
WIDNES TOWN CENTRE

Regeneration Framework

Document Control

<u>File Name</u>	<u>Prepared by</u>	<u>Checked by</u>	<u>Regeneration</u>	<u>Transport</u>
3591-ID-004-00-Framework	ML LF CH	CH ALC	Walker Sime	WSP
			<u>Engagement</u>	
			PLACED	

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the purpose and aim of this framework document, how it is structured and the area of focus.



Purpose and aim of the document

This Town Centre Regeneration Framework has been produced to form a set of spatial strategies and deliverables to drive the future of Widnes town centre. It creates an ambitious picture of the future which, with support from partners and stakeholders, can become a deliverable and implementable programme to benefit all who live, work and visit Widnes Town Centre.

The Regeneration Framework is informed by an evidence base which includes:

- **PLACED Widnes Town Centre Engagement Report** - This report summarises the feedback from the public engagement programme that engagement specialists PLACED delivered in Widnes Town Centre during October and November 2024; and
- **Widnes Town Centre Parking, Active Travel and Movement Study** - This report analyses the movement of people through the town centre and identifies interventions that can support its transformation through analysis undertaken by connectivity specialists WSP between September and December 2024.

Publishing commitments through a Regeneration Framework is a tried and tested way of committing to delivering the Vision, which aligns the town with both local and national targets, informed by extensive consultation. This provides a platform for conversations to get started or continue with relevant stakeholders for funding applications dedicated to town centre regeneration by guiding how development should come forward to support the aspiration of the town. It will be used as a delivery tool for Halton Borough Council (HBC) to organise their resources, inform future decision making, and to engage with private sector delivery partners.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is seizing the opportunity to use devolved powers and funding to invest in the sub-regional economy including people, place, transport, and digital infrastructure. This will open opportunities for Council's to apply for localised funding to improve the high street and highways.

Once the Regeneration Framework is adopted by the council, the local authority will then begin implementing work that aligns to the Vision by developing more detailed designs for each of the projects in Chapter 6, considering the best delivery routes, and creating business cases, to access grant funding.

The framework area

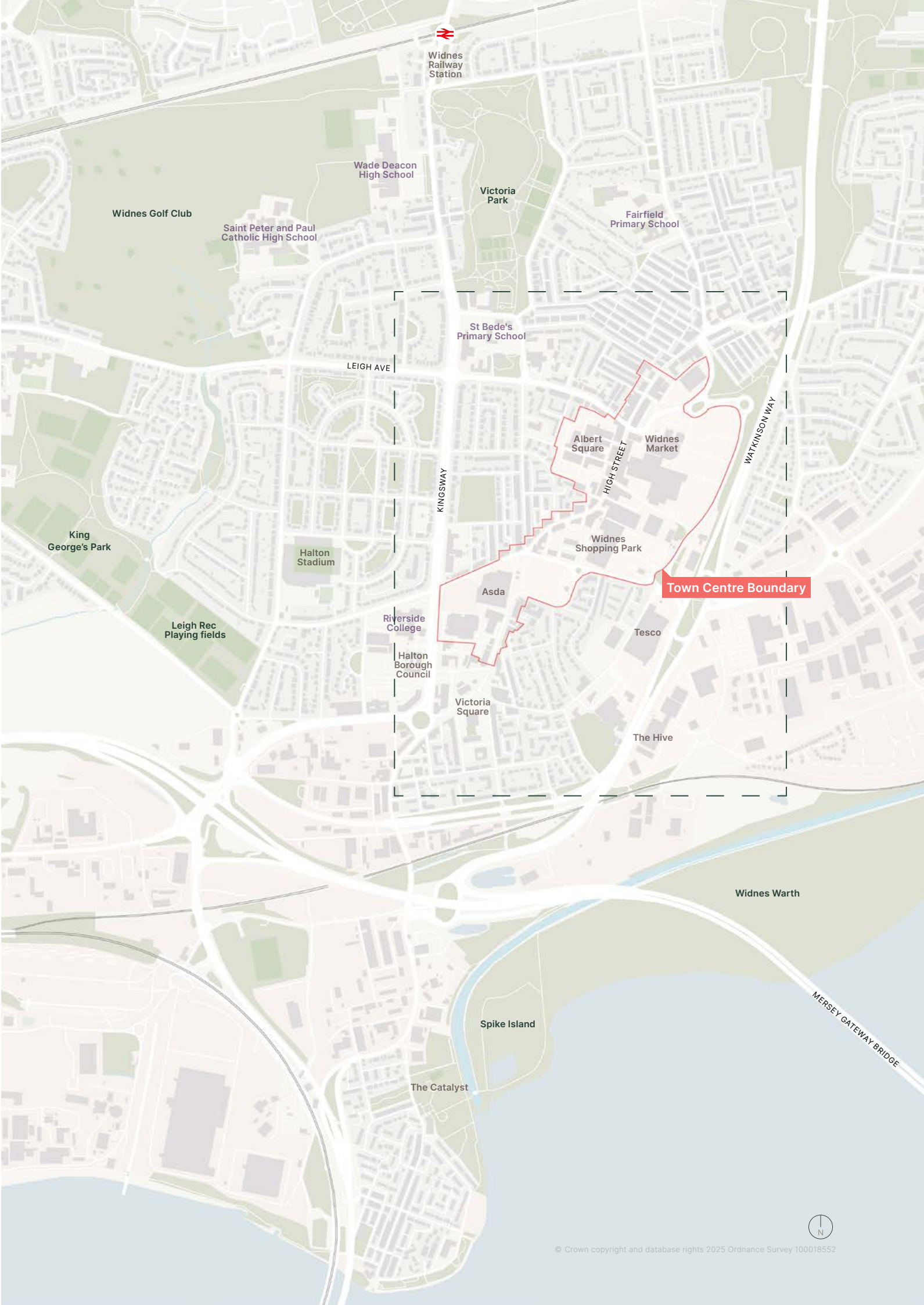
This document focusses primarily within the area defined as the town centre, by the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (2022).

However, due to the nature of spatial strategies, a broader area of influence is also considered beyond the town centre boundary, including:

- Connections to the north up to Victoria Park and Widnes Railway Station;
- South to the Hive, the historic core around Victoria Square and down to Spike Island and the River Mersey;
- West to Halton Stadium and residential communities; and
- East to the existing and emerging communities.



The Regeneration Framework is informed by these supporting documents



2 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

This chapter summarises the evolution of Widnes town centre, where its strengths lie, and some of the challenges which will need to be overcome, before setting out where the development opportunities likely lie, and the elements which make Widnes special, which must be maintained.



The wider context

Widnes is geographically well located within the Liverpool City Region, with direct connections to Liverpool via bus and trains, as well as Warrington and Greater Manchester.

Due to the town centre's location directly north of the Mersey Gateway bridge, the immediate context has to cope with a large quantity of vehicular movement, most of which bypasses the town. However, this movement still severs day to day access into the town centre.

Widnes Railway Station is physically separated from the town centre, lying 1 mile to the north, beyond Victoria Park.

Halton Stadium lies to the west of the town centre, nestled within the Kingsway Residential Estate.

Victoria Square and the new leisure centre lie to the south-west of the town centre, alongside the civic cluster and Riverside College. These uses feel like key landmarks which bookend the southern extent of the town centre, despite not lying within the boundary.

The Hive provides a leisure cluster physically separated from the south-eastern boundary of the town centre, due to the nature of Watkinson Way, despite lying just half a mile from Derby Square.



Widnes, the town

The population of Widnes in 2021 was just shy of 60,000 people.

Against UK average socio-demographic data the population is categorised by the following:

- The percentage of the population per age band is comparable to the UK average across the younger population, except for 20-35 year olds, suggesting some younger adults move away and do not return to start families here. The population returns back to average again from 40 years and above average at 55+ years, resulting in Widnes **trending to an older population**.
- There are **slightly higher levels of deprivation** than the UK average, and **people are generally less healthy**.
- There are more houses and **less flats, maisonettes and apartments** than the UK average.
- There are higher levels of social rented properties and mortgaged or shared ownership properties, resulting in **lower levels of private rented properties** in the town.
- **23% of residents have no access to vehicles**. This is at the UK average, and increases to 40% for those within close proximity to the town centre (see page 11 of the *Widnes Town Centre - Parking, Active Travel, and Movement Study*).

The town centre

The town centre boundary is drawn tightly around the retail core of Widnes, as defined by the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (2022).

Running north to south, the town centre boundary includes:

1. Widnes Market, developed in the 1990s, this is not the historic market hall position in the town, but provides easy access to car parking and bus stops. An outside market is located on the northern face.
2. Albert Square Shopping Centre, including car parking to the west.
3. Green Oaks Shopping Centre, providing an internal street link between the High Street and the car parking areas to the east, adjacent to the front door of Morrisons.
4. The retail High Street itself is a small part of a longer historic spine, from Albert Road to Widnes Road and connecting down to Victoria Square in the south. The High Street is pedestrianised.
5. Derby Square, bookending the southern end of the High Street, providing a connecting link back to Widnes Shopping Park.
6. Widnes Shopping Park provides a gateway 'front door' to many who visit Widnes due to the direct link off Watkinson Way. This retail park is of an 'out of town' typology within the town centre, providing big name national brands, surrounding a large car park. The free parking allowance means many use this location to nip into the High Street.
7. Aldi, Tesco and Asda are three further supermarkets within, or immediately adjacent to the town centre, each with their own car parking allowance.
8. The former Kingsway Leisure Centre site, to be developed as the new 'Kingsway Quarter' for predominantly urban residential homes.
9. Just beyond the south-western boundary lies Riverside College, the civic campus (including the offices of Halton Borough Council), and Victoria Square with Widnes Library - the historic heart of Widnes which is now disconnected from the main retail core.



Widnes, the town

First impressions

The following first impressions provide a spatial snapshot of the town. These are by no means an exhaustive list, yet some of the following impressions can be linked directly to the socio-demographic data:

- Widnes Market is busy, well regarded and attracts a large amount of people, although commonly considered to be in decline.
- Widnes Market lacks coherent integration with the High Street.
- Traditional convenience retailers are surviving well amongst a full field of supermarkets in the town centre, suggesting loyal shoppers.
- Widnes has a strong cafe culture, but limited evening economy.
- The town centre does not have a single focus, with the area around Victoria Square and the Hive being two examples of its multi-centric nature. This is the result of Widnes' interesting history and should be celebrated and enhanced.
- There is a lack of cultural and historical identity apparent in the town centre.
- Road infrastructure isolates the town centre from the surrounding neighbourhoods, yet the train station is physically separated from the town centre.
- The main green spaces are located outside of the town centre, and are well used by a range of people which the town centre does not benefit from.



← Busy market day.

↘ Lack of character or identity on the primary pedestrian arrival to the high street.

↓ The historic heart of Widnes, now physically separate from the rest of the town centre.



← Victoria Park, a beautiful park on the route between the town centre and the train station. Very limited green space exists within the town centre itself.

↗ Widnes Shopping Park - whilst providing big named national brands which create a draw to the town centre but lacks clear identity. Save for the name, this could be anywhere.

↗ Derby Square - a key link between Widnes Shopping Park and the High Street, lacking animation and celebration of the arrival at the heart of Widnes.

→ Widnes High Street - a strong pedestrianised corridor, but cluttered, tired and doesn't reflect Widnes as a town and lacks a welcoming feel.

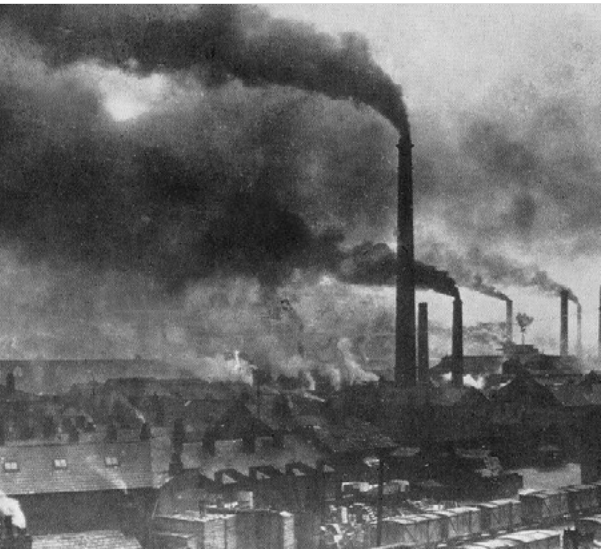
Historical analysis

Widnes was formally centred around Victoria Square, benefiting from a closer connection to the River Mersey and railway stations which have been lost over the years.

- Widnes was a key soap and chemical manufacture centre through the 19th and early 20th century. It's location was critical to this success, adjacent to the River Mersey and in between the key cities of Liverpool and Manchester.
- This industry polluted the town heavily which resulted in it being described as the 'ugliest' town in Britain at the time.
- Heavy manufacturers, warehouses and an intricate railway network formed, pushing the town northwards.
- Today, Albert Road, Widnes Road and Victoria Road are the remnants of the historic spine running between the former Widnes Stations northwards.



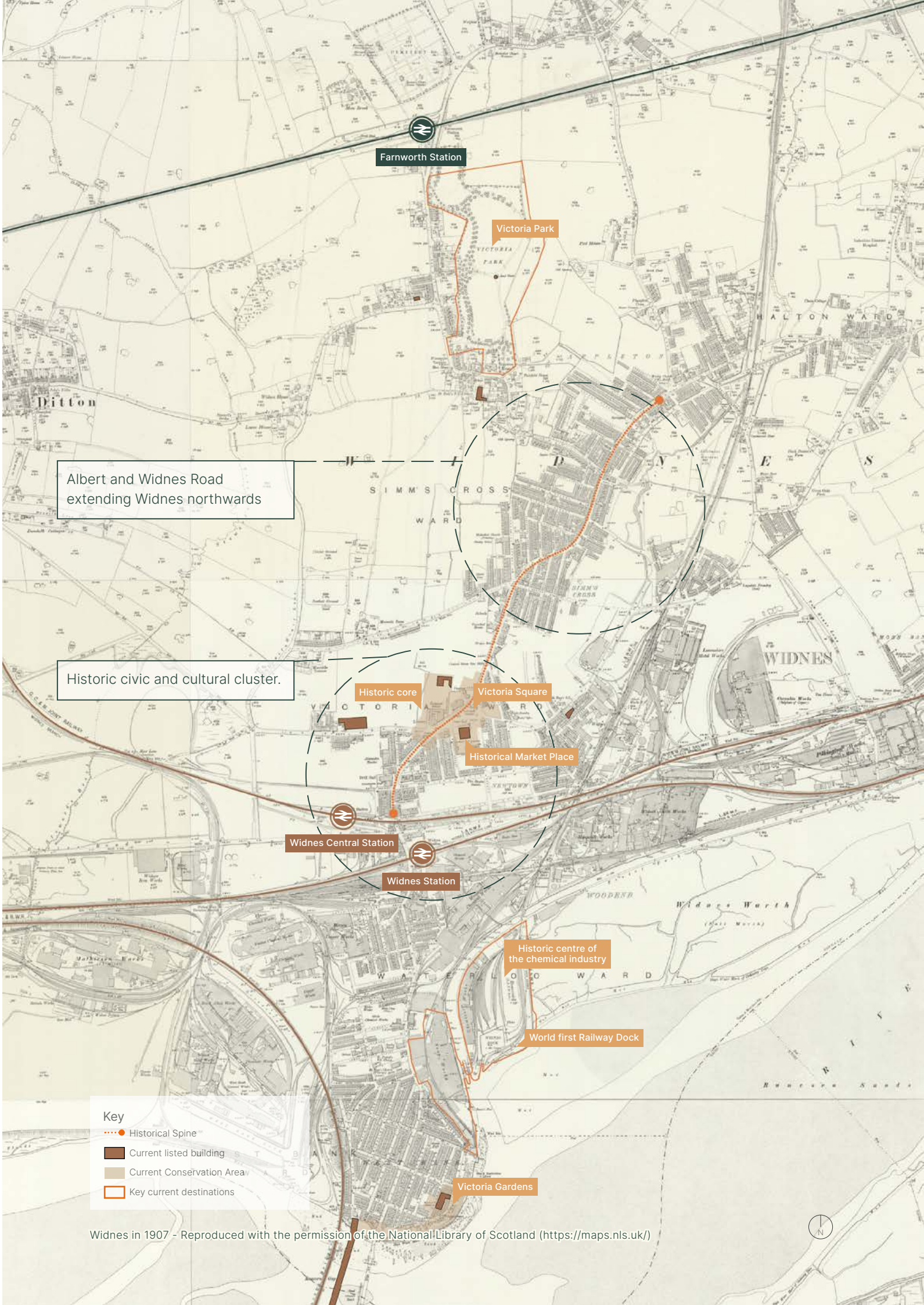
Widnes Central Station



View of industrial Widnes

"Their especial ugliness is, however, never more marked than when the spring is making beautiful every nook and corner of England, for the spring never comes hither. It never comes because, neither at Widnes nor St. Helens, is there any place in which it can manifest itself. The foul gases which, belched forth night and day from the many factories, rot the clothes, the teeth, and, in the end, the bodies or the workers, have killed every tree and every blade of grass for miles around."

— Robert Sherard, The White Slaves of England, Being True Pictures of Certain Social Conditions in the Kingdom of England in the Year 1897, p.47.



Widnes' cultural identity

Whilst not being at the forefront of the town, Widnes has a strong identity and local sense of belonging.

Key events and venues have marked the town throughout the decades, telling its story.



Widnes Industrial landscape, and Widnes Dock.



from the ugliest town...

19th century

Widnes Town of Innovation

Widnes played an important role in industrial revolution through its chemical production.

This put Widnes alongside St Helens on the map as the "Ugliest and most depressing town in England" at the time. (Diggle, Rev. G. E. (1961))

Another outcome was the first railway dock in the world, developed near Spike Island.

from late 1870s to now

Widnes Town of Rugby

Widnes Vikings were part of the original 22 rugby league clubs that formed the Northern Rugby Football Union in 1895.

Their historic nickname was The Chemics after Widnes' industrial history.

The club enjoyed a period of success between the 1970s-1980s and were referred as the 'cup kings'.

The club narrowly escaped liquidation in 2019, thanks to crowdfunding setup by the fanbase, and the club remains a key landmark within the heart of the town.

1875

Widnes Market

Widnes Market on Alford Street opened and welcomed traders and consumers for decades until the Market moved to its current hall in the 1990s, adjacent to Green Oaks Shopping Centre.

Some of the oldest local brands still remain within the market whilst others have changed and evolved through time.

Widnes Market is not only an anchor but a key asset within the town, which still remains despite strong competition from large shopping centres, supermarkets near by and prominence of online shopping.

2025 will see the 150th anniversary of the market.



Widnes Market and outdoor section on Alford St. late 19s century. ©courtesy of Picture Halton



Widnes Fish and Meat Market on Alford St, circa 70s

...to 150 years of the Market...



Runcorn railway bridge and Transporter bridge from Victoria Gardens ~19th century



Runcorn railway bridge and Jubilee bridge from Victoria Gardens



Mersey Gateway bridge and Halton bridges

19-21th century

A town of bridges

Completed in 1868, Runcorn Railway bridge was opened to allow the crossing of the River Mersey by train and foot where before the crossing would be by ferry.

Completed in 1905, Widnes-Runcorn Transporter Bridge was the first transporter bridge and the largest of its type in the world.

It continued to be used until summer 1961 when it was replaced by the 'Jubilee bridge'. The transporter bridge was then demolished.

Completed in 1961, Runcorn-Widnes bridge named the Silver Jubilee bridge in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee. It was built as a replacement bridge for the Transporter bridge which became inadequate for the amount of traffic using it after WWII.

Completed in 2017, the Mersey Gateway Bridge was built to support and decrease flow through Silver Jubilee bridge which had reached 10 times over its expected capacity. The Mersey Gateway bridge upgraded the surrounding road infrastructure to improve connections and travel times to the rest of the region.



Wesleyan Chapel in Victoria Road, which became the Queen's Hall 50s' ©courtesy of Picture Halton

...and icon of the UK music scene



The Stone Roses on Spike Island, 1990. © courtesy of Halton Borough Council

1950s

Widnes Town of Music

Queens Hall was a local landmark, a space for events, including wrestling and gigs. Built in 1864 as Victoria Road Wesleyan Methodist Church, when this closed, it was subsequently bought by Widnes Corporation in 1953.

The hall closed in 2004 and was demolished in 2012.

1965

Widnes Town of Music

Paul Simon claimed to write 'Homeward Bound' from Widnes Station platform.

1990s

Widnes Town of Music

The Stone Roses' iconic Live on Spike Island in Widnes 27th May 1990, attracted 30,000 revellers, music press and concert staff who converged on Widnes for the seminal show.

Q Magazine voted it the 12th best concert in the world ever and wrote: "Stuck out on a peninsula on the Mersey Estuary surrounded by gas towers and chimneys, the sweeping crosswinds played havoc with the sound."

The concert is remembered by many for the thousands of music fans who transformed the town for one day and night into the centre of the UK music scene.

2013

Ice Hockey

Widnes Wild Cats ice hockey club are based on Planet ice rink in the Hive.

The men's team play in the English Ice Hockey Association's NIHL North 1 league, whilst the women's team play WNIHL.

Since their foundation in 2013, they have won 7 trophies and are an undoubted success and key addition to the town's evening economy.

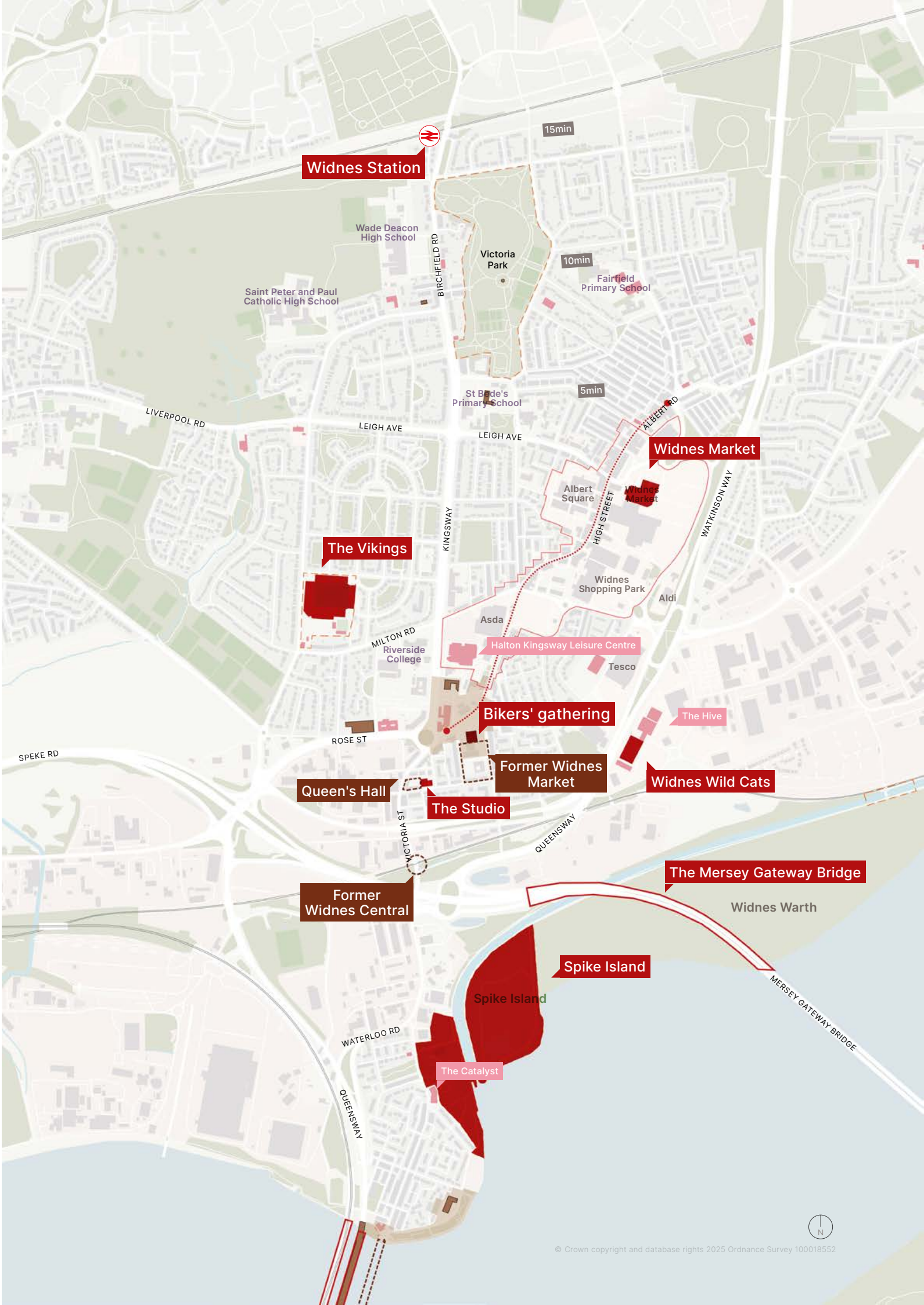
2019

Widnes Town of Bikers!

