

# Nantwich



## Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plans

December 2022





Prepared by Cushman and Wakefield,  
Optimised Environments and Mott  
Macdonald for Cheshire East Council

December 2022

# Contents

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01 Introduction	4
<i>Baseline</i>	
02 Introduction to Nantwich	10
03 Policy Context	16
04 Our People	20
05 Our Place	26
06 Connectivity and Accessibility	44
07 Our Offer	52
08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats	60
<i>Action Plan</i>	
09 Priority Areas for Intervention	64
10 Potential actions	72
11 Delivery	94

## Context of the Study

**Town centres across the UK are facing unprecedented challenges. Changes in how we shop, in particular the growth in internet shopping, has significantly decreased footfall in town centres resulting in numerous store closures, leaving many centres struggling. Trends that have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Government has stated its commitment to helping high streets and town centres evolve and adapt to both the structural changes that are occurring in the retail market as well as to COVID-19. It has identified a number of measures to support town centres at this challenging time including the Future High Streets Fund, a High Streets Task Force, changes to the planning system and direct support to local authorities and local businesses. Alongside these national measures the government has stressed the need for strong local leadership in supporting town centres.

## Town Centre Vitality Plans

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is committed to supporting the vitality and viability of all town centres within the borough. Whilst acknowledging that in areas of low deprivation, there may be limited opportunity to bid for centralised funding. When funding opportunities do become available, there is generally a need to have clear proposals already agreed before bids can be submitted.

It is also recognised that there are often initiatives which can be taken to support the vitality and viability of local centres which do not require significant capital funding, but rather require the support of local volunteers and/or businesses.

In addition, the reports could be used to support discussions regarding the allocation of S106 monies resulting from development within and in the vicinity of the local centres.

**With an almost overwhelming array of options and opinions on what is the best way to support town centre vitality and viability, CEC has commissioned Cushman & Wakefield (regeneration and property advisors), supported by Optimised Environments (urban designers) and Mott Macdonald (transport planners), to work with the Town Council's and their stakeholders to produce bespoke town centre Vitality Plans (TCVP) for the nine Key Service Centres (KSC):**



*The 9 Key Service Centres which form part of this study*

## Aims and Objectives

The TCVP provides a sense of direction and identify initiatives to support the nine key service centres to better fulfil their potential recognising that each centre is distinct, with its own unique opportunities and specific challenges and local groups/stakeholders. The unique characteristics of each centre is identified along with tailored solutions for each.

### They

- **Are bespoke in nature, based on a thorough analysis of individual circumstances affecting the health of each town centre, local stakeholder views and any local specific policy considerations.**
- **Are cross functional and holistic, and recommend a practical, realistic set of priority actions for supporting the vitality and viability of each town centre.**
- **Are informed and tested by existing relevant national and local public policy and strategies, local stakeholder views, relevant research and a thorough understanding of commercial markets and spatial considerations.**
- **Identify a set of recommended clear priority physical and other (e.g. marketing) interventions/actions to support the vitality and viability of each town centre both in recovery from COVID-19 impacts and beyond to enhancement.**
- **Recommend deliverable actions including who should be involved in delivering of each action identified, to enable Town Councils, community groups, occupiers, property owners etc., to all work towards a common vision.**
- **Take account of proposals developed/being developed by Town Councils and develop such plans further.**

## Responding to the Impacts of COVID

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, high streets and town centres were having to respond to changing consumer demands driven in part by technological changes. Many recognised the increasing importance of the consumer experience - an attractive place to dwell, shop, see friends, to eat out and be entertained. COVID-19 has led to an acceleration of changes to the reasons people visit and use local centres.

COVID-19 has not and will not be universally negative for all local centres. The requirement to stay local has supported residents to use their local facilities and where the local offer aligns with the demands of residents, local businesses have benefited. The need to work from home has also resulted in a re-evaluation of where we work going forward and it is anticipated that there has been a fundamental shift, for some, in the balance between the amount of time we spend in an office and the amount of time we work from home.

It will be some time before a clear picture emerges of the impact of new forms of working (a hybrid between office and home) on our high streets in the longer-term. The impact will be felt differently from place to place depending on the local economy's dependency on particular sectors. It is

likely that those centres that perform best going forward will be those able to reconnect with their communities and use them to meet local needs including access to housing, culture, leisure, health etc.

The Town Centre Vitality Plans have been prepared post the outbreak of COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 on each of the centres has been different. The bespoke Vitality Plans will provide an action plan to support recovery and future success.

## Vitality Plan and Toolkit

This report builds upon the Draft Baseline Report (which was a summary of the key stages undertaken in 2020 - see below) and incorporates potential actions which have been identified in consultation with local stakeholders during 2021 to form a bespoke Vitality Plan for Nantwich,

The Vitality Report comprises of two sections:

- **Baseline** - which was undertaken in 2020 and describes the Centre in terms of its offer and key characteristics. It brings together evidence and opinion in respect of the

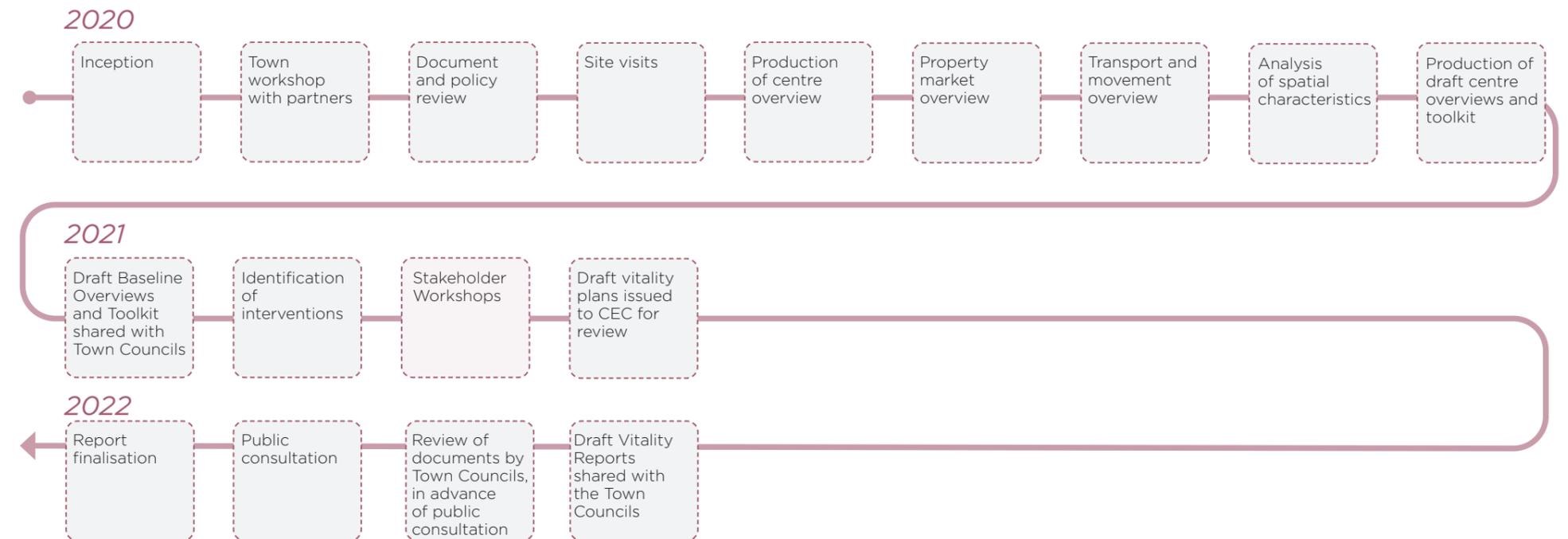
buildings, green and open spaces, access and its residents and businesses.

- **Action Plan** - has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for the Centre responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

The draft TCVPs went to public consultation for six weeks from September 2022. Feedback was reviewed and where appropriate amendments have been made to the final report. A summary of other key messages have been shared with key stakeholders.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Toolkit. The Toolkit presents exemplar projects from other centres (including from within Cheshire East) nationally and internationally to assist key stakeholders to determine a set of actions to support their centres to thrive. There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support accessing funding.

The preparation of the Vitality Plans has involved the following stages:



# Baseline

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Note:

The Baseline analysis was undertaken in 2020. The information in the Baseline was correct and the sources were the most up to date at that time. It is recognised that in some cases more up to date information is available whilst it is not possible to keep updating all the evidence where a significant change has happened. It should also be noted that Census 2011 data is provided for some indicators. Whilst the 2021 Census has just been completed, a release of this data will not be made available until March 2023 therefore making the 2011 Census the most recent consistent data source across the 9 centres for some key indicators.

# 02 Introduction to Nantwich

## Nantwich's Location within Cheshire East

Nantwich is located in the south of the Cheshire East borough, 5 miles south west of Crewe and 11 miles north of Whitchurch in the adjoining borough. The town's connectivity to the M6 via the A500 provides good strategic road connectivity to Manchester, Manchester Airport, Birmingham and beyond. Nantwich Train Station on the southern edge of the town centre has a regular daily service to Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly and Carmarthen allowing connections to London via the West Coast Main Line. As such, the town enjoys excellent local, regional and national connectivity.

Nantwich town centre is focused around Market Square, Beam Street, High Street, Hospital Street, Pillory Street and Welsh Row. It is a market town characterised by the River Weaver, attractive black and white timbered buildings and a rich heritage set within attractive countryside surroundings.

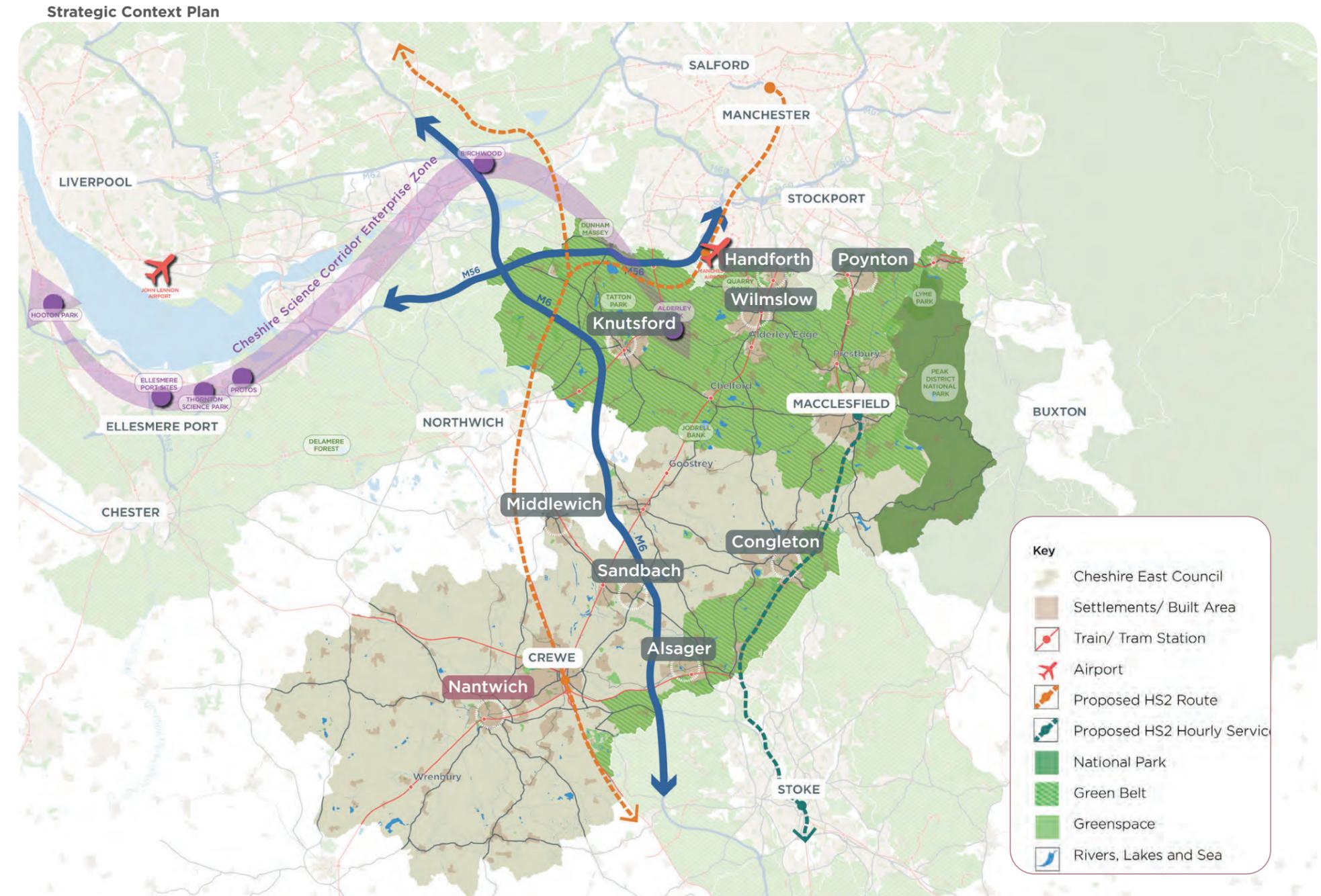
As a Key Service Centre it benefits from a well-represented convenience and comparison retail offer including national brands such as Morrisons, M&S, Aldi, Boots and WH Smith together with a traditional market and representation of

independent retailers and food and beverage operators. The vacancy rate is half that of the national average.

The town provides an attractive residential location offering easy commuting to employment destinations, set within open countryside surroundings and providing an attractive historic town centre. As a result, Nantwich has witnessed housing growth which presents an opportunity to support and expand town centre services and businesses provided the right mix and quality of homes are delivered.

Nantwich has a good mix of housing types allowing it to accommodate for a range of demographics from first time buyers to larger affluent families. The housing mix reflects the relatively economically diverse local population which includes a high proportion of residents aged over 65 years, some of whom are struggling financially, and highly skilled economically active affluent groups surrounding the urban core. New housing must continue to meet the varied needs of the local population.

Due to its close proximity to Crewe and accessibility to the M6, Nantwich is predominantly a commuter town with no significant industrial estate or business park employment cluster within its urban area, with the exception of a relatively small employment park off Middlewich Road to the north of the town and proposals for additional commercial development at Kingsbourne. There are some offices interspersed throughout the town centre and Reaseheath College, on the northern outskirts, provides agricultural, academic and light industrial uses. Whilst the scale of office use within the town centre is limited, the importance of retail, leisure and tourism as an employer and economic driver in Nantwich is acknowledged.

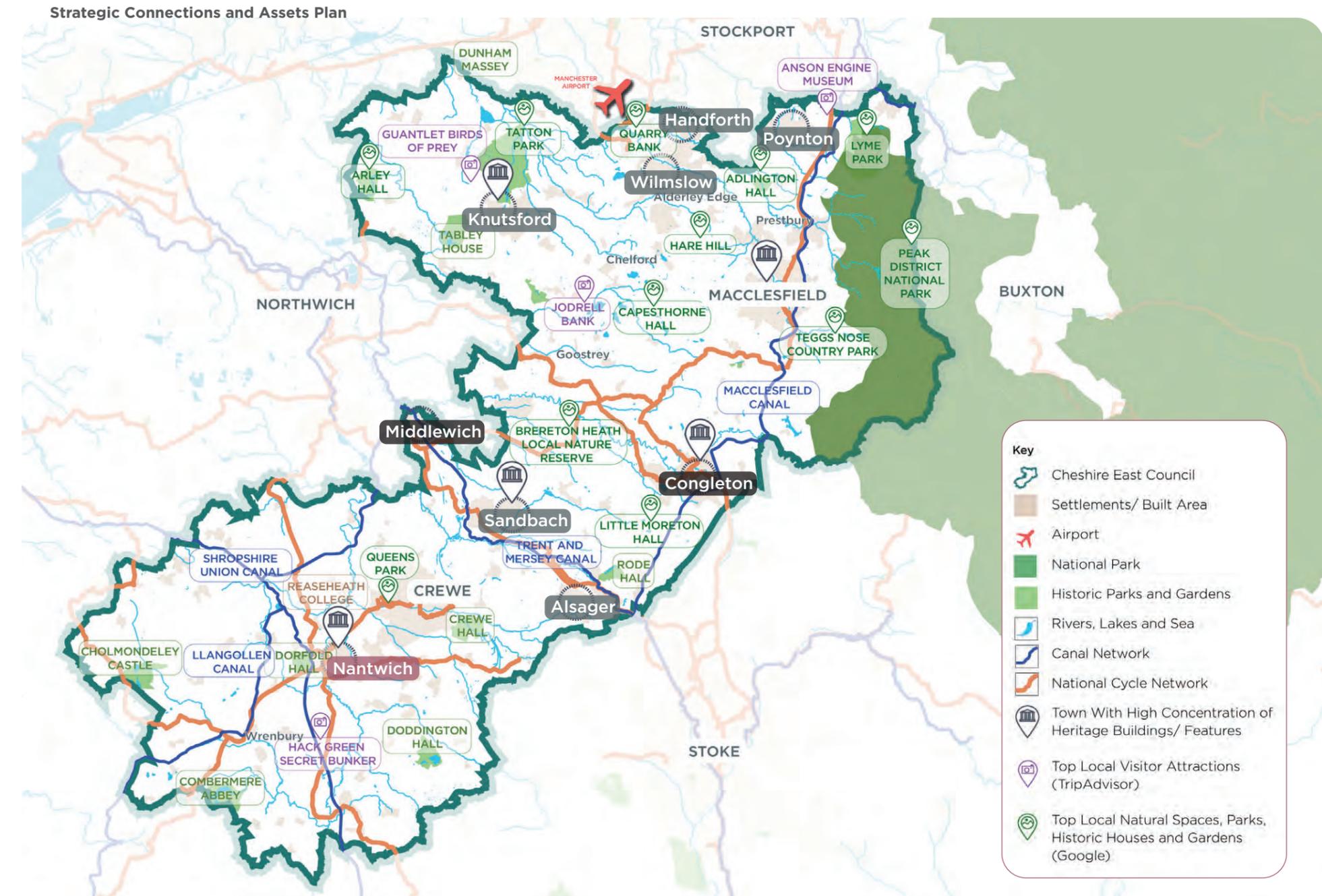


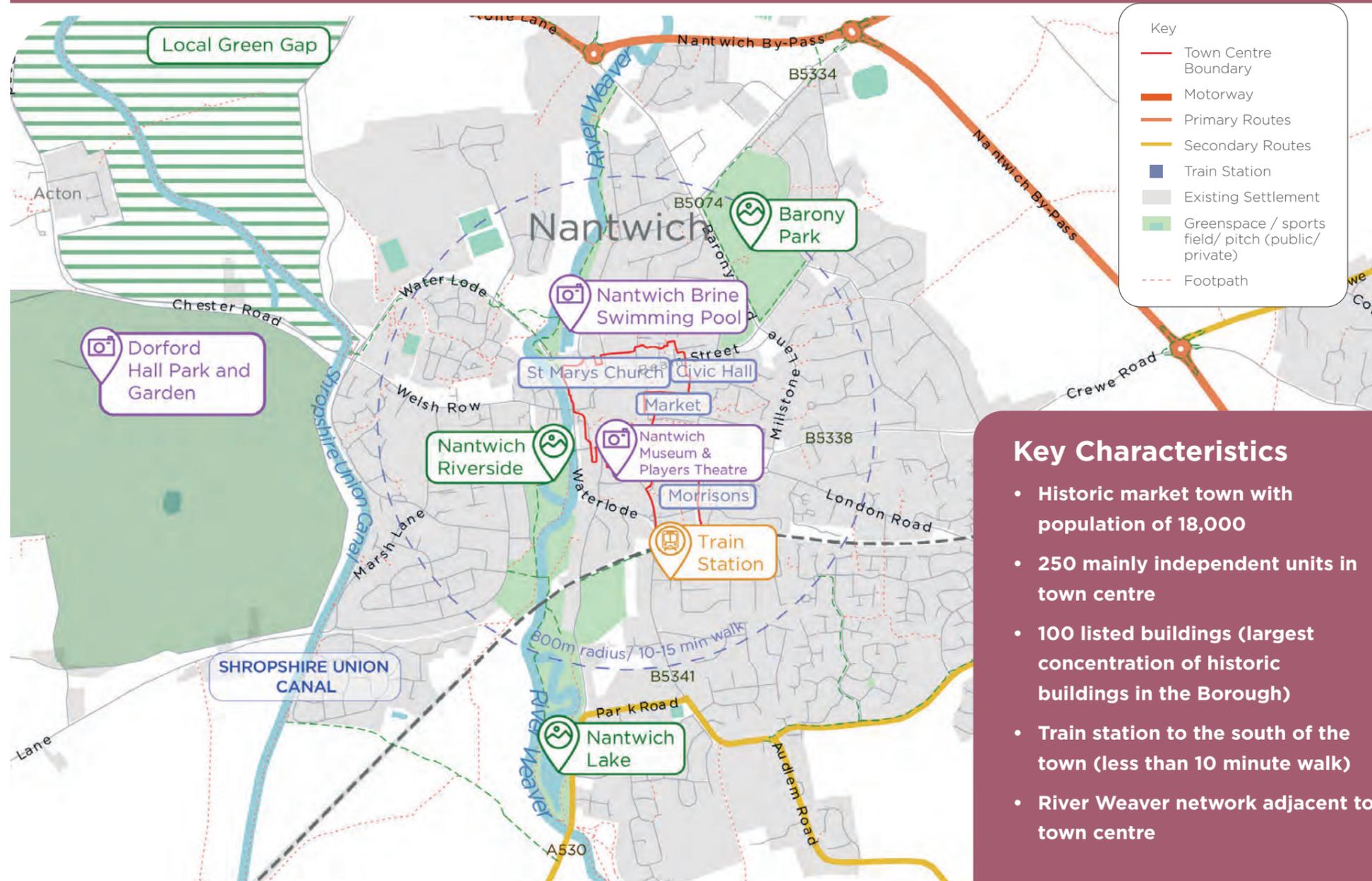
## 02 Introduction to Nantwich cont.

The town is becoming an increasingly popular visitor destination for short breaks given its attractive built character, range of shops and services, and local attractions. Particularly for canal holidays with several marinas within easy reach on the Shropshire Union and Llangollen canals. Ease of reach to other tourist destinations such as the Peak District and North Wales also supports tourism in the town and its wider setting (see Strategic Connections and Assets Plan). A series of high profile events and festivals attracts visitors throughout the year including the Battle of Nantwich, Nantwich Show, the Jazz Festival, the Food Festival and Words and Music Festival.

Brookfield Park and Barony Park provide attractive and well used open spaces close to the town centre and the River Weaver flows to the west at Nantwich Riverside. Beyond the town centre is open countryside, the Shropshire Union Canal and much used public rights of way.

Nantwich has a range of leisure, sports and social facilities and clubs. The Leisure Centre on the northern edge of the town provides a gym, indoor pool and one of only two outdoor brine pools nationally. The town also has a Cricket Club, Tennis Club, semi-professional Football Club and hosts the Cheshire Triathlon twice a year.





## Key Characteristics

- Historic market town with population of 18,000
- 250 mainly independent units in town centre
- 100 listed buildings (largest concentration of historic buildings in the Borough)
- Train station to the south of the town (less than 10 minute walk)
- River Weaver network adjacent to town centre

## Nantwich Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

Nantwich Town Council decided not to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan but instead prepared the Nantwich Corporate Strategic Plan (2020-2023) which aims to give residents a clear understanding of what the Town Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to support and deliver this. It sets out the five Core Priorities for Nantwich Town Council over the next three years and the overarching vision of ‘making Nantwich an even better place’.

### Vision

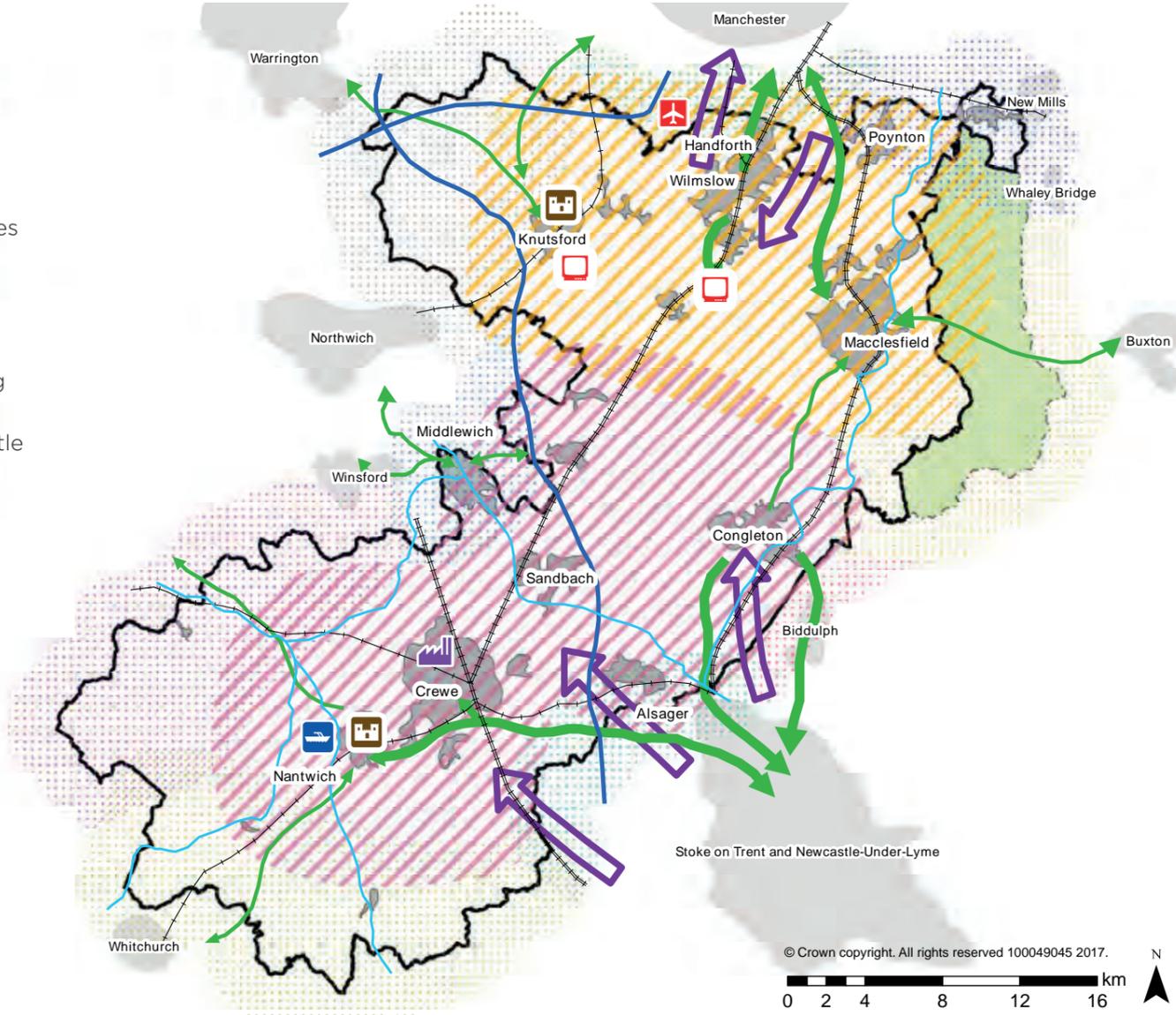
“Protecting our past, working for our future to improve the environment, local services and facilities making Nantwich an even better place.”

### Corporate Priorities

- **Planning a sustainable future for our town** – To conserve and enhance the character of the town and its green spaces, making the town greener and cleaner.
- **Work with others to preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism** – to make Nantwich a better and safer place to live, work and visit.
- **Continuing to develop and learn as an organisation** – To develop appropriate strategies and plans for the Town and the Town Council which are supported by the community.
- **Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community** – to work with and influence others to deliver improvement in areas where the Council has no direct control.
- **Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community** – To deliver effective and efficient services.

## Cheshire East Local Plan

The plan opposite identifies the functional relationship that Nantwich has with other centres through connectivity and proximity within and beyond Cheshire East. It highlights the centre's proximity to Crewe, a key driver of housing and employment growth in the North West driven by the arrival of HS2, but also Nantwich's strong connections to the adjoining Staffordshire boroughs including Stoke on Trent and Newcastle Under Lyme to the east and Whitchurch in Shropshire to the south.



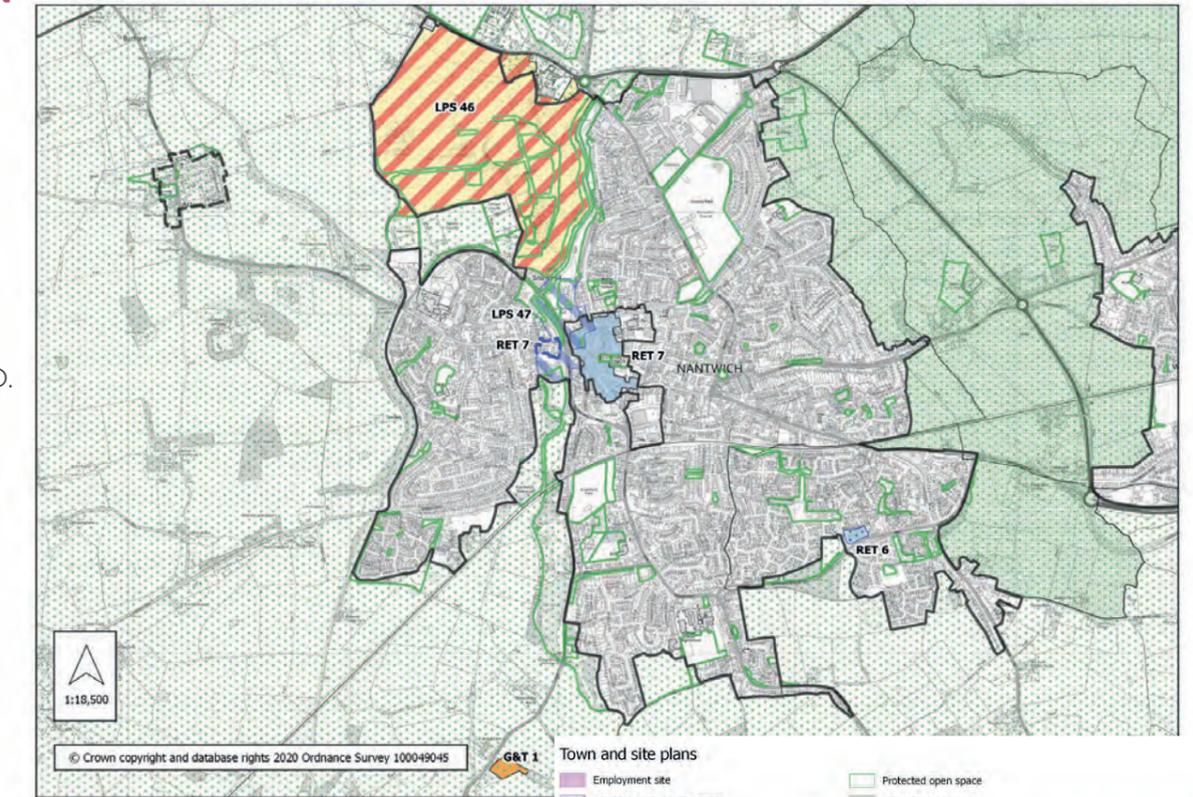
Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Strategy 2010-2030 2017, Functional Diagram, pg 22

## Local Plan Strategy 2017 (LPS) and Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) 2020

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was adopted in 2017 setting strategic development sites around the borough. The SADPD will form the second part of the Local Plan, supporting the policies and proposals in the LPS by providing additional non-strategic policy detail and allocating additional sites to assist in meeting the overall development requirements set out in the LPS. The plan opposite identifies both Local Plan Strategy sites in and around Nantwich and draft allocations in the SADPD.

Nantwich is a key service centre. Key sites close to the town centre which have been allocated include:

- LPS 47 'Snow Hill' located on the western edge of the town centre can accommodate retail convenience and comparison floorspace, including opportunities for small, independent retailers
- LPS 46 'Kingsley Fields', known as Kingsbourne, located north west of the town centre can accommodate 1,100 homes and ancillary uses. Development is currently underway.
- A Strategic Green Gap is designated between Crewe and Nantwich
- RET 7 'Supporting the vitality of town and retail centres' which identifies town centre locations for main town centre uses to support their long term vitality and viability, in line with LPS Policy EG 5 'Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce'



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Draft Adopted Policies Map 2020, pg 26



### Local Stakeholders

#### Nantwich Corporate Strategic Plan (2020-2023)

Nantwich Town Council prepared the draft Nantwich Corporate Strategic Plan (2020-2023) in 2019. The town's residents, groups and organisations were given the opportunity to have their say and put forward their views on the Plan through an extensive public consultation exercise, which were fed back into the final draft document.

The three year Nantwich Corporate Strategy Plan can be accessed at: [https://www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2020/09/Strategic-Plan\\_Draft.pdf](https://www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2020/09/Strategic-Plan_Draft.pdf)

#### Nantwich Town Council: A "Vision" for Nantwich 2019-2023

Future Direction includes:

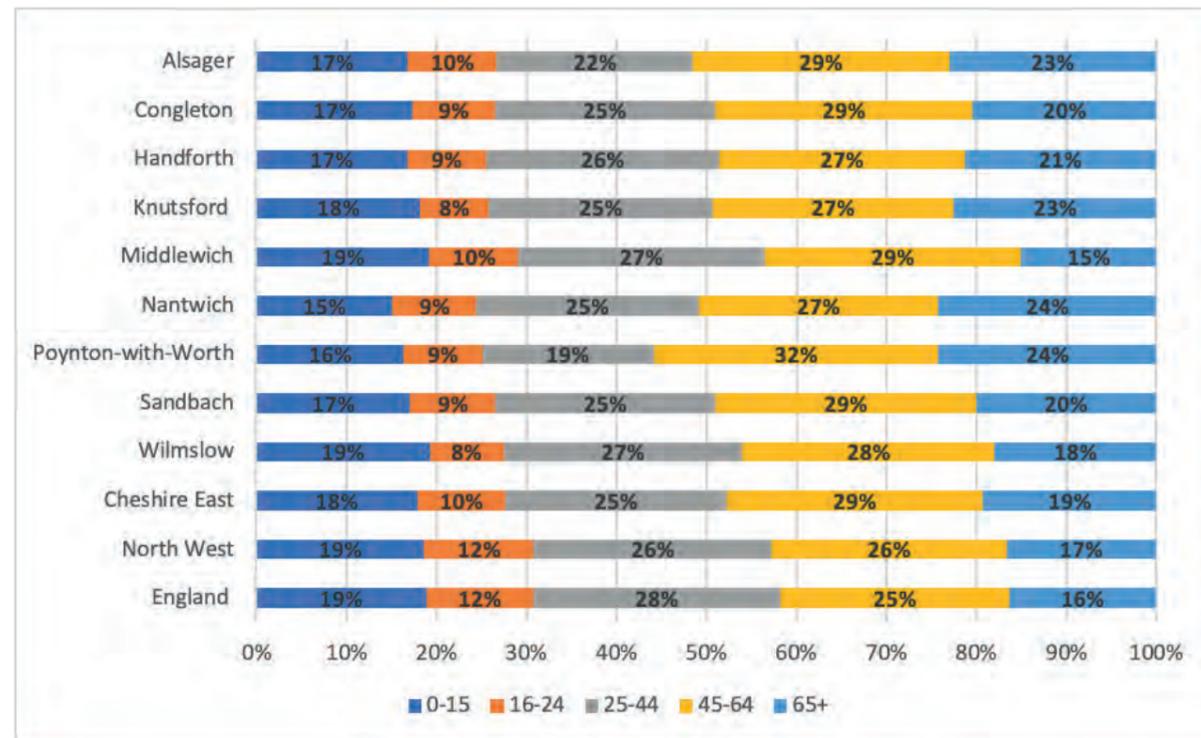
- Continue to support Nantwich in Bloom and procure planting and other services from Cheshire East Council
- Identified benefit of installing public art and improved landscaping at key gateways to town centre, as well as signage and Tourist Information Points
- Identified that several areas of the conservation area need enhancement to protect the historic character of the town and improve the tourism offering, including Castle Street, the Stocks at Pillory Street, Church Walk and the area surrounding the Church are in desperate need of major work to repair uneven surfaces and replace inappropriate materials.
- Nantwich Civic Hall - Identified that the hall would benefit greatly from a modest rear extension to provide additional facilities. This would allow greater use by community groups and voluntary groups as well as assisting commercial bookings and improving the appearance of the rear elevation. (The Civic Hall extension has been put on hold due to higher than anticipated build costs).



# 04 Our People

## Age

The 2011 Census data indicates that the Nantwich parish area had a population of 13,964 residents representing 3.8% of Cheshire East's total population (370,127). Nantwich's age profile is similar to that of Cheshire East. Compared to the other Key Service Centres Nantwich has a high proportion of 45-64 year olds which is the most economically active age group. Nantwich also has the joint highest proportion of residents aged 65+, along with Poynton. This explains why Nantwich also has the second highest average (mean) age across the 9 KSC's at 45 years old which is higher than the Cheshire East mean age and the wider geographies of the North West (40) and England (39).



Age Structure.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Ethnicity

Broken-down by ethnic group the Census 2011 (latest) shows the resident population across the Cheshire East is predominantly white at 96.7% which is a higher proportion than the wider geographies of the North West (90.2%) and England (85.4%). The majority of the population in Nantwich is also white (98.1%), the second highest proportion when compared to the other KSC's, whilst having the second lowest proportion of Asian/ Asian British residents (0.7%/ 99 people).

Area	White	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	Other ethnic group
Alsager	97.6%	1.1%	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Congleton	98.0%	0.6%	1.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Handforth	93.1%	1.5%	3.9%	0.9%	0.7%
Knutsford	96.5%	1.2%	1.8%	0.3%	0.3%
Middlewich	98.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Nantwich</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
Poynton-with-Worth	98.0%	0.5%	1.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Sandbach	98.1%	0.7%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%
Wilmslow	92.6%	1.7%	4.4%	0.5%	0.7%
Cheshire East	96.7%	1.0%	1.6%	0.4%	0.2%
North West	90.2%	1.6%	6.2%	1.4%	0.6%
England	85.4%	2.3%	7.8%	3.5%	1.0%

Population by Ethnic Group  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Occupational Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, a large proportion of Nantwich residents were employed in higher order occupations including 'managers, directors and senior officials' (14.3%) and 'professional occupations' (21.8%) – a much higher rate than the wider Borough, regional and national benchmarks.

Conversely, 15.3% were engaged in manual or elementary occupations. This is below the North West (19.8%) and England rate (18.3%). The occupational structure of Nantwich suggests a highly skilled workforce, which will in turn attract businesses (who want to attract highly skilled employees) to locate in the area.



Built Up Area	Alsager	Congleton	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow	Cheshire East	North West	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	12.8	11.7	17.2	11.9	14.3	14.9	12.6	18.3	13.6	9.9	10.9
Professional occupations	22.3	18.9	26.2	15.8	21.8	24.0	19.9	24.6	19.6	16.3	17.5
Associate professional and technical occupations	12.6	13.2	15.1	13.4	12.3	15.1	13.3	16.3	13.0	11.5	12.8
Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.4	10.3	9.4	11.8	10.0	12.2	11.0	9.9	10.4	11.7	11.5
Skilled trades occupations	10.1	11.6	6.4	11.0	9.8	8.6	10.2	6.6	10.4	11.3	11.4
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8.7	9.5	8.0	9.9	8.2	7.7	9.2	7.8	8.9	10.1	9.3
Sales and customer service occupations	7.5	7.0	5.7	7.4	8.3	8.0	8.2	6.9	7.5	9.4	8.4
Process, plant and machine operatives	5.8	7.9	3.8	8.5	6.0	3.3	6.6	3.0	6.5	8.1	7.2
Elementary occupations	8.8	9.9	8.2	10.4	9.3	6.3	9.0	6.6	10.2	11.7	11.1

Occupational Profile

Source: Census 2011

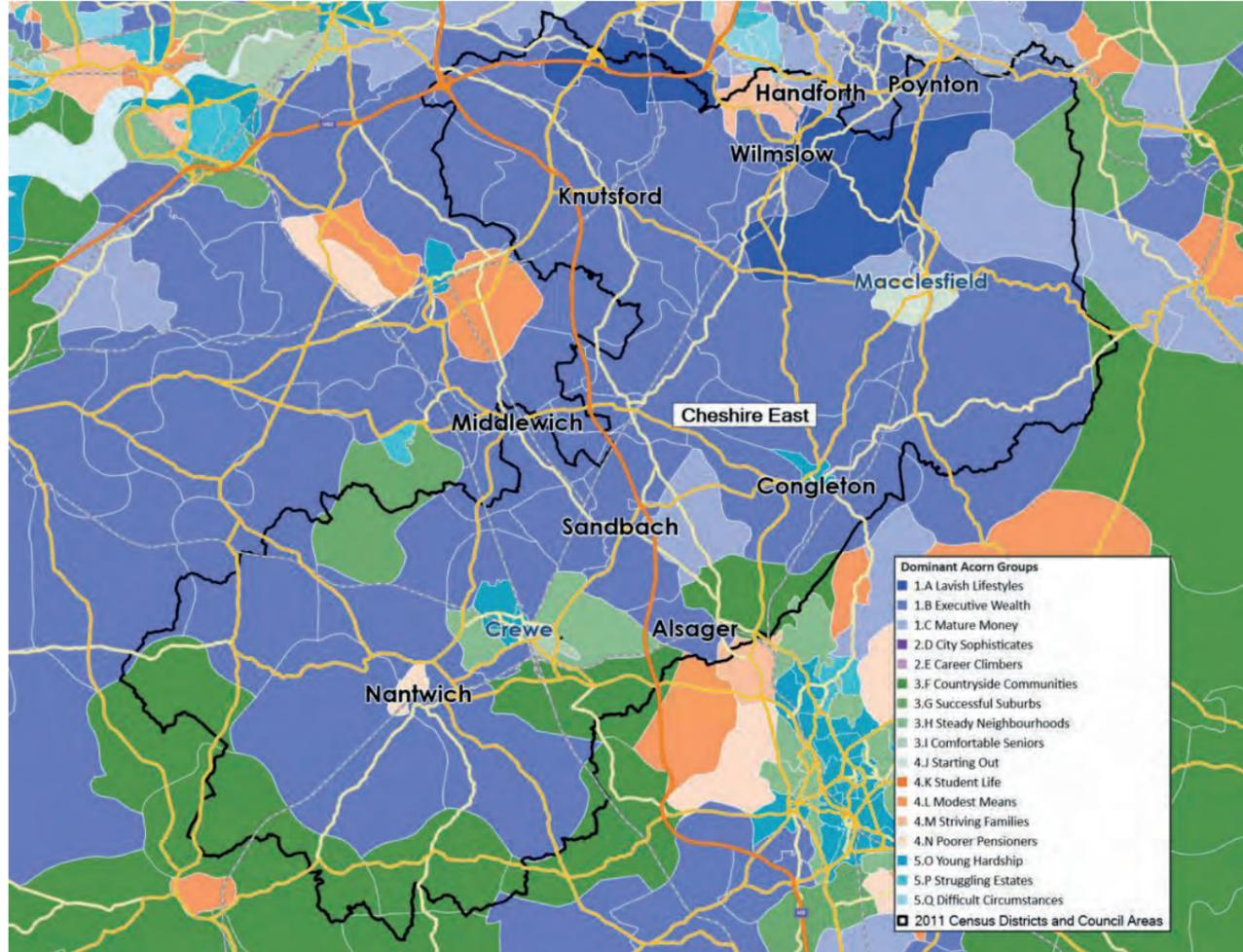
\*Wilmslow BUA includes Alderly Edge and Handforth

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Demographic Characterisation

CACI Acorn classifications of local postcode geographies provide precise information and an in-depth understanding of different consumer types by analysing significant social factors and consumer behaviour. Demographic analysis of Cheshire East area demonstrates diverse segmentation groups across the area. The dominant Acorn groups in Nantwich are Poorer Pensioner (older more financially stretched residents living in socially rented housing) within the urban core and Executive Wealth (affluent wider catchment comprising professionals with families living in large homes) surrounding the town centre.

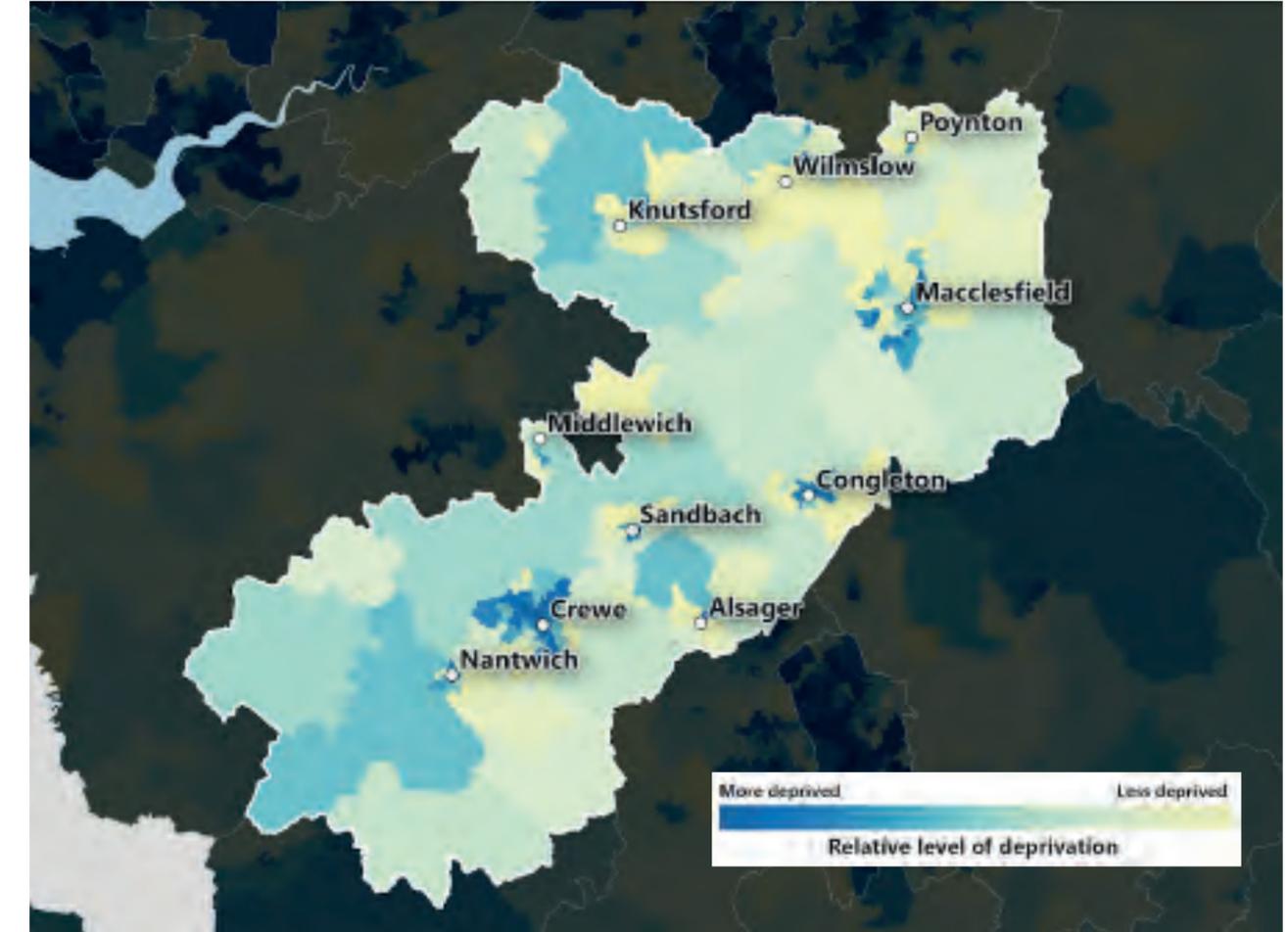
- Dominant Age Groups
- 1. A Lavish Lifestyles
  - 1. B Executive Wealth
  - 1. C Mature Money
  - 2. D City Sophisticates
  - 2. E Career Climbers
  - 3. F Countryside Communities
  - 3. G Successful Suburbs
  - 3. H Steady Neighbourhoods
  - 3. I Comfortable Seniors
  - 4. J Starting Out
  - 4. K Student Life
  - 4. L Modest Means
  - 4. M Striving Families
  - 4. N Poorer Pensioners
  - 5. O Young Hardship
  - 5. P Struggling Estates
  - 5. Q Difficult Circumstances
  - 2011 Census Districts and Council Areas



CACI Acorn Classifications  
Source: CACI

## Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 illustrates the spatial distribution and pockets of deprivation relative to national averages. Cheshire East ranked 228th most deprived out of 317 local authorities in 2019 indicating relatively low levels of deprivation. Just 1.7% of the Borough is within the top 10% most deprived areas in England, with these most deprived areas being concentrated around Crewe and to a lesser extent, Macclesfield. Around half of Nantwich falls within the 20% least deprived areas of deprivation nationally.



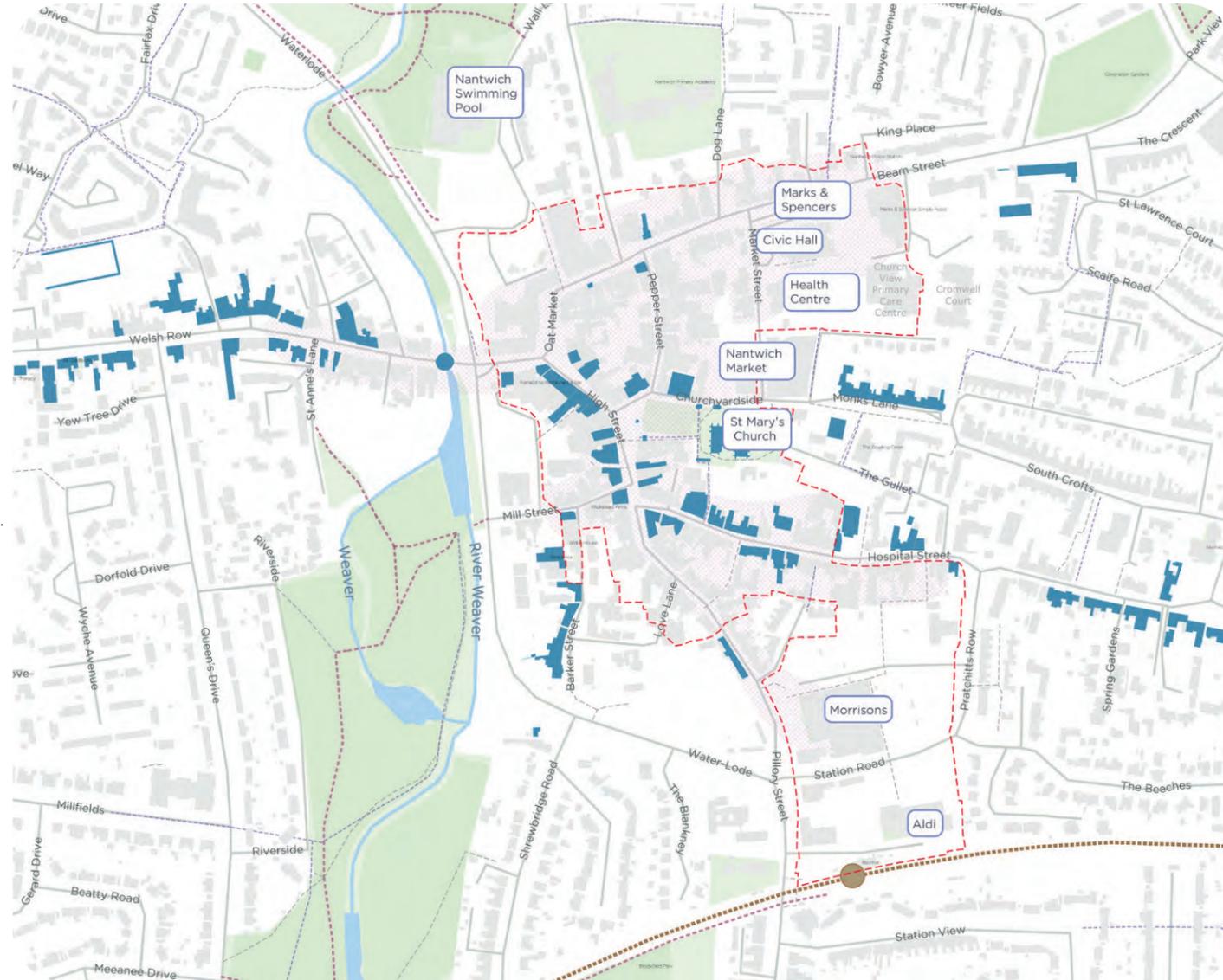
Source: MHCLG, IMD 2019

## Local Context

Nantwich is a large historic market town located south west of Crewe. The train station to the south of the town is a 7 minute walk away. The River Weaver network lies adjacent to town centre but separated by Waterlode.

The towns industrial heritage is based around the salt industry, with Roman and medieval saltworking remains still present. The centre is a planned Elizabethan town - the rebuild was financed by Elizabeth I after a fire in 1583. There are a number of timber framed buildings dating from 16th Century onwards.

- Key
-  Town centre boundary
  -  Shopping core
  -  Listed building
  -  Primary vehicular routes
  -  Cycle paths
  -  Walking paths
  -  Public right of way
  -  Central green space
  -  Train station



## Spatial Review

An analysis of the experiential quality of the town centre is provided over the next few pages. The review is based on information gathered from a number of site visits to the town centre during October and September 2020 and is assessed by the key vitality indicators listed below:

- Quality of the place
- People
- Sense of Community
- Accessibility
- Gateways
- Wayfinding
- Attractions
- Amenities
- Sense of a Centre
- Character
- Public realm
- Green space
- Derelict Sites/ Vacant units
- Housing
- Covid measures

## Visit information

	Visit 1	Visit 2
Date of visit:	Thursday 10th September 2020	Wednesday 4th November 2020
Time of day:	11:30am-1pm	2-3pm
Weather:	Grey, Cloudy	Grey, Some sunshine
Mode of transport:	Train	Car
Covid lockdown status:	Eased Lockdown Restrictions	Three Tier Restrictions in Place

## Quality of the place

- Very attractive medieval market town with interesting shops, restaurants and services
- Lots to do and see
- Characterful alley ways and a pedestrianised centre
- Full of people (even in Covid circumstances) - the town felt fairly busy
- Distinctive Cheshire town due to it's historic character and sense of centre



## People

- One of the busiest town centres visited
- Lots of people of all ages using the centre for shopping and eating. The local town square offers opportunities for dwell time and informal seating
- Beyond High Street, Oat Market and Beam Street the number of people in the town drops, with lower Pillory St and others seeing footfall diminish



## Sense of Community

- Noticeboards
- Well kept planting and the town centre appeared clean and well maintained
- Outdoor markets had visitors (even in wet weather)



## Accessibility

- Although less than 10 minutes walk to the centre, the train station feels a little disconnected with the town
- A number of car parks to the north and south of the historic core, with various charging applications.
- Vehicular access to the centre of the town is restricted due to pedestrianisation
- Historic core is defined by a compact urban grain meaning streets can be narrow. Footpaths along some streets are constrained and prevent spill out space for shops / cafes and may impact people's perceptions of safety due to reduced space to socially distance on footways
- Beam Street and Waterlode Street pass around the northern and southern fringes of the town centre, serving as an orbital route for vehicles but which also creates some pedestrian severance



## Gateways

- There are some links that draw you into the town centre however there are few good quality, clear and legible gateway points other than traffic dominated junctions
- Retail streets along Pillory Street and Hospital Street offer enticing shops beyond the initial arrival from the train station. Vacant sites and Morrisons car park at the key junction do not provide a positive arrival experience
- Edge gateways to the north and south are car dominated
- Lack of defined gateway to the River Weaver
- Monks Lane provides an attractive and characterful pedestrian approach from the east however other points of arrival from the east are through surface car parks offering little sense of arrival
- The Thomas Telford Aqueduct provides a historically important gateway from the west



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Wayfinding

- Good signage in key locations within the centre
- Some signage located in car parks but can be easily missed as you make your way through
- Several heritage information boards

## Attractions

- Large variety of restaurants, bars and established independent businesses
- Indoor and weekly outdoor market
- Museum & St. Mary's Church
- Small shops and gift shops which offer a boutique shopping experience, situated within the compact, attractive historic centre and nearby streets

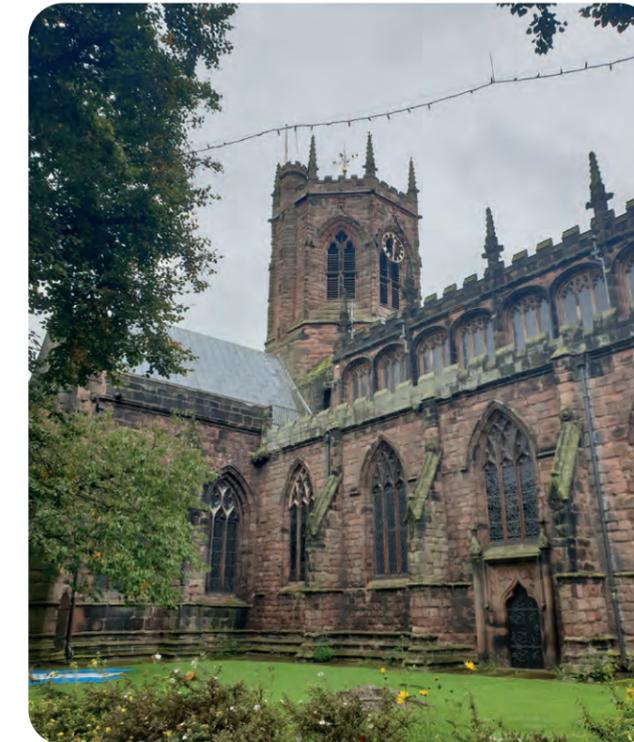
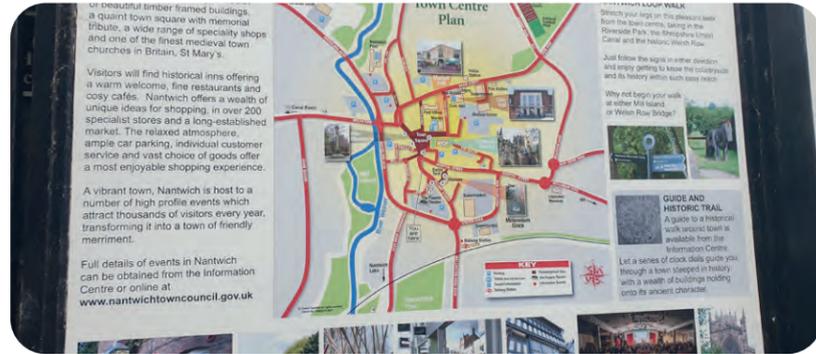
- Larger out of centre retail units (M&S, Morrisons) and points of interest (Civic Hall) attract patronage but town centre struggling to capitalise
- High concentration of listed buildings within the town centre, which adds to the attractiveness to the town

## Amenities

- Library and Civic Hall to the north east of town
- Swimming pool and outdoor Brine Pool (one of the few remaining pools in the UK)  
Large health centre
- St Mary's church in prominent position in town
- Nantwich Museum

## Sense of a Centre

- Clear and easily recognisable centre
- Historic core creates a positive atmosphere and enclosed streets draw you along
- Pedestrianised space, full of people sitting and walking through



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Character

- High concentration of listed buildings and Nantwich Conservation Area covers the majority of the centre
- Very distinct vernacular which has largely been retained in its core - Tudor and medieval buildings create an interesting and attractive townscape
- Very well kept historic buildings in a mix of styles with active uses on the ground floor
- Oat & Swine Market is of a lesser townscape quality due to the c.1960's precinct development along the south side which juxtaposes the character and quality of the town centre
- The area around the Civic Hall, Library and new Retail & Primary Care centre feels disconnected from the town. The character of Beam Street is less consistent and of the same quality as other areas of the town centre
- Mix of winding alleyways and streets and larger high street routes create a variety of interesting journeys across the town



## Public Realm

- Approach from station is car dominated with narrow pavements along Pillory Street
- Pedestrianised areas are successful but there are some dated features
- The materiality around the Town Square and Church is in contrast to later delivered redbrick public realm - public realm feels disjointed around the town square in particular
- Public realm reduces in quality into the Oat Market area of town



## Green space

- St Mary's Church green space in centre is well kept, with a number of attractive mature trees
- River Weaver and open space along it to the west of the town centre is an asset
- Brookfield Park further south feels disconnected from the town centre



## Derelict Sites/ Vacant Units

- Update 2022: Since the site visit in 2020 some of the units that were vacant have now been occupied, for example the former Laura Ashley store. Likewise, some other units have become vacant such as the Barclays Bank and Bratts on Church Yard Side.



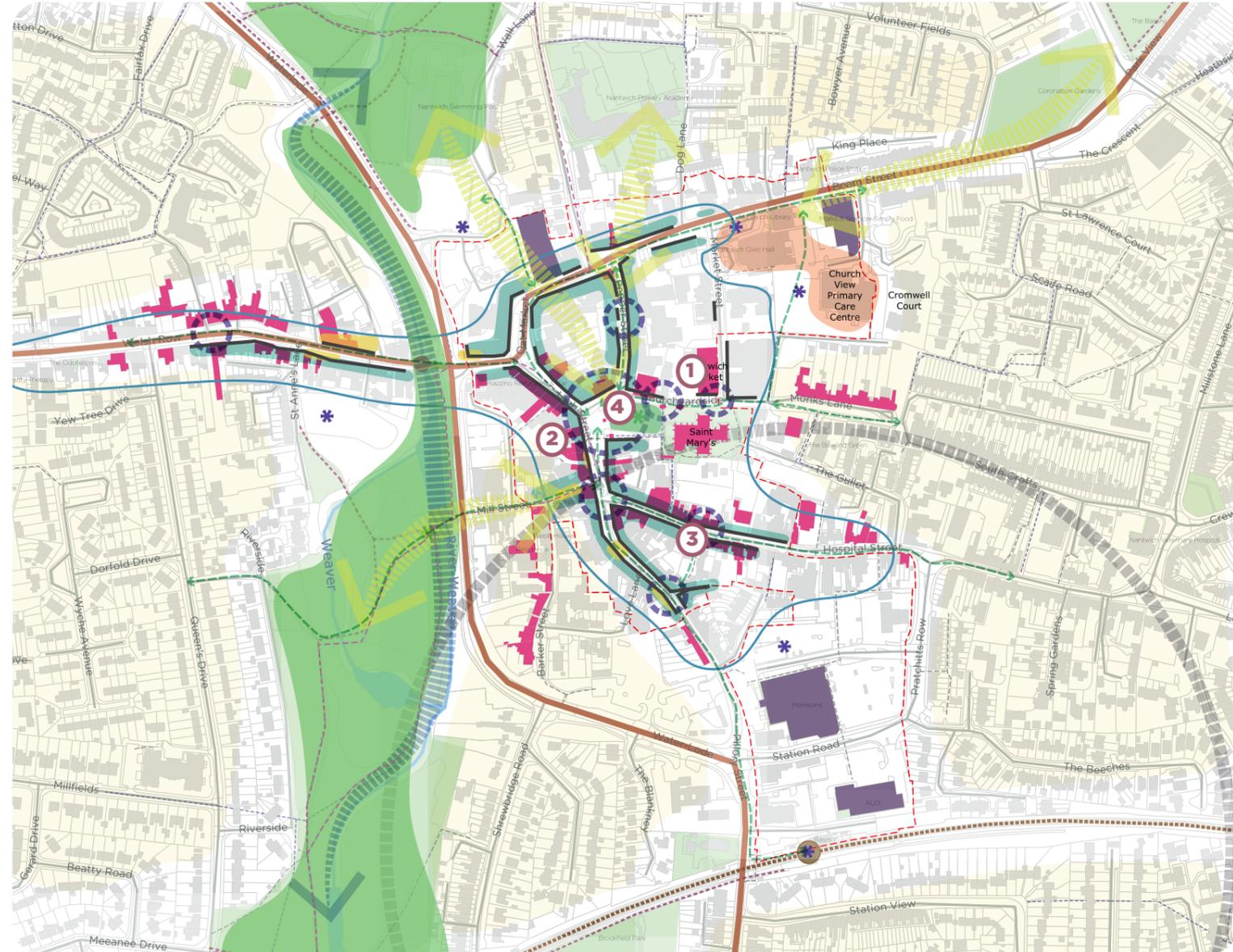
# 05 Our Place cont.

## Positive Features

Positive spatial elements are identified on the plan:

### Key

-  Local centre boundary
-  Local street network
-  Primary vehicular route
-  Arrival destinations (car parks/ train stations/ bus stops)
-  Key pedestrian links
-  Cycle routes part of the National Cycle Network (on and off-road)
-  Surrounding social infrastructure within close proximity to town centre
-  Positive arrival experience
-  Anchor retail locations
-  Anchor open space / recreational areas
-  River network in close proximity to town centre
-  Local pocket park space offering dwell time
-  Open space / recreational areas
-  Areas with a concentration of F&B uses
-  Areas with a concentration of retail uses
-  Areas with concentration of community uses (library, Town Hall)
-  Well defined building frontages with active ground floor uses
-  Buildings of historic or townscape quality that help reinforce character
-  Intact historic core creating a positive setting and complementing buildings of historic quality
-  Local businesses within close proximity to the town centre
-  Local residential areas within immediate proximity to the town centre
-  400m from Nantwich train station (5 minute walk)



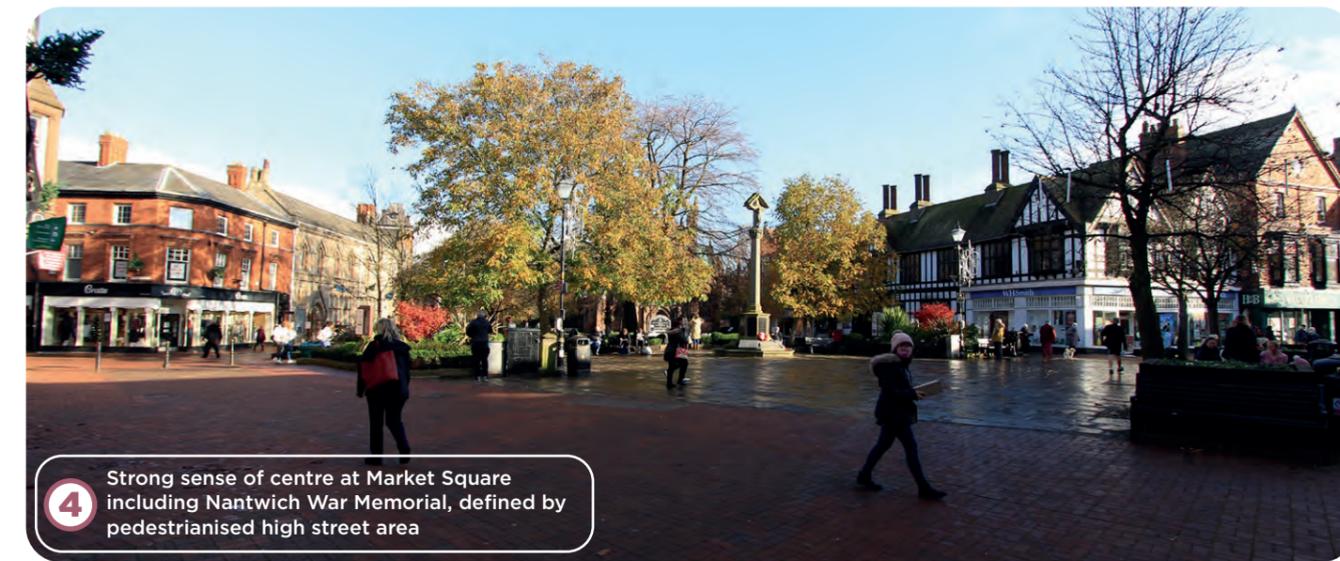
**1** Popular indoor and outdoor market in a dedicated space on Churchyard side



**2** Large concentration of historic and heritage buildings create unique character



**3** Mix of shops offering a boutique and higher end experience, with interesting window displays



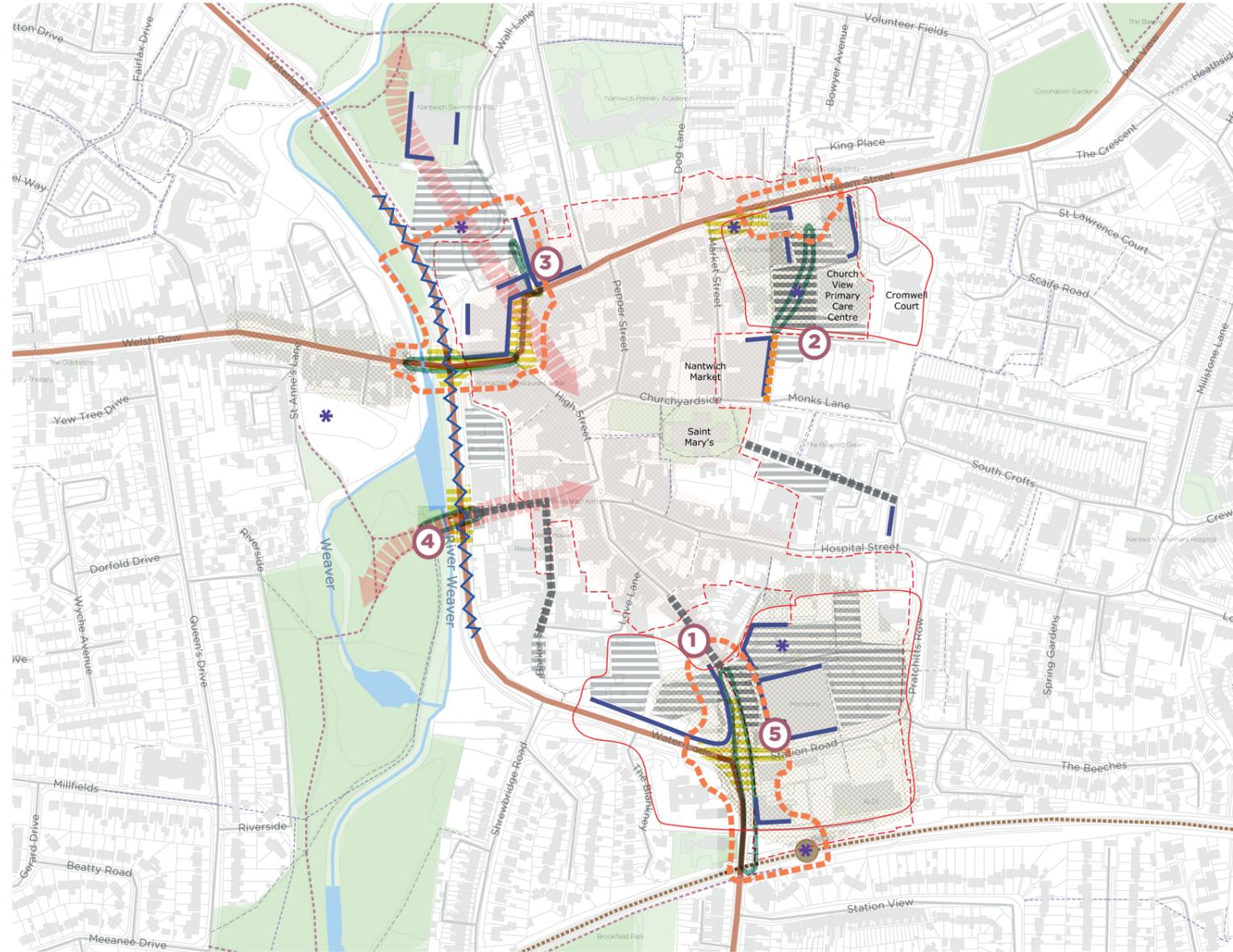
**4** Strong sense of centre at Market Square including Nantwich War Memorial, defined by pedestrianised high street area

# 05 Our Place cont.

## Negative Features

Negative spatial elements are identified on the plan:

- Key**
- Local centre boundary
  - Local street network
  - Primary vehicular route
  - Arrival destinations (car parks/ train stations/ bus stops)
  - Streets and spaces dominated by car parking
  - Streets with narrow footways / poor pedestrian provision
  - Arrival gateways with a low quality arrival experience
  - Areas of poor quality public realm (primarily low grade / aged materials, lack of street furniture and tree planting)
  - Low quality frontages
  - Links with poor legibility to and from the town centre
  - Local streets leading to cul-de-sacs or unclear where they connect to
  - Extent of area which reads as part of the Town Centre
  - Areas which feel beyond the extent of the Town Centre
  - Key assets which feel disconnected from the Town Centre
  - 400m from Nantwich train station (5 minute walk)
  - Nature of roads create barriers for pedestrians between town centre and park
  - Area which has seen erosion of historic grain



**1** Pedestrian footway and vehicle carriageway provision along streets such as Pillory Street is balanced in favour of vehicles, creating confined pedestrian routes



**2** Car parks to the east of the market create an eroded townscape, disrupt legibility and hinder pedestrian movement/ enjoyment of space



**3** Poor quality public realm and low quality frontages impact arrival from Snow Hill Car Park and other car park arrival points



**4** Low quality connections to River Weaver and park from the town centre



**5** Number of vacant shop units across the town centre in prominent locations. (Note: since the site visit, the unit has now been occupied).

## Summary of Spatial Elements

The tables below and on the following page identify the key positive and negative spatial attributes for the town centre:

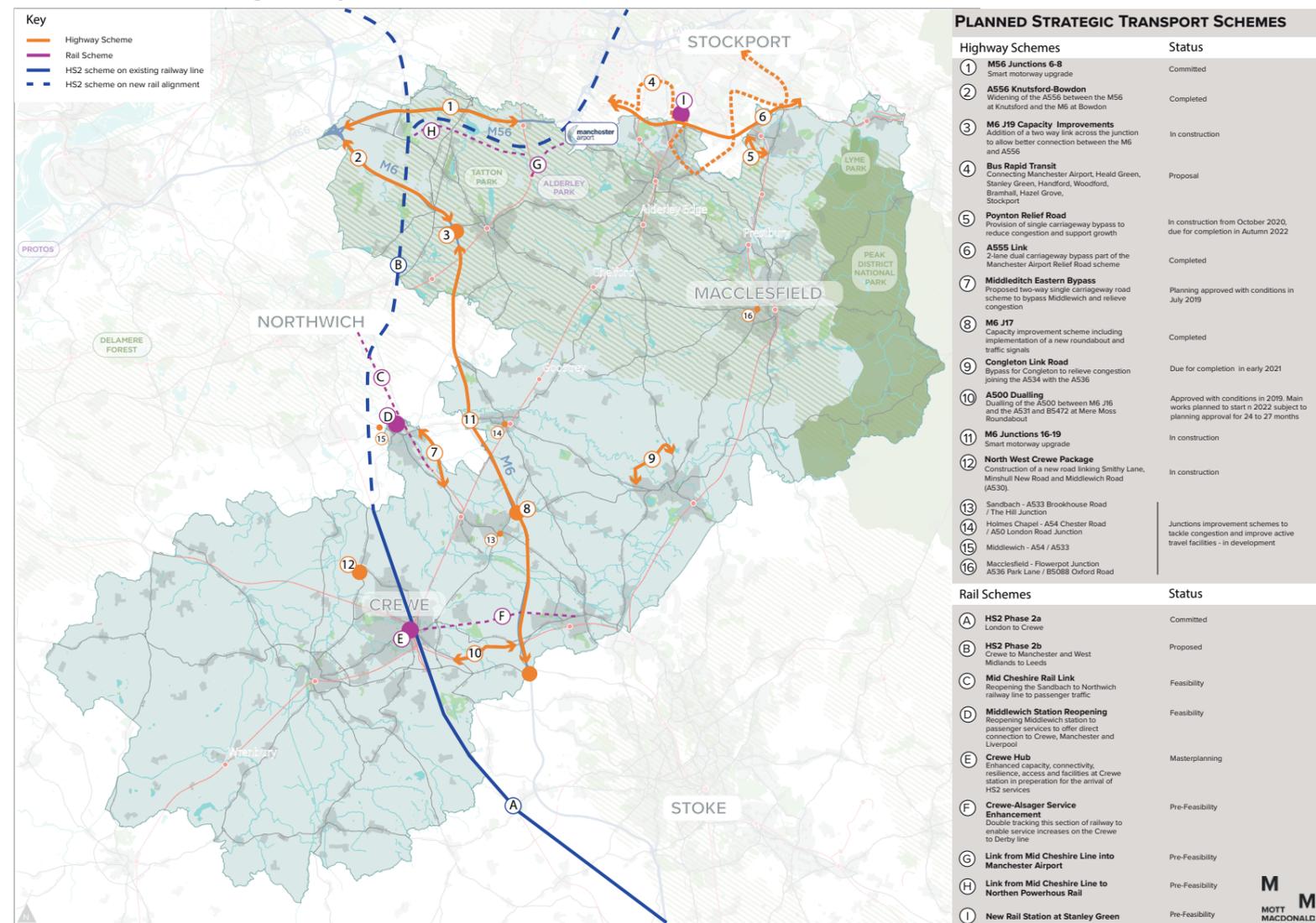
Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Positives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well used pedestrianised town square around War Memorial, act as a centre point for surrounding shopping streets and potential for hosting events</li> <li>Some consistency with block paving along shopping streets helps to visually connect the myriad of historic streets and allow them to read as a part of the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic grain and heritage buildings create positive arrivals around the town square and upon entering the shopping area from the south</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network of walking/ cycling routes along the River Weaver including the National Cycle Network routes 451 and 551</li> <li>Small area of green space behind Nantwich Town Square at St Mary's Church</li> <li>Pedestrianised town square offers al-fresco eating which enhances atmosphere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large number of listed buildings including the late 16th Century timber framed Crown Hotel, 14th Century Church of St Mary (both Grade I listed), Gothic style Barclays Bank built in 1876, the French style 1-5 Pillory Street building built in 1911 and Market Hall built in 1867.</li> <li>Brine outdoor swimming pool (one of only two in the country)</li> <li>The Nantwich Conservation Area provides good coverage across the town centre and ensures historic buildings are respected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very attractive historic Cheshire market town with a large number of heritage buildings</li> <li>Much of the historic street pattern intact within the core of the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic buildings at key gateways help legibility</li> <li>Main shopping streets lead into town square at centre</li> <li>Interesting routes off the main streets enhance shopping experience, e.g. between Pillory Street and Hospital Street by Nantwich Museum</li> </ul>

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Negatives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although some areas have benefited from recent investment in resurfacing, there are other areas where the public realm is tired beyond the core of the town, meaning that these places become visually disconnected with other high quality areas of public realm. This can impact upon people's desire to navigate and explore areas of the town</li> <li>Streets are car dominated along for example along Pillory Street and Beam Street</li> <li>Public realm is dated and poorly maintained at Swine Market/ Oat Market 'roundabout'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Station gateway and approach to Pillory Street in need of improvement, from the train station the route to the centre is dominated by roadspace, car parks</li> <li>The junction of the B341/ Welsh Row/High Street is dominated by vehicles and roadspace, making it difficult to cross and appreciate views to the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansive open space along River Weaver feels disconnected from the town due to B5341 highway - arrival points are underwhelming, e.g. from Mill Street. Currently not capitalising on the proximity of this green / blue corridor to the west of the town centre</li> <li>Underutilised open space around Swimming Pool, feels leftover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some notable historic buildings were vacant (particularly on High Street - section between the Oat Market and Town Square)</li> <li>Difficult to appreciate heritage buildings along narrow streets dominated by car parking (e.g. along Pillory Street) due to limited opportunities to dwell or sit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic street pattern has been eroded in areas - around Morrisons to the south, around the Town Council building/ Civic Hall to the east and around Snow Hill Car park - this detracts from the quality of place as your approach the centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The B5341 / Water-Lode severs connections between the east and western parts of the town centre and the green space around the River Weaver</li> <li>Walking routes from the Market Hall to Nantwich library/ Beam Street are confused by parking</li> </ul>

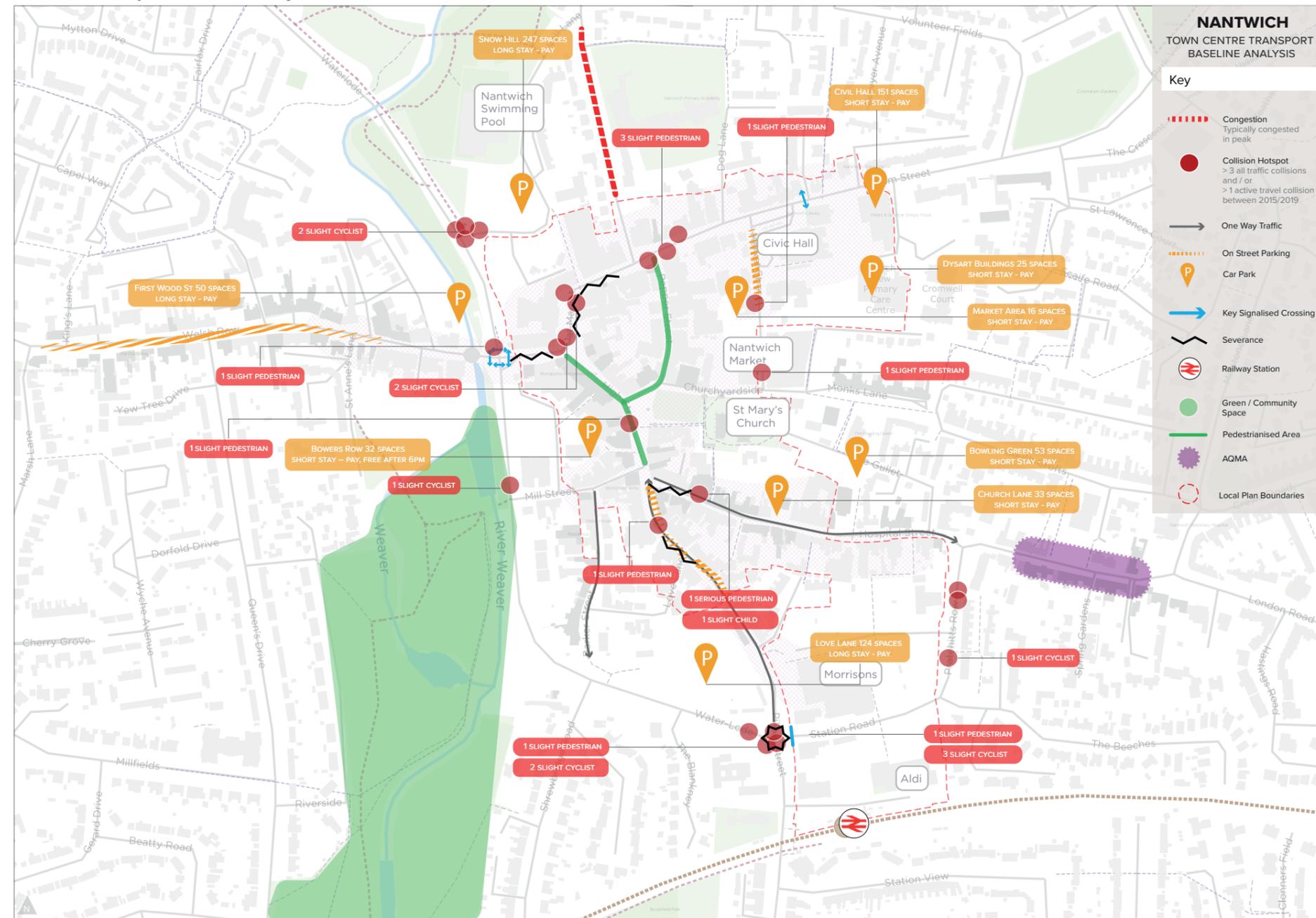
# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility

Nantwich is located around 4-miles from central Crewe, and is well connected to other settlements by several key A-roads. This includes the A534 towards Wrexham and the A51 leading directly to Chester City Centre. The A51 Nantwich Bypass also provides a direct link between the town and the A530 and A500 – connecting north to Winsford and Middlewich and east to the M6 respectively. Nantwich Railway Station is located just outside of the town centre and is served by two trains per hour to Manchester. Rail trips to Manchester from Nantwich offer competitive journey times when compared to private car use. The Transport for Wales service between Nantwich and Manchester offers journey times of 49 minutes whilst car journeys typically take over an hour.

## Nantwich Planned Strategic Transport Schemes



## Nantwich Transport Baseline Analysis



## Car Parking

Car parking within the centre of Nantwich comprises a mix of long stay and short stay off-street car parks. Off-street parks are all paid with parking tariffs inconsistent between the various locations which is likely to cause confusion amongst visitors. On-street parking is provided along Welsh Row and Pillory Street and is free with a 1 hour stay restriction in place from Monday – Saturday between 8am and 6pm.

Similar to a number of other centres across Cheshire East, off-street car parks are generally poorly connected to the town centre with a lack of signage and wayfinding and poor pedestrian provision including crossing facilities at key junctions.

The TCVPs consider the role of car parking in relation to the vibrancy and vitality of each town centre. However, any proposals to review or modernise car parking provision and management will be considered on a town by town basis as part of the Council’s approach to travel demand management. Therefore the delivery of any car parking proposals is outside the scope of the TCVPs.

Town Centre	Car Park ID	Parking Spaces	Duration	Pricing
Nantwich	Snow Hill	247	Long Stay	Pay
	Civil Hall	151	Short Stay	Pay
	Dysart Buildings	25	Short Stay	Pay
	Market Area	16	Short Stay	Pay
	Bowling Green	53	Short Stay	Pay
	Church Lane	33	Short Stay	Pay
	Love Lane	124	Long Stay	Pay
	Bowers Row	32	Short Stay	Pay – free after 6pm
	First Wood	50	Long Stay	Pay
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>731</b>		

## Public Realm

Public realm across the centre of Nantwich is generally of a poor quality and in need of maintenance and upgrade in a number of places. Surfaces in the area of Hospital Street and Beam Street are uneven and cracked, creating trip hazards and reducing the quality of the environment.

Public realm features at Oat Market and Swine Market also require maintenance upgrades as the current planting between the streets reduce visibility for both vehicles and pedestrians at a key access point into the High Street. Ongoing investment in the public realm has been delivered in places.

Despite Pillory Street and Hospital Street being one-way to vehicles, they feature wide carriageways and narrow footways. There are, therefore, opportunities within this area to explore increasing the amount of space available to pedestrians.

Key access junctions into the town centre such as Water-Lode/Welsh Row/High Street currently present poor-quality environments with few facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. These areas would therefore benefit from public realm enhancements and gateway treatments to enhance sense of arrival into the town centre.

## Road Safety

A number of locations across the town centre of Nantwich have been identified as collision hotspots(p45). This includes the Station Road/ B534 Water-Lode along the key pedestrian route between the town centre and rail station where 2 collisions involving a cyclist and 1 involving a pedestrian have occurred over the last 5 years. As an important pedestrian desire line for the town centre, improved pedestrian crossing facilities should be considered at this location. A number of collisions have also occurred around Oat Market which is a key area for pedestrians in proximity to the pedestrianised area of the High Street.

