



Halton Borough Council

Kingsway Quarter, Widnes Site Planning Brief

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**LIVERPOOL
CITY REGION**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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1. Background and Purpose of this Brief

1.1. Introduction (Site Location and History)



Figure 1: Kingsway Quarter site boundary

With reference to the redline plan at Figure 1, Kingsway Quarter is a 2.4 hectares (5.9 acres) brownfield site situated at the southern end of Widnes Town Centre. The site is within the single ownership of Halton Borough Council, following a period of land assembly, site clearance and preparation works. It comprises three land parcels:

- Site of the former Widnes Police Station and Magistrates Court;
- Site of former Broseley House (previously a mixed commercial building);
- Site of former Kingsway Leisure Centre.

In July 2024, the Council endorsed a residential led vision¹, identifying that the comprehensive redevelopment of the site presented an opportunity to meet a need for older people and family housing. Bringing these different housing requirements into a single new intergenerational neighborhood could contribute to regenerating and revitalising the town centre. This Vision was informed by a design and development feasibility study, undertaken by Ellis Williams Architects in 2024. The analysis and outcomes from this study has informed this planning brief.

In April 2025, the Council adopted a new Widnes Town Regeneration Framework, which set a spatial strategy to drive the future of Widnes town centre. Within this Framework, the comprehensive redevelopment of the Kingsway Quarter for residential led development is solidified.

Looking beyond land use, the Framework recognises that the Kingsway Quarter provides an important pedestrian route between Riverside College and the town centre through the site. The redevelopment of the site presents an opportunity to enhance this route and introduce new public greenspaces into the town centre.

Given its importance within the Framework, the site is identified as a priority project for immediate short term delivery within the wider programme of focused projects.

¹ See Minutes of Halton Borough Council Executive Board 11th July 2024
<https://councillors.halton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=292&MId=9035&Ver=4>

1.2. Purpose of the Brief

This planning brief has been prepared by Halton Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to provide more detailed guidance to inform development of the site. Its purpose is to support timely delivery and help ensure Kingsway Quarter becomes a successful and sustainable place – a high quality, well-designed residential neighbourhood. It seeks this by setting out:

1. The specific Local Planning Policy this brief seeks to implement (The main purpose of this Site Planning Brief);
2. Wider national and local planning policies that inform the development of the site, this includes other key local strategies;
3. Analysis of the character and setting of the site and its surroundings, to ensure development is responsive and make a positive contribution to placemaking;
4. Vision and Objectives for the place, including key elements to create a sense of place, identity and community cohesion;
5. Site specific design and development requirements, including:
 - a. **Residential Mix** to achieve a balanced neighbourhood which meets local housing need, including an identified supported housing requirements;
 - b. **Design Standards**, including scale and massing, key frontages, density, materials and precedents;
 - c. **Access, Movement and Parking** to achieve a people focused place;
 - d. **Public Realm and Landscape Quality**, including introducing new green spaces into the town centre and management of these spaces;
 - e. **Environmental Sustainability**, including building standards, ecology and sustainable urban drainage;
 - f. **Social Value and Community Benefits** including realising an intergenerational neighbourhood through housing mix, accessible design, local employment and skills, and the provision of facilities and spaces that promote social cohesion, health and wellbeing.
6. Development management matters, including pre-application requirements.

1.3. Local Plan Policy Implementation

The main purpose of this Site Planning Brief is implementation of the following two policies of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP), adopted in March 2022:

- Policy HC9 Mixed Use Areas, site Allocation MUA1: Widnes Civic Quarter; and
- Policy CS(R)12 Housing Mix and Specialist Housing

1.3.1. Policy HC9 Mixed Use Areas (MUA1 – Widnes Civic Quarter)

This Site Planning Brief implements HC9 Mixed Use Area by setting out how the comprehensive redevelopment of the Kingsway Quarter for mix-tenure residential development can be achieved and the site specific requirements how to enable proposals to be positively supported.

The Local Planning Authority considers that of the appropriate uses set out within MUA1, residential development would be the most appropriate and it would make a significant contribution to realising the Spatial Plan for Halton. The main justification for this being that the Kingsway Quarter presents a large and deliverable brownfield windfall site to contribute to the Boroughs Housing Land Supply.

Additionally, Residential redevelopment also helps unlock adjoining residential allocation W28 and site of the former Kingsway Leisure Centre (that sits within the Kingsway Quarter site area) to be brought forward in a coherent way from a land use and development perspective. This approach also aligns, and contributes to delivery of the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework.

Policy Justification

Within the Kingsway Quarter site boundary, there is a mixture of allocations (see figure 2) including for residential development (Policy RD1, site allocation W28), Mixed Use Areas (Policy HC9, Site Allocation MUA1: Widnes Civic Quarter) and Community Facilities and Services (Policy HC5).

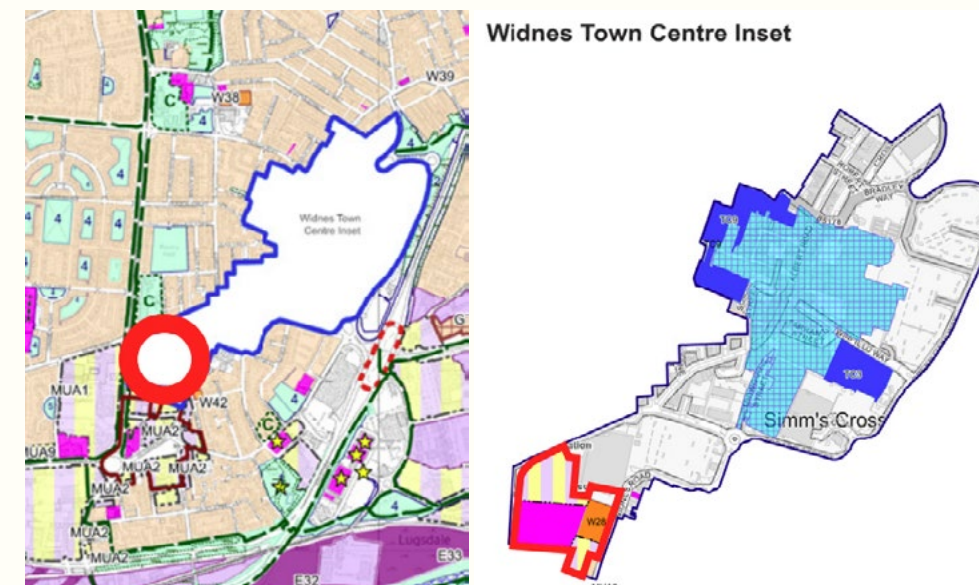


Figure 2: DALP Policies Map extract

Policy HC9, relates to the land parcel of the former Widnes Police Station and Magistrates Court. The policy states that within Mixed Use Areas (MUA), the Council may require a masterplan or development brief to be prepared demonstrating that the proposals will positively support and complement the comprehensive wider development of the area. This planning brief has been prepared to meet that requirement in respect of MUA1. The policy states:

“Within Mixed Use Area 1 the following uses are considered appropriate: a. Leisure; b. Residential; c. Office, Research / Development, Light Industry; d. Restaurants; e. Hotel; f. Education; and g. Health.”

Resident development is compliant with the Policy and the Local Planning Authority considers that of the appropriate uses set out within MUA1, residential development would be the most appropriate as it presents (as part of the Kingsway Quarter) a large and deliverable brownfield windfall housing site ²to contribute to the Boroughs Housing Land Supply.

Regarding Residential Allocation Policy RD1. Part of the Kingsway Quarter site area is residential allocation W28 (former Broseley House land parcel) , with a notional capacity for 10 homes. Through being brought forward as part of comprehensive redevelopment of the Kingsway Quarter, this residential allocation will be unlocked and developed in coherent way.

Regarding Policy HC5, the former Kingsway Leisure Centre and associated car parking land parcel is designated as a community facility which can be redeveloped, subject to demonstrating it is no longer suitable/viable and would not create a provision shortfall. Whilst the site is designated for community use, the current use of the site for the purposes of this policy is vacant land, and the DALP allocation has been superseded by recent changes in provision through relocation to the nearby new Halton Leisure Centre on Moor Lane, Widnes, which opened in 2025. The former Leisure Centre land parcel can therefore be brought forward in a coherent way as windfall housing as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Kingsway Quarter.

