

**Mersey Gateway  
Pre-Planning Application Public Consultation  
Progress Report**

**6<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

The scheme was approved to be put forward for public consultation by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007. Immediately following this there was a briefing for the press held at the Catalyst Museum in Widnes.

Press Coverage

The articles that subsequently appeared in the press are outlined below:

Liverpool Daily Post, "Superhighway Plans to Tackle Traffic Chaos", Page 1 headline and Page 6, 19<sup>th</sup> June. Basic information that included the reference to Aigburth Road improvements.

Liverpool Echo, "A Bridge too Far?", Page 3, 19<sup>th</sup> June. Basic information and emphasis on tolls and threat to haulage. Mention of superhighway that the LDP had led on.

Runcorn World, "Fly the Future", Page 1 headline, 20<sup>th</sup> June. Basic information and description of the 3D model.

Runcorn Weekly News, "No Free Ride over the Mersey", Page 1, 21<sup>st</sup> June. General information with emphasis on toll charges.

Runcorn World, Page 15, 27<sup>th</sup> June. Reminder to the public about consultation exhibition locations.

Runcorn Weekly News, "A Bridge too Far?", Page 5, 28<sup>th</sup> June. Opposition to tolling with four Widnes residents interviewed.

Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News "Have your Say on Bridge Bid ", 5<sup>th</sup> July. Positive advice to readers on the exhibitions and the purpose of consultation.

Leaflets and Questionnaires

Since 18<sup>th</sup> June, around 56,000 consultation leaflets and questionnaires have been delivered to all households and businesses within Halton. Affected landowners were notified on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Just short of 1,000 questionnaires have been returned to date. The overall impression from comments received is:

- The scheme is generally well received with most people supportive of the proposals if tolls were not to be charged, hence
- Both bridges should be free to use;
- SJB should remain free to use; and
- Toll free or reduced tolls for local people.

Other issues have been the increase in traffic on the Central Expressway with associated noise, pollution and property devaluation; concerns about the possible new M56 access; and loss of businesses and jobs.

In addition to the leaflet distribution within the Borough, letters and leaflets have been sent out to around 600 regional project stakeholders.

### Exhibitions

The first of the exhibitions took place on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> July at Halton Stadium and was attended by around 60 members of the public. The second exhibition was at The Brindley on 5<sup>th</sup> July with an attendance of 149 plus 30 schoolchildren. Smaller scale exhibitions took place on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July with an attendance of 135 and 133 respectively. At these exhibitions the main issue has been tolling, with the principal view that locals should not have to pay tolls. Other issues have been CPO; the affect upon the Central Expressway; and the impact of J11A on Sutton Park.

The exhibitions at Halton Lea were successful in engaging with members of the public who would not have made a specific trip to visit an exhibition at the Stadium or the Brindley.

Other common views have been that Widnes is being given better facilities at the expense of Runcorn, in particular the Old Town, and tolling would sever Halton residents living south of the river from them. Traditional Lancashire and Cheshire loyalties still prevail.

Nine more exhibitions will take place up to 21<sup>st</sup> July, and there will be an unmanned exhibition in the foyer of the Liverpool Daily Post from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July. It is also proposed that an unmanned exhibition will be in place at Liverpool John Lennon Airport from 23<sup>rd</sup> July onwards.

Presentations to wider stakeholders are planned to take place as follows:

Merseytravel Integrated Transport Forum - 13<sup>th</sup> July;  
Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Ports and Transport Committee - 18<sup>th</sup> July; and  
Merseyside Transport, Health and Environment Forum - 25<sup>th</sup> July.

Future media events will include:

A story each week in the press;  
TV preview of consultation;  
Article with LJLA; and  
Article in Liverpool CoC magazine.

**S Nicholson**