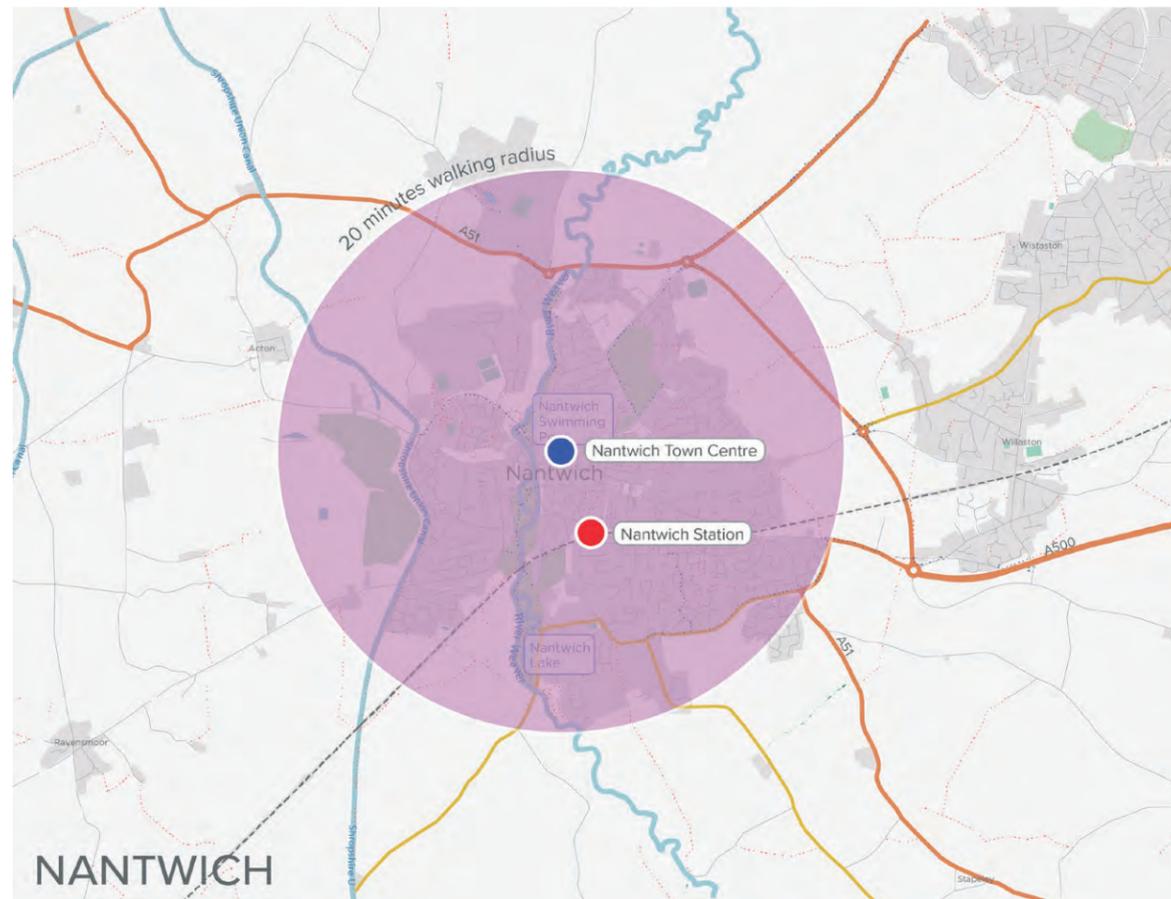
## Active Travel

Aside from the pedestrianised areas around the High Street in Nantwich, there is limited provision to support active travel to, from and around the town. Narrow footways and two-way traffic routes along several streets create the look and feel of a highway dominated environment which does not lend itself well to walking or cycling.

A lack of cycle parking is evident across the town centre and where it is provided, such as within the High Street, it is of a poor quality and low provision.

Opportunities to reduce or remove traffic along streets which provide important areas to pedestrians such as Market Street and Beam Street, and increase the quality of public realm could be explored in order to enhance the level of active travel provision to support pedestrian and cyclist activity within the town centre. This will be particularly important to address the Air Quality issues identified by the AQMA present on Hospital Street close to the town centre.

A further opportunity to strengthen active travel corridors comes from the Connect2 Crewe to Nantwich Greenway. This route is a rural connection between the two towns, offering a traffic-free route along the A530 corridor - providing an attractive path for both leisure and for commuting. The existing link is a 5-mile-long Greenway taking about 30 minutes to cycle, and this route could be extended towards Nantwich Town Centre.



Nantwich 20-Minute Walk Isochrone

## Public Transport

Nantwich station is served by 2 trains per hour to Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly and Shrewsbury. The station is approximately a 7-minute walk to the centre of Nantwich via a direct route along Pillory Street or Water-Lode. Although footways are provided between the station and the town centre, the route is poorly signed with pedestrians required to navigate through residential streets or large junctions. There is greater provision for pedestrians and cyclists along the B534 Water-Lode which presents a footpath separated from the adjacent B-road via a grass verge.

The lack of car parking at the train station also increases the need to ensure the station is well connected by walking and cycling links and provides adequate secure cycle storage.

Bus stops in the central area of Nantwich at High Street provide hourly services to Crewe and Chester and 2 buses per hour to surrounding local areas (Wrenbury & Audlem). Although bus stop facilities are well placed to provide access to the town centre, the services are limited in terms of frequency and availability which is further reduced during evenings and weekends.

## Movement Trends

Walking and cycling already accounts for 16% of commuter trips made by residents in Nantwich and 29% of people living in Nantwich work within the area (travelling less than 5km to work). The 20-minute walk time between Nantwich Town Centre and the edge of all residential communities in Nantwich creates further opportunities to increase the number of people walking and cycling into the town centre. Around 20% of households do not have access to a car, which is the second highest of all nine TCVP areas. However, given limited quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and a lack of public transport connectivity, this is likely to remain the mode of choice for most people without more radical intervention.

## Local Aspirations

The A51 provides a bypass round Nantwich, running from the north-west of the town to the south, and in rush hour can be significantly congested at a number of junctions, including Alvaston Roundabout and Burford Crossroads. The A51 is also a key route to Chester and North Wales as it continues north-west, as well as providing a connection to the M6 via the A500 to the east of Nantwich, access to Leighton Hospital and Middlewich along the A530, and links to Crewe and Wrexham by the A534.

A series of improvements are planned for the A51 route, including junction and drainage enhancements, to tackle congestion and address pedestrian and cyclist severance. Furthermore, an amended alignment of the A51 around The Green is now under construction to include a new link from the A51 north of Nantwich at Kingsbourne into the town centre.

-  **4% of people living in Nantwich work within the town centre**
-  **40% of residents travel between 5 and 30km to work**
-  **Public transport accounts for 5% of commuter trips**
-  **20% of households in Nantwich do not have access to a car, 29% have access to 2 or more vehicles**
-  **66% of residents in Nantwich in employment drive to work by car**
-  **7 minute walk between town centre and railway station**
-  **Active travel accounts for 16% of commuter trips**

Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility cont.

A Local Transport Plan (LTP) was adopted by Cheshire East Council in October 2019 covering the period to 2024. The LTP sets out a strategy for all forms of transport across Cheshire East. To complement the strategies set out in the LTP, CEC has developed a series of Local Transport Development Plans (LTDP) including an LTDP for Nantwich. The LTDP identify potential transport schemes for individual towns and their surrounding areas. The Council has also developed a number of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP), which may also contain suggestions for walking and cycling schemes.

In Nantwich the LTDP sets out a wide range of actions that CEC are exploring. In Nantwich, the LTDP focuses primarily on active travel interventions to improve conditions for those on foot and cycle. There are also some areas identified for improved public realm and parking management.

The table contains detail on the schemes set out in the LTDP.

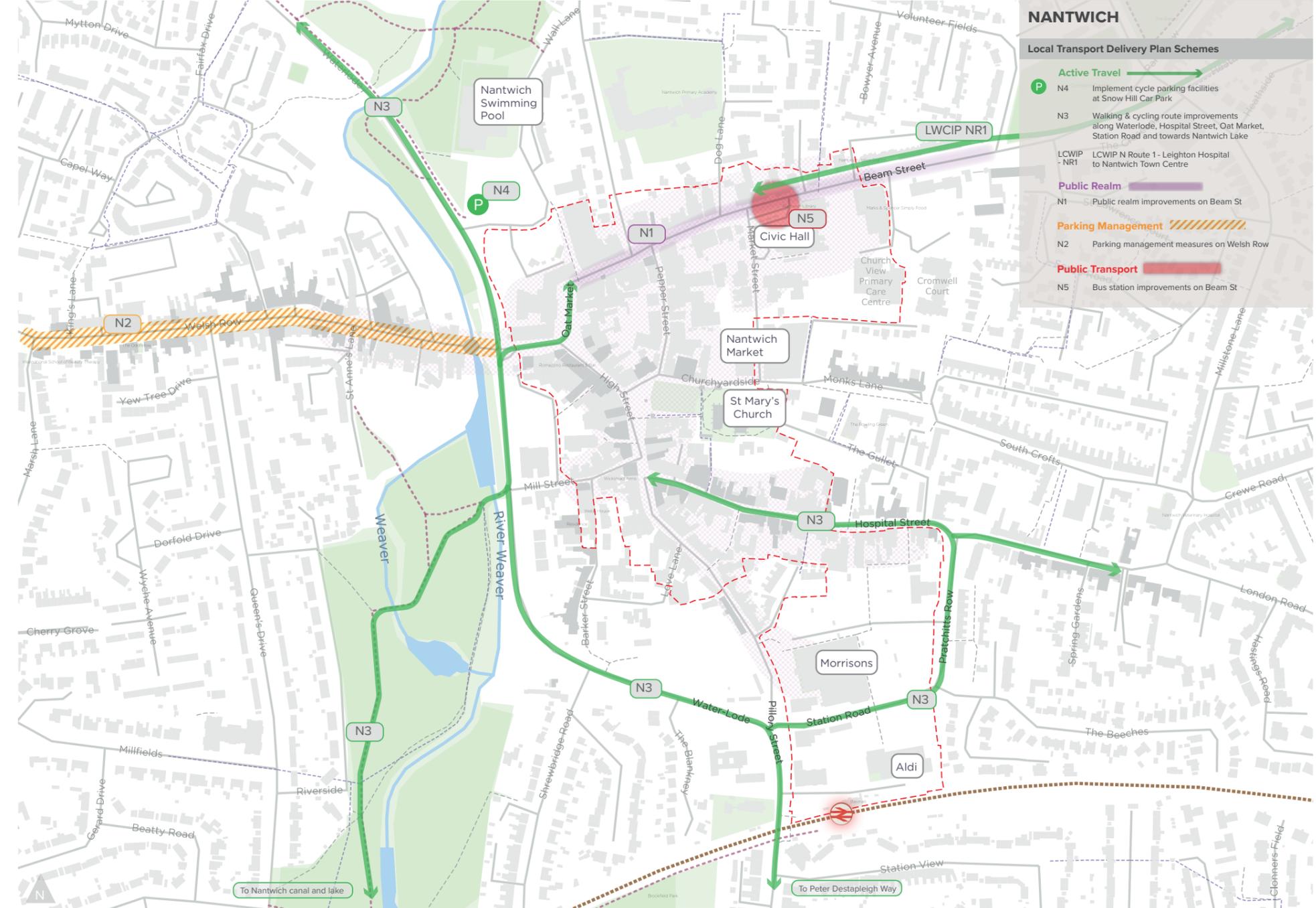
For full information on LTDP and the latest version of the LTDP please refer to the Highway pages of the CEC website.

## Nantwich LTP and LCWIP Schemes

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	N3	Walking & cycling route improvements along Waterlode, Hospital Street, Oat Market, Station Road and towards Nantwich Lake	Walking & cycling route improvements on Waterlode, Hospital Street, Oat Market, Station Road and towards Nantwich Lake to improve connections through the town centre.	£1m-£5m
	N4	Introduce cycle parking facilities at Snow Hill Car Park	Introduce cycling parking facilities at Snow Hill Car Park and other locations across the town centre, including at leisure facilities.	<£100k
Public Realm	LCWIP-NR1	LCWIP N Route 1 - Leighton Hospital to Nantwich Town Centre	LCWIP Nantwich Route 1 - Leighton Hospital to Nantwich Town Centre identified in Crewe LCWIP	£1m-£5m
	N1	Public realm improvements on Beam St	Public realm improvements on Beam Street including widening and updating pavements, improving signage and providing links to the Bus Station and Connect 2 cycle route.	£1m-£5m
Parking Management	N2	Parking management measures on Welsh Row	Introduce parking management measures including: Limit parking on Welsh Row e.g. permit parking for residents, Introduce parking restrictions on Taylor Drive e.g. double yellow lines, Increase short stay car park capacity within Nantwich town centre.	<£100k

The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.

## Nantwich Local Transport Development Plan Schemes



## Retail and Leisure

Cheshire East Council recognises the importance of monitoring key information to assess and respond to issues in its centres and commissions regular reviews of the retail and leisure market across the Borough. The latest partial update of the Retail Study Report generally paints a positive picture for Nantwich in terms of performance since the last Report (2016).

Nantwich is vital and viable KSC with an attractive town centre that provides a good mix of national operators along with speciality/ independent shops and businesses. The town centre predominantly caters for the day-to-day retail and service needs of its local residents and community.

Overall, the centre provides 287 units (Experian Goad Plan, February 2020), one of the largest number of units within Cheshire East, which are primarily located on Beam Street, High Street, Hospital Street, Pillory Street and Welsh Row.

The convenience sector is well represented and anchored by the Morrisons food store in the south east of the town centre, with other major operators including M&S and Aldi. Nantwich also

provides speciality/ independent convenience sector offerings, including Nantwich Market on Market Street. Overall, the proportion of convenience units in the centre accounts for 7% which is just below the UK average (9%). However, the proportion of floorspace is above the UK average, largely accounted for by the Morrisons food store (18% compared to UK average of 15%). A large Sainsburys food store is situated in the northern parts of the town, just off the A51.

The comparison goods offering within Nantwich is considered strong for its scale with many independent retailers and a number of national brands including Boots, Card Factory, Superdrug, Specsavers and WH Smith. The number of comparison units has increased since 2016 and the proportion (35%) is higher than the UK average (29%). Reflecting the small/medium size of comparison goods units in the town centre, the proportion of floorspace is just below the UK average (32% compared to 34%).

Improvements have been witnessed in the leisure service provision since 2016, with an increase of 5 units, but the proportion of units and floorspace remains slightly lower than the national average. Most leisure operators are independents, providing a range of takeaways, bars and restaurants, with

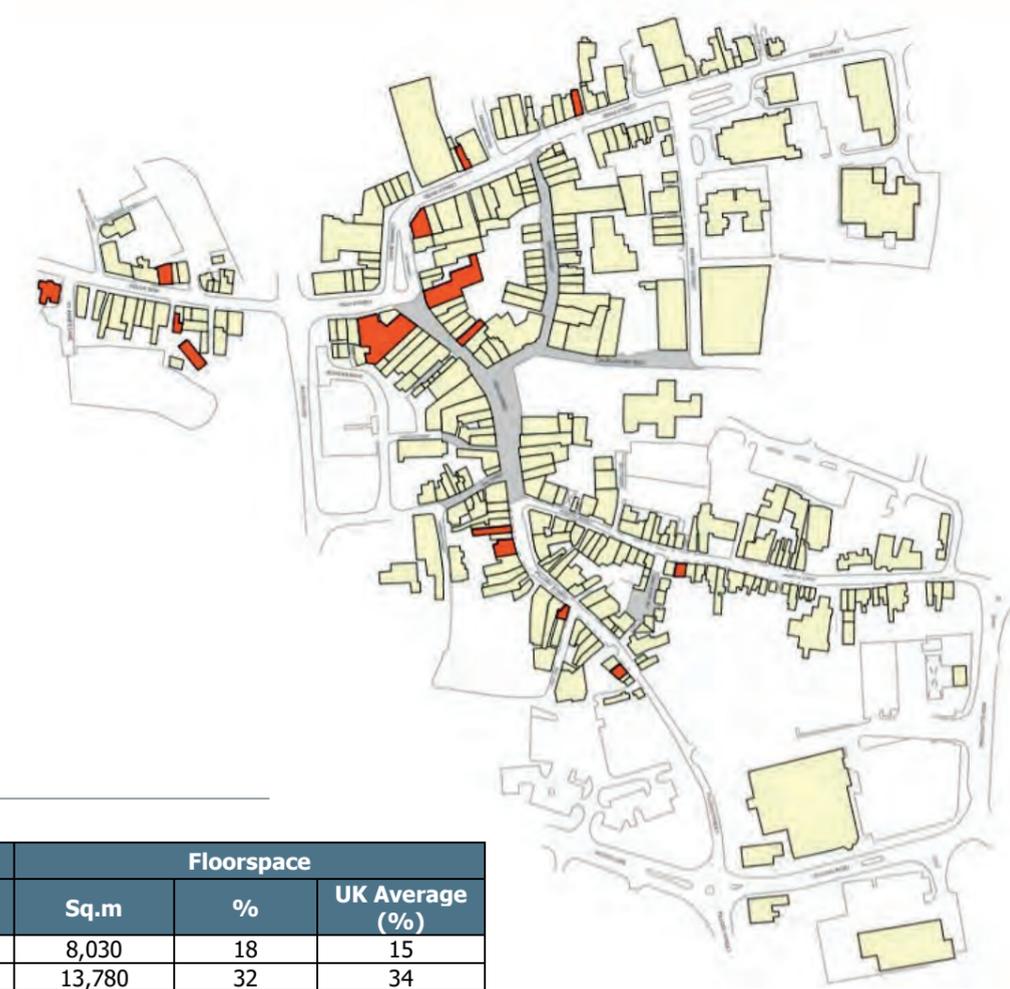
some national operators including Costa Coffee, Dominoes, Subway and Café Nero.

The number of vacant units in the town centre has remained stable at 16 since the 2016 survey. This represents just 6% of total units and is half the national average (12%). The level of floorspace is also below the national average (6% compared to UK average of 11%). The former Union Bar and Co-Op are the most noticeable vacancies, being of reasonable size on the High Street.

At this stage, it is unclear what the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic will be on Nantwich's Town Centre occupiers. Town centre spend will have been, in part, compensated for by more people working from home and using local facilities.

Nantwich offers a strong collection of national brands covering all sectors within the town centre, along with speciality/ independent offerings and a low vacancy rate. The relatively affluent catchment population who predominantly use the centre on a day-to-day basis should provide some buffer to the continued challenges facing many of the national high streets. The long term impact should be that Nantwich remains an attractive and viable town centre for local residents and visitors/ tourists.

The development of Nantwich's leisure centre is currently underway



Location of voids in the Town Centre, 2019 .  
Source: GOAD

	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK Average (%)	Sq.m	%	UK Average (%)
Convenience	19	7	9	8,030	18	15
Comparison	101	35	29	13,780	32	34
Retail Service	60	21	15	4,320	10	7
Leisure Service	65	23	25	10,680	25	26
Financial and Business Service	26	9	10	4,340	10	7
Vacant	16	6	12	2,410	6	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43,560</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Diversity of Uses in Nantwich Town Centre in October 2019  
Source: Experian GOAD Survey, September 2019. UK Average from the Experian GOAD Category Report (February 2020)

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

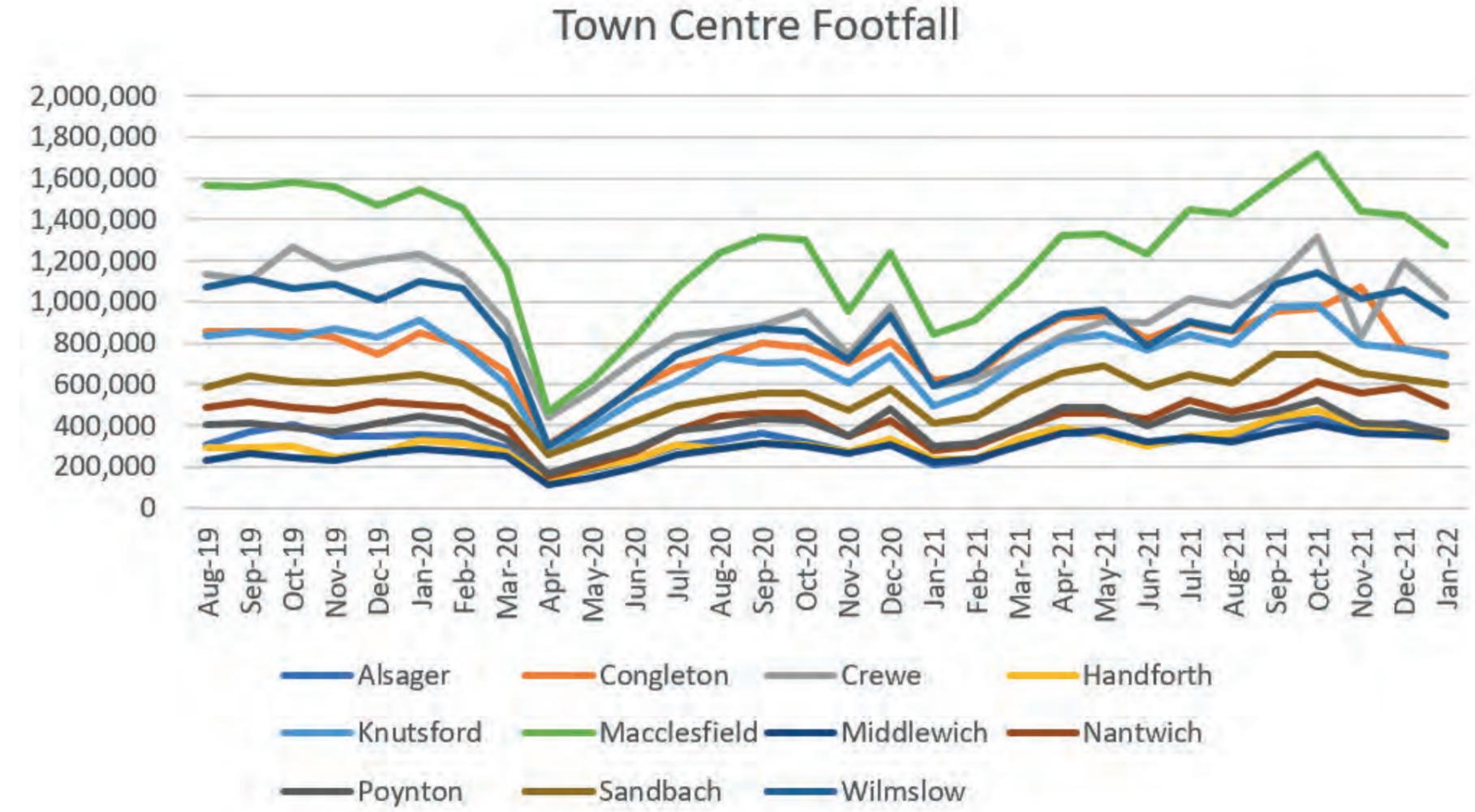
The finance and business space identified in the table (derived from the GOAD survey) only relates to ground floor office floorspace within the town centre. Nantwich's office market is considered further on p55

### Footfall

In recognition of the important relationship between footfall and vitality, Cheshire East Council is now commissioning regular monitoring of footfall across the centres. The following graph shows the footfall in all the key centres between August 2019 and December 2020. It starkly shows the impact of Covid on footfall across Cheshire East, particularly in March and November last year (during national lockdowns) and some bounce back in December.

Nantwich was the fifth least visited centre in Cheshire East in August 2019 and dropped down to fourth least visited by December 2020 – with in the region of 516,000 visitors per month at its peak. Positively, whilst the largest monthly footfall to reduce in Nantwich fell by 27% on the year previously to 345,000 in November 2020, this was lower than the national average benchmark rate of 40% suggesting many working from home were choosing to shop locally. Additionally, this figure then grew by 23% in December 2020.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on footfall, both during enforced lockdowns but also in further accelerating online retail use. The ability of a centre to attract a wide range of visitors (rather than just relying on shoppers) will have a significant impact on how centres emerge from the pandemic.



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: August 2019 - Jan 2022



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: Nantwich Town Centre: October 2019-2020

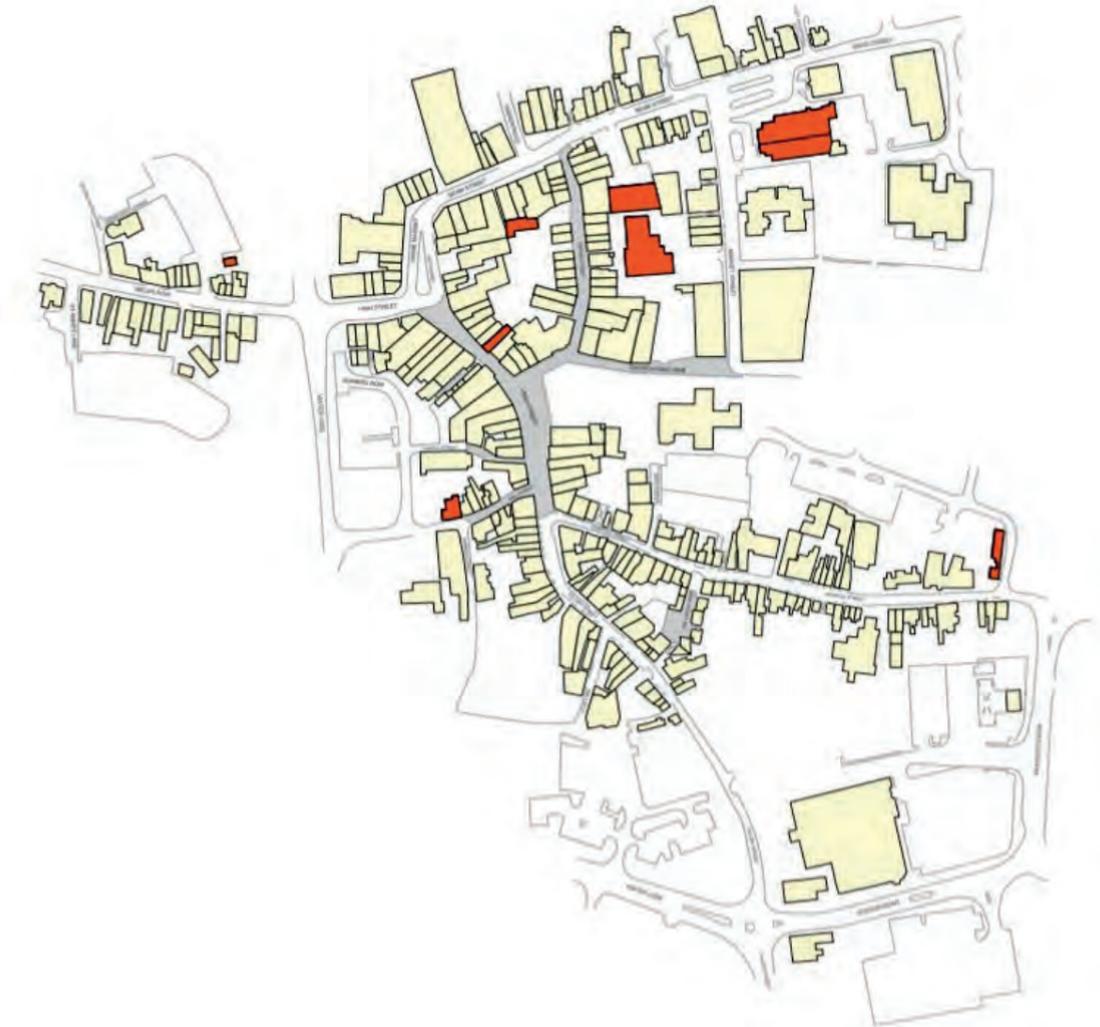
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Employment

Nantwich is predominantly a commuter town with a limited employment offer within the town boundary. There is no significant industrial estate or business park, with the exception of a relatively small employment park off Middlewich Road to the north of the town and proposals for additional commercial development at Kingsbourne, but, some individual office and industrial/ warehouses units dispersed throughout the town. The largest number of industrial units can be found on the northern outskirts and are used for mainly agricultural purposes for Reaseheath College. The site also contains academic buildings and student accommodation.

As of March 2020, there were 9 office premises spread throughout Nantwich Town Centre, with the largest being located behind the retail frontage on Beam Street and Pepper Street. Pepper House on Pepper Street is a three storey office building occupied by local businesses in the financial and property sectors. Royal Mail occupy another office building on Pepper Street whilst Nantwich Civic Hall is home to Nantwich Town Council. Whilst the scale of office use within the town centre is limited, the importance of retail, leisure and tourism as an employer and economic driver in Nantwich is well recognised and will be encouraged.

The nature of Nantwich as a commuter town is due to the close proximity to both Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent, both of which have strong office and industrial/ warehousing markets. Any employment development within Nantwich would have to compete with these established employment areas.



Location of Offices in the Town Centre, 2019  
Source: GOAD

## Residential Market Context

Nantwich provides an attractive residential location offering easy commuting to nearby larger towns of Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent (via A51 and A530) and surrounded by open countryside beyond.

At the time of the 2011 Census the dominant house type across the Cheshire East area was detached housing (35.6%) which is a much higher proportion than the North West (18%) and England (22.4%).

Nantwich had a total of 6,710 households, 4.2% of Cheshire East's total residential stock (159,441). In terms of housing mix, semi-detached (30.6%) and terraced (26.8%) housing is the dominant housing type. In contrast to the wider Borough, detached homes account for the lowest proportion within Nantwich (20.8%). The mix of housing stock in Nantwich allows for all demographics to be accommodated for, catering for first-time buyers to larger affluent families.

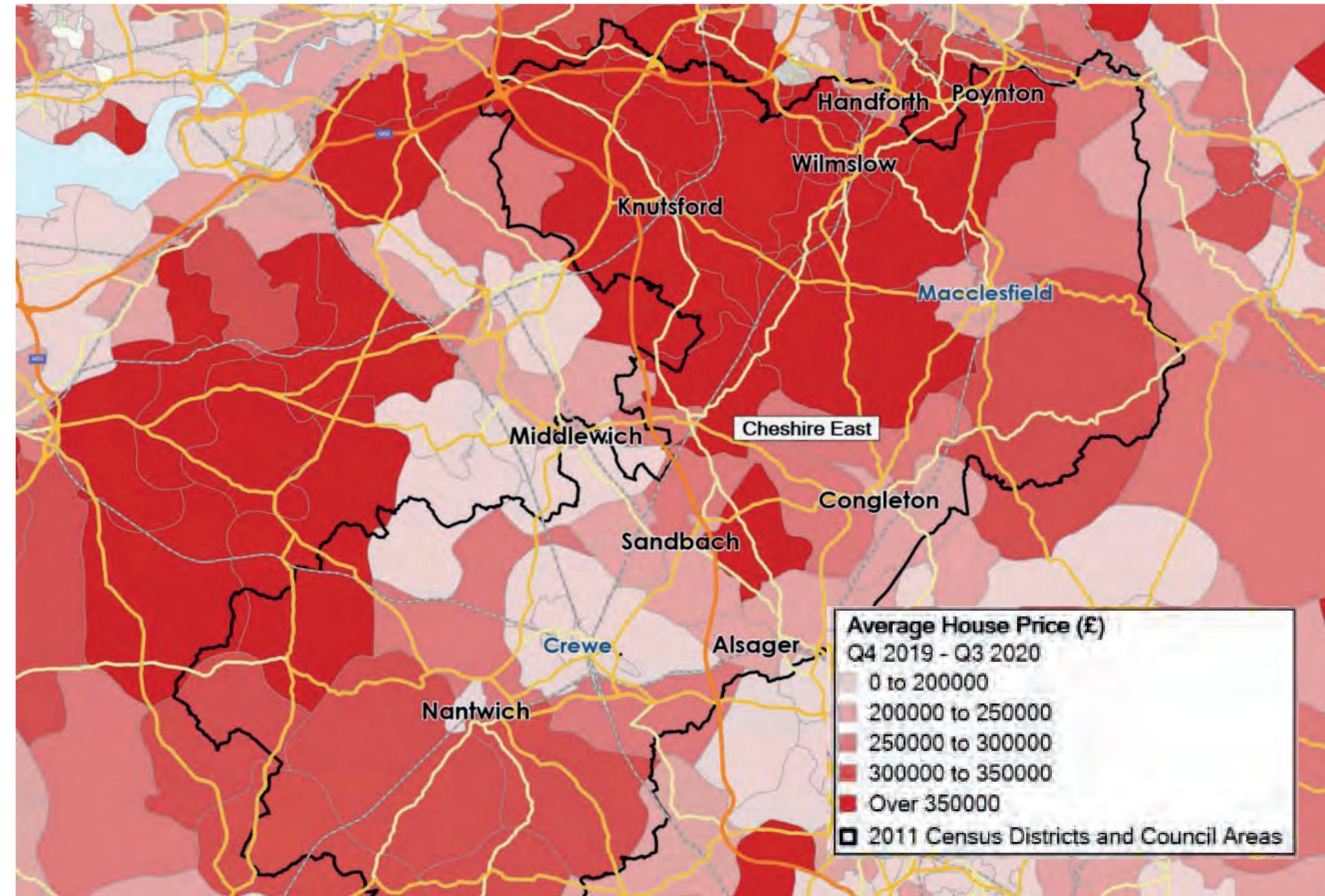
Average achieved house prices in Nantwich over the last year were around £270,000, offering a relatively affordable location compared to many other parts of Cheshire East.

Active new build housing developments include the current phase of Kingsbourne, a 1,000 unit development by David Wilson Homes and Cheerbrook Gardens on Cheerbrook Road, both offering 3, 4, and 5 bedroom homes with 3-beds starting from £260,000. The Bayley Croft development by Stewart Milne Homes offers 5-6-bed 'executive' homes from £420,000.

The large scale of housing growth, particular from the Kingsbourne development, presents an opportunity to expand town centre services and businesses to meet the larger local population. However, this increase in population also presents challenges in respect of the ability for the town's infrastructure including health facilities, schools and highways to accommodate this increased demand.

Dwelling Type/Area	Detached	Semi Detached	Terrace	Flat	Other	Total Households
Alsager	39.9%	40.4%	11.6%	8.1%	0%	5,183
Congleton	36.3%	35.4%	19.3%	8.9%	0.2%	11,561
Handforth	26.1%	23.1%	27.9%	22.8%	0.1%	2,936
Knutsford	38.8%	34.2%	19.7%	7.0%	0.4%	5,671
Middlewich	39.0%	26.0%	19.7%	15.3%	0%	5,910
<b>Nantwich</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>6,710</b>
Poynton-with-Worth	42.7%	39.2%	10.5%	7.2%	0.3%	6,024
Sandbach	39.1%	36.1%	17.6%	6.8%	0.3%	7,840
Wilmslow	39.5%	26.6%	19.5%	14.3%	0%	10,615
Cheshire East	35.6%	32.6%	21.2%	10.2%	0.5%	159,441
North West	18.0%	36.3%	29.8%	15.4%	0.5%	3,009,549
England	22.4%	31.2%	24.5%	21.2%	0.7%	22,063,368

Housing Stock by Type.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)



# 08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

This SWOT is based on the analysis of the consultant team and discussions with the Town Council and other local partners including councillors.

## Strengths

- Attractive Cheshire market town with a lot to offer residents and visitors
- Town has weathered Covid remarkably well. Although the centre has seen some increased vacancy rates because it does not have a lot of chains there is not a significant concern about large scale closures. Most shops are owner occupied. Footfall is therefore very important
- Benefits from being an attractive centre (advantage for all ages) and layout of town makes it easy/safe to walk around
- Lots of historic buildings in the town which add to character
- Attractions include the River Weaver and Brine Pool (one of the only two outdoor brine pools in the country and for which investment has recently been secured), proximity to canal network, a theatre and a museum - there is scope to make more of these assets
- Good Profile - town is known for its offer "Always something on in Nantwich"
- Strong calendar of events throughout the year including the Words and Music Festival, Jazz and Blues Festival and a number of triathlons (2/3 a year) which brings in visitors
- United Town - Strong partnership and collaboration - Town Council works really well. Nantwich Partnership is a fully constituted group that has been established for the purpose of attracting substantial inward investment into Nantwich with a focus upon public realm improvements. Vibrant civic society and other societies. Strong community spirit. Info sharing via Nantwich News etc
- Pedestrianised core is perceived as a safe place, attractive for walking and good for children
- Good evening economy
- Network of walking/ cycling routes along the River Weaver
- 10 minute walk from train station
- Quality of tourism/hospitality assets within hinterland
- Proximity of Reaseheath College

## Weaknesses

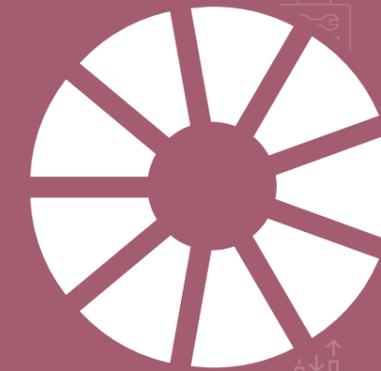
- Dependent on footfall/catchment
- Public transport - concern that people cannot get to the centre - loss of local bus routes into Nantwich on Saturday (e.g. from Stapeley) and issues with bus subsidy concern that services could reduce further
- Quality of the riverside - The riverside margin has become overgrown and under-maintained preventing visual and physical access to the river edge, which could be a better utilised environment for the town and ecology
- Concern about level of investment in the centre - since 2012 Town Council has run the market and profits are reinvested back into the centre but locals still pay taxes - concern that limited Council funds are being invested into other centres such as Crewe rather than fairly shared
- Quality of the public realm and some historic buildings - particular concern around gateway and corridors which give a poor first impression to the town. Maintenance issues of footways - cracked and retain water. Hospital Street and Beam Street particular areas of concern. Civic Society/Town Council prepared 3 reports on aspects of urban environments which need improving. Although some resulting action - would have liked to see more
- Experience from train station to centre for pedestrians is highways dominated, route along Pillory Street is very narrow
- Connection to River Weaver & Brookfield Park is poor
- History of brine and historic curation not obvious on first visit
- Some poor quality infill development along main links into town.
- Easterly end of Welsh Row feels disconnected with the core due to the nature of the High Street - Water-Lode Street Junction

## Opportunities

- New housing is a key opportunity (Kingsbourne -1,000 new homes) - will support footfall/population growth
- Town Council is proactive and has taken on assets and services - delivering these well and keen to take on more for example around open spaces
- Harness growing interest in sports related tourism - Nantwich already hosts a number of triathlons and scope to make more of the Brine Swimming Pool, the only one in the North West. Harness growing interest in wild water swimming. Make more of growing interest in triathlons - bringing money into economy.
- Could make more of programme of calendar of events - build upon current and popular events around themes of heritage based, rural, food, cultural etc.
- Scope to make more of interesting history
- Opportunities for public realm improvements along the River Weaver - Emphasis that public realm in the town centre is important and improvement will help to attract visitors and encourage local people to continue to visit
- Opportunity to improve pedestrian connections from High Street to Welsh Row, across Water-Lode
- Opportunity to consolidate parking into a co-ordinated strategy which avoids over reliance on surface car parking only
- Upgrade and enhance the quality of the public realm combined with a review of local street function to allow for increased pedestrian footfall, cycle accessibility and spill out space for local cafes and shops
- Opportunity for riverside development at the old Gas Works site

## Threats

- Pressure on local infrastructure including roads/schools/doctors/hospitals - as a result of the proposed large housing estate. Already struggle to see doctors/dentists
- Car parking - CEC owned car parks all operate charges - reference made to centres such as Sandbach and Alsager where there are no charges - seen as unfair. Redevelopment (hotel and retail) of St Anne's Lane Site/car park is proposed and has resulted in the loss of 80-100 spaces. Simultaneously there is a recognition that demand for/pressure on parking is currently high. Lack of spaces seen as a risk particularly as Nantwich grows
- Proximity to Crewe Town Centre means competition for shoppers as regeneration efforts there are realised
- New development on Snow Hill car park and St Anne's Lane, reducing perception of available parking in town centre
- Strong perceptions of car accessibility needed to get to the centre of the town and reluctance to move towards more sustainable and less space intensive modes of travel
- Ongoing COVID pandemic impacts visitor numbers, events and retail footfall seeing a contraction and decline of the boutique and craft shopping experience



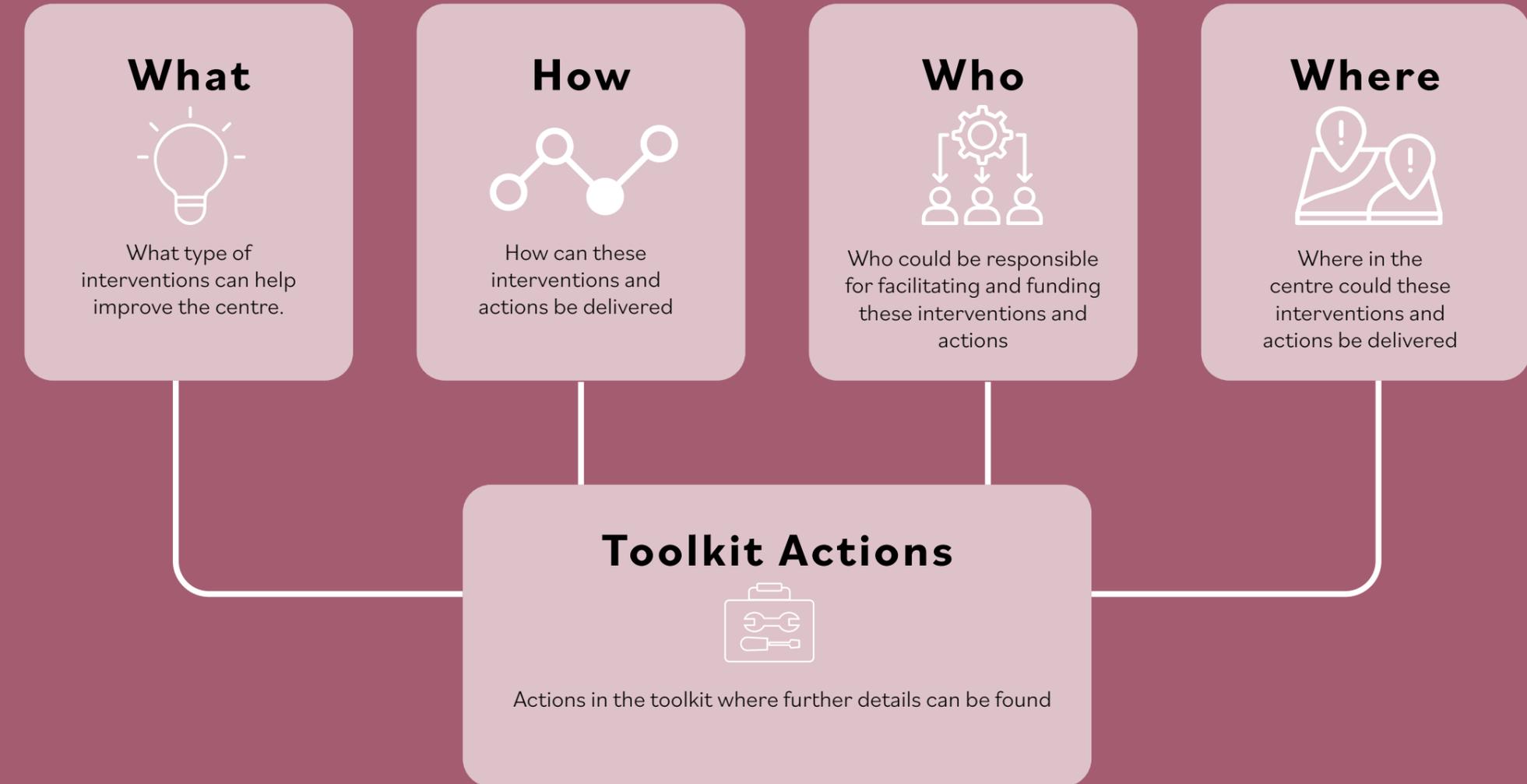
# NANTWICH ACTION PLAN

## 09 Priority Areas for Intervention

The Action Plan has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for Nantwich responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

For each of the actions further details are provided in terms of what, how, who and where (see Box for further details).

The Action Plan is supported by a Toolkit which provides a wide range of actions across 25 intervention areas (which align with the High Street Task Force recommendations) which can be undertaken by a range of stakeholders.



# Vision and Objectives

## Vision Statement

Protecting our past and working for our future to improve the environment, local services and facilities to make Nantwich an even better place.

## Objectives

- **Planning a sustainable future for our town**
- **Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism**
- **Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community**
- **Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community**

## Role of the Centre

Nantwich plays a number of important roles:

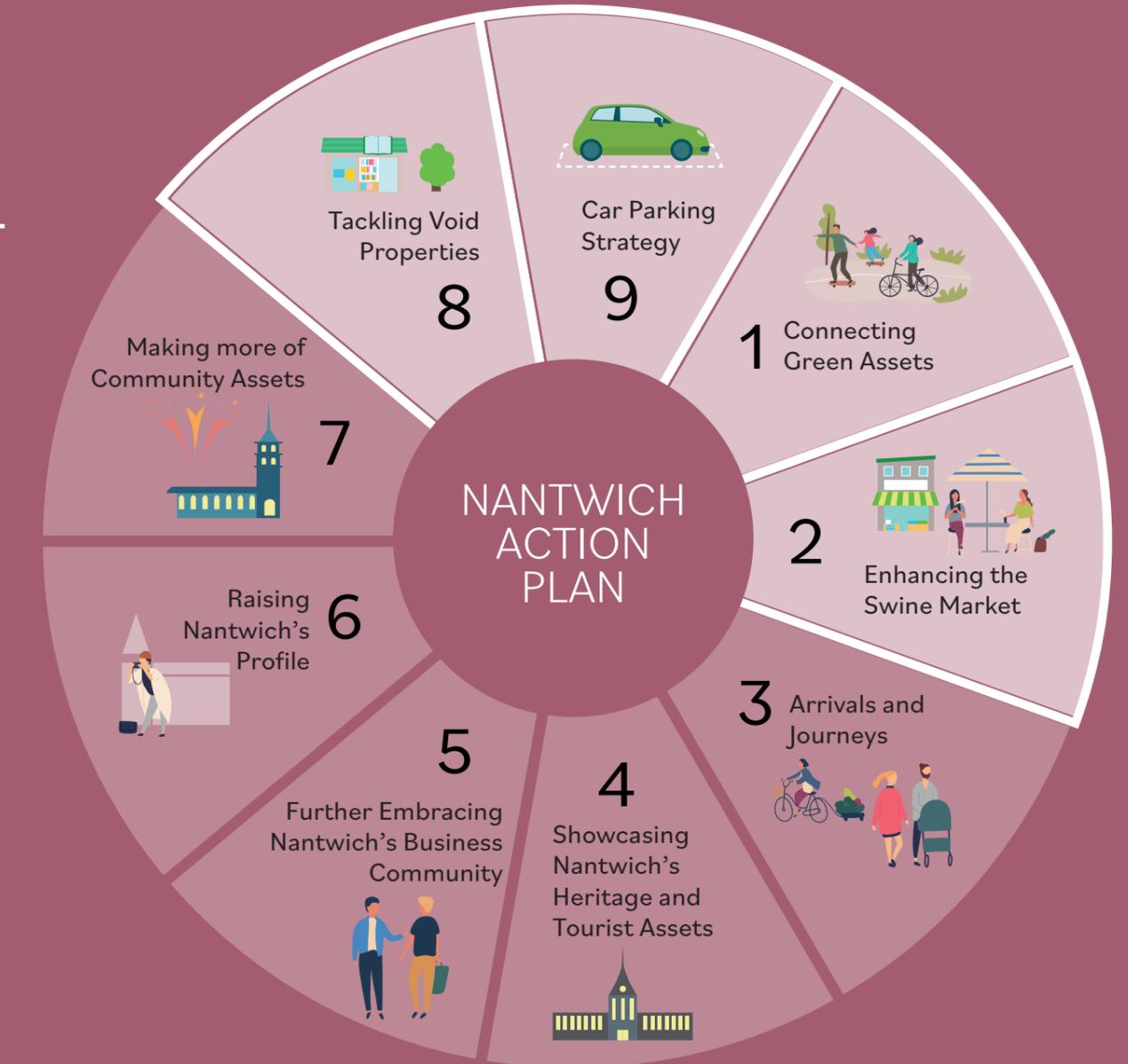
- A small town serving the needs of its local residents
- A commuter town providing access to extensive employment opportunities in Cheshire and Staffordshire
- An historic town and attractive town with strong visitor appeal with strong links to North Wales
- An accessible location from which to explore wider area including via its canal network.

The Vitality Plan seeks to support Nantwich to fulfil its potential across these important roles.

## Areas for Intervention

The following have been identified as areas for intervention. Priority interventions identified through the public consultation are highlighted with a white border.

Potential actions are identified in Section 10:



# Spatial Action Plan

The Spatial Action Plan illustrates key features of the Centre and identifies where proposed actions could be delivered. It demonstrates how the linkages between the town centre and the River could be improved as well as ensuring proposed new development is well connecting into the Centre. It also highlights the Centres extensive green and heritage assets.

The four priority actions which have emerged from the public consultations are:

- **Action 1: Connecting green assets**
- **Action 2 : Enhancing the Swine Market**
- **Action 8 Tackling void properties**
- **Action 9 Car parking strategy**

## Action Plan

### Action 1 - Connecting green assets

 Introduce outdoor play spaces, events space and relaxation /viewing spaces as part of a coordinated riverside parkland attraction to Nantwich

### Action 2 - Enhancing the Swine Market

 Short term improvements to shop frontages and immediate surroundings. Longer term opportunity for redevelopment.

 Focus area of public realm investment linking historic core of town with northern and western extents, connecting to the riverside and open space.

### Action 3 - Arrivals and journeys

 Primary gateways to Nantwich. Visible, clear and eye catching signage - a welcome to the Town.

 Secondary gateways and markers. Designed to guide pedestrians to key local amenities and located at decision points along walking links.

 Pedestrianised area with opportunity to invest and enhance existing public realm.

 New linkages with good quality public realm linking to town centre amenities, open space and surrounding communities.

 Improvements to shop frontages and environs (including public realm) to better connect Welsh Row with the Town Centre and Riverside



- Key**
-  Town centre boundary
  -  Main routes into and out of town
  -  Listed buildings
  -  Existing buildings
  -  Sports pitches
  -  Open green spaces
  -  Local amenities
  -  Nantwich Food Festival locations
  -  Nantwich 3 mile riverside walk loop
  -  Planned new residential development
  -  Opportunity for a coordinated heritage trail for Nantwich. Showcasing the town's key heritage assets linked to Tourism Strategy.
  -  Opportunity for heritage trail to link to other areas of town centre through events. Leisure heritage and river heritage part of Nantwich Heritage Trail.

# Movement Action Plan

Building on the transport schemes suggested in the LTDP, additional town centre transport schemes are suggested as likely to be beneficial in supporting town centre vitality and viability. These additional schemes, which place a strong emphasis on public realm and enhancing the street environment are set out in the table and plan opposite.

## Town Centre Movement Schemes suggested in addition to LTDP potential Schemes

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	N_AT1	Improve pedestrians and cyclists' crossings at Water-Lode / High Street / Welsh Row	Reduce severance and provide safer and better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at Water-Lode / High Street / Welsh Row junction.	<£1m
	N_AT2	Improve signage and wayfinding across the town centre	Improve signage and wayfinding across town at key gateways and landmarks.	<£100k
Public Realm	N_PR1	Implement public realm scheme on Welsh Row	Implement public realm scheme Welsh Row towards the Shropshire Union Canal Main Line and Dorfold Hall – aim to enhance existing heritage and upgrade tired and underwhelming public realm.	£1m-£5m
	N_PR2	New public space at Oat Market	Create a new public space at Oat Market. Short to medium interventions could include re-routing traffic down Swine Market to claim space at Oat Market.	£1m-£5m
	N_PR3	Enhance the connection to the riverside on Mill St	Enhance the connection with the riverside particularly via Mill St and the gateway junction at Water Lode (B5341) to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists including enhanced provision of crossings.	£1m-£5m
	N_PR4	Implement public realm scheme on Hospital Street	Implement public realm scheme on Hospital Street to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment.	£1m-£5m
	N_PR5	Implement public realm scheme on Pillory Street	Implement public realm scheme on Pillory Street to enhance the setting of businesses and listed buildings, as well as improve walking connections to the railway station.	£1m-£5m
Parking Management	N_PM1	Parking management measures on Pillory Street	Review parking management measures – in particular regarding on-street parking – to increase width of footway and allow more space to dwell. Explore opportunities to trial pop-up uses, such as parklets.	<£100k

The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.  
[cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1](https://cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1)



Park Lane, Poynton

Implementing an informal street approach on Welsh Row would calm traffic, improve conditions for those on foot and enhance the setting of the historic buildings. (photo credit: MottMacdonald)



Frodsham Street, Chester

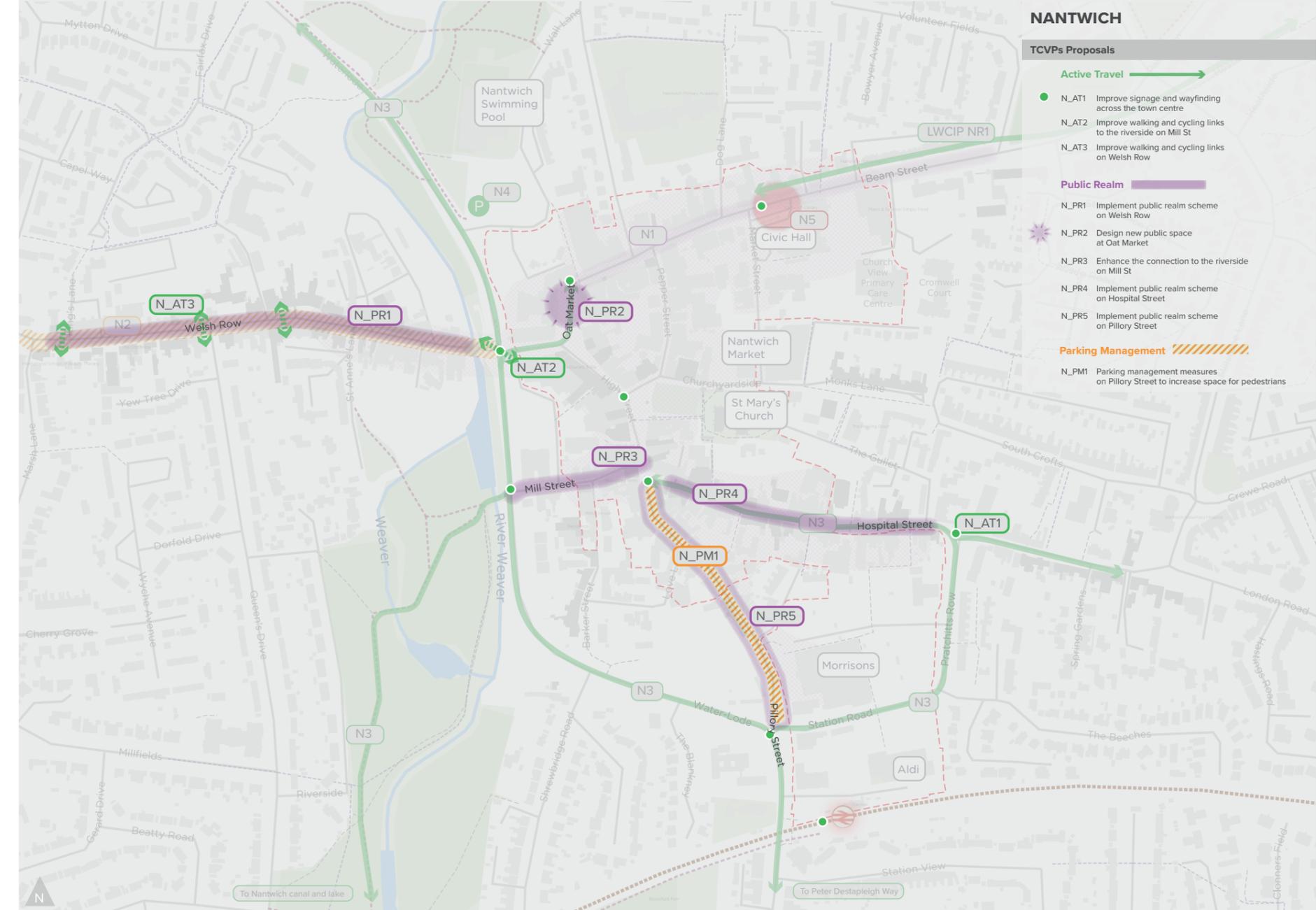
A level surface pedestrian priority street, which would provide a good model to explore on Pillory and Hospital Street. (photo credit: MottMacdonald)



Seville, Spain

A former highway converted in to a small public space where vehicles are permitted through. The Oat Market area could be reimagined in this way. (photo credit: MottMacdonald)

## Nantwich Town Centre Viability Plan Proposals



## 10 Potential Actions



### Action 1: Connecting Green Assets - Making more of Nantwich's riverside (Priority from public consultation)

#### What

Nantwich has a fantastic asset next to its characterful historic town centre, a linear greenspace corridor which follows the River Weaver providing an opportunity to further diversify Nantwich's offer to both visitors and residents.

Nantwich is a small town in terms of its size and population – though its town centre punches well above its weight. The small footprint of the town, its narrow historic streets, make it more attractive to walking and cycling for short trips than many others. However, with an affluent population and large retail/leisure catchment, car use remains high for trips to the town centre.

Several proposals are set out in the Local Transport Deliver Plan (LTDP) and Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for improving conditions for journeys on foot and cycle. These proposals should be supported and progressed, helping build confidence for those who presently feel less comfortable on foot or cycle than in their car.

#### How

Investment into the river corridor and its surrounding greenspaces to enhance a valuable community and environmental asset to the town. This could be achieved through;

- Creating a co-ordinated network of improved walking and cycling links that sustainably connect planned new development and the town centre with the riverside and other green assets
- Lots of community interest in the potential to enhance the landscape attractiveness/ wildlife value of Brookfield Park and other vital green spaces such as Barony Park, Queens Drive and Nantwich Walled Garden
- Interpretation and information points to explain the town's natural heritage as well as celebrating built heritage features of the riverside i.e Grade II Listed Nantwich Bridge which could be further enhanced through the website and other social platforms
- A co-ordinated series of spaces within the corridor for cultural and community events
- Enhanced and protected habitats to encourage biodiversity
- Creating a variety of landscape types to help diversify the offer of the corridor park ranging from urban food grow spaces, wildflowers, adventure play spaces, dwell spaces with benches and picnic areas, quiet spaces
- Improved entrance points, signage, crossing points and lighting to encourage more trips into the riverside, pathways and green assets
- Ensure green routes are safe and well maintained including removing overgrown trees and hedges, ensuring even surfaces, removing graffiti, adequate bin provision and lighting

Potential actions to support walking and cycling include:

- Consider the location of cycle hubs linked to improved green links and provide safe secure cycle parking throughout the town centre and at the railway station.
- Explore design options for routes identified as key active travel connections in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP). This includes Beam St, Hospital St, Station Road, and Water-Lode.
- Enhance the connection with the riverside particularly via Mill St and enhancing the gateway junction at Welsh Row / Water-Lode (B5341).

- Enhance the connection with Nantwich train station via Pillory St.
- Enhance signage and wayfinding to key destinations e.g. towards Nantwich Museum.

#### Who

- Town Council
- CEC/ANSA
- Canal & River Trust
- Local community/ voluntary groups e.g local angling societies and Nantwich Walled Garden Society

#### Where

- Nantwich Riverside
- River Weaver and areas to the north of the Pool
- Nantwich Town Centre
- Beam St, Hospital St, Station Road, and Waterlode
- Brookfield Park, Barony Park and Nantwich Walled Garden



Action 1 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town



#### Toolkit Actions

- 1b - Introduce a programme of events
- 4b - Better signage
- 4d - Planting in pots to define space certain uses
- 4e - Enhance gateway sites
- 5a - Upgrade the public realm
- 7a - Parklets
- 7e - Bike and scooter parking
- 9b - Curated events
- 11a - Design a holistic public realm scheme
- 20b - Use space and activities to attract people to a forgotten part of town centre and create new place identity/ Reinvigorated alleyways
- 25a - Meanwhile uses
- 25d - Raise awareness in the public realm



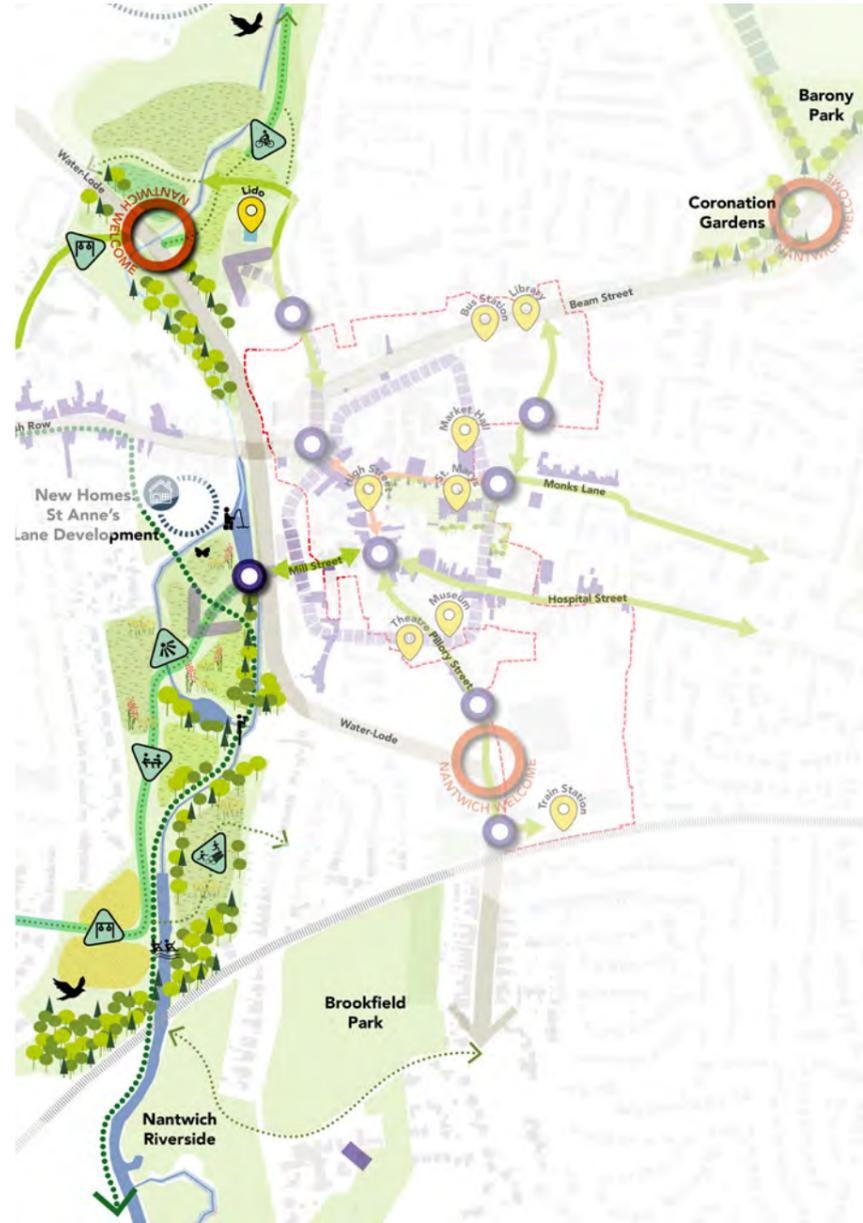
# Action 1: Connecting Green Assets - Making more of Nantwich's riverside (Priority from public consultation)

## Re imagining the riverside

The plan to the right highlights the location of the riverside adjacent to the town centre and how it could connect into suggested interventions such as the heritage trail and gateway improvements.

The riverside corridor itself could be enhanced with outdoor play areas, events spaces and relaxation/viewing spaces to attract more visitors and allow and better connect assets.

- Key**
- Town centre boundary
  - Main routes into and out of town
  - Listed buildings
  - Existing buildings
  - Sports pitches
  - Open green spaces
  - Local amenities
  - Planned new residential development
  - Opportunity for a coordinated heritage trail for Nantwich. Showcasing the town's key heritage assets linked to Tourism Strategy.
  - Opportunity for heritage trail to link to other areas of town centre through events. Leisure heritage and river heritage part of Nantwich Heritage Trail.
  - Primary gateways to Nantwich. Visible, clear and eye catching signage - a welcome to the Town.
  - Secondary gateways and markers. Designed to guide pedestrians to key local amenities and located at decision points along walking links.
  - Pedestrianised area with opportunity to invest and enhance existing public realm.
  - New linkages with good quality public realm linking to town centre amenities, open space and surrounding communities.
- Connecting green assets**
- Opportunity to introduce coordinated riverside parkland route
  - Opportunity to introduce outdoor play spaces, events space and relaxation /viewing spaces as part of a coordinated riverside parkland attraction
  - Nantwich 3 mile riverside walk loop



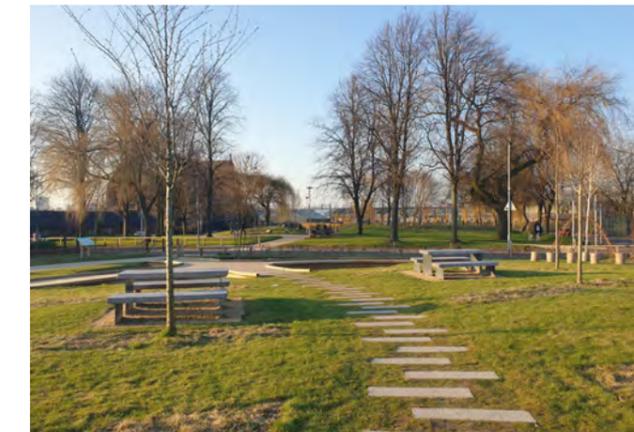
## Precedent Images

The images adjacent provide examples of how to create pockets of activity along a route. Seating, playspaces and artwork have been used to provide opportunities to dwell and play, but also help define a specific route through a space.

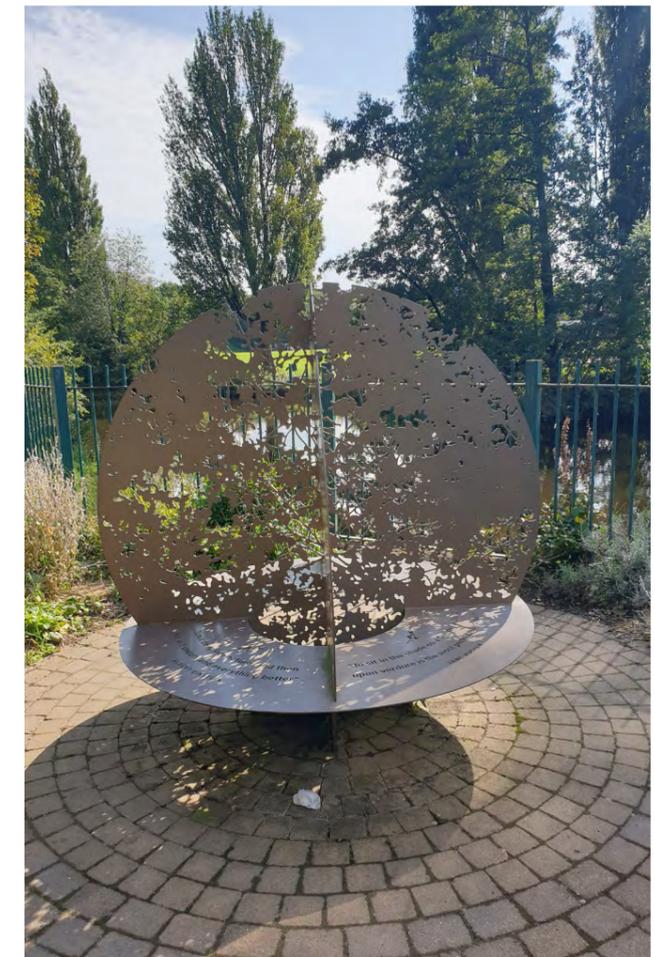
Something similar could be designed for the riverside corridor, and take account of movement between the more urban setting of the river around Welsh Road into the parkland areas to the south.



Grey to Green, Sheffield, Credit: Sheffield City Council



Sponge Park, Gorton



Artwork and seating along the River Dane in Congleton Park



## Action 2: Enhancing the Swine Market (Priority from public consultation)

### What

The area historically known as the Swine Market sits to the north of the historic core of the Town and is one of the main gateways to the town centre both by car (from nearby car parks) and pedestrians. It is characterised by outdated and tired retail development as well as being highway dominated. Attention should be given to the area to improve the quality and vibrancy of this important arrival space to the historic core of the centre.

### How

Short term:

Façade improvements to existing businesses – investment in consistent signage and shop frontage design to compliment the historic town centre core’s aesthetic

Ensuring void spaces are utilised and activated with temporary or meanwhile uses

Engagement with local artists / school groups to create a shutter art programme to help reduce the negative visual impact of the area once retailers close

Introduce more seating areas, bicycle parking and dwell space.

Longer term:

There may be an opportunity to redevelop the dated retail and residential units which front onto the Swine Market with more modern mixed use development. Ensuring active ground floor frontage will be important.

A co-ordinated public realm design for the area which links pedestrians and activity with the Town’s historic core, its riverside and Welsh Row. Traffic calming, improved pedestrian crossings, increased pedestrian space, potentially through the removal of the island, and a consistent public realm visual aesthetic can help to connect assets such as the Pool and Welsh Row with the Towns Historic core.

### Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- Local businesses

### Where

- Swine Market junction



The Swine Market area in Nantwich, 2020



### Action 2 supports the following objectives:

- Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism
- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community
- Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community



### Toolkit Actions

- 1d - Use lighting
- 4a - Provide pop up seating
- 4b - Better signage
- 4e - Enhance gateway sites
- 5a - Upgrade public realm
- 5b - Redesign shop fronts
- 5c - Dressing vacant sites
- 7e - Bike and scooter parking
- 9a - Re-purposing of assets
- 14a - Manage traffic
- 18b - Provide new places to sit



## Action 2: Enhancing the Swine Market (Priority from public consultation)

### Short term change

Architectural Emporium's work in Huyton Village in Knowsley is a good example of how to revamp a more dated shopping parade and create a space with a more defined identity, which could work well around the Swine Market/ Oat Market area in Nantwich.

The approach taken in Withington in Manchester, which saw a number of local artists curated to paint the roller shutters of shops on the high street, could also be pursued. This would create vibrancy and add interest when the shops are closed.



Used with permission from [Architectural Emporium](#)

Upgrades to shutters through local artwork projects helps to soften the visual impact of void or closed units. An opportunity to bring colour, vibrancy and identity to an otherwise unattractive shop front environment.

Consistent and coordinated approach to shop signage and frontage design can dramatically help to improve the look and feel of a place.



Finding opportunities to retrofit interventions within the highway to promote pedestrian movement can help to improve footfall and activity.

Installations such as wayfinding, signage, planters and parklets can help to animate dead space and provide additional purpose and function to the public realm



## Action 3: Arrivals and Journeys

### What

The streets within the town centre often appear tired, and do not reflect the quality of the wider built environment. Creating streets that are more pleasant places to dwell, shop and relax are essential ingredients of successful town centres. Nantwich Station is also a key primary gateway into the town for those arriving by train.

Action should be taken to improve the arrival and journey experience at different points and by different modes around and across the town centre. This consists of three elements;

1. Creating a series of primary gateway features along the main vehicular routes into and around the centre to showcase a uniquely Nantwich Welcome. These would capture passing vehicles and offer a brief showcase to what's happening in Nantwich
2. Followed by a complementary series of secondary gateways located at important local, pedestrian nodal points across the town to help with wayfinding as well as informing people of live or upcoming events in the town centre.
3. Improving the quality of pedestrian links from destination points within the town. Improving walking links from car parks and the train station, enhancing the walking experience across the town towards its boutique retail offer, heritage offer and variety of F&B establishments

### How

Primary Gateways –

Physical gateway features – could consist of sculpture / digital / branded signage at a scale to grab attention and share information

Secondary gateways –

Human scaled signage / interpretation points / mobile phone app compatible QR codes etc to help with local wayfinding to local amenities. Also an opportunity to share local historic, upcoming events, links to other FAQs etc

Pedestrian links – improving the visual quality of pedestrian links from main arrival points including the train and bus stations and main car parks, car parklets, business spill out space, additional greening and planters with seating, improved materials and lighting.

Ensure foot and cycle paths are safe and well maintained including removing overgrown trees and hedges, ensuring even surfaces and are well lit

Consideration could be given to the following areas:

- Pillory St and Hospital St are both narrow streets where the highway dominates and the footways are often in poor condition. They are in need of upgrades to the public realm to better support businesses, accessibility and create a safer pedestrian environment. Consideration should also be given to the options for giving pedestrians priority over cars in this area, including wider pavements
- Welsh Row is of major local historic and civic importance, as well as being a vibrant hub for local businesses. However, the area currently feels cut off from the town and the quality of the street should be improved, with the intention of creating clearer connections and a better balance between the needs of vehicles and pedestrians.
- The Oat Market has the potential to be transformed into a new public space for the town.

A concept design study could be progressed for these areas, to develop options and set out a phased and costed strategy for change.

### Who

- CEC
- Network Rail
- Historic England
- Car park operators
- Local businesses

### Where

- Primary Gateways – Waterlode, Welsh Row, Beam Street / Coronation Gardens, Water Lode / Pillory Street and bus station and train station
- Secondary Gateways – Monks Lane, Civic Hall Car Park, Pillory Street, Mill Street / Nantwich Riverside, Swine Market, Wall Lane Car Park, Nantwich Train Station, High Street
- Pedestrian Links – Civic Hall Car Park, Monks Lane, Hospital Street, Pillory Street., Mill Street, Wall Lane, Oat Market, Snow Hill Car Park link to Beam St and Welsh Row



### Action 3 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town
- Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism
- Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community



### Toolkit Actions

- 4a - Provide pop up seating
- 4b - Better signage
- 5a - Upgrade public realm
- 5b - Redesign shop fronts
- 7e - Bike and scooter parking
- 9a - Re-purposing of assets
- 9b - Curated events
- 11a - Design a holistic public realm scheme
- 14c - Manage traffic speeds



## Action 3: Arrivals and Journeys

### Precedent Images

A good strategy to enhance Nantwich's gateway streets and improve pedestrian links across town, could be to introduce trial measures – like the planters and street furniture used in Avignon, France – to test space reconfiguration and changes.

Pedestrian priority measures can then be made more permanent, like the Chester example – to reduce car dominance even further and switch priority to pedestrians, in an environment where cars are guests.



Trial pedestrian priority measures, Avignon, France



Public realm scheme, Frodsham Street, Chester



Public realm enhancement to increase pedestrian priority, Garda, Italy

### Quick wins: Pillory Street

Pillory Street is a key arrival gateway into Nantwich Town Centre from the train station. Currently the narrow street is dominated by parked cars.

There is an opportunity to temporarily replace parking bays at key crossing locations with activity generating installations such as parklets, outdoor seating and benches. These are lower cost interventions which can make a big difference straight away.



Temporary 'Parklet' style installations can provide seating and add instant greenery to a street currently dominated by cars, as well as attract footfall close to local businesses. Any disruption from reduced parking can be monitored against the wider benefits of the scheme.

New crossings in key locations can transform the hierarchy of users of the space, putting pedestrians and cyclists first, before vehicle movements and enhance access to side streets, such as the route to Hospital Street by Nantwich Museum.



## Action 4: Showcasing Nantwich's Heritage and Tourist Assets

### What

Nantwich boasts a number of high quality heritage buildings along its main shopping streets and attractive green and blue assets around its edges including the River, Canal and Brine Pool. Nantwich Museum already promotes the town's heritage but there is scope to expand upon this and to link better to wider tourism attractions and opportunities.

### How

Nantwich Town Council have just agreed to prepare a Tourism Strategy and have established a working group. This should include engagement with CEC to ensure aspirations are developed in alignment with the Visitor Economy Strategy that is being prepared for Cheshire East and Marketing Cheshire.

Nantwich Museum already offers walking and guided trails once a week which are popular. A private firm had created a walking trail and various bronze plaques (clockfaces) are located within the centre to support this. It is well used and leaflets are displayed in the Town Council offices, museum and hotels. Consideration could be given to embracing technology to broaden the appeal of this to younger people making it more interactive using QR codes etc. Trails could also showcase local public and local personalities.

As well as heritage events, there is also an opportunity for more targeted thematic events e.g. cultural and food, building upon those that are already established such as the Jazz and Blues, Words and Music Festivals. These can be used to help position the town and assist promotion and profiling.

Consideration needs to be given to enhanced signage to support visitors to explore all aspects of the town including its buildings and its green spaces.

Other actions proposed should enhance the setting of the heritage buildings and encourage people to be able to dwell more around those. A number of the other local centres are also looking to make more of their heritage and it would be worth engaging with them to share best practice and also to consider whether there is scope to collaborate with them and other organisations to encourage linked trips for visitors.

More events focused around heritage should also be considered with scope to showcasing the towns other assets including the Canal and River, these can also deliver health and well-being benefits.

The tourist information office would benefit from being more prominent/higher profile with extended opening hours to encourage greater utilisation. More could also be made of the Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker located south of Nantwich.

### Who

- Nantwich Museum and associated support groups/volunteers including Civic Society
- Town Council/Nantwich Town Partnership
- CEC
- Local businesses
- Other towns with heritage and tourism assets
- Volunteers
- Canal and River Trust

### Where

- Across Nantwich Town Centre with wider links to nearby relevant heritage, leisure and tourism assets of interest



### Action 4 supports the following objectives:

- Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism
- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community
- Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community



### Toolkit Actions

- 1a - Improve the evening offer
- 1b - Introduce a programme of events which open-up and connect different parts of the centre for a limited time
- 1c - Enable autumn and winter al-fresco dining
- 1d - Use lighting
- 3a - Managing assets
- 3c - Destination management plans
- 4f - Open up heritage buildings as venues or for visitors/ events
- 9b - Curated events focused on historic buildings, public spaces, gardens and parks
- 15a - Annual/ regular events
- 16a - Self guided heritage tours



## Action 5: Further embracing Nantwich's Business Community

### What

Nantwich already has an impressive network of local community groups who support the town and its amenities. Whilst its business community is not large (given that unlike some towns it is not surrounded by business parks) scope does exist to increase engagement with local businesses to support these businesses to thrive and well as supporting the prosperity of the centre.

### How

Nantwich Town Council already harnesses the local community resources to support improvements in the centre such as litter picking and painting street furniture. Scope exists to tap into Reaseheath College and other local colleges and schools to encourage more young people to volunteer to support the Centre. Other initiatives to engage young people and encourage entrepreneurialism could be a junior market which is proving successful in Stockport.

Encouraging businesses to collaborate can generate new opportunities to share customers, cross sell etc. Special events could be organised by a group of businesses. This has worked really well in Wilmslow where retailers and F&B businesses arranged a series of events around the Rex Cinema including hosting events linked to film premiers with pre drinks in individual shops and fashion shows in the interval.

Individual businesses could be showcased on Town Council's website including individual workers profiles to make it more personal

Businesses could also come together to establish loyalty schemes to support shoppers to stay local. This has worked well in Belper <https://lovebelper.co.uk/>.

In addition to supporting businesses to collaborate to increase their prosperity, scope exists to work with them to give back to Nantwich. Many businesses, particularly larger ones, are being encouraged to support their local communities for example through involvement with voluntary or community groups. If engaged around issues/opportunities that relate to their core function, businesses may be able to provide the following to support the Town's aspirations:

- Sponsorship
- Materials
- Technical support
- Volunteers

### Who

- Town Council/Nantwich Partnership
- Local businesses especially dynamic/innovative/creative businesses
- Community/voluntary groups

### Where

- Across Nantwich



### Action 5 supports the following objectives:

- Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism
- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community



### Toolkit Actions

- 10a - Independent shop guides
- 13a - Business profiles
- 13b - Community wealth building
- 25f - Tap into local talent



## Action 6: Raising Nantwich's Profile

### What

Nantwich has a comprehensive website showcasing the town and whilst this is a great start there are lots of ways in which the town's offer could be better promoted to attract more local residents, workers, visitors, tourists and students.

### How

Whilst the current website and the information on Visit Chester and Cheshire does promote the town, further content could be added to really showcase the town including profiles of local businesses (including individuals to make it more personal), local walks in the surrounding area, cycle routes etc. which would be useful to both tourists and local residents.

Consideration could be given, as has just been done in Wilmslow, to working with a local marketing company to develop a brand linked to the town's website and other media channels - <https://wilmslowswaybetter.co.uk/> - the local community should be engaged to assist with this process to engender civic pride.

To support increased footfall on the website it would be worth considering which other websites it could be linked up with, such as other centres with heritage assets (Sandbach, Congleton, as well as places like Leek and Buxton), the CEC website and local visitor attractions.

Other mechanisms to raise the profile of the centre could include:

- Improved signage (physical and virtual via app/ QR code) to encourage visitors to explore
- Preparation of an independent shop guide
- Establish Town Ambassadors
- Enhanced programme of events and raise awareness of businesses. Such events and initiatives should be well advertised via a variety of methods.

- As part of the Town Council's proposed Tourism Strategy it should be ensured that key messages from the Vitality Plan and the emerging Strategy are fed into the Visitor Economy Strategy that is being prepared for Cheshire East
- More use of social media to promote and highlight local businesses
- Promotion of Nantwich through positive PR and good news stories e.g. feature in Cheshire Life
- Consider collaboration with local rail operator Transport for Wales to promote Nantwich and other Cheshire towns on the local line.

### Who

- Town Council/Nantwich Partnership
- Marketing Cheshire/CEC
- Local Businesses

### Where

- N/A



### Action 6 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town
- Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism
- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community
- Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community



### Toolkit Actions

- 2a - Create a smarter High street
- 3b - Appointment of town centre champions
- 3c - Destination management plans
- 4b - Better signage
- 10a - Independent shop guides
- 12a - Create an App
- 12b - Creation of Local Brand
- 12c - Set-up an online platform
- 12d - Introduce WIFI/ digital high street/town centre app
- 15a - Annual/ regular events





## Action 7: Making more of Community Assets

### What

Nantwich Town Council already manages the Nantwich Civic Hall, the Market Hall, 4 allotment sites, Snow Hill toilets and two redundant toilet blocks (used for storage). The Town Council is also responsible for town centre management, street environment, tourism, CCTV and shop mobility. As such Nantwich Town Council are one of the most active Town Councils in Cheshire East but are continuing to consider further ways of making more of Nantwich's assets.

Consideration should be given as to how Nantwich's assets could be further utilised to attract footfall into the Centre and serve the needs of the local community. Giving more reasons for visitors to stay longer.

### How

Nantwich Town Council are already very active in ensuring that Nantwich is as attractive as possible recently undertaking painting of street furniture and already organising litter picking events.

In terms of assets Nantwich Town Council has been investigating the potential of developing an extension to the rear of the Civic Centre (but this has been put on hold due to development costs). Nantwich Town Council is also currently looking to deliver toilets at Snow Hill (Town Council own the building but CEC own the land). Public

consultation has endorsed strong support for the proposals.

The Civic Hall is already a vibrant centre offering a wider range of activities but consideration should be given as to how this and other public buildings and land in their vicinity could be used to host an enhanced programme of events including larger events utilising the car parking and open space in the area.

Consideration should also be given to engaging and collaborating with the wider community assets across Nantwich including local churches and community based organisations.

### Who

- Town Council/Nantwich Partnership
- CEC
- Network of Community/Voluntary Groups

### Where

- Across the Town including Civic Hall, Market Hall and green spaces



### Action 7 supports the following objectives:

- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community
- Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community



### Toolkit Actions

- 1b - Use of events to open up and connect
- 1c - Enable autumn and winter al fresco
- 1d - Use of lighting
- 4a - Provide pop up seating
- 4f - Open up heritage buildings
- 9b - Curated events focused on historic buildings
- 9c - Enable a café culture
- 15a - Annual/regular events
- 16a - Self guided heritage tours
- 17 - Markets



## Action 8: Tackling Void Properties (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Whilst voids are not a major issue it is recognised that the attractiveness of parts of Nantwich are undermined by vacancies or poor quality shop fronts.

### How

It is acknowledged that the ability to identify new retail occupiers for the large vacant units is likely to be difficult particularly as a result of Covid which has compounded structural change in the retail sector. Instead of focusing on new retail occupiers it is worth trying to target leisure operators. The creation of flexible workspace is being looked at in some vacant departments stores/larger characterful buildings.

Residential is also another option to be considered for smaller units on the edges of the town or above shops. The key is to work with local developers and to complement the wider new homes being developed on the edge of the town.

Meanwhile uses (until development can happen) such as pop up stores, activities or community use can support footfall and allow potential occupiers to test the local area. Residential is also another option to be considered, particularly for longer standing voids and for smaller units on the edges of the town or above shops.

Other short term solutions which brighten up vacant shop-fronts include vinyl "wrappers" promoting the town and its businesses e.g. places of interest or iconic buildings or using vacant shop-windows to showcase products of existing businesses or online stores. Local schools could be encouraged to create window displays.

Working with artists to create murals on blank façades.

### Who

- Town Council and CEC working with landlords and local developers

### Where

- Vacant units/poor quality shop fronts



### Action 8 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town



### Toolkit Actions

- 5c - Dressing vacant shops
- 9a - Repurposing assets
- 15b - Community organised artwork
- 19a - Affordable start-up space
- 21a - Managed activation of underutilised space
- 25a - Meanwhile uses



## Action 9: Car Parking Strategy (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Consideration needs to be given to how to use Nantwich's current car parking provisions more efficiently. Better balancing short-stay high turnover parking (which supports retail/leisure) with longer-stay worker parking such as at the train station will be important.

Better management/configuration of off street parking is recommended to help facilitate aspirations for change in other parts of the town centre, including along Pillory St and Hospital St.

Considerations should be given to limiting on street parking to loading or very short stay (30 min). The reduction of on street parking will enhance the look of Nantwich and improve safety for pedestrians.

Higher turnover of on-street bays or reconfiguration within car parks should be explored to offset any minor reductions in overall numbers. The bulk of car parking should be provided off-street with a timescaled pricing structure.

### How

- Revisit parking strategy for Nantwich Town Centre taking into account the recommendations of this TCVP and views received in consultation.

- Reduce on-street parking supply and length of stay. Higher turnover of on-street bays can offset any reductions in overall numbers.
- Increase short stay car park supply within Nantwich Town Centre – this could be achieved through changes to pricing structure.
- Ensure car parking locations are well signposted throughout the town centre.
- Consider introduction of more electric charging points linked to car parking within the town centre.
- Ensure parking restrictions and conditions are enforced across the town centre

### Who

- CEC
- Town Council

### Where

- Across Nantwich



### Action 9 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town
- Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism
- Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community



### Toolkit Actions

- 14a - Tactical urbanism to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces
- 14f - Better managed car parking
- 20a - Remove clutter from key pedestrian routes and simplify crossing points
- 25c - Facilitate modal shift



# Centre Wide Actions

In addition to the specific actions identified for Nantwich, a number of actions have been identified that are relevant to all of the nine centres. These are:

## 1. *Appointment of CEC Centre Champion*

The identification of a nominated officer (go to person/champion) within CEC management team for each of the Centres who would understand local priorities for the Centre and would support them to access appropriate officers within key departments and also would seek to unblock issues. As an alternative CEC could produce baseline service statements explaining the services they provide for the centres which include services provided by Cheshire East Council and key contact details for that service. This would be supported by an providing each of the centres with a clear organogram of who within CEC is responsible for what to make engagement easier.

## 2. *Creation of a Centres Forum*

Establishment of forum where key representatives from each of the centres could come together on a regular basis to receive updates from CEC about common issues/ opportunities would be beneficial.

