

Halton Local Plan

Duty to Co-operate Statement

July 2019



It's all happening IN HALTON
www.halton.gov.uk

Version	Revisions	Auth	Check
Publication Stage (web)		AM/TG 03/01/18	ac 03/01/18
Proposed Submission (web)		KAB 26/06/19	

Halton Borough Council

**Delivery and Allocations Local Plan
Duty to Cooperate Statement
July 2019**

Operational Director
Planning and Transport Strategy
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QF

Contents

Contents

Contents 1

1. Introduction to the Duty to Cooperate 1

2. Purpose of the Duty to Cooperate Statement..... 2

3. The Halton Context..... 3

4. Co-operation with other Organisations 5

5. Halton’s Cross Boundary Issues..... 6

Table A : Strategic Priorities 7

6. Joint Working Arrangements..... 18

Appendix A: Duty to Co-operate Bodies..... 19

I. Introduction to the Duty to Cooperate

- I.1 In November 2011 the Localism Act came into effect, but different parts of the Act come into effect at different times through Regulations. The Localism Act through clause 110 established the 'duty to cooperate'.
- I.2 It applies to all local planning authorities, national park authorities and county councils in England and also to a number of other public bodies. The 'duty':
- relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council;
 - requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues;
 - requires councils and public bodies to 'engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis' in order to develop strategic policies; and
 - requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.
- I.3 This means that any local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies in relation to planning for sustainable development need to cooperate when preparing their Local Plans and other plans where there are strategic matters that need to be addressed.
- I.4 The scope of this Duty to Cooperate includes local planning authorities and a range of other prescribed bodies that are identified in Appendix A.
- I.5 A strategic matter is anything relating to sustainable development or use of land, including infrastructure, which has or would have significant impact on at least two local planning areas. It requires that councils set out policies to address such issues proactively and to the mutual benefit of the authorities.
- I.6 Guidance on the Duty to Cooperate is provided in paragraphs 24 to 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- I.7 Paragraph 24 clearly states that '*public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those that relate to strategic priorities*'. These strategic priorities are set out in paragraph 20 of the NPPF as follows:
- homes and jobs needed in an area;
 - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
 - conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- I.8 This Duty to Cooperate covers the publication of the Halton Delivery and Allocation Local Plan (incorporating Partial Review of Core Strategy). It sets out how Halton Borough Council has responded to the legal duty to cooperate in preparing the Local Plan. It details how the Council has worked with other Councils, public bodies and organisations to identify the spatial strategy for the Local Plan.

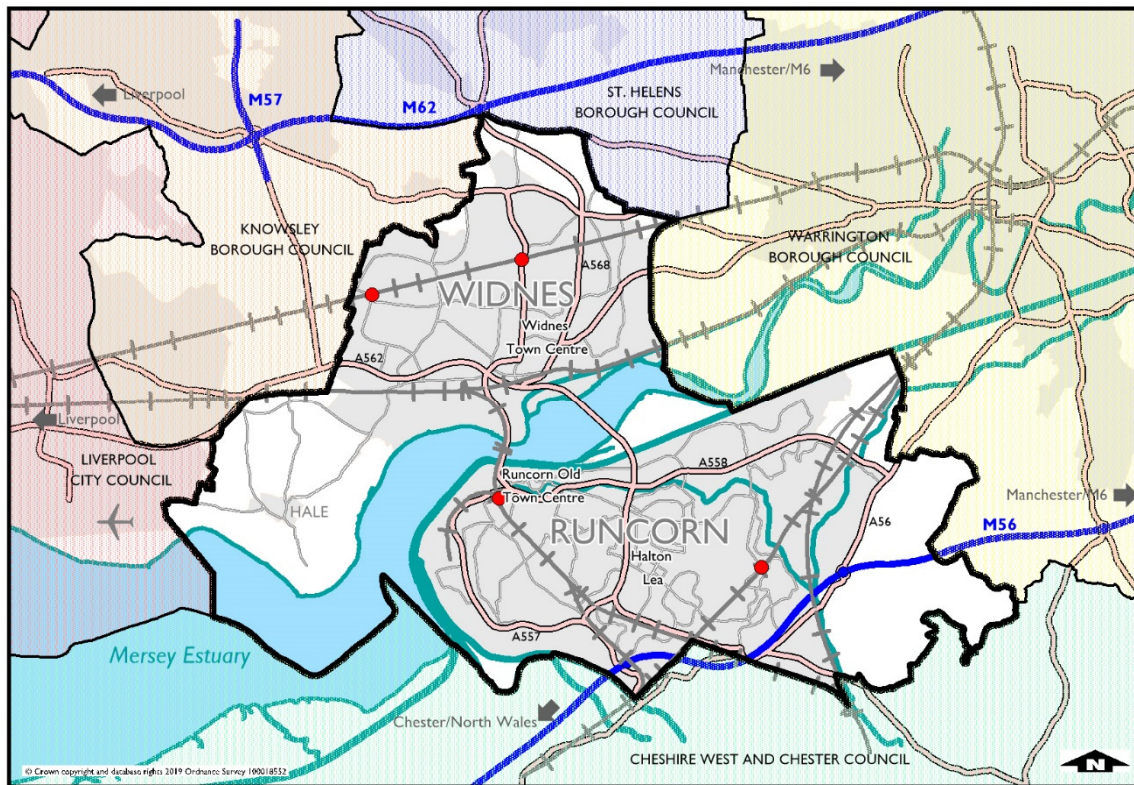
2. Purpose of the Duty to Cooperate Statement

