



# The Mersey Gateway Project

The Mersey Gateway Project is a major scheme to build a new six-lane toll bridge over the River Mersey in the north west of England. It will link the towns of Runcorn and Widnes and will relieve the congested and ageing Silver Jubilee Bridge.

Both the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge will be tolled crossings once the new bridge opens in autumn 2017. All Halton residents will be able to cross either bridge for free\*.

The project also includes or facilitates;

- plans to develop and integrate public transport, cycle and pedestrian links across Halton,
- plans to kick start a major 20-year regeneration programme for Halton, and
- improving regional transport links to encourage new and inward investment.

The new bridge will;

- mean an estimated 4,640 new jobs through direct employment, regeneration activity and inward investment,
- generate an estimated £61.9 million a year in Gross Value Added from the new jobs by 2030,
- cross the river around 1.5km to the east of the Silver Jubilee Bridge,
- have three lanes across the Mersey in each direction, with a speed limit of 60mph, and
- form the centrepiece of a new and improved high standard link road (9.5km long) connecting the national motorway network in north Cheshire with Merseyside.

\*Residents of Halton will still need to register to use the bridges and there will be a small charge for this.

## Benefits

The project will bring huge estimated benefits for people and businesses in Halton, the Liverpool city-region, Cheshire and across the north west.

We are already seeing the early impact of the plans with new investment coming to Halton on both sides of the river.

### Economic benefits:

- 470 permanent full time equivalent jobs on site during the construction phase,
- 4,640 permanent new jobs as a result of the operation of the Mersey Gateway, regeneration activity and inward investment, and
- £61.9 million a year in Gross Value Added from the new jobs by 2030.

It will also support sustained growth at Liverpool Ports and Liverpool John Lennon Airport and improve business productivity throughout the Mersey corridor (known as agglomeration impacts).

### Transport benefits:

- reductions in some journey times of up to 10 minutes in peak periods,
- increase in journey time reliability,
- less congestion resulting in lower carbon emissions,
- reductions in the cost of accidents of up to £39 million,
- 80% less traffic using the Silver Jubilee Bridge, freeing it up for use as a local bridge,
- increased network resilience and civil contingencies,
- reductions in maintenance delays as a result of reduced congestion, and
- a major strategic new transport route linking the Liverpool city-region and the north west to the rest of the country.

### Social benefits:

- improvements to public transport facilities,
- improvements to walking and cycling facilities,
- improved health as a result of reduced air pollution,
- safer new routes for cyclists and pedestrians across and around the river, and
- more reliable access to emergency services and more robust emergency civil contingency planning.

## Costs and funding

Halton Borough Council and Merseylink have saved £250 million on the lifetime cost of the project, bringing the total cost through to the year 2044 down to £1.86 billion.

This lifetime cost includes the design, build, finance, operation and maintenance of the project through to 2044.

The majority of the funding comes from the tolls paid by road users. The UK Government is contributing a minimum of £212 million in grants, and this will increase following its commitment to fund the improved toll discount scheme for Halton residents.

Studies show that the economic benefits the project will bring to Halton and the surrounding area are almost four times greater than its cost.

## Delivering the project

Halton Borough Council has set up a new body, the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd, to deliver the project.

The new Board will deliver the project on behalf of Halton Borough Council. The Board will operate as a commercial (though not for profit) organisation on an arm's length basis from the council.

It will be working closely with the Merseylink consortium, which was appointed as the project company for the Mersey Gateway Project in March 2014.

The consortium is now responsible for the design, build, finance and operation of the bridge over the next 30 years.

The Merseylink consortium is made up of experienced sponsors with a track record in delivering major infrastructure projects, alongside their construction and operational partners, who are world leaders in their field.



*The new bridge as it crosses St Helens Canal in Widnes*

## We've started work



Construction work began in April 2014

## The new bridge

The design of the new Mersey Gateway Bridge is based on a cable-stay structure similar to the second Severn Crossing, but with three towers. It will be 2.3km long with a river span of 1km.