It is also recognised that during the preparation of the Vitality Plans that a number of the centres are making a great progress overcoming specific issues. By coming together and sharing progress and discussing issues it is considered that the centres would be better able to share best practice and to identify actions where they could collaborate with other centres to drive economies of scale/value for money. Some meetings may just be held between the centres (within out representation from CEC officers) whilst others could include CEC and/or other partners such as C&W LEP, Groundwork etc.

## 3. *Centre Focused Meetings in CEC*

The process of preparing the Vitality Plans has involved internal workshops with relevant department leads within CEC to ensure that all departments are considering challenges and opportunities in the round rather than just in terms of their individual responsibility. It would be beneficial to continue to hold more regular Centre focused workshops. The best decisions

for the centres will be taken when the implications of proposals are considered in the round taking into account both potential investment and long term maintenance.

## 4. *Streamlining maintenance of public realm and greenspace*

In light of the local desire for improved maintenance combined with recognition that CEC budgets are under severe pressure, it is recommended to ensure maintenance of public realm can be optimised that further engagement would be beneficial to agree how the resources of CEC, the Town Council and wider stakeholders could be targeted to support maintenance. Work to establish a more comprehensive schedule of local assets in each centre and who is responsible for their maintenance should be the starting point of drive for improved maintenance. Going forward any future capital investment must be supported by appropriate consideration as to how assets will be maintained over their lifetime. It is also important to recognise that better maintenance does not necessarily just relate to grass

being cut regularly. In recognition of the importance of biodiversity, going forward it is anticipated that consideration will be given to allocating parcels of land to the “wild” to support biodiversity.

## 5. *Increasing importance of sustainability*

Sustainability is now a critical issue for many organisations and important for local residents both in terms of operational implications (for example energy costs) but also in terms of local impact on the local community and the planet. As such sustainability can no longer be positioned as another priority action but rather must be a concept that is considered in every aspect of proposed actions to minimise their carbon footprint and maximise their positive benefits for the local area and its community.

## 6. *Improved platform for communicating activities*

The preparation of the Vitality Plans has demonstrated that all of the centres are proactively trying to improve their

centres. However it is recognised that many stakeholders will not be aware of all these efforts. Consideration therefore needs to be given as to how to amplify to more local residents, shoppers, visitors and businesses what is going on. Consideration should be given as to how to enhance the current websites for example adding more content and sharing this through a variety of channels and to ensure that these are also linked to other key partners for example CEC and the other centres (so collectively they reinforcing each other’s profiles)

## 7. *Enhanced engagement with local businesses*

Many of the centres benefit from having a range of national, and in some cases international businesses, many of which are innovating in their specialist areas. There is a significant benefit to the centres and their businesses to collaborating. Whilst restrictions on public sector revenue budgets is putting pressure on what CEC can support there is an increasing recognition by businesses, especially corporates, for the need to support their local communities (Corporate Social

Responsibility). This can be in the form of grants, offering expertise or encouraging their employees to volunteer. Even smaller businesses often want to give back to the communities in which they operate. This can be in the form of materials and/ or specialist expertise (e.g. marketing which has been harnesses by Wilmslow in setting up the Wilmslow’s Way Better brand and website). All centres should seek to better engage with their local businesses to determine how they can collaborate to support each other’s objectives. This type of collaboration can give centres a significant boost particularly when it happens around public realm (investment and maintenance), marketing and branding.

## 8. *Greater ownership of community assets*

Nantwich Town Council has taken responsibility for a number of assets for over 10 years and as such can provide other centres, considering being more proactive, with advice based on their experience.

# 11 Delivery

## Governance and Delivery

Nantwich Town Council is proactive in supporting Nantwich to fulfil its potential working closely with local community groups. Going forward it is recommended that the Town Council champion and drive forward the actions emerging from this Vitality Plan.

Having established a range of potential projects that will support Nantwich to thrive, further work is now required to determine a detailed action plan setting out who will do what and by when.

As has been done previously, it is recommended that dedicated working groups are set up to drive specific short term priority actions forward. The action focused working groups will be responsible for:

- Defining the details of the proposed action
- Considering how it could be funded
- Determining who needs to be involved in supporting its delivering and what their role will be
- Seeking funding - this might require support from other partners
- Determining the timetable for intervention

- Monitoring and evaluating progress against key performance indicators and refining actions if agreed outcomes are not being met
- Reporting progress to relevant partners including the WIP and CEC
- Recommending that CEC, Town Council and any other key local stakeholder groups be invited to adopt the TCVP as a shared common plan. This would allow easy demonstration to potential funders that there is a consensus of approach and buy in from the local community

The makeup of the working groups will vary depending on the specific actions they are focused on. It is important to ensure that the same people are not tasked with getting involved in all the working groups as this will impact on progress. As such the number of working groups and pace of delivery will depend on the number of stakeholder partners that can be engaged with and encouraged to get involved.

Consideration should be given as to whether specific stakeholders need to be invited to be involved to provide technical support. For example CEC, national organisations like the Canal and River Trust or local businesses with specific expertise around specific actions already. CEC Connected Community officers may be able to provide development support.

It is recommended that progress be reported into the Town Council who in turn report regularly to CEC. Where issues regarding progress/delivery are identified discussions will need to be taken to determine the required refinements to get progress back on track.

It is acknowledged that partners will need to determine their appetite and ability to deliver the proposed actions. Depending on resources it may be determined that additional staff may need to be recruited to support the pace of delivery of the Vitality Plan and supporting Action Plans.

Recommending that CEC, Town Council and any other key local stakeholder groups be invited to adopt the TCVP as a shared common plan. This would allow easy demonstration to potential funders that there is a consensus of approach and buy in from the local community.

## Communication and Engagement

There is scope to expand on the current website and to use it to engage more effectively with a wider range of residents, visitors, workers, students and businesses. There is a need to begin to share important messages with key stakeholders including:

- Recent and proposed investment in the centre
- Projects that are being worked up
- Funding that is being sought and accessed
- How to get involved

The key partners to be engaged with on a regular basis include:

- Local businesses
- Residents
- Local community and interest groups
- Other towns centres generally and specifically those who are focusing on common actions for example centres looking to strengthen their programme of sport related events to support a stronger coordinated borough wide programme of events

Quality engagement should generate potential volunteers to get involved in the delivery of specific actions and potentially resources to support their delivery.

The following mechanisms should be used to engage with key partners:

- Further enhancement of the website and strengthen profile on social media
- Public engagement consultations – the draft Vitality Plan will be consulted upon and this be used to continue the dialogue with local residents
- Piggybacking Events – for example a stall at markets showcasing what’s on and how to get involved
- Existing and enhanced business networking events – to share emerging ideas, test support and encourage ideas to refine and support their delivery

- Identification of a team of local ambassadors – ambassadors could be trained and then kept up to date about what it going on in the Centre and then they can showcase positive messages to their contacts. Ambassadors can be proactive local independent businesses leaders and other individuals who come into contact with lots of local people e.g. taxi drivers.

Consideration could be given to the appointment of a part time marketing officer for the centre as Wilmslow has just done.

In addition, as set out in Section 10, it is important for enhanced communication and engagement between CEC and Nantwich Town Council.

## Funding

Whilst there is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan, given the scale of new development around Nantwich contributions may well become available and the Vitality Plans can support discussions with CEC and developers on where resources should be focused to ensure that the new homes and jobs are linked to the centre of Nantwich and its existing social infrastructure. It is understood that a significant amount of S106 monies has been secured in respect of the two large housing developments on the edge of the centre.

In addition the Vitality Plan will be a useful tool which can be used to:

- Articulate priorities for Nantwich to CEC - the Vitality Plan will be used to articulate local priorities to CEC to guide them in their negotiations with developers in respect of contributions linked to planning applications (especially to support improvements in cycling, public realm and public transport) and also in determining their own capital budgets. Formal adoption of the TCVP by key stakeholder organisations can help demonstrate common objectives and priorities for any party submitting funding bids. Formal adoption of the TCVP by key stakeholder organisations can help

- demonstrate common objectives and priorities for any party submitting funding bids.
- Support external funding bids – having a clear action plan which provides an evidence base and priorities that have been consulted upon is now essential for most funding bids. It is important to recognise that often funding bids have specific funding leads. In some cases this may be CEC or Cheshire & Warrington LEP in others it might need to be a community group. Whoever may be responsible for leading and submitting a specific funding application, demonstration of collaboration between stakeholders and community support is essential
- Engage with local businesses – to determine whether there are actions that they can get involved in which align with their priorities for supporting their local communities

It is important to note that when determining potential interventions consideration must be given to both initial capital investment and longer term revenue implications such as maintenance. In proposing capital investment the whole life of a project must be considered to ensure that appropriate revenue is available for ongoing costs such as maintenance.

## Phasing

The actions identified in Section 10 range from projects which are already being progressed to long term aspirations which will require feasibility and funding before they can be delivered.

The Vitality Plan identifies 9 actions which support the established vision and objectives for the Centre. The Town Council is proactive and a number of the identified actions are already being pursued. The public consultation identified the following as priority interventions:

- Connecting green assets
- Enhancing the Swine Market
- Tackling void properties
- Car parking strategy

Partners now need to determine a detailed action plan related to funding that they are able to access and the resources that they have available or can access to support delivery.

It is important to acknowledge that this indicative programme is not fixed and if specific sources of funding are identified the programme should be adapted to respond to the opportunity.

Covid has taught us important lessons about testing new approaches. For example temporary road closures to gauge whether reducing car

access to encourage cycling or to provide outside dining space would benefit local centres. This approach should be continued so that rather than a public realm project having to be worked up in huge detail and then significant resources found to deliver it, more temporary solutions can be tested in terms of their impact and determine whether a more permanent solution is required or desirable. Changes are much more likely to be embraced by businesses and supported by local residents if they know that ideas are being tested and monitored and if they do not work can be reverted back to how they were.

A broad phasing plan for the identified actions is identified below where short term relates to 1-2 years, medium 3-5 and long 5+ years.

- A number of interventions will require further feasibility and this can be ongoing but intervention on the ground is likely to be a few years off whilst planning permission and funding is sought
- A number of interventions are interrelated in particular strengthening green links and expanding the events programme



# 11 Delivery

## Monitoring and Evaluation

As noted above the programme and the action plan will not be set in stone but must be capable of responding to new opportunities or challenges. As such it will be important to monitor impact to determine whether the established vision and objectives are being met. Suggested key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they could be measured and how often are identified below:

KPI	How measured	Frequency
Footfall	External provider	Monthly
Number of vacancies	Town Clerk	Quarterly
New businesses opened	Town Clerk	Quarterly
Businesses engaged	Town Clerk to keep a list	Ongoing
Area of greenspace/ open space/ cycleways and footpaths improved	CEC	Annually
Hits on website	Traffic on Social Media	Quarterly
Increased air quality	CEC	Quarterly

Note: CEC has recently commissioned monthly footfall data to end Sep 2026. Recommend all those involved regularly share useful monitoring data with other parties so that all can be aware of progress.

## Technical Terms

Term	Explanation
Comparison Goods Sector	Retail that stocks higher value goods that are purchased infrequently
Convenience Sector	Retail that stocks everyday items such as groceries, newspapers, toiletries, confectionery
F&B	Food and Beverage
Green Belt	A designated area of countryside, protected from most forms of development to help stop urban sprawl but can be used for agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure
Greenspace	Parks, public gardens etc
HS2 route	The UKs new high speed rail network
KSC	Key Service Centres
Linkages	The connections between two or more places/ sites within the town centres
Public Realm	Space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible for everyone
S106 monies	Money that developers can use towards the development of community and social infrastructure
TCVP	Town Centre Vitality Plans
Wayfinding	The ways in which people orient themselves in a physical space and navigate from place to place
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Dwell time	The time a person may spend in a particle place or area. For example, the length of time spent sat on a public bench.



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# Poynton



## Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plans

December 2022



Prepared by Cushman and Wakefield,  
Optimised Environments and Mott  
Macdonald for Cheshire East Council

December 2022

# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	4
<b>Baseline</b>	
02 Introduction to Poynton	10
03 Policy Context	18
04 Our People	24
05 Our Place	30
06 Connectivity and Accessibility	48
07 Our Offer	56
08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats	64
<b>Action Plan</b>	
09 Priority Areas for Intervention	68
10 Potential Actions	76
11 Delivery	88

## Context of the Study

**Town centres across the UK are facing unprecedented challenges. Changes in how we shop, in particular the growth in internet shopping, has significantly decreased footfall in town centres resulting in numerous store closures, leaving many centres struggling. Trends that have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Government has stated its commitment to helping high streets and town centres evolve and adapt to both the structural changes that are occurring in the retail market as well as to COVID-19. It has identified a number of measures to support town centres at this challenging time including the Future High Streets Fund, a High Streets Task Force, changes to the planning system and direct support to local authorities and local businesses. Alongside these national measures the government has stressed the need for strong local leadership in supporting town centres.

## Town Centre Vitality Plans

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is committed to supporting the vitality and viability of all town centres within the borough. Whilst acknowledging that in areas of low deprivation, there may be limited opportunity to bid for centralised funding. When funding opportunities do become available, there is generally a need to have clear proposals already agreed before bids can be submitted.

It is also recognised that there are often initiatives which can be taken to support the vitality and viability of local centres which do not require significant capital funding, but rather require the support of local volunteers and/or businesses.

In addition, the reports could be used to support discussions regarding the allocation of S106 monies resulting from development within and in the vicinity of the local centres.

**With an almost overwhelming array of options and opinions on what is the best way to support town centre vitality and viability, CEC has commissioned Cushman & Wakefield (regeneration and property advisors), supported by Optimised Environments (urban designers) and Mott Macdonald (transport planners), to work with the Town Council's and their stakeholders to produce bespoke Town Centre Vitality Plans (TCVP) for the nine Key Service Centres (KSC):**



*The 9 Key Service Centres which form part of this study*

## Aims and Objectives

The TCVP provides a sense of direction and identify initiatives to support the nine key service centres to better fulfil their potential recognising that each centre is distinct, with its own unique opportunities and specific challenges and local groups/stakeholders. The unique characteristics of each centre will be identified along with tailored solutions for each.

### They

- **Are bespoke in nature, based on a thorough analysis of individual circumstances affecting the health of each town centre, local stakeholder views and any local specific policy considerations.**
- **Are cross functional and holistic, with scope to recommend a practical and realistic set of priority actions for supporting the vitality and viability of each town centre.**
- **Are informed and tested by existing relevant national and local public policy and strategies, local stakeholder views, relevant research and a thorough understanding of commercial markets and spatial considerations.**
- **Identify a set of recommended clear priority physical and other (e.g. marketing) interventions/actions to support the vitality and viability of each town centre both in recovery from COVID-19 impacts and beyond to enhancement.**
- **Recommend deliverable actions including who should be involved in delivering of each action identified, to enable Town Councils, community groups, occupiers, property owners etc., to all work towards a common vision.**
- **Take account of proposals developed/being developed by Town Councils and develop such plans further.**

## Responding to the Impacts of COVID

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, high streets and town centres were having to respond to changing consumer demands driven in part by technological changes. Many recognised the increasing importance of the consumer experience - an attractive place to dwell, shop, see friends, to eat out and be entertained. COVID-19 has led to an acceleration of changes to the reasons people visit and use local centres.

COVID-19 has not and will not be universally negative for all local centres. The requirement to stay local has supported residents to use their local facilities and where the local offer aligns with the demands of residents, local businesses have benefited. The need to work from home has also resulted in an re-evaluation of where we work going forward and it is anticipated that there has been a fundamental shift, for some, in the balance between the amount of time we spend in an office and the amount of time we work from home.

It will be some time before a clear picture emerges of the impact of new forms of working (a hybrid between office and home) have on our high streets in the longer-term. The impact will be felt differently from place to place depending on the local economy's dependency on particular sectors. It is likely that those centres that perform best

going forward will be those able to reconnect with their communities and use them to meet local needs including access to housing, culture, leisure, health etc.

The Town Centre Vitality Plans have been prepared post the outbreak of COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 on each of the centres has been different. The bespoke Vitality Plans provide an action plan to support recovery and future success.

## Vitality Plan and Toolkit

This report builds upon the Draft Baseline Report (which was a summary of the key stages undertaken in 2020 - see below) and incorporates potential actions which have been identified in consultation with local stakeholders during 2021 to form a bespoke Vitality Plan for Poynton.

The Vitality Report comprises of two sections:

- **Baseline** - which was undertaken in 2020 and describes the Centre in terms of its offer and key characteristics. It brings together evidence and opinion in respect of the buildings, green and open spaces, access and its residents and businesses.

- **Action Plan** - has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for the Centre responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

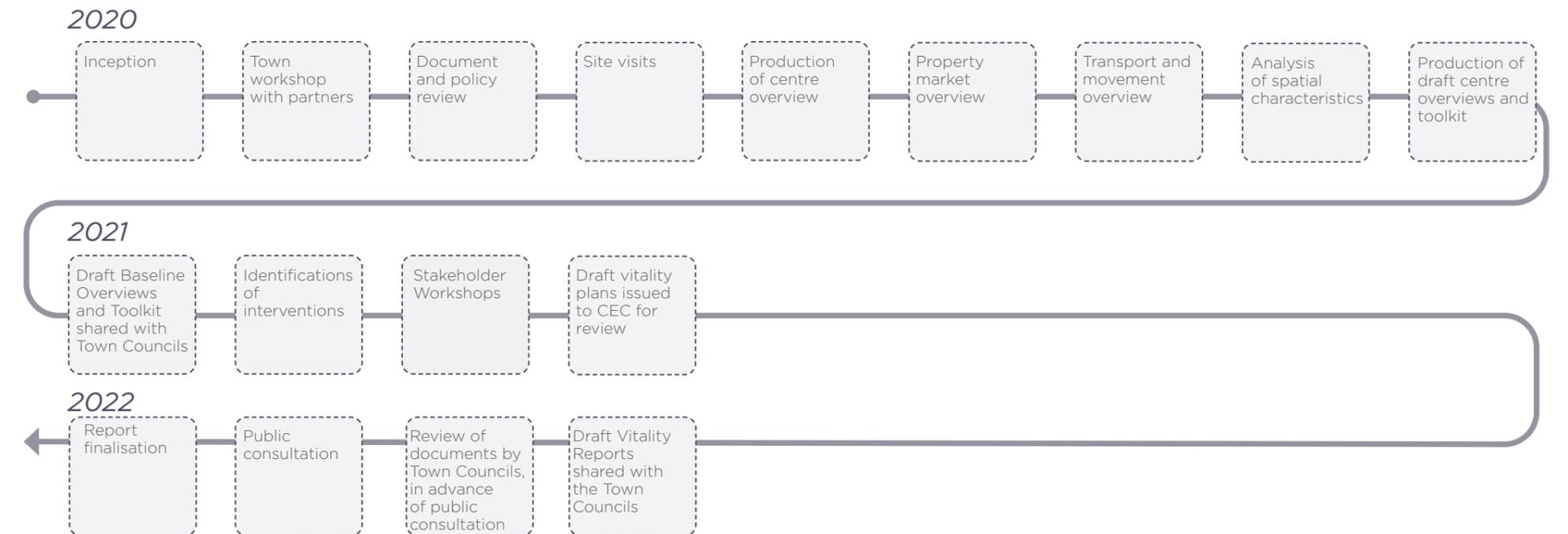
The draft TCVPs went to public consultation for six weeks from September 2022. Feedback was reviewed and where appropriate amendments have been made to the final report. A summary of other key messages have been shared key stakeholders.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Toolkit. The Toolkit presents exemplar projects from other centres (including from within Cheshire East) nationally and internationally to assist key stakeholders to determine a set of actions to support their centres to thrive.

There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support accessing funding.

## Approach

The preparation of the Vitality Plans has involved the following stages:



# Baseline

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Note:  
The Baseline analysis was undertaken in 2020. The information in the Baseline was correct and the sources were the most update at that time. It is recognised that in some cases more up to date information is available whilst it is not possible to keep updating all the evidence where a significant change has happened it is recognised. It should also be noted that Census 2011 data is provided for some indicators. Whilst the 2021 Census has just been completed, a release of this data will not be made available until March 2023 therefore the 2011 Census is the most recent consistent data source across the 9 centres for some key indicators.

# 02 Introduction to Poynton

## Poynton Location within Cheshire East

Poynton is located in the North East of Cheshire East, 5 miles south of Stockport and 13 miles south of Manchester City Centre and lies just outside the boundary of Greater Manchester. Manchester Airport is located 6 miles to the east, with strong road connectivity to the M56 via the A555 and the A523 passing through the town, connecting it to Macclesfield, Stockport and Manchester. Poynton train station is located on the Northern line and operates local hourly services northbound to Manchester and southbound to Stoke-on-Trent. (See Strategic Context Plan)

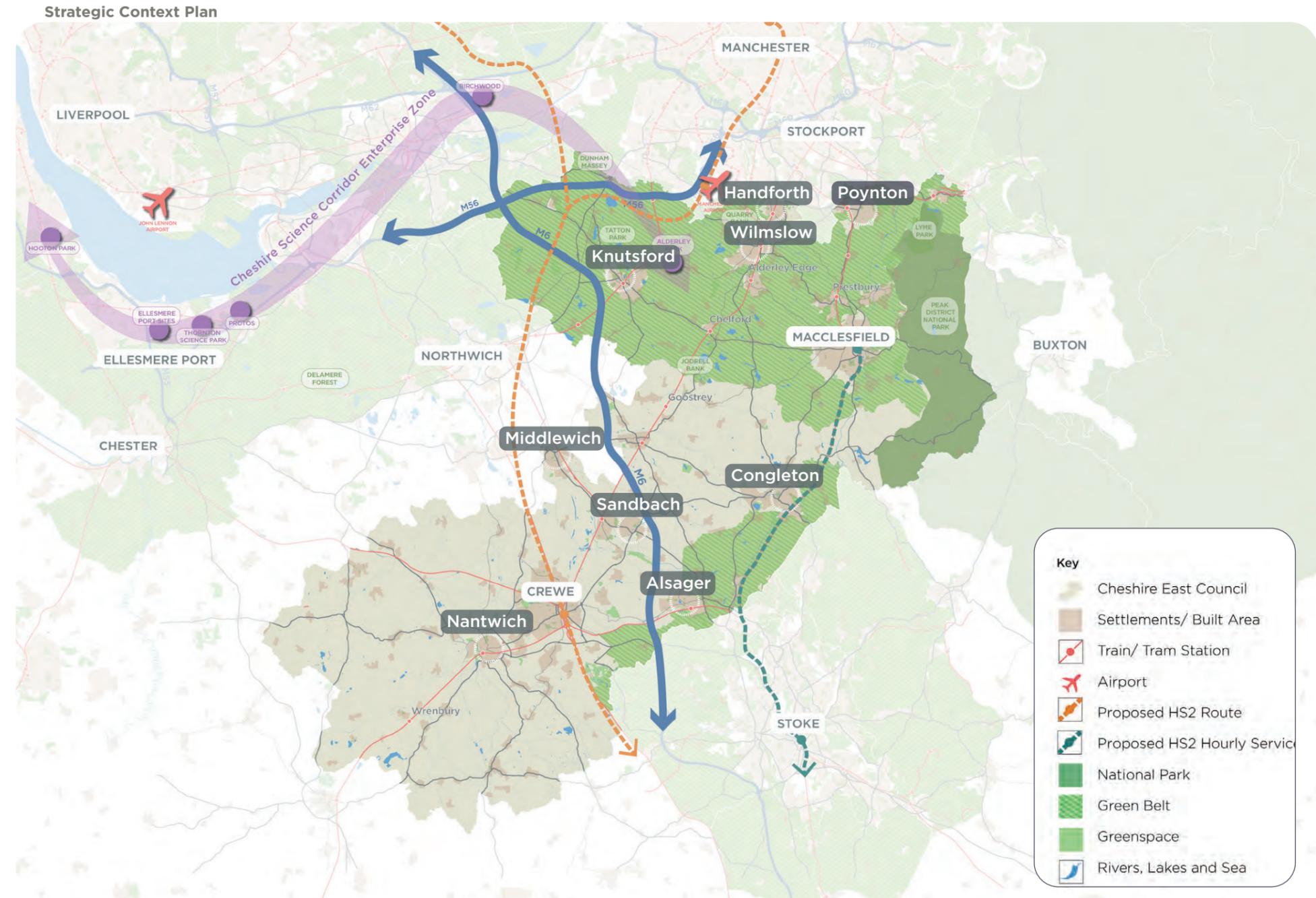
Poynton is a small centre, with a village feel, set within the Green Belt on the edge of the Peak District. The town centre accommodates just over 100 units primarily located on Park Lane London Road South, Queensway and School Lane. The town boasts a strong convenience sector offering, anchored by Waitrose and Aldi, along with a small Morrisons and choice of independent stores including bakers, butchers and delis. There is a range of national operators including Boots and WH Smith as well as independents within the comparison goods sector.

Poynton's good evening economy and high-quality environment also add to the attractiveness of the town centre. The Civic Hall located behind Waitrose is a focal point for classes and events and helps to bring locals and visitors into the town in the evenings and weekends, extending the town's offering.

The strength of Poynton's convenience sector offering, along with the mix of national and independent retailers aligned with catchment population of affluent professionals should mean that Poynton remains a viable town centre, despite the challenges facing high streets. This has been demonstrated by a year on year uplift in footfall of almost 20% since December 2019 demonstrating that during lockdown the centre has benefited from advice to stay local. Coming out of lockdown, it is anticipated that more people will choose to work from home some of the time which will support the vitality of Poynton.

Being located on the border of Greater Manchester means it is well located to access a wide range of employment opportunities. As such Poynton is a predominantly commuter town with only a small internal employment provision.

Poynton has a strong reputation as an attractive residential location, set within open countryside, but within commuting distance to employments opportunities in Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Its housing offer is dominated by family homes, having the highest proportion of detached homes in Cheshire East, and the second highest proportion of semi-detached homes - these make up 80% of the housing stock. Average house prices are just under £400,000 making it one of the more expensive towns in Cheshire.



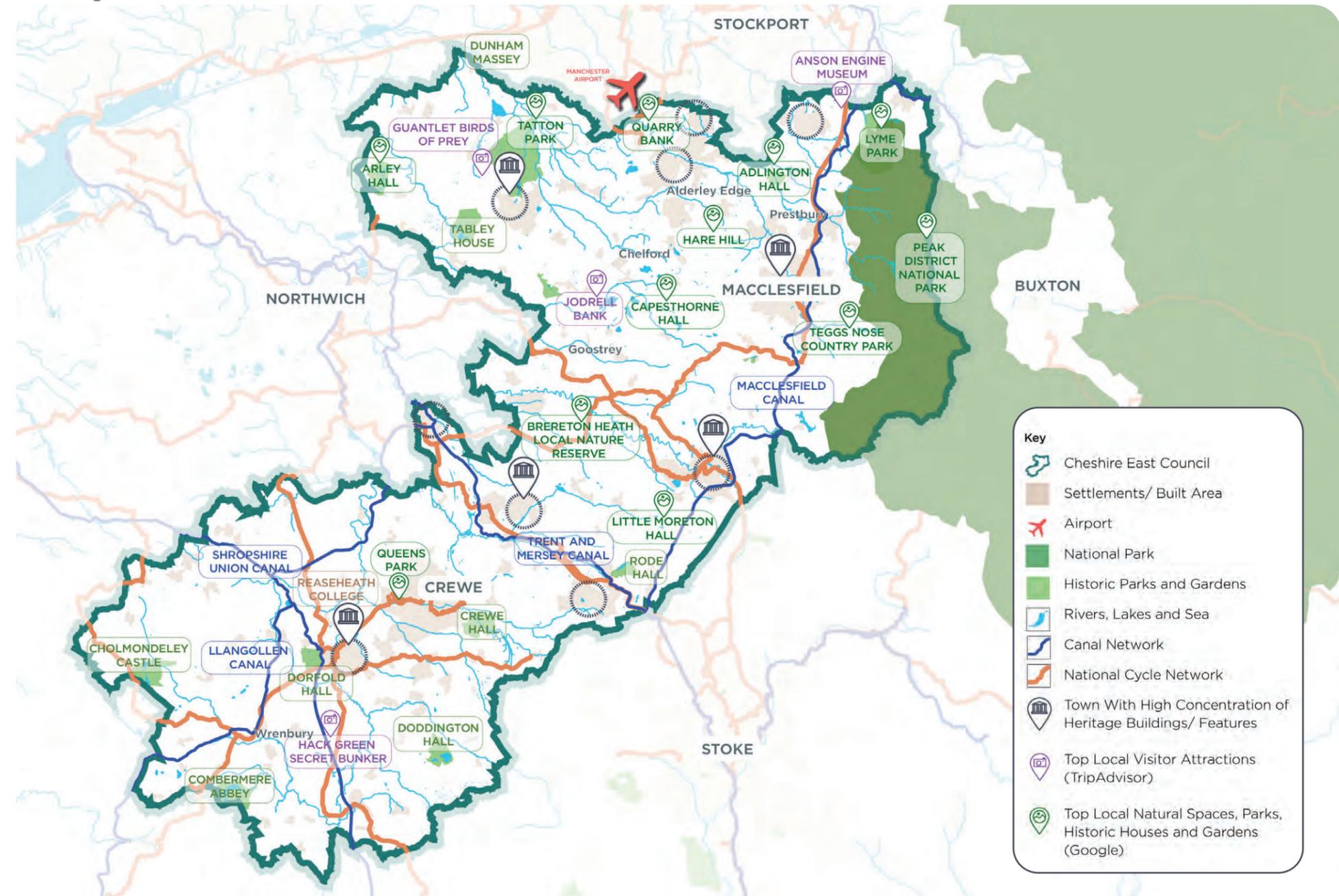
## 02 Introduction to Poynton

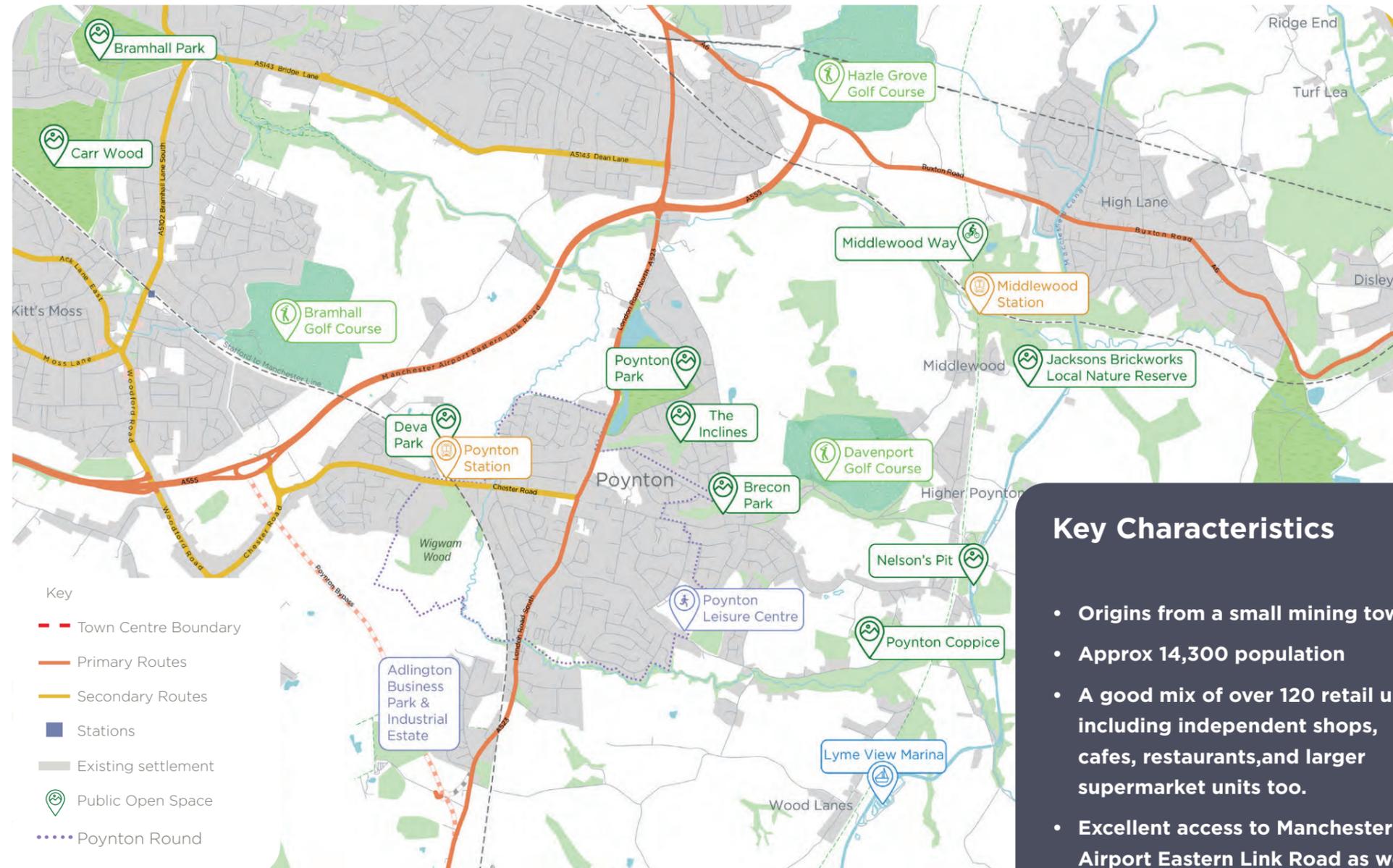
As well as providing access to countryside, Poynton has a range of attractive green space close to the centre. This includes Deva Park, Poynton Park, Brecon Park and a major wildlife corridor tracks the course of Poynton Brook incorporating land of high and medium distinctiveness along its banks and links to Middlewood Way used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Poynton also offers access to Lyme Park and the Peak District National Park (see Strategic Connections and Assets Plan).

The centre has benefited from strategic infrastructure investment - Airport Link Road and the Poynton Relief Road (which is currently under construction) and public realm improvements. The Town Council is lobbying for further improvements to cycling and walking networks across the town to improve sustainable active travel.



### Strategic Connections and Assets Plan





### Key Characteristics

- **Origins from a small mining town**
- **Approx 14,300 population**
- **A good mix of over 120 retail units including independent shops, cafes, restaurants, and larger supermarket units too.**
- **Excellent access to Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road as well as Manchester Airport**

## Poynton Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives.

Poynton Town Council is proactive and initiated the preparation of the Poynton Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out the Vision and Objectives for the Town.

### Vision

Over the next 15 to 20 years Poynton will evolve and develop in a way that respects and reflects the views of its community. Development will be of a high quality, sustainable and matched by the provision of infrastructure and services. Poynton will retain its character and heritage as ‘a small town with a village feel’, bounded on all sides by the Green Belt.

The wide range of community activities and mix of businesses will expand and prosper within attractive surroundings. Current and future generations will enjoy a strong and inclusive sense of community, good access within Poynton and to neighbouring towns and villages, and a positive sense of wellbeing in a flourishing natural environment. Poynton will be a healthy, happy and fulfilling place to live, which the residents will be proud to call home.

## Objectives

### For the Environment

- To preserve and enhance the distinctive character of Poynton which is achieved by the role of Green Belt in maintaining an open buffer between Poynton and surrounding towns, by protecting the surrounding countryside from development, by ensuring that built development is concentrated in the town and by protecting key views from and within Poynton.
- To protect and enhance Poynton's green spaces, its natural and built environment, its heritage assets and its landscapes, so as to provide for and improve the lives of the local community.

### For Housing

- To enable and support sustainable development which is appropriate for the future needs of Poynton's community and age groups, whilst ensuring all development is sympathetic to the protection of the Green Belt and the preservation of the village atmosphere. By so doing this will maintain Poynton as a vibrant and aspirational place to live and work.

### For Transport

- To improve access, supported and encouraged through the provision and enhancement of safe and secure walking, cycling and mobility scooter/ wheelchair routes in and around Poynton.
- To improve rail infrastructure and rail and bus services in order to help reduce car use.

### For the Town Centre and Business

- To achieve a distinct identity and 'village feel' for Poynton through management of all of the aspects of the town centre (including property, architecture, streetscape and traffic).
- To develop community land and buildings (for health, recreation, adult education etc) through the allocation of land and cooperation with relevant organisations;
- To support businesses and employment in Poynton through policies for property use and for the comprehensive provision of high speed broadband.

### For Health & Wellbeing

- To provide an environment which is clean and healthy; an infrastructure which supports walking, cycling and access to green spaces and the countryside; a healthy lifestyle encouraged by the provision of recreational exercise, sports and swimming facilities; outstanding education and learning; and a comprehensive healthcare provision for all age groups in the community.



# 03 Policy Context

## Local Policy

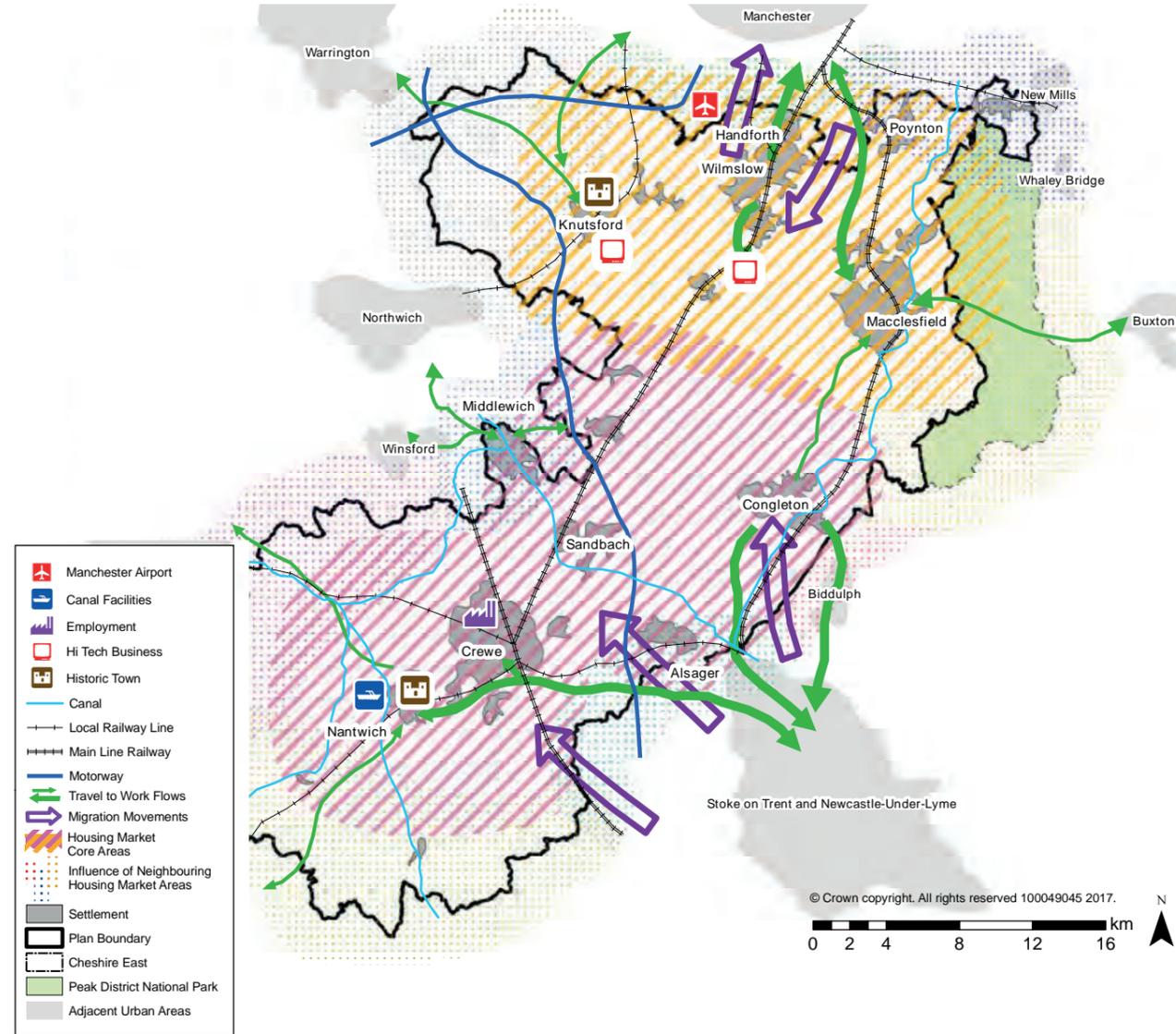
The plan opposite identifies the functional relationship that Poynton has with other centres.

Located in the north east of the Borough centre, whilst set within open countryside, is close to employment opportunities including Manchester City Centre and Stockport. Its connectivity has been enhanced by the Airport Link Road and Manchester Airport is 7 miles to the west.

## Local Plan Strategy 2017 (LPS) and Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) 2020

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was adopted in 2017 setting strategic development sites around the borough.

SADPD will form the second part of the Local Plan, supporting the policies and proposals in the LPS by providing additional non-strategic policy detail and allocating additional sites to assist in meeting the overall development requirements set out in the LPS.



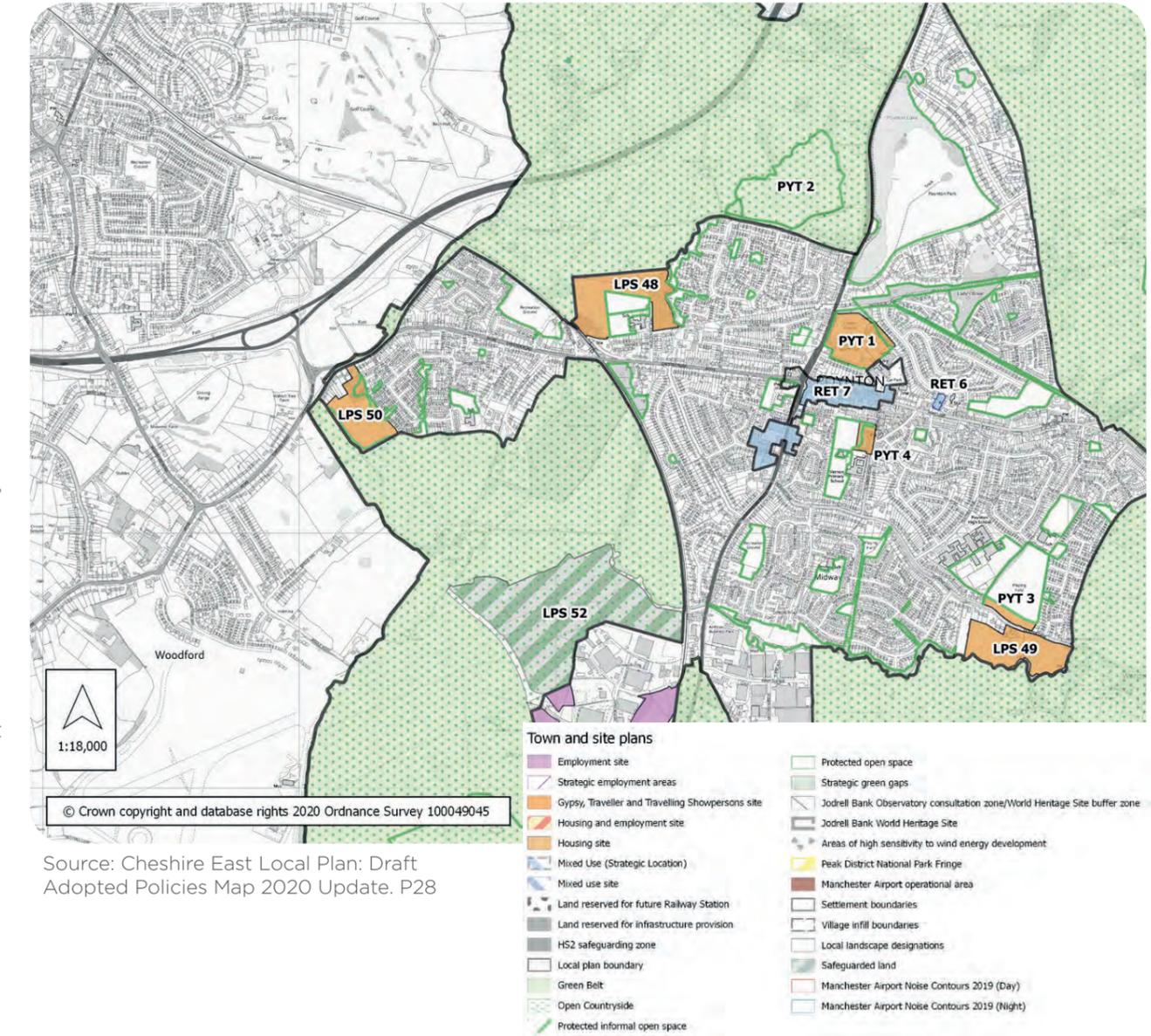
The plan opposite identifies both Local Plan Strategy sites in and around Poynton and draft allocations in the SADPD.

These include:

- Site LPS 48 'Land adjacent to Hazelbadge Road, Poynton'
- Site LPS 49 'Land at Sprink Farm, Poynton'
- Site LPS 50 'Land south of Chester Road, Poynton'
- Site LPS 51 'Adlington Business Park Extension, Poynton'
- Safeguarded Land LPS 52 'Woodford Aerodrome, Poynton'
- Safeguarded Land LPS 52 'Woodford Aerodrome, Poynton' (22 hectares)
- RET 7 'Supporting the vitality of town and retail centres' which identifies town centre locations for main town centre uses to support their long term vitality and viability, in line with LPS Policy EG 5 'Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce'.

Draft allocations close to the Town Centre:

- PYT1 : 80 homes on site of Sports Centre
- PYT 4: 50 homes at former Vernon Infant School



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Draft Adopted Policies Map 2020 Update. P28

## Poynton Neighbourhood Plan January (2019)

In 2013 Poynton Town Council began to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, with the aim of informing development in Poynton until 2030. The Plan was prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group supported by a wider group of volunteers. The Plan period is from 2016 until 2030. The referendum was held in October 2019 and received resounding support from voters with 88% of people who voted, voting yes to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan was made in November 2019.

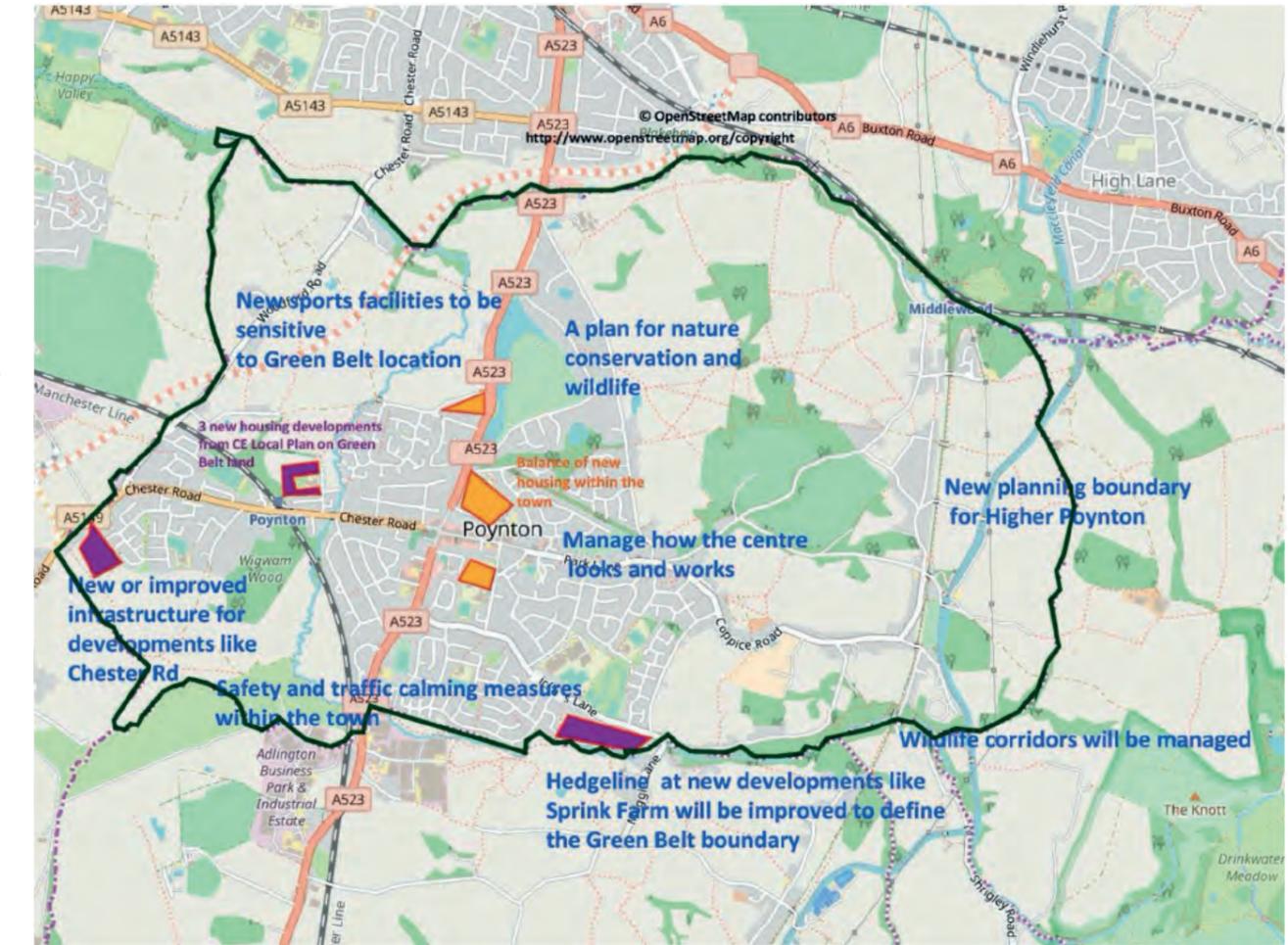
The following key issues were identified which the Plan needed to address:

- Acknowledging the town's status as a town inset in the North Cheshire Green Belt and surrounded by countryside on all sides;
- Balancing that long-standing planning policy against the other changing national and regional factors influencing where people should live and work;
- Responding to the changing highway network partly under construction (the A6MARR) and partly still yet to be built in the form of the Poynton Relief Road;
- Aligning plans at different spatial scales for Poynton with current national planning guidelines dating from 2011 to enable a planned approach to new development to be achieved;
- Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan alongside the Cheshire East Local Plan, July 2017, which takes a strategic overview of the function of all the main settlements within the Borough;

- Meeting the challenge and impact of the additional infrastructure, services and facilities in Poynton as the nearest town to the redevelopment of the former Woodford Aerodrome for nearly 1,000 homes;
- Reviewing the successful Shared Space zone within the town centre so that other parts of the town may benefit from this approach to an improved retail environment, to respond to high levels of traffic and improve pedestrian access and safety.

In response to these issues the Neighbourhood Plan sought to:

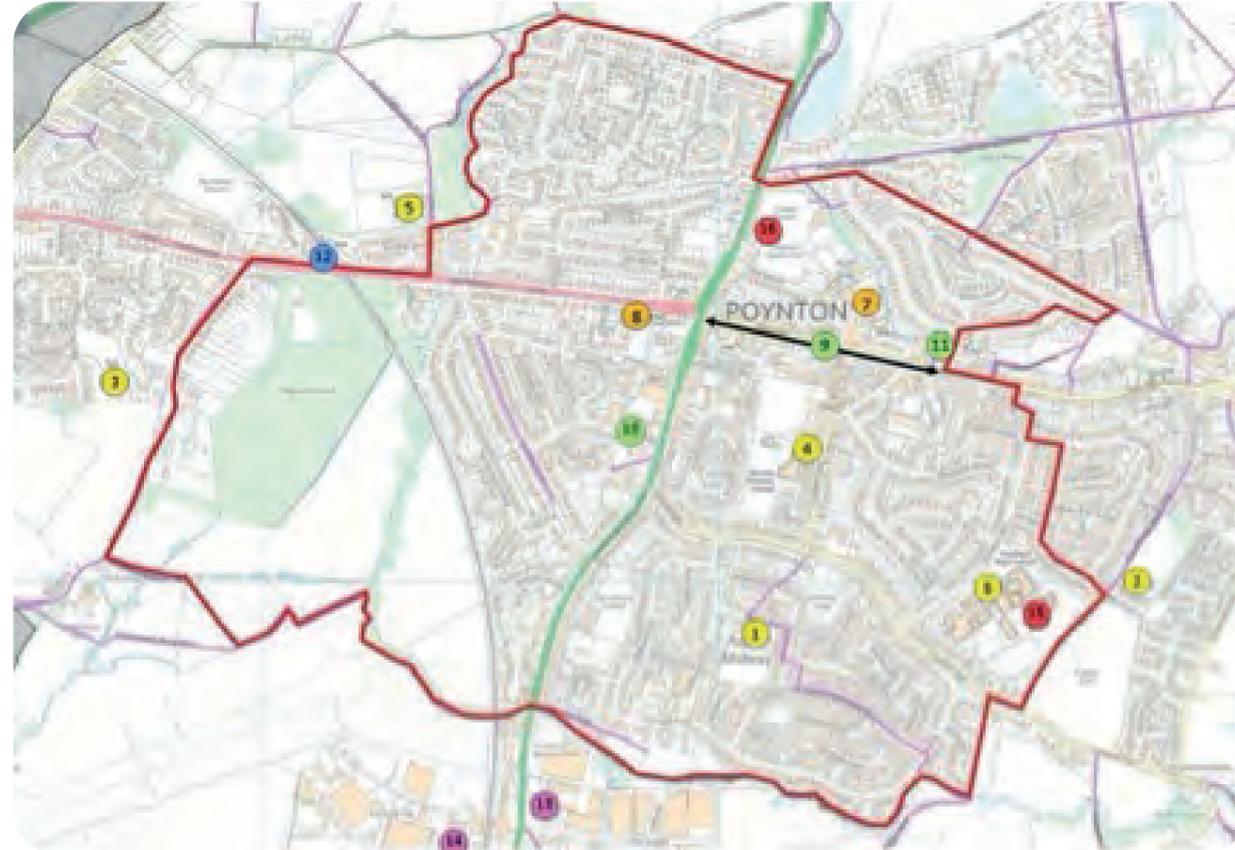
- Set out a vision for the future of the town;
- Seek to preserve and enhance the range of uses likely to be of benefit to the local community;
- Seek to retain the character of the town as one surrounded by countryside and defined as Green Belt;
- Identify land which may be used to meet the housing needs of the town;
- Designate and protect the green spaces within and around the town which would be protected from development;
- Seek to preserve and enhance the quality of the built and natural environment of Poynton;
- Widen opportunities for sustainable transport within the town following the completion of planned road schemes;
- Support appropriate development within the town centre as the heart of the community.



Source: Poynton Neighbourhood Plan 2019, page 13

## Poynton's Accessibility Masterplan - The Poynton Round (March 2021)

Poynton Town Council recognises the importance of sustainable, active travel. The accessibility masterplan identifies short, medium and long-term solutions and projects which engage and work with partners and community stakeholders. The aim of Poynton's Accessibility Masterplan is to provide increased opportunities for residents to make their way around the town more easily by walking, cycling or jogging. The masterplan identifies a number of discreet infrastructure projects which promote Active Travel principles and offers realistic, sustainable alternatives for community and commuting routes for leisure and work-related purposes with reduced reliance on car use.



1. St. Paul's Catholic Primary School	9. Shops on Park Lane
2. Worth Primary School	10. Shops at Queensway
3. Lostock Hall Primary School	11. Shops at School Lane
4. Vernon Primary School	12. Poynton Train Station
5. Lower Park Primary School	13. Poynton Industrial Estate
6. Poynton High School	14. Adlington Industrial Estate
7. Poynton Civic Centre (Priorslegh Medical Practice, Poynton Civic Hall, Library)	15. Poynton Leisure Centre
8. McIvride Medical Practice	16. Poynton Sports Club

Accessible Poynton. Source: Poynton's Accessibility Masterplan The 'Poynton Round'

It identifies the following objectives:

- Improve physical activity levels creating a more active and healthier population
- Encourage developers to ensure future housing developments are integrated into existing infrastructure and create new infrastructure where it doesn't exist to meet the needs of an active community
- Reduce car dependency
- Better connect key community hubs, e.g. Schools, play areas, shops, etc.
- Improve accessibility to public transport hubs
- Integrate existing cycle routes to new and proposed road networks in the surrounding areas
- Improve air quality as demonstrated during the early weeks of the national lockdown when vehicle use was significantly reduced
- Connect green spaces with residential estates and the wider countryside
- Address residents' concerns expressed in the 'accessibility' and 'the green, safe travel' surveys (September 2020)
- Increase confidence for safe cycling for all residents but especially for parents encouraging children to cycle

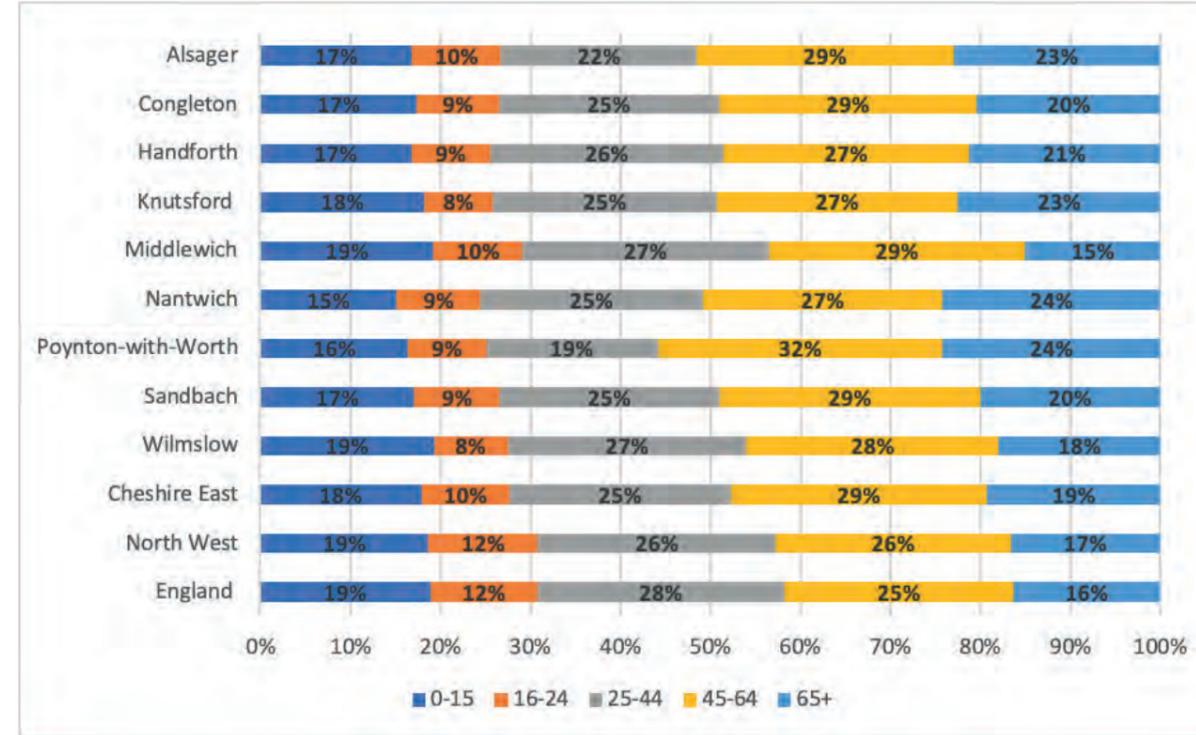
One of the key proposals is the Poynton Round is creation of an accessible all weather route around the town linking key assets.



# 04 Our People

## Age

The 2011 Census data indicates that the Poynton parish area had a population of 14,260 residents representing 3.9% of Cheshire East's total population (370,127). Generally Poynton's age profile is similar to that of Cheshire East. Poynton also has the joint highest proportion of residents aged 65+, along with Nantwich. Compared to the other Key Service Centres Poynton has the lowest proportion of 25-44 year olds which is the most economically active age group and the second lowest proportion of under 15 year olds (after Nantwich). This explains why Poynton also has the highest average (mean) age across the 9 KSC's at 45 years old which is higher than the Cheshire East mean age and the wider geographies of the North West (40) and England (39).



Age Structure.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Ethnicity

Broken-down by ethnic group the Census 2011 (latest available) shows the resident population across the Cheshire East is predominantly white at 96.7% which is a higher proportion than the wider geographies of the North West (90.2%) and England (85.4%). The majority of the population in Poynton is also white (98.0%), whilst having the lowest proportion of Mixed/ Multiple ethnic group residents (0.5%/ 78 people).

Area	White	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	Other ethnic group
Alsager	97.6%	1.1%	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Congleton	98.0%	0.6%	1.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Handforth	93.1%	1.5%	3.9%	0.9%	0.7%
Knutsford	96.5%	1.2%	1.8%	0.3%	0.3%
Middlewich	98.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%
Nantwich	98.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.1%
<b>Poynton-with-Worth</b>	<b>98.0%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Sandbach	98.1%	0.7%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%
Wilmslow	92.6%	1.7%	4.4%	0.5%	0.7%
Cheshire East	96.7%	1.0%	1.6%	0.4%	0.2%
North West	90.2%	1.6%	6.2%	1.4%	0.6%
England	85.4%	2.3%	7.8%	3.5%	1.0%

Population by Ethnic Group  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Occupational Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, a large proportion of Poynton residents were employed in higher order occupations including 'managers, directors and senior officials' (14.9%) and 'professional occupations' (24.0%) – a much higher rate than the wider Borough, regional and national benchmarks.

Conversely, just 9.6% were engaged in manual or elementary occupations. This is around half the North West (19.8%) and England rate (18.3%). The occupational structure of Poynton suggests a highly skilled workforce, which will in turn attract businesses (who want to attract highly skilled employees) to locate in the area.

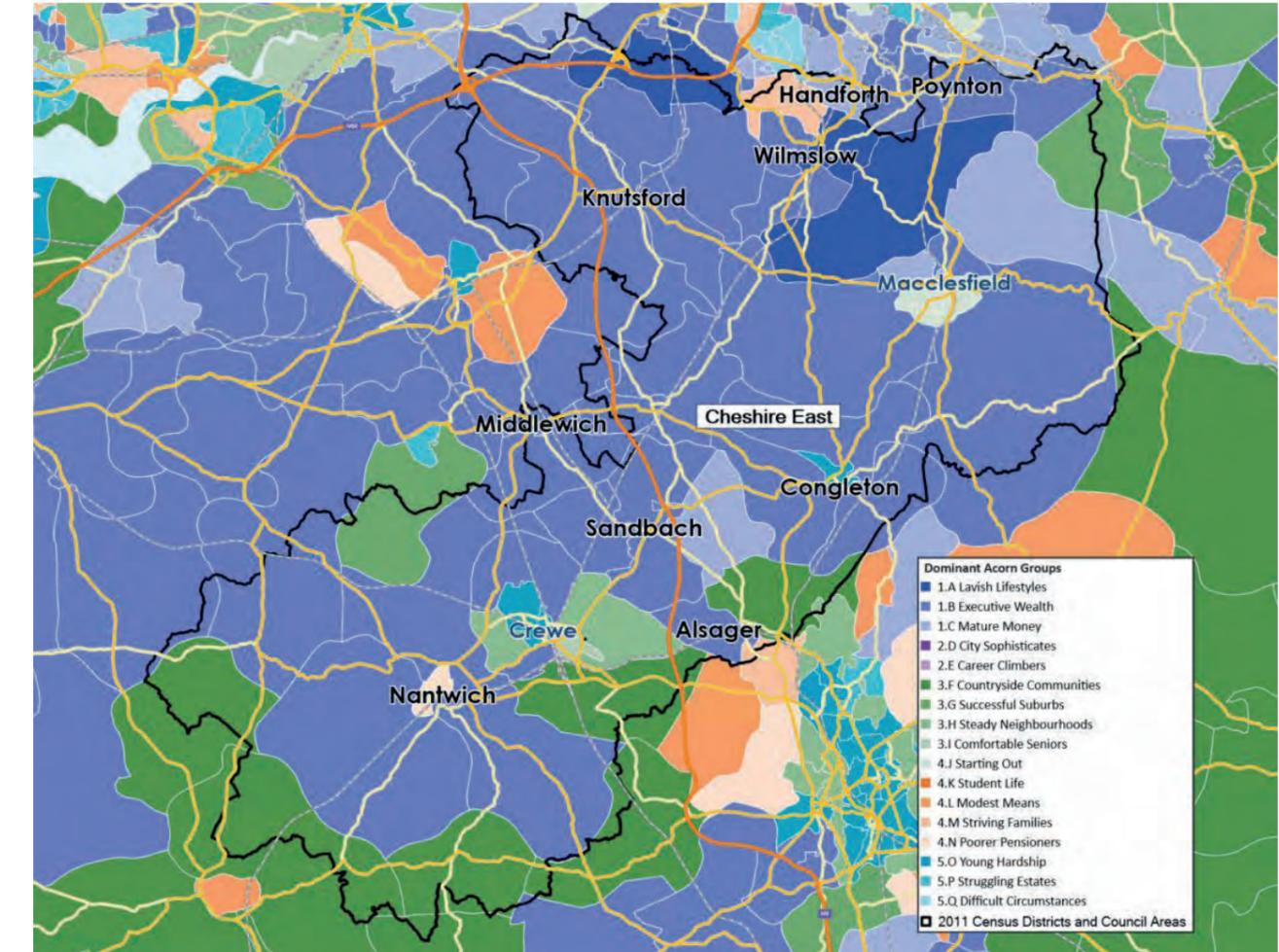
Built Up Area	Alsager	Congleton	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow	Cheshire East	North West	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	12.8	11.7	17.2	11.9	14.3	14.9	12.6	18.3	13.6	9.9	10.9
Professional occupations	22.3	18.9	26.2	15.8	21.8	24.0	19.9	24.6	19.6	16.3	17.5
Associate professional and technical occupations	12.6	13.2	15.1	13.4	12.3	15.1	13.3	16.3	13.0	11.5	12.8
Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.4	10.3	9.4	11.8	10.0	12.2	11.0	9.9	10.4	11.7	11.5
Skilled trades occupations	10.1	11.6	6.4	11.0	9.8	8.6	10.2	6.6	10.4	11.3	11.4
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8.7	9.5	8.0	9.9	8.2	7.7	9.2	7.8	8.9	10.1	9.3
Sales and customer service occupations	7.5	7.0	5.7	7.4	8.3	8.0	8.2	6.9	7.5	9.4	8.4
Process, plant and machine operatives	5.8	7.9	3.8	8.5	6.0	3.3	6.6	3.0	6.5	8.1	7.2
Elementary occupations	8.8	9.9	8.2	10.4	9.3	6.3	9.0	6.6	10.2	11.7	11.1

Occupational Profile  
Source: Census 2011  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Demographic Characterisation

CACI Acorn classifications of local postcode geographies provide precise information and an in-depth understanding of different consumer types by analysing significant social factors and consumer behaviour. Demographic analysis of Cheshire East area demonstrates diverse segmentation groups across the area. The dominant Acorn group in Poynton is Executive Wealth characterised by affluent professionals with families living in large homes.

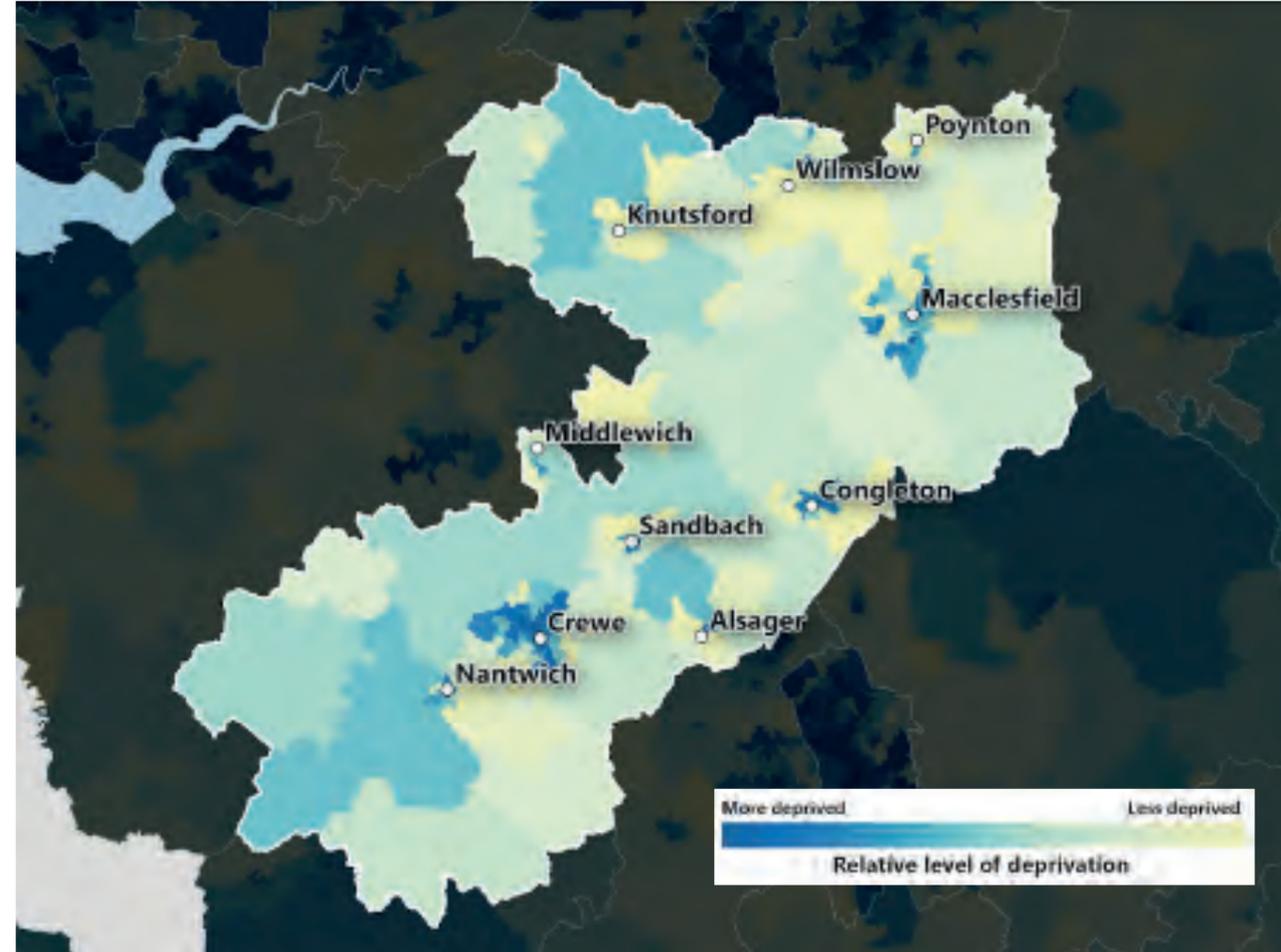
- Dominant Age Groups
- 1. A Lavish Lifestyles
  - 1. B Executive Wealth
  - 1. C Mature Money
  - 2. D City Sophisticates
  - 2. E Career Climbers
  - 3. F Countryside Communities
  - 3. G Successful Suburbs
  - 3. H Steady Neighbourhoods
  - 3. I Comfortable Seniors
  - 4. J Starting Out
  - 4. K Student Life
  - 4. L Modest Means
  - 4. M Striving Families
  - 4. N Poorer Pensioners
  - 5. O Young Hardship
  - 5. P Struggling Estates
  - 5. Q Difficult Circumstances
  - 2011 Census Districts and Council Areas



CACI Acorn Classifications  
Source: CACI  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 illustrates the spatial distribution and pockets of deprivation relative to national averages. Cheshire East ranked 228th most deprived out of 317 local authorities in 2019 indicating relatively low levels of deprivation. Just 1.7% of the Borough is within the top 10% most deprived areas in England, with these most deprived areas being concentrated around Crewe and to a lesser extent, Macclesfield. The majority of Poynton is within the 10% least deprived areas of deprivation nationally.



Source: MHCLG, IMD 2019  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres





## Visit information

	Visit 1	Visit 2
Date of visit:	Sunday 6th September	Monday 26th October
Time of day:	3.30-4.30pm	10-11pm
Weather:	Sun, Light drizzle	Heavy rain and sun
Mode of transport:	Car	Car
COVID 19 Lockdown Status	Eased restrictions, rule of six indoors and outdoors	Tier Two - rule of six indoors and outdoors

## Quality of the place

- Small, well kept town
- Large houses close to the town centre
- Range of shops and services
- Aesthetically very tidy with modern public realm.



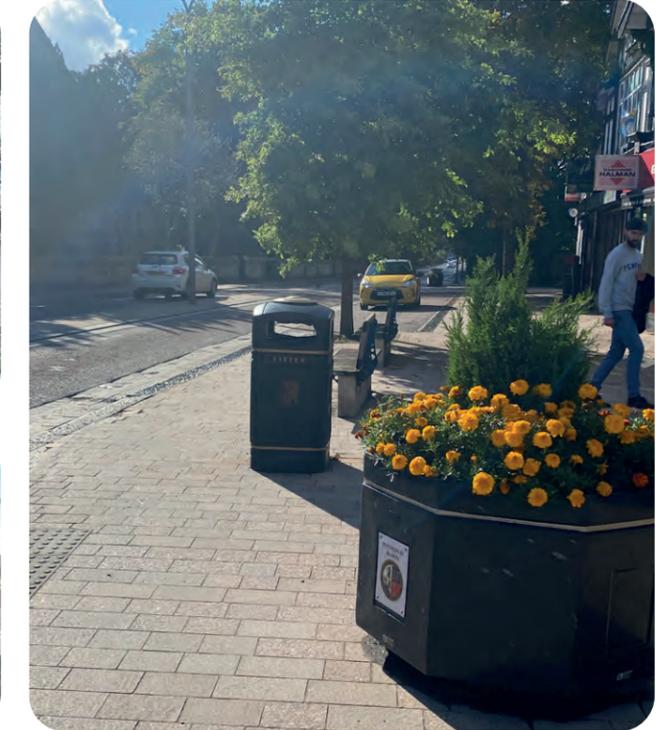
## People

- People sitting outside Costa coffee - mostly couples or parents with children
- People sitting outside local bars - mostly couples or 20 somethings
- Older population



## Sense of Community

- Noticeboards seem up to date
- Lots of well kept planters
- Signs of awards being won
- Bunting in public spaces



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Accessibility

- 10 minute walk from Poynton station, however links to and from are not well sign posted and poor foothpath connections
- Short stay and long stay parking available at Civic Hall / Waitrose
- No segregated cycle routes but a few people cycling

## Gateways

- Despite traffic calming measures, London Road south is still quite car dominated - due to the nature of the road and the volume of traffic it has to handle
- Junction with Park Lane, Chester Road and London Road North and London Road South provides main gateway however still issues for pedestrians and cycles

## Wayfinding

- Entrance points to town centre are highlighted with Poynton monuments which help create a sense of arrival
- No memorable signage within the town however it is quite small and easy to navigate
- Poynton monuments at each of the 4 main access routes



## Attractions

- Some cafes and restaurants, signs of outdoor seating
- The Centre - Community Centre on Park Lane
- Poynton Civic Hall
- Poynton Lake at Poynton Park

## Amenities

- Library, Town Council at Civic Hall, Churches, Health Centre and Gym
- Waitrose Supermarket, Aldi Supermarket, Morrisons Supermarket
- Independent cafes, restaurants and bars
- 4 distinct shopping centres

## Sense of a Centre

- The town does not have a typical square or focal point but instead has evolved through ribbon development. The sense of the centre isn't focused on one area but rather along the main streets that the town is formed around
- The consistent public realm material, opportunities to cross Park Lane and spill out spaces with active frontages helps to create a more readable sense of centre along Park Lane.
- Smaller shopping centres at School Lane and Queensway Shopping Centre create a secondary retail focus within the town

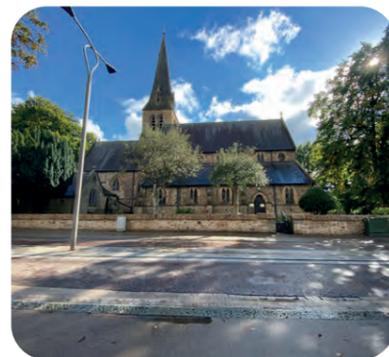


# 05 Our Place cont.

## Character

- Flat town centre which climbs slightly east beyond Waitrose
- Some heritage buildings with a number of Grade II listed buildings, including the impressive Church of St. George as well as interesting local heritage features such as the Grade II listed milestone marker along London Road South

- Mostly dated shop fronts are well kept
- Park Lane has an attractive character, with a number of Victorian / Edwardian terraced houses converted to commercial / retail / leisure space



## Public Realm

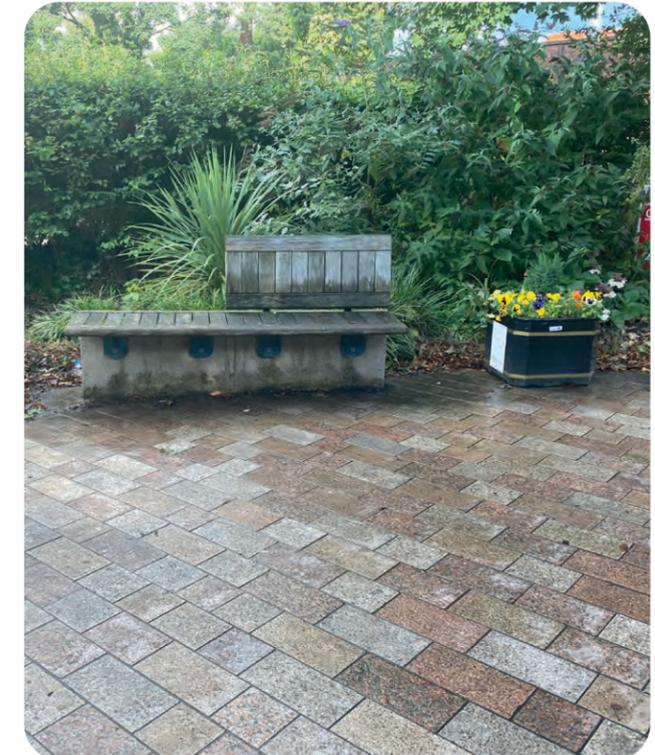
- Despite new public realm interventions, pavement and road surfaces are tired and worn in places
- Plenty of planters and seating but again falling into disrepair
- Quite generous spill out space along Park Lane and visual narrowing of carriageway helps with pedestrian priority and movement

- Tree planting with the areas of enhanced public realm complements heritage buildings and main street character



## Green space

- No central green space offered in the town centre
- Brecon Park, Deva Park and Poynton Park provided closest green space under 1km from the centre
- Poynton Round is a proposed greenway route, mainly for pedestrian accessibility and some cycle access (which requires funding to deliver) that will link schools and the Leisure Centre with the Town Centre.



## Derelict Sites/ Vacant Units

- Large vacant unit close to London Road South / Park Lane junction, occupying a visually prominent site on approach to the town. (Note that since our site visit this unit has now been occupied).
- Some smaller vacant shop units
- For a smaller town, not as many vacant or derelict sites as expected



## Housing

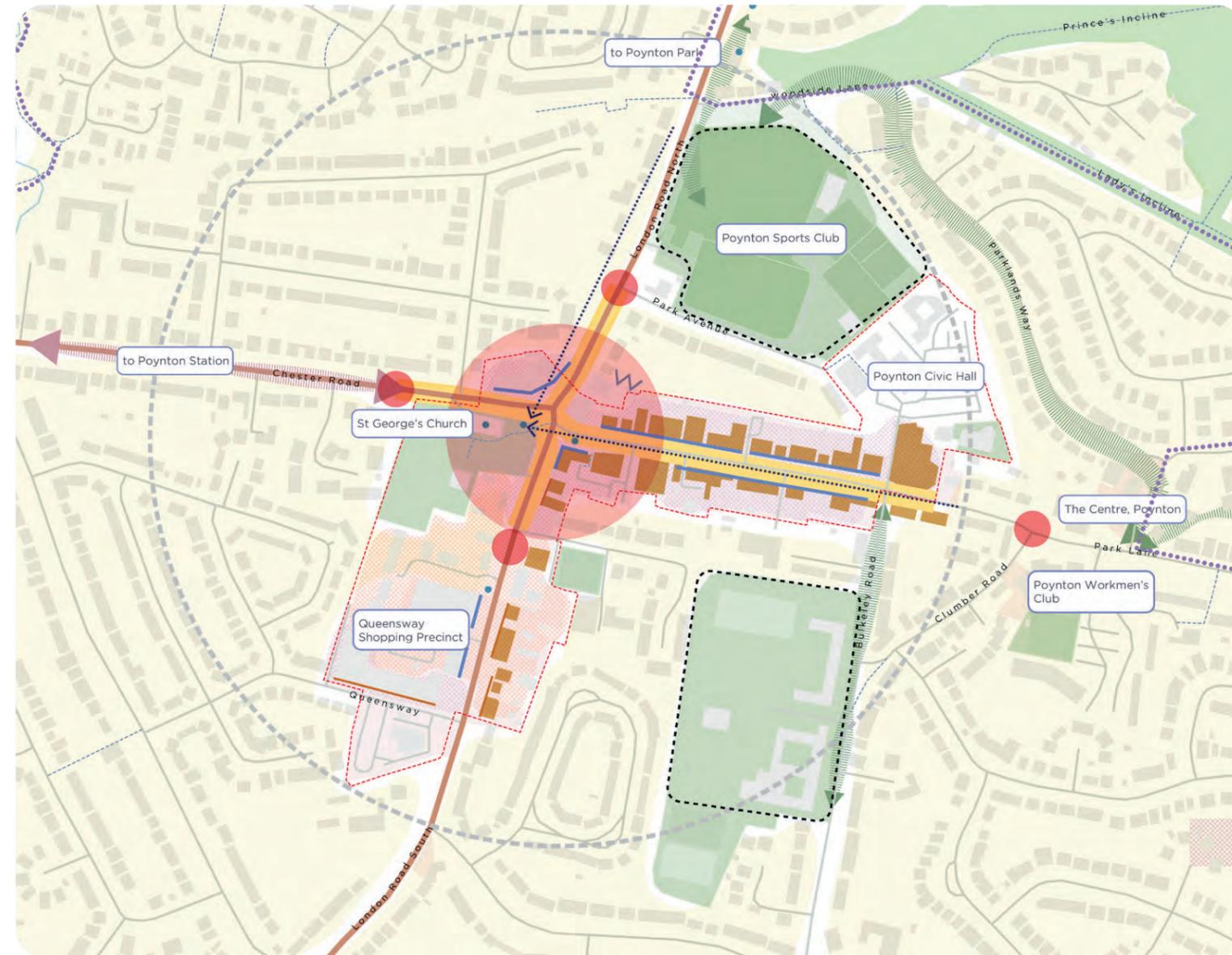
- Signs of new housing development by Queensway Shopping Centre
- Mostly terrace housing lines London Road South and Park Lane
- Larger detached and semi detached on Chester Road
- Well kept properties line Chester Road and Park Lane (in part)



## Positive Features

Positive spatial elements are identified on the plan:

- Key
- Local Centre boundary
  - Primary retail core
  - Potential regeneration area
  - Artwork highlighting entrance to town
  - Positive space/arrival space
  - Historic assets
  - Positive streetscape with active uses
  - Active ground floor uses (some reducing in number)
  - Primary active frontage onto streets
  - Secondary active frontage onto streets
  - Key sight lines
  - Publicly accessed green space
  - Potential Development sites for housing (Neighbourhood Plan in 2016)
  - Neighbouring residential
  - Primary routes
  - Key connections
  - Key pedestrian connections
  - Cycle paths
  - Pedestrian routes
  - 400m walking radii from centre
  - Poynton Round



**1** Tree planting and planters create an attractive and welcoming space for both pedestrians and cyclists



**2** Well defined shop frontages create active streetscapes. The Aldi shopping precinct helps to improve visitor experience of the town



**3** Tidy shop frontage and planting helps to improve the overall streetscape along Park Lane



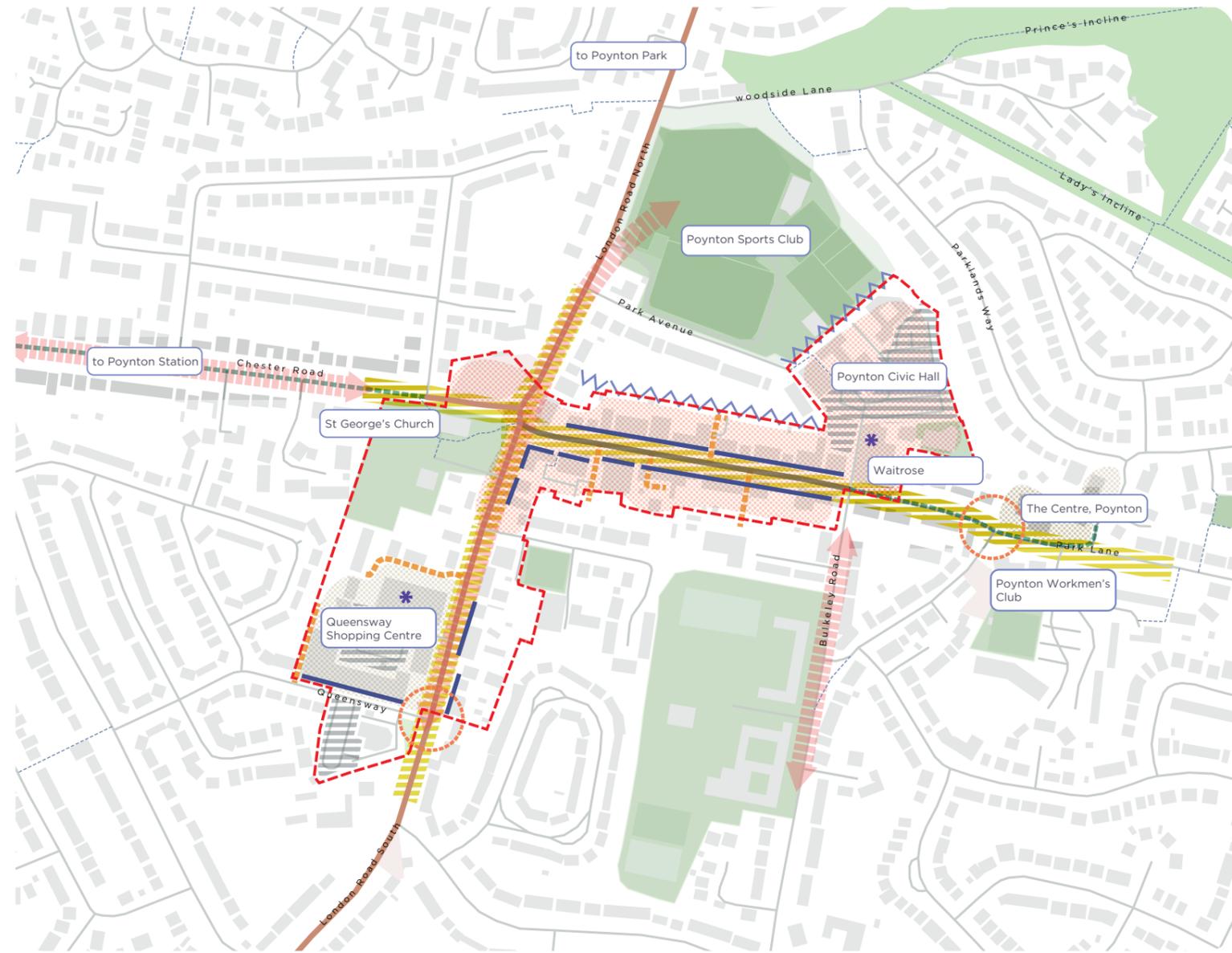
**4** The Chester Road, Park Lane and London Road junction provides an improved shared surface zone within the town centre which helps to create a less car dominated environment encouraging more active travel and pedestrian movement across the town.

## Negative Features

Negative spatial elements are identified on the plan:

### Key

-  Local Centre boundary
-  Streets and spaces dominated by car parking
-  Streets with narrow footways / poor pedestrian provision
-  Arrival gateways with a low quality arrival experience
-  Areas requiring maintenance of public realm
-  Low quality frontages
-  Arrival destinations
-  Links with poor legibility to and from the town centre
-  Local streets leading to cul-de-sacs or unclear where they connect to
-  Extent of area which reads as part of the Town Centre
-  Areas which feel beyond the extent of the Town Centre
-  Key assets which feel disconnected from the Town Centre
-  Pedestrianised high street with dated public realm and aesthetic
-  Area of severance / disconnect
-  Undefined / low key arrival thresholds to the town



**1** Narrow paving along Park Lane makes for poor legibility for pedestrians, especially those with mobility issues and prams



**2** Shopping areas appear separated and dated in part which contribute towards an aging townscape.



**4** On street parking is not well defined and clutters the shared surface area



**3** Poor maintenance of public realm reduces the quality of the streetscape



**5** Dated shop fronts and housing detracts from the vibrancy of the town

## Summary of Spatial Elements

The table below and on the opposite page identifies the key positive and spatial attributes for the town centre:

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Positives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality public realm - which is being re-nominated for an Urbanism Award on 13th November 2020 (but it is tired and in need of repair in many places)</li> <li>• Dementia friendly town</li> <li>• Plenty of planters and seating - these have recently been repaired by the Town Council and volunteers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junction with Park Lane, Chester Road and London Road North and London Road South provides main gateway however still issues for pedestrians and cycles</li> <li>• Entrance points to town centre are highlighted with Poynton monuments which create a positive arrival gateway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No immediate town centre open space, however Brecon Park, Deva Park and Poynton Park provided closest recreational green space</li> <li>• Poynton Round, green way route for pedestrians and cycles</li> <li>• Number of walking trails that could be better promoted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small number of listed buildings, grouped around the enhanced traffic calming scheme help to frame a gateway into Poynton</li> <li>• Modern public realm scheme has helped to improve areas which also have heritage qualities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good local business offer within the town centre including a strong café culture/ eateries/evening offer</li> <li>• Strong sense of community, however there is a need for a welcoming space - other than the Civic Hall there is no real defined central space</li> <li>• 3 distinct shopping areas - Queens Way, London Road South and Park Lane, and School Lane Shopping Area further east.</li> <li>• The quality of the townscape is most intact along Park Lane, both towards St George's Church and further east towards the historic residential areas around Poynton Green</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information boards dotted across the centre</li> <li>• Some street-side wayfinding signage at the Station and other locations helps with wayfinding</li> <li>• Small centre which is easily navigated without large amounts of signage</li> </ul>

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Weaknesses</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of the public realm - lack of repair to public furniture / wider maintenance issues.</li> <li>• Limited signage to navigate to station and primary shopping centres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite traffic calming measures, London Road south is still quite car dominated, due to the volume of traffic it carries</li> <li>• Some metal artwork identifies entrance points to the town but no framed arrival space</li> <li>• Arrival from the east is defined by historic residential properties, however the streetscape is dominated by kerb side parking and narrow footways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of central open space within the immediate centre</li> <li>• Green spaces such as Poynton Park and Deva Park are on the periphery of the town centre, with connections to and from them not clear and of varying quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small number of listed buildings, grouped around the enhanced traffic calming scheme</li> <li>• No real sense of celebrated heritage within the town, little information, art or interpretation about the mining, aviation, or agricultural heritage of the town for visitors and residents to interact with</li> <li>• Low quality buildings along Park Lane detract from the heritage quality of the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No designated square or community gathering point - Park Lane and Chester Road intersection creates a central point</li> <li>• Difficult to determine where designated parking is</li> <li>• Dated frontage for some shops and restaurants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of public transport - half the town centre is served by a bus route,</li> <li>• No bus link to station, Chester Road feels cut off from town centre</li> <li>• No clear defined cycle paths - partially provided in some areas</li> <li>• Walking and cycling along Chester Road is difficult to navigate. The town is fairly easy to read however visible links and wayfinding to important assets such as Poynton Park, Civic Hall and others could be improved</li> </ul>

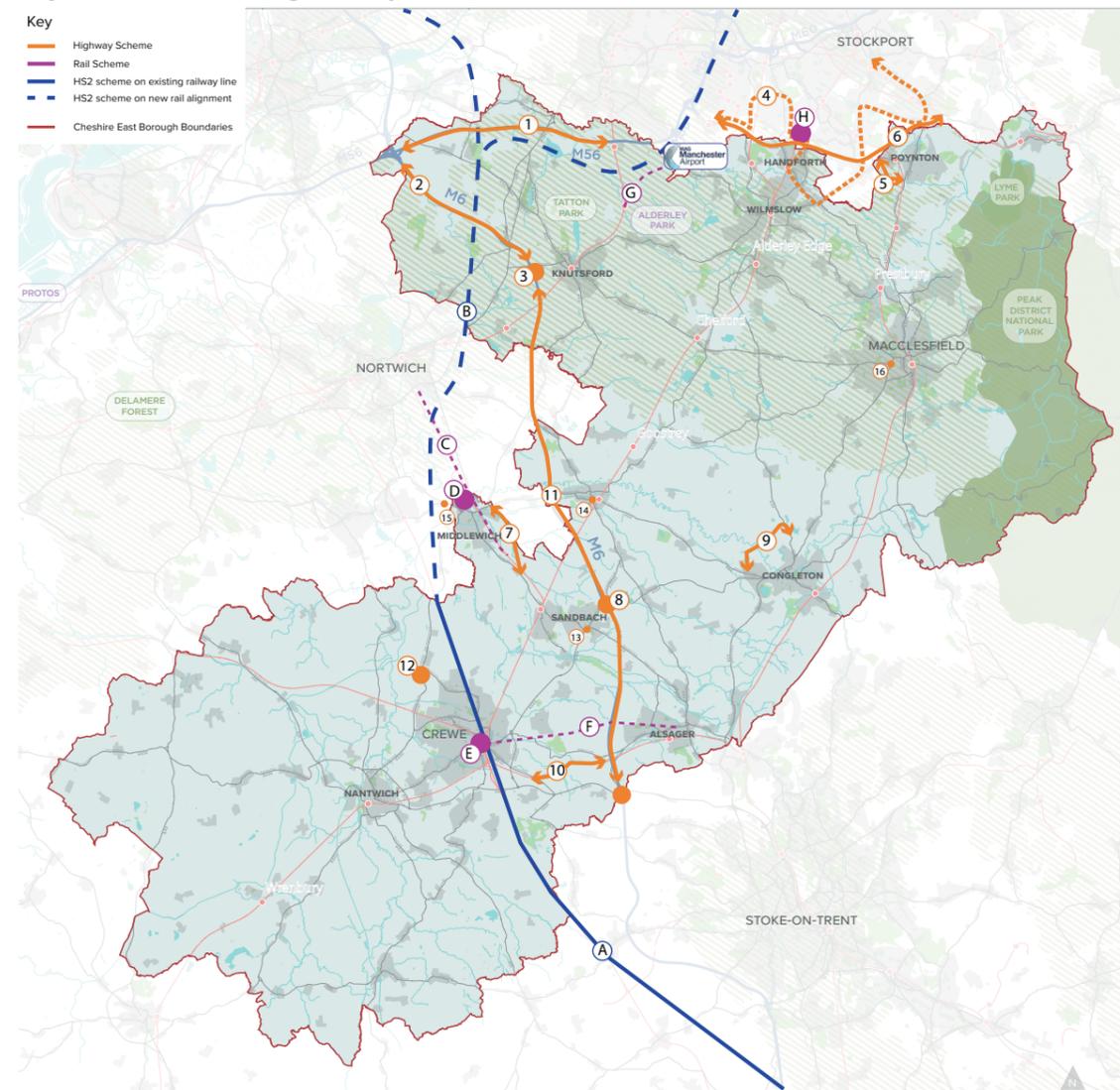
# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility

Poynton has excellent links to the strategic transport network with its surrounding A roads providing direct access via the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road motorway, to Manchester City Centre and Manchester Airport.

Manchester Airport is accessible from Poynton within less than 15-minutes drive time making it an attractive place to live, work and invest.

As well as Manchester, which is readily accessible by both road and rail, Poynton is within a 10 minute drive to the Peak District.

## Poynton Planned Strategic Transport Schemes



### PLANNED STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SCHEMES

Highway Schemes	Status
1 M56 Junctions 6-8 Smart motorway upgrade	Committed
2 A556 Knutsford-Bowdon Widening of the A556 between the M56 at Knutsford and the M6 at Bowdon	Completed
3 M6 J19 Capacity Improvements Addition of a two way link across the junction to allow better connection between the M6 and A556	Completed
4 Bus Rapid Transit Connecting Manchester Airport, Heald Green, Stanley Green, Handforth, Woodford, Bramhall, Hazel Grove, Stockport	Proposed
5 Poynton Relief Road Provision of single carriageway bypass to reduce congestion and support growth	Under Construction from October 2020, due for completion in Autumn 2022
6 A555 Link 2 lane dual carriageway bypass part of the Manchester Airport Relief Road scheme	Completed
7 Middlewich Eastern Bypass Proposed two-way single carriageway road scheme to bypass Middlewich and relieve congestion	Subject to planning and final funding approvals: main works to start late 2023, with estimated 28-month construction period
8 M6 J17 Capacity improvement scheme including implementation of a new roundabout and traffic signals	Completed
9 Congleton Link Road Bypass for Congleton to relieve congestion joining the A534 with the A536	Completed
10 A500 Dualling Dualling of the A500 between M6 J16 and the A531 and B5472 at Mere Moss Roundabout	Subject to final funding approvals: main works to start in 2024, with estimated 24 to 27 month construction period
11 M6 Junctions 16-19 Smart motorway upgrade	Completed
12 North West Crewe Package Construction of a new road linking Smithy Lane, Minshul New Road and Middlewich Road (A530)	Under Construction - works to start in May 2022 and will last 24 months
13 Sandbach - A533 Brookhouse Road / The Hill Junction	Junctions improvement schemes to tackle congestion and improve active travel facilities - in development
14 Holmes Chapel - A54 Chester Road / A50 London Road Junction	
15 Middlewich - A54 / A533	
16 Macclesfield - Flowerpot Junction A536 Park Lane / B5088 Oxford Road	
Rail Schemes	Status
A HS2 Phase 2a London to Crewe	Committed
B HS2 Phase 2b Crewe to Manchester and West Midlands to Leeds	Proposed - hybrid bill deposited
C Mid Cheshire Rail Link Reopening the Sandbach to Northwich railway line to passenger traffic	At feasibility stage
D Middlewich Station Reopening Reopening Middlewich station to passenger services to offer direct connection to Crewe, Manchester and Liverpool	At feasibility stage
E Crewe Hub Enhanced capacity, connectivity, resilience, access and facilities at Crewe station in preparation for the arrival of HS2 services	Masterplanning
F Crewe-Alsager Service Enhancement Double tracking this section of railway to enable service increases on the Crewe to Derby line	Pre-Feasibility
G Link from Mid Cheshire Line into Manchester Airport	Pre-Feasibility
H New Rail Station at Stanley Green	Pre-Feasibility

## Poynton Transport Baseline Analysis



## Car Parking

Car parking across Poynton town centre comprises several off-street car parks offering a maximum stay of 2 hours free of charge.

On-street parking is limited across Poynton giving maximum space to pedestrians and cyclists areas of enhanced public realm. Where it is provided, it is usually formalised in bays and complementary to the public realm. On-street parking is enforced in a number of locations such as Queensway through provision of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's).

As the main off-street car parks are located a short walk from retail facilities, it is important to ensure the main pedestrian routes along Park Lane, Queensway, School Lane and London Road South provide safe and attractive environments. This will support access to the town centre and encourage journeys into the town by more sustainable modes. This is particularly important in an area such as Poynton where the majority of households (81%) have access to a car.

The TCVPs consider the role of car parking in relation to the vitality of each town centre. However, any proposals to review or modernise car parking provision and management will be considered on a town by town basis as part of the Council's approach to travel demand management. Therefore the delivery of any car parking proposals is outside the scope of the TCVPs.

## Public Realm

Poynton has benefited from a major investment in public realm, with an informal street design implemented along the key axis of the town, centred on Fountain Place. It is a key strength of the town, creating a high quality of environment and strong sense of place where pedestrian and cyclists are prioritised and embraced, despite high vehicular flows through the town. Public realm within these areas also presents gateway features to enhance sense of arrival into the town, enhanced lighting facilities and seating to provide opportunities for people to stop and rest. Despite the success of the scheme, maintenance is required in many places to ensure this high-quality environment is maintained.

In contrast to the area of Park Lane and Fountain Place, the streets around the local facilities at

Queensway and School Lane comprise aging highways infrastructure and public realm creating an inconsistency in relation to sense of place within different areas of the town. As parking restrictions are already in place in these areas with no on-street parking facilities, and large amounts of space is present along retail frontages, there are significant opportunities within these areas to bring the quality of public realm up to a similar standard to that evident along Park Lane and Fountain Place.

There is also potential to gain further benefits from the public realm scheme in Poynton town centre once the Poynton Relief Road opens in 2022, removing a significant proportion of traffic from the town.

Town Centre	Car Park ID	Parking Spaces	Duration	Pricing
Poynton	Poynton Train Station Car Park	38	Long Stay	£2 per day
	Civic Hall Car Park	204 spaces: 73 operated by the Council and 131 leased by Waitrose	Mix of 2hrs short stay and long stay spaces	Free
	Shopping Area Car Park		/	Free
	<b>TOTAL</b>			

## Road Safety

There are a number of places across Poynton town centre where the safety of pedestrians and cyclists could be improved. A lack of crossing points is provided across London Road South around the junction with Abbey Court which forms part of the key route between facilities, the rail station and off-street car parks. There is also a lack of safe crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of the rail station to support pedestrian access to the town centre and nearby bus stops. New crossing facilities should therefore be considered throughout this study along key pedestrian desire lines to enhance road safety and encourage the use of more active modes.

## Active Travel

Key pedestrian desire lines within the centre of Poynton include the routes between the station, along Chester Road towards the high street and key facilities. Poor pedestrian and cyclist facilities are present along Chester Road with a single narrow footway adjacent to the key A road proving the only means of pedestrian access towards the town centre. Signage and wayfinding from the station for pedestrians and cyclists is also poor and unclear.

Cycle parking is provided within a number of locations around Fountain Place and Park Lane. However, the provision of cycle infrastructure is reduced in areas where public realm is of a lower quality.

The public realm scheme delivered in Poynton provides substantial benefits for pedestrians in particular. Expansion of this scheme across a wider area of Poynton would support more sustainable movement within the town.

## Public Transport

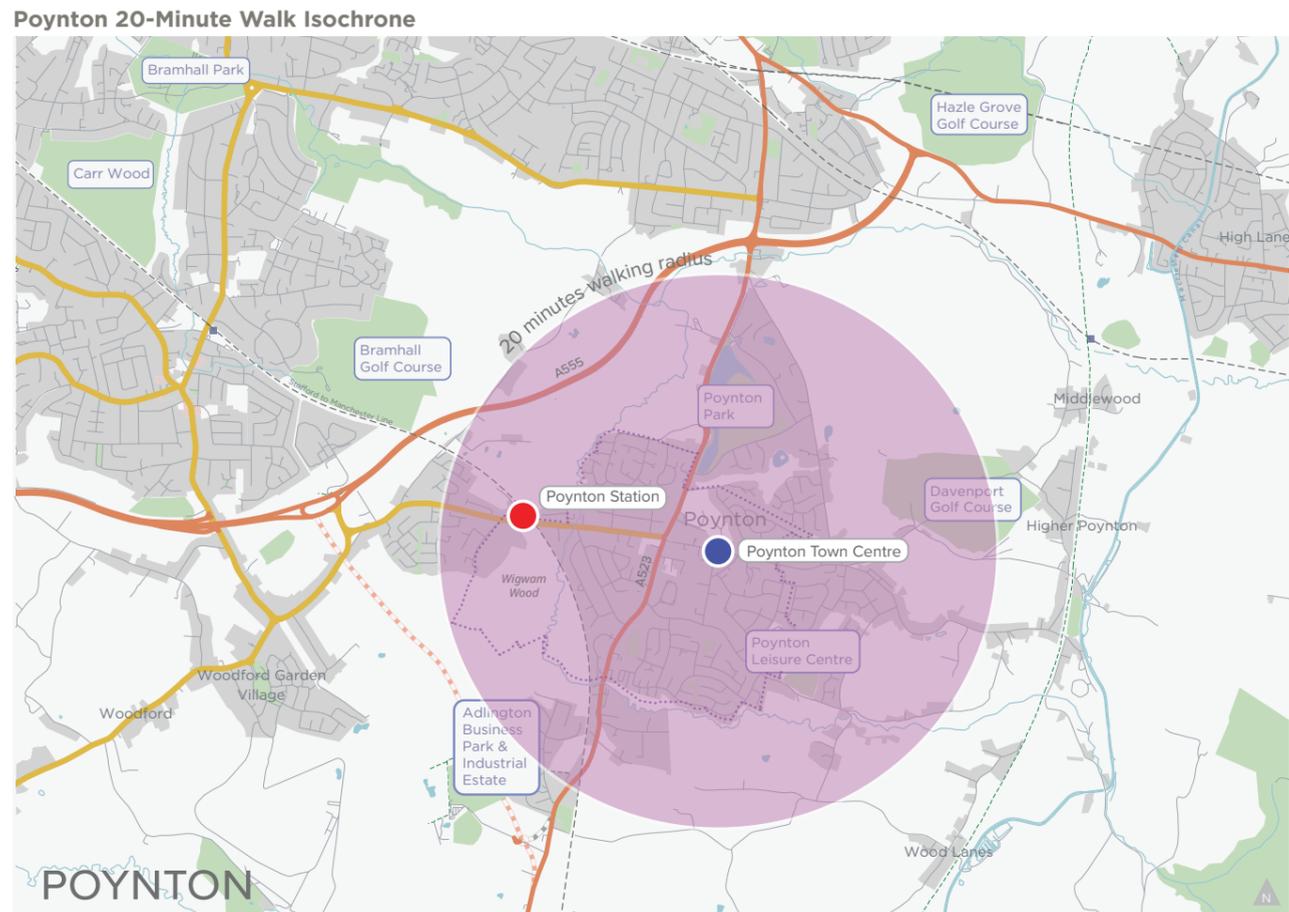
Poynton railway station is located around a 10-minute walk away from the main retail area and key facilities. Poynton is served by 1 train per hour to Manchester Piccadilly northbound and southbound to Stoke-on-Trent. Access to Poynton from the wider area by rail is therefore limited by a lack of direct rail services and service frequency.

Bus services within the area comprise 1 bus per 90mins serving Queensway to Macclesfield and 1 bus per 90 mins serving Chester road to Stockport. There is a lack of direct bus services to the rail station with the closest stop (around a 3-minute walk away) offering only 1 bus per 90 mins to Stockport further reducing the accessibility to the rail network. There are also no Sunday bus services.

The poor connectivity to the area by public transport is intensified by the high proportion of elderly residents who often rely on bus and rail services to access key facilities.

## Movement Trends

The town centre is predominantly within a 20-minute walk of the wider built-up area, and as such there is a significant opportunity to increase the levels of walking and cycling access to the town centre. However, car ownership in Poynton is particularly high and the local highway network (outside of the town centre) does little to prioritise people on foot or bike.



## Local Aspirations

In October 2020, work began on the £53m Poynton Relief Road which is expected to open to traffic in Autumn 2022. Poynton Relief Road will be a modern single carriageway including two over-bridge crossings for use by walkers, cyclists and farm vehicles. A 3.5-metre-wide combined cycle and footway will run beside the length of the route on the western side of the main carriageway.

This not only provides opportunities to divert traffic away from the town, but also offers the opportunity to enhance the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure in the area and promote sustainable access to the town centre.

There are also aspirations to improve the A523 route for cyclists between Poynton Town Centre northwards towards Hazel Grove and linking to the A555 route - as the current highway's width could accommodate cycling infrastructure and the Poynton Relief Road is expected to take traffic off this section.



5% of people living in Poynton work within the town centre



24% of residents travel less than 5km to work



Public transport accounts for 6% of commuter trips



Only 13% of households in Poynton do not have access to a car, 36% have access to two or more vehicles



72% of residents in Poynton in employment drive to work by car



11 minute walk between town centre and railway station



Active travel accounts for 10% of commuter trips



One train per hour in each direction to Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester Piccadilly. Additional services operate at peak commuter times and after 10pm. Six services in each direction on Sundays

Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility cont.

Cheshire East Council has approved Local Transport Development Plans (LTDP) for its principal towns, keys service centres and surrounding rural areas. The table opposite summarises the potential transport schemes included in the LTDP relating to the town centre at the point they went out to public consultation. Please note the majority of schemes are at concept stage, subject to feasibility work and must be viewed as potential schemes. Therefore the LTDP are live documents and this list of schemes is subject to change and will evolve as further work is undertaken.

In Poynton the LTDP sets out a wide range of actions that CEC are exploring. In Poynton, the LTDP has fewer actions than many other towns given the significant investment that has been made in public realm in the town centre. There is however recognition that improvement of the A5149 Chester Road and A523 London Road is needed outside of the town centre core.

The table contains detail on the schemes set out in the LTDP.

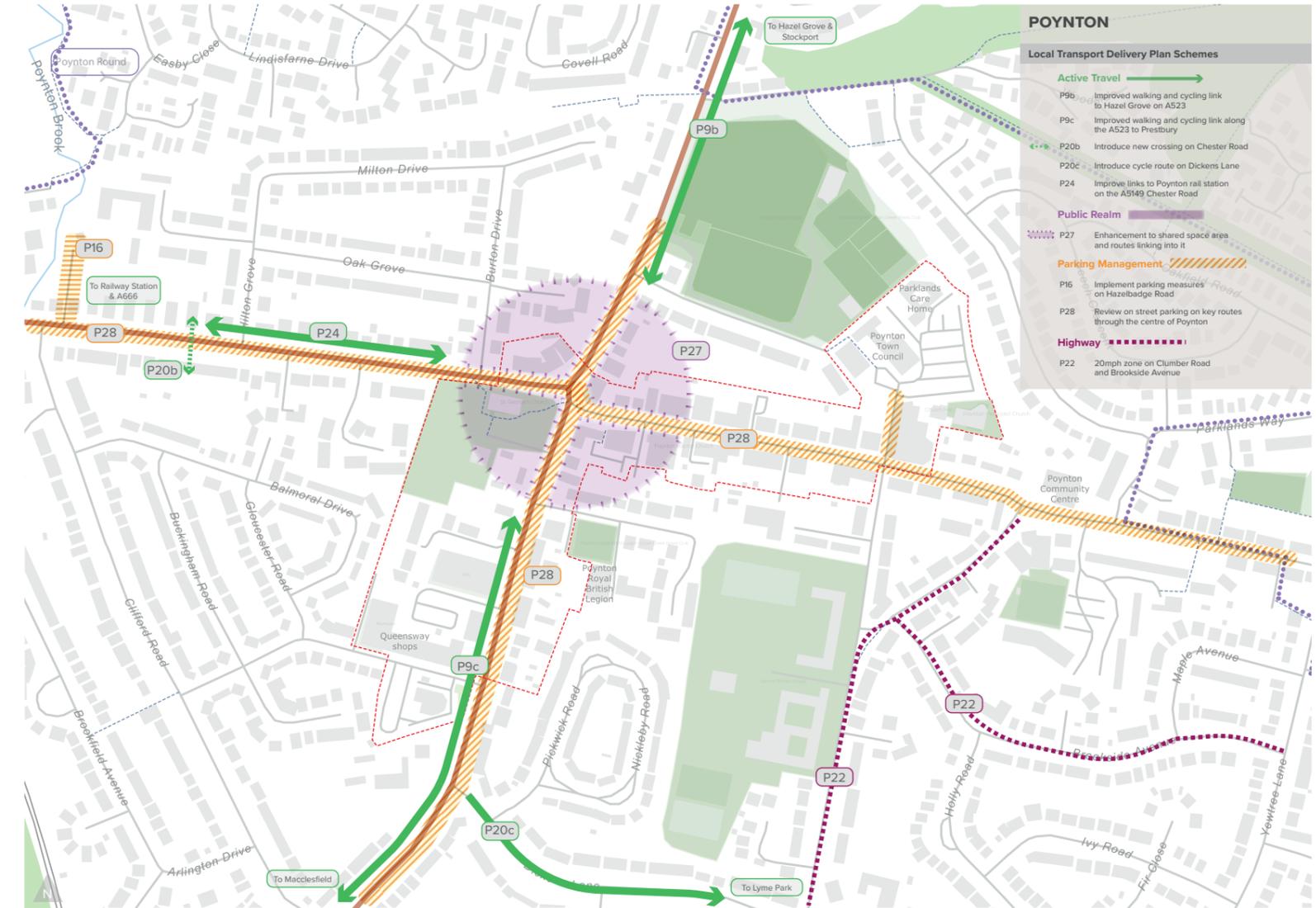
For full information on LTDP and the latest version of the LTDP please refer to the Highway pages of the CEC website.

## Poynton LTP and LCWIP schemes

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	P9b	Improve walking and cycling route to Hazel Grove on the A523 (north)	Improve walking and cycling route along the A523 London Road North to Hazel Grove and Stockport.	£1m-£5m
	P9c	Improve walking and cycling route to Prestbury on the A523 (south)	Improve walking and cycling route along the A523 to Macclesfield and Prestbury.	£1m-£5m
	P20b	Introduce new pedestrian crossing on Chester Road	Introduce a new pedestrian crossing on Chester Road, near to Deva Park, west of the train station.	<£1m
	P20c	Provide cycle links on Dickens Lane	Introduce a cycle route along Dickens Lane and upgrade the existing uncontrolled crossing near Yewtree Lane.	<£1m
	P24	Improve walking and cycling route on the on the A5149 Chester Road to Poynton train station	Improve walking and cycling route on the A5149 Chester Road to Poynton train station.	<£1m
Public Realm	P27	Enhance the existing shared space area and routes linking into it	Review the shared space scheme once the Poynton Relief Road has opened, to assess parking and signage requirements within the area and on routes linking into it.	<£1m
Parking Management	P16	Parking management measures on Hazelbadge Road	Implement parking management measures linked to the development at Hazelbadge Road.	<£100k
	P28	Review of parking management measures on Chester Road, London Road, Park Lane and School Lane	Review of parking management measures – particularly on-street parking – across the town centre on Chester Road, London Road, Park Lane and School Lane.	<£1m
Highway	P22	Introduce 20mph zone on Clumber Road and Brookside Avenue	Introduce 20mph zone on Clumber Road and Brookside Avenue to provide a safer environment and access to the High School.	<£1m

<sup>1</sup> The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.

## Poynton Local Transport Development Plan Schemes



## Retail and Leisure

Cheshire East Council recognises the importance of monitoring key information to assess and respond to issues in its centres and commission regular reviews of the retail and leisure market across the Borough. The latest partial update of the Retail Study Report paints a strong and positive picture for Poynton in terms of performance since the last Report (2016).

Poynton is identified as a KSC within Cheshire East that is performing strongly and continues to be a vital and viable town centre. A mix of national and independent operators provide important retail and service provisions for the local catchment population, with a particularly strong convenience sector offering. Poynton's good evening economy and high-quality environment also add to the attractiveness of the town centre.

As of August 2018, Poynton town centre had 108 units, a decrease of 2 since 2016, which are primarily concentrated on Park Lane and London Road South.

The convenience sector in Poynton is strong with a mix of national brands and independent retailers. The centre is anchored by Waitrose on Park Lane and Aldi on London Road South, which has been created along with 4 retail units

	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK Average (%)	Sqm.	%	UK Average (%)
Convenience	13	12	9	6,049	39	15
Comparison	30	28	29	2,679	17	34
Retail Service	23	21	15	1,405	9	7
Leisure Service	24	22	25	2,987	19	26
Vacant	9	8	10	700	5	7
Financial and Business Service	9	8	12	1,659	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>41,220</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Diversity of Uses in Poynton Town Centre in September 2019  
 Source: Experian GOAD Survey, August 2018. UK Average from the Experian GOAD Category Report (February 2020)  
 Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

from the demolition of the Poynton Cinema. The centre is also catered for by a small Morrisons and a small number of independent bakers, butchers and delis. This has contributed to the proportion of units (12%) being slightly above the UK average (9%) and a proportion of floorspace being significantly above the UK average (39% compared to UK average of 15%).

The comparison goods offering in Poynton is predominantly independent retailers however there are a small number of national operators including Card Factory, Boots and WH Smith.

Whilst having experienced a decrease in the number of units since 2016, a fall from 36 to 30, the proportion of comparison goods units is in line with the UK average (28% and 29% respectively). With the comparison goods retailers in Poynton occupying small units, this lends to a floorspace proportion of half the UK average (17% compared to UK average of 34%).

Poynton is well represented in both the retail and leisure sector provisions with a particular strength of 14 hairdressers/ beauty salons in the centre. This contributed to a proportion of retail units in

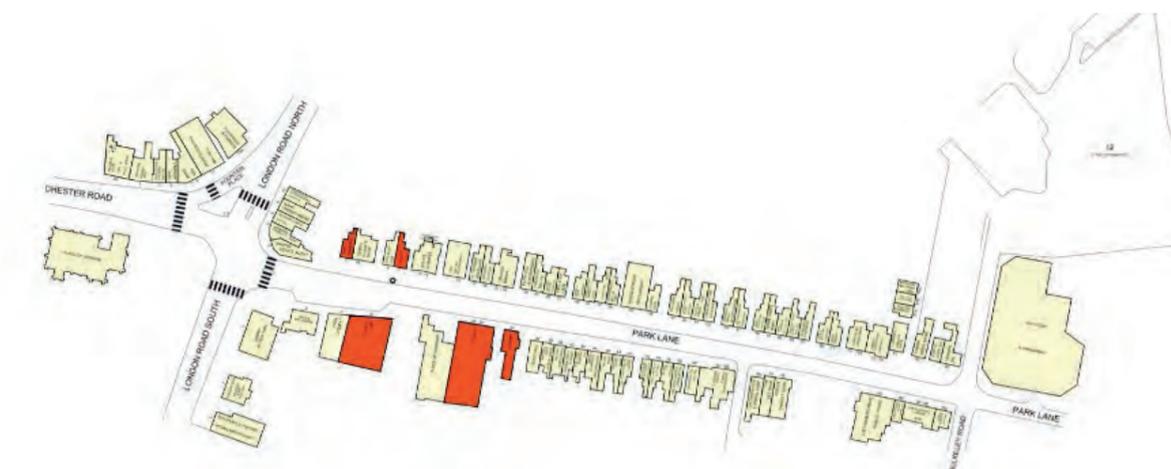
the centre of 21%, above the UK average of 15%. The number of leisure service unit has increased since 2016, a proportion of 22% of all units and just below the UK average of 25%. Most of these leisure units are occupied by independent food and beverage operators providing a range of restaurants, take aways and pubs, with some national operators of Pizza Express, Costa Coffee and Subway. The loss of Natwest and RBS banks has meant there are no banking facilities within the town centre which does weaken the service offer, but has been a national trend seen across smaller/ medium sized towns.

The town centre had a recorded 9 vacant units, representing 8% of the total number of units and below the UK average of 12%. This is an increase on 6 vacant units recorded in 2016, and an identical proportion of vacant floorspace compared to the UK average of 11%. The total vacant floorspace was 1,659 sqm. Since 2018 it is noted that at least 2 of these units have now been occupied.

At this stage, it is unclear what the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic will be on Poynton's town centre occupiers. Town centre spend will have been, in part, compensated for by more people

working from home and using local facilities as the town centre predominantly serves the catchment population.

The strength of Poynton's convenience sector offering, along with the mix of national and independent retailers aligned with catchment population of affluent professionals should mean that Poynton remains a viable town centre, despite the challenges facing high streets due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst some occupiers may experience short term impacts, longer term the centre should remain an attractive and vital location within Cheshire East.



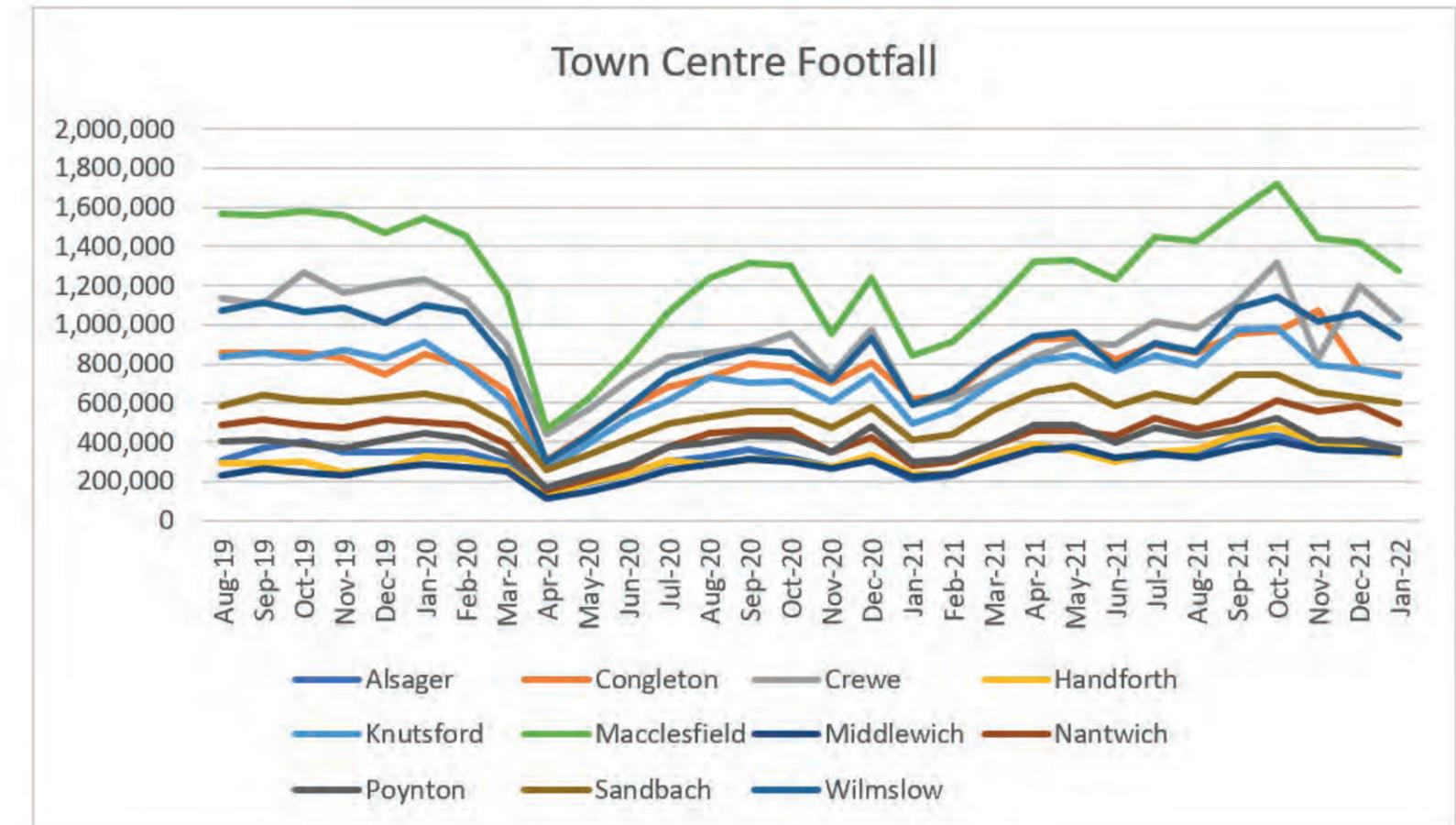
Location of voids in the Town Centre, 2018 .  
 Source: GOAD

## Footfall

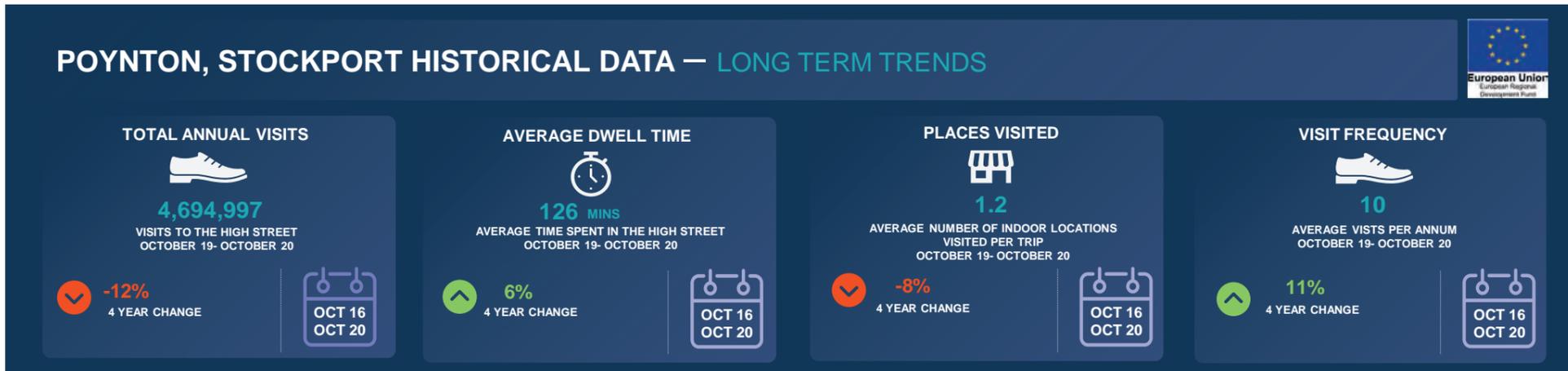
In recognition of the important relationship between footfall and vitality, CEC is now commissioning regular monitoring of footfall across the centres. The graph opposite shows footfall across the key Cheshire Towns between August 2019 and December 2021, including the impact of national lockdowns as a result of COVID-19. It starkly shows the impact of Covid on footfall, across Cheshire East particularly in March and November 2020 (during national lockdowns) and some bounce back in December.

As a small centre Poynton has the fourth lowest footfall of the KSC - a position that has remained broadly consistent during the period that footfall has been recorded. In December 2020 footfall reached 483,000 from 403,086 in August 2019. This was an 18.3% uplift on December 2019 - second only to Handforth in terms of increases. A number of other centres recorded a fall over the same period.

Covid has had a significant impact on footfall, both during enforced lockdowns but also in further accelerating online retail use. The ability of a centre to attract a wide range of visitors (rather than just relying on shoppers) will have a significant impact on how centres emerge from Covid. As a local centre Poynton should be more resilient than other centres - as has been seen during lockdown.



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: December 2021



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: Poynton Town Centre: October 2019-2020  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Employment

The main employment area in the vicinity of Poynton is Poynton Industrial Estate, located on the southern edge of the town. This largely comprises average quality B2/B8 industrial and warehouse units and some ancillary office space. The site is well occupied by local businesses in sectors including manufacturing, construction and ICT. No national occupiers are present on site.

Adlington Industrial Estate is situated directly to the west, on the other side of the A523, yet counted as just outside of the Poynton boundary. This estate is home to similar sized industrial units, some of better quality and therefore provides strong competition for occupiers. Current occupiers are within the transportation, construction and manufacturing sectors.

Whilst there is only one office building in Poynton (located behind the Boots on Park Lane) there are a number of solicitors, architects, financial services, care providers, a business centre, property developers and estate agents.

Compared to other towns in Cheshire East, Poynton's employment provision is small. This demonstrates Poynton's role as a commuter town.

## Residential Market Context

Poynton provides an attractive residential location surrounding the town centre, set with open countryside in the north east of the Borough. It offers easy commuting to employment destinations via the A523 and A555 and is 7 miles from Manchester Airport.

At the time of the 2011 Census the dominant house type across the Cheshire East area was detached housing (35.6%) which is a much higher proportion than the North West (18%) and England (22.4%).

The Poynton parish area had a total of 6,024 households, representing 3.8% of Cheshire East's total residential stock (159,441). Poynton's housing stock is dominated by larger family housing, with 42.7% detached homes, the highest proportion in Cheshire East and 39.2% being semi-detached, the second highest amount after Alsager. Together these contribute to over 80% of the housing stock in Poynton.

Therefore, there is a need to rebalance the housing offer to provide more starter homes, affordable housing and homes for older people to meet changing demographics and future local needs.

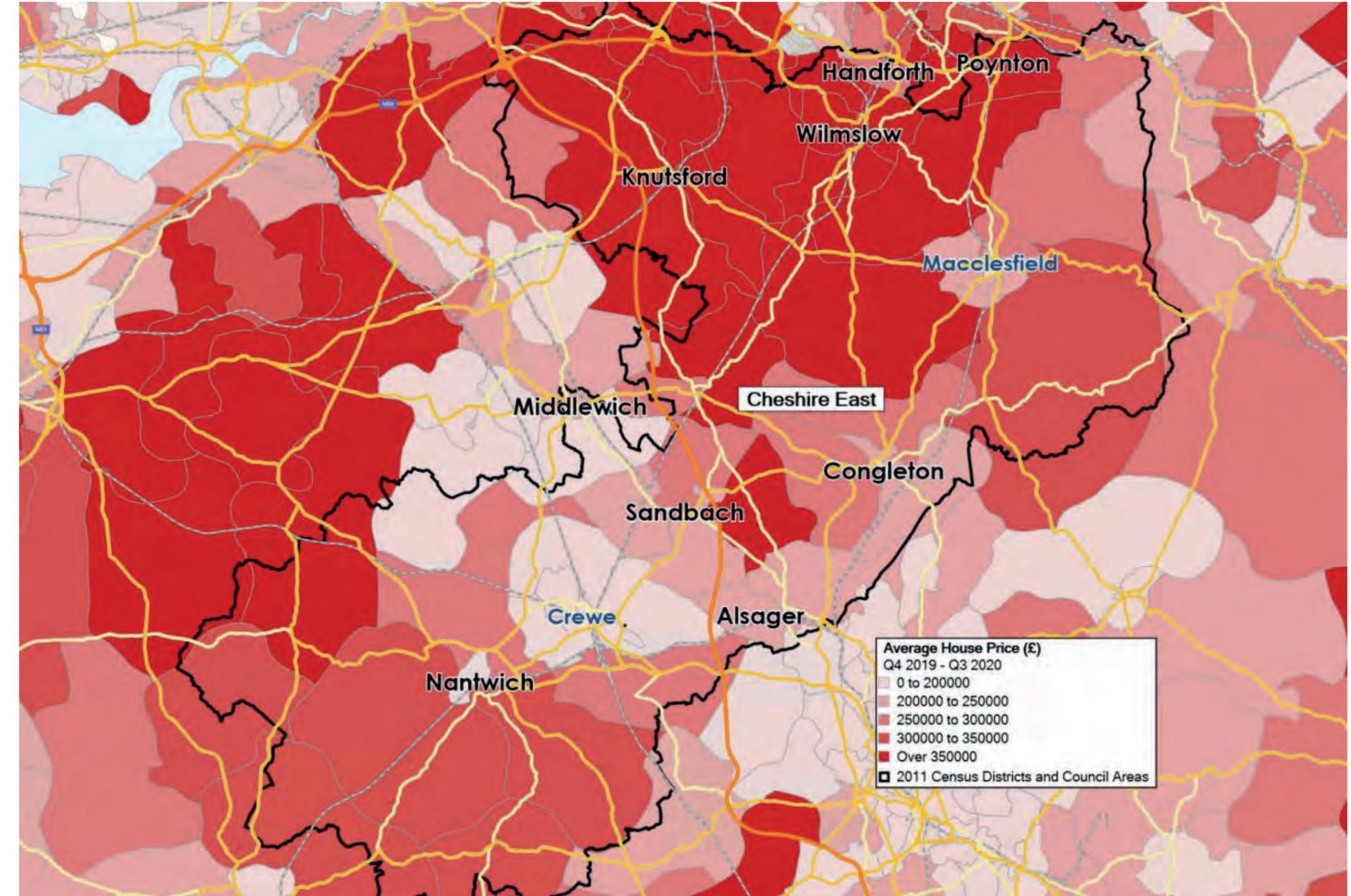
Over the last year, the average house price in Poynton was just under £400,000 (£398,000), 9% down on the previous year. This makes Poynton one of the more expensive towns to live in Cheshire East.

Currently active new housing developments include the Kingswood Development on

Chester Road by Bloor Homes and Copperfields Development on Dickens Lane by Bellway Homes. These are both developments of 2-5 bedroom homes, with a 3-bed semi-detached ranging from £356,000-410,000.

Dwelling Type/Area	Detached	Semi Detached	Terrace	Flat	Other	Total Households
Alsager	39.9%	40.4%	11.6%	8.1%	0%	5,183
Congleton	36.3%	35.4%	19.3%	8.9%	0.2%	11,561
Handforth	26.1%	23.1%	27.9%	22.8%	0.1%	2,936
Knutsford	38.8%	34.2%	19.7%	7.0%	0.4%	5,671
Middlewich	39.0%	26.0%	19.7%	15.3%	0%	5,910
Nantwich	20.8%	30.6%	26.8%	21.6%	0.2%	6,710
<b>Poynton-with-Worth</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>6,024</b>
Sandbach	39.1%	36.1%	17.6%	6.8%	0.3%	7,840
Wilmslow	39.5%	26.6%	19.5%	14.3%	0%	10,615
Cheshire East	35.6%	32.6%	21.2%	10.2%	0.5%	159,441
North West	18.0%	36.3%	29.8%	15.4%	0.5%	3,009,549
England	22.4%	31.2%	24.5%	21.2%	0.7%	22,063,368

Housing Stock by Type.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)



# 08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

This SWOT is based on the analysis of the consultant team and discussions with the Town Council and other local partners including councillors.

## Strengths

- Location of the town - Stockport/South Manchester catchment as well as Cheshire
- Attractive village feel
- Good quality public realm in some places - re-nominated for an Urbanism Award
- Good local business offer within the town centre including a strong café culture/eateries/evening offer
- Strong sense of community
- Residents like to stay local
- Accessibility is good in parts, for pedestrians and vehicles - improvements needed for public transport
- Free parking
- Pre COVID-19 there was a good number of events taking place in Poynton - Christmas Fest, Summer Fest, folk nights, food and drinks events, the Poynton Show and Party in the Park.
- Civic Hall - high occupancy rate providing space for classes and events bringing people into the town in the evenings or at weekends
- 3 distinct shopping areas - Queensway, School Lane and Park Lane
- Dementia friendly town
- Town supported by Poynton Area Community Partnership
- Strong community spirit - Town Council and Poynton Area Community Partnership. Community Support Team (CCST) - very good asset for the community

## Weaknesses

- Lack of repair to public furniture / wider maintenance issues. Including complaints from residents regarding the deteriorating surface of the Shared Space impacting on accessibility, upkeep (for example flower beds on London Road North) and street sweeping. The town needs to look like a place people want to come to
- No real defined central space other than the Civic Hall
- Lack of public transport - only half the town centre is served by a bus route
- No bus link to station, Chester Road feels cut off from town centre
- No clearly defined cycle paths - partially provided in some areas
- Walking and cycling along Chester Road is difficult to navigate
- Lack of a local market - e.g. Makers market

## Opportunities

- Creation of a 'Destination Town'
- Improved branding and marketing of the town, and an enhanced schedule of events
- Better utilisation of CE land outside Civic Hall - could be used for markets/craft fairs (currently attracts anti-social behaviour)
- Attract more independent shops/cafes/restaurants/bars - maintenance of public realm is important to retaining/building on this.
- Poynton Relief road currently under construction which will improve accessibility
- Better connections to Deva Park and Poynton station including improved pedestrian crossings
- Sports and recreation facilities at Poynton Leisure Centre could be linked to wider green space in the town
- The Poynton Round - a green route for pedestrians that loops around the town avoiding vehicular routes
- Raise profile of Middlewood Way as a green link and walking opportunity

## Threats

- Potential changes to parking at Waitrose / Civic Hall - introduction of charges for long stay car park and short stay
- Over-development of the town putting a strain on infrastructure - 3 strategic development sites located in the town, however the infrastructure is not adequate to support these
- Separation of the 3 shopping areas
- Loss of Green Belt due to development
- High proportion of elderly residents (highest percentage of over 80s in Cheshire) - intensifies poor public transport issue and other walkability issues.
- Flooding



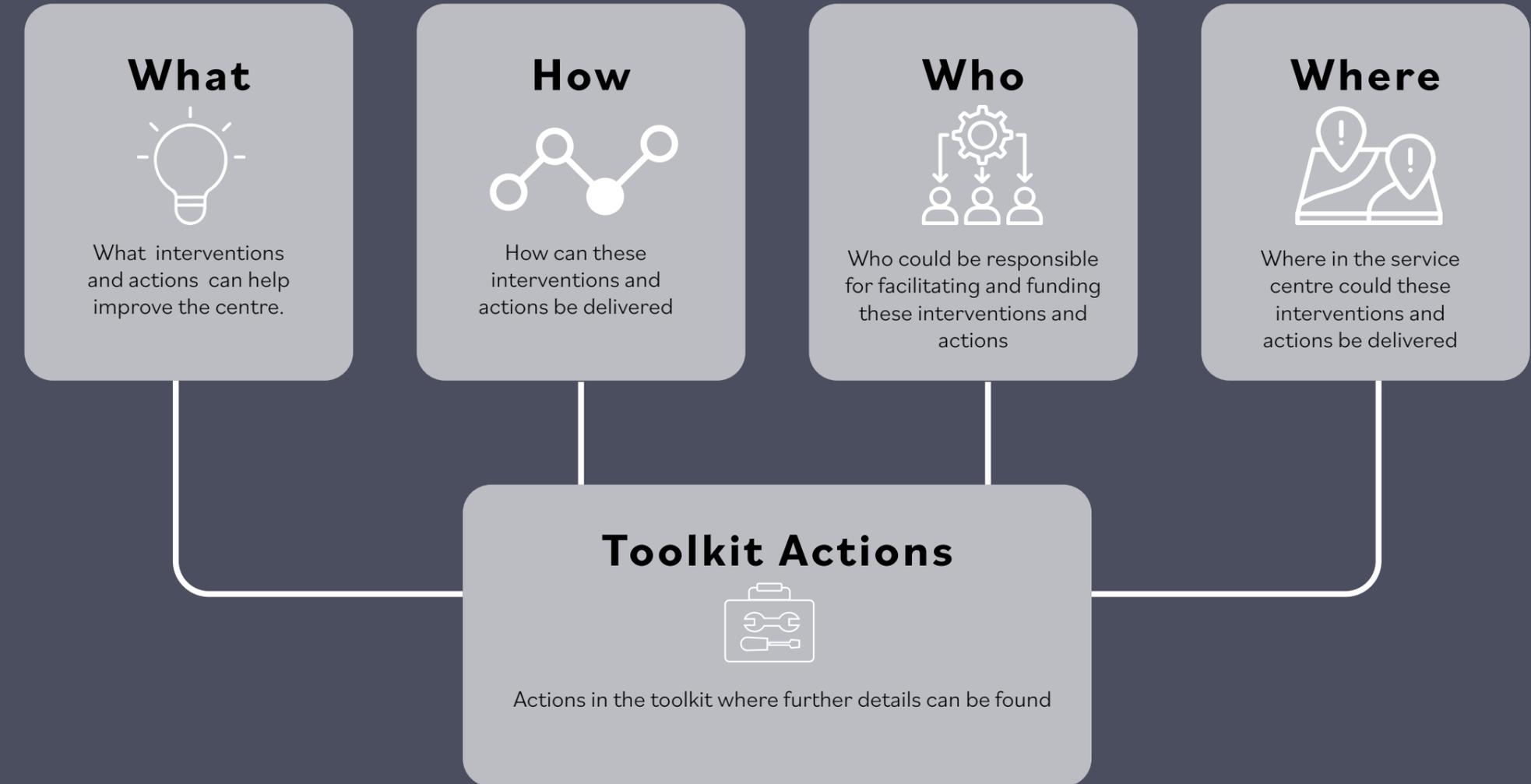
# POYNTON ACTION PLAN

## 9 Priority Areas for Intervention

The Action Plan has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for Poynton responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

For each of the actions further details are provided in terms of what, how, who and where (see Box for further details).

The Action Plan is supported by a Toolkit which provides a wide range of actions across 25 intervention areas (which align with the High Street Task Force recommendations) which can be undertaken by a range of stakeholders.



# Vision and objectives

## Vision Statement

Over the next 15 to 20 years development in Poynton will be of a high quality, sustainable and matched by the provision of infrastructure and services. This development will enable Poynton to retain its character and heritage as ‘a small town with a village feel’, bounded by Green Belt.

Community activities and the current mix of businesses will expand and prosper within attractive surroundings. Poynton will maintain a strong and inclusive sense of community, good access to neighbouring towns and villages and a positive sense of wellbeing making Poynton a healthy, happy and fulfilling place to live.

## Objectives

- **To preserve and enhance its distinctive character and green spaces**
- **To enable and support sustainable development**
- **To improve access by walking, cycling and public transport in order to reduce car use**
- **To support the Town Centre and Business**

## Role of the Centre

Poynton plays a number of important roles:

- A small town with a village feel serving the needs of its local residents
- A commuter town providing access to extensive employment opportunities in Cheshire and Greater Manchester
- A great base from which to access to attractive countryside in Cheshire and the Peak District

The Vitality Plan seeks to support Poynton to fulfil its potential across these important roles.

# Areas for intervention

The following have been identified as areas for intervention, with priorities highlighted with white borders. Potential actions are identified in Section 10:



# Spatial action plan

The Spatial Action Plan illustrates key features of the Centre and identifies where proposed actions could be delivered. It highlights the significant green assets both within and around the Centre as well as its the Centre's range of civic amenities. It also highlights how all the assets are well connected.

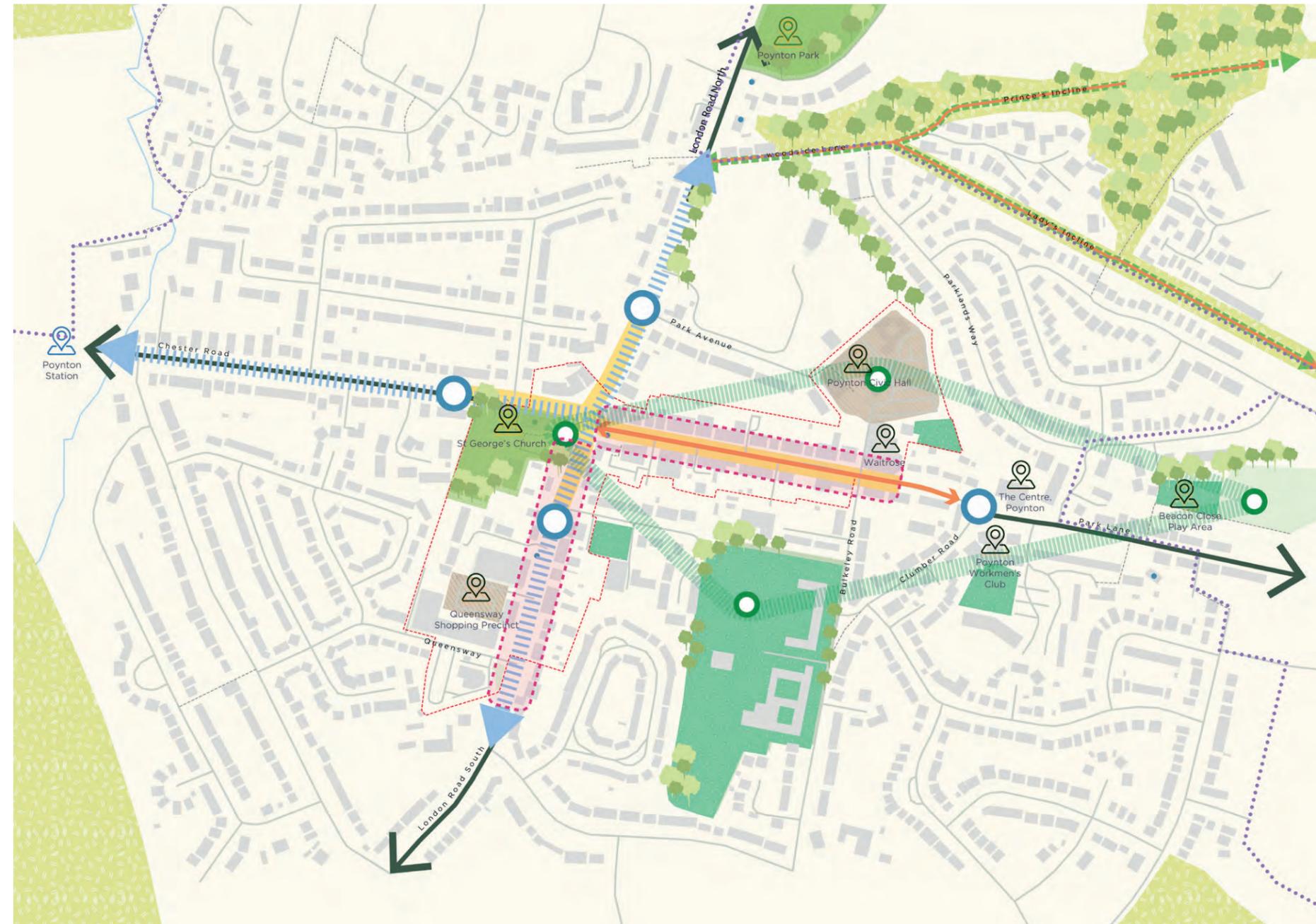
The two priority actions which have emerged from the public consultations are:

## 1. Action 1: Connecting green assets and encouraging walking and cycling

Poynton has a number of good quality green spaces within its immediate centre catchment, such as Poynton Park, Deva Park, and Brecon Park however they are not well accessed by good quality walking and cycling routes. The Action Plan identifies Poynton's opportunity to better promote sustainable movement between these green assets and reconnect them with the centre of Poynton.

## 2. Action 2 Tackling Void Properties

There are a small number of voids in Poynton. Generally, occupancy is good. However, some properties have been empty for a long time despite approaches being made to the property holders by other businesses. The Town Council and Cheshire East Council will engage with landlords to encourage them to identify new occupiers to bring vacant units back into use.



# Movement action plan

Building on the transport schemes suggested in the LTDP, additional town centre transport schemes are suggested as likely to be beneficial in supporting town centre vitality and viability. These additional schemes, which place a strong emphasis on public realm and enhancing the street environment are set out in the table and plan opposite.

The impact of the Poynton Relief Road should be assessed to determine how active travel can be prioritised going forward.

## Town Centre movement schemes suggested in addition to LTDP potential schemes

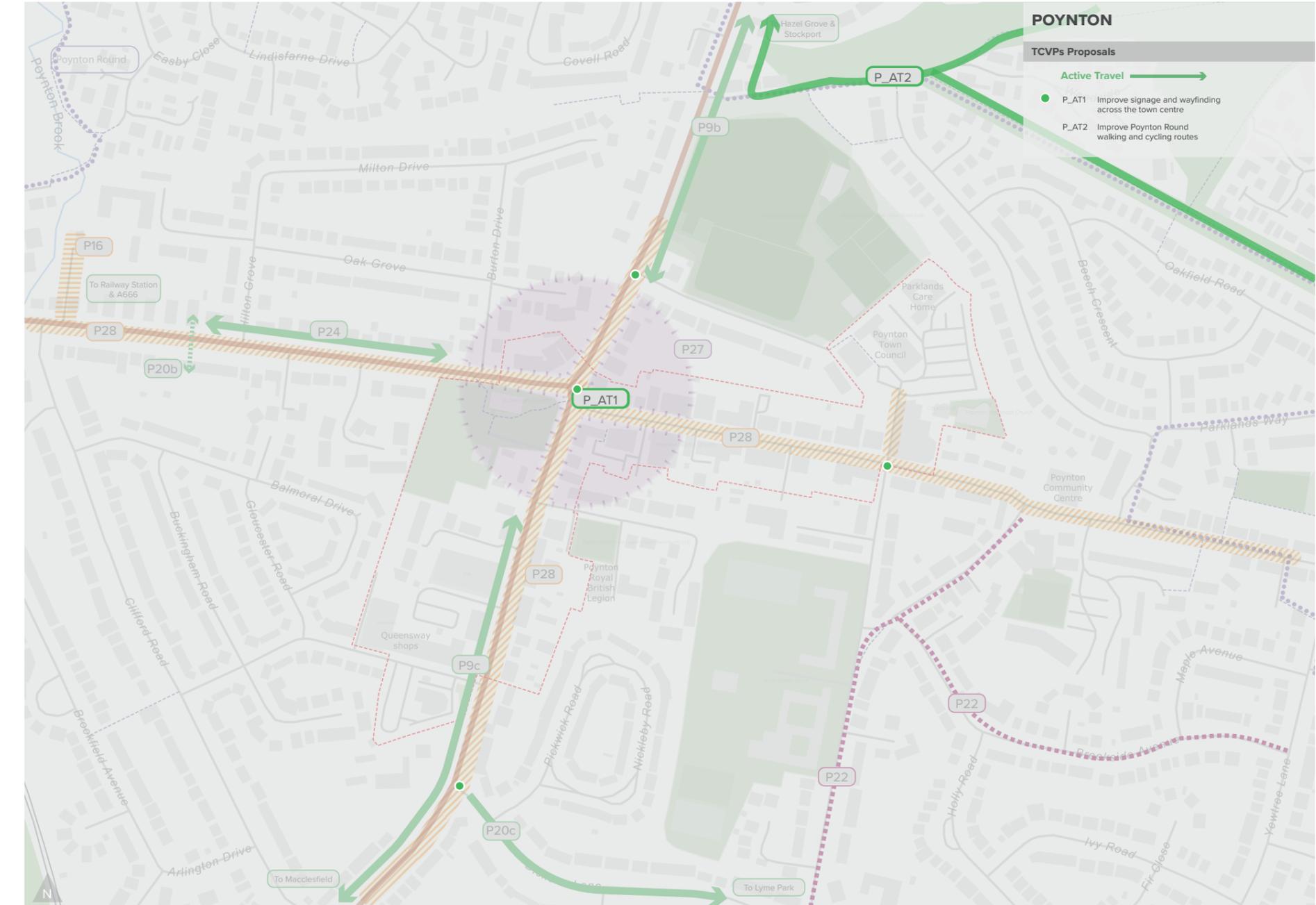
Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	P_AT1	Improve signage and wayfinding across the town centre	Improve signage and wayfinding across town at key gateways and landmarks.	<£100k
	P_AT2	Improve Poynton Round walking and cycling routes	Improve Poynton Round walking and cycling routes to provide connections to leisure facilities and attractions in Middlewood.	£1m-£5m

<sup>1</sup>The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.  
[cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1](https://cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1)



High-quality surfacing on a shared walking and cycling route through park and woodland – Poynton Round could be upgraded in a similar way. – Sirmione, Italy (Photo credit: MottMacdonald)

## Poynton Town Centre Viability Plan Proposals



# 10 Potential Actions



## Action 1: Connecting Green Assets and Encouraging cycling and walking (PRIORITY)

### What

Poynton has a number of good quality green spaces within its immediate centre catchment, such as Poynton Park, Deva Park, and Brecon Park however they are not well accessed by good quality walking and cycling routes. Poynton has an opportunity to better promote sustainable movement between these green assets and reconnect them with the centre of Poynton.

Poynton is in an enviable position with regard to the look, feel and quality of its town centre streets. However, there is more to do beyond the immediate town centre to improve conditions for people on foot and cycle.

On the main roads outside of the town centre core, conditions for people on foot can be challenging, with high vehicle flows, high design speeds, narrow footways, and limited safe crossing points. An example of this is the connection between the town centre and railway station.

Poynton Round is a well-used asset, but could be significantly improved. It has the potential to be an exemplar connection - stitching together residential areas with high-quality green active travel infrastructure.

### How

- Events such as markets, festivals, carnivals and other cultural performances could be held in the various parks. A programme of events would help coordinate events across the spaces
- Enhanced public realm along Chester Road would provide safer cycle and pedestrian routes between the station and the centre
- Establish a wayfinding strategy that better connects the green assets
- Change of materials on routes that allows for accessibility by all
- Explore options for improving links along Chester Road, London Road (North & South), Poynton Pool and Dickens Lane as set out in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP)
- If redevelopment proposals come forward for Poynton Sports Club ensure strong direct walking and cycling links with town centre services such as the Library, explore potential for children's play to serve both new homes and the town centre plus ensure strong walking and cycling links to any re-provided sports facilities

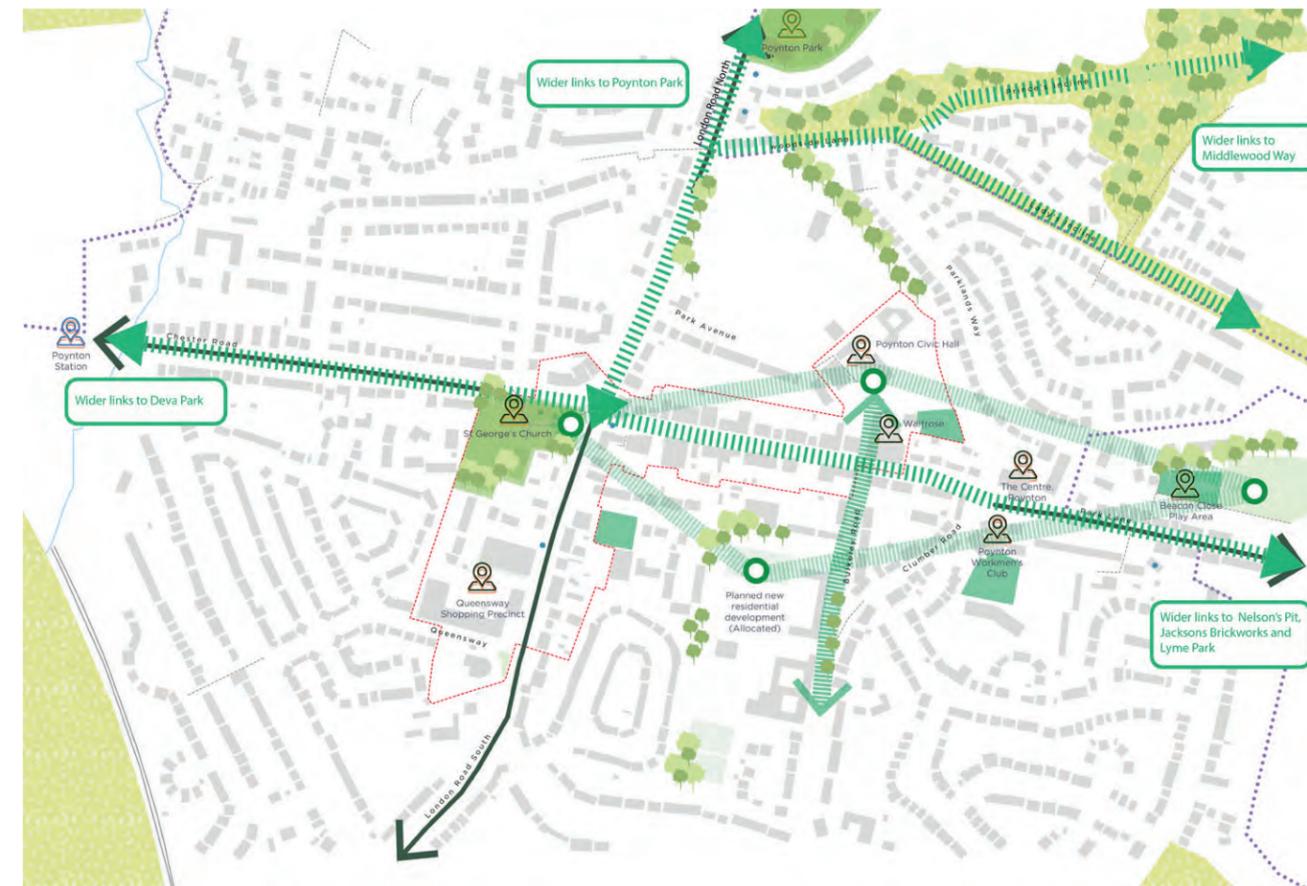
- Develop a detailed strategy for the phased improvement of Poynton Round
- Introduce new pedestrian crossings on Chester Road
- Review of on-street parking on key routes through the town centre to ensure balance of street space for pedestrians
- Improve maintenance of pavements, drains and vegetation to support more walking and cycling
- All future proposals must ensure they are accessible for everyone
- More seating providing resting points and places to dwell

### Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- Community Groups

### Where

- CA523 London Road South and London Road North linking to Poynton Park and Pool
- A555
- Chester Rd
- Dickens Lane
- Poynton Train Station



### Action 1 supports the following objectives:

- To preserve and enhance its distinctive character and green spaces
- To enable and support sustainable development
- To improve access by walking, cycling and public transport in order to reduce car use



### Toolkit Actions

- 1b Use of events to open up and connect
- 1c Enable autumn and winter al fresco
- 1d Use of lighting
- 4e Enhance gateway sites
- 9c Enable a café culture
- 15a Annual/regular events
- 16a Self guided heritage tours
- 17 Markets

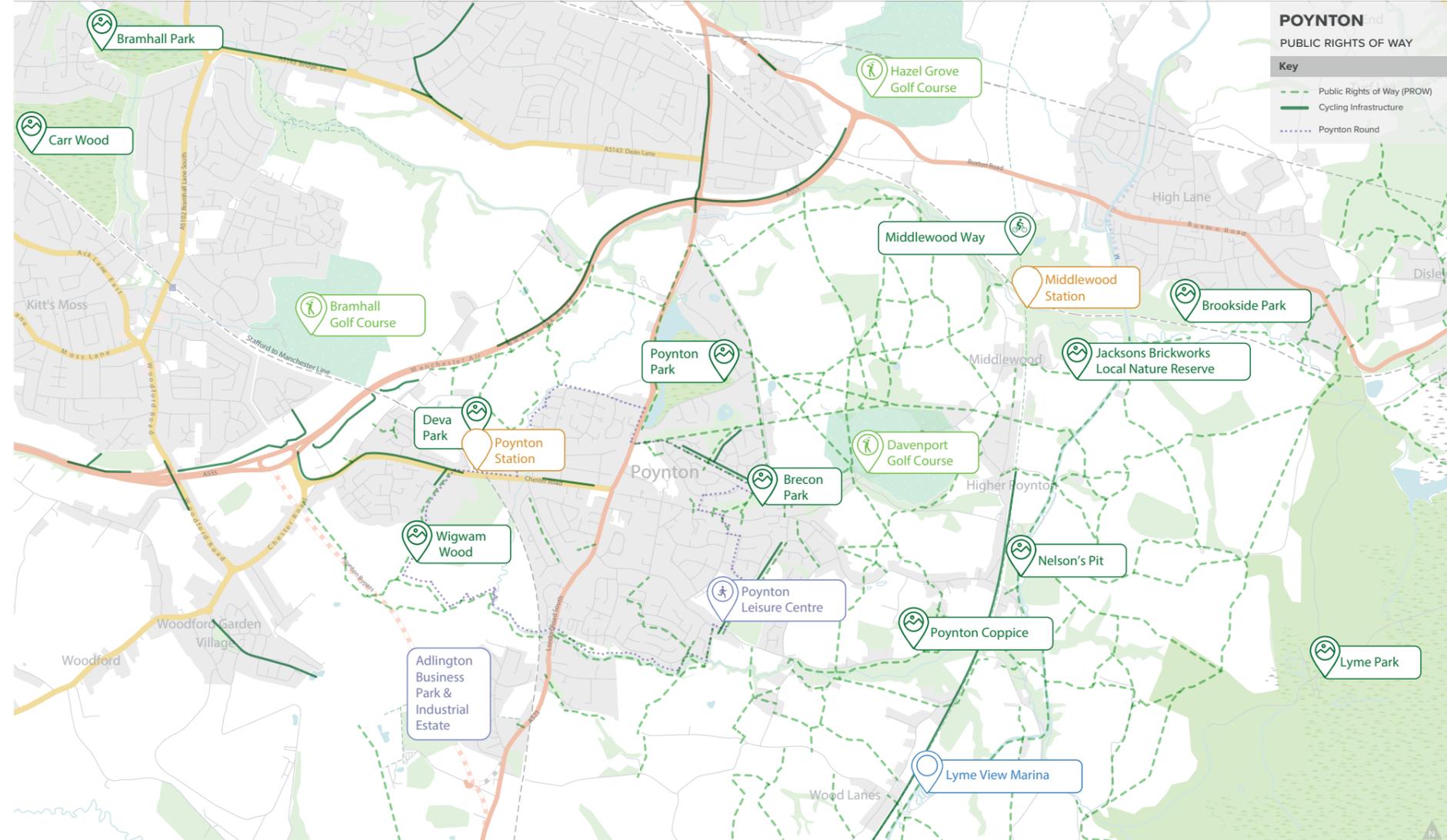


# Action 1: Connecting Green Assets and Encouraging cycling and walking (PRIORITY)

Designing safe and accessible routes is key to enhancing the attractiveness of active travel connections between Poynton and the nearby green spaces and facilities. Active travel infrastructure should generally be separated from traffic if it is to be safe and well used.

Routes should be barrier-free, to allow unrestricted access for all users. In many locations this may mean removing existing barriers that exclude disabled people from using the PROWs.

Good quality surfacing and drainage is particularly important to maintain year-round use and accessibility.



Shared walking & cycling route on the edge of a settlement. Peschiera, Italy (Photo Credit: MottMacdonald)



Well sign posted routes aid wayfinding across the centre. (Photo Credit: Adobe Stock)



Barrier-free access to a Public Right of Way - Liverpool UK. (Photo Credit: MottMacdonald)



## Action 2: Tackling Void Properties (PRIORITY)

### What

There are a small number of voids in Poynton. Generally, occupancy is good. However, some properties have been empty long term despite approaches being made to the property holders by other businesses.

Further approaches should be made where resources allow with the Town Council and CEC collaborating to try and establish the root cause, with consideration being given to all potential options to tackle vacancies.

### How

It is acknowledged that the ability to identify new retail occupiers for the large vacant units is likely to be difficult particularly as a result of Covid which has compounded structural change in the retail sector. Instead of focusing on new retail occupiers it is worth trying to target leisure operators. Flexible workspace is being looked at in some vacant departments stores but usually in those with some character.

Residential is also another option to be considered for smaller units on the edges of the town or above shops. The key is to work with local developers and to complement the wider new homes being developed on the edge of the town.

Meanwhile uses (until development can happen) and pop up stores or activities can support footfall and allow potential occupiers to test the local area.

Other short term solutions which brighter up vacant shopfronts include “wrappers” promoting the town and its businesses or existing shops to showcase their products.

Town Council and Cheshire East Council to engage with landlords to encourage them to consider which of these ideas could work best to support their vacant units to be brought back into use or as a temporary use whilst an occupiers can be identified.

Town Council and Cheshire East Council to work with owners of vacant units to encourage them to use vacant shops/windows to display exhibitions/art work or for use by community groups to engage with community.

### Who

- Town Council and CEC working with landlords and local developers

### Where

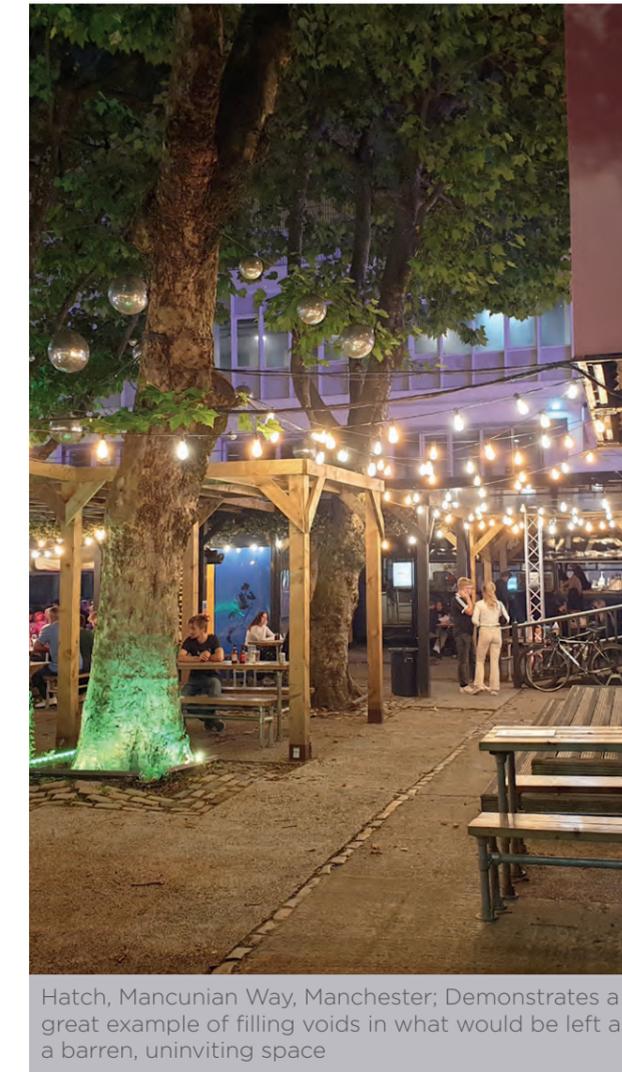
- Vacant units



Living vacant units with colourful, co-ordinated shutter painting as shown in this example.



Make Shift, Pop Brixton, London; Providing a location for local, independent businesses to set up shop, trade and exchange ideas



Hatch, Mancunian Way, Manchester; Demonstrates a great example of filling voids in what would be left as a barren, uninviting space



**Action 2 supports the following objectives:**

- To support the Town Centre and Business



### Toolkit Actions

- 5c – Dressing vacant sites
- 9a – Repurposing of assets
- 15b – Community organised artwork
- 19a – Affordable start-up space to help new businesses establish themselves
- 21a – Managed activation of underutilised space
- 25a – Meanwhile uses



## Action 3: Mobilising Poynton's Community

### What

Poynton already has an impressive network of local community groups who support the town and its amenities. The Town Council is also supporting businesses to network through the establishment of the Poynton for Business website which has a directory of over 320 businesses. Having created a platform to engage with local businesses the key now is to harness this into encouraging them to collaborate to generate new revenue opportunities and to determine how businesses could give back more to the Centre and its community

### How

Groundwork have recently been appointed by the Wilmslow Town Council to support local business engagement and to test the appetite to establish a Business Improvement District (BID). However a lighter approach could be pursued in Poynton using the new platform to identify potential actions which different sectors could support the Council with. As part of their commitment to supporting their local communities businesses may be willing to offer

- Sponsorship
- Materials
- Technical support
- Volunteers

Businesses networking could also identify “themes” where businesses can drive opportunities forward for example retailers and F&B hosting a fashion show or beauty events.

Consider creating a single platform for all networks/ local charity groups/activities/council information etc and offer support and advice for volunteers looking to set up events/ workshops/ classes

Businesses could also come together to established loyalty schemes to support shoppers to stay local. This has worked well in Belper <https://lovebelper.co.uk/>

Poynton also has active community groups and these important resources should be utilised to support the delivery of the Action Plan

### Who

- Town Council
- Local businesses especially larger and dynamic/ innovative/creative businesses. It is recognised that some retailers may be struggling but other local businesses may be keen to get involved and support their community
- Community Groups

### Where

- Across Poynton



### Action 3 supports the following objectives:

- To support the Town Centre and Business



### Toolkit Actions

- 3b Appointment of town centre champions
- 10a Independent shop guides
- 13a Business profiles
- 13b Community wealth building
- 25f Tap into local talent



## Action 4: Raising Poynton's Profile

### What

Poynton has a number of websites – Town Council, Business and Community - showcasing the town and whilst this is a great start there are lots of ways in which the town's offer could be better promoted to attract more local residents, workers, visitors and tourists.

### How

Consideration should be given as to whether these existing websites could be combined into a single platform providing information for local residential, businesses and visitors. The website could also be linked to other partner websites including CEC and Visit Chester and Marketing Cheshire. Content could be added to really showcase the town including profiles of local businesses (including individuals to make it more personal), local walks, cycle routes etc

To support increased footfall on the website it would be worth considering which other websites it could be linked up with. Such as other centres in the area or with centres that are linked by cycling or walking and local visitor attractions. Reviewing the newly revamped website for Wilmslow ([www.wilmslowswaybetter.co.uk](http://www.wilmslowswaybetter.co.uk)) may provide inspiration for energising Poynton's website. showcases many exciting aspects of the town its wellbeing, F&B, cinema, businesses, shopping and how to explore the wider area. The website was created by local businesses who wanted to support Wilmslow. Town Council is preparing a Welcome to Poynton leaflet with information for new residents and has set up a Business Directory and is currently looking at how to work with businesses in the Town.

Consideration should also be given to how to make more of social media. For example tapping into cycling and walking groups discussions to encourage them to visit Poynton as part of their journeys. Encouraging local groups to actively promote what's on in Poynton.

Other mechanisms to raise the profile of the centre could include:

- Improved signage (physical and virtual via app/ QR code) to stop people just passing through
- Establish Town Ambassadors
- Expand the already impressive programme of events to attract as wide an audience as possible and use this to raise awareness of businesses. Hitchin held special events to showcase individual streets to encourage people to explore other parts of the town not just where they usually visit
- Turn the heritage leaflet into an interactive trail around the town showcasing buildings of historic value or interesting people or historic events. This can be real or virtual embracing technology (Apps or QR codes)
- Ensure that key messages from the Vitality Plan is fed into the Visitor Economy Strategy that is being prepared for Cheshire East

### Who

- Town Council
- Marketing Cheshire
- Local Businesses

### Where

- N/A



### Action 4 supports the following objectives:

- To preserve and enhance its distinctive character and green spaces
- To enable and support sustainable development
- To improve access by walking, cycling and public transport in order to reduce car use
- To support the Town Centre and Business



### Toolkit Actions

- 1b Use events to open up new areas
- 2a Create a smarter High street
- 3b Appointment of town centre champions
- 3c Destination management plans
- 4b Better signage
- 10a Independent shop guides
- 12a Create an App
- 12b Creation of Local Brand
- 12c Set-up an online platform
- 12d Introduce WIFI/ digital high street/ town centre app
- 15a Annual/ regular events



# Action 5: Expanding the Events Programme

## What

Pre COVID-19 there was a good number of events taking place in Poynton - Christmas Fest, Civic Bonfire, Summer Fest, folk nights, food and drinks events, the Poynton Show and Party in the Park. In addition the Civic Hall a range of classes and events bringing people into the town in the evenings or at weekends. Following the ending of COVID restrictions there is considerable scope to reinvigorate the events programme.

## How

- The majority of pre Covid events have been re-established in 2022 of there are plans to bring them back in 2023. All events as promoted on the Town Council website. Preparation is underway for the Poynton Arts Festival which will take place in summer 2023
- Scope exists to work with other centres to develop an integrated programme of themed events which could target audiences that are currently not coming to Poynton
- Participation of walking and cycling has been strong during COVID and the extensive networks that are close to the Centre should be targeted to encourage more visitors to use the Centre’s amenities as part of their cycles or walks
- The Centre enjoys an impressive range of spaces within its heart which could be used more often to accommodate a wider range of events
- Try to encourage a regular makers market to visit the Centre
- More day time events for the elderly and less mobile residents as well as events for young people
- Conduct a drive for volunteers for events
- The Civic Hall is already a vibrant centre offering a wider range of activities but consideration should be given as to how this and other public buildings and land in the area could be used to host an enhanced programme of events including larger events utilising the car parking (temporarily) and open space in the area
- Enhancing the public realm around the Library with consistent paving, seating, and planting which would allow for small scale event space.

## Who

- Town Council
- Local Businesses
- CEC
- Community Groups

## Where

- Across the town, including Poynton Park



Tarascon, France. Open public space: example of how decluttering the street environment and integrating green features can upgrade the look and feel of the space. (Photo Credit: MottMacdonald)



Jerdan Place, Fulham. Small public space with active frontages, trees and seating (Photo Credit: MottMacdonald)



Use of public realm to host markets and local events. (Photo Credit: Getty)



## Action 5 supports the following objectives:

- To preserve and enhance its distinctive character and green spaces
- To support the Town Centre and Business



## Toolkit Actions

- 1b Introduce a programme of events which open-up and connect different parts of the centre for a limited time
- 1c Enable autumn and winter al-fresco dining
- 1d Use Lighting
- 4a Provide pop-up seating
- 9b Curated events
- 9c Enable a café culture
- 15a Annual/regular events
- 17 Markets
- 20b Use space and activities to attract people
- 21a Managed activation of underutilised space

# Centre Wide Actions

In addition to the specific actions identified for Poynton, a number of actions have been identified that are relevant to all of the nine centres. These are:

## 1. **Appointment of CEC Centre Champion**

The identification of a nominated officer (go to person/champion) within CEC management team for each of the Centres who would understand local priorities for the Centre and would support them to access appropriate officers within key departments and also would seek to unblock issues. It is understood that this is something CEC is currently considering. This would be supported by providing each of the centres with a clear organogram of who within CEC is responsible for what to make engagement easier.

## 2. **Creation of a Centres Forum**

Establishment of forum where key representatives from each of the centres could come together on a regular basis to receive updates from CEC about common issues/opportunities would be beneficial. It is also recognised that during the preparation of the Vitality Plans that a number of the centres are making a great progress overcoming specific issues. By coming together and sharing progress and discussing issues it is considered that the centres would be better able to share best practice and to identify actions where they could collaborate with

other centres to drive economies of scale/value for money. Some meetings may just be held between the centres (within out representation from CEC officers) whilst others could include CEC and/or other partners such as C&W LEP, Groundwork etc.

## 3. **Centre Focused Meetings in CEC**

The process of preparing the Vitality Plans has involved internal workshops with relevant department leads within CEC to ensure that all departments are considering challenges and opportunities in the round rather than just in terms of their individual responsibility. It would be beneficial to continue to hold more regular Centre focused workshops. The best decisions for the centres will be taken when the implications of proposals are considered in the round taking into account both potential investment and long term maintenance.

## 4. **Streamlining maintenance of public realm and greenspace**

In light of the local desire for improved maintenance combined with recognition that CEC budgets are under severe pressure, it is recommended to ensure maintenance of public realm can be optimised that further engagement would be beneficial to agree how the resources of CEC, the Town Council and wider stakeholders could

be targeted to support maintenance. Work to establish a more comprehensive schedule of local assets in each centre and who is responsible for their maintenance should be the starting point of drive for improved maintenance. Going forward any future capital investment must be supported by appropriate consideration as to how assets will be maintained over their lifetime. It is also important to recognise that better maintenance does not necessarily just relate to grass being cut regularly. In recognition of the importance of biodiversity, going forward it is anticipated that consideration will be given to allocating parcels of land to the “wild” to support biodiversity.

## 5. **Increasing importance of sustainability**

sustainability is now a critical issue for many organisations and important for local residents both in terms of operational implications (for example energy costs) but also in terms of local impact on the local community and the planet. As such sustainability can no longer be positioned as another priority action but rather must be a concept that is considered in every aspect of proposed actions to minimise their carbon footprint and maximise their positive benefits for the local area and its community.