- 2.1 As a statutory requirement, the Duty to Cooperate will form one of the legal tests to be considered by the Inspector at the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan's Examination, while compliance with the NPPF's requirements for positive preparation and effectiveness form part of the soundness test. This statement provides the evidence to demonstrate that Halton Borough Council has met the legal and soundness requirements relating to cooperation in preparing its Local Plan.
- 2.2 As the Duty is not just a one-off obligation but an on-going responsibility this draft Statement will be kept under review and amended as circumstances change.
- 2.3 In preparing its Local Plan, Halton Council has to demonstrate compliance with the Duty including:
- *Consultation with key bodies:* Halton Council has engaged and cooperated with the prescribed organisations and authorities set out in the legislation and regulations and in compliance with the Regulations, planning guidance and its adopted Statement of Community Involvement, and other relevant bodies;
 - *Collaboration and cooperation in plan making:* Halton continues to work collaboratively with a wide range of partners, to produce strategies and develop evidence which addresses key planning issues across the sub-region; and
 - *Consideration of cross boundary impacts:* Halton continues to be engaged proactively with neighbouring authorities in considering and addressing strategic and site-specific cross-boundary impacts arising from both Halton's plans, and those plans of our neighbours, notably Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester.
- 2.4 The duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree. However, a local authority should demonstrate that it has made every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on these matters. This duty is an ongoing process and does not stop with the adoption of the Local Plan.

3. The Halton Context

- 3.1 Halton is a single tier unitary authority. It is located in the north west of England on the either side of the River Mersey, and covers the towns of Runcorn and Widnes.

Figure 1: Halton in context



- 3.2 Halton has boundaries with a number of local authorities, three in the Liverpool City Region – Knowsley, Liverpool and St Helens, and two other authorities – Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington.
- 3.3 The Halton Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in April 2013. It sets out the spatial vision for the Borough through to 2028. Halton is currently in the process of preparing a Delivery and Allocations Local Plan, which will update the Core Strategy where appropriate and provide more detailed policies and site allocations, it will cover the period to 2037.
- 3.4 The Liverpool City Region local authorities have a long history of collaboration on spatial planning and economic issues and have well-established partnership arrangements. Examples of past joint planning work include joint research and policy development for the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS) through the Merseyside Policy Unit and the Merseyside Partnership
- 3.5 The Government signed a Devolution Agreement with Halton, the five Merseyside Authorities and the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership that devolves specific powers to the new office of Mayor. These powers include defined strategic planning functions, including the production of a single Strategic Framework for the City Region. This has ensured that full engagement with partner authorities has been undertaken to support and influence the delivery of the Spatial Framework.

