations become greater tasks than originally anticipated, due to increased interest from stakeholders, the forward planning team can draw upon resources within the planning department for extra support.

The Council can also draw upon its inhouse resources to aid the consultation process. There are several examples of this, which include our address management and GIS section and a newsletter produced by the Council which is distributed borough wide.

FUNDING

The Development Plans team can currently call upon funding from Planning Delivery Grant to supplement the statutory local plans delivery budget.

The Council is also fortunate to have its own marketing and printing services which reduces the need to use outside agencies.

In an effort to reduce duplication of consultation events the Council actively promotes cross departmental communication to highlight areas of overlapping work. This proactive approach will contribute to the reduction of overall costs of consultation.

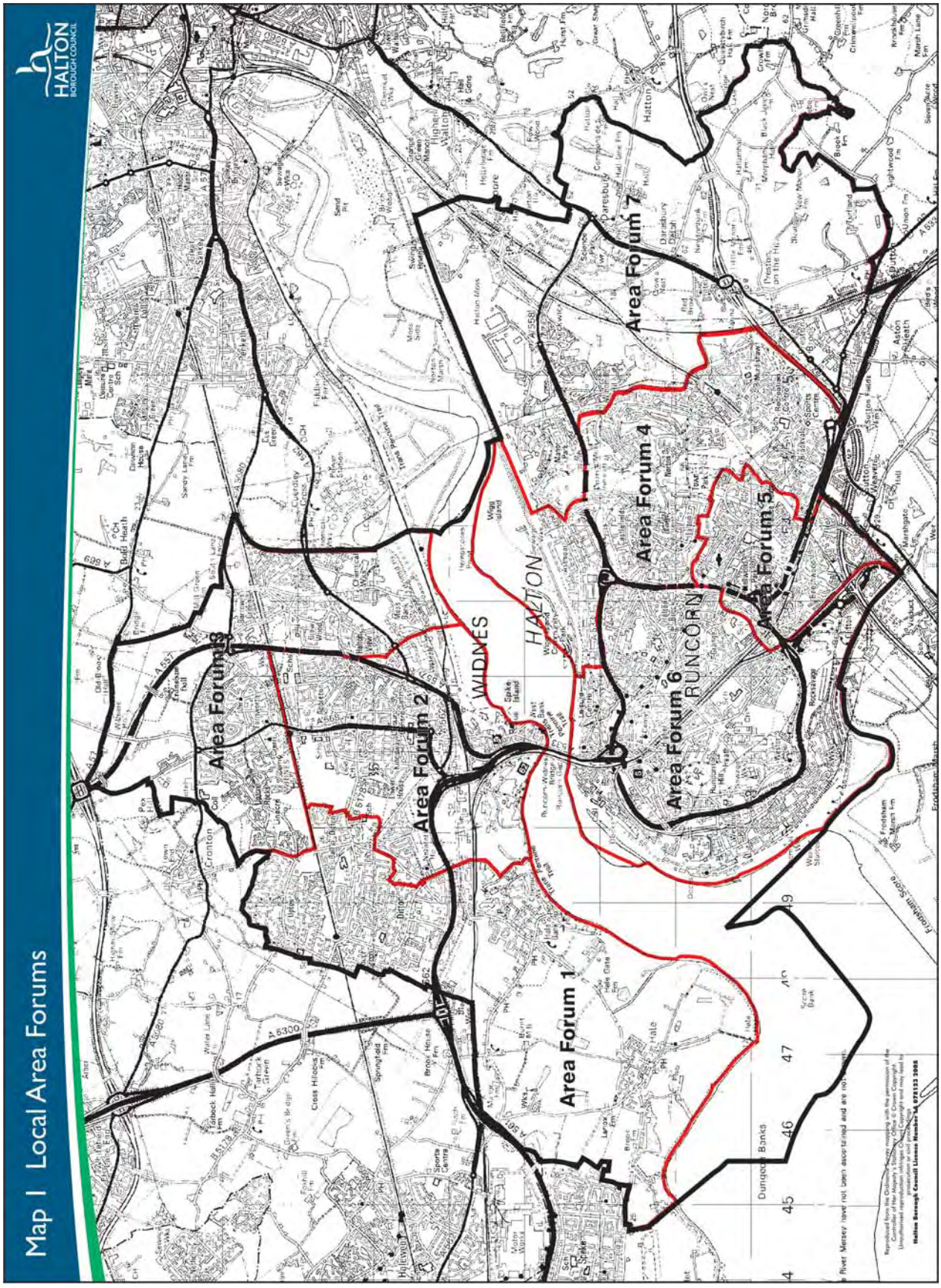
VENUES

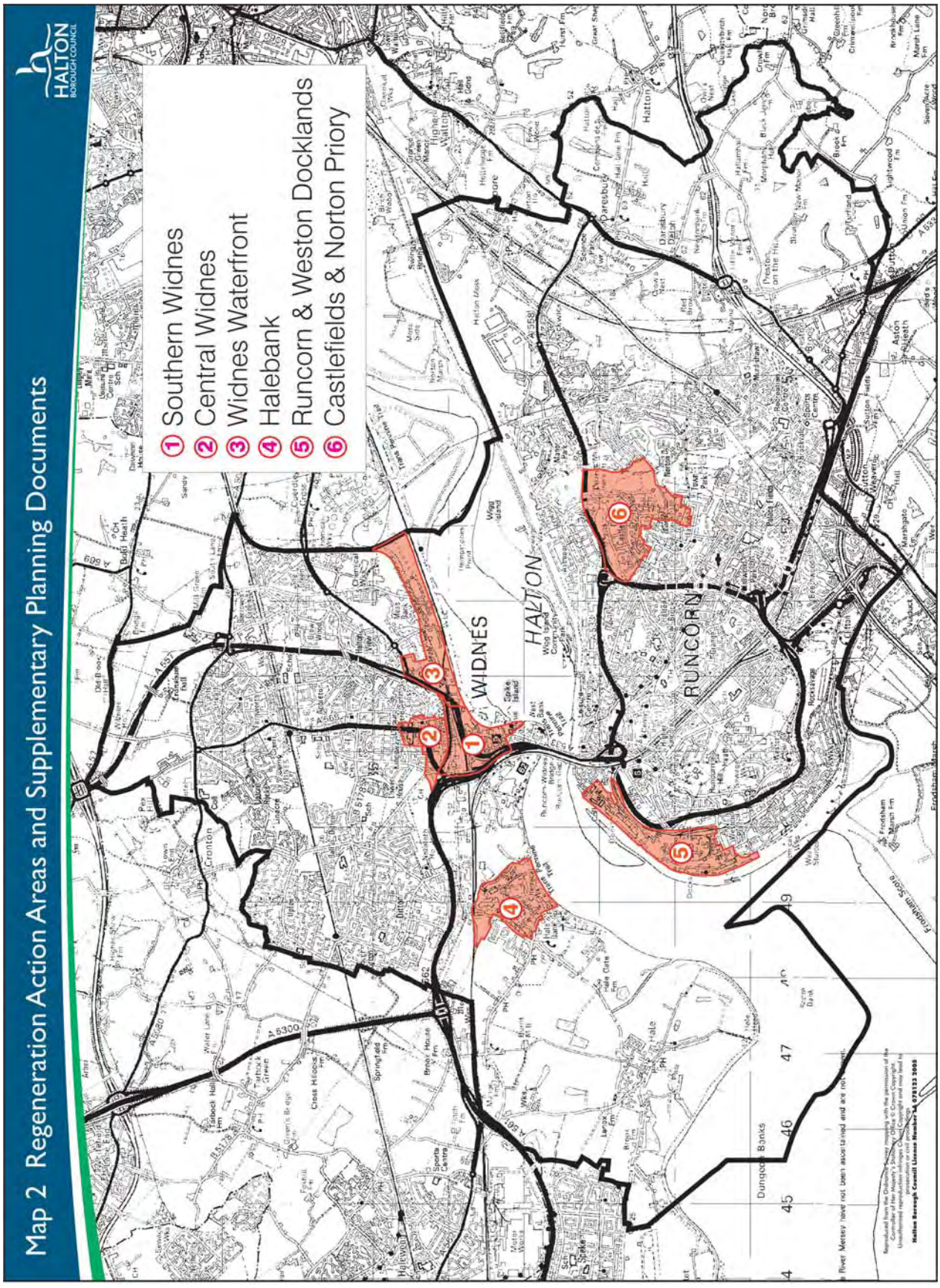
The Council has a number of prominent venues throughout the borough at its disposal. These venues can be used for larger scale consultation events such as for DPD's.

