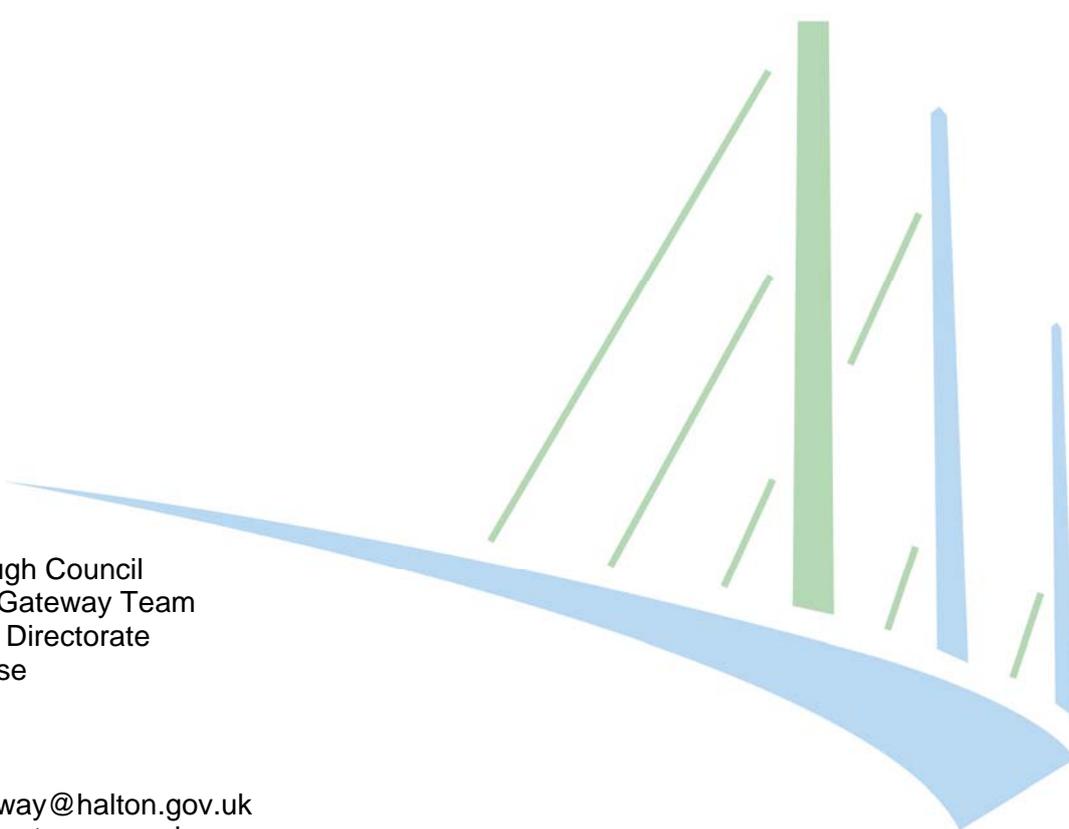


Mersey Gateway Pre-Planning Application Public Consultation

Part I, The Public Consultation Process



Halton Borough Council
The Mersey Gateway Team
Environment Directorate
Rutland House
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

mersey.gateway@halton.gov.uk
www.merseygateway.co.uk

MERSEY GATEWAY PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION PUBLIC CONSULTATION

PART I, THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Details of the Consultation Activities	3
2.1	Pre-Consultation, up to 17 th June 2007	3
2.2	Consultation Launch, 18 th June 2007	4
2.3	Initial Contact with Stakeholders by Letter and Leaflet	4
2.4	Public Consultation Exhibitions	5
2.5	Presentations	7
2.6	Media Coverage	8
2.7	Newsletters	8
2.8	Website	9
2.9	Telephone Contact	9
2.10	E-mail	9
2.11	Text	9
3.0	Recording of Responses and Enquiries	9

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0.1 The Mersey Gateway project held a 14 week pre-planning application consultation, running from 18th June to 21st September 2007. During this time, it held a number of specific consultation activities detailed in Section 2.

1.0.2 This report is the first part of a report that covers the detail of the Mersey Gateway Pre-Planning Application Public Consultation exercise. This report (Part I) specifically covers the consultation process. The other two parts are:

- Part II, Factual Results of Consultation and
- Part III, Interpretive Results of Consultation.