4. Co-operation with other Organisations

- 4.1 Section 33A of the Act and Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and Planning Guidance define specific bodies and categories of bodies with which the Council must co-operate in preparing its Local Plan. The bodies which the Council considers to be relevant in the context of the Halton Local Plan are set out below:

Liverpool City Council (as neighbouring planning and highway authority)
 Knowsley Borough Council (as neighbouring planning and highway authority)
 St Helens Council (as planning and highway authority)
 Wirral Council (as planning and highway authority)
 Sefton Council (as planning and highway authority)
 West Lancashire Borough Council (as neighbouring planning authority)
 Cheshire West and Chester (as neighbouring planning and transport authority)
 Warrington BC (as neighbouring planning and transport authority)
 The Environment Agency
 Historic England
 Natural England
 Civil Aviation Authority
 Homes England
 NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
 The Office of Rail Regulation
 Merseytravel (as integrated transport authority)
 The Marine Management Organisation
 Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership
 Liverpool City Region Local Nature Partnership

- 4.2 Halton has also worked closely with a wide range of other organisations and partners including the Environment Agency, Historic England, the Homes England, the Ministry of Defence, Sport England, Natural England, the clinical commissioning groups operating in Halton and Merseytravel in preparing its Local Plan. It has consulted the bodies listed here as appropriate, at each formal stage of the Local Plan preparation. It has fully recorded any comments made, and offered to meet with the organisation where required in order to discuss how any out-standing matters can be overcome.

Liverpool City Region Statement of Cooperation

- 4.3 Halton Council's Executive Board adopted the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Statement of Co-operation (SoC) on Town Planning matters at its meeting on 20 October 2016. The Board was advised that the Localism Act 2011 placed a legal duty on Local Planning Authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation and strategic cross-boundary land use planning matters.
- 4.4 The LCR SoC provides the evidence that this statutory co-operation had been undertaken. The SoC has been drafted by all six LCR authorities plus West Lancashire District Council and approved by the Combined Authority's Housing and Spatial Planning Board.
- 4.5 The report and SoC can be found here (Agenda Item 52):
<http://moderngov.halton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=292&MIId=5803&Ver=4>

5. Halton's Cross Boundary Issues

- 5.1 Paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those relating to the strategic priorities set out in paragraph 20 of the Framework. These relate to:
- The homes and jobs needed in the area;
 - The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities;
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 5.2 As a result of working with the prescribed organisations and others throughout the Local Plan process, and having regard to the NPPF, Halton has identified a number of strategic matters as having cross boundary impacts that need to be addressed through the Local Plan. These strategic, cross boundary issues for Halton are set out below. Waste is an additional strategic issue. The six Liverpool City Region authorities continue to cooperate on waste planning matters, following the adoption the Joint Waste Local Plan for the Liverpool City Region by the LCR LAs in 2013.

Framework Strategic Priorities	Halton Strategic Issue
1. Homes and jobs	a) Housing Provision b) Employment land provision c) Cross boundary impacts arising from proposed allocations d) Provision for Travellers
2. Retail, leisure and commercial	a) Retail Provision and Sub-regional hierarchy of Centres.
3. Infrastructure	a) The impacts of the Local Plan on transport and other infrastructure (e.g. utilities) in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region. b) Liverpool John Lennon Airport
4. Health, community and cultural infrastructure	a) The impacts of the Local Plan on strategic health provision, and community and cultural infrastructure in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region.
5. Climate change and natural and historic environment	a) The impacts of the Local Plan on the low carbon infrastructure in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region b) The impacts of the Local Plan on biodiversity networks neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region c) The impacts of the Halton Local Plan and other Local Plans or Core Strategies of neighbouring, Liverpool City Region and other authorities on the designated nature sites of international importance in the Liverpool City Region and elsewhere. d) The impacts of the Local Plan on flood risk in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region e) The safeguarding of mineral resources in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region.

The following sub-sections paragraphs provide an overview of each of these strategic priorities. More information about each strategic issue is provided in Table A.