Every Monday, the local bikers gather in Victoria Square and provide some much needed activity within this historic part of town.

→ This map illustrates where the elements which constitute Widnes' identity are located.

- Key
- Historical Spine
 - Current listed buildings
 - Current Conservation Area
 - Key current destinations
 - Key historic destinations
 - Former key destinations



Public realm

The landscape surrounding Widnes town centre is attractive, from its strong connection to the River Mersey, to the historic Victoria Park.

However, the town centre has no green open spaces and the extent of public realm within the town centre focussed on people is minimal.

The town centre is a predominately hard space with limited areas to sit and rest. The High Street and Derby Square both lack a welcoming character and do not encourage people to stop and dwell, which is vital to a successful town heart.

Tree planting exists along the High Street which is a welcome addition. Some smaller pockets of landscape exist along Windfield Way, South Street and Kent Street, however, these spaces are simple grassed verges without a clear function.

The opportunity exists to bring some of the success of Victoria Park into the town centre, providing a place that is enjoyable to be in, increasing dwell time and therefore more opportunity to boost the local economy.



Derby Square, illustrating the lack of soft landscape within the town centre

~2% of the town centre is public realm, providing space for people to enjoy the town centre.

- Key
- Town centre boundary
 - Active frontage
 - Public realm - predominantly hard landscape and pedestrianised
 - Playground
 - Green public space
 - Incidental soft space within the town centre



Reflecting on Widnes' townscape

This plan highlights the conflict in urban grain within Widnes town centre, largely split between two opposing typologies:

- Along the High Street, building forms are predominantly a series of small to medium footprint buildings, in a linear form, creating an almost complete active frontage to the High Street. These smaller footprints are also modest in scale, at predominantly 2 storeys, with minimum service requirements tucked in behind.
- Larger, national brand 'out of town' typologies and supermarkets, facing out of the town centre and turning away from the High Street. These typologies fronts are dedicated to large car parking areas, with generous service yards behind creating a difficult relationship in the transitional spaces to the High Street.

Between these types, it is difficult to understand the priority and focus of the town centre. The retail High Street, predominantly filled with independent uses has a difficult task to compete in close proximity, and direct competition with national brands with their ease of access around them.

It is acknowledged that the national brands surrounding the High Street provide a clear draw and attraction to the town centre, which further drives footfall. However, a fine balance needs to be struck to ensure these benefits can be balanced alongside a successful High Street.

The National Model Design Code is a useful resource to provide design guidance around the delivery of high quality town centres, throughout part 1 and part 2. This is focussed around a clear High Street first approach.



The inactive connection between Widnes Shopping Park and Derby Square, down the side of the retail units and past the service yard.

Key

The High St Typology; including mix-use retail, day-time F&B and commercial uses

Out of Town Typology; including mainly retail uses

Supermarket

Associated car parking

Town centre shopping centre

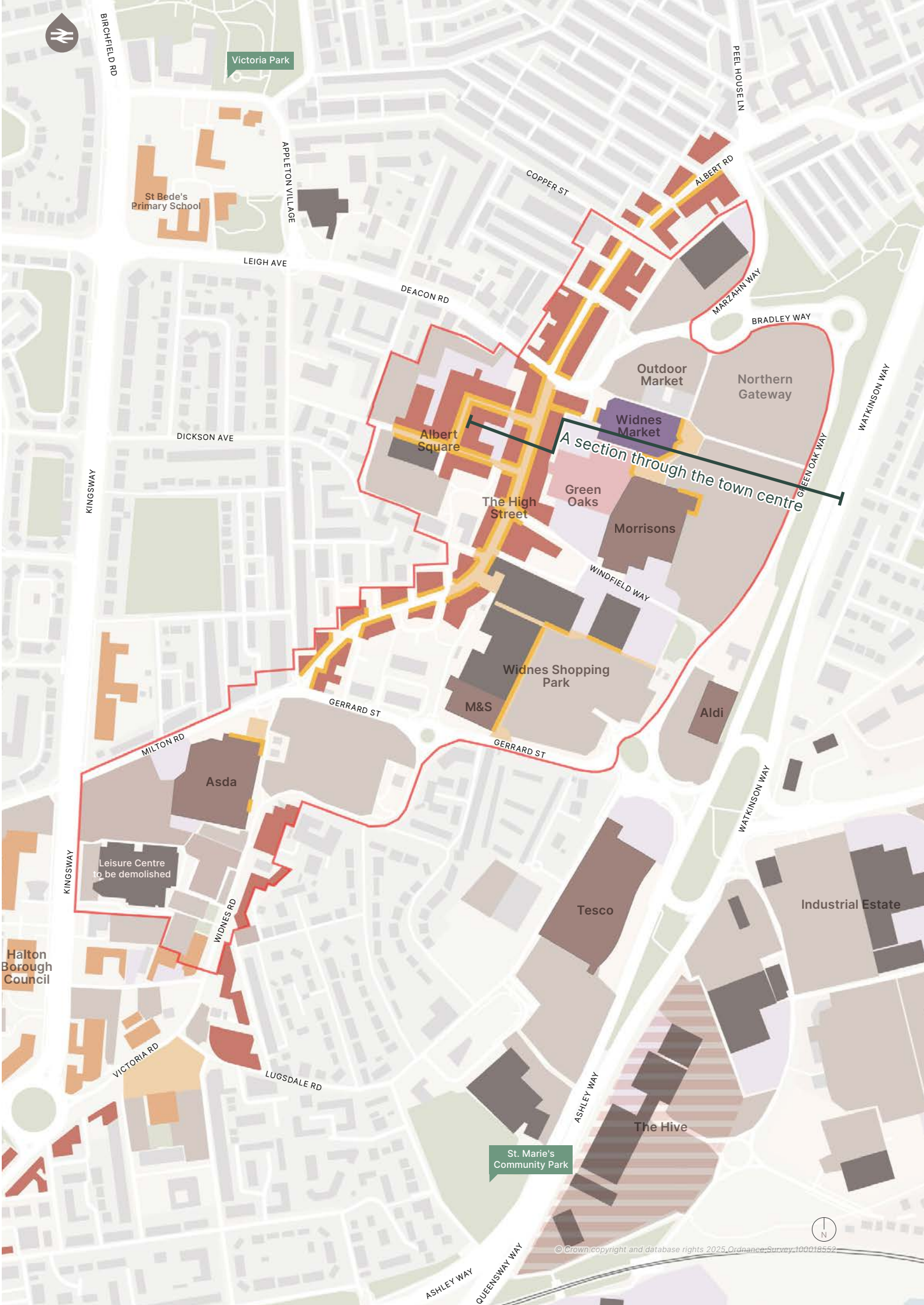
Widnes Market

Associated service / working yard

Square; public realm predominantly hard

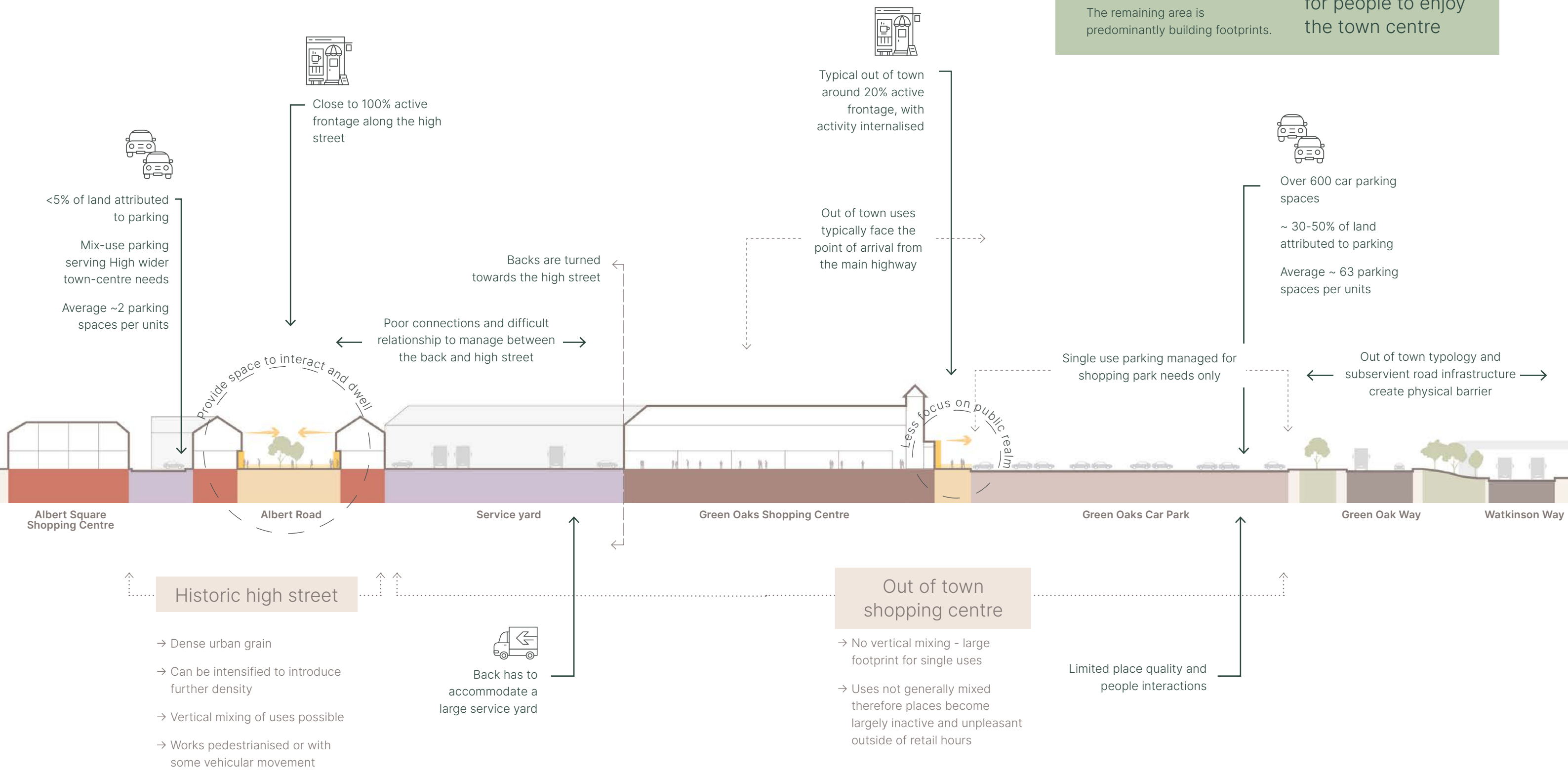
Civic typology; including uses such as education, local authority, community, health.

The Hive; predominantly leisure uses



A section through town

This section highlights the relationship between the two opposing retail typologies.



The town centre boundary is approximately 28Ha, of which:

27% of land is attributed to surface car parking

10% of land is attributed to hardstanding and service yards

20% of land is attributed to roads and carriageway

2% of land is public realm, providing space for people to enjoy the town centre

The remaining area is predominantly building footprints.

Town centre movement analysis

The Parking, Active Travel, and Movement Study supports this framework and provides a detailed analysis of access and movement across the town centre.

An overview is provided below:

Travel patterns

23% of Widnes' population do not have access to a car or van, yet motorised vehicle remains the primary mode of transport for many, with 55% of residents driving to work.

Of these, 29% of drivers travel less than 10km, which suggests a portion of car journeys are relatively short and alternative modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, may be suitable. 8% and 2% of the population currently use these methods, respectively.

59,000 private cars were registered in Halton in 2021. This is up from 52,000 ten years ago, outlining a 12% increase, whilst the population has grown by 2%. Subsequently, car ownership in Halton is rising faster than the population.

43% of commuters travel less than 10km to work.

The population within a **30min** walking distance of Widnes Town Centre exceeds **30,000**.

Only **10%** of people travel to work using an active mode of transport (walk or cycle).

23% of households in Widnes do not have a car / van.

Design

The reliance on private vehicles is evident in the town centre's design:

- Public car parking alone occupies 27% of the town centre's land.
- Cyclists and pedestrians navigating to key destinations are met with a combination of fragmented infrastructure, limited crossing points and multiple lanes of vehicular traffic, deterring use.
- Limited provision of bus services in the evening, limits the ability to travel by public transport for the local catchment.
- The abundance of publicly available, free off-street car parks guides vehicles to infiltrate local roads into the town centre. This contributes to a poor environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Impacts

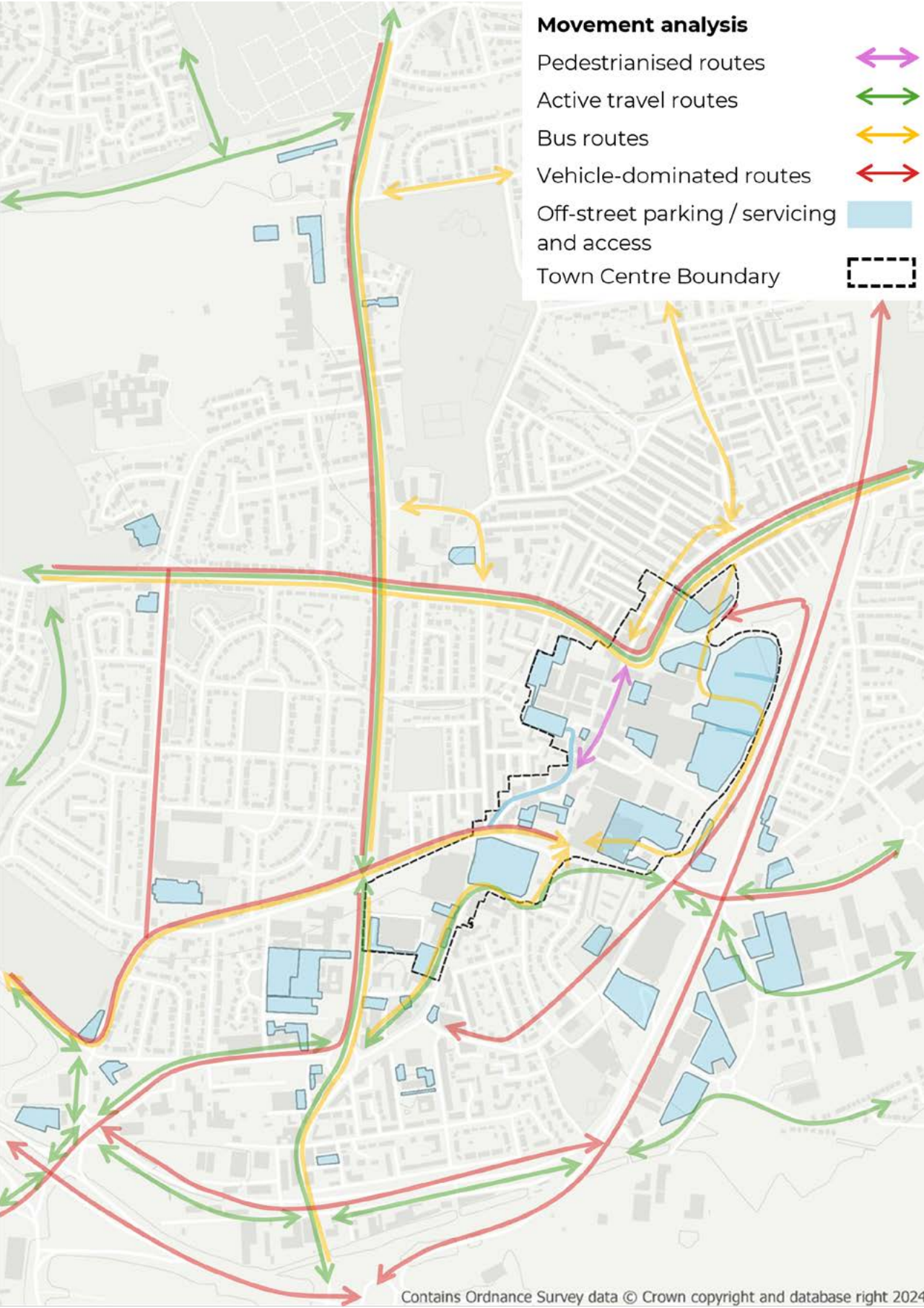
Prioritising sustainable modes of transport in the town centre runs counter to the overall trend of increased car use.

There is a growing dependence on private vehicles which creates a cycle where the need for road infrastructure and parking facilities continues to grow, reinforcing the dominance of vehicle travel over other modes.

Inequalities are distributed across Widnes with areas of deprivation and low car ownership being less susceptible to opportunities.

Town Centre challenges

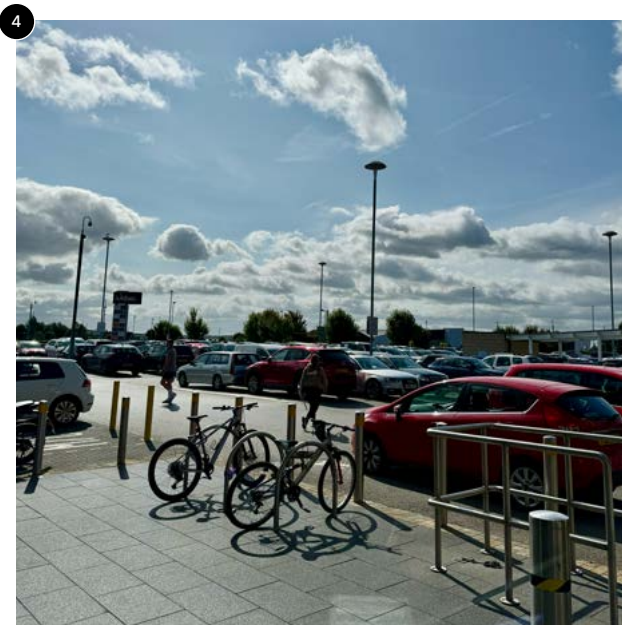
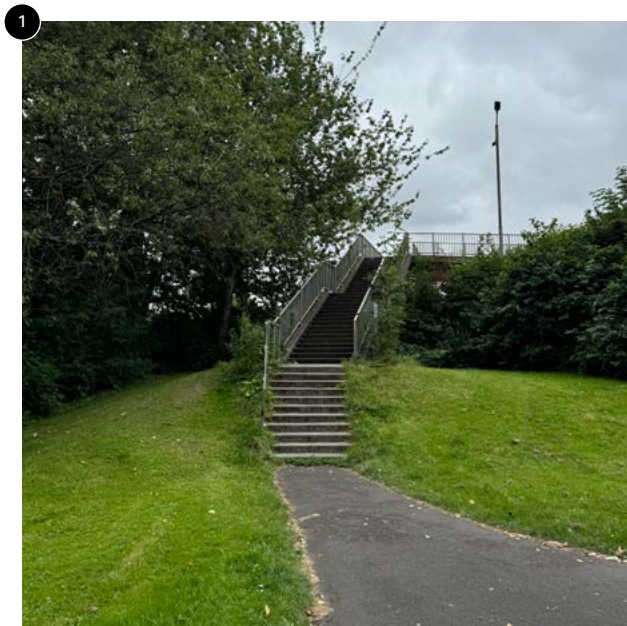
- Vehicle led infrastructure limits other choices of travel.
- Uneven distribution of car parking occupancy, despite an abundance of car parking. Demand is high in the west and experiences low turnover rates, unlike those in the east that charge a fee.
- Lack of animated walking routes and wayfinding to the High Street.
- Lack of integration between key transport hubs and the town centre.



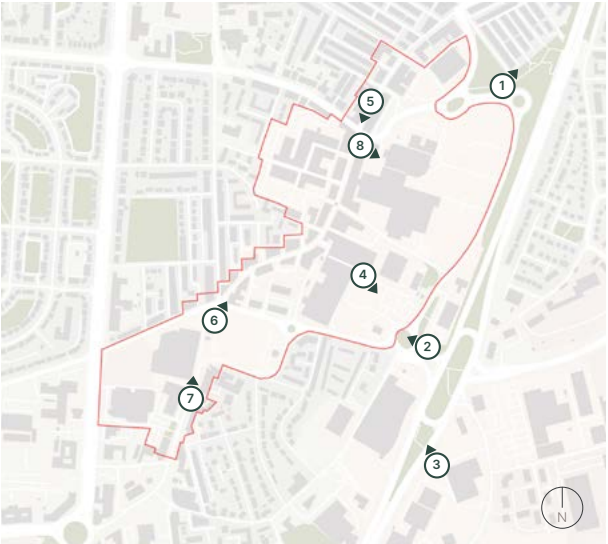
Barriers to the town centre

Active travel connections to and from the town centre need to overcome some key challenges.

- ① Routes from the east must cross Watkinson Way, either by the bridge connection to the north which does not provide inclusive access or access for cyclists, or by using multiple pedestrian crossings which prioritises vehicle movement. This therefore includes long wait times, poor air quality, high levels of noise and an indirect route.
- ②
- ③
- ④ Pedestrian space is limited and cycle storage basic which does not encourage usage.



- ⑤ Gateways to the town centre do not prioritise sustainable modes of travel vital to the success of the town centre, with standard crossings and little celebration to announce arrival to the town centre. Instead the arrival is cluttered, with limited signage to guide people to key landmarks.
- ⑥
- ⑦ The hierarchy of connections are not clear - for example the historic spine is lost through the Asda land, and the key connection between the Market and High Street is narrow, dark and uninviting.
- ⑧



Challenges

The challenges and considerations that have emerged from the analysis and engagement feedback are summarised here.

Out of town retail typologies, within the town centre

- Over providing car parking for individual uses.
- Acting as primary gateways, without prioritising connections back to the High Street.
- Competing with the High Street offer, and creating difficult interfaces to overcome due to the location of service access.

Vehicle dominated town centre

- Sustainable, active modes of travel which improve footfall and give life to the town centre is secondary, and having to fight against the dominance of road infrastructure.

A lack of identity

- Widnes is not celebrated across the town centre.
- Landmarks and iconic spaces unique to Widnes are not referenced and Widnes' story could be better told, so there is no doubt that this place is the heart of Widnes.

Is it a place people want to be in?

- Lack of greenery and softer spaces, and places to relax.
- Limited opportunities to dwell in the town centre, with few places to be in without spending money.
- Few places of work, to generate footfall beyond retail spend.
- Limited residential within the town centre to generate footfall beyond core retail hours.

A lack of activity and vitality?

- Some retail and cafe culture exists, however limited evening economy, both cultural and food and beverage creates a dark, inactive heart to the town.
- Limited offer beyond retail uses. No play facilities for families, and cultural and leisure uses have been pushed beyond the heart of the town centre, without strong active travel connections between them and the High Street.

Key

Town centre boundary

Town centre public realm

Primary frontages

Highways as barrier to movement

Movement conflicted junction

Link to High Street

Community assets

Listed building

Conservation Area

Out of town typology

Surface car parking

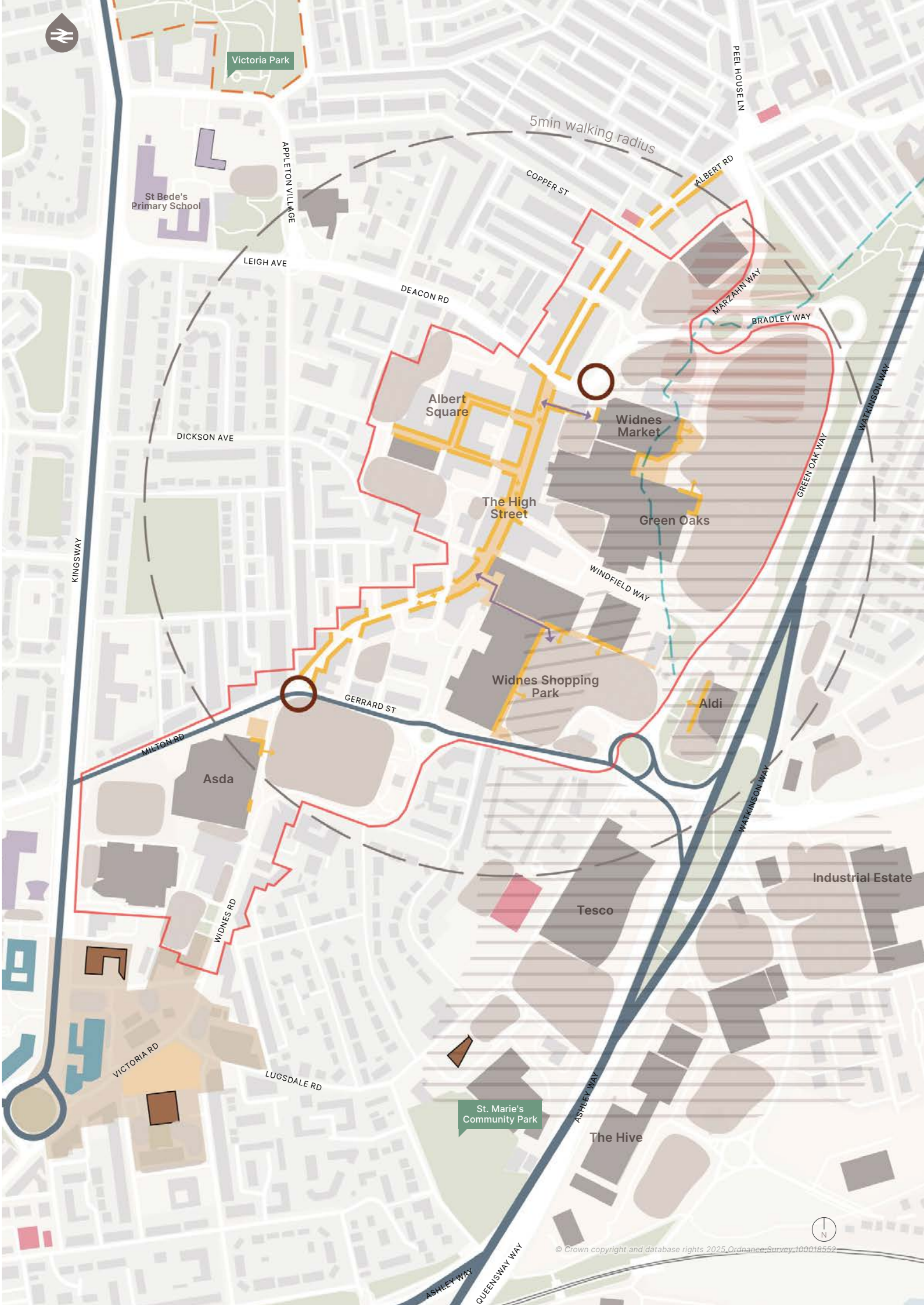
Local Cycle route

National Cycle Route 62

Culverted Brook

Landfill area

Potentially contaminated area



Development opportunities

This regeneration framework follows up on the Town Centre Vision report (2023) which identified key development opportunities across the town centre.