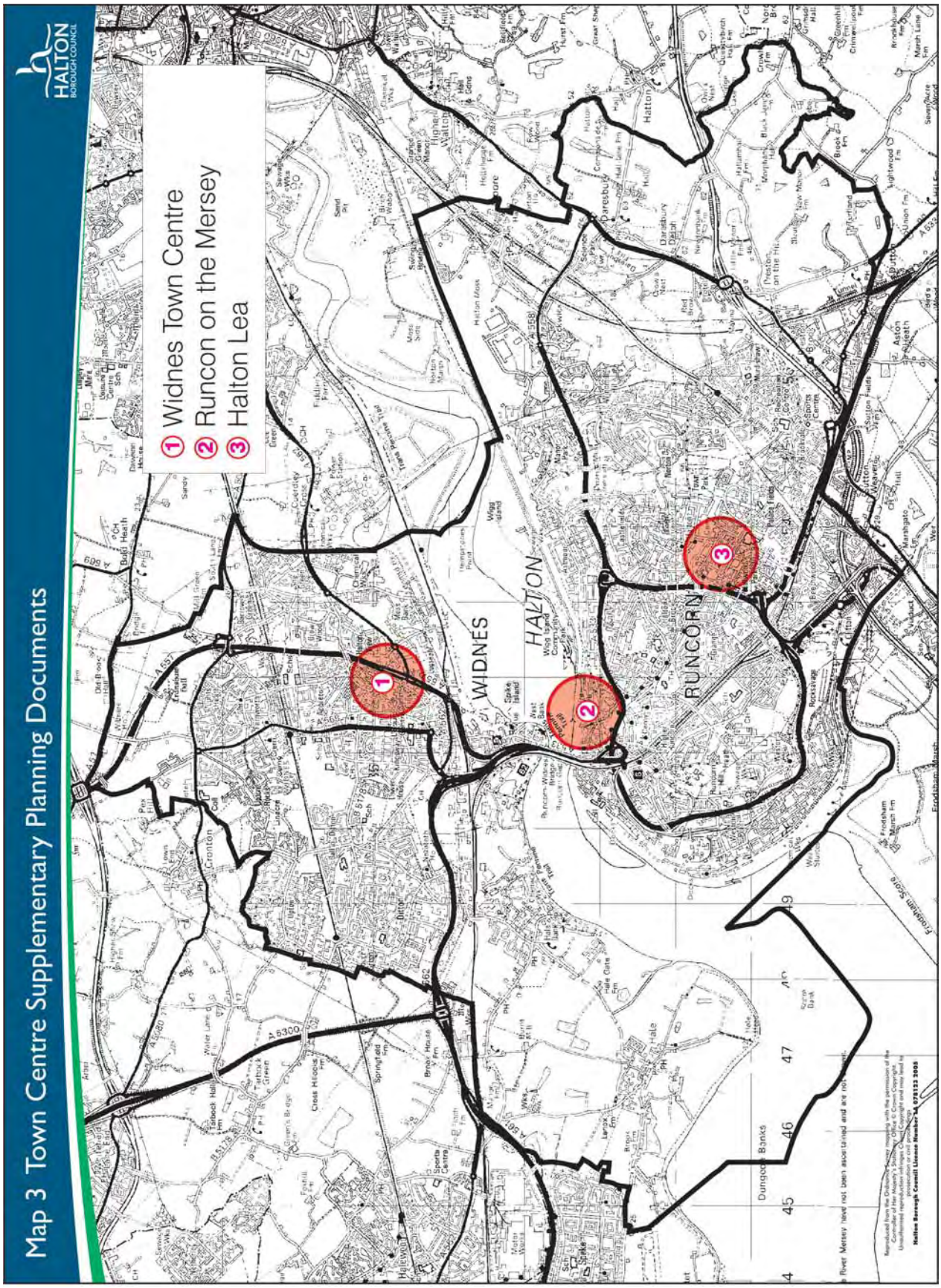
Appendix E

Tests of Soundness for Statement of Community Involvement		
Test i	LPA has complied with minimum standards as set out in Regulations	Have minimum standards been met? (Regulations 25, 26, 27, 28, 29)
Test ii	SCI links with other community involvement initiatives, e.g. community strategy	Are suitable links in place?
		Does the SCI indicate how the LPA will link consultation exercises on different DPD's with CS?
Test iii	SCI identifies in general terms which local community groups & other bodies will be consulted	Does the SCI make clear the nature of the Local community groups who will be involved?
		Does the SCI indicate how these groups will be involved?
Test iv	SCI identifies how consultees can be involved in a timely & accessible manner	Are the methods outlined suitable for the type of documents?
Test v	Methods of consultation proposed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in document preparation.	Does the SCI outline the stages of consultation and types of consultation and that they are suitable for the intended audience i.e. hard to reach groups.
Test vi	Resources are available to manage community involvement effectively.	It is clear how the LPA will manage time, staff, funding….etc?
		Is it clear resources are available to manage large planning applications?
Test vii	SCI shows how the results of the community involvement will be fed into documents	Does the SCI state that the results of consultation will be reported back to those who have taken part and the wider community?
Test viii	That the authority has methods for reviewing the SCI	What will trigger a review of the SCI?
		Are there methods in place for the review itself?
Test ix	SCI clearly describes the LPA's policy for consultation on planning applications	Does the SCI demonstrate how people will be involved in the preparation of LDD's?
		Are the methods appropriate for the range of groups?

Appendix F Maps of the Borough




Map 2 Regeneration Action Areas and Supplementary Planning Documents