Table A : Strategic Priorities

Framework Strategic Priority	1. Homes and Jobs
Strategic Issue	a) Housing Provision
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The provision of land to meet Halton's housing needs. Green Belt release is required to meet this requirement and to ensure flexibility in delivery. Whilst Halton is a relatively self-contained housing market area (as confirmed by the 2014 SHMA) there are housing market linkages with adjacent districts, particularly Warrington and St Helens. The amount of housing provided in Halton could therefore have an impact on adjacent districts. Given these housing market linkages, unmet needs arising in Halton could in theory be accommodated in adjacent districts, and vice versa.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council
How has this co-operation been carried out?	Halton has co-operated with neighbouring local authorities in deriving a housing requirement for the Borough. When it became apparent in 2013 that Halton would be unable to meet its own housing and employment needs without Green Belt release, the Council discussed with neighbouring local authorities, whether they could accommodate some of Halton's needs in their area. All advised that they were unable to do so. In addition, Halton's neighbouring authorities have been consulted at each stage of preparation of the Local Plan, and have attended 'Housing Market Partnership' meetings alongside local housing associations and developers. No neighbouring district has so far objected to the proposed housing or employment land requirements in the Local Plan. No neighbouring district has asked Halton to meet any overspill housing or employment needs arising from their district. Knowsley and St Helens have both proposed releasing large areas of Green Belt land in their areas to meet their own housing and employment needs, St Helens is also accommodate employment needs for Warrington..
Outcomes	Halton's housing requirement has been derived to meet Halton's needs only. This is appropriate given Halton's largely self-contained housing market area. No neighbouring authority is able to meet any of Halton's housing needs, and Halton has not been requested to meet any other District's unmet needs. In any event, Halton would not be able to meet any neighbouring authority's housing needs without releasing even more Green Belt than is currently proposed. No neighbouring authority has so far objected to Halton's proposed Local Plan housing requirement.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	The housing requirement is intended to meet Halton's needs only. Therefore the impact on neighbouring authorities' housing markets should be limited.

Strategic Issue	b) Employment Land Provision
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The provision of land to meet Halton's employment requirement and create opportunities to deliver new jobs. Green Belt release is required to meet this requirement and to ensure flexibility in delivery. There are strong commuter pattern connections with adjacent districts. The amount of employment land provided in Halton could have a limited impact on adjacent districts. Unmet needs arising in Halton could in theory be accommodated in adjacent districts.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council
How has this co-operation been carried out?	The 2010 joint Employment Land and Premises Study was produced for Sefton, West Lancashire, Knowsley, and Halton. It has also formed the basis for these authorities' Local Plans. Halton, Knowsley and West Lancashire's Plans have subsequently been found sound on this basis. No neighbouring district has asked Halton to meet any overspill employment needs arising from their district. Knowsley and St Helens have proposed releasing large areas of Green Belt land in their areas to meet their own employment needs, and St Helens are proposing to meet an unmet employment need of Warrington
Outcomes	Halton's employment requirement has been derived to meet Halton's needs only. No neighbouring authority is able to meet any of Halton's employment needs, and Halton has not been asked to meet any other District's unmet needs. In any event, Halton would not be able to meet any neighbouring authority's employment needs without releasing even more Green Belt than is currently proposed. No neighbouring authority has so far objected to Halton's proposed Local Plan employment requirement.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	The employment requirement is intended to meet Halton's needs only. Therefore the impact on neighbouring authorities' employment markets should be limited.

Strategic Issue	c) Cross Boundary Impacts Arising from Proposed Allocations
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The Local Plan proposes to release a number of large Green Belt sites in order to meet local housing and employment needs. Some of these sites are adjacent or close to the boundary with neighbouring districts, and have the potential for cross-boundary impacts.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council

How has this co-operation been carried out?	The review of Green Belt boundaries in Halton has been undertaken using a common methodology. Halton has formally consulted each neighbouring authority on the emerging Local Plan including attendance at sub-regional workshops and other officer level meetings. The other duty to cooperate bodies relevant to this issue have also been formally consulted at each stage.
Outcomes	Discussions have been ongoing with Neighbouring authorities over the extent and impacts of potential Green Belt release.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	Some limited cross boundary highways impacts. Potential Green Belt impacts on neighbouring LAs by virtue of narrowing the Green Belt gap between settlements.

Strategic Issue	d) Provision for Travellers
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The level of need and provision for sites to accommodate Gypsy and Travellers can only appropriately be assessed on a sub-regional basis.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council • Cheshire East
How has this co-operation been carried out?	The Cheshire Partnership has utilised ORS Ltd to provide a 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment' to provide an up to date evidence base on needs
Outcomes	All the participating authorities have agreed that the identified need for each authority will be met within each authority, and that the study provides a good basis for an appropriate network for traveller pitches, particularly transit pitches, across the study area. Halton has identified both permanent and transit pitches in line with the findings of the sub-regional study in the Local Plan.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	Other local authorities are also seeking to identify Gypsy and Traveller sites in line with the study recommendations.