In accordance with Policy HC9 and taking account of other allocations and designations within the Kingsway Quarter site boundary, comprehensive residential development of the whole site is considered to be the most appropriate land use to achieve the Spatial Plan for Halton and enable the Kingsway Quarter to be brought forward in a coherent way. This Site Planning Brief has been prepared to set out how this can be achieved and will be positively supported by the Local Planning Authority.

² Windfall sites are sites not specifically identified in the development plan. The site is not a specific housing allocation but housing is permitted under the mixed use allocation.

1.3.2. Policy CS(R)12 Housing Mix and Specialist Housing

This Site Planning Brief implements Policy CS(R)12 by setting out the specialist housing requirement for the Kingsway Quarter that any planning application will be required to delivered. The Local Planning Authority has identified and consider this site as an appropriate and a suitable location for specialist housing as a publicly-owned site in an highly accessible location. This is further evidenced by borough wide Housing Strategy 2026 – 2031 and Housing Needs Assessment 2024/25.

Policy Justification

It is required that sites of 10-or-more dwellings should provide mix of new properties to contribute to addressing identified needs, through size of homes and specialist housing; specifically seeking specialist housing for older people. The policy states:

“Proposals for new specialist housing for elderly, including extra-care and supported accommodation, will be encouraged in suitable locations, particularly those providing easy access to local services and community facilities.”

Para 7.80 and 7.81 of DALP Policy CS(R)12, acknowledges the importance of selecting appropriate locations and sites for extra care and supported housing:

“The need for extra care or supported housing in Halton is particularly pronounced because of low levels of existing provision. This level of need is anticipated to grow over the plan period given the Borough’s ageing population. The Housing Strategy for Halton indicates that there is a need to develop a wider range of housing options, including extra care and retirement housing across all tenures, to prevent over reliance on residential care.”

“Selecting appropriate locations for extra care and supported housing is important to ensure that residents are able to integrate with the surrounding community and retain maximum independence... Provision of extra care housing is hindered by the lack of developable or publicly owned land and the high costs associated with land purchase, remediation and conversion or demolition of an existing building. **Where the Council has the opportunity**

to influence the type of housing provision on sites which meet a number of the criteria for extra care housing, the need for this specialist type of accommodation will be emphasised.”

In accordance with this policy, which is further supported by the Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031 and the borough wide Housing Needs Assessment 2024/25, the Kingsway Quarter site has been identified as a publicly owned site in a highly accessible location which can meet a locally arising need for specialist accommodation, as part of cohesive community. This planning brief has been prepared to set out the site specific specialist and supported housing requirements in more detail and how this provision should be integrated into the wider residential development.

1.4. Policy Context

Whilst the specific purpose of this Site Planning Brief is the implementation of DALP Policies HC9 Mixed Use Areas and CS(R)12 Housing Mix and Specialist Housing, it has also been prepared with regard to wider national and local policies.

This section does not constitute a complete assessment of the national and local planning policy framework for the site. Its purpose is to highlight the key policies and strategies that underpin the justification for the production of this planning brief and site specific requirements. (A more detailed summary of Policies is contained at Appendix F)

1.4.1. National Policy

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, defined as the management of land use “in the long-term public interest.” Decision-making should therefore take a proactive approach to guiding development towards sustainable outcomes, while responding to local circumstances, character and needs.

1.4.2. Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP)

- **Policy CS(R)1: Spatial Strategy**

The site lies within ‘South Widnes’ one of the five Key Urban Regeneration Areas where the majority of new development in the borough is expected to be located.

- **Policy CS(R)5: A Network Of Centres**

The site sits within the Town Centre Boundary as defined on the Policies Map (see Figure 2), with the site being at the southern end of the Centre.

- **CS(R)3: Housing supply and locational priorities**

Seeks a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) in more accessible

locations, such as Town Centres. It also seeks at least 30% new residential development should be delivered on previously developed (brownfield) land. The policy also identifies ‘Windfall development sites’ form part of the Borough’s Housing Land Supply.

- **CS(R)13: Affordable Homes**

Residential schemes including ten or more dwellings (net gain), or 0.5 hectares or more, excluding brownfield sites, are expected to provide affordable housing, with greenfield sites required to deliver 25% affordable provision.

- **CS(R)18: High Quality Design**

Achieving and raising the quality of design is a priority for all development in Halton.

- **Policy CS(R)19: Sustainable Development and Climate Change**

The policy seeks that all new development should be sustainable and be designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change including reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and adapting to climatic conditions. The policy seeks to encourage new development to incorporate current best practice in sustainable design and construction.

- **Policy C1: Transport Network and Accessibility**

This policy seeks to encourage and enable a shift to more sustainable modes of travel. It is necessary to ensure that a successful sustainable transport network is in place.

1.4.3. Other Local Policy

- **Social Value SPD**

Halton Borough Council’s Social Value in Planning Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved by the Council on 16th April 2026. It sets out how major development must contribute to improved employment, skills and training outcomes for local residents, including employment-related activities such as work placements, site visits for students, and wider community engagement initiatives (for example, competitions).

- **Transport and Accessibility SPD**

The development will be required to demonstrate that transport and accessibility considerations have informed the layout and design from the earliest stage.

- **Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework**

Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework was adopted in April 2025. It is a non-statutory regeneration and planning document. The Framework provides a coherent set of spatial strategies and deliverables to drive the regeneration and future of Widnes town centre. Within the Framework, the Kingsway Quarter site is identified as a residential opportunity to promote Town Centre Living in a range of housing types to attract young families and older residents in a sustainable setting.

- ***A Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031***

In February 2026, the Council published a new Housing strategy for Halton. The aim of the Strategy is for “Homes that Drive Growth, Opportunity, and Fairness for all” in Halton. It is underpinned by a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), to provide an up-to-date evidence on the housing needs across all sections of the local community. Both the Housing Strategy and HNA provides further evidence for the need, type and mix of housing and specialist accommodation appropriate for the Kingsway Quarter site.

- ***Halton Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2022 - 2027***

The aim of the Plan is to be net zero by 2040 for Council activities and set out a framework for change, identifying some early actions and priorities and setting out our ambitions over the short, medium and long term. The Kingsway Quarter is identified as a candidate site for potential inclusion of a net zero demonstration project.

- ***One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2027***

This is a strategy for improving health and reducing health inequalities within Halton. It was prepared by the One Halton Place Based Partnership to guide how health and social care partners will work together to ensure everyone in Halton gets the best start in life and gets the opportunity to live longer healthier lives in older age.

One of the underlying themes is supporting our community in ageing well, recognising that by 2041, the proportion of Halton population aged 65 + will increase by 38%.

The national and local planning policy and other relevant local strategies create a strong framework in which to develop site specific requirements in respect of design and development of the Kingsway Quarter.

1.5. Statement of Consultation to Date

The policies that this brief is drawn from has been subject to the following consultation:

- DALP plan-making process included public (and statutory) consultation exercises and was subject to a formal examination via public inquiry overseen by an independent inspector appointed by HM Government;
- Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework was informed by a public engagement programme undertaken by consultation specialists PLACED delivered in Widnes Town Centre during October and November 2024; and
- Housing Strategy and Housing Need assessment was shaped by a continuous process of consultation and engagement, including a survey sent to about 1 in 4 households in Halton with a 9.8% response rate, two stages of stakeholder engagement in 2025, and formal a six-week public consultation exercise in October – November 2025.
- One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed with the input and involvement of a range of organisations including Halton Borough Council, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, Primary and Secondary Care providers, the voluntary sector, Community Health Services, Health Watch, blue light services, housing and local community groups.

2. Site Context and Area Analysis

2.1. Extent of Area Covered by this Brief

The principal area covered by this brief is as shown on the redline boundary plan at Figure 1. Some requirements, such as those identified through the Regeneration Framework, sit outside of the redline boundary. These largely concern with ‘knitting’ the site into its surroundings, including ensuring movement through the site connects beyond the immediate frontages onto Kingsway, Milton Road and Widnes Road.

2.2. Site Context and Setting

With reference to figure 6 and figure 7, The site (A) sits in a prominent location on the southern threshold of Widnes Town Centre. The site sits to south east of the retail core, bookended by Asda (B) to the north west of the site and the Masonic Hall (C) to the south.

The site sits north of the Victoria Square Conservation Area, containing a series of attractive and historic buildings including Kingsway Learning Centre (H). Further southeast is the new leisure centre (M) on Moor Lane.

To the immediate west of the site is Riverside College (J), a key town centre anchor institution. Adjacent to Riverside College is the Municipal Building (K) and associated car parking (L). These are the current offices of Halton Borough Council, which are scheduled to be vacated by the Council in the next few years.



Figure 6: Conservation Area and Listed Buildings



Figure 7: Site Context Plan

2.3. Site Movement and Accessibility

Kingsway

The site occupies a prominent location adjacent to Kingsway (B5419) at the threshold of the town centre. This is an important road route through the town and therefore can be busy at times. Historically, the site had a number of vehicular access points from Kingsway to service former uses. These are constrained due to current standards and are considered further later in this document. Access/layout should be considered in consultation with the Highway Authority.

Milton Road

Milton Road is well-used leading to and from the town centre, with a traffic lighted junction onto Kingsway. Historically there was a vehicle access / egress serving the former Police Station. This has not been operational for over 10 years. The Milton Road junction to Kingsway is often subject to queuing traffic.

Milton Road provides a strong pedestrian route to and from the town centre, though has narrow footways.

Widnes Road

Widnes Road is a low traffic route, primarily used to service the commercial premises fronting onto it and access Lieberg Court apartments. Once Widnes Road passes beyond the site frontage and crosses a mini roundabout, the Road becomes one way in the direction of Brynn Street and is restricted to buses and taxis only. At the frontage of the site, Widnes Road is approximately 9 metres wide with some marked bays for on street parking.

An unmanaged car park with approximately 34 spaces is accessible off Milton Road and is within the site boundary. This car park previously serving former Broseley House and has been left open by the Council, it provides some provision to access local business uses and its closure will need to be considered carefully as part of the sites redevelopment.

Vehicular access

Historically, there were a number of vehicular access points into the site (prior to demolition works) to serve previous buildings and land uses, though there has never been a direct road link through/across the site. The principal access points to the site were previously off Kingsway. Some of these historical vehicle access points into the site (such as from Milton Road and Kingsway) are constrained by existing road layouts and would not be suitable for reopening, and therefore any redevelopment proposals must carefully consider the provision of safe and efficient access and egress arrangements through the design process.

Pedestrian access

There is a strong pedestrian desire line between Riverside College and the site, over an existing central reservation. This is used by college students, ignoring the existing set pedestrian crossing points (see Figure 8).

This desire line forms part of a strong pedestrian route on the south side of the site used by people from Riverside College and council offices to and from the town centre via either Milton Road or through the site to Widnes Road. The route through the site to Widnes Road, whilst popular was previously poor quality and not adopted as highway or footpath. It did not meet basic pedestrian accessibility standards, having previously cut across the leisure centre car park. Following completion of the demolition works a temporary pedestrian route has been reinstated along the previous desire line.



Figure 8: View across Kingsway - showing people ignoring the set pedestrian crossing routes in favour of desire line

Cycle Access

The existing cycleway network around the site is patchy. There are in carriageway cycle lanes in both directions on Kingsway, no cycling provision on Milton Road or Widnes Road. There have historically been no cycleway routes through the site, though there has been some observed evidence of the temporary pedestrian route being used by cyclists to access the town centre. Any future scheme should seek to enhance this route wherever possible, taking into account potential future legal connections and established desire lines to improve connectivity and accessibility.

2.4. Surrounding Design and Local Character

As demonstrated by Figure 6, the local vernacular is generally typical interwar housing stock. The site interfaces with 2-storey terrace housing on Milton Road, and interfaces with 2 and 3 storey mixed residential and commercial buildings to Widnes Road.

To Kingsway, the site interfaces with taller educational and civic buildings ranging in height from 2 to 8 storey. With 4 and 5 storey college buildings immediately opposite the site and the 2 storey Masonic Hall adjacent to the site. These buildings are a range of architectural styles and quality, with some set further back from the road, additionally the width of Kingsway provides space for taller buildings to not feel imposing.

The Asda superstore in the north west corner of the site dominates both in its mass and height. The store turns its back on the site by large blank white walls. The service / goods yard for Asda being sited on the north west boundary of the site, with access to the service yard from Milton Road.

There are some standout buildings in the direct local area (These are illustrated in Appendix B1 and marked on fig 6 above) including St Paul's Church, Former Widnes Town Hall and Kingsway Library. These are good examples of ornate red brick design with terracotta dressing and form part of the Victoria Square Conservation Area.

Two recent additions to the local area demonstrate how modern building can integrate into (and take inspiration from) the local vernacular. These are Queens Court, a residential apartment building on Victoria Road (see Appendix B1) and the new Halton Leisure Centre (Figure 8). Both of these buildings utilise red brick alongside facade cladding to create more contemporary buildings which complement their surroundings.



Figure 8: Use of red brick and standing seam cladding, Halton Leisure Centre, Moor Lane.

3. Vision and Design Aspirations for Place

3.1. The overall vision for the development of Kingsway is as follows:

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 site can introduce a contemporary residential offer, promote more sustainable urban living and increase footfall and activity into the Town

Centre. The size and location of the site presents an opportunity to meet an identified need for more supported living for older persons, affordable family housing and accommodation for young people seeking to gain greater independence. Bringing these different housing requirements together into a single new neighbourhood can seek to create a place which exceeds minimum requirements and through built environment and shared public green space design recognise the growing importance of promoting intergenerational connections.

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

3.2. The Vision and design aspirations for Kingsway Quarter aligns the development of the site with the realisation of planning policy and key strategies:

- Ensure development contributes to delivery of the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework;
- Given site characteristics – large publicly owned site, in a highly accessible location and close to amenities – it presents a clear opportunity to meet local housing need, identified within the Housing Strategy and HNS; and;
- Support delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan for environmental sustainability.

4. Design Principles and Development Requirements

4.1. Fundamental Design Principles

The approach to design and layout will be guided by a number of principles to create a new residential neighbourhood within Widnes Town Centre

(as illustrated at Appendix A1):

- **Distinctive** – Contemporary residential architecture, referencing local character of adjacent Victoria Square Conservation Area and standout buildings;
- **Prominence** – Create a more attractive and better defined entry point into the town centre. Give the site strong edges and prominence on surrounding roads, including a landmark building on the corner of Kingsway and Milton Road;
- **Access** – Increase connectivity across and within the site. With a focus on utilising existing walking/cycling ‘desire line’ through the site to improve accessible routes into the heart of the town centre in accordance with the town centre movement hierarchy;
- **Greening** - Maximize opportunities for urban greening, sustainable urban drainage and biodiversity areas as an integral part of the development;
- **Intergenerational** – Create an integrated and cohesive community that bring residents - young and old - together within the neighbourhood to interact and socialise.

These design principles have been brought together and expressed as concept design and layout at Appendix A2.

4.2. Residential Mix

The residential mix should improve the quality and range of housing offer within Widnes Town Centre to promote a sustainable mixed community and increase the resident population within the town centre, supporting local businesses, services and facilities. To achieve this the development should offer a mix of 1 – 4 bed homes to promote a balanced community (broadly in line with the HNA). Within the tenure mix, smaller properties should emphasise social and affordable rent; whilst family housing should emphasise affordable home ownership (shared ownership and rent to buy).

4.3. Supported and Specialist Housing

In accordance with Local Plan Policy CS(R)12: Housing Mix and Specialist Housing, the Kingsway Quarter has been identified as a suitable site and accessible location for the provision of supported and specialist housing. Through the priorities set out within the Housing Strategy and consultation with the social care commissioning teams, the site has been identified as suitable to meet the following specific headline requirements:

- 50 – 70 own front door 1-Bed & 2-Bed independent living / extra care scheme for older people;
- 10 – 12 1-bed own front door apartments for young people leaving care;
- 2 – 6 own front door family houses designed to a higher specification to meet the needs of families with children / young people who are disabled or have complex needs;

Supported and specialist housing should be integrated within the wider residential neighborhood to promote a cohesive community. A more detailed summary of each requirement is contained at Appendix E, this includes the tenure of each housing type.

This headline requirement is provided to inform design of the development and delivery of supported and specialist housing only. Any accommodation agreements (dealing with matters such as nominations and void periods) will be formally dealt with through separate appropriate agreement(s) between the Council and the registered housing provider. The Council’s model of social care support, in respect of all three requirements, would not require any care provision by the Registered Provider, beyond any typical support through housing and tenant management responsibilities.

4.4. Design and Materials

Kingsway Quarter must raise the quality of design and placemaking within Widnes Town Centre. This will be secured by demonstrating that the scheme has considered and applied Homes England Building for a Healthy Life Design Code.

Through design and architecture, the Kingsway Quarter must introduce a contemporary residential offer, including townhouses, level access homes and apartments, which promotes more sustainable urban living and increases footfall and activity into the Town Centre. The development must create a prominent high quality building on the corner of the site (Milton Road/ Kingsway) to act as entry into Town Centre. Within the concept design and layout this is likely to be best realised through the siting of the older persons scheme to this corner. Building precedents are contained at Appendix B2.

The development must demonstrate thoughtful design and placemaking which promotes social interactions, particularly between young and old residents. Design should draw on best practice from bodies including Care England, Intergenerational England and most recently the ‘Creating Intergenerational Communities’ Report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Housing and Social Care.

Architecture should combine traditional and contemporary building materials which reference the local vernacular – drawing from the best of the surrounding areas, notably the Victoria Square Conservation Area. An indicative materials palette is contained at Appendix B3.

4.5. Density, Scale and Massing

Recognising the site’s highly sustainable location with excellent access to shops, services and public transport, development should achieve a minimum density of 50 dwellings per hectare (dph). This density reflects the aspirations set out with the Widnes Town Centre Framework for the site and exceeds 40 dph minimum requirement set out in DALP policy CS(R)3: Housing supply and locational priorities.

Building heights should vary across the site to respond to local character and create a clear hierarchy of development. A landmark building of up to 4-5 storeys should be provided at the Kingsway/Milton Road corner to mark this prominent gateway location and assist with wayfinding. Development elsewhere should generally be between two and three storeys in height. Particular care should be taken where development adjoins existing two-storey dwellings on Milton Road to ensure an appropriate transition in scale and massing. Three storey townhouses present the opportunity to create a strong character and frontage to key pedestrian routes through the site (see elevation / street scene visualisations at Appendix D)

4.6. Access, Movement and Parking

Any future proposal will need to have regard to the following points and be addressed in a Transport Assessment where appropriate:

4.6.1. People Focused

The overarching design principle for the Kingsway Quarter is to create a new neighbourhood which is people and community focused, rather than designing around the needs of the car. This is in accordance with the town centre movement hierarchy. This should shape the approach to street and public space design; as well as parking and access arrangements. This approach also recognises the sites sustainable town centre location and access to public transport, shops and local amenities which encourages low car ownership and encourage trips into the town centre by means other than private car. This context for the site, shapes a new residential offer to attract those looking for a more sustainable lifestyle. Appendix D, provides concept visuals for indicative elevations and street scene demonstrate this new residential offer.

4.6.2. Vehicular Access

Proposed vehicular access and movement through the site should be focused on creating a new northeast – west link between Kingsway and Widnes Road. This would approximately be in alignment with the former magistrate court access and would be used as 2 way (left in/left out). As the design and layout is progressed, this junction (especially the out) must be at least 43m from the splitter end so drivers do not have to assess approaching vehicles from multiple directions. Careful consideration should be given to traffic calming measures to avoid the road becoming attractive to non-residents.

4.6.3. Highway Adoptions

The movements of people and vehicles should be carefully considered in response to the vision for Kingsway Quarter. The east-west link should incorporate a number of shared spaces and the requirement to create a new high quality pedestrian ‘green corridor’ route through site. This will require carefully consideration of approach to Highway Adoption.

As the design progresses, at pre-application stage, further and early involvement of the Council Highway Authority will be required, to ensure matters such as Highway adoptions and need for a neighborhood management company have been addressed. This would also include linked matters such as shared greenspaces / pocket parks and approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

4.6.4. Existing Parking Requirements

Within the site boundary there is currently a 34 approx. space car park owned by the Council, adjacent to Asda, accessed from Widnes Road. This was left open on an informal basis by the Council to support the local shops and services on Widnes Road.

The removal needs to be carefully considered and mitigated as part of any future planning application. It would therefore be advantageous to incorporate some visitor parking to primarily serve the local shops and businesses on Widnes Road either within the site or through incorporating improved lay-by / on-street parking arrangements to Widnes Road.

4.6.5. Proposed Car and Cyle Parking Requirements

Development should meet the latest Council Parking standard requirements, as set out in the DALP, Appendix D. As the design progresses, at pre-application stage, further and early involvement of the Council Highway Authority will be required to agree final parking requirements, particularly in respect of the older persons and supported accommodation, which can have varying car parking requirements dependent upon the nature of any care provided, and the age and needs of the residents (i.e. staff/visitor requirements).

Cycle parking should be provided for each dwelling either integrally within the private amenity space or in safe and secure areas to promote use.

The necessary infrastructure for electric and alternative fueled vehicles will need to be included in accordance with Building Regulations for 'on property' including apartments.

Please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/approved-document-s-infrastructure-for-charging-electric-vehicles-frequently-asked-questions>

This sort of provision allows for long term climate change mitigation as well as improvements in local air quality.

4.6.6. Pedestrian Access

Kingsway Quarter will deliver a new high quality pedestrian route on a east – west axis through the site between Kingsway B5419 and Widnes Road. This will improve permeability to encourage movement between Riverside College / site of Municipal Building and the town centre. As part of this delivery, the development would require the relocation of the existing miss-aligned uncontrolled crossing on Kingsway. This

crossing would be moved to a more appropriate location, aligned with the new east – west pedestrian route through the site. Consideration would need to be given to the effect the relocation has on vehicular access and egress arrangements, such as to Riverside College.

4.6.7. Public Realm and Landscape Quality (Urban Greening)

The approach to public realm and landscape quality, should be the heart of placemaking by:

1. Creating shared spaces for interaction and socialising of neighbourhood residents;
2. Introducing new green spaces to create a more attractive town centre; and,
3. Supporting the town centre movement hierarchy which prioritises the pedestrian experience.

With reference to the public realm and landscape precedent at Appendix B4, the elements to achieve this being:

- Creation of pocket parks, social spaces and areas of play within the neighborhood to allow people to gather and use the space with passive supervision;
- Use planting to create buffers between different zones with potential to separate private parking and the access routes.
- Clear front gardens give distinct boundary between the shared surface and the front doors of the houses.
- Areas of the proposal will prioritise pedestrians over cars. Where regulations and government guidance allow , this can be achieved by a shared surface but also by creating “obstacles” to naturally slow cars down.
- Shared surface for cars and pedestrians to give an open feel to the development whilst allowing access of all kinds.

These elements can come together as a 'green corridor' to help define and soften the new east – west route through the site. To ensure success, consideration should be given to maintenance and management of any shared public / green spaces. Appendix C, provides further information on the 'green corridor' concept.

4.6.8. Environmental Sustainability

Kingsway Quarter should contribute to realising the Council's Climate Action Plan (and in accordance with Local Plan Policy CS(R)19). This will be achieved through

incorporating a net zero demonstration project with a minimum of 10% of housing units to be built to the “Net Zero Carbon – Operational Energy Standard”. This is nationally recognised best practice standard and is defined by the Good Homes Alliance and UK Green Building Council.

As the first planned net zero housing demonstration project in Widnes, opportunities in accordance with the Social Value SPD should be taken during construction to incorporate local engagement and learning activity to promote a better understanding of net zero carbon housing technologies.

Whilst not a formal requirement, there is an opportunity for development at Kingsway Quarter to support net zero carbon objectives through potential connection to the Council’s Smart Micro Grid. Developers should explore opportunities to connect to, or otherwise benefit from, local renewable energy infrastructure where this is demonstrated to be technically and commercially feasible.

Opportunities to improve bio-diversity through planting and landscaping should also be sought through the development. This could add a further dimension to the ‘green corridor’ concept and also incorporate sustainable urban drainage. This is explored in Appendix C.

4.6.9. Social Value and Community Benefits

In accordance with the adopted Social Value SPD, the development will be required to meet its social value obligations. It is anticipated that Riverside College will be the primary partner, reflecting its prominent location directly opposite the site and its extensive further education provision in construction and trade-related disciplines. However, opportunities will also be pursued to engage other relevant agencies through the Halton Employment Partnership, of which the College is a key member. Through ongoing engagement during the construction phase, skills development, apprenticeships, and site-based work experience opportunities should be provided. This could include the ‘adoption’ of a specific ‘home’ by Riverside College, with involvement throughout the build process, alongside complementary initiatives delivered with other partners as appropriate.



5. Development Control Matters

5.1. Pre-application advice

Any party wishing to apply for planning permission is strongly advised to use the Councils' pre-application advice service. A charge is applicable for this service. Seeking pre-application advice from Halton Borough Council creates the opportunity for applicants to meet a Planning Officer for an informal discussion prior to submission of a planning application. The key benefits of a pre-application advice request are as follows:

- Identify opportunities for scheme improvements at a stage when a proposal can still be modified, resulting in higher quality developments;
- Significantly increase the likelihood of gaining planning permission;
- Allow more opportunity to coordinate investment;
- Help to communicate the vision and objectives for the area;
- Develop a shared understanding of constraints, opportunities and context;
- Agree information requirements and identify schemes which are unlikely to be supported;
- Establish timescales and explain administrative processes; and
- Reduce delays through early engagement of key parties.

Halton Borough Council categorise the various scales and types of development which subsequently then have various costs for pre-application fees. The proposed development at Kingsway Quarter falls under category F. This covers large scale developments of 50 or more dwellings.

Further information regarding the Council's preapplication advice service including fees can be found via the following link:

<https://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/Get-Planning-Advice.aspx>

(Please note the additional potential fees within the Notes section)

5.2. Planning application validation

Guidance on the national requirements for a valid planning application can be found at the following link: [Making an application - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/making-an-application)

Failure to supply the necessary information will likely mean the application is deemed invalid resulting in potential delays.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(inserted by the Environment Act 2021\)](#). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, [subject to some exceptions](#), every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

5.3. Planning application determination

Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal as quickly as possible, and in any event within the statutory time limit unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.

The statutory time limits are usually 13 weeks for applications for major development and 8 weeks for all other types of development (unless an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, in which case a 16 week limit applies).

6. Appendix

A. Site Design and Layout

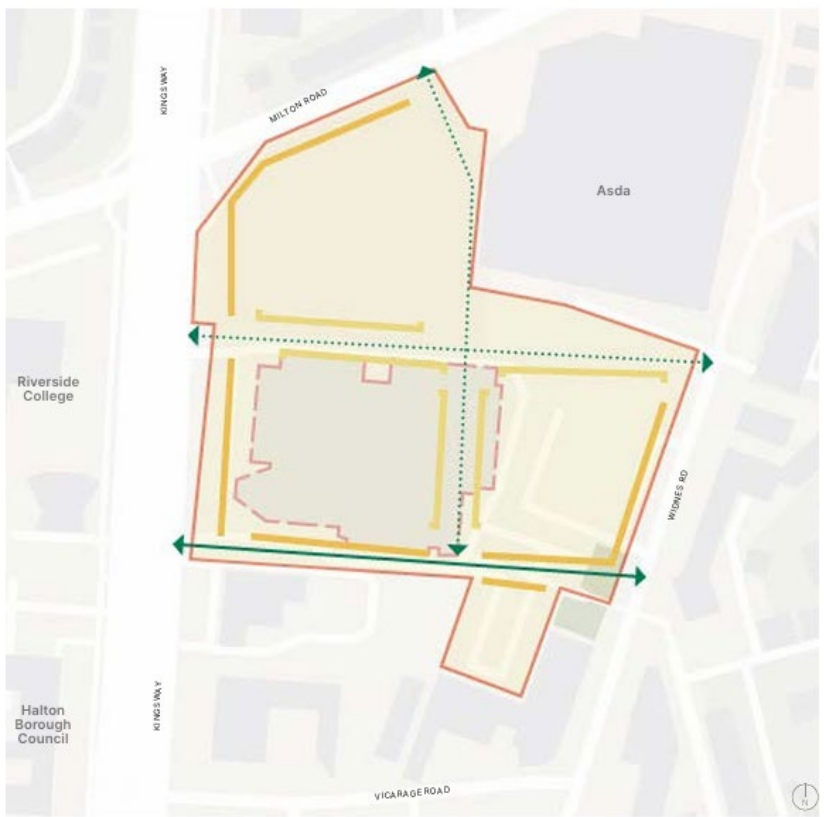
A1: Widnes Town Centre Framework, Kingsway Quarter Design Principles

Key fixes for all options

- Kingsway ownership and area of development
- Former Leisure Centre
- Enhanced Green Corridor as key pedestrian connection between Widnes Road and Kingsway
- Provide primary active frontages along key routes

Potential variations

- Potential to maintain or provide access connecting to surroundings
- Continuous frontage alignment along key internal routes



A2: Concept Design and Layout



B. Design, Building And Material Precedents

B1: Local Vernacular (extract from Design Feasibility study, Ellis Williams)

4.1 LOCAL VERNACULAR

The local vernacular is generally a typical British housing stock however there are some standout buildings in the direct local area. St Paul's Church and Old Widnes Town hall are good examples of ornate red brick design with terracotta dressing and form part of the Victoria Square conservation area.

On Near the site there is a rare example of an art deco building. The former Health Centre that is currently used by the College and is grade ii listed

- 1. Former Health Centre Building
- 2. Old Widnes Town Hall
- 3. Queens Court
- 4. Transform Widnes St Paul's Church



1.



3.



2.



4.

elliswilliams

4.3 BUILDING PRECEDENT

KINGSWAY RESIDENTIAL SCHEME - STAGE 01 FEASIBILITY REPORT



01 | Timekeepers Square



02 | Heald Farm Court

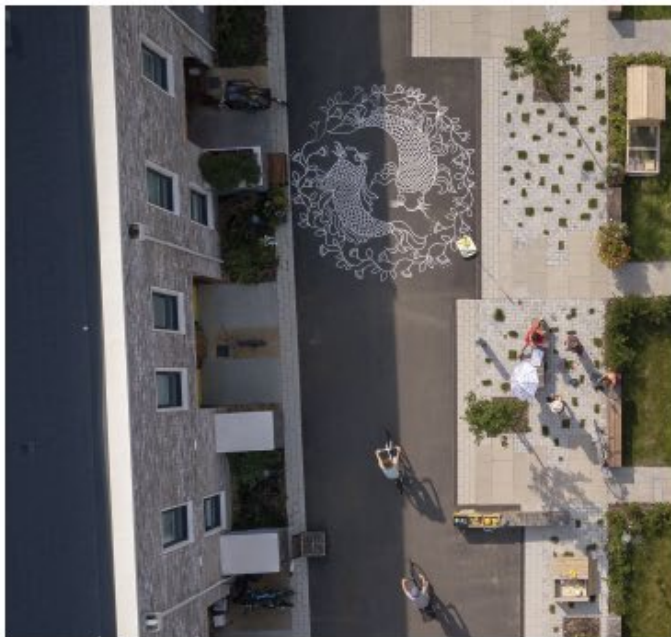


4.4 BUILDING PRECEDENT

KINGSWAY RESIDENTIAL SCHEME - STAGE 01 FEASIBILITY REPORT



03 | Abode Great Kneighton



04 | Marmalade Lane



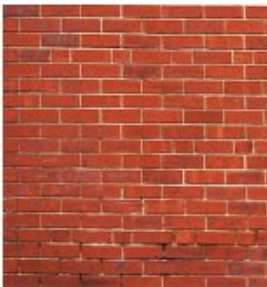
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4.2 MATERIALITY



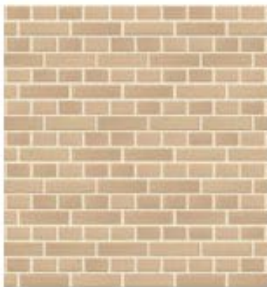
Standing Seam Cladding



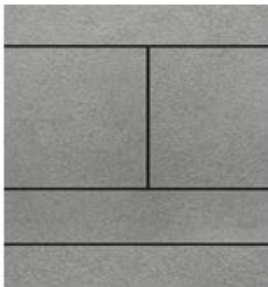
Red Brick



Timber Cladding



Natural Brick



Concrete Cladding

Equitone

4.5 LANDSCAPE PRECEDENT



Defensible Space

Clear front gardens give distinct boundary between the shared surface and the front doors of the houses on site.