## 6. **Improved platform for communicating activities**

the preparation of the Vitality Plans has demonstrated that all of the centres are proactively trying to improve their centres. However it is recognised that many stakeholders will not be aware of all these efforts. Consideration therefore needs to be given as to how to amplify to more local residents, shoppers, visitors and businesses what is going on. Consideration should be given as to how to enhance the current websites for example adding more content and sharing this through a variety of channels and to ensure that these are also linked to other key partners for example CEC and the other centres (so collectively they reinforcing each other’s profiles)

## 7. **Enhanced engagement with local businesses**

many of the centres benefit from having a range of national, and in some cases international businesses, many of which are innovating in their specialist areas. There is a significant benefit to the centres and their businesses to collaborating. Whilst restrictions on public sector revenue budgets is putting pressure on what CEC can support there is an increasing recognition by businesses, especially corporates, for the need to support their local communities (Corporate Social Responsibility). This can

be in the form of grants, offering expertise or encouraging their employees to volunteer. Even smaller businesses often want to give back to the communities in which they operate. This can be in the form of materials and/or specialist expertise (e.g. marketing which has been harnesses by Wilmslow in setting up the Wilmslow’s Way Better brand and website). All centres should seek to better engage with their local businesses to determine how they can collaborate to support each other’s objectives. This type of collaboration can give centres a significant boost particularly when it happens around public realm (investment and maintenance), marketing and branding.

## 8. **Greater ownership of community assets**

a couple of Town Councils have taken responsibility for their community assets (both in terms of ownership and/or management). CEC is willing to engage with each of the Town and Parish Councils to discuss whether there could be benefits from greater local ownership of local assets. A process is in place to support this to happen. There is also scope for centres who are already doing this to share pro and cons with other centres (via the proposed Centres Forum).

# 11 Delivery

## Governance and Delivery

Poynton Town Council is responsible for supporting Poynton to fulfil its potential working closely with local community groups. Going forward the Town Council will continue to be a major driver in the delivery of the agreed actions emerging from the Vitality Plan.

Having established a range of potential projects that will support Poynton to thrive, further work is now required to determine a detailed action plan setting out who will do what and by when.

It is recommended that dedicated working groups are set up to drive specific short term priority actions forward. The action focused working groups will be responsible for:

- Defining the details of the proposed action
- Considering how it could be funded
- Determining who needs to be involved in supporting its delivering and what their role will be
- Seeking funding - this might require support from other partners
- Determining the timetable for intervention

- Monitoring and evaluating progress against key performance indicators and refining actions if agreed outcomes are not being met
- Reporting progress to relevant partners including the WIP and CEC
- Recommending that CEC, Town Council and any other key local stakeholder groups be invited to adopt the TCVP as a shared common plan. This would allow easy demonstration to potential funders that there is a consensus of approach and buy in from the local community

The makeup of the working groups will vary depending on the specific actions they are focused on. It is important to ensure that the same people are not tasked with getting involved in all the working groups as this will impact on progress. As such the number of working groups and pace of delivery will depend on the number of stakeholder partners that can be engaged with and encouraged to get involved.

Consideration should be given as to whether specific stakeholders need to be invited to be involved to provide technical support. For example CEC, national organisations like the Canal and River Trust or local businesses with specific expertise around specific actions already. CEC Connected Community officers may be able to provide development support.

Progress will be reported into the Town Councils who will in turn also report regularly to CEC. Where issues regarding progress/delivery are identified discussions will need to be taken to determine the required refinements to get progress back on track.

It is acknowledged that partners will need to determine their appetite and ability to deliver the proposed actions. Depending on resources it may be determined that additional staff may need to be recruited to support the pace of delivery of the Vitality Plan and supporting Action Plans.

## Communication and Engagement

There is scope to expand on the current websites and to use them to engage more effectively with a wider range of residents, visitors, workers and businesses. There is a need to begin to share important messages with key stakeholders including:

- Recent and proposed investment in the centre
- Projects that are being worked up
- Funding that is being sought and accessed

How to get involved

- The key partners to be engaged with on a regular basis include:
  - Local businesses
  - Residents
  - Local community and interest groups

- Other towns centres generally and specifically those who are focusing on common actions for example centres looking to make more of wider cycling and walking opportunities.

Quality engagement should generate potential volunteers to get involved in the delivery of specific actions and potentially resources to support their delivery.

The following mechanisms should be used to engage with key partners:

- Further enhancement of the website and strengthen profile on social media
- Public engagement consultations – the draft Vitality Plan will be consulted upon and this be used to continue the dialogue with local residents
- Piggybacking Events – for example a stall at markets showcasing what’s on in Poynton and how to get involved
- Existing and enhanced business networking events – to share emerging ideas, test support and encourage ideas to refine and support their delivery
- Identification of a team of local ambassadors – ambassadors could be trained and then

kept up to date about what it going on in the Centre and then they can showcase positive messages to their contacts. Ambassadors can be proactive local independent businesses leaders and other individuals who come into contact with lots of local people e.g. taxi drivers.

Consideration could be given to the appointment of a part time marketing officer for the centre as Wilmslow has just done.

In addition, as set out in Section 10, it is important for enhanced communication and engagement between CEC and Poynton Town Council.

## Funding

There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support discussions with potential funders. As such it provides a useful tool with which can be used to:

- Articulate priorities for Poynton to CEC - the Vitality Plan will be used to articulate local priorities to CEC to guide them in their negotiations with developers in respect of contributions linked to planning applications (especially to support improvements in cycling, public transport and public realm) and also in determining their own capital budgets. Formal adoption of the TCVP by key stakeholder organisations can help demonstrate common objectives and priorities for any party submitting funding bids.
- Support external funding bids - having a clear action plan which provides an evidence base and priorities that have been consulted upon is now essential for most funding bids. It is important to recognise that often funding bids have specific funding leads. In some cases this may be CEC or Cheshire & Warrington LEP in others it might need to be a community

group. Whoever may be responsible for leading and submitting a specific funding application, demonstration of collaboration between stakeholders and community support is essential

- Engage with local businesses - to determine whether there are actions that they can get involved in which align with their priorities for supporting their local communities

Another approach to generating more revenue to spend locally is for the Town Council to take responsibility for owning or managing assets with any surpluses being generated being invested back into the local centre.

It is important to note that when determining potential interventions consideration must be given to both initial capital investment and longer term revenue implications such as maintenance.

## Phasing

The actions identified in Section 10 range from projects which are already being progressed to long term aspirations which will require feasibility and funding before they can be delivered. The Vitality Plan identifies 5 actions which support the established vision and objectives for the Centre. The Town Council is proactive and a number of the identified actions are already being pursued.

The public consultation identified the following as priority interventions:

- Connecting green assets and encouraging cycling and walking
- Tackling void properties

Partners now need to determine a detailed action plan related to funding that they are able to access and the resources that they have available or can access to support delivery.

It is important to acknowledge that this indicative programme is not fixed and if specific sources of funding are identified the programme should be adapted to respond to the opportunity.

Covid has taught us important lessons about testing new approaches. For example temporary road closures to gauge whether reducing car access to encourage cycling or to provide outside dining space would benefit local centres.

This approach should be continued so that rather than a public realm project having to be worked up in huge detail and then significant resources found to deliver it more temporary solutions can be tested in terms of their impact and determine whether a more permanent solution is required or desirable. Changes are much more likely to be embraced by businesses and supported by local residents if they know that ideas are being tested and monitored and if they do not work can be reverted back to how they were.

A broad phasing plan for the identified actions is identified below where short term relates to 1-2 years, medium 3-5 and long 5+ years.

- A number of interventions will require further feasibility and this can be ongoing but intervention on the ground is likely to be a few years off whilst planning permission and funding is sought
- A number of interventions are interrelated in particular strengthening green links and expanding the events programme



# Delivery continued

## Monitoring and Evaluation

As noted above the programme and the action plan will not be set in stone but must be capable of responding to new opportunities or challenges. As such it will be important to monitor impact to determine whether the established vision and objectives are being met. Suggested key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they could be measured and how often are identified opposite.

KPI	How measured	Frequency
Footfall	External provider	Monthly
Number of vacancies	Town Clerk	Quarterly
New units opening	Town Clerk	Quarterly
Businesses engaged	Town Clerk to keep a list	Ongoing
Area of greenspace/open space/cycleways and footpaths improved	CEC	Annually
Hits on website	Traffic on social media	Quarterly
Increase air quality	CEC	Quarterly

Note: CEC has recently commissioned monthly footfall data to end Sep 2026. Recommend all those involved regularly share useful monitoring data with other parties so that all can be aware of progress.

## Glossary

Term	Explanation
Comparison Goods Sector	Retail that stocks higher value goods that are purchased infrequently
Convenience Sector	Retail that stocks everyday items such as groceries, newspapers, toiletries, confectionery
F&B	Food and Beverage
Green Belt	A designated area of countryside, protected from most forms of development to help stop urban sprawl but can be used for agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure
Greenspace	Parks, public gardens etc
HS2 route	The UKs new high speed rail network
KSC	Key Service Centres
Linkages	The connections between two or more places/ sites within the town centres
Public Realm	Space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible for everyone
S106 monies	Money that developers can use towards the development of community and social infrastructure
TCVP	Town Centre Vitality Plans
Wayfinding	The ways in which people orient themselves in a physical space and navigate from place to place
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Dwell time spend	The time a person may spend in a particle place or area. For example, the length of time spent sat on a public bench.



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# Sandbach



## Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plans

December 2022



Prepared by Cushman and Wakefield,  
Optimised Environments and Mott  
Macdonald for Cheshire East Council

December 2022

# Contents

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01 Introduction	4
<i>Baseline</i>	
02 Introduction to Sandbach	10
03 Policy Context	16
04 Our People	20
05 Our Place	26
06 Connectivity and Accessibility	46
07 Our Offer	54
08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats	62
<i>Action Plan</i>	
09 Priority Areas for Intervention	66
10 Potential actions	74
11 Delivery	90

## Context of the Study

**Town centres across the UK are facing unprecedented challenges. Changes in how we shop, in particular the growth in internet shopping, has significantly decreased footfall in town centres resulting in numerous store closures, leaving many centres struggling. Trends that have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Government has stated its commitment to helping high streets and town centres evolve and adapt to both the structural changes that are occurring in the retail market as well as to COVID-19. It has identified a number of measures to support town centres at this challenging time including the Future High Streets Fund, a High Streets Task Force, changes to the planning system and direct support to local authorities and local businesses. Alongside these national measures the government has stressed the need for strong local leadership in supporting town centres.

## Town Centre Vitality Plans

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is committed to supporting the vitality and viability of all town centres within the borough. Whilst acknowledging that in areas of low deprivation, there may be limited opportunity to bid for centralised funding. When funding opportunities do become available, there is generally a need to have clear proposals already agreed before bids can be submitted.

It is also recognised that there are often initiatives which can be taken to support the vitality and viability of local centres which do not require significant capital funding, but rather require the support of local volunteers and/or businesses.

In addition, the reports could be used to support discussions regarding the allocation of S106 monies resulting from development within and in the vicinity of the local centres.

**With an almost overwhelming array of options and opinions on what is the best way to support town centre vitality and viability, CEC has commissioned Cushman & Wakefield (regeneration and property advisors), supported by Optimised Environments (urban designers) and Mott Macdonald (transport planners), to work with the Town Council's and their stakeholders to produce bespoke Town Centre Vitality Plans (TCVP) for the nine Key Service Centres (KSC):**



*The 9 Key Service Centres which form part of this study*

## Aims and Objectives

The TCVP provides a sense of direction and identify initiatives to support the nine key service centres to better fulfil their potential recognising that each centre is distinct, with its own unique opportunities and specific challenges and local groups/stakeholders. The unique characteristics of each centre is identified along with tailored solutions for each.

### The TCVPs:

- **Are bespoke in nature, based on a thorough analysis of individual circumstances affecting the health of each town centre, local stakeholder views and any local specific policy considerations.**
- **Are cross functional and holistic, and recommend a practical, realistic set of priority actions for supporting the vitality and viability of each town centre.**
- **Are informed and tested by existing relevant national and local public policy and strategies, local stakeholder views, relevant research and a thorough understanding of commercial markets and spatial considerations.**
- **Identify a set of recommended clear priority physical and other (e.g. marketing) interventions/actions to support the vitality and viability of each town centre both in recovery from COVID-19 impacts and beyond to enhancement.**
- **Recommend deliverable actions including who should be involved in delivering of each action identified, to enable Town Councils, community groups, occupiers, property owners etc., to all work towards a common vision.**
- **Take account of proposals developed/being developed by Town Councils and develop such plans further.**

## Responding to the Impacts of COVID

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, high streets and town centres were having to respond to changing consumer demands driven in part by technological changes. Many recognised the increasing importance of the consumer experience - an attractive place to dwell, shop, see friends, to eat out and be entertained. COVID-19 has led to an acceleration of changes to the reasons people visit and use local centres.

COVID-19 has not and will not be universally negative for all local centres. The requirement to stay local has supported residents to use their local facilities and where the local offer aligns with the demands of residents, local businesses have benefited. The need to work from home has also resulted in an re-evaluation of where we work going forward and it is anticipated that there has been a fundamental shift, for some, in the balance between the amount of time we spend in an office and the amount of time we work from home.

It will be some time before a clear picture emerges of the impact of new forms of working (a hybrid between office and home) have on our high streets in the longer-term. The impact will be felt differently from place to place depending on the

local economy's dependency on particular sectors. It is likely that those centres that perform best going forward will be those able to reconnect with their communities and use them to meet local needs including access to housing, culture, leisure, health etc.

The Town Centre Vitality Plans have been prepared post the outbreak of COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 on each of the centres has been different. The bespoke Vitality Plans provide an action plan to support recovery and future success.

### Vitality Plan and Toolkit

This report builds upon the Draft Baseline Report (which was a summary of the key stages undertaken in 2020 - see below) and incorporates potential actions which have been identified in consultation with local stakeholders during 2021 to form a bespoke Vitality Plan for Sanbach.

The Vitality Report comprises of two sections:

- Baseline - which was undertaken in 2020 and describes the Centre in terms of its offer and key characteristics. It brings together

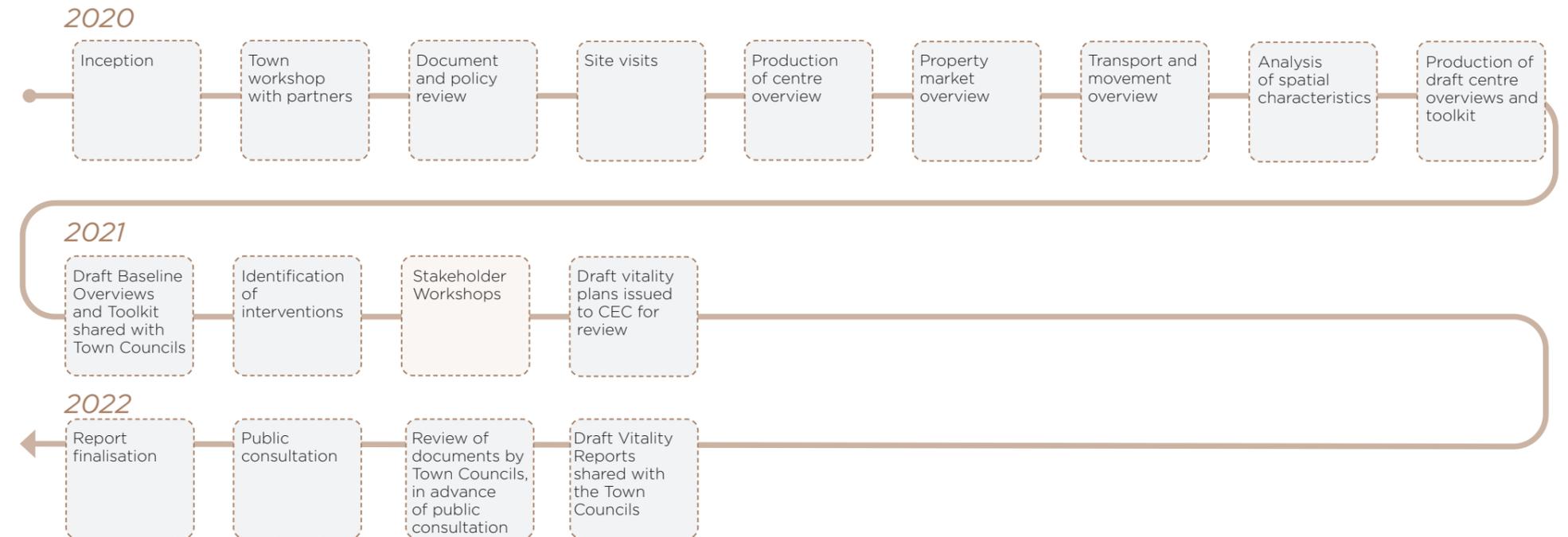
evidence and opinion in respect of the buildings, green and open spaces, access and its residents and businesses.

- Action Plan - has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for the Centre responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

The draft TCVPs went to public consultation for six weeks from September 2022. Feedback was reviewed and where appropriate amendments have been made to the final report. A summary of other key messages have been shared with key stakeholders.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Toolkit. The Toolkit presents exemplar projects from other centres (including from within Cheshire East) nationally and internationally to assist key stakeholders to determine a set of actions to support their centres to thrive. There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support accessing funding.

The preparation of the Vitality Plans has involved the following stages:



# Baseline

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Note:

The Baseline analysis was undertaken in 2020. The information in the Baseline was correct and the sources were the most up to date information available whilst it is not possible to keep updating all the evidence where a significant change has happened. It should also be noted that Census 2011 data is provided for some indicators. Whilst the 2021 Census has just been completed, a release of this data will not be made available until March 2023 therefore making the 2011 Census the most recent consistent data source across the 9 centres for some key indicators.

# 02 Introduction to Sandbach

## Sandbach's Location within Cheshire East

Sandbach is centrally located within the Cheshire East borough, 7 miles north of Crewe and 15 miles south of Macclesfield. The town's proximity to the M6 provides excellent strategic road connectivity to Manchester, Manchester Airport, Birmingham and beyond. Sandbach Train Station is situated a mile from the town centre in Elworth village and has a regular daily service between Crewe and Manchester, via Manchester Airport allowing connections to London via the West Coast Main Line at Crewe. As such, the town enjoys good local, regional and national connectivity.

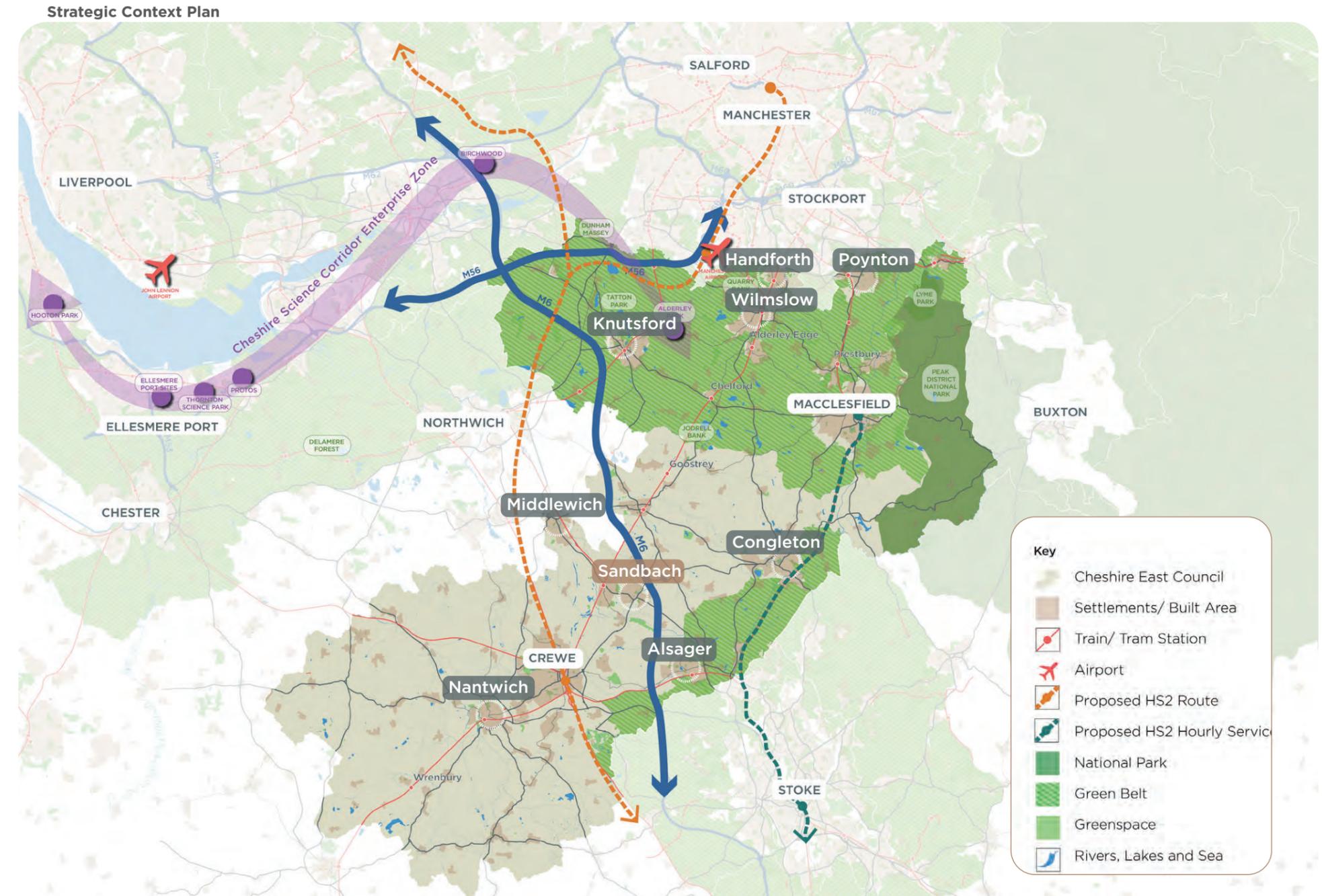
Sandbach is a small historical rural market town in an open countryside setting with a traditional ambiance and numerous historical buildings set within an attractive Conservation Area. The town is identified as a key service centre with the surrounding villages of Elworth and Wheelock forming part of the parish settlement. There is a strong aspiration to preserve the rural setting of Sandbach and the areas of separation and distinctiveness between its village settlements.

The town provides an attractive residential location offering easy commuting to employment destinations, set within open countryside surroundings and providing a vibrant historic town centre. As a result, Sandbach has witnessed significant housing growth much of which has been outside of the settlement boundary and/or on greenfield sites. Further housing development is proposed and there is concern over the ability for the town's infrastructure including health, schools and highways to accommodate the increased demand from new housing. However, housing growth also presents an opportunity to support and expand town centre services and businesses.

Many of the homes in Sandbach are detached or semi-detached and there is a need to rebalance the housing offer away from additional family housing to provide more starter homes, affordable housing and homes for older people in order to meet local needs and changing demographics.

The main employment function is currently found on the western edge of the town at Springvale Industrial Estate in Ettiley village, with smaller employment areas in Wheelock village and business units in Elworth. Significant mixed use development is also underway at Capricorn Business Park adjacent to J17 of the M6 motorway which will provide 29 hectares of employment uses including a new business park, industrial, storage and distribution, supporting food, beverage and hospitality amenities, a sports facility and a local centre. The scheme is anticipated to enhance the town's employment role, boost economic growth and reduce the strong prevalence of out-commuting.

Sandbach Town Centre is focused around High Street, Hightown, Congleton Road, Bold Street, Middlewich Road and The Cobbles. The town is characterised by attractive black-and-white and thatched buildings, and historical monuments, reflective of its heritage as a lively market town.

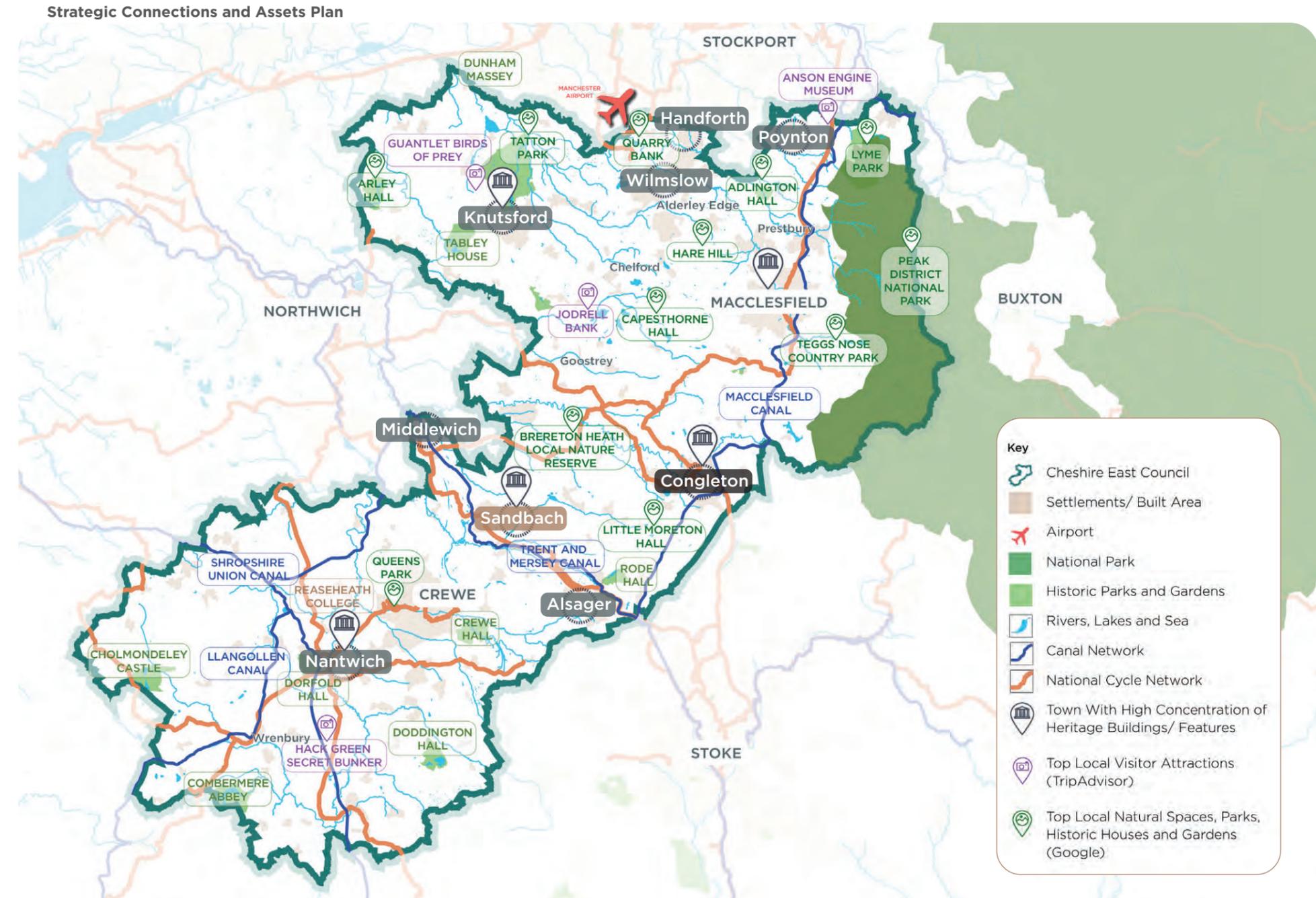


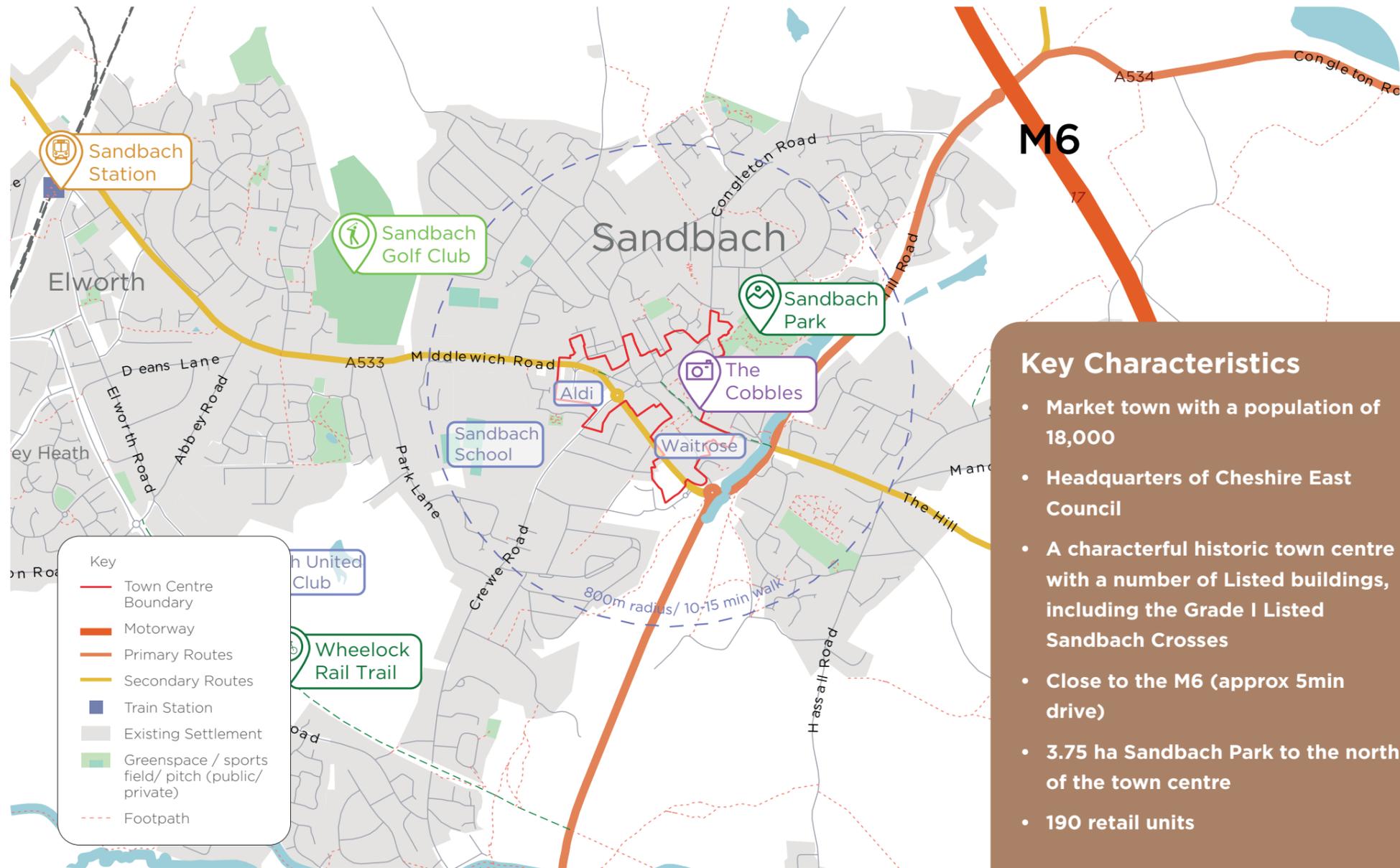
## 02 Introduction to Sandbach

It benefits from a well-represented convenience retail offer including a Waitrose and Aldi supermarket and weekly Thursday Market on Scotch Common; together with a strong representation of independent retailers, food and beverage operators; and a low vacancy rate. The town also plays host to a range of regular events such as markets, farmers markets, festivals, open-air concerts and fairs. Sandbach has an important civic role with Cheshire East Council offices, a historic Town Hall which incorporates a community cinema and Sandbach Library.

Sandbach has a range of leisure, sports and social facilities and clubs. Sandbach Leisure Centre hosts an indoor sports hall, gym and swimming pool. Ettiley Heath has football pitches and an Academy. Sandbach also has a Golf Club, Rugby Club and a couple of Cricket Clubs.

The 9 acre Sandbach Park immediately adjacent to the town centre provides an attractive and accessible open space with bowling greens, play areas, tennis courts and play areas. Slightly further afield, Wheelock Rail Trail and the Trent and Mersey Canal brings some visitors to the outskirts of the town. Beyond the villages that make up Sandbach is open countryside and much used public rights of way.





## Key Characteristics

- **Market town with a population of 18,000**
- **Headquarters of Cheshire East Council**
- **A characterful historic town centre with a number of Listed buildings, including the Grade I Listed Sandbach Crosses**
- **Close to the M6 (approx 5min drive)**
- **3.75 ha Sandbach Park to the north of the town centre**
- **190 retail units**

## Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

The Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan was proactively prepared by the Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group, comprising members of Sandbach Town Council and the local community. The Plan was adopted in April 2016 and identifies the following vision and overarching aims:

### Vision

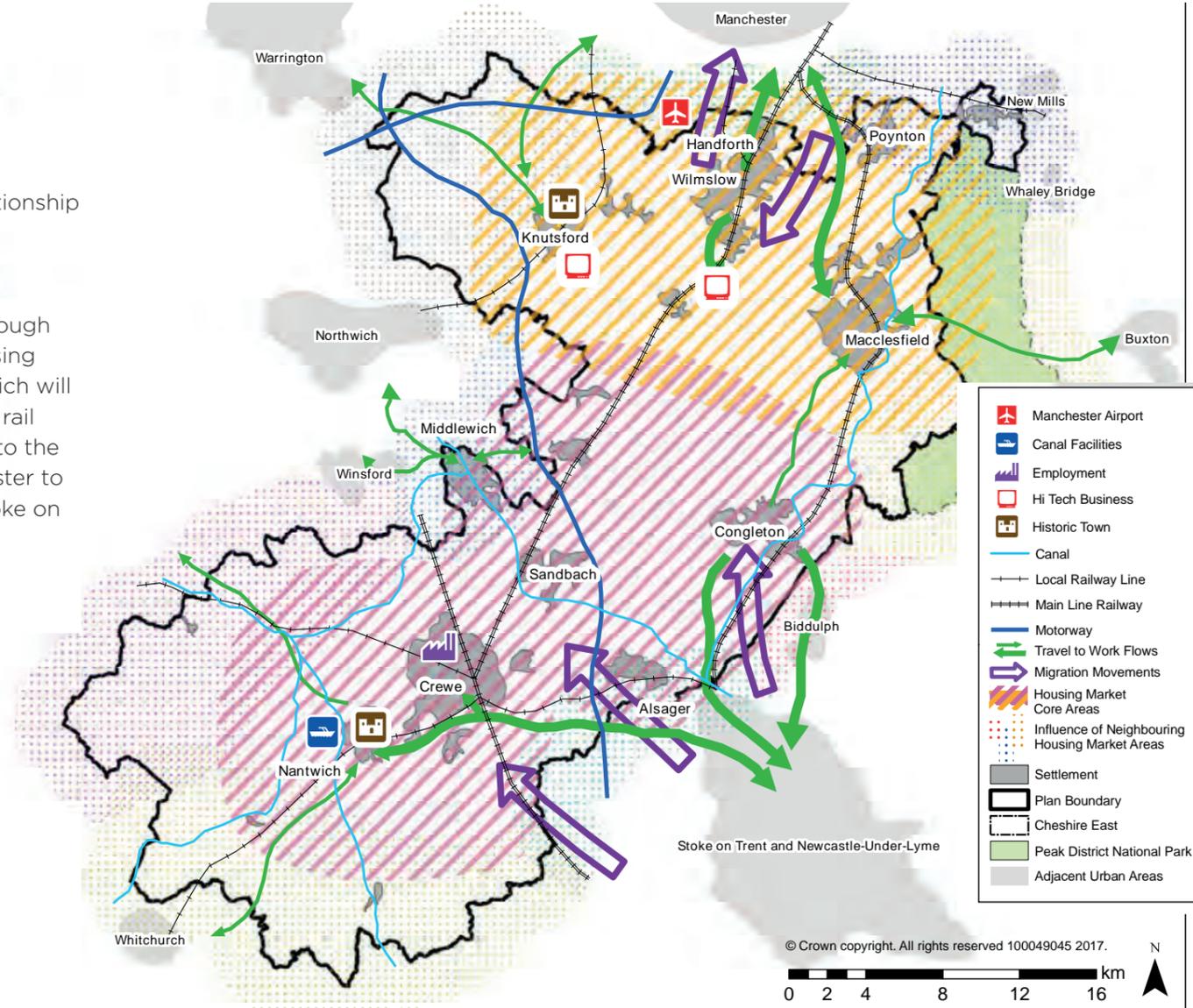
“Over the Plan period, Sandbach will continue to be a distinctive rural parish, whilst evolving and expanding in a way that respects and reflects the views of the community. It will retain its distinctive character of a rural market town formed by villages intersected by open countryside. There will be a wide range of community facilities and businesses that will both expand and prosper within an attractive environment. Current and future generations will enjoy a strong sense of community, a high quality of life, and a flourishing natural environment”

### Aims

- **Protecting the Countryside** - To protect and enhance the open countryside setting of Sandbach including its Local Green Gaps, green spaces, canals, amenity land and wildlife areas
- **Preserving Heritage and Character** - To preserve and enhance the heritage and character of the Parish of Sandbach
- **Managing Housing Supply** - The Sandbach Plan housing policies are designed to provide a framework which will enable the parish of Sandbach to grow at a sustainable rate which will satisfy the identified future local housing need during the Plan period. The Plan does not attempt to establish an appropriate level of future housing or employment growth or identify specific sites to accommodate future growth, rather it focuses on how new development will be managed, relying primarily on existing permissions and future windfall proposals on sustainable sites to cater for future needs, together with any subsequent allocations made through the Cheshire East Local Plan
- **Promoting Local Economy and Jobs** - To promote and maintain a thriving local economy to ensure that jobs and enterprise opportunities are available for local people of all ages. There will be a strong customer base for retail and hospitality businesses, enabling the community to maintain a prosperous town centre
- **Improving the Infrastructure** - To develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system that contributes to the social, environmental and economic well-being of the residents, businesses and visitors to Sandbach. To provide equal opportunity for everyone to access key services whilst maximising the use of 'green' alternatives to vehicular movements
- **Community and Well-Being** - To protect and maintain existing community amenities, buildings, facilities and services throughout Sandbach. New services and facilities should be added as appropriate in the future
- **Adapting to Climate Change** - To encourage sustainable development and moves towards a low-carbon economy, which includes high standards of energy conservation and the use of renewable energy; and to encourage better use of green infrastructure assets such as ponds, swales and wetlands which will not only meet local green space needs but also address existing and/or future surface water/ climate change issues

## Cheshire East Local Plan

The plan opposite identifies the functional relationship that Sandbach has with other centres through connectivity and proximity within and beyond Cheshire East. It highlights Sandbach's central positioning within the southern part of the borough and its proximity to Crewe, a key driver of housing and employment growth in the North West which will be driven by the arrival of HS2. Good road and rail connectivity also illustrate strong connections to the adjoining borough's of Cheshire West and Chester to the west and the Staffordshire boroughs of Stoke on Trent and Newcastle Under Lyme to the south.



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Strategy 2010-2030 2017, Functional Diagram, pg 22

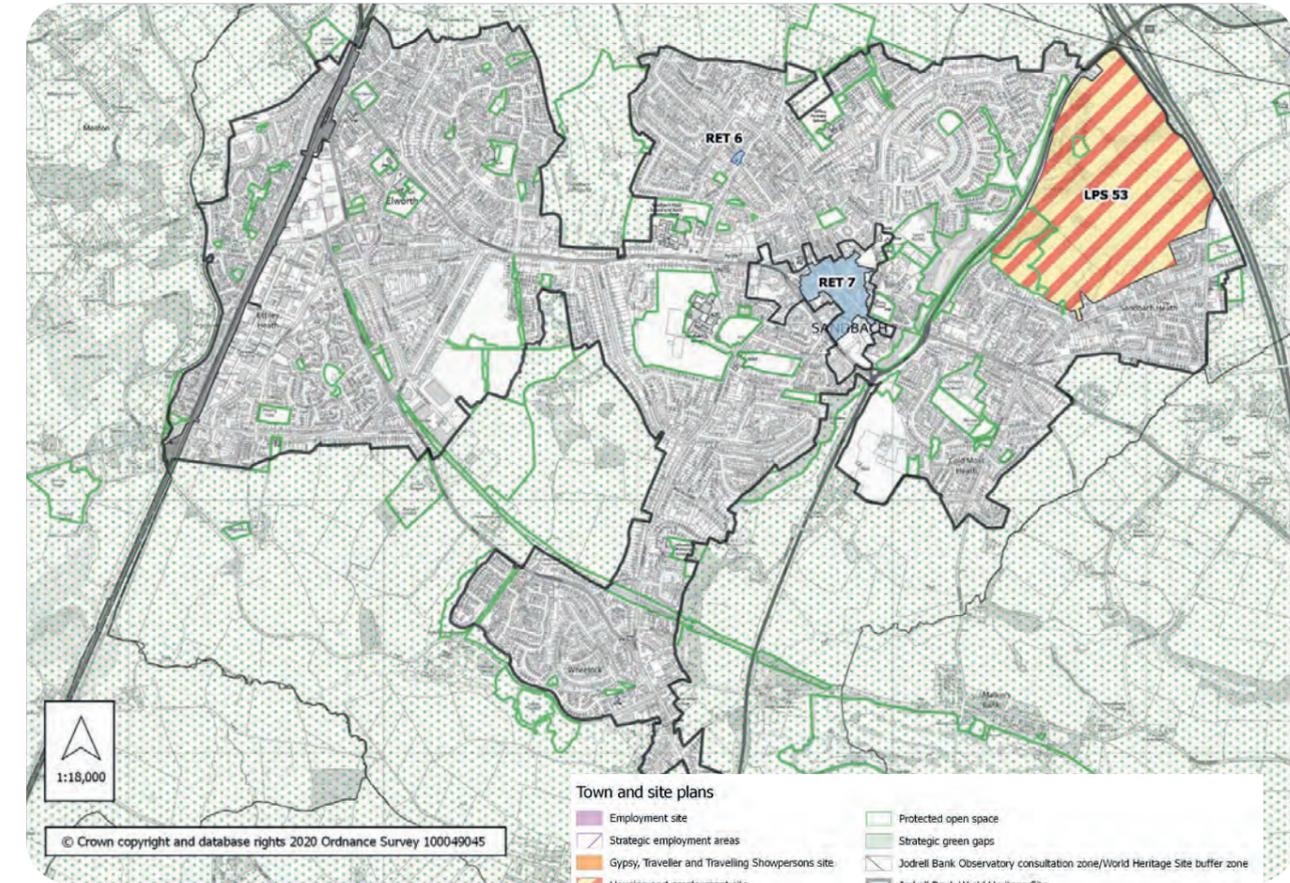
## Local Plan Strategy 2017 (LPS) and Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) 2020

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was adopted in 2017 setting strategic development sites around the borough. The SADPD will form the second part of the Local Plan, supporting the policies and proposals in the LPS by providing additional non-strategic policy detail and allocating additional sites to assist in meeting the overall development requirements set out in the LPS. The plan opposite identifies both Local Plan Strategy sites in and around Sandbach and draft allocations in the SADPD.

Sandbach is identified as a key service centre within the town centre hierarchy. Sandbach and the neighbouring village of Elworth are surrounded on all sides by open countryside.

Key sites close to the town centre which have been allocated for development include:

- LPS 53 'Land Adjacent to J17 of M6' to the north east of the town centre, which can accommodate 450 homes and 20 hectares of employment land (B1 and B2), plus retail and leisure uses
- RET 7 'Supporting the vitality of town and retail centres' which identifies town centre locations for main town centre uses to support their long term vitality and viability, in line with LPS Policy EG 5 'Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce'



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Draft Adopted Policies Map 2020, pg 30

### Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2010-2030, January 2016

The Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan was prepared by the Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group and adopted in April 2016. The Group was made up of skilled and enthusiastic members of Sandbach Town Council and volunteer residents who actively engaged with the local community resulting in a referendum result of Yes 96%, No 4%.

The plan can be accessed at: <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/planning/neighbourhood-plan/sandbach-ndp-modified-plan.pdf>

The Neighbourhood Development Plan forms an important document in informing and encouraging positive development within Sandbach and will be used to influence individual planning decisions as they come forward.

The report specifies -

- A need to protect the town centre and viability of the shops and services throughout the town, which are one of the town's strongest assets, whilst preserving and enhancing its appearance and conservation area which is fundamental to the traditional market town 'feel'.

- There is a lack of car parking facilities in the town centre to serve both the medical centre and shopping areas.
- More speed reduction measures are required throughout the town.
- Need for housing suitable for an ageing population
- Policies relevant to the town centre include:
  - POLICY HC2 - Change of use for ground floors to Class A5 hot food takeaway will be resisted where the proportion of units in A5 use exceeds 10% of the total number of units
  - POLICY HC3 - Shopfronts and signage is expected to preserve a traditional appearance (as defined in the Sandbach Town Council Street Signage Design Policy)
  - POLICY HC4 - Development and expansion of viable outdoor and indoor markets will be supported
  - POLICY JLE3 - Alterations and improvements to Market Hall should take into account the need to sustain and enhance the heritage asset of Sandbach Town Hall

A review of the Neighbourhood Plan took place in May 2021 and can be found here: <https://sandbach.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Sandbach-NDP-Phase-2-Reg14-draft.pdf>



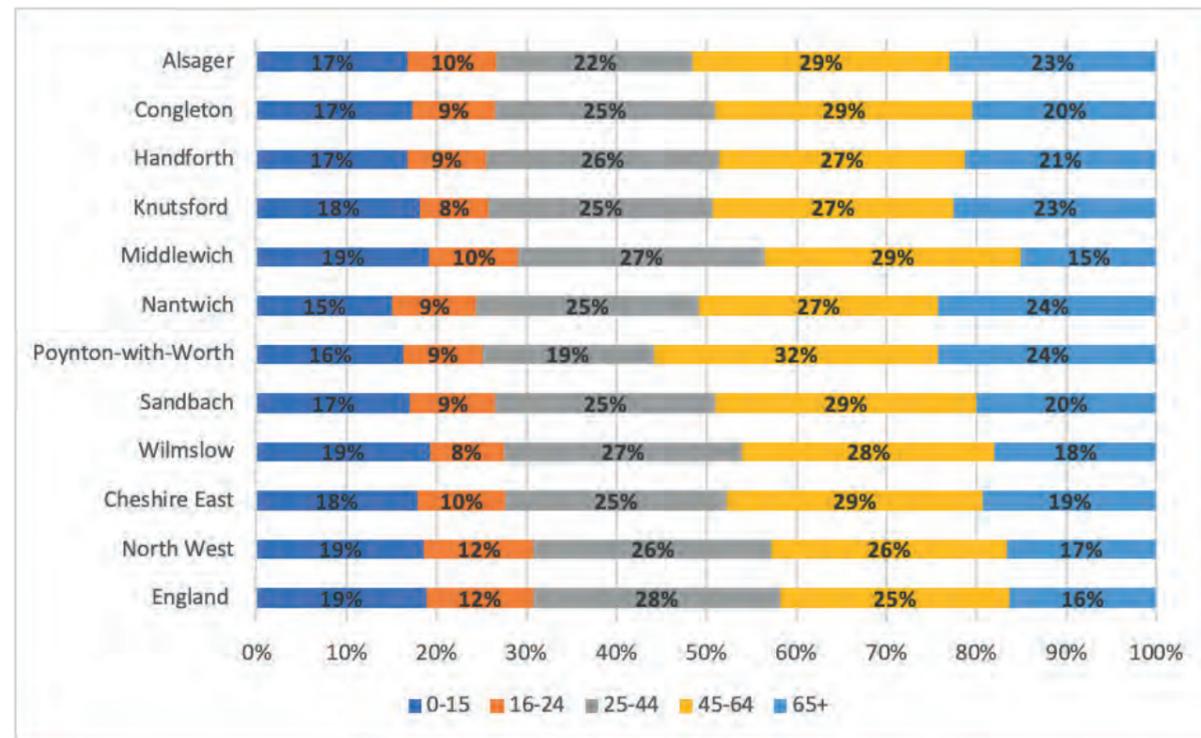
# 04 Our People

## Age

The 2011 Census data indicates that the Sandbach parish area had a population of 17,976 residents representing 4.9% of Cheshire East's total population (370,127). Sandbach's age profile is very similar to that of Cheshire East with a quarter of the population (25%) within the most economically active 25 to 44 year old age group.

Sandbach has a fairly mid-range average (mean) age compared to the other 9 KSCs at 42.5 years old, however this is higher than the Cheshire East figure (42) and the wider geographies of the North West (40) and England (39).

It is anticipated that when the 2021 Census data is available it should show an increase in younger residents given the number of family homes that have been delivered in the area over the last decade.



Age Structure.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Ethnicity

Broken-down by ethnic group the Census 2011 (latest) shows the resident population across Cheshire East is predominantly white at 96.7% which is a higher proportion than the wider geographies of the North West (90.2%) and England (85.4%). The vast majority of the population in Sandbach is also white (98.1%) - one of the least ethnically diverse of the Cheshire East KSCs with just 349 people from none white ethnic groups.

Area	White	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	Other ethnic group
Alsager	97.6%	1.1%	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Congleton	98.0%	0.6%	1.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Handforth	93.1%	1.5%	3.9%	0.9%	0.7%
Knutsford	96.5%	1.2%	1.8%	0.3%	0.3%
Middlewich	98.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%
Nantwich	98.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.1%
Poynton-with-Worth	98.0%	0.5%	1.1%	0.1%	0.2%
<b>Sandbach</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Wilmslow	92.6%	1.7%	4.4%	0.5%	0.7%
Cheshire East	96.7%	1.0%	1.6%	0.4%	0.2%
North West	90.2%	1.6%	6.2%	1.4%	0.6%
England	85.4%	2.3%	7.8%	3.5%	1.0%

Population by Ethnic Group  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Occupational Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, a similar proportion of Sandbach residents were employed in higher order occupations including ‘managers, directors and senior officials’ (12.6%) and ‘professional occupations’ (19.9%) to that of Cheshire East, representing a higher rate than the wider regional and national benchmarks.

Conversely, just 15.6% were engaged in manual or elementary occupations – lower than the Cheshire East rate of 16.7%, together with that of the North West (19.8%) and England (18.3%). The occupational structure of Sandbach suggests a skilled workforce, which will in turn attract businesses (who want to attract highly skilled employees) seeking to locate in the borough.



Built Up Area	Alsager	Congleton	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow	Cheshire East	North West	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	12.8	11.7	17.2	11.9	14.3	14.9	12.6	18.3	13.6	9.9	10.9
Professional occupations	22.3	18.9	26.2	15.8	21.8	24.0	19.9	24.6	19.6	16.3	17.5
Associate professional and technical occupations	12.6	13.2	15.1	13.4	12.3	15.1	13.3	16.3	13.0	11.5	12.8
Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.4	10.3	9.4	11.8	10.0	12.2	11.0	9.9	10.4	11.7	11.5
Skilled trades occupations	10.1	11.6	6.4	11.0	9.8	8.6	10.2	6.6	10.4	11.3	11.4
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8.7	9.5	8.0	9.9	8.2	7.7	9.2	7.8	8.9	10.1	9.3
Sales and customer service occupations	7.5	7.0	5.7	7.4	8.3	8.0	8.2	6.9	7.5	9.4	8.4
Process, plant and machine operatives	5.8	7.9	3.8	8.5	6.0	3.3	6.6	3.0	6.5	8.1	7.2
Elementary occupations	8.8	9.9	8.2	10.4	9.3	6.3	9.0	6.6	10.2	11.7	11.1

Occupational Profile

Source: Census 2011

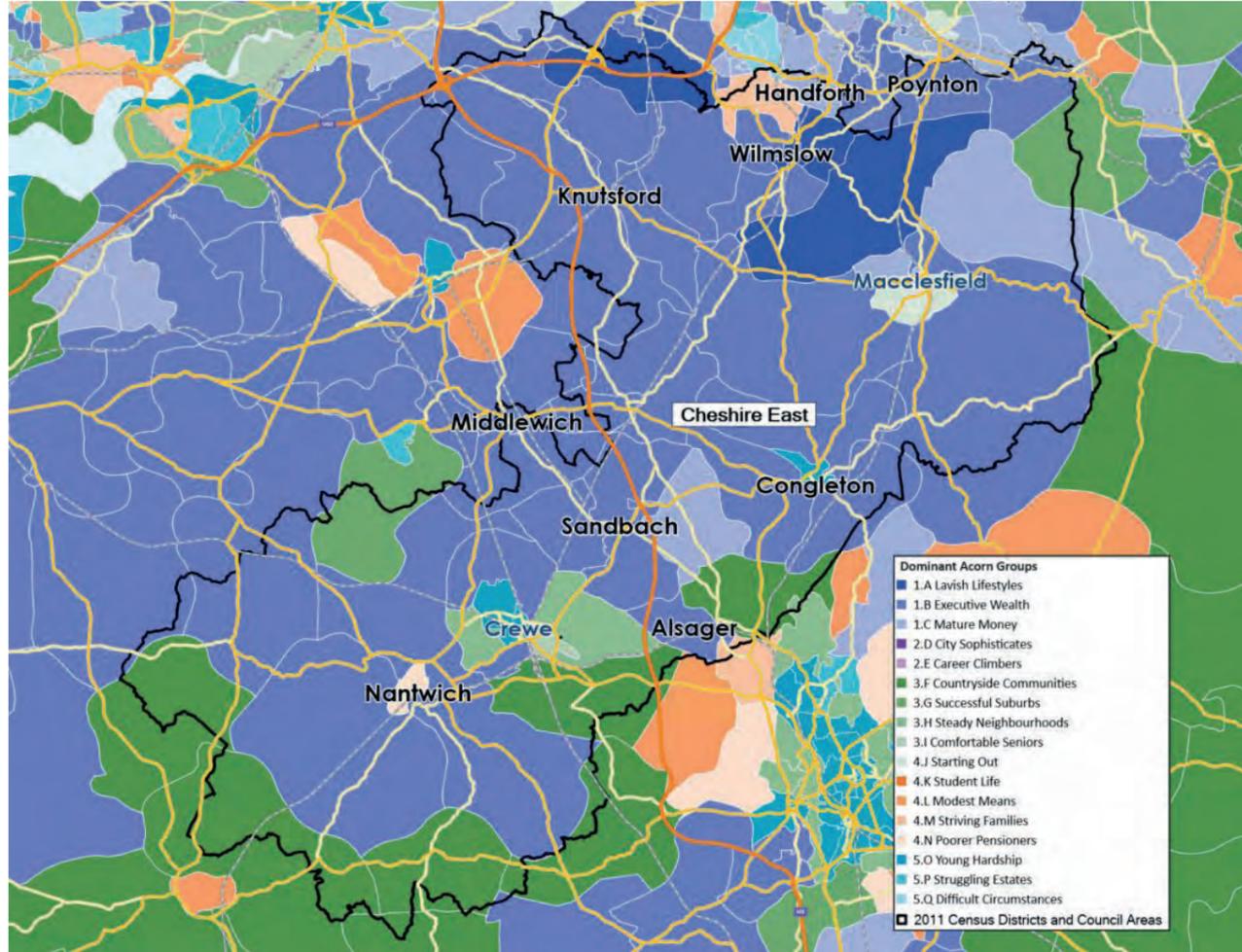
\*Wilmslow BUA includes Alderly Edge and Handforth

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Demographic Characterisation

CACI Acorn classifications of local postcode geographies provide precise information and an in-depth understanding of different consumer types by analysing significant social factors and consumer behaviour. Demographic analysis of Cheshire East area demonstrates diverse segmentation groups across the area. The dominant Acorn group in Sandbach is Executive Wealth (Affluent professionals with families living in large homes) with some Mature Money (Older more wealthy residents in rural/semi-rural locations) to the east of the town.

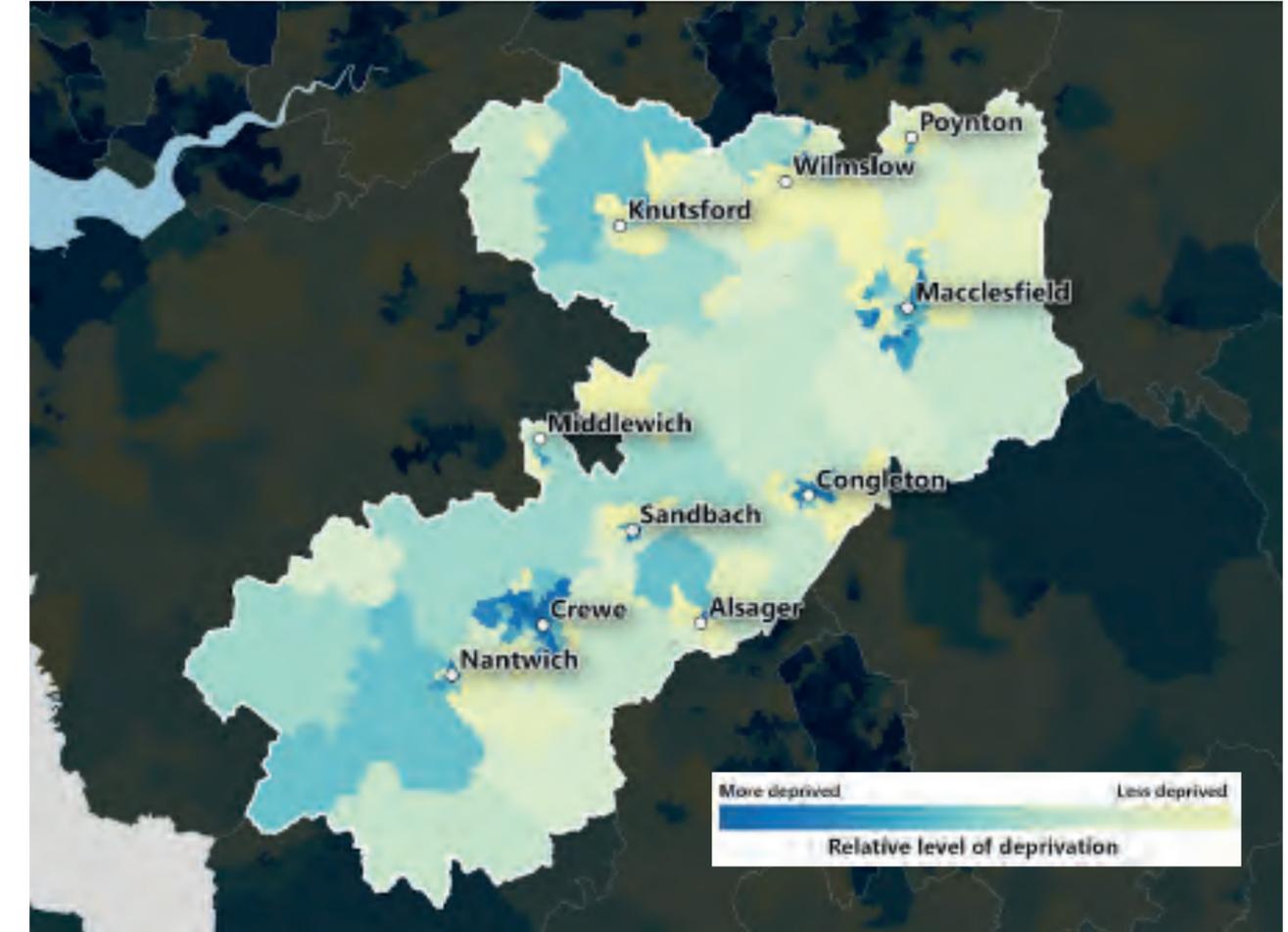
- Dominant Age Groups
- 1. A Lavish Lifestyles
  - 1. B Executive Wealth
  - 1. C Mature Money
  - 2. D City Sophisticates
  - 2. E Career Climbers
  - 3. F Countryside Communities
  - 3. G Successful Suburbs
  - 3. H Steady Neighbourhoods
  - 3. I Comfortable Seniors
  - 4. J Starting Out
  - 4. K Student Life
  - 4. L Modest Means
  - 4. M Striving Families
  - 4. N Poorer Pensioners
  - 5. O Young Hardship
  - 5. P Struggling Estates
  - 5. Q Difficult Circumstances
- 2011 Census Districts and Council Areas



CACI Acorn Classifications  
Source: CACI

## Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 illustrates the spatial distribution and pockets of deprivation relative to national averages. Cheshire East ranked 228th most deprived out of 317 local authorities in 2019 indicating relatively low levels of deprivation. Just 1.7% of the Borough is within the top 10% most deprived areas in England, with these most deprived areas being concentrated around Crewe and to a lesser extent, Macclesfield. The majority of Sandbach is within the 20% least deprived areas of deprivation nationally.



Source: MHCLG, IMD 2019

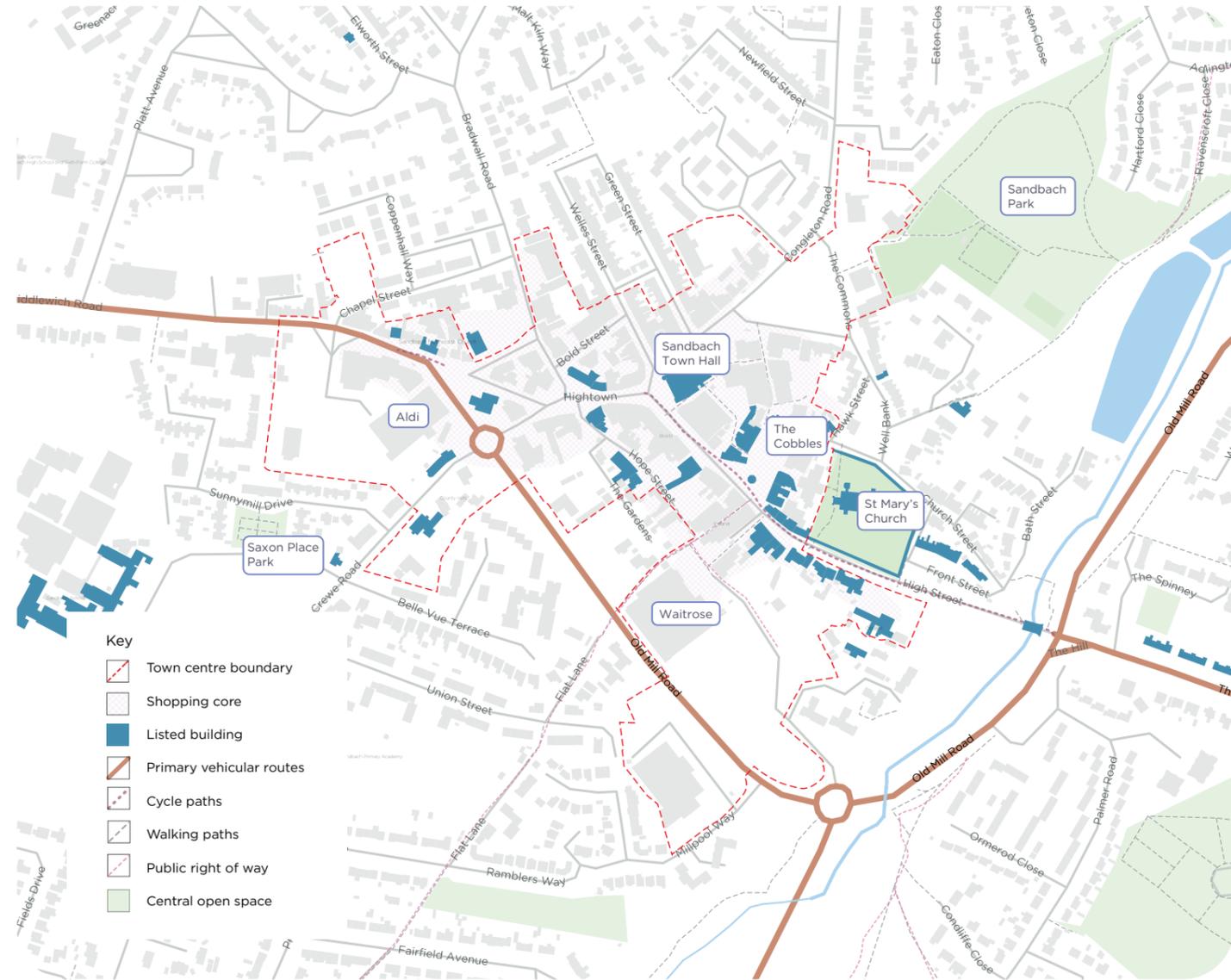
## Local Context

Sandbach is located within a mile (4-5 minute drive) of the M6. Sandbach Train Station is located in the village of Elworth, a 25-30 minute walk west of the town centre.

Sandbach is located within the Cheshire Plain, which consists of salt related landscapes, and the surrounding area is typical of Cheshire (flat/rolling) farmland and woodland.

Within the town centre there are a number of traditional style buildings. The centre of the town has a cobbled square and houses ancient Saxon Crosses.

There is evidence of historic salt brine pumping. Brine extraction without replacement and the existence of a number of underlying brine runs, means that significant areas of the parish are potentially subject to ongoing ground movements.



## Spatial Review

An analysis of the experiential quality of the town centre is provided over the next few pages. The review is based on information gathered from a number of site visits to the town centre during October and September 2020 and is assessed by the key vitality indicators listed below:

- Quality of the place
- People
- Sense of Community
- Accessibility
- Gateways
- Wayfinding
- Attractions
- Amenities
- Sense of a Centre
- Character
- Public realm
- Green space
- Derelict Sites/ Vacant units
- Housing
- Covid measures

## Visit information

	Visit 1	Visit 2
Date of visit:	Saturday 12th September 2020	Wednesday 28th October 2020
Time of day:	12-1pm	3-4pm
Weather:	Sunny, dry, clouds	Sunny, drizzle
Mode of transport:	Car	Car
Covid lockdown status:	Eased Lockdown Restrictions	Three Tier Restrictions in Place

## Quality of the place

- Historic town with a range of attractive listed heritage assets
- Busy at time of first visit (Saturday afternoon)
- Strong sense of history and medieval character



## People

- Visit on Saturday coincided with Artisan Market in town square - very busy with people visiting the market and visiting shops, pubs, cafés
- Chatty stall holders
- Cyclists stopping and passing through



## Sense of Community

- Strong sense of community on market days with local residents and stall holders using their town centre
- Sandbach Park had local families and teenagers using the space in the early evening
- Some civic buildings were closed due to Covid during our site visits but they were advertising events and inviting people in to explore and use, particularly the Town Hall
- Flowers and planters well kept



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Accessibility

- Train station 25 min walk away from centre
- Free parking at Scotch Common - large car park, but busy
- Entry into town dominated by highways and roundabouts - The A553 forms an infrastructure barrier along the southern extents of the town centre
- Road markings and signage suggests priority for cyclists towards eastern end of High Street
- Lack of coherent routes around the back of the Market and Town Hall, dark, narrow shopping precinct, but active ground floor windows help



## Gateways

- Series of roundabouts framed by historic buildings enhance sense of arrival, but the environment is still car / highways dominated - it is difficult to move comfortably and fairly directly to the centre as a pedestrian
- The Cobbles area, accessed from High Street is full of character and a significant central gathering space. The cobbled square is framed by a variety of listed and attractive heritage buildings and is a key gateway to the town
- Gateway from Middlewich Road confusing for pedestrians where A533 re-routes at Crewe Road roundabout



## Housing

- Smaller houses integrated into centre
- Signs of apartments and conversions under construction
- Apartments above ground floor retail uses creates some higher density accommodation within the town centre
- Residential areas within immediate walking distance of centre



## Wayfinding

- Good signage
- Consistent style which respects the historic townscape character in locations
- Signage to community anchors such as the Library and Sandbach Park could be improved



## Attractions

- Indoor market and monthly Artisan market busy (even during Covid restrictions)
- Variety of independent and chain stores
- Sandbach Park, which offers a huge variety of outdoor uses for a number of age groups
- The historic setting and history of the town in itself could be considered an attraction and reason to visit
- Sandbach Leisure Centre located to the western edge of the Town Centre but is less accessible by foot / cycle



## Amenities

- Library by entry to Sandbach Park
- Waitrose and Aldi
- Other national chain retailers are present such as Costa Coffee and Domino's pizza
- Markets selling fresh produce
- Cheshire East Council offices
- Wesley Community Centre



## Sense of a Centre

- The Cobbles/Market Square area feels like a natural centre, with regular outdoor markets, spill out space and monuments
- From the west, visitors are drawn through a series of interesting spaces, framed by historic buildings - around Hightown Drinking Fountain, the front of the Market Hall and into the Cobbles
- The historic town centre is very compact and walkable (extents of the town centre can be reached within a 10 minute walk), but more recent development does not follow desire lines and may require crossing busy roads (e.g. Aldi, Waitrose, Sandbach Library)



## Character

- Very much a market town feel, retaining historic identity and an intact historic core which is the focus of the town's place character
- Well kept shops, with products displayed outside on occasion, drawing footfall and creating variety
- High quality building stock and variety of historic buildings including Elizabethan and Tudor style
- Strong building line down main shopping parade
- Shops spill into side streets, creating sense that centre is larger than it is



## Public Realm

- Public realm treatments around the 'The Cobbles' town square add to the historic character and enhance space for pedestrians (as well as slowing down vehicles)
- Block paving quite consistent in other parts of the centre, but more recent materials have been added which support vehicles and detract from clear, good quality paved pedestrian routes



## Green space

- Sandbach Park larger than expected and well kept, but feels disconnected from Town Centre
- The entrance to the park from the town could be improved - it is currently constrained by the library building and adjacent access to the Fire Station



### Derelict Sites

- A few vacant units in the town centre
- Signs of contraction of high street along secondary streets leaving some derelict units as businesses close
- Opportunities for residential conversions
- Few derelict sites within proximity to the Town Centre

Update 2021: Since the site visit in 2020, the units circled below have now been occupied: the former Debra Shop on Bold Street is under refurbishment as a health clinic, Cubar on the High street is now up and running and the former takeaway on Congleton Road is undergoing refurbishment.



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Positive Features

Positive spatial elements are identified on the plan:

- Key**
- Local centre boundary
  - Local street network
  - Primary vehicular route
  - ✳ Arrival destinations (car parks/ train stations/ bus stops)
  - Key pedestrian links
  - ⊕ Positive arrival experience
  - Anchor retail locations
  - Anchor open space / recreational areas
  - ✳ Open space / recreational areas
  - Wildlife Corridor/ walking route
  - Areas with a concentration of F&B uses
  - Areas with a concentration of retail uses
  - Well defined building frontages with active ground floor uses
  - Buildings of historic or townscape quality that help reinforce character
  - Local businesses within close proximity to the town centre
  - Local residential areas within immediate proximity to the town centre
  - 400m radius from centre (approx 5 minutes walk)



**1** Independent shops activate ground floor spaces with produce and displays



**2** Town square - The Cobbles offers a unique, flexible space for events and partly lined with outdoor eating space and monuments - Sandbach Crosses



**3** Inviting indoor market



**4** Series of spaces anchored by high quality historic buildings create an impressive arrival into the town, but dominated by highway infrastructure



## Negative Features

Negative spatial elements are identified on the plan:

- Key**
-  Local centre boundary
  -  Local street network
  -  Primary vehicular route
  -  Arrival destinations (car parks/train stations/bus stops)
  -  Streets and spaces dominated by car parking
  -  Streets with narrow footways / poor pedestrian provision
  -  Arrival gateways with a low quality arrival experience
  -  Areas of poor quality public realm (primarily low grade / aged materials, lack of street furniture and tree planting)
  -  Pedestrianised high street with dated public realm and aesthetic
  -  Low quality frontages
  -  Links with poor legibility to and from the town centre
  -  Local streets leading to cul-de-sacs or unclear where they connect to
  -  Extent of area which reads as part of the Town Centre
  -  Areas which feel beyond the extent of the Town Centre
  -  Key assets which feel disconnected from the Town Centre
  -  400m radius from centre (approx 5 minutes walk)



**1** Dated pedestrianised section along Pendle Way funnels pedestrians from Scotch Common



**2** Car parking dominates area behind the Market Hall, reducing the experience and creating a low quality setting for the outdoor market and confusing routes for pedestrians



**3** Some vacant shop units across the town centre



**4** Sandbach Park is hidden behind the Fire Station and Library, with pedestrian permeability confused by Fire Station access.



**5** Middlewich Road highway infrastructure is difficult to cross and dominates the space

## Summary of Spatial Elements

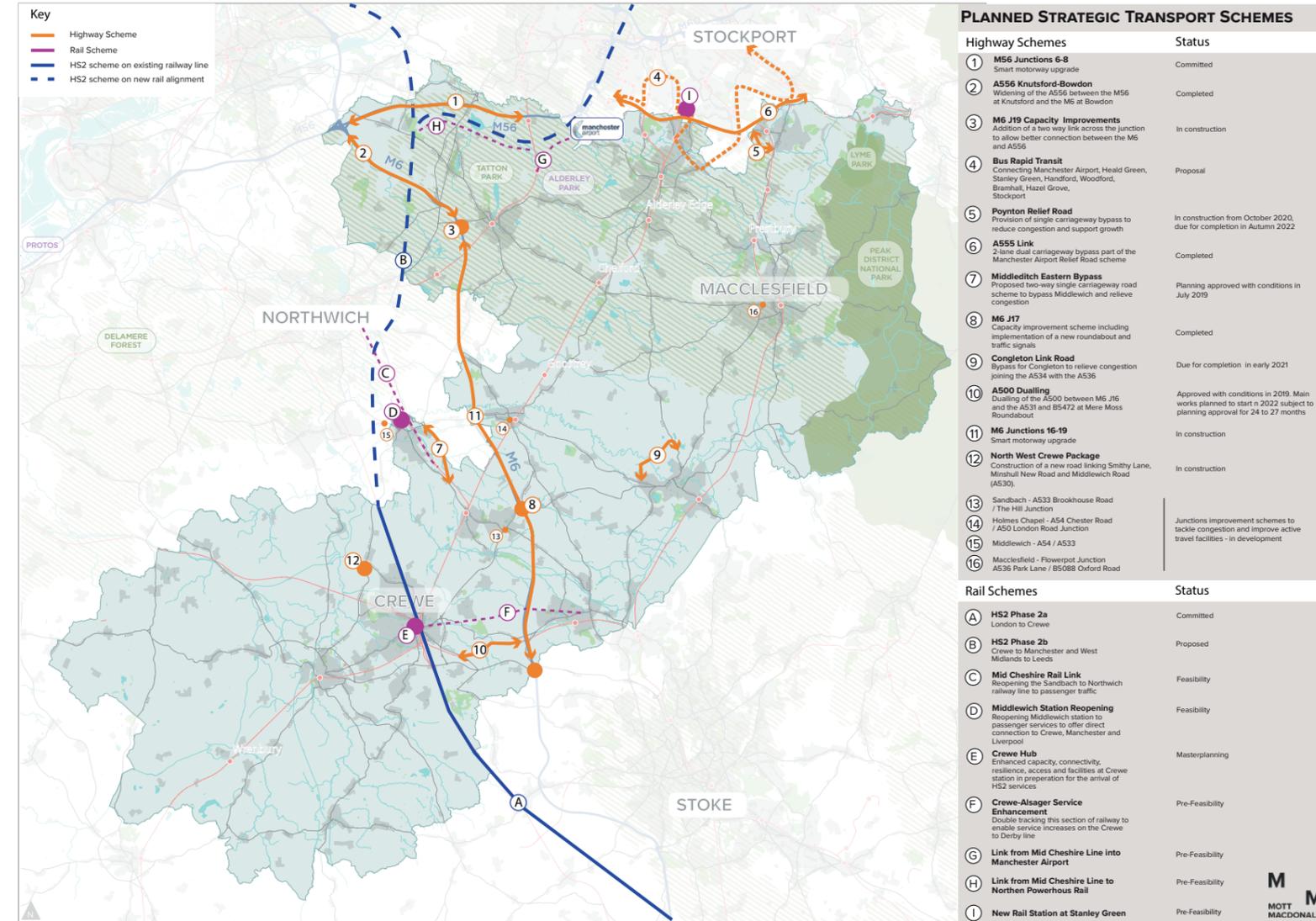
The tables below and on the following page identify the key positive and negative spatial attributes for the town centre:

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Positives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cobbled area around square and on High Street helps to define central space and frame heritage buildings</li> <li>Well used public spaces - thriving Artisan market on The Cobbles, even during Covid partial lockdown</li> <li>The space outside Market Hall is well used with stalls to attract trade and footfall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic street patterns and large heritage buildings help define key gateways into the town centre, particularly from the east</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandbach Park is a diverse and well maintained large public park within walking distance of the centre</li> <li>Trees along High Street, in St Mary's Church graveyard and opposite gardens in the Old Hall add interest at the eastern end of the town centre</li> <li>The wildlife corridor (along Old Mill Road) is in close proximity to the Park and offers a green route into the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well maintained Elizabethan buildings. Town Council and Market Hall building are impressive heritage buildings at key gateways</li> <li>In addition to significant listed buildings and statues there are also areas of intact heritage townscape which help reinforce the visual character of the Town Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinct market town with large historic buildings</li> <li>Unique series of spaces defined by historic building pattern and ending in a picturesque market square 'The Cobbles' housing the Sandbach Crosses</li> <li>Change in levels around St Mary's Church compliments areas of historic townscape</li> <li>Some recent infill development works with the existing heritage context</li> <li>The immediately adjacent terraced residential streets contribute to the townscape character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well defined shopping street along High Street, draws visitors toward The Cobbles square</li> </ul>

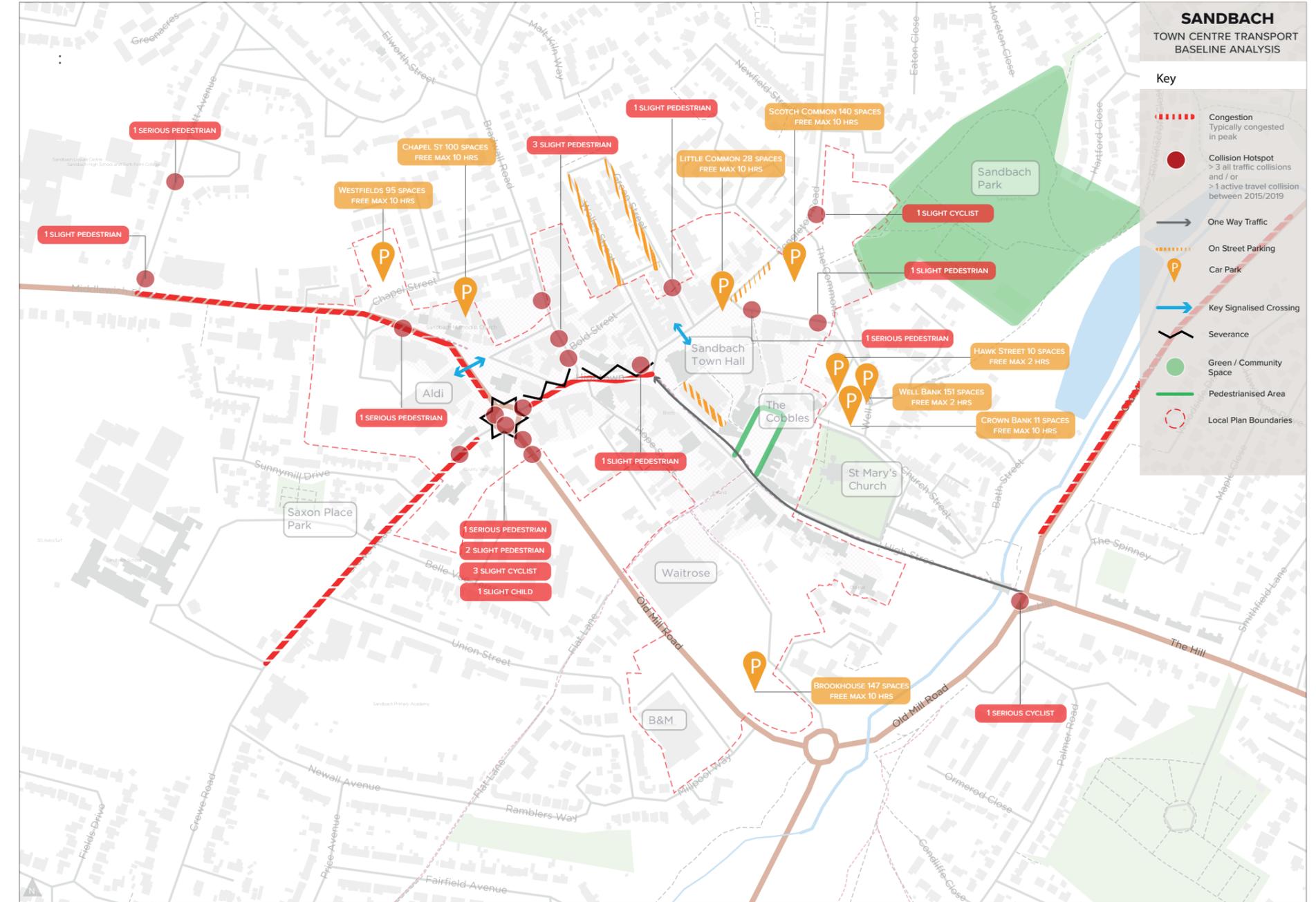
Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Negatives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disjointed public realm materials across the Town Centre overall make parts of the centre feel disconnected from others</li> <li>Large areas of open surface car parking disrupt desire lines to some important surrounding community assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateways to the west of the town centre are heavily dominated by vehicular infrastructure and movements into the town</li> <li>Gateways from Scotch Common car park to High Street are dominated by parking</li> <li>Limited opportunities for dwell time to the west and north of the Town Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to Sandbach Park is constrained by Fire Station</li> <li>Lack of links to St Mary's Wood, Dingle Wood and watercourse to the east of the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting of some historic buildings dominated by cars meaning it is difficult to admire buildings if there is traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tight urban grain falls away to the back of the Market Hall</li> <li>The town centre and Sandbach Park, which are key attractors, lack clear pedestrian connections between them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routes from Scotch Common to High Street are confusing around the back of the Market Hall</li> <li>Routes from Middlewich Road to Wesley Avenue are dominated by vehicular traffic and it is not clear where the shopping area ends around Wesley Avenue/ Bradwall Road</li> </ul>

# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility

Sandbach is located directly adjacent to the M6 Junction 17 and is therefore well positioned on the strategic road network, offering direct highway connectivity to Warrington, Wigan and Preston to the north and Stafford and Birmingham to the south. However, stakeholders have also identified this as a major threat due to the amount of through-traffic this generates on key routes through the town. Sandbach Railway Station provides hourly stopping services to Manchester and Liverpool as well as two services per hour to Crewe for most of the week. Sandbach is located around 10-minutes drive from Crewe Station, which is a major strategic rail hub providing faster direct connections to both Liverpool and Manchester.



Sandbach Planned Strategic Transport Schemes



Sandbach Transport Baseline Analysis

## Car Parking

Car parking across Sandbach is predominantly made up of six free long stay off-street car parks which are located in close proximity to the town centre. On-street parking provision is also provided along Congleton Road with provision of disabled parking bays along High Street. Connectivity between car parks and the key areas of the town centre should however be considered as routes are currently unclear and require pedestrians to navigate across busy highways with few crossing facilities. Several car parks require movement across major junctions which present road safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists such as the Old Mill Road/Hightown/ Crewe Road junction.

The TCVPs consider the role of car parking in relation to the vibrancy and vitality of each town centre. However, any proposals to review or modernise car parking provision and management will be considered on a town by town basis as part of the Council's approach to travel demand management. Therefore the delivery of any car parking proposals is outside the scope of the TCVPs.

Town Centre	Car Park ID	Parking Spaces	Duration	Pricing
Sandbach	Westfields Car Park	95	Max 10 hours	Free
	Chapel St Car Park	75	Max 10 hours	Free
	Little Common Car Park	28	Max 10 hours	Free
	Scotch Common Car Park	140	Max 10 hours	Free
	Crown Bank Car Park	11	Max 10 hours	Free
	Brookhouse Car Park	147	Max 10 hours	Free
	Well Bank Car Park	15	Max 2 hours	Free
	Hawk Street Car Park	10	Max 2 hours	Free
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>521</b>		

## Public Realm

Sandbach is a market town with distinct heritage and character which is evident within the existing public realm and important to be maintained. Although the town centre provides a range of planting, seating, and gateway features the majority of the public realm across the town is in need of upgrades and maintenance as pavements present uneven surfaces in a number of areas.

The Cobbles area of the town centre adjacent to the High Street provides a high-quality public space offering opportunity for people to stop, rest and spend time, as well as accommodate more formalised events.

## Road Safety

There are a number of junctions and areas across the centre of Sandbach which have been identified as collision hotspots (p47) which present road safety concerns particularly for vulnerable road users. This includes the Old Mill Road/Hightown/ Crewe Road junction where 7 collisions have occurred over the last 5 years resulting in a pedestrian seriously injured and a further 3 pedestrians (including a child) and 3 cyclists slightly injured. As a central point of the town centre this creates a major barrier to pedestrian and cyclists activity and reduces the safety of movements made between key areas and facilities. Intervention should be considered in this area to rethink this large format junction.

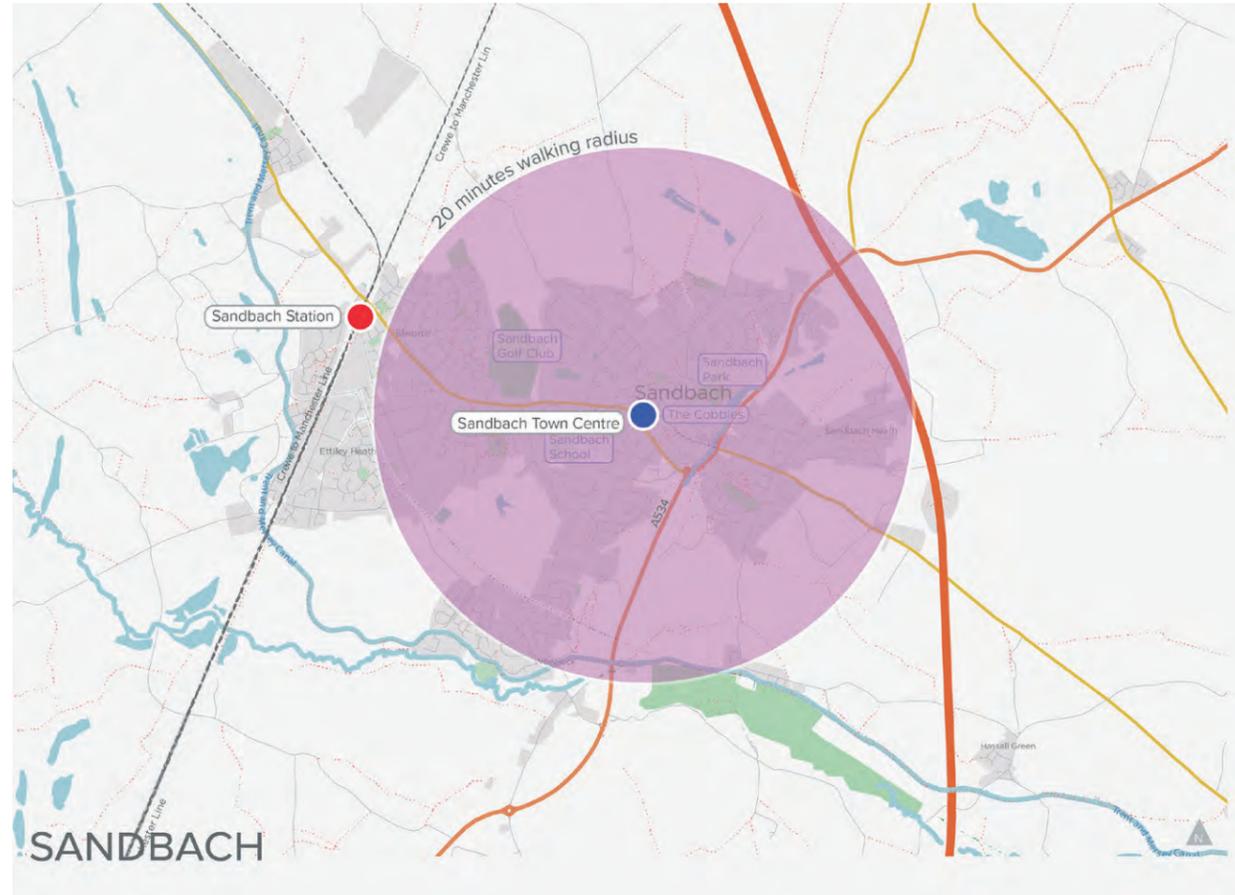
## Active Travel

As noted above, areas of road safety concern within the town centre of Sandbach currently create severance for pedestrians and cyclists between key areas of the town centre. This is likely a result of the number of roundabouts within the main area of the town centre with limited crossing facilities and a lack of safe crossing along other key pedestrian routes such as High Street and Middlewich Road.

There is also a lack of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure across the town. Most footways are narrow and adjacent to wide and busy highways with little traffic calming, for instance in areas such as Hightown. That said, the contraflow lane along High Street is one of the better pieces of cycle infrastructure noted across the nine centres. This route could be further upgraded (including physical or light segregation) and extended beyond the town centre.

Cycle parking is evident in a number of locations around The Cobbles and High Street however is of a sub-standard quality. The level of provision in terms of the number of cycle parking spaces and its lack of shelter and security is also unlikely to encourage cycling.

Enhancing the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure across the town, giving more space and priority to pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles and increasing the ease and attractiveness of active modes should be a key consideration of the study to encourage access to, from and around the town centre by more sustainable modes.



Sandbach 20-Minute Walk Isochrone

## Public Transport

Public transport services to the train station and nearby population centres and facilities are generally uncoordinated. As a result, the vast majority of journeys are made by private car contributing towards the low levels of air quality seen in areas such as Middlewich Road.

Sandbach rail station is located around a 25-minute walk away from the town centre. Bus services provided at the rail station on London Road provide 3 buses per hour towards the centre of Sandbach and also offer connectivity to Northwich, Crewe and Alsager. The station therefore remains relatively disconnected to the town with infrequent bus services and limited provision of walking and cycling provision to support connectivity on foot or bicycle. Long walking times from the station to the centre are not only unattractive but are also unfeasible for people with reduced mobility therefore reducing access for all.

Sandbach rail station is served by two trains per hour to Crewe southbound, one per hour to Manchester Piccadilly and one per hour to Liverpool Lime Street northbound. As over 5,000 residents of working age in Sandbach commute to work outside the area each day, the rail station plays an important role in providing connectivity to strategic destinations.

## Movement Trends

The majority of people (65%) living in the area of Sandbach travel to work outside of the area, predominantly towards Crewe. With high car ownership in the area (85% of residents with access to a car) and a 25-minute walk to the nearest train station from the area travel to, from and around Sandbach is likely to be dominated by private car use. This is the case for commuter trips amongst residents where car travel accounts for 74% of travel to work journeys.

-  **Only 2% of people living in Sandbach work within the town centre**
-  **55% of residents travel between 5 and 30km to work**
-  **Public transport accounts for 5% of commuter trips**
-  **Only 15% of households in Sandbach do not have access to a car, 34% have access to 2 or more vehicles**
-  **74% of residents in Sandbach in employment drive to work by car**
-  **25 minute walk between town centre and railway station**
-  **Active travel accounts for 10% of commuter trips**

Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility cont.

Cheshire East Council has approved Local Transport Development Plans (LTDP) for its principal towns, key service centres and surrounding rural areas. The table opposite summarises the potential transport schemes included in the LTDP relating to the town centre at the point they went out to public consultation. Please note the majority of schemes are at concept stage, subject to feasibility work and must be viewed as potential schemes. Therefore the LTDP are live documents and this list of schemes is subject to change and will evolve as further work is undertaken.

In Sandbach the LTDP sets out a wide range of actions that CEC are exploring. In Sandbach, the LTDP focuses strongly on active travel interventions to improve conditions for those on foot and cycle – particularly on key corridors such as Old Middlewich Road, Crewe Road and Flat Lane. Highway design enhancements are also a key focus and several junctions improvements are set out across the TCVP area to tackle congestion.

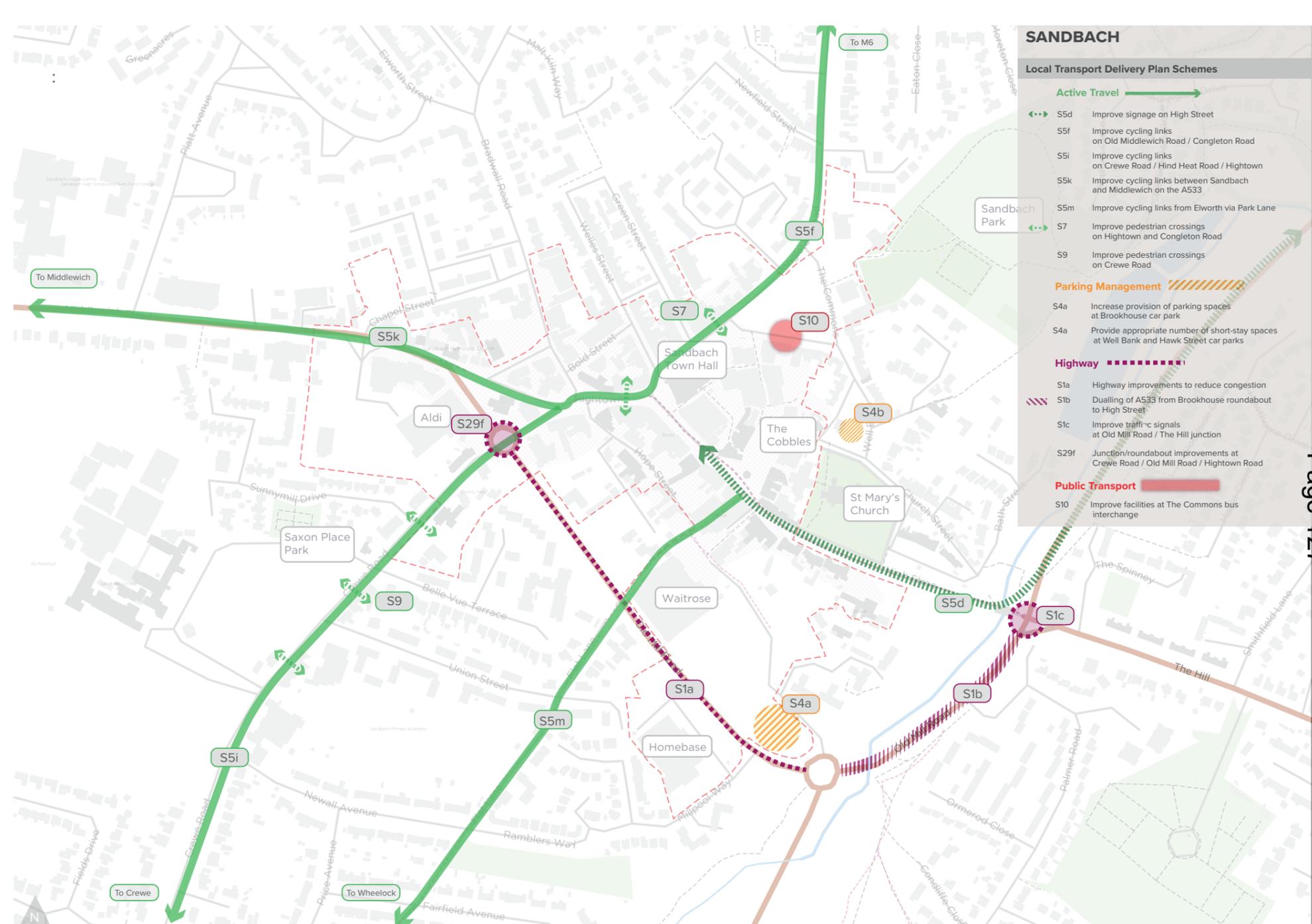
The table contains detail on the schemes set out in the LTDP.

For full information on LTDP and the latest version of the LTDP please refer to the Highway pages of the CEC website.

## Sandbach LTP and LCWIP schemes

Sandbach Local Transport Development Plan - Schemes				
Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	S5d	Improve signage on High Street	Improve signage on High Street to enhance cycling links into the town centre.	<£100k
	S5f	Improve cycling links on Old Middlewich Road / Congleton Road	Improve cycling links on Old Middlewich Road / Congleton Road to improve cycle connections to the town centre.	<£1m
	S5i	Improve cycling links on Crewe Road / Hind Heat Road / Hightown	Improve cycling links on Crewe Road / Hind Heat Road / Hightown to improve cycle connections to the town centre.	<£1m
	S5k	Improve cycling links between Sandbach and Middlewich on the A533	Improve cycling links on the A533 London Road via Cookesmere Lane to enhance the cycle connection between Sandbach and Middlewich on the A533.	<£1m
	S5m	Improve cycling links from Elworth via Park Lane	Improve/introduce cycling links from Elworth via Abbeyfields development/Park Lane towards Waitrose area.	<£1m
	S7	Improve pedestrian crossings on Hightown and Congleton Road	Improve pedestrian routes in the town centre improving/introducing crossing points on Hightown and Congleton Road.	<£1m
Parking Management	S9	Improve pedestrian crossings on Crewe Road	Increase the number of crossing points along Crewe Road.	<£1m
	S4a	Increase provision of parking spaces at Brookhouse car park	Increased provision of designated parking spaces at Brookhouse car park.	<£100k
Highway	S4b	Provide appropriate number of short-stay spaces at Well Bank and Hawk Street car parks	Review of current parking management at Well Bank and Hawk Street car parks of appropriate number of short stay car parking.	<£100k
	S1a	Highway improvements to reduce congestion	Tackle congestion on the A533 Middlewich Road and Old Mill Road: introduce highway improvements on Old Mill Road and Middlewich Road to reduce congestion.	£1m-£5m
	S1b	Dualling of A533 from Brookhouse roundabout to High Street	Tackle congestion on the A533 Middlewich Road and Old Mill Road: dualling of A533 from Brookhouse roundabout to High Street.	£5m-£10m
	S1c	Improve traffic signals at Old Mill Road / The Hill junction	Tackle congestion on the A533 Middlewich Road and Old Mill Road: improve the traffic signals at The Hill / High Street junction to smooth the flow of traffic and to provide an improved crossing point for cyclists linking between High Street and the shared path along Old Mill Road.	<£1m
	S29f	Junction/roundabout improvements at Crewe Road / Old Mill Road / Hightown Road	Junction/roundabout improvements at Crewe Road / Old Mill Road / Hightown Road to improve transport connections across Sandbach.	£1m-£5m
Public Transport	S1a	Highway improvements to reduce congestion	Tackle congestion on the A533 Middlewich Road and Old Mill Road: introduce highway improvements on Old Mill Road and Middlewich Road to reduce congestion.	£1m-£5m
	S10	Improve facilities at The Commons bus interchange	Improve facilities at The Commons bus interchange.	£1m-£5m

<sup>1</sup> The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.



Sandbach Local Transport Development Plan Schemes

## Retail and Leisure

Cheshire East Council recognises the importance of monitoring key information to assess and respond to issues in its centres and commissions regular reviews of the retail and leisure market across the Borough. The latest partial update of the Retail Study Report generally paints a positive picture for Sandbach in terms of performance since the last Report (2016).

Sandbach, alongside Nantwich and Poynton, is identified as one of three KSCs in Cheshire East that is performing particularly well as a vital and viable centre. The centre is considered to have a good convenience goods and service offer and continues to provide important facilities for its local population. Its mix of national multiple and independent store offering and markets act as key attractors, and a good evening economy adds to its vibrancy. Sandbach is an attractive town centre with good levels of environmental quality.

Overall, the centre provides 156 units (Experian Goad Plan, September 2019) which are primarily located around High Street, Hightown, Congleton Road, Bold Street, Middlewich Road and The Cobbles.

The convenience sector continues to be well represented, with the proportion of units in the

centre being broadly in line with UK average (10% compared to UK average of 9%) and the proportion of floorspace being significantly above the UK average (27% compared to UK average of 15%). The centre is anchored by a Waitrose food store and edge of centre Aldi store which are understood to be trading well. Sandbach also continues to provide valuable indoor and outdoor markets which help to diversify and differentiate the retail offering from other centres.

Whilst slightly lower than the national averages, the proportion of comparison goods units and floorspace in Sandbach is considered reasonable having regard to its local service and shopping catchment role. Most comparison retailers in the centre are independent operators, however, there remains a small number of national multiple brands including M&Co, WHSmith, Savers and Boots. B&M Home Stores also took occupancy of the edge-of-centre former Homebase store in June 2019.

Particular improvements were noted in the leisure service provision since the 2016 report, with the increase of three units. Most leisure units are occupied by independent food and beverage operators providing a range of take aways, bars, restaurants and cafes, with national operators limited to McDonald's and Costa. However, whilst

the proportion of leisure units remains above the national (27% to UK average of 24%), the floorspace falls below owing to the primarily small units in the town.

The vacancy rate continues to be low representing just 7% of units compared to the national average of 12% and there are no long-term vacant units present in the centre. The loss of two national banks (Barclays and RBS) since the last survey has however weakened the town centre service offer.

At this stage, it is unclear what the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic will be on Sandbach's retail and leisure occupiers. Town centre spend will have been, in part, compensated for by more people working from home and using local facilities. In the future, more flexible working habits should mean that Sandbach benefits from its commuter town role.

The strength of Sandbach's independent, market and food and beverage offer, aligned with its civic role and a relatively affluent catchment population, should provide some buffer to the continued challenges facing many of the national high street brands. Therefore, whilst there may be a short term impact on some occupiers, longer term the centre should return to being an attractive location for predominantly independent retail and leisure occupiers but may be constrained by the lack of available premises.



Location of voids in the Town Centre, 2019 . Source: GOAD

	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK Average (%)	Sq.m	%	UK Average (%)
Convenience	15	10	9	7,110	27	15
Comparison	42	27	29	7,830	30	34
Retail Service	30	19	15	2,060	8	7
Leisure Service	42	27	24	6,070	23	26
Financial and Business Service	16	10	10	2,350	9	7
Vacant	11	7	12	1,230	5	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26,650</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Diversity of Uses in Sandbach Town Centre  
Source: Experian GOAD Survey, September 2019. UK Average from the Experian GOAD Category Report (February 2020)

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

The finance and business space identified in the table (derived from the GOAD survey) only relates to ground floor office floorspace within the town centre. Sandbach's office market is considered further on p 57

## Footfall

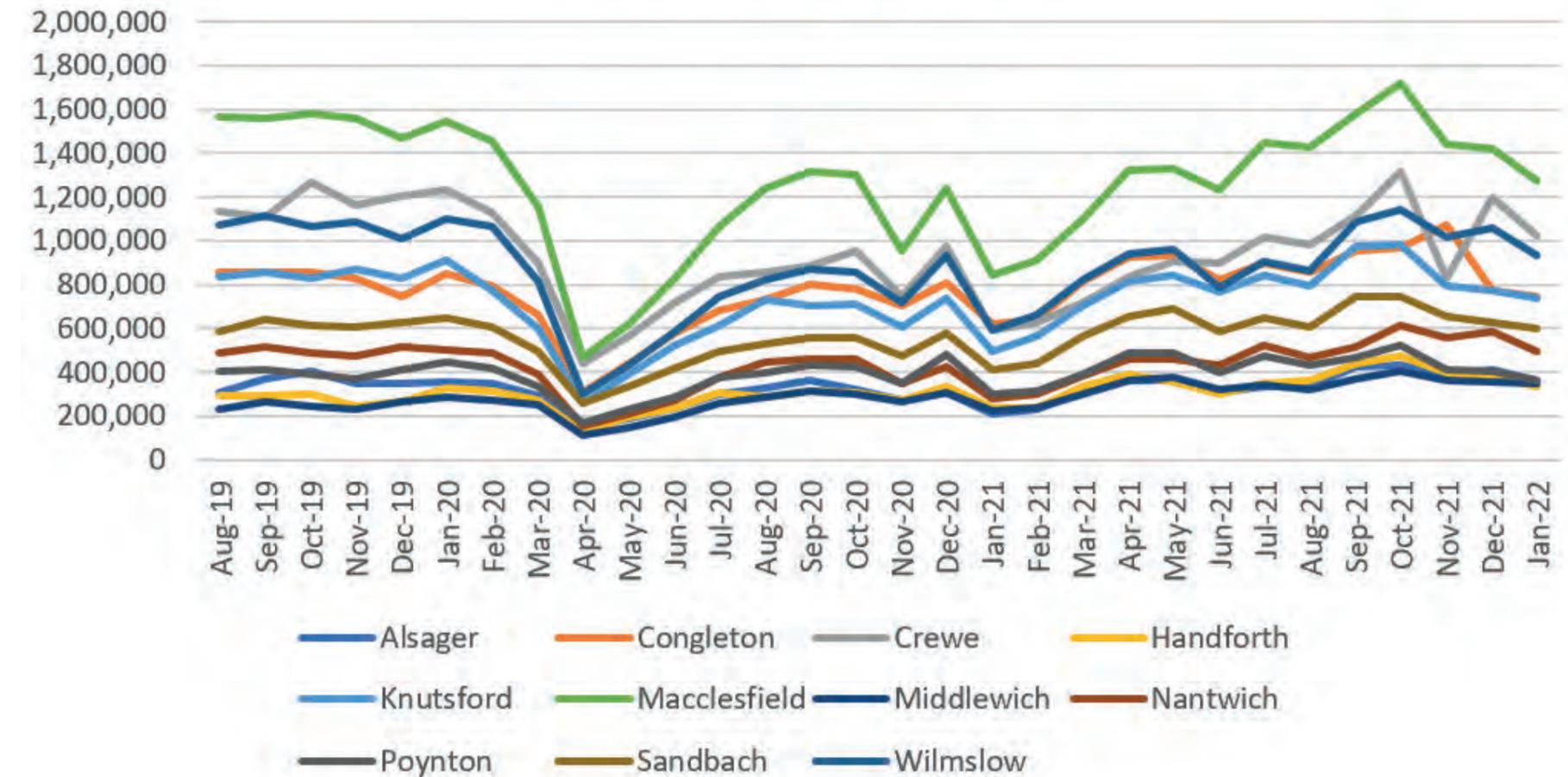
In recognition of the important relationship between footfall and vitality, Cheshire East Council is now commissioning regular monitoring of footfall across the centres. The following graph shows the footfall in all the key centres between August 2019 and December 2020. It starkly shows the impact of Covid on footfall, across Cheshire East particularly in March and November last year (during national lockdowns) and some bounce back in December.

Reflective of the town's relative scale, Sandbach was one of the Cheshire East's mid-performing centres in terms of visitors in August 2019 and retained this position throughout the period to December 2020 with in the region of 600,000 visitors per month. Positively, whilst monthly footfall in Sandbach fell by 10% on the year previously to 556,000 in October 2020, this was around a quarter of the national average benchmark rate of 40% suggesting many working from home were choosing to shop locally.

Covid has had a significant impact on footfall, both during enforced lockdowns but also in further accelerating online retail use. The ability of a centre to attract a wide range of visitors (rather than just relying on shoppers) will have a significant impact on how centres emerge from Covid.



## Town Centre Footfall



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: August 2019 - Jan 2022



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: Sandbach Town Centre: October 2019-2020

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

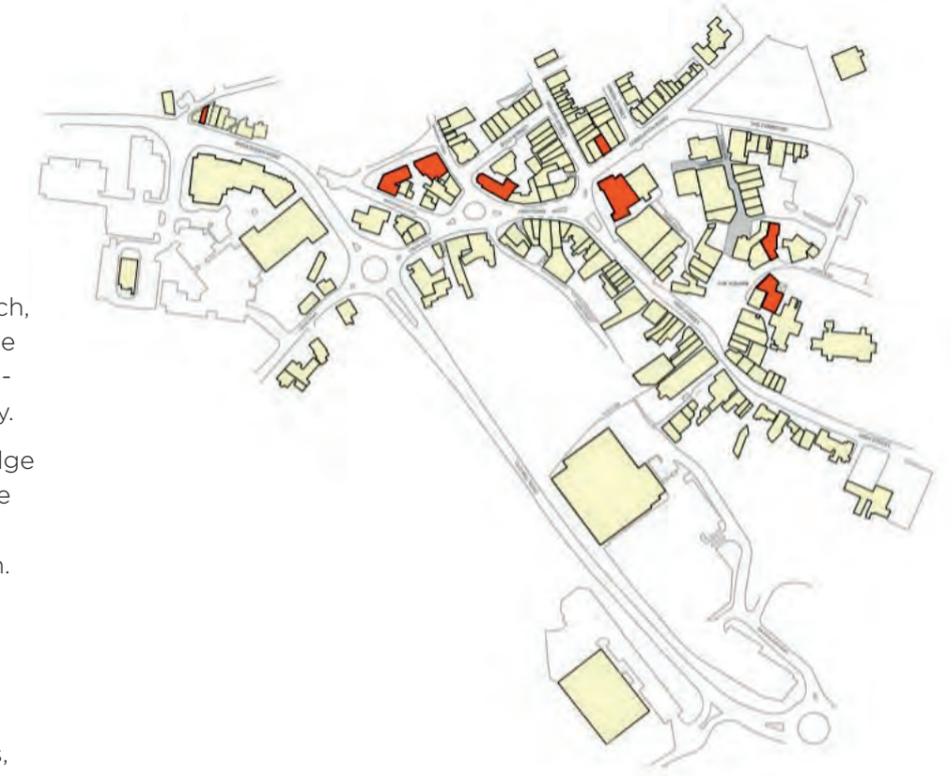
## Employment

As a result of the closure of many factories and businesses over time in Sandbach, and the proximity to the M6 motorway making it an accessible location to a wide range of employment opportunities within the surrounding Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent area, many residents now commute to work outside of Sandbach each day.

Currently, the main employment offer in Sandbach is situated on the western edge of the town at Springvale Industrial Estate in Ettiley village. The 13 hectare estate is well occupier by a mix of industrial occupiers. Other small employment areas include the Zan Industrial Park in Wheelock village and business units in Elworth.

Significant employment development is underway at Capricorn Business Park adjacent to J17 of the M6 motorway. The first phase of the mixed use site has planning permission for a drive-through Costa Coffee, McDonald's restaurant, hotel, pub and a further 2.6 hectares of business park use. Phase 2 provides a further 26 hectares of development land for a commercial park including offices, industrial, storage and distribution, a sports facility and a local centre. The scheme is anticipated to enhance the town's employment role, boost economic growth and reduce the strong prevalence of out-commuting.

Whilst the scale of office use within the town centre is limited, the importance of retail, leisure and tourism as an employer and economic driver in Sandbach is well recognised and will be encouraged. The town is also likely to benefit from the shift in working habits that have emerged during COVID-19 and are likely to continue. It's residential and associated offer are likely to attract workers going forward who want to live in an attractive town, well serviced by local amenities and well connected to larger employment locations where they may work a few days a week. This will further support the vitality and viability of the town centre.



Location of Offices in the Town Centre. Source: GOAD

## Residential Market Context

Sandbach provides an attractive residential location offering easy commuting to employment destinations, set within open countryside surroundings and providing a vibrant historic town centre.

At the time of the 2011 Census the dominant house type across the Cheshire East area was detached housing (35.6%) which is a much higher proportion than the North West (18%) and England (22.4%).

The Sandbach parish area had a total of 7,840 households, representing 4.9% of Cheshire East's total residential stock (159,441). In terms of housing mix, Sandbach is characterised by larger family housing types with 39.1% being detached and a further 36.1% being semi-detached – together making up over three quarters of the housing stock.

There is a need to rebalance the housing offer away from additional family housing to provide more starter homes, affordable housing and homes for older people in order to meet local needs and changing demographics.

Average achieved house prices in Sandbach were in the order of £200,000 to £250,000 in the twelve months to September 2020. This is

relatively affordable compared to many parts of Cheshire East.

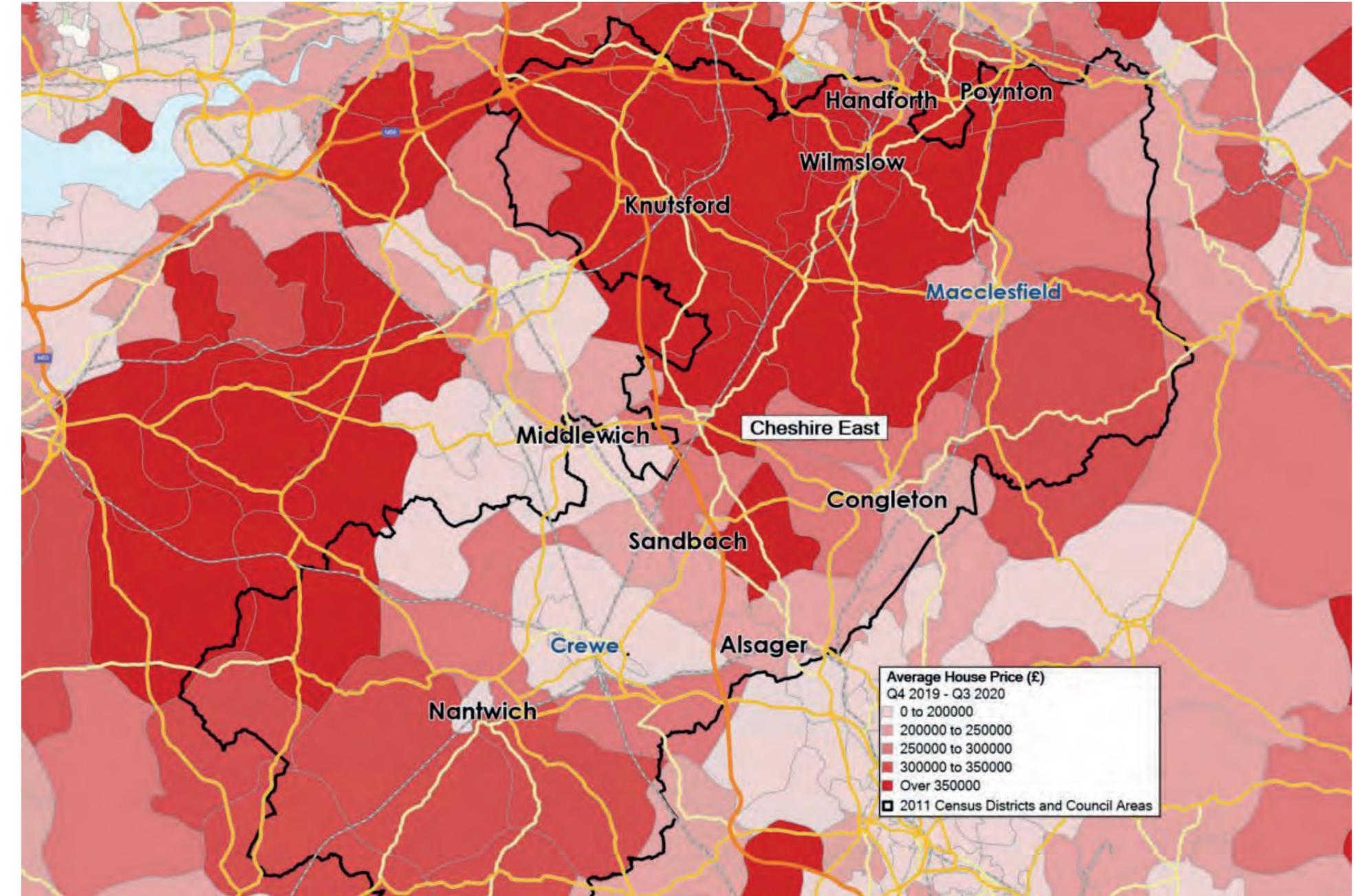
Currently active new housing developments include The Heath on Hawthorn Drive by Persimmon Homes; and Barratt Homes' J One Seven scheme on Old Mill Drive. Both have 4 bed homes available ranging from £256,000 for a terrace to £262,000 for a detached. The Holies is a conversion of a historic town centre building

offering 1 bed apartments from £125,000 to £135,000.

Sandbach has witnessed significant housing growth over recent years and further development is planned. Whilst this presents an opportunity to support and expand town centre services and businesses, it also presents challenges in respect of the ability for the town's infrastructure including health, schools and highways to accommodate the increased demand generated from new housing.

Dwelling Type/Area	Detached	Semi Detached	Terrace	Flat	Other	Total Households
Alsager	39.9%	40.4%	11.6%	8.1%	0%	5,183
Congleton	36.3%	35.4%	19.3%	8.9%	0.2%	11,561
Handforth	26.1%	23.1%	27.9%	22.8%	0.1%	2,936
Knutsford	38.8%	34.2%	19.7%	7.0%	0.4%	5,671
Middlewich	39.0%	26.0%	19.7%	15.3%	0%	5,910
Nantwich	20.8%	30.6%	26.8%	21.6%	0.2%	6,710
Poynton-with-Worth	42.7%	39.2%	10.5%	7.2%	0.3%	6,024
<b>Sandbach</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>36.1%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>7,840</b>
Wilmslow	39.5%	26.6%	19.5%	14.3%	0%	10,615
Cheshire East	35.6%	32.6%	21.2%	10.2%	0.5%	159,441
North West	18.0%	36.3%	29.8%	15.4%	0.5%	3,009,549
England	22.4%	31.2%	24.5%	21.2%	0.7%	22,063,368

Housing Stock by Type.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)



# 08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

This SWOT is based on the analysis of the consultant team and discussions with the Town Council and other local partners including councillors.

## Strengths

- Good accessibility to the M6 and a train station providing national transport linkages
- Attractive historical market town with numerous heritage buildings, conservation areas and open spaces including Central Park
- Flat terrain with pleasant outlook within a rural setting
- Generous and charitable local community, shop and market traders (Thursday market, indoor market and makers market)
- Compact, central and relatively vibrant town centre, providing retail, service and hospitality sectors with a high level of local independent proprietors
- Good business retention and low void rate
- Free parking
- Unique series of spaces defined by historic building pattern and ending in a picturesque market square 'the cobbles' housing the Sandbach Crosses
- Variety of shops and services to provide a full day of activities

## Weaknesses

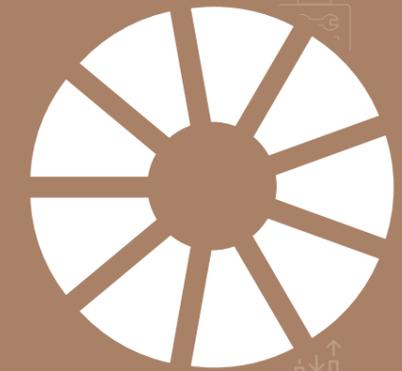
- Acts as a commuter town - Close to the M6 J17 access point and rail links to Manchester and Crewe resulting in issues with car sharing and all day parking but not using the town centre
- Lack of integrated transport links, particularly to the Railway Station a mile from the town centre
- Traffic and congestion, particularly passing through the town centre, resulting in environmental and air quality issues - it is considered that this is a result of positioning between Crewe, Congleton and Middlewich together with the infrastructure having not caught up with the scale of residential development and influx of new residents
- Too many fast food outlets on the high street and shop fronts with inappropriate fascias, signages and illumination
- Insufficient pedestrianisation of the high street and inadequate access/support for disabled people
- Insufficient signage for pedestrians
- Lack of adequate investment to maintain the building stock and town centre e.g. Literary Institute, ex William Deacons Bank opposite Iceland is an eyesore
- Blights on the traditional building landscape e.g. Post Office sorting office on the cobbles.
- Issues around waste management and street environment
- Limited town centre employment beyond retail and the Council - would like to encourage more
- Legibility issues around the back of the market hall/ scotch common car park

## Opportunities

- Adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place and policies within are in the process of being reviewed, updated and strengthened
- Diversification to support offices, services, leisure, cultural and residential uses in appropriate locations (as per Neighbourhood Plan)
- Maintain and improve the choice of retail offering, through increasing the vibrancy of the markets and supporting local independent and small/medium outlets (services and hospitality are adequately served) but ensuring suitable balance with national shops
- Develop a larger public transport network to integrate the new housing estates and the railway station including interconnected footpaths and cycleways that encourage walking and cycling across and through the town
- Environmental improvements including increased tree planting and more protected green spaces
- Encourage more tourism e.g. links to historic centre and surrounding countryside through historic walks
- Opportunity for more events to complement existing - weekend Transport Festival linked to Sandbach's truck heritage; Town Crier Competition; annual Christmas Market
- Use of upper floors for residential or business use
- Opportunity to improve quality of space behind the town hall, where the outdoor market takes place and public realm along the high street
- Opportunity to improve links from Sandbach Park, through to High Street

## Threats

- Parking is currently free. Understand need to review charges but "harmonisation" across the borough will discourage people from visiting Sandbach and risk displacement of parking onto many surrounding residential streets (as happened when Sandbach Station started charging £3 per day)
- Further increase in traffic through and around the town e.g. resulting from the forthcoming Middlewich Eastern Bypass and/or more non-strategic/unplanned housing developments. "30-40%" increase in population under local plans (Sandbach already exceeded 2030 housing figures) but limit/no improvements to transport infrastructure.
- Threat of on-line and out of centre shopping (e.g. Muller housing development and the "new crosses")
- High levels of unemployment following COVID 19 crisis - further reduction in local job opportunities for local people
- New planning rules regarding change of use i.e. shops to residential
- Residents are attracted to nearby shopping towns with better shop selection / parking facilities
- Relatively high level of rents and Business Rates for Town Centre properties (Sandbach far higher than Congleton for example)
- Older and ageing population - need to consider their requirements including housing and accessibility
- Anticipate future issues around EV charging for historic properties with no off-street parking.
- Many stakeholders - but apathy and some do not get on e.g. Sandbach Traders and Retailers (STAR)
- Heritage buildings, which can require more maintenance may fall into disrepair if vacant for longer periods of time



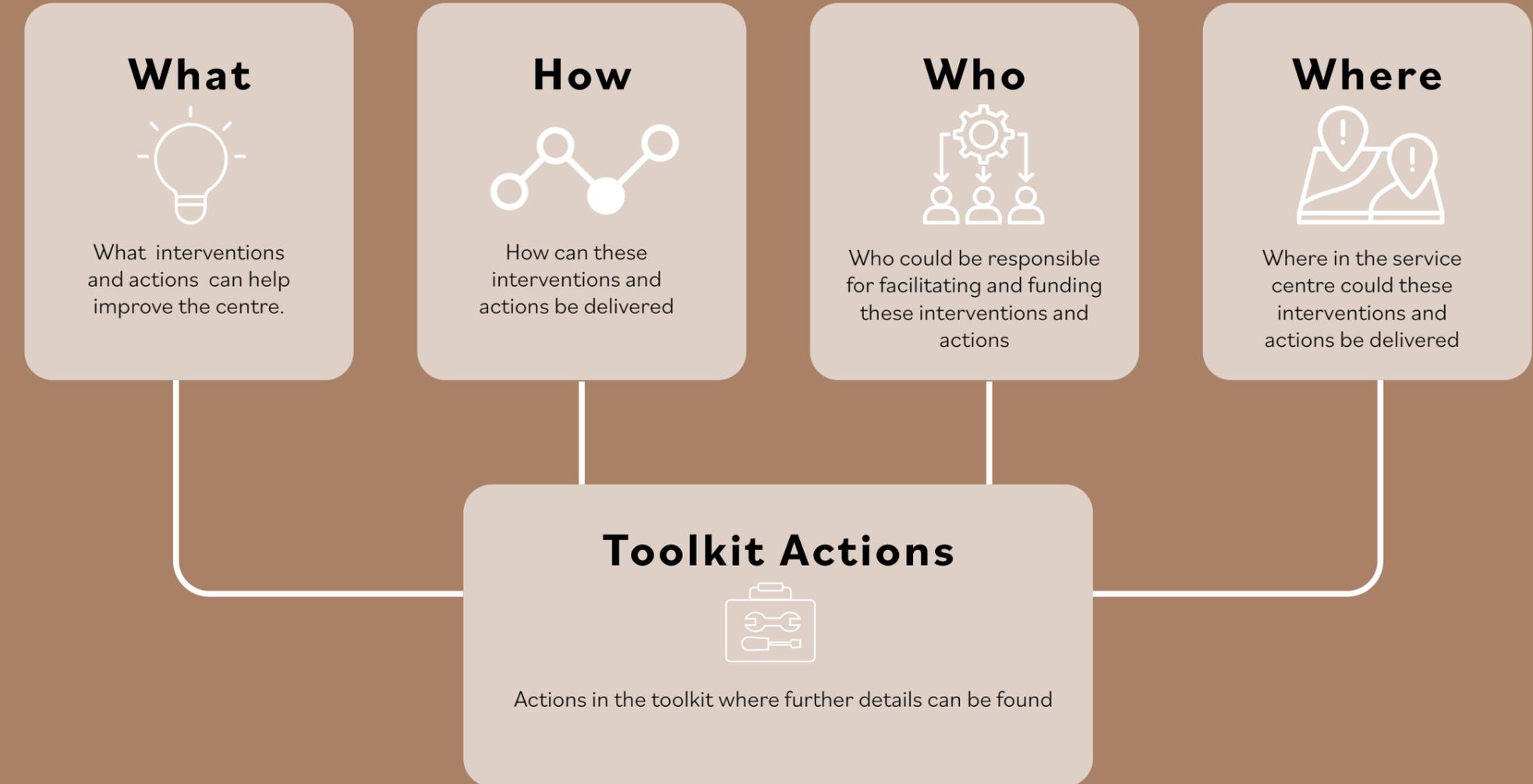
# SANDBACH ACTION PLAN

## 09 Priority Areas for Intervention

The Action Plan has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for Sandbach responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

For each of the actions further details are provided in terms of what, how, who and where (see box for further details).

The Action Plan is supported by a Toolkit which provides a wide range of actions across 25 intervention areas (which align with the High Street Task Force recommendations) which can be undertaken by a range of stakeholders.



# Vision and objectives

## Vision Statement

Sandbach will continue to be a distinctive rural market town formed by villages intersected by open countryside. There will be a wide range of community facilities and businesses that will prosper and expand as the town evolves and expands in respect of the views of the community. This will ensure that current and future generations enjoy a strong sense of community, a high quality of life and a flourishing natural environment.

## Objectives

- **To protect and enhance the open countryside setting**
- **To preserve and enhance the heritage and character of Sandbach**
- **To manage housing supply at a sustainable rate and satisfy local housing need**
- **To promote and maintain a thriving local economy and employment**
- **To develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system**
- **To protect and maintain existing community amenities and add appropriate new services and facilities**
- **To adapt to climate change through sustainable development and low carbon economy**

## Role of the Centre

Sandbach plays a number of important roles:

- A local centre serving the needs of its local residents
- A civic hub comprising Cheshire East Council offices and Town Hall comprising a library and community venue
- A visitor destination offering a range of heritage assets, events and leisure amenities
- An employment hub offering a range of job opportunities

The Vitality Plan seeks to support Sandbach to fulfil its potential across these important roles.

# Areas for intervention

The following have been identified as areas for intervention. Priority interventions identified through the public consultation are highlighted with a white border.

Potential actions are identified in Section 10:



# Spatial action plan

The Spatial Action Plan illustrates key features of the Centre and identifies where proposed actions could be delivered.

It highlights the opportunities to reduce car dominance around the market hall and improve connections to key green assets in the centre such as Sandbach Park.

The three priority actions which have emerged from the public consultations are:

- **Action 2 : Deliver a movement plan, reduce car dominance**
- **Action 6 Mobilising the business community**
- **Action 7 Improve connections between key destinations and the centre**

## Actions

-  **Action 1: Opportunity for physical change: around Market Hall**  
Area for short term enhancement using meanwhile uses and tactical urbanism (pop-up seating, planting, parklets) to better balance space used by outdoor market and vehicles
-  **Action 2: Deliver a movement plan/ reduce car dominance**  
Focus area for public realm works to better balance the movement of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles, and enhance the setting of heritage buildings in the town centre
-  **Action 3: Encourage walking and cycling**  
Key roads for active travel corridors
-  Key locations for new cycle hubs
-  **Action 4: Showcasing Sandbach's Heritage and Tourism Assets**  
Conceptual route for an online or self guided heritage trail
-  **Action 7: improve connections between the key destinations and the centre**  
Enhanced walking routes to town centre/ key assets/ local greenspaces
-  Priority gateway for signage/wayfinding/artwork, to provide a clear sense of arrival into Nantwich town centre



# Movement action plan

## Town Centre movement schemes suggested in addition to LTDP potential schemes

A series of schemes have been identified through the TCVP process, building upon those set out in the LTDP.

They are intended to strengthen and expand the existing LTDP proposals – with a stronger emphasis on active travel and public realm to enhance the street environment.

Sandbach TCVP Proposals				
Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	S_AT1	Improve pedestrians and cyclists' crossings at Crewe Road / Old Mill Road / Hightown Road	Reduce severance and provide safer and better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at Crewe Road / Old Mill Road / Hightown Road roundabout.	<£1m
	S_AT2	Improve walking and cycling route between the town centre and Sandbach Park	Improve walking and cycling route between the town centre and Sandbach Park to remove current pedestrian barrier through car park.	<£1m
	S_AT3	Improve signage and wayfinding across the town centre	Improve signage and wayfinding across the town centre to enhance visitor experience and signpost existing attractive assets.	<£100k
	S_AT4	Improve pedestrians and cyclists' crossings at Old Mill Road / Flat Ln	Aim to reduce severance and provide safer and better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at Old Mill Road / Flat Ln junction	<£1m
	S_AT5	Improve pedestrians and cyclists' crossings at Old Mill Road / High St / The Hill	Aim to reduce severance and provide safer and better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at Old Mill Road / High St / The Hill junction	<£1m
Public Realm	S_PR1	Enhance the pedestrian environment on Hightown	Enhance public realm along Hightown between the existing roundabouts to improve the pedestrian environment and access to the town centre, including pavement surface improvements and exploration of pedestrian priority.	£1m-£5m
	S_PR2	Enhance gateway and public realm in front of the Town Hall	Enhance gateway and public realm at the Town Hall including improvements to pavement materials, street furniture and planting which is currently tired and underwhelming.	£1m-£5m
	S_PR3	Enhance market area to the back of the Town Hall	Enhance public realm within the market area to the back of the Town Hall to improve pavement materials and upgrade street furniture and planting - which is currently tired and underwhelming. Undertake a review of parking management measures to explore opportunities for better use of space.	<£1m

<sup>1</sup> The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.  
[cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1](http://cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1)



Avignon, France Planters to trial pedestrian priority and road closure interventions. (Photo credit: MottMacdonald)

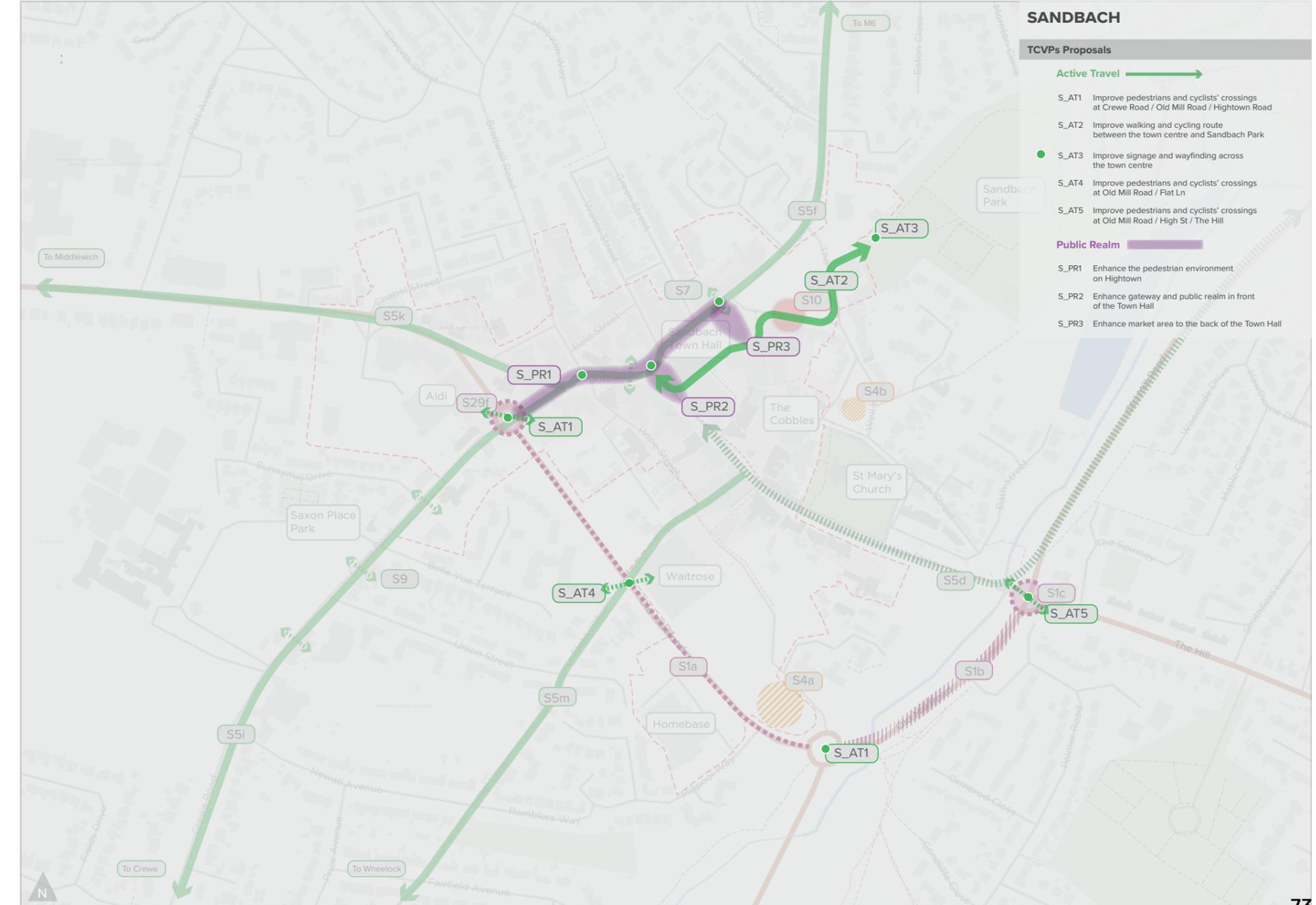


Poynton, Cheshire Informal street treatment at roundabout – applicable at key town centre junctions as Crewe Rd/Hightown roundabout and Hightown Drinking Fountain. (Photo credit: MottMacdonald)



Maid Marian Way, Nottingham Supercrossing – direct, wide crossing and integrated green features. A similar approach could be considered at the A533/ Crewe Road junction. (Photo credit: MottMacdonald)

## Town Centre Viability Plan Proposals



## 10 Potential actions



### Action 1: Opportunity for physical change around the Market Hall

#### What

Sandbach benefits from a number of interesting heritage buildings and attractive public spaces reflecting its market town status and creating a unique identity for the town. The Town Hall in particular has benefited from significant refurbishment by Sandbach Town Council and is a thriving hall hosting many events. However, the area around the Market Hall and Town Hall is surrounded by roads which detract from their profile and key gateway location, creating a less pleasant environment than their setting deserves. Underutilisation on non-market days creates an opportunity for new uses. This could be on an interim basis or on event days to test how such a scheme could work in the longer term if successful.

This action seeks to enhance the setting of the Town Hall, Market Hall and Outdoor Market to improve the experience of both market and non-market days and increase footfall by encouraging visitors to dwell in a more attractive urban environment.

It must be recognised that significant physical change would be very costly and whilst this may be a longer term aspiration, more modest interventions may be more realistic in the current economic climate.

#### How

Physical change around the Market Hall could be implemented through the following actions:

- Claim more space (from roads and highways) in front of and behind the Town Hall/ Market Hall building, to increase dwell time and create a more vibrant atmosphere - with pop-up seating areas, lighting installations, art installations, moveable planting
- Open up the Town Hall for events and activities
- Encourage pop up activity spaces e.g. planters on wheels

- Use lighting and artwork to enliven space and better frame market spaces
- Use Town Hall frontage in 'smarter' ways - e.g. 'Good Ideas Shop' to provide space for online business advertising: [https://www.facebook.com/business/m/good-ideas-shop?content\\_id=8dxdnW5laCGdmVb](https://www.facebook.com/business/m/good-ideas-shop?content_id=8dxdnW5laCGdmVb)
- Consider potential for pop up food events in Market Hall on non-market days e.g. Altrincham and Crewe Food Halls
- Use Town Hall frontage in 'smarter' ways - e.g. 'Good Ideas Shop' to provide space for online business advertising: [https://www.facebook.com/business/m/good-ideas-shop?content\\_id=8dxdnW5laCGdmVb](https://www.facebook.com/business/m/good-ideas-shop?content_id=8dxdnW5laCGdmVb), but always ensuring the heritage character of the area is protected

#### Who

- Town Council
- Market team
- CEC

#### Where

- Around Town Hall and Market Hall



#### Action 4 supports the following objectives:

- To preserve and enhance the heritage and character of Sandbach
- To promote and maintain a thriving local economy and employment
- To protect and maintain existing community amenities and add appropriate new services and facilities



#### Toolkit Actions

- 1b - Introduce a programme of events
- 1d - Use lighting
- 4a - Provide pop-up seating
- 4d - Planting in pots to define space
- 4f - Open up heritage buildings as venues
- 14a - Tactical urbanism to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly space
- Markets



# Action 1: Opportunity for physical change around the Market Hall

## Re imagining the approach to Market Hall

Sandbach's wonderful Grade II listed Town Hall and Market Hall presents a fantastic opportunity to revitalise an important cross route within the town. The space immediately adjacent to the building is currently cluttered by street furniture and dominated by roads.

By reconsidering how this space functions, a more equitable and flexible space could be used to support the functions of the Market Hall and the surrounding businesses.

Initially, pop up uses, temporary installations and programme of activities can change perceptions of the space. Longer term, more interventionist reconfiguration of the highway can free up spaces for community and civic use allowing the space to be active more of the time.



Opportunities to create new crossing facilities that re-connected both sides of the street and encourage more informal pedestrian crossing trips

Reclaim the space around the Market Hall and remove conflicts with other users by creating clear areas. Temporary, moveable planters, seating and other elements can help to safely divide the space

More opportunities for spill out space on flexible spaces - cafe seating, performance space linked to a town festival, dwell space or seller space.

Reduce the dominance of the highway by narrowing carriageways and increasing foot-way widths where its practical to do so - this creates spaces for businesses to occupy with their produce, seating etc and encourages more people to walk comfortably into and around the town centre. A host of temporary, easy win measures can be used to begin to change the use of the space - recycled timber parklets, low cost reclaimed timber seating, moveable but secure box planter build outs and seating, cycle parks.



## Action 2: Deliver a movement plan/ reduce car dominance (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Reducing the dominance of cars in the heart of the town centre to encourage visitors to be able to dwell, creating a safer and healthier environment. Re-prioritising pedestrians and reducing the space for cars provides town centre visitors with a more pleasant place to shop, relax and to browse more comfortably, which in turn benefits businesses through increased footfall, dwell time and linked trips across previously dominant roads. Shop fronts are also more visible when not hidden behind large and/or heavy vehicle movements.

### How

The streets within the town centre are predominantly focused around the movement of vehicles, with the movement and experience of people on foot an after-thought. Creating streets that value and welcome pedestrians are essential ingredients to successful town centres. Car dominance could be reduced in a number of locations across the town centre:

- Hightown Drinking Fountain to High Street – the existing roundabouts at the drinking fountain and outside the Town Hall should be reimagined as a new high-quality public space. Further work is required to understand the options available, but it is likely vehicle access would need to be retained through the space, but with greater priority given to pedestrians.
- High Street and The Cobbles – The Cobbles is a good quality civic space and focal point for the town. The treatment of High Street, as a key connector to The Cobbles, should be improved using natural stone to match.
- Review access & movement to the Town Centre – alongside the above schemes, a review of movement issues and options should be undertaken. One issue identified is that cars use High St and the town centre to bypass traffic lights, especially at peak times.
- A533 Middlewich Road Roundabout – this is a major barrier to the safer movement of pedestrians from the west of the town, and better pedestrian facilities are required at this junction. There is concern amongst local stakeholders that the new Middlewich Eastern Bypass (MEB) could induce or redirect higher levels of traffic into this area. CEC will review the work done to date on MEB and consider whether any additional mitigation is required in Sandbach.
- Old Mill Road – explore design options to address congestion and improve access into Sandbach town centre whilst ensuring conditions for cyclists and pedestrians are also enhanced

Ideas can be soft-tested as temporary measures to review any impact on businesses, e.g. by using planters to increase

pavement width and parklets, sponsored by local businesses in on-street parking bays.

### Who

- Town Council
- CEC

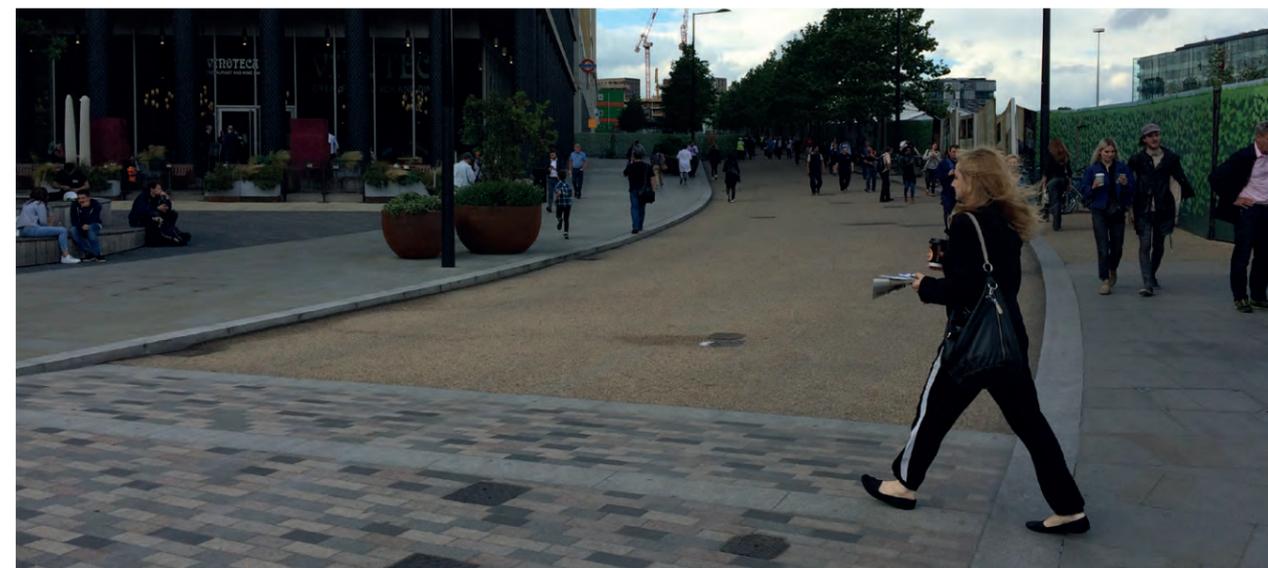
### Where

Across the town centre but focused upon:

- Hightown Drinking Fountain to High Street
- High Street and The Cobbles
- Old Mill Road
- A533 Middlewich Road Roundabout



Source: Civic Engineers <https://civicengineers.com/project/poynton-cheshire/>



Benchmark Location: King Cross Arena



### Action 2 supports the following objectives:

- To preserve and enhance the heritage and character of Sandbach
- To develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system
- To adapt to climate change through sustainable development and low carbon economy



### Toolkit Actions

- 4c – Better bus stops
- 4d – Planting in pots to define space for certain uses
- 9c – Enable a café culture
- 14a – Tactical urbanism to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces
- 14c – Enhanced crossings
- 18e – Prioritise environmental considerations in the design of new public spaces
- 25c – Facilitate modal shift



## Action 3: Encourage walking and cycling

### What

On the main roads outside of the town centre core, conditions for people on foot or cycle can be challenging, with high vehicle flows, high design speeds, narrow footways, and limited safe crossing points. An example of this is the connection between the town centre and railway station along A533 London Road/Middlewich Road.

Several proposals are set out in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP) and Neighbourhood Plan (NP). These proposals should be supported and progressed, helping build confidence for those who presently feel less comfortable on foot or cycle than in their car.

Support cycle and walking routes from the town centre to the Train Station in Elworth. The Town Council and Community Rail Partnership are already working towards match funded community projects to support this aspiration.

Whilst seeking to encourage walking and cycling it is acknowledged that not all people are able to do so and therefore car use will continue to be required in some circumstances.

### How

- Explore design options for routes identified as key active travel connections in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP). This includes Congleton Road, Crewe Road and Park Lane.
- Deliver enhanced pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities at key junctions and pedestrian routes including the Crewe Road/Highton Road roundabout, High Street/ The Hill junction, Park Lane, between B&M and Waitrose, at Bradwell Road and near the Heath Road Co-op.
- Consider the location of cycle parking linked to improved green links and introduce secure, safe cycle parking in central retail areas such as Welles Street, Green Street and Bold Street
- Raise awareness and improve pedestrian/cycle connections to existing provision for walking and cycling including Sandbach Park, St Mary's Dell, Dingle Wood and the Woodland Corridor
- Support cycle and walking routes from the town centre to the Train Station in Elworth
- Improve signage and wayfinding across the town
- Consider linkages with local cycling clubs, walking groups and relevant volunteer organisations e.g. Sandbach Footpath Group to encourage walking and cycling
- Disabled access to platforms at Sandbach Station
- Ensure foot and cycle paths are safe and well maintained including removing overgrown trees and hedges, ensuring even surfaces and are well lit

### Who

- CEC
- CEC Cycling Champion
- Town Council
- Local cycling and walking organisations
- Community Rail Partnership

### Where

- Town centre and edges but with a focus on key routes



Benchmark Location: Leys Ave, Letchworth Garden City



Benchmark Location: Cannon, Preston



### Action 3 supports the following objectives:

- To protect and enhance the open countryside setting
- To develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system
- To adapt to climate change through sustainable development and low carbon economy



### Toolkit Actions

- 7e - Bike and scooter parking
- 11a - Design a holistic public realm scheme that improves pedestrian provision



## Action 4: Showcasing Sandbach's Heritage and Tourism Assets

### What

Sandbach boasts a rich heritage including a number of high quality buildings and monuments along its main central streets. The Town Council and other groups already promote the town's heritage, including through a series of major annual events such as the Transport Festival, and by enhancing the setting of heritage assets through the work of its rangers, floral displays etc. There is scope to expand upon these assets and link with wider attractions, to increase visitor and tourism opportunities that would benefit the town centre as a whole.

This Action relates closely to Action 5 Raising the Town's Profile and could contribute towards expanding the visitor economy of Sandbach.

### How

Advancements in technology have opened up lots of new opportunities to showcase heritage assets in new and exciting ways. The use of QR codes, apps and interactive information points means more insight can be offered to more visitors. Interactive walking and/or heritage trails could be prepared and tailored to themes such as the town's buildings and monuments, key historical figures or local pubs. Consideration should be given as to how to use these to encourage visitors to venture into other parts of the town and surrounding green/attractive areas including Sandbach Park. Other actions proposed should enhance the setting of the Town's heritage assets and encourage people to dwell more around those at the Market Hall and The Cobbles and appreciate them. Better signage could also help direct visitors to these assets.

A number of the other local centres including Knutsford and Middlewich are also looking to make more of their heritage assets and it would be worth engaging with them to share best practice and also to consider whether there is scope to collaborate with them and other organisations to encourage linked trips for visitors.

Better utilisation of Sandbach Park and The Cobbles for events, markets and outdoor seating for bars and restaurants should also be considered, alongside more heritage focused events such as a May Day Market, with scope to link to showcasing the town's other assets.

There could be scope to engage with local businesses in local relevant events e.g. Bentley for a Transport Festival or Faders Brass Band. Local businesses may also be willing to provide expertise to support the Town to develop a local app or QR codes.

### Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- Local businesses
- Other towns with heritage and tourism assets
- Volunteers and community groups
- Marketing Cheshire

### Where

- Across Sandbach



Some of Sandbach's heritage and tourism assets



### Action 4 supports the following objectives:

- To protect and enhance the open countryside setting
- To develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system
- To adapt to climate change through sustainable development and low carbon economy



### Toolkit Actions

- 1a – Improve the evening offer
- 1b – Introduce a programme of events which open-up and connect different parts of the centre for a limited time
- 1c – Enable autumn and winter al-fresco dining
- 1d – Use lighting
- 3a – Managing assets
- 4f – Open up heritage buildings as venues or for visitors/ events
- 9b – Curated events focused on historic buildings, public spaces, gardens and parks
- 15a – Annual/ regular events
- 16a – Self guided heritage tours



## Action 5: Raising the town's profile

### What

Create a platform from which to promote Sandbach's great assets and numerous events to ensure that residents, visitors and local businesses are aware of what is on offer in the centre. This should support the centre to be recognised as the heart of the community.

### How

Whilst Sandbach already has a well-supported and reasonable profile proportionate to its size and offering, a number of actions could be considered to further raise the profile of the town:

Currently the Town Council provides basic information about Sandbach, key policy documents and meetings, local services and events/things to do on its website. However, many centres now have their own websites to showcase what their centres have to offer.

A new website for Sandbach has been approved by the Town Council and planned for launch in 2023. It will provide an improved single point for information that is relevant to existing and new residents; local businesses; community groups; and visitors. It should also provide information on:

- The existing offer in terms of shops, bars, restaurants etc
- Events programme
- How local businesses can get together to identify collaboration opportunities
- How to get involved in local groups
- What's on offer in the local and surrounding area including tourism attractions

Consideration could be given, as has just been done in Wilmslow, to work with a local marketing company to develop a brand linked to their website and other media channels - [www.wilmslowwaybetter.co.uk](http://www.wilmslowwaybetter.co.uk). It showcases many exciting aspects of the town such as it's wellbeing, Food and beverage offer, cinema, businesses, shopping and how to explore the wider area. The website was created by local businesses who wanted to support Wilmslow.

Next steps could include linking up with other partners' websites such as CEC, other market centres with a similar profile and local visitor attractions in the wider area to enhance "footfall" on the Sandbach pages. The Cheshire Vibe business directory is already starting to do this for Sandbach.

Further, whilst Sandbach has a page on the Visit Chester and Cheshire website that promotes the town, additional content could be added to really showcase the town including its assets and facilities together with profiles of local businesses (and individuals to make it more personal), local walks, cycle routes etc. Links to relevant websites including community groups could also be provided.

Other mechanisms to raise the profile of the centre could include:

- Wider promotion of the Town's established programme of popular events – a "what's on" in Sandbach
- Improved signage (physical and virtual via app/QR code) to stop people just passing through
- Establish Town Ambassadors and encourage brand loyalty
- Promotion through positive PR and good news stories
- Ensure that key messages from the Vitality Plan are fed into the Visitor Economy Strategy that is being prepared for Cheshire East
- Link in with Marketing Cheshire to see if there are any opportunities for collaboration
- Engage with other similar market towns and see if there is scope to showcase each other's assets to broaden the appeal of the town to attract new visitors e.g. Leek, Buxton etc.
- Promotion of Sandbach via dedicated social media channels
- Provide information on things to do in Sandbach within the Library
- Engage with established community, volunteer and sporting groups to promote things to do and special interests

### Who

- Town Council
- Marketing Cheshire
- Local Businesses

### Where

- N/A



### Action 5 objectives:

- To protect and enhance the open countryside setting
- To preserve and enhance the heritage and character of Sandbach
- To promote and maintain a thriving local economy and employment



### Toolkit Actions

- 2a – Create a smarter High street
- 3b – Appointment of town centre champions
- 3c – Destination management plans
- 4b – Better signage
- 10a – Independent shop guides
- 12a – Create an App
- 12b – Creation of Local Brand
- 12c – Set-up an online platform
- 12d – Introduce WIFI/ digital high street/ town centre app
- 15a – Annual/ regular events



## Action 6: Mobilising the business community (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Sandbach already has a strong network of local community groups who support the town and its events and amenities. It is recommended that this energy is harnessed and extended to the business community (those in the centre and in employment locations around its edges including at the new Capricorn Business Park). Engaging and consulting with these local stakeholders and businesses with these local stakeholders and businesses and encouraging them to collaborate more effectively will support the economic growth of the area. In addition, many businesses are considering how they can add value to their local communities.

### How

Whilst it is recognised that it is challenging without financial incentives, local stakeholders and businesses should be encouraged to collaborate and generate new opportunities to share customers, cross sell etc. Groundwork have recently been appointed by Wilmslow Town Council to support local business engagement and to test the appetite to establish a Business Improvement District (BID). However, a lighter approach could be pursued in Sandbach by supporting local businesses to network and understand how they could get involved in supporting the actions identified in the Vitality Plan. If actions can be identified around issues/opportunities that relate to their core function, businesses may be able to provide the following to support the Town's aspirations:

- Sponsorship
- Materials
- Technical support
- Volunteers
- Promotion

Business networking could also identify "themes" where businesses can drive opportunities forward for example retailer and food and

beverage, hosting a fashion show or beauty event. This should not just be focused on retailers but should also target businesses on the local employment areas. It could also generate opportunities for business to business referrals.

This action could be supported through the establishment or reinstatement of business groups such as Traders and Retailer Group, Sandbach Partnership or Chamber of Commerce. In the interim, the Town Council is keen to work with the business community to build linkages and develop this action.

Other ways to engage local retailers and businesses could be through bringing them into events and initiatives such as extended opening hours for key events or window display competitions.

Businesses could also come together to establish loyalty schemes to support shoppers to stay local. This has worked well in Belper <https://lovebelper.co.uk/>

### Who

- Town Council
- Local businesses especially larger and dynamic/innovative/creative businesses. It is recognised that some retailers may be struggling but other local businesses may be keen to get involved and support their community
- Groundwork?

### Where

- Across Sandbach including the growing Capricorn Business Park



### Action 6 supports the following objectives:

- To promote and maintain a thriving local economy and employment
- To protect and maintain existing community amenities and add appropriate new services and facilities



### Toolkit Actions

- 10a - Independent shop guides
- 13a - Business profiles
- 13b - Community wealth building
- 25f - Tap into local talent



## Action 7: Improve connections between key destinations and the centre (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Improving connections across the town and between key assets in the town centre, particularly by walking and cycling, to enhance the experience of the Sandbach and encourage activity between different town centre assets. The town has several assets located on the edge of its centre that are currently disconnected (both visually and perceptually). Improvements to the links which connect these assets to the town centre are already being identified by the Town Council's Access Working Group and will require working jointly with CEC to seek funding to deliver. Improved connections across Sandbach will encourage more sustainable movements as well as encouraging more trips back into the town centre.

### How

Improved connections can be achieved by the following

- Enhanced walking route from Sandbach Park, through Scotch Common and onto High Street
- Greening of Scotch Common - to provide a clear walking route but retaining car parking provision
- Provide better co-ordinated directional signage and maps, with distances where appropriate, between town centre locations and surrounding assets to ensure locals and visitors understand direction and time between key destinations
- Improve crossings adjacent to key assets to improve pedestrian accessibility
- Promote trails and linked activities across wider outdoor recreational destinations to encourage families to undertake cycle trips and outdoor activities

### Who

- CEC
- Town Council

### Where

- Connecting Sandbach Park and other key housing and employment assets to the centre.



### Action 7 supports the following objectives:

- To protect and enhance the open countryside setting
- To promote and maintain a thriving local economy and employment
- To develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system
- To protect and maintain existing community amenities and add appropriate new services and facilities
- To adapt to climate change through sustainable development and low carbon economy



### Toolkit Actions

- 4b - Better signage
- 4d - Planting in pots to improve space
- 14a - Tactical urbanism to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces
- 14c - Enhanced crossings

# Centre wide actions

In addition to the specific actions identified for Congleton, a number of actions have been identified that are relevant to all of the nine centres. These are:

## 1. *Appointment of CEC Centre Champion*

The identification of a nominated officer (go to person/champion) within CEC management team for each of the Centres who would understand local priorities for the Centre and would support them to access appropriate officers within key departments and also would seek to unblock issues. It is understood that this is something CEC is currently considering. This would be supported by an providing each of the centres with a clear organogram of who within CEC is responsible for what to make engagement easier.

## 2. *Creation of a Centres Forum*

Establishment of forum where key representatives from each of the centres could come together on a regular basis to receive updates from CEC about common issues/opportunities would be beneficial. It is also recognised that during the preparation of the Vitality Plans that a number of the centres are making a great progress overcoming specific issues. By coming together and

sharing progress and discussing issues it is considered that the centres would be better able to share best practice and to identify actions where they could collaborate with other centres to drive economies of scale/value for money. Some meetings may just be held between the centres (within out representation from CEC officers) whilst others could include CEC and/or other partners such as C&W LEP, Groundwork etc.

## 3. *Centre Focused Meetings in CEC*

The process of preparing the Vitality Plans has involved internal workshops with relevant department leads within CEC to ensure that all departments are considering challenges and opportunities in the round rather than just in terms of their individual responsibility. It would be beneficial to continue to hold more regular Centre focused workshops. The best decisions for the centres will be taken when the implications of proposals are considered in the round taking into account both potential investment and long term maintenance.

## 4. *Streamlining maintenance of public realm and greenspace*

In light of the local desire for improved maintenance combined with recognition that CEC budgets are under severe pressure, it is recommended to ensure maintenance of public realm can be optimised that further engagement would be beneficial to agree how the resources of CEC, the Town Council and wider stakeholders could be targeted to support maintenance. Work to establish a more comprehensive schedule of local assets in each centre and who is responsible for their maintenance should be the starting point of drive for improved maintenance. Going forward any future capital investment must be supported by appropriate consideration as to how assets will be maintained over their lifetime. It is also important to recognise that better maintenance does not necessarily just relate to grass being cut regularly. In recognition of the importance of biodiversity, going forward it is anticipated that consideration will be given to allocating parcels of land to the “wild” to support biodiversity.

## 5. *Increasing importance of sustainability*

Sustainability is now a critical issue for many organisations and important for local residents both in terms of operational implications (for example energy costs) but also in terms of local impact on the local community and the planet. As such sustainability can no longer be positioned as another priority action but rather must be a concept that is considered in every aspect of proposed actions to minimise their carbon footprint and maximise their positive benefits for the local area and its community.

## 6. *Improved platform for communicating activities*

The preparation of the Vitality Plans has demonstrated that all of the centres are proactively trying to improve their centres. However it is recognised that many stakeholders will not be aware of all these efforts. Consideration therefore needs to be given as to how to amplify to more local residents, shoppers, visitors and businesses what

is going on. Consideration should be given as to how to enhance the current websites for example adding more content and sharing this through a variety of channels and to ensure that these are also linked to other key partners for example CEC and the other centres (so collectively they reinforcing each other’s profiles)

## 7. *Enhanced engagement with local businesses*

Many of the centres benefit from having a range of national, and in some cases international businesses, many of which are innovating in their specialist areas. There is a significant benefit to the centres and their businesses to collaborating. Whilst restrictions on public sector revenue budgets is putting pressure on what CEC can support there is an increasing recognition by businesses, especially corporates, for the need to support their local communities (Corporate Social Responsibility). This can be in the form of grants, offering expertise or encouraging their employees to volunteer. Even smaller businesses often want to give back to the communities in which they operate. This can be in the form of materials and/or

specialist expertise (e.g. marketing which has been harnesses by Wilmslow in setting up the Wilmslow’s Way Better brand and website). All centres should seek to better engage with their local businesses to determine how they can collaborate to support each other’s objectives. This type of collaboration can give centres a significant boost particularly when it happens around public realm (investment and maintenance), marketing and branding.

## 8. *Greater ownership of community assets*

A couple of Town Councils have taken responsibility for their community assets (both in terms of ownership and/or management). CEC is willing to engage with each of the Town and Parish Councils to discuss whether there could be benefits from greater local ownership of local assets. A process is in place to support this to happen. This is an area where centres who are already doing this could share pros and cons with other centres looking to take greater responsibility in their areas.

# 11 Delivery

## Governance and Delivery

Sandbach Town Council is responsible for supporting Sandbach to fulfil its potential. Going forward the Town Council will continue to be a major driver in the delivery of the agreed actions emerging from the Vitality Plan.

Having established a range of potential projects that will support Sandbach to thrive, further work is now required to determine a detailed action plan setting out who will do what and by when.

It is recommended that dedicated working groups are set up to drive specific short term priority actions forward. The action focused working groups will be responsible for:

- Defining the details of the proposed action
- Considering how it could be funded
- Determining who needs to be involved in supporting its delivery and what their role will be
- Seeking funding - this might require support from other partners

- Determining the timetable for intervention
- Monitoring and evaluating progress against key performance indicators and refining actions if agreed outcomes are not being met
- Reporting progress to relevant partners including the WIP and CEC
- Recommending that CEC, Town Council and any other key local stakeholder groups be invited to adopt the TCVP as a shared common plan. This would allow easy demonstration to potential funders that there is a consensus of approach and buy in from the local community

The makeup of the working groups will vary depending on the specific actions they are focused on. It is important to ensure that the same people are not tasked with getting involved in all the working groups as this will impact on progress. As such, the number of working groups and pace of delivery will depend on the number of stakeholder partners that can be engaged with and encouraged to get involved.

Consideration should be given as to whether specific stakeholders need to be invited to be involved to provide technical support. For example, CEC, national organisations like the Canal and River Trust or local businesses with specific expertise around specific actions already. CEC Connected Community officers may be able to provide development support.

Progress will be reported into the Town Councils who will in turn also report regularly to CEC. Where issues regarding progress/delivery are identified discussions will need to be taken to determine the required refinements to get progress back on track.

It is acknowledged that partners will need to determine their appetite and ability to deliver the proposed actions. Depending on resources it may be determined that additional staff need to be recruited to support the pace of delivery of the Vitality Plan and supporting Action Plans.

## Communication and Engagement

There is scope to expand on the current website to use it to engage more effectively with a wider range of residents, visitors, workers and businesses. There is a need to begin to share important messages with key stakeholders including:

- Recent and proposed investment in the centre
- Projects that are being worked up
- Funding that is being sought and accessed
- How to get involved

The key partners to be engaged with on a regular basis include:

- Local businesses
- Residents
- Local community and interest groups
- Other towns centres generally and specifically those who are focusing on common actions

Quality engagement should generate potential volunteers to get involved in the delivery of specific actions and potentially resources to support their delivery.

The following mechanisms should be used to engage with key partners:

- Further enhancement of the website and strengthen profile on social media
- Public engagement consultations – the draft Vitality Plan will be consulted upon and this be used to continue the dialogue with local residents
- Piggybacking Events – for example a stall at markets showcasing what’s on and how to get involved
- Existing and enhanced business networking events – to share emerging ideas, test support and encourage ideas to refine and support their delivery
- Identification of a team of local ambassadors – ambassadors could be trained and then kept up to date about what is going on in Sandbach and then they can showcase positive messages to their contacts. Ambassadors can be proactive local independent businesses leaders and other individuals who come into contact with lots of local people e.g. shop keepers.

Consideration could be given to the permanent appointment and role expansion of your currently part time temporary Market Manager to include wider marketing and engagement for the town.

In addition, as set out in Section 10, it is important for enhanced communication and engagement between CEC and Sandbach Town Council.

# 11 Delivery

## Funding

There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support discussions with potential funders. As such it provides a useful tool with which you can use to:

- Articulate priorities for Sandbach to CEC - the Vitality Plan will be used to articulate local priorities to CEC to guide them in their negotiations with developers in respect of contributions linked to planning applications (especially to support improvements in cycling, public realm and public transport) and also in determining their own capital budgets. Formal adoption of the TCVP by key stakeholder organisations can help demonstrate common objectives and priorities for any party submitting funding bids.
- Support external funding bids – having a clear action plan which provides an evidence base and priorities that have been consulted upon is now essential for most funding bids. It is important to recognise that often funding bids have specific funding leads. In some cases, this may be CEC or Cheshire & Warrington LEP, in others it might need to be a community group. Whoever may be responsible for leading and submitting a specific funding application, demonstration of collaboration

between stakeholders and community support is essential.

- Engage with local businesses – to determine whether there are actions that they can get involved in which align with their priorities for supporting their local communities.

Another approach to generating more revenue to spend locally is for the Town Council to take responsibility for owning or managing assets with any surpluses generated being invested back into the local centre.

It is important to note that when determining potential interventions consideration must be given to both initial capital investment and longer term revenue implications such as maintenance. In proposing capital investment, the whole life of a project must be considered to ensure that appropriate revenue is available for ongoing costs.

Some local centres have raised the need for some support in both the identification of funding sources and writing of business cases to secure funding for your aspirations for the town, for example in respect of delivering a much enhanced public realm. There are various organisations that can both support this task and may offer some capacity including CEC, the LEP and bodies such as Groundwork UK who work with local partnerships.

## Phasing

The actions identified in Section 10 range from projects which are already being progressed to long term aspirations which will require feasibility and funding before they can be delivered.

The Vitality Plan identifies 7 actions which support the established vision and objectives for the Centre. The Town Council is proactive, and a number of the identified actions are already being pursued. The public consultation identified the following as priority interventions:

- Deliver a movement plan/reduce car dominance
- Mobilising the business community
- Improve connections between key destinations and the centre

Partners now need to determine a detailed action plan related to funding that they are able to access and the resources that they have available or can access to support delivery.

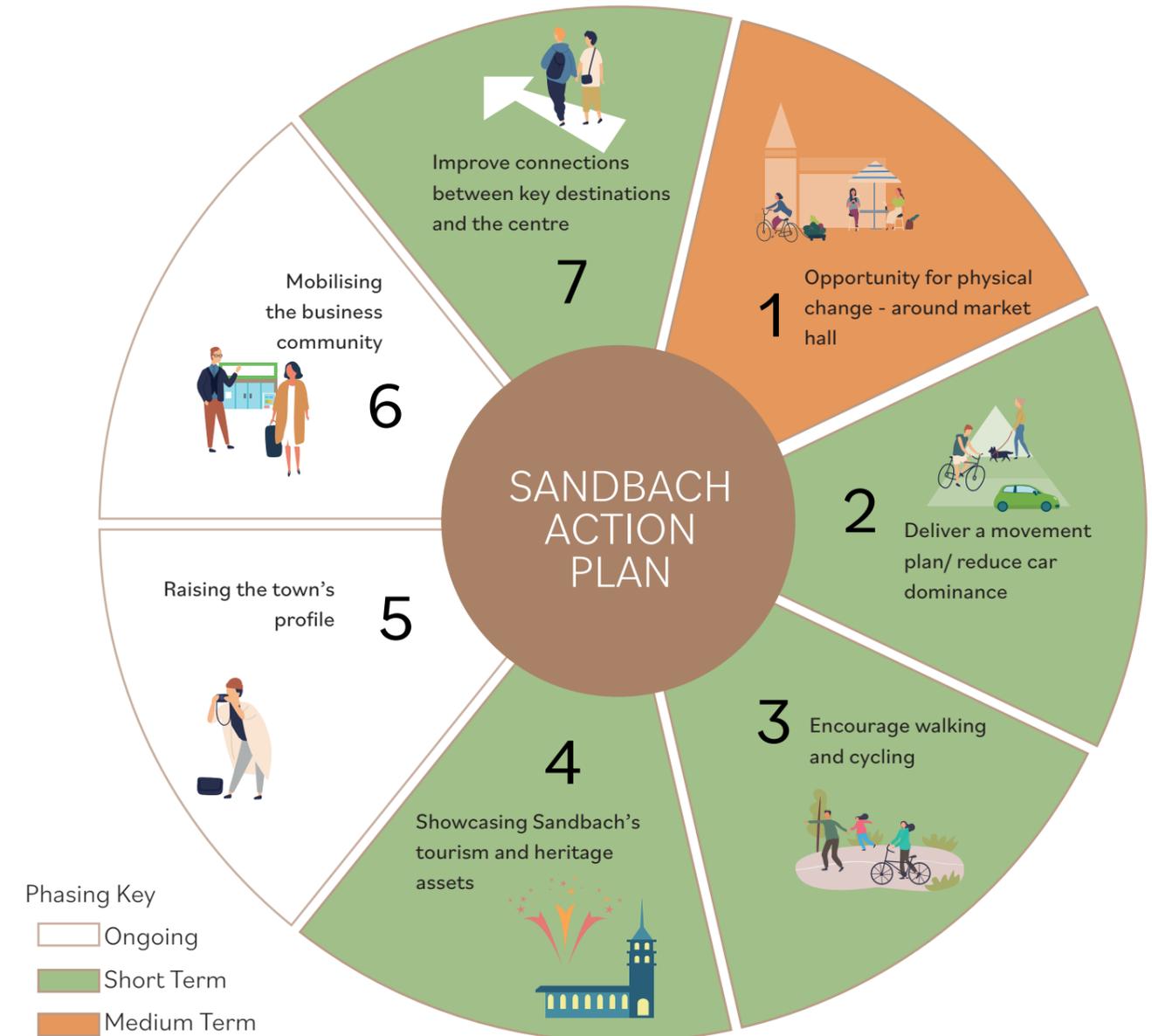
It is important to acknowledge that this indicative programme is not fixed and if specific sources of funding are identified the programme should be adapted to respond to the opportunity.

Covid has taught us important lessons about testing new approaches. For example temporary

road closures to gauge whether reducing car access to encourage cycling or to provide outside dining space would benefit local centres. This approach should be continued so that rather than a public realm project having to be worked up in huge detail and then significant resources found to deliver it more temporary solutions can be tested in terms of their impact and determine whether a more permanent solution is required or desirable. Changes are much more likely to be embraced by businesses and supported by local residents if they know that ideas are being tested and monitored and if they do not work can be reverted back to how they were.

A broad phasing plan for the identified actions is identified below where short term relates to 1-2 years, medium 3-5 and long 5+ years.

- A number of interventions will require further feasibility and this can be ongoing but intervention on the ground is likely to be a few years off whilst planning permission and funding is sought
- A number of interventions are interrelated in particular reducing car dominance and encouraging walking and cycling



# 11 Delivery

## Monitoring and Evaluation

As noted above the programme and the action plan will not be set in stone but must be capable of responding to new opportunities or challenges as they arise. As such it will be important to monitor impact to determine whether the established vision and objectives are being met. Suggested key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they could be measured and how often are identified below:

KPI	How measured	Frequency
Footfall	External provider	Monthly
Number of vacancies	Town Clerk	Quarterly
New businesses opened	Town Clerk	Quarterly
Businesses engaged	Town Clerk to keep a list	Ongoing
Area of greenspace/ open space/cycleways and footpaths improved	CEC	Annually
Hits on website	Traffic on Social Media	Quarterly

Note: CEC has recently commissioned monthly footfall data to end Sep 2026. Recommend all those involved regularly share useful monitoring data with other parties so that all can be aware of progress.

## Technical Terms

Term	Explanation
Comparison Goods Sector	Retail that stocks higher value goods that are purchased infrequently
Convenience Sector	Retail that stocks everyday items such as groceries, newspapers, toiletries, confectionery
F&B	Food and Beverage
Green Belt	A designated area of countryside, protected from most forms of development to help stop urban sprawl but can be used for agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure
Greenspace	Parks, public gardens etc
HS2 route	The UK's new high speed rail network
KSC	Key Service Centres
Linkages	The connections between two or more places/ sites within the town centres
Public Realm	Space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible for everyone
S106 monies	Money that developers can use towards the development of community and social infrastructure
TCVP	Town Centre Vitality Plans
Wayfinding	The ways in which people orient themselves in a physical space and navigate from place to place
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Dwell time	The time a person may spend in a particular place or area. For example, the length of time spent sat on a public bench.



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Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plans

December 2022



Prepared by Cushman and Wakefield,  
Optimised Environments and Mott  
Macdonald for Cheshire East Council

December 2022

# Contents

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01 Introduction	4
<i>Baseline</i>	
02 Introduction to Wilmslow	10
03 Policy Context	16
04 Our People	22
05 Our Place	28
06 Connectivity and Accessibility	46
07 Our Offer	54
08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats	62
<i>Action Plan</i>	
09 Priority Areas for Intervention	66
10 Potential Actions	74
11 Delivery	96

## Context of the Study

**Town centres across the UK are facing unprecedented challenges. Changes in how we shop, in particular the growth in internet shopping, has significantly decreased footfall in town centres resulting in numerous store closures, leaving many centres struggling. Trends that have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The Government has stated its commitment to helping high streets and town centres evolve and adapt to both the structural changes that are occurring in the retail market as well as to COVID-19. It has identified a number of measures to support town centres at this challenging time including the Future High Streets Fund, a High Streets Task Force, changes to the planning system and direct support to local authorities and local businesses. Alongside these national measures the government has stressed the need for strong local leadership in supporting town centres.

## Town Centre Vitality Plans

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is committed to supporting the vitality and viability of all town centres within the borough. Whilst acknowledging that in areas of low deprivation, there may be limited opportunity to bid for centralised funding. When funding opportunities do become available, there is generally a need to have clear proposals already agreed before bids can be submitted.

It is also recognised that there are often initiatives which can be taken to support the vitality and viability of local centres which do not require significant capital funding, but rather require the support of local volunteers and/or businesses.

In addition, the reports could be used to support discussions regarding the allocation of S106 monies resulting from development within and in the vicinity of the local centres.

**With an almost overwhelming array of options and opinions on what is the best way to support town centre vitality and viability, CEC has commissioned Cushman & Wakefield (regeneration and property advisors), supported by Optimised Environments (urban designers) and Mott Macdonald (transport planners), to work with the Town Council's and their stakeholders to produce bespoke Town Centre Vitality Plans (TCVP) for the nine Key Service Centres (KSC):**



*The 9 Key Service Centres which form part of this study*

## Aims and Objectives

The TCVP provides a sense of direction and identify initiatives to support the nine key service centres to better fulfil their potential recognising that each centre is distinct, with its own unique opportunities and specific challenges and local groups/stakeholders. The unique characteristics of each centre is identified along with tailored solutions for each.

### They

- **Are bespoke in nature, based on a thorough analysis of individual circumstances affecting the health of each town centre, local stakeholder views and any local specific policy considerations.**
- **Are cross functional and holistic, and recommend a practical, realistic set of priority actions for supporting the vitality and viability of each town centre.**
- **Are informed and tested by existing relevant national and local public policy and strategies, local stakeholder views, relevant research and a thorough understanding of commercial markets and spatial considerations.**
- **Identify a set of recommended clear priority physical and other (e.g. marketing) interventions/actions to support the vitality and viability of each town centre both in recovery from COVID-19 impacts and beyond to enhancement.**
- **Recommend deliverable actions including who should be involved in delivering of each action identified, to enable Town Councils, community groups, occupiers, property owners etc., to all work towards a common vision.**
- **Take account of proposals developed/being developed by Town Council's and develop such plans further.**

## Responding to the Impacts of COVID

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, high streets and town centres were having to respond to changing consumer demands driven in part by technological changes. Many recognised the increasing importance of the consumer experience - an attractive place to dwell, shop, see friends, to eat out and be entertained. COVID-19 has led to an acceleration of changes to the reasons people visit and use local centres.

