

Environment and Communities Committee

Agenda

Date:	Thursday, 13th November, 2025
Time:	10.30 am
Venue:	Committee Suite, Delamere House, Delamere St, Crewe CW1 2JZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

Please Note: This meeting will be live streamed. This meeting will be broadcast live and a recording may be made available afterwards. The live stream will include both audio and video. Members of the public attending and/or speaking at the meeting should be aware that their image and voice may be captured and made publicly available. If you have any concerns or require further information, please contact Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. Apologies for Absence

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. Declarations of Interest

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2025.

For requests for further information

Contact: Frances Handley

E-Mail: CheshireEastDemocraticServices@cheshireeast.gov.uk

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days' in advance of the meeting.

Petitions - To receive any petitions which have met the criteria - [Petitions Scheme Criteria](#) and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

5. **Second Financial Review 25/26** (Pages 9 - 32)

To receive an update report on the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2025/26.

6. **Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 - 2029/30** (Pages 33 - 46)

To receive a report on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30.

7. **Local Plan Update** (Pages 47 - 102)

To consider the report on the progress in delivering the new Local Plan.

8. **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** (Pages 103 - 246)

To consider the report which seeks approval adopt the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

9. **Statement of Gambling Principles** (Pages 247 - 302)

To consider a report which seeks approval of the Statement of Gambling Principles 2026-2029.

10. **Work Programme** (Pages 303 - 304)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

Membership: Councillors L Braithwaite, M Brooks, D Clark, T Dean, M Houston, D Jefferay (Chair), A Kolker, A Moran, H Moss, H Seddon (Vice-Chair), L Smetham, M Warren, H Whitaker

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Communities Committee**
held on Thursday, 25th September, 2025 in The Capesthorpe Room - Town
Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor D Jefferay (Chair)
Councillor H Seddon (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Braithwaite, M Brooks, D Clark, M Houston, T Dean, H Moss,
B Posnett, M Warren, H Whitaker and P Redstone

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chris Allman, Director of Planning and Environment
Ralph Kemp, Head of Environmental Services
Steve Reading, Finance Manager (Place & Corporate Services)
Phil Cresswell, Executive Director of Place
Mark Darbyshire, Bereavement Services Manager
James Thomas, Principal Solicitor
Frances Handley, Democratic Services Officer

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors A Moran and L Smetham and
Councillor P Redstone was present as a substitute.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025 be approved as a
correct record and signed by the Chair.

14 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Councillor Ken Edwards addressed the committee as a visiting Member in
relation to the closure of Bollington Household Waste Recycling Centre.
Councillor Edwards noted that the decision to close the site had been
taken some time ago and urged the committee to reconsider its decision,
proposing that the site remained operational for as long as it remained
available. It was highlighted that even if the site were to be transferred to
the Council's Assets portfolio, it would still be accessible for use.

Councillor Edwards commended the committee for its financial stewardship, noting that it was one of the few committees projecting a budget surplus. It was suggested that maintaining a modest waste service for the rural community around Bollington would not significantly impact the committee's financial position.

In addition, Councillor Edwards referred to the positive outcomes of shared service funding, particularly in relation to libraries. Reference was made to the financial report which included a contribution of approximately £154,000 from Parish and Town Councils towards library services. Cllr Edwards expressed appreciation for the continued operation of local libraries, particularly the opportunity for families to engage in literary activities on weekends and encouraged the committee to recognise this as a positive development.

15 FIRST FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2025/26

The committee considered the report which provided an update on the current forecast outturn position for the financial year 2025/26 based on income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of June 2025. It also identified actions that were being taken to address adverse variances to urgently improve the financial sustainability of the Council. The report formed part of the reporting cycle and provided a comprehensive overview of the Council's financial position, including revenue budgets, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) items, capital programme, and reserves.

The committee queried whether the forecasted underspend (ranging from £2.1 million to £3.6 million) was due to operational efficiencies or transfers from the transformation budget. Officers clarified that the underspend was a combination of Exceptional Financial Support, operational efficiencies, one off grants and contributions from the transformation programme.

The committee queried the Extended Producer Responsibility Grant and why it had been considered a one-off if it was expected to recur. Officers highlighted that whilst the grant was recurring, the current year's allocation included additional funding based on estimation for councils and would be expected to reduce in future years once specific figures on tonnages, contamination rates and actual costs had been calculated alongside manufacturers improving packaging practices and aligning with policy goals of reducing waste.

The committee sought clarification on the variance between projected and actual transformation savings. Officers explained that the pessimistic scenario reflected the most cautious outlook. The savings were cross-cutting and would be realised over time as transformation projects were implemented across directorates.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Environment and Communities Committee

1. Note the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £3.1m against a revised budget of £440.5m (0.7%). and note the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
2. Note the in-year forecast capital spending of £205.5m against an increased capital budget of £208.5m. This was adjusted at outturn following an approved MTFS budget of £173m.
3. Note that Council will be asked to approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1.
4. Approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 2.
5. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.

16 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Committee considered the report which sought approval of key amendments to the Bereavement Services Policy in relation to pre-purchase grave sales, implementing a Memorial Safety Testing Policy and clarifying the approach to unauthorised memorials.

The committee raised concerns in relation to the sensitive handling of unauthorised memorials, particularly in cases involving young people and grieving families. Officers assured Members that engagement and communication would precede any enforcement, and that flexibility would be shown, particularly around the time of funerals.

The committee noted that the policy did not require complete removal of items but sought to manage the volume and placement of memorials to maintain cemetery standards.

The committee noted that a 10% premium on the price of pre-purchased graves had been implemented from 1 April 2025. The committee raised concerns regarding value for money and the time value of money, noting that residents were paying in advance for a service that may not be used for decades. Officers responded that historical comparisons suggested

pre-purchase remained a good investment and that the premium aligned with practices across other local authorities.

The committee highlighted the subjective nature of aesthetic judgments and the need for sensitivity, particularly in cases involving bereaved families and cultural practices. It was confirmed that cultural and religious considerations would always be considered and that the aesthetics referred to volume of items and potential littering issues rather than the specific items being placed.

The committee noted that the Equality Impact Assessment identified potential impacts on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community due to their cultural mourning practices. Officers confirmed that these practices remained respected and accommodated within the revised policy framework.

Members noted the health and safety testing methods and insurance involvement. Officers confirmed that current practices aligned with the Health and Safety Executive recommendations.

The committee expressed strong support for the revised policies, praising the work of officers in expanding cemetery capacity and improving safety.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Environment and Communities Committee:

1. Approve the pre-need sale of graves to be suspended when a cemetery reaches 5-year capacity remaining rather than 20 years.
2. Approve the Memorial Safety Policy in Appendix A.
3. Note the Council's approach to unauthorised memorials.

17 REFUSE COLLECTIONS - UPDATE

The committee received a verbal update on the current status and challenges facing the waste collection service. The service handled approximately 250,000 bins per week, including residential, commercial, and assisted collections. Recent operational pressures had included staff shortages and additionally over the last two weeks - vehicle fires.

The committee was informed of ongoing staffing shortages, both drivers and loaders, which had led to missed collections. Recruitment is underway, but the competitive market for drivers posed some challenges. Recent issues had been exacerbated by peak holiday periods and sickness absences.

The committee were updated on missed rounds during week commencing 15 September, with two rounds remaining outstanding. Efforts to recover missed collections included weekend work and volunteer support. As of week commencing 22 September, all scheduled rounds had been completed.

The committee noted that a serious fire had occurred in the back of an RCV in Macclesfield, which had been suspected to be caused by batteries disposed of in household waste. The incident damaged vehicle hydraulics. This incident highlighted the need for public education on proper waste disposal. A campaign would be considered to raise awareness of hazardous items in waste.

The committee suggested improved communication with residents, enhanced training for staff, and collaboration with the fire brigade. The importance of route knowledge for drivers, especially in rural areas, was also emphasized.

The committee raised concerns regarding missed bin collections being due to road closures and queried how this can be avoided. Officers requested that members provide specific details of the issues and circumstances, and they would be investigated.

The committee discussed preparations for winter conditions, including identifying collection points to try and attempt to prevent slips and falls. Members were encouraged to assist in communicating with residents to ensure safe and accessible waste collection during adverse weather.

18 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the Work Programme, the following was noted:

- Officers to refer back to June committee minutes in relation to items to be added to the work programme.
- Officers to follow up on the Cleaner Crewe Project due for circulation as a briefing report via the Members Hub.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 6.30pm

Councillor D Jefferay (Chair)

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OPEN

Environment and Communities Committee

13 November 2025

Second Financial Review 25/26

Report of: Ashley Hughes, Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Report Reference No: EC/07/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable

For Decision and Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides the Environment and Communities Committee an update on the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2025/26. This is the second financial review (FR2) and is based on our income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of August 2025.
- 2 The report is structured into four parts:
 - (a) An Executive Summary of the Council's Financial Position
 - (b) A Summary of Recommendations
 - (c) An Environment and Communities Committee focused narrative
 - (d) An annex for the Committee that summarises the service level financial forecast and the detailed capital programme
- 3 The Executive Summary of the Council's Financial Position provides the Committee with summary details of the Council's forecast outturn for all services. This provides the Committee with contextual information on the financial position of the Council. The Committee is asked to focus their scrutiny on the forecasts and supporting information relating to services within the remit of the Committee whilst understanding the overall financial position of the Council.
- 4 The Summary of Recommendations requests the Committee's approval for amendments to the Committee's budget, in line with the Committee's authorisation levels.

- 5 The Committee focused narrative presents the current revenue and expenditure commentary with an update on the 2025/26 approved budgeted change items relating to the Environment and Communities services.
- 6 The annex includes the summary of the service level financial forecast and the individual projects within the Directorate's capital programme.
- 7 As set out in previous Financial Reviews, the requirement to continue to identify further actions to bring the Council back to a position where we are living within our means remains, and it will be important that these actions are closely monitored, and appropriate action taken to manage our resources. This report includes information on the actions that are currently underway.
- 8 The full report to Finance Sub Committee on 3 November 2025 includes additional information on debt, Council Tax and Business Rates collection, Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators. The report can be found here [Finance Sub Committee FR2 Report](#).

Executive Summary – Council Financial Position

- 9 This is the Second Financial Review monitoring report (FR2), showing the forecast outturn position for the 2025/26 financial year.
 - 10 The report provides the current forecast outturn position for the revenue budget, capital budget, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Transformation Programme for the financial year 2025/26.
 - 11 The Second Financial Review (FR2) forecast revenue outturn is an **adverse variance of £2.345m** against a net revenue budget of £360.198m which is an improvement of £0.802m compared to the overspend reported at FR1 of £3.147m.
 - 12 The current forecast is that services will be £12.904m over budget in the current year, whilst central budgets are forecast to be £10.559m under budget, resulting in the overall outturn overspend of £2.345m overspend.
 - 13 This is after the application of planned use of conditional Exceptional Financial Support **£25.261m** as set out in the approved budget in February 2025. Please see Table 1 at the top of page 3 for details:
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Table 1 2025/26 FR2	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Forecast Variance FR1	Movement from FR1 to FR2
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Service Committee					
Adults and Health	167.257	167.334	0.077	(0.295)	0.372
Children and Families	98.420	107.283	8.863	8.998	(0.135)
Corporate Policy	43.708	43.492	(0.216)	0.062	(0.278)
Corporate Policy - Cross Transformation	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631	9.631	-
Economy Growth	28.756	25.996	(2.760)	(2.285)	(0.475)
Environment and Communities	43.618	40.921	(2.697)	(2.545)	(0.152)
Highways and Transport	17.151	17.159	0.008	0.114	(0.106)
Total Service Budgets	385.458	398.364	12.906	13.680	(0.774)
Finance Sub:					
Central Budgets	55.000	44.439	(10.561)	(10.533)	(0.028)
Funding	(415.197)	(415.197)	-	-	-
Total Finance Sub	(360.197)	(370.758)	(10.561)	(10.533)	(0.028)
Exceptional Financial Support	(25.261)	(25.261)	-	-	-
TOTAL	-	2.345	2.345	3.147	(0.802)

- 14 All Directorates continue to work on mitigation plans to improve the overall forecast overspend position and in doing so, are highlighting any risks associated with mitigations currently reflected in the reported £2.345m overspend. Each Directorate has plans underway to deliver approved budget changes (growth and savings) identified as part of the 2025/26 approved budget per MTFS line.
- 15 The value of additional mitigation plans not yet reflected as delivered at FR2 are estimated at £1.933m, giving a potential improved overall forecast of £0.412m overspend. However, should the current mitigations included in the FR2 forecast not materialise, alongside further risks identified, then the forecast overspend position could increase to £21.191m adverse.
- 16 The opening DSG deficit is £112.149m with an in-year projected movement of £33.829m to forecast a year end deficit of £145.978m.

- 17 The FR2 forecast outturn position against the approved Transformation budget changes for 2025/26 is outlined in Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Transformation Budget Saving	Original Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Forecast Variance FR1	Movement from FR1 to FR2
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Access to Services & Corporate Core (Cross cutters including Digital/Workforce/3 rd Party Spend/Fees & Charges)	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631	9.631	-
Service Delivery – Adults Social Care	(7.000)	(7.000)	-	-	-
Service Delivery – Children’s	(3.788)	(0.868)	2.920	2.420	0.500
Service Delivery – Place	(0.175)	(0.175)	-	-	-
Total	(24.415)	(11.864)	12.551	12.051	0.500

- 18 The capital programme for the current year is forecasting expenditure of £167.700m in year, an underspend of £40.791m against a budget of £208.491m at FR2. This is an increase against the approved MTFS budget of £173.142m due to increases in Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) of £23.031m as well as some reprofiling of projects.
- 19 The overall forecast revenue overspend of £2.345m remains a significant financial challenge for the Council when considered in addition to the planned use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) of £25.261m.
- 20 Reserves at out-turn were £29.413m, being £6.299m of General Fund Reserves and £23.114m of Earmarked Reserves. A planned net use of Earmarked Reserves and the General Fund Reserve is forecast at £2.282m leaving £27.131m total available reserves. The Council’s level of reserves is therefore insufficient to cover the current forecast revenue outturn for the year without further action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

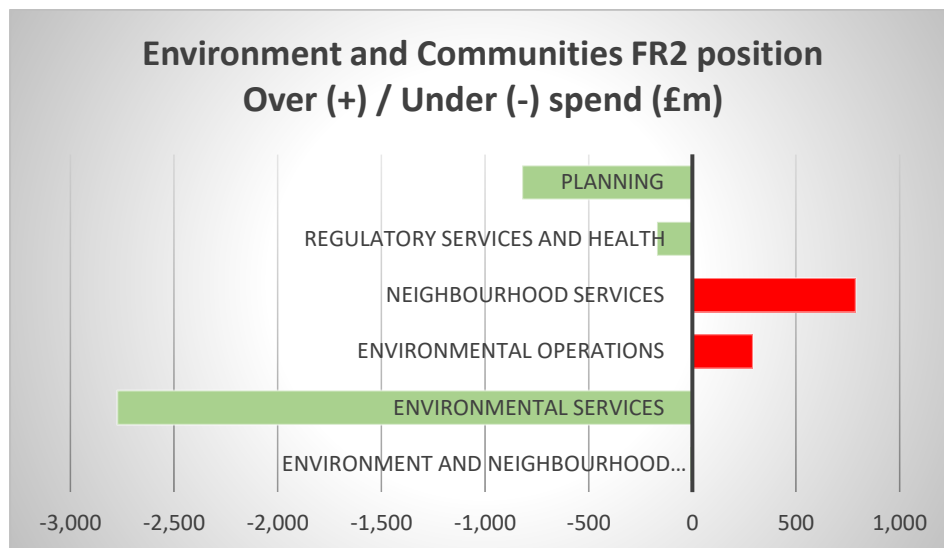
The Environment and Communities Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the overall Council's Financial Position as described within the Executive Summary – Council Financial Position.
 2. Scrutinise the latest revenue forecast for Environment and Communities Directorate, review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items (Table 3), the RAG ratings and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
 3. Note the overall in-year forecast capital spending for Environment and Communities Directorate of £15.284m against a revised MTFS budget of £18.606m in Tables 4 and 5.
 4. Note the Capital Budget reductions in Table 6.
 5. Note the available reserves position in Table 7.
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Environment and Communities Committee Focused Narrative

Revenue and Expenditure Commentary including an update on the 2025/26 Approved Budget Change Items

- 21 The Environment and Communities Directorate second financial review for 2025/26 presents a forecast underspend of £2.697m against a budget of £43.618m which is an improvement of £0.152m on the FR1 position.
- 22 The graph below presents the service level position of the Directorate with the summary data available within Section 1 of Annex 1.



- 23 There are a number of one-off items generating an in-year improvement compared to budget. This is partially offset by a £1.027m pressure within Leisure Commissioning which is as a result of delays in the delivery of MTFS savings, a pressure related to capital financing costs and a shortfall in income.

Mitigations

- 24 Within Environmental services there is a reported underspend of £2.774m which is due to one-off benefits from an increased Extended Producer Responsibility grant of £1.394m; improved company reserves of £0.800m and a lower Ansa management fee of £0.148m from current vacancies. General underspends have been generated from vacancy management and additional income.
- 25 Within Development Management there is a £0.667m underspend generated mainly from additional income. There are other service underspends of £0.283m due to vacancies.

Update on 2025/26 Approved Budget Change Items

- 26 The following section provides an explanation of the key drivers behind variances to the budget for the Environment and Communities directorate. Table 3 provides detailed commentary on the progress against the approved budget change items that were agreed as part of the approved budget in February 2025.

Table 3 – Detailed List of Approved Budget Change Items

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
Environment and Communities 2025/26 Revised Budget as per Cover report Table 1		43.618	40.921	(2.697)	
Change from 2024/25 budget		(2.741)	(5.438)	(2.697)	
74	Strategic Leisure Review (Stage 2)	0.403	0.626	0.223	Red - Initial savings secured via committee decision on 11 March 2024. Proposals are being developed with EHL and town and parish councils to secure the residual £0.250m amount - dialogue is ongoing. Delays to disposing of Middlewich and Holmes Chapel Leisure Centres in year are having a negative impact on savings position.
75	Libraries Strategy - Stage 1	(0.100)	(0.061)	0.039	Amber - Committee approval to implement final Strategy secured on 27th November 2024, implementation now ongoing with revised opening hours at Tier 3 sites going live from January 2025 and Tier 2 sites as of 1st April 2025. Staff consultations now complete, new structure implemented from 7th July. Engagement with Town and Parish Councils

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					undertaken to shape the Strategy proposals and seek funding contributions, which has resulted in a total of 8 sites being supported to a total of c.£154k enabling over 2,150 hours of library opening time per annum. Budget gap of £39,000 yet to be found, mitigated through in year savings from ongoing staff vacancies.
76	Reduce revenue impact of carbon reduction capital schemes	0.171	0.171	-	Green - Carbon Neutral Council target 2030 for the Council to be Carbon neutral with minimum of offset.
77	Pay Inflation	2.270	2.698	0.428	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025.Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.7m across the Council.
78	Pension Costs Adjustment	(0.159)	(0.159)	-	Completed
79	Explore a Trust delivery model for Libraries and other services	(0.150)	(0.150)	-	Green - Growth item to cover one off costs relating to implementation of alternative delivery model(s) for libraries service. Aligned to development of Libraries Strategy.
80	Land Charge Income Adjustment	0.147	0.147	-	Amber - Uncertainty around implementation timescales of HM Land Registry changes to centralise some aspects of land charges functions hence

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					understanding of actual impact, to be regularly monitored.
81	Local Plan Review	0.315	0.315	-	Amber - Reprofiled budget adjustment to provide additional funding towards development of new Local Plan which has now commenced.
82	Review of CCTV service - service efficiencies and income generation from existing services	(0.040)	(0.040)	-	Green - On target. Restructure has been subject to recruitment process with final outcomes communicated. Establishment to be updated on Unit 4.
83	Environmental Services Growth 2025/26 onwards	3.041	1.808	(1.233)	Green - Environmental Services Growth 2025/26 onwards.
84	Environmental Services Savings 2025/26 onwards	(2.366)	(2.170)	0.196	Green - Environmental Services Savings 2025/26 onwards.
85	Environmental Services Growth - Pensions	0.727	0.727	-	Green - Environmental Services Growth - Pensions (2025/26 onwards). This is net nil for the Council and forms a housekeeping item to ensure the budgets for staff who have transferred in from the ASDVs, at different pension contribution rates, are consistent in advance of changes for all employees.
86	Environmental Services – expected income from Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging	(7.000)	(8.394)	(1.394)	Green - New Central Government Legislation Extended producer responsibility (EPR) 2025-26, Deposit Return Scheme 2027-2028 and Waste

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					Disposal Carbon Tax UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) 2027-28.
In year	Libraries Strategy Stage 1 (mitigation)	-	(0.039)	(0.039)	Savings mitigated through in year vacancy saving. 2025/26 RAG rated amber.
In year	Environment & Communities Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position	-	(1.077)	(1.077)	Environment & Communities Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position
In year	Fees and Charges	-	0.160	0.160	Adjustment for fees and charges - presenting Lyon Review items centrally

Capital Programme

27 **Table 4** below sets out the Environment and Communities capital programme position for 2025/26 as at FR2, showing forecast of £15.284m against revised MTFS budget of £18.606m.

Table 4 Capital 2025/26	MTFS £m	Out - turn £m	Actuals FR1 £m	Actuals FR2 £m	Forecast Spend £m	Gov Grants £m	Ext Contributions £m	Rev Contributions £m	Cap Receipt £m	Prud Borrow £m	TOTAL £m
Environment and Communities	19.357	18.606	0.451	1.099	15.284	8.655	1.600	0.647	-	4.382	15.284

28 **Table 5** shows the movement in the 2025/26 Capital budget since the MTFS Budget was approved in February 2025.

Table 5 Capital Movement 2025/26	MTFS Budget 2025-29 £m	SCE Outturn and FR1 £m	Carry Forward & Budget Reduction Outturn and FR1 £m	Virement Outturn and FR1 £m	Re profiled to future FR1 £m	SCE FR2 £m	Virement FR2 £m	Budget Reduction FR2 £m	Re profiled to future FR2 £m	FR2 2025/26 £m
Environment and Communities	19.357	1.610	6.154	-	(1.229)	-	(0.050)	(0.004)	(10.555)	15.284

- 29 Carry forwards from 2024/25 amounted to £6.154m. This figure includes Crewe Towns Fund Programme of £3.104m, the Strategic Leisure Review of £0.421m, Green Investment Scheme (Solar Farm) of £0.485m and the Fleet EV Transition of £0.606m.
- 30 FR1 and FR2 reviews have resulted in £11.784m being reprofiled into future years, made up mainly of Weekly Food Waste Collections of £5.413m, Fleet EV Transition of £3.23m, Parks of £0.934m, Crewe Towns Fund - Valley Brook Green Corridor of £0.748m, and the Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres of £0.65m.
- 31 Due to the above changes, forecast expenditure in 2025/26 has reduced by £4.073m that includes additions to the Capital Programme. These additional include King George Playing Fields of £1.522m and the LTA - Tennis Facility Improvements of £0.85m.
- 32 Each Committee is being asked to recognise the need for capital restraint particularly if external borrowing is required. This is being monitored and tracked through the work of the Capital Programme Board.
- 33 **Table 6** shows Capital Budget Reductions to Note.

Table 6 - Committee / Capital Scheme	Approved Budget £m	Revised Approval	Reduction	Reason and Funding Source
Environment and Communities				
Wybunbury Parish Open Space	0.005	0.001	(0.004)	Project now complete
Total	0.005	0.001	(0.004)	

Reserves Position

34 Table 7 below shows the Environment and Communities position on reserves by the end of 2025/26.

Table 7 Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdown to Support Service Exp	Additional Contributi ons to Reserves	Balance Forecast at 31 March 2026	Notes
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Strategic Planning	(0.287)	0.050	-	(0.237)	To meet costs associated with the Local Plan - site allocations, minerals and waste DPD. - Reserve needed in 26/27
Trees / Structures Risk Management	(0.084)	-	-	(0.084)	To help respond to increases in risks relating to the environment and adverse weather events.
Air Quality	(0.036)	0.036	-	-	Air Quality Management - DEFRA Action Plan. Relocating electric vehicle chargepoint in Congleton
Licensing Enforcement	(0.010)	0.010	-	-	Three-year reserve to fund a third party review and update of the Cheshire East Council Taxi Licensing Enforcement Policies.
Flood Water Management (Emergency Planning)	(0.002)	0.002	-	-	Grant relating to Public Information Works.
Neighbourhood Planning	(0.041)	0.041	-	-	To match income and expenditure.
Street Cleansing	(0.022)	0.022	-	-	Committed expenditure on voluntary litter picking equipment and electric blowers.
Total Reserves	(0.482)	0.161		(0.321)	

Consultation and Engagement

- 35 As part of the budget setting process the Pre-Budget engagement process provided an opportunity for interested parties to review and comment on the Council's Budget principles.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 36 The overall process for managing the Council's resources focuses on value for money, good governance and stewardship. The budget and policy framework sets out rules for managing the Council's financial affairs and contains the financial limits that apply in various parts of the Constitution. As part of sound financial management and to comply with the constitution any changes to the budgets agreed by Council in the MTFS require approval in line with the financial limits within the Finance Procedure Rules.
- 37 This report provides strong links between the Council's statutory reporting requirements and the in-year monitoring and management processes for financial and non-financial management of resources.

Other Options Considered

- 38 None. This report is important to ensure Members of the Committee are sighted on the financial pressure the Council is facing and the activity to date to try and mitigate this issue, and are given an opportunity to scrutinise this activity and identify any further actions that could be taken to learn to live within our means Do nothing. Impact – Members are not updated on the financial position of the Council. Risks – Not abiding by the Constitution to provide regular reports.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 39 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget and require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 40 The provisions of section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 41 The Council should therefore have robust processes in place so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty. It must ensure that all available resources are directed towards the delivery of statutory functions, savings and efficiency plans. Local authorities are creatures of statute and are regulated through
-

the legislative regime and whilst they have in more recent times been given a general power of competence, this must operate within that regime. Within the statutory framework there are specific obligations placed upon a local authority to support communities. These duties encompass general and specific duties and there is often significant local discretion in respect of how those services or duties are discharged. These will need to be assessed and advised on as each circumstance is considered.

- 42 The financial position of the Council must therefore be closely monitored, and Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings or alternative mitigations.
- 43 This report provides an update on progress for 2025/26 for all services.
- 44 It also provides updates and comments regarding the Council's use of Exceptional Financial Support under The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which inserted an amended Section 12A as a trigger event within the Local Government Act 2003, in relation to capital finance risk management. The legislation also provides for risk mitigation directions to be given to the Council which limit the ability to undertake certain financial action. The limitations are based on identified risk thresholds.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 45 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
 - 46 Reserve levels are agreed, by Council, in February each year and are based on a risk assessment that considers the financial challenges facing the Council. If spending associated with in-year delivery of services is not contained within original forecasts for such activity it may be necessary to vire funds from reserves.
 - 47 The unplanned use of financial reserves could require the Council to deliver a greater level of future savings to replenish reserve balances and / or revise the level of risks associated with the development of the Reserves Strategy in future.
 - 48 As part of the process to produce this report, senior officers review expenditure and income across all services to support the development of mitigation plans that will return the outturn to a balanced position at year-end.
 - 49 Forecasts contained within this review provide important information in the process of developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Analysis of variances during the year will identify whether such performance is likely to continue, and this enables more robust estimates to be established.
-

- 50 The risk associated with the scale of these challenges is that the Council could act illegally, triggering the requirement for a s.114 report from the Chief Financial Officer. Illegal behaviour in this context could materialise from two distinct sources:
1. Spending decisions could be made that exceed the available resources of the Council. This would unbalance the budget, which is unlawful.
 2. Spending decisions to restrict or hide pressures could be made that avoid an immediate deficit, but in fact are based on unlawful activity.
- 51 The consequences of the Council undermining a budget with illegal activity, or planned illegal activity, is the requirement to issue a s.114 report. Under these circumstances statutory services will continue and existing contracts and commitments must be honoured. But any spending that is not essential or which can be postponed must not take place.
- 52 Further consequences would be highly likely and could include the appointment of Commissioners from the MHCLG, and potential restrictions on the decision-making powers of local leaders.

Human Resources

- 53 This report is a backward look at Council activities at outturn and states the year end position. Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Risk Management

- 54 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2024/25 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2025/26 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

Impact on other Committees

- 55 All Committees will receive this financial update report.

Policy

- 56 This report is a backward look at Council activities and predicts the year-end position. It supports the Council's vision of being an effective and enabling Council as set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2025-2029
- 57 The forecast outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2026 to 2030 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 58 The approval of supplementary estimates and virements are governed by the Finance Procedure Rules section of the Constitution.
-

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 59 Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Statutory Officer (or deputy):			
Chris Benham	Director of Finance	04/11/2025	04/11/2025
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Monitoring Officer	04/11/2025	04/11/2025
Legal and Finance			
Chris Benham	Director of Finance	04/11/2025	04/11/2025
Jennie Summers	Acting Head of Legal Services	04/11/2025	04/11/2025
Other Consultees:			
Executive Directors/Directors:			
CLT			

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Chris Benham – Director of Finance Chris.benham@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Annex 1 - Detailed Second Financial Review 2025/26
Background Papers:	The following are links to key background documents: MTFS 2025-2029 First Financial Review 2025/26



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Second Financial Review 2025/26

Results to end of August 2025

Environment and Communities Committee

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Section 1: 2025/26 Forecast Outturn

1.1. **Table 1** below provides a service summary of financial performance based on information available as at the end of August 2025. The current forecast is that Environment and Communities will be £2.697m under budget in the current year.

Committee	Service Area Tier 3	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	FR1 Variance	Movement from FR1
Environment and Communities	Environment and Neighbourhood Services Total	0.334	0.322	- 0.012	0.416	- 0.428
Environment and Communities	Environmental Services Total	7.882	5.108	- 2.774	-2.896	0.122
Environment and Communities	Environmental Operations Total	23.741	24.033	0.292	0.217	0.075
Environment and Communities	Neighbourhood Services Total	4.561	5.349	0.788	0.420	0.368
Environment and Communities	Regulatory Services and Health Total	2.971	2.800	- 0.171	-0.145	- 0.026
Environment and Communities	Planning Total	4.128	3.308	- 0.820	-0.557	- 0.263
Environment and Communities		43.618	40.921	-2.697	-2.545	-0.152

Section 2: capital

Table 2 below: is a detailed list of Environment and Communities Capital schemes :

Environment & Communities													CAPITAL
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Environment Services													
Bereavement Service Data System	0.035	0.007	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.028
Booth Bed Lane, Goostrey	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.100	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.140
Bosley Village Play Area	0.020	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020
Browns Lane Play Area 2024/25	0.012	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012
Carbon Neutral 2030 Investments	13.980	0.104	0.000	0.597	4.000	9.279	13.876	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	13.876	13.876
Carbon Offset Investment	0.568	0.539	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.029
Carnival Fields	0.042	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042
Chefford Village Hall Phase 2	0.061	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061
Closed Cemeteries	0.152	0.000	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.152	0.152
Crewe Crematorium Flue Modifications	0.030	0.019	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.011
Crewe Crematorium and Macclesfield Crematorium Major	0.030	0.018	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.012
Elworth Park	0.052	0.002	0.035	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Energy Improvements at Cledford Lane	0.985	0.914	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071
Fleet EV Transition	6.897	0.990	0.350	3.557	2.000	0.000	5.907	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.907	5.907
Fleet Vehicle Electric Charging	0.585	0.159	0.286	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.426
Future High Street Funding - Sustainable Energy Network	1.516	1.349	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.166	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.166
Green Investment Scheme (Solar Farm)	4.150	3.459	0.536	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.691	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.691	0.691
Green Spaces Wilmslow - Mersey Forest	0.021	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Grounds Maintenance Management ICT System	0.121	0.060	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.062
Household Waste Recycling Centres	0.860	0.084	0.776	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.776	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.776	0.776
Jim Evison Playing Fields	0.161	0.019	0.122	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.000	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.142
Litter and Recycling Bins	0.208	0.119	0.010	0.052	0.027	0.000	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.089
Longridge Open Space Improvement Project	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.066
LTA - Tennis Facility Improvements	0.124	0.039	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.085
Macclesfield Chapel Refurbishment	0.629	0.022	0.607	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.607	0.000	0.000	0.607	0.000	0.000	0.607
Main Road, Langley	0.259	0.003	0.160	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.257	0.000	0.257	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.257
Newtown Sports Facilities Improvements	0.099	0.093	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006
Park Development Fund	0.846	0.670	0.089	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.176	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.176	0.176
Park Play, Meriton Road & Stanley Hall	0.010	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010
Pastures Wood De-carbonisation	0.051	0.038	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.013
Queens Park Bowling Green	0.017	0.002	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.015	0.000	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.015
Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	1.000	0.000	0.350	0.650	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Rotherhead Drive Open Space and Play Area	0.141	0.117	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.024	0.000	0.024	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.024
Rugby Drive, Macclesfield	0.071	0.024	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.000	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.047
Shaw Heath Recreation Ground	0.022	0.016	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006
Stanley Hall Improvements	0.055	0.053	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002
The Carrs Improvement Project	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061
The Moor, Knutsford	0.036	0.032	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.004

Environment & Communities

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Environment Services													
Unsafe Cemetery Memorials	0.035	0.009	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026	0.026
Victoria Park Amenity Improvements	0.020	0.012	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.000	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008
Victoria Park Pitch Improvements	0.029	0.028	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
Weekly Food Waste Collections	8.209	0.192	2.104	5.913	0.000	0.000	8.017	2.519	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.497	8.017
West Park Open Space & Sports Improvements	0.120	0.045	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.000	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.075
Woodland South of Coppice Way, Handforth	0.089	0.068	0.005	0.016	0.000	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.021
Wybunbury St Chad's Closed Cemetery	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.219
Neighbourhood Services													
Congleton Leisure Centre	13.000	12.973	0.027	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.027	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.007	0.027
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	3.173	0.404	2.768	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.768	2.769	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.769
Crewe Towns Fund - Pocket Parks	1.481	0.954	0.527	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.527	0.527	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.527
Crewe Towns Fund - Valley Brook Green Corridor	3.339	0.590	2.000	0.748	0.000	0.000	2.748	2.748	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.748
Middlewich Leisure Centre	0.060	0.051	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.009	0.009
Libraries - Next Generation - Self Service	0.374	0.336	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.038	0.038
Strategic Leisure Review	3.400	1.329	1.421	0.650	0.000	0.000	2.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.071	2.071
Planning & Regulatory Services													
Regulatory Systems & Environmental Health ICT System	0.313	0.279	0.034	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.034	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.034	0.034
Total Committed Schemes	67.975	26.243	13.212	13.201	6.033	9.285	41.732	8.890	0.987	0.647	0.000	31.208	41.732
New Schemes													
Environment Services													
Parks	1.483	0.000	0.549	0.370	0.214	0.349	1.483	0.000	1.483	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.483
King George V Playing Fields	1.522	0.000	1.522	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.522	1.113	0.409	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.522
Total New Schemes	3.005	0.000	2.072	0.370	0.214	0.349	3.005	1.113	1.892	0.000	0.000	0.000	3.005
Total Environment and Communities Schemes	70.980	26.243	15.284	13.571	6.247	9.635	44.737	10.003	2.879	0.647	0.000	31.208	44.737

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Environment and Communities Committee

13 November 2025

Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 - 2029/30

**Report of: Ashley Hughes, Executive Director of Resources,
Section 151 Officer**

Report Reference No: EC/08/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable

For Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1 The Environment and Communities Committee is being asked to provide feedback, as consultees, on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30. Feedback is requested in relation to the responsibilities of the Committee.
- 2 The report sets out the latest budget position for 2026/27 to 2029/30 and the list of budget savings proposals. relevant to the remit of this Committee, that has been included in the public consultation which was launched in November 2025.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2025/26 to 2028/29 was approved by full Council on 26 February 2025.
- 4 The MTFS is underpinned by a set of assumptions around income, expenditure and core funding that result in a 4-year position. The budget could only be balanced for the 2025/26 financial year by use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) by way of a capitalisation direction. This is not sustainable in the medium to long term and needed to be addressed urgently for the Council to be financially sustainable. The gaps forecast in later years were addressed as part of the business planning process this year, as well as the Council learning to live within

its means by delivering all savings and containing approved growth within 2025/26, otherwise there will be increased pressures in future years and preparing a balanced budget/ MTFS will continue to be challenging.

- 5 The budget gap in the last update paper received by Corporate Policy Committee and Finance Sub Committee, without mitigations, was £33.3m on the General Fund Revenue budget for 2026/27. This is the year, by law, that elected members must set a legal budget by no later than the 11 March 2026.
- 6 Since that budget assumptions report there have been further changes identified that needed to be worked towards, and details are set out in the [Corporate Policy Committee](#) report of 30 October 2025.
- 7 The proposals are those being consulted on, are not necessarily the final budget items that Corporate Policy Committee will recommend to Budget Council in February 2026.
- 8 Finance Sub-Committee have received a further update highlighting risks and issues that have not been taken into account at this point due to uncertainty or inability to quantify those risks. The risks relating to Environment and Communities Committee remit include:
 - (a) That the Council will exercise the considerable capital programme restraint described in the MTFS in full. This is to ensure that every pound the Council spends, delivers maximum benefits for residents – irrespective of funding sources. Just because a project doesn't rely on prudential borrowing to progress, doesn't mean it is necessarily the project the Council would progress if the funding sources are transferable and other projects meet the Council's strategic aims and objectives described in the Cheshire East Plan.
 - (b) An MTFS can only succeed when a Council's policies and procedures, plans and strategies, and outcomes are focused on the Council's core business. There will be tension between delivering financial sustainability across both capital and revenue budgets and meeting wider objectives which the Council must navigate through the MTFS process.
- 9 Committee should also note that the impact of the new Cheshire & Warrington Combined Authority (CWCA) – and the devolution of funds and powers that come with the CWCA formation – is not factored into the MTFS.
- 10 As a drive towards longer-term, strategic thinking the Council will be shifting its Capital Strategy to a ten-year horizon plus pipeline of

opportunities that can be “on the shelf” should the appropriate funding opportunity present itself. This speaks to the capital restraint plank of the proposed MTFS and allows Council to reprofile its capital expenditure and to align it to the CWCA’s longer-term base funding over the ten-year cycle.

- 11 A programme of public engagement during November and December will be undertaken to support the 2026/27 budget setting and consultation.
- 12 The Council must ensure the conditions for successful delivery of budget proposals are in place. Without the following conditions, it will be difficult to confirm the robustness of estimates under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003.
 - A robust, consistent, corporate Programme and Project Management approach in a suitably resourced Programme Management Office.
 - Delivery plans for proposals must consist of the cost of change where it is appropriate to do so, including those from services not involved directly in delivery.
 - A strong culture of owning performance and delivery, underpinned by monthly officer-led Performance Boards.
 - Elected members agree to oversee delivery through quarterly Star Chambers and apply the same methodology to challenge the budget process into 2027/28.
 - Delivery, in full, of the Financial Leadership Improvement Plan, particularly around the Enterprise Resource Programme and budget holder accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment and Communities Committee is asked to:

1. Note the updated budget position for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30 as set out in Table 3.
2. Scrutinise and feedback on the list of Environment and Communities budget savings proposals that are contained in the budget consultation launched in November 2025 as contained in Annex 1.
3. Note the conditions for successful budget delivery, as approved by Corporate Policy Committee on 30 October 2025, which are set out in paragraph 12.

Background

- 13 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2025/26 to 2028/29 was approved by full Council on 26 February 2025.
- 14 As a reminder, Table 1 below sets out the revenue budget estimates for the four years from 2025/26 to 2028/29 as at February 2025.

Table 1: Summary position for 2025/26 to 2028/29	Approved Net Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2028/29 £m
Adults & Health	159.449	157.245	158.761	160.240
Children & Families	97.290	97.226	97.025	96.767
Corporate Policy	42.786	47.182	49.072	50.557
Economy & Growth	28.442	29.137	29.569	29.897
Environment & Communities	45.702	48.971	49.953	56.745
Highways and Transport	16.901	17.053	17.121	17.151
Council Wide Transformation savings	(13.452)	(34.182)	(45.212)	(45.212)
Total Service Budgets	377.118	362.632	356.289	366.145
<i>CENTRAL BUDGETS:</i>				
Capital Financing	35.039	38.758	41.860	43.248
Flexible use of Capital Receipts	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)
Bad Debt Provision (change)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Contingency Budget	15.953	30.861	42.783	55.709
Risk Budget	-	3.800	1.960	0.750
Pension adjustment	(0.727)	(0.727)	(0.727)	(0.727)
Use of (-) / Top up (+) Reserves	1.304	5.000	8.898	8.898
Total Central Budgets	50.519	76.642	93.724	106.828
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS	427.637	439.274	450.012	472.972
<i>FUNDED BY:</i>				
Council Tax	(307.264)	(325.591)	(344.983)	(365.498)
Business Rate Retention Scheme	(57.122)	(57.122)	(57.122)	(57.122)
Revenue Support Grant	(0.849)	(0.849)	(0.849)	(0.849)
Specific Unring-fenced Grants	(37.140)	(34.098)	(34.098)	(34.098)
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	(402.375)	(417.660)	(437.052)	(457.567)
Exceptional Financial Support - Capitalisation Directi	(25.261)			
Funding Position (+shortfall)	-	21.614	12.961	15.406

- 15 The table above highlighted the fact that the Council continued to face a significant four-year funding gap at that time and was only able to balance in 2025/26 with the use of EFS. There continues to be the requirement to increase general reserves to more appropriate levels, to

support the future financial sustainability of the Council and the above four-year budget built this level to £20m.

Budget assumption updates – base scenario (September/early October)

- 16 There was further refinement to some of the assumptions and resulting values since the MTFS approved in February 2025 (Table 1). These changed the overall funding position for 2026/27 onwards as per Table 2 below. A list of updates included in this table can be found in the [previous report](#).

Table 2: Base Scenario position for 2026/27 to 2029/30	Approved Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2028/29 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2029/30 £m
Adults & Health	159.449	167.450	172.795	178.074	188.074
Children & Families	97.290	101.130	104.805	108.395	118.395
Corporate Policy	42.786	45.812	46.132	46.008	46.008
Economy & Growth	28.441	28.707	28.699	28.577	28.577
Environment & Communities	45.701	47.590	47.163	52.519	52.519
Highways and Transport	16.901	16.942	16.896	16.809	16.809
Council Wide Transformation savings	(13.452)	(34.182)	(45.212)	(45.212)	(45.212)
Transformation pump priming	-	15.000	5.000	-	-
Total Service Budgets	377.116	388.448	376.277	385.169	405.169
<i>CENTRAL BUDGETS:</i>					
Capital Financing	35.039	34.997	37.637	38.932	38.690
Flexible use of Capital Receipts	(1.000)	(10.000)	(5.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)
Bad Debt Provision (change)	(0.050)	(1.000)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Contingency Budget	15.953	44.661	49.743	61.459	69.453
Pay inflation	-	10.154	18.382	26.746	35.110
Pension adjustment	(0.727)	(0.727)	(0.727)	(0.727)	(0.727)
Use of (-) / Top up (+) Reserves	1.304	5.000	8.898	8.898	5.000
Total Central Budgets	50.519	83.085	108.883	134.258	146.476
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS	427.635	471.533	485.160	519.427	551.645
<i>FUNDED BY:</i>					
Council Tax	(307.264)	(326.341)	(345.769)	(366.323)	(388.069)
Business Rate Retention Scheme	(57.122)	(47.084)	(46.767)	(46.919)	(47.048)
Revenue Support Grant	(0.849)	(63.851)	(79.786)	(85.300)	(86.161)
Specific Unring-fenced Grants + DAMPING	(37.140)	(0.929)	2.251	3.936	(0.929)
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	(402.375)	(438.205)	(470.071)	(494.606)	(522.207)
Exceptional Financial Support - Capitalisation Directi	(25.261)				
Funding Position (+shortfall)	-	33.328	15.089	24.821	29.438

Budget assumption updates – latest base scenario

- 17 Further work has been undertaken to reduce the £33.3m gap, demonstrating to MHCLG and our Assurance Panel that we are doing

what we have been charged with and working towards a route out of EFS.