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
1 Southern Widnes
2 Central Widnes
3 Widnes Waterfront
4 Halebank
5 Runcorn & Weston Docklands
6 Castlefields & Norton Priory
WIDNES
HALTON
RUNCORN


Map 3 Town Centre Supplementary Planning Documents
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
1 Widnes Town Centre
2 Runcon on the Mersey
3 Halton Lea
WIDNES
HALTON
RUNCORN

Glossary

Area Action Plan (AAP) - Used to provide the planning framework for areas where a significant change or conservation is needed

Core Strategy - This will set out the Council's main vision, objectives, spatial strategy and Core Policies for the area

Development Plan Documents (DPDs) - Documents within the LDF that make up the statutory plan

Local Development Document (LDD) - Documents which are included in the LDF

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - Document setting out what documents a Council intends to include within its LDF, and the programme for production

Local Development Framework (LDF) - The suite of DPDs and SPDs produced by a council for its area

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) - Document produced at the regional level which will set the context for LDFs and form part of the statutory plan. This document also undergoes a public consultation process where representations can be made.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - A Local Development Document that sets out the principles the council will follow when consulting the public on policy and development issues.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - A statutory process which analyses and evaluates the environmental effects of a plan or proposed development.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - A statutory process which evaluates the environmental, social and economic impacts of a plan or proposed development.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Non statutory planning guidance related to a DPD policy, which will form part of the LDF