In response to representations made by a number of parties, and in fulfilment of the commitments made in the HBC publication ‘Setting the Record Straight’, which was published in October 2008 and is available on http://www2.halton.gov.uk/merseygateway/docs/centralexpresswayleafletoct08, Halton Borough Council has commissioned a rapid Health Impact Assessment (rHIA). This was carried out to provide further information concerning the effects of the Project on the health of communities in Runcorn and Widnes, which includes those visiting and working in this area. This was compiled by an independent firm of consultants not otherwise involved with the Project.

The enclosed document reports the findings of the rHIA, which draws on information presented in the Environmental Statement (ES) and a number of other reports and assessments produced as part of the Orders and Applications process for the Mersey Gateway. It is important to realise that an HIA is not a statutory requirement. It is published to assist in understanding health consequences of the Project. To a similar extent other documents must also be read to understand the Project as a whole as explained below.

The rHIA considers the potential health effects of specific aspects of the proposed Mersey Gateway Project assessed against defined criteria using accepted, impartial review and assessment methodologies. The rHIA deals with issues having the potential to directly affect health, including noise nuisance and airborne pollution (including dust) as well as effects on access to health and leisure facilities. The rHIA relates directly to work published in the ES, and cross references to appropriate sections of the ES are included throughout the rHIA.

In addition to requesting an HIA for the Mersey Gateway Project, some of the representations received by the Project Team have raised particular concerns relating to the effects of the Project on, or as a result of, contaminated land in Runcorn and Widnes. The rHIA does not provide an additional assessment of the effects of the Project on contaminated land. This is because assessments of this particular issue have already been undertaken in great detail as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, and reported upon in the ES.

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One area of particular interest related to part of Wigg Island (not comprised in the project area) that is known to have been used historically for munitions production and storage. A paper prepared by the Project Team to provide additional information concerning this matter to regulators at Halton Borough Council and elsewhere has been included as an appendix to the rHIA. Full details of all matters relating to this particular concern are presented in Chapter 14 of the ES and the associated Technical Annex, which contain a detailed review of the historic use of the area and the effects of the Project on contaminated land and groundwater, as well as the potential risks to human health posed by and to the Project as a result of contamination.

Risks to human health from contamination, which have been identified as a result of construction of the Project, will be dealt with through specific mitigation measures. These measures will be outlined within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure that significant risks to human health will be adequately dealt with. Mitigation measures included within the CEMP and secured and implemented by Planning Condition will be drawn up in consultation with the appropriate regulators and will be compliant with relevant legislation. Chapter 14 notes that ‘on the basis of the assessment undertaken it is considered that the Project will be “suitable for use” as risks to site users can be mitigated’.

Additional information on the potential effects of the Mersey Gateway Project specifically with regard to health is presented in the ES and the Technical Annex deals with contamination matters in relation to soils, sediments and groundwater. The information is presented in the following chapters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Issues Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Effects on footpaths and access to leisure facilities, green spaces and other areas used for exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td>Contaminated Land</td>
<td>Risks from existing contaminated land and sediments. Risks from historic land use in the area. The risks assessed are for both the construction phase and post construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>Potential effects due to the generation, storage and transport of waste during and following construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 16</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Effects on footpaths and access to health and leisure facilities and areas used for exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 17</td>
<td>Noise and Vibration</td>
<td>Effects of noise and vibration generated during construction and operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 19</td>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>Effects on local air quality and dust during construction and operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 20</td>
<td>Social Effects</td>
<td>Effects on socio economics, including access to health facilities, leisure areas, effects on health of population, access to employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The key recommendations of the rHIA are compatible with those already identified through the Environmental Impact Assessment process and have already been taken into account in the Planning Conditions (which include the requirements for a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Construction Transport Management Plan), the adoption of the Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Conditions of Contract to be included in the procurement of the concessionaire.

The ES is available for review on-line on the Mersey Gateway website (http://www2.halton.gov.uk/merseygateway), and at Halton Borough Council Offices in the following locations:

- Halton Lea Library, Halton Lea, Runcorn*; and
- Kingsway Learning Centre, Widnes.

*As of 23rd February 2009 the Mersey Gateway Project documents will be temporarily relocated from Halton Lea Library to Halton Direct Link, Concourse Level, Rutland House, Halton Lea Shopping Centre, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2ES. The hours of opening are Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, Saturday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Further requests for information and queries should be addressed to the Mersey Gateway Team at:

Halton Borough Council
Mersey Gateway Project
First Floor
Unit 15 Turnstone Business Park
Mulberry Avenue
Widnes WA8 0WN
mersey.gateway@halton.gov.uk

Steve Nicholson
Project Director – Mersey Gateway

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