Integrated Areas

Small areas of play equipment or gathering spaces with passive supervision to promote usage of the space



Shared Surface

Shared surface for cars and pedestrians to give an open feel to the development whilst allowing access of all kinds.



4.6 LANDSCAPE PRECEDENT



Planting

Use planting to create buffers between different zones on the proposal. Potential to separate private parking and the access routes.

Pedestrian Priority

Areas of the proposal will prioritise pedestrians over cars. This can be achieved by a shared surface but also by creating "obstacles" to naturally slow cars down.

Public Space

Allow people to gather use the space with passive supervision

C. Green Corridor (extract from Design Feasibility study, Ellis Williams)

KINGSWAY RESIDENTIAL SCHEME - STAGE 01 FEASIBILITY REPORT

4.7 GREEN CORRIDOR



Derbyshire Street Pocket Park



HIERARCHY OF SPACE ↑

The diagram plan for the Derbyshire Street Pocket Park shows how you can use planting to separate areas for different uses. The example shows the planting being used to separate cycle and pedestrian routes however the Kingsway Quarter proposal would primarily be used to separate vehicular traffic from both pedestrian and cycles.

The shapes created ensure there is a natural meander that can be used to slow any traffic present on site and create interesting landscape features which can include bike shelters and seating areas. By introducing safe and secure bike shelters along with seating areas we hope to promote active methods of transport across the site.



NATURAL BARRIERS ↑

The proposed planting can be used to both screen potentially unsightly elements of the existing fabric as well as slow people by forcing to navigate around regardless of their chosen transport method.

By including focused and purposeful lighting interventions the proposal would promote safety through passive supervision which would in turn aim to draw people back to the Widnes cultural quarter and community assets.

URBAN GREENING & BIODIVERSITY ↓

The proposal will respond to planning requirements by increasing the biodiversity within the proposal. This is achieved by increasing the quality of planting across the site and attracting diverse wildlife.



RAIN GARDENS & SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE ↑

The landscape proposal should include strategies to limit the impact on the drain capacity in the area. This can be achieved through the use of rain gardens and water collection strategies.

MATERIALITY CHOICE ↓

The chosen materiality will create natural differences for the designations of space. This can be used to separate different transport methods or to separate the public spaces, semi-public and private spaces on site without introducing hard barriers that can create a confrontational boundary.



D. Indicative Elevations and Street Scene / Concept Visual CGI





E. Supported and Specialist Housing Requirement

The boxes below set out a more detailed summary of each requirement to be delivered.

Own front door one bed apartments for young people leaving care

Headline Need to be Met

Provision of supported living accommodation for young people aged over 18 years, who are transitioning out of care (Care Leavers). There will be a provision of floating support, from a separately commissioned provider, to help young people learn the skills needed to manage a tenancy and live independently successfully.

Housing / Accommodation (including Tenure)

- 10 – 12 one-bedroom self-contained homes each with own front door (Use Class C3a). Provided within a two or three-story terrace block, with no or limited internal shared communal spaces (i.e. corridors). Individual dwellings on the ground floor to be level access and designed to M4(2) Building Regulations Standard.
- Tenure of these homes would be Social Rent.

Care and Support Provision

- Floating support provision will be provided through a separately commissioned service, which may be an extension of an existing supported accommodation contract.
- Floating support in place will be for a predetermined amount of time, individual to the resident, but will be designed to be as non-intrusive as possible.
- Residents will also have access to a satellite independent Care Leavers Hub in which to seek further support.

Ancillary & Outdoor Spaces

- Provision for onsite trainer / mentor space in a ground floor / level access space.
- Communal outdoor green space.

Other Requirements

- None

Independent living / extra care scheme for older people

Headline Need to be Met

Accommodation for people aged 55+ and vulnerable adults with lower level support needs. The physical environment will be designed to a high specification to future proof provision and ensure it continues to meet people’s changing needs.

Housing / Accommodation (including Tenure)

- 50 – 70, one and two-bed apartments.
- Accommodation will be mixed-tenure, including homes for rent and shared ownership.
- Different tenures will be mixed throughout the building.
- Accommodation will be fully accessible, adaptable and dementia friendly

Care and Support Provision

- Care will be commissioned by the Council’s domiciliary care providers to meet individual’s assessed needs in line with Halton’s social (and extra care) model.
- Support will be available from the registered housing provider who will provide low-level housing support for all occupants funded through intensive housing management service charge.

Ancillary & Outdoor Spaces

- Provide communal space to ensure social inclusion for people who live there and allow engagement with the wider community
- Will have communal outdoor greenspace.

Other Requirements

- The infrastructure of the building will support technology and adaptations.

Homes for families with children who are disabled or have complex needs

Headline Need to be Met

Provision of flexible specialist housing accommodation available to adults and families of children with extremely complex conditions and behaviours. The homes will be fully adaptable and will be able to meet the needs of a flexible range of complex children and vulnerable adults.

Housing / Accommodation (including Tenure)

- 2 – 3, three-bedroom family homes each with a ground floor toilet/bathroom.
- 2, two or three-bedroom level access properties for vulnerable adults with complex needs and/or disabilities who may need individual tenancies or who wish to continue living with family but where current accommodation does not meet their environmental needs
- Each property will be fully accessible to those with a physical disability.
- Homes would be for social/affordable rent

Care / support Provision

- Care provision in these specialist homes will be commissioned separately from specialist organisations who can meet the needs of either complex children or vulnerable adults, dependent on the proposed residents' individual circumstances.

Ancillary & Outdoor Spaces

- Each property will have a medium to large enclosed garden space.

Other Requirements

- Each property will have the infrastructure for technology to enhance the support offer

F. Summary of National and Local Policy Framework

National Policy

F1: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, defined as the management of land use “in the long-term public interest.” This overarching objective underpins both plan making and decision taking and provides the policy context for the delivery of development, including housing sites. The planning system seeks to achieve sustainable development through the preparation of development plans and the application of planning policy. Development proposals should respond positively to local circumstances, character and community needs.

Accordingly, this Planning Brief takes a proactive role in defining the key design principles, development requirements and place-making objectives that will guide future development of the Kingsway Quarter.

F2: Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP)

The Council formally adopted its Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) in March 2022. It provides the principal planning policy document and spatial framework for the future of Halton, for the period 2014-2037.

Policy CS(R)1: Spatial Strategy

The sites lies within ‘South Widnes’ one of the five Key Urban Regeneration Areas where the majority of new development in the borough is expected to be located.

Policy CS(R)5: A Network Of Centres

The site sits within the Town Centre Boundary as defined on the Policies Map (see Figure 2), with the site being at the southern end of the Centre. The justification for Policy states:

“Widnes is the largest centre in the Borough and pulls trade from Runcorn. Until recently the centre continued to attract investment in additional or reconfigured floorspace, possibly aided by significant housebuilding in north Widnes (Upton Rocks) altering the catchment profile. The centre has migrated north from its original focus over many decades and suffers from being ‘spread out’ along Albert Road/Widnes Road. Some contraction in secondary pitches is evident.” (para 7.58, p54)

CS(R)3: Housing supply and locational priorities

Seeks a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) in more accessible locations, such as Town Centres. It also seeks at least 30% new residential development should be delivered on previously developed (brownfield) land. The policy also identifies ‘Windfall development sites’ form part of the Borough’s Housing Land Supply.

