

### **Matter 3. Working in the North West** **(2000 word limit encompasses Matter 3B)**

#### **Matter 3B: Retail**

(i) Have the appropriate centres been listed in policy W5?

The policy effectively introduces 3 tiers to retail centres in the North West. Liverpool and Manchester are the only centres in tier 1; 24 further named centres are listed in tier 2, with all other centres in the region effectively forming the third tier. None of the Halton centres are named and therefore fall within tier 3. This is understandable in terms of Runcorn Old town centre which fulfils a localised role, however the omission of Widnes and Halton Lea (Runcorn) is surprising.

There is a clear anomaly between the hierarchy of retail centres listed in policy W5 and those shown in table 7.1 (Settlement hierarchy) in connection with policy RDF 1 (Main Development Locations). Four centres shown in table 7.1 under the 'regional towns and cities' category are omitted from the 'tier 2' centres in Policy W5 (Widnes, Runcorn, Ellesmere Port and Skelmersdale). All regional towns and cities listed in table 7.1 should also be named in policy W5. To not do so defeats the objective of them fulfilling a rounded role as a regional town, which includes a retail function.

White Young Green proposed a network of centres for the North West as part of their Town Centre Assessment Study (2005), as stated at para.3.206 of the Technical Appendix. These are listed in table 3.22 to the Technical Appendix of the Draft RSS and consist of Regional Centres (Manchester / Salford and Liverpool) and key component centres of the Regional Network. Widnes is the only centre listed in table 3.22, and therefore recommended by White Young Green, that is not explicitly listed in Policy W5. Again, this anomalous and needs to be corrected.

(ii) Should a more hierarchical approach be adopted?

Halton Borough Council do not wish to submit any additional response in relation to this issue.

(iii) Is the floor space requirement shown in Table 8.4 realistic?

Halton Borough Council support the fact the figures in Table 8.4 are indicative and it is acknowledged that they need to be kept under regular review.