

18. Connectivity

CI: Transport Network and Accessibility

18.1. To encourage and enable this shift to more sustainable modes of travel it is necessary to ensure that a successful sustainable transport network is in place.

Policy CI: Transport Network and Accessibility

Walking and Cycling

1. Development will only be permitted where:
 - a. It does not prejudice the access on to or through the walking and cycling network or it provides a suitable alternative link of equal quality and convenience; and
 - b. It does not affect the enjoyment of the walking and cycling network (e.g. through noise, smells or other forms of pollution).

The walking and cycling network is taken to include but not be limited to: the Greenway Network; The Bridgewater Way; Mersey Way; Mersey Timberland Trail, The Trans-Pennine Trail, the Cycle Network and Public Rights of Way.

2. The Council will normally support development provided that:
 - a. It gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design;
 - b. The internal layout, access and highway network is safe, attractive, in character, functional and accessible for all users and does not discourage existing and proposed users;
 - c. It provides convenient access for walking and cycling to local facilities, key destinations and sustainable networks;
 - d. It does not have an adverse impact on the function, safety and character of and accessibility to the local or strategic highway network;
 - e. Appropriate provision for car and cycle parking is made;
 - f. Road design encourages safe driving practices, and that traffic management and traffic calming schemes are incorporated, where appropriate;
 - g. It is located within 400metres walking distance of a bus stop or railway station with a suitable level of service;
 - h. It seeks to minimise increases in the usage of level crossings and where necessary provides an alternative method of crossing (e.g. footbridge, underbridge or diversions) without increasing maintenance liabilities to HBC; and
 - i. Equal access for all people, including inclusive access is provided.

Where development does not meet all of these criteria or may be expected to have negative impacts, appropriate mitigation measures will be required at the developer's expense.

3. Development associated with the relinking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge to the pedestrian and cycle network will be supported, including the realignment of pedestrian and cycle links from Widnes Town Centre and Runcorn Old Town and the reconfiguration of the existing Bridge deck.

4. The Council will normally support work to improve canal towpaths and Public Rights of Way where they can provide key linkages from developments to local facilities.

Public Transport

5. Development will only be permitted where it does not prejudice:
 - a. the integrity and function of the Runcorn Busway.
 - b. the use of Ditton Station as part of the public transport network,
 - c. the use of the Halton Curve rail line as part of the rail network,
 - d. the Shell Green Route rail line in Widnes as part of the rail network, and
 - e. the provision of additional rail tracks immediately to the north of the existing rail line between Hough Green Station and Widnes Station

The re-opening, or provision, of these transport facilities will generally be supported.

6. Development will only be permitted where it retains the opportunity for new railway stations at:
 - a. Beechwood
 - b. South Widnes

New stations and other associated public transport facilities at these locations will be supported.

7. Development to support the creation of a multi modal public transport interchange at Runcorn Train Station will be supported, as part of a wider regeneration scheme for the area.
8. The Council will support provision of a rail based commuter Park and Ride scheme at:
 - a. Ditton
 - b. Locations where the scheme would demonstrably reduce congestion, alleviate parking issues, or increase accessibility to employment for those in the most deprived areas.

Waterways

9. The Council will expect development to:
 - a. Maintain waterside transport infrastructure where appropriate
 - b. Encourage physical waterborne leisure activities, boosting the tourism economy and promoting health improvements in appropriate locations
 - c. Enhance watercourses and related infrastructure where appropriate.

Road schemes

10. The Council will continue to work with partners to support appropriate road schemes including:
 - a. J11A of the M56
 - b. Liverpool John Lennon Airport Eastern Access Transport Corridor

11. Improvements to the following parts of the road network are proposed during the Plan period.

- a. A558 Daresbury Expressway;
- b. Watkinson Way / Ashley Way Gyratory;
- c. A562 Speke Road;
- d. A557 Access improvements; and
- e. Reconfiguration / improvement of infrastructure to the south of the SJB.

Where necessary the routes of these improvements will be protected.

Freight and Logistics

12. Any development which generates significant movement of freight will be expected to locate where they are, or can be, served by water or rail infrastructure in addition to having good road access.

13. The following sites have been identified as Freight and Logistics hubs:

- a. Port Runcorn
- b. Port Weston
- c. 3MG

Development that could have a detrimental impact on the access to these hubs will be resisted.