Framework Strategic Priority	2. Retail, Leisure and other Commercial Development
Strategic Issue	a) Retail Provision and Sub-regional Hierarchy of Centres
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Halton is reliant on centres in other authorities (particularly Liverpool and Warrington) for access to comparison retail and, to a lesser extent, convenience retail opportunities. There are two town centres identified in Halton - Widnes and Runcorn.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council • Merseytravel
How has this co-operation been carried out?	Halton has consulted with neighbouring authorities and transport authorities regarding the retail policy and the hierarchy of centres in its Local Plan through formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan preparation.
Outcomes	The Local Plan does not propose any new retail allocations. Halton has long established links with neighbouring authorities and Liverpool City Centre in particular serves the whole of Merseyside as the sub-regional centre. This

	relationship will continue over the duration of the Plan period.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	Halton residents will continue to rely on neighbouring authorities and the larger regional cities in the North West for a proportion of its retail and leisure provision.

Framework Strategic Priority	3. Infrastructure
Strategic Issue	b) The impacts of the Local Plan on transport and other infrastructure (e.g. utilities) in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The Council has consulted other infrastructure providers while preparing the Local Plan. In addition to the duty to co-operate bodies this has included providers such as gas and electricity providers, transport providers, the Mobile Operators Association, and has engaged closely with United Utilities including through officer level meetings and on-going liaison. The consultation has also included the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Consultation with the Environment Agency (and United Utilities and the Council's flood and coastal erosion risk management officers) is considered separately (see strategic issue E5 below. The Liverpool City Region authorities and Warrington BC and CWAC and each other formally and informally (including officer level meetings) on their emerging Local Plans.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council
How has this co-operation been carried out?	The Council has worked with Merseytravel and neighbouring authorities during the preparation of the Local Plan. For Merseytravel and Network Rail this consultation has included the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Council has worked with other LCR local authorities and Merseytravel on the early stages of the preparing our third Local Transport Plan (LTP3). This provides a long term strategy and delivery programme of transport investment up to 2024. Following the establishment of the Combined Authority further work was undertaken to align the respective LTP's with an overarching Transport Plan for Growth. The Merseyside planning authorities fed their evidence and assumptions of housing and employment growth into the LTP preparation process, to make sure that investment decisions affecting the transport network in the LTP period (up to 2024) took account of the growth and development aspirations of the Merseyside districts in their emerging Local Plans.

Outcomes	The Council's approach towards planning for strategic transport including infrastructure is set out in Local Plan policies. Stronger working arrangements have been developed with key utility providers, such as United Utilities, Scottish Power and the National Grid. This has, and will continue, to make the utility providers and Halton Council aware of the processes each has to go through and to enable respective plans and strategies to align. Each Utility Provider has provided information to Halton that has supported the level of growth proposed in the Local Plan, taking into account growth proposals of other local authorities in the Liverpool City Region. No objections to the Local Plan have been received from neighbouring authorities, the Environment Agency or United Utilities (or other infrastructure providers) in relation to these matters. The Council's approach towards planning and paying for infrastructure provision is set out in Local Plan policies.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	No significant impacts on neighbouring authorities or those elsewhere in the City Region and beyond.

Strategic Issue	c) Liverpool John Lennon Airport
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The Liverpool City Region Growth Plan identifies improved access to the Airport as a strategic project.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Liverpool John Lennon Airport
How has this co-operation been carried out?	There is on-going liaison between the duty to co-operate bodies on this and wider planning issues, including those relating to the Growth Plan. This project is still developing, and co-operation is on-going.
Outcomes	This project is still developing, and outcomes achieved to date relate to project delivery 'milestones' rather than the preparation of the Local Plan.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	This project is still developing, and so there have been relatively few direct positive economic and other impacts, or mitigation of any adverse impacts on other authorities to date.

Framework Strategic Priority	4. Health, Community and Cultural Infrastructure
Strategic Issue	a) The impacts of the Local Plan on strategic health provision, and community and cultural infrastructure in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	It was important to establish any impacts of the Plan on NHS general hospitals serving Halton; and also on other strategic security, community and cultural infrastructure in the City Region such as the major cultural offer in Liverpool e.g. through increased pressure of usage.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council • Halton CCG

How has this co-operation been carried out?	Neighbouring local authorities, Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Commissioning Groups have been consulted at all stages of preparation of the Local Plan, including officer level meetings. Public health officers have also been involved. The NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups have also been involved in the infrastructure delivery plan process.
Outcomes	Stronger working arrangements have been developed with Clinic Commissioning Groups and public health officers. No objections to the Local Plan have been received from neighbouring authorities, Clinical Commissioning Group or Primary Care Trusts or other key health or other community and cultural infrastructure providers in relation to these matters. The Council's approach towards planning and paying for infrastructure provision is set out in the Local Plan. The Plan's approach to planning for health in line with corporate and Health and Wellbeing Board priorities.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	No significant impacts on neighbouring authorities or those elsewhere in the City Region and beyond.