COVID-19 has not and will not be universally negative for all local centres. The requirement to stay local has supported residents to use their local facilities and where the local offer aligns with the demands of residents, local businesses have benefited. The need to work from home has also resulted in an re-evaluation of where we work going forward and it is anticipated that there has been a fundamental shift, for some, in the balance between the amount of time we spend in an office and the amount of time we work from home.

It will be some time before a clear picture emerges of the impact of new forms of working (a hybrid between office and home) have on our high streets in the longer-term. The impact will be felt differently from place to place depending on the local economy's dependency on particular sectors.

It is likely that those centres that perform best going forward will be those able to reconnect with their communities and use them to meet local needs including access to housing, culture, leisure, health etc.

The Town Centre Vitality Plans have been prepared post the outbreak of COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 on each of the centres has been different. The bespoke Vitality Plans will provide an action plan to support recovery and future success.

## Vitality Plan and Toolkit

This report builds upon the Draft Baseline Report (which was a summary of the key stages undertaken in 2020 - see below) and incorporates potential actions which have been identified in consultation with local stakeholders during 2021 to form a bespoke Vitality Plan for Wilmslow.

The Vitality Report comprises of two sections:

- Baseline - which was undertaken in 2020 and describes the Centre in terms of its offer and key characteristics. It brings together evidence and opinion in respect of the

buildings, green and open spaces, access and its residents and businesses.

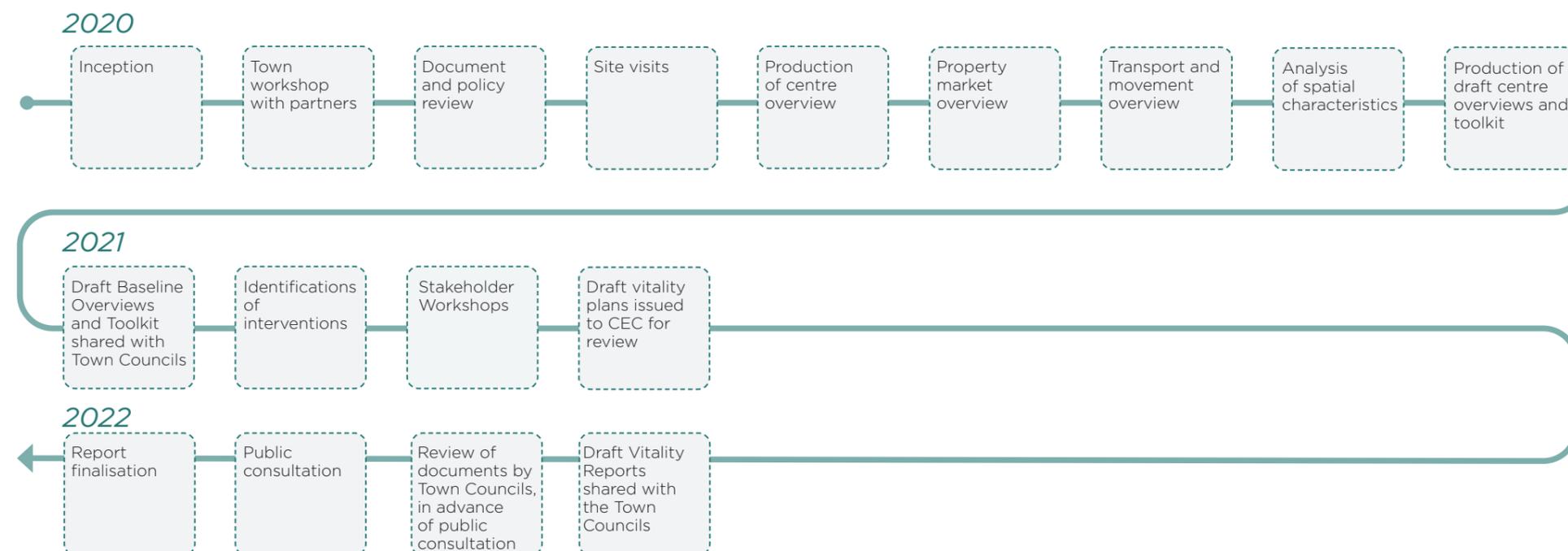
- Action Plan - has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for the Centre responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

The draft TCVPs went to public consultation for six weeks from September 2022. Feedback was reviewed and where appropriate amendments have been made to the final report. A summary of other key messages have been shared with key stakeholders.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Toolkit. The Toolkit presents exemplar projects from other centres (including from within Cheshire East) nationally and internationally to assist key stakeholders to determine a set of actions to support their centres to thrive. There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support accessing funding.

## Approach

The preparation of the Vitality Plans has involved the following stages:



# Baseline

---

Note:

The Baseline analysis was undertaken in 2020. The information in the Baseline was correct and the sources were the most update at that time. It is recognised that in some cases more up to date information is available whilst it is not possible to keep updating all the evidence where a significant change has happened it is recognised. It should also be noted that Census 2011 data is provided for some indicators. Whilst the 2021 Census has just been completed, a release of this data will not be made available until March 2023 therefore the 2011 Census is the most recent consistent data source across the 9 centres for some key indicators.

# 02 Introduction to Wilmslow

## Wilmslow's Location within Cheshire East

Wilmslow is located in the North of Cheshire East, 14 miles south of Manchester City Centre and 3 miles from Manchester Airport and the M56 which connects it to the M6 and M60, and is well connected by the A34 to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton. Wilmslow Station is on the West Coast Main Line providing local and long distance services. As such the town enjoys excellent local, national and international connectivity (see strategic plan)

Wilmslow has an excellent reputation as an attractive residential location offering a range of high quality homes within walking distance of its centre and accessible to attractive countryside. It is also well located to access a wide range of employment opportunities both within the Centre itself, its surrounding area (Airport City, Alderley Park and Waters Corporation) as well as access to those in the wider Manchester City Region and Cheshire.

The choice of homes include a range of historic/ large family detached homes set in attractive landscaped grounds as well as more modern estates around the edge but unlike many of the northern towns there is a relatively low proportion of terraces.

Importantly it also offers a good range of state and private educational facilities including Wilmslow High School and Wilmslow Guild. However these assets means that the town is sought after resulting in affordability issues.

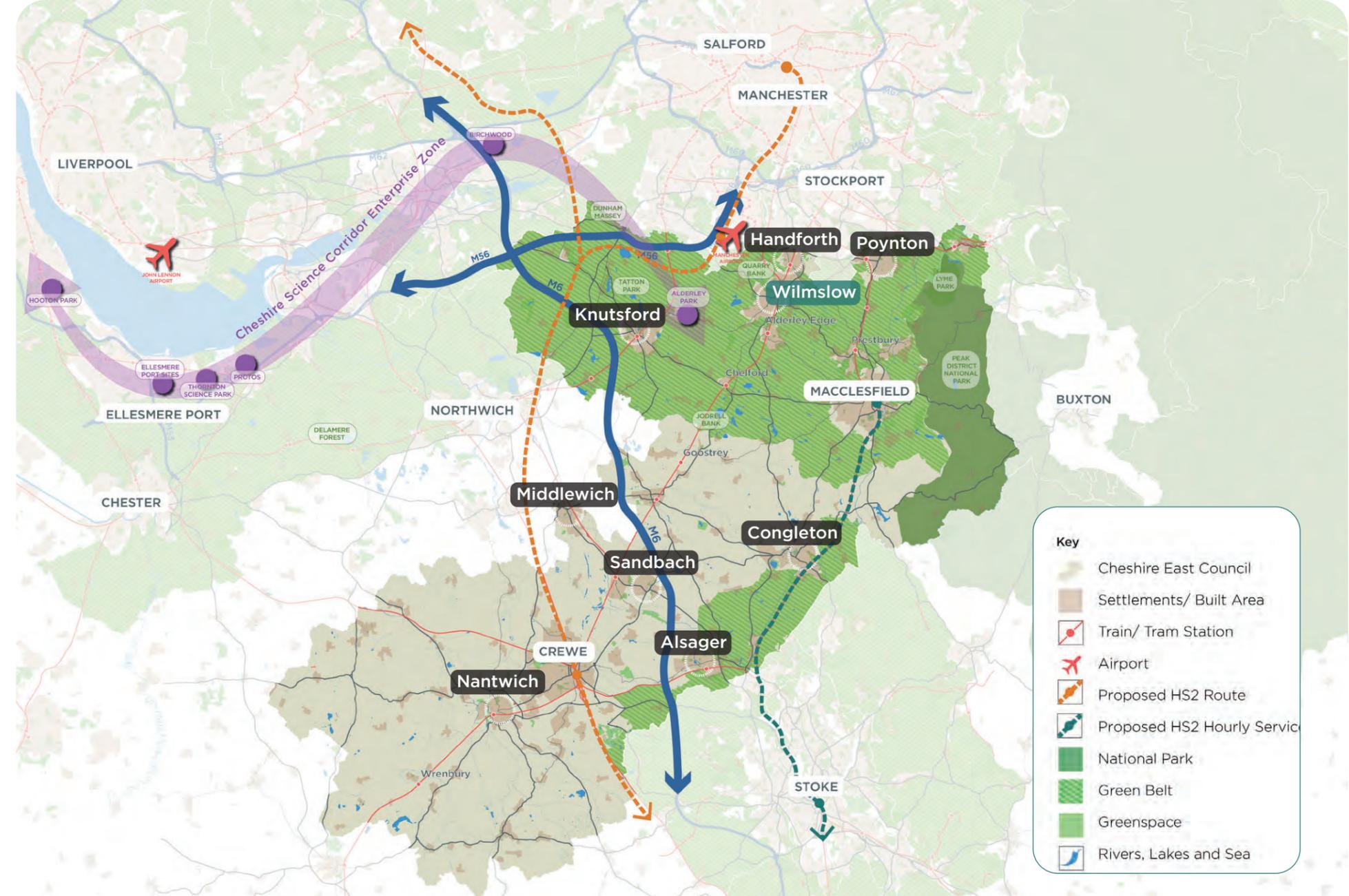
The Town Centre provides 241 units (Experian Goad Plan, September 2019), which are primarily located on Grove Street, Alderley Road and Water Lane, as well as a strong office market which attracts commuters in.

The town is bookended by two major supermarkets – Waitrose and Sainsburys and offers a choice of independent stores including Hoopers Department Store and a number of high end clothing and jewellery stores along Water Lane. Grove Street provides a pedestrian route offering a blend of national brands including Boots, Superdrug and Waterstones as well as a range of independents.

The Wilmslow Leisure Centre located in the heart of the centre offers a swimming pool and is a focal point for a number of annual sports events.

The Town holds a popular Artisan Market. The Green Room Theatre, Evans Theatre (in the Leisure Centre) and the Library and Wilmslow Guild, all support Wilmslow's cultural offer. Recent investment in the Rex, independent cinema has enhanced the night time economy. The centre also accommodates a number of attractive and historic buildings include Grade I Listed St Bartholomew's Church.

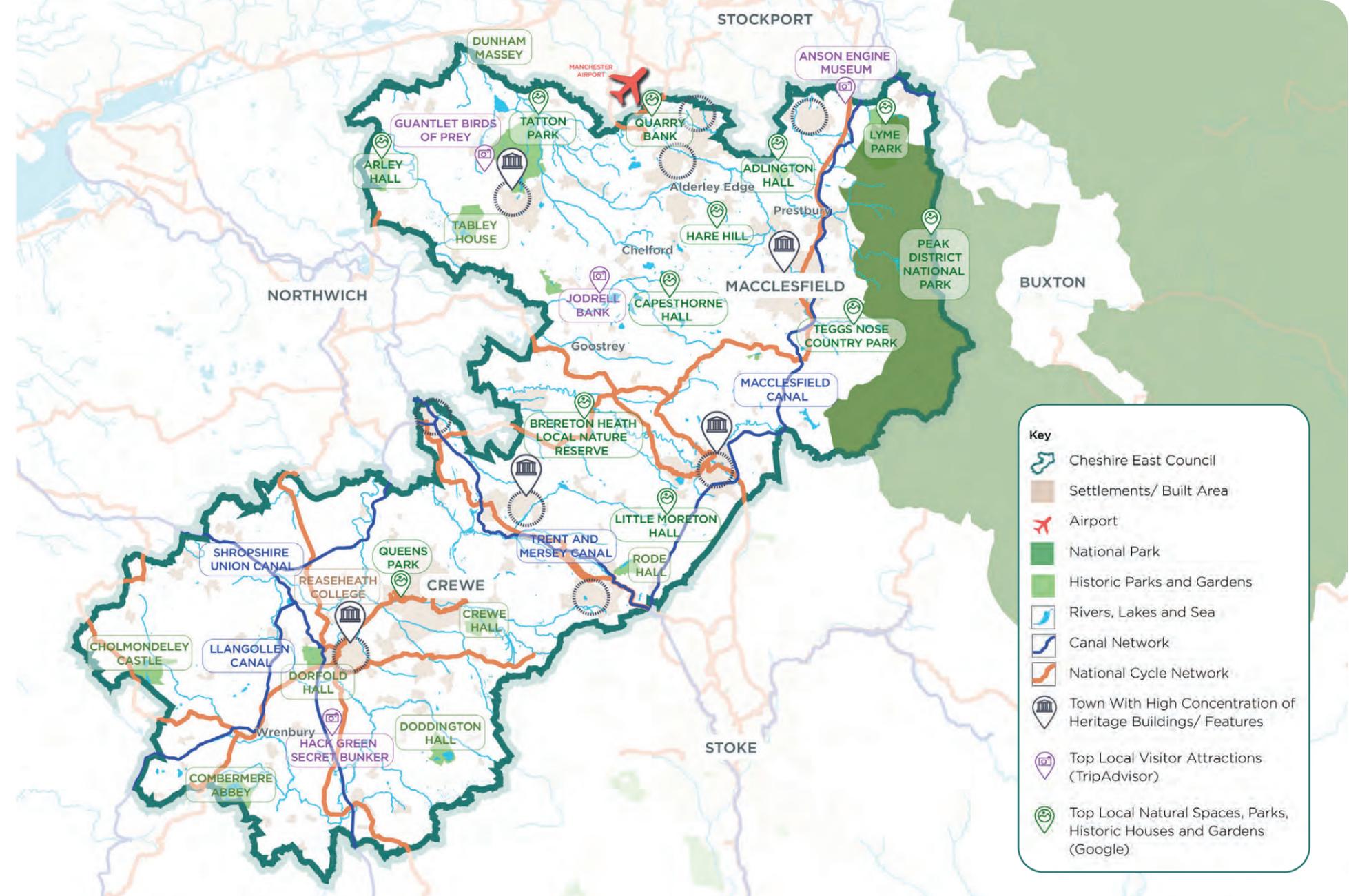
Strategic Context Plan

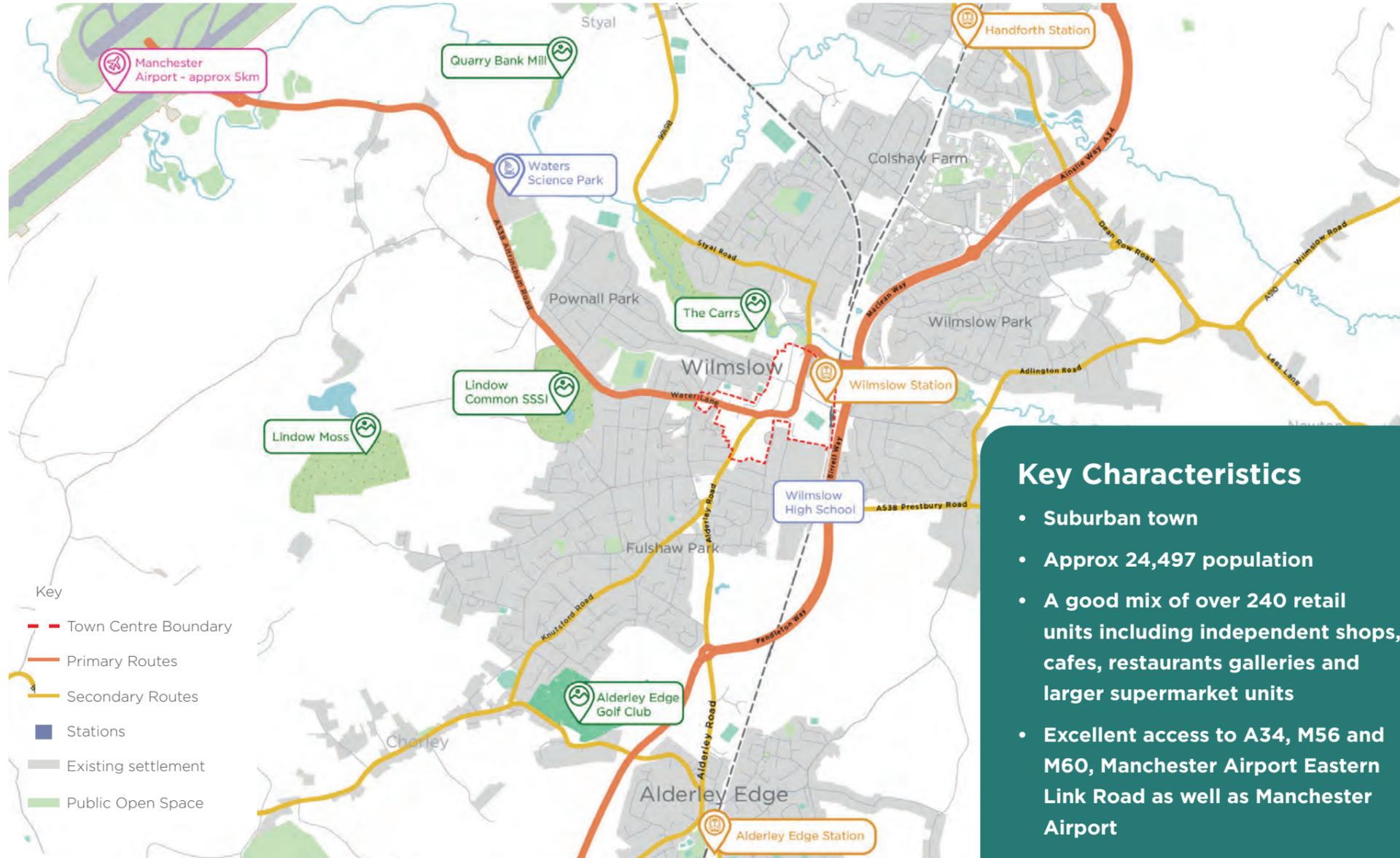


The Strategic Connections and Asset Plan sets Wilmslow in the context of blue and green assets and tourists attractions. It demonstrates Wilmslow's connectivity to a number of local tourist attractions including historic Quarry Bank Mill and Styal Estate, Dunham Massey (National Trust), as well as a number of attractive walking areas including the Carrs, Bollin Valley and Alderley Edge. Wilmslow is located within the Green Belt and surrounded by pastoral farmland, river valleys of the Bollin and Dean, moss land and heathland including protected landscapes at Lindow Common, an Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as being a Nature Reserve



Strategic Leisure/Tourism Assets





## Key Characteristics

- **Suburban town**
- **Approx 24,497 population**
- **A good mix of over 240 retail units including independent shops, cafes, restaurants galleries and larger supermarket units**
- **Excellent access to A34, M56 and M60, Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road as well as Manchester Airport**

## Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

Wilmslow Town Council is proactive and initiated the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan which was delivered by the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group working with planning consultants Urban Imprint in 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following vision and objectives:

### Vision

To sustain and enhance a dynamic community within Wilmslow which protects its special built and natural character and which promotes a user friendly and green environment with an increasingly attractive and thriving Town Core.

### Objectives

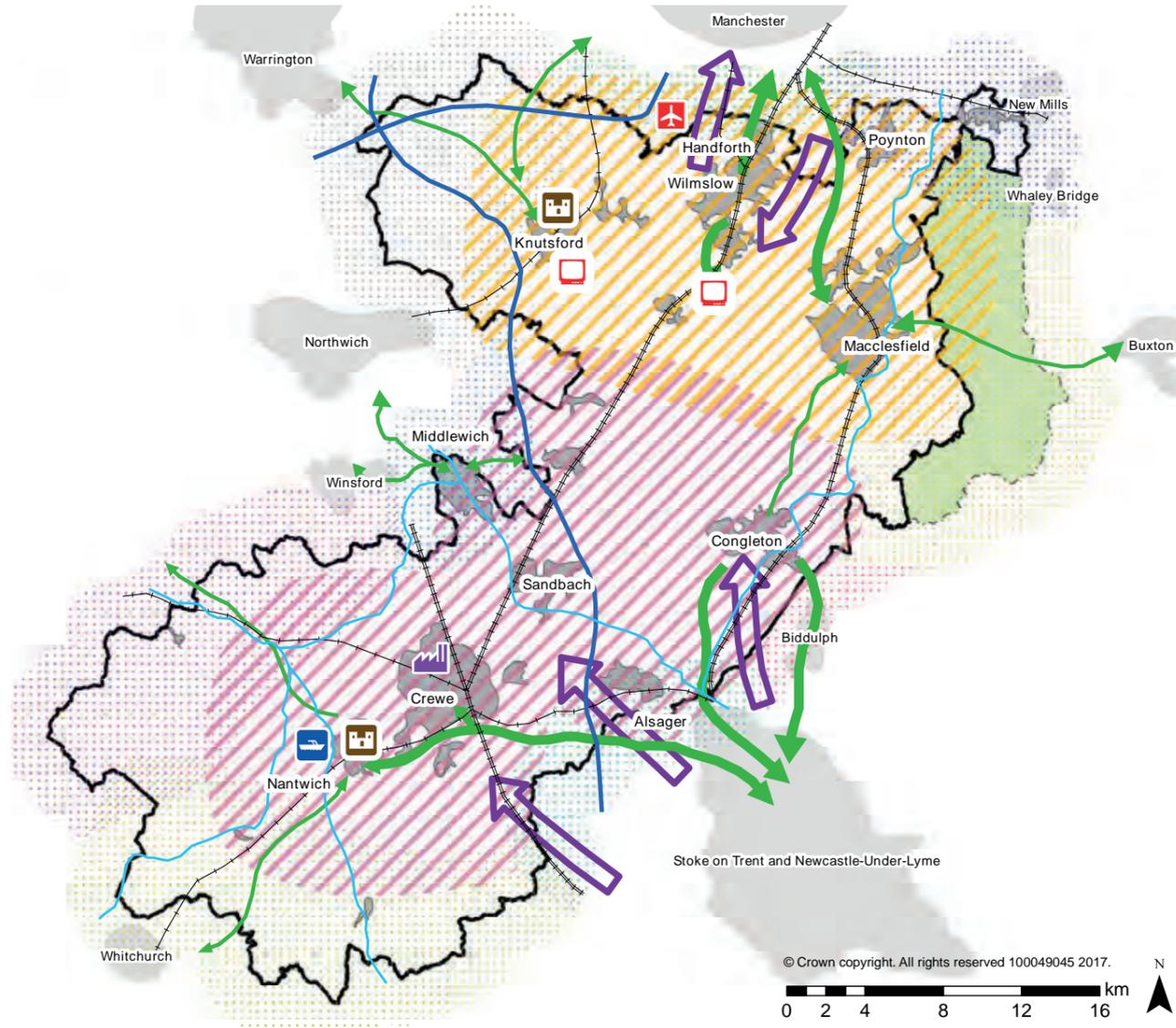
- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Heritage assets** – To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow’s designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town’s history
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.

# 03 Policy Context

## Local Policy

The plan opposite identifies the functional relationship that Wilmslow has with other centres through connectivity and proximity within and out with Cheshire East. It highlights the centre's proximity to Manchester Airport and Manchester City Centre - key drivers of growth in the North West.

- Manchester Airport
- Canal Facilities
- Employment
- Hi Tech Business
- Historic Town
- Canal
- Local Railway Line
- Main Line Railway
- Motorway
- Travel to Work Flows
- Migration Movements
- Housing Market Core Areas
- Influence of Neighbouring Housing Market Areas
- Settlement
- Plan Boundary
- Cheshire East
- Peak District National Park
- Adjacent Urban Areas



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Strategy 2010-2030 2017, Functional Diagram, pg 22

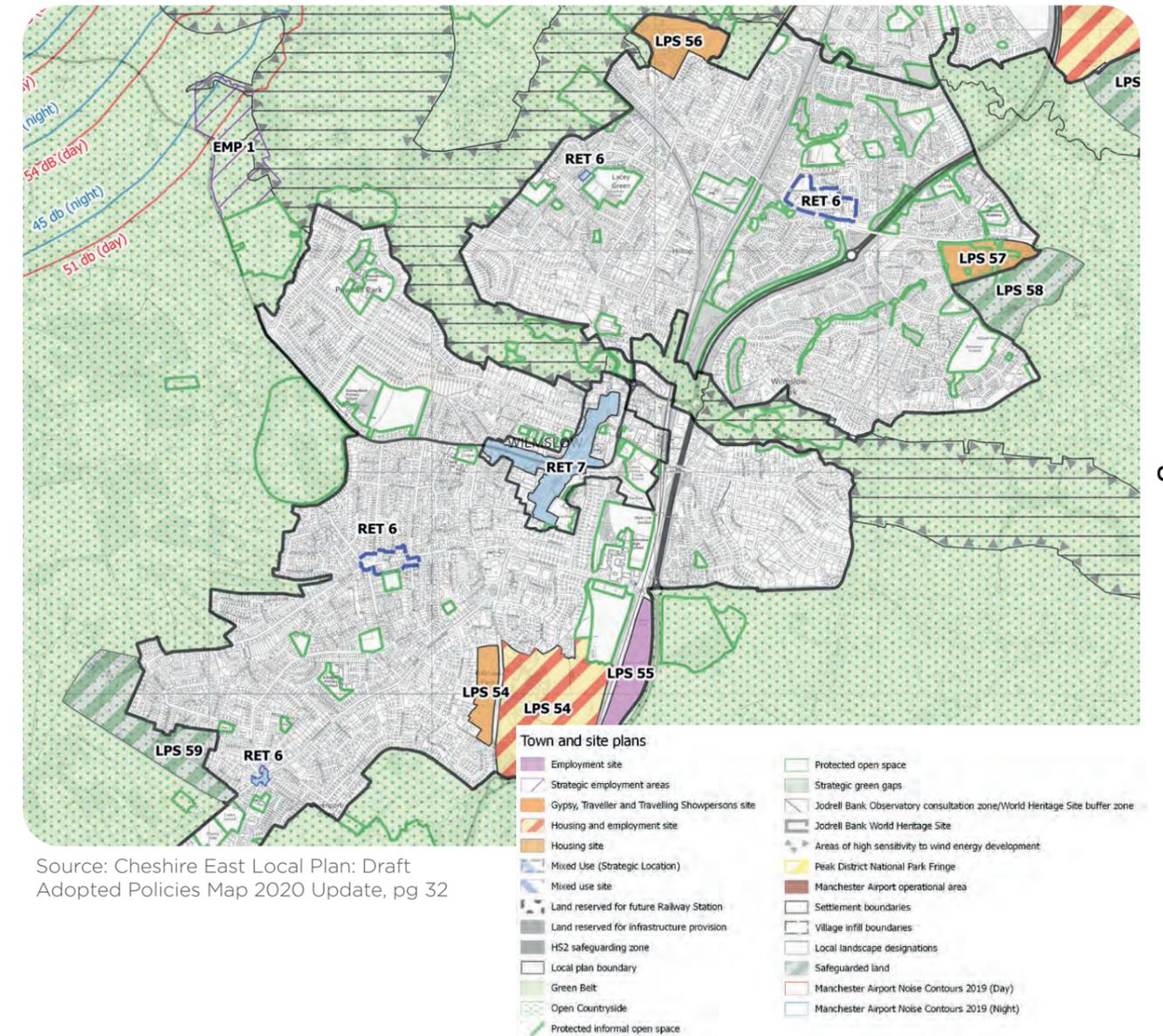
## Local Plan Strategy 2017 (LPS) and Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) 2020

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was adopted in 2017 setting strategic development sites around the borough.

SADPD will form the second part of the Local Plan, supporting the policies and proposals in the LPS by providing additional non-strategic policy detail and allocating additional sites to assist in meeting the overall development requirements set out in the LPS.

The plan opposite identifies Local Plan Strategy sites in and around Handforth for growth in the future:

- Royal London including land to the west of Alderley Road;
- Wilmslow Business Park; LPS 56 Land at Little Stanneylands;
- Heathfield Farm;
- Safeguarded Land (with longer term development potential) 'Land at Heathfield Farm, Wilmslow' (9 hectares)
- Safeguarded Land (with longer term development potential) at Upcast Lane / Cumber Lane, Wilmslow (15 hectares)
- RET 7 'Supporting the vitality of town and retail centres' which identifies town centre locations for main town centre uses to support their long term vitality and viability, in line with LPS Policy EG 5 'Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce'.



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Draft Adopted Policies Map 2020 Update, pg 32

## Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan

The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group working with planning consultants Urban Imprint and finalised in November 2019. The Group was made up of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers who live in Wilmslow and who actively sought the views of the town's residents throughout the process resulting in a referendum result of Yes 89 %, No 11 %.

The plan can be accessed at <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-plans-n-z/wilmslow-neighbourhood-plan.aspx>

Since the Plan was completed it has already become a widely used document both in influencing individual planning decisions in the town and also in informing and encouraging positive development.

Keen that the document, that took almost three years to create, did not sit on a shelf the Town Council set up an Implementation Group as a working Group of Wilmslow Town Council

The Town Centre Spatial Strategy identified that town centre uses should be concentrated to support a vibrant and active street scene.

Areas within the dotted black line show where the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support

improvements to the town centre environment and enhance existing community facilities through specific planning policies and aspirations over the short and longer terms.

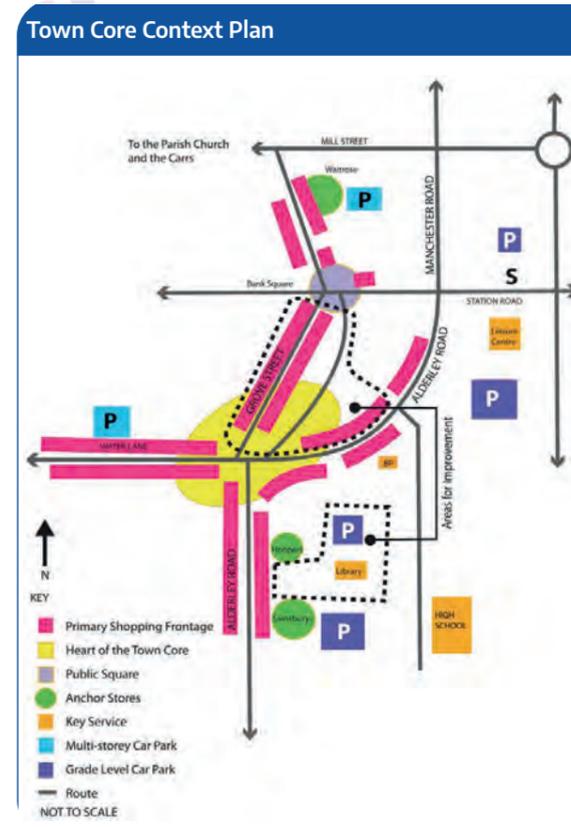
The plan identifies six priority sites:

- Police, Fire and Ambulance Stations, Hawthorn Street (Policy KS2)
- British Legion, Grove Avenue (Policy KS3)
- Parsonage Green, Green Lane (Policy KS4)
- Library and South Drive Car Park (Policy KS5)
- Broadway Meadows Car Park (Policy KS6)
- Station Car Parks (Policy KS7).

The Neighbourhood Plan provides advice to applicants on a range of issues include biodiversity conservation

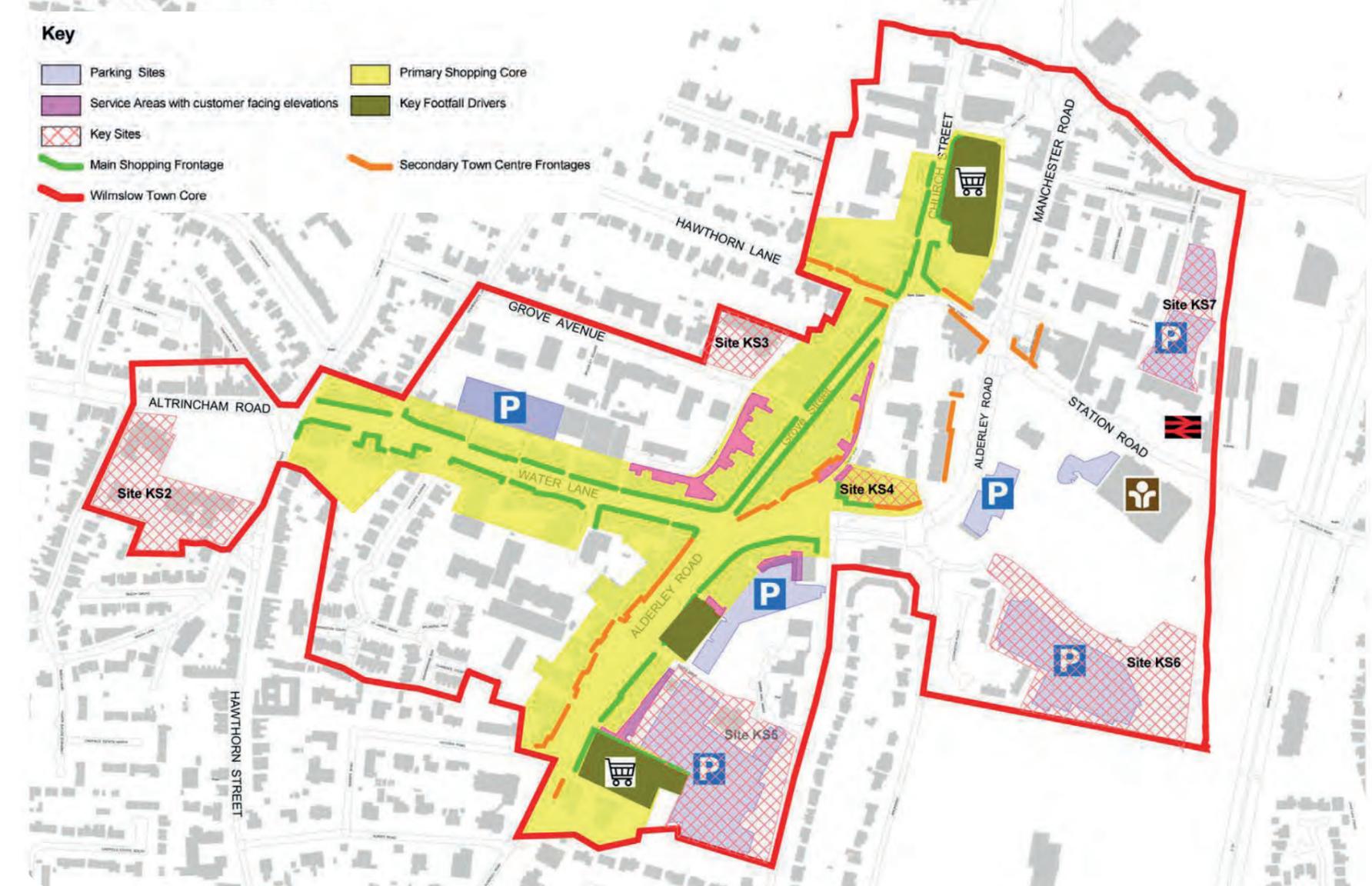
## Business Engagement

Wilmslow Town Council has appointed Groundwork on a 12 month contract to manage the town centre and to undertake a feasibility study to investigate the interest in establishing a BID. A Town Centre Management Group has been established and a contact database has been set up with 240 businesses to support wider engagement with the business community. A Business Improvement District (BID) was established in November 2022



Spatial Strategy for the Town Core. Source: Wilmslow NDP, pg 20

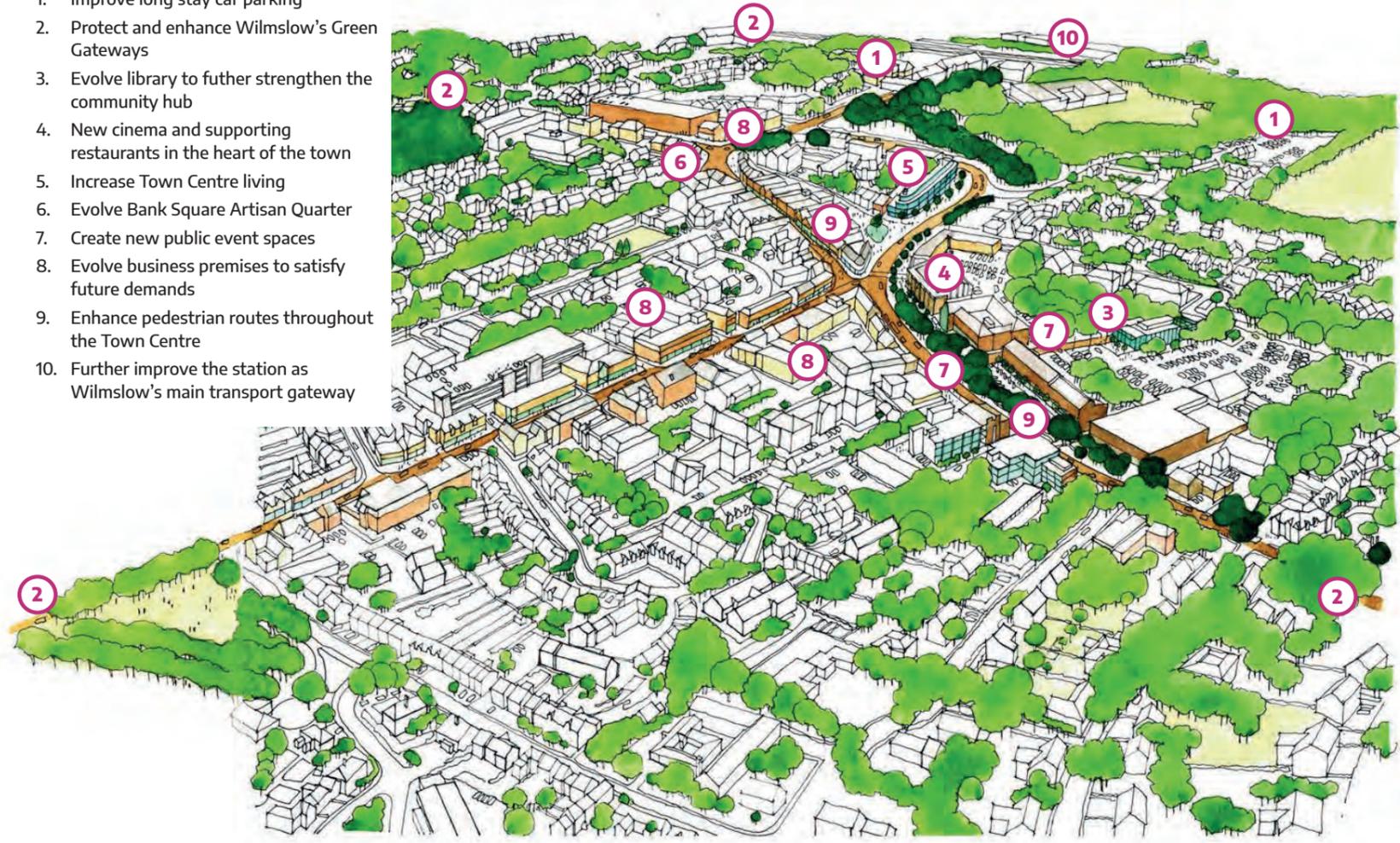
## Proposals Map 2



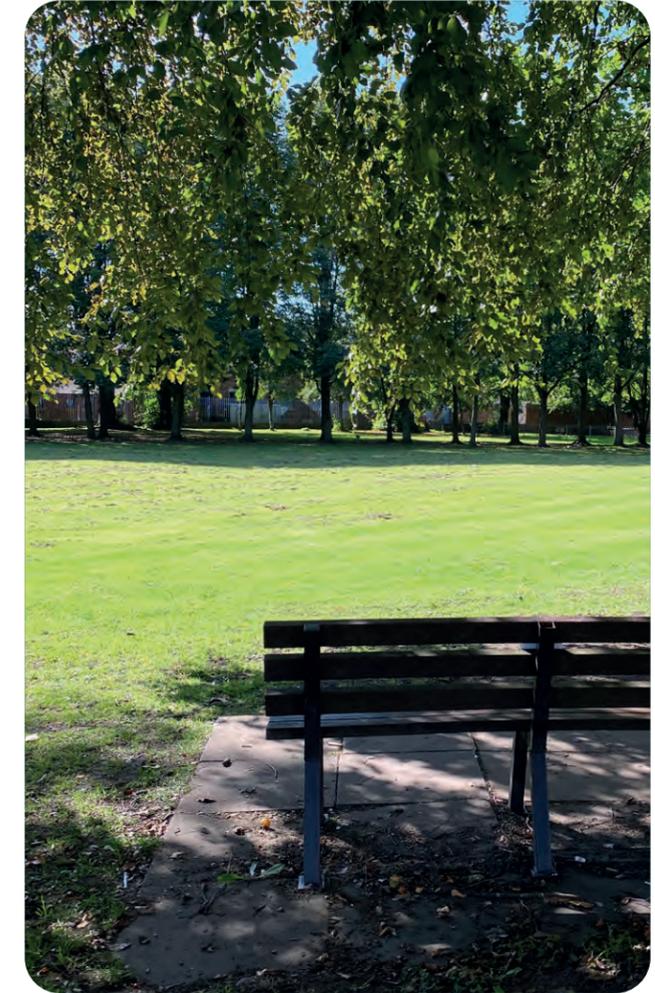
Proposals Map 2. Source: Wilmslow NDP, pg 105

## Aerial view of the town core highlighting key initiatives merged (Artist's Impression)

1. Improve long stay car parking
2. Protect and enhance Wilmslow's Green Gateways
3. Evolve library to further strengthen the community hub
4. New cinema and supporting restaurants in the heart of the town
5. Increase Town Centre living
6. Evolve Bank Square Artisan Quarter
7. Create new public event spaces
8. Evolve business premises to satisfy future demands
9. Enhance pedestrian routes throughout the Town Centre
10. Further improve the station as Wilmslow's main transport gateway



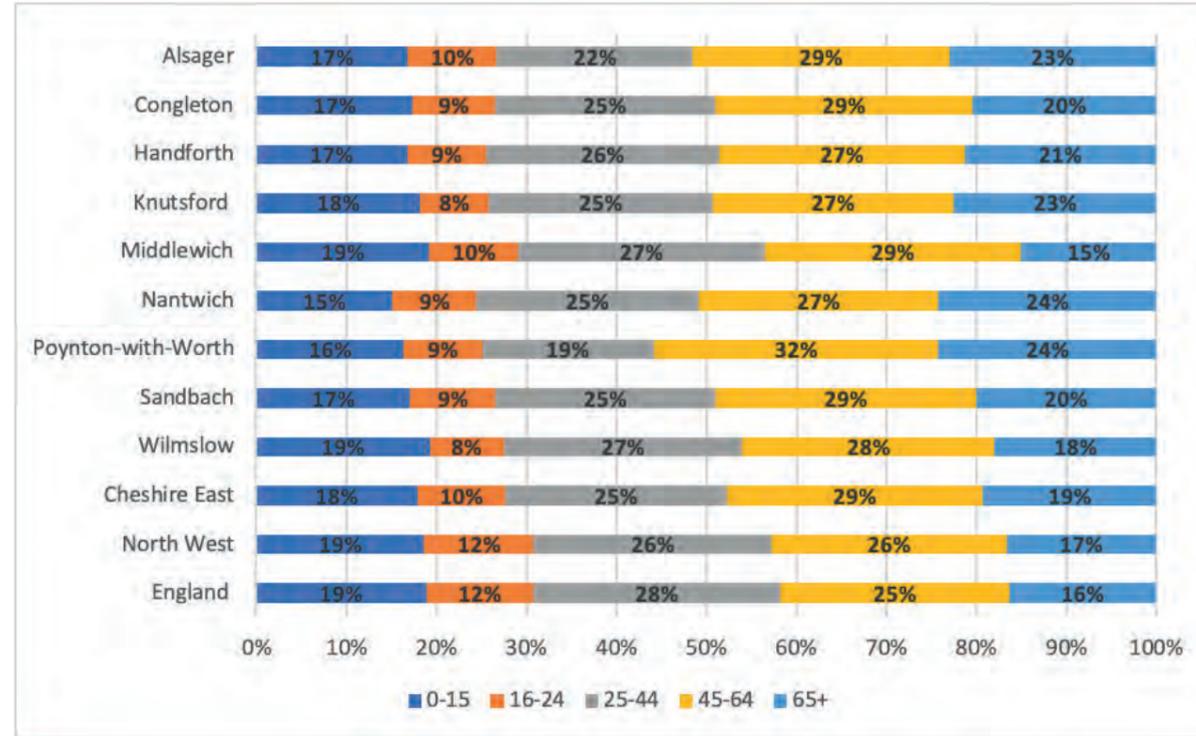
Key Initiatives.  
Source: Wilmslow NDP, page 73



# 04 Our People

## Age

The 2011 Census data indicates that the Wilmslow parish area had a population of 24,497 residents representing 6.6% of Cheshire East's total population (370,127). Wilmslow's age profile is similar to that of Cheshire East. Compared to the other Key Service Centres Wilmslow has one of the highest proportions of 25-44 year olds which is the most economically active age group. Wilmslow also has one of the lowest average (mean) ages across the 9 KSC's at 41 years old which is lower than the Cheshire East mean age but higher than the wider geographies of the North West (40) and England (39).



Age Structure.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Ethnicity

Broken-down by ethnic group the Census 2011 (latest) shows the resident population across the Cheshire East is predominantly white at 96.7% which is a higher proportion than the wider geographies of the North West (90.2%) and England (85.4%). The majority of the population in Wilmslow is also white (92.6%), however compared to other KSC's Wilmslow has the highest proportion of Asian/Asian British residents (4.4%/1,087 people).

Area	White %	Mixed / multiple ethnic groups %	Asian / Asian British %	Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British %	Other ethnic Group %
Alsager	97.6	1.1	1.0	0.2	0.1
Congleton	98.0	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.2
Handforth	93.1	1.5	3.9	0.9	0.7
Knutsford	96.5	1.2	1.8	0.3	0.3
Middlewich	98.5	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.1
Nantwich	98.1	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.1
Poynton-with-Worth	98.0	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.2
Sandbach	98.1	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.2
Wilmslow	92.6	1.7	4.4	0.5	0.7
Cheshire East	96.7	1.0	1.6	0.4	0.2
North West	90.2	1.6	6.2	1.4	0.6
England	85.4	2.3	7.8	3.5	1.0

Population by Ethnic Group  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Occupational Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, a large proportion of Wilmslow residents were employed in higher order occupations including 'managers, directors and senior officials' (18.3%) and 'professional occupations' (24.6%) – a much higher rate than the wider Borough, regional and national benchmarks.

Conversely, just 9.6% were engaged in manual or elementary occupations. This is around half the North West (19.8%) and England rate (18.3%). The occupational structure of Wilmslow suggests a highly skilled workforce, which will in turn attract businesses (who want to attract highly skilled employees) to locate in the area.

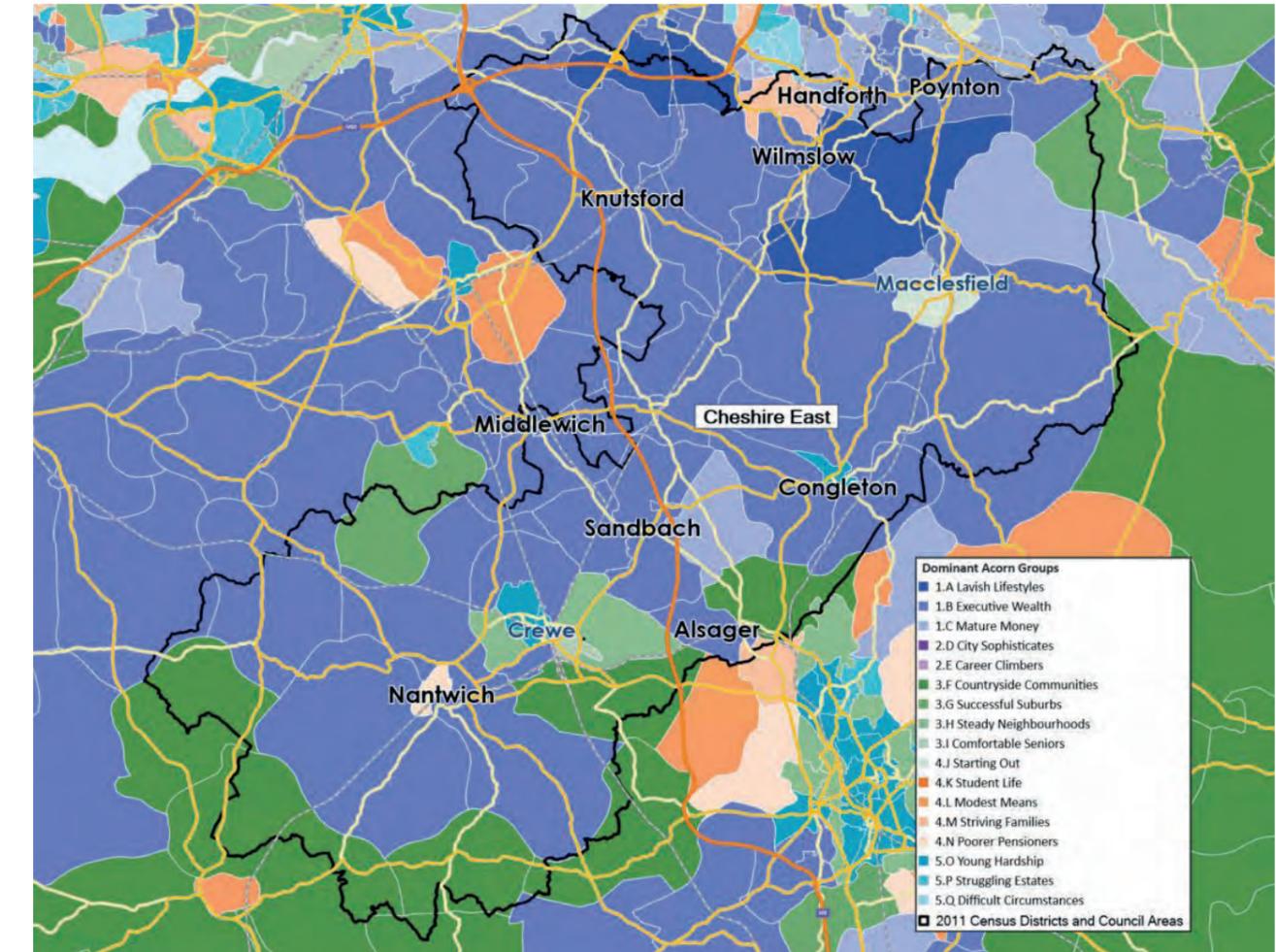
Built Up Area	Alsager	Congleton	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow	Cheshire East	North West	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	12.8	11.7	17.2	11.9	14.3	14.9	12.6	18.3	13.6	9.9	10.9
Professional occupations	22.3	18.9	26.2	15.8	21.8	24.0	19.9	24.6	19.6	16.3	17.5
Associate professional and technical occupations	12.6	13.2	15.1	13.4	12.3	15.1	13.3	16.3	13.0	11.5	12.8
Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.4	10.3	9.4	11.8	10.0	12.2	11.0	9.9	10.4	11.7	11.5
Skilled trades occupations	10.1	11.6	6.4	11.0	9.8	8.6	10.2	6.6	10.4	11.3	11.4
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8.7	9.5	8.0	9.9	8.2	7.7	9.2	7.8	8.9	10.1	9.3
Sales and customer service occupations	7.5	7.0	5.7	7.4	8.3	8.0	8.2	6.9	7.5	9.4	8.4
Process, plant and machine operatives	5.8	7.9	3.8	8.5	6.0	3.3	6.6	3.0	6.5	8.1	7.2
Elementary occupations	8.8	9.9	8.2	10.4	9.3	6.3	9.0	6.6	10.2	11.7	11.1

Occupational Profile  
Source: Census 2011  
\*Wilmslow BUA includes Alderly Edge and Handforth  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Demographic Characterisation

CACI Acorn classifications of local postcode geographies provide precise information and an in-depth understanding of different consumer types by analysing significant social factors and consumer behaviour. Demographic analysis of Cheshire East area demonstrates diverse segmentation groups across the area. The dominant Acorn groups in Wilmslow are Lavish Lifestyles and Executive Wealth

- Dominant Age Groups
- 1. A Lavish Lifestyles
  - 1. B Executive Wealth
  - 1. C Mature Money
  - 2. D City Sophisticates
  - 2. E Career Climbers
  - 3. F Countryside Communities
  - 3. G Successful Suburbs
  - 3. H Steady Neighbourhoods
  - 3. I Comfortable Seniors
  - 4. J Starting Out
  - 4. K Student Life
  - 4. L Modest Means
  - 4. M Striving Families
  - 4. N Poorer Pensioners
  - 5. O Young Hardship
  - 5. P Struggling Estates
  - 5. Q Difficult Circumstances
  - 2011 Census Districts and Council Areas



CACI Acorn Classifications  
Source: CACI  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 illustrates the spatial distribution and pockets of deprivation relative to national averages. Cheshire East ranked 228th most deprived out of 317 local authorities in 2019 indicating relatively low levels of deprivation. Just 1.7% of the Borough is within the top 10% most deprived areas in England, with these most deprived areas being concentrated around Crewe and to a lesser extent, Macclesfield. The majority of Wilmslow is within the 10% least deprived areas of deprivation nationally.

See the Neighbourhood plan for further details e.g. NE5 Biodiversity Conservation



Source: MHCLG, IMD 2019  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Local Context

Wilmslow is located in the North of Cheshire East, 14 miles south of Manchester City Centre and 3 miles from Manchester Airport and the M56 which connects it to the M6 and M60, and is well connected by the A34 to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton.

Wilmslow is recognised for its affluent population, with the town centre offering a number of independent dining and leisure opportunities and surrounding open spaces. Town centre living remains at the periphery of its boundary leaving the town centre very much a hub of day time activity.

- Key
-  Local Centre boundary
  -  Primary retail core
  -  Historic Assets
  -  Primary routes
  -  Cycle paths
  -  Pedestrian routes
  -  Central Open Space
  -  Wilmslow Station



## Spatial Review

An analysis of the experiential quality of the town centre is provided over the next few pages. The review is based on information gathered from a number of site visits to the town centre during September / October 2020 and is assessed by the key vitality indicators listed below:

- Quality of the place
- People
- Sense of Community
- Accessibility
- Gateways
- Wayfinding
- Attractions
- Amenities
- Sense of a Centre
- Character
- Public realm
- Green space
- Derelict Sites/ Vacant units
- Housing
- Covid measures

## Visit information

	Visit 1	Visit 2
Date of visit:	Monday 14th September 2020	Monday 26th October 2020
Time of day:	12-3pm	1-3pm
Weather:	Sun	Heavy rain and sun
Mode of transport:	Car	Car
COVID 19 Lockdown Status	Eased restrictions, rule of six indoors and outdoors	Tier Two - rule of six indoors and outdoors

## Quality of the place

- Medium sized, well kept town
- Large houses close to the town centre
- Large range of shops and services
- Number of quiet, green spots to sit in



## People

- People sitting outside Nero
- People sitting outside restaurants - business / causal
- Varied demographic along Grove Street



## Sense of Community

- Noticeboards seem up to date
- Lots of planters
- Lots of activities and community pride advertised



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Accessibility

- Approx 10 minute walk from train station, via Station Road
- Designated parking - on street or in designated car parks
- No segregated cycle routes
- Wide, high capacity highways

## Gateways

- 3 gateways into the town however they fell under dressed and car dominated.
- Alderley Road / Water Lane Junction
- Manchester Road / Mill Street / A538 Roundabout
- Church Street
- Poor quality Tesco building at a key junction in the town

## Wayfinding

- Well sign posted town for both pedestrians and vehicles
- Information boards dotted across the centre



## Attractions

- Good range of cafes and restaurants, signs of outdoor seating
- Rex independent cinema
- Hoopers Independent Department Store
- Cycle Cafe
- Grove Street pedestrianised high street

## Amenities

- Library, leisure centre, community club, churches, health centres - public and private
- Waitrose, Sainsburys, Co-op, Tesco Express, plus a range of independents

## Sense of a Centre

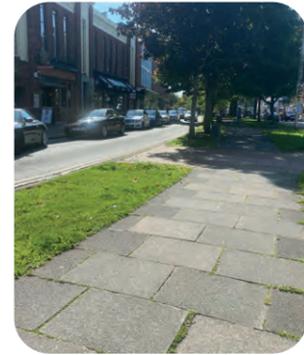
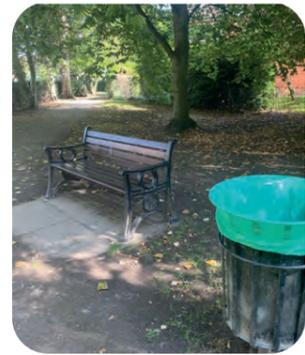
- Defined high street at Grove Street
- Retail offer extends down Alderley Road
- Grove Street is dated however a neat pedestrianised high street



# 05 Our Place cont.

## Character

- Town Centre is fairly level, however the topography slopes along Mill Street
- Some heritage buildings
- Dated shop fronts, signs of some regeneration
- Little central residential



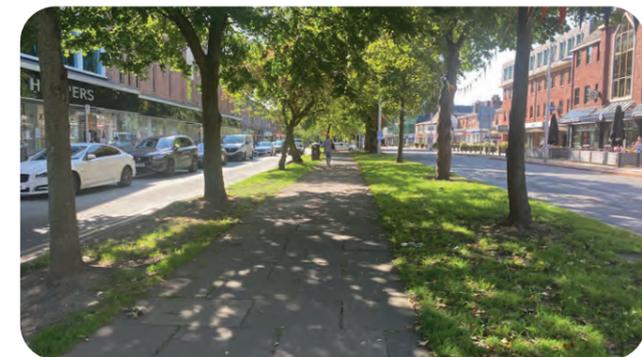
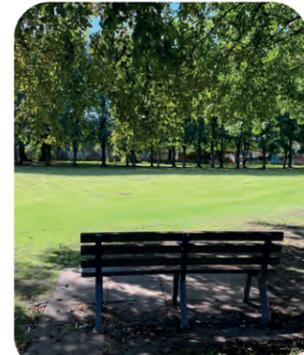
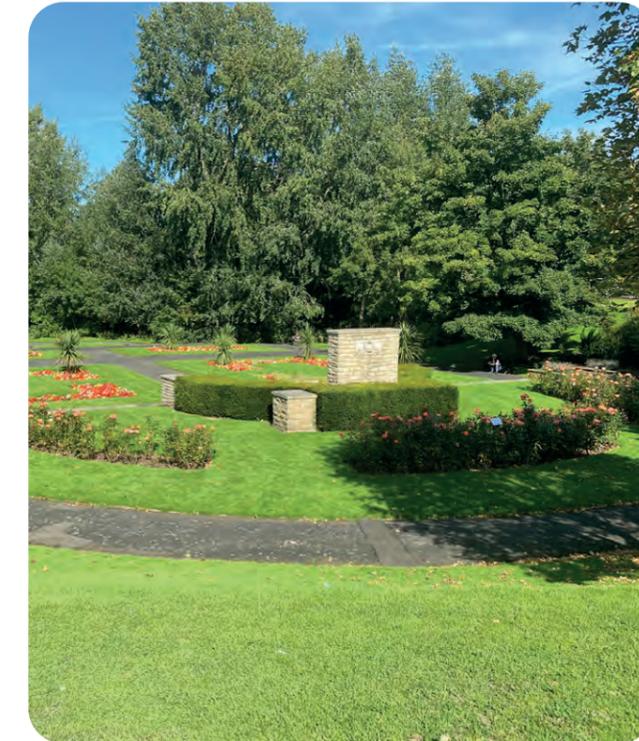
## Public Realm

- Pavement and road surfaces are tired and worn in places
- Some newer areas of hard landscaping, outside Cycle Cafe



## Green Space

- Boulevard along Alderley Road
- Landscaped area at Mill Street offers a nice stop, with views to St Bartholomew's Church
- Little Lindow provides a nice space along Water Lane



## Derelict Sites/ Vacant Units

- Vacant sites along primary retail core take away from the vibrancy of the town, this is likely to raise in the short term at least due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Even prior to COVID High Street brands were leaving the town centre
- There could be further evidence of this as we come out of lockdown



## Housing

- Good mix of historic and modern homes
- Large Victorian/ Edwardian homes to the south of town centre
- Mix of larger homes with garden, apartments and terraced homes

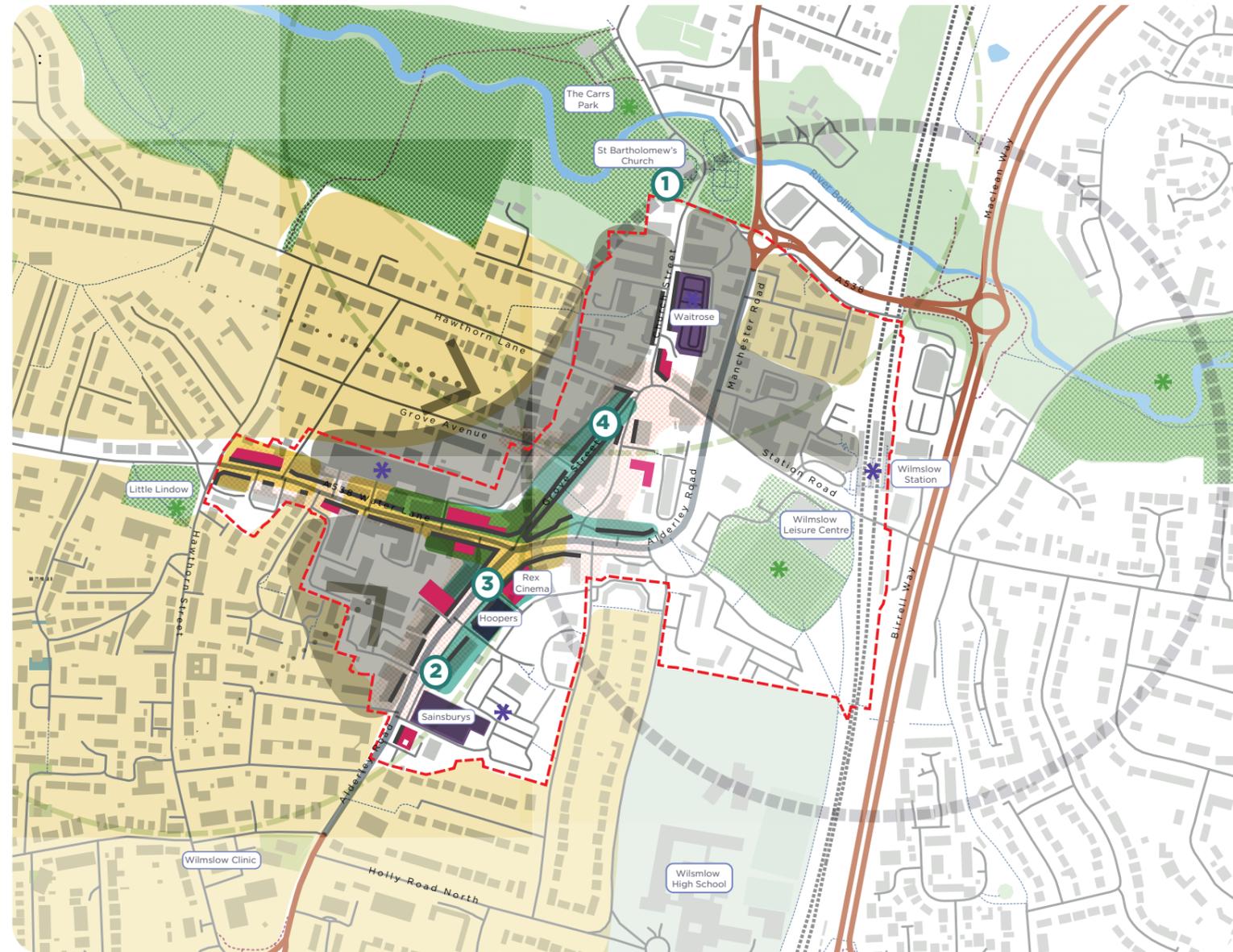


## Positive Features

Positive spatial elements are identified on the plan:

Key

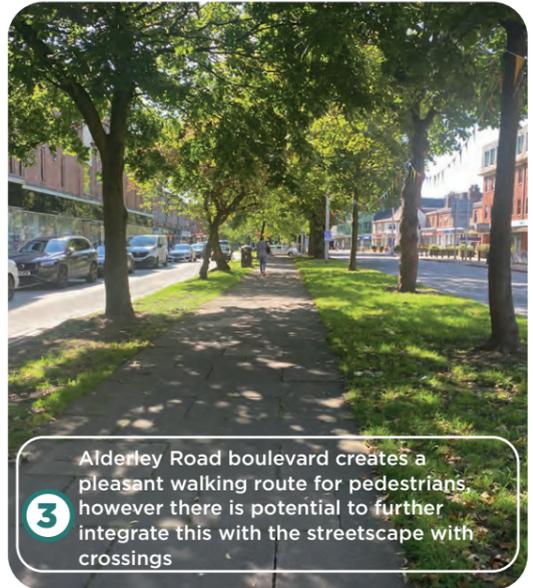
-  Local Centre boundary
-  Local street network
-  Birrell Way bypass
-  Arrival destinations
-  Anchor retail locations
-  Anchor open space / recreational areas
-  Areas with a concentration of F&B uses
-  Areas with a concentration of retail uses
-  Well defined building frontages with active ground floor uses
-  Buildings of historic or townscape quality that help reinforce character
-  Local businesses within close proximity to the town centre
-  Local residential areas within immediate proximity to the town centre
-  Wilmslow Station 400m proximity to the town centre (5 minutes walk)
-  Carrs Park and Little Lindow within 400m proximity to the town centre (5 minutes walk)



**1** St Bartholomew's Church, an area north of the town centre providing historical character and rich open space.



**2** Well defined shop frontages create active streetscapes. Tree planting and planters create an attractive and welcoming space, with adequate space for both pedestrians and vehicles.



**3** Alderley Road boulevard creates a pleasant walking route for pedestrians, however there is potential to further integrate this with the streetscape with crossings

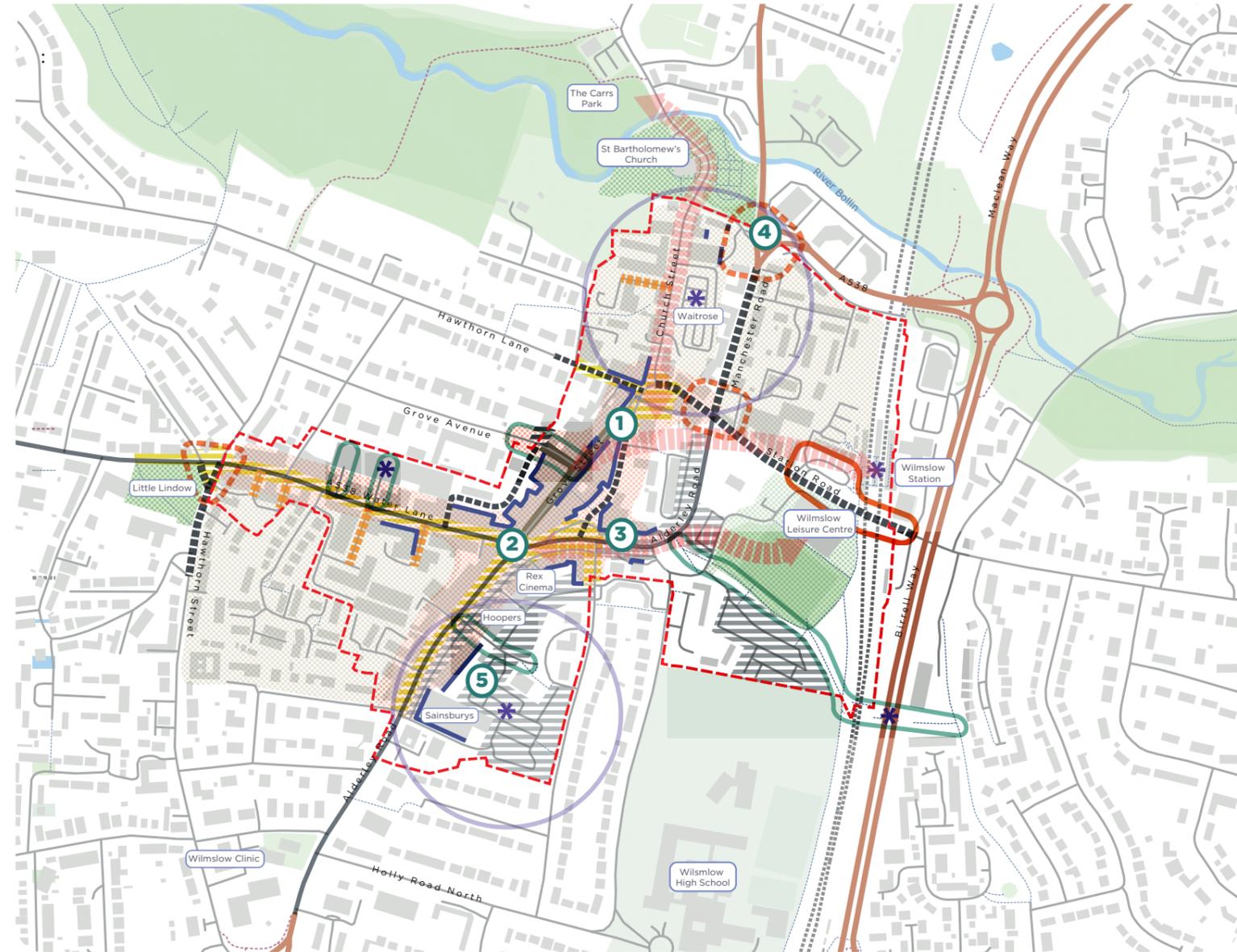


**4** Grove Street provides a pedestrian zone and designated 'high street' within the town centre which helps to build the heart of Wilmslow

## Negative Features

Negative spatial elements are identified on the plan:

- Key
- Local Centre boundary
  - Streets and spaces dominated by car parking
  - Streets with narrow footways / poor pedestrian provision
  - Arrival gateways with a low quality arrival experience
  - Arrival gateway constrained by railway over-bridge and narrow footways
  - Areas of poor quality public realm (primarily low grade / aged materials, lack of street furniture and tree planting)
  - Pedestrianised high street with dated public realm and aesthetic
  - Low quality frontages
  - Arrival destinations
  - Links with poor legibility to and from the town centre
  - Local streets leading to cul-de-sacs or unclear where they connect to
  - Extent of area which reads as part of the Town Centre
  - Areas which feel beyond the extent of the Town Centre
  - Key assets which feel disconnected from the Town Centre
  - Immediate catchment for anchor retail



**1** Grove Street provides a pedestrian high street within the town centre, however public realm is worn and shop frontage is dated



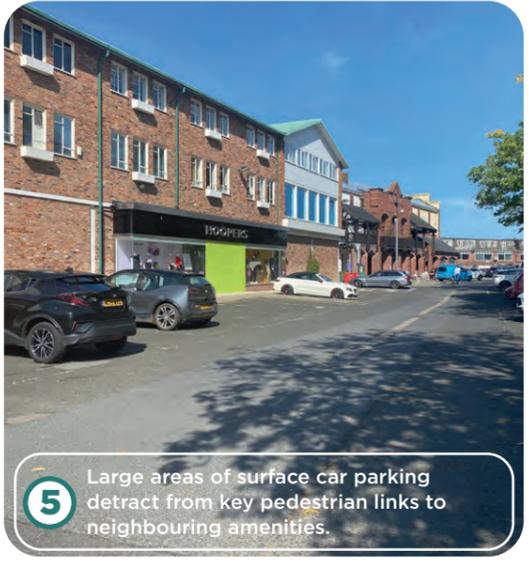
**2** Water Lane and Alderley Road junction creates an area of low quality public realm. The area is heavily dominated with cars and an aging streetscape



**3** Surplus of on-street car parking and dated shop frontage lower the aesthetic quality of the streetscape



**4** Arrival gateway at Manchester Road provides a spacious entrance, however this creates a low quality arrival experience with little definition



**5** Large areas of surface car parking detract from key pedestrian links to neighbouring amenities.

## Summary of Spatial Elements

The table below and on the opposite page identifies the key positive and spatial attributes for the town centre:

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Positives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide footpaths which allow for ease of movement</li> <li>Some newer areas of hard landscaping, outside Cycle Cafe</li> <li>Pedestrianised high street</li> <li>Abundance of street planting and seating</li> <li>Potential opportunities for alfresco activity</li> </ul>	3 potential vehicular gateways into the town: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alderley Road / Water Lane Junction</li> <li>Manchester Road / Mill Street / A538 Roundabout</li> <li>Church Street</li> <li>Railway Station also creates an arrival point at Station Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boulevard along Alderley Road creates a pleasant pedestrian route</li> <li>Landscaped area at Mill Street offers a nice stop, with views to St Bartholomew's Church</li> <li>Access to the Carrs, with links to wider countryside e.g River Dean and Styal Country Park.</li> <li>Lindow Common is not only a recreational green space, but an important Site of Special Scientific Interest &amp; Local Nature Reserve adjacent to the wider peatlands of Lindow Moss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St Bartholomew's Church provides a beautifully landscape area to the north of the town centre</li> <li>Hoopers department store has a long standing history with the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined high street at Grove Street which is well maintained and provides a good pedestrianised route</li> <li>Attractive boulevard which lines the retail offer that extends down Alderley Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anchor retail destinations provide focal points to the town: Hoopers, Sainsburys and Waitrose</li> <li>Well sign posted town for both pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>Information boards dotted across the centre</li> </ul>

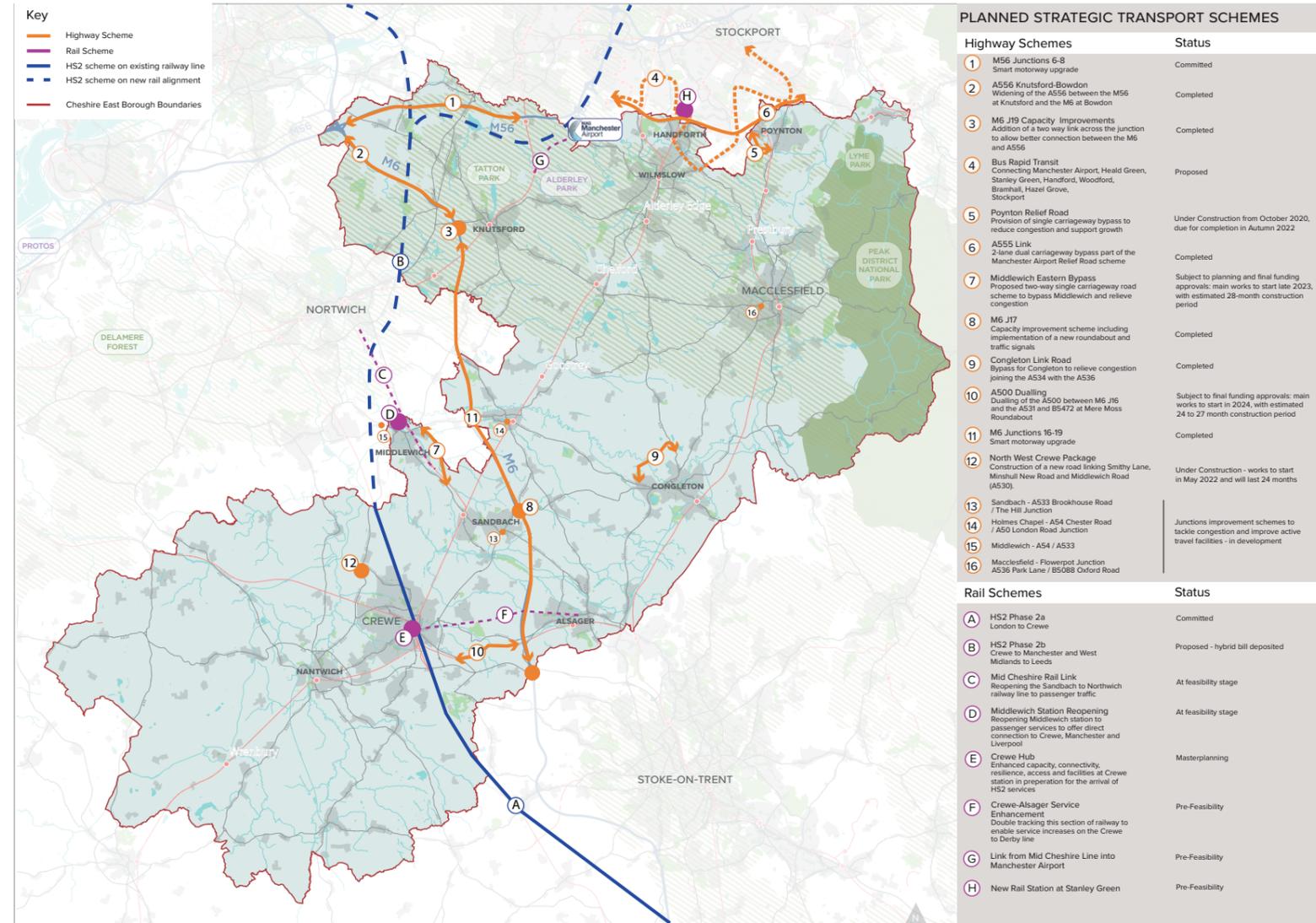
Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
<b>Negatives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pavement and road surfaces are tired and worn in places</li> <li>Disconnect of public realm due to variation of materials and textures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car dominated</li> <li>Built environment does not frame the gateways adequately</li> <li>No sense of arrival or destination points</li> <li>Poor signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor signage to areas of open space - Little Lindow and The Carr's Park</li> <li>Potential over provision of green space along Alderley Road that doesn't best frame the streetscape</li> <li>No defined community square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little offer of heritage buildings, and those that are of heritage value aren't celebrated or well known within the town centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dated shop frontage along main high street detracts from the overall vibrancy</li> <li>Very few residential offers within the town centre - residential seems to skirt the end of the TC boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to identify a central gathering point in the town</li> <li>Varied mix of old and new therefore hard to distinguish an identity for the town</li> </ul>

# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility

Wilmslow is located in the North of Cheshire East, 14 miles south of Manchester City Centre and 3 miles from Manchester Airport and the M56 which connects it to the M6 and M60, and is well connected by the A34 to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton. Wilmslow Station is on the West Coast Main Line providing access to Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport, Crewe and London Euston.

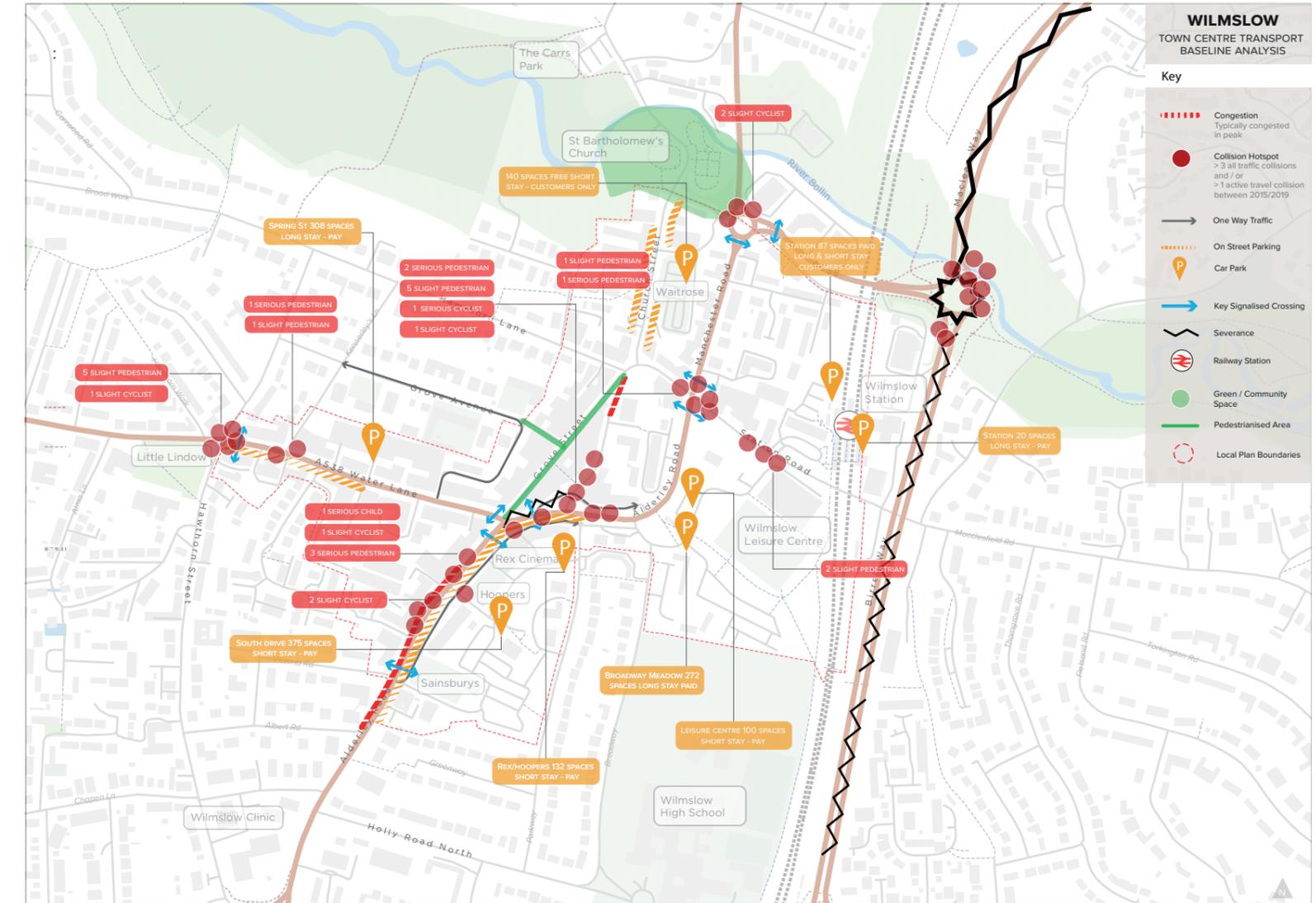
While road access to Macclesfield and Congleton is generally good, public transport's connections are more challenging - as there is no direct rail service and bus services are limited. Likewise, rail capacity in the vicinity of Stockport station is a key issue as this limits services interacting with North Cheshire.

Wilmslow Planned Strategic Transport Schemes



The road network has benefited from investment which has eased north south movement although east west movement suffers from congestion particularly given that the centre connects A34 and Airport/M56. This also impacts on surrounding streets such as Hawthorn Street. Congestion is a cross cutting theme in the Neighbourhood Plan in particularly the disconnect it causes in the town centre and the impact that it has at the junction of Alderley Road and Water Lane.

Wilmslow Transport Baseline Analysis



## Car Parking

Public car parking across Wilmslow town centre comprises a number of short and long stay off-street car parks, and on-street car parking along key streets such as Alderley Road and Church Street. Off-street parks are all paid with inconsistent parking tariffs between the various locations which is likely to cause confusion amongst visitors. On-street parking provided is generally limited to 1-hour maximum stay.

As there is a significant amount of formal on-street parking in proximity to shops and key facilities within the town centre, a number of streets within the main retail areas of the town centre become dominated by vehicles. This reduces opportunities for enhanced public realm and the quality of the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

There is a long-held aspiration for a MSCP at Broadway Meadows (NP Policy KS6). CEC is currently assessing the feasibility<sup>1</sup> of the delivery of this linked to a wider parking strategy to ensure sufficient short stay parking for shoppers while relieving parking pressure on key routes such as Alderley Rd – creating the potential to improve the pedestrian environment.

The TCVPs consider the role of car parking in relation to the vibrancy and vitality of each town centre. However, any proposals to review or modernise car parking provision and management will be considered on a town by town basis as part of the Council's approach to travel demand management. Therefore the delivery of any car parking proposals is outside the scope of the

Town Centre	Car Park ID	Parking Spaces	Duration	Pricing
Wilmslow	Waitrose Car Park	140	Short Stay	Free (for customers only - 2hr limit)
	Station Car Park (west)	87	Long Stay	Paid
	Station Car Park (east)	20	Long Stay	Paid
	Spring St Car Park	308	Long Stay	Paid
	South Drive Car Park	375	Short Stay (330)	Paid
	Long Stay (45)	Paid		Paid
	Rex / Hoopers Car Park	132	Short Stay	Paid
	Broadway Meadow Car Park	272	Long Stay	Paid
	Leisure Centre Car Park	100	Short Stay	Paid
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1434</b>		

Stay limited to 4-hrs or less.

<sup>1</sup>This is currently on hold due to high number of local office workers working from home resulting in uncertainty over longer term demand for long stay car parking in the centre

TCVPs.

## Public Realm

Footways within the town centre are generally wide (>3m) and clutter free. However, materials appear particularly aged along A538 Water Lane and B5086 Alderley Road. Where opportunities for enhanced public realm exist in terms of available space or gateways to the centre, the area is often dominated by vehicles in terms of on-street parking or large junctions, for example the Green Lane/Alderley Road junction. Reconfiguration of junctions, more frequent



crossings, rationalised on-street parking, and higher quality public realm should therefore be considered.

## Road Safety

Several streets and junctions within the centre of Wilmslow present road safety concerns particularly for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. This includes the Hawthorn Street/A538 Water Lane junction where 5 collisions resulted in slight injury have occurred over the last 5 years. Additionally, several collisions have occurred at the Alderley Road/South Drive junction - 3 involving pedestrians and 1 involving a cyclist. Pedestrian safety measures, such as reduced carriageway widths, tightened junction

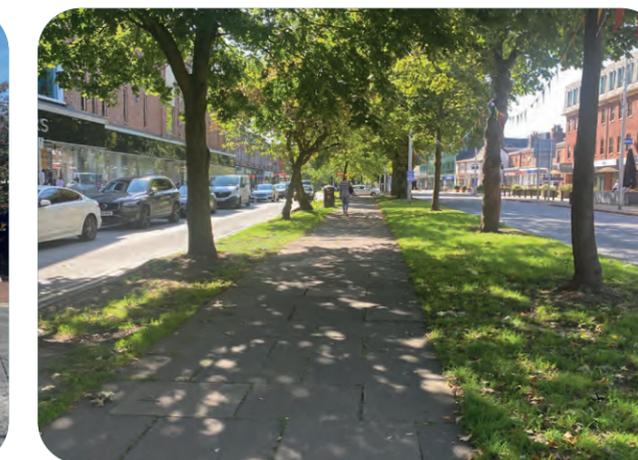


radii and more frequent crossing points should therefore be considered in this area.

## Active Travel

The town centre is situated within 20-minute walk time of the majority of surrounding residential areas and therefore presents good opportunities for walking and cycling access. However, infrastructure to support sustainable modes is currently limited.