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)

14. Halton as part of the LCR welcomes the use of new technologies including those that:

- a. Manage the flow of traffic around the Borough.
- b. Reduce transport emissions through the use of SMART vehicle technology.
- c. Provide smartcard transport solutions, enabling transport and journeys in general to become quicker and more efficient for residents and visitors to the borough.

Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

15. The Council will require the submission of a Travel Plan and a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement for all developments over a prescribed floorspace or that are likely to generate a significant number of trips. Development proposals where there are location specific issues or traffic sensitivities may also be required to undertake a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement.

Justification

18.2. Halton's existing Sustainable Transport Network includes:

- i. Halton Greenway Network
- ii. Silver Jubilee Bridge public transport and walking routes
- iii. The Bridgewater Way, Mersey Way, Mersey Timberland Trail and the Trans Pennine Trail walking and cycling routes
- iv. Other walking and cycling routes including the Public Rights of Way, the Cycle Network and other access networks
- v. Halton Core Bus Network including the Runcorn Busway and Bus Priority Routes
- vi. Railway routes and stations
- vii. Bus interchanges and bus stops

- viii. Waterways, including towpaths
- 18.3. Although making the best use of the existing Sustainable Transport Network and infrastructure will be the main priority in Halton, patterns of growth for the Borough and in particular the Key Areas of Change may require improvements to the existing Sustainable Transport Network and the introduction of new sustainable routes and facilities. The existing Sustainable Transport Network will therefore be protected, and opportunities to improve the existing or provide new facilities and services, where appropriate, will be supported. This complements the goals set out within the Halton Local Transport Plan (LTP3) which is fundamental in the delivery of sustainable transport in Halton.
- 18.4. It is also imperative that the cross-boundary nature of travel is recognised and where appropriate, opportunities are taken to ensure that public transport, walking and cycling routes are integrated across boundaries. Working with neighbouring authorities will be supported in order to achieve sustainable cross boundary accessibility particularly in conjunction with the Liverpool City Region and Merseytravel.
- 18.5. The 'Greenway Network' is made up of off-road routes for walking and cycling and bridleways, connecting people to facilities and greenspaces in and around the urban areas and to the countryside.
- 18.6. High Speed 2 (HS2) is the most significant transport infrastructure project in the UK since the motorways were built in the 1950s and 1960s. It will provide a high speed rail line between London and Birmingham and on to Manchester and Leeds. Halton will benefit from these improvements by providing the opportunities to develop a half hourly rail service.
- 18.7. The re-opening of new stations and the creation of public transport hubs could enable more people to use the public transport network and therefore reduce the need for people to travel by private vehicle. Whilst improvements to the rail network could lead to improved services within the Borough and the wider area. Ditton Station in Widnes, on the London to Liverpool, was closed to passenger services in 1994. There is an opportunity for the re-opening of this station, particularly in light of proposed developments in the area. The Halton Curve in Runcorn is not used at present for regular passenger services. The line forms a transport link between Liverpool, Runcorn and Chester and on to North Wales. There is the opportunity for this line to be re-opened and to recreate the links from the City Region into Chester and Wales. The re-opening of the Shell Green route (Ditton – Warrington) would allow improved opportunities would allow improved opportunities for travel between Widnes and Warrington and could form part of the Trans-Pennine linkage. Additional rail tracks between Hough Green and Widnes North stations would provide a passing route allowing additional stops on the line, without prejudicing running speeds on the Trans-Pennine route.
- 18.8. Network Rail must be consulted where a proposal is likely to increase the volume, or create a material change in the character of, traffic crossing the level crossing over the railway. Where a proposal has an increase in type and volume of user at a level crossing, Network Rail would seek closure of that crossing and the replacement of the level crossing with a suitable footbridge, through the following process:

- a. Network Rail would seek a developer contribution towards the funding of the footbridge either via CIL, S106 or a unilateral undertaking. Where proposals are large scale Network Rail expect that the developer should provide full funding for the footbridge, for smaller proposals a contribution would be sought in proportion to the development.
 - b. Network Rail would design and construct the footbridge.
 - c. The developer would submit a planning application for the footbridge.
 - d. Network Rail and the Council will work together to ensure a commitment that both are supportive in principle of the closure of the relevant level crossing and construction of a footbridge.
 - e. Network Rail would have liability for the maintenance of the footbridge unless agreed otherwise.
 - f. The Council will require the installation of the footbridge, and the closure of the relevant level crossing, normally prior to 50% of dwellings being occupied, this will be a condition of any approval.
- 18.9. Where replacement with a footbridge is not feasible Network Rail and the Council will seek a diversion order of, for example, a public footpath - which would include discussions with the LPA, Highways and PROW teams. In this case the developer will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the diversion orders.
- 18.10. The Council will require a Travel Plan, Transport Assessment or Transport Statement in line with thresholds set out within Transport and Accessibility SPD. In accordance with this guidance, the Council may still require a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan to accompany applications for new developments that do not meet these thresholds, where a transport impact is expected from the development, or a cumulative impact is expected from different uses within a development or from a number of developments in the vicinity.
- 18.11. The effectiveness of these infrastructure improvements and measures in controlling traffic growth will need to be carefully monitored. This will primarily be achieved through the Halton Local Transport Plan and the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth

C2: Parking Standards

18.12. The availability of parking in commercial areas has a major influence over how people choose to travel to their destination. The impact of poor parking standards in residential areas can affect the success of the overall development. This policy will consider parking standards within the following areas; Commercial and Residential developments, and extensions to existing premises/properties.

Policy C2: Parking Standards

1. All development must provide an appropriate level of safe, secure, accessible and viable parking, taking into account:
 - a. The accessibility of the site, including the availability of public transport;
 - b. The type, mix and use of development;
 - c. The availability of on-street parking or shared parking facilities; and
 - d. An overall need to encourage the use of low emissions vehicles.
2. The design and layout of the proposed parking must enable and encourage the maximum use of sustainable modes of transport, including provision for cyclists and low emission vehicles.
3. The Council will require parking provision, cycle parking and electric vehicle infrastructure according to the standards set out in Appendix D. Any significant variation (+/- 10%) from these standards must be justified on a case-by-case basis, and would need to demonstrate there are no harmful impacts on the street scene or the availability of on-street parking.
4. Where development has a significant amount (10 or more) of single or low occupancy dwellings provision should be made for communal car clubs. Where opportunities arise Halton would welcome car club facilities within commercial and high density areas.

Justification

18.13. The NPPF states that policies in development plans can set local levels of parking for residential and non-residential development and they should take into account, amongst other things, the accessibility of the site, the type, mix and use of development and the local levels of car ownership (para.39). It also states that plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes and that developments should be designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles (para.35).

18.14. The necessary infrastructure for electric and alternative fuelled vehicles will depend on the prevailing vehicle technology requirements, but capacity should also be built into new development to allow for upgrading and advances in technology. This sort of provision allows for long term climate change mitigation as well as improvements in local air quality.

- 18.15. The residential parking standards contained in this policy will apply to all developments involving the provision of 1 or more residential units (gross). Applications for extensions and alterations to existing dwellings should ensure that a suitable level of parking provision is made.
- 18.16. The non-residential parking standards contained in this policy will apply to all developments that result in the creation of non-residential floorspace. This includes the extension and alteration of existing non-residential premises and all changes of use.
- 18.17. Where mixed-use, residential and commercial developments are proposed, the parking requirements for each element should be calculated individually using the standards. However, where appropriate, the Council may consider the shared use of parking between residential and commercial elements where it can be justified.

Parking Spaces

- 18.18. Halton follows DfT guidance and principals when addressing the size of parking spaces. Off road residential parking spaces in Halton are expected to be a minimum size of 3m x 6m if to be considered as a parking space, anything less than this would be not considered a parking space.
- 18.19. Good quality parking facilities can add to the overall attractiveness of a residential or commercial area. Halton works to the manual for streets principal as per 6 bays a surface break should be applied. Halton follows DfT guidance with regard to permeable surfaces in car parks to help alleviate drainage issues, further advice can be obtained from the Highways department.
- 18.20. Cycle Parking: A minimum of 5 cycle parking spaces should be designated per new commercial development. However this number should then be doubled per additional 100 employees.
- 18.21. Parking requirements can be seen at Appendix D: