

Halton

Regeneration & Investment Briefing

Funding, places and delivery.

A briefing for the organisations bringing forward homes and regeneration across Runcorn, Widnes and Halton Lea.

Inside this briefing

A practical guide to funding routes, local programmes and the organisations turning sites and neighbourhood priorities into delivery.

For organisations delivering housing and regeneration in Halton.

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The Brindley, Runcorn

DATES AND DECISIONS TO WATCH

As at 19 September 2026	Published position
Local Plan housing requirement	Adopted Local Plan requires 350 homes a year to 2037; the council's 2024/25 Housing Needs Assessment puts the standard method minimum at 474 a year. No review timetable verified. [29,30]
Pride in Place, Runcorn Town	£20m over ten years, replacing the £19.5m Plan for Neighbourhoods allocation; delivery from April 2026. As a phase 1 place, Runcorn has no further Plan deadline. [6,7,34]
Pride in Place, Hough Green (Widnes)	Halton's single phase 2 neighbourhood. Plan due to MHCLG by 30 November 2026; up to £20m over ten years. Board Chair still not named. [8,34]
Pride in Place Impact Fund	£750,000 in 2025/26 and £750,000 in 2026/27 — £1.5m in total, directed at Widnes town centre; fully committed by March 2027. [9,10,35,37]

Figures in this briefing cover different programmes, geographies and periods. They should not be added into a single borough investment total.

Up to £46 billion over ten years

Homes England and its subsidiary, the National Housing Bank, have up to £46 billion to deploy across England to 2036. These are the principal streams. [1]

The joint Investment Prospectus, published on 31 March 2026 ahead of the Bank's opening on 1 April, brings grant, land and finance into one framework. The Bank aims to attract more than £50 billion of additional private capital over the decade.

Stream	Amount	What it funds / who it reaches
Social and Affordable Homes Programme 2026–2036	At least £27bn outside London £39bn nationally, including London	Capital grant for social and affordable rent, shared ownership, supported housing and estate regeneration. Registered Providers, councils, housebuilders and community-led organisations, through continuous market engagement or strategic partnerships.
Housing and Infrastructure Capital Grant	About £3.1bn Homes England's share of the £5bn national pot*	Land assembly, remediation and strategic infrastructure; dedicated viability-gap support planned for later in 2026/27. Councils, developers and landowners with sites the market cannot unlock alone.
National Housing Delivery Fund Debt, equity and guarantees	Up to £16bn	Loans, equity and guarantees, including funding that may be devolved to mayoral authorities. Housebuilders, Registered Providers, funds and lending partners.

*The prospectus describes the agency's share as £3.1bn, subject to final confirmation. These are programme envelopes, not a ring-fenced allocation to Halton.

PROGRAMME MILESTONES

Date	Milestone
31 March / 1 April 2026	Investment Prospectus published / National Housing Bank opens
25 August 2026	First wave: £9.58bn to 33 strategic partners outside London [2]
Later in 2026/27	Dedicated viability-gap grant planned [1]
To 2036	Ten-year programme period

Land, grant and finance can be combined around the needs of a scheme.

Grant, land and finance

Which support fits a scheme depends less on its size than on what is holding it up: a funding gap, a difficult site, or the tenure of the homes to be delivered. [1]

Family	Product	Purpose	Typical user
Grant	Social and Affordable Homes Programme	Affordable tenures, supported housing and estate regeneration	RPs, councils, developer partners
Grant	Housing and Infrastructure Capital Grant	Viability gaps, infrastructure, land assembly and remediation	Councils, landowners, master developers
Land	Homes England land	Acquisition, enabling and disposal through sale, lease, development agreement or joint venture	Developers of all sizes
Finance	SME Accelerator Loan	Site finance for smaller builders establishing a track record	SME housebuilders
Finance	Revolving credit facility	Multi-site support alongside commercial lenders	Growing builders
Finance	Senior and mezzanine debt	Project funding for build to rent, later living and brownfield schemes	Developers and funds
Finance	Corporate lending	Balance-sheet finance for growth, including modern methods of construction	Housebuilders
Finance	Infrastructure loans	Long-term finance, up to 15 years, for upfront infrastructure	Developers and councils
Finance	Low-interest RP loans	Unlocking capital investment in social and affordable homes	Registered Providers
Finance	Equity	Minority investment in vehicles typically delivering more than 3,000 homes	Funds and partnerships
Finance	Guarantees	Bonds and loans to reduce institutional financing costs	Funds and RPs

Two grant routes in the Liverpool City Region. Land, remediation and infrastructure grant normally comes first through the Combined Authority: the Brownfield Land Fund, the Housing Investment Fund and the integrated settlement that LCRCA has held since 1 April 2026. Social and Affordable Homes Programme grant remains administered by Homes England, shaped by LCRCA's published strategic priorities. The National Housing Bank makes its own finance decisions while working alongside the agency.

How the regional routes fit together

For a Halton scheme, land, infrastructure support usually comes first through the Combined Authority; Homes England takes the national grant decision.

FIRST-WAVE SAHP ESTIMATE FOR THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

£380m **c.3,100 homes**

Estimated strategic-partnership spend and homes across the region in MHCLG's regional funding breakdown of 24 August 2026; the companion Homes England release names the 33 partners and gives no totals. Neither gives a Halton allocation. [2]

Scheme requirement	Route to establish	What to resolve
Social and affordable homes (SAHP)	Homes England, via strategic partnership or continuous market engagement, shaped by LCRCA's strategic priorities.	Eligible tenure against the 60% Social Rent floor; delivery partner; grant need. [21,4,5]
Land, infrastructure or abnormal costs	LCRCA's Brownfield Land Fund and Halton's regeneration team; Brownfield Land Release Fund for public land.	Evidence the scheme is unviable without support; brownfield status; LCR Housing Pipeline status. [15]
Additional affordable-housing support	LCRCA's Housing Investment Fund and the LCRCA / Homes England Strategic Place Partnership.	SAHP secured or progressing; the remaining gap; deliverability. [15]
Debt, equity or guarantees	National Housing Bank via Homes England.	Borrower or investment structure, commercial funding, security. [1]

Brownfield Land Fund: current position. LCRCA's £60m programme from July 2020 targets at least 4,000 and up to 5,000 homes; applications go to the Combined Authority's housing team with no standing deadline, and the test is that the scheme is unviable without grant. A further £13.8m for 555 homes was added in November 2025. The Housing Investment Fund, endorsed January 2026, supports stalled and early-stage sites in the LCR Housing Pipeline. [3]

Priority places. Widnes and Runcorn are both named LCRCA SAHP priority places, among 13 across the city region, with a regional tenure floor of at least 60% Social Rent. [21,15] Press reporting put the region's SAHP share at around £380m and 3,100 homes; not verified. [2,15]

REGIONAL AMBITIONS TO DESIGN FOR

LCRCA's SAHP strategic priorities seek around 16,000 social and affordable homes over 2026–2036 with at least 60% at Social Rent, across 13 priority places. The LCR Housing Pipeline published in January 2026 carries 64,044 homes on 310 sites. The Liverpool North Docks Mayoral Development Corporation, decided by the Combined Authority on 25 September 2026, could bring forward up to 17,000 homes. These are regional ambitions across delivery routes. [21]

Who decides what

Funding, planning and delivery sit with different organisations. Identify the decision you need before choosing the first conversation.

01

Homes England / National Housing Bank

Final SAHP funding and contractual decisions; the Bank assesses its finance investments. [1,4]

02

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Regional priorities and tenure mix, the Brownfield Land Fund, the Housing Investment Fund and the Spatial Development Strategy. [15]

03

Halton Borough Council

A unitary authority: local housing need, planning, council land, and accountable body for Pride in Place, the Impact Fund and the Town Deal. [6,7]

04

Neighbourhood and town boards

The Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board and the proposed Widnes Strategic Board shape local priorities. Council accountability and national programme rules still apply. [6,12,13]

05

Registered Providers

Halton Housing and The Riverside Group are the two providers with the clearest published development activity in the borough. [16,17]

PUBLIC ROUTES FOR THE NEXT CONVERSATION

Enquiry	Public route
National grant / finance	enquiries@homesengland.gov.uk
Regional brownfield and land	brownfield@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk [15]
Halton Borough Council, general	0303 333 4300 · hdl@halton.gov.uk [18]
Regeneration and economic development	Halton's regeneration pages [19]
Planning policy / Local Plan	forward.planning@halton.gov.uk [20]
Reconnecting Runcorn / Pride in Place	reconnectingruncorn.info [11]
Procurement	The Chest [15]

A useful first enquiry names the site, landowner, proposed use, delivery lead, funding gap and next decision. Attach a concise programme and explain what the requested intervention changes.

A route for smaller providers

A first-wave strategic allocation is one route into delivery. Continuous Market Engagement also gives eligible organisations a direct route to Homes England.

Continuous Market Engagement

Open for individual schemes and portfolios, while funding remains available. Designed to accommodate smaller partners, new entrants and complex projects. [19]

Strategic partnerships

Programme-level allocations support delivery at scale. The initial bidding round closed on 15 April 2026; future rounds will be announced. [18]

Route	Practical fit and requirements
CME general	A direct scheme bid. Establish eligible tenure, costs, delivery readiness and grant need with Homes England. [18,19]
CME portfolio	Discuss the pipeline before bidding. Initial portfolios normally deliver 300–500 homes; named sites should start by 31 March 2028 and complete by 31 March 2032. [19]
Delivery partnership	An eligible RP or council can work with a strategic partner under the programme's delivery-partner rules. Owning the funded homes is a different role from supplying construction services. [18,20]

BEFORE A GRANT APPLICATION

Organisations need Homes England Investment Partner qualification to receive grant. New partners can apply for that status alongside the funding application. Programme qualification and regulatory registration are separate steps. [19]

The bid should show how it meets local housing need and regional priorities. The Liverpool City Region seeks at least 60% Social Rent through SAHP, with 13 named priority places. [21] Halton's adopted Local Plan requires at least 30% of new housing on previously developed land over the plan period. [30] The council's 2024/25 Housing Needs Assessment recommends an affordable tenure split of 50% social rent, 27% affordable rent and 23% affordable home ownership. [29]

HOW TO PREPARE THE DISCUSSION

Bring a site schedule, proposed tenure mix, cost plan, planning position, delivery programme and confirmation of the intended landlord. Explain what is ready now and which dependencies still need resolving.

Places and programmes

Runcorn's Town Deal, Halton Lea's Riverside-led regeneration, Widnes town centre and the borough's Pride in Place programmes sit at different stages. Establish the live phase and the organisation commissioning it.



Runcorn Old Town · Reconnecting Runcorn's Town Deal area.

Runcorn Old Town — Reconnecting Runcorn

£23.6m Town Deal, eight projects

Confirmed in 2021, delivering eight projects under the Reconnecting Runcorn banner; match funding has nearly doubled the total investment since 2021, with the remaining projects completing and opening to the public during 2026. Mercia Place delivers 66 affordable homes for over-55s, expected spring 2026. [11,16]

Establish the actual delivery lead — projects range from a Community Land Trust scheme to a heritage restoration society, sitting outside the council's own programme.

Widnes town centre

Framework approved; Impact Fund targeted here

The Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework was approved by Executive Board on 17 April 2025, with the Widnes Strategic Board's structure approved on 12 June 2025. The £1.5m Pride in Place Impact Fund is being deployed against this framework, but board membership and homes numbers remain unpublished. [12,13,35,36]

Confirm whether a scheme sits inside the framework's project areas before assuming Impact Fund money reaches it.

Halton Lea — Riverside's £120m regeneration

134 + 257 homes consented

Riverside is redeveloping The Uplands (317 homes demolished, 257 built, approved May 2024) and the Palace Fields Local Centre (134 homes including veterans and extra care housing, permission granted 7 August 2023). The whole scheme is valued at around £120m over 8–10 years. [17,39]

The delivery team — Compendium Living, Lovell Partnerships and named consultants — is the practical supply-chain route in; it does not run through the council. [39]

Heath Park, Runcorn

545 homes, outline consent

Outline permission granted 22 May 2024 for a 57-acre mixed-use masterplan: 545 homes (25% affordable), a hotel, senior living and extra care, offices and retail. Reported by trade press; not verified against the decision notice. [23]

The promoter said it would engage investors to implement — establish who is actually delivering before treating this as a live pipeline.

A town programme and a neighbourhood

Runcorn Town and Hough Green, Widnes each have up to £20m over ten years, but they are different programmes on different timetables — one already in delivery, one still recruiting its board. [6,8]



Hough Green, Widnes

Neighbourhood	Published position / next conversation
Runcorn Town (phase one)	£19.5m over ten years, presented locally as up to £20m, replacing the Plan for Neighbourhoods allocation; 25% revenue / 75% capital, devolved directly to the council. Regeneration Plan was due to MHCLG by 28 November 2025; delivery from April 2026. As a phase 1 place, Runcorn Town has no further national Pride in Place Plan deadline. Whether the Regeneration Plan was submitted and approved is not verified. [6,7,34]
Hough Green, Widnes (phase two)	Confirmed as Halton's single phase 2 neighbourhood; up to £20m over ten years, 63% capital / 37% revenue; Pride in Place Plan due to MHCLG by 30 November 2026; £1.36m released on approval in FY 2027/28. Locally known as Hough Green and Ditton; funding secured by Derek Twigg MP. Board applications closed noon 17 June 2026; the Chair is still not named. [8,34,37,38]

BRING A PROJECT THAT CAN BE DELIVERED

Need, ownership and consent

Explain who benefits and how the proposal responds to residents. Identify land control, a delivery lead, consents and dependencies.

Capital and continuing costs

Set out works, development costs and contingency, then identify the asset owner, operating budget and maintenance responsibility.

Runcorn Town's phase 1 place means it has already received its early capacity funding and is in year 1 of delivery; the guidance's 26 February 2027 date applies only to the 40 phase 2 boards named in March 2026 and to Wales — Halton has no place on that list. [34] Public contact routes: page 6.

Different pots, different decisions

Halton's Town Deal, its two Pride in Place programmes and the borough-wide Impact Fund operate at different scales and on different timetables; none should be summed into a single borough total.

£23.6m

Reconnecting Runcorn: the Town Deal award for Runcorn Old Town [11]

Component	What the figure includes
£23.6m	Towns Fund Town Deal, confirmed 2021, eight projects under the Reconnecting Runcorn banner; match funding has nearly doubled the total investment since 2021. [11]
£19.5m (up to £20m)	Pride in Place, Runcorn Town — formerly Plan for Neighbourhoods — 25% revenue / 75% capital, delivery from April 2026. [6,7]

Funding note: Halton's successor allocation to UKSPF (Local Growth Fund) for 2026/27 is not verified; UKSPF itself funded festivals, a cultural lead post, improvements at Widnes Market and The Brindley, and 17 community grants to March 2026. No Levelling Up Fund award is verified for Halton. [28]

PRIDE IN PLACE CAPACITY AND SMALL GRANTS

Commitment	Published position
£200k (2025/26) and £150k (2026/27)	Pride in Place capacity funding for consultation, feasibility, management and branding. [6]
£250 micro / £1,000–£5,000 Grow grants	Pride in Place Runcorn Small Grants, administered by Halton & St Helens VCA; round 2 closed 11 September 2026, decisions due early October 2026. [26]

The Pride in Place headline and the Town Deal are two separate programmes covering broadly the same part of Runcorn. Do not add them together as a single "Runcorn investment" figure.

HALTON PRIDE IN PLACE IMPACT FUND

£1.5m	£750,000 in 2025/26 (determination 29 September 2025) and £750,000 in 2026/27 (8 April 2026). [9,10] Targeted at Widnes town centre: the Executive Board report of 11 December 2025 is marked "Wards: Widnes Wards" and directs the money at the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework. [35]
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100% capital, split 50/50 across the two years, fully committed by March 2027; uncommitted sums are repayable to MHCLG. [27]

Homes, partners and local need

Halton's adopted Local Plan requires 350 homes a year to 2037; the council's 2024/25 evidence base puts the standard method minimum at 474 a year — a gap of roughly 35%. Housing Strategy adoption date and targets are not verified. [29,30,14]



Runcorn Locks · The Bridgewater Canal at Runcorn Old Town, beneath the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

Partner / example	Documented local delivery
The Riverside Group — Hallwood Park and Palace Fields, Halton Lea	Around £120m over 8–10 years. The Uplands: 317 homes demolished, 257 built (approved May 2024). Local Centre: 134 homes incl. veterans and extra care housing, permission granted 7 Aug 2023. [17,39]
Halton Housing — Mercia Place, Runcorn High Street	66 affordable homes for over-55s on a long-vacant brownfield site; completion expected spring 2026; part of the Town Deal. [11,16]
Halton Housing — Sewell Street, Runcorn	33 affordable rent flats on a former dairy site; complete. [16]
Halton Housing / Open Door / Russell Homes — Bower Brook Gardens phase 2, Widnes	118 two and three bedroom semi-detached homes across a range of tenures. Not verified. [16]
SOG Group — Heath Park, Runcorn	545 homes outline, 25% affordable. Consent 22 May 2024; not verified against the decision notice. [23]

These are examples of local activity, not a complete provider list, procurement shortlist or evidence of a new SAHP award.

FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ASSET TEAMS

Agree tenure, accessible homes and support needs before fixing the unit mix. Bring the operator into the appraisal: nominations, management, service charges and whole-life maintenance. Keep new-supply budgets separate from existing-stock investment.

From scheme assembly to appointment

The national programme supports delivery through councils, Registered Providers and developers. The local supply chain enters through their projects, procurement routes and contractor packages.

Stage	Lead organisations	Specialist input
01 · Site and viability	Council estates, landowner, developer, RP, funders	Land and planning advice, valuation, surveys and abnormal-cost assessment
02 · Enabling	Halton Borough Council, developer, LCRCA / Homes England where relevant	Ground investigation, remediation, ecology, civils and utilities
03 · Funding and agreement	RP, developer, public funder, lender	Legal, cost advice, programme and development finance
04 · Design and consent	Client team, architect, planning authority	Architecture, engineering, arboriculture and technical coordination
05 · Construction	Main contractor and client delivery team	Groundworks, structure, roofing, M&E, scaffolding and site services
06 · Handover and operation	RP asset team, council or other operator	Commissioning, landscaping, compliance and maintenance

FINDING THE ACTUAL ROUTE TO WORK

Halton Borough Council advertises its tender opportunities on The Chest (www.the-chest.org.uk), the North West's shared e-procurement portal hosted on the Proactis ProContract platform, used by five of the six Liverpool City Region councils; Liverpool City Council directs suppliers to ProContract rather than to The Chest portal. The council's procurement contact is procurement@halton.gov.uk. Contracts above £138,760 including VAT are also advertised on Find a Tender, with lower-value opportunities on Contracts Finder. [31,32]

The council applies the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and has produced a local version of Social Value Themes and Outcomes for bidders, supported by a Social Value Policy and Framework. Align commitments to Halton wards rather than generic city-region outcomes. [31]

A published forward procurement pipeline for Halton was not verified. The borough's largest housing programmes — Riverside at Halton Lea and Halton Housing's schemes — are RP-led, so their contractor and consultant appointments run through those organisations' own frameworks, not through the council.

A funding announcement does not itself create an open invitation to tender. Confirm whether work is being commissioned directly, through a framework or by a main contractor.

Build the workforce into the plan

Construction skills, training capacity and local employment should be considered while the scheme and its contracts are being assembled.

CONSTRUCTION SKILLS AT RIVERSIDE COLLEGE

Riverside College, the borough's FE college, has two Widnes campuses. Construction provision includes Level 3 Site Carpentry and Joinery, HNC Construction at Level 4, and apprenticeships in brickwork and painting and decorating; the apprenticeship team works with over 700 employers. [33]

The regional North-West Construction Technical Excellence College — one of ten in England, £100m nationally, targeting 40,000 skilled workers by 2029 — is hosted by Wigan & Leigh College, covering Cheshire and the Liverpool City Region. LCRCA also runs a Construction Skills Service and Skills Bootcamps. [15]

01 · Forecast

Trades, numbers and start dates

02 · Agree

Training, supervision and delivery partners

03 · Evidence

Starts, qualifications and sustained work

A PRACTICAL WORKFORCE BRIEF FOR A LIVE SCHEME

Agree early	What to record
Demand and timing	Map likely labour needs to the programme: enabling works, structure, services, finishes and handover.
Employer and supervision	Name the employing organisation, site supervisor and training partner. Allow time for recruitment and induction.
Learning and progression	Identify the relevant qualification, practical experience and route into continuing work.
Evidence of delivery	Agree how starts, completions, qualifications and employment outcomes will be recorded by the contract owner.

Suggested briefing checklist for clients and contractors. Agree the actual commitments through the scheme's procurement and contract process.

CONNECT TRAINING WITH COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Halton's Pride in Place menu includes Work, Productivity and Skills and Education and Opportunity; the 25% revenue element makes skills and employment activity fundable in a way capital-only programmes do not. [6]

Riverside College: www.riversidecollege.ac.uk

Regional college enquiries: CTECenquiries@wigan-leigh.ac.uk

Evidence and source notes

Research checked on 19 September 2026. Numbered references link to primary sources; public enquiry routes are on page 6.

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