- 18 Therefore, there has been further refinements to some of the assumptions and resulting values since this time. These change the overall funding position for 2026/27 onwards as per Table 3 below. The current shortfall in 2026/27 is now estimated to be £18.2m. The full list of updates and all savings proposals can be found in the [Corporate Policy Committee](#) paper:

Table 3: Base Scenario position for 2026/27 to 2029/30	Approved Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2028/29 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2029/30 £m
Adults & Health	159.449	162.601	162.435	164.189	166.697
Children & Families	97.290	94.245	92.766	91.194	96.194
Corporate Policy	42.786	44.537	44.536	44.172	44.172
Economy & Growth	28.441	26.235	25.771	25.051	24.801
Environment & Communities	45.701	45.673	45.065	50.228	52.234
Highways and Transport	16.901	18.084	18.175	18.083	17.815
Council Wide Transformation savings	(13.452)	(26.943)	(37.973)	(37.973)	(37.973)
Transformation pump priming	-	10.000	5.000	5.000	-
Total Service Budgets	377.116	374.432	355.775	359.943	363.939
<i>CENTRAL BUDGETS:</i>					
Capital Financing	35.039	34.997	37.637	38.932	38.690
Flexible use of Capital Receipts	(1.000)	(15.000)	(10.000)	(10.000)	-
Bad Debt Provision (change)	(0.050)	(1.000)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Contingency Budget	15.953	48.538	53.620	65.336	73.330
Pay inflation (moved from service budget to contingency budget from 2026/27 until final pay agreement reached)	-	10.223	18.451	26.815	35.179
Pension adjustment relating to ASDVs only	(0.727)	-	-	-	-
Use of (-) / Top up (+) Reserves	1.304	5.001	15.456	14.479	12.011
Total Central Budgets	50.519	82.759	115.114	135.512	159.160
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS	427.635	457.192	470.889	495.456	523.100
<i>FUNDED BY:</i>					
Council Tax	(307.264)	(327.119)	(346.587)	(367.173)	(388.962)
Business Rate Retention Scheme	(57.122)	(47.084)	(46.767)	(46.919)	(47.048)
Revenue Support Grant	(0.849)	(63.851)	(79.786)	(85.300)	(86.161)
Specific Unring-fenced Grants + DAMPING	(37.140)	(0.929)	2.251	3.936	(0.929)
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	(402.375)	(438.983)	(470.889)	(495.456)	(523.100)
Exceptional Financial Support - Capitalisation Direction	(25.261)				
Funding Position (+shortfall)	-	18.209	-	-	-

Next Steps

- 19 There has been further work carried out to challenge this updated position. Business case submissions for future planned savings were

presented to Corporate Leadership Team on 13 October. Further changes that could be made to the above position (Table 3) have been included in the latest figures and a list of savings proposals is included at Annex 1 relevant to this Committee. For a full list of proposed budget savings please see the [Corporate Policy Committee](#) paper.

- 20 Further work to support Children's Services to review the demography and complexity permanent growth budgets of £10m with a target to reduce it by at least £5m per annum to 2030. This work began after the Ofsted inspection on Monday 20 October.
- 21 Savings still need to be delivered through service redesign and as part of the wider transformation programmes and should be considered as stretch deliverables where possible. This work will form part of the final set of proposals for February 2026. As such, stretch transformation numbers in relation to redesign are being completed by December 2025.
- 22 The Council will continue to review its MTFS and budget reductions programme going forward. The assumptions included within this report will be refreshed through November and December to take account of available information on Government funding decisions as well as the macro-economic environment.
- 23 Over the period November to January, these proposals will be further developed to ensure robust delivery plans are in place and work will commence, with a view to maximising the full year effect of delivery in 2026/27. Priority will be placed on income maximisation across all service areas to reduce the burden on expenditure reductions, however there will be a need for efficiencies in costs alongside a genuine requirement to invest in transformation where the return on investment delivers long-term improvements in outcomes for residents in line with the Cheshire East Plan alongside recurrent reductions in costs that support the MTFS.
- 24 The draft budget savings proposals will be subject to consultation and engagement both online and in person sessions with various stakeholders – the full details of Public Engagement in Support of the 2026/30 Budget Consultation are set out in paragraphs 22- 24 of the [Corporate Policy Committee](#) paper. These sessions will likely be prior to the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement so would be updated with changes as a result of those announcements.
- 25 This position includes the list of savings proposals as contained in Annex 1 and summary Table 4 has been provided below.

- 26 This Committee is being asked to review and feedback on the list of items pertaining to this committee only.

TABLE 4 - DRAFT BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2026/27 TO 2029/30	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
	(57.781)	(14.562)	(8.158)	7.086
Children and Families	(3.826)	(0.725)	(0.725)	-
Adults and Health	(11.769)	(5.984)	(4.537)	(2.961)
Corporate Policy	(5.988)	(1.423)	(1.517)	-
Corporate Policy - Council Wide Transformation	(13.491)	(11.030)	-	-
Economy and Growth	(2.885)	(0.543)	(0.597)	(0.250)
Environment and Communities	(4.615)	(0.653)	(0.544)	0.580
Highways and Transport	(0.257)	(0.154)	(0.238)	(0.283)
Finance Sub Committee - Central Budgets	(14.950)	5.950	-	10.000

Consultation and Engagement

- 27 The annual business planning process involves engagement with local people and organisations. Local authorities have a duty to consult on their budget with certain stakeholder groups and in Cheshire East we include the Schools Forum as well as business rate payers. In addition, the Council chooses to consult with other stakeholder groups. The Council continues to carry out stakeholder analysis to identify the different groups involved in the budget setting process, what information they need from us, the information we currently provide these groups with, and where we can improve our engagement process.
- 28 All committees will receive reports during the November cycle of meetings for them to scrutinise proposals relating to the remit of the committee. There will be a further opportunity during the January 2026 committee meeting cycle to comment further as feedback is received.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 29 In accordance with the Constitution Committees play an important role in planning, monitoring and reporting on the Council's finances. Each Committee has specific financial responsibilities.
- 30 The Council's annual budget must be balanced. The proposals within it must be robust and the strategy should be supported by adequate reserves. The assessment of these criteria is supported by each

Committee having the opportunity to help develop the financial proposals before they are approved by Full Council

Other Options Considered

- 31 The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced annual budget taking regard of the report from the Chief Financial Officer. As such options cannot be considered that would breach this duty. Any feedback from the consultation process and individual committee feedback must still recognise the requirement for Council to fulfil this duty.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Not an option as the council must legally set a balanced budget for the coming financial year	The Council would be acting unlawfully if budgets are not aligned to available resources

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 32 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget and require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 33 The provisions of section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 34 The Council should therefore have robust processes in place so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty. It must ensure that all available resources are directed towards the delivery of statutory functions, savings and efficiency plans. Local authorities are creatures of statute and are regulated through the legislative regime and whilst they have in more recent times been given a general power of competence, this must operate within that regime. Within the

statutory framework there are specific obligations placed upon a local authority to support communities. These duties encompass general and specific duties and there is often significant local discretion in respect of how those services or duties are discharged. These will need to be assessed and advised on as each circumstance is considered.

- 35 The financial position of the Council must therefore be closely monitored, and Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings or alternative mitigations.
- 36 This report provides an update on progress towards the setting of the 2026/27 budget.
- 37 It also provides updates and comments regarding the Council's use of Exceptional Financial Support under The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which inserted an amended Section 12A as a trigger event within the Local Government Act 2003, in relation to capital finance risk management. The legislation also provides for risk mitigation directions to be given to the Council which limit the ability to undertake certain financial action. The limitations are based on identified risk thresholds.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 38 Please see all sections of this report.

Human Resources

- 39 Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that the budget report deals with will be dealt with in the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Risk Management

- 40 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2025/26 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2025/26 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

Impact on other Committees

- 41 All committees will work towards bringing forward budget change proposals to assist with the medium-term financial strategy.

Policy

- 42 The Cheshire East Plan sets the policy context for the MTFs and the two documents are aligned. Any policy implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt with in the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate. This contributes to Commitment 3: An effective and enabling Council.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 43 Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Statutory Officer (or deputy):			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	23/10/2025	03/11/2025
Jennie Summers	Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer	23/10/2025	28/10/2025
Legal and Finance			
Chris Benham	Director of Finance	23/10/2025	23/10/2025
Hilary Irving	Interim Head of Legal Services	23/10/2025	23/10/2025
Other Consultees:			
Executive Directors/Directors:			
CLT			

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Chris Benham – Director of Finance Chris.benham@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Annex 1 – Proposals Budget Savings for Consultation
Background Papers:	The following are links to key background documents: MTFS 2025-2029 Financial Review 1 2025/26 Corporate Policy Committee – MTFS Consultation full report

Prev MTFS Ref	ANNEX 1 - DRAFT BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2026/27 TO 2029/30		2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
	Environment and Communities		(4.615)	(0.653)	(0.544)	0.580
85	Pension Costs Adjustment - ASDVs	This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate estimated by the Cheshire Pension Fund from the April 2026 triannual valuation results.	(0.727)	-	-	-
New	Sale of BNG Credits (linked to assets work)	Pilot Environmental Services project to sell Biodiversity Net Gain credits on Council owned woodland planting areas and closed landfill sites. We anticipate approx. 180ha of useable land with a potential average of 2.5 BNG units per hectare a total of 450 BNG units are potentially possible.	(1.000)	-	-	1.000
New	Pet Cremations	Proposal for a pet cremation facility at Congleton Cemetery. With an estimated 300k pets within 25 miles of the site and 1 existing facility in CE, this would increase resident choice and provide revenue generation for the Council. Involves installation of pet cremation equipment and office in the existing building.	(0.007)	(0.024)	(0.012)	(0.005)
New	Stretch Target on Green Bin Subscriptions	This proposal assumes a further £5 stretch over the above existing MTFS targets so that the 2026 (January to December) charge would be £69.	(0.255)	-	-	-
New / replace 83 and 84	Environmental Services Inflation - Income fees and charges	Inflation applied to Bereavement Services fees and charges , sports pitch fees and Garden waste charges.	(0.617)	(0.580)	(0.601)	(0.488)
New / replace 83 and 84	Simplier Recycling	Grant expected from DEFRA -new burdens grants for weekly food waste collection to offset costs related to the government requirement for food waste collection.	(1.521)	-	-	-
			0.701	-	-	-
New / replace 83 and 84	Environmental Services Commercialisation	Commercialisation - waste, grounds, fleet and transport, waste transfer station opportunity to sell unused capacity, additional income to offset operating costs	(0.200)	(0.100)	-	-
New / replace 83 and 84	ANSA Commissioning management saving	ANSA Commissioning management saving from closing ANSA Environmental Services Ltd.	(0.325)	-	-	-
New / replace 83 and 84	Growth and savings relating to Household Waste Recycling Centre waste contract	Growth and savings in relation to a new supplier for the HWRC waste contract	(0.663)	0.052	0.069	0.072

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OPEN

Environment and Communities Committee

13 November 2025

Local Plan Update

Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director - Place

Report Reference No: EC/06/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report updates members on national planning reform and the Local Plan programme; seeks approval to undertake a further call for sites and associated engagement and seeks approval of delegated authority for future decisions on the Local Plan.

Executive Summary

- 2 This report seeks two decisions, provides an update on national planning reform and progress on the new Local Plan for Cheshire East.
- 3 Local Plans are an essential place-making tool that co-ordinate development, infrastructure and services. The Local Plan is a crucial tool to help co-ordinate, fund and plan for the delivery of infrastructure across the borough and supports delivery of a range of priorities set out in the Cheshire East Plan, and the Local Transport Plan.
- 4 National planning reform is addressing multiple components of the UK planning system, including the development of a new Local Plan process. This requires legislation and guidance to be produced by government. There have been delays in progressing this, however updates are expected within this year.
- 5 In the meantime, the Council has been readying itself for formal commencement of the plan making process through programme planning, establishing governance arrangements, undertaking initial evidence preparation and resource planning.

- 6 To support readiness, decisions are requested to undertake a further call for sites and to delegate some Local Plan decision making to the Director of Planning and Environment. It should be noted that until new regulations are published, all local plan activity is undertaken with the understanding that elements may need repeating in part, or in full, to meet requirements that may be set out in new local plan regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment and Communities Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree to publicise and undertake a further call for sites.
2. Agree to delegate the following decisions associated with the production of the Council's New Local Plan to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee. The delegation is proposed to be limited to the following:
 - a. Decisions to engage and consult with stakeholders on activities which support the production of the New Local Plan (workshops and focus groups for example)
 - b. Decisions to publish documents and material which support the production of the New Local Plan (including evidence and draft plans that set out options), and seek feedback on their content

The following are proposed to be exempt from the delegation:

- i. Consultation on a final draft New Local Plan
- ii. Submission of the New Local Plan to government
- iii. Submission of the post-examination New Local Plan to Council for consideration to approve

Background

National Planning Reform

- 7 The governments' planning reform agenda has seen the introduction of significant change with more systemic changes on their way. The key features of the new planning system are summarised at Appendix 4 with significant implications for Cheshire East:
- 8 Housing requirement has raised from 977¹ to 2,603 homes per year (including 5% buffer), causing a five-year land supply shortfall and activating the 'tilted balance' in planning decisions. This means that

¹ 977 is the figure derived from the 'standard method' in place prior to the December 2024. The annual housing requirement for the borough as set out in the local plan was significantly more ambitious than this and stood at 1,800 per annum, in place since 2017.

unless material harm is identified, proposals that support the delivery of new homes should be supported.

- 9 The introduction of 'Grey Belt' also has important implications for the borough. Grey Belt is land that does not strongly contribute to purposes a), b) or d) of the Green Belt to:
 - (a) check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - (b) prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - (c) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- 10 As part of the evidence base, a review of the Green Belt has been commissioned that will assess the purpose and performance of the Green Belt and identify Grey Belt locations.
- 11 A further significant implication for the Council is the announcement of a potential site for a New Town at Adlington, identified by the New Towns Commission. The process to identify this site has been carried out wholly by government and third parties. The Council will engage with the process as appropriate.
- 12 Legislation to prepare plans under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) has been delayed, preventing the Council from commencing its new plan. It should be noted that [government has advised](#) that authorities preparing 'old style' plans must restart, from the beginning should they decide to switch to the new system.

Progress on the Cheshire East Local Plan

- 13 Despite regulatory uncertainty, a new Local Plan timetable, aligned to the March 2025 [Local Development Scheme](#), has been drafted and initial evidence gathering is underway. It is important to note that whilst the LDS sets out a programme that estimates adoption in late 2028, a review of the programme will be undertaken once the details of the new plan making system are published (expected by the end of the year) and the implications of it are further understood. An update to the timetable will follow from this review.
- 14 The [2024 'issues' consultation](#) identified key priorities (e.g., health, climate change, natural environment) to guide further plan development and ongoing monitoring continues, with the 203/4 [Authority Monitoring Report](#) and [Housing Monitoring Update](#) supplying critical baseline data.
- 15 The Minerals and Waste Plan will now be incorporated into the Local Plan and early work on a draft [Minerals and Waste Plan](#) (2022) provides

an important basis from which to further develop this element of the Plan.

Developing the evidence base for the plan

- 16 The new Local Plan will shape our places for years ahead and an accurate evidence base is essential to secure best outcomes. Work has focused on evidence components least likely to be superseded by forthcoming legislation; an evidence review (Appendix 5) highlights numerous areas to update.
- 17 When submitted, Local Plans must contain up to date evidence (often not more than two years old). Therefore, a prudent commissioning strategy is being managed through close project oversight.
- 18 Informal collaboration is in progress with Cheshire East's new Combined Authority partners, to explore implications and opportunities arising from the future regional Spatial Development Strategy, including potential cost savings from sharing of evidence.

Project Management and Risk

- 19 The Council's Project Management Office is supporting the plan programme and helping identify resource needs as legislation evolves.
- 20 Governance structures include an internal senior officer Local Plan Board (Director level) and a Members Reference Group; a risk register identifies key uncertainties—such as the impact of a forthcoming Spatial Development Strategy—while financial implications will be managed via the MTFS. A detailed review of the programme has led to a cost estimate of £2.574 million over a four-year period.

Consultation and Engagement

- 21 The existing Statement of Community Involvement ([SCI, January 2022](#)) continues to guide public engagement and will be replaced by engagement arrangements in a Project Initiation Document (PID) once new legislation is in place. The 'Issues' consultation complied with the SCI and will remain the engagement standard until regulations change.
- 22 The new system will require plans be prepared within 30 months and emphasizes digital engagement, especially mapping tools. Accordingly, the Council has upgraded its digital engagement platform with new software and will use this for the proposed further call for sites.
- 23 A communications strategy is being prepared which prioritizes digital outreach, with potential to supplement with targeted topic-specific discussions where valuable. An important aspect of the approach will be early and regular communication with Cheshire East members, and

ensuring clear information is provided to the public, to explain the process and how they can participate.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 24 The 'call for sites' is undertaken as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' (HELAA) and will also inform the production of the new Local Plan for minerals and waste site submissions. It considers all available land that could be brought forward for development, including land owned by public sector bodies. Therefore, there is a need for the Council's own land assets to be included in the assessment, alongside land that may be owned by town and parish Councils.
- 25 The 2024 call for sites returned some 365 sites for housing and economic uses, each of which has been digitised, mapped and recorded. The sites are listed and are available to view on a digital platform included at Appendix 1. Given the introduction of significant changes to the policy environment since this work was originally carried out, a further call for sites is required to ensure the plan making process is fair to all interested parties.
- 26 Currently the constitution requires all matters related to Local Plan policy development to be decided by E&CC. To respond effectively to the pending timescales for plan making, delegated decision-making is being requested to clarify that officers can publish parts of the evidence base, and engage with stakeholders as and when necessary, without the need to bring such operationally based decisions to committee. This approach will be underpinned by member engagement on such issues and liaison with the Member Reference Group. Decisions to publish final draft plans, and to submit proposed Plans to government will continue to rest with E&CC; whether to adopt the plan (post examination) will remain a decision for full Council.

Other Options Considered

- 27 The Council could wait for the full legal and policy framework for the reformed Local Plan making system to be put in place before it takes any substantive step towards progressing the new Local Plan. This option would delay completion.

28

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Delay to the Local Plan programme	Extended period where over which the Council cannot effectively control

		development and fully leverage its benefits.
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 29 This proposal is carried out under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This requires the Council to notify various parties and invite feedback in the form of proposed sites for consideration within the new Local Plan.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 30 As far as possible, the cost of preparing the new Local Plan has been reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025-29, and is being updated for the proposed MTFS 2026 – 2030, however this will need to be kept under review in the light of future changes to the legal and national policy framework for Local Plan preparation. The MTFS takes account of an existing earmarked reserve for Local Plan preparation. The current MTFS includes a budget of £2,309,064.00 and through more detailed resource planning, proposals have been made to increase this to £2,574,000.

Human Resources

- 31 Human resources support will be required to support appropriate resourcing of the Strategic Planning team.

Risk Management

- 32 Appropriate risk management will be carried out as an integral part of the Plan's project management.

Impact on other Committees

- 33 A new Local Plan will contain planning policies, affecting all communities across Cheshire East and therefore will potentially support and shape decisions that are taken by other committees.

Policy

34

Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all The Local Plan establishes a land use framework for the borough which supports inward investment and delivery of infrastructure, jobs and homes.	Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing Policies brought forward via the Local Plan will help shape communities to secure good design, improvements to the natural environment and a range of infrastructure that supports health and wellbeing.	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling Council An adopted Local Plan enables the Council to take decisions on planning applications with greater certainty providing stability for officers, members and applicants.
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 35 A communications strategy is being prepared to ensure an inclusive approach to engagement. Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out during future stages of Plan preparation.

Other Implications

- 36 The new Local Plan will provide an opportunity to go further with planning policies to mitigate climate change, recognising the Council's pledge to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045.
- 37 There is an opportunity to promote health within the new Local Plan and an update to the Local Plan would contain planning policies for the whole of the borough, including rural areas.
- 38 The well-being of young people and cared for children could be an important objective that any revised policies may seek to support.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	23/10/25	27/10/25
Hilary Irving	Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer	30/10/25	30/10/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
James Thomas	Principal Planning & Highways Solicitor	01/10/25	02/10/25
Wendy Broadhurst	Principal Accountant (Place)		
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Chris Allman	Director of Planning and Environment	29/09/25	22/10/25
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director – Place	27/10/25	27/10/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Tom Evans, Angela Johnson tom.evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk, angela.johnson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Call for Sites 2024 Appendix 2: Local Plan Programme Appendix 3: Finalised Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Appendix 4: Summary of Key National Planning Reforms Appendix 5: Proposed Local Plan Evidence Base
Background Papers:	n/a

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[Link to call for sites maps: Cheshire East – Local Plan: Cheshire East Council: Submissions to Call for Sites 2024](#)

Please note that sites submitted as part of the 2024 call for sites have no additional status for planning purposes. These sites, and others submitted through future call for sites, will be assessed as part of the Local Plan making process and will be used to understand how and where future development will be located in the Borough.

[Submissions to the call for sites 2024](#)

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 1	Land off Birchin Lane	Birchin Lane, Nantwich, CW5 6JY	6.99	Housing
HE 2	Land to the west of Sound Lane	Sound Lane, Ravensmoor, CW5 8PS	1.03	Housing
HE 5	Land north of East View	Monks Lane, Audlem, CW3 0HP	1.07	Housing
HE 6	Land to the rear of 277 Crewe Road	277 Crewe Road, Haslington, CW1 5RU	0.4	Housing
HE 8a	Land west of Waldron's Lane	Waldrons Lane, Crewe, CW1 4PT	5.23	Housing
HE 9a	Moss Farm	Broughton Road, Crewe	5.65	Housing
HE 10a	Land East of Groby Road	Groby Road, Crewe	27.42	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 11	Land off Crewe Road	Crewe Road, Wheelock Heath	2.39	Housing
HE 12	Land N & W of Winterley Farm	277 Crewe Road, Haslington, CW1 5RU	3.53	Housing
HE 13	Land at Whetstone Edge Farm	Congleton, CW12 4TE	8.39	Housing
HE 15	Land at Mobberley Road, Altrincham Road and Sandy Lane	Land between Altrincham Road and Sandy Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5NB	5.71	Housing
HE 16	Land at Rotherwood Road	Rotherwood Road, Wilmslow, SK9 6DR	1.11	Housing
HE 20	Land at Ivy Farm	Waldron's Lane, Crewe, CW1 4PT	3.52	Housing or industry
HE 22	Land at New Inn Lane	New Inn Lane, Betchton, CW11 2TP	0.77	Housing or industry or commercial
HE 23	Land off Mow Cop Road	191 Mow Cop Road, Mow Cop, ST7 4NJ	0.57	Housing
HE 24	Foxfields	Drury Lane, Warmingham, CW1 4PN	0.78	Housing
HE 25	Land east of Audlem Road	Audlem Road, Hankelow, CW3 0JE	1.03	Housing
HE 26	Land at Hall Hill off Brow Hill	Moss Brow, Bollington, SK10 5HH	3.68	Housing
HE 27	Land at Smithy Field	Audlem Road, Hankelow, CW3 0JE	1.55	Housing and community uses
HE 29	The Villa Farm	Hunsterson Road, Hatherton, CW5 7PD	1.31	Housing or industry or commercial or renewable energy
HE 30	Land adj to Trouthall Lane	Trouthall Lane, Plumley, WA16 0UN	0.48	Housing
HE 31	Land at Macclesfield Rugby Club	Priory Park, Priory Lane, Macclesfield, SK10 4AE	11.58	Housing
HE 32a	Land off Chelford Road	Chelford Road, Congleton, CW12 4ZG	14.17	Housing and commercial

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 33	Land off Moss Lane	Moss Lane, Styal, SK9 4LF	0.81	Housing (C2)
HE 34	Knowle House	Sagars Road, Handforth, SK9 3EA	1.07	Housing (including C2)
HE 35	Land South of Coppice Road	Coppice Road, Poynton, SK10 1SP	3.28	Housing
HE 37	Land West of Moggie Lane	Moggie Lane, Adlington, SK10 4NY	0.4	Housing
HE 38	Land East of Middlewood Road	Middlewood Road, Poynton, SK12 1TS	2.46	Housing
HE 39	Land off Higginson Close	Higginson Close, Congleton	0.64	Housing
HE 40	Land at Sandhole Lane	Sandhole Lane, Marthall, WA16 8SR	1.4	Housing
HE 41	Land adjacent to Brookside	New Road, Wrenbury, CW5 8HF	0.26	Housing
HE 42	Land to the South of Giantswood Lane	Giantswood Lane, Hulme Walfield, CW12 2JQ	2	Housing
HE 43	Land North of Dane Valley Roundabout	Wolstenholme Elmy Way (A536), Congleton	6.65	Housing or industry or commercial or mix
HE 44	Marthall Mill	Chelford Road (A537), Knutsford, WA16 8TA	0.46	Housing
HE 45	Land west of Marthall Mill	Chelford Road (A537), Knutsford, WA16 8TA	0.85	Housing
HE 46	Land South of Grimshaw Lane	Bollington, SK10 5LY	0.33	Housing
HE 47	Land between 15 and 17a Jackson Lane	Jackson Lane, Bollington, SK10 5BE	0.23	Housing
HE 48	Land at Wrights Lane	Wrights Lane, Sandbach	1.73	Housing
HE 49a	Land adjacent to Stone Chair Lane/Station Road	Stone Chair Lane/Station Road, Scholar Green, ST7 3JN	1.7	Housing
HE 50	Cotton Equestrian Centre	Middlewich Road, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7ES	1.66	Housing
HE 52	Land opposite Rising Sun	Station Road, Scholar Green, ST7 3JN	2.4	Housing
HE 53	Land adjacent to Buxton Road	Buxton Road, Congleton, CW12 3PH	13.08	Housing
HE 54	Land at Total Fitness	Storeys Way, Handforth, SK9 3PE	3.58	Housing and commercial
HE 55	Land off Flowers Lane	Flowers Lane, Leighton, CW1 4QJ	2.23	Housing, or commercial, or roadside services or transport facilities
HE 56	Land off Moggie Lane	Moggie Lane, Adlington, SK10 4NY	6.34	Housing
HE 57	Land at London Road/Poynton Relief Road	London Road/Poynton Relief Road (A523), Adlington, SK10 4NG	2.91	Industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, tourism, leisure
HE 58	Deandale Equestrian Centre	Sagars Road, Handforth	7.57	Housing (C2)
HE 59	Harden Park	Alderley Road, Alderley Edge	4.92	Housing
HE 60	Land at Tweedale Farm	Nantwich Road, Wardle, CW6 9JS	12.93	Industry, commercial, tourism, marina
HE 61	Sych Farm	Ledley Street, Bollington, SK10 5HY	18.66	Housing
HE 62	Land south of Nantwich Road	Nantwich Road, Church Minshull, CW5 6DY	0.23	Housing
HE 63	143 Crewe Road and land to North	143 Crewe Road, Nantwich, CW5 6NB	1.93	Housing
HE 64	Land at Dunkirk Farm	West of railway line, Holmes Chapel, CW4 8AX	69.1	Housing or commercial or renewable energy

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 65	Land southwest of Cheerbrook Roundabout	Cheerbrook Roundabout, adjoining Newcastle Road, Nantwich, CW5 7EJ	6.36	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, renewable energy
HE 66	Park House Care Home	Congleton Road, Sandbach, CW11 4SP	4.8	Housing (C2)
HE 67	Land adjacent to Harman Technology	Ilford Way, Mobberley, WA16 7JL	8.83	Housing or industry or commercial
HE 68	Land at Booths Park	Booths Park, Knutsford, WA16 8GS	9.97	Housing or industry or commercial or community uses or tourism
HE 69	LPS 41 Booths Park Knutsford - safeguarded land	Booths Park, Knutsford, WA16 8GS	9.96	Housing (including C2)
HE 71	Land to the south of Cross Lane	Cross Lane, Church Minshull, CW1 4RG	6.82	Housing
HE 72	Land at Kinderton Hall	Byley Road, Middlewich, CW10 9LH	5.36	Housing
HE 73	Adlington Equestrian Centre	Street Lane, Adlington, SK10 4NT	1.52	Housing
HE 74	Land at Woodford Aerodrome (west)	Roy Chadwick Way, Adlington	50.81	Housing, industry, and commercial
HE 75	Land at Woodford Aerodrome (east)	Roy Chadwick Way, Adlington	23.58	Housing and industry
HE 76	Land south of Newcastle Road	Newcastle Road, Hough	2.37	Housing
HE 78	Land south of Bentside Road	Bentside Farm, Disley, SK12 2NZ	4.94	Housing
HE 81	Land west of Cooksmere Lane	Cooksmere Lane, Sandbach, CW11 3BQ	35.07	Housing
HE 82	Land east of Cooksmere Lane	Cooksmere Lane, Sandbach, CW11 3BQ	21.88	Housing
HE 83	Land south of Bird's Nest	Audlem Road, Audlem, CW3 0HF	1.07	Housing
HE 85	Land at Brook Cottage	Nantwich Road, Church Minshull, CW5 6DY	36.14	Housing
HE 86	Land west of Wrenbury Road	Wrenbury Road, Aston, CW5 8DQ	2.59	Housing, commercial, community uses
HE 88	Land East of London Road	London Road, Holmes Chapel, CW4 8BE	6	Industry
HE 89a	Land South of Church Way (Eastern parcel)	Church Way, Wybunbury, CW5 7SB	2.27	Housing
HE 89b	Land South of Church Way (Western parcel)	Church Way, Wybunbury, CW5 7NX	1.59	Housing
HE 90	Land North of Main Road	Main Road, Wybunbury, CW5 7LR	1.6	Housing
HE 91	Land West of Bridge Street	Bridge Street, Wybunbury, CW5 7SS	1.06	Housing
HE 92	Land North of Stock Lane	Stock Lane, Shavington, CW5 7HE	20.08	Housing
HE 93	Land off Plumley Moore Road	Plumley Moore Road, Plumley	12.47	Housing
HE 95	Land south of Heybridge Lane	Heybridge Lane, Prestbury	1.45	Housing
HE 96	Land at Lower Park Road	Lower Park Road, Poynton, SK12 1SQ	46.32	Housing
HE 98	Land north of School Lane	School Lane, Brereton Green	1.71	Housing and community uses

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 99	Land at Blossoms Turkey Farm	Blossoms Lane, Woodford SK7 1RF	4.51	Housing
HE 100	Land South of Middlewich Road	Middlewich Road, Holmes Chapel	14.86	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses
HE 101	Land west of Audlem Road	Audlem Road, Audlem, CW3 0FH	9.09	Housing
HE 102	Land adj to Albion Locks	Booth Lane, Sandbach, CW11 3PU	14.09	Housing
HE 103	Land south of Royal Road and Elizabeth Avenue	Bentside Farm, Disley, Stockport, SK12 2NZ	11.56	Housing
HE 104	Land at Styal Golf Course	Station Road, Styal, SK9 4JN	57.22	Housing
HE 105	Land to the west of Station Road	Station Road, Goostrey	6.11	Housing and community uses
HE 106	Land off Butterson Lane	Butterson Lane, Alsager	3.32	Housing and community uses
HE 108	Land off Close Lane	Close Lane, Alsager	4.39	Housing
HE 109	Land at Meadows Farm	Monks Lane, Audlem, CW3 0HP	4.93	Housing
HE 110	Land west of Padgbury Lane	Congleton, CW12 4LP	1.97	Housing
HE 111	Former Flowcrete site	Booth Lane, Sandbach, CW11 3QF	1.21	Housing
HE 112	Land West of Middlewich Road	A530, Crewe, CW1 4QU	126.45	Housing, industry, commercial and community uses
HE 113	Land North of Sandbach Road	Sandbach Road, Congleton, CW12 4TE	5.7	Housing
HE 114	Land West of Wilmslow Road	Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge	3.32	Housing
HE 115	Capricorn Park	J17 of M6/Congleton Road, Sandbach	26.94	Industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities
HE 117	Land north of Hind Heath Road	Hind Heath Road, Sandbach, CW11 3LZ	8.57	Housing
HE 118	Land off Manor Lane	Manor Lane, Holmes Chapel	4.37	Housing
HE 119	Land off Rope Lane	Land off Rope Lane, Crewe, CW2 5DB	13.43	Housing
HE 120a	Land west of Broughton Road	Broughton Road, Crewe, CW1 4LQ	9.48	Housing or industry or commercial
HE 121a	Land off Colleys Lane	Colleys Lane, Crewe	4.42	Housing
HE 121b	Land off Middlewich Road	Middlewich Road, Crewe	4.56	Housing
HE 122	Land at Dunkirk Farm Paddock	London Road, Holmes Chapel, CW4 8AX	3.45	Housing
HE 123	Land off Knutsford Road	Knutsford Road, Knutsford	7.44	Housing (including C2)
HE 124a	Land north of Blossoms Lane	Blossoms Lane, Woodford, SK7 1RF	8.28	Housing and community uses.
HE 124b	Land south of Blossoms Lane	Blossoms Lane, Woodford, SK7 1RF	8.38	Housing and community uses.
HE 125	Land west of School Lane	School Lane, Marton	5.83	Housing
HE 126	Land off Oak Lane	Oak Lane, Marton	1.28	Housing
HE 127	Land north of Moor Lane	Land at Moor Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 6DN	1.61	Housing
HE 128	Land west of David Whitby Way	Basford East, Crewe	2	Housing
HE 129a	Land north of Moss Lane	Moss Lane, Crewe	67.5	Housing, commercial, community uses

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 129b	Land east of Eardswick Lane	Middlewich Road, Crewe	56.95	Biodiversity net gain, renewable energy
HE 130	Land South of Glastonbury Drive	Glastonbury Drive, Poynton	1.36	Housing
HE 132a	Land at Ryleys Farm, south of Chelford Road	Chelford Road, Alderley Edge	38.8	Housing and community uses.
HE 132b	Land at Ryleys Farm, north of Chelford Road	Chelford Road, Alderley Edge	4.59	Housing
HE 132c	Land at Ryleys Farm, west of Sutton Road	Sutton Road, Alderley Edge	2.14	Housing
HE 132d	Land at Ryleys Farm, west of Wilton Crescent	Sutton Road, Alderley Edge	2.2	Housing
HE 133a	Land at Nursery Lane	Nursery Lane, Siddington,	0.52	Housing
HE 133b	Land next to Siddington Post Office	Chelford Road, Siddington	0.81	Housing
HE 133c	Land off Salters Lane	Chelford Road, Siddington	1.72	Housing
HE 133d	Land at Monks Heath Hall Workshops	Chelford Road, Monks Heath	3.09	Commercial
HE 133e	Land at Monks Heath Crossroads	Chelford Road, Monks Heath	0.45	Housing
HE 133f	Land at School Lane	School Lane, Marton	1.28	Housing
HE 133h	Land at Marton Lane	Marton Lane, Marton	2.05	Housing
HE 134	Land North of Cheerbrook Road	Cheerbrook Road, Willaston	5.42	Housing
HE 135	Land at Rope Lane	Rope Lane, Crewe	36.04	Housing
HE 136	Land north of Tabley Road	Tabley Road, Knutsford	11.29	Housing
HE 137	Land south of Tabley Road	Tabley Road, Knutsford	11.4	Housing
HE 139	Land west of Manchester Road	Manchester Road, Knutsford	10.08	Housing, commercial, community uses
HE 141	Land north of Wybunbury Lane	Newcastle Road, Nantwich, CW5 7EJ	4.88	Commercial (sports & leisure)
HE 143	Land at Moorfields Road	Moorfields Road, Willaston, CW5 6QZ	4.35	Housing
HE 144	The Windmill Public House	Chester Road, Tabley, WA16 0HW	1.35	Commercial
HE 146a	Land west of Holmes Chapel Road	Holmes Chapel Road, Sandbach	13.68	Industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities
HE 146b	Land east of Holmes Chapel Road	Holmes Chapel Road, Sandbach	12.49	Industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities
HE 147	Land off Bradwall Road	Bradwall Road, Sandbach, CW11 1SF	8.38	Housing
HE 148	Land north of 71 Main Road	71 Main Road, Shavington, CW2 5DU	1.36	Housing
HE 149	Land off Elton Road	Elton Road, Sandbach, CW11 3NJ	41.02	Housing
HE 150	Land off Macclesfield Road	Macclesfield Road, Congleton, CW12 2NB	7.45	Housing
HE 151	Land off Waggs Road	Congleton, CW12 4BU	4.06	Housing
HE 153	Land to the north of Church Lane	Church Lane, Henbury, SK119NN	2.88	Housing
HE 154a	Land east of Long Lane	Long Lane, Haughton	1.41	Housing
HE 154b	Land north of Long Lane	Long Lane, Haughton	2.31	Housing
HE 154c	Land south of Long Lane	Long Lane, Haughton	1.32	Housing

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 154d	Land east of Ferret Oak Lane	Ferret Oak Lane, Haughton	0.47	Housing
HE 154e	Land to the south of Moss Farm	Hall Lane, Haughton	0.26	Housing
HE 155	Land Off Greaves Road	Greaves Road, Wilmslow, SK9 5LN	0.17	Housing (self or custom build)
HE 156a	Land west of Groby Road	Groby Road, Crewe	14.53	Housing
HE 157a	Lostock Hall Farm	Roy Chadwick Way/Lostock Hall Road, Poynton, SK12 1DP	27.62	Housing or industry or commercial
HE 158a	Land adjacent to High Legh Village and Golf Club	Pheasant Walk, High Legh	8.11	Housing
HE 158b	Land at West Lane	West Lane, High Legh	27	Housing
HE 158c	The Grit Depot off A50	A50, High Legh	0.26	Housing or employment
HE 158d	Land off Ditchfield Lane	Ditchfield Lane, High Legh	0.2	Housing
HE 158e	Land off Halliwell's Brow	Halliwell's Brow, High Legh	1.47	Commercial
HE 158f	Land off Wrenshot Lane	Wrenshot Lane, High Legh	0.29	Housing
HE 159	Land north of Banky Fields/ west of Waggs Road	Banky Fields/Waggs Road, Congleton	2.05	Housing
HE 160	Land to the East of Crewe Road	Crewe Road, Winterley, CW1 5TR	11.18	Housing, economic and community uses
HE 161	Land off Kent's Green Lane	Crewe Road/Kent's Green Lane, Winterley, CW1 5TR	1.57	Housing
HE 162	Land south of Cheerbrook Roundabout	Cheerbrook Roundabout, Newcastle Road, Willaston, CW5 7EL	2.31	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities
HE 163	Land east of New House Farm	Holmes Chapel Road, Somerford, CW12 4SN	39.83	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses, renewable energy
HE 164	The Stables	95 Cobbs Lane, Hough, CW2 5JL	0.73	Housing
HE 165	Land at Old Pusey Dale	Main Road, Shavington, CW2 5DU	0.67	Housing
HE 166	Land at Pigginsshaw	Altrincham Road, Wilmslow, SK9 5NW	0.52	Housing (including C2)
HE 167	Land west of Haslington	Crewe Green Avenue/Bradeley Hall Road, Haslington, CW1 5RA	6.97	Housing and community uses
HE 168	Land South of Hassall Road	Land between 72 Pool Lane/98 Hassall Road, Winterley, CW11 4RT	0.43	Housing
HE 169	Land at White Gables Farm	Castle Hill/Bollin Grove/Butley Lanes, Prestbury	56.74	Housing, industry, commercial and community uses.
HE 170	Land to side/rear of 272 Newcastle Road	Newcastle Road, Shavington, CW5 7EZ	5.05	Housing
HE 171	Land at Prestbury Lane	Prestbury Lane, Prestbury	1.84	Housing
HE 172	Land at Fields Farm	Congleton Road, Sandbach, CW11 4TE	0.02	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses, tourism, gypsy & traveller uses. Renewable energy , biodiversity net gain
HE 173	Land at Station View	Station View, Chelford	4.69	Housing

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 174a	Land East of Chelford, north of Knutsford Road	Knutsford Road, Chelford	9.21	Housing, commercial, community uses
HE 174b	Land East of Chelford, south of Knutsford Road	Knutsford Road, Chelford	18.42	Housing
HE 175	Former Fisons Site	London Road, Holmes Chapel	3.68	Housing
HE 176	Land at Hough Hall Farm	Prestbury Road, Wilmslow, SK9 2TL	40.85	Housing
HE 177a	Land to the east of Pochin Way	Plot 1C, Midpoint 18, Middlewich, CW10 0Q	4.64	Industry, commercial
HE 177b	Land to the east and west of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass	Plot 4A, Midpoint 18, Middlewich, CW10 0Q	7.92	Industry, commercial
HE 177c	Land off ERF Way	Plot 1B, Midpoint 18, Middlewich, CW10 0Q	1.57	Industry, commercial
HE 177d	Land at Midpoint 18 (Phase 3)	Midpoint 18, Middlewich, CW10 0Q	47.3	Industry, commercial
HE 178	Land at Aston Cricket Club & west of Whitchurch Road	Sheppenhall Grove, Aston, CW5 8DX	3.46	Housing and community uses
HE 179	Land at Houndings Lane	Houndings Lane, Sandbach, CW11 4PQ	58.49	Housing, commercial, community uses
HE 180	Land off Broad Lane	Broad Lane, Nantwich, CW5 7QL	29.99	Housing
HE 181	Land off Frank Close	Crewe Road, Winterley, CW1 5TR	0.49	Housing (C2)
HE 182	Land off Moorsfield Avenue	Moorsfield Avenue, Audlem, CW3 0LA	7.4	Housing
HE 183	Land off Heybridge Lane	Heybridge Lane, Prestbury, SK10 4HD	3.51	Housing
HE 184	Land at Beggarmans Lane	Beggarmans Lane, Knutsford	3.99	Housing
HE 186	Land at Congleton Road	Congleton Road, Macclesfield	14.74	Housing
HE 187	Land South of Gresty Lane	Gresty Lane, Crewe	5.87	Housing
HE 189	Land south of Sandbach Road	Sandbach Road, Congleton	5.43	Housing
HE 190	Land to the west of Giantswood Lane	Giantswood Lane, Congleton	5.59	Housing
HE 191	Wilmslow Business Park	Land to the west of Pendleton Way, Wilmslow	4.07	Industrial and commercial.
HE 192	Land at Horseshoe Farm	Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge	1.12	Commercial
HE 193	Land East of Chelford Road	Chelford Road, Knutsford, WA16 8RB	6.9	Housing, commercial, community uses
HE 194	Land south east of Gough's Lane	Chelford Road, Knutsford, WA16 8RB	37.74	Housing, commercial, community uses
HE 195	Land off London Road	London Road, Nantwich, CW5 7LH	6.4	Housing
HE 196	Land off Whirley Road	Whirley Road, Macclesfield, SK10 3JL	14.8	Housing
HE 197	Land adjacent to Nantwich By-Pass	Nantwich By-Pass, Nantwich, CW5 6GX	25.28	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 198	Land at Alvaston Business Park	Middlewich Road, Nantwich, CW5 6RU	3.32	Industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities
HE 199	Land off Waterlode	Waterlode, Nantwich, CW5 6XH	4.39	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses

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HE 200	Land off Newcastle Road	Newcastle Road, Brook Bank, Nantwich, CW5 7EJ	1.55	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 201	Land East of Hallgreen Lane	Hallgreen Lane, Somerford Booths, CW12 2LY	9.3	Housing, commercial, tourism
HE 202	Land at Cumber Lane and Upcast Lane	Land between Cumber Lane and Upcast Lane, Wilmslow	17.33	Housing
HE 203	Land at Prestbury Road	Prestbury Road, Macclesfield	16.34	Housing
HE 204	Coomb Dale House and Lodge	Harthill Lane, Bickerton SY14 8AT	2.93	Housing
HE 205	Egerton Hall Farm	Shay Lane, Malpas, SY14 8AE	3.33	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 206	Raw Head Farm	Coppermine Lane, Bickerton SY14 8BY	1.61	Housing, commercial, tourism
HE 207	Land West of London Road	London Road (A523), Adlington	3.04	Commercial
HE 208	Land west of Adlington Railway Station	Brookledge Lane/London Road, Adlington	0.62	Housing and retail
HE 209	Land to the North of Legh Arms	London Road, Adlington	0.84	Roadside services or transport facilities
HE 210	Land at Redbrook	Brookledge Lane, Adlington	15.81	Housing
HE 211	Land at Harrop Green	Brookledge Lane, Adlington	4.15	Housing
HE 212	Land to the North of Prestbury	Butley Lanes, Prestbury	1.95	Housing
HE 213	Land at Junction 16 of M6	M6 J16, Barthomley, CW2 5PT	28.45	Industry, commercial
HE 214	Land west of Cheshire Green Industrial Park	Nantwich Road, Wardle, CW5 6LQ	64.97	Industry
HE 215a	Former Dingle Bank Quarry Site A	Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, SK11 9DR	5.14	Tourism
HE 215b	Former Dingle Bank Quarry Site B	Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, SK11 9DR	19.01	Commercial
HE 215c	Former Dingle Bank Quarry Site C	Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, SK11 9DR	30.73	Renewable energy
HE 215d	Former Dingle Bank Quarry Site D	Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, SK11 9DR	51.03	Commercial
HE 215e	Former Dingle Bank Quarry Site E	Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, SK11 9DR	9.6	Tourism
HE 215f	Former Dingle Bank Quarry Site F	Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington, SK11 9DR	18.11	Housing
HE 216	Oakwood Farm	Lapwing Lane, Lower Withington, SK11 9AB	1.77	Housing
HE 217	Boundary Farm	Whisterfield Lane, Siddington, SK11 9DB	0.53	Housing
HE 218	Dairy House Farm	Catchpenny Lane, Lower Withington, SK11 9DG	0.3	Housing
HE 219	Land at the Mereside Campus	Alderley Park, Congleton Road	24.04	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 220	Land to the North of Brook Lane	Brook Lane, Alderley Edge, SK9 7RX.	0.91	Housing (C2)
HE 221	Land south of Jenny Heyes	Heyes Lane, Alderley Edge, SK9 7LH	0.47	Housing
HE 222	Adlington Golf Club	London Road, Adlington, SK10 4NG	45.01	Commercial (sports and leisure)
HE 223	Arighi Bianchi Warehouse	Park Lane, Macclesfield	0.56	Housing or commercial
HE 224	Land South of Bluebell Road	Bluebell Road, Bluebell Green, Holmes Chapel	1.84	Housing

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 225a	Land west of Broad Lane	Broad Lane, Holmes Chapel	14.92	Housing or housing, industry, commercial
HE 226	Land North of Middlewich Road	Middlewich Road, Holmes Chapel	7.48	Housing
HE 227	Land adj to the Boars Head Public House	1 Wybunbury Rd, Walgherton, CW5 7LA	1.56	Housing
HE 228	Land north of Street Lane	Street Lane, Adlington, SK10 4NT	7.32	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses, tourism, renewable energy
HE 229	Land south of Woodford Road	Woodford Road, Woodford, SK12 1E	0.76	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses, renewable energy
HE 230	Land at Pasturegate	Alderley Road, Prestbury, SK10 4RH	2.44	Housing
HE 231	Land south of Longridge	Longridge, Knutsford	16.17	Housing and community uses
HE 232	Land at Sheppenhall Lane	Aston, CW5 8DT	2.12	Housing
HE 233	Land adjacent to 51 Main Road	51 Main Road, Goostrey, CW4 8JR	0.31	Housing
HE 234	Land at Hole Farm	Hough Lane, Wilmslow	33.45	Housing, industry, commercial.
HE 235	Land at Agden Park Lane	Agden Park Lane, Broomedge	0.55	Housing
HE 236	Land west of Macclesfield Road	Macclesfield Road, Congleton CW12 2NA	2.91	Housing
HE 237	Land at Chelford Road	Chelford Road, Prestbury	3.35	Housing
HE 238	Land north of Chelford Road	Chelford Road, Marthall	61.68	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 239	Land south of Prestbury Road	Prestbury Road, Wilmslow	15.38	Housing, industry, commercial.
HE 240	Land off Shrigley Road	Shrigley Road, Bollington, SK10 5RD	1.08	Housing or housing, industry, commercial, community uses
HE 241	Land South of Oakleigh	Oakleigh, Knutsford, WA16 8QW	0.24	Housing
HE 242	Land north of Nantwich Road	Nantwich Road, Wrenbury	2.24	Housing
HE 243	Land at Woodhouse Farm	Anson Road, Poynton, SK12 1TD	1.33	Housing
HE 244	Nab Works	Long Lane, Pott Shrigley	5.01	Industry
HE 245	Land rear of Twemlow Ave and Marlborough Drive	Twemlow Ave/Marlborough Dr, Sandbach	1.48	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses, tourism, renewable energy
HE 246	Roadside House	Knutsford Road, Chelford, SK11 9AS	0.54	Housing
HE 247	Land at the Grange Fields	Main Road, Worleston	0.49	Housing
HE 248	Land at 199 Crewe Road	199 Crewe Road, Shavington, CW2 5AH	1.07	Housing
HE 249	Depot West of Crewe Road	Crewe Road, Shavington, CW2 5AD	1.89	Housing
HE 250	Land Rear of 199 Crewe Road	199 Crewe Road, Shavington, CW2 5AH	2.56	Housing

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 251	Land South of A500	A500, Shavington, CW2 5AU	5.21	Housing
HE 252	Land West of Alexandra Soccer Centre	Crewe Road, Shavington, CW2 5AU	5.22	Housing, community uses
HE 253	Land north of Cholmondeley Road	Cholmondeley Road, Wrenbury	4.81	Housing
HE 254	Land rear of Crewe Road and Park Lane	Crewe Road/Park Lane, Sandbach	7.16	Housing and community uses
HE 256a	Land west of Batherton Lane	Batherton Lane, Nantwich	4.56	Housing
HE 257	Car Park at Moorside	Church Walk, Knutsford	0.3	Housing, commercial
HE 258	Land off Linley Lane	Linley Lane, Alsager	7.79	Housing
HE 259	Land off Newcastle Road/Holmes Chapel Road	Newcastle Road/Holmes Chapel Road, Brereton	4.83	Housing
HE 260	Bulls Head	2 Oak Lane, Kerridge, SK10 5BD	0.99	Housing or industrial or commercial
HE 261	The Harrington Arms	Gawsworth, SK11 9RJ	0.39	Housing, employment or commercial
HE 262	Lawton Arms	Liverpool Road West, Church Lawton, ST7 3DL	0.29	Housing or industrial or commercial
HE 264	Land adjacent to the Tollemache Arms	Nantwich Road, Alpraham, CW6 9JE	0.28	Housing or commercial
HE 265	Land at Manor Farm	Hassall Road, Alsager, ST7 2TG	50.24	Housing and community uses
HE 266a	Land south of Moss Lane	Moss Lane, Crewe	32.04	Housing and community uses
HE 267	Land at Gresty Lane	Gresty Lane, Crewe, CW2 5DD	29.34	Housing and community uses
HE 268	Land west of Congleton Road	Congleton Road/Lydiat Lane, Alderley Edge	2.43	Housing
HE 269	Land East of Heyes Lane	Heyes Lane, Alderley Edge	4.75	Housing
HE 270	Land off Galloway Road	Galloway Road, Chelford	0.79	Housing
HE 271	Land West of Heyes Lane	Heyes Lane, Alderley Edge	3.15	Housing
HE 272	Land off Lower Park Road	Lower Park Road, Poynton	3.16	Housing
HE 273	Poynton Sports Club	London Road North, Poynton, SK12 1AG	4.39	Housing
HE 274	Stockton Farm	Land off Welton Drive and Stockton Road, Wilmslow	8.67	Housing
HE 275	South West Macclesfield Development Area	Land at South West Macclesfield, Macclesfield	101.49	Housing, industry, commercial, community uses
HE 276	Land north of Henshall Road	Henshall Road, Bollington	2.02	Housing
HE 277	Land north of Birch Farm	Hollin Lane, Styal	1.44	Housing
HE 278	Land off Congleton Road North	Congleton Road North, Scholar Green	1.61	Housing
HE 279	Land at Bexton Court	Bexton Court, Knutsford	0.45	Community uses or housing
HE 280	Knutsford Community Hospital	Bexton Road, Knutsford	0.48	Community uses
HE 281	Tatton Street Car Park	Tatton Street, Knutsford	0.48	Housing and commercial uses
HE 282	King Street Car Park	King Street, Knutsford	0.48	Housing and commercial uses
HE 283	Princess Street Car Park	Princess Street, Knutsford	0.18	Housing and commercial uses

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 284	Land to the East of Handforth Road	Handforth Road, Wilmslow	16.53	Housing
HE 285	Land to the north of River Dean	Blossoms Lane, Woodford	6.66	Housing
HE 286	Land at Albert Road	Albert Road, Bollington	1.01	Housing
HE 287	Land at Sydney Road	Sydney Road, Crewe	1.06	Housing (C2)
HE 289	Land East of Nantwich Bypass	Nantwich Bypass, Willaston, CW5 7BQ	2.51	Housing
HE 290a	Land north of Bradley Hall Road	Bradley Hall Road, Crewe	311.82	Housing, industry, commercial, community uses
HE 291a	Land east of Broad Lane	Broad Lane, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7GZ	14.46	Housing or housing, industry and commercial uses
HE 293	Land south of Nether Alderley Roundabout	Congleton Road, Nether Alderley, SK10 4T	6.24	Housing (including C2), commercial, roadside services or transport facilities, community uses
HE 294	Land South of Broad Lane	Broad Lane, Nantwich	3.79	Housing
HE 295	Land between Melrose Way and Alderley Road	Alderley Road, Alderley Edge	0.68	Housing (C2), roadside services or transport facilities, renewable energy
HE 296	Land at Sandbach Road	Sandbach Road, Congleton, CW12 4SQ	5.02	Housing
HE 297	Land East of Crewe Road	Crewe Road, Shavington, CW2 5WF	8.42	Housing
HE 298	Land at Shavington Lodge	Weston Lane, Shavington, CW2 5AT	5.87	Housing
HE 299	Land at The Old Vicarage	Narrow Lane, Crewe Green, CW1 5UN	1.77	Housing
HE 300	Abbey Mill	Shirleys Drive, Prestbury, Cheshire	1.45	Housing (C2), community uses
HE 301b	Land south of Rose Way	Rose Way, Sandbach	6.59	Housing
HE 301c	Land south of The Hill	The Hill, Sandbach	5.59	Housing
HE 301d	Land south of Manor Road	Manor Road, Sandbach	8.21	Housing
HE 301e	Land east of School Lane	School Lane, Sandbach	2.87	Housing
HE 302a	Land south of Bradley Hall Road	Bradley Hall Road, Crewe	29.16	Housing or commercial
HE 303a	Poplars Farm (Parcel 1)	A51 Nantwich Road, Wardle, CW5 6BE	32.61	Housing, industry, commercial, community uses
HE 303b	Land north-east of Barbridge (Parcel 2)	Nantwich Road, Wardle, CW5 6BH	17.96	Community uses (recreation/open space)
HE 304	Land at Manor Lane	Manor Lane, Holmes Chapel	3.17	Housing
HE 305	Land north of Newcastle Road	Newcastle Road, Shavington, CW2 5EB	41.07	Housing and community uses
HE 306	Land adjacent to Agden Mount Farm	Lymm Road, Agden, WA13 0UE	1.16	Tourism
HE 307a	Land at Parkgate Village (Parcel 1)	Parkgate Village, Knutsford	0.8	Housing
HE 307b	Parkgate Farmstead (Parcel 2)	Parkgate Farmstead, Knutsford, WA16 8HB	1.34	Commercial and community uses

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 307c	Land to the north of Wildgoose Avenue (Parcel 3)	Parkgate Farm, Wildgoose Avenue, Knutsford	1.3	Housing or commercial
HE 307d	Land to the south of Wildgoose Avenue (Parcel 4)	Parkgate Farm, Wildgoose Avenue, Knutsford	0.34	Open space
HE 307e	Land north of Parkgate Farm (Parcel 5)	Parkgate Farm, Knutsford	7.55	Open space and community use
HE 307f	Land west of Parkgate Farm & Parkgate Lane (Parcel 6)	Parkgate Farm/Parkgate Lane, Knutsford	16.07	Housing or commercial
HE 308	Land at Spode Green Farm and west of Bowdon Roundabout	Lymm Road/Chester Road	12.5	Industry, or roadside services or transport facilities, or renewable energy
HE 309	Land West of Chester Road	Chester Road, Bucklow Hill, WA16 6RL	1.46	Housing and community uses
HE 310	Land East of Mereside Road	Mereside Road, Mere	0.53	Housing
HE 311	Tatton Services, Land at Junctions 7 & 8 of M56	Junctions 7 & 8 of M56, WA14 4TP	15.78	Roadside services or transport facilities
HE 312	Land east of Manchester Road and west of Mereheath Lane	Manchester Road/Mereheath Lane, Knutsford, WA16 0SR	13.26	Housing, commercial
HE 313	Land north of Ashley Road	Ashley Road, Ashley, WA14 3QE	4.01	Housing, roadside services or transport facilities
HE 314	Land west of Cow Lane	Cow Lane, Ashley, WA15 0QS	2.56	Housing
HE 315	Land between Cow Lane and Tanyard Farm	Cow Lane/Tanyard Lane, Ashley, WA15 0QT	10.71	Housing
HE 316	Land north of Back Lane	Back Lane, Ashley, WA15 0QH	5.27	Housing
HE 317	Land east of Mobberley Road	Mobberley Road/Back Lane, Ashley, WA15 0QH	6.22	Housing, commercial and community uses
HE 318	Land west of Mobberley Road	Mobberley Road, Ashley, WA15 0QW	5.27	Housing, commercial and community uses
HE 319	Land south of Ashley Road	Ashley Road, Ashley, WA14 3QF	6.57	Housing led and community uses
HE 320a	Ashley Garden Village NW quadrant	Ashley Road, Ashley	79.18	Mix, including industrial, commercial, infrastructure, school(s), hotel, renewable energy.
HE 320b	Ashley Garden Village NE quadrant	Ashley Road/Cow Lane, Ashley	42.67	Mix, including housing, infrastructure, school(s), renewable energy.
HE 320c	Ashley Garden Village SE quadrant	Castle Mill Lane/Back Lane/Tanyard Lane, Ashley	79.03	Mix, including housing, industrial, commercial, infrastructure, renewable energy.
HE 320d	Ashley Garden Village SW quadrant	Ashley Road, Ashley	50.93	Mix, including housing, infrastructure, school(s), renewable energy.
HE 321	Land east of Cottons Spa and Manchester Road	Manchester Road, Knutsford	11.79	Community uses (sport)
HE 322	Land south of Rostherne Lane	Rostherne Lane, Rostherne, WA16 6RZ	0.76	Housing
HE 323	Land north of New Road	New Road, Rostherne, WA16 6RY	0.9	Housing

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 324	Land south of New Road	New Road, Rostherne, WA16 6RT	2.59	Housing and community uses
HE 325	Land east of Rostherne Lane	Rostherne Lane, Rostherne, WA16 6SA	1.27	Housing
HE 326a	Tatton Sports Village, Manchester Road/Mereheath Lane (northern site)	Manchester Road/Mereheath Lane, Knutsford	14.43	Community uses (sport & open space)
HE 326b	Tatton Sports Village, Manchester Road/Mereheath Lane (southern site)	Manchester Road/Mereheath Lane, Knutsford	7.6	Housing
HE 327a	Land at Beech House	Buxton Road, Congleton	1.7	Housing (including C2)
HE 327b	Land south of Tommys Lane	Tommys Lane, Congleton	0.98	Housing (including C2)
HE 327c	Land at Bank Place Farm	Tommys Lane, Congleton	3.77	Housing (including C2)
HE 327d	Land to the north of Brookhouse Lane/ Bromley Road	Brookhouse Lane/ Bromley Road, Congleton	0.89	Housing (including C2)
HE 328	Land to the North of Beech Road	Beech Road, Alderley Edge	2.82	Housing
HE 329	Land at Grove Farm	Alfred Potts Way, Shavington	10.61	Housing
HE 330a	Land at Dean Row Road, NW of Cross Lane	Dean Row Road, Wilmslow	11.48	Housing
HE 330b	Land at Dean Row Road, SE of Cross Lane	Dean Row Road, Wilmslow	15.91	Housing
HE 331	West Crewe Sustainable Urban Extension	Middlewich Road, Crewe	113.67	Housing, commercial and community uses
HE 332	Land north of Knutsford Road and east of Gore Lane	Knutsford Road/Gore Lane, Chorley, SK9 7SH	1.57	Housing or commercial
HE 333	Land west of South View	Nantwich Road, Wrenbury Heath	1.23	Housing, industry, commercial, roadside uses or transport facilities, community uses, tourism, renewable energy
HE 334	Land at Roughwood Lane	Roughwood Lane, Hassall Green	0.19	Housing
HE 335	Land South of Park Road	Park Road, Willaston	11.59	Housing, commercial, roadside uses or transport facilities, community uses
HE 336	Land at Alderley Road	Alderley Road, Macclesfield	18.93	Housing
HE 338	Land at Toft Road	Toft Road, Knutsford	3.78	Housing
HE 339	Woodleigh	Chester Road, Poynton, SK12 1HG	2.04	Housing
HE 340	North plot at Hill Green Farm	Woodford Road, Poynton, SK12 1ED	0.62	Housing, industry, commercial
HE 341	South plot at Hill Green Farm	Woodford Road, Poynton, SK12 1ED	6.23	Housing or industry, or commercial
HE 343	Grange Farm	Clay Lane, Handforth	14.31	Housing
HE 345	Land on the south side of Wybunbury Lane	Wybunbury Lane, Stapeley, CW5 7JP	3.21	Housing
HE 347a	Crewe West - land east of Middlewich Road	Middlewich Road, Crewe	174.17	Housing, industry, commercial, community uses

Ref	Site name	Site address	Size (ha)	Submitted uses
HE 348	Land adjacent to Hollies Lane	Hollies Lane, Dean Row, Wilmslow, SK9 2BW	0.44	Housing; commercial
HE 349a	Land at Three Oakes	Booth Lane, Middlewich	9.1	Housing
HE 349	Land to the north of Tetton Lane	Tetton Lane, Middlewich	16.62	Housing
HE 350	Land at Belbro Farm	Padgbury Lane, Congleton	1.37	Housing
HE 352	Land to the West of Crewe Road	Crewe Road, Winterley, CW11 4RP	4.31	Housing
HE 355	White Moss Quarry	Crewe Road, Alsager CW1 5UJ	36.31	Housing, commercial and community uses



New local plan for Cheshire East

Housing and economic land availability
assessment methodology

November 2025

Open

Fair

Green

Front cover images

- Crewe Market Hall and Municipal Buildings (top left)
- Arclid north site plant and lake (image supplied by Bathgate Silica Sand Ltd) (top right)
- Jodrell Bank Observatory (centre)
- Lamberts Lane Bridge, Congleton (bottom right)
- Tabley Park , Northwich Road, Knutsford (bottom left)

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) and National Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) require local planning authorities to assess the amount of land that is available for housing and economic development in their areas. This is known as a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (‘HELAA’).
- 1.2 Cheshire East Council (“the Council”) last published its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment¹ and its Employment Land Review² in 2012 and these evidence base documents informed the preparation of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.
- 1.3 The council has now embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan and the HELAA will enable the council to consider the availability of land for future development and provide an understanding of the constraints that affect it.
- 1.4 The HELAA is an important evidence source to inform plan-making but does not represent policy, nor does it determine whether a site should be allocated for future development or whether planning permission should be granted. Land allocations can only be made through local plans or neighbourhood plans.

IMPORTANT: The inclusion of a site in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment does NOT confer any planning status on the site; it does not imply that it will be allocated, nor that planning permission would be granted should an application be submitted for consideration.

The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment will be used to inform future stages of work in producing the new Local Plan in relation to land availability and site selection. Where relevant, sites may also be considered for potential inclusion on the Brownfield

¹ https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/research_and_evidence/strategic_housing_land_assmnt/shlaa.aspx

² https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/research_and_evidence/employment-needs.aspx

2 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The HELAA will be prepared in accordance with national planning policy including the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) and National Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”)

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 ¶32 of the NPPF sets out that the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals.
- 2.3 The NPPF ¶72 requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.
- 2.4 In terms of economic development, NPPF ¶86 requires planning policies to set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period. NPPF ¶127 states that policies should also reflect changes in the demand for land and be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.5 PPG expands upon and provides practical guidance to support the NPPF. The PPG is regularly updated, with the latest guidance relevant to Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments being published in July 2019.
- 2.6 The guidance states that the purpose of the assessment is to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. The assessment also helps with the identification of a five-year supply of housing land and help to inform as well as make use of sites in brownfield registers.³
- 2.7 The PPG also clarifies that the HELAA assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local authority’s requirements, but it is for the

³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Paragraph: 001
Reference ID: 3-001-20190722

development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

2.8 Plan-making authorities may carry out land availability assessments for housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be identified for the use(s) which is most appropriate.

2.9 Assessments should:

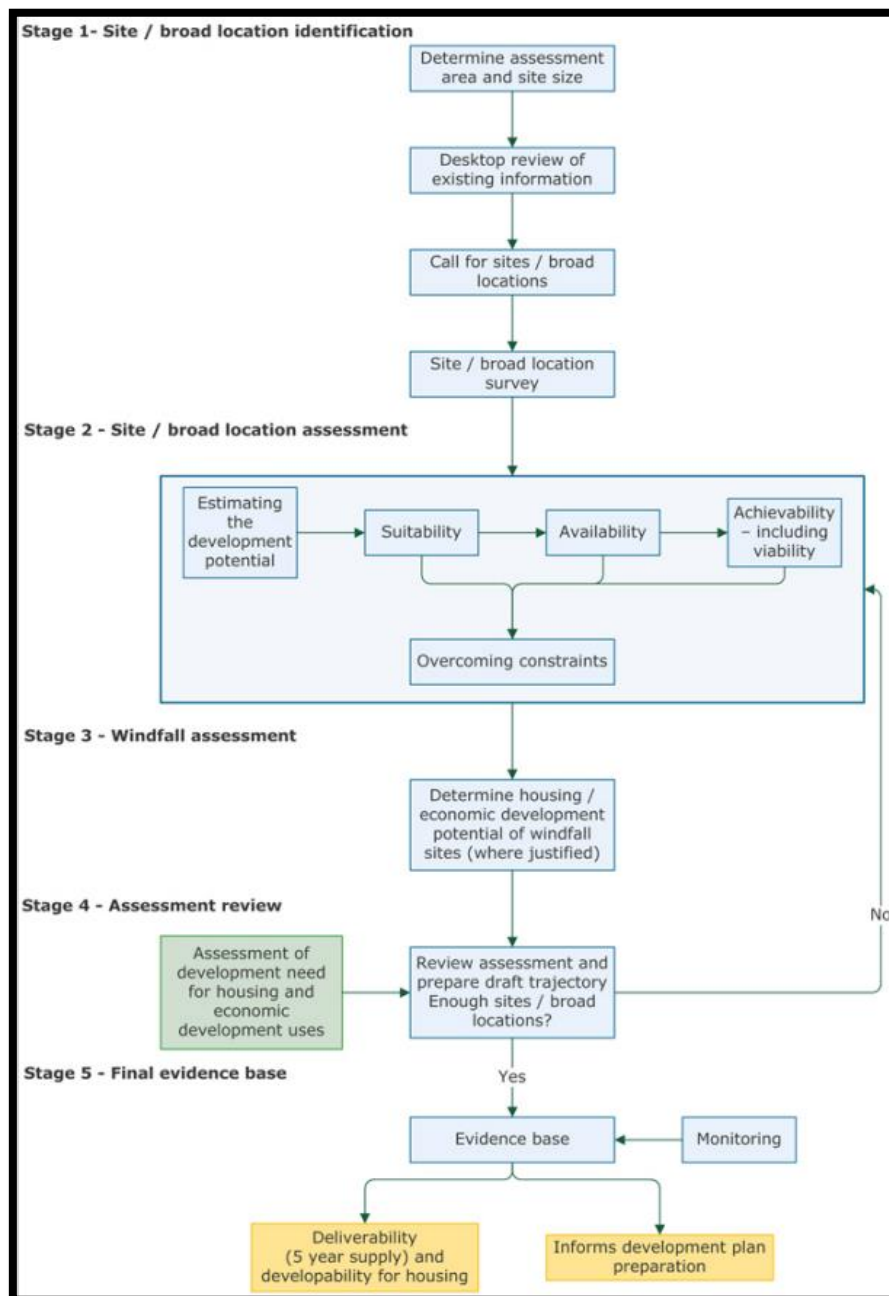
- Identify sites and broad locations with potential for development;
- Assess their development potential
- Assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability).

2.10 Constraints should be considered when assessing the suitability, achievability and availability of sites and broad locations.

3 Methodology

3.1 The HELAA will comprise of five stages based on the guidance set out in PPG and the flow chart at Figure 3.1 below summarises the methodology set out in national guidance:

Figure 3.1: National Planning Practice Guidance Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Flow Chart⁴



Stage 1: Identification of sites and broad locations

- 3.2 The geographical area for the HELAA will cover the whole of Cheshire East⁵ and will primarily focus on housing and economic land uses, in line with the PPG. Housing will be defined as development falling within Use Class C3

⁴ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 3-005-20190722

⁵ Excluding the part of the borough which falls into the Peak District National Park as this is covered by its own planning authority

(residential dwellings) which may include self and custom build, first homes and other forms of specialist housing for example, housing for older people (which may include C2 uses). Economic development uses are defined in the PPG as retail, leisure, cultural, office, warehousing, etc.

- 3.3 On 1 September 2020, the Use Classes Order 1987 was amended, and new Classes were introduced including a new Class E (commercial, business and service); Class F.1 (learning and non-residential institutions); and Class F.2 (local community). The previous Class B1 use now falls within Class E however Classes B2 and B8 remain unchanged.
- 3.4 The HELAA will consider economic development uses that fall within Classes B2, B8 and E. Additional forms of development will also be considered for example, land for renewable energy development, community uses and sites for Gypsies & Travellers.

Size thresholds

- 3.5 The PPG sets out that a HELAA should consider all sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above⁶. The Cheshire East HELAA will use these thresholds for housing and economic development.
- 3.6 For housing sites, sites that are capable of delivering less than 5 dwellings will be considered to be windfall supply. NPPF ¶75 advises that allowances for windfall sites (sites not specifically allocated in a development plan) can be used when assessing anticipated housing land supply. If an allowance is applied for windfall, this should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

Desktop identification of sites and broad locations

- 3.7 The PPG states that when carrying out desktop review, plan-makers need to be proactive in identifying as wide a range of sites and broad locations for development as possible. It is important that plan-makers do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about, but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may assist in meeting the development needs of an area⁷.
- 3.8 The PPG includes a table of the types of sites and potential data sources that should be reviewed as part of the desktop assessment and an extract is

⁶ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 3-009-20190722

⁷ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 3-010-20190722

provided below⁸ and where practicable, information will be gathered from these sources.

Table 3.1: Type of site and potential data source (Extract from PPG)

Type of site	Potential data source
Existing housing and economic development allocations and site development briefs without planning permission	Local and neighbourhood plans Planning applications records Development Briefs
Planning Permissions for housing and economic development that are unimplemented or under construction	Planning application records Development starts and completions records
Planning applications that have been refused or withdrawn	Planning application records
Brownfield land in the local authority's ownership	Local authority records
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	National register of public sector land. Engagement with strategic plans of other public sector bodies such as county councils, central government, National Health Service, police, fire services, utilities services, statutory undertakers
Sites with permission in principle, and identified brownfield land	Brownfield land registers (parts 1 and 2). National Land Use Database. Valuation Office database. Active engagement with sector
Vacant and derelict land and buildings (including empty homes, redundant and disused agricultural buildings, potential permitted development changes, e.g., offices to residential)	Local authority empty property register. English Housing Survey. National Land Use Database. Commercial property databases (e.g., estate agents and property agents). Valuation Office database.

⁸ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 011
Reference ID: 3-011-20190722

Type of site	Potential data source
	Active engagement with sector Brownfield land registers.
Additional opportunities for un-established uses (e.g., making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks)	Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Planning applications. Site surveys
Business requirements and aspirations	Enquiries received by local planning authority. Active engagement with sector
Brownfield sites in rural locations	Local and neighbourhood plans Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys.
Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas	Local and neighbourhood plans. Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys.
Sites in adjoining villages and rural exceptions sites.	Local and neighbourhood plans. Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys
Potential urban extensions and new free-standing settlements	Local and neighbourhood plans. Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys

Call for sites and broad locations

- 3.9 In addition to a desktop review, a call for sites and broad locations exercise can also enable sites to be promoted for development for consideration and assessment. This may be undertaken for a fixed period of time or on an ongoing basis. In accordance with the PPG, a call for sites and broad locations will be aimed at as wide an audience as is practicable so that those

not normally involved in property development have the opportunity to contribute⁹.

- 3.10 The call for sites and broad locations may identify land that was not identified through the desktop review. It may also provide more up-to-date or detailed information about land identified through the desktop review.

Sites and broad locations with overlapping boundaries

- 3.11 There is potential for duplication and overlapping boundaries when identifying sites and broad locations from the varying types of data sources. Where there is duplication of a site or broad location with identical boundaries, the site or broad location will only be assessed once within the Land Availability Assessment to avoid double-counting of sites and their potential capacity.
- 3.12 Where site or broad location boundaries overlap, the first action will be to explore the reason for this overlap. This can be done by considering the source(s) of the sites/broad locations and their proposed uses. In the situation that a more recent submission or data source clearly supersedes an earlier submission or data source, the more recent boundary will be used. In the situation that two or more distinct sites or broad locations overlap, a judgement will be taken as to whether they should remain as separate sites, or assessed together as a whole, with commentary provided on the suitability, availability and achievability of individual sub-parcels.

Initial site and broad location survey

- 3.13 The sites and broad locations identified through the desktop review and any call for sites will be added to an internal GIS mapping system and an initial assessment will be undertaken.
- 3.14 The purpose of the initial assessment is to establish up-to-date, high-level information on each site and broad location in relation to its characteristics and key constraints. This will help to understand the type and scale of development that may be possible if it was ever allocated and to gain a greater understanding of deliverability, including any barriers and how they could be overcome¹⁰.
- 3.15 Information on the sites and broad locations will be collected as part of the initial assessment stage. Table 3.2 sets out the minimum information to be collected and if there are any other known site-specific issues or constraints these will also be noted. Published site assessments will provide a high-level summary of any significant constraints that have been identified through the initial assessment stage.

⁹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 3-012-20190722

¹⁰ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 3-013-20190722

Table 3.2 Initial survey information

Type of information	Explanation
Site reference	Unique site reference for the site/ broad location.
Site name	Site/broad location name.
Site address	Address of site/ broad location.
Parish	Name of parish that the site/broad location falls within.
Ward	Name of the ward that the site/ broad location falls within.
Source of site	Note how the site/broad location was identified for inclusion in the HELAA (e.g. desktop/call for sites).
Gross site size (ha)	Area size in hectares.
Developable area (ha)	Estimated area of site that is considered to be developable. This will be a judgement based on information provided by site promoters, planning application records and evidence of developable areas achieved on similar sized sites since the start of the plan period.
Current land use	Note current land use.
Last use (if vacant)	Note last use if the site has been in previous use and is now a vacant site.
Greenfield/Brownfield/Mixed	Note if the site is greenfield, brownfield or a mix.
Could this site be joined to another to form a larger site?	If the site abuts another site promoted via a call for sites or a site revealed by desktop research, this will be noted in the assessment.

Type of information	Explanation
If yes, give details of adjoining site including site reference if applicable	Quote reference of abutting/ overlapping site.
Planning history & status	
Planning history	Note any relevant planning history and current status (i.e. extant/ expired).
Allocated site	Note if the site is allocated for development in the Cheshire East Local Plan or is safeguarded for possible future development. Note if the site is allocated in a made Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Proposed development type(s)	
Proposed development types	Note submitted/proposed use as per call for sites/ desktop research including planning application records.
Potential physical constraints	
Site access	This will be a high level assessment about the location of the site and its relationship to surrounding roads. It will not be the role of the HELAA to undertake a full appraisal of the safety and suitability of any possible route of access into the site. Note if there are any known issues such as covenants restricting access if this information is available.
Access to services and facilities including public transport	High level description of access to services and facilities including public transport services. Sites will be assessed against Table 9.1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan which sets out the minimum distances to services and facilities that sites are expected to achieve.

Type of information	Explanation
Surrounding land uses and character	High level description of surrounding land uses and character (e.g. urban/rural character). This information will be based on information provided by site promoters, planning application history and desktop analysis.
Ground conditions	Note whether there are any known ground conditions that could impact upon the suitability of the site for development, including any known land contamination constraints.
Topography	High level description of any known constraints relating to levels. This information will be based on information provided by site promoters, planning application history and desktop analysis.
Air Quality Management Area ("AQMA")	Note if the site/ broad location is within an AQMA.
Potential Minerals Constraints	Note if the site/ broad location could be affected by potential minerals constraints.
Potential Waste Constraints	Note if the site/ broad location could be affected by potential waste constraints.
Peaty soils	Note if the site/broad location could be affected by peaty soils.
Flood risk/ drainage issues	High level description based on the majority of the site/broad location and reference to Flood Risk Zones and any known drainage issues.
Groundwater Source Protection Zones	Note if the site/ broad location is within or adjacent to a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.

Type of information	Explanation
Infrastructure/utilities	High level description of any known physical constraints such as pylons, overhead power lines, substations, transmission pipelines and their safeguarded area based on desktop assessment.
Hazardous Site Consultation Zone	Note if the site/ broad location is within a Hazardous Site Consultation Zone.
Aircraft Noise (Manchester Airport)	Note if the site/ broad location is within an area subject to aircraft noise levels above the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) and if noise levels are between the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) and SOAEL.
Other noise issues	Note if there are any other noise related issues within the vicinity of the site.
Aerodrome Safeguarding Zone	Note if the site is within an Aerodrome safeguarding consultation zone.
Public Rights of Way	Note if there are any Public Rights of Way within the site/broad location or adjacent to it.
Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, Buffer Zone or Consultation Zone	Note if the site is within the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, its Buffer Zone or Consultation zone.
Infrastructure safeguarding	Note if the site is within or adjacent to the HS2 Phase 2b safeguarding area(s) or any other infrastructure safeguarding areas.
Potential environmental constraints	

Type of information	Explanation
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Note if there is a SAC within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Note if there is a SPA within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Ramsar site	Note if there is a Ramsar site within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Potential international site	Note if there are any potential international sites (SPA, SAC or Ramsar site) within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Note if there is a SSSI within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
SSSI Impact Risk Zone	Note if the site/ broad location falls within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
Nutrient Neutrality Catchment	Note if the site/broad location falls within a Nutrient Neutrality Catchment.
National Nature Reserves	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a National Nature Reserve.
Local Nature Reserves	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a Local Nature Reserve.
Local Wildlife Site/ Site of Biological Importance	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site/Site of Biological Importance.
Local Geological Sites	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a local geological site.

Type of information	Explanation
Ancient Woodlands	Note if there is an Ancient Woodland within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Ecological Network area	Note if the site/ broad location is within an Ecological Network Area.
Priority habitat	Note if the site/broad locations contains any Priority habitat.
Offset Biodiversity Net Gain Sites	Note if the site/ broad location is within or adjacent to an area that is identified for Biodiversity Net Gain.
Tree Preservation Order(s) ("TPO's")	Note if there are any TPO's within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Agricultural Land Classification	If all or part of the site/ broad location is agricultural land, note the classification (i.e. 1,2,3).
Heritage assets	Note if there are any Heritage Assets within the site or within or adjacent to the site. Designated heritage assets include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens. Note if there are any known non-designated assets (including locally listed buildings). Note if the site/broad location lies within an area of archaeological importance/area of potential.
Landscape/ other designations	
Local Landscape Designation	Note if the site is within a designated Local Landscape Area.
Local Green Space	Note if there is a designated Local Green Space within or adjacent to the site/broad location

Type of information	Explanation
Protected Open Space	Note if there is a protected open space within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Green Belt	Note if the site/broad location is within the Green Belt.
Green Gap	Note if the site is within a Strategic Green Gap or a local green gap designated in a Neighbourhood Plan.
Open countryside	Note if the site is within the open countryside.
AONB	Note if the site is within a candidate AONB.
Any other constraints	
Any other constraints	Note if there are any other constraints not identified above.

Initial sifting of sites and broad locations

- 3.16 The PPG states that there may be some sites and broad locations which, when taking into account national policy and designations, will not be appropriate to carry out more detailed assessments as it is clear that they will not be suitable for development¹¹.
- 3.17 Table 3.3 below identifies those constraints that will be considered to be 'showstoppers' and these will be used to automatically sift sites out from further assessment at Stage 2. Any sites sifted out will be published in a separate long list of sites with reasons given for their exclusion.

¹¹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 014
Reference ID: 3-014-20190722

Table 3.3: Initial site sift.

Constraints/Criteria	Explanation
Sites and broad locations that have a cannot accommodate 5 or more dwellings. Sites that have a developable area of less than 0.25 ha (or 500 square metres of floor space) for economic development	Sites to be excluded as they do not meet the capacity thresholds. Sites for housing that do not meet the size/capacity thresholds will be included as part of the windfall assessment for housing.
Flood risk	Sites to be excluded for residential development if the site falls within Flood Zone 3b (the functional floodplain). If the area of flood risk covers only part of the site, those parts will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Site of Special Scientific Interest ("SSSI")	Sites to be excluded if a SSSI covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Special Areas of Conservation ("SAC")	Sites to be excluded if a SAC covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Special Protection Area ("SPA")	Sites to be excluded if a SPA covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-

Constraints/Criteria	Explanation
	evaluated based on the remaining area.
Ramsar Site	Sites to be excluded if a Ramsar site covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Scheduled Monuments ("SM")	Sites to be excluded if a SM covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Ancient Woodlands	Sites to be excluded if an Ancient Woodland covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Registered Battlefield	Sites to be excluded if a Registered Battlefield designation covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Registered Parks & Gardens	Sites to be excluded if a Registered Parks & Gardens designation covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be

Constraints/Criteria	Explanation
	excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.

Stage 2: Site and broad location assessment

- 3.18 All sites that are not sifted out at Stage 1 will be subject to further assessment including consideration of their suitability, availability, achievability, possible timescales for delivery and development potential. The assessment needs to identify all sites and broad locations (regardless of the amount of land that might be needed) in order to provide a complete audit of land. The HELAA will include a red, amber, green rating (“RAG”) for conclusions reached about site suitability, availability and achievability.

Suitability

- 3.19 The PPG¹² states that a site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. When considering constraints plan-makers may wish to consider the information collected as part of the initial site survey, as well as other relevant information such as:
- national policy.
 - appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed.
 - contribution to regeneration priority areas.
 - potential impacts including effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation.
- 3.20 Site suitability will be assessed against existing development plan policies, the identification of constraints and whether these can be overcome. Sites that are already allocated in the development plan or with planning permission will normally be considered suitable for development (unless there has been a change in circumstance) and given a green RAG rating.
- 3.21 For sites that are currently in open countryside locations and/or within the Green Belt, it is likely that policy change would be needed to allocate these sites for development. This will be recorded in the assessment of the site’s suitability as issues to be overcome, and sites will then be given an amber rating. Further consideration of site suitability will be given as the new local plan progresses when further information is available about future development requirements and their proposed spatial distribution of development and the sites that are needed to meet this.

¹² Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 018
Reference ID: 3-018-20190722

Availability

- 3.22 The PPG states that a site or broad location can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from landowners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development¹³. Extant or expired planning permissions can also inform availability and will establish five-year timeframes, or beyond, of developability. Sites will be given a green rating if the site appears to be available, an amber rating if issues have been identified that would need to be overcome or red if there are significant constraints to the delivery of the site and would be difficult to overcome.

Achievability

- 3.23 The PPG states that a site or broad location is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period¹⁴.
- 3.24 If issues are identified with the suitability or availability of a site, consideration will be given as to whether these issues could affect the achievability of the site.

Estimating development potential

- 3.25 The HELAA will estimate the development potential of each site/broad location. This stage considers the number of homes or land that can be delivered for employment uses on a site.
- 3.26 The PPG states that the estimation of the development potential of a site or broad location can be guided by existing or emerging plan policy including locally determined policies on density. Plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land in line with policies set out in the NPPF¹⁵. This should also take into consideration of viability, given the quantum may affect viability and therefore, achievability and so inform developability within five years or beyond.
- 3.27 The net developable area of each site/broad location will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will take into account available supporting information such as information provided by site promoters, relevant planning

¹³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 019
Reference ID: 3-019-20190722

¹⁴ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 020
Reference ID: 3-020-20190722

¹⁵ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 016
Reference ID: 3-016-20190722

history and the identification of any significant constraints (for example areas at high/medium risk of flooding) which could affect the developable area. Evidence from sites completed since the start of the plan period may also be used as a benchmark for gross to net developable areas.

- 3.28 The potential capacity of the identified net developable areas will also be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will take into account any supporting information available such as relevant planning permission evidence or information received from site promoters. For housing, if no information is available about site capacity, a density multiplier of 30 dwellings per hectare of developable land will normally be applied reflecting the requirements of SADPD Policy HOU 14 'Housing Density'. For economic uses, the land available in hectares will be recorded.
- 3.29 Assessment of development potential at this stage remains indicative for the purposes of the HELAA. It will be for the Local Plan process to identify how relevant constraints could be addressed through appropriate mitigation, including the assessment of sites through the Sustainability Appraisal and allocation of sites in the Local Plan and other associated Development Plan Documents. It could also be tested thoroughly through the development management process. The allocation of sites in the council's new Local Plan would only be proposed following more detailed site assessment work. For the purposes of the Local Plan Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, the findings of this more detailed assessment work were set out in settlement reports, published as part of the evidence base for these plans.
- 3.30 For Gypsy and Traveller sites, the size and layout of existing traveller sites will be considered, as well as the Government's Good Practice Guide: Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (May 2008). Although the Good Practice Guide is dated and has been withdrawn, it does include useful design principles which are still relevant.
- 3.31 Sites and broad locations that are identified as not being suitable and available for development will not be considered achievable. Sites and broad locations that are identified as being suitable for development but not available may not be deliverable within the first five years but may be identified as being achievable later in the plan period.

Timescales

- 3.32 The timescale for the development potential and rate of development will be identified considering the size, scale and quantum of development. This will take into consideration evidence of lead-in times and build-out rates. Information from the site submissions, developers and other third parties will help inform timescales and development rates.

Stage 3 Housing windfall assessment

- 3.33 The term ‘windfall sites’ is defined in the NPPF as “sites not specifically identified in the development plan¹⁶ .
- 3.34 The PPG outlines that a windfall allowance may be justified in the anticipated supply if a local planning authority has compelling evidence as set out in Paragraph 75 of the NPPF:
- “Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area”¹⁷.*
- 3.35 Evidence of historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends will be used to determine whether the application of a windfall allowance is justified in anticipated supply.
- 3.36 The HELAA does not include sites which have a capacity of less than 5 dwellings therefore a windfall allowance will be included for smaller developments falling below the defined HELAA threshold of 5 dwellings. The annual windfall allowance will be determined by applying a trend-based approach based on an analysis of completions over a period of 10 years.

Stage 4: Assessment review

- 3.37 Once sites and broad locations have been assessed, an indicative trajectory will be produced setting out how much housing and economic development can be provided across the plan area and at what point in the future it could be delivered. It may be the case that much of this development would only be capable of coming forward subject to significant policy changes. The indicative trajectory should therefore be treated with significant caution.
- 3.38 The indicative trajectory will outline the forecasted delivery of development in three timeframes as set out in the PPG¹⁸ .

Stage 5: Final evidence base

- 3.39 The HELAA will, as a minimum, include the following information in accordance with the PPG¹⁹ :

¹⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) Glossary

¹⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) Paragraph 75

¹⁸ 0-5 years, 6-10 years and 11 years and beyond.

¹⁹ Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 026
Reference ID: 3-026-20190722

- A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps.
 - An assessment of each site or broad location including:
 - An assessment of the suitability, deliverability/ developability of each site. Where sites have been discounted, reasons will be given.
 - Where sites are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when.
 - An indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.
- 3.40 The assessments will be made publicly available in an accessible form.
- 3.41 The HELAA will be used alongside a suite of relevant technical reports and analysis, to inform the development strategy for the plan area and subsequently, to inform the site selection process and formation of policy criteria. It may also be used to identify available land for inclusion in the Part 1 Brownfield Land Register.

Stage	Milestone	Date	Type
Stage 01 - pre-project activity	E&C Committee agree to 'new style' local plan	Nov-23	Political Decision
	Issues Paper and 'call for sites' prepared	Mar-24	
	12 week 'Issues' public consultation	Apr-24	Public Consultation
	Local Development Scheme sent to MHCLG	Jan-25	External Gateway
	E&C Committee Approve Local Development Scheme	Mar-25	Political Decision
	Pre 'new style' local plan evidence gathering commenced	Aug-25	
Stage 1 – Project Initiation	'new style' local plan project initiation	Jan-26	
	Planning Inspectorate Gateway 1 (readiness to commence)	Mar-26	External Gateway
Stage 2a – Visioning and Spatial Options	Initial Strategy Development	Mar-26	
	Visioning and Strategy Document	Jun-26	
	Interim Sustainability Appraisal	Aug-26	
	Cabinet agree Visioning and Strategy	Sep-26	Political Decision
	8 week 'Visioning and Strategy' public consultation	Oct-26	Public Consultation
Stage 2b – Evidence and Draft CENLP	Final Strategy Development	Oct-26	
	Evidence gathering and Settlement Reports	Dec-26	
	Draft CENLP Local Plan document	Feb-27	
	Interim Sustainability Appraisal	Jun-27	
	Planning Inspectorate Gateway 2 (sound and compliant)	Aug-27	External Gateway
	Cabinet agree draft LPS25 Local Plan document	Sep-27	Political Decision
Stage 3 – Engagement and Validation	6 week 'draft LPS25' public consultation	Sep-27	Public Consultation
	Finalise CENLP Local Plan document	Dec-27	
	Final Sustainability Appraisal	Jan-28	
	Planning Inspectorate Gateway 3 (validate plan)	Mar-28	External Gateway
Stage 4 – Submission and Adoption	Prepare for examination	Mar-28	
	Hold Examination	May-28	External Gateway
	4 week 'final CENLP' public consultation	Sep-28	Public Consultation
	Council adopt CENLP Local Plan	Dec-28	Political Decision

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Summary of Key Features of National Planning Reform:

December 2024 update to the [NPPF](#) with higher housing targets, a stronger presumption in favour of development and introduction of 'grey belt' with an emphasis on delivering more affordable housing.

Implementation of local plan reform as set out in the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act](#) (LURA), with more streamlined approach to plan-making, statutory timetables and digitally enabled Local Plans (February 2025). Government supporting LPAs progressing under the system via PAS in advance of the Regs and NPPF / guidance updates expected by close of 2025.

[Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) (PIB) includes legislation for a return of regional level strategic planning to replace the Duty to Co-Operate; expansion of delegated decision making; local fee setting; simplified process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects; Nature Recovery provisions.

[English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) (EDB) addresses local government reform establishing strategic authorities, requiring publication of Spatial Development Strategies; also includes further provision for Mayors supporting a shift to regional plan making.

[New Towns Task Force](#) established in July 2024: Report published 28th September 2025, including proposals for a New Town at Adlington.

National infrastructure delivery: reforms to speed up national infrastructure (via PIB) introduction of 10 year [National Infrastructure Strategy](#) (June 2025), inc. first new reservoirs in East Anglia and Lincolnshire.

Major new [Social and Affordable Homes Programme](#), with new [National Housing Bank](#), major investment in social housing delivery, reforms to Right to Buy to protect existing social housing stock.

[Rental Reform Bill](#) includes provision to tackle no fault evictions

Housing Delivery:

[New homes accelerator programme](#) introduced in August 2024 to 'unlock' large scale housing developments with significant delays or obstacles by deploying specialist support (100,000 homes pushed forward so far).

[Brownfield passports policy paper](#) published in February 2025. Proposes to support building 40k new homes on brownfield sites by setting clear parameters (not automatic consent). Work underway on disused railway land starting with sites in Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Cambridge (July 2025).

[Growth Commission](#) established in Cambridge and Oxford to support housing delivery via the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor.

[Support package](#) for small and medium sized housebuilders includes faster decision making, exceptions from certain regulations and planning requirements, more funding options ([National Housing Delivery Fund](#)), more land available via Homes England and pilot [Small Sites Aggregator](#) (May 2025).

Proposals to introduce a new [streamlined approach to processing planning appeals](#) announced.

National Development Management Policies introducing a new 'rules based' approach to planning decisions at a national level, alongside local plans. Route to bring this forward is not yet defined.

Stage	Delivery Method	Evidence Required
stage 01 - pre-project activity	Internal Delivery	Settlement Hierarchy Review
		Waste Management Needs Assessment
		Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Report
		Housing and Economic Land Assessment
		Jodrell Bank Observatory
	External Delivery or delivered by another CEC service	Design Code
		Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
		Local Aggregate Assessment 2025
		Green Belt Assessment
		Strategic Green Gap Review
		Local Transport Modelling
		Infrastructure Baseline Study
		Sandstone Stone and crushed rock study
		CIL Review
Stage 2a – Visioning and Spatial Options	Internal Delivery	Plan ‘Vision and Strategy’ Document
		Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report / Environmental Outcomes Report (Draft)
		Equality Impact Assessment EqIA (Draft)
		Health Impact Assessment
		Rural Proofing Assessment
		Green Belt Review
	External Delivery or delivered by another CEC service	Town Centre Study background study
		Open Spaces Assessment
		Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment
		Habitats Regulation Assessment
		Spatial Distribution Report
		Employment Land Review
		Local Aggregate Assessment 2026
		Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
		Climate Change Study/Risk Assessment
		Historic Environment Study
		Renewable Energy Study
		Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Update
		Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy
		Infrastructure Delivery Plan
		Local Plan Viability Study
Stage 2b – Evidence and Draft CENLP	Internal Delivery	CENLP Draft Plan Document
		Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report / Environmental Outcomes Report (Final)
		Equality Impact Assessment EqIA (Final)
		Health Impact Assessment HIA (Final)
		Rural Proofing Assessment RPA (Final)
		Aggregate Apportionment

		Settlement Reports – Principal Towns
		Settlement Reports – Key Service Centres
		Settlement Reports – Local Service Centres
		Minerals Needs Assessment
	External Delivery or delivered by another CEC service	Heritage Impact Assessments
		Peat Soil Evidence
		Waste Needs Assessment
		Retail Study
Stage 3 – Engagement and Validation	Internal Delivery	CENLP Submission Plan Document

OPEN

Environment and Communities Committee

13 November 2025

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Report of: Director of Planning and Environment

Report Reference No: EC/06/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To consider publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington.

Executive Summary

- 2 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a key place making tool that provide strategic direction to protect and enhance the environment and habitats. They are a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 and it is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to have a Local Nature Recovery Strategy as part of their enhanced biodiversity duty. Due to the legal standing of the LNRS, the mapped areas of strategic significance for nature's recovery will affect the planning process and the calculation of Biodiversity Net Gain Units.
- 3 LNRSs are prepared by a Responsible Authority and require support from the Supporting Authorities to develop the strategy bring it into effect. Cheshire West and Chester have acted as the 'Responsible Authority and led the production of the LNRS. Warrington and Cheshire East Councils have acted as Supporting Authorities. Publication of the LNRS brings it into effect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment and Communities Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree that the final Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington should be published by the Responsible Authority (Cheshire West and Chester Council).
2. Agree to host the LNRS and supporting material on the Cheshire East website.

Background

- 4 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) set out priorities and practical actions to protect, connect and improve habitats across a region. They are a legally required policy document that guides local planning decisions and longer-term investment in nature, particularly from Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 5 In Cheshire & Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester Council was appointed as the lead authority, the 'Responsible Authority', supported by several regional and national bodies. LNRSs were mandated by the Environment Act 2021 to address England's severe biodiversity loss. Each strategy must include a habitat map and a statement of biodiversity priorities, tailored to local needs and landscapes.
- 6 The LNRS is prepared ahead of devolution however joint working between the future Combined Authorities has produced a regionally strategic document that will help to shape the development of matters such as the Local Growth Plan and the Spatial Development Strategy, key documents that will articulate ambitions for communities across the region and establish an investment framework to support key economic sectors, growth and infrastructure.

Consultation and Engagement

- 7 Extensive pre and post draft LNRS public consultation gave the opportunity for the public, farmers and landowners, NGO's, communities and businesses to comment and help shape proposed priorities, measures and areas mapped for nature's recovery.
- 8 Over a two-year period, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy was shaped through extensive public consultation and engagement. Diverse stakeholders contributed via surveys, workshops, school competitions, and other outreach methods. More than 900 people shared their vision for a nature-positive future between February and April 2024.

- 9 Workshops held in Chester, Macclesfield, and Warrington focused on six key themes for nature recovery, later expanded to include Farmland and Urban areas. Following these, the Responsible Authority, Supporting Authorities, and the Local Nature Partnership collaboratively reviewed and refined priorities and actions over two six-week phases.
- 10 A shortlist of priorities and actions was agreed in October 2024 and ratified ahead of the draft strategy's public consultation, which ran from 14 February to 31 March 2025. The 160 responses received led to further amendments, finalised with Supporting Authorities for publication

Reasons for Recommendations

- 11 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a key tool for guiding nature-focused investment and shaping long-term development through Local Plans in Cheshire and Warrington. It enables coordinated decision-making by providing a shared approach and detailed habitat data. The strategy proposes actions such as protecting peatlands, boosting habitat recovery, forming a county-wide Future Farming Group, expanding green infrastructure in disadvantaged areas, and identifying Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) investment opportunities.
- 12 A detailed delivery plan is being developed with the Local Nature Partnership to support collaborative implementation. Once established, the LNRS must be considered in planning and policy decisions across the region.
- 13 LNRS are not 'adopted' in the same way as Local Plans; the term used to bring them into effect is 'publication'. Publication has a specific legal meaning held within the Environment Act 2021 and Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.
- 14 The responsibility for publication rests with the 'Responsible Authority', this is Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC). Therefore, in its role to support the development of policies that relate to inclusive and sustainable growth, and to improving the quality of the environment, the Committee is asked if it is content for CWaC to publish the LNRS, and that Cheshire East also hosts the LNRS and supporting material.

Other Options Considered

15

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The benefits outlined in the LNRS will not be realised;	The opportunity to give the document statutory status in the Local Plan making process and in

	government funding to implement recommendations will be put at risk.	development management decision making will be lost; the ability to deliver recommendations of the LNRS will be limited
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 16 There is an express duty to publish the LNRS. The Environment Act 2021 requires Responsible Authorities to consult in line with the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, ensuring that the Responsible Authority (Cheshire West and Chester Council) must share a publication draft with the Supporting Authorities, as per regulation 13 (1).
- 17 Before being published, the Cheshire West and Chester Council LNRS team must inform the Secretary of State for DEFRA of their intent to publish, as per regulation 17 (1). The final LNRS is brought into effect as part of the enhanced Biodiversity Duty of all Local Authorities, with the Responsible Authority responsible for reporting upon its progress.
- 18 As the Responsible Authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council, must publish the LNRS. As a Supporting Authority, Cheshire East Council must also publish the consultation feedback report alongside the LNRS document and the Local Habitat Map.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 19 The development of the Strategy has been funded externally with support provided from Cheshire East officers, the staff time for which is funded from existing service budgets.
- 20 The proposal does not require additional budget approval or create future unfunded pressures and funding for improvements to nature highlighted by the strategy will come from a variety of grants, land management and private investment sources.
- 21 In recognition of the significant resource implications of preparing the LNRS, funding support is provided solely to the Responsible Authority, Supporting Authorities have a far more limited role, and therefore no access to funding is available to them.
- 22 DEFRA funding is available to implement the strategy (£135k for financial year 2025/6). The Responsible Authority will manage this. If the LNRS is not approved by December 2025, the funding is put at risk.

Human Resources

- 23 There are no Human Resources issues arising from the decision. Actions arising from the decision will be addressed by existing staff resource, within budget.

Risk Management

- 24 The table below outlines a summary of the risks being managed.

Risk	Mitigation
Removal of delivery funding from DEFRA	Approval of the LNRS
Impact financial gain from Biodiversity Net Gain on Council owned sites if the LNRS is not approved	Approval of the LNRS
Complaints from Farmers/Landowners about inclusion of their sites in the Local Habitat Map	Detailed communication paper shared with landowners regarding the implication of inclusion in the Local Habitat Map
Use of the Local Habitat Map by community groups/ parish councils to stop development	Legislation states that the LNRS must be 'taken regard of' in planning decisions but it does not have legislative power to prohibit development in the 'Opportunity Areas for Nature Recovery' as per Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (updated) 2023 and subsequent guidance published by the UK Government.
Biodiversity Duty non-compliance that leads to possible fine by national government	Approval of LNRS
Impact on future Spatial Development Strategies due to rejection of LNRS	Approval of LNRS

Impact on other Committees

- 25 The LNRS will have a cross-cutting effect on the development of corporate policy, particularly in relation to the Local Plan, and therefore will potentially support and shape decisions that are taken by other committees.

Policy

26

Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all	Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
Key topics in the LNRS document focus on the impact of water availability/flood risk, SuDS/Natural Flood management, agroforestry and Biodiversity Net Gain, all of which can have a significant impact on the local economy. Investment in nature based solutions will also support the rural economy and the opportunities presented by devolution.	The LNRS focuses on the need to incorporate nature better into education. The LNRS seeks to achieve the national environmental objective of everyone being 15 minutes from a semi-natural greenspace and providing green skills opportunities.	The LNRS is a strategy to deliver action via Biodiversity Net Gain, will help ensure development has a positive impact on placemaking, the ecological network and broader landscape quality.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 27 The LNRS considers all needs, including ethnic minority communities and those living in areas of social, economic and environmental inequality, often places where investment in additional green infrastructure could act as a catalyst for better health, wellbeing, environmental quality and a stronger economy.
- 28 A range of methods should ensure the LNRS's use for delivery is as inclusive and accessible as possible, considering the needs of different audiences, offering a wide range of ways to take participate.
- 29 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the process and is included at Appendix 3.

Other Implications

- 30 The LNRS seeks to improve the lives of children and young people by promoting forest schools, encouraging better stewardship of the natural environment and providing the evidence base to encourage developers to provide more natural greenspace within developments.

- 31 The LNRS will benefit rural communities through better placemaking and improved strategic countryside management with nature and people in mind.
- 32 The Council has an ambition to help rural communities to thrive and Devolution will support targeted improvements to rural transport but also represents an opportunity to strategically invest in nature. The strategic nature of the LNRS will support delivery of ELMS (Environmental Land Management Strategies) and other nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change. The integration of the LNRS with the Devolution agenda therefore represents an important opportunity for investment in our rural communities.
- 33 The Nature-based solutions theme within the document provides action that would help communities in Cheshire East adapt to climate change and become more resilient to heatwaves, drought and flooding events.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	24/10/25	28/10/25
Hilary Irving	Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer	30/10/25	30/10/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Wendy Broadhurst	Finance Business Partner – Place	16/10/25	20/10/25
James Thomas	Senior Lawyer - Place	16/10/25	20/10/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Chris Allman	Director Planning and Environment	16/10/25	20/10/25

Phil Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	24/10/25	27/10/25
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Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Tom Evans, David Malcolm, Angela Johnson Tom.Evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk, David.Malcolm@cheshireeast.gov.uk, Angela.Johnson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy Appendix 2: LNRS Consultation Report Appendix 3: LNRS Equality Analysis (the appendix can be found under 'Local Nature Recovery Strategy' toward the bottom of the page)
Background Papers:	n/a



Cheshire and Warrington
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
2025-2035

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“We want to mainstream nature’s recovery into all decisions and activities so that nature, people and businesses thrive.”

Foreword - Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader, Cheshire West and Chester Council

As the Responsible Authority required to develop and produce the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Cheshire West and Chester Council is honoured to lead this process for the county on behalf of Cheshire East, Warrington Borough Council and the Peak District National Park Authority, with support from Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

We are grateful to Cheshire Local Nature Partnership, our supporting authorities, residents, communities, and businesses who have helped us produce this strategy over the past 24 months.

The purpose of our Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to urgently halt nature’s decline and ensure its recovery across the county and positively contribute to the Nature Recovery Network for England. Our Local Nature Recovery Strategy outlines the priorities, actions and maps we all need to guide our projects, decisions and where resources should be targeted.

All three councils’ decisions to declare a Climate Emergency demonstrate the combined commitment to repair the natural world and combat climate change. Cheshire’s Local Nature Partnership (LNP) will be developing an action plan so that we can all work together to deliver the priorities and actions set out here.

Investing in nature can make business more effective and sustainable, help places become more climate resilient, act as a focus for quality placemaking, build stronger communities, and improve people’s health and wellbeing.

To complement new initiatives and more joined up activities, work will continue on many landscape scale projects already being led by Local Nature Partnership members.

These include Saving Lindow Moss, the Trees for Climate programme, Networks for Nature project, Coronation Meadows, Deescapes Programme and the Bollin to Mersey Nature Recovery Project. This Strategy will play an important role in developing future projects like these, together with coordinating work to invest in nature across our landscape for years to come.

To promote and recognise positive action, we are launching the annual Wilder Cheshire Awards to celebrate the efforts of so many individuals, businesses, farmers, landowners and community groups making a difference to create a more nature-friendly Cheshire.

This is not just a strategy that contains ambition and aspirations, it also includes detailed examples of practical things we can do in Appendix 7. I look forward to us all working together to protect and safeguard the wildlife, habitats and natural spaces we love, cherish and rely on here in Cheshire and Warrington.

Foreword - Councillor Tony Higgins, Lead Member for Climate Change, Sustainability and the Environment, Warrington Borough Council

Warrington Borough Council is proud to have worked alongside the responsible authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council and the Peak District National Park Authority in the development of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy, supported by Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

In 2019, Warrington Borough Council declared a climate emergency and made a commitment to take action. Understanding that the global climate crisis has an important local dimension, this commitment made clear that we must all do our bit to limit our impact and ensure we are prepared for the effects. The Warrington Climate Emergency Commission was set up shortly after, to advise the council on its climate commitments and lead the borough-wide conversation on climate change.

At Warrington Borough Council, our goal is to be net-zero within our own operations by 2030. To meet our objective, we must rapidly decarbonise our activities, including the way in which we heat and power our built infrastructure, the way we travel to work and the resources that we consume daily. A new climate change team was established in 2021 to move forward with achieving these goals and developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan, which was adopted in May 2023.

A key component of Warrington Borough Council's commitment to change and taking effective action will be realised through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington. The strategy identifies the priorities, actions and locations for nature recovery within Cheshire and Warrington over the next decade and aims to improve ecological networks, targeting investment in nature as part of the process of climate change adaptation.

As a member of Cheshire's Local Nature Partnership, Warrington Borough Council will take a leading role in developing an action plan to deliver these priorities and actions, as the strategy is taken forward.

As nature knows no boundaries, it is imperative that the spirit of cooperative working continues to thrive across Cheshire and Warrington, and that the scope of projects relating to wildlife, habitats and wider ecological networks is not limited to individual boroughs. We all hold a shared responsibility in protecting our natural world, and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides the blueprint to turn words into action, providing natural solutions for climate change adaptation. By working together alongside landowners, local communities and future generations of environmentalists, we will ensure a healthy and resilient natural environment that can be enjoyed by all.



“We will ensure a healthy and resilient natural environment that can be enjoyed by all.”

Foreword - Councillor Nick Mannion, Leader Cheshire East Council

Our resolution to this important work is clear and increasingly becoming one of our organising principles. On that basis, in January 2022 we made a further pledge to make Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045. Using policy tools like the environmental policies in our Local Plan and our Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document, we're building a framework to protect nature and promote sustainable energy.

Our environmental strategies have been key to this and have helped us make significant progress by introducing renewable energy to our estate, planting thousands of trees across the borough and promoting the shift to electric vehicles across our fleet.

The actions we are taking today will have positive impacts on everyone, but for us all to lead more rewarding and healthier lives we need to make this a collective effort. By working together, we can live in an environment where our families can flourish – an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East. The biodiversity crisis is intrinsically linked to the climate emergency and as a council we are proud to support this emerging Nature Recovery Strategy, which will help us protect and restore multiple habitats across the region, while adapting to climate change

Foreword - Michael Gorman, Deputy Leader Cheshire East Council

The climate and biodiversity emergency is something that affects us all and as part of our response to this, back in May 2019, we recognised the climate emergency and committed the council to tackling its own carbon emissions.

This commitment is part of our ambition to make policy and take decisions that improve our performance on environmental issues.

We have also pledged to raise awareness of taking action to combat climate change across the borough, working with others to consider and tackle their own carbon footprint by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Our actions now will help Cheshire East residents lead happier and healthier lives – both now and for many generations to come. It's essential to creating a greener environment for all of us to enjoy.

Foreword - Peak District National Park Authority

Nature is a crucial part of our lives. We need it to produce the food we eat, clean the air we breathe and the water we drink, and help us feel less stressed and anxious in our fast-paced, modern environment.

The State of Nature reports show that wildlife in the UK is in serious trouble, and the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that nature in our National Parks is more important than ever; especially when we found that opportunity for wellbeing and connectedness to the landscape temporarily taken away.

Though we celebrate the past and continuing hard work of those that are protecting and restoring nature, we acknowledge that we need a step change in action for nature. The Peak District National Park Authority has therefore welcomed being a Supporting Authority for the Cheshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and has inputted with the hope that a strategic, county-wide approach can work in parallel with our own Nature Recovery Plan to help connect and restore our natural environment.

This publication provides the priorities for nature for the next 10 years and indicates how people, organisations and communities can get involved. We look forward to seeing the difference that can be made when we all work together to help make Cheshire and Warrington nature positive.



Executive summary:

Vision - We want to mainstream nature's recovery into all decisions and activities so that nature, people and businesses thrive.

Principles

- Right habitat in the right place for the right reason.
- Comply with current legal requirements, policy, standards, guidance, best practice, as well as required permits and licences when creating and restoring habitats, including taking account of legislative documents (see Appendix 7 for further information).
- Support landowners and managers.
- Think long term and build resilience to climate change and other threats.
- Maximise multiple benefits.
- Improve access to nature for residents and communities.
- Raise awareness and grow skills.
- Grow and share expertise.
- A cohesive, joined up approach.

Cheshire and Warrington's LNRS network - local habitat maps

Core sites: A map of Cheshire and Warrington existing core sites – areas of particular importance to biodiversity with many designated under national and local legislation to protect and enhance nature

Opportunity areas for nature recovery: The best locations to create new areas and connect habitats with corridors and stepping stones for nature's recovery.

Priority habitats and themes

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Woodland, hedgerows and trees | 5. Species |
| 2. Grassland and heathland | 6. Nature-based solutions |
| 3. Watercourses | 7. Farmland |
| 4. Peat and wetlands | 8. Urban |

Examples of opportunities and actions for biodiversity

Manage woodland restoration to increase diversification in the age and structure

Increase the biodiversity in all woodlands including plantations and diversify with climate-resistant native and non-native trees

Plant and maintain more urban trees to create a continuous tree canopy

Turn old landfill sites into unimproved grasslands and other habitats to increase species and habitats

Reconnect rivers to their floodplains so they function more naturally, reducing flood risk downstream

Restore and increase hedgerows which also reduce runoff and improve water quality in rivers and streams

Enablers – partnerships, resources, management and funding

Establish and maintain a strong effective partnership for management and delivery

Administer and coordinate funding backed by robust and efficient procedures

Ensure funding is targeted to agreed plans and objectives

Increase financial investment into nature and nature-based solutions

Put in place staff and resources to deliver the LNRS, support Cheshire Local Nature Partnership and deliver agreed initiatives

Communicate and promote the benefits of nature and nature's recovery

Natural public goods and services - how nature helps us

- ✓ Financially successful and productive farm businesses
- ✓ Reduced flood and drought risk
- ✓ Locking away and storing carbon
- ✓ Clean water and air
- ✓ Urban cooling and reduced pollution
- ✓ Healthier soils
- ✓ Food supply and security
- ✓ Physical/mental health and wellbeing
- ✓ Recreation and sustainable tourism
- ✓ Enhanced heritage and culture
- ✓ Better jobs and investment
- ✓ Attractive retail, longer visits and greater spend

Introduction: Why do we need a nature recovery strategy?

The county of Cheshire is known for its city, towns and villages and its tourist attractions, heritage, industry and agriculture, but without nature what would it be?

With the Peak District upland moors in the east, our distinctive meres and mosses, internationally important estuaries, Sandstone Ridge and Cheshire Plains, our county has a varied and rich natural environment. People love to explore its forests and woodland, wetlands, waterways and country parks.

Cheshire has a strong farming heritage, with its gently rolling green landscape, nationally important dairy industry, its famous Cheshire Cheese, and ancient orchards which produce 32 apple species. The county is also known as the 'pond capital of Europe' with its heavy soils supporting 16,000 ponds. Along with our rivers, estuaries, canals and other wetlands, these host an array of plants and wildlife such as Great Crested Newts, Toads, Water Voles and birdlife such as Redshank and Snipe. You may be lucky enough to find the odd hedgehog snuffling in a garden, while you might see a Kestrel or owl hunting for prey, or Swifts and swallows flying overhead.

Much of Cheshire and Warrington's industrial and rural heritage has given us the formal parks, urban trees, ancient woodland, heathland, grasslands, wetlands, orchards, and the canals and rivers that we enjoy today. Cheshire and Warrington's natural assets have been vital to our communities, economy and culture for centuries.

However, nature is at risk. The UK is amongst the lowest 10% of countries for biodiversity in the world. We are witnessing catastrophic declines in key species and habitats. Since the 1990s, we have seen an unprecedented decline in nature in the UK with one in four mammals facing extinction and 43% of birds at risk. Cheshire holds the sad record of having lost more species in the county than in any other rural county in England, with 156 species going extinct since 1950. Pressure on nature from human development, intensification of land use, pollution and climate change has led to habitat loss and fragmentation. This means that wildlife is confined to smaller and lower quality areas without

the means to move and expand.

We need to create bigger, better and more space for nature and ensure they are joined up. You will see references to wildlife corridors and mosaic habitats in the strategy – this means joining up areas for nature, by creating varied stepping stones between them. Variety is key – different species need different habitats to live in, and many species need a variety of habitats over the course of their lifetime.

Not only is nature struggling – but people suffer from unequal access to nature and greenspace. The opportunity for people to enjoy and appreciate nature needs to be made easier for everyone, while protecting nature and allowing it to thrive. To ensure nature continues to be appreciated, cared for and prioritised more people need to connect with it, learn about it, and understand the wonders of its habitats and species. We need to rediscover how to identify plants and animals and understand what they need, to take a role in helping to care for them in the future.

The good news is that globally, nationally and locally, action is underway to halt and reverse the threat to nature. This Local Nature Recovery Strategy is part of a national approach to create a nature recovery network to halt species decline by 2030 and improve it by 2042 (across England). More significantly, the Cheshire and Warrington combined authority's recent approval means the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be delivered as a strategic approach to nature recovery.

In turn, the UK is committed to the Global Biodiversity Agreement to achieve 30 by 30 (30% of land protected for nature by 2030).

What is Biodiversity? Biodiversity means the variety of life in our natural world – including plants, animals, insects and microorganisms.

What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

Cheshire and Warrington's Local Nature Recovery Strategy is our collective blueprint to turn around nature's decline and restore it. The strategy:

- describes our unique natural environment and key habitats and species whilst providing the current state of nature in the county.
- sets out the opportunities and priorities for different parts of Cheshire and Warrington, showing us where we can take action to safeguard and enhance the special species that live there.
- identifies the actions to deliver our priorities (see Appendix 7).
- includes interactive local habitat maps with different layers of information, including our Core nature sites and where it might best be improved, and signposts to useful resources.

Our interactive pledge map shows where people, communities, businesses and other organisations intend to act, or have taken positive action for nature already.

Nature recovery can happen in every place, whether it is on a balcony, in a garden or community space, on a family farm or a large country estate.

We can all make a difference, from farmers and landowners, Town and Parish Councils, businesses and housing developers to highways engineers, school children, communities and voluntary groups.

[Visit our pledge map here >](#)

Note: All pledges will only be shown once you are on the verge of submitting your own pledge.



How was the Local Nature Recovery Strategy produced?

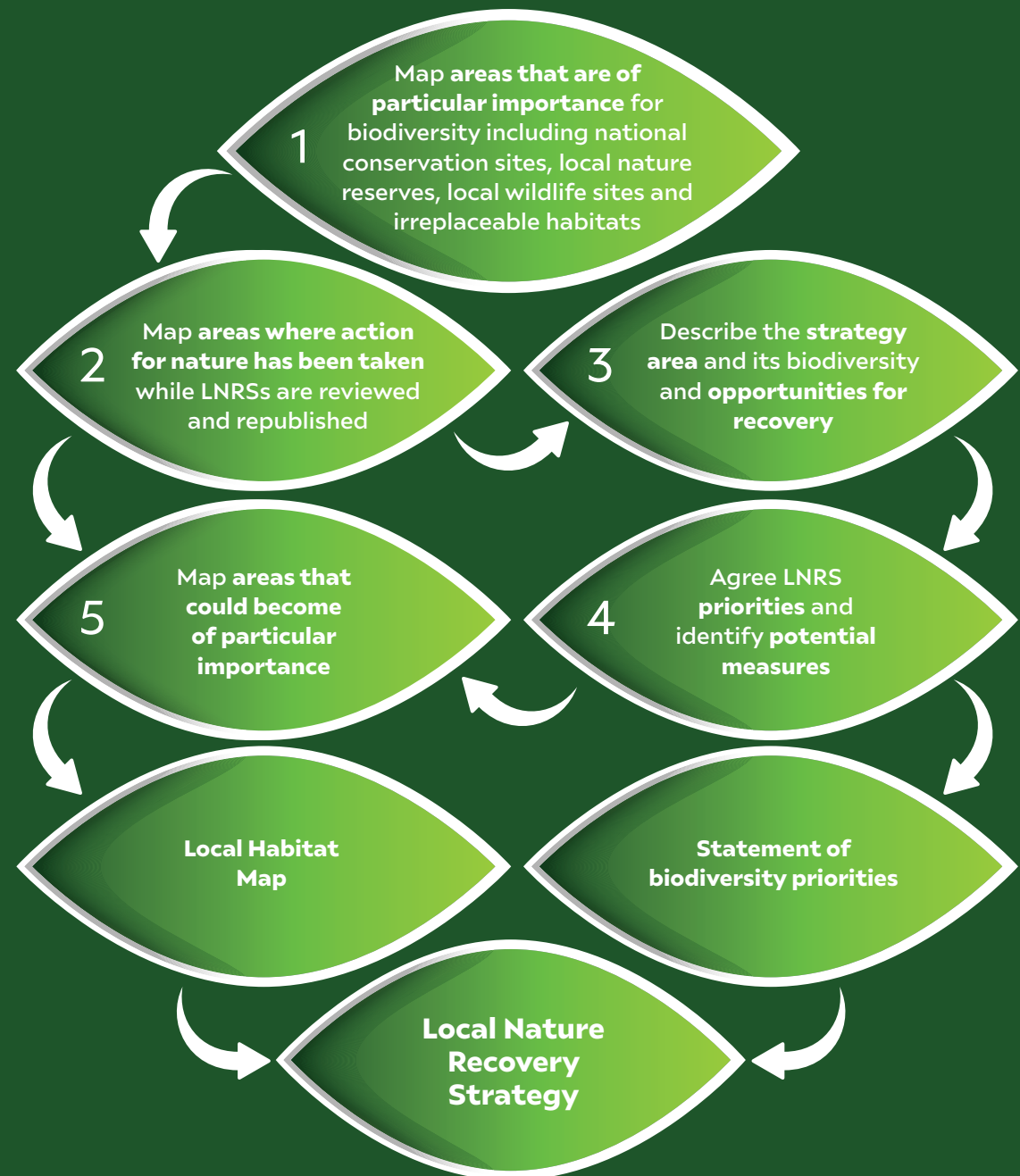
The Environment Act 2021 requires Cheshire and Warrington local authorities to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Cheshire West and Chester Council has led the preparation of this Strategy in collaboration with the other councils and partners across the area.

Our Local Nature Recovery Strategy was developed with key stakeholders to agree priorities for nature recovery and actions in particular locations, informed by a range of other relevant local plans and strategies. By working with local people with a keen understanding of their area, including farmers and landowners, we have agreed practical, achievable actions to deliver our LNRS Priorities and Measures [the actions to achieve the LNRS] to help restore and manage Cheshire and Warrington's nature better so it can thrive again.

This Strategy covers the whole of Cheshire and Warrington including West Cheshire, Cheshire East, Warrington and the South West and Dark Peak areas of the Peak District National Park that fall within Cheshire East. It includes part of the Mersey and Dee estuaries (to the mean low water line) but does not include the deeper marine environment. As part of the process, we have worked with our neighbouring areas to ensure that the Nature Recovery Network and the actions overlap over county boundaries, as nature doesn't recognise where one county ends and another starts.

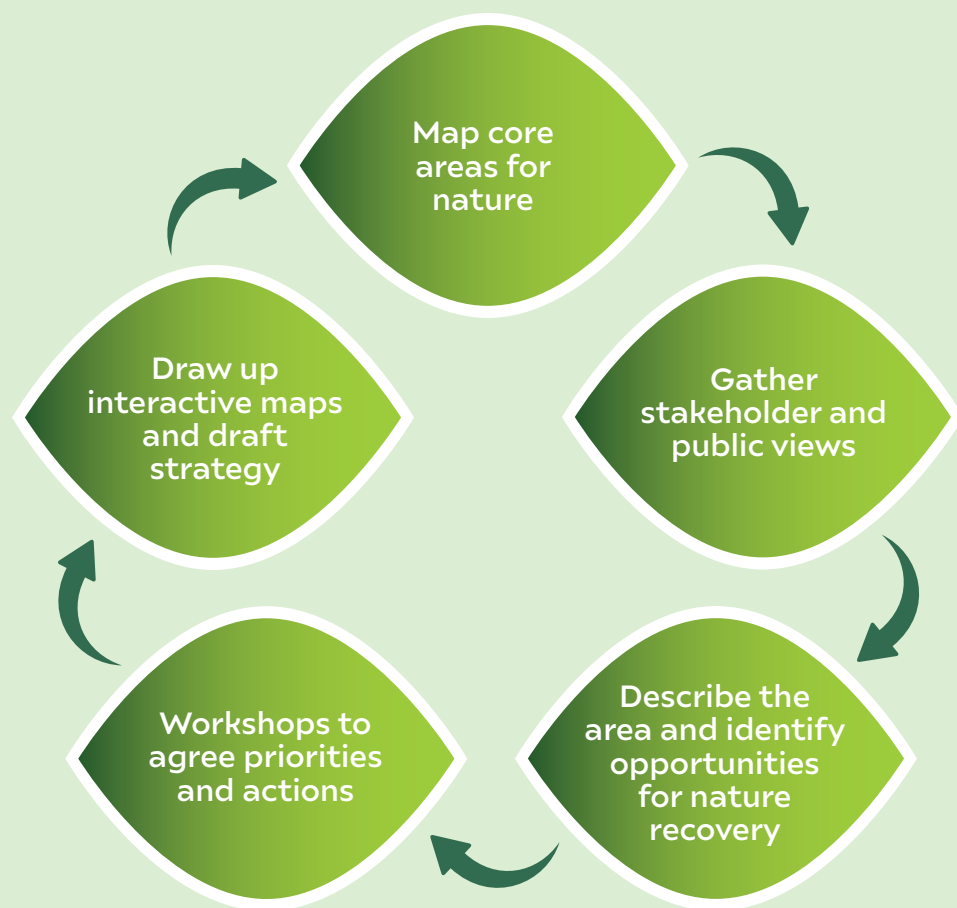
By working in this way our contribution to the Nature Recovery Network map for the whole of England will be complete and align with our neighbours.

The steps of the LNRS process are shown on the right.



How was the Local Nature Recovery Strategy produced?

The steps we followed are shown below:



We are very grateful to everyone who generously gave their time, views and expertise to help create this strategy and look forward to working together to help protect, enhance and restore nature for current and future generations. Thanks to:

- Over 900 people and organisations who responded to the survey, draft consultation and pledges for local action on nature.
- Nearly 200 people who came to our three public workshops to shape the priorities and actions.
- 145 online respondents, 15 e-mail respondents and to the 57 who made it to our consultation drop-in sessions across the sub-region.
- Farmers, landowners and other key stakeholders who have given their valuable time to participate in both one-to-one and group meetings.
- Schools who helped provide views from young people on the natural world.
- Representatives from stakeholder organisations including Active Cheshire, Sustainable Northwich, Norley Wildlife group, Macc Wild Network Trust, Friends of Culcheth Park, the National Farmers Union, Grosvenor Estates, and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.
- Experts from our Local Nature Partnership and steering group (see acknowledgements for full list) including individuals who contributed to online workshops to refine the priorities and actions.
- Staff from Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Cheshire RECORD for their exhaustive and thorough work on the descriptions, species list and maps.
- Volunteers who dedicate their time to recording, reporting, documenting and taking action to safeguard and reinstate key habitats and species.

“I would like Cheshire to be a place where the natural environment is valued as much as the built environment, and where everyone has access to nature.”

Cheshire resident, survey respondent

Who is the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for?

This strategy is for everyone in Cheshire and Warrington who wants to help nature recover and thrive. It can help:

- **Public Sector organisations** with a role in regulation and decision making as well as involvement in National policy making and funding schemes.
- **Local Authorities** to: ensure nature is considered as part of decision making, provision of their services, and to better understand and integrate the benefits nature can provide to society and economy.
- **Local Planning Authorities** with Local Plans and planning policy to guide where and how development should take place, alongside how nature should be safeguarded, incorporated into development, included in good placemaking and as a catalyst for better health and wellbeing, stronger communities, delivering a quality environment and to support the economy.
- **Farmers and Land Managers** as the main stewards of our landscapes, to continue to care for and extend valuable natural habitats as part of their businesses.
- **Policy Makers and Funders** to direct and guide funding and resources, informing evolving Environmental Land Management and Agri-Environment funding schemes.
- **Investors** to find effective local opportunities to finance habitats and actions for nature, people and the economy.
- **Developers** to plan how they can build in harmony with nature, deliver Biodiversity Net Gain and design resilient developments that prioritise nature-based solutions.
- **Communities and Businesses** that want to take action to protect and recover nature and grow skills, knowledge and capacity to realise the benefits it could bring.
- **Training Providers** to develop the skills for a future workforce. Helping to increase the number of experts, contractors and volunteers that will be needed to create, safeguard, maintain and monitor nature into the future.
- **Environmental Organisations** taking action to deliver better habitats and landscapes to achieve wider environmental benefits including nature-based solutions. To continue to act as an independent voice for nature, improve peoples connection with nature and support individuals, communities and businesses to take positive action for nature.





What happens next?

The published Local Nature Recovery Strategy will inform work with the Cheshire Local Nature Partnership who are developing a delivery plan that will sit alongside the strategy.

This includes ensuring that we monitor and report every five years against the priorities and actions, following our agreed monitoring framework.

The Secretary of State will determine when published LNRs will need to be reviewed, revised and republished within a three to ten year timeframe.

Our monitoring work will inform future versions of our LNRs.



What does nature do for us?

In response to the video and initial online survey in February 2024, the following statistics highlighted that:

- 95% of people think that the natural environment is getting worse.
- 45% of people visit the outdoors for leisure at least once a week.
- 54% of people enjoy nature, and 55% feel it improves their wellbeing.

Ecological benefits

- Protects our rare and threatened species and habitats.
- Provides greater abundance and diversity of wildlife and healthier ecosystems.
- Captures and stores carbon dioxide, helping to tackle climate change.
- Provides resilience to future climate impacts, reducing flooding and overheating.
- Provides natural regulation and resilience to pests and diseases.
- Natural cycles and processes improve air, water and soils.



**I would like to know more about where
I can go and see or walk in nature.**



What are the challenges facing nature that impacts us?

- **Water availability** - The impact of climate change is already being felt by our communities. The severity and frequency of drought and flooding is anticipated to increase into the future. Northwich flooded in 2021 resulting in 373 houses flooded and 41 out of 46 businesses left part of the town after suffering losses. By incorporating natural flood management in the river catchments alongside hard conventional engineering, the impact of flooding in the future could be significantly reduced. Encouraging investment in nature-based solutions across river catchments could help reduce flood risk, save money and reduce disruption to residents and businesses. These sorts of interventions may also ensure water returns to our rivers cleaner and slower, helping to safeguard wildlife and water resources in periods of drought.

- **Light pollution** - Light pollution has increased with urbanisation. More recent installation of brighter LED lighting has been shown to significantly impact the circadian rhythm and feeding success of nocturnal animals. Also negatively effecting the reproductive and feeding success of nocturnal animals. Warmer lighting (<3000Kelvin), the ability to dim lights, completely switch lights off, or ensuring lights are shielded or focussed on very specific areas, such as security lights, are some of the alternatives that Local Authorities are exploring and seeking to advocate. It is key that we raise awareness of these issues and the solutions that are available to help protect nature.

- **Insufficient access to greenspace and nature** - Some wards across Cheshire and Warrington have very little tree cover (as low as 4%), with inequality of access to green infrastructure, whether formal or more natural. This means that some communities do not experience the positive benefits that an average amount of trees and green infrastructure can have on health and wellbeing. Access to nature can be a catalyst for stronger and more connected communities and can help provide ecosystem services, such as urban cooling, surface water management and clean air. Even businesses, retail and housing are more effective and valuable when there is a high proportion of green infrastructure. It can be easier to attract and retain employees and those working for businesses can be more productive and less stressed. Customers may also dwell for longer, spend more and house prices can be higher where there are more trees and greenspaces.

- **Water quality** - Cheshire and Warrington's rivers are classified as being in moderate or poor ecological condition under the Water Framework Directive. An increase in the frequency of flood and drought conditions, alongside pollution from agriculture, highways and our sewage system, with increasing invasive non-native species have negatively impacted our rivers. Our River Catchment Partnerships, including Weaver-Gowy, Upper Mersey, Tidal Dee and Middle Dee, continue to secure investment and improvements. The Mersey River Trust and other organisations also support farmers to develop water management plans, and the Angling Trust's work tirelessly to remove invasive species from our canals and rivers.

- **Poor condition of woodland** - 66% of Cheshire and Warrington's woodlands have been unmanaged for several generations. Revitalising interest and exploring ways to develop skills, and a local market for timber could help to bring more of our woodlands back into positive sustainable management, encouraging nature to thrive and supporting our rural economy. With more funding to support woodland creation, management and agroforestry, combined with a growing demand for more homes, provides an opportunity to explore how local our woodlands could be used again to provide sustainable, local, low carbon building materials and other products to support our local economy and targets for new homes.



Ecological benefits

- Protects our rare and threatened species and habitats.
- Provides greater abundance and diversity of wildlife and healthier ecosystems.
- Captures and stores carbon dioxide in habitats and timber, helping to tackle climate change.
- Provides resilience to future climate impacts, reducing flooding and overheating.
- Provides natural regulation and resilience to pests and diseases.
- Natural cycles and processes improve air, water and soils.

Benefits for our economy and businesses

- Supports thriving, sustainable farm, forestry and rural businesses.
- Reduces the likelihood and costs of flood and heat related risks.
- Provides value for money as nature-based solutions are often cheaper and more sustainable than 'hard engineering' solutions.
- Provides timber for sustainable building construction which also helps to tackle climate change.
- Provides new business opportunities with growing demand for green jobs and skills.
- Delivers a pleasant environment to attract and help retain a productive and healthy workforce.
- Improves tourism, high street and customer retail experiences.
- Adds value to housing in close proximity or by incorporating quality natural features and spaces.
- Provides clean water for homes, businesses and industrial processes.
- Attracts investment including the opportunity to offset the carbon impact of businesses.

Social benefits

- Protects communities from weather extremes by nature-based solutions that reduce flood and urban overheating risks.
- Improves local food and timber security.
- Makes for happier, healthier communities with green spaces for exercise and leisure for better physical, mental health and wellbeing.
- Provides access to cleaner air and water.
- Improves local food security, reducing the need to use pesticides and fertilisers.
- Provides natural places for people to meet and act as a catalyst for neighbours to connect, building stronger communities.
- Creates career and opportunities to improve skills, health and wellbeing, and develop a sense of ownership and connection to local nature.

See Appendix 8 for detailed lists of benefits of nature to different sectors and organisations.

What are nature-based solutions? These are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified land, freshwater and marine ecosystems to address social, economic and environmental challenges - while at the same time providing human well-being, resilience and biodiversity benefits. An example is planting trees in a town to reduce flood risk, prevent overheating, provide habitats for animals, make an area more attractive and improve health and wellbeing for residents.



Cheshire and Warrington's Natural Environment – Where are we now? A description of the strategy area and its biodiversity

Nature in Cheshire and Warrington

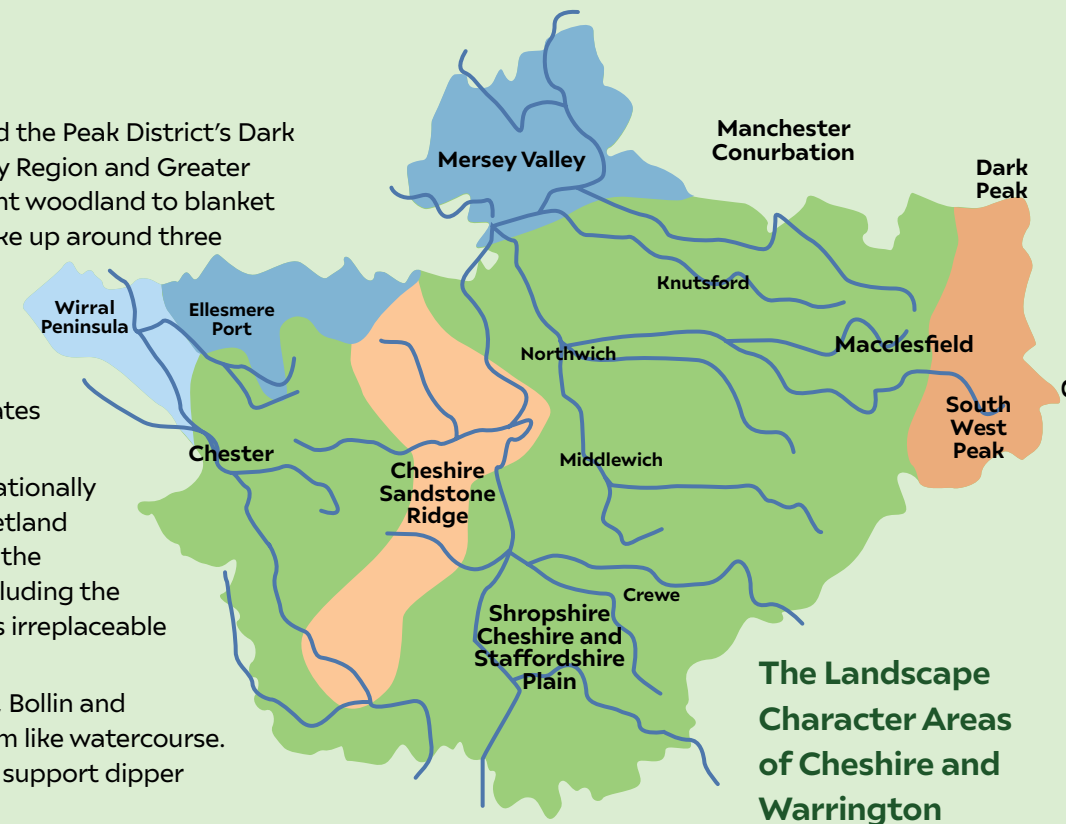
Cheshire and Warrington form a unique area sheltered by Wales from the west and the Peak District's Dark and South West Peak to the east, south of the major conurbations of Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester. It has a distinct landscape with multiple types of habitats from ancient woodland to blanket bog on the moors, and ponds to floodplain meadows. Farming and agriculture make up around three quarters of land use, and Cheshire is not famous for its cheese for nothing – dairy farming has relied on its grasslands for centuries. Cheshire's land is not only used for livestock but crops as well, making much of the county a mixed farming landscape. Cheshire is also home to some important historic parkland and farming estates such as Tatton, Grosvenor's Eaton and the Cholmondeley Estates which feature ancient woodland and important grasslands.

There is a wide array of habitats, and parts of the county are internationally and nationally important for biodiversity. Our Meres and Mosses are internationally important wetland habitats left over from the last ice age², added to by thousands of ponds dug over the centuries, once totalling 40,000. This wet landscape supports an array of birds, including the threatened Willow Tit, amphibians, dragonflies and rare invertebrates as well as its irreplaceable raised bogs and deep post-glacial waterbodies.

Our Cheshire Plains are drained by numerous rivers such as the Dee, Mersey, Gowy, Bollin and Weaver, with its tributary the River Dane, our only more natural, unimproved stream like watercourse. Ancient woodlands cling onto its steep valley slopes and fast-flowing sections still support dipper and wild trout.

The Peaks to the east of the county and the Sandstone Ridge running north to south in the middle of Cheshire form higher less-productive land providing a refuge for heathland, and ancient grassland including internationally important waxcap grasslands. These areas are particularly important for moths and butterflies. Higher up still, the moors of the Peak District are strongholds for birds of prey and breeding wader populations.

Cheshire and Warrington have four main habitat themes and three wider themes: Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows; Grassland and Heathland; Watercourses, Peatland and Wetlands, Farmland, Urban and Nature-based solutions. Within the habitat themes, there are some irreplaceable habitats, which include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bogs and lowland fens. Throughout the habitat themes, you will see the benefits farming provides to each habitat and how having these habitats benefit farming.



² Introduction to the Glaciation of Britain - AntarcticGlaciers.org

Nature in Cheshire and Warrington

- 24 different nature-rich habitat types
- Iconic species such as the Great Crested Newt and Black-Crested Grebe
- 11.25% of Cheshire and Warrington is nature rich (including all designated sites and nature-rich undesignated sites)
- 12.69% of Cheshire is covered by trees, 9.62% is total woodland cover (excluding wood pasture and trees outside woodland) with 2,349ha (1.03%) being ancient woodland (excluding plantations on ancient woodland sites)
- 8 National Trust sites, 34 CWT run reserves and 2 RSPB reserves
- 3,401 ha of coastal & floodplain grazing marsh and saltmarsh
- 941 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), covering 13,827ha (with a further 796 potential LWS located in the LNRS area), managed by the LWS partnership.
- 62 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 5 Ramsars, 10 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA), 3 National Nature Reserves (including one recently designated in July 2025) and 10 Local Nature Reserves.
- 10,118km of hedgerows (3% of England's total hedgerow network)
- Internationally and nationally significant estuaries, Dee and Mersey, which are designated with the Dee as a Water Protection Zone, SPA, SAC, SSSI and Ramsar and the Mersey as a SPA, SAC and Ramsar
- Nationally significant pond network (important for Great-Crested Newts and Lesser Silver Water Beetle)

Irreplaceable habitat is very difficult (or takes a very long time) to restore, create or replace once it has been destroyed. This may be due to its:

- Age
- Uniqueness
- Species diversity
- Rarity ³

³ Irreplaceable habitat - GOV.UK

Irreplaceable habitat includes some of England's most ecologically valuable terrestrial and intertidal habitat. For example:

- Ancient woodland, which includes ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), ancient wood pasture and parkland, and infilled ancient wood pasture and parkland.
- Ancient and veteran trees
- Blanket bog
- Limestone pavements
- Coastal sand dunes
- Spartina saltmarsh swards
- Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub

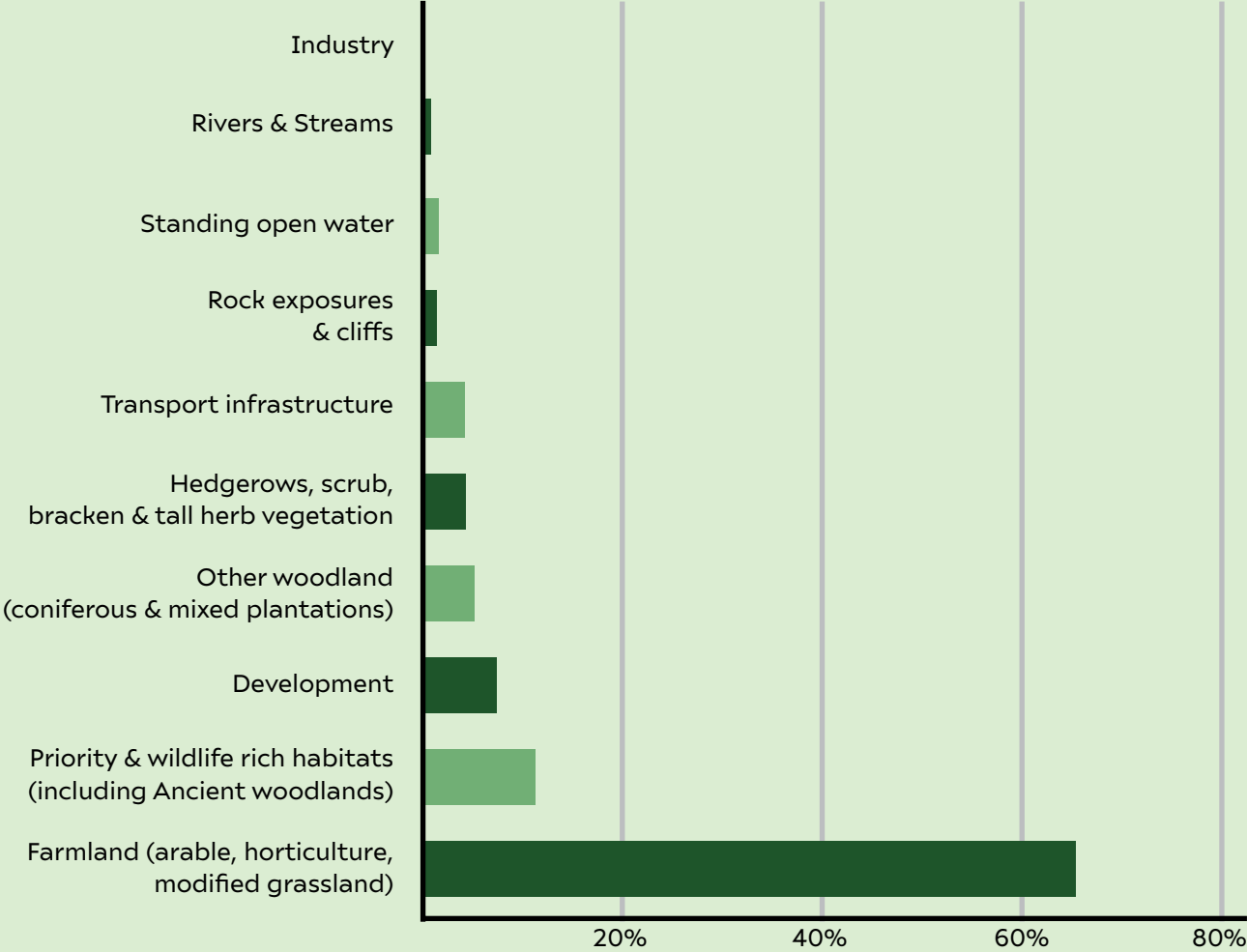
What is a Water Protection Zone (WPZ)? The WPZ is an area that is protected for water quality, such as the River Dee. The designated area has regulations put in place to protect water quality from diffuse pollution and certain activities (e.g. storing or using controlled substances), which are banned or restricted to reduce the risk of polluting drinking water. Most of our rivers provide drinking water and water for industrial processes but the Dee is the only WPZ due to its importance for drinking water in Wales and England.

The vast majority of land use in our area is agriculture, at nearly 70%, which is in line with the national average for England. Forest, open land and water makes up around 11-15% (this includes priority habitat plus other woodlands including plantations). Although rivers and streams themselves have a small footprint, their catchments, areas from which water flows into them, cover the entire county. Development, including residential development, makes up around 6-9% with Warrington being more built up than other areas of Cheshire. Transport routes and other major infrastructure take up 4-5%. Despite its visual impact from many locations, such as the view of Stanlow from the side of the Mersey or Helsby Hill, industry has a very small footprint at less than 0.5%. Total built-up area is 16.64% including gardens.

In the context of the national commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030, just 3.4% of Cheshire and Warrington's land is under statutory protection while 9.4% is designated for nature, but 11.25% is of high nature value. In comparison to its more urban neighbours this is low given that the city-regions have more land for nature - 11% of Greater Manchester, 14% of Liverpool City Region and 24% for the more rural county of Lancashire.

Cheshire and Warrington have some internationally recognised important sites designated for nature, from Special Protection Areas on the coast and estuaries to Specials Areas of Conservation and Ramsar designated sites across our Cheshire Meres and Mosses. There are 62 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, of which 84% are meeting favourable or unfavourable recovering condition at this time.

Land use and habitats in Cheshire and Warrington



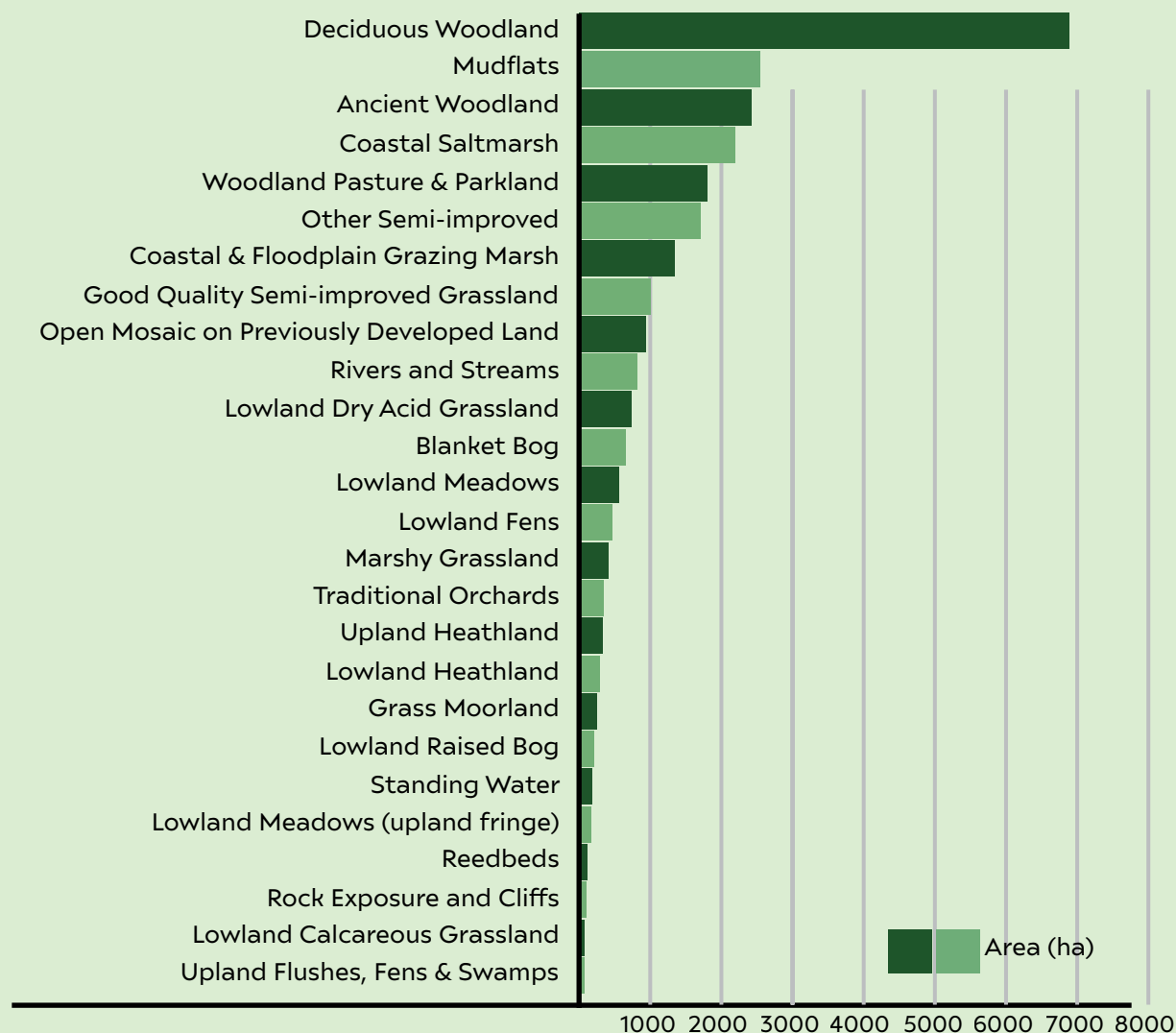
What is a Wildlife rich habitat? A habitat that is one of the following types of habitat and which is of sufficient quality that it is, or will be, capable of supporting flora and fauna which are typically found in the habitat in question

(a) a habitat type of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity listed by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006(7) (biodiversity lists and action (England);

(b) another habitat type listed in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Targets (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations⁴.

⁴ The Environmental Targets (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations 2023

Area cover for priority and wildlife-rich habitats in LNRS



Cheshire and Warrington's total area is 229,000 hectares and the chart above shows some of the priority areas and wildlife rich habitats by remaining area. This shows us that **the actual land-area of some of our most valuable sites for nature is very small** – showing the urgency of action to safeguard, expand, buffer and connect these sites to conserve both habitats and species.

What is a conservation designation?

There are seven types of conservation designations in the Cheshire and Warrington area. These include:

Statutory Protected Sites

- Ramsar⁵ sites which are wetlands considered important at an international level.
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which are designated to conserve the habitats and species of importance at a European level. Both SPA's & SAC's form the UK national site network.
- National Nature Reserves are those sites that are of most significance nationally.
- National Nature Reserves are those sites that are of most significance nationally.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are a representative sample of those sites considered to be of national importance for their biological or geological features.
- Local Nature Reserves are sites of particular importance for their nature conservation value, but also their value to the local community.

Non-statutory

- Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory (unlike all the above) and selection is based upon the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats. They can have status in Local Plans where policies exist to provide limited protection. They are also known as Sites of Biological Importance, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, County Wildlife Sites and Local Sites.
- All these designations provide important sites for nature and are our core sites for nature recovery.

⁵ A wetland site designed to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention 1971

How big is a hectare (ha)? A hectare is 100m by 100m or 2.4 acres. It is a bit bigger than a football pitch and about the same area as the inside area of a 400m running track at a sports ground.

The State of Nature

The state of nature in Cheshire, mirrors national trends, with **declines in all priority habitats** since 1980. Cheshire and Warrington may appear green, yet many of these seemingly natural areas have limited value to wildlife. Many habitats have been lost and fragmented, causing declines in some of the county's landmark species.

Cheshire's biodiversity has become less diverse, with possibly the highest loss of species recorded out of any county in England, higher than the average of 133. A further 3,935 species were last recorded between 1990-2010 but have not been recorded since (see Appendix 1). In some cases, this could be due to lack of experts to identify and record key species.

“ **99% of species rich grasslands have been lost in Cheshire since the Second World War** ”



Current statistics in Cheshire and Warrington show a clear downward trend

- Hazel dormouse was deemed locally extinct in 2010, despite reintroductions.
- Since the 1970's, 80% of all butterfly species have declined in abundance, distribution or both.
- 4 local reptile species, 2 have had a rapid decline (adder and grass snake) and 2 have a relatively stable distribution but numbers may be low and populations could be lost due to the island effect (common lizard and slow worm).
- Marked declines in farmland birds e.g. Curlew and Yellowhammer, and even in woodland birds, such as the Willow Tit, Spotted Flycatcher and the Dipper. The Lapwing is now becoming so scarce that there are only a few records compared to quite widespread distribution many years ago.
- Water Vole has been lost from 94% of its range.

We need more people to take an active interest in our local wildlife, recruiting, training and supporting anyone interested to develop their identification skills to a competent level.

We also need to encourage more people to send in records of what they have seen to Cheshire RECORD.

What do we need to do?

Following the Lawton Principles⁶, if the areas we do have for nature are made **more, bigger, better, and joined up**, we can help nature recover and thrive while at the same time helping protect areas from floods and droughts, tackling inequalities and enabling everybody to live and work in healthier and happier places. Our farmers and agricultural businesses could thrive, working with nature, producing healthy food, providing an attractive landscape and a more resilient ecosystem.

Our nature recovery principles

Our Nature Recovery Network is based on evidence and established thinking on nature recovery in the UK, in particular, the Lawton Review of 2010 which said that we need to make our network of sites for nature “bigger, better, more and joined up”. This recognises our best remaining wildlife sites as the basis of our Nature Recovery Network and guides us to act to:

- **improve** the quality of wildlife sites by better management.
- **increase** the size of habitat sites.
- **enhance** our sites for nature by improving connections between them
 - corridors and stepping stones.
- **create** new sites in rural and urban areas.
- **safeguard** existing sites, and all of nature, by taking pressure off the wider environment – reducing pollution, climate impacts, disturbance, invasive species etc.

⁶ Making space for nature: a review of England's wildlife sites published today- gov.uk

What is the ecological network? Ecological networks are the basic, joined up infrastructure of existing and future habitat needed to allow populations of species and habitats to survive in fluctuating conditions⁷.

Although we have 24 specific habitats grouped in four themes, it is important to note that **all habitats are interconnected** and for a landscape like Cheshire and Warrington's, a mosaic of habitats provides the best way to support nature, people and the economy.

⁷ Planning and the ecological and Nature Recovery Networks | Somerset Wildlife Trust

What is a mosaic approach? The Mosaic approach means looking at what species need in habitats – some species need different habitats in stages of their lifecycle from bare ground, dead wood, tall flower-rich vegetation, to scattered trees and scrub. This means having a mixture of habitats.



We need to take a practical and holistic approach to the landscape, recognising everyone's different roles. The expertise of farmers as stewards of the land, the academic expertise of our universities and colleges, the local knowledge and passion of our Wildlife Trust, other conservation organisations and community groups, the statutory role our Local Authorities and other regulatory bodies such as the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and Natural England can work hand in hand to recover nature and deliver economic and social benefits.

The following set of 11 Cheshire and Warrington nature recovery delivery principles need to be applied to policy, funding and delivery.

01

Right habitat in the right place for the right reason

Consult with Local Nature Partnership members. Ensure that habitat creation proposals occupy suitable sites and do not damage or displace existing quality habitats. Sensitive habitat restoration should be the go-to option for sites that already nature-rich.

02

Follow best practice and standards

Comply with current legal requirements, standards, guidance, best practice, as well as required permits and licences when creating and restoring habitats e.g. UK Forestry Standards. Ensure nature is at the centre of all new development and neighbourhoods by design. An example of good practice, in addition to the UK forestry standards, includes: *Decision framework for peatland protection*.

03

Think about long-term resilience

Put nature at the heart of new development, so nature and places are resilient. Plan at the start for long-term habitat management, maintenance and funding. Ensure that schemes are resilient to future climate change impacts, pests and diseases.

04

Be ambitious and evidence-led

Ensure that any nature restoration or any new habitat project is evidence-led and ambitious in its aims and objectives. Understanding the geology, soil type and biodiversity and archaeological importance of a site before undertaking any habitat improvement by seeking expert help.

05

Maximise multiple benefits

Communicate and maximise the wider benefits of nature recovery actions such as improving health and wellbeing, storing carbon, or reducing flood risk.

06

Involve residents and communities

Work collaboratively with residents, landowners, farmers, partnerships and business for nature's recovery.

07

Improve responsible access

Support and work towards fair and improved access for individuals and communities (where appropriate), so everyone has responsible and equitable access to nature.

08

Raise awareness

Ensure that the public are made aware of nature's recovery and the importance of their support e.g. biosecurity, help identifying species, volunteering, Countryside Code etc.

09

Support farmers and landowners

Support, and work in partnership with farmers and landowners, for example to encourage the uptake of Environmental Land Management Schemes. Help farmers and landowners to make informed decisions based on expert advice and knowledge. Go to: Funding for farmers, growers and land managers - GOV.UK

10

Seek expertise - ask an expert

Whenever thinking of creating or restoring a habitat at a landscape scale, experts should be involved to help identify the best opportunities for biodiversity; seek expert guidance on large and small projects.

11

Make it cohesive, join it up and blur the boundaries

Nature has no boundaries – think through how actions can connect – speak to neighbours, create blurry edges, and a diverse patchwork of habitats. For new habitat creation along rivers, discuss water management with neighbours to ensure consistency and collaboration in catchments.

LNRS habitats and themes - strategic priorities

The following sections show each of the habitats and themes, explains the state of nature, the pressures they face, outlines the opportunities and lists the priorities and actions we can take to support nature recovery and build our Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Network.

These sections cover:

- ▶ **Woodlands, hedgerows and trees**
- ▶ **Grassland & heathland**
- ▶ **Watercourses**
- ▶ **Peat & wetlands**
- ▶ **Species**
- ▶ **Farmland**
- ▶ **Urban**
- ▶ **Nature based solutions**

Following the habitat sections, we cover key priority species that need bespoke actions over and above habitat actions that benefit them, followed by themes that bring relevant topic based actions together.

In each of the habitats and theme sections, you will see a 'Key Habitat' or 'Key Topic' highlighting our highest priorities for the next 10 years.

Key habitats demonstrate the habitat's importance to the landscape character and historical aspects of the region. Whereas key topics align with the main issues facing Biodiversity and intrinsic links to impacts on society and/or the economy.

For further understanding around delivery, please refer to Appendix 7, which will help to inform consideration of priorities and actions in terms of accessing relevant guidance and standards to inform LNRS delivery note that this appendix shows mapped actions in bold for ease of reference.



Priorities and actions shortlist terminology

The below common terms will be used throughout the priority habitat types and themes in the priorities and actions shortlist.

Safeguard - This safeguard represents the need to protect existing nature sites, external to those of which are our core nature sites through buffers. Although this may sound prohibitive to development, this is not the case. The LNRS cannot prohibit development from taking place but it does need to have regard to the LNRS and ensure that the nature site is improved by the development (following BNG guidance) or that nature is integrated into the development.

Restore - Habitat restoration refers to:

- Action on sites which support relict habitat that leads to the expansion of wildlife-rich habitat. Examples would include where fragments of wildlife-rich habitat remain and action on land or water surrounding these fragments re-establishes the habitat, increasing the total extent of the wildlife-rich habitat. Only the newly established habitat will be counted towards the target.
- Action on degraded habitat where single or multiple actions need to be undertaken to address on or off-site pressures so that wildlife-rich habitats of sufficient quality can become established, e.g. addressing nutrient enrichment and invasive non-native species pressures to restore a lake.
- Action on existing habitat (possibly wildlife-rich) that has developed in a degraded ecosystem; consequently, the existing habitat may be considered degraded. Examples include the restoration of blanket bog from dry heath on drained peat, or action to reduce grazing pressure on upland acid grassland to restore priority habitat such as upland heath or upland oakwood⁸.

Create - Where viable, wildlife rich habitats are established on land or water where such habitat is currently absent.

Enhance - Actions that improve the condition, structure or composition of existing wildlife-rich habitats but is not considered within the scope of creation or restoration despite following actions relating to those priorities.

Promote - LNP partners and local authorities (LNRS team) to promote nature friendly solutions within their representative organisations and to developers and businesses.

Increase - Where possible, 'stepping stones' (large areas of similar habitat) should be created. Appropriate - definition of the term is shown in Appendix 7. Furthermore, the Appendix also describes appropriate habitats.

⁸ Version 1 - Environment Act Habitat Target - Definitions and Descriptions (1).pdf

Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees

This section outlines the current state of our woodland, hedgerow and trees, the pressures they face, opportunities for nature recovery, the priorities and actions for this habitat.

Cheshire and Warrington's woodlands, hedgerows and trees.

- Total tree and woodland cover: 12.69% (slightly above North West average).
- Woodland cover: 6.51% (2022 NFI) (less than NW and England average) (of which 4.17% is in front of broadleaf woodland - in other words, majority of Cheshire woodlands are broadleaf).
- Trees outside woodland cover: 6.17% (2023 unpublished data higher than NW and England average) 0.75% coniferous.
- 7,194ha deciduous woodland in LNRS area (3.14% of LNRS region).
- 1,702ha wood Pasture and parkland (0.74% of the LNRS region).
- Ancient woodland 1.03% (2349.47ha of which: 78% is Ancient Semi Natural Woodland [1,460 ha]).
- 284ha traditional orchards (0.12% of LNRS region).
- 325 recorded veteran trees.
- 10,118km of hedgerow in Cheshire (making up 3.2% of England's total hedgerow network).
- An estimated 9% of wildlife habitat lost in region since 1980's is deciduous woodland.
- 66% of Cheshire's woodlands are not sustainably managed (this is measured by a Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicator).
- Urban tree cover varies significantly in Cheshire and Warrington, ranging from as little as 4% in some wards in Ellesmere Port, Chester and Warrington to 30% in some wards on the edge of our towns and villages.

In total the area of woodland and trees outside woodland covers 12.69% of Cheshire and Warrington (slightly below national average of 14.87%). Just 6.51% of this is woodland cover (lower than the England average of 10%), while trees outside woodland such as those found in urban areas, along hedgerows and in parkland collectively cover a further 6.17% (higher than the England average of 4.68%).

Although formerly ancient hunting forest, relatively little ancient woodland remains (0.8%), we have 325 recorded veteran trees (some of which are ancient), but these are likely to represent a fraction of current and past ancient trees once seen across our landscape. We have a variety of types of woodland which are home to different species but are fragmented, facing common and specific risks, including a lack of management (regular thinning for woodland products that once took place), pressure from development, climate change, diseases, invasive non-native species like Rhododendron or disturbance from recreation.

Did you know?

Beetles need dead wood...

Around 650 UK beetle species are thought to require deadwood at some point in their lifecycle – our woodland, trees and hedgerows are home to deadwood invertebrates which in turn become part of the food chain and support other wildlife which eat them.



Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees - types of habitat

Broadleaf woodland covers 4% of our area, making up just over a quarter of priority habitat overall in this strategy. It includes Dry Oak woodland, Ash woodland and upland oak woodland. Shell Brook Valley near Wincle (see photo) and woods near Cumberland Cottage in the South Pennines SAC are considered some of the best examples of Upland Oak woodland in the UK. These woodlands are very important for birds including the Wood Warbler, Redstart, and Pied Flycatcher. They are also home to rare moths and the Purple Hair-streak Butterfly.



Wet woodland, (priority habitat) can be found in poorly drained or seasonally wet locations and is commonly known as 'carr'. There are three main types in Cheshire – Willow, Alder and Birch Carr reflecting the tree species found most in each.

In the uplands, moorland cloughs and river valleys can support Birch and Alder wet woodland, providing important habitat for birds, which help to improve water quality. In lowland areas, wet woodland can often be found along watercourses, around open water and in mosaics with other wetland habitats and as part of larger woodlands. Researchers have recently highlighted that wet woodland as a peat forming habitat has been overlooked, so as well as being a priority habitat in its own right, hosting important invertebrates and the threatened Willow Tit, it is also likely to help reduce the impacts of climate change.

Plantation woodland, the UK imports over 80% of the timber it uses, so more use of home-grown timber should be explored. And by applying the UK Forestry Standard, productive plantation woodlands can be managed in a responsible and sustainable way. At Delamere Forest, the largest plantation woodland in the area, Forestry England is increasing structural and species diversity and open habitat to deliver biodiversity alongside timber production. These, along with access, recreation and events, boost health and wellbeing and the local economy.

Wood pasture and parkland is found in all 15 estates across Cheshire, from Lyme Park in Disley to Eaton Estate on the Dee. It is often home to veteran and ancient trees. Wood pasture and parkland is important because of the high numbers of ancient and veteran trees alongside unimproved grassland. It can also be classified as ancient wood-pasture.

Ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are irreplaceable habitat only covering 1% of Cheshire.

Heroic Hedges: As well as being good for nature, healthy hedges provide a wealth of benefits to farmers and landowners including providing wind and frost shelter for arable crops, reducing pesticide use by providing homes for natural predators on arable pests and season round habitat and foods for pollinators that help field yields; they also help protect our grazing animals by providing shelter from heat and cold, provide different foods for grazers, and a source of self-medication for animals and vital biosecurity – protecting against disease spreading. Hedges reduce water run-off and protect soils, reduce phosphate and nitrate run-off to water courses, their deep roots can reduce flood impact, and improve and draw up nutrients to the soil surface. Hedgerows store carbon above and below ground, new hedgerows can store between 600-800kg of CO₂ per year, per km.

Pressures

Grey squirrels - An invasive species that can have significant impacts in woodlands as they severely damage young, establishing woodlands through their bark stripping habits. This can impact our ability to meet the tree and woodland cover targets, as set out in the Environment Act 2021 amongst other pressures as discussed below.

Deer - There are six species in the UK in the wild. Red and Roe are the native species found in the UK and both have been recorded in Cheshire. Non native species in UK include Sika, Chinese Water Deer, Muntjac and Fallow. In Cheshire, Fallow and Muntjac have been recorded⁹.

Some estates in Cheshire actively manage deer herds in their parkland. For example Tatton Park has both Red and Fallow herds. Dunham Massey has Fallow.

Deer fencing prevents access but doesn't address numbers. Sustainably managed populations are also important. While fencing to exclude deer helps to limit browsing impact, this doesn't address the density that populations can reach and their impact across the wider landscape.

Disease - Climate change poses an imminent threat to many of Cheshire's trees, as new diseases have spread northwards especially acute oak decline and Phytophthora ramorum, which affects a number of tree species, including Larch and also Rhododendron (an invasive species rampant in the UK), so eradication of Rhododendron could help to prevent the potential spread of Phytophthora to other species of trees. Another major disease, already rampant, is ash dieback but there are signs that certain young ash trees are becoming resistant to this disease.

⁹ Deer Distribution Survey - The British Deer Society

Open areas in woodland: Openings in the woodland canopy are important to let light in and enable younger and smaller trees and shrubs, plus flowering plants like Bluebells, Wood Anemones, brackens and grasses to flourish and provide food for animals and insects.



Nature recovery opportunities for Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees

Case study: National Trust's Historic Landscapes Programme

Funded by Defra Green Recovery Challenge fund, the Historic Landscape programme aimed to enhance nature and start to combat the effects of climate change in five areas across Cheshire and Greater Manchester. Projects include planting 20,000 trees and laying or improving 4km of hedgerow to provide a nature corridor through Quarry Bank and Lyme Park. Other projects include wetland creation at Dunham Massey and Alderley Edge, bringing Egrets back to the area.

- Woodland restoration, especially PAWS restoration, through improved management and species diversification.
- Sustainable agroforestry could be a key element of a sustainable farming business and contribute to increased biodiversity as well as a different income stream within the farming landscape.
- Diversify woodland structure through natural regeneration, tree planting and coppicing favouring species and provenance suited to expected future climate.
- Ensure climate resilient trees are planted and increase area of canopy openings to benefit woodland species.
- Re-establish local timber production to encourage better management
- Establish a landscape-scale deer and grey squirrel strategy to enable young woodlands to thrive.
- Manage livestock access to facilitate successful tree and woodland establishment.
- Retain dead wood and mature trees with cavities to provide habitat for multiple species.
- Develop a continuous canopy cover approach for the urban tree environment.
- Adopt natural colonisation as a woodland establishment method and natural regeneration within existing woodlands, using planting where colonisation/regeneration are not successful, where appropriate.

What are veteran and ancient trees? A veteran tree is one that has features like cavities, decay holes and fungi growing on the trunk, they are an important habitat in their own right, significantly contributing to wider forest or woodland biodiversity and often have a rich cultural and historical value. Sometimes prominent in the landscape, they mark historic boundaries or locations. An ancient tree is one that has passed beyond maturity and is in its old age, often with a wide trunk but smaller crown. The deadwood from ancient trees is an important habitat.

Priority	Actions
W1. More, bigger, better and joined up wildlife rich woodland networks across the landscape	• W1.1 Establish sustainable, biodiversity-positive management of all woodland, increase % of open space, resilience to pests, disease and climate change regardless of size. • W1.2 Establish buffers to woodlands using a variety of methods. • W1.3 Create woodlands to UK Forestry Standard. • W1.4 Create and restore clough woodlands for natural flood management and increased biodiversity. • W1.5 Increase connectivity between existing woodlands through different suitable habitats. • W1.6 Safeguard mosaics (different habitats within one landscape) to complement and support woodland through good design and management • W1.7 Increase the biodiversity in all woodlands. • W1.8 Encourage positive management of woodlands by encouraging renewed interest in extracting timber for products and sale. • W1.9 Manage and minimise invasive, non-native species and deer impacts on new/current woodland and scrub/hedgerow habitats. • W1.10 Create and expand wet woodland in appropriate places. • W1.11 Create and maintain woodland scrubby edge habitats. • W1.12 Manage wet woodlands to promote a varied age structure and species diversity alongside maintaining a high-water table.
W2. A network of well-connected, well managed and restored ancient woodlands and plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), veteran trees, orchards and exceptional trees	• W2.1 Safeguard and encourage positive management of existing ancient woodlands and plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS). • W2.2 Create woodlands, woodland belts and hedgerows to buffer and connect existing ancient woodland sites. • W2.3 Improve protection of and safeguard all veteran and exceptional mature trees. • W2.4 Establish new trees that can become veteran and exceptional trees of the future. • W2.5 Record and map existing veteran trees and ancient woodlands. • W2.6 Re-establish voluntary tree wardens or community volunteers across Cheshire to help record, safeguard and encourage the positive management of veteran or exceptional trees and orchards.
W3. Urban areas with a network of trees, hedges and woodland, sustainably managed, delivering nature recovery and more environmental benefits to residents	• W3.1 Better safeguard and manage tree assets in urban areas and only remove as a last resort. • W3.2 Establish and manage tree assets as a continuous viable tree cover. • W3.3 Plant suitable replacement urban trees, native (UKISG nursery) or non-native, where planted urban trees are coming to end of life. • W3.4 Create and safeguard a network of urban trees and woodlands. • W3.5 Safeguard, retain and improve conditions for exceptional mature trees in the urban environment. • W3.6 Prevent damage to retained trees. • W3.7 Safeguard, manage and expand community woodlands. • W3.8 Raise awareness of the benefits of trees, hedges and woodland.
W4. More, bigger, better and joined up hedgerow networks	• W4.1 Safeguard and enhance existing hedgerows to achieve species diversity and enhance landscape value. • W4.2 Create or restore 5,000km of additional species rich hedgerows. • W4.3 Promote benefits of hedgerows and their positive management across Cheshire and Warrington. • W4.4 Better value and safeguard and increase the number of veteran and exceptional trees in our hedgerow network.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- Grassland fungi assemblage
- Deadwood invertebrates assemblage
- Farmland birds assemblage
- White-Letter Hairstreak butterfly
- Willow Tit
- Western European hedgehog
- Badger
- Bats assemblage

Key habitat - Hedgerows

Hedgerows play a vital role in the lifecycle and survival of many farmland species including amphibians, small mammals, invertebrates and birds. They complement and connect other areas of habitat and provide food, shelter and breeding sites. They are found on the Cheshire plains and on the lower slopes of the Pennine foothills. The most common tree species to be seen in our hedgerows and in-fields (historic hedgerows) include Oak, Sycamore, Lime, Field Maple and Holly.

What happened?

- From 1976 to 1997, the EU CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) scheme paid farmers to remove hedges to target increased production by having larger fields.
- 66% of remaining hedgerows are in poor to moderate condition due to historic inconsistent national policy and guidance around management.

Are hedgerows in recovery now in Cheshire? What policies and regulations are there to protect them?

- Since 1997, there has been legislation in the UK preventing the removal of ecologically or historically important hedgerows without the consent of the local authority.
- There are farm subsidies available for farmers to lay hedgerows and to maintain them with the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Countryside Stewardship scheme and Higher Level Stewardship, which has helped to see a marked increase in the number of new hedges.
- From 2024 onwards, there have been new hedgerow management regulations in place to prevent the degeneration of hedgerows by residents, farmers, local authorities and developers¹⁰.

¹⁰ The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024



Farming and Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

Below list demonstrates the benefits for farmers from utilising the above habitat theme and how farming benefits these habitats:

Woodland, hedgerows and trees benefits to farming:

- Diversified source of income through Agroforestry.
- Contributes to achieving carbon neutrality on the farm through carbon sequestration¹¹.
- Improved animal welfare as livestock utilise woodlands, hedgerows and trees for shade from all weather conditions as livestock can suffer from heat stress in the summer months, leading to lower productivity rates, negative effect on weight gain, and decreases conception rates. Also, trees can offer livestock additional food contributing to diet diversity¹³.
- Reduces the likelihood of diseases¹².
- Flood mitigation.
- Soil enhancement.
- Improves water quality.
- Silvoarable can provide extra income through fruits, nuts or timber being produced in alleys in and amongst crops.
- 20% average yield advantage from Silvoarable system.

Farming benefits for woodlands, hedgerows and trees

- Increased management providing diversity in structure of woodland and ensuring that hedgerows form the "A" shape commonly associated with healthy hedgerows (Cyclical management)¹⁴.
- Farmers provide trees in the most suitable area on their farm to ensure the best outcome for the trees as well as their livestock, soil or arable crops.

¹¹ National Farmers Union: Achieving net zero - farming's 2040 goal - AFN Network+

¹² The Benefits of Silvopastures: What are silvopastures, and how do they benefit our farmland and waterways? - Lancaster Farmland Trust

¹³ Agroforestry - Woodland Trust

¹⁴ Hedgerow Management Advice | Hedgelink

Key topic - Agroforestry

What is it?

Agroforestry is the integration of trees into a farming system, while maintaining or enhancing the farm's agricultural output¹⁵.

What types of agroforestry are there?

There are two types of agroforestry practices:

- Silvo-pastoral agroforestry • Silvo-arable agroforestry

What is silvo-pastoral agroforestry?

This type of agroforestry is where livestock graze under trees. There are mutual benefits for both the livestock and trees, with animals enriching the soil whilst the tree provides shelter and nutrition for livestock.

What is silvo-arable agroforestry?

Silvo-arable¹⁶ agroforestry is defined as 'agricultural or horticultural crops grown simultaneously with a long-term tree crop, such as fruit or nut trees, which provides an annual income while the tree crop matures. Trees are grown in rows with wide alleys in-between for cultivation.

How is agroforestry relevant to Cheshire's nature recovery and agriculture?