Although routes along key pedestrian desire lines are provided with footways within Wilmslow, a lack of signage and natural wayfinding towards the town centre creates poor legibility. This is more problematic for visitors who may be arriving

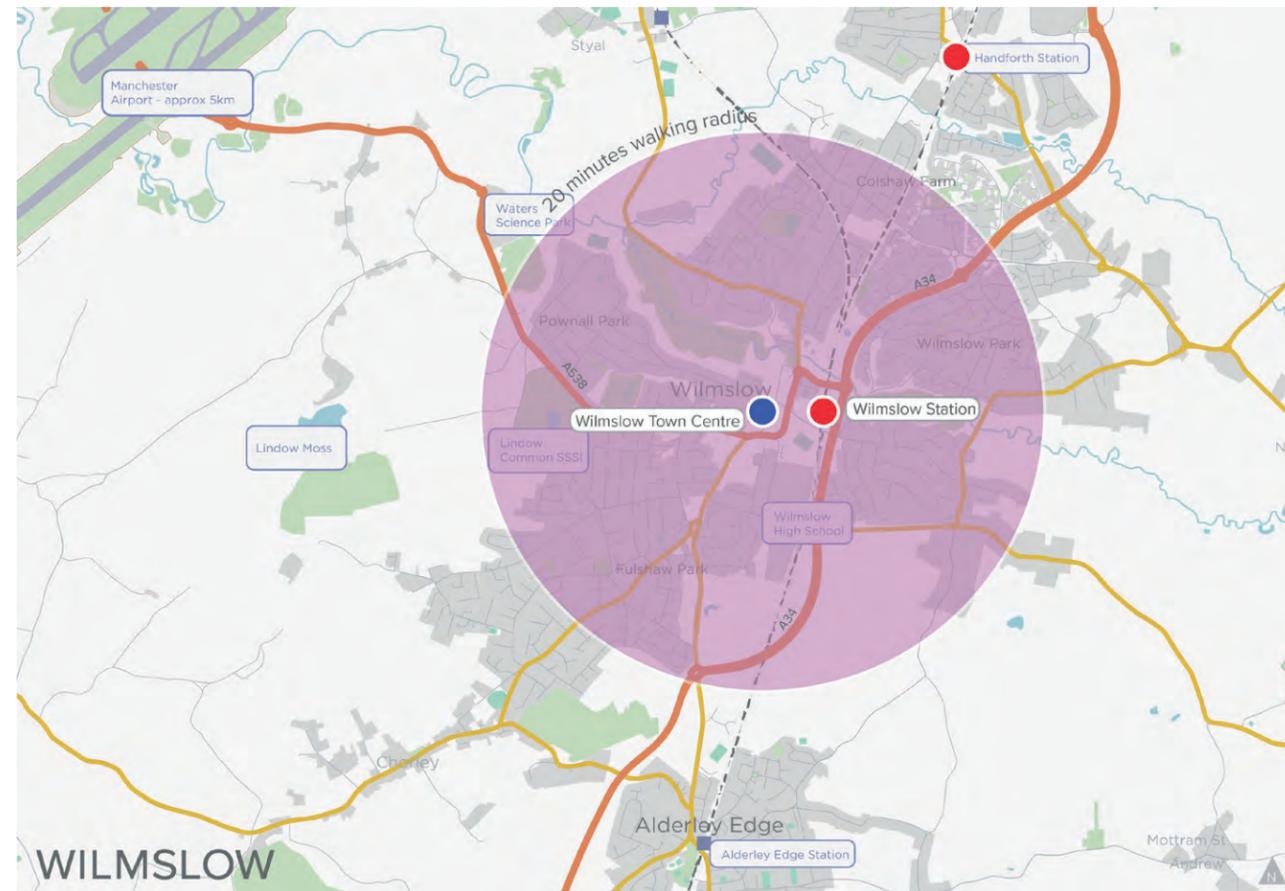


at the rail station or off-street car parks in the surrounding areas.

In terms of access for pedestrians and cyclists from the surrounding area, the presence of the A34 to the east of the town centre causes a major severance for surrounding large residential areas reducing opportunities to access the town centre via active travel modes and contributing to the parking concerns. This is particularly an issue for residents in the north east of the town where the Bollin Valley Roundabout and dual carriageway with no crossing facilities creates a major barrier to pedestrian and cyclist activity.

The highway dominated environment around the town centre not only reduces perceptions of safety for pedestrian and cyclists, but also provides an unattractive offer in comparison to car use and is therefore unlikely to promote behaviour changes. The dominance of car travel in the area also contributes to worsening air quality which is highlighted by the AQMAs present in the vicinity of the town centre near Tatton Street and Hallow Lane.

Wilmslow 20-Minute Walk Isochrone



## Public Transport

Wilmslow station is served by 5 trains per hour to Manchester Piccadilly and 4 trains per hour between Crewe and Liverpool Lime Street. The station provides car parking, cycle parking and bike hire facilities.

The station is approximately a 5-minute walk to the centre of Wilmslow via a direct route along Station Road. Although footways and a number of pedestrian crossings are provided between the station and the town centre, the route is poorly signed with pedestrians required to navigate large junctions before accessing the main retail core, the presence of which is also unclear from the adjacent highway network. The station forecourt also appears tired.

Bus stops are provided along Green Lane and Alderley Road providing hourly services to Knutsford, Altrincham and Macclesfield. Although bus interchange facilities are well placed to provide access to the centre, the services are

limited in terms of frequency and availability during evenings and weekends.

## Movement Trends

Travel to work data (Census 2011) suggests that Wilmslow is a net importer of commuters - more people are travelling to work in the area than are commuting out of the area. This is a different trend to that observed across all other TCVP towns. A high proportion of people travelling to work in the area is likely to create a high demand for parking within the vicinity of the town centre. Links to public transport hubs such as the rail station should therefore be strengthened to encourage a modal shift of people travelling into the area on a regular basis.

Car ownership within the area is also high with 90% of residents having access to a car and 40% of residents having access to 2 or more vehicles. This further increases the need to consider parking management and attractive walking and cycling links to reduce the number of people driving to the town centre.

-  4,400 people travel from Wilmslow to work in surrounding areas
-  6,600 people travel from surrounding areas to work in Wilmslow
-  48% of residents travel between 5 and 30km to work
-  Public transport accounts for 6% of commuter trips
-  Only 10% of households in Wilmslow do not have access to a car, 40% have access to 2 or more vehicles
-  69% of residents in Wilmslow in employment drive to work by car
-  5minute walk between town centre and railway station
-  Active travel accounts for 9% of commuter trips

Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility cont.

Cheshire East Council has approved Local Transport Development Plans (LTDP) for its principal towns, keys service centres and surrounding rural areas. The table opposite summarises the potential transport schemes included in the LTDP relating to the town centre at the point they went out to public consultation. Please note the majority of schemes are at concept stage, subject to feasibility work and must be viewed as potential schemes. Therefore the LTDP are live documents and this list of schemes is subject to change and will evolve as further work is undertaken.

In Wilmslow the LTDP sets out a wide range of actions that CEC are exploring. In Wilmslow, the LTDP focuses strongly on active travel interventions to improve conditions for those on foot and cycle. Parking management is also a key focus and several reviews are set out across the TCVP area.

The table contains detail on the schemes set out in the LTDP.

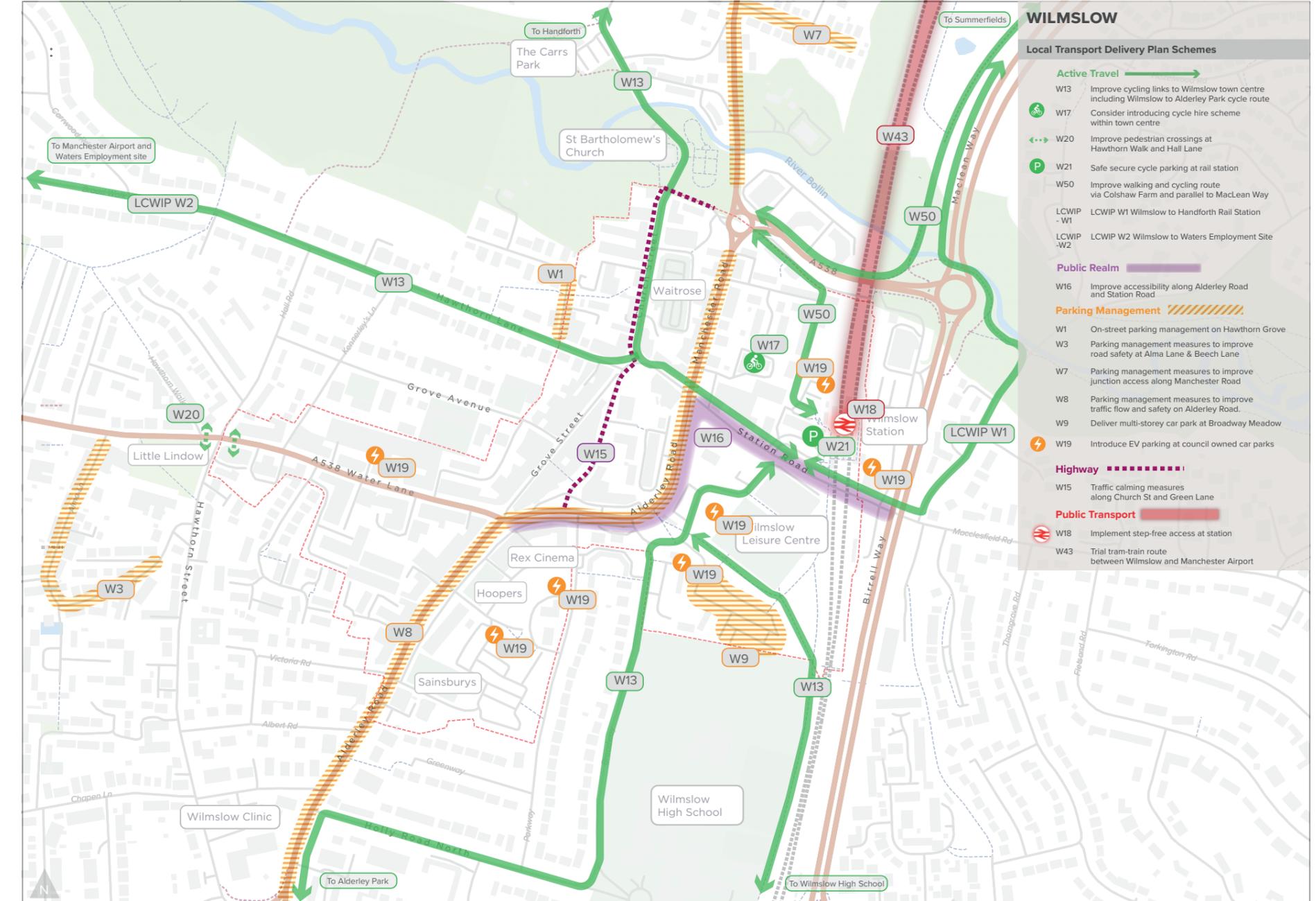
For full information on LTDP and the latest version of the LTDP please refer to the Highway pages of the CEC website.

## Wilmslow LTP and LCWIP schemes

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	W13	Improve cycling links to Wilmslow town centre including Wilmslow to Alderley Park cycle route	Improve cycling links to Wilmslow town centre along Broadway, Church Street, Hawthorn Street, Holly Road North – and including Wilmslow to Alderley Park cycle route.	£1m-£5m
	W17	Consider introducing cycle hire scheme within town centre	Consider introducing a cycle hire scheme in Wilmslow and Alderley Edge centres.	Revenue Funding
	W20	Improve pedestrian crossings at Hawthorn Walk and Hall Lane	Improve pedestrian crossing points by providing dropped kerbs and reducing the junction mouth width where appropriate at numerous locations including Hawthorn Walk and Hall Lane junctions with the A538 Altrincham Road.	£1m-£5m
	W21	Safe secure cycle parking at rail station	Improve cycle parking facilities at Wilmslow train station.	<£100k
	W50	Improve walking and cycling route via Colshaw Farm and parallel to MacLean Way	Improve walking and cycling route between Handforth Garden Village, Handforth rail station and Wilmslow via Colshaw Farm and parallel to MacLean Way.	£1m-£5m
	LCWIP-W1	Wilmslow to Handforth Rail Station	LCWIP route: Wilmslow to Handforth Rail Station identified in Wilmslow LCWIP.	£1m-£5m
LCWIP-W2	Wilmslow to Waters Employment Site	LCWIP route: Wilmslow to Waters Employment Site identified in Wilmslow LCWIP.	£1m-£5m	
Public realm	W16	Improve accessibility along Alderley Road and Station Road	Improve the streets in Wilmslow town centre and Alderley Edge village centre to make them more attractive and accessible (particularly for pedestrians and people with disabilities) along Alderley Road and Station Road.	£1m-£5m
	W1	On-street parking management on Hawthorn Grove	Review parking management of on-street parking to improve parking turnover and traffic flow along Hawthorn Grove.	<£100k
Parking Management	W3	Parking management measures to improve road safety at Alma Lane & Beech Lane	Introduce parking management measures on Alma Lane and Beech Lane including any junctions – implementing parking management measures to improve road safety and access at junctions.	<£100k
	W7	Parking management measures to improve junction access along Manchester Road	Introduce parking management measures to improve junction access along Manchester Road, including the Manchester Road/Copperfield's junction.	<£100k
	W8	Parking management measures to improve traffic flow and safety on Alderley Road.	Introduce parking management measures on Alderley Road to improve traffic flow – as traffic collision data gathered indicates a high number of collisions along this section of the network.	<£100k
	W9	Deliver multi-storey car park at Broadway Meadow	Deliver a multi-storey car park at Broadway Meadow.	5-10mil
	W19	Introduce EV parking at council owned car parks	Introduce electric vehicle charging points at Council owned car parks within Wilmslow and Alderley Edge.	<£100k
Highway	W15	Traffic calming measures along Church St and Green Lane	Implement traffic and speed calming measures along Church St, Chancel Lane, Mill St and Green Lane in Wilmslow.	<£100k
	W18	Implement step-free access at station	Introduce step-free access to the Manchester Airport platform at Wilmslow train station.	<£1m
Public transport	W43	Trial tram-train route between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport	Trial tram-train route on the existing rail line between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport.	>£10m

<sup>1</sup>The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.

## Wilmslow Local Transport Development Plan Schemes



## Retail and Leisure

CEC recognises the importance of monitoring key information to assess and respond to issues in its centres and commission regular reviews of the retail and leisure market across the Borough. The latest partial update of the Retail Study Report generally paints a positive picture for Wilmslow in terms of performance since the last Report (2016)

Wilmslow is one of the larger KSC in Cheshire East. Overall, the centre provides 241 units (Experian Goad Plan, September 2019) which are primarily located on Grove Street, Alderley Road and Water Lane.

The centre is anchored by two food stores: Sainsbury's at the southern end and Waitrose at the northern end. In addition, convenience goods provision includes Tesco Express and Co-op Food convenience stores. However with the exception of a tobacconist, there are no independent convenience operators likely to due to the size of the Waitrose and Sainsbury's store. The proportion of convenience goods floorspace is above the UK average. The current proportion of units in comparison goods use is also above the UK average (29%) with predominantly clothing/ footwear retailers but also a number of high end jewellers.

	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK Average (%)	Sq.m	%	UK Average (%)
Convenience	13	5	9	7,690	19	15
Comparison	80	33	29	14,030	34	34
Retail Service	50	21	15	5,270	13	7
Leisure Service	52	22	25	7,470	18	26
Financial and Business Service	23	10	10	3,510	9	7
Vacant	23	10	12	3,520	8	11
TOTAL	241	100	100	41,220	100	100

Diversity of Uses in Wilmslow Town Centre in September 2019  
 Source: Experian GOAD Survey, September 2019. UK Average from the Experian GOAD Category Report (February 2020)

The finance and business space identified in the table (derived from the GOAD survey) only relates to ground floor office floorspace within the town centre. Wilmslow's office market is considered further on p 57

Particular improvements were noted in the leisure service provision since the 2016 report, there has been a significant increase in the number of units (+13) - compared to only 2 since 2009. At the time of the survey there were 6 bars/pubs, 26 café's/restaurants and 10 takeaway outlets. The leisure provision in the town has been boosted by the opening of the Rex Cinema following refurbishment of the old theatre on Alderley Road, previously in retail use.

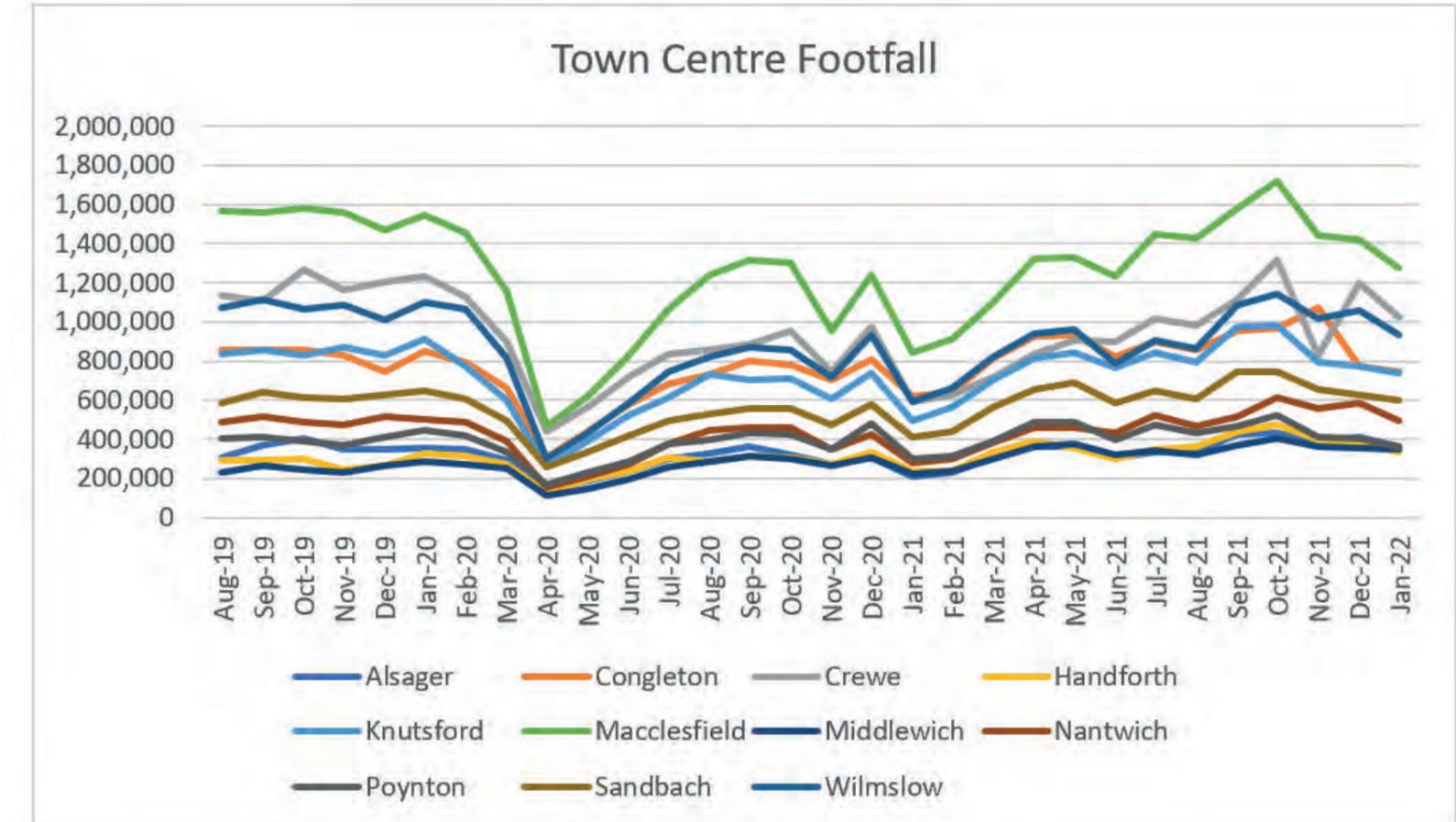
At this stage, it is unclear what the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic will be on Wilmslow's retail and leisure occupiers. Whilst pre COVID, Wilmslow benefited from additional footfall from its significant local office market which supported its local shops, cafes and restaurants, this has been lost during lockdown. The relocation of 3,000 Royal London employees to Alderley Park has had an impact on local hospitality businesses including pubs and hotels. Whilst in the longer term new homes which will be built on the site should support the centre in the short term, compounded by the slow return of workers to some of the town's offices this has impacted on footfall in the centre. However, it is anticipated that in the future more flexible working habits should mean that Wilmslow will continue to benefit from the spend of workers both working from offices in Wilmslow and from those working from home.

Over recent years a number of national brands had already closed their doors in the town and in some cases these were being reoccupied by cafes and bars. Given its affluent catchment, it is anticipated that although there may be a short term impact on some occupiers, longer term - given the breadth of the offer - the centre should return to being an attractive location for retail and leisure occupiers. The focus should be on attracting independents rather than nationals.

## Footfall

In recognition of the important relationship between footfall and vitality, CEC is now commissioning regular monitoring of footfall across the centres. The below figure shows the footfall in all the key centres between August 2019 and December 2020. It starkly shows the impact of Covid on footfall, across Cheshire East particularly in March and November last year (during national lockdowns) and some bounce back in December. In August 2019 Wilmslow was the third most visited centre in Cheshire East (just over 1m) and retained this position throughout the period - with just under £1m visitor per month in December 2020. Covid has had a significant impact on footfall, both during enforced lockdowns but also in further accelerating online retail use. The ability of a centre to attract a wide range of visitors (rather than just relying on shoppers) will have a significant impact on how centres emerge from Covid.

Although as noted above, the relocation of Royal London and the slow return of some to local offices has impacted on footfall given the multiple roles that Wilmslow plays in terms of shops and services, office location, leisure (including F&B and sport) and as a place to live it should be more resilient than centres with a more limited offer.



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: August 2019-2021



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: Wilmslow Town Centre: August 2019-2020  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

## Employment

Wilmslow benefits from having a strong office market within the heart of the town including standalone office buildings on the high street as well as offices around the edges such as Riverside Business Park on Bollin Way. The current office supply is predominantly owned and managed by the Emerson Group who have 400,000 sq. ft of offices in the town centre across 50 units accommodating a number of large occupiers. These significantly support the vitality and viability of the town.

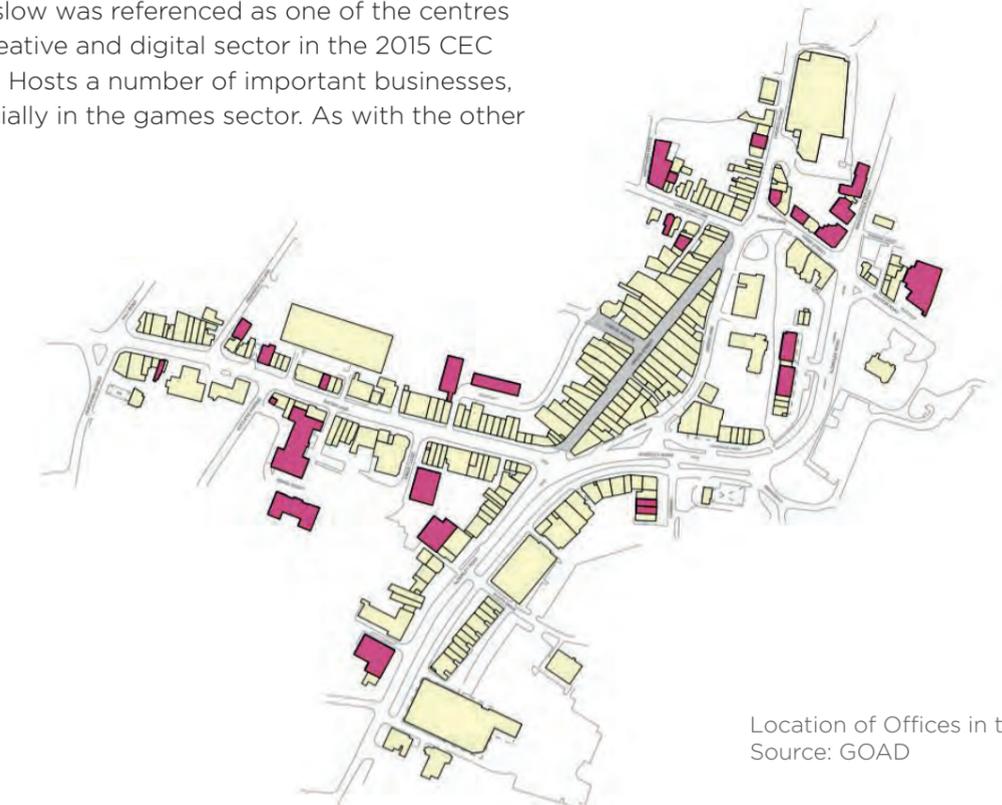
It is also accessible to a wide range of employment opportunities in the wider area - Airport City, Alderley Park and Waters Corporation - as well as being well connected to those in the wider Manchester City Region. In addition, planning permission was recently approved for a 190,000 sq ft business park off Pendleton Way.

Towns like Wilmslow are likely to benefit in the medium term from the anticipated new normal of office working arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic - hybrid working (splitting time between the office, home and meeting locations). Wilmslow's residential and associated offer are likely to attract workers going forward who want to live in an attractive centre, well serviced by local amenities and well connected to larger employment locations where they may work

a few days a week. Whilst its strong existing office market will remain important for workers who want to collaborate or meet clients in the office in the longer term, it is acknowledged that footfall is likely to be impacted until more workers return more often to the office.

Wilmslow was referenced as one of the centres for creative and digital sector in the 2015 CEC study. Hosts a number of important businesses, especially in the games sector. As with the other

Cheshire East towns that are important in this sector (incl. Macclesfield/Bollington, Knutsford and Congleton), aspects such as quality of place, vibrancy and attractiveness of the town are important locational factors alongside connectivity and access to talent.



Location of Offices in the Town Centre. Source: GOAD

## Residential Market Context

The town enjoys an excellent reputation as an attractive residential location offering a range of high quality homes within walking distance of the centre and accessible to attractive countryside.

The choice of homes include a range of historic/ large family detached homes set in attractive landscaped grounds as well as more modern estates around the edge but unlike many of the northern towns there is a relatively low proportion of terraces.

Importantly it also offers a good range of state and private educational facilities including Wilmslow High School and Wilmslow Guild. However these assets means that the town is sought after resulting in affordability issues.

At the time of the 2011 Census the dominant house type across the Cheshire East area was detached housing (35.6%) which is a much higher proportion than the North West (18%) and England (22.4%).

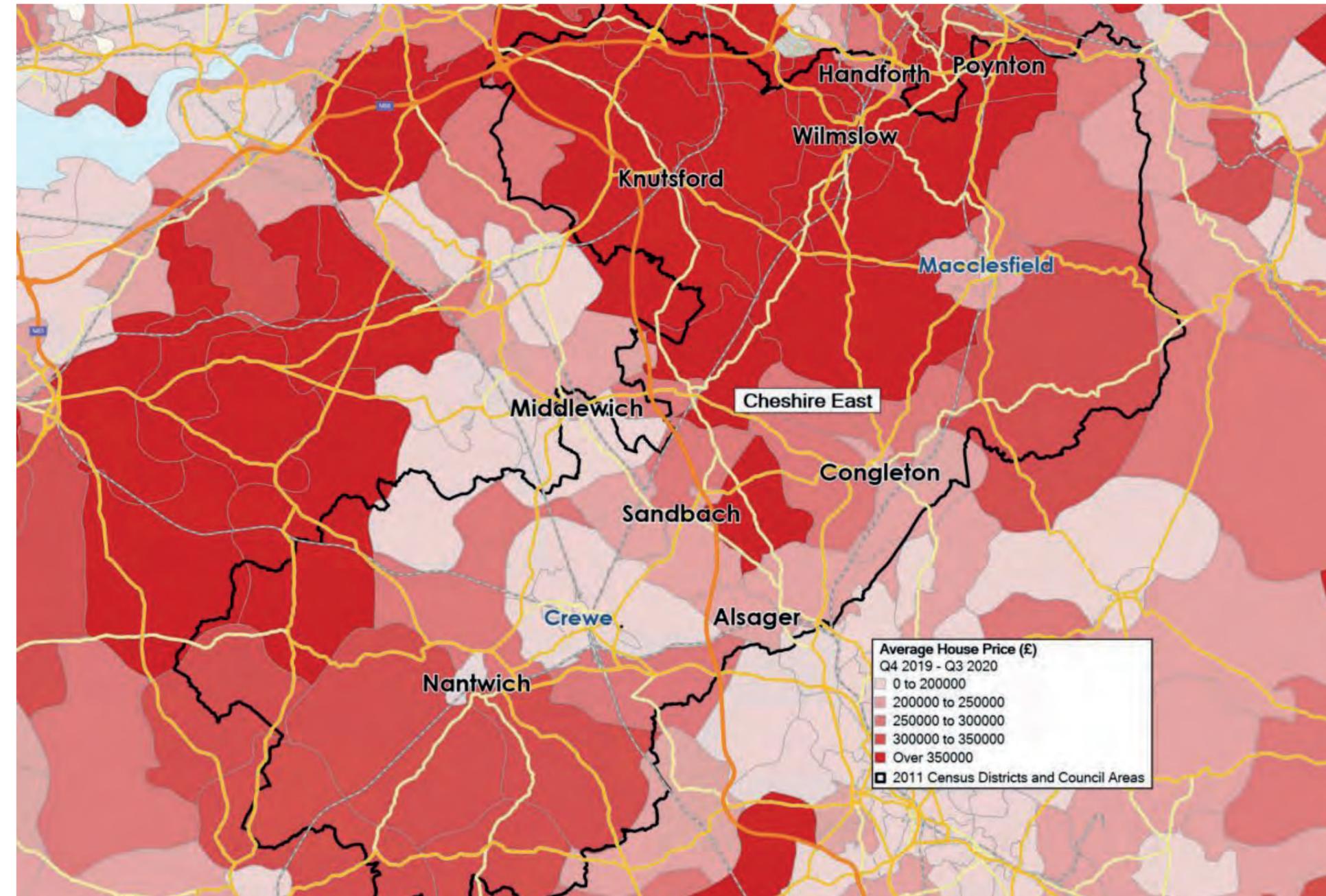
The Wilmslow parish area had a total of 10,615 households, representing 6.6% of Cheshire East's total residential stock (159,441). In terms of housing mix, Wilmslow is characterised by larger house types with 39.5% being detached properties which is one of the highest proportions across the 9 KSC's next to Alsager (39.9%).

This offer has recently been further enhanced by Chapelwood, on the edge of the high street, which offers independent living for the over 60s in 57 one, two and three bedroom homes, complemented by health and wellbeing facilities, including a spa, gym, restaurant and owners' lounge for socialising with friends, family and neighbours.

The Local Plan allocated sites have the capacity to deliver 722 homes by 2030. Although this sought after housing market certainly adds to the appeal of the centre it does mean that it is not inclusive in terms of ability to meet all housing needs.

Dwelling Type/Area	Detached	Semi Detached	Terrace	Flat	Other	Total Households
Alsager	39.9%	40.4%	11.6%	8.1%	0%	5,183
Congleton	36.3%	35.4%	19.3%	8.9%	0.2%	11,561
Handforth	26.1%	23.1%	27.9%	22.8%	0.1%	2,936
Knutsford	38.8%	34.2%	19.7%	7.0%	0.4%	5,671
Middlewich	39.0%	26.0%	19.7%	15.3%	0%	5,910
Nantwich	20.8%	30.6%	26.8%	21.6%	0.2%	6,710
Poynton-with-Worth	42.7%	39.2%	10.5%	7.2%	0.3%	6,024
Sandbach	39.1%	36.1%	17.6%	6.8%	0.3%	7,840
<b>Wilmslow</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10,615</b>
Cheshire East	35.6%	32.6%	21.2%	10.2%	0.5%	159,441
North West	18.0%	36.3%	29.8%	15.4%	0.5%	3,009,549
England	22.4%	31.2%	24.5%	21.2%	0.7%	22,063,368

Housing Stock by Type.  
Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres



# 08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

This SWOT is based on the analysis of the consultant team and discussions with the Town Council and other local partners including councillors.

## Strengths

- Strategic location - national and international transport links - connections to Manchester Airport, key motorways, A34 and train station
- Retail/leisure offer - mix of national brands and independents including a number of luxury brands which serve its affluent catchment area. Key attractors to the town:
  - Hoopers Independent Department Store
  - Rex Independent Cinema - started to support evening economy
  - Monthly market
  - Luxury good including cars and jewellery
- Centre offers a balanced lifestyle for residents - shops, employment, leisure centre, cafés, bars and restaurants and a range of good schools
- Strong local office market accommodating a wide range of businesses which support the local shops and F&B offer. Located within the Cheshire East Science Corridor
- Environmental assets - Green approaches and central boulevard and gateway to rolling Cheshire Countryside, Carnival Fields, Little Lindow etc.
- Programme of events including monthly artisan market and Wilmslow half marathon, Cycle cafe is a draw for cycling clubs/groups
- Choice of parking which does not dominate the streetscape - provided in MSCP or tucked away from the main routes
- Brand - build upon assets quality and luxury, nice place to visit
- Active charity and volunteer sector particularly with respect to improving the town (clean team, Wilmslow in bloom, friends of the Carrs, etc.)
- 'Wilmslow's Way Better' brand

## Weaknesses

- Traffic dominates parts of the town - need to create the right conditions that make people want to walk/cycle - safer streets with reduced traffic dominance
- Car park strategy - conflict between workers and resident's car parking, aspiration/need for an additional MSCP would benefit from more nip in. Could Green Lane be made into one-way to provide on-street parking bays?
- Town centre feels somewhat disjointed - public realm doesn't seem to link together leading to a lack of character within the area. Lacks a central location, no natural square which can draw people together for larger scale gatherings. Parts look tired and in some cases scruffy particularly along Alderley Road, Grove Street
- Retail offer - National retailers disappearing e.g. Paperchase/Laura Ashley. Independents on outskirts
- Weak evening economy especially in comparison to neighbouring towns (such as Alderley Edge).

## Opportunities

- Affluent population on doorstep untapped, huge potential and growing (Handforth Garden Village, Woodford and Adlington)
- Scope to enhance programme of events building upon strengths such as cycling linked to Cycle café and Wilmslow half marathon.
- Create more places to dwell
- Make more of the boulevard - to better showcase Rex and Hoopers
- Exploit the cultural/history and natural assets - cinema, F&B, gallery space, art trail etc. capitalised on links to Romany, Turing, Lindow Pete, etc as well as natural assets such as The Carrs and Lindow Moss
- Define the brand of Wilmslow - find its niche which sets it apart from other towns in Cheshire.
- Wilmslow was referenced in the 2015 CEC study as one of the centres for the creative & digital sector (number of important businesses, especially in the games sector)
- Better interpretation/outdoor "tourist information centre" explaining the history and notable features/residents to attract visitors
- Harness Rex Cinema as catalyst to support night economy support independent cafes and bars etc. Would also be supported by more residential development in the centre
- No conference space - should make more of proximity of the Airport. Scope for more hotels?
- Support pop ups in vacant units and wraps on vacant units
- Create clearer clusters of uses in areas - e.g. dining zone
- Enhancing Wilmslow's digital and on line presence - scope to introduce town wide free WIFI
- Create a "community hub" connecting Library, Cinema and Leisure Centre
- Proactive town council
- Tap into strong business base better
- Reduce the dominance of the highway - improve pedestrian facilities
- Encourage more independents esp. convenience stores such as cheese shop, butchers, bakers, deli
- Active travel to the Carrs

## Threats

- Competition - competition from Trafford Centre, Handforth Dean, Cheadle and online retailers and going forward surrounding service centres implementing the same improvements. Number of high street retailers closed/left - Laura Ashley, paperchase etc.
- Traffic using the town more to pass through on the way to other destinations such as Alderley Edge/Airport
- COVID-19 and potential closure of retail and leisure outlets.
- COVID-19 Emergency Active Travel Fund measures weak/non-existent in Wilmslow
- COVID -19 potential impact on office demand if existing buildings do not respond to new ways of working - need to ensure offices are vibrant places which attract employers to collaborate and are great places that clients want to visit
- Lack of coordinated investment and public realm improvements.
- Tesco Block is an eyesore - need to improve the appearance of this key gateway



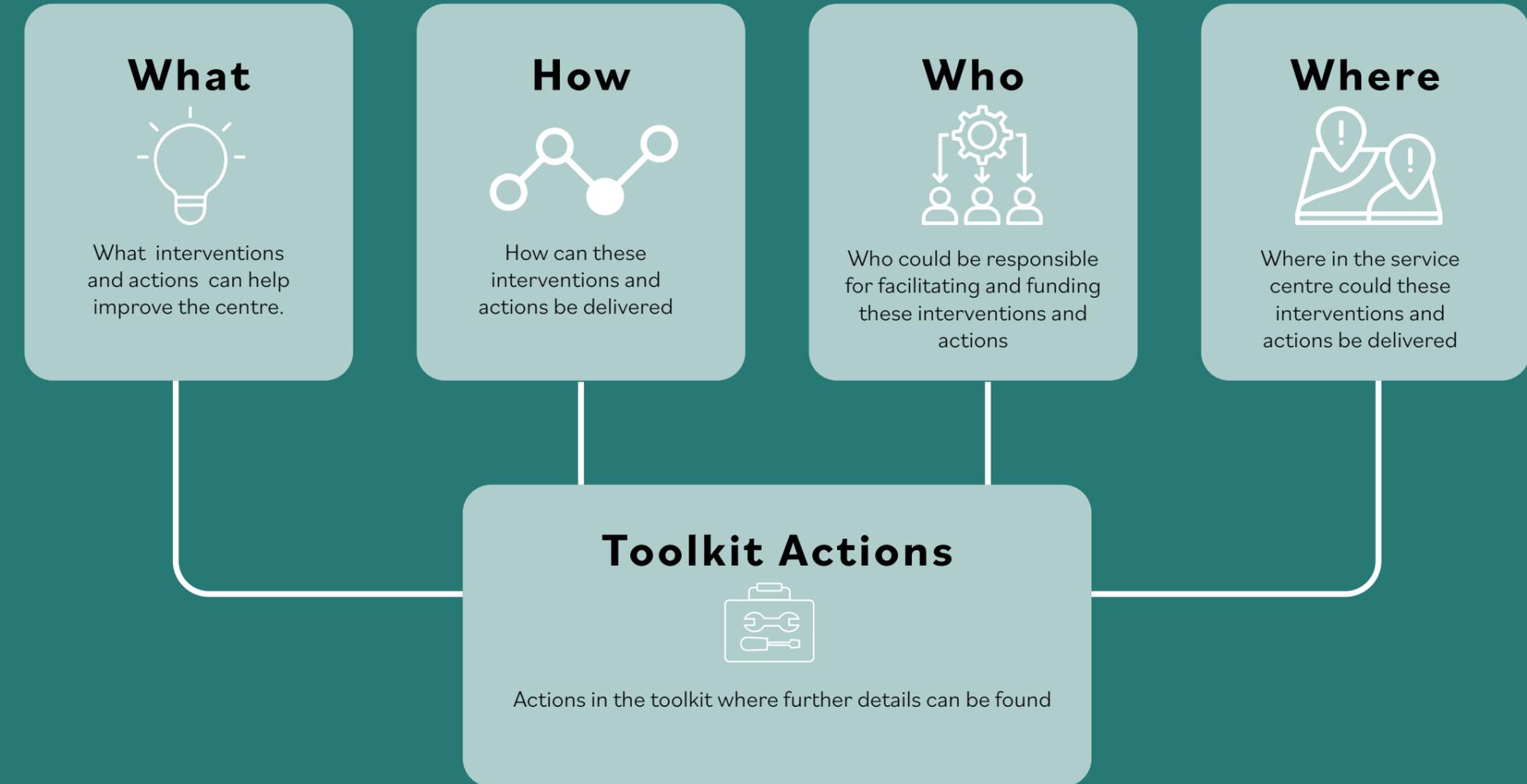
# WILMSLOW ACTION PLAN

## 9 Priority Areas for Intervention

The Action Plan has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for Wilmslow responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention which will have the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the Centre.

For each of the actions further details are provided in terms of what, how, who and where (see Box for further details).

The Action Plan is supported by a Toolkit which provides a wide range of actions across 25 intervention areas (which align with the High Street Task Force recommendations) which can be undertaken by a range of stakeholders.



# Vision and objectives

## Vision Statement

To sustain and enhance a dynamic community within Wilmslow which protects its special built and natural character and which promotes a user friendly and green environment with an increasingly attractive and thriving Town Core.

## Objectives

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Heritage assets** – To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow’s designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town’s history
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space

- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.

## Role of the Centre

Wilmslow plays a number of important roles:

- Local centre for local catchment accommodating 240 retail, leisure and hospitality companies, 40 food, drink and restaurant and 45 specialist health and beauty businesses
- Employment hub accommodating 160 office and professional service companies
- Leisure hub – home to The Rex (independent cinema), Wilmslow Leisure Centre and a number of attractive green areas which attract visitors from wider catchment including The Carrs, Little Lindow and Lindow Common

The Vitality Plan seeks to support Wilmslow to fulfil its potential across these important roles.

## Areas for intervention

The following have been identified as areas for intervention. Priority interventions identified through the public consultation are highlighted with a white border.

Potential actions are identified in Section 10:



# Spatial action plan

The Spatial Action Plan illustrates key features of the Centre and identifies where proposed actions could be delivered. It highlights the Centre's significant green assets and how these could be better connected and gateways strengthened. It also highlights how the Boulevard could be enhanced to support visitors to dwell more in the Centre supporting vitality.

The three priority actions which have emerged from the public consultations are

- **Action 2: Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre**
- **Action 3: Improving the Town's Core**
- **Action 9: Better Management of Movement**

**Key**

- Town centre boundary
- Main routes into and out of town
- Open green spaces
- Parks & recreational destinations
- Arrival gateways to Wilmslow - Visible, clear and eye catching signage - a welcome to the Town.
- Station arrival
- Improved management and provision of car parking across the town within existing car parking locations

**Action Plan**

**Action 1 - Strengthening green space & links**

- Pedestrian focused streets with temporary & permanent environmental improvements which link to important green assets
- Areas where upgrades to public realm and existing streets can help to increase footfall and dwell time
- Improvements to junctions where pedestrian movements across should be prioritised. Improvements can include aesthetic as well as functional upgrades helping to create a continuous, joined up journey to destinations

**Action 2 - Creating more opportunities to dwell**

- Indicative locations for temporary interventions along key streets which encourage dwell time, active travel, ground floor active uses
- Investment and upgrades to existing open space amenities to further improve the variety of activities available for all



# Movement action plan

A series of schemes have been identified through the TCVP process, building upon those set out in the LTDP.

They are intended to strengthen and expand the existing LTDP proposals – with a stronger emphasis on public realm and enhancing the street environment.

## Town Centre movement schemes suggested in addition to LTDP potential schemes

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	W_AT1	Improve wayfinding across town centre at key gateways	Improve signage and wayfinding across town at key gateways and landmarks.	<£100k
	W_AT2	Provide cycling link on Alderley Road (north) to Wilmslow town centre	Introduce a cycle route on Alderley Road (north) towards Handforth.	<£1m
	W_AT3	Improve cycling and walking links on Alderley Road (south) to Wilmslow town centre	Improve walking and cycle routes between Alderley Road (south) and the town centre building up on the existing boulevard layout - connecting south towards Alderley Park.	<£1m
	W_AT4	Provide cycling link on Water Lane to Wilmslow town centre	Introduce a cycle route on Water Lane towards Manchester Airport – there is opportunity of reallocating highway space on Water Lane as currently there is plenty of on-street parking provided while there is Spring Street MSCP available (with access from Water Lane).	<£1m
Public Realm	W_PR1	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Hawthorn Lane	Implement a public realm scheme on Hawthorn Lane to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment.	£1m-£5m
	W_PR2	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Alderley Road (south)	Implement a public realm scheme on Alderley Road (south) to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment for people to dwell and spend time.	£1m-£5m
	W_PR3	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Water Lane	Implement a public realm scheme on Water Lane including improvements to pavement materials, street furniture and planting which is currently tired and underwhelming. Undertake review of parking management to explore opportunities for better use of space e.g. temporary parklets.	£1m-£5m
	W_PR4	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Green Lane	Implement a public realm scheme on Green Lane to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment.	£1m-£5m
Parking Management	W_PM1	Temporary parking suspensions for trial pop-up uses on Alderley Road (south)	Trial pop-up uses for the service roads, both through localised changes (e.g. parklets) and temporary full suspension of parking on market days.	<£100k
Highway	W_H1	Improve pedestrian and cycle safety at key junctions	Explore and implement quick wins for improving safety for those on foot or cycle across the town, including enhanced/new crossings and advanced stop lines on major junctions.	<£100k

<sup>1</sup> The costs presented are indicative only at this stage. Costs will depend on type and level of interventions delivered – and should be revised at subsequent design stages.

[cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1](https://cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1)



Passeig de Sant Joan, Barcelona Linear green space introduced along busy main road, to provide opportunities to stop and rest. (Photo credit: MottMacDonald)

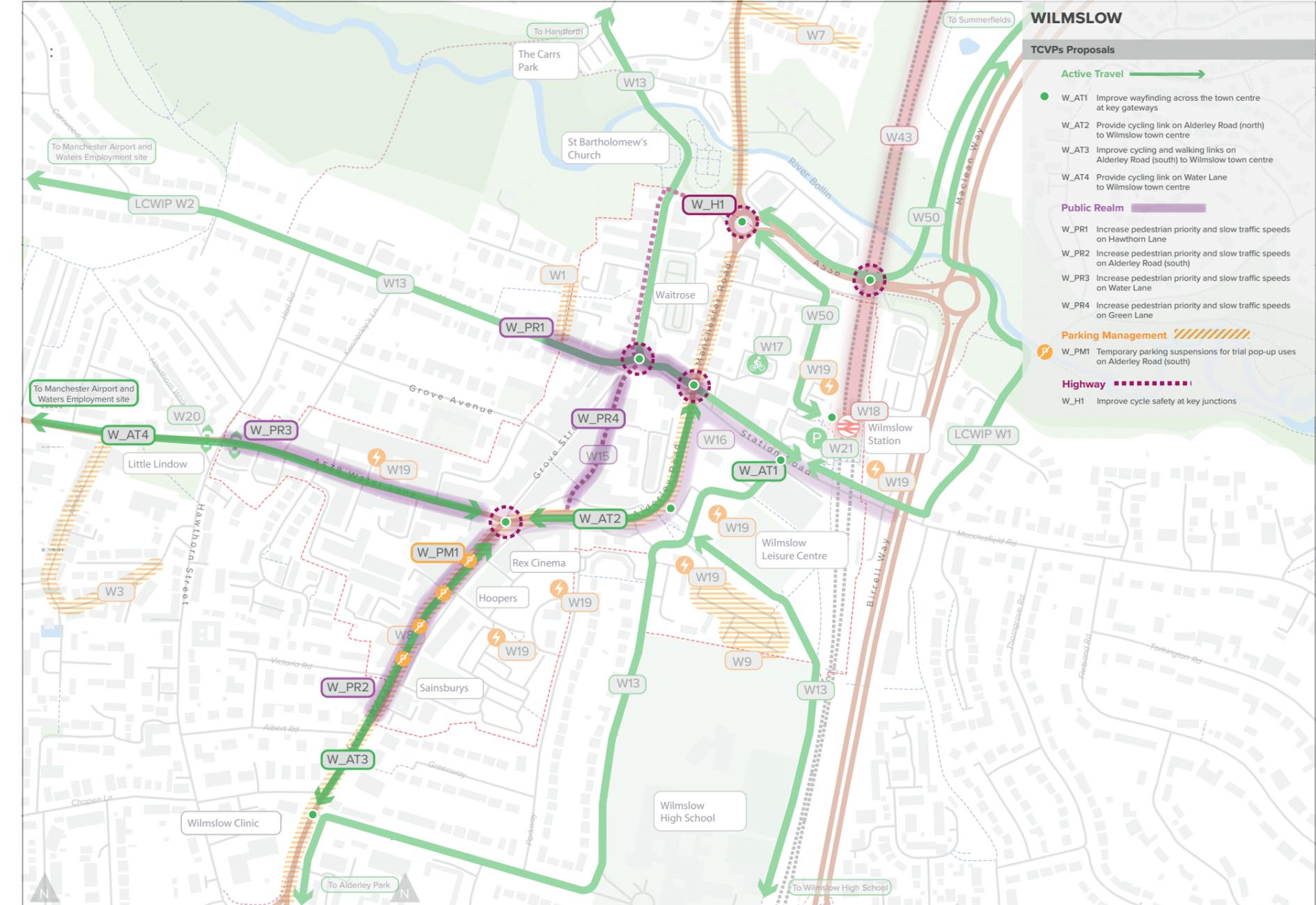


Pedestrian Super-crossing, Nottingham. Wide and direct crossing of busy A-road to better balance the needs of people and vehicles. (Photo credit: MottMacDonald)



Jamaica St, Liverpool. Public realm enhancement and segregated cycle lane to upgrade active travel facilities along busy routes – as Wilmslow's Alderley Rd. (Photo credit MottMacDonald)

## Wilmslow Town Centre Viability Plan Proposals



# 10 Potential Actions



## Action 1: Strengthening green space and links

### What

Wilmslow benefits from a number of green assets on its edges and through its centre however there is scope to make more of these to enhance the visitor experience and support healthier lifestyles.

### How

This is a key priority for the Town Council and something they are already making good progress on. They have commissioned Annabelle Tugby Architects to carry out a series of feasibility studies on the town centre public realm – with a focus on Bank Square, Grove Street and Water Lane including the link to Little Lindow. Working with CEC they are delivering Little Lindow Park improvements – investment (CEC £77,000 and WTC £90,000) to renovate and revitalise the park. Planning is underway and work are due to be completed in Autumn 2022.

- Opportunity to create an easily identifiable walking route through the town, made up of a variety of different features designed to bring elements of the Towns green spaces into the Town Centre. This animated link would connect Wilmslow’s important surrounding spaces such as Lindow Common, Carnival Fields, Little Lindow, the Carrs and Vardon Bridge, making each more accessible and connected with the Town Centre. The routes could consist of a variety of installations, designed as temporary or permanent features which offer visitors opportunities for dwell space and interaction. Clear coordinated signage, and wayfinding along the route as well as urban parklets, pop up uses, pop up spaces, enhanced existing public realm, spill out space, urban grow spaces and additional tree planting and soft landscaping could combine to create a series of links which better connect Wilmslow with its existing green space assets
- By further activating the green spaces and parks across Wilmslow and establishing a network of ‘Parklet Streets’ to them, the offer of the town will be significantly enhanced and diversified. Uses across the existing larger outdoor spaces could include pop up markets, mini festivals and music concerts which would feel more immediately accessible and connected with events, local businesses and other amenities within the Town Centre
- Consideration could be given to expanding the Friends of the Carrs model to support maintenance of green spaces and delivery of events
- Engage with local artists to install more public art in parks and on key routes targeting local community funds such as Tesco and Big Local Lottery Fund
- Align to Action 6 create a series of Wilmslow Walks to highlight local walks and links to existing walks in the wider area

### Who

- Wilmslow Town Council
- CEC / ANSA
- Community Groups – investigate rolling similar model to “Friends of the Carrs” to other green spaces
- Seek support from local businesses – materials, expertise and volunteers
- Engage with specialist groups such as City of Trees who seek to support tree planting across Greater Manchester and the wider area and Incredible Edible which supports greening projects by supporting communities to grow food
- Mersey Forest (there is a partnership agreement with Mersey Forest and there will shortly be a collaboration agreement with CWT)
- Volunteers – Canal and River Trust can share their expertise of supporting the establishment of volunteer groups particularly expertise in encouraging active travel, biodiversity, health/ wellbeing and heritage.
- WIG is in discussion with leading expert on peat to consider how to raise awareness of the ancient peat bogs at Lindow Moss

### Where

- Initial focus should be on the following space and improving the connections between them:
  - Green boulevard along Alderley Road
  - Little Lindow. The Town Council is looking to reinstate peat bogs and to establish Lindow Moss Partnership.
  - The Carrs
  - Lindow Common
  - Carnival Fields
- Longer term other locations could be added including ensuring links to walks in the rest of Cheshire and South Manchester
- Manchester Road



### Action 1 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** -providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure**– To create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

- 1b Introduce a programme of events which open-up and connect different parts of the centre for a limited time
- 1d Use lighting
- 4d Planting in pots to define space for certain uses
- 4e Enhance gateway sites
- 5a Upgrade the public realm with high quality materials
- 5d Instant greening
- 7a Parklets
- 7b Multi-generational play space
- 11a Design a holistic public realm scheme
- 15c Community food growing
- 18d Provide allotments and concrete gardens on leftover space
- 25d Raise awareness in the public realm



# Action 1: Strengthening green space and links

## Wilmslow's network of Parklet Streets

Establishing key streets across the Town which already provide a link to surrounding outdoor spaces. A programme of events, installations and features along these important links to encourage activity and vibrancy within the Town Centre to continue into it's outdoor spaces (and vice versa) - a chance to diversify Wilmslow's Town Centre offer to one which connects the town with it's impressive and varied greenspaces. Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group is working up proposals for improvements to pocket parks. Creating a better balance for all users of the town is an explicit aim of the action plan, the design and accessibility is to be determined by detailed applications.



Use of colourful planters to frame spaces and create points of orientation. Culture Mile, Farringdon, London. (Photo Credit: Culture Mile Part 2. Used with permission from Richard Wolfströme.)



Spill out space on paving and into parking bays can be shaped by flexible planters offering new dwell spaces (Photo Credit: Getty.)



Accessible shared cycle and walking path, (Garda, Italy (Photo Credit: MottMacdonald.)



## Action 2: Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Encouraging visitors to stay longer in a local centre increases the potential for them to spend more money in the centre. Whilst Wilmslow has a number of attractive parks around its edge it is recognised that there is no large central area for congregating in the Centre of Wilmslow, although there are a number of areas that could be better utilised and linked.

### How

Review existing space and consider how it would be enhanced to encourage more dwelling, for example;

- Businesses along Grove Street have offered more seating areas during lockdown which has animated the space and this could be expanded and enhanced. This is a great space to enliven the wide pedestrian route and harness space which is not impacted by passing traffic to spend time.
- The installation of picnic tables on the grassed area on Alderley Road learning lessons from Mediterranean countries.
- Pop up stalls/vans on Bank Square and using green areas (such as Leisure Centre) and car parks spaces more for events
- Creation of a pocket park outside the Tesco building to improve this high profile location at the heart of the Centre which is currently dominated by highways parking and pavements.

WIG has commissioned some feasibility work to look into some aspects of this.

### Who

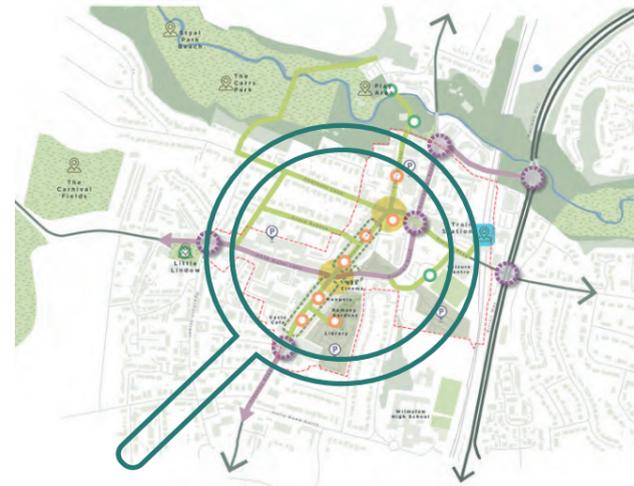
- Town Council
- Local Businesses

### Where

Initial focus on

- Grove Street
- Green Boulevard
- Bank Square

This should also include a logical and visual link between the areas above



### Action 2 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

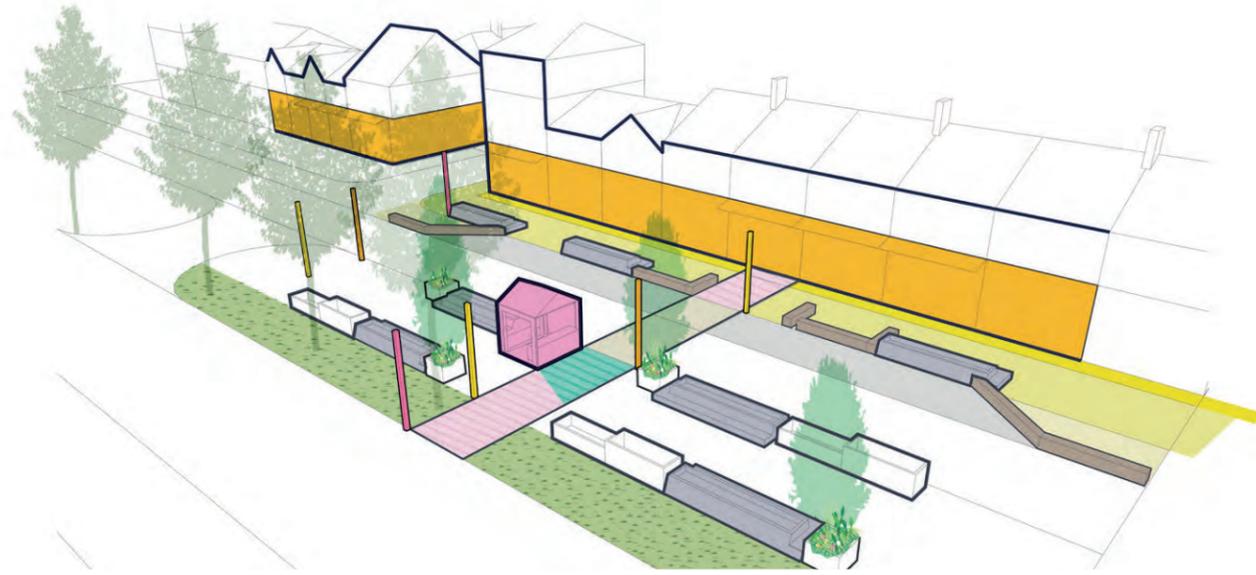
- 1a Improve the evening offer
- 1c Enable autumn and winter al-fresco dining
- 1d Use lighting
- 4a Provide pop-up seating
- 7a Parklets
- 9b Repurposing of assets
- 9c Curated Events
- 14a Quick-wins and temporary interventions to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces – e.g. planters, parklets and street furniture
- 17 Markets
- 18b Provide new places to sit
- 18c Implement road closures
- 25a Meanwhile uses





## Action 2: Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre (Priority from public consultation)

An example of temporary or low cost interventions to make the most of currently underused space / car dominated space (i.e. box planters & seating, painted crossings, build outs and organised spaces to dwell).



Continuing to evolve the offer of underutilised spaces through more permanent interventions (i.e. carriageway narrowing, public realm materials, F&B space etc)



### Precedent Images

Wilmslow currently lacks a distinctive, spacious central area for people to congregate - and Letchworth (right) provides a great example of how to create a public space encouraging people to dwell and spend time in the town centre.

The choice of stone pavements and warm textures on Leys Ave - combined with the new planting and seating - enhances the look and feel of the space, effectively transformed into a pedestrian priority area. In the medium to long-term this approach could be extended to the Alderley Road service road.

While Letchworth illustrates a transformational public realm approach, there are also temporary interventions that can be introduced to increase pedestrian priority and trial designs to reduce traffic dominance.

For example, the parklets installed in Bath town centre and the trial street pedestrianisation in Dublin (right) both incorporate street furniture and planting - and have collected very positive feedback as pedestrian-friendly spaces.

This kind of interventions would allow to trial pop-up uses of the highway space on streets in Wilmslow - reclaiming space for pedestrian activities and businesses' spill-out.



Leys Ave, Letchworth Garden City - Public realm investment (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



Bath - Parklets (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



Dublin - Trial Pedestrianisation (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



## Action 3: Improving the town's core (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Whilst Wilmslow boasts a number of attractive green space and buildings across the Centre there are pockets of poorer quality areas that detract from the Centre. Also some assets are hidden away would benefit from their profile being raised.

### How

- Tesco Block -The Tesco block is a prominent area which detracts from the appearance of the town at a key junction. See emerging illustrations.
- Library – creating improved linkages through planting and signage between the library and Alderley Road should improve usage
- Grove Street – during lockdown a number of local cafes have started to spill out onto Grove Street increasing its vibrancy. More local businesses should be encouraged to do this alongside some investment in planting. The area could then be seen more as an extension to the Boulevard and support a more continental feel to the Centre with attractive places to dwell

### Who

- Town Council
- Local businesses in the vicinity of the areas
- Landlords
- Local developers

### Where

Initial priority should be given to the following areas:

- Tesco Block
- Library – linked to Action 1 improving linkages between key community
- Grove Street



### Action 3 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Heritage assets** - To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow's designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town's history
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



### Toolkit Actions

- 1d Use lighting
- 5b Redesign existing shop fronts to provide a fresh and consistent experience
- 5c Dressing vacant sites
- 9a Repurposing of assets
- 15a Annual/ regular events
- 15b Community organised artwork
- 19a Affordable start-up space to help new businesses establish themselves
- 20b Use space and activities to attract people to a forgotten part of town centre and create new place identity/ Reinvigorated alleyways
- 21a managed activation of underutilised space
- 21b Flexible office space
- 21c Empty unit exhibitions
- 22a Creating exciting new spaces
- 22b Bringing vacant buildings back into residential use
- 23 Redevelopment plans



Wilmslow Public Realm Masterplan (Image Credit: Annabelle Tugby Architects 2021)





## Action 4: Creating stronger gateways into the Centre

### What

Make more of welcoming visitors into the centre clearly demonstrating when they have arrived and how they can get to key destinations within the Centre maximising the opportunity to showcase the town assets. This in turn should support landlords to invest more in their properties

Improved gateways also offer an opportunity to capture passing visitors and commuters for example, along busy surrounding streets, inviting more impromptu and regular visits to the Town Centre.

The TC has just accessed £160,000 from CEC for landscape improvements and a new play area for Little Lindow.

### How

- Enhanced gateway signage and/or features, which could be linked to a Town Centre branding campaign / local arts & sculpture / lighting, to clearly illustrate distinctive welcome points to the Town Centre - a unique to Wilmslow arrival experience. Gateway features could also be informative, regularly updated to communicate latest attractions, events and things to do across the town
- Connecting physical signage with virtual trails and smart phone app technology, (for example using QR codes / augmented reality) so those visiting have a seamless journey from Town Centre arrival to interaction and wayfinding across the Town Centre
- Establishing themed spotter trails to encourage visitors to explore different parts of the centre. For example a trail celebrating Alan Turing or spotter trails within shop windows for younger children and families to uncover across the Town

### Who

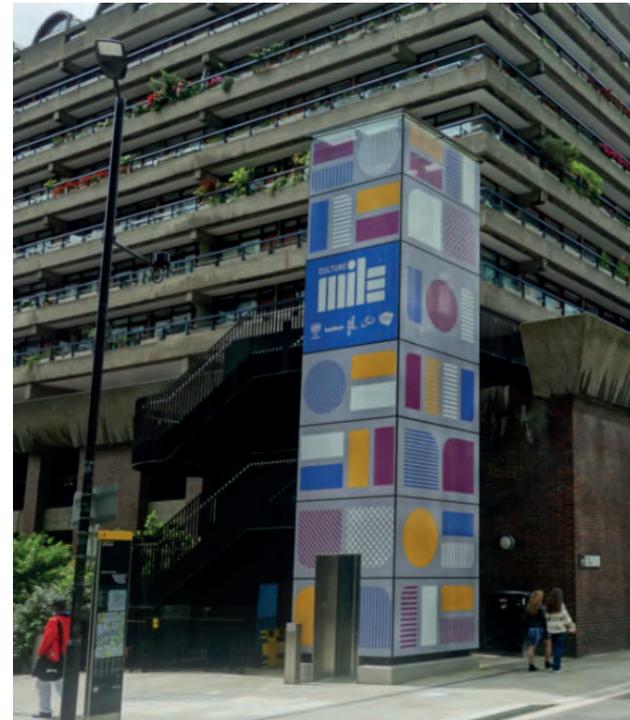
- Town Council
- Local businesses

### Where

Key gateways to focus on could include:

- Manchester Road & A538 approach to the Town Centre - local signage as well as a more visible presence onto the Birrell Way & MacLean Way

- Station Road & Manchester Road - an important nodal point from Train Station to Town Centre Mill Street / Manchester Road
- Water Lane and Hawthorn Street junction at Little Lindow
- Alderley Road in proximity to the Coach & Four pub and bus stop



Culture Mile, Farringdon, London. (Photo Credit: Culture Mile Part 2. Used with permission from Richard Wolfströme.)



### Action 4 supports the following objectives:



### Toolkit Actions

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
  - **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
  - **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
  - **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
  - **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.
- 4b Better signage
  - 4c Better bus stops
  - 4e Enhance gateway sites
  - 5a Upgrade public realm
  - 5d Dressing vacant spaces
  - 15b Community organised artwork



## Action 5: Expanding the events programme

### What

Wilmslow already has an established programme of events, many of which are organised by Voluntary Groups, including monthly Artisan Market, Festival of Nature including the Car Free Street Day and a track record of holding regular great sporting events such as Wilmslow Half Marathon. These should be expanded to attract a wider mix of attendees and promoted widely to raise awareness.

### How

- Re-establish the existing programme of events (post Covid) and consider themes around which new events could be established. The recent Film & Fashion event utilising the Rex Cinema and the opening of the House of Gucci to showcase a number of local businesses including Black White Denim was a great local initiative and scope exists to replicate this around other films
- Hold events across a variety of locations including Leisure Centre, Carnival Park and other open spaces
- The Wilmslow's Way Better communication channels can be used to promote activities as can the Communication Officer
- Review if scope to allow service roads along Alderley Road to be used for staging events

### Who

- Town Council
- BID and local businesses
- Voluntary Groups

### Where

- Across the town (see Priority Action 2)



## Action 6: Raising the Centre's profile

### What

Wilmslow has just launched a new website and brand for the town Wilmslow's Way Better (see below) to be a collective voice of businesses. It showcases many exciting aspects of the town; its wellbeing, food and beverage, cinema, businesses, shopping and how to explore the wider area, offering news and newsletters as well as how to get to the centre and where to park. Ideally this should become the go to single website/platform for the time Town which provides links to other partners websites to showcase what the town offers in terms of shops, amenities, events, education and opportunities to get involved.

### How

- Scope to grow and continue to showcase what the town has to offer via the Wilmslow's Way Better platform. Next steps could include making links to other partner's websites such as CEC, Town Council and Marketing Cheshire to enhance "footfall" on the pages
- The Wilmslow Hub, formerly Rex Revival Group, comprises of a small number of volunteers in Wilmslow who aim to promote what Wilmslow has to offer in terms of upcoming events, local initiatives, clubs and voluntary organisations. The Wilmslow Hub aims to be a place where the community feels welcome to ask questions about their towns groups and clubs, discusses

local issues and wishes to encourage community spirit via the sharing of information

- Improved signage (physical and virtual via app/QR code) to stop people just passing through
- Establish Town Ambassadors
- Better promote existing ongoing activities in the centre (e.g. leisure centre classes), events and raise awareness of businesses
- Ensure that key messages from the Vitality Plan are fed into the Visitor Economy Strategy that is being prepared by CEC
- Establish stronger links with tourist attractions in the local area including Quarry Bank Mill
- Hold events across a variety of locations including Leisure Centre, Carnival Park and other open spaces
- Transition Wilmslow is currently working with the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group to establish a "Countryside Access Guide to Wilmslow and its Environs". This will complement the existing cycle guide

### Who

- Town Council / Marketing and events sub group
- Groundwork
- BID and local businesses
- Voluntary Groups

### Where

- N/A



### Action 6 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



### Toolkit Actions

- 2a Create a smarter High street
- 3b Appointment of town centre champions
- 3c Destination management plans
- 6a Establishing a BID
- 10a Independent shop guides
- 12a Create an App
- 12b Creation of Local Brand
- 12c Set-up an online platform
- 12d Introduce WIFI/town app



## Action 7: Mobilising the business community

### What

Wilmslow benefits from a large business community including professional services and health and beauty in addition to retail and leisure. A Business Improvement District has just been established.

### How

Business collaboration – recent Film & Fashion Festival is a great example of how businesses can collaborate to entice a wider audience into the Centre to spend more money around an exciting event. More events where businesses can collaborate around a film is a great idea which should be replicated. Not only does this collaboration potentially support the Town but it can help individual businesses to thrive creating improved business conditions and new opportunities to drive revenue

If engaged around issues/opportunities that relate to their core function, businesses may be able to provide the following to support the Town’s aspirations:

- Sponsorship
- Materials
- Technical support
- Volunteers

### Who

- CEC
- Town Council
- Groundwork
- BID and local businesses especially larger (such as the Emerson Group) and dynamic/innovative/creative businesses

### Where

- Across Wilmslow



### Action 7 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Heritage assets** – To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow’s designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town’s history
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



### Toolkit Actions

- 5b Redesign existing shop fronts
- 6a Establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID)
- 13a Business profiles
- 13b Community wealth building
- 19a Affordable start up space
- 21c Empty unit exhibitions
- 25e Prioritise more sustainable businesses
- 25f Tap into local talent



## Action 8: Making more of community assets

### What

Better link existing community assets to establish a community hub providing an enhanced local offer. Focus on Library, The Rex Cinema and Wilmslow Leisure Centre and the routes between

### How

- WIG has commissioned a feasibility study into the potential of creating a new public space in front of the library linking to Alderley Road Boulevard.
- Project should be considered alongside Action 1 (Green Links) and 9 (Management of cars)
- Scope for the Town Council to consider playing a more active role in the management of some of these assets

### Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- Wilmslow Hub

### Where

Within and between Library, The Rex Cinema and Wilmslow Leisure Centre



### Action 8 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



### Toolkit Actions

- 3a Managing assets
- 4e Enhance gateway sites
- 9a Repurposing assets
- 9b Curated events
- 10a Independent shop guides
- 16a Self-guided heritage tours
- 21c Empty unit exhibitions



## Action 9: Better management of Movement (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Although the A34 bypasses Wilmslow town centre, significant traffic volumes are frequently observed in the town centre and congestion can build up on key routes – along Manchester Road, Alderley Road and Water Lane.

There is a need to increase pedestrian priority, slow traffic speeds and reduce the dominance of highway infrastructure especially in the heart of the centre. The evidence base that underpins the Wilmslow Parking Strategy (published in February 2020) suggests that the demand for off-street parking exceeds supply. However, the Council needs to review whether demand continues to exceed supply following the COVID-19 pandemic. There is also a need to consider whether car parking management can be improved to help achieve a better balance in long stay vs short stay car parking. A review of on-street parking is needed to improve parking turnover and use of street space. This could include better use of service road space for pop-up kerbside activity. This review should be completed as part of the wider parking strategy for the town, which is set out in the Wilmslow Parking Strategy.

The Wilmslow Parking Strategy identified a potential opportunity to deliver a multi-storey car park at Broadway Meadow. Initial high level feasibility work has been completed, and the Council is continuing to monitor ticket sales for all car parks in Wilmslow. Once demand, travel patterns and consumer behaviours have stabilised following the recovery from the pandemic, the assumptions used within the high level feasibility work will need to be reviewed.

The Council should also consider introducing EV charging points at Council owned car parks in line with the borough-wide EV Strategy and Implementation Plan, which has been adopted to guide the roll out of charging provision, including Wilmslow.

Link to CEC's Share the Road campaign calling for the public to be kind and considerable to each other to help keep each other safe on the road.

### How

- Undertake review of car parking in the town centre to ensure there is sufficient supply of parking in appropriate location for key users - very short stay shoppers to pop in, medium stay for longer visitors and longer stay for workers. Consideration also needs to be given to the residential parking in the vicinity of the centre.
- Undertake viability study for Broadway Meadow MSCP once more normal post COVID-19 office working patterns are established.
- Support development of public realm proposals, including public and business consultation on proposals.
- Trial pop-up uses for the service roads, both through localised changes (e.g. parklets) and temporary full suspension of parking on market days.

### Who

- CEC Parking Services
- CEC Highways
- Town Council

### Where

- Broadway Meadow (MSCP)
- Town Centre
- Alderley Road (inc Service Road)
- Hawthorn Grove (parking management review)
- Alma Lane & Beech Lane (parking management review)



### Action 9 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

- 11a design a holistic public realm scheme
- 14b Reduce traffic speeds
- 14c Enhanced crossings
- 14a Quick-wins and temporary interventions to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces – e.g. planters, parklets and street furniture in all cases
- 14e Decked and multi-storey car parks
- 14f Better managed car parking
- 20a Remove clutter from key pedestrian routes and simplify crossing points
- 25c Facilitate modal shift



## Action 10: Embracing cycling

### What

Given its demographics and its existing assets, in particular the established cycling café, there is scope to expand the local cycling culture to support the wellbeing of residents as well as attracting more visitors into the Centre. This could encourage interest in cycling and improve related facilities.

Support the introduction of high-quality safe cycling routes throughout the town, as identified by the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Consider the location of cycle hubs linked to improve green links (Action 1) and provide safe secure cycle parking throughout the town centre and at the railway station.

Consider introducing a cycle or e-scooter hire scheme in the town centre.

### How

- Explore quick wins for improving cycling safety on key streets throughout the town (e.g. providing Advanced Stop Lines on major junctions).
- Explore design options for routes identified as key active travel connections in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP).
- Explore design options for Wilmslow to Handforth Rail Station, as identified in the LCWIP.
- Explore design options for Wilmslow to Waters Employment Site, as identified in the LCWIP.
- Improve signage and wayfinding across town.

### Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- CEC Cycling Champion

### Where

- Wilmslow town centre
- Wilmslow train station
- Station Road



Opportunities for bicycle and scooter rentals would encourage visitors and residents to cycle to different destinations within the town (Photo Credit: Getty)



Park Lane, Liverpool Streets with higher flows of traffic will require segregated cycle tracks if they are to attract use by people of all ages and abilities (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



### Action 9 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

- 7e Bike and scooter parking

# Centre Wide Actions

In addition to the specific actions identified for Wilmslow, a number of actions have been identified that are relevant to all of the nine centres. These are

## 1. **Appointment of CEC Centre Champion**

The identification of a nominated officer (go to person/ champion) within CEC management team for each of the Centres who would understand local priorities for the Centre and would support them to access appropriate officers within key departments and also would seek to unblock issues. It is understood that this is something CEC is currently considering. This would be supported by an providing each of the centres with a clear organogram of who within CEC is responsible for what to make engagement easier.

## 2. **Creation of a Centres Forum**

Establishment of forum where key representatives from each of the centres could come together on a regular basis to receive updates from CEC about common issues/ opportunities would be beneficial. It is also recognised that during the preparation of the Vitality Plans that a number of the centres are making a great progress overcoming specific issues. By coming together and sharing progress and discussing issues

it is considered that the centres would be better able to share best practice and to identify actions where they could collaborate with other centres to drive economies of scale/value for money. Some meetings may just be held between the centres (within out representation from CEC officers) whilst others could include CEC and/or other partners such as C&W LEP, Groundwork etc.

## 3. **Centre Focused Meetings in CEC**

The process of preparing the Vitality Plans has involved internal workshops with relevant department leads within CEC to ensure that all departments are considering challenges and opportunities in the round rather than just in terms of their individual responsibility. It would be beneficial to continue to hold more regular Centre focused workshops. The best decisions for the centres will be taken when the implications of proposals are considered in the round taking into account both potential investment and long term maintenance.

## 4. **Streamlining maintenance of public realm and greenspace**

in light of the local desire for improved maintenance combined with recognition that CEC budgets are under severe pressure, it is recommended to ensure maintenance of public realm can be optimised that further engagement would be beneficial to agree how the resources of CEC, the Town Council and wider stakeholders could be targeted to support maintenance. Work to establish a more comprehensive schedule of local assets in each centre and who is responsible for their maintenance should be the starting point of drive for improved maintenance. Going forward any future capital investment must be supported by appropriate consideration as to how assets will be maintained over their lifetime. It is also important to recognise that better maintenance does not necessarily just relate to grass being cut regularly. In recognition of the importance of biodiversity, going forward it is anticipated that consideration will be given to allocating parcels of land to the “wild” to support biodiversity.

## 5. **Increasing importance of sustainability**

sustainability is now a critical issue for many organisations and important for local residents both in terms of operational implications (for example energy costs) but also in terms of local impact on the local community and the planet. As such sustainability can no longer be positioned as another priority action but rather must be a concept that is considered in every aspect of proposed actions to minimise their carbon footprint and maximise their positive benefits for the local area and its community.

## 6. **Improved platform for communicating activities**

the preparation of the Vitality Plans has demonstrated that all of the centres are proactively trying to improve their centres. However it is recognised that many stakeholders will not be aware of all these efforts. Consideration therefore needs to be given as to how to amplify to more local residents, shoppers, visitors and businesses what is going on. Wilmslow has just launched a new website which is a significant step to support this. Now the focus

should be on adding more content and sharing this through a variety of channels and to ensure that these are also linked to other key partners for example CEC and the other centres (so collectively they reinforcing each other’s profiles)

## 7. **Enhanced engagement with local businesses**

many of the centres benefit from having a range of national, and in some cases international businesses, many of which are innovating in their specialist areas. There is a significant benefit to the centres and their businesses to collaborating. Whilst restrictions on public sector revenue budgets is putting pressure on what CEC can support there is an increasing recognition by businesses, especially corporates, for the need to support their local communities (Corporate Social Responsibility). This can be in the form of grants, offering expertise or encouraging their employees to volunteer. Even smaller businesses often want to give back to the communities in which they operate. This can be in the form of materials and/or specialist expertise (e.g. marketing which has been harnesses by Wilmslow in setting up the Wilmslow’s Way Better brand and website). All centres

should seek to better engage with their local businesses to determine how they can collaborate to support each other’s objectives. This type of collaboration can give centres a significant boost particularly when it happens around public realm (investment and maintenance), marketing and branding.

## 8. **Greater ownership of community assets**

a couple of Town Councils have taken responsibility for their community assets (both in terms of ownership and/or management). CEC is willing to engage with each of the Town and Parish Councils to discuss whether there could be benefits from greater local ownership of local assets. A process is in place to support this to happen. There is also scope for centres who are already doing this to share pro and cons with other centres (via the proposed Centres Forum)

# 11 Delivery

## Governance and Delivery

The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group (WIG) is tasked with driving the aspirations of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan and the Wilmslow Town Council forward and good progress is being made in achieving this. A number of feasibility studies have been undertaken and more are ongoing investigating how public realm (which has been identified as the key priority) can be enhanced. Progress is also being made in accessing funding to deliver projects for example the Little Lindow park improvements.

Going forward WIG will continue to be a major driver for the delivery of the agreed actions emerging from the Vitality Plan. Having established a range of potential projects that will support Wilmslow to thrive, further work is now required to determine a detailed action plan setting out who will do what and by when.

It is recommended that dedicated working groups are set up to drive specific short term priority actions forward. The action focused working groups will be responsible for:

- Defining the details of the proposed action
- Considering how it could be funded
- Determining who needs to be involved in supporting its delivery and what their role will be

- Seeking funding - this might require support from other partners
- Determining the timetable for intervention
- Monitoring and evaluating progress against key performance indicators and refining actions if agreed outcomes are not being met
- Reporting progress to relevant partners including the WIP and CEC
- Recommending that CEC, Town Council and any other key local stakeholder groups be invited to adopt the TCVP as a shared common plan. This would allow easy demonstration to potential funders that there is a consensus of approach and buy in from the local community

The makeup of the working groups will vary depending on the specific actions they are focused on. It is important to ensure that the same people are not tasked with getting involved in all the working groups as this will impact on progress. As such the number of working groups and pace of delivery will depend on the number of stakeholder partners that can be engaged with and encouraged to get involved.

Consideration should be given as to whether specific stakeholders need to be invited to be involved to provide technical support. For example CEC, national organisations like the Canal and River Trust or local businesses with specific expertise around specific actions already. CEC Connected Community officers may be able to provide development support.

Progress will be reported into the Town Councils who will in turn also report regularly to CEC. Where issues regarding progress/delivery are identified discussions will need to be taken to determine the required refinements to get progress back on track.

It is acknowledged that partners will need to determine their appetite and ability to deliver the proposed actions. Depending on resources it may be determined that additional staff may need to be recruited to support the pace of delivery of the Vitality Plan and supporting Action Plans as Wilmslow has recently done with the appointment of a part time communications officer.

## Communication and Engagement

Wilmslow Town Council recognises the importance of harnessing its local businesses to support the Centre to thrive. They appointed Groundwork to support managing the Centre with a specific focus on engaging with local businesses. The BID has been voted in and started in November 2022.

The launch of the Wilmslow's Way Better is a powerful brand and platform to support enhanced communication with a range of partners. The focus at this stage has been on engaging businesses but it also works well for engaging with residents and visitors. The role out of the brand and establishment of the vibrant website has already delivered a step change in the ability of Wilmslow to communicate with a wider audience to improve both the perceptions of the centre but importantly in terms of what it has to offer.

In parallel to this enhanced business engagement the recent appointment of a part time Communication and Community Engagement officer for Wilmslow will support enhanced communication with local residents.

There is a need to begin to share important messages with key stakeholders including:

- Recent and proposed investment in the centre
- Projects that are being worked up
- Funding that is being sought and accessed

- How to get involved

The key partners to be engaged with on a regular basis include:

- Local businesses
- Residents
- Local community and interest groups
- Other towns centres generally and specifically those who are focusing on common actions for example centres looking to strengthen their programme of sport related events to support a stronger coordinated borough wide programme of events

Quality engagement should generate potential volunteers to get involved in the delivery of specific actions and potentially resources to support their delivery.

The following mechanisms should be used to engage with key partners:

- Enhanced website and strengthen profile on social media – building upon the Wilmslow's Way Better to include recent investment and future proposals
- Public engagement consultations – the draft Vitality Plan will be consulted upon and this be used to continue the dialogue with local residents

- Piggybacking Events – for example a stall at markets showcasing what's on in Wilmslow and how to get involved
- Existing and enhanced business networking events – to share emerging ideas, test support and encourage ideas to refine and support their delivery
- Identification of a team of local ambassadors – ambassadors could be trained and then kept up to date about what it going on in the centre and then they can showcase positive messages about the town to their contacts. Ambassadors can be proactive local independent businesses leaders and other individuals who come into contact with lots of local people e.g. taxi drivers.

In addition, as set out in Section 10, it is important for enhanced communication and engagement between CEC and Wilmslow Town Council.

# Delivery continued

## Funding

There is not a pot of money available to support the delivery of the Vitality Plan. Rather the Vitality Plan has been prepared as a resource to support discussions with potential funders. As such it provides a useful tool with which you can use to:

- Articulate priorities for Wilmslow to CEC - the Vitality Plan will be used to articulate local priorities to CEC to guide them in their negotiations with developers in respect of contributions linked to planning applications (especially to support improvements in cycling, public transport and public realm) and also in determining their own capital budgets. Formal adoption of the TCVP by key stakeholder organisations can help demonstrate common objectives and priorities for any party submitting funding bids.
- Support external funding bids - having a clear action plan which provides an evidence base and priorities that have been consulted upon is now essential for most funding bids. It is important to recognise that often funding bids have specific funding leads. In some cases this may be CEC or Cheshire & Warrington LEP in others it might need to be a community group. Whoever may be responsible for leading and submitting a specific funding application, demonstration of collaboration

between stakeholders and community support is essential

- Engage with local businesses - to determine whether there are actions that they can get involved in which align with their priorities for supporting their local communities.

The recently established BID will generate spend which will be spent on locally agreed priorities. The Vitality Plan and subsequent agreed Action Plan will be a useful tool to supporting the BID process.

Another approach to generating more revenue to spend locally is for the Town Council to take responsibility for owning or managing assets with any surpluses being generated being invested back into the local centre. CEC is open to discussing how Town Council could take greater responsibility for local assets.

It is important to note that when determining potential interventions consideration must be given to both initial capital investment and longer term revenue implications such as maintenance. In proposing capital investment the whole life of a project must be considered to ensure that appropriate revenue is available for ongoing costs such as maintenance.

## Phasing

The actions identified in Section 10 range from projects that which are already being progressed to long term aspirations which will require feasibility and funding before they can be delivered. The Vitality Plan identifies 10 actions which support the established vision and objectives for the Centre. The Town Council is proactive and a number of the identified actions are already being pursued.

The public consultation identified the following as priority interventions:

- Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre
- Improving the Town's Core
- Better Management of Movement

It is important to acknowledge that this indicative programme is not fixed and if specific sources of funding are identified the programme should be adapted to respond to the opportunity.

Covid has taught us important lessons about testing new approaches. For example temporary road closures to gauge whether reducing car access to encourage cycling or to provide outside dining space would benefit local centres. This approach should be continued so that rather than a public realm project having to be worked up in huge detail and then significant resources found to deliver it more temporary solutions can

be tested in terms of their impact and determine whether a more permanent solution is required or desirable. Changes are much more likely to be embraced by businesses and supported by local residents if they know that ideas are being tested and monitored and if they do not work can be reverted back to how they were.

A broad phasing plan for the identified actions is identified below where short term relates to 1-2 years, medium 3-5 and long 5+ years.

- A number of interventions will require further feasibility and this can be ongoing but intervention on the ground is likely to be a few years off whilst planning permission and funding is sought
- A number of interventions are interrelated in particular strengthening green links and expanding the events programme

### Phasing Key

- Ongoing
- Short Term
- Medium Term



# Delivery continued

## Monitoring and Evaluation

As noted above the programme and the action plan will not be set in stone but must be capable of responding to new opportunities or challenges. As such it will be important to monitor impact to determine whether the established vision and objectives are being met. Suggested key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they could be measured and how often are identified opposite.

Groundwork is currently supporting the Town Council to engage with businesses and they have developed a dashboard to demonstrate engagement with businesses this includes the following indicators

- Activity with contacts
- Vacant Retail property
- Trading Accounts
- Business activity broken down by retail and non retail

They are also tracking business confidence.

KPI	How measured	Frequency
Footfall	External provider	Monthly
Number of vacancies	Town Clerk	Quarterly
New businesses opening	Town Clerk	Annually
Businesses engaged	Town Clerk to keep a list	Ongoing
Area of greenspace/open space/cycleways and footpaths improved	CEC	Annually
Hits on website	Traffic on social media	Quarterly

Note: CEC has recently commissioned monthly footfall data to end Sep 2026. Recommend all those involved regularly share useful monitoring data with other parties so that all can be aware of progress.

## Technical Terms

Term	Explanation
Comparison Goods Sector	Retail that stocks higher value goods that are purchased infrequently
Convenience Sector	Retail that stocks everyday items such as groceries, newspapers, toiletries, confectionery
F&B	Food and Beverage
Green Belt	A designated area of countryside, protected from most forms of development to help stop urban sprawl but can be used for agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure
Greenspace	Parks, public gardens etc
HS2 route	The UKs new high speed rail network
KSC	Key Service Centres
Linkages	The connections between two or more places/ sites within the town centres
Public Realm	Space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible for everyone
S106 monies	Money that developers can use towards the development of community and social infrastructure
TCVP	Town Centre Vitality Plans
Wayfinding	The ways in which people orient themselves in a physical space and navigate from place to place
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Dwell time	The time a person may spend in a particule place or area. For example, the length of time spent sat on a public bench.



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