CS(R)13: Affordable Homes

Residential schemes including ten or more dwellings (net gain), or 0.5 hectares or more, excluding brownfield sites, are expected to provide affordable housing, with greenfield sites required to deliver 25% affordable provision.

Whilst Kingsway Quarter is not subject to the strict application of this policy, the Council is not seeking to depart from its underlying objectives to meet a demonstrable housing need and is deemed to be deliverable in accordance with paragraph 7.88 of the DALP. Therefore, this brief seeks to bring the site forward in a manner that aligns with the principles of Policy CS(R)13, supporting the delivery of affordable housing and contributing towards the creation of a balanced and mixed-tenure community.

Housing Mix and Specialist Housing – Policy CS(R)12

It is required that sites of 10-or-more dwellings should provide mix of new properties to contribute to addressing identified needs, through size of homes and specialist housing; specifically seeking specialist housing for older people. The policy states:

“Proposals for new specialist housing for elderly, including extra-care and supported accommodation, will be encouraged in suitable locations, particularly those providing easy access to local services and community facilities.”

Para 7.80 and 7.81 of DALP Policy CS(R)12, acknowledges the importance of selecting appropriate locations and sites for extra care and supported housing:

“The need for extra care or supported housing in Halton is particularly pronounced because of low levels of existing provision. This level of need is anticipated to grow over the plan period given the Borough’s ageing population. The Housing Strategy for Halton indicates that there is a need to develop a wider range of housing options, including extra care and retirement housing across all tenures, to prevent over reliance on residential care.”

“Selecting appropriate locations for extra care and supported housing is important to ensure that residents are able to integrate with the surrounding community and retain maximum independence... Provision of extra care housing is hindered by the lack of developable or publicly owned land and the high costs associated with land purchase, remediation and conversion or demolition of an existing building. Where the Council has the opportunity to influence the type of housing provision on sites which meet a number of the criteria for extra care housing, the need for this specialist type of accommodation will be emphasised.”

In accordance with this policy which is further supported by the borough wide Housing Needs Assessment 2024/25, the Kingsway Quarter site has been identified as a publicly owned site in a highly accessible location which can meet a locally arising need for specialist accommodation, as part of cohesive community. This planning brief has been prepared to set out the site specific specialist and supported housing requirements in more detail and how this provision should be integrated into the wider residential development.

CS(R)18: High Quality Design

Achieving and raising the quality of design is a priority for all development in Halton. In particular the policy requires new development to:

- Enhance and reinforce positive elements of an area’s character contributing to ‘sense of place’;
- Create attractive public spaces, promote active lifestyles, work effectively for all society’s members;
- Provide safe, secure, accessible routes for all society’s members (particular emphasis on walking, cycling, public transport);
- Be well-integrated/connected with existing development.

This planning brief seeks to set out how these and other design quality standards should be achieved on the site.

Policy CS(R)19: Sustainable Development and Climate Change

The policy seeks that all new development should be sustainable and be designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change including reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and adapting to climatic conditions. The policy seeks to encourage new development to incorporate current best practice in sustainable design and construction. The policy states:

*“The BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard will be encouraged as a minimum standard for new non-residential development, and while there are no nationally described standards for residential development, the Council will be supportive of schemes that seek to utilise standards such as the BRE’s Home Quality Mark. **The development of bespoke standards for new housing and non-residential development would also be supported.**”*

This planning brief has been set out how the Kingsway Quarter can achieve sustainable development and meet the challenge of climate change.

Policy C1: Transport Network and Accessibility

This policy seeks to encourage and enable a shift to more sustainable modes of travel. It is necessary to ensure that a successful sustainable transport network is in place. The policy states:

The Council will support development provided that:

- a. It gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design where appropriate;
- b. There is inclusive walking and cycling provision to local facilities and sustainable networks;
- c. Promotes the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV)
- d. Appropriate provision for car and cycle parking is made;

- e. Road designs are well laid out and where appropriate incorporate highway safety measures, such as traffic management and traffic calming schemes, where appropriate
- f. It is located within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop or railway station with a suitable level of service wherever possible; and
- g. It is accessible to all.

This planning brief set outs how the Kingsway Quarter can achieve sustainable transport and accessibility requirements.

F3 Other Local Policy

Social Value SPD

Halton Borough Council’s Social Value in Planning Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved by the Council on 16th April 2026. It sets out how major development must contribute to improved employment, skills and training outcomes for local residents, including employmentrelated activities such as work placements, site visits for students, and wider community engagement initiatives (for example, competitions). Although it applies to all major developments, the SPD is particularly relevant to new residential schemes, as these generate substantial construction activity and associated employment opportunities.

The SPD supplements policies in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan by requiring developers to demonstrate how their proposals will deliver added social, economic and environmental value. It ensures new development contributes to Halton’s priorities for inclusive growth, reduced inequality, and increased access to employment and training.

A Social Value Strategy is required for:

- Residential developments of 30 or more dwellings
- Commercial/industrial schemes creating 1,000m²+ floorspace

For residential schemes, where a detailed Social Value Plan is not viable, the Council expects a financial contribution secured through an appropriate agreement.

Developers must engage with the Council early in the planning process to agree an appropriate social value package. Social value will be secured through a an appropriate agreement, ensuring commitments are legally enforceable.

For housing developments, contributions focus on the construction phase. Developers must outline how they will create measurable opportunities for Halton residents, which may include:

- Apprenticeships (Level 2–4+)
- Work placements and site experience for colleges/schools

- Guaranteed interviews for local people
- Mentorship, careers workshops, and CV/interview support
- Purchase of PPE or training materials
- Mental health, equality, diversity and inclusion training
- Use of local supply chains and procurement

Transport and Accessibility SPD

The development will be required to demonstrate that transport and accessibility considerations have informed the layout and design from the earliest stage. The site should promote a vision-led approach to movement, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport over private car use, in accordance with the Transport and Accessibility SPD, adopted in 2026, and relevant policies of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan. The internal layout must provide safe, legible and convenient routes for all users, ensuring that movement patterns integrate with the surrounding street and path network

This brief outlines key high level transport and access principles any scheme should meet with details addressed through a planning application and a Transport Assessment/Statement as appropriate and in consultation with the Highways Authority.

Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework

Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework was adopted by the Council in April 2025. It is a non-statutory regeneration and planning document. Whilst it does not form part of the statutory development plan, it is capable of being afforded weight as a material consideration as it sets out the Council’s adopted vision, objectives and design principles for the future development of Widnes Town Centre.

The Framework is supported by an evidence base which includes:

- Engagement Report, summarising partner and public engagement undertaken to inform production of the Framework; and
- Parking, Active Travel and Movement Study, which analyses the movement of people through the town centre and identifies interventions that can support its transformation.

The resulting Framework provides a coherent set of spatial strategies and deliverables to drive the regeneration and future of Widnes town centre.

Contextual analysis within the Framework identifies that the town centre faces a number of barriers and challenges including:

- Limited residential within the town centre to generate footfall beyond core retail hours;
- Lack of greenery and softer spaces, and places to relax;
- Lack of animated walking routes and wayfinding to the High Street; and
- Hierarchy of connections are not clear, including the historic spine is lost through the Asda land.
- Riverside College, Victoria Square with Kingsway Learning Centre - the historic heart of Widnes which is now disconnected from the main retail core.

To respond to these challenges the framework sets out a Vision and Objectives for the town centre. The three objectives being:

- A more sustainable town centre, including the need for a high street first approach and greening the town centre;
- A more cohesive town centre, by rebalancing movement to put pedestrians first and repair connections to and from the town centre;
- A more diverse town centre, including the creation of opportunities to increase the number of people living within the centre.

Within the Framework, the Kingsway Quarter is a ‘focused project’ a priority for immediate short term delivery, identifying the following requirements for its development:

A Greener Town Centre Requirements

- ‘Greening’ and planting along the Widnes Road frontage, which forms part of central spine of the town centre;
- Street trees and soft plant to Milton Road frontage;
- Creation of a new east – west green link across the site between Kingsway and Widnes Road, incorporating public realm enhancements to soften the streetscape and incorporating SUDs.