1.0.3 Other reports associated with this consultation exercise include:

- The Mersey Gateway Communications Strategy (April 2007) which outlines how the project will seek to consult with its wide range of stakeholders throughout the project; and
- The Stakeholder Management Plan (November 2007), that followed on from the Communications Strategy details how stakeholder engagement will be implemented.

1.0.4 This consultation served a number of purposes which were to:

- Inform and help shape the Mersey Gateway planning application, which is due to be submitted in early 2008;
- Inform stakeholders of the Mersey Gateway plans and proposed timetable of activity;
- Ensure third parties are informed directly at the earliest appropriate opportunity of proposals that could directly impact upon them;
- Seek views and opinions of stakeholders on proposals, particularly those aspects of the project which are still flexible;
- Use stakeholder comments to assist with mitigating potential objections prior to the formal planning process (refer to Public Consultation Interpretive Report);
- Seek to build and maintain support for the project amongst its stakeholders; and
- Ensure that the project is employing best practice and meeting relevant consultation guidelines at all stages.

All consultation conformed to Halton Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

1.0.5 The following is a summary of the activities that took place during the consultation period:

- Leaflets and questionnaires delivered to each of the 56,000 households and businesses in Halton;
- 15 exhibitions throughout the Borough;
- Editorial in Council publications – Inside Halton/Halton Today/In Touch;
- Mersey Gateway/Halton Borough Council websites;
- Letters to directly affected stakeholders;
- Letters to general stakeholders;
- Information campaign in local media;
- Monthly e-newsletter;
- Briefing events for local/regional businesses and groups;
- Formal letters to all statutory consultees;
- Leaflets and questionnaires sent to local and regional MP's, MEP's, Council leaders and Chief Executives;
- Gateway newsletter; and
- Postal/phone/text feedback system.

2.0 DETAILS OF THE CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

2.1 Pre-Consultation, up to 17th June 2007

2.1.1 In October 2006, all affected landowners were contacted advising them of the progress of the Mersey Gateway project and the possible impact of the scheme upon them (including those potentially affected by the new M56 motorway access). These landowners were identified as being affected by the scheme as it was then. The scheme design has however changed to a minor degree subsequently.

2.1.2 In December 2006, landowners were again written to in connection with the Phase 6 Ground Investigation (further additional landowners were also written to in March and April 2007). This also included some landowners who were on the periphery of the scheme, but not directly affected by it other than the requirement to carry out a borehole on their land.

2.1.3 A Consultation Action Plan was drawn up in March 2007 that initiated the work required for the consultation exercise. This can be found on Collaborator.

2.1.4 An informal evening briefing event was held on 7th June 2007 at Halton Stadium for the benefit of all Halton Borough Council Members.

- 2.1.5 A presentation was given to Liverpool Airport Transport Forum on 1st June 2007, and the Mersey Estuary Forum on 14th June 2007 – refer also to Section 2.5.
- 2.1.6 During this period, routine enquiries from landowners, businesses and the general public were dealt with on a day-to-day basis.

2.2 Consultation Launch, 18th June 2007

The Mersey Gateway Executive Board of 18th June 2007 approved the scheme for public consultation, based upon the then current reference design. The period of consultation was to last until 21st September 2007.

- 2.2.1 Immediately following Mersey Gateway Executive Board approval of the scheme for consultation, a press launch was held at the Catalyst Museum in Widnes, where presentations were given to the press. Consultation leaflets and questionnaires were available for the launch – refer to Appendix A.
- 2.2.2 During early June, a number of articles appeared in the Halton and Liverpool press. These are included in Appendix B – refer also to Section 2.6, Media Coverage.

2.3 Initial Contact with Stakeholders by Letter and Leaflet

- 2.3.1 Information was posted to directly affected landowners and leaseholders on 19th June 2007. The information supplied to them included:
- A letter that described the consultation process and the possible impact of the scheme upon them;
 - A plan of the scheme in proximity of the landholding in question;
 - A consultation leaflet;
 - A questionnaire;
 - A pre-paid envelope for return information; and
 - A form requesting details of ownership, leases and tenancies.
- 2.3.2 Whilst the vast majority of landowners were contacted at that time, there were a small minority where ownership details were then unknown. The current land referencing exercise will assist in gaining this information.
- 2.3.3 During the latter part of June 2007, copies of the consultation leaflet, questionnaire and pre-paid envelope were delivered to most households and business premises in the Borough. The remaining

addresses in the Parishes of Moore and Daresbury had leaflets, questionnaires and envelopes delivered during July 2007.