Nature benefits from forestry within agriculture systems, especially when it comes to wood pasture and orchards as these can provide habitats for a wide range of species¹⁷.

- Inputting trees within hedgerows provides an increase in tree canopy cover and provides nesting sites for birds and other creatures.
- Agroforestry can help to enhance soil health and protect from extreme weather, which can boost crop production and help with shelter for livestock.
- The yields of crops in between the trees is not reduced by shading until the tree reaches alley width, in which case the system can become silvo-pasture.

According to Agroforestry Research Trust, competition between trees and the alley crop for water is not present in the West, whereas during drought summers, this might be present in the East.¹² In a silvoarable system, nitrogen leaching could be reduced by up to 28% in areas where leaching was deemed high, but this is entirely dependent on tree density.

¹⁵ What is agroforestry? | Soil Association

¹⁶ Silvoarable - The Agroforestry Research Trust

¹⁷ A guide to agroforestry - GOV.UK

Grassland and Heathland

This section outlines the current state of our grassland and heathland, the pressures they face, opportunities for nature recovery and the priorities and actions for this habitat.

The state of our grassland and heathland

What types of grassland and heathland are good for nature?

Species rich grassland (shown on the right) is what we need, buzzing with insects, with different heights and types of plants and surface texture including tussocks and lumps. Improved grasslands may sound good – but in fact they are not very good for nature. Most of our species-rich grasslands, full of different types of grasses and wildflowers, have been lost to fields that may look green but are in fact species poor crop grassland of rye grass or a very limited species mix (e.g. clover, buttercup and ryegrass). This type of grassland is not that effective in protecting and improving our soils or supporting insects or other animals. Less than 2% of Cheshire and Warrington area is species-rich grassland and heathland habitat.



- Most grassland in Cheshire is improved (species-poor) grassland (73,077ha), mainly rye grass for agriculture.
- Second largest habitat is coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, at 1,315ha (again most is species poor).
- 99% of Cheshire's species rich meadows have disappeared since 1930.
- 466ha of lowland meadow priority habitat left below 200m, with a further 141ha in the upland fringe.
- 26ha of calcareous grassland - a unique habitat in the North West as it is normally found in the chalk area in the South of England.
- 63% of Local Wildlife Sites on grasslands have lost all their unimproved neutral, acid or calcareous grassland habitat.¹⁸

Grassland and heathland habitats cover a small area of Cheshire and Warrington, including grazing land, as well as road verges, parks, golf courses, riverbanks, lakesides, churchyards and along access routes and within open space in woodlands. Our grasslands and heathlands are fragmented, under pressure from drainage, development, agricultural improvement, recreational disturbance, and lack of management that leads to succession (when grasslands become areas of scrub, with woody plants, as nutrients increase).

The best examples of species rich grassland can have more species per square metre than any other habitat. Cheshire has irreplaceable wax-cap meadows and pastures which have some of the best examples of fungi in the UK. Along with these, our old species rich grasslands are home to well-established, complex webs of plants, fungi and invertebrates which cannot be replaced if lost.

¹⁸ Appendix 1: Description of the Strategy Area: Technical version

Cheshire and Warrington's diverse habitats include a wide range of types of grassland and heathland which include the following:

Neutral grassland is grassland defined as having vegetation dominated by grasses and herbs on a range of neutral soils, usually with a pH of between 4.5 and 6.5. These can include up to 12 different species of grass or flower per square metre, making it one of the most biodiverse habitats alongside species rich acid or calcareous grassland, discussed below. There are multiple habitats that neutral grasslands cover, as per the UKHab classification, including lowland neutral meadow. We only have 607ha left of species-rich neutral meadow, one of the largest is at local nature reserve Swettenham Meadows (see photo) managed by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust and the local farmer with sympathetic grazing. The large number of flowering plants now supports 14 types of butterfly. Other grasslands covered under the term neutral grasslands can include meadows and pastures, as well as a range of grasslands periodically inundated with water or permanently moist.

Waxcap grassland is a specific habitat with groups of fungi (see photo) including those from the Waxcap family. It is nutrient poor, well-drained, semi-natural grassland, and often grazed by sheep or mowed. It can be found in pastures, reservoir embankments, churchyards or old cricket pitches. It is found in the Pennine foothills at Rainow, with its rare Ballerina waxcap, and Tegg's Nose Country Park has 18 waxcap species and 25 other types of fungi. The importance of waxcap grasslands and its rarity is highlighted through its inclusion in the species actions, as there is a need for better information about where these sites are.

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh is found where the floodplain retains a high-water table for at least part of the year, providing an important habitat for overwintering wildfowl and breeding wader birds. Its water-filled ditches are an important habitat for mammals, insects and plants. Cheshire has only 1,315 ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh left along its major rivers. The River Gowy meadows support important endangered birds like Purple Heron, Glossy Ibis, Red-backed Shrike, Wryneck and Snipe and invertebrates such as the Mud Snail and Lesser Silver Water Beetle. Grazing marsh along Frodsham, Helsby and Ince marshes are of county, national and international importance for breeding and migrating birds, designated as functionally linked land to the Mersey estuary. We also have small areas of **fen meadow** and **marshy grassland** also known as rush pasture.

What is a sward? It's an old English word meaning a stretch of turf or an area covered in grass. It comes from words relating to hide or skin.





Calcareous grassland has formed on lime beds formed from salt mining near Northwich (around 27 ha, providing rare and complex plant life like that found on natural limestone outcrops in the Derbyshire Dales. Similar sites with crushed concrete, brick waste and other industrial material left for a generation or two can often provide incredible mosaic habitats where nutrients are at a premium, leading to a mix of scrub, woodland, open ground, very rare grassland and groups of other plants like lichen and mosses. Hard concrete and other aggregates provide an artificial hard layer to stop soil enrichment and prevent these habitats deteriorating with a lack of management of the vegetation (which would normally result in enrichment and succession). This hard landscape often provides temporary pools and bare ground. Together all these things are called **open mosaic habitat**. Many of these sites are at risk of development due to a national policy for encouraging development on brownfield sites.

Lowland acid grassland has only 744ha left with good examples in Cheshire East, at Kettleshulme, Wildboardclough and Rainow. These have magical sounding plant names like Sheep's Fescue, Common Bent, Tormentil, Harebell, Adder's tongue and Moonwort.

Great grasslands: The benefits of species rich grassland are good for nature and farmers alike. A typical three acre field can host nine million flowers on a single summer's day, producing enough nectar to support over 300,000 bees. Species rich grassland legume rich grassland or herbal lays with legume species (also found in species rich grassland) will help to reduce the costs of fertilisers, fix nitrogen, reduce the need for feed supplements and worming treatment, as a more mixed pasture will help to provide better grazing nutrition and minerals. Rotational grazing also promotes animal growth. It drains better, is more resilient to drought and provides a longer grazing season, provides five times the carbon storage than pure grass fields, and results in less weed growth. Of course, there is a cost to swapping out rye and clover for herbal lays. The Future Farming Group should be able to provide case studies and examples of how this 'reversion' back to more species rich grassland can be a win-win for farming businesses and wildlife.

Heathland comes in two types – **wet heathland and dry heathland**, these occur in both uplands and lowlands. Heathland is an important habitat with over 25% dwarf shrub cover found on mineral soils and thin peat. Our wet heathland is very fragmented and degraded, suffering from recreational disturbance or becoming deciduous woodland due to lack of appropriate intervention management, which could lead to natural habitat succession. It is found on the edges of blanket bog, degraded peat or on water-logged soils, with sphagnum mosses and heathers present. **Cheshire's lowland wet heath is its second rarest habitat in the area.** Dry heathland is recognisable by its gorse, heather and bilberry and is an important home to Common Lizards and in some locations uncommon species such as Green Hairstreak butterfly and Adder. Risks it faces include development, fire, climate change and air pollution.

What is citizen science? Research conducted by the public also known as volunteer monitoring or community science. Citizen Science is widely used to study wildlife and help with conservation. We'd like to encourage more people to connect with nature, to learn more about it, and help us keep good records of common and rare species across Cheshire.

Many of Cheshire's traditional hay meadows were ploughed up around the Second World War's 'dig for victory' campaign and then lost during the intensification of farming driven by the Common Agricultural Policy. This encouraged greater mechanisation, larger scale and simpler processes, including extensive use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. When species rich grasslands are lost, we see a significant impact on farmland species, particularly invertebrates at the bottom of the food chain, which also impacts small mammals, amphibians and even reptiles. So, the loss of this habitat has had a severe effect on the numbers of Lapwings, Curlews and Yellow Wagtails and Skylark since the 1930s. **Species rich grassland has been lost faster than any other habitat in the UK.**

Pressures on Grassland and Heathland

- Increased pesticide use.
- Lack of awareness amongst residents about benefits of leaving 'no cut' areas in urban centres.
- Lack of communication between local authorities, contractors and residents relating to new mowing strategies designed to benefit biodiversity.
- Invasive non-native species.
- Soil compaction.
- Soil erosion.
- Inappropriate management techniques.
- Succession.

Nature recovery opportunities for Grassland and Heathland

- Councils have begun to adopt better management practices, sowing wildflower areas in many of our urban areas to provide food for pollinators. More work is needed to ensure new wildflower meadows are sustainable in the long term with appropriate resources, training or volunteer support to ensure they are hay cut, and cuttings removed, to prevent enrichment, resulting in loss of diversity and value over time.
- Restore former landfill sites to grassland and other appropriate habitats, manage by hay cutting or conservation grazing.
- Lapwing, Redshank and Curlew populations will benefit from restoration and management of lowland wet grassland on floodplains.
- Implement seasonal grazing and mowing to maintain the grass cover (sward) and not impact nesting birds.
- Restore former heathland sites for example those at Goostrey Heaths & Morley Green Heath.
- Improve resident education and awareness to carry out nature friendly gardening, improve awareness of the rarity of heathland habitat and reduce the danger of wildfires at publicly accessible heathland sites.
- Restore appropriate ex-industrial sand and sandstone quarries in Cheshire to acid grasslands and lowland heath to allow animals like reptiles to thrive.

Fact: Plantlife research shows that one typical 3 acre field can host 9,000,000 flowers on a single summers day, producing enough nectar to support over 300,000 bees.

Priority	Actions
G1 More, bigger, better and joined up nature friendly and semi-natural grasslands for people and pollinators	• G1.1 Create and enhance a network of species-rich grassland sites. • G1.2 Create more wildflower rich grasslands, encourage rotational grazing practices and reduced fertiliser use. • G1.3 Create new species rich grasslands as part of public and private development. • G1.4 Better manage grasslands to increase species and sward diversity. • G1.5 Promote better grazing practices for different wildlife-rich grassland communities. • G1.6 More grasslands managed by hay cuts or cut-and-collect in urban areas, to ensure quality can be sustained. • G1.7 Promote nature friendly gardening. • G1.8 Support communities to adopt public land to manage as species rich grasslands. • G1.9 Promote nature friendly public space and linear features (i.e. roads, railways, cycle routes, canals). • G1.10 Use Citizen Science to increase identification and recording of species across our diverse grasslands. • G1.11 Promote awareness of the value and role species-rich grasslands can play. • G1.12 Encourage pesticide use to be minimised.
G2 Waxcap grasslands, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh are extended and restored	• G2.1 Enhance waxcap grasslands. • G2.2 Establish appropriate conservation grazing over large areas. • G2.3 Restore and expand the area of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. • G2.4 Map and safeguard existing known locations of waxcap grasslands. • G2.5 Carry out appropriate management of sites depending on location. • G2.6 Maintain waxcap grassland through appropriate livestock grazing or haymaking but avoid soil damage where possible. • G2.7 Conduct research to locate sites of importance as such mapping long established undisturbed grasslands.
G3 More, bigger, better and joined up Heathland	• G3.1 Restore and create wet heath. • G3.2 Create and enhance a network of heathland sites. • G3.3 Manage and maintain heathland through appropriate conservation grazing practices. • G3.4 Manage and expand diverse heathlands for key species identified in Cheshire. • G3.5 Promote the value of heathland.
G4 Moorland areas supporting species and structurally diverse mosaic of habitats	• G4.1 Enhance and manage moorland through plant reintroductions and translocations. • G4.2 Manage recreation to safeguard our moorlands. • G4.3 Promote awareness of moorland habitats and why they are important. • G4.4 Establish a network of gully blocking and re-profiling areas to raise the water table. • G4.5 Enable heather to complete its natural cycle.

A list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- Birds of prey assemblage
- Grassland fungi assemblage
- Roof nesting birds assemblage
- Reptiles assemblage

Key habitat - Orchards

What are orchards?

According to UKHabs classification, Orchards are an open mosaic habitat, 'that is structurally and ecologically similar to wood pasture and parkland, with open grown trees set in herbaceous vegetation'. They are different to the priority habitat complexes due to the tree species composition, the small scale of individual habitat patches and a wider distribution and greater frequency of the habitat patches²⁰. Cheshire's traditional orchards are unique, there are 32 local cultivars of apple within the county and highly localised varieties of pear, damson, bullace (plum type), plum and pear.

Why are orchards important in Cheshire?

Cheshire's orchards were once well-known in the conurbations of Liverpool and Manchester as Cheshire was a key supplier of fresh fruit up until the late 1940's. Majority of the estates and farms in Cheshire had their own orchard, which makes it unsurprising that the two main cities relied on the county for their 5 a day. On top of the orchard areas within farms and estates, many farms have Damson trees in hedges close to farms.

What is normally in an orchard?

- Fruit trees (Damson, Bullace, Pear, Apple, Cherry).
- Wildflower meadow (The pollinators and predators in this habitat helps to improve the success of fruit trees).
- Ponds (This was part of the traditional orchard setting).
- Vegetable plots.

What happened?

- Post World War 2, many of the orchards have been removed.
- However, within the historic Vale Royal area of mid-Cheshire, there are still numerous orchards that survive.
- In 2011, PTES (People's Trust for Endangered Species) found that there was only 90.2Ha of orchards left in Cheshire, but from further studies by Cheshire Wildlife Trust, there are 284Ha of Orchards in the county (see Appendix 1).

What is going to be done to improve the figures?

- Through possible private investment into natural capital, the Cheshire and Warrington LNRS team will look to incentivise farmers and landowners to reintroduce this valuable asset into the countryside.
- Environmental Land Management schemes, which will be linked with the LNRS in the future, could help to improve the state of orchards in Cheshire.
- Also, there are community and allotment groups, which have introduced orchard trees, providing another source of food for pollinators and invertebrates and the community itself. This is being made possible through national heritage lottery funding.

“Cheshire was famous for its apples and pears. I'm in my fifties now, and things have really changed. I remember finding old orchards on farms as a child, with really old apple and pear trees. Cheshire resident.”

²⁰ ORCHARD | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary

Species-rich Grassland/Heathland and Farming

The below list demonstrates the benefits for farmers from changing their practices to incorporate the above habitats and how farming benefits these habitats

Benefits for farming from species-rich grassland and heathland

- Keeps soil healthy and carbon rich.
- Protects soil from erosion.
- Provides a range of forage for livestock.
- Is part of the character of a landscape.
- Can be part of our cultural heritage where traditions and skills are maintained, like haymaking²¹.
- Provides minerals for livestock, which would not come from normal rye grass pasture²².
- Just by having a 6 metre strip along the side of a crop field, can provide multiple benefits, such as pest reduction, less diseases, cost reduction of up to £3,000per ha, when compared to the cost of pesticide use.
- In drought conditions, wildflowers have been found to cope with the extreme heat conditions better due to the varying root structure that enables them to tap into groundwater sources.
- Supports biodiversity on the farm.
- Reduces overall chemical dependence.
- Higher yields are achieved as pollination is enhanced.
- Ensures climate resilience on farms.

²¹ Maintain species-rich grassland – Farming

²² Is the rye-grass always greener

Farming benefits to species-rich grassland and heathland

- Without farming interventions, such as haymaking or sympathetic livestock grazing, wildflower meadows tend to move into the next phase of ecosystem succession, which is becoming scrub habitat²³.
- By embracing wildflowers on the borders of their fields, farmers can help to reduce run off into the watercourses, therefore benefitting overall ecosystems²⁴.
- Farmers or land managers can help to reduce the risk of wildfires and provide a mosaic of structure on heathland by maintaining traditional grazing practices on heathland. However, stocking rates must be set to create or maintain the mosaic of habitats and vegetation structure²⁵.

²³ 7 Stages of succession

²⁴ 19 Reasons Farmers Are Using Wildflowers Instead Of Pesticides - And Why You Should Try It

²⁵ Lowland heathland - Farm Wildlife

What's a headland? Headlands are the areas at the edges of fields beyond where the main arable crop grows, it's often where the tractor and machinery turns around before going back into the main field to drill or spray it. Headlands are therefore a grassland, where lots of wild-flowers can grow providing homes and food for pollinators that benefit crops and eat pests, reducing the need for fertilisers and pesticides.

Watercourses

This section outlines the current state of our watercourses, the pressures they face, opportunities for nature recovery and the priorities and actions for this habitat.

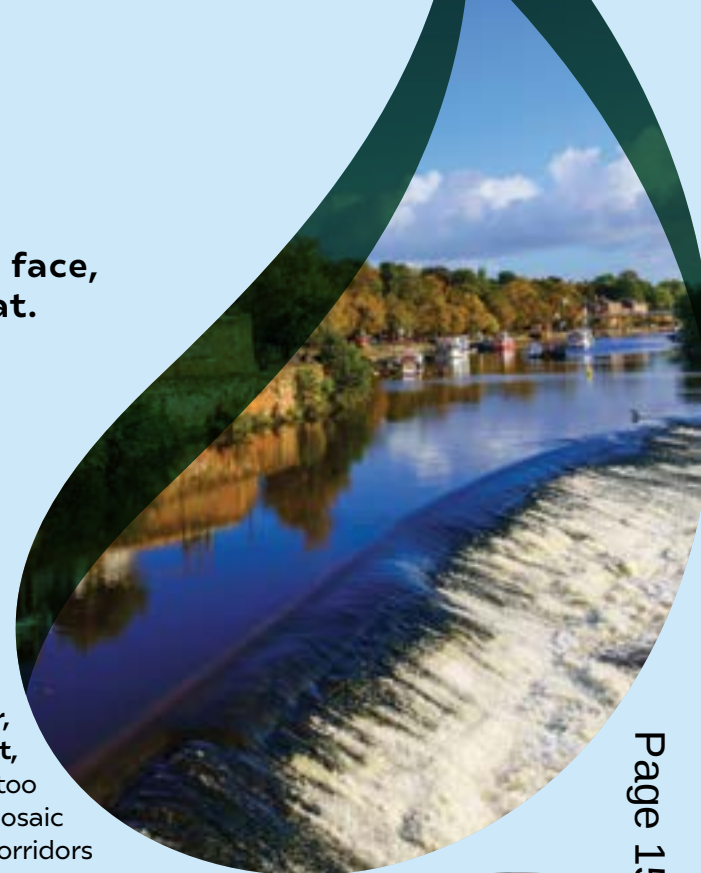
The state of our watercourses

- The majority of Cheshire and Warrington rivers and streams are in poor or moderate condition.²⁶
- 3,704ha of mudflats make up 1.62% of the area.
- 1,112ha of rivers and streams cover less than 0.5% of our area but their catchments cover almost the entire county.
- 2,086ha coastal saltmarsh makes up under 1% of our area.
- River Dee and River Mersey estuaries are nationally and internationally designated with legal protections.

Cheshire and Warrington's watercourses include rivers, streams, estuaries and canals. **The rivers Mersey, Dane, Weaver, Wheelock, Gowy, Bollin and Dee are important ecological corridors crossing our landscape, home to Brown Trout, Atlantic Salmon and European Eel.** Alongside the numerous streams, they form a vital habitat for wildlife. Riverbanks too steep or wet for farming or timber production are home to woodland, species-rich grassland and form tiny fragments of mosaic with scrub or fen. **Our canals**, built in the industrial revolution are now important homes for wildlife, forming ecological corridors through the urban and rural environment, along with their sustainable use as recreational corridors and multifunctional role. **Some of Cheshire and Warrington's most important places for wildlife are the Mersey and Dee Estuaries with inter-tidal mudflats and saltmarshes**, which are internationally important for migrating birds.

There are many risks to nature in and around Cheshire's rivers, canals and streams with majority in less than "Good" status, exacerbated by the modifications and obstacles in them which make species movement difficult. These water bodies are under pressure from water abstraction, pollution from agricultural, urban and highway run-off, plus occasional sewage discharge overflows. Run-off from agriculture and sewage discharges add unwanted nutrients to the water which cause algal blooms and a high amount of sediment, adversely affecting native species. The linear nature of our network of watercourses helps invasive non-native species like Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Floating Pennywort to spread. Our waterways and river systems, especially the risk to water quality, are also increasingly affected by the impacts of climate change, including extremes of rainfall or dry weather and associated temperature changes, which alter water quality, quantity and habitats. The LNRS will look to address the impacts of these pressures alongside the impacts from climate change, such as flooding and drought, through the priorities and actions set out on page 46.

²⁶ State of our Rivers Report 2024 | The Rivers Trust



Rivers

The **River Dee** rises in Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park in Wales and joins the English border above Chester, where it forms the boundary between Cheshire and Wales. It is designated as a Water Protection Zone (WPZ) due to its importance as a source of drinking water for three million people. It is a SAC and a SSSI because of a suite of designated features. Furthermore, The River Dee is the only SAC river in Cheshire. It was designated because of the species it supports and its fluvial geomorphology, including the most northern population of Club Tailed Dragonfly in Britain, and the only population in Cheshire.

The **River Dane** has many natural features such as oxbows, sandy cliffs and sand bars. Significant amounts of woodland can be found along the steep banks near Holmes Chapel, including ancient woodland. A tributary of the River Dane, the **River Wheelock** area is a designated Local Wildlife Site due to its reeds, Reed Sweetgrass and Reed Canary grass, which provides an important habitat for the Marsh Harrier. It is an important ecological connectivity corridor to the Sandbach Flashes SSSI.

The **Weaver** is the longest river in the county at over 50 miles rising in the Peckforton Hills and joining the Manchester Ship Canal before entering the Mersey estuary. Between Nantwich and Winsford, it is more semi-natural and meandering but downstream of Winsford, it has been heavily modified with weirs and locks to allow boats to bring in coal and export salt. It even had its own Act of Parliament to permit navigation in 1759.

Also rising in the Peckforton Hills is the **River Gowy** which follows the lowland of Cheshire for 22 miles. It is the most heavily modified river in the area, and have been straightened, dredged and had its banks raised to drain once marshy floodplain for agriculture and to reduce flooding. Yet it still provides important coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat in several locations along its route. It plays host to nationally rare insect species at the Gowy Marshes and is an important area for wading birds.

The **Mersey** is fed by many tributaries including the Bollin on the boundary between Cheshire and Greater Manchester. It flows through Warrington, meandering through Paddington Fields on the northern edge of Woolston Eyes, before meeting the estuary at Howley Weir. It then flows heavily channelled through the south of Warrington town centre, out to the west of Warrington, where it naturally meanders before being joined by **Sankey Brook** and the **Gowy** west of Warrington.



Canals

Canals are excellent wildlife and recreational corridors, especially in urban areas. Canals do face challenges, such as non-native invasives e.g. Floating Pennywort, due to its linear nature. In Cheshire and Warrington, the Canal and Rivers Trust and other partners have been hard at work trying to boost biodiversity along these corridors and their adjacent habitats, enabling some of our rarest species to maintain a stronghold e.g. Gadwall, Reed Bunting and Willow Warbler.

Pressures on our Watercourses

- Increased pesticide use.
- Lack of awareness amongst residents about benefits of leaving 'no cut' areas in urban centres.
- Lack of communication between local authorities, contractors and residents relating to new mowing strategies designed to benefit biodiversity.
- Invasive non-native species.
- Soil compaction.
- Soil erosion.
- Inappropriate management techniques.
- Succession.

Nature recovery opportunities for Watercourses

- Adopt nature-based interventions in the landscape to improve water quality e.g. hedgerows, buffer strips and river-side tree planting.
- Develop and build upon the good work of the catchment partnerships to complete further Water Framework Directive (WFD) enhancement actions by speeding up river restoration and wetland creation.
- Eradicate American Mink, to help establish a viable population of Water Voles again.
- Require developers of large-scale developments to follow local planning and Biodiversity Net Gain policies regarding watercourses, by following the mitigation hierarchy. Damage to estuarine habitats through Biodiversity Net Gain policies.



Priorities and actions for Watercourses

What are the priorities and actions to support protection and restoration of a thriving water-based ecosystem?

Priority	Actions
WA1. Healthier and resilient watercourses with more abundant native wildlife	• WA1.1 Create interventions in the landscape to slow the flow, attenuate water, and reduce run-off. • WA1.2 Re-connect rivers and estuaries with their floodplains. • WA1.3 Facilitate identification, prevention, regulation and enforcement of pollution by relevant agencies. • WA1.4 Remove or adapt barriers to allow fish and other river species full access to our rivers and streams. • WA1.5 Enhance natural structures in rivers for biodiversity benefits. • WA1.6 Ensure better natural recharge of water bodies during low rainfall periods. • WA1.7 Create and restore a variety of riverside (riparian) and in-channel habitats.
WA2. The whole river catchment, from source to sea, functions as naturally as possible	• WA2.1 Re-naturalise rivers by re-connecting rivers to their floodplains. • WA2.2 Create a mosaic of habitats in the catchment that holds and slowly releases water over time to refill our waterbodies for nature and people. • WA2.3 Reduce pollution in our watercourses and catchments. • WA2.4 Enhance canals by improving and creating better habitats for nature. • WA2.5 Restore natural processes of erosion, transportation and deposition through the implementation of nature-based solutions.
WA3. Our estuaries are restored for nature and enhanced by local communities	• WA3.1 Enhance and create habitats along our estuaries. • WA3.2 Manage and re-align flood defences to conserve intertidal habitats. • WA3.3 Reduce the impact of public access on feeding and nesting birds.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- White-Clawed Freshwater Crayfish
- Migrating fish assemblage
- Mud Snail
- Lowland raised mire invertebrates
- Exposed riverine sediment invertebrates
- European Water Vole
- Common Club-Tail Dragonfly
- Desmoulin's Whorl Snail

What is diffuse water pollution? Diffuse water pollution comes from lots of smaller, scattered and intermittent sources including run off from transport, agricultural soils and nutrients, pesticides and leaching through soils or underground drainage, which all combined to pollute our watercourses.

Key habitat - Estuaries

The middle of the Mersey Estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and SSSI. It is an important part of a major bird migration route. The upper Mersey Estuary, near Warrington consists of intertidal sand and mudflats and saltmarsh. They are classified as functionally linked land to the SPA. Since the industrial revolution, the river has been subject to industries dumping heavy metals, such as zinc lead and arsenic, into the river. But as many of these industries have disappeared, fish and other aquatic life have returned, attracting Cormorant, Heron and Grebe as the river came back to life.

The Dee Estuary is protected by SPA, SAC, SSSI and Ramsar designations and is one of the top ten estuaries in the UK for wintering and passing waterfowl populations. Throughout the year, it provides a key area for internationally designated birds, in with its mudflats support a variety of marine invertebrates.

Our estuaries, especially the Dee's saltmarshes, have been managed well by the RSPB but certain pressures still persist across the Dee and Mersey. These include effects of persistent historic and current pollution, increased storm surges because of climate change and recreational disturbance, along with invasive species like the Chinese Mitten Crab.

What are the pressures impacting estuaries?

Estuaries are unique habitats as it comprises of multiple habitats within one ecosystem. Some of the key pressures include:

- Poor water quality from agricultural, sewage and litter pollution.
- Recreational disturbance (see Appendix 1).
- Sea level rise.
- Coastal erosion.
- Invasive non-native species.
- Development pressure.

Key issues - Water availability

Cheshire and Warrington's landscape will be undergoing vast amounts of pressure on its water resources in the near future:

- Twice the amount of housing allocation- All boroughs in Cheshire and Warrington.
- 10x higher abstraction from water-reliant industries such as salt, manufacturing, renewable energy, food manufacturing and agriculture.
- The River Dee supplies three million people on both sides of the border in England and Wales.
- The Weaver-Gowy catchment is an unusual catchment in the North-West as it is predominantly abstracted for non-public water supply, meaning that it is under more pressure than other rivers in the region.

The majority of Cheshire's water bodies are falling below good ecological and chemical condition, with only a few reaching "Good" status.

How does ecological and chemical condition impact water abstraction?

The main rivers in Cheshire and Warrington, which face possible water scarcity in the near future include the Weaver, Gowy and Dane. The rest of the catchments are following closely behind with the upper Mersey being a source of concern. All of these rivers are classified as moderate, poor or bad condition, for both ecological and chemical condition. By not having ecological and chemical condition of watercourses at "Excellent" or "Good" status, it can cause problems to businesses through:

- Businesses with abstraction licences, with higher volumes of water, may have their volumes reduced.
- There will need to be a re-distribution of abstraction among existing sources within the catchment.
- The Environment Agency will possibly change licences under Section 51/52 of the Water Resources Act 1991, as they are committed by law to ensure that designated sites are not impacted and they are committed to address serious damage, actual and at risk water bodies under the abstraction plan.

What is the likelihood of water scarcity and what could happen to abstraction licences in Weaver, Gowy and Dane?

- In Water Resources West Water means Business report²⁷, it is stated that declining low flows are becoming a stark reality for the Dane, Gowy and tributaries of the Weaver. Low flows that abstractors could expect to see, specifically in the River Dane, during dry summers for the next 30 years, could be 9% lower than the previous 30 years. We are experiencing water scarcity in both the Gowy and Weaver too, and low flow alarms are being recorded. In August 2025, rainfall was only 33.7%. For abstractors, the EA have set up Hand-Off Flow (HOF) conditions in their licences, meaning that if river flows fall below the HOF threshold, abstraction is restricted. If investment is not put into water security through nature-based solutions and river restoration, this could become more frequent as climate change takes hold.

What is being done to prevent this?

The solutions proposed to mitigate the potential impact of low water availability in the next 10 years are as follows:

- The Weaver-Gowy private investment scheme, which is a natural capital scheme, will be directed by the combined authority, providing farmers and landowners with funding to provide nature-based interventions in the landscape to slow the flow, reduce flood risk, store carbon and improve biodiversity on their land. This scheme will be paid for by a range of stakeholders with an interest in water availability, carbon sequestration, nature restoration, water quality and high quality farm produce.

²⁷ WRW Water Means Business Report

Farming and Water

The below list demonstrates the benefits for farmers from changing their practices to incorporate these habitats and how farming benefits these habitats:

Water benefits to farming:

- Lower water usage can help to reduce costs for farmers, making their operations more economically sustainable.
- Improved water management can help to improve soil health by preventing soil erosion and maintain soil structure, promoting better crop growth.
- Holistic water management by capturing rainwater through techniques like swales and ponds, which allow soil infiltration and aquifer recharge, can protect farmers in future extreme climate conditions, such as droughts and flooding, thus making the business sustainable²⁹.
- Agriculture, water and maintenance of natural environment has been previously seen as separate issues, but by creating a holistic catchment management approach, centred around all 3 together, we can help to resolve many problems faced by each one synonymously³⁰.

Farming benefit to water:

- In areas where irrigation is used, farmers can be efficient by optimising irrigation piping placement to ensure water is evenly distributed across crop fields and by integrating large trees within crop areas to minimise evaporation and reduce water needs³¹.
- Many farming techniques can help with water conservation that can help improve water quality and boost biodiversity:
 1. Drip irrigation.
 2. Capturing and storing water (rainwater harvesting).
 3. Irrigation scheduling.
 4. Drought resistant crops.
 5. Dry farming: Method of crop production that does not rely on irrigation during dry seasons but instead utilises soil moisture stored from previous rains³².

Urban areas and water

Unlike other themes in the LNRS, watercourses are a key and permanent feature of our urban areas as majority of the world's urban centres are centred around watercourses. The amount of water used by an average person in the UK at present is now 143 litres per day, whereas in the 1960's, it was 85 litres per day³³. With urban areas expected to increase in the UK, the pressures on making our water use and management system sustainable and efficient. Flooding and water quality problems will be the main topic of contention over the next few decades and some of the key solutions are discussed in this document e.g. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).

²⁸ Water Conservation in Natural Farming | Water-Smart Farming

²⁹ Nurturing Nature: The Crucial Role of Water in Regenerative Farming | Eight Oaks Farm Distillery

³⁰ Agriculture-impacts-water-quality.pdf

³¹ Water Use in Agriculture Key Facts and Figures

³² Agricultural Techniques for water conservation

³³ Future of the subsurface: Urban water management in the UK



Peatland and Wetlands



This section outlines the current state of our peat and wetlands, the pressures they face, opportunities for nature recovery and the priorities and actions for this habitat.

The state of our peatland and wetlands

- 2,627ha standing open water (of which 156ha is priority habitat).
- 692ha Blanket bog.
- 16,000 Ponds (formerly 41,000 ponds classifying Cheshire as the pond capital of Europe).
- Cheshire's Meres and Mosses are internationally and nationally significant for wildlife.

Cheshire and Warrington have a range of peatland and wetlands formed after the last ice age an estimated 10,000 years ago³⁴ – known as its Meres and Mosses. These support a variety of important habitats and species including lowland raised bogs and basin mires, upland blanket bog, fens and reedbed, inland salt marsh, meres, lakes and ponds. Development pressure, climate change, drainage, erosion, nutrient enrichment from nearby ditches and watercourses, ecological succession, invasive species like Himalayan Balsam. Lastly, recreational disturbance can all put these valuable habitats at risk.

Peatland - There are 153ha of lowland raised bog and 20.4ha of basin mire remaining. Lowland raised bogs formed gently curving domes of peat up to 12 metres thick, rising above the surrounding landscape and fed only by rainwater. Their swampy pools are filled with willow, other wetland-loving tree species and reeds, followed by vegetation and sphagnum mosses growing on rafts above the surface of trapped water beneath. Over the years, this formed peat, an important carbon store. This process still occurs in places like Abbot's Moss, also known as 'quaking bogs'. Today, most of the mosslands of Cheshire and Warrington are relict peat. The small areas of mossland support rare species of invertebrates, such as the Raft Spider, aquatic beetles and Small Heath Butterfly. While the best mosslands support rare plants such as Royal Fern, Juniper, Cranberry, Bog Rosemary, Sundew and host multiple species of sphagnum moss.



Succession – it's natural but it's a problem. Succession is a threat to some habitats but what does it mean? Nothing stays the same, and that is natural. So, habitats evolve – soils build up as plants rot down, ponds fill with silt and plants, unmanaged grassland 'scrubs up'. If ponds aren't cleaned out, new ponds aren't being created, there will be no new sites for rare species to move and habitats will be lost. With so few protected or safeguarded spaces, nature is at more of a risk, so we need to ensure that succession does not mean we lose our last remaining habitats for key species.



Upland blanket bog - There are 153ha of **lowland raised bog** and 20.4ha of **basin mire** remaining. Lowland upland blanket bog began to form around 7,500 years ago and since then mosses accumulated, trapping organic matter and carbon to create waterlogged expanses of peaty soils, to depths that were present until recent history. On average, the IUCN state that active peat formation is likely to be only 2mm per year highlighting the importance of the need for active peatland restoration in the region. Peat forming species colonise this habitat, such as sphagnum mosses, accompanied by Common and Hare's Tail Cotton Grasses. Cheshire's upland blanket bog is found on the flanks of the South Peak's Pennine hills where the habitat supports birds like Merlin, Golden Plover and Short Eared Owl. This is a protected landscape, alongside Risley Moss and other meres and mosses within the area, that is reflected in international, national and local designations. Sadly, our upland blanket bogs have dried out in some cases, others have been subject to high levels of historic pollution and disturbance which destroyed tracts of peat making it more vulnerable to erosion and wildfires. Efforts are being made to restore naturally functioning blanket bog and related habitats with a view to halting carbon emissions and turn them back into carbon sinks. This relies on healthy bog vegetation, in which peat building sphagnum mosses flourish once again. Gully blocking, planting sphagnum and works to stabilise existing peat are actions which help to retain water and provide the conditions for restored function to happen. Healthy functioning peatlands provide environmental benefits, such as better water retention and flood risk reduction.

Wetlands - Within Cheshire, 28 of its wetlands are designated as SSSI's, and considered as nationally important examples of lowland habitats, largely formed through post glacial process, and support an array of rare flora and fauna. In addition, a significant proportion of these are internationally important, designated in clusters such as the:

- West Midlands Mosses SAC
- Midlands Meres & Mosses Ramsar Phase 1 & 2
- Manchester Mosses SAC (e.g. Risley Moss)

Fens and reedbeds - (photo) occur on the edges of open water in valleys and depressions and around springs and flushes, where the soil remains waterlogged most of the year. Fens and reedbeds form an important mosaic of varied habitat around the meres (lakes) of Cheshire and are home to the famous booming Bittern, groups of Warbler and flowers – Marsh Violet, Purple Loosestrife and Meadowsweet. We have nearly 500 hectares of fen and reedbed, reduced over the years through drainage for agriculture and the lowering of the water table on neighbouring land. Flood barriers have acted to disconnect rivers from their floodplains which in turn damages many of these wetland habitats.

Inland saltmarsh - is Cheshire's rarest habitat and due to its fragmentation and a lack of recording we don't know its current extent. It is an important habitat (one of the most at-risk habitats across Europe) found near salt workings where brine springs come up. Forming part of a mosaic habitat it supports Saltmarsh Grass and Lesser Sea-Spurrey.

Meres & mosses - are mainly located across lowland Cheshire and include natural glacial meres ranging in depth from 1 – 27m, artificial reservoirs, flooded sand and gravel pits, subsidence lakes and flashes (wetlands formed in old mining areas). These all provide vital habitat for insects, dragonflies and wildfowl. Cheshire's meres and mosses have suffered from pollution, from human pressure – nitrogen leaching from sewage works, overstocking with fish, disturbance from boats and through the spread of invasive non-native species.





Pressures facing Peatland and Wetlands

- Increased pressure from development on unknown locations.
- Climate Change.
- Recreational disturbance.
- Inappropriate management techniques.
- Dredging.
- Intensification of agriculture.

Nature recovery opportunities for Peatland and Wetlands

- District Level Licencing (DLL) project.
- Decision support framework for peatland protection, the establishment of new woodland and re-establishment of existing woodland on peatland in England, in conjunction with the Open Habitats and Breeding wader policy.
- Peat restoration projects are currently taking place with the Great North Bog project and the Great Manchester Wetlands project, which includes areas of Warrington.
- Trials of wet farming techniques have been established with the Mersey Rivers Trust and this could be expanded to ensure floodplains are re-connected to the rivers.

³⁴ Introduction to the Glaciation of Britain - AntarcticGlaciers.org

What is Wet Woodland? Willow Carr and Alder Carr are types of wet woodland that grow in fens and bogs with a bulky ground layer of plants like Royal Fern, Yellow Flag and Meadowsweet.

Priorities and Actions for Peatland and Wetlands

Priority	Actions
P1. Peatlands restored and buffered with semi-natural habitats	• P1.1 Where possible, peatland habitat should be restored. Where development is proposed, it should not create harm, which cannot be mitigated. • P1.2 Improve the condition and functioning of upland peatlands through appropriate measures to re-wet habitats, to revegetate bare peat, to establish appropriate vegetation, and to stabilise areas of erosion, reducing carbon emissions and creating conditions for future peat formation, carbon sequestration and improved natural flood management. • P1.3 Increase lowland raised bog restoration. • P1.4 Enhance and restore blanket bog plant diversity. • P1.5 Develop opportunities for local businesses to invest in peat restoration.
P2. More, bigger, better and joined up wetland habitats	• P2.1 Target wetland creation in naturally wet areas. • P2.2 Expand existing wetlands and species diversity through restoration. • P2.3 Re-introduce and increase the sphagnum moss and companion species cover across our meres and mosses. • P2.4 Minimise recreational disturbance, where possible. • P2.5 Create buffer zones around known sites to prevent damage from surrounding land use practices. • P2.6 Safeguard, restore and improve wetland habitat, providing buffers to protect water quality and by managing invasive non-native species.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- Open Mosaic Butterflies and Moths
- Desmoulin's Whorl Snail
- European Water Vole
- Birds of Prey assemblage
- Lesser Silver Water Beetle
- Lowland raised mire invertebrates.



Key Habitat - Ponds

What is a pond?

It's a water body less than 2 hectares in size. Ponds have a life cycle – gradually silting up and becoming marshy at the edges as trees and plants encroach. Eventually they're visible as clumps of trees, and may only have water in during the winter as some dry up in the summer, this sometimes serves to remove fish present that predate on most other aquatic life. A pond that is good for wildlife is species rich with lots of variety and plant life at different stages to support aquatic and insect species.



What is synonymous between ponds and Cheshire?

Cheshire has one of the densest pond landscapes in the country with 16,600 ponds remaining out of the pre-20th century's 41,000 ponds. Areas close to Handforth, Arley and Tabley are particularly rich in ponds. Old pond locations or 'ghost ponds' can be seen as contours on the ground or found on old maps. Cheshire also has the greatest concentration of Great Crested Newts in England. Ponds act as a network of wildlife habitats and as stepping stones in the landscape for aquatic and wetland species. Cheshire's marl pits (clay pits) were dug at a similar time and many have not been actively managed. Many of these ponds are reaching the later stages of their life cycle, silted up and succession has led to scrub and woodland establishment, often seen as clumps of trees in the landscape. In the last 40 years, many of Cheshire's ponds have been adversely impacted by chemical drift and fertiliser run off and sometimes taken over by invasive species.

What is currently being done for ponds?

- In Environmental Land Management schemes, farmers and landowners can get payments to create ponds on their land and additional payments for managing and buffering the ponds with appropriate habitat.
- Across the UK, there is currently a District Level Licensing (DLL) Pond scheme, where landowners can apply to create or restore ponds, specifically for Great Crested Newt (GCN) mitigation from new development (further information below in the case study).



Case Study: Lindow Moss Landscape Partnership

Lindow Moss is a unique and historically important place in Wilmslow, Cheshire, home to Lindow Man, the preserved bog body discovered in the 1980s. Lindow Moss is one of the largest lowland peatlands in Cheshire and is a diverse mosaic of habitats and a key area for carbon storage due to its peat content. The Lindow Moss Partnership was established in February 2024 by Wilmslow Town Council, Transition Wilmslow, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside, Cheshire East Council, Natural England, Friends of Lindow Moss and Mersey Rivers Trust. They have developed a 10 year **action plan** and secured a national lottery grant to begin work to achieve their vision of a landscape in recovery, for nature, for the climate and for our citizens.

Case study: Natural England's District Level Licensing (DLL) Pond scheme

The idea behind DLL is that a landscape scale approach is used to improve GCN populations across England, focusing on the whole species rather than individuals, which is the opposite approach to traditional mitigation licensing (see **YouTube link** for more information). This doesn't mean DLL will replace mitigation but will work alongside it, especially in places where DLL hasn't/will not launch in the future.

Natural England use an ensemble model to determine where GCN are (core), likely to be (fringe) and good habitat for GCN. Each county that DLL has launched in models these Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) to outline suitable areas for pond creation or restoration. The data gathered is from local record centres where GCN have been recorded and where known GCN populations already exist. You can have a look at the SOA for Cheshire and Warrington by following **this link**. We ask our delivery partners to create/restore ponds within the core & fringe areas to increase the distribution and range of GCN, but outside of SOA can also encourage GCN to find new areas and link up metapopulations.

