

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 12 June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Leader

SUBJECT: Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework – Creation of Widnes Strategic Board

WARD(S) All Widnes

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members for approval, the structure for the Widnes Strategic Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- 1. approves the structure of the Widnes Strategic Board and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to finalise its members; and**
- 2. approves the draft Terms of Reference appendix 1 and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to update and adapt the Terms of Reference as the projects contained within the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework evolve.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework and its supporting documents were presented to and endorsed by the Executive Board on 17th April 2025.
- 3.2 One of the recommendations agreed on 17th April 2025 was ‘to move towards establishing a Widnes Strategic Board comprising relevant public and private sector partners, to have direct oversight of the delivery of projects.’

3.3 The structure before the Board today is the result of the approval of that recommendation.

3.4 The purpose of the Widnes Strategic Board is to:

- Provide advice, insight, and challenge to Halton Borough Council on the regeneration and development of Widnes town centre.
- Represent the interests of local residents, businesses, and community organisations.
- Support the delivery of the Widnes Regeneration Framework and related projects.
- Champion Widnes town centre and promote civic pride.

3.5 The Widnes Strategic Board will consist of up to 15 members drawn from the local community.

3.6 The table below demonstrates the demographic of members to join the Board. It is anticipated that some members of the Widnes Strategic Board may be able to represent more than one of the categories listed below in order to keep the Board to a maximum of 15 members.

	Target background
1	Halton Council (Portfolio Nominees) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Major Projects- Housing & Environmental Sustainability.- Community Safety
2	Business Sector Employers
3	Strategic Housing
4	Business Development and Support
5	MP for Widnes and Halewood
6	Voluntary and Community Sector
7	Cultural and Creative Industries
8	Education & Learning Sector
9	Health and Social Care (e.g. NHS Trust, local GP)
10	Policing
11	Tourism and Hospitality Sector
12	Leisure Sector

3.7 The Board will be supported by Regeneration Officers and occasionally officers from other departments as and when necessary. The Council's Programme Management Office will manage the administration and servicing of the Board.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Framework aligns with existing local and national policy objectives, supporting economic growth, sustainability, and community well-being. Its implementation may require updates to

planning policies, investment strategies, and partnership agreements to ensure effective delivery.

4.2 Consideration will also need to be given to how the Framework interacts with emerging policies, including those related to housing, transport and environmental sustainability.

4.3 Ensuring alignment with the Local Plan and broader strategic priorities will be essential to securing funding and stakeholder support.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with setting up a Board beyond minor expenses for refreshments at quarterly meetings.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Possible positive implications depending on what developments and programmes are implemented.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Potential for job creation and inward investment.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Possible positive implications depending on what developments and programmes are implemented.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Possible positive implications depending on what developments and programmes are implemented.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Any development that comes forward through the Framework will be built to environmentally friendly building regulation standards and biodiversity net gain.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The future projects can help create assets and public realm for local people to enjoy.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Each project the Board discusses within the Framework will be subject to individual risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential challenges.

7.2 Bringing together people with different views and priorities is important, but it can also lead to disagreements. If these differences are not managed well, it could lead to delays in decision-making or difficulty in agreeing on actions. This could slow down progress or cause frustration among board members. Clear and agreed terms of reference will mitigate this risk.

7.3 If people in the wider community feel the Board is not making a real difference, or if they think decisions are being made behind closed doors, trust could be lost. Similarly, if the board's advice is not acted on, members may lose interest or feel that their time is being wasted. This could lead to the board being seen as ineffective. Regular review, feedback and improvement would help to mitigate this risk and keep the Board effective and inclusive over time.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Establishing a Widnes Strategic Board has the potential to advance equality and improve inclusion by actively involving a wide range of voices in shaping the future of the town centre.

8.2 All significant projects will be subject to their own Equality Impact Assessment at conception and design stage.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Consideration of the impacts of climate change, including reducing the carbon footprint, mitigation and adaptation will be required. At the Town Centre level, this would include such considerations such as reduced private transport use, provision of local renewable energy sources, alternative heating sources, Electric Vehicle charging points, appropriate building design, innovative construction methods, shading and planting. The Framework can have a role to reduce the Town Centre's impact on the climate as well as promoting good practices for residents and businesses.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- Draft Terms of Reference
- Map of area