These development opportunities have been reviewed and further opportunities identified and illustrated right. These opportunities will inform the spatial strategies and explored in more detail in the focussed projects chapter.

Former Kingsway leisure centre

This site is already progressing as a residential-led development opportunity, following the demolition of the former Kingsway leisure centre.

A contemporary urban residential offer is proposed, to increase footfall and activity within the town centre. Family housing and housing for older people are prioritised within a single new neighbourhood, tied together with landscape-led public realm.

Albert Square Shopping Centre

This site is a clear regeneration opportunity within the town centre and was identified as such in the 2023 Town Centre Vision report. The site is allocated as part of the Primary Shopping Area and includes a Town Centre Allocation on the car parks to the west.

The Bingo Hall and adjacent site

The Bingo Hall and adjacent vacant land provide a large site to explore for the next phase of Widnes Shopping Park. The site is allocated for town centre uses.

Widnes market and the wider Northern Gateway

Widnes market is an important asset to the town centre and it should be enhanced at its current location, bookending the northern end of the High Street.

However, the land to the north and east of the Market hall (the outside market and some of the car parking land) are considered future development opportunities to support and strengthen town centre uses, to maximise the northern gateway location. These sites are not designated as the Primary Shopping Area.

The High Street and its wider connections

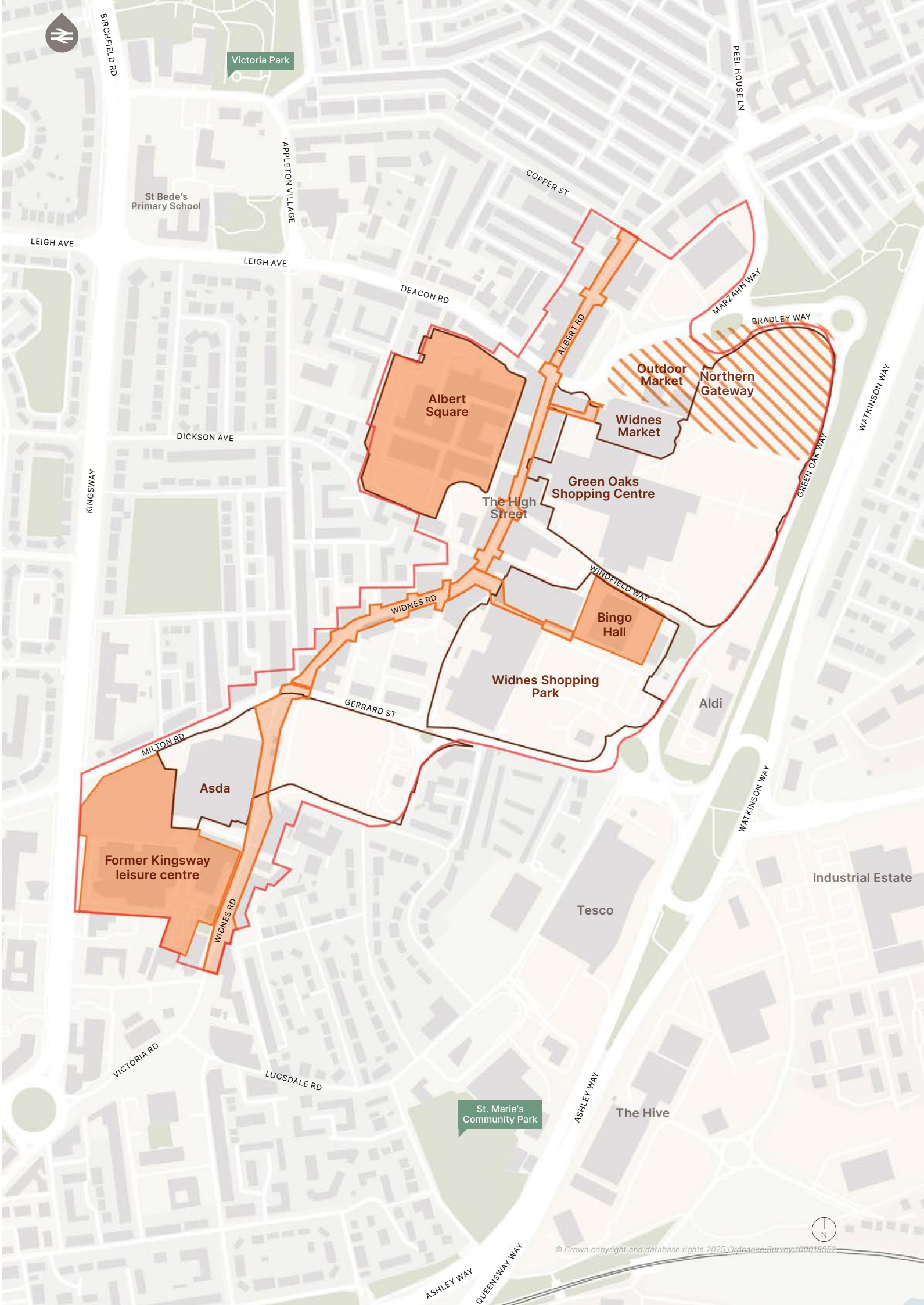
There are clear development opportunities to explore the High Street first approach. This includes prioritising retail uses along the High Street, and expanding the historic spine connections beyond the High Street to the north and south. These opportunities also include the enhancement of connections to and from the High Street for active travel movement types.

Key

Major HBC long lease ownership

Identified development opportunities

Potential further development opportunities



What makes Widnes special?

The analysis has highlighted a number of key elements which makes Widnes special, that all development opportunities should seek to build upon over the new 15 years.

Great landscape scenery



- Victoria Park and the riverfront around Spike Island are successful, well used and beautiful public open spaces offering green and blue spaces for recreation.
- These spaces should provide key precedents to guide the future feel of landscape enhancements within the town centre.

A long lasting local economy



- Widnes has traditionally offered a great variety of independent retailers, many of which have survived and thrived, despite the prominence of supermarkets in the town centre.
- These retailers are largely focussed on Widnes Market, which should be nurtured and enhanced as a core asset within the town centre, to grow the strongly independent local economy.

A walkable town



- Despite the sprawl of amenities and challenges around vehicle dominance, there are the ingredients for an attractive walkabout town that should be enhanced.

Rich history and heritage



- Widnes has enticing architectural landmarks and a rich history associated with its land and former industry.
- This history is not exploited to its fullest within the town centre, mostly notably with this historic core no longer siting within the town centre boundary.
- New development opportunities should look to bring this historic richness back to the fore, to make the most of what makes Widnes special.

3

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This chapter summarises the public engagement exercise undertaken to support the analysis stage of this framework, to identify the challenges and opportunities from a broad range of people using (or not using) the town centre.



4 TOWN CENTRE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

This chapter sets out the Vision and Objectives agreed at the Council's Executive Board. It explores this vision spatially, at the wider and town centre scale and illustrates how these translate into a series of strategies to guide the evolution of the town centre to achieve this vision.



Town Centre Vision

In December 2023, the Council's Executive Board endorsed the following vision statement to guide the next 15 years for Widnes town centre.

*"Widnes town centre is a modern, attractive and vibrant centre, servicing a range of needs of the town. **The centre is well connected to its community and key assets within Widnes.***

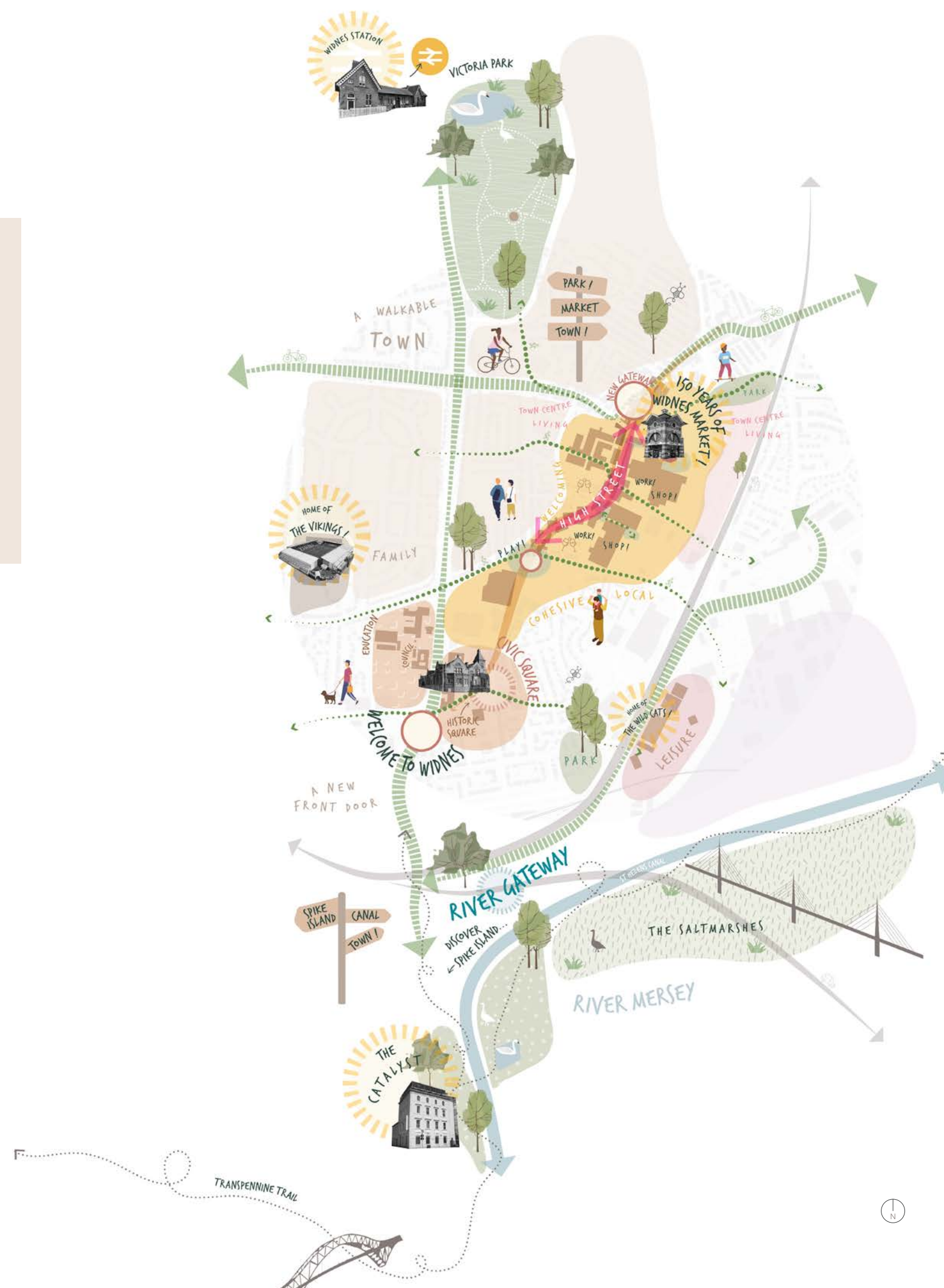
*The town centre is diverse, celebrating and reflecting the Widnes community. It provides a broad range of employment and business opportunities. **It is the focus of Widnes' community, social and civic functions, including a thriving evening economy.***"

Whilst this vision focusses on the future of the town centre, it is important to also stress that a successful town centre in the future will also provide stronger connections to some of Widnes' key assets.

This includes:

- Strengthening the connection along the historic High Street down to Victoria Square.
- Enhancing and celebrating the connection to the river frontage, Spike Island and Catalyst Museum.
- Improving connections to the west, to the college, the new leisure centre, the civic campus and the stadium.
- Strengthening connections north to Victoria Park.
- Improving connections east to the Hive, and to new development at Fiddler's Ferry.

However, amongst all of these, the retail high street will be at the centre of it all, a place where all of these connections will come together, and feel true to Widnes.



Widnes town centre in 2040

Within the town centre, the following opportunities have been identified to meet the vision for 2040.

- **Albert Square** will be a vibrant new mixed use development, providing a mix of residential homes, workspaces and active ground floor uses focussed around a high quality new central square. This will provide new food and beverage uses which will extend into the early evening.
- **Widnes Market** will be strengthened at the northern end of the high street, with enhanced connections back to the High Street. The offer will continue to be independent and celebrated locally, enhanced with a new outside market space to expand the offer to more people who live, work or visit Widnes.
- The **High Street** will be at the heart of the town centre, providing a high quality space which people enjoy to be in. The street will be multi-functional, providing soft landscape, social spaces, retail spill out, art and a strong events programme. The High Street will be part of a re-established central spine, with enhanced connections up to Victoria Park and down to Victoria Square and beyond.
- Widnes will have a **thriving evening economy**, supported by locally loved restaurants and bars, alongside a strong cultural economy, attracting a broader audience from further afield.
- The **Kingsway Quarter** will be a high quality new urban neighbourhood, providing an exemplar housing community within the town centre. It will be a place where community thrives, underpinned by a strong landscape setting which prioritises people movement and has improved connections beyond its boundaries.
- The **town centre will be attractive** to look and walk around, providing soft planting and spaces for nature, new urban play spaces and uses for families without needing to spend money.
- Residents, workers and visitors alike will agree that the town feels like Widnes, and it is **maintained to a standard to make everyone proud**, and that encourages a strong community culture of actively taking part in looking after and engaging in the town centre.



From vision and objectives, to spatial strategies

Town centre objectives

In order to meet the town centre vision, three key objectives were also endorsed by the Council's Executive Board in December 2023.

The objectives seek to make Widnes Town Centre:

- More sustainable;
- More cohesive; and
- More diverse.

By meeting these objectives, the spatial strategies will help to meet the town centre vision for 2040.

From objectives, to spatial strategies

A series of spatial strategies have been designed to realise the opportunities within the town centre.

These strategies are specifically targeted to meet the three key objectives endorsed by the Council's Executive Board in December 2023.

By meeting these objectives, the spatial strategies will help to meet the town centre vision for 2040.

Whilst these strategies have been broadly grouped to target each objective, they are inherently interconnected, collectively helping to meet all three objectives.

Objectives



A more sustainable town centre

The town centre is very car-dependent, which has a higher impact on the environment in terms of climate change emissions and pollutants. Reducing the reliance on car trips by increasing public transport use and active travel would improve the sustainability of the town centre. Increasing the quantity of residential dwellings within and near to the town centre means that more users of the town centre would not require car trips.



A more cohesive town centre

This objective is in recognition of Widnes' sprawling nature and disconnected layout. The centre can be difficult to navigate for those unfamiliar with it and key elements are poorly connected, despite being physically close (e.g. Widnes Shopping Park and the high street or the Market Hall and the high street).



A more diverse town centre

The town centre is heavily reliant on the retail sector, meaning it is vulnerable to the downturns within it. An economically more diverse offer within the town centre would make the town centre more resilient, but also more attractive as a destination. A thriving town centre should be a location for a broad range of uses, including retail, commercial, civic, community, leisure, food and drink, entertainment, social and residential.

Spatial strategies

A holistic approach to the town centre

Setting out a range of development considerations to ensure the future of Widnes town centre is more sustainable.

An attractive high street

Identifying a clear high street first approach, strengthening the high street environment to create a place to be proud of.

A greener town centre

Setting the bar for exemplary landscape design, creating a cleaner, greener town centre.

Rebalance movement across the town centre

To ensure the town centre functions effectively, this strategy seeks to rebalance the movement hierarchy, putting pedestrians first.

Simplify the vehicle network

Exploring how large areas of the vehicular network could be utilised for pedestrians or development.

Repair connections to and from the town centre

Creating a successful town centre which is accessible to all, at all times, by all means.

Diverse uses for diverse users

Widnes will continue to be a shopping town, but this offer will be supported by a range of new and strengthened uses to diversify the town.

Town centre living

Increasing the number of people living within the town centre to animate the town.

Celebrate and enhance Widnes' heritage and identity

Identifying opportunities for new signage, wayfinding features and routes through the town.

5 SPATIAL STRATEGIES

This chapter identifies a series of strategies as the focus of the framework, to help guide future change within the town centre to 2040.

Each strategy sets out key considerations and a set of spatial interventions, to deliver on the objectives and vision for the town centre.



A holistic approach to the town centre

In order to achieve *a more sustainable town centre*, a range of considerations are required to be explored by all development proposals.

Before the spatial strategies focusses on the improvement of walking and cycle priority within the town centre to meet the objective, we must consider a broader range of considerations under the umbrella of sustainability. This is to ensure all developments are fully considered, balance impact beyond the red line and collectively help Halton achieve the target to be net zero carbon by 2040.

The set of considerations listed to the right has been created to highlight the range of considerations high quality town centre development projects can and should be responding to positively, to meet Halton's target.

This list ensures all elements of sustainability are considered, and projects benefit all elements of Widnes Town Centre, now and into the future.

The expectation is that all new developments within the town centre will be able to respond positively to this list. Existing developments in the town centre are also encouraged to review and make improvements wherever possible to help meet this challenge.

This list is not exhaustive, and it is anticipated that additional elements will be required during the lifetime of this document.

Why

- To enable Halton to meet the target to be net zero carbon by 2040.
- To broaden the focus of development proposals to ensure the town centre is climate friendly, ready and just, as set out in 'A greener future for Halton'.
- To ensure new development benefits everyone and the town centre as a whole.

Outcomes

- High quality, holistic development proposals which tie into and repair the town centre, future proofing it for future generations.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to promote and champion.
- All developers to take this challenge on positively.

Has the development proposal...————→

...illustrated a genuine need for the project, and clearly does not negatively impact other areas or elements, people or local businesses of Widnes town centre, or beyond it?

...utilised the Climate Positive Design Tool, with the design scoring a minimum of the number of years to climate positive than it is to 2040, when Halton have committed to being net zero carbon (e.g. a scheme proposed in 2025 as a minimum should be carbon positive in 15 years)?

...provided an improvement of healthy streets index score (wherever relevant), with a minimum score of 2 for each metric?

...achieved a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain within the town centre boundary?

...provided sustainable drainage wherever possible, as the primary form of drainage within the site?

...demonstrated that the Make Space for Girls 'Safer Parks' guidance key design principles have been followed (applicable to all types of applications)?

...followed the design guidance outlined in the National Model Design Code related to 'town centres', including density, plot ratio, built form and enclosure ratio?

...adopted a retrofit first approach to reuse development on site, alongside the adoption of circular economy principles to all materials on site and required for development?

...provided evidence that developments can operate at net zero carbon by 2040?

...described the direct and indirect measurable social value benefits derived from the project?

...provided a genuine attempt at meeting Passivhaus design principles for energy efficiency and environmentally friendly buildings?

...undertaken deep and meaningful community engagement which can be proven to have shaped the design of the proposal?

—————↓
If **YES** can be answered for **ALL** of these, the proposal is sufficiently considered in sustainability terms to ensure it is appropriate for the future of Widnes' town centre.



An attractive high street

The focal point of Widnes town centre

Creating a clear hierarchy to the town centre, with the retail high street at the centre, itself enhanced as a place that people want to, and feel comfortable to be in. A high street to be proud of.

Whilst it is recognised that Widnes' existing retail offer includes the immediately adjacent retail park and shopping centre which bring their own benefits, it must be acknowledged that these, more often than not, impact the high street and in many cases, even detract from new investment in the town centre.

This strategy seeks to make clear a high street first approach. This is more than an aesthetic treatment. Fundamentally, it is about providing a healthier, more equitable and safe environment, with a strong sense of ownership around them.

Key regeneration framework interventions include...

- 1 Introduce new areas to stop and rest and enhance the existing provision so people feel more comfortable using them.
- 2 New areas of planting to be introduced around existing trees, providing pollinating species, wildlife habitats, sustainable drainage solutions and lighting.
- 3 Encourage more uses to 'spill out' into the high street itself.
- 4 Enhance lighting, creating an atmospheric high street and a place where an early evening food and beverage offer could start to emerge.
- 5 Provide a canvas for art schemes to thrive, celebrating Widnes.
- 6 Enhance Derby Square as a focal space to bookend the south of the high street. A space for events, activity, or just to sit and rest.
- 7 Enhance the connection to the market, so it is integrated into the northern end of the high street.
- 8 Signage to celebrate the high street, and to strengthen the high street first approach.



↑ The High Street, Altrincham. Formalised plating and seating areas to soften the high street and create moments of rest and pause. The high street here is the main shopping area, with surrounding supermarkets supplementary, but not dominant.

Why

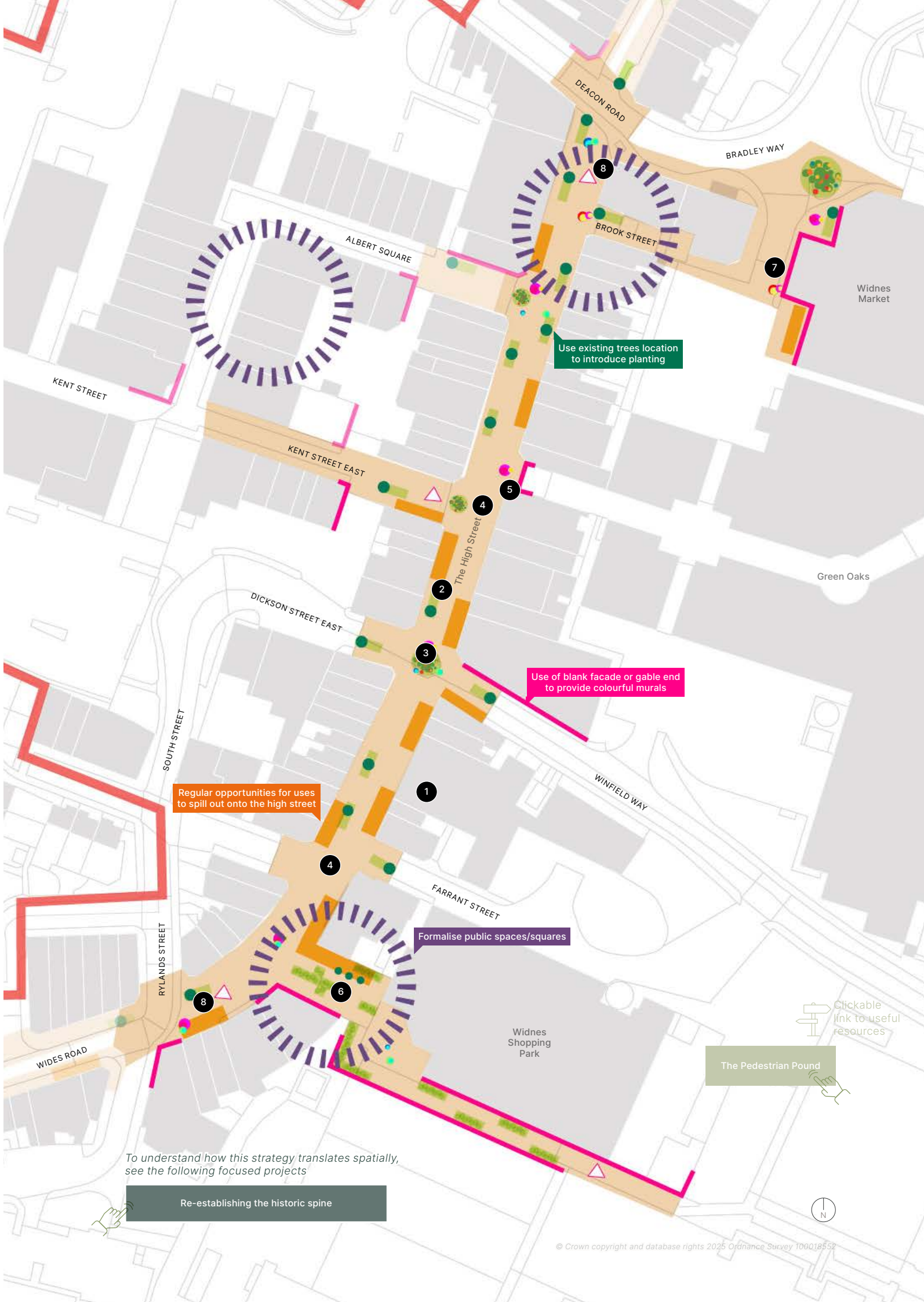
- To ensure the town centre is welcoming and safe for everyone by enhancing High Street and its connections.
- To provide healthier places to dwell and to host activity at all times of the day.

Outcomes

- An increased sense of pride in the town centre and by extension from Widnes.
- More people wanting to come and spend time in the town centre whether they are from Widnes or further afield.
- Creation of a place for everyone to feel welcome, and which feels central to Widnes.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to support and implement with relevant stakeholder support.
- Great potential for local community involvement and support.



A greener town centre

Town centres should be the exemplar of landscape design, setting the tone for the rest of the town.

This strategy enhances the landscape offer within the town centre, creating calmer, more attractive and pedestrian first environments for all.

Introducing more verdant planting within the town centre also provides the benefit of a natural solution to ground contamination which exists within the area.

The strategy also includes the integration of sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS) within the town centre, to reduce issues of flooding.

Key regeneration framework interventions include...

- ➔ Planting along the central spine, including the High Street (as set out in 'An attractive high street' strategy).
- ➔ Strategic landscape corridors, with moments of colourful perennial planting to create attractive and vibrant gateways into the town centre.
- ➔ Green links - public realm enhancements to soften the streetscape and incorporating SuDS.
- Street trees and soft planting introduced wherever possible on key connecting vehicular roads.
- Opportunity for new or enhanced public spaces for new activity.
- Enhanced existing green spaces, including new seating, lighting and perennial planting. Explore the introduction of play.

A detailed description of each intervention is contained on the following pages.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

Re-establishing the historic spine	Derby Square and New Street connection
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↑ Albion Street, Oldham. New areas of planting provide sustainable drainage and places to stop and rest - therefore changing the characteristic of the town centre. Oldham is now a people focussed centre, a place for everyone to thrive, with new opportunities emerging to reflect this.

Why

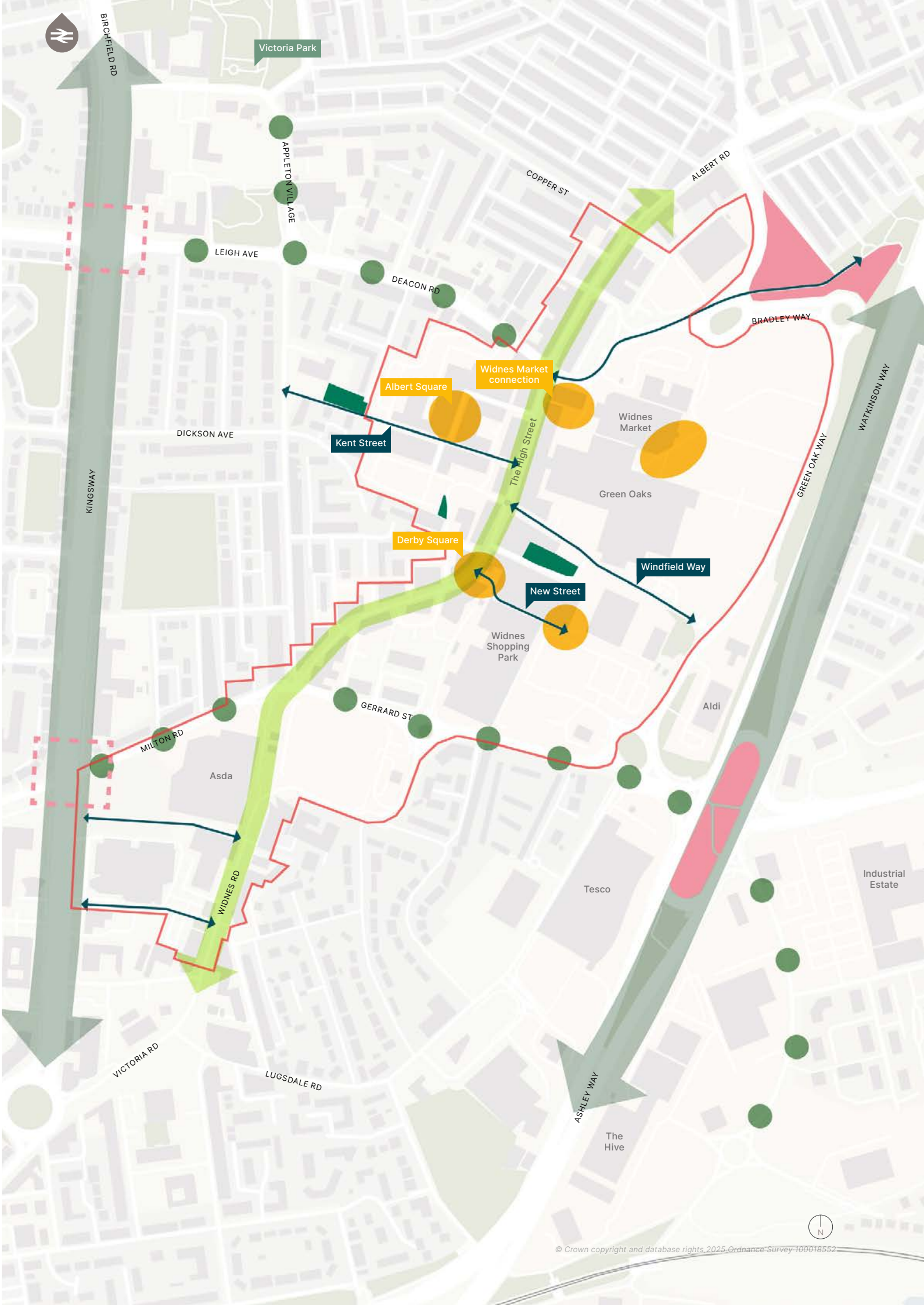
- To increase and improve access to nature and the mental and physical health improvements this brings.
- To improve town centre contributions to biodiversity and pollinating species.
- To help towards the challenges of flooding and soil contamination, providing nature based solutions.

Outcomes

- Enhanced overall well-being of residents and visitors to the town centre.
- Improvements in air quality and ground pollution.
- Improvements in the sense of love and ownership of the town centre, potentially fostering new community care activism.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to implement with support from relevant stakeholders.
- National trust or other community planting / growing / maintenance organisations.
- Opportunity for new local community involvement to support landscape maintenance.



A greener town centre

Strategic landscape corridors

These provide the opportunities for swathes of underutilised existing green spaces, which are subject to an existing management and maintenance routine, to provide a more deliberate contribution to biodiversity, wildlife and the attractiveness of the town centre.

The gateways to the town centre can be further celebrated with attractive planting mixes, which come back year on year, providing seasonal colour and a joyful arrival.

The intervention proposes the replacement of closely mown grass spaces along these routes with perennial wildflower or other areas left to re-wild, which is less maintenance intensive, provides biodiversity and sustainable drainage benefits as well as carbon capture and sequestration.

These changes clearly mark the gateway into Widnes Town Centre, as well as providing wildlife corridors between Victoria Park and the River Mersey.

These changes also create a more welcoming and attractive environment to move along, by all modes of travel, laying the ground work for further active travel enhancements along and across these routes in the future.

Green links - public realm enhancement to soften streetscape and incorporating SuDS

The green links would create an interconnected network of softer streets off the High Street, connecting together key areas of public realm and green spaces.

The intervention proposes the introduction of planting and street trees within the streetscene, including areas for SuDS.

These routes have the potential to become quieter and more attractive walking routes to and from the town centre, as well as functioning as wildlife routes between the strategic landscape corridors.

Routes with existing traffic and parking will be rebalanced to prioritise active travel, creating space for streetscape softening to occur, whilst reducing the impact of informal car parking in these areas.



↑ Grey-to-Green, Sheffield. Adapting major road corridors (in this case Sheffield's inner ring road) into wildlife corridors, attractive walking and cycling routes and incorporating sustainable drainage at its heart.



↑ Middlewood Locks, Salford. Verdant planting, sustainable urban drainage, on-street car parking and generous and direct pedestrian routes. The streets here allow for all movement types, but do so in a manner which treats the streets as green streets, calming and softening the environment and benefiting the wider public realm.

Street trees and soft planting introduced wherever possible on key connecting vehicular roads

It is acknowledged that not all streets have the space for planting to be introduced.

These streets are still expected to deliver a greener environment in the longer term, however, given the important role these vehicular corridors play currently and the limited space available along them, this intervention proposes smaller scale opportunities in the short term, which set the ground work for the future.

This intervention should refer and seek to work coherently with wider strategies for Halton Borough Council, i.e A Strategy for Halton's Trees and Woodlands.



↑ Manchester Science Park. Verdant perennial planting along a small frontage has created an attractive welcome mat, including features such as sculptural bug hotels.

Opportunity for new or enhanced public spaces

A good mixture of spaces already exist, or have the potential to be delivered within the town centre.

This intervention seeks to make the most of these opportunities, creating high quality moments throughout the town centre, to sit and rest, for retail uses to spill into, to play, to socialise or to host events.

These spaces must be enjoyable environments to spend time in, for all people of Widnes, throughout the day, into the evening and all year long.

New planting to soften the harsh street environment is key to achieving this, alongside welcoming street furniture and a strong events strategy.



↑ Bridgefield Street Pocket Park, Stockport. Soft planting, new activities, seating, art and lighting introduced to existing spaces within Stockport town centre which had little function and served little role within the town centre.

Enhanced existing green spaces

Every town centre needs to make the most of valuable green spaces which already exist within them.

This intervention seeks to make existing green spaces within the town centre work much harder, by introducing new seating, lighting and perennial planting - treating these spaces as pocket parks.

Giving these spaces a function, such as play, community growing or simply just a spot to enjoy the town centre, is critical to garnering a sense of ownership and care for them, in turn combating perceived issues of anti-social behaviour.

This strategy will need to be accompanied by a low intensity approach to landscape management, to ensure planting is maintainable and no net increase in maintenance is created.

It is strongly suggested that a partnership with a suitable body is created to maintain planting areas into the future, alongside exploring the potential for upskilling community groups to partner with.



Flip the movement hierarchy to rebalance movement across the town centre

The town centre prioritises vehicle movement through its infrastructure, creating challenges for others wishing to move around by others modes of transport.

This vehicle led environment does not align with the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code or the movement hierarchy set out in various transport plans and underpinned by the Highway Code.

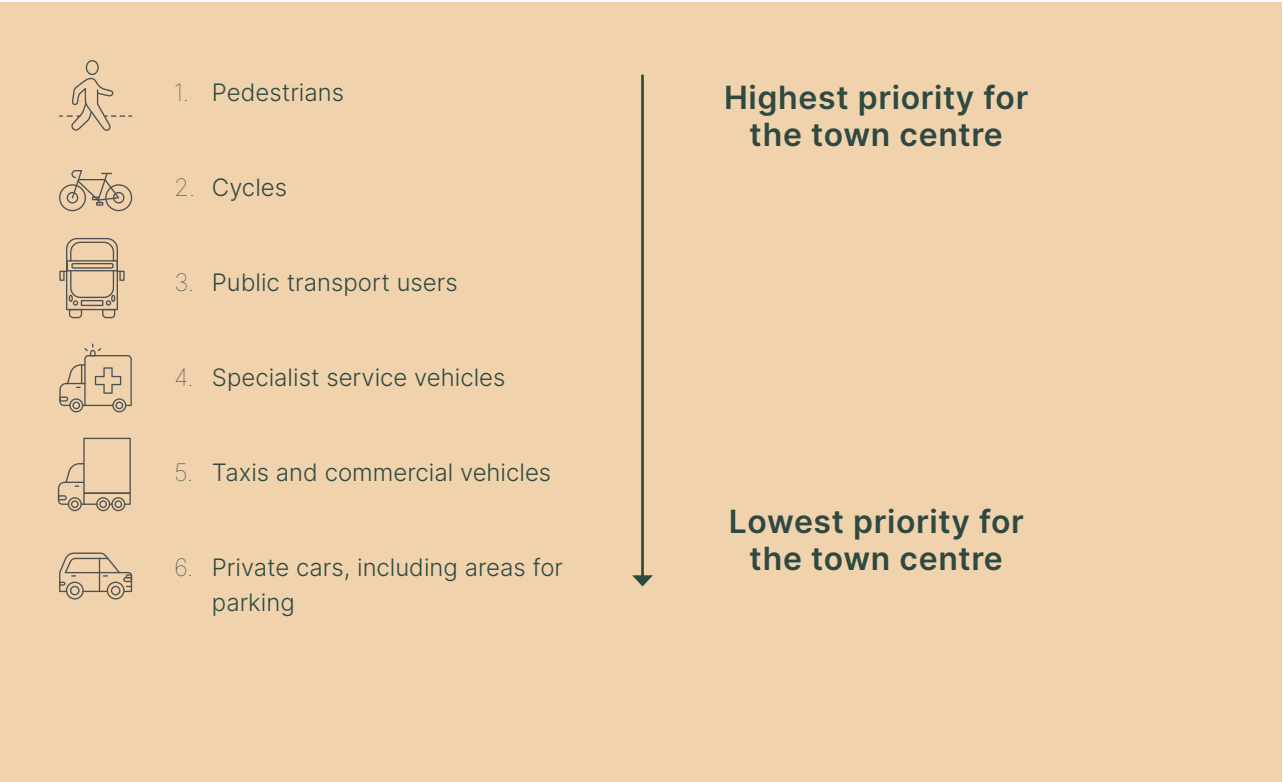
This strategy explores re-balancing this relationship by re-establishing pedestrians at the top of the movement hierarchy. This seeks to maximise the benefits of existing vehicle infrastructure, whilst redesigning the streets to improve other travel choices, increasing priority to the most vulnerable users.

These groups often face greater risks in vehicle-led environments, with limited space, safety and barriers to accessibility. Prioritisation can support improvements in safety, inclusivity and support those without vehicle access, whilst also maintaining and maximising benefits from strategic vehicular routes.

To deliver this, it is proposed that all development opportunities can clearly evidence that they have been designed following the following hierarchy:

This hierarchy helps to meet the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy set out in Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan.

In order to achieve this across the town centre, substantial change is required to 'repair' the form and function of the 'out of town' typologies which exist.



This strategy seeks to provide a better environment to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling as the default choice of travel for short-distance journeys to the town centre.

This framework intends to:

1. Enhance active travel routes to and from the town centre, integrating and incorporating Liverpool City Region *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan* (LCWIP) routes.
2. Strengthen the rail connection to the town centre, and ensure seamless integration with other transport modes.
3. Maximise sustainable travel opportunities through integrated transport options, reducing environmental impacts whilst maintaining a choice of travel.
4. Establish stronger public transport links between the town centre and key corridors to improve connectivity and accessibility.
5. Upgrade public transport infrastructure to provide efficient, and user-friendly facilities.
6. Streamline vehicular traffic whilst maintaining accessibility within the town centre.
7. Improve perceived public safety by incorporating lighting along key routes and public spaces to encourage usage.
8. Future-proof parking provision to balance convenience for drivers with efficient land use, and encourage uptake of sustainable modes.

"In well-designed places, people should not need to rely on the car for everyday journeys, including getting to workplaces, shops, schools and other facilities"

National Design Guide, 2021, paragraph 83.

Why

- To improve the choice of travel for all within and surrounding the town centre.
- To reduce reliance of vehicles.
- To support pedestrian friendly spaces, outdoor seating and greenery.

Outcomes

- Improved choice of travel options for all within and surrounding the town centre.
- Reduced reliance of vehicles to access town centre.
- A more pleasant environment is created within the town centre, increasing footfall and dwell time.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to implement with collaboration with Liverpool City Region and relevant stakeholders.

Simplify the vehicle network

Two thirds of the town centre is dedicated to vehicles through the road network, servicing areas or car parking.

This total suggests there is scope to reuse some of these areas for people or development, to strengthen the offer and environment within the town centre.

Key regeneration framework interventions include...

- ➔ Simplify the highway network to improve traffic flow and ease of navigation within the town centre whilst minimising car severance. A 20mph speed limit should be considered as a means to support people walking and cycling within town centre.
- 🚌 Improve key town centre bus stops, providing protected bus shelters at town centre gateways.
- ⦿ Simplify junctions to optimise land use and better serve traffic flow.
- 🟡 Creating spaces that prioritise people and accessibility whilst ensuring traffic flows smoothly in a calmer, more balanced environment.
- 🟤 Future-proof car parking to optimise land use efficiency whilst responding to town centre needs.

Other supporting strategic moves

- ➡ Existing pedestrianised streets to be maintained.
- ➡ Kingsway bus rapid transit route enhancements.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

Re-establishing the historic spine: Intervention 2 and 3

The northern gateway: intervention 1

Reducing severance

Why

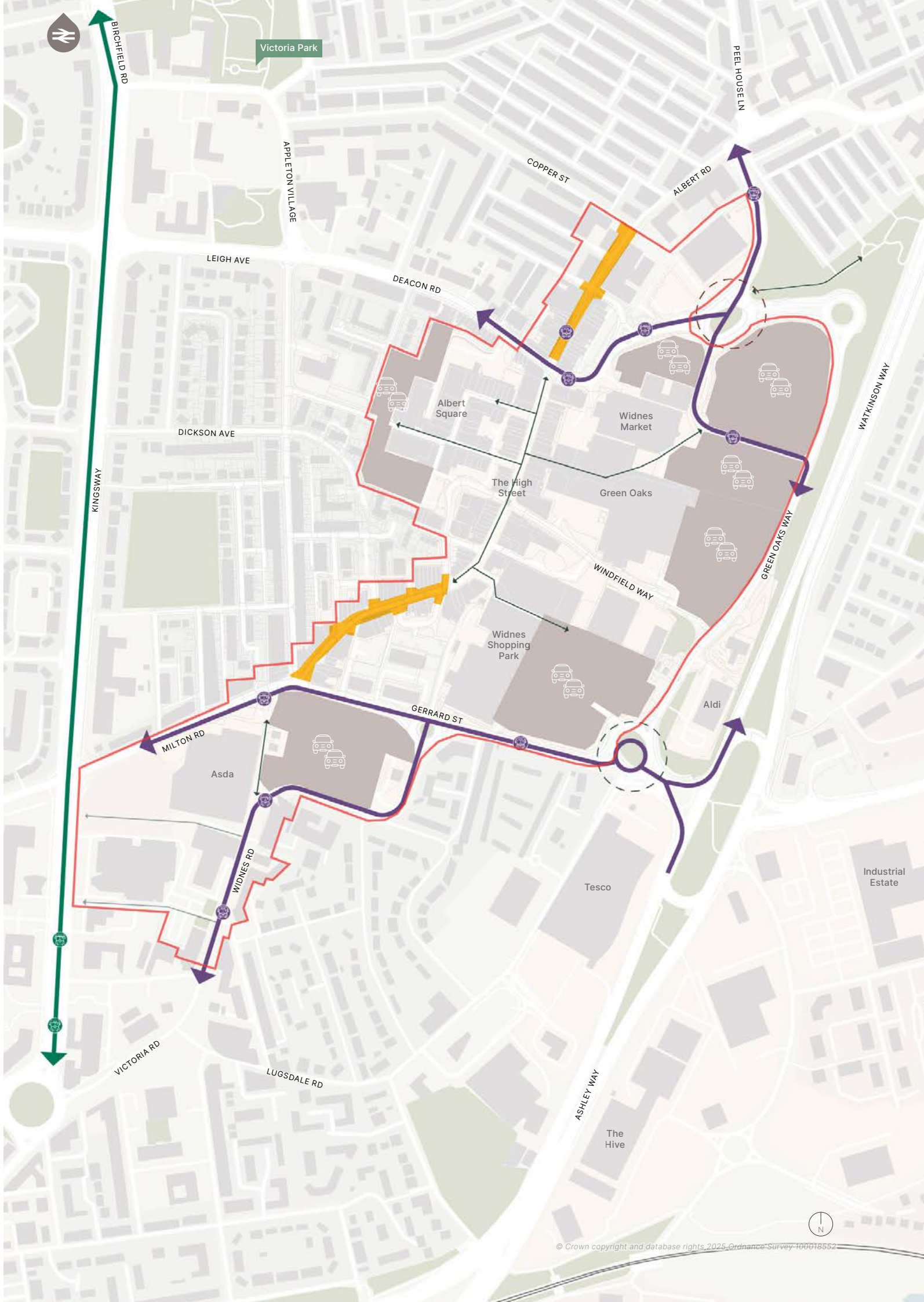
- To provide a more welcoming town centre for all.
- To provide a more efficient use of land.

Outcomes

- Improving vehicular flow within the town centre whilst making a safer environment for people to access, and navigate around.
- Unlock spaces for people-orientated design and development.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to implement with support from relevant stakeholders.



Simplify the vehicle network

Simplify the highway network to improve traffic flow and ease of navigation within the town centre, whilst minimising car severance

Routes have been identified for de-engineering to remove excess carriageway space, maintaining vehicle access whilst enhancing key connections for other priority modes of transport that are essential for the success of the town centre.

This includes the reduction in carriageway widths, providing space for improved active travel provision, wider footways and creation or upgrade of cycle routes to provide segregation. Landscape enhancement and SuDS will be introduced where space permits.

Improve key town centre bus stops, providing protected bus shelters at town centre gateways

To encourage bus patronage, a review and enhancement programme is required to ensure bus stops are well located, serviced frequently and provide necessary, well-lit and sheltered spaces which are welcoming for all, throughout the day and night.

Simplify junctions to optimise land and better serve traffic flow

Junctions across the town centre have been identified as inefficient, given the amount of land they occupy, and their limited support for active travel movements. This intervention proposes refinement to these junctions, to optimise traffic flows, address the transport hierarchy and potentially free land that will be better served to provide active travel provision, crossings, sustainable drainage or development purposes.

This intervention proposes refinement to these junctions to optimise traffic flows, address the sustainability hierarchy and potentially free up land that will be better served to provide active travel, crossing, sustainable drainage or development purposes.



↑ UCLan, Preston. Vehicle centric road infrastructure maintained but de-engineered to provide improved movement for a broader range of types, including space for landscape interventions and simplified road junctions to improve crossing facilities.



↑ Corn Exchange, Leeds. High quality bus shelters which are welcoming, with integrated green roofs for biodiversity enhancements.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

- Re-establishing the historic spine: Intervention 2 and 3
- The northern gateway: intervention 1
- Reducing severance

Creating spaces that prioritise people and accessibility while ensuring traffic flows smoothly in a calmer, more balanced environment.

Creating a high-quality environment for walking, wheeling and cycling by designing people-orientated streets which is reinforced through street design.

The intervention proposes a review of Widnes Road and Albert Road in line with the sustainable movement hierarchy, to ensure people focussed movement into the town centre is prioritised through the street layout. This could include widening footways, improving crossing provision, introducing more opportunities for soft landscape and seating and space for retail units to 'spill out' into the street.

Future-proof car parking to optimise land use efficiency and still respond to town centre needs

Car parking within the town centre is largely provided with individual uses, such as a retail park or leisure complex, rather than centralised for the whole town centre. In practice, some of these car parks do serve the whole town centre offer, such as Widnes Shopping Centre car park.

This situation results in large underutilised areas of car parking, and 'public' car parking use on private land which is out of the ownership and management control of Halton Borough Council, so there is no control over cost of parking (or lack of cost) and parking controls.

There is a broader opportunity to create a town centre wide parking strategy, to utilise surface car parking across the town centre more efficiently and for the benefit of all, for all town centre uses throughout the day and into the evening.

This centralised approach should also seek to provide a broader transport offer, including linking to public transport and active travel routes, electric vehicle charging, cycle hire and repair and changing facilities to enable all to access the town centre, by all means, for all uses.

These centralised car parking areas would encourage efficient use of land by adopting a multi-storey solution, freeing up other surfacing parking areas for development opportunities to strengthen the town centre offer.



↑ Stamford New Road in Altrincham town centre. Carriageway widths have been reduce, zebra crossing introduced whilst footpaths widened, to rebalance the road. A safer, lower speed environment is created for people, increasing dwell time and spend, whilst traffic flow is retained.



↑ Nordhavn car park, Copenhagen. This offers a centralised 'mobility hub' at the centre of a neighbourhood. The building provides car parking, as well as a supermarket, cycle parking, cycle hire, and a play facility for all ages on its rooftop, providing a multi-functional facility and highly efficient use of land.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

- North-South connectivity corridor
- Future proofing car park



Repair connections to and from the town centre

Successful town centres are accessible to all, at all times, in a manner which is easy and inclusive.

Watkinson Way, Mersey Gateway and Kingsway enable motorised vehicles through and to Widnes Town Centre, yet sever other modes, limiting sustainable transport opportunities and minimising the choice of travel.

Repairing these connections will enable accessible, inclusive movement of people to and through the town centre, whilst maintaining accessibility.

This strategy will focus on stitching the town centre back to the surrounding communities.

Key regeneration framework interventions include...

- ➔ Routes for enhanced active travel provision.
- ➔ Connecting destinations through crossing enhancements, meeting pedestrian desired lines.
- ➔ Potential for pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing of Widnes Gyratory.

Other supporting strategic moves...

- ➔ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) routes for enhancement.

Why

- To provide a more coherent town centre.
- To diminish the sense of sprawl.
- To improve crossings and enhance active travel journeys, making it easier, safer and more accessible to move, whilst maintaining traffic flow.

Outcomes

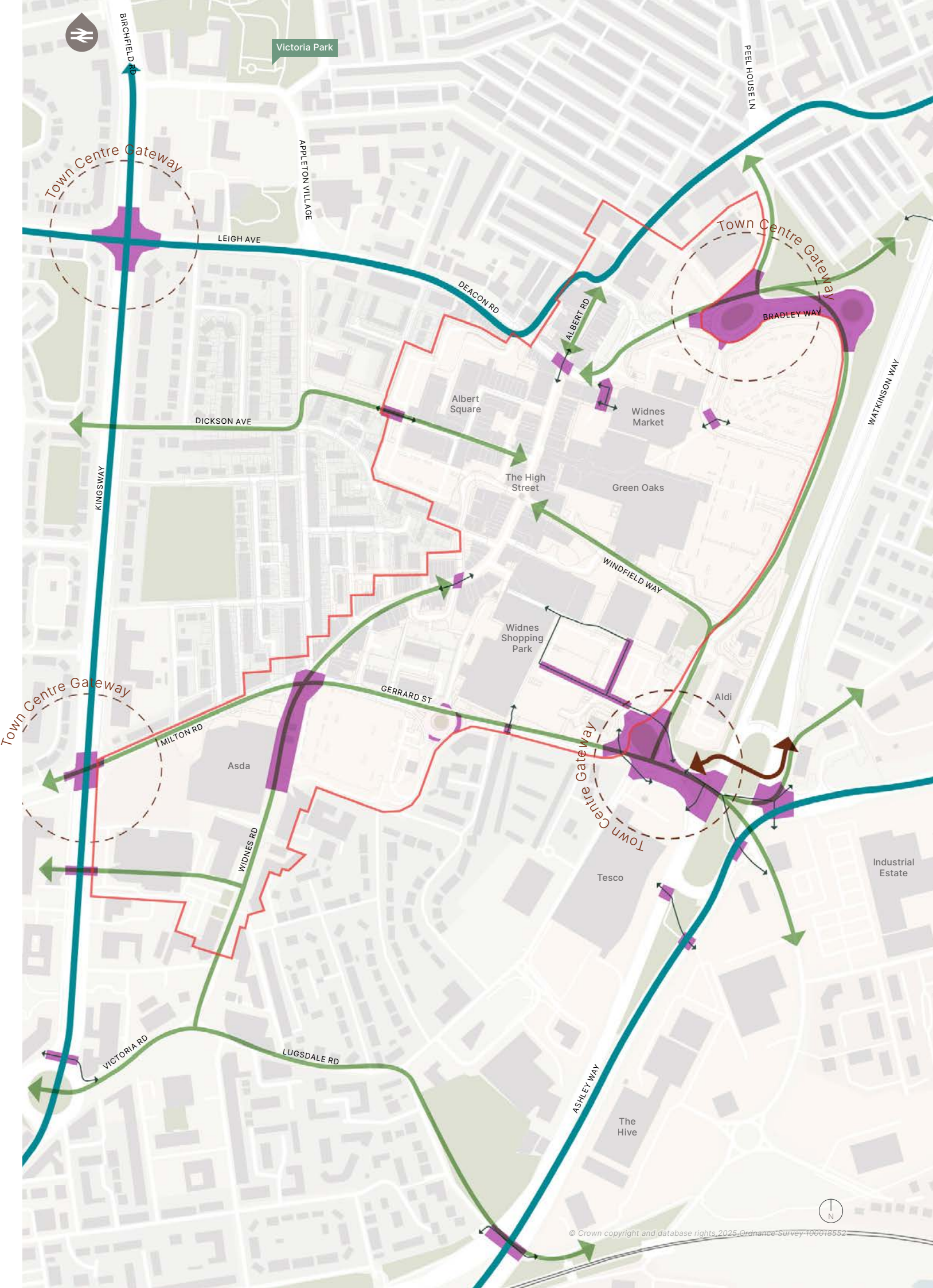
- Improved experience for all, attracting more people to the town centre.
- Improved connections to / from surrounding communities and the town centre, encouraging more walking, wheeling and cycling for shorter-distance journeys.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to implement with support from relevant stakeholders.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

Re-establishing the historic spine: Intervention 3	The northern gateway: intervention 1	Reducing severance
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Repair connections to and from the town centre

Routes for enhanced active travel provision

A network of routes have been identified to link the wider LCWIP routes through the town centre, to the High Street and beyond.

Each route provides the opportunity to deliver segregated cycle routes and generous footpath connections, places to stop and rest and improved landscape features, incorporating SuDS if possible.

A high quality environment with active travel provision not only reduces congestion and supports healthier lifestyles, but also boosts regeneration by improving access to key areas such as the High Street, attracting investment and creating more vibrant, connected and economically resilient communities.

By creating continuous, accessible active travel connections, walking and cycling becomes a more attractive option for short-distance journeys, reducing the need for vehicle travel. Over time, reduced vehicle dependence can reduce congestion, improve air quality and support healthier lifestyles. This impacts the streetscape of a town, and can lead to quieter, calmer and safer streets, with stronger connections between communities.



↑ Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. ↓ The Headrow, Leeds. Segregated cycle lanes have been introduced, alongside widening of the footpath, introduction of new street trees, seating and lighting features.



Connecting destinations through crossing enhancements, meeting pedestrian desire lines

Using crossings to prioritise the movement of people and bring together the various parts of Widnes town centre diminishes the perceived distances and prevents a sense of sprawl across the town centre.

This intervention seeks to provide inclusive infrastructure which focuses on the desired routes of movement between destinations to improve safety and equitable journeys. Crossings are encouraged to allow all people to take a safe and direct route, without needing to divert and make way for vehicle movement.

Crossings should encourage courtesy towards people, generally achieved through slow speed junctions and a clear understanding that vehicles are moving through a people focussed environment.

Potential for pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing of Widnes Gyratory

A pedestrian and cyclist crossing across Watkinson Way gyratory has been considered, to improve east-west movements and access to the town centre, linking to the leisure uses such as the Hive.

This would enable improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists without impacting the flow of vehicles and signalling along this strategic route.

This intervention also explores the opportunity for this bridge to become a landmark feature for the town, providing playful and soft landscape and architectural merit to announce the gateway to the town centre. This provides increased value to new residential communities developing to the east and improves connectivity.



↑ UCLan, Preston. Slow speed junctions and direct pedestrian crossing is achieved without the need for traffic signals and guard railing. Vehicles must move slowly along the main routes, increasing the level of courtesy drivers provide to pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic signals have been removed to avoid 'green means go' mentality.



↑ Sighthill, Glasgow. Bridge providing direct pedestrian and cycle access across the M8 motorway, utilising an organic architectural form and soft landscaping, creating an iconic structure and celebrated connection to a developing neighbourhood.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

Re-establishing the historic spine: Intervention 3	The northern gateway: intervention 1	Reducing severance
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Diverse uses for diverse users

Widnes Town Centre will be a social, enjoyable and thriving place to live, work, visit and invest.

Retail uses will continue to be prioritised along the high street, however, these uses will be supported by a range of additional uses to diversify the town.

It is critical that the town centre offers uses and activities for all ages and needs, providing spaces where people want to spend time and places that can be enjoyed with or without spending money.

The enhancements to the town centre seek to develop an early evening economy, providing restaurant and bar uses, as well as exploring the introduction of other community and health facilities to diversify the town centre - delivered through a mix of refurbishment and new mixed use development opportunities.

Why

- To diversify and complement the existing offer within the town centre and strengthen the focus on the High Street.

Outcomes

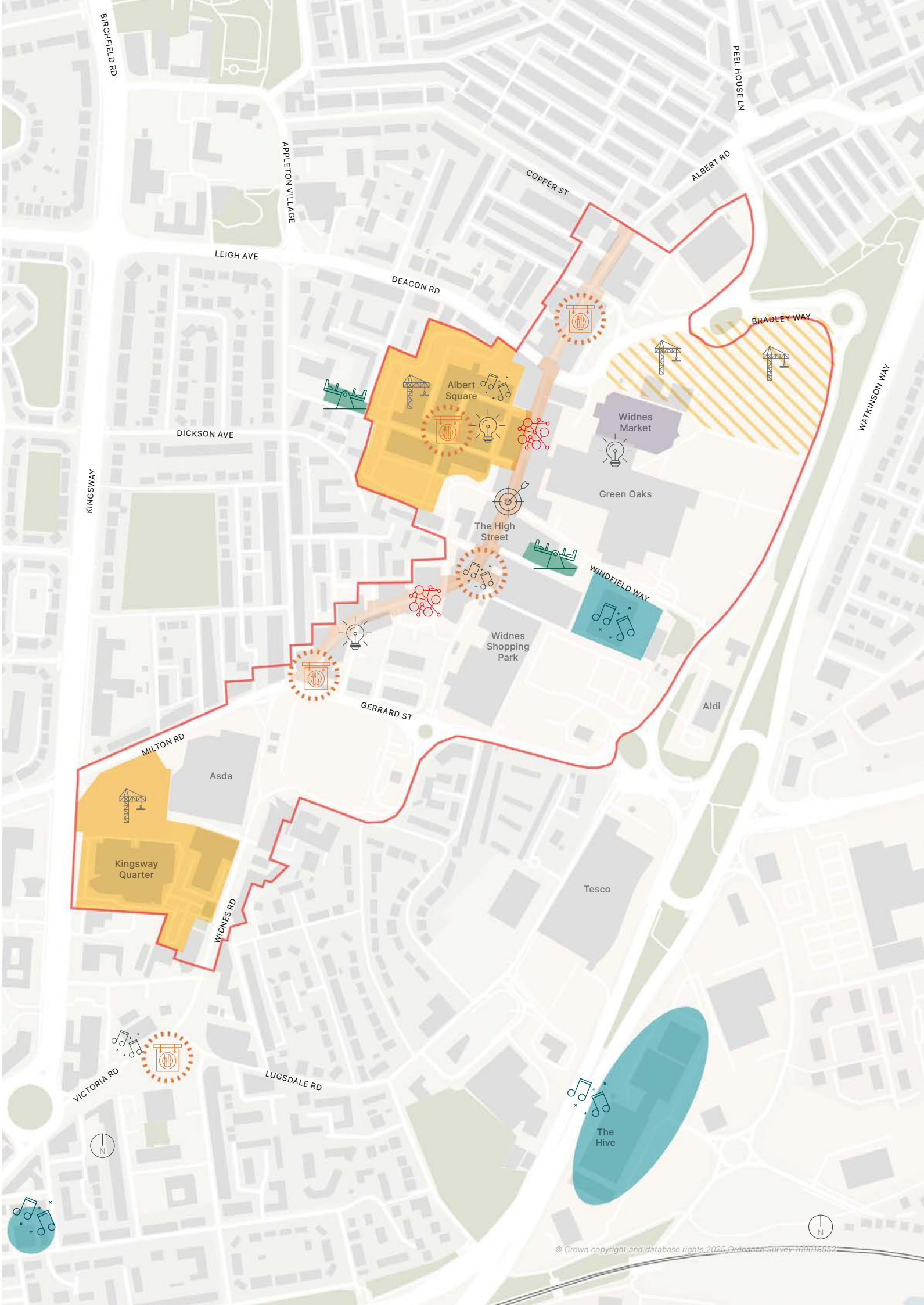
- Increased footfall and spend throughout the day.
- An inclusive destination for a diverse range of visitors.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to implement with support and partnership from relevant stakeholders.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

- Kingsway Quarter
- Albert Square
- Widnes Shopping Park



Diverse uses for diverse users

A clear High Street first approach

- Focussing retail uses on the high street, encouraging the businesses along it to grow and flourish, celebrating the independent offer and expanding beyond comparison retail uses to provide a broader range of uses to increase footfall.
- Ensuring any development of retail and leisure uses beyond the high street will not negatively impact the vitality of the high street, access to the high street or its prominence in the town.
- Ensuring the high street is a exemplar public space. Safe, welcoming, enjoyable and accessible to all, at all time.
- Promoting office development / re-use to increase footfall to support businesses on the High Street.

Creating community spaces, and an offer for play

- Play and other leisure activities to be introduced, providing spaces for community socialising, as well as family provision within the town centre, which is free creates additional footfall for local business to benefit from.

Expanding the arts and cultural offer

- Widnes has demand to expand the arts and culture scene within the town centre.
- New space for these uses, alongside flexible non-office based workspace and community uses should be provided within new mixed use developments, including Albert Square, as well as through refurbishment of vacant or underutilised spaces.
- A clear and enticing events strategy should enliven the spaces within the town centre, including an enhanced Derby Square.
- Opportunity could be given to facilitate space to showcase college student work or provide training facilities for the college.



↑ Elephant Park, Elephant and Castle, London. Pocket of urban green space incorporating formal and informal play as a way to gather community, create activation of public realm and nurture a sense of place.



↑ Art Gallery, Old Bank residency, Manchester ©Standard Practice. Temporary occupation of the Old Bank in Noma, Manchester by a collective of artists for creative workshops, temporary exhibitions and a hub of activities.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

Facilitating an early evening economy

- This could include expanding the market's food and beverage offer (rather than activities solely based around drinking) within the vicinity of the market, or building off the market's success to grow the offer elsewhere.
- This could be supported by a stronger cultural offer and community events will help people take more ownership of the town centre and public spaces, strengthened by more people living and working within the town centre.
- Albert Square and revitalised Albert Road, Derby Square are considered key opportunities to delivering this offer. Whilst Victoria Square to the south remains a longer term aspiration to grow this offer within the attractive historic setting.

Independent businesses and start-ups incubators

- Building on the success of independent uses within Widnes Market, expand that entrepreneurial offer within the town centre, by offering share workspace and financial incentives to start a new business or social enterprise.
- These could be delivered by re-purposing underutilised premises or mixing flexible workspace within new development.
- Whilst not an issue unique to Widnes, it is vital that the town centre favours local, independent retail uses, whilst maintaining a choice of retail through its existing named brands retailers and supermarkets.

Using Town centre to test ideas

- Accommodating vocational learning in partnership with the college and/or adult learning offering affordable service while providing real experience to student and trainees.
- This could be enabled using vacant units along the high street whilst working toward more permanent location within the town centre.
- Ensuring the town centre uses technology to provide WIFI and live information.



↑ Goose green, Altrincham town centre. Pedestrianised pocket of public realm welcome and allow for spill out, activate space whilst being located in a through route providing natural surveillance.

Town centre living

Increasing the number of people living within a town centre is a clear means in which to animate a place, beyond the typical daytime activity.

Residential-led development opportunities

There is a clear intention to introduce a range of types and tenures of new housing, at two key sites within the town centre; the Kingsway Quarter, and Albert Square. These sites will blend the town centre with the existing residential neighbourhoods, whilst providing a new type of town centre living to Widnes, attracting younger families and older residents in a sustainable setting.

These new homes will be denser than the surrounding homes, providing communal space and lower car parking ratios, due to the sustainable setting. There will be a clear focus on design quality, inspired by the character of Widnes, are provided of a flexible size for all people, and are provided with generous defensible space, to protect the amenity of residents.

New residential homes are expected to be a mix of smaller and larger apartments and urban family homes, delivered at a mix of tenures to provide homes for all people.

Longer term residential



Development opportunities

Two further potential development sites to the north-east of the town centre have been identified with the potential for residential development in the longer term. It is acknowledged that ground contamination in this area limits the viability of residential development at this moment, however the longer term nature of these sites and the gateway opportunity do not rule out an apartment offer with a non-residential ground floor within the timeframe of this framework document.



◀ Goldsmith Street, Norwich. ▲ The Gables, Crosby. High quality urban family homes.

Why

To introduce new activities within the town centre and increase town centre footfall.

To improve the choice of residential homes.

Outcomes

More activity throughout the evening and an increase in natural surveillance.

A range of new types and tenures of sustainable, urban residential homes provided.

Better definition of the town centre edges and celebrating key gateways.

Who could be involved?

HBC to set design standard and implement on HBC land.



Celebrate and enhance Widnes' heritage and identity

Widnes has a set of unique qualities and a history which can be celebrated through new clear signage, existing routes to follow and wayfinding features around the town centre.

Some of these features and routes should tell the story of Widnes, it's growth and expansion, its high points and low points. It should provide links through and beyond the town centre, down to the River Mersey, Spike Island and the Catalyst Museum, and up to Victoria Park.

Routes, signage and wayfinding features should be artistic, to tell Widnes' story, its features and its hidden gems in a compelling and universal manner, to attract new visitors, excite existing residents and workers and fundamentally create new vibrancy within the town centre.

Done well, these elements should contribute to a new Widnes brand, and grow a feeling of pride and investment in the town centre, expanding the sense of place and community and increasing a desire to help look out for the town.



↑ London Bridge. Bold feature wayfinding, providing an artistic feature, with historic information, seating and tradition signage.

To understand how this strategy translates spatially, see the following focused projects

- Widnes Market enhancement
- Derby Square and New Street connection

Key regeneration framework interventions include...

- ➔ A nature trail to the water from Victoria park, through the heart of the town centre - to interpret biodiversity enhancements integrated into the town centre and explain the challenges left by heavy industry and flood risk.
- ➔ A heritage trail - telling the story of Widnes' growth, its former heart around Victoria Square and former market.
- 👁 An art trail - celebrating Widnes' culture and artistic achievements to emphasis a sense of place and introduce boldness, colour and playfulness.
- ☀ A strong, year round event programme within key public spaces, providing a range of events for all who live, work or visit.
- 📍 Wayfinding markers at key moments to ensure Widnes Market and other key landmarks are easy found across the town centre.
- 🏠 Introduce a programme of local meanwhile uses* to animate vacant units along the High Street.
- 🤝 Facilitate long term creative partnership within the local community to introduce artwork, temporary installations, host events or activate the town centre in other means.

Why

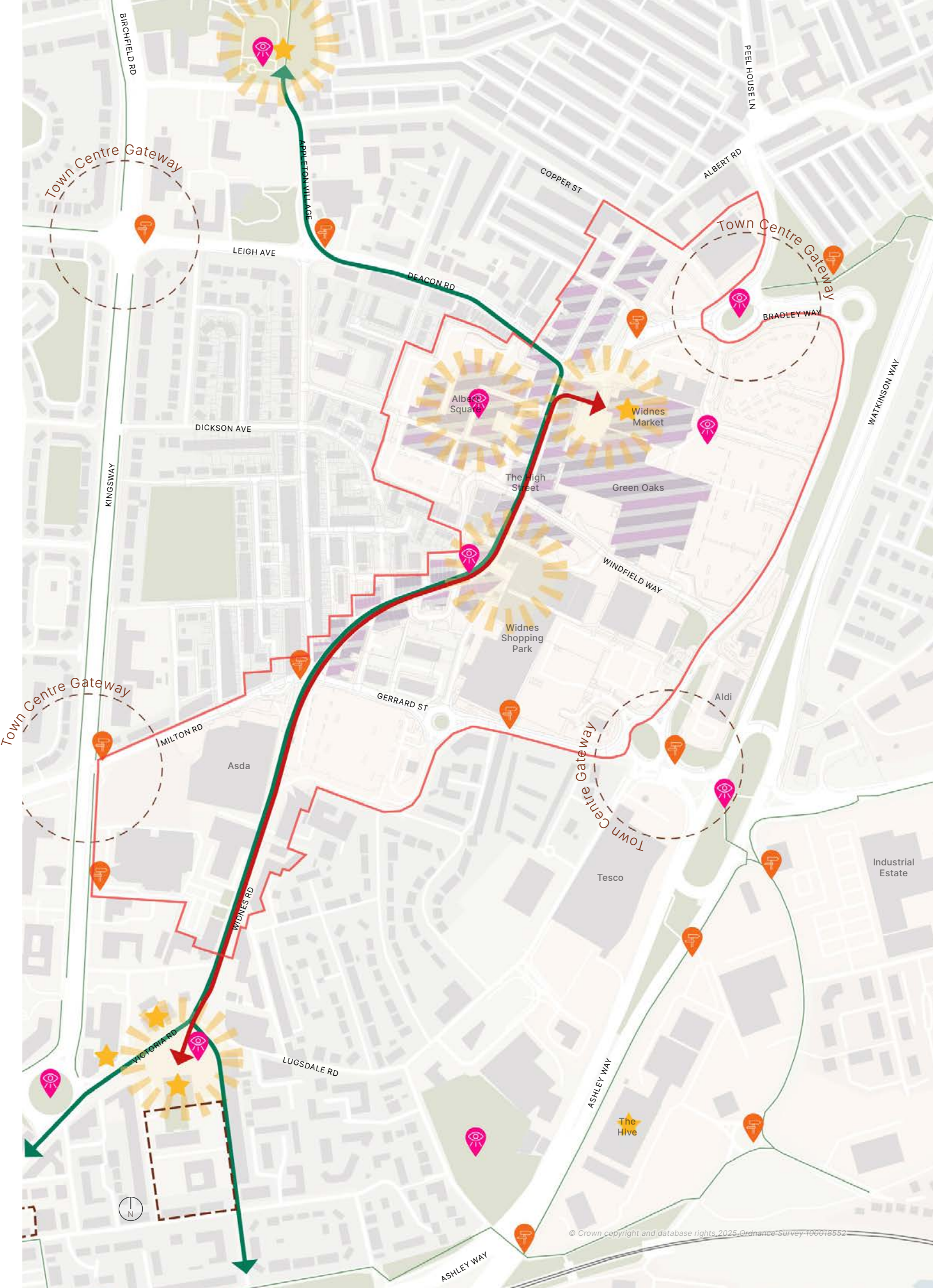
- To improve sense of pride and sense of place.
- To ensure Widnes is on the map as a place to visit.

Outcomes

- Better connections facilitated across the town centre.
- Increased footfall and enhanced cultural and community sector.

Who could be involved?

- HBC to implement with support from relevant stakeholders.
- Opportunity for partnership with local creative community groups and artists.



Celebrate and enhance Widnes' heritage and identity

The following interventions seek to grow a new Widnes brand, building on what makes the town special, and turning what was once described as "the dirtiest, ugliest and most depressing town in England" to the most colourful, cheerful and joyful one.

A nature trail to the water from Victoria Park, through the heart of the town centre

The route seeks to guide between the River Mersey and Victoria Park, providing moments along the way to understand biodiversity enhancements integrated into the town centre and explain the challenges left by heavy industry and flood risk.

It will seek to link up landscapes through signage wayfinding and landscape 'stepping stones', helping to reinforce "A green town centre" strategy. By doing so, it will aim to bring increased footfall and spend to the High Street, from those who may previously have just visited Victoria Park.

A heritage trail

This route seeks to tell the story of Widnes' growth, across the town centre, from the current market down to the former market around Victoria Square.

It also forms the opportunity to collate local history and involve community groups to engage and tell the story of Widnes, through wayfinding, creative signposting and the potential for permanent exhibition space within or across the town centre, whether internal or external.

A strong, year round event programme

Key public spaces, particularly Derby Square, Victoria Square and a new Albert Square should be subject to a year round event programme, providing a range of activities for all who live, work or visit.

Events could also become tools for public consultation for emerging development proposals within the town centre, or to enhance community participation and sense of ownership of the town.



↑ Grey-to-green totem in Sheffield, have been made in collaboration with artists taking inspiration of the area where they are located as well as mixing art, bold colour and wildlife habitats to create singular and striking landmark.



↑ The Strand, Liverpool. A seating bench provides a historic map of the former Dock's Umbrella route, providing the opportunity to explore the route and find the various artefacts that still remain.

An art trail

An artistic trail provides the opportunity to celebrate Widnes' culture and artistic achievements, both past and present as a means to emphasis a sense of place and introduce boldness, colour and playfulness to the town centre.

It can also strengthen Widnes' identity and be used as a means to facilitate an events programme, or activating particular key spaces across the town centre. Pieces could be temporary, encouraging further footfall to the town centre to walk new routes and see new pieces. This could also provide evening activity through lighting pieces.

Wayfinding markers at key moments

These are vital to ensure Widnes Market and other key landmarks across the town centre are easily found, and the town feels accessible to all.

This signage should be accessible to all, and could be playful, and incorporate other information such as walking time to encourage movement through the town centre for all.

Introduce a programme of local temporary uses

A programme of activating long term vacant units to provide community space, pop-up workspace or cultural uses should be explored.

This can operate alongside an event programme and is expected to showcase non-commercial occupiers including artists, voluntary or charitable groups.

Facilitate long term creative partnership within the local community

All of these interventions should seek to engage the broader Widnes communities, and should seek to create long lasting partnerships with creative locals and organisations to animate and co-create the future of Widnes town centre.



↑ Liverpool mountain at Royal Albert Dock, 10m-high sculpture of fluorescent painted stacked rock provide an abstract interpretation of Liverpool maritime past whilst becoming an iconic landmark and tourist attraction in its own right.



↑ Braille signage at Charter Square, Sheffield. Ensuring signage is accessible to all.



Getting the essentials right

Alongside the strategies, it is also vital that the town centre is maintained in a way that maximises its potential.

Maintenance and management are at the core of long lasting impact, ensuring interventions are just as impactful in years to come, as they are when they are new.

As an initial step towards an improved town centre, the overall management and maintenance strategy should be carefully reviewed, with the intention for it to pick up the interventions set out here.

As some responsibility for management and maintenance falls beyond HBC to private landowners and operators, this strategy should be seen as applicable to the whole town centre, and all should hold themselves and each other responsible to ensure the proper upkeep of the town centre, into the future.

Key regeneration framework interventions include →

Why

- The engagement exercise has identified a lack of care and sense of pride toward town centre, and High Street more specifically, which needs to be addressed.

Outcomes

- Improvement in public realm quality into the future.
- An improved sense of pride and love around the town centre, ensuring all treat it with care and respect.
- A sustainable maintenance strategy for the whole of the town centre.

Who could be involved?

- HBC and town centre land owners/ occupiers, working in partnership.

Creating a town centre that everyone is proud of

The essential outcome of any management and maintenance strategy is to create a town centre that everyone is proud of, and that feels loved.

The town centre should feel and look cared for. It should be clear that it is a place that is important to look after well, as the centre for all that live, work and visit Widnes.

The strategy should empower the community to have ownership over the town centre, and feel able to stand up against anything which seeks to harm or mistreat the look, feel or welcoming nature of the town centre.

Keeping Widnes tidy and clean

The town centre should be seen as an exemplar in maintenance and care. Respondents to the engagement exercise felt big improvements could be made in these areas, which contributes heavily to the feeling of pride and care for the town centre.

In order for the town centre to feel cared for, it needs to be well kept. Bins must be emptied regularly, loose litter picked, planting managed, surfaces swept and cleaned, graffiti cleared, light bulbs changed, road markings refreshed, signs cleaned and walls painted.

The town centre should be an exemplar in recycling, responding to the Zero Waste Liverpool City Region road map and target, providing good quality separate bins and frequent bin collections, especially related to events.

Front doors for people, back doors for bins

All existing and new development proposals should meet this simple rule. This ensures all main routes and spaces are animated and active, and any service yards and 'backs' are facing away from these routes, and shielded. This ensures the place feels tidy, ordered and people orientated, as well as helping to reduce conflict with service access.

Design for Community
Safety SPD

Zero Waste LCR

Merseyside WDA



A de-cluttered town centre

Across the town centre, efforts should be made to de-clutter key routes and spaces, especially the High Street. Pedestrian desire lines must be kept clear, with opportunities to dwell in designated areas away from the main movement routes.

Where suitable and appropriate, removal of excess signage, bollards, guard railing, and advertising should be carried out to create a calming, more cohesive and positive environment for all to enjoy.

The little details

Implementing little details, whether through design, maintenance and management, elevate a place from anywhere, to just here. It should feel Widnes.

It shows care and attention, value in this place and helps to instil a sense of ownership, to look after and value something, because it is collectively ours.

Cooperation

All should be encouraged to get involved in looking after, programming or animating the town centre where possible.

This could include running events, getting involved in planting and weeding days, litter picking or painting. Local businesses, community organisations, residents groups and schools all provide great opportunities to work together in partnership towards a goal of enhancing the town centre, in turn growing the sense of ownership, care and appreciation for the town centre.

More focussed and well targeted maintenance is proposed to ensure it is not cost prohibitive.

Creating a town centre where everyone feel safe and welcomed

All development should meet the design principles set out in Halton's Designing for Community Safety SPD.

Design principles and delivery should ensure perception of safety is improved as well as design to reduce antisocial behaviour through natural surveillance and regular maintenance.



↑ Altrincham Town Centre ©Adrian Lambert. De-cluttered routes with clear pedestrian sight and desire lines.



↑ Goose Green, Altrincham. Little details make a place feel cared for and valued.



↑ Sadler's Yard, Manchester. A community planting event to maintain the space and encourage new volunteers.

6

FOCUSED PROJECTS

This chapter identifies several focussed projects which have the opportunity to create catalytic changes within Widnes town centre.

This identified focused projects provide overall guidance on design principles for future development opportunities.

Opportunities for change

A series of focused projects have been identified as catalytic opportunities for change within Widnes town centre.

These projects deliver a range of development types, including public realm improvements, highway amendments and traditional development opportunities, however, they also serve several purposes to help in the delivery of framework strategies.

Most of the identified focussed projects have the potential to be approached incrementally, allowing to start as soon as possible and provide a platform to test changes before full scale redevelopment occurs.

Focussed projects have been considered following the priority list below, based on the nature of projects and opportunity for catalytic change. This ordering is explored further in the next chapter:

1. Kingsway Quarter
2. Albert Square
3. Re-establishing the historic spine
 - Enhancing the High Street
 - Rebalance Widnes Road and Albert Road
 - Reconnecting Widnes Road
4. Widnes Market
 - Market connection to High Street
 - Potential Outside Market relocation - couple locations
 - Potential gateway site
5. Derby Square and New Street connection
6. Widnes Shopping Park Phase 2
7. The northern gateway
 - Bradley Way and Green Oaks roundabout
 - Future development areas
8. North-south connectivity corridor
9. Reducing severance
10. Future proofing car parking

Key

Town centre boundary

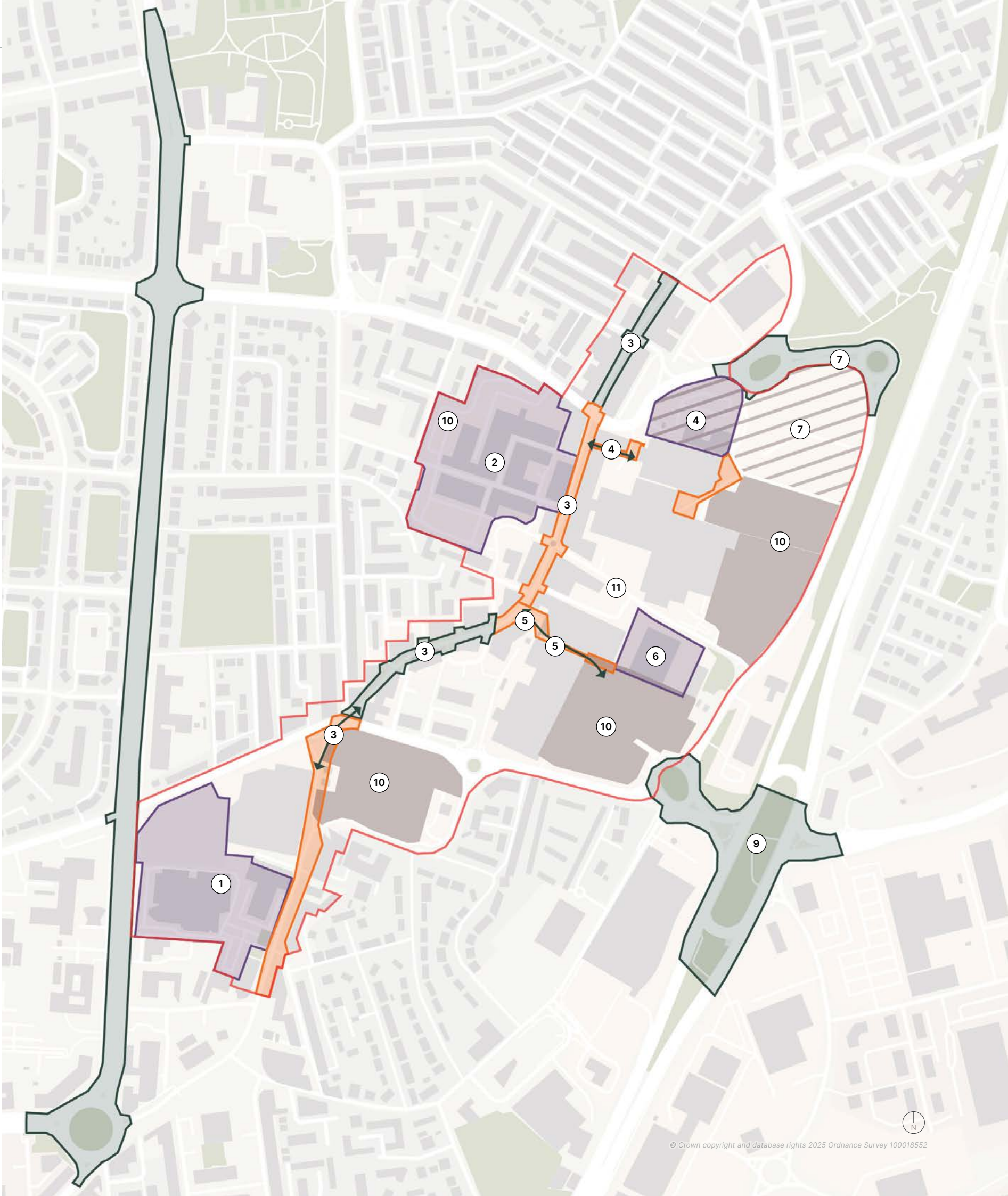
Highways focussed Projects

Public realm focussed projects

Development opportunity sites focussed projects

Rationalised surface car parking to explore development opportunities

Surface car parking



6.1 Kingsway Quarter

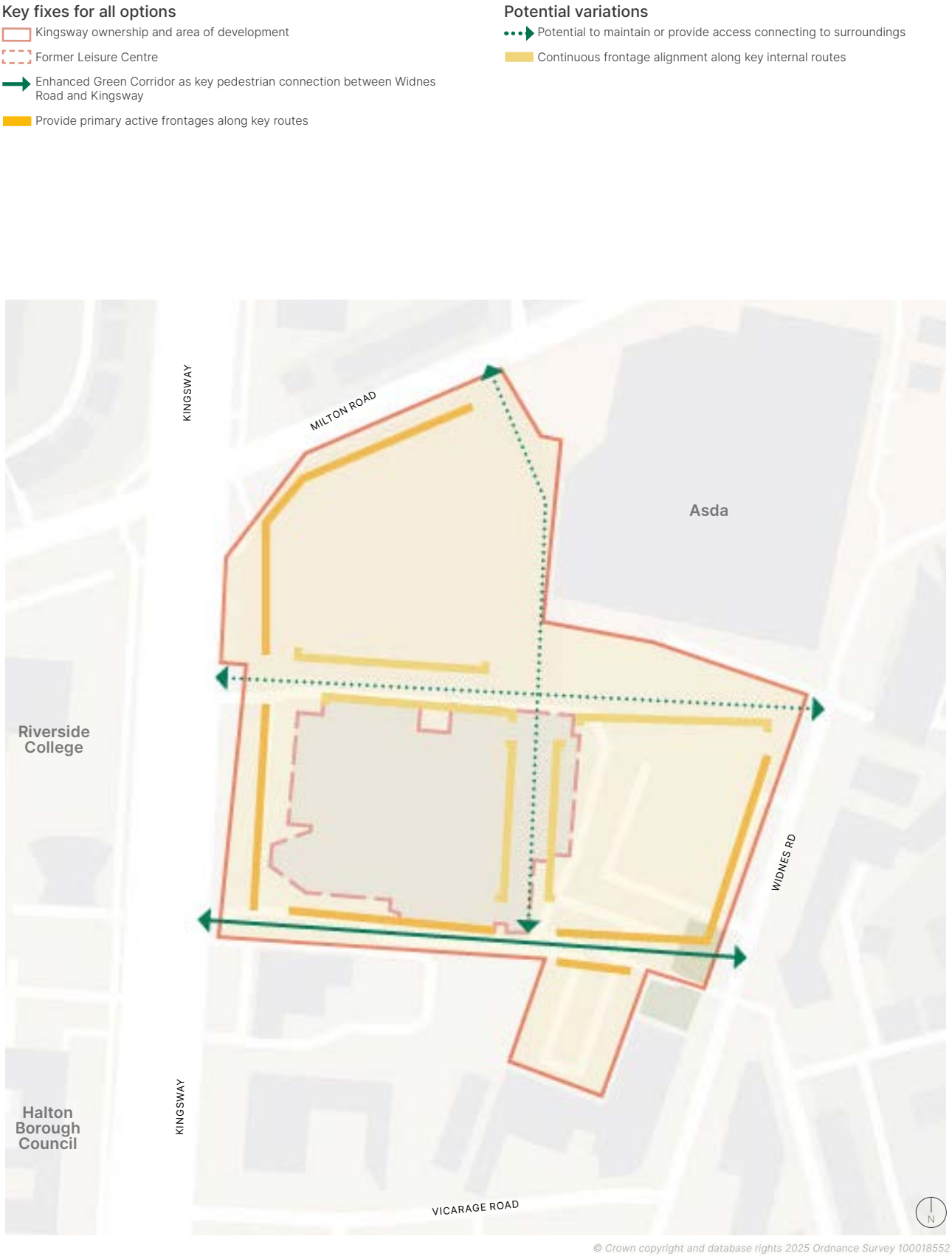
Kingsway Quarter presents a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to regenerating and revitalising Widnes Town Centre through delivering a high quality residential-led development that makes a positive first impression on a prominent site at the southern threshold into the town centre.

The vision for the site is that it can introduce a contemporary residential offer, promote more sustainable urban living and increase footfall and activity into the core of the town centre. The size and location of the site presents an opportunity to meet a need for more older people accommodation and family housing. Bringing these different housing requirements together into a single new neighbourhood of around 120 homes can create a place which exceeds minimum requirements and through built environment and shared public space design, recognise the growing importance of promoting intergenerational connections.

The design of a place can help relieve isolation, bring people together in community activities to exchange life skills and experiences and improve general health and wellbeing, as evidenced by research by bodies including Care England and Intergenerational England.

As one of the first town centre priority development sites coming forward, it can provide a statement of ambition and act as and act as catalyst for further investment and change. Alongside the opening of the new Halton Leisure Centre on Moor Lane, it can support the renewal and attractiveness of the wider Kingsway Quarter and Southern Widnes area.

The Kingsway Quarter is a prominent site. It provides an important pedestrian route between Riverside College and the town centre through the site. The redevelopment of the site presents an opportunity to enhanced this route and introduce new public greenspaces into the town centre.



6.2 Albert Square

Albert Square has potential to be a catalytic redevelopment scheme incorporating new town centre living, an anchor workspace, and a revitalised active ground floor environment.

This could be delivered incrementally to address some short-term requirements for improvement.

Short-term improvements

Use of art, feature lighting and temporary furniture (i.e. planters and seating) to bring life to Albert Square and test interventions leading to future change. All elements should be able to be re-purposed in the future scheme or elsewhere in the town centre.

- Event programming and meanwhile use of vacant units to accompany 'light touch' interventions to create a draw.

Design principles for development opportunity

Land use

- It is expected that redevelopment will be residential-led, providing diversity in residential tenure and typologies with supporting uses at ground floor to animate the retained Kent Street, and a new Albert Square.
- A new workspace should be explored as an anchor tenant, accommodating ~250 desks.
- A variety of uses is expected to animate the streets and new Albert Square, exploring cultural, community, leisure and retail uses as well as food and beverage to provide a focal point to the evening economy .
- New residential development should provide a mix of townhouses, maisonettes and apartments, all providing the opportunity of homes for all ages within the town centre.
- Existing anchors retail tenants could be retained or removed should lease allow.

Landscape and public realm

- Redevelopment is focussed around the creation of a new central space, Albert Square.
- Any new central open space and street network is expected to provide seating, lighting, active uses and planting to enhance biodiversity, incorporating SuDS.
- Albert Square is anticipated to accommodate events and could provide a complementary market offer such as the relocation of the outdoor market (if desired) or independent food and beverage uses to boost the evening economy.

Access and movement

- Service access to the back of the existing uses along the High Street and Deacon Road will be maintained, with preferred option to servicing from the north.
- The key direct link between Albert Square and Widnes Market is expected to be maintained and connect to a new Albert Square.
- Kent Street is expected to be retained as a prioritised pedestrianised link to the west.
- In the case of anchor retail tenant retention, servicing yard access to these uses will be retained.
- Existing car parking to the west of Albert Square could be retained or removed, subject to the desire for full scale redevelopment which would inevitably challenge car parking in this location.

Layout and scale

- New development is anticipated to be within 3-4 storeys in height and expected to provide a positive relationship to existing buildings, with active frontages at ground floor on key streets and spaces.
- Retrofit of existing buildings should be explored, alongside the potential for vertical extensions to introduce residential uses above the existing floorplates.
- Any new development opportunity is anticipated to provide the continuation of frontages to the High Street, Deacon Road, Kent Street and Carey Street.



Key fixes for all options

- Albert Square ownership and area of development
- Provide central public square at the heart of Albert Square
- Non-residential uses expected to animate central Albert Square
- Maintain connection from Albert Square and Widnes Market
- Maintain Kent St as key pedestrian connection to High Street
- Maintain active frontage along Kent St

Potential variations

- Existing building with possibility to be removed or retrofitted
- Sport Direct assumed to remain due to freehold ownership
- Potential to maintain or provide access connecting to surrounding neighbourhoods back to the High Street
- Continuous frontage alignment



Albert Square Retrofit led

1.

Most existing buildings have the opportunity to be retrofitted for workspace, community, culture, leisure or food and beverage uses, with the further potential for vertical extensions to bring residential uses above.
2.

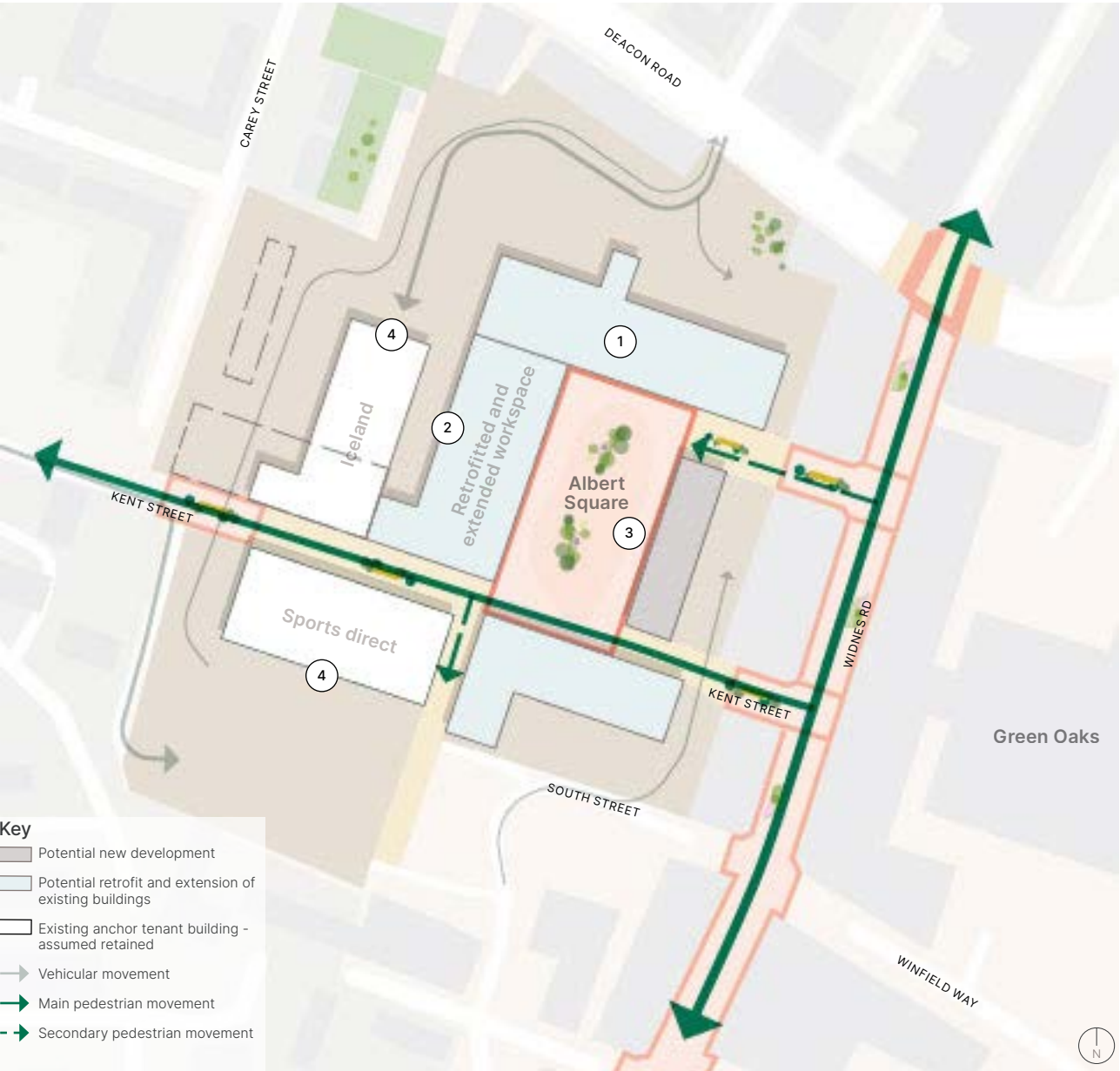
A significant new commercial tenant could be introduced to anchor uses.
3.

The existing eastern block could be removed, providing a new centralised space for events, market activity and spill out, fronted to the east by new independent food and beverage uses.
4.

This option maintains the anchor tenants of Sports Direct and Iceland, as well as the existing surface car parking and service yard.

12,000 sqm Gross External Area (GEA)

- 5,000sqm for new commercial anchor tenant
- 40 new homes (apartments)



Albert Square Full redevelopment

1.

Residential-led redevelopment surrounding a new Albert Square, providing a mix of apartments, townhouses and maisonettes, with active ground floors of both residential and non-residential uses.
2.

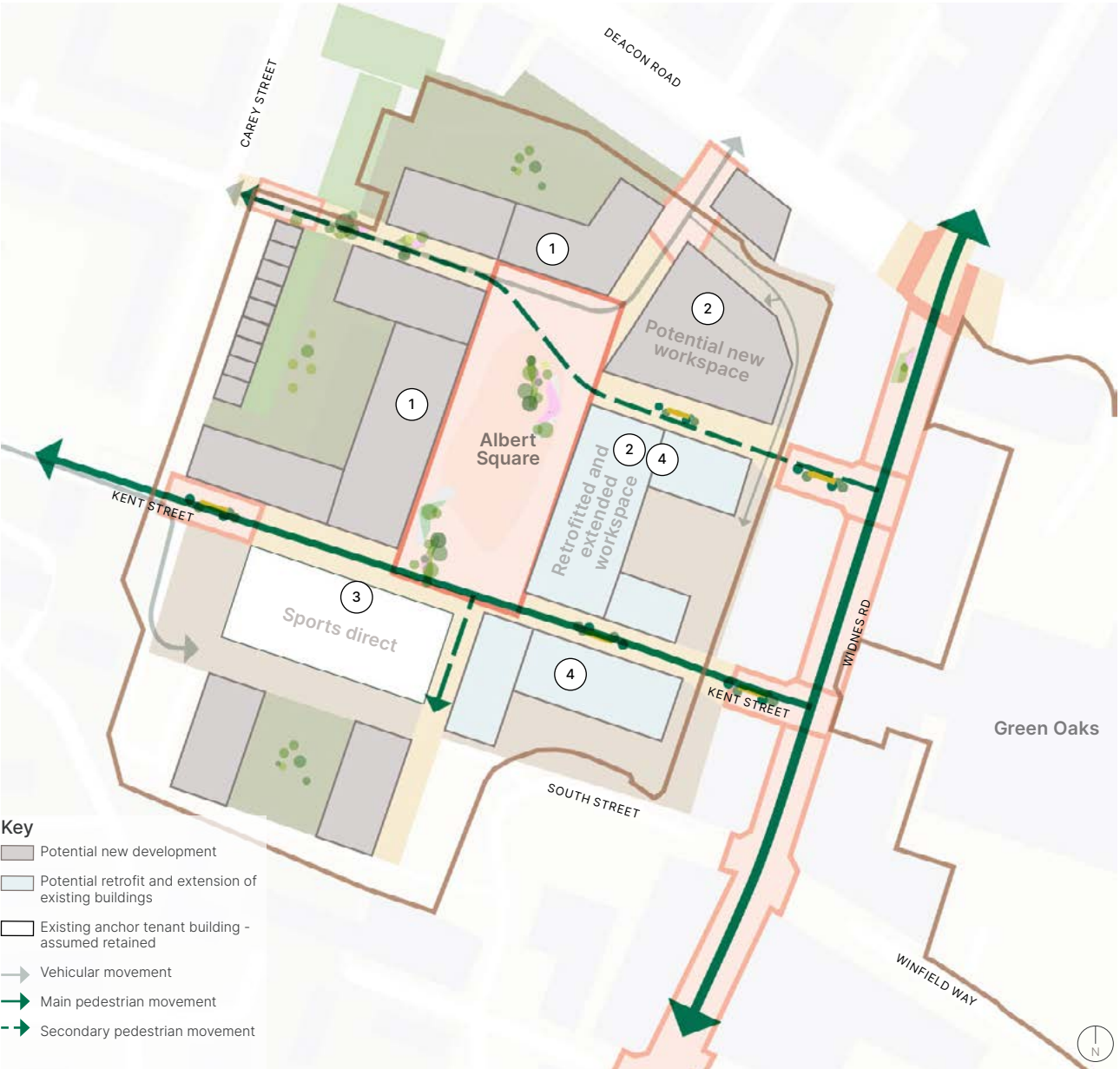
Opportunity for a new commercial tenant to anchor the development at two potential locations, animating Albert Square with active ground floor uses
3.

Sports Direct can also be maintained as an anchor use if required.
4.

Existing blocks to the east could be retrofitted for workspace, community, culture, leisure or food and beverage uses, with the further potential for vertical extensions to bring residential or workspace uses above.

20,000-30,000 sqm Gross External Area (GEA)

- 5,000sqm for new commercial anchor tenant.
- 130 new homes, provided as a mix of apartments, townhouses and maisonettes.



6.3

Re-establishing the historic spine

Enhancing the High Street and expanding the route

The retail High Street and the historic spine along Widnes Road and Albert Road is a phased public realm project central to the enhancement of the town centre.

This could be delivered incrementally to address some short-term requirements for improvement.

Short-term improvements

- Use of art, bold and colour signage, feature lighting and temporary furniture (i.e. planters and seating) to announce change, test interventions and engage locals on what they would like to see. Any temporary elements should be able to be re-purposed across the town centre.

Intervention 1 - High street enhancements

- Introduce new areas to stop and rest and enhancing the existing provision so people feel more comfortable using them.
- New areas of planting to be introduced around existing trees, providing pollinating species, wildlife habitats, sustainable drainage solutions and lighting.
- Encourage more uses to 'spill out' into designated areas onto the High Street itself.
- Enhance lighting, creating an atmospheric High Street and a place where early evening food and beverage offer could start to emerge.
- Provide a canvas for art schemes to thrive, celebrating Widnes.
- Signage to celebrate the High Street, and to strengthen the High Street first approach.
- Integrate the nature and heritage trail into the High Street, celebrated through paving, street furniture and signage.

Intervention 2 - Rebalancing Widnes Road and Albert Road to provide people friendly streetscenes

The introduction of pedestrian prioritisation measures and enhanced active travel provision, to reinforce the transport hierarchy.

- Improving pedestrian experience through design may include flushed carriageways, widening footways, improving junctions, restricting vehicular access, introducing planting and enhancing sustainable transport connections.
- Improving crossing points across Albert Road and Widnes Road to adhere to pedestrian desire lines will facilitate footfall and movement.
- The introduction of any public realm features will be used to help guide footfall and connect the pedestrianised realm with Widnes Road and Albert Road. This will follow suit of the High Street design principles to provide a uniform approach.
- Where dwell space is warranted, public realm features will encourage the use of these spaces and include planting and lighting where possible.
- Liaison with businesses, bus operators and taxi companies is required with any changes to Albert Road and Widnes Road.
- It is acknowledged that consultations are currently ongoing to identify improvements in this area.

Intervention 3 - Reconnecting Widnes Road

Improvement to the Widnes Road / Gerrard Street / Milton Road junction and reconnecting the historic spine south to Victoria Square.

- By upgrading pedestrian crossings at Albert Road and Widnes Road and including features such as wide footways, dropped kerbs and prioritised signalling, navigation can be supported and guide footfall. This makes the area safer for people to walk, reducing conflict with other modes, and creating a more inviting environment. Subsequently, junction enhancements improve connectivity across the spine, making it easier for pedestrian movement and prioritising spaces for people.



- Aligning crossing points with pedestrian desire lines ensures that people follow the most natural routes, make crossings convenient and therefore frequently used. This improves safety, pedestrian priority, and encourages foot traffic, as people are more likely to use a crossing that matches their journey, enhancing walkability.
- Milton Road bisects the connection of Asda to the High Street, and rebalancing this space with design features can help repair these connections and ensure this route acts as a key Gateway towards the spine of the High Street.
- Increasing the width and clear pedestrian desire lines along the severed Widnes Road, by removing existing clutter and pushing circa one car parking bay from each route away from the building line to meet the sustainable movement hierarchy.
- New areas of planting to be introduced, providing pollinating species, wildlife habitats, sustainable drainage solutions and lighting.
- Provide a canvas for art schemes to thrive, celebrating Widnes.
- Signage to direct people towards the High Street and Victoria Square.
- Introduce new areas to stop and rest.
- Integrate the nature and heritage trail into the enhanced route, celebrated through paving, street furniture and signage.





MARKET

150 YEARS OF
WIDNES
MARKET

NATURE TRAIL

HERITAGE TRAIL

Nei

NB
Neil & Barker



HIGHSTREET

HERITAGE TRAIL

6.4 Widnes Market enhancement

Widnes market is an iconic asset celebrating its 150 year presence within the town.

Whilst its location does not bring challenges, opportunities exist to improve its prominence within the town centre, anchoring the northern end of the High Street.

Short-term improvements

Whilst more significant improvements are considered, there are improvements that can be made in the short term that improve the setting of and connection to Widnes Market.

- Improvements to and from the Market and the High Street, including bolder signage, lighting enhancement and providing pedestrian priority crossing across the service yard.
- Integration of active uses 'spilling from' the market from its western entrance, and onto the High Street.
- Use of art and temporary furniture (i.e. planters and seating) to announce the 'space' at the top of the High Street where the Market connection exists. These can explore change, test interventions and engage locals on what they would like to see. Any temporary elements should be able to be re-purposed across the town centre.

Design principles for development opportunity

Intervention 1: Creation of a more generous Market connection to the High Street

- Announce the Market at the northern end of the High Street through the creation of a new space to enhance the public realm.
- This space should celebrate the connection to the market, through new bold signage, lighting and planting, creating spaces to sit and rest and for events to utilise.
- The space is anticipated to connect to the market through a stronger east / west link, achieved through widening the existing route by partial removal of disuse units.

- The connection to the market is also a key opportunity along the Widnes' heritage trail, to explore the new market location and synergy with the market's former home around Victoria Square.
- It should also explore the potential to use art, light and colour to celebrate the vibrancy and independent nature of the market offer.
- Frontage enhancement to the west of the market building should also be considered, to welcome people along the route and announce the market building. Retail spill out should be explored in this location also to improve natural surveillance.
- The connection must run to the western entrance to the Market, providing a pedestrian priority crossing across the vehicle route into the service yard.
- Enhancements undertaken to the west of the Market should also be explored to the eastern entrances, with the same design language to address those arriving by from the east via active means, or by bus or car.

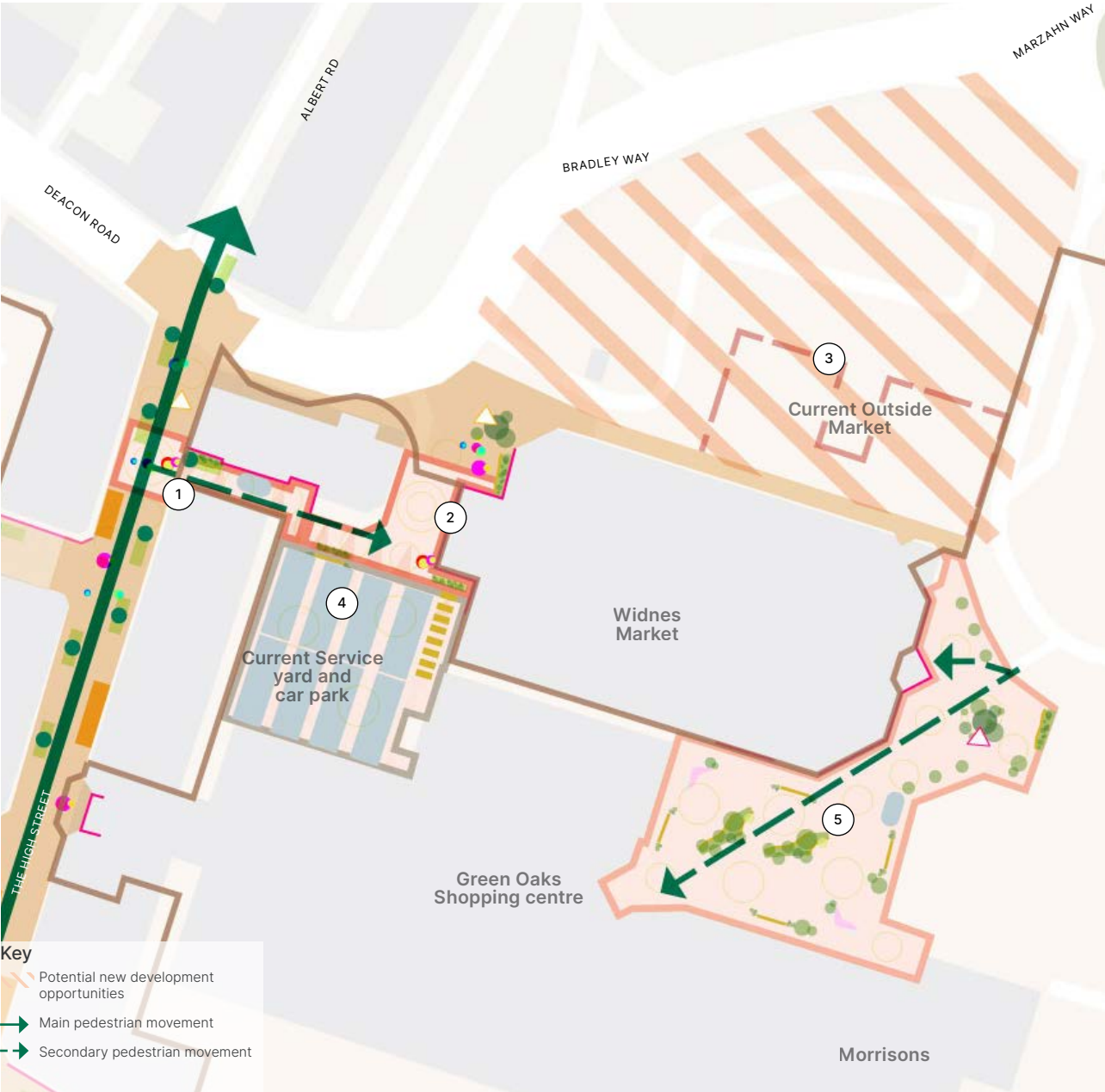
Intervention 2: Potential outside market relocation

- The outside market is less connected from the High Street, lying to the north-east of the Market building.
- It sits within a small portion of a much larger site, with the remaining land used for general servicing and car parking.
- The opportunity exists to explore other locations for the outside market, including a new space at Albert Square, or the Green Oaks service yard. This would enable the large site to the north of the Market to be explored for redevelopment - as a gateway site to the town centre.
- Any redevelopment would retain the servicing access to the Market itself.
- The underutilised Green Oaks service yard could provide a potential location for a future outside market, delivered as part of an upgrade of the space. See potential outside market relocation visual on pages 104-105.
- Minimal servicing would need to be maintained, through efficient use of space, alongside public realm enhancements to the space itself.



Design principles

1. Enhanced public realm strengthening and celebrating market connection.
2. Pedestrian priority and widen crossing on western market entrance.
3. Potential relocation of outdoor market unlock land for potential development opportunities.
4. Opportunity to explore outdoor market relocation within northern green oaks service yard and parking.
5. Public realm on eastern side of Widnes market use similar design language and public realm enhancement as western link to the High Street.





MARKET

ALBERT
SQUARE

150 YEARS OF
WIDNES
MARKET

WIDNES
MARKET



Potential outside market relocation

6.5 Derby Square and New Street connection

Derby Square lies at the southern gateway to the High Street and also celebrates the connection east to Widnes Shopping Park.

Despite being a key node within the town centre, the square and New Street both lack animation and do little to celebrate the arrival at the heart of Widnes.

Short-term improvements

Whilst more significant improvements are considered, there are improvements that can be made in the short term that improve the square and connection east.

- Improvements to and from the Widnes Shopping Park and the High Street, including bolder signage, lighting enhancement and announcing the High Street within the corner of the car park of Widnes Shopping Park.
- Introducing active uses to animate Derby Square, such as a coffee cart with seating.
- Use of art, temporary furniture (i.e. planters and seating) and events to activate Derby Square. These can explore change, test interventions and engage locals on what they would like to see. Any temporary elements should be able to be re-purposed across the town centre.

Design principles for development opportunity

Land use

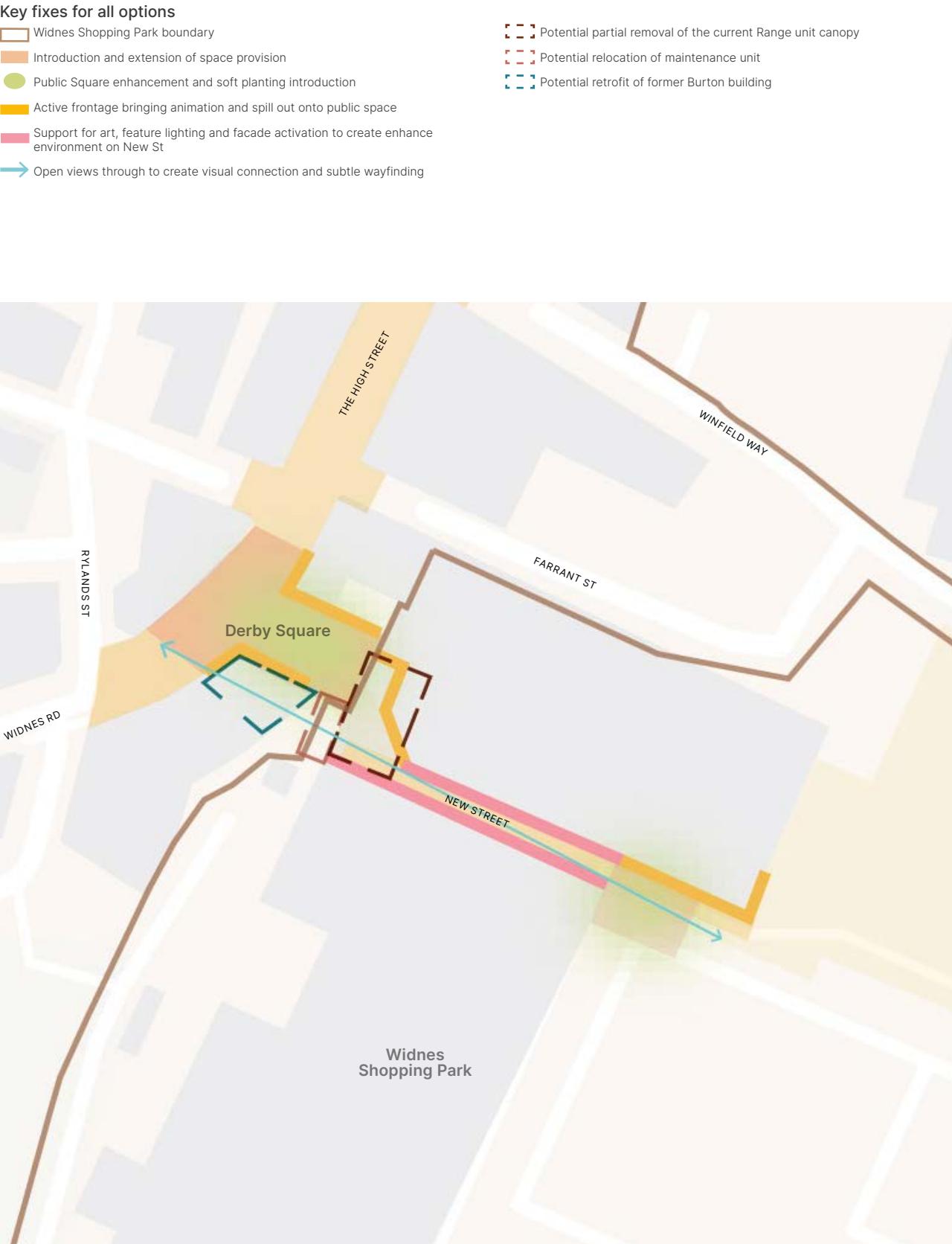
- Support and activate the spaces introduction of new retail uses, or cultural uses and events.
- Encourage The Derby pub to animate its southern face, on the northern side of Derby Square.
- Encourage retailers to open up onto and animate New Street, including the Range unit to open access onto Derby Square.

Landscape and public realm

- Create a clear line of sight between the High Street and Widnes Shopping Park.
- Introduce new areas to stop and rest and enhance the existing provision so people feel more comfortable using them.
- New areas of planting to be introduced around existing trees, providing pollinating species, wildlife habitats, sustainable drainage solutions and lighting.
- Enhance lighting, creating an atmospheric High Street and a place where early evening food and beverage offer could start to emerge.
- Provide a canvas for art schemes to thrive, celebrating Widnes.
- Signage to clearly announce the High Street and Derby Square, with a key moment identified within the corner of the car park at Widnes Shopping Park.
- Integrate the nature and heritage trail into the High Street, celebrated through paving, street furniture and signage.
- Explore the possibility for play or fun features to engage families.

Layout

- The possibility to extend the footprint of Derby Square and improve the connection to New Street should be explored.
- This could include the relocation of the Widnes Shopping Park maintenance unit, to extend the New Street connection, removing part of the kink and open up the visual connection between Derby Square and Widnes Shopping Park.
- The former Burtons building should be explored for demolition, or partial demolition to keep a structural canopy, to all for Derby Square to expand southwards, removing the need for a kink and opening up a direct link between the Square and Widnes Shopping Park.
- The low canopy to the Range unit should also be reviewed for removal to provide welcoming access for all people, at all times of the day and night.



Derby Square and New Street connection

The scale of change within Derby Square and New Street has yet to be determined. The following options explore change from aesthetic (option 1) to maximising the opportunity (option 3).

These options could be worked up to incrementally, if required.

Option 1: Public realm enhancement



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- 1. New planting, lighting, signage, seating and animation within Derby Square.
- 2. Improved environment along New Street to increase animation, interest and perception of safety. Lighting, planting and art to be introduced, with retailers encouraged to open up onto the route.
- 3. New bold feature signage to announce the High Street in this location.

Option 2: Relocation of security office



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- 1. Relocation of the security office elsewhere on the estate to enable the extension of New Street and create a focal point from Widnes Shopping Centre.

Option 3: Maximising the opportunity



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- 1. Opportunity to open up a direct link through by removing, or partially removing the former Burtons building. This provides more space to Derby Space for play, events and other forms of animation.
- 2. Opportunity to remove the low canopy over the western entrance to the Range to remove the enclosure and extend Derby Square eastwards. This also encourages the Range to open up onto and animate Derby Square.
- 3. Explore the inclusion of the additional leftover land to the east of New Street to extend the connection from the High Street and create a pocket park within Widnes Shopping Park.



6.6 Widnes Shopping Park Phase 2

The eastern edge of Widnes Shopping Park has the potential for substantial redevelopment, at the eastern gateway to the town centre.

In doing so, there is the broader opportunity to alter the nature of the place, and take a longer term view which expands the boundaries of the development opportunity, encompassing the eastern half of the shopping park.

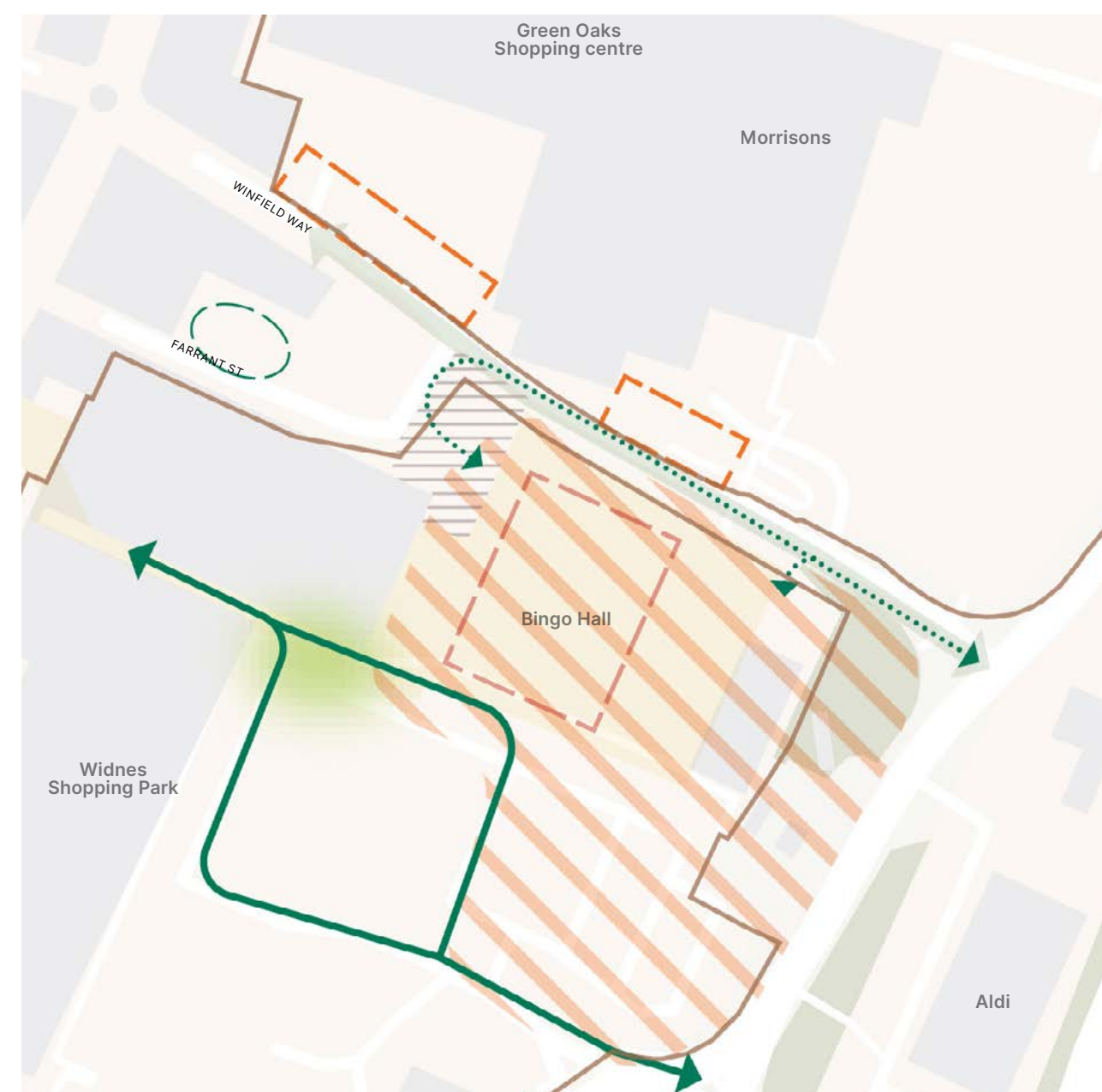
This wider area, creates a greater opportunity to expand the potential uses which could be delivered here beyond retail and leisure, to cultural, workspace and even the potential for residential development, subject to detailed design exploration.

Design principles for development opportunity

- Development proposals should consider the opportunity of creating a gateway development and alter the nature of the area to move away from 'out of town' typologies to people focussed, finer grain and active development types.
- This includes the potential to utilise the eastern area of car parking within a broader development area, due to the medium-longer term aspirations of this development opportunity.
- A mix of town centre uses should be considered to achieve this opportunity.
- Subject to the uses proposed, new development should maximise the gateway location, extending development heights beyond the town centre datum.
- Development should animate and help deliver a route across Widnes Shopping Park to and across the Watkinson Way gyratory, as well as animate Winfield Way with active frontages as an alternate quiet route to the High Street.
- Further design consideration would need to be developed to produce more detail layout responding to site constraints.