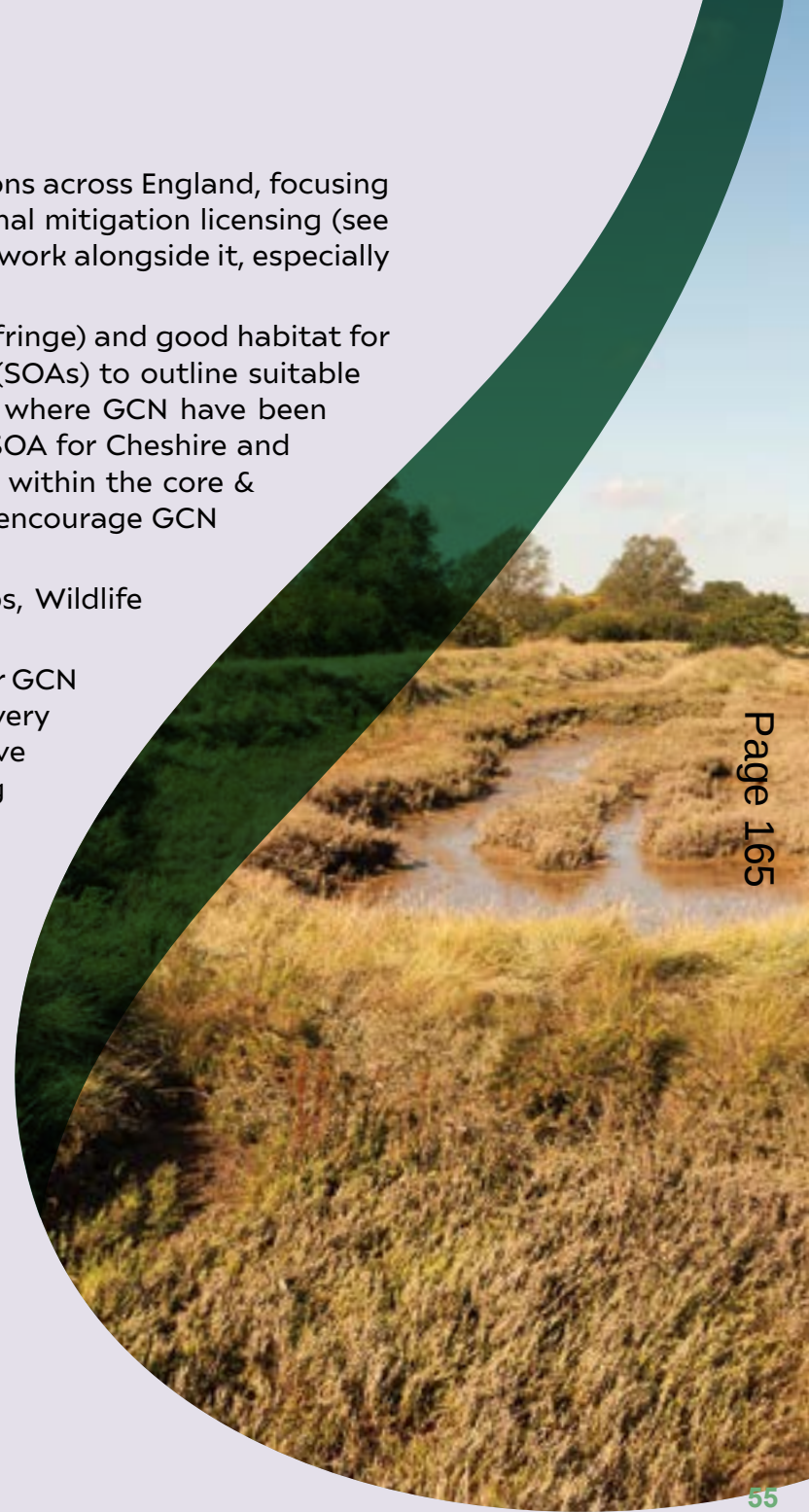
Natural England's partners in DLL are made up of farming and wildlife advisory groups, Wildlife Trusts and Councils who have experienced ecologists.

DLL was first introduced in 2017, and was first launched in Kent and Cheshire, due to higher GCN populations, according to the baseline surveys. We wanted to understand how pond delivery would work, if our partners were able to deliver ponds works effectively and if we could have a positive impact on range, distribution, and colonisation of GCN. In the first monitoring year, we had a 3% presence rate with 85 ponds being created/restored.

It uses eDNA water sampling to determine if GCN are present. The samples taken are sent to labs who test each pond sample for GCN DNA.

Each pond also has a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) score, which is undertaken by Natural England's partners, who are experienced ecologists. For GCN, each pond should have a HSI of 0.7 (means the pond is good and suitable for GCN) or higher (this will mean the pond is excellent for GCN).

This has proved quite successful, as it showed that GCN were finding the ponds and using them. Since then, the scheme has been extended to another 21 counties with a potential of adding more. Overall, the scheme had a presence rate of 34% of roughly 2,754 ponds colonised by GCN across England. The scheme has now delivered 4,000 ponds. Monitoring runs from April 15th to June 30th, the evidence has suggested this is after GCN have emerged from hibernation and will already be in the ponds or just entering, they will likely be mating during this period, releasing more eDNA which is more likely to be detected with the eDNA testing.



Farming and Peatland

The below list demonstrates the benefits for farmers from changing their practices to incorporate these habitats and how farming benefits these habitats:

Peatland and wetland benefits to farming:

- It is a net carbon source and the ecosystems associated with peat can provide farmers with an area that livestock could graze sympathetically and can provide a diversified source of income through carbon credits when the peatland is restored from a damaged state³⁵.
- By adapting the agricultural practices to a wet farming technique, can help to reduce soil loss, subsidence and can increase productivity, especially with regards to crop cultivation. However, there will need to be a move away from dredging and tillage to enable this transition. Understanding suitable areas and crops to be identified. Technical challenges of wet farming will still need to be overcome. The recognition and provision through developing agri-environment schemes will be key³⁶.

- Protection against climate change effects i.e. flooding and drought.
- Reduced drainage intensity systems may deliver partial reductions in the rate of emissions, with smaller modifications to existing systems that could help farmers overcome the challenge of maintaining crop production and help them to minimise their environmental harm³⁷.

Farming benefit to peatland and wetland:

- By moving to paludiculture (wet farming), farmers can help to re-establish peat layers and providing cultivated crops. This will support native wildlife in these habitats, such as Golden Plover and Sundew.
- Agricultural 'wasted' peat could be suitable for wet woodland creation, where water tables are raised to rewet the peat.

³⁵ Peatland Benefits | IUCN UK Peatland Programme

³⁶ Wet agriculture - a tool in the climate action toolbox | IUCN UK Peatland Programme

³⁷ Global Change Biology | Environmental Change Journal | Wiley Online Library



Species

What is this section about?

The Species shortlist forms part of step 3 and 4 of the LNRS process, as highlighted in figure 3. Although step 3 is the description of the strategy area, it has helped to inform the species longlist as it described the state of nature. Whilst step 4 identified what overall habitat actions can help improve the state of certain species. Therefore, the species shortlist is highly focussed on individual species, that need specific niche actions within their respective ecosystems, above and beyond the overall habitat improvements. These actions will help increase species numbers and spread within Cheshire.

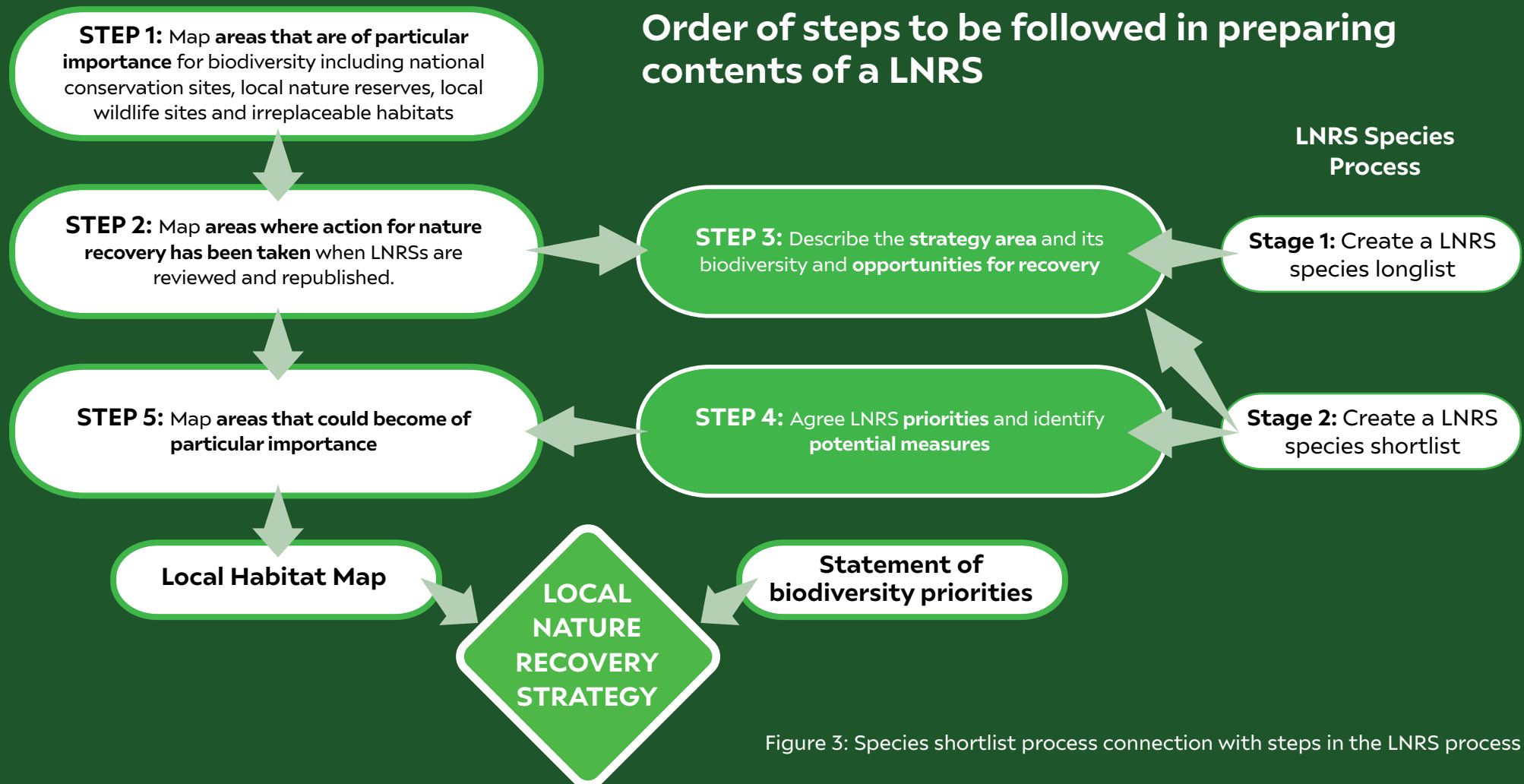
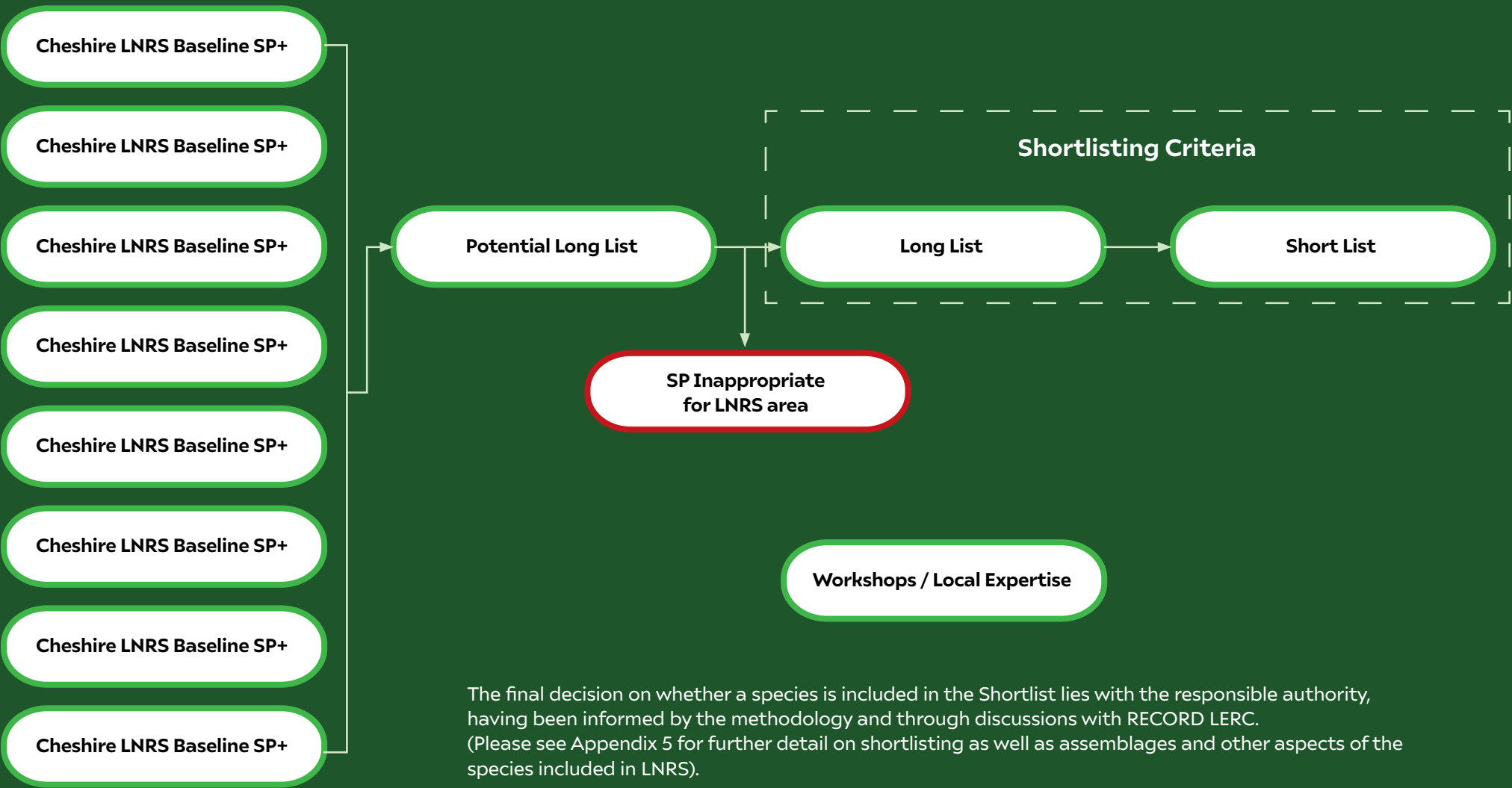


Figure 3: Species shortlist process connection with steps in the LNRS process

How did we get a shortlist?

Cheshire RECORD LERC (Local Environmental Record Centre) led the species shortlisting process. They followed the broad species shortlisting methodology, which sets out the criteria for species shortlisting, outlined in the DEFRA document ‘Species Recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Advice for Responsible Authorities (version 1: August 2023)’. The outline of the followed process, which included species experts, local residents and professionals, is shown in the diagram below:



Why do we need a shortlist and what does it mean?

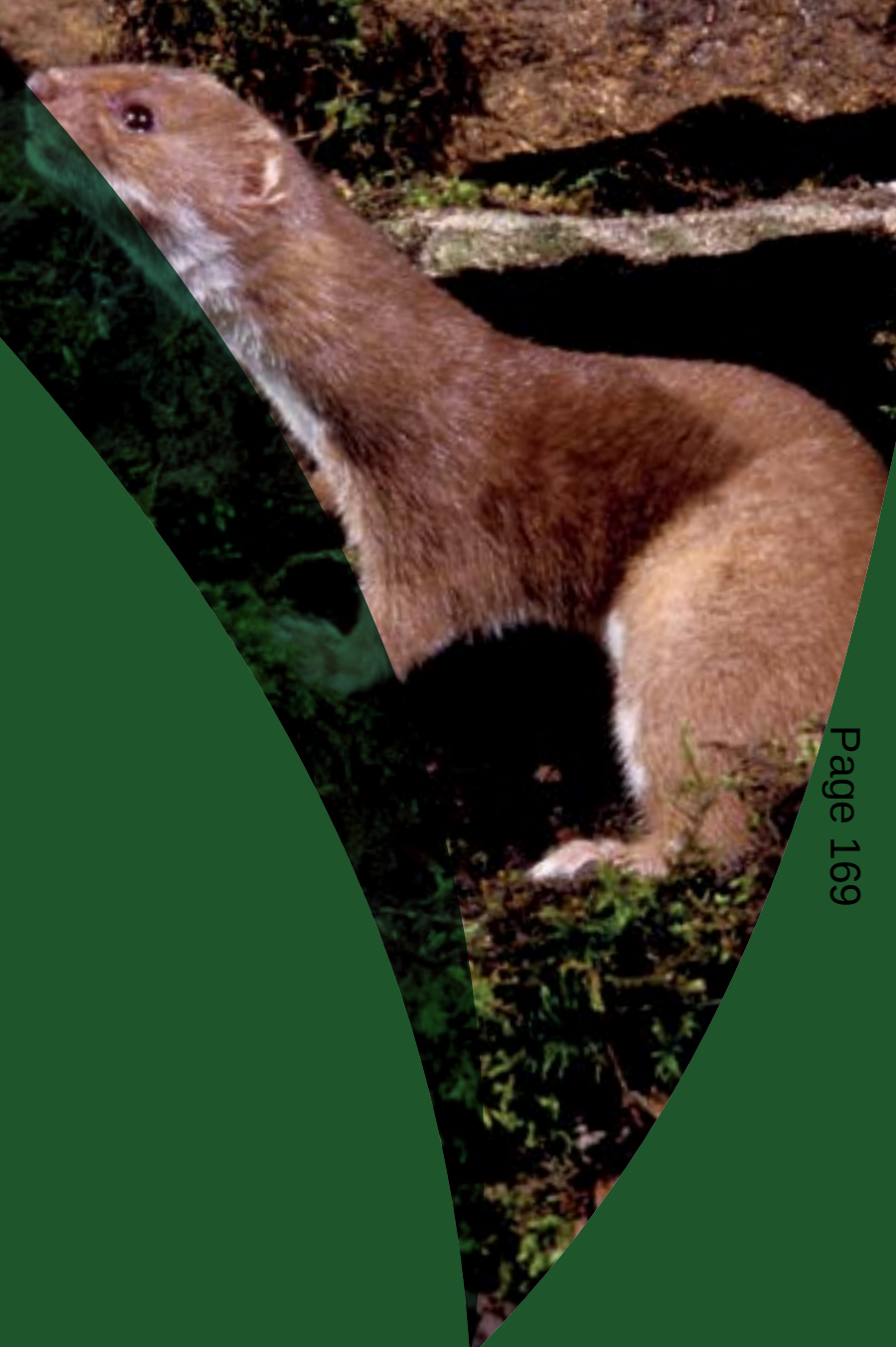
A species shortlist is key in the LNRS process to determine whether a species, identified in the IUCN Red List and extant in Cheshire and Warrington. It must have additional conservation actions put against it to improve its population and/or distribution. The Species Shortlist was assessed by RECORD LERC staff, county recorders and/or local specialists.

The species discounted from the shortlist was decided upon from detailed research (local research, survey reports, national checklists, advice and guidance) and where a species would benefit from already planned habitat actions as part of the habitat priority actions (see section 3) following the Lawton principles. In addition, the species-specific actions (detailed in the species shortlist) have been developed to avoid, where possible, any negative impact on other species of conservation concern.

From a broader perspective, the species shortlist in Cheshire works alongside other bordering authorities' shortlists to ensure consistency and align conservation actions for specific species (especially esoteric species) across the region.

The Cheshire and Warrington species short list was developed through a Natural England process and working with local species experts from the initial long list of 8,264 threatened species. Delivery of the LNRS will benefit all species on this long list in the broadest terms and the long list remains the baseline for species considerations in future iterations of LNRS when delivery of priorities and actions to date are reviewed and reconsidered.

Appendix 7 repeats the species list including the rationale and actions for each species and includes information that can help with delivery.



Species priorities, actions & rationale

Whilst restoring and safeguarding nature in the four habitat areas and in the three themes should help halt species decline and nature to recover. We have identified priority species for Cheshire and Warrington that require special actions. These are shown here in alphabetical order.

Species

Actions & Rationale

Common-Clubtail Dragonfly



- Conduct bespoke habitat management to maintain a balance of vegetation along water courses.
- Provide good water quality, nearby scrub and wood, and shading that is below 50% during May to July.
- If dredging is carried out, it should be done in sections with the spoil left long enough for larvae to make their way out, then eventually be moved away from the watercourse.

Rationale: Expand England's northern-most population.

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Watercourses | Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (this is just 3mm tall)



- Provide high water levels and good quality habitat, including areas of Greed Sweet-grass (Glyceria).
- Protect river banks from evolving into scrub.
- Do not cut river bank vegetation short.
- Do not drain wetland habitat.

Rationale: Maintain the presence in Cheshire of this threatened Mollusc

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Watercourses | Wetlands

Species

Actions & Rationale

European Water Vole



- Eradicate or control American mink.
- Create buffer strips along water courses.
- Control livestock access to river banks (through fencing or seasonal fencing).
- Carry out sympathetic bank and ditch management so the burrows are not destroyed.

Rationale: Support reversal of decline of local populations

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Watercourses | Wetlands | Farmland

< Water Vole Terry Whittaker 2020 Vision Wildlife Trusts

Lapwing (as part of the Breeding wader assemblage)



- Adopt sympathetic land management practices, particularly during GROUND nesting season (eg keeping livestock away from nesting areas).
- Maintain wet features such as drains and scrapes.
- Improve water quality during winter months for resident populations.

Rationale: Support reversal of declining populations

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Farmland | Watercourses | Peatland and Wetlands

Hen Harrier (as part of the Raptor assemblage)



- Raising awareness amongst the public about raptor persecution and how to reduce it.
- Increased capacity for nest watches and closer working with communities that come in close conflict with the species.
- Increase in suitable nesting sites.

Rationale: Address negative impacts on raptor species

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Heathland | Farmland | Peatland and Wetlands

Species

Actions & Rationale

Lesser Silver Water Beetle



- Maintain livestock access to ponds and ditches, maintaining the poached margins.
- Leave vegetation in ponds and do not dredge them.
- Keep numbers of ponds fish-free to avoid predation.

Rationale: Positively manage for this Cheshire population

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Peatland and Wetlands | Farmland

< Image copyright Andy Harmer

West European Hedgehog



- Connect urban spaces through 'hedgehog holes' and road bridges/tunnels.
- Foraging areas should be considered in planning applications alongside badger setts.
- Encourage promotion of local and national citizen science projects to record hedgehog numbers.

Rationale: Support increased awareness and connectivity

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Urban | Grassland and Heathland

Atlantic Salmon (as part of the migrating fish assemblage)



- Where possible, allow river channels to return to a natural meander providing greater protection from predators.
- Modify or remove weirs and/or install fish passes.
- Create fish migration map to highlight bottlenecks and raise awareness on the impact of the barriers in watercourses.

Rationale: Increase migration and spawning opportunities

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Watercourses

Species

Actions & Rationale

Mud Snail



- Install or safeguard ephemeral (occasional) ponds.
- Avoid drainage and management practices that involve clearing vegetation and deepening of ponds.

Rationale: Reverse declines of Cheshire populations

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Wetlands | Farmland

Open Mosaic Butterflies and Moths



- Within appropriate habitats maintain a mix of 'micro' habitats with a variety of plant species and ages.
- Plant food sources such as Common Bird's-foot-trefoil and Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil alongside a variety of grasses such as False Brome and Cock's-foot.

Rationale: Reverse declines via suitable habitat

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Open Mosaic Habitats | Grassland and Heathland |
Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees | Peatland and Wetland

Swift (as part of the Roof nesting bird assemblage)



- Increase suitable nesting sites through sympathetic renovation works and installation of nest boxes and swift bricks.
- Develop a communication campaign to gain public support for swifts.
- Encourage and promote people to record swifts on 'Swift mapper' or RECORD's data app 'SWIFT'.
- Encourage gardening for wildlife by planting suitable wildflowers to help increase invertebrates, providing more food sources, and by reducing weed killers and pesticides.

Rationale: Reverse significant decline in Cheshire colonies

Habitat Benefit All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:
Urban | Grassland and Heathland | Farmland

Species

Actions & Rationale

White-Clawed Freshwater Crayfish



- Use environmental DNA testing to locate populations of White-Clawed Freshwater Crayfish and non-native crayfish.
- Identify potential future ark sites.
- Continue translocations and monitoring of ark sites.
- Control non-native crayfish to reduce competition for food.

Ark sites are being used across the UK to create stable populations in remote areas free of disease, non-native crayfish and other threats.

Rationale: Reverse declines of Cheshire populations

Habitat All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:

Benefit Watercourses

White-Letter Hairstreak Butterfly



This butterfly breeds on Elm species (many of which were killed during the Dutch Elm Disease outbreaks of the 1970s).

- Plant Wych Elm, English Elm and Small-leaved Elm.

Rationale: Create suitable habitat to minimise vulnerability

Habitat All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:

Benefit Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

< Ian Leach, Butterfly Conservation

Willow Tit



- Increase the presence of woodland glades, open canopy, standing deadwood and a dense shrub layer within woodland through the creation of new areas of woodland, especially wet woodland.
- Adopt coppicing in suitable damp woodland sites to manage woodland structure.
- Create and maintain woodland's scrubby, edge habitats.
- Raise awareness of the damage of bird feeding, in Willow Tit appropriate habitats.
- Keep aware of ongoing research and implement delivery based on best practice.
- Increasing woodland scrub density benefits Turtle Dove and Nightingale, and increasing standing deadwood benefits Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and deadwood invertebrates.

Rationale: Expand the population across Cheshire sites

Habitat All the species actions above will benefit the following habitats:

Benefit Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees | Peatland and Wetlands

Reintroductions

There is strong public interest around reintroducing appropriate species to the LNRS area. The survey conducted at the start of the LNRS process identified those species that the public cared most about. Expert advice informed a careful process considering which species are most appropriate and likely to benefit from reintroduction in Cheshire and Warrington. The Cheshire LNP is well placed to co-ordinate a specific reintroductions decision making group, and includes farmers and landowners, and to ensure we address supportive habitats improvement and identify viable sites.

What would be the main objective of the Reintroductions Group?

The Cheshire and Warrington species reintroduction group will follow the UK national species reintroduction taskforce guidance. The main aim of the group will be to drive successful species reintroductions into the Cheshire and Warrington region through an expert-led and evidence-based approach with a thorough public/key stakeholder consultation process. Other aims of the group include identifying species that could provide ecosystem services such as Beaver, or help to re-balance the ecosystem to allow occurrence of repair of certain niches in the ecosystem such as Goshawk and/or Red Kite.

Key Species Identified

As a result of the Species shortlisting process the following species have been identified with potential for reintroduction:

- Beaver (*Castor fiber*)- mammal.
- *Clubiona norvegica* (*Clubiona norvegica*)- Spider.
- *Gnaphosa leporina* (*Gnaphosa leporina*)- Spider.
- Silver-Studded Blue Butterfly (*Plebejus argus*)- Insect.
- Large Heath Butterfly (*Coenonympha tullia*)-Insect.

“

I would add more green spaces like wildlife parks to get animals to rest and have a good space.

”





Farmland

Cheshire is predominantly an agricultural landscape, with productive farmland covering 60% (139,968ha) of the area. By the 12th century, Cheshire was one of the main dairy regions in the UK. The dairy industry initially relied on natural hay meadows and water meadows. The difference between today's ryegrass crop to the hay and water meadows that made Cheshire's rich yields was the introduction of industrial fertiliser. The areas of permanent species rich pasture and hay meadow worked hand in hand with the soil due to the difficulty to plough, resulting in a self-sustaining system.

In the east of the county, crops were grown in rotation with grass. After the second world war, as a result of national policy, agriculture in Cheshire intensified, causing nearly 60% of habitat loss. Changes in policy over the last 20 years have resulted in a recent focus on encouraging more traditional practices of food production to provide food security and incorporate nature recovery into farm practices.

The Environmental Land Management Schemes have provided incentives for farmers and landowners to transition to nature friendly farming. 50% of England's farmers have already signed up to the Sustainable Farming Incentive, one of the (ELM) schemes, reflecting the positive uptake and role farmers are prepared to play as the main stewards of our landscape.

The benefits of taking nature recovery actions on each of the four habitat areas have been outlined in sections above including:

- **Healthy hedgerows and new hedgerows** provide shelter and browsing for animals, benefits to crops, preventing soil runoff and improving water quality.
- **Species rich grassland and herbal leys** provide **minerals and nutrition** to grazing animals along with **longer grazing seasons**, with **greater resilience to drought and flooding** through their deeper root systems. Hay and silage cutting should be undertaken taking into account ground nesting birds, and cut and remove practice introduced to preserve unimproved grassland where livestock are not present.
- **Use of nature-based solutions and natural flood management** to reduce and slow runoff into waterways, such as natural buffers to arable crops, retention ponds, leaky barriers, riverside and floodplain woodland, riverside fencing for cows to maintain the banks as habitats, sympathetic management of ditches (eg clearance of one side, retaining spoil so larvae can hatch before spoil is removed) and reconnecting rivers to their floodplains.

There are also many actions within each of the habitat sections that farmers and landowners are encouraged to take to conserve and restore natural habitats and provide wildlife corridors. Some of these are low cost or simple changes to practices that can have a significant effect to turn around species decline, such as changing hedge cutting to every two or three years and forming an A shape hedge; or installing bird boxes and preserving headlands for species rich wildflowers. Others require more in depth planning and funding within farm business plans. Some funds are currently available, to support positive management of woodland, hedgerows, ponds and other habitats via agri-environment grants, or Biodiversity Net Gain, while other forms of support and funding are still being developed.

To deliver this strategy, the LNP are committed to providing and enabling expert support and advice so that our farmers and landowners can easily access information and resources, in partnership with the Future Farmers Group, the National Farmers Union and Countryside Landowners Association. Together we can work to make Cheshire and Warrington's farms and land both sustainable and financially successful.

Case Study: Mersey Rivers Trust

Mersey Rivers Trust (MRT) runs a **water friendly farming programme** across several catchments of the Mersey basin including the upper Weaver in Cheshire. Working in partnership with others (e.g. Environment Agency and Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming) the Trust engages with land managers to raise awareness of the need to protect and improve water quality. Where funded, MRT can offer a small grant to implement measures identified in the plan such as soil management, cover crops, slurry management, livestock fencing and trackway improvements.

> **Mersey Rivers Trust - Water Friendly Farming Hub.**



Pressures facing Farmland

- Intensification of agriculture.
- Increased pesticide and fertiliser use.
- Lack of awareness about ground nesting sites on the farmland.
- Low invasive non-native species management, severely impacting habitats.
- Soil erosion and compaction.
- Increased risk of livestock-borne diseases moving into the ecosystem.
- If government funding provision abruptly stops, it can impact industry confidence leading to further intensification.

Nature recovery opportunities for Farmland

- Agri-environmental funding has been available since the 1990s to address impacts on wildlife.
- England's agri-environment schemes have been strengthened, and new schemes established such as Landscape Recovery, which is designed to support large-scale projects for environmental and climate benefits.
- Improvement in data capture and analysis with the agri-environment schemes enable us to develop an understanding of the positive impacts.
- To increase the county's farmland bird population by 10% over 10 years, many farmers can adopt certain outcomes to achieve this through schemes, such as SFI (re-opens 2026).
- If we can re-establish and extend the hedgerow network we can reduce soil loss, improve soil health, increase bird populations, benefit livestock and crop health.

Key topic - Biodiversity Net Gain and LNRS

What is biodiversity net gain?

Biodiversity Net Gain as defined by the GOV.UK website (2024) is 'an approach to development which makes sure that habitats are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. This means a development will result in more or better quality natural habitat than there was before development.

In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%.' BNG has been mandatory for large scale developments since February 2024 and small scale development since April 2024. At the time of writing, the government is currently consulting on BNG becoming mandatory for all national significant infrastructure projects and local infrastructure projects from May 2026.

Why is it relevant to the LNRS?

Biodiversity Net Gain and the LNRS, as stated in the Environment Act 2021, are intrinsically linked to ensure that BNG, if delivered offsite, delivers more for biodiversity. The Local Habitat Map for the LNRS provides a strategic approach for off-site delivery. It maps the opportunity areas for nature recovery, where landowners will achieve 1.15x strategic significance multiplier, if their on-site or off-site BNG is delivered. This means that more units are achieved per habitat delivered as there is a higher biodiversity value associated with those sites. This means that the units that they sell to developers from their BNG sites are worth more than if the land is outside of the opportunity areas³⁸.

What are the specific requirements for the strategic significance uplift?

For landowners to receive the strategic significance uplift, the land prepared for BNG must incorporate the mapped actions (actions assigned to a particular land parcel and a specific habitat that can help to boost biodiversity) on the Local Habitat Map as it provides the best opportunity for nature recovery (see the map section below for further information relating to mapped actions). Sites with mapped actions will trigger the 1.15% strategic uplift in biodiversity value in the BNG Metric where that action is included in a planning application. If part of your site is within the opportunity area on the map but the rest is not, only that part and the associated action for nature recovery will be eligible for 1.15x strategic uplift.

How can landowners find more information about BNG?

Landowners must contact their local planning authorities to understand more about the BNG process within their area. However, there is a planning process guidance for BNG on the UK government website, which provides an in-depth background to BNG for both farmers and developers and highlights how sites can be registered onto the national database:

Meet your BNG requirements: steps to take for land managers - GOV.UK

³⁸ Incorporating Local Nature Recovery Strategies when planning for Biodiversity Net Gain – Environment

Priorities and actions for Farmland

Priority	Actions
F1. Support and promote nature friendly farming, land management and sustainable food production across the landscape	• F1.1 Establish a Future Farmer Group to develop, showcase and promote sustainable farming that benefits nature. • F1.2 Help co-ordinate farm advice across the region to support sustainable farming, productivity and better outcomes for nature. • F1.3 Maintain and recover species rich grassland through appropriate livestock grazing, avoiding soil damage where possible. • F1.4 Safeguard exposed river sediments from vegetation building up, disturbance by animals, excessive run-off and pollution. • F1.5 Adopt sympathetic land management practices, particularly during nesting season (e.g. keeping livestock away from nesting areas). • F1.6 Maintain wet features such as ditches and scrapes. • F1.7 Encourage and promote benefits of hedgerows to livestock, soils and crops. • F1.8 Promote and support landowners and farmers to develop and deliver Natural capital funding. • F1.9 Support farmers to use nature-based solutions to reduce the risk of agricultural pollution.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- Invertebrates on exposed river sediments
 - European Water Vole
 - Breeding waders assemblage
 - Farmland birds assemblage



Urban

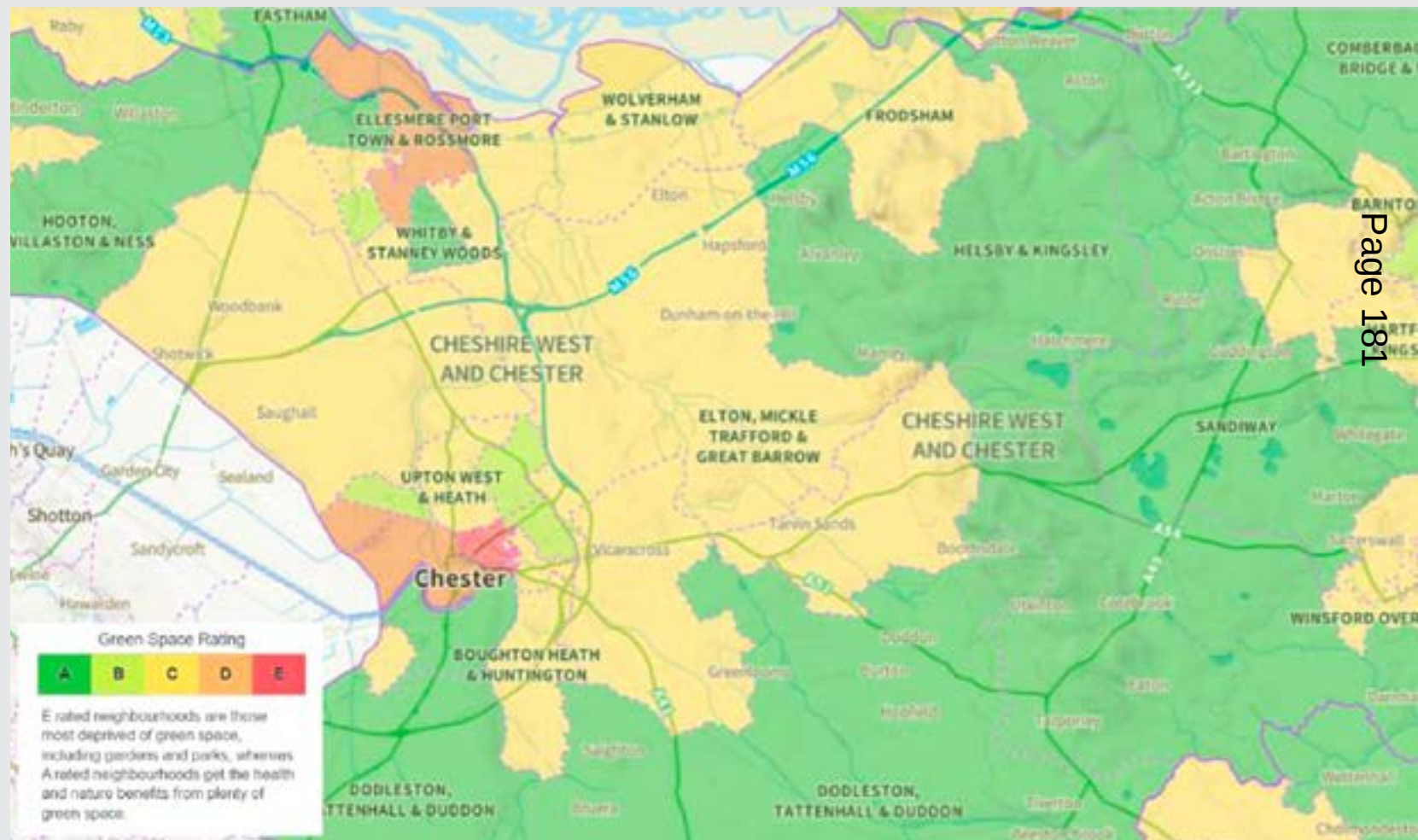
Cheshire and Warrington's urban, post-industrial landscape includes a variety of habitats, which many rare species have colonised. Cheshire and Warrington contain disused quarries, old industrial sites, former railway sidings and landfill sites, often located in the urban centres and fringes. As industrial and manufacturing processes changed during the mid to late 20th century, the road network dramatically expanded, and railways became important linear wildlife corridors. Some of our brownfield sites have evolved into rare open mosaic habitats, becoming home to nationally scarce species. The salt and sandstone industry also left areas of unique habitat, such as flashes and lime beds. Wealthy industrialists also helped to invest in formal parks, gardens, arboretums and much of the green infrastructure we benefit from today.

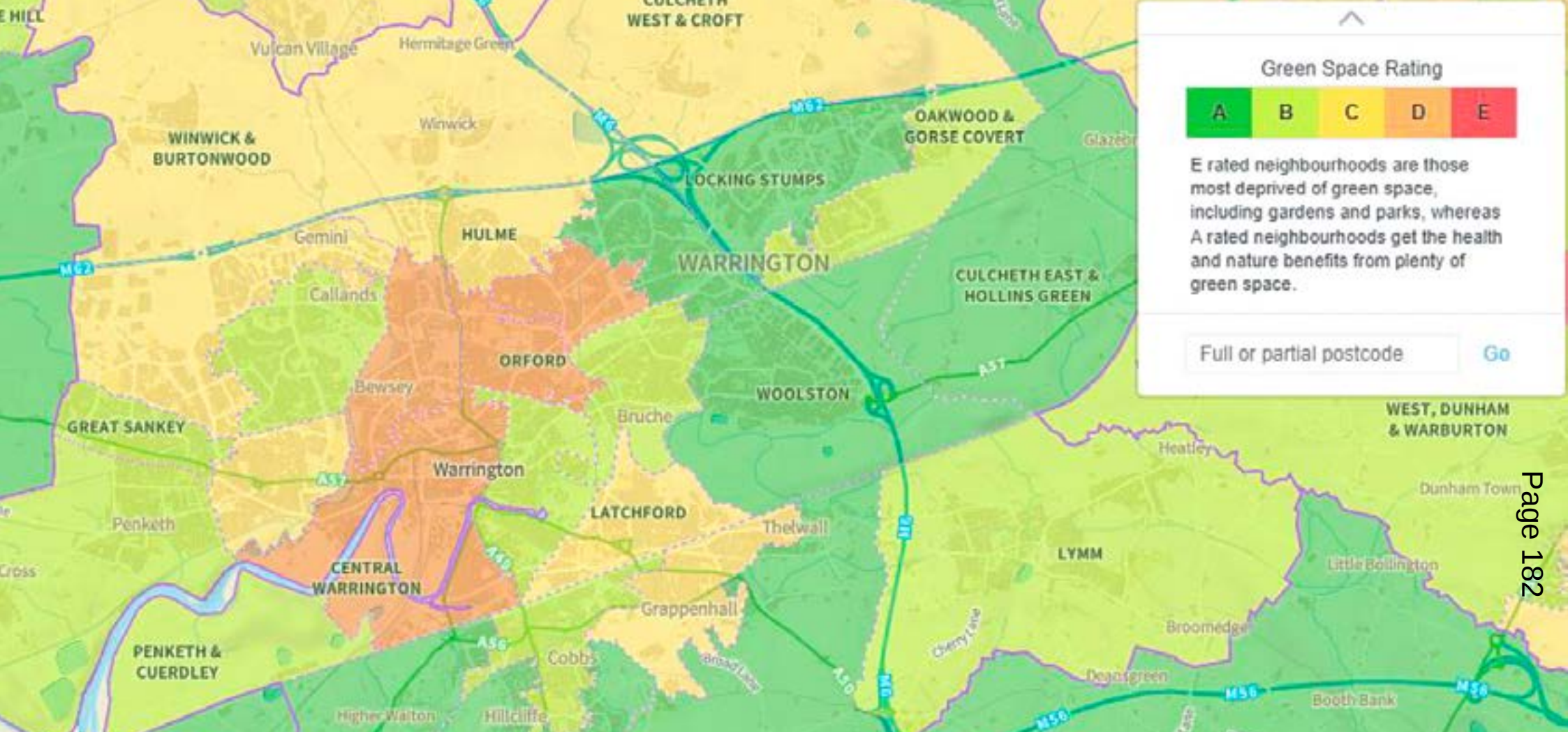
Our urban areas are vital for nature's recovery, and we can gain multiple benefits from acting for nature while also improving our air quality, reducing heat and flood risk, improving spaces for leisure and recreation and helping improve residents' health and wellbeing.

We can also tackle some of the big inequalities and make sure everyone has access to nature including being able to access green space, woodland, rivers and grassland within a 15-minute walk of everyone's home.

Currently, according to Friends of the Earth's Green Space Rating³⁹ maps, people living in some of our urban areas are deprived of greenspaces including gardens and parks, including Ellesmere Port, Chester and Wharton, parts of Warrington and Macclesfield.

³⁹ Access to green space in England | Friends of the Earth





The same often goes for trees, the tree equity score from the Woodland Trust is based on the principle that all communities should have equitable access to the benefits of trees where they live. While some urban areas enjoy abundant greenery and tree cover, others lack these essential natural assets.

Studies show that trees and other green infrastructure in urban areas can:

- Reduce air pollution, quieten noise and keep cities shaded and cool.
- Improve ecosystems and boost biodiversity.
- Create a sense of place, beauty and heritage.
- Create attractive environments where businesses want to invest and people want to live, work and play.
- Alleviate stress, stabilise blood pressure, ease anxiety and depression, and provide opportunity for healthy, active lifestyles.

Urban tree cover varies significantly in Cheshire and Warrington, ranging from as little as 5% in some wards in Ellesmere Port, Chester and Warrington to 30% in some wards on the edge of our towns and villages.