2.3.4 In early July 2007, wider stakeholders at a local, regional and national level were also contacted by a letter that enclosed a consultation leaflet, questionnaire and envelope. It was however anticipated that the majority of these stakeholders would respond using their own notepaper. A total of 747 such stakeholders were contacted.

2.3.5 The consultation leaflet gave the basic information, but also advised how further information could be obtained and views put forward, this included:

- In person at exhibitions;
- By telephone;
- On-line;
- By freepost return of questionnaire;
- By e-mail; and
- By text.

The following Sections 2.4 - 2.11 detail how further information could be obtained and views given.

2.4 Public Consultation Exhibitions

2.4.1 Details of the consultation times and venues were advertised using the consultation leaflet, posters and the local press. These were held at 13 various locations within the Borough between 4th and 21st July 2007. The dates were chosen to avoid the school holiday period. A summary of these events is given in the table below.

Date	Venue	Time
04/07/2007*	Halton Stadium	12:00-20:00
05/07/2007*	The Brindley	12:00-20:00
06/07/2007	Halton Lea	10:00-16:00
07/07/2007	Halton Lea	10:00-14:00
09/07/2007	Halton Direct Link, Widnes	09:00-17:00
10/07/2007	Halton Direct Link, Widnes	09:00-16:00
12/07/2007*	Halton Stadium	10:00-20:00
13/07/2007	Greenoaks, Widnes	10:00-16:00
14/07/2007	Greenoaks, Widnes	10:00-14:00
16/07/2007	Direct Link, Runcorn Old Town	09:00-17:00
17/07/2007	Direct Link, Runcorn Old Town	09:00-17:00
18/07/2007*	The Brindley	14:00-20:00
21/07/2007*	Halton Stadium	10:00-14:00
Total	13 Venues	87 Hours

*after the date denotes a full exhibition

2.4.2 Due to the late delivery of leaflets to Moore and Daresbury, it was decided to hold two additional full consultation exhibitions in September to avoid the school holiday period. These were:

- 04/09/2007 Daresbury Innovation Centre 12:00-18:00; and
- 06/09/2007 Moore Primary School 14:30-20:00.

This gives a total of 15 venues, with a total of 98.5 hours of manned exhibition time.

2.4.3 At the full exhibitions, detailed 1:2500 scale plans were on display, along with regeneration and environmental information. The main display stand was also in place and plans were available on tables to assist with detailed queries. An animation of the South Widnes and North Runcorn areas with the new crossing in place was shown on a TV screen. Also a “walk through” 3D computer model was available for the public to view the proposals from any location or height. Staff were on hand to answer queries and record details of views given on a form that would be treated in the same way as a questionnaire response.

2.4.4 At other exhibitions where space was more restricted, the main stand was in place and the 1:2500 scale plans were available if required.

The exhibition attendances are detailed in the table below.

Date	Venue	Attendance
04/07/2007	Halton Stadium	55
05/07/2007	The Brindley	149 (plus 30 school children)
06/07/2007	Halton Lea	135
07/07/2007	Halton Lea	133
09/07/2007	Halton Direct Link, Widnes	49
10/07/2007	Halton Direct Link, Widnes	29
12/07/2007	Halton Stadium	52
13/07/2007	Greenoaks, Widnes	312
14/07/2007	Greenoaks, Widnes	330
16/07/2007	Halton Direct Link, Runcorn Old Town	40
17/07/2007	Halton Direct Link, Runcorn Old Town	37
18/07/2007	The Brindley	92
21/07/2007	Halton Stadium	26
04/09/2007	Daresbury Innovation Centre	58
06/09/2007	Moore Primary School	19
Total		1,546

- 2.4.5 The Town Centre exhibitions at Greenoaks and Halton Lea were successful in informing and gaining the views of members of the public who may not have made a specific journey to attend an exhibition at Halton Stadium or The Brindley. The Greenoaks exhibitions were attended by a significant number of people who lived in Warrington but chose to shop in Widnes.
- 2.4.6 Whilst attendance levels were lower at Halton Stadium and The Brindley, the duration of attendance was significantly longer with people asking questions in greater detail.
- 2.4.7 The exhibitions at Widnes and Runcorn Old Town Halton Direct Links were visited by a mixture of people passing by on other business and specific visits. These exhibitions were generally quieter than the others.
- 2.4.8 The Daresbury exhibition had a number of visits from residents of Preston Brook as the Parish Council had publicised this and the Moore exhibition in a newsletter.
- 2.4.9 The Moore exhibition had low attendance but included a visit from a member of Moore Parish Council.
- 2.4.10 An unmanned exhibition was held at the offices of the Liverpool Daily Post during the period 9th July to 13th July 2007. A full set of display boards was used at this venue.
- 2.4.11 An unmanned exhibition using the main stand and a leaflet dispenser was in place at Liverpool John Lennon Airport between 27th July and 31st August 2007.
- 2.4.12 An exhibition at Spike Island in September 2007 included much of the Mersey Gateway exhibition materials and was attended by over 70 people.