Framework Strategic Priority	5. Climate Change and Natural and Historic Environment
Strategic Issue	a) The impacts of the Local Plan on the low carbon infrastructure in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	There is also some potential for combined heat and power / District Heating.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region local authorities • West Lancashire Borough Council • Warrington Borough Council • Ministry of Defence • Civil Aviation Authority • English Heritage • Liverpool City Region LEP
How has this co-operation been carried out?	Halton has worked with the Liverpool City Region authorities, West Lancashire and Warrington Councils on a Renewable Energy Capacity Study for this area. This study has informed the policy approach in the Local Plan. The Liverpool City Region authorities have agreed a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (2012) which identifies key low carbon energy actions to be delivered across the City Region.
Outcomes	No objections to the Local Plan have been received from neighbouring authorities, the Ministry of Defence, the Civil Aviation Authority or English Heritage in relation to these matters.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	Proposed Local Plan policies on renewable energy do not limit renewable energy related developments in Halton where appropriate in the context of the Borough. Therefore, neighbouring authorities are not impacted by these proposals.

Strategic Issue	b) The impacts of the Local Plan on biodiversity networks neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Biodiversity, ecology, habitats and species and associated landforms in Halton do not change at the borough boundary, but continue across neighbouring authorities, the Liverpool City Region and beyond. This includes designated nature sites of international importance of the Mersey Estuary, Dee Estuary, and the Sefton Coast.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region local authorities • West Lancashire Borough Council • Warrington Borough Council • Nature Connected, the Local Nature Partnership for the Liverpool City Region
How has this co-operation been carried out?	All 6 Liverpool City Region local authorities, together and through the auspices of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) which they jointly fund, are co-operating to prepare an ecological network which draws together evidence, and indicates strategic priorities and opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement across the sub-region. This includes identification of a Nature Improvement Area (NIA) with individual NIA Focus Areas, some of which are cross-boundary. This is included in the Local Plan. The 6 local authorities, together with MEAS, agreed a common policy framework for nature and geodiversity conservation and enhancement. Formal consultation on the draft ecological framework saw responses from bodies including Natural England, the Environment Agency, the North West Development Agency, Peel Holdings and the Mersey Forest. Lancashire County Council were also consulted on the emerging ecological framework, including officer meetings. Halton is a partner in Nature Connected, the Local Nature Partnership. More generally, Halton has been a member of the Mersey Forest partnership for many years, with 6 other local authorities, the Environment Agency and Natural England, and most recently contributed to the preparation of the Mersey Forest Plan 2014.
Outcomes	Local Plan policies set out the Council's approach to development affecting designated nature and geodiversity sites, priority habitats and species.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	Halton wishes to continue working jointly with neighbouring authorities, MEAS and other LCR local authorities and other partners on the ecological framework and common policy framework for nature and geodiversity conservation and enhancement. Halton's designated nature and geodiversity sites, priority habitats and species will continue to contribute positively to the Liverpool City Region. Local Plan policies reflect Halton Council's commitment to working with partners to enhance this contribution.
Strategic Issue	c) The impacts of the Halton's Delivery and Allocations Local Plan and other Local Plans or Core Strategies of neighbouring, Liverpool City Region and other authorities on the designated nature sites of international importance