Pressures on nature recovery in Urban areas

- Lack of understanding amongst urban residents about the benefits of wildflower meadows can lead to limited development of appropriate habitats for nature in the urban areas.
- Increase in development without consideration of nature already on the site.
- Low green infrastructure.
- Inappropriate development on floodplain areas (Low provision of SUDS).
- Litter pollution.
- Recreational disturbance.
- Water pollution from runoff.



Opportunities to recover nature and provide wider benefits in our Urban areas

- Ensure that multi-functional green spaces are planned into new developments and regeneration schemes.
- Manage our parks and open spaces for nature rich, climate adapted habitats.
- Make sure all our schools, care homes, hospitals and other buildings have nature-rich accessible green spaces for nature and people.
- Include green space and trees in any highways or infrastructure plans.
- As part of street lighting and lighting in public spaces, consider dimming, shielding and installing sensor activated lighting (subject to security considerations) and install warmer red-spectrum lights instead of the blue-white lights so often used.
- Support and encourage more people to make their gardens, driveways and land more nature friendly.
- Support community gardens and green spaces, for nature, food growing and climate.

Case Study: Warrington's Sky Garden

Culture Warrington's award-winning Sky Garden is based on top of a multi-storey car park in the town centre.

It was funded by Museum Development North and Hubbub, and is project managed by Warrington Museum. The idea behind the garden was to provide a space for nature in an urban environment, a space for schools to learn about botany and wildlife and a space for wider community engagement.

The site runs with help from a volunteer team and staff at Golden Square shopping centre, and free local food is grown for the community to be given away at events throughout the year.

Culture Warrington's Sustainability Officer also chairs a group of community green spaces across the borough. This is a growing community of green spaces across the Warrington area where people can share skills and resources to improve the environment and improve their health and wellbeing.

Key topic - Light Pollution

What is light pollution?

Light pollution is an issue first reported in the 1970's⁴⁰. It is the presence of excessive artificial light in the environment, which can have various negative effects, caused by urbanisation and industrialisation, which contribute to issues of glare, light trespass and sky glow.

How does it affect us and wildlife?

- Threatens the natural life cycles of both humans and wildlife, including reproductive and metabolic systems.⁴¹
- Due to artificial light, people can now work throughout the day, but this has led to a rise in cancer cases and mental health impacts (i.e. depression, mood disorders and cognitive impairment).⁴²
- Further to the effects on humans, wildlife is adversely impacted by direct and indirect lighting. This includes feeding habits, reproductive success, distribution and abundance. Note that this is in the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.^{43 44}

What is currently being done about it?

In Cheshire and Warrington, each local authority follows the Bat Conservation's guidance on street lighting⁴⁵ and further guidance have been created internally specifically for developers when considering lighting settings. As LED technology improves, we are hoping that the brightness and colour of lighting can be adjusted to benefit both wildlife and people. There are plans to trial and test other lighting methods, which could further deliver cost savings, reductions in crime and help biodiversity.

How can the LNRS support minimising light pollution?

Local authorities and planning applicants must have regard to LNRS. LNRS provides the necessary evidence base for developers through the associated information within the appendices and the priorities and actions set out in the document.

⁴⁰ Light Pollution

⁴¹ Environmental Impacts of Artificial Light at Night

⁴² Artificial light at night and risk of mental disorders: A systematic review

⁴³ Light pollution from illuminated bridges as a potential barrier for migrating fish

⁴⁴ Artificial light at night - pollution alters bat lunar chronobiology

⁴⁵ Bats and artificial lighting at night

Priorities and actions for the Urban areas

Priority	Actions
U1 Green and blue wildlife corridors between urban and rural Cheshire and Warrington, for species movement and opportunities for active travel, recreation and engagement with nature	• U1.1 Safeguard and expand nature corridors within urban areas, to connect with broader rural landscape corridors. • U1.2 Create more communal semi-natural greenspace and wildlife rich areas. • U1.3 Re-establish and improve wildlife culverts / underpasses along our transport infrastructure. • U1.4 Integrate nature into better urban placemaking including working towards increasing GI cover to at least 15%. • U1.5 All housing developments are promoted to include swift/bee bricks and hedgehog highways. • U1.6 Develop a sponge city network to reduce possible impacts of climate change. • U1.7 Improve the greenway and active travel network for nature and people. • U1.8 Where possible, invest in nature in brownfield sites that are not subject to development.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- Western European Hedgehog
- Badgers
- Mammals in urban areas assemblage
- Bats assemblage
- Open mosaic butterflies and moths

We can do this by using nature based solutions – for more on that, see the following section.





Nature-based solutions

Nature-based solutions are interventions based on nature that provide society with other beneficial outcomes.

Ecosystem services or environmental co-benefits are defined as “the benefits people derive from ecosystems such as clean water, food, forest products, flood control, and natural resources”⁴⁶. To achieve the ecosystem services needed, nature-based solutions (NBS) (adoption of ecosystem services to address environmental problems) can be applied but must follow four principles:

1. NBS must help to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change but cannot be a substitute for rapid fossil fuel phase out.
2. Involve the protection, restoration or management of a wide-range of natural and semi-natural ecosystems on land and in the sea.
3. NBS must be designed, implemented, managed and monitored by or in partnership with local communities.
4. NBS supports or enhances biodiversity, that is, the diversity of life from the level of gene to the level of ecosystem⁴⁷.

Nature-based solutions such as increasing tree cover can reduce pollution and urban temperatures during summers, helping to regulate the climate in our towns and cities.

Hedgerows, tree belts, more diverse grasslands and buffer strips can reduce runoff from agricultural fields, reducing soil loss and improving water quality in our rivers.

Nature-based solutions can help to combat the effects of climate change; re-connect rivers to their floodplains can increase flood capacity, reducing flood risk downstream. Riverside planting, buffer strips and even leaky dams in smaller streams can also ‘slow the flow’ to help increase water volume in drier months to sustain wildlife in our rivers and provide drinking water and sufficient provision for industrial processes.

Nature-based solutions are often a more natural, sometimes cheaper, and more nature-friendly alternative to hard engineering, which only solves one problem and sometimes creates others.

⁴⁶ Overview Ecosystem Services & Nature Based Solutions - Native Plant Conservation Campaign

⁴⁷ Nature-based Solutions Initiative | Nbs Guidelines

Nature recovery opportunities for nature through Nature-based solutions in the Urban and Rural environment

- Strategic planning of a multi-functional nature-rich greenspace especially in new developments enables nature to recover and people to become more connected with nature.
- Encourage rural communities to plant clough woodlands in the uplands, to reduce flood risk, help to build flood resilience and enhance the woodland network in the uplands.
- Encourage more schools, preschools and nurseries to create richer and wilder green infrastructure spaces within their setting. Encourage students and staff to use these spaces in diverse ways such as forest schools, environmental education, outdoor classrooms and learning to foster positive relationships with nature from an early age.
- Use design standards and good practice, such as the **Building with Nature Standard** or actions outlined in Wildlife Trust's **Swift and Wild report**, to encourage new developments to be more nature-friendly.
- Encourage developers to join the **Homes for Nature** initiative to ensure that every new home built has a bird-nesting brick or box, and hedgehog highway as standard in addition to meeting Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.
- To reduce flood issues, require developers to install sustainable urban drainage systems such as swales, rain gardens and permeable surfacing that support wildlife and reduce flood risk.
- As part of installation, maintenance and replacement for street lighting or other lighting, we need to swap out blue-white public lighting and replace it with nature friendly lighting (warmer, lower wavelengths) in urban and rural environments to reduce impact on bird, bat⁴⁸ and other species. Also consider opportunities for ensuring lighting is no brighter than necessary or shielding street lighting subject to security and road safety considerations.
- Install wildlife-friendly green roofs and walls.
- Bat and bird boxes designed into buildings.
- Establish nature corridors to help invertebrates, reptiles, hedgehogs and other mammals to move between habitats.
- Planting should include native, locally sourced wildlife-friendly plants to reduce invasive species impact.
- Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is correctly implemented, monitored and strictly maintained.

⁴⁸ Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals

Key topic - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) & Natural Flood Management (NFM)

Reduced Flood Risk and Better Water Quality

What are SuDS and natural flood management?

SuDS (Sustainable urban Drainage Systems) are approaches to manage surface water, which take account of water quality (pollution), amenity, water quantity (flooding) and biodiversity (wildlife and plants). The key aspect of SuDS is to mimic nature and manage rainfall through natural geoprocesses⁴⁹. The difference between SuDS and natural flood management is that SuDS help the urban areas mimic nature whereas NFM techniques refer to the restoration of natural ecosystems, such as wetland restoration or reforestation to help 'slow the flow' and helps with soil management⁵⁰.

Why are SuDS and NFM techniques important for society and the environment?

- By implementing SuDS in the urban area, the urban heat island effect is minimised along with a reduced flood risk and provides a habitat for biodiversity and natural flood management.
- NFM- providing more wetland areas in Cheshire would enable many rivers to store water and help with river recharge during droughts and reduce flooding impact on farming in the rural areas.
- NFM- work on NFM in Cheshire's rural landscape would provide farming businesses and rural residents more resilience to flooding, which will save money in terms of insurance and business costs.

⁴⁹ Sustainable drainage

⁵⁰ Natural Flood Management (NFM) | The Flood Hub

Benefit Category	What it covers
 Flood risk management	Impact on people and property
 Water quality management	Surface water quality improvements to aesthetics, health, biodiversity etc.
 Biodiversity and ecology	Sites of ecological value
 Amenity	Attractiveness and desirability of an area
 Air quality	Impact on health from air pollution
 Building temperature	Thermal comfort, cooling (summer) or insulation (winter)
 Carbon reduction & sequestration	Operational & embodied carbon reduction together with sequestrian (planting)
 Crime	Crimes against people or property
 Economic growth	Business, jobs & productivity
 Education	Enhanced educational opportunities
 Enabling development	Water infrastructure capacity (headroom) for housing / other growth
 Flexible infrastructure / Climate change adaption	Improved ability to make incremental changes & adapt infrastructure no regrets
 Groundwater recharge	Improved water availability or quality
 Health & Wellbeing	Physical, emotional, mental health benefits from recreational aesthetics
 Pumping wastewater	Reduced flows of wastewater to treatment works
 Rainwater harvesting	Reduced flows into sewers, pollution or dependence on potable (mains) water
 Recreation	Involvement in specific recreational activities
 Tourism	Attractiveness of tourist sites
 Traffic calming	Reducing risk of road accidents or increasing street-based recreational opportunities
Treating wastewater	Reduced volume of wastewater to treat from combined drainage systems

Priorities and actions for Nature-based solutions

Priority	Actions
NBS1. Nature, people and economy thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure	• NBS1.1 Hedgerow creation prioritised over fencing within new development with a min 1-1.5m width (see hedgerow actions). • NBS1.2 All individual trees removed should be replaced with at least two trees (removal of veteran or exceptional trees is not to be permitted unless risk is evidenced). • NBS 1.3 Create and/or retrofit new green roofs/walls and spaces where feasible. • NBS1.4 Mitigate the impacts of pollution from waste, transport and landfill for the benefits of nature and people. • NBS1.5 Design buildings and infrastructure with nature benefits and improved placemaking in mind. • NBS1.6 Increase urban tree canopy cover, to provide multiple benefits by working towards a 15% tree (or GI) cover target for all wards by 2035, prioritising action in wards of highest disparity. • NBS 1.7 Diversify amenity grassland in urban greenspaces to provide more semi-natural habitats and multi-functional greenspaces. • NBS1.8 Safeguard and expand blue/green corridors (for multiple benefits) in urban areas, to connect with broader rural landscape. • NBS1.9 Encourage more nature in school grounds, well-designed with maintenance in mind. • NBS1.10 Target habitat creation or enhancement in urban areas.
NBS2 Improved biodiversity by mitigating specific sources of pollution	• NBS2.1 Remove or mitigate against light pollution, particularly along the river and canal network. • NBS2.2 Mitigate pollution from agriculture, waste, industry and recycling management processes.
NBS3 Better functioning watercourses for nature, people and a thriving economy	• NBS 3.1 Create, enhance and celebrate nature-based solutions throughout catchments to ensure plentiful, clean water for wildlife, people and economy. • NBS3.2 Store water and slow the flow through upstream habitat investment. • NBS3.3 Promote the benefits of functional green and blue spaces for a vibrant economy.
NBS4. More sustainable drainage and natural flood management, making space for water in our catchments and communities	• NBS4.1 Install Sustainable Drainage Systems to deliver multiple benefits for nature, people and local businesses. • NBS4.2 Install permeable surfaces and green / blue infrastructure to manage surface water. • NBS 4.3 Identify areas of significant flooding and develop nature interventions and investment opportunities to reduce risk and impact. • NBS4.4 Develop Cross-county strategic design guidance that benefits nature, encourages more semi-natural greenspace and mitigates climate impacts.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions

- Urban mammals assemblage (e.g. Western European Hedgehog, Badgers)
- Open Mosaic Butterflies and moths assemblage
- Birds of prey assemblage
- Bats assemblage
- Roof nesting birds assemblage
- Breeding wader assemblage

Tackling Invasive Non-native Species

As mentioned in the different habitat sections, some of the threats and pressures to our most important wildlife comes from invasive non-native species particularly Himalayan Balsam, which shades out other species, Japanese Knotweed, and Floating Pennywort, a species that starves the water of oxygen and causes shading in waterbodies, which results in other species dying off.

American Mink predate the native Water Vole, and the non-native American Signal Crayfish are spreading through our river and canal network, outcompeting the native White Clawed Crayfish and spreading disease, decimating the White Clawed Freshwater Crayfish populations.

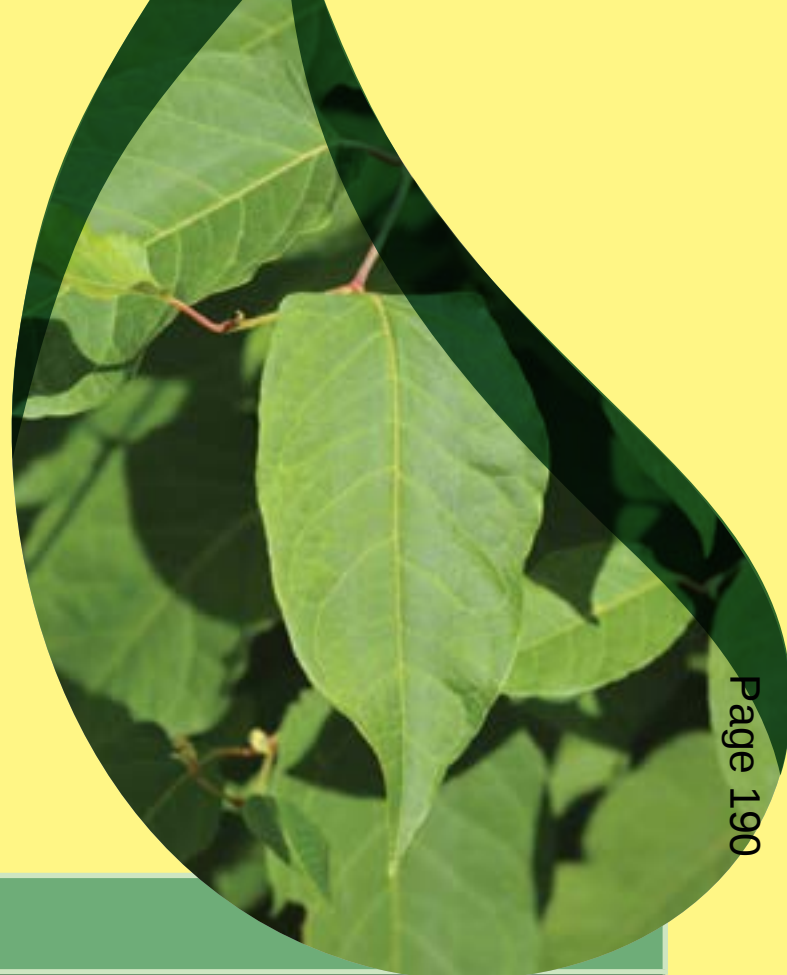
Careful monitoring, management and schemes to control or eradicate these non-native invasive species are important to Cheshire and Warrington's Nature Network.

Priorities and Actions for Invasive Non-Native Species

Priority	Actions
INNS 1 Invasive non-native species (INNS) minimised across Cheshire and Warrington	• INNS 1.1 Collate and promote good practice and build capacity for management and eradication of invasive non-native species. • INNS 1.2 Eradicate and manage harmful invasive non-native species across all watercourses in Cheshire and Warrington. • INNS 1.3 Discourage inappropriate planting of invasive non-native species as part of landscaping and development schemes e.g. Rhododendron. • INNS 1.4 Identify and understand spatial prevalence of INNS, and coordinate planning and action to eradicate them, using the catchment-based approach. • INNS 1.5 Promote the national "Check, Clean, Dry" biosecurity campaign across the county for boats, fishing equipment etc. • INNS 1.6 Require and support landowners to manage, reduce extent of and minimise invasive non-native species. • INNS1.7 Regulate the importation and management of soils as part of highway and major infrastructure projects to prevent spread of invasive non-native species.

Species - the list of species and species assemblages that benefit from the above actions:

- European Water Vole
- White-Clawed Freshwater Crayfish
- Exposed riverine sediment invertebrates
- Migrating fish assemblage
- White-Letter Hairstreak Butterfly



Cheshire and Warrington's nature network - Local Habitat Map

Our local habitat maps shows our best existing habitats and show where the best opportunities are to expand, join or create these habitats.

They provide guidance for developers, businesses, environmental groups, community groups, local authorities and public on where certain habitats should be created (and where habitats should not be created – ensuring the mosaic habitat is maintained, and that valuable rare habitats are restored). The maps can be used as evidence to support grant funding applications and can direct businesses where to target investment in carbon, as part of their environmental social governance (ESG) or biodiversity credits.

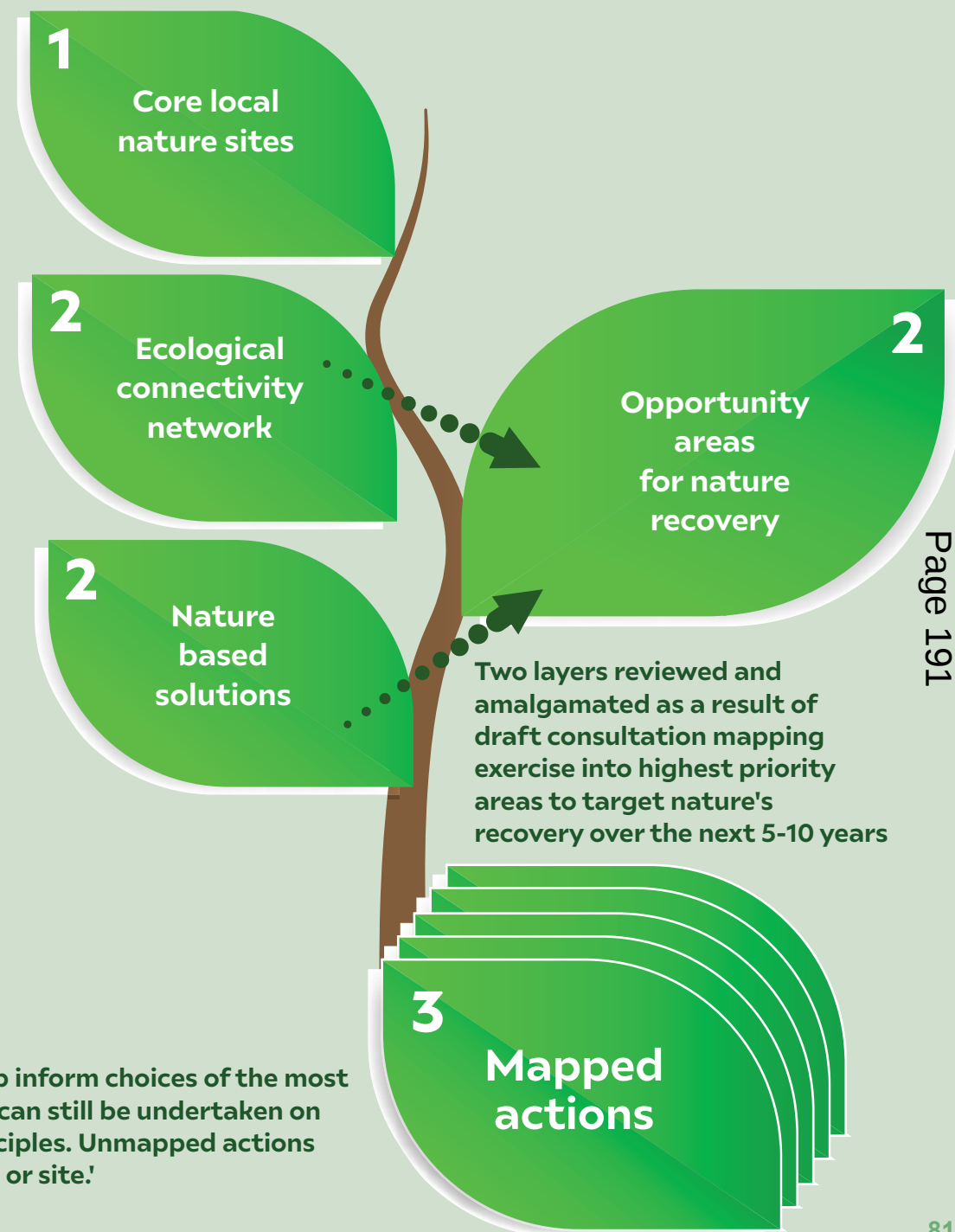
The Local Habitat Map consists of 3 layers:

1. Core local nature sites (areas of particular importance for biodiversity).
2. Opportunity areas for nature recovery (areas that could 'become of importance for biodiversity' consisting of opportunity areas offering wider environmental benefits).
3. Mapped actions – the mappable actions from our priorities and actions for nature recovery.

These can be viewed in an online, interactive map.

For Guidance Only: (To inform landowners / land managers)

Relevant actions can be viewed as a list for each mapped site to help inform choices of the most suitable actions that can be taken in that location. Other activities can still be undertaken on a site even if they are not mapped subject to the LNRS delivery principles. Unmapped actions apply across the LNRS area wherever they are relevant to a location or site.'



1. Core nature sites

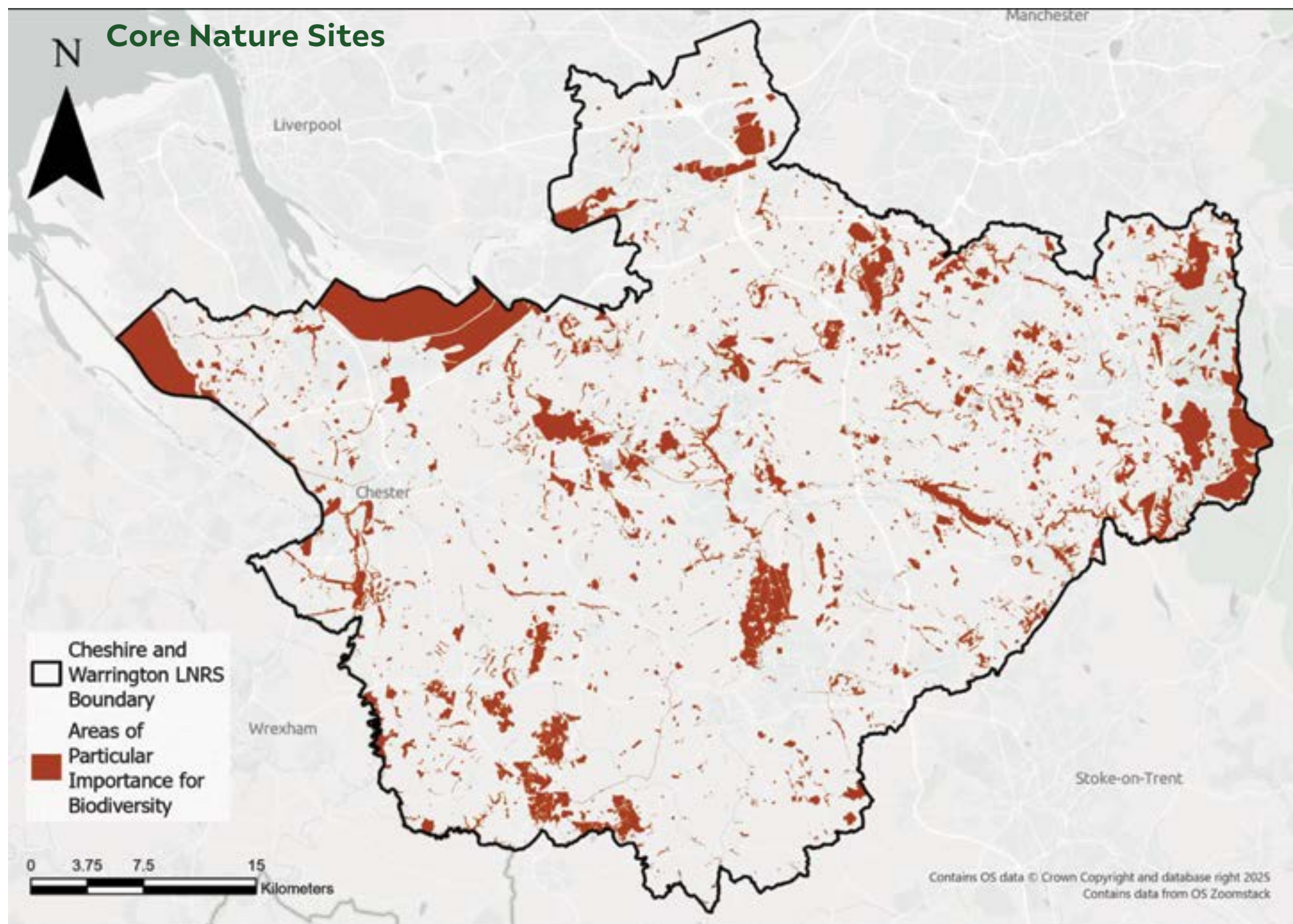
Our best remaining wildlife sites across the area (our “areas of particular importance for biodiversity”).

These are statutory (protected under UK, EU and International Law) and non-statutory (recognised in local planning policy as being of importance in the local area⁵¹) designated sites and irreplaceable habitats.

These are the most important sites for nature, core areas of our ecological network and the foundation of our nature network, that we need to protect, restore, improve, connect and expand.

⁵¹ Guidance: statutory and non-statutory wildlife site designations | Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre





2. Opportunity areas for nature recovery

The opportunity areas for nature recovery consist of a nature first approach. The map was created using ecological network modelling that looked at the resistance to species movement in the landscape (e.g. transport and infrastructure effects). Alongside this the Ecoservr model was used to assess where modelled areas achieved the best ecosystems services score to help focus areas for potential nature recovery, deliverable in the next ten years. (See Appendix 4 for further technical detail).

Higher priority is given to a specific area, which can provide not only nature recovery benefits but also wider ecosystem services e.g. natural flood management, improved mental and physical health and higher productivity in the workplace.

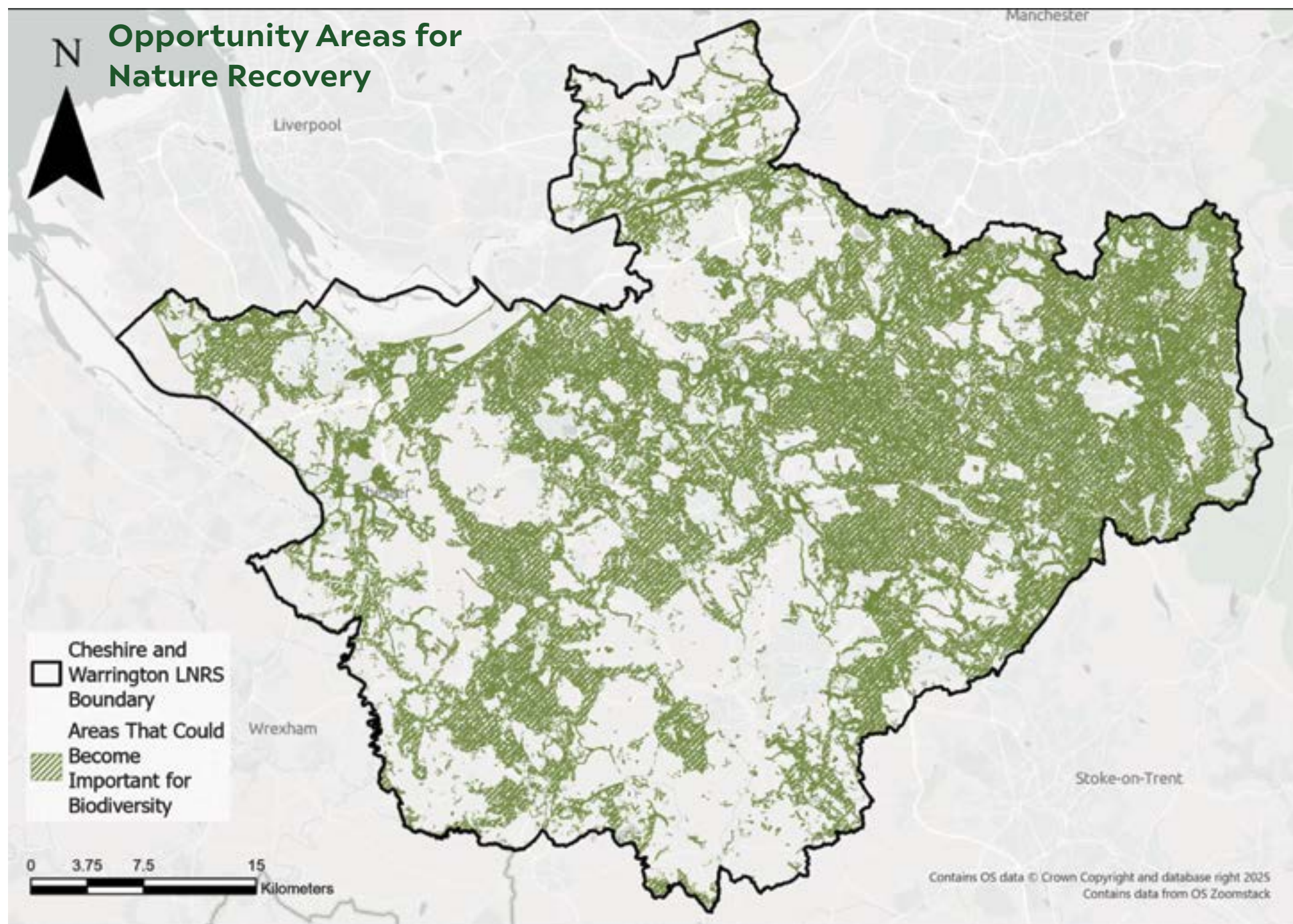
The maps displayed in this section, demonstrate where combined opportunities lie to create, expand or improve the right habitats or a mix of habitats to form these essential arteries. The 'corridors' and 'stepping stones' to link core sites, vital to ensure nature's recovery and a more effective, robust ecological network across Cheshire and Warrington, where investment could bring extra benefits.

Some places where we would wish to invest in nature could also provide essential services for people, the economy, and businesses (also known as ecosystem services). These include: cleaner air, noise reduction, helping communities and businesses adapt to the effects of changes to our climate, to reduce the risk of flooding, and provide clean water for people to drink and water for our industries. To provide places for people to engage with and benefit from nature for their improved health and wellbeing.

Areas identified to provide other benefits, further strengthen the value of investment.

The opportunity areas contain the mapped actions (explained in the following section) but also indicate wider areas where the maximum benefit can be achieved across wider environmental, social and economic benefits. There is no requirement on any farmer, landowner or developer to deliver what is mapped, as the LNRS is only an evidence base to inform best options for nature recovery, ecosystems services and natural capital.





3. Mapped actions

Actions available within opportunity areas for nature recovery

The maps below show actions for each habitat, species and theme. On the Local Habitat Map, users are able to click on a location or site and see a list of the actions mapped that could be delivered to benefit nature.

Some locations may have different actions mapped for the same space, providing options of which action or mix of actions a landowner or land manager may be able to choose to help deliver, if they wish to do so. That is compatible with other land uses, suitability of soils, aspect, water, and business needs.

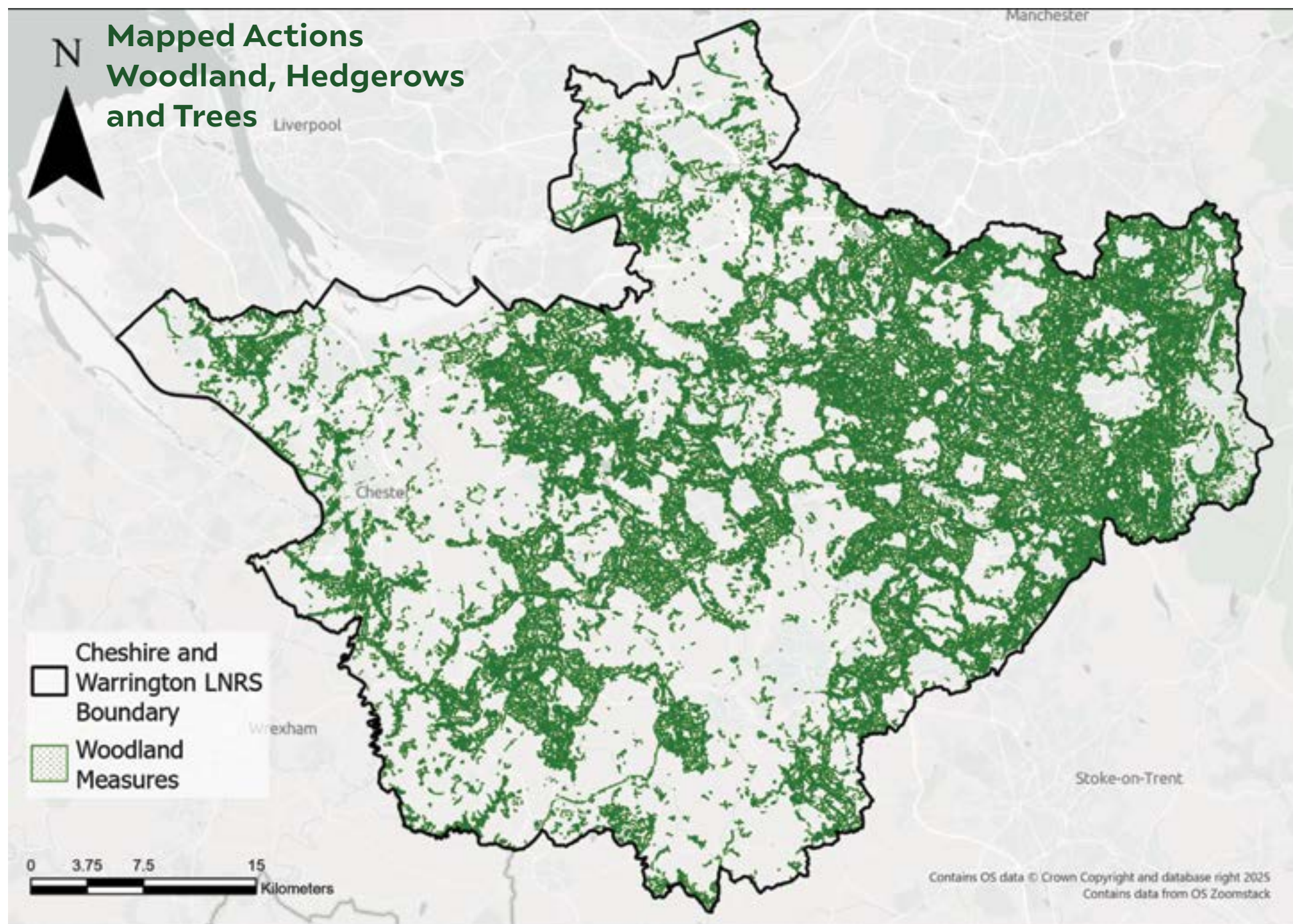
By looking at the interactive mapping, it allows everyone to see all the opportunities where actions could be delivered for each priority / theme.

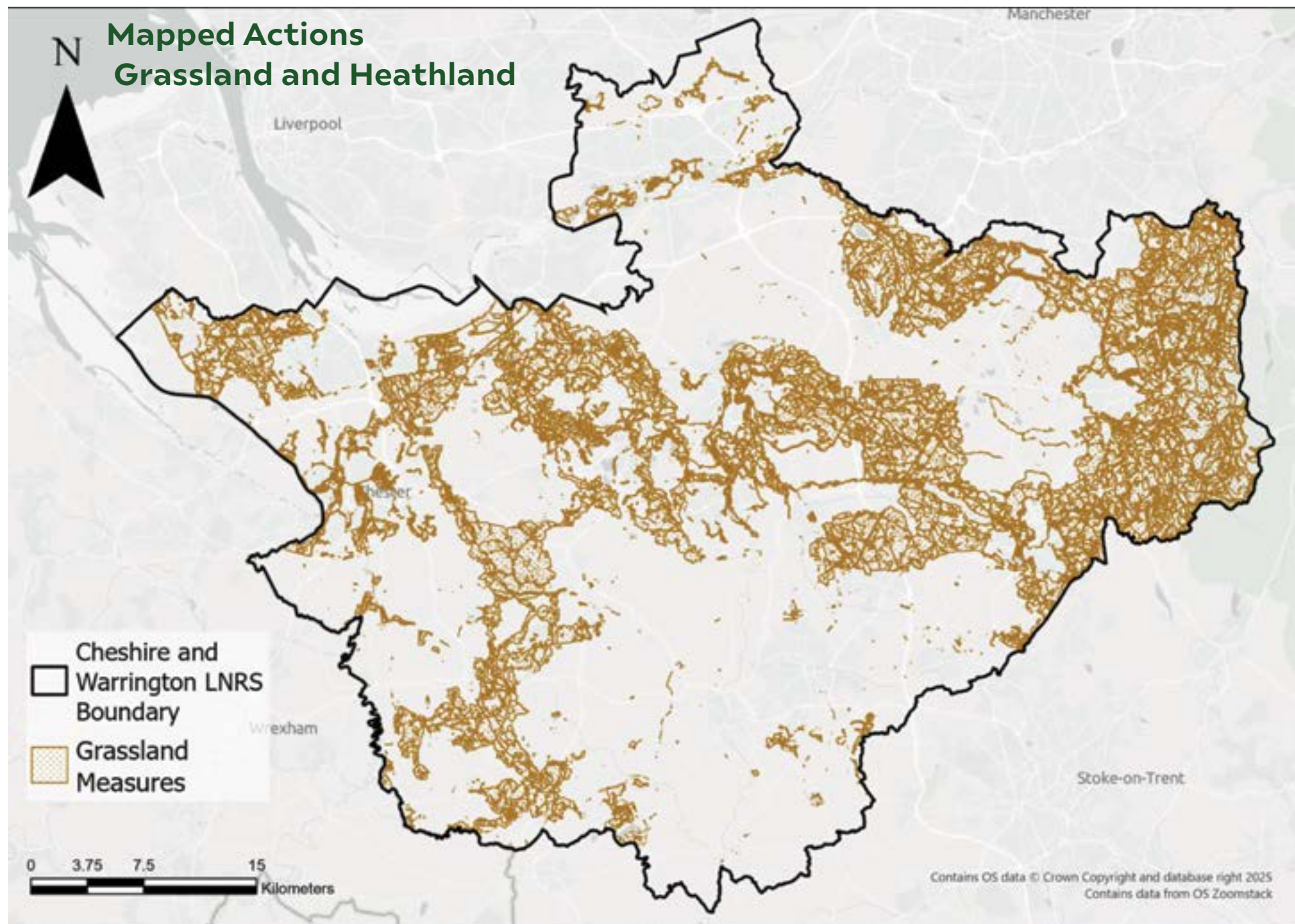
There are quite extensive opportunities to make a difference to nature by delivering all these actions across our rural and urban landscapes.

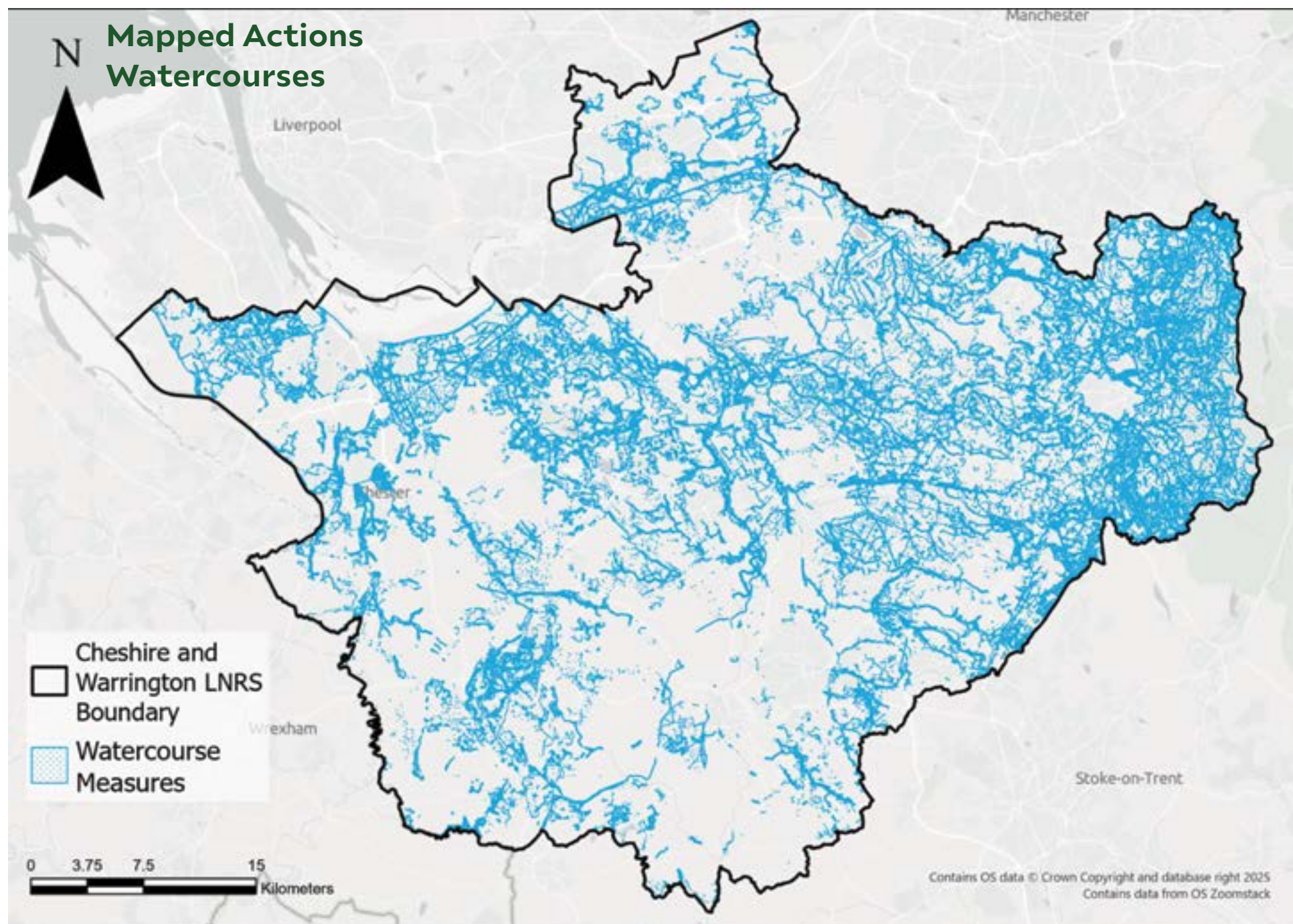
Actions include the desire to buffer existing important sites, to improve and protect current valuable habitat and expand it. They also include the opportunity to deliver new or improved habitats, or a blend of these habitats (a mosaic) to provide the strategic arteries – ‘corridors’ and ‘stepping stones’ indicated in the opportunity areas for nature recovery, between our core nature sites. Sites will be even more valuable if they can deliver important ecosystem services.