2.5 Presentations

- 2.5.1 Presentations have taken place to a number of stakeholders including:
- Merseytravel Integrated Transport Forum, 13th July 2007;
 - Urban Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership, 17th July 2007;
 - Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Ports and Transport Forum, 18th July 2007;
 - Construction for Merseyside, 20th July 2007;
 - Merseyside Transport, Health and Environment Forum, 25th July 2007;

- Stakeholders involved in the Social Impact Assessment, w/b 10th September 2007;
- Federation of Small Businesses, 10th October 2007; and
- Mersey Crossing Group and Breakfast Briefing, 15th October 2007.

These presentations were well received.

In addition to these presentations, two others were given in June 2007 prior to the launch of consultation – refer to Section 2.1.

2.6 Media Coverage

2.6.1 Media coverage was secured in the following outlets:

- BBC North West;
- Granada;
- BBC Radio Merseyside;
- Wire FM;
- Liverpool Echo;
- Liverpool Post;
- Runcorn & Widnes World;
- Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News;
- Planning;
- Surveyor;
- Local Transport Today;
- Architect, Builder, Contractor & Developer; and
- Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Magazine.

2.7 Newsletters

2.7.1 The following newsletters were used to provide information on the proposals:

- The Mersey Gateway e-newsletter;
- In Touch (HBC internal magazine);
- Inside Halton (HBC magazine distributed to all households in Halton);
- The Gateway (Mersey Gateway stakeholder leaflet);
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport newsletter;
- Liverpool Chamber of Commerce magazine; and
- NWDA newsletter.

2.8 Website

- 2.8.1 The Mersey Gateway website has been updated for the purposes of consultation. In addition to providing more detailed information, the website also provided a means of feedback with an electronic questionnaire in the same format as the hard copy of the questionnaire contained within the consultation leaflet.

2.9 Telephone Contact

- 2.9.1 The consultation brochure contained a telephone number for the Halton Borough Council Call Centre that was manned 24 hours per day. The Call Centre staff had been briefed with the question and answer briefing to hand. More detailed enquiries were passed through to the Mersey Gateway Team.

2.10 E-mail

- 2.10.1 The consultation leaflet gave details of the Mersey Gateway e-mail address. The e-mail address was also available through the Mersey Gateway and Halton Borough Council websites.

2.11 Text

- 2.11.1 A texting facility was also set up at the telephone Call Centre, and details were given in the consultation leaflet.

3.0 RECORDING OF RESPONSES AND ENQUIRIES

- 3.0.1 The most common means of giving views on the scheme was the questionnaire sent out with the consultation leaflet with over 3,000 responses received by post (refer also to Part II, Factual Results of Consultation). These were all typed and recorded electronically. Also the original questionnaire was electronically scanned. In a very small minority of cases, a degree of censorship was necessary where comments were made that could be viewed as offensive and were unrelated to the scheme. In several replies, a request was made for further information. This information was generally provided by e-mail where an e-mail address was given, otherwise a response was posted.

In addition to the above, over 200 questionnaires were received electronically.

- 3.0.2 Where comments were received that related to a directly affected property by any means of communication, these were copied to the

relevant land file. For each affected landholding, a separate file was set up.

- 3.0.3 There were over 200 questionnaires filled in by staff at the exhibitions where a visitor wished to give a point of view. These are being recorded in the same manner as the leaflet questionnaires.
- 3.0.4 Telephone responses were initially received by the Call Centre, but callers who needed more detail were passed onto the Mersey Gateway Team where full details of the call were recorded. Telephone enquiries processed by the Mersey Gateway Team were added to the database of responses.
- 3.0.5 A total of 78 e-mails were received with many requiring a response. All e-mails were added to the database of responses.
- 3.0.6 Only 2 texts were received despite being advertised in the consultation leaflet.
- 3.0.7 A total of 30 responses were received from wider stakeholders.