The main bridge deck will be made from reinforced concrete and the spans will be supported by steel cable stays attached to towers rising up to between 80 and 125m above the river bed.

The new bridge will be designed to carry up to six traffic lanes forming part of a new and improved high standard road (9.5km long) connecting north Widnes and Merseyside with Runcorn and the national motorway network in north Cheshire. Traffic would benefit from congestion free uninterrupted travel across the Mersey for the foreseeable future.

## Tolling

Both the new Mersey Gateway Bridge and the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge will be tolled crossings once the new bridge opens. All Halton residents will be able to cross either bridge for free\*.

The standard toll charge for other users to cross either bridge in 2017 has been set at £2 for a one-way trip in a car or a small van. This means the cost is expected to be in line with the tolls paid on the Mersey Tunnels.

There will be a number of different ways of reducing the cost, including monthly peak and off-peak passes and discounts for registering your vehicle.

You can find out more at [www.merseygateway.co.uk/tolls](http://www.merseygateway.co.uk/tolls).

There will be no toll booths - both bridges will use an 'open road tolling system' where smart technology is used to keep traffic free flowing along the route, capture vehicle details, and ensure that bridge users pay.

\*Residents of Halton will still need to register to use the bridges and there will be a small charge for this.

## Objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

- relieve the congested Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and better provide for local transport needs,
- apply minimum toll charges to both the new bridge and the SJB to allow the project to be funded,
- improve accessibility to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities,
- improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment,
- improve public transport links across the river,
- encourage the increased use of cycling and walking, and
- restore effective network resilience for transport across the River Mersey.

## Timetable

The new bridge is scheduled to open in autumn 2017, but that is just one part of our busy timetable.

**Spring 2014**  
Construction work started

**Summer 2014**  
Main bridge works start

**Autumn 2017**  
Mersey Gateway Bridge scheduled to open

**Autumn 2017**  
Silver Jubilee Bridge closed for refurbishment

**Spring/Summer 2018**  
Silver Jubilee Bridge scheduled to re-open



## Regeneration areas

The Mersey Gateway Project is a unique opportunity to stimulate long-term regeneration initiatives in Halton and to provide essential support for the delivery of economic growth across the region. The local regeneration strategy covers five of the borough's most deprived areas (see map left). It spreads across 20sq km and provides a bold and challenging 20-year vision for regeneration in Halton.

Across the region, Mersey Gateway is seen as a transformational project that will drive economic recovery and in particular support expansion at Liverpool Ports and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.



*How the Silver Jubilee Bridge could look in the future*

## The Silver Jubilee Bridge

Built in 1961, and now crossed by over 26 million users every year, the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) is the only route for cars to cross the Mersey through Halton and is a notorious traffic bottleneck.

Incidents and routine maintenance result in extensive delay where the local and regional road networks become 'gridlocked' for several hours.

To deliver the traffic and environmental benefits when the new bridge opens, the SJB will be tolled – but it will be free for all Halton residents, buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

Around 80% of traffic will use the new bridge and the SJB will be

reconfigured as a local bridge – with one lane of traffic in each direction, alongside dedicated space for cyclists and pedestrians.

When the new bridge opens it is planned to close Silver Jubilee Bridge for 6 to 12 months to undertake essential maintenance work that is being postponed to avoid traffic disruption. The SJB will remain open to cyclists and pedestrians throughout this closure.

## Environment

Mersey Gateway is a 'green' project that will bring major environmental benefits to the local area.

A unique new charity – the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust – has been created to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the environment across a 1600 hectare area of the Upper Mersey Estuary running from the new bridge up river to Warrington.

The Trust, which will also manage a new 28.5 hectare nature reserve alongside the bridge, is unique for a major construction project in the UK.

## Keep in touch

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[www.merseygateway.co.uk](http://www.merseygateway.co.uk)

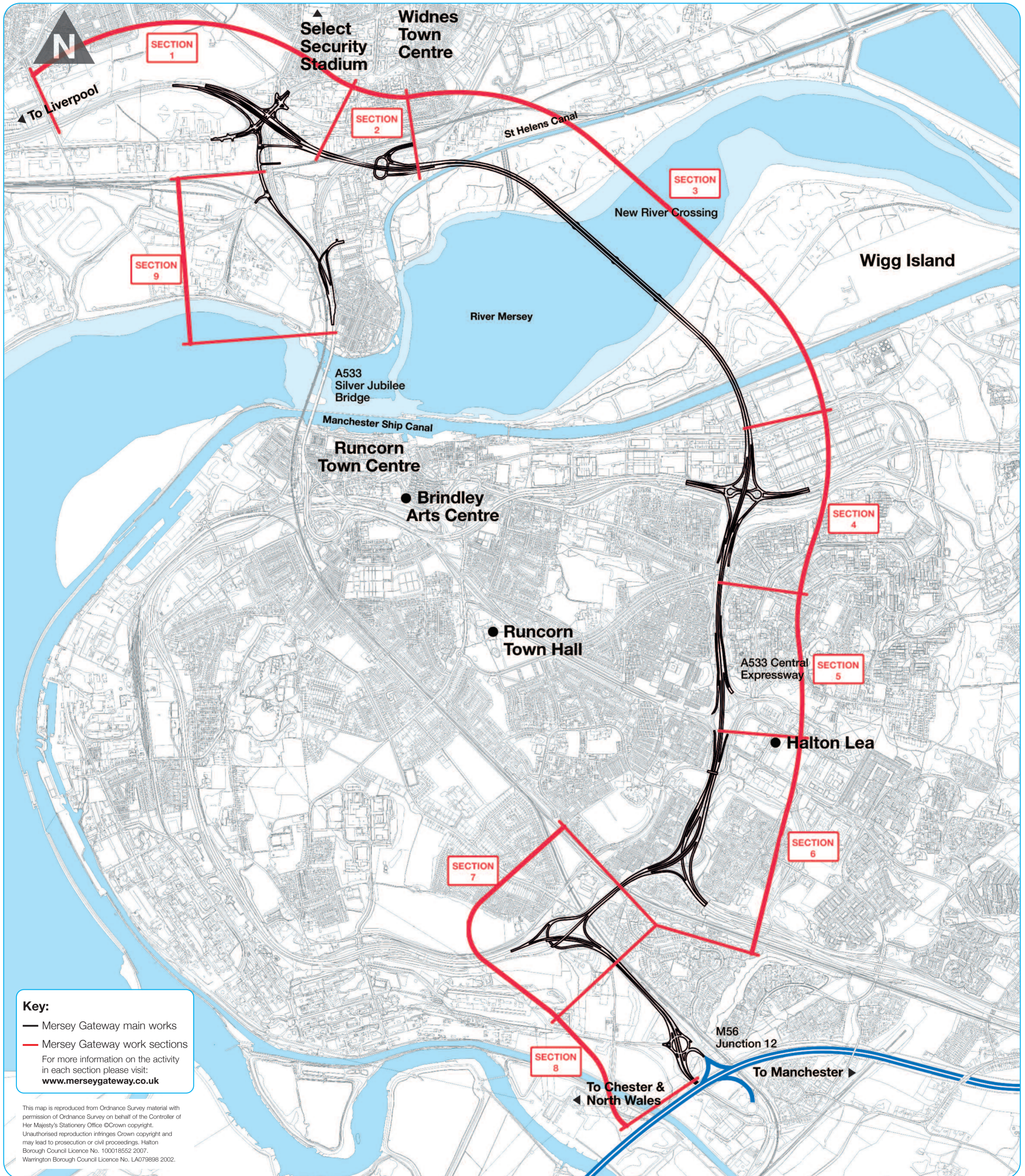
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# The route



SAVINGS DELIVERED through procurement

**£250 MILLION**

**4,640** NUMBER OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS the project is set to create

**FREE TRIPS** FOR ALL HALTON RESIDENTS across the two bridges

**2017** MERSEY GATEWAY SCHEDULED TO OPEN