Figure 3: A greener Town Centre Diagram, Framework extract

Flip the movement hierarchy to rebalance movement across the town centre

- Development of Kingsway Quarter must clearly evidence that it has been designed to the town centre movement hierarchy (as shown at figure 4).

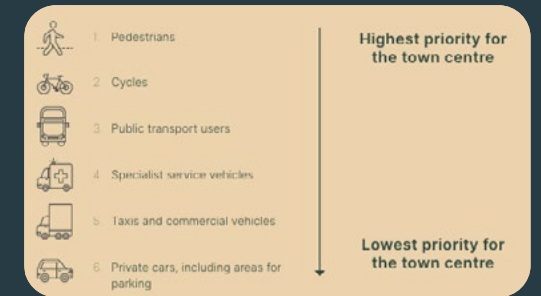


Figure 4: Town Centre movement hierarchy diagram, Framework extract

Repair connections to and from the town centre

- Enhanced east – west active travel route across the site between Kingsway and Widnes Road;
- Crossing enhancement to Kingsway to improve connectivity between Riverside College and town centre. Crossing should meet pedestrian desire lines;
- Junction of Kingsway and Milton Road should be recognised as a Town Centre Gateway.



Figure 5: Repairing town centre connections diagram, Framework extract

Town Centre Living

- Kingsway Quarter will blend with existing residential areas with an expected urban density of 50+ dph (It is noted that this density exceeds the minimum density set out in DALP Policy CS(R)3: Housing supply and locational priorities)
- Provide a new type of town centre living to attract young families and older residents in a sustainable setting;
- 3 – 4 storeys anticipated providing a mixture of townhouses and small apartments;
- Mixture of tenures, targeting first homes, young families and older persons homes, including affordable provision.
- Recognise that proximity to existing town centre facilities will support enhanced social interaction, with easy access to local services, leisure, and social spaces that encourage participation in community activity.

As one of the focused projects within the Framework more detailed design and layout principles are set out for the site. These are contained at appendix A1 of this brief. This recognises that Kingsway Quarter presents a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to regenerating and revitalising Widnes Town Centre through residential led development. It can provide a statement of ambition and act as catalyst for further investment and change.

These requirements are carried into this Planning Brief, to ensure that the Kingsway Quarter is brought forward in a coherent way and contributes to realising the wider spatial strategies for the town centre.



A Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031

In February 2026, the Council published a new Housing strategy for Halton. The aim of the Strategy is for “Homes that Drive Growth, Opportunity, and Fairness for all” in Halton.

The Strategy seeks to achieve this through a Vision and four Priorities:

- Driving Economic Growth through housing-led investment.
- Creating inclusive housing markets to promote fairness.
- Supporting Independent Living, Empowering People, and Strengthening Communities.
- Promoting Healthy Homes, Thriving Communities and Resilient Neighbourhoods.

It is underpinned by a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), to provide an up-to-date evidence on the housing needs across all sections of the local community. This included getting a better understanding of current and future housing requirements of existing and newly forming households in Halton. Covering matters such as the need for adaptations, level access and supported housing; and assessing the affordability of purchasing and renting a home in Halton. The HNA covers the period 2024 to 2042 and for recommendations breaks the borough down into sub areas, with Kingsway Quarter being within the Central and Southern Widnes sub area.

The Strategy identifies housing-led growth can be driven through increasing residential delivery in the borough’s town centres. Recognising:

“A growing town centre population supports local shops, cafés, and services by increasing footfall throughout the day and evening, helping businesses stay viable and attracting further investment... By enabling more people to live near services and public transport, this approach promotes more sustainable, low carbon lifestyles and supports the long-term vibrancy and resilience of Halton’s communities ”

Widnes Town Centre is recognised to be poised for a major transformation driven by the Regeneration Framework with town centre living and the Kingsway Quarter demonstrating ambition to deliver high-quality residential led development on a prominent site. The site presenting the opportunity to addressing local demand for both older-persons and younger family housing.

Both the Housing Strategy and HNA provides further evidence for the need, type and mix of housing and specialist accommodation appropriate for the Kingsway Quarter site. The strategy identifies the need to promote a more inclusive housing market ensures that people from all walks of life — whether on low incomes, in insecure employment, facing health challenges, or simply starting out — can access a safe, secure and suitable home. This includes provision of social and affordable rent homes, as well a introducing more affordable routes to home ownership (such as shared ownership and rent to buy). In respect of latter point the Strategy states:

“Increasing access to affordable home ownership is essential to ensure that local people can remain and put down roots in their communities, supporting first time buyers and key workers while also contributing to wider economic growth.”

In terms of dwelling size of affordable homes, the HNA assessment identifies (at Table C13, p127) a need for a range of 1 – 4+ bed homes in central and southern Widnes. With the predominant need being for 3 bed houses (48%) and 1 – 2 bed homes (27% - including both flats/houses). Alongside some larger 4+ bed homes (16.4%) and a further need for 1 – 2 bed homes which are level access (8.5%).

The Strategy recognises that going forward the Council will be much clearer about supported and specialist housing requirements, and includes pledges to:

- Improve the local housing offer for those most in need — including survivors of domestic abuse, young people leaving care, and people experiencing homelessness;
- Provide choice and dignity for people to live independently as they age,
- including increased older person's housing provision.

The HNA assessment identified a need for 2,790 additional specialist older people homes by 2042. A commitment is made within the Strategy to produce a new Specialist Housing Prospectus which will guide the market to respond more effectively to these diverse local need. This Prospectus has not yet been produced.

In respect of young people leaving care, the Strategy recognises this has strong public backing with 58.2% of respondents in our 2024 household survey felt that supporting looked after children leaving care with permanent accommodation and support should be an important priority in our Housing Strategy.

Responding to this, the Strategy sets out the Council approach to care leavers accommodation:

“Young people transitioning out of care often struggle to access and sustain appropriate housing. Many are not tenancy-ready, lack support networks, and face stigma from private landlords, leading to high rates of tenancy breakdown. The council intends to identify housing solutions earlier for young people with plans made far earlier.

Young people often need one bedroom, self contained homes because shared housing like Houses in Multiple Occupation are often unsuitable. We currently have 2 trainer flats — transitional, self-contained homes with on site or floating support that help young people learn the skills needed to manage a tenancy successfully. There is a clear need for more trainer flats.”

The Strategy also identifies that the Council's approach is guided by supporting people to remain living in Halton or return to Halton, this includes solutions for children with disabilities (or other complex needs) where current housing is not suitable and families are in danger of being split up. The response to this being a requirement for homes that are fully adaptable and able to meet a flexible range of needs.

The identified local housing need as set out in the Housing Strategy and HNA provide an important basis for informing the mix of housing types and tenures, including specialist and supported housing, to be provided within the Kingsway Quarter.

Halton Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2022 - 2027

The aim of the Plan is to be net zero by 2040 for Council activities and set out a framework for change, identifying some early actions and priorities and setting out our ambitions over the short, medium and long term.

In the Homes and Regeneration Theme, the following action is identified:

“H2 - Develop a strategy to accelerate delivery of Net Zero new build homes within the Borough ahead of UK Government targets and introduction of new Future Homes Standards, including use of Council land to deliver a demonstration project.”

The Kingsway Quarter is identified as a candidate site for potential inclusion of a net zero demonstration project. This planning brief will set out the opportunity for how this can be achieved (see section 4.6.8).

One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2027

This is a strategy for improving health and reducing health inequalities within Halton. It was prepared by the One Halton Place Based Partnership to guide how health and social care partners will work together to ensure everyone in Halton gets the best start in life and gets the opportunity to live longer healthier lives in older age.

One of the underlying themes is supporting our community in ageing well, recognising that by 2041, the proportion of Halton population aged 65 + will increase by 38%. The following action is identified:

“Integrating and strengthening services and wellbeing support for older people including support to address frailty, loneliness and isolation”

This planning brief will seek to ensure that the Kingsway Quarter is designed to enable and support healthy lives and promotes social interaction including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other.

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