What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) of the adopted Halton Core Strategy, St Helens Core Strategy, and West Lancashire Local Plan and emerging the Liverpool, Knowsley, Wirral Local Plans, and that of the Sefton Local Plan – identify both the potential for recreation pressure to adversely affect the integrity of the internationally important nature sites and mitigation measures. They also recognise the need for development across the Liverpool City Region and beyond to avoid adverse impacts on internationally nature sites across the City Region and beyond. The above adopted and emerging Local Plans set out a commitment to joint working to help mitigate these potential impacts.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region local authorities • West Lancashire Borough Council • Natural England • Natural Resources Wales • Marine Management Organisation
How has this co-operation been carried out?	The local Liverpool City Region local authorities and West Lancashire agreed to use the same consultants (Scott Wilson, who became first URS then AECOM) to provide specialist Habitats Regulations Assessment advice. These consultants also carried out the HRA of the joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan. Since 2013 the City Region authorities, with the exception of St Helens who were further advanced in the preparation of its Local Plan, have, through the auspices of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, jointly commissioned AECOM to carry out HRA work. Following on from Natural England comments on the Proposed Publication of the DALP in Jan 2018, Halton Council have appointed AVIAN to undertake a Non Breeding Bird Study, to assess the potential disturbance of the proposed allocated sites on non-breeding birds in relation to the Mersey Estuary and SPA. The City Region authorities and West Lancashire have for a number of years held officer level meetings specific to HRA, including the need to make sure there are no adverse effects international nature sites as a result of development in their areas, notably due to increased recreational pressures on the Sefton Coast. These meetings are on-going. In part reflecting this, the emerging and adopted Local Plans for the Liverpool City Region local authorities and West Lancashire include a commitment to joint working with each other, Natural England and other relevant partners to maintain the integrity of international nature sites, including those outside their areas such as the Sefton Coast. This is line with the recommendations of HRAs of the respective plans. In future this will require a more formal framework or strategy for monitoring and managing recreational access across the City Region, to take a strategic approach to managing access to European sites. Natural England is commissioning work on recreational disturbance to the City Region internationally important nature sites to inform any future strategy.

Outcomes	Stronger working arrangements have been developed between Halton, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales. The Liverpool City Region local authorities, together with Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, West Lancashire Borough Council, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales are committed to continued co-operation and partnership working to protect the integrity of internationally important nature sites across the City Region and beyond, and notably against recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast. This commitment is reflected in on-going officer level meetings and joint working, and in their adopted or emerging and Local Plans and their accompanying Habitats Regulations Assessments.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	The Liverpool City Region authorities and Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, West Lancashire Borough Council, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales are co-operating to make sure that there are no adverse impacts on the internationally important nature sites in their areas and beyond.

Strategic Issue	d) The impacts of the Local Plan on flood risk in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	The River Mersey presents a source of tidal flooding. Fluvial flood risk arises from Ditton Brook (Widnes) and Keckwick Brook, (Runcorn). The mechanics of flooding in these catchments is well understood and mitigation is in place. The main strategic issues are making sure that development in other districts does not increase 'downstream' river flood risk in Halton, and that development close to the borough boundary in Halton, Liverpool, Knowsley or St Helens, CWAC or Warrington does not increase surface water flood risk locally.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Neighbouring local authorities and those in the rest of the City Region • Other north west and north Wales local authorities • Environment Agency • The Canal and River Trust • United Utilities
How has this co-operation been carried out?	Halton has undertaken Strategic Flood Risk Assessments as part of the production of the 2013 Core Strategy. And this has been further developed into a new up to date Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 to assess the proposed DALP allocations. These SFRA's closely involved the Environment Agency, and both the Environment Agency and United Utilities had the opportunity for informal comment on the draft SFRA L2. As surface water is the most significant sources of flood risk in Halton, the Surface Water Management Plan informed the SFRA and through this plan making, policy development and the site selection process.

Outcomes	Stronger working arrangements have been developed between the Council (notably its Local Lead Flood Authority LLFA), the Environment Agency and United Utilities regarding flood risk management and infrastructure, in operational terms and in terms of the Local Plan. This has, and will continue to make these organisations and Halton Council aware of the processes each has to go through and enable respective plans and strategies to align. United Utilities and the Environment Agency have provided information to Halton that has supported the level of growth proposed in the Local Plan, taking into account growth proposals of other local authorities in the Liverpool City Region.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	Given the wording of relevant policies it is considered that there are no impacts on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies.