Design principles

- ➡ Key east-west pedestrian route to enhance.
 - Enhanced public realm announcing link between Widnes Shopping Park and the High Street.
 - ↔ Potential route for enhanced active travel provision.
 - /// Potential land to unlock through future proofing car parking: western gateway development opportunity to introduce mix uses, activate and animate neighbouring streetscape.
 - - - Potential for small footprint units to activate and animate Winfield Way to accompany western gateway long term development opportunity aspirations.
 - Pocket park and introduction of play participate to overall change Winfield Way and 'back of the High Street'.
 - - - Existing Bingo hall footprint.
 - /// Service yard to the Range and access to be considered.
 - ▭ Widnes Shopping Park boundary.



6.7

The northern gateway

Reallocating roadspace and unlocking development land

The land to the north-east of the town centre has the potential to form a gateway development site, introducing new urban uses and announcing the arrival within the town centre.

By reimagining and repurposing over-engineered road space and under-utilised parking areas, valuable development land can be unlocked, whilst a more accessible and inclusive environment can be created that enhances community well-being and improved connectivity for all.

Highway works are anticipated to lead this opportunity, with any future development opportunities tying to the future of the outside market and potential to consolidate town centre car parking.

Design principles for development opportunity

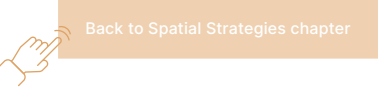
Intervention 1 - Bradley Way and Green Oaks Roundabout

- The current road network is over-engineered for vehicle demand. Changes to this area will reduce road space and parking to serve the community and provide improved routes for sustainable travel.
- Buses and taxis operate in this space and careful consideration will ensure viable transport options are available and serve the town centre.
- Any changes should look to incorporate public realm, reconsider the existing green space to the north as parkland and support increasing footfall to the market and the High Street.
- This space incorporates Public Right of Way (PRoW) that is currently available north east of the identified land and presents opportunities to enhance the connection from the town centre to the residential area to the east of the town centre, utilising the existing walking bridge available.
- Changes to this space may impact the bus network and therefore liaison with relevant stakeholders, including businesses and land owners would be required.

- Any changes to parking may impact the town centre and therefore further analysis would be required to understand its impact.

Intervention 2 - Northern Gateway development opportunity

- Development Land to be unlocked from roadspace and associated parking facilities, and to encompass this space. Further design consideration would need to be developed to produce more detail layout responding to site constraints.
- The opportunity is linked to outside market consideration. If the outside market were to move, the car parking area and outside market area can combine to create a greater development opportunity.
- It is understood that remediation will be required here which will limit the extent of residential at ground floor.
- New development should maximise the gateway location, extending development heights beyond the town centre datum.
- A range of town centre uses are likely to be acceptable. Residential is preferred, alongside workspace, in a perimeter layout to animate the surrounding routes.
- The existing landscape north of Bradley Way is expected to be enhanced, introducing SuDS, a mix of perennial planting, spaces to stop and rest, improved routes, play features and enhanced lighting.
- Further design consideration would need to be developed to produce a more detailed layout responding to site constraints.
- Any required car parking is expected to be integrated within a ground floor podium, or centralised within a consolidated town centre car parking strategy.



Design principles

- ➡ Key pedestrian route linking to PRoW maintained and enhanced.
- ➡ Potential route for enhanced active travel provision.
- ➡ Land unlocked through repurposing and future proofing of road infrastructure and surface car parking for development opportunities to introduce new mix-use, animate and activate neighbouring streetscape.
- Enhanced landscape introducing mix planting and SuDS.
- ⬜ Introduce and consider formalise uses for green open space.
- ⬜ Current key public transport stops to be considered and enhanced.
- ⬜ Current bus route to be considered.
- ⬜ Current outdoor market footprint.
- ➡ Key link between the High St and Widnes Market.
- ⬜ Green Oaks ownership boundary.



6.8 North-south connectivity corridor

Transforming the role of Kingsway to prioritise the local community, creating a more people-orientated environment and strengthening sustainable connections

Design principles for development opportunity

Land use

- The introduction of Watkinson Way has enabled Kingsway to shift strategic vehicular flows elsewhere, enabling this route to serve the local community.
- Redevelopment of the Kingsway Leisure Centre will enable access and movement through to the town centre from Kingsway, providing east-west connections.

Landscape and public realm

- Encourage sustainable travel through the use of improved public realm. This includes greenery, benches and dwell spaces, whilst ensuring natural surveillance, particularly at bus stop facilities.

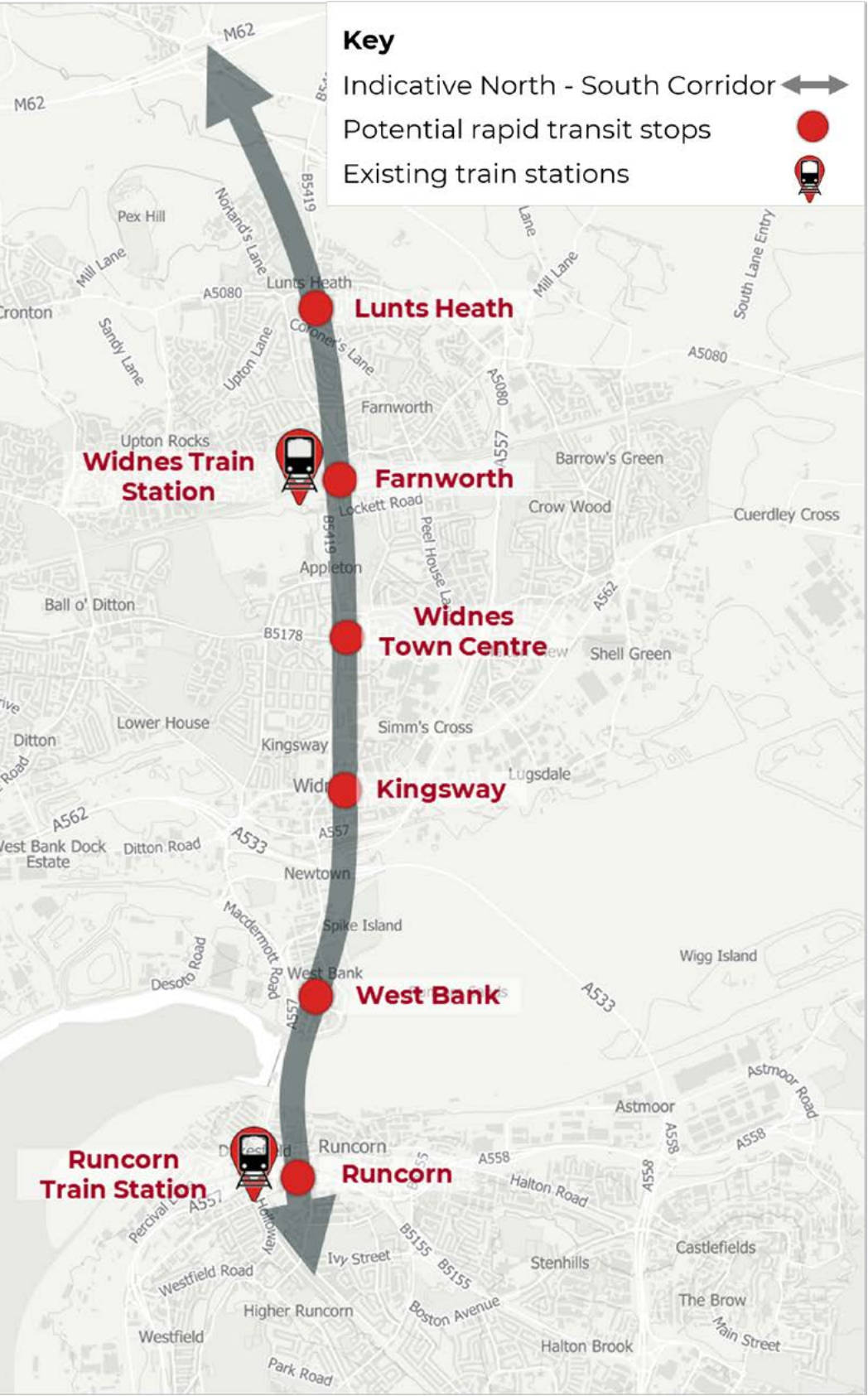
Access and movement

- Improving existing active travel links and incorporating them into the town centre to encourage use and make them more attractive. The upgrade of existing cycle lanes and the creation of any new routes will align with LTN 1/20 guidance, where possible.
- Reducing vehicle-dominated infrastructure to create safer, more inviting spaces that prioritise active travel, community benefits and sustainable travel choices.
- Aligning crossing points with pedestrian desire lines to ensure seamless east-west movement, enhancing accessibility and prioritising walking and cycling.
- Future-proofing a north-south route for public transport to enable LCRCAs ambition of rapid transit. This would establish links from Runcorn and St Helens which are currently missed by rail.
- Strengthen connections to the train station and Improving bus waiting facilities to public transport use and integration of different travel choices.

Layout and scale

- Improved wayfinding and signage can support the movement of people to key destinations and transport hub.

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6.9 Reducing severance

With substantial growth planned to the east of the town centre, alongside the existing communities, improvements are required to reduce the severance created by Watkinson Way.

First steps

- Upgrade of crossing points across the Gerrard Street / Lugsdale Road roundabout to make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to access the town centre and attractions to the east such as the Hive and the Retail Park, strengthening active travel links and reducing the severance that the road network creates for other modes.
- Future aspirations may look to repair and improve this east-west connection by providing a green corridor in the form of a bridge.

Design principles for development opportunity

Land use

- With the introduction of development expected from Fiddlers Ferry (~860 residential units) and the Three Sails Point development (~158 units), it is expected that more people will use this junction to access the town centre.

Landscape and public realm

- Public realm features introduced will guide footfall to and from the town centre and improve the active travel experience through the day and night.

Access and movement

- Watkinson Way is a key vehicular route and provides regional connectivity.
- Enhancing crossing points at Watkinson Way gyratory and the Gerrard Street / Lugsdale Road roundabout to follow pedestrian desire lines, where possible, will improve connections to key destination points.
- Encouraging active travel movements will reduce reliance on cars, alleviating demand on Watkinson Way and easing congestion.

Layout and scale

- Further design consideration would need to be developed to produce more detail layout responding to the potential of a bridge.

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6.10 Future proofing car parking

Parking should align with future town centre developments, ensuring efficiency, balance and turnover of spaces to maximise benefits and keep spaces accessible.

Design principles for development opportunity

Land use

- Opportunities arise to reallocate parking facilities that are not effectively serving the town centre, allowing land to be repurposed for development and enhancing community benefits.
- By fostering mixed-use communities, residents can live, work and spend their leisure time within close proximity, enhancing convenience and community connectivity.
- Decisions on where to retain or repurpose parking should align with broader land use and the regeneration framework strategies.
- Reallocation of vehicle-led infrastructure to mixed-use development can help to stimulate local economies as more residents lead to increased demand for goods and services, which creates jobs too.
- Compact developments promote sustainability by lowering carbon footprints and enhancing walkability.

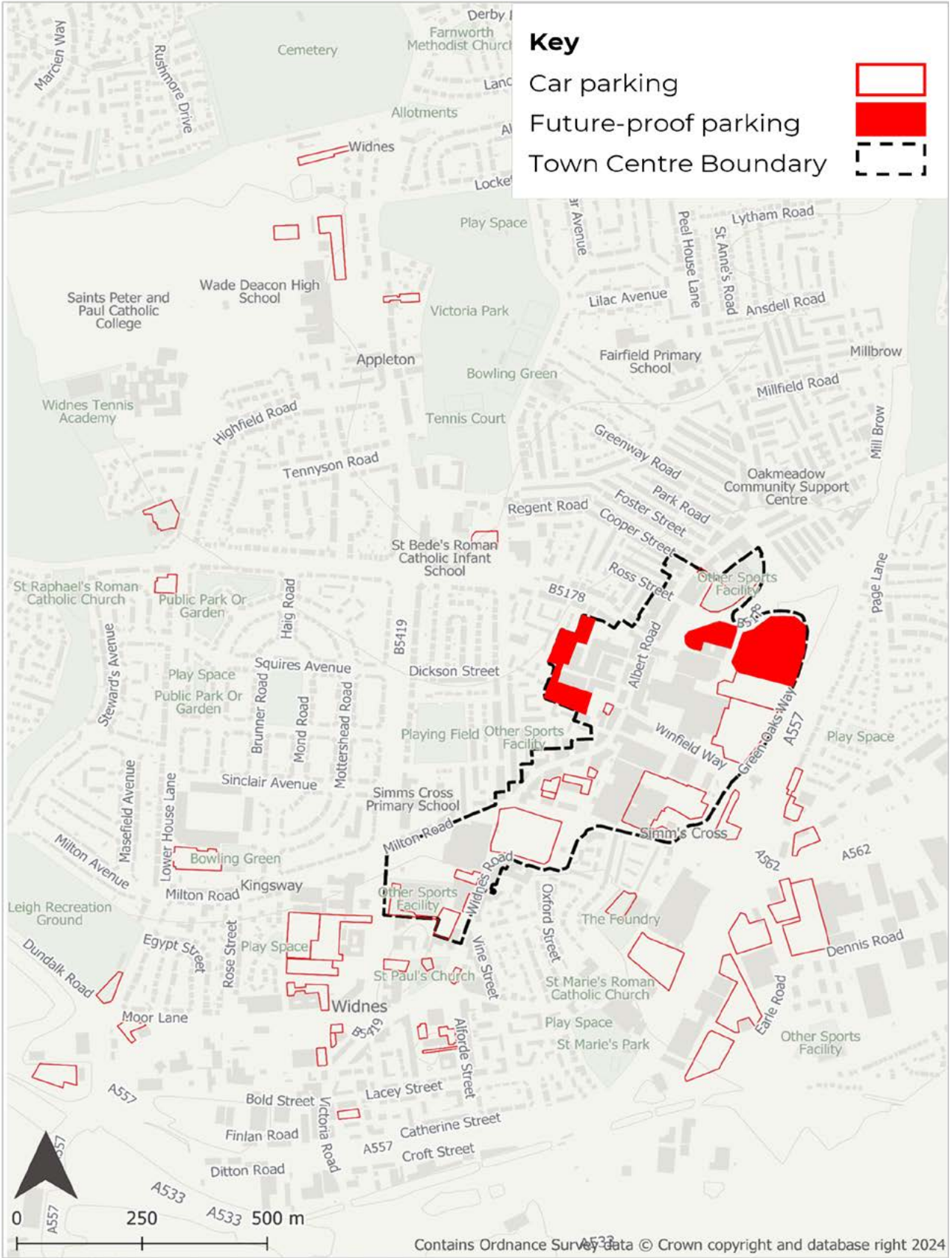
Landscape and public realm

- The emphasis on people-orientated infrastructure and green space enhances the aesthetic appeal of the town centre.

Access and movement

- Across the town centre there is an abundance of car parking spaces with over 4,000 publicly available off-street spaces.
- Reviewing restrictions and payment of car parks is necessary to reduce car-dependence in Widnes and create a more vibrant town centre.
- Rebalancing the distribution of car parking across the town centre through the use of charging and time restriction policies will manage demand, address illegal parking, increase parking availability, with increased turnover of parking spaces across the town centre. Revenue generated can be used to fund other transport initiatives.
- The role of parking is recognised in the town centre and there is a need to achieve an appropriate balance in encouraging the use of sustainable modes for those that are willing and able to do so, and also maintaining sufficient spaces in recognition of the fact that the current parking offer supports the economic vitality.
- Accessible car parking locations to enable disabled parking users the ability to travel to the town centre by vehicle if required.

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7

DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter sets approach for delivery and implementation of identified projects.

It sets way to management, finance and broad timeframe process.

Introduction

This Regeneration Framework is a set of strategies and projects to guide future designs.

It is created as a policy framework to support the delivery of the aspiration of the town, informed by a comprehensive consultation process and analysis undertaken by the technical teams. It will be used as a delivery tool for the Council to attract investment and drive forward improvements.

The plans that will come forward will aim to diversify the population, catering for both older residents who need assisted care, but also bringing in more young adults and working age residents by providing more affordable homes as an alternative to living in the city centre of either Manchester or Liverpool. The development of the town centre will bring construction investment which could mean more jobs created in the area during and beyond the works, and the improved green space will futureproof the area from climate change. The goal is to ultimately improve the quality of life of the current and future people living in Widnes, whilst positively contributing to the town’s economic, social, and cultural well-being in providing long term opportunities.

Delivery

By aligning the values within the Regeneration Framework with national policy drivers, the local authority can bring forward plans that contribute to national housing targets, and therefore housing funding, as well as access the brownfield land fund.

The public consultation conducted by Placed has shown a strong need to strengthen the high due to the significant footfall decline, especially since COVID19 where shopping habits moved online. This regeneration framework offers a vision to strengthen the offer of the high street to drive increased footfall. Recognising the council is limited in its ability to influence areas outside of its ownership, they can, however, improve the quality of the environment by making it cleaner and more attractive, and, by improving footfall, they can significantly improve safety and security. To do this, there will need to be several interventions:

- Curating a clear High Street first approach
- Creating community spaces, and an offer for families
- Expanding the arts and cultural offer
- Facilitating an early evening economy
- Welcoming independent business and start-ups incubator.

As part of the next stage, HBC will review all routes for delivery and assess the pro’s and con’s of each delivery mechanism. This will include the possibility of bringing in a development manager to oversee the regeneration, and/or bringing in a developer as a joint-venture partner for certain projects. Any potential delivery partner would have to demonstrate that they align with the vision and values set out in this regeneration framework.

Governance

The Town Centre Panel is in place to guide the regeneration and management of Widnes Town Centre. It is comprised of a Chair, seven locally elected Members and the Member of Parliament.

The Panel is looking to evolve and extend membership to include a wider selection of public and private sector representatives, including potentially a representative from the Police, the NHS, the College, and business leaders, community stakeholders, and subject-matter experts, to ensure diverse perspectives and expertise are represented. Guided by clear principles of accountability and shared objectives, The Town Centre Panel should champion delivery of the Regeneration Framework, including its vision, objectives, spatial strategies and projects. It will monitor progress against key milestones, and adapt to emerging challenges. By fostering trust, leveraging cross-sector resources, and maintaining a sharp focus on the long-term vision, this Regeneration Framework will position the town for vibrant and inclusive regeneration.

Priorities and phasing

The success in delivery should be the alignment of the proposed and delivered works to the regeneration framework’s vision and principles.

It is important to get projects initiated quickly to garner interest and confidence with investors and other relevant stakeholders who will be key to delivery. There are small, medium, and large interventions delivered throughout the course of the development to ensure there is continuing change and improvements.

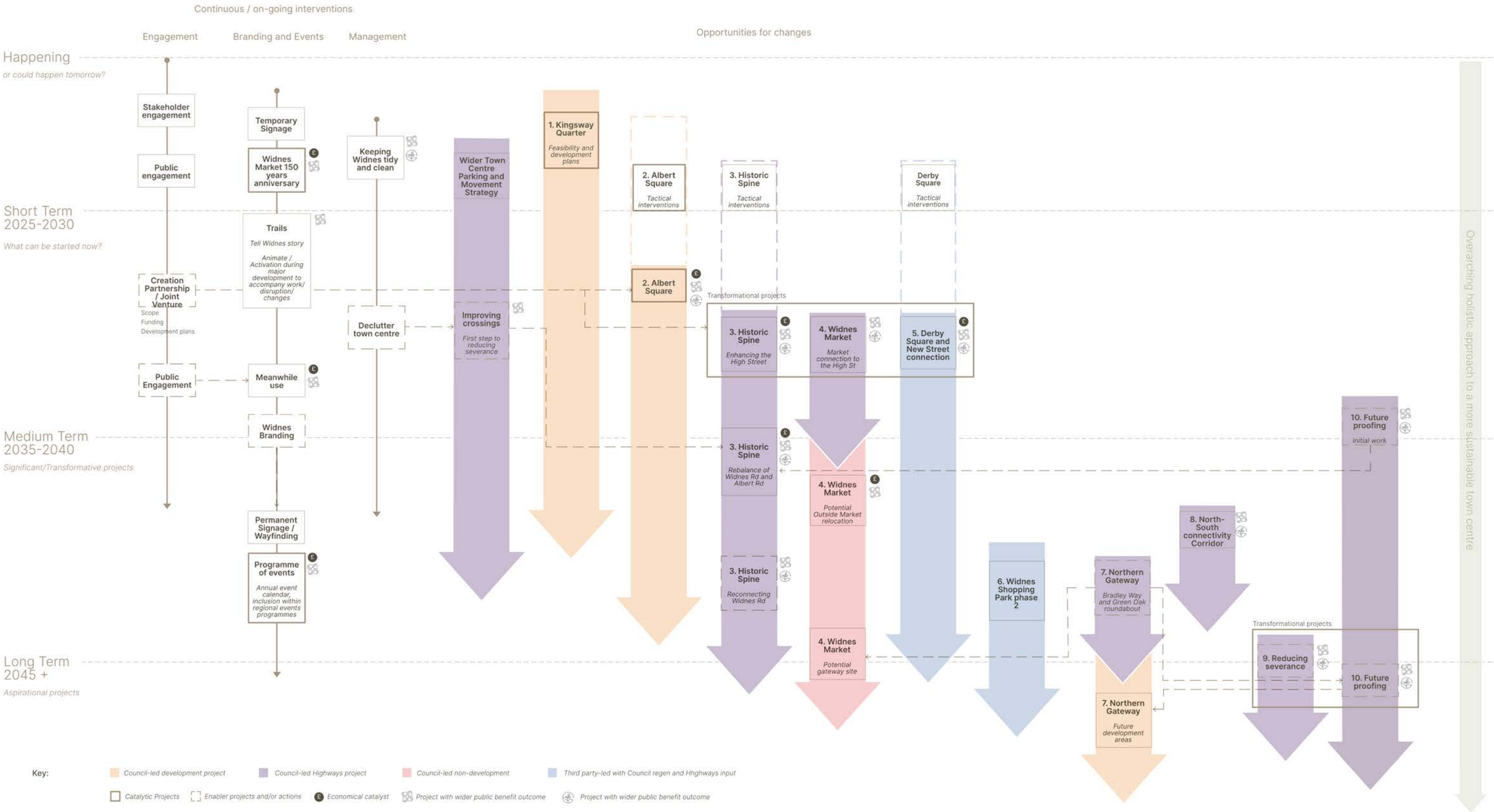
Throughout the course of the lifetime of this Regeneration Framework, the Council will remain adaptive to the changes in Governmental priorities and the changing economic, social, and environmental conditions that can impact the town.

Project matrix

The following matrix has been developed as a tool to assess projects against to ensure that they deliver established strategies, identify key partnerships and stakeholders as well as help to prioritise phasing.

Focussed projects	Framework Strategies: Does this project work toward the delivery of the strategies?									Key Stakeholder and partners	Management and maintenance	High Level costs £ Low cost £ £ Medium cost £ £ £ High cost	Phasing / Priority? 	High level indicative timeframe short term Medium term Long term
	A More Sustainable town centre			A more cohesive town centre			A more diverse town centre							
	Holistic approach to town centre	A soft and pleasant high street	Living with water and nature	Flip the movement hierarchy	Simplify the vehicle network	Repair connections to and from the town centre	Diverse uses for diverse users	Town centre living	Celebrate and enhance Widnes' heritage and Identity					
Kingsway Quarter	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓						
Albert Square	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	Albert Square owners				
Re-establishing the historic spine														
Enhancing the High Street	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓					
Rebalance Widnes Road and Albert Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	HBC highways				
Reconnecting Widnes Road	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	HBC highways, Asda owners				
Widnes Market														
Market connection to High Street	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Green Oaks owners				
Potential Outside Market relocation - couple locations	✓						✓		✓	Green Oaks owners				
Potential gateway site	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Green Oaks owners				
Derby Square and New Street connection	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	Widnes Shopping Park owners				
Widnes Shopping Park Phase 2	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		Widnes Shopping Park owners				
The northern gateway														
Bradley Way and Green Oaks roundabout	✓			✓	✓	✓				Green Oaks owners				
Future development areas	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	Green Oaks owners				
North-south connectivity corridor	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	HBC highways, Liverpool City Region				
Reducing severance	✓			✓	✓	✓				HBC highways, Land owners				
Future proofing car parking	✓			✓	✓	✓				HBC highways, Land owners				

Implementation and delivery diagram



Next Steps

The implementation of the Vision through delivery will take time, but the Council will be engaging key partners and stakeholders to keep up the momentum.

Engagement with local residents and businesses, as well as key partners and stakeholders, will continue as projects come forward. The Council will continually explore funding options and business cases to bring forward plans within the Regeneration Framework.

The team will progress a detailed design plan that considers the phasing of the works and identifies different development approaches, as well as reviewing funding opportunities for each area.

The Council will then seek planning consent, begin land assembly, and then delivery of the works.

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