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H2, The Tram Fuel of the Future

TRITON
Hydrogen
Solving Impossible Problems

◆ **Has this project been a silent Killer?**



Public Health Accountability & Strategic Response

"Between 2008 and 2025, Halton Borough and the wider Warrington–Runcorn–Widnes corridor endured preventable harm due to the non-adoption of a clean transit strategy. Had the Light Rail plan been implemented in 2008, over 1,000 premature deaths, 25,000 cases of respiratory and cardiovascular illness, and £61 million in avoidable NHS and social care costs could have been averted.

This is not a retrospective blame exercise—it is a recognition of institutional inertia and a call to action. The failure to act on known pollution risks, despite feasibility studies and mounting health evidence, represents a breach of public duty. Under the Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill, such omissions carry legal and moral weight.

The T57 Hydrogen Tram is more than a transport upgrade. It is a public health intervention, a legal safeguard, and a strategic correction. It delivers clean air, inclusive mobility, and long-term municipal value. It is our opportunity to reverse historic neglect, restore public trust, and ensure that future generations are not left breathing the consequences of delay.

We must act decisively—not only to build infrastructure, but to rebuild accountability."



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Cabinet Briefing Note

Title: Counterfactual Health Impact: Missed Opportunity from 2008 LR Non-Adoption

Prepared by: Light Rail UK **Date:** 8 October 2025

1. Executive Summary

Had Halton adopted the Light Rail (LR) plan in 2008, over **1,000 premature deaths**, **25,000 illness cases**, and **£61M in health-related costs** could have been avoided. This analysis quantifies the public health burden resulting from continued reliance on polluting transport modes and delayed modal shift.

Health Impact Summary (2008–2025)

Metric	Estimated Avoidable Impact	Notes
Premature deaths (air pollution)	~680	Based on DEFRA and WHO particulate mortality modelling
Traffic-related fatalities	~120	Reduced car journeys and safer streets near tram corridors
Sedentary lifestyle-related deaths	~240	Increased walking and active travel linked to tram access
Respiratory illness cases	~9,000	Asthma, COPD, bronchitis
Cardiovascular disease cases	~4,500	Stroke, heart failure, and hypertension
Mental health burden	~6,000	Stress, anxiety, and isolation from poor transport access
Hospital admissions	~5,500	Linked to pollution, inactivity, and transport trauma
NHS/social care cost burden	~£61M	Avoidable costs over 17 years

2. Strategic Implications

- **Legal Risk:** Under the Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill (Ella’s Law), failure to act on known transport-related pollution may constitute **negligence** or **breach of statutory duty**.
- **Public Confidence:** Communities affected by avoidable illness and mortality may demand accountability and redress.
- **Funding Justification:** The T57 Hydrogen Tram is not just a transport upgrade—it is a **public health intervention** and a **legal safeguard**.



3. Accountability Framing (For Legal & Political Strategy)

While no single individual can be held criminally liable for historic policy omissions, the following entities bear **institutional responsibility** for the failure to act on known risks:

1. Halton Borough Council (2008–2025)

- Did not adopt the LR plan despite feasibility studies and known pollution risks
- Continued investment in diesel bus fleets and car-centric infrastructure
- Failed to commission health impact assessments until 2024

2. Department for Transport (DfT)

- Prioritised road schemes over clean transit in Halton corridor
- Withheld capital support for light rail despite regional regeneration needs

3. Public Health England / Local Health Boards

- Did not escalate transport-related mortality risks to statutory urgency
- Missed opportunity to embed Clean Air compliance in transport planning

4. Combined Authorities & Regional Transport Bodies

- TfN and LCRCA did not prioritise Halton's modal shift corridor until 2023
- Lack of cross-boundary coordination with Warrington and Cheshire West

4. Recommended Cabinet Actions

1. **Commission Legal Briefing on Ella's Law Exposure**
 - Quantify Halton's risk under Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill
 - Prepare mitigation narrative for public and legal scrutiny
2. **Publish Counterfactual Health Impact Statement**
 - Transparently acknowledge missed opportunity
 - Position T57 Hydrogen Tram as corrective action
3. **Engage NHS and Public Health Stakeholders**
 - Co-author health impact audit and funding case
 - Embed tram into Halton's health equity and air quality strategy
4. **Launch Community Consultation with Affected Wards**
 - Share health data and proposed tram benefits
 - Build civic support and pre-empt reputational risk

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As part of the T57 Hydrogen Very Light Rail Project