Strategic Issue	e) The safeguarding of mineral resources in neighbouring authorities and the rest of Liverpool City Region
What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Halton has no active aggregate or industrial mineral extraction sites or any known resources considered likely to be commercially viable during the period covered by the plan, and so has no defined mineral safeguarding areas. Halton has a number of active materials' recycling facilities that supply recycled and substitute materials to the construction market. There is no current energy mineral extraction within Halton. However, coal measures are present in neighbouring authorities and Halton is within the area identified as having potential for the presence of potentially viable shale oil and gas resources. Current licences for onshore oil and gas exploration cover parts of Halton. Licences are for oil and gas and do not distinguish between conventional and unconventional extraction. They are awarded nationally in blocks and are not subject to influence or control by the Local Plan.
Who are the relevant duty to cooperate bodies or other key partners?	• Liverpool City Region authorities • Warrington Borough Council • Greater Manchester authorities

How has this co-operation been carried out?	The 6 Liverpool City Region authorities have co-operated in establishing a joint evidence base for minerals planning in the City Region, which has supported the development of a minerals policy framework. Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), on behalf of the 6 Liverpool City Region local authorities contracted Greater Manchester Geological Unit (GMGU), part of the Urban Vision Partnership, to establish this City Region wide minerals evidence. Halton maintains its commitment to the Managed Aggregate Supply System through continued representation in the North West Aggregates Working Party. Together with the other authorities of Merseyside, it is within an aggregate apportionment sub-region with Warrington and the Greater Manchester authorities and, is working with them to deliver a joint Local Aggregate Assessment, in accordance with paragraph 145 of the Framework. This is a principal component of the evidence base to inform Halton's future role in facilitating the appropriate supply of aggregate minerals.
Outcomes	Local Plan policy on Minerals sets out the Council's approach to minerals extraction and to safeguarding from inappropriate development, safeguarded in the interests of facilitating the continuing supply of minerals.
Impact on neighbouring authorities and duty to co-operate bodies	The Council is aware of no outstanding concerns from other authorities to the Local Plan's approach to minerals extraction and safeguarding the key infrastructure for the movement of minerals.

6. Joint Working Arrangements

Cross Boundary Issue	Interested Duty to Cooperate Body	Evidence of Cooperation
Housing	St Helens Council, Warrington Borough Council Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings, Housing and Spatial Planning Board meetings, Mid Mersey Housing Group meetings
Economy and Employment	Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Wirral and Sefton Councils	LCR Joint Employment Land and Property Study, LCR Overview Study, SHELMA
Green Belt	Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington Councils	Consultation on methodology, District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings, Consultation meetings with Warrington, Knowsley and St Helens.
Connectivity	Mersey Travel, Halton Transport	District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings,
Liverpool John Lennon Airport	Knowsley, Liverpool	District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings,
Green Infrastructure	Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington,	District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings, LCR Green Infrastructure Strategy, LCR Ecological Framework
Flood Risk	Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington Councils	Environment Agency consultations, District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings,
Retail		District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings,
Infrastructure	Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington Councils	District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings,
Health and Well-being	Public Health Team Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) NHS (Halton Hospital)	District Planning Officers and Planning Policy Managers meetings,

Appendix A: Duty to Co-operate Bodies

Prescribed Body In Act and Regulations ¹	Relevant Body	Relevant Body Outside of Halton	Relevant Issues
Neighbouring authorities (as appropriate)	All LCR LPAs	As appropriate: Cheshire West and Chester Lancashire CC Warrington Wigan	Various (as appropriate): Housing Economic Development Transport
Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Utilities Infrastructure Environment
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)	Historic England (North West)	Historic England (North West)	Environment
Natural England	Natural England (North West)	Natural England (North West)	Environment
The Mayor for London	N/a	N/a	
Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority	Transport
Homes England	Homes England	Homes England	Housing Economic Development
Clinical Commissioning Group (replacing CCGs)	Halton and St Helens CCGs	All CCGs operating in the LCR	Community Infrastructure
NHS England (replacing CCGs)	NHS England	NHS England	Community Infrastructure
Office of Rail and Road	Office of Rail and Road	Office of Rail and Road	Transport
Transport for London	N/a	N/a	
Integrated Transport Authority	Merseytravel	Cheshire ITA	Transport
Highway Authority	Highways England Department for Transport	Neighbouring Authorities Highways England	Transport
Marine Management Organisation	Marine Management Organisation	Marine Management Organisation	Transport
Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)	Liverpool City Region LEP	Cheshire & Warrington LEP	Housing Economic Development Tourism
Local Nature Partnership (LNP)	Nature Connected (Merseyside's Local Nature partnership)	Cheshire Local Nature Partnership	Utilities Infrastructure Environment

¹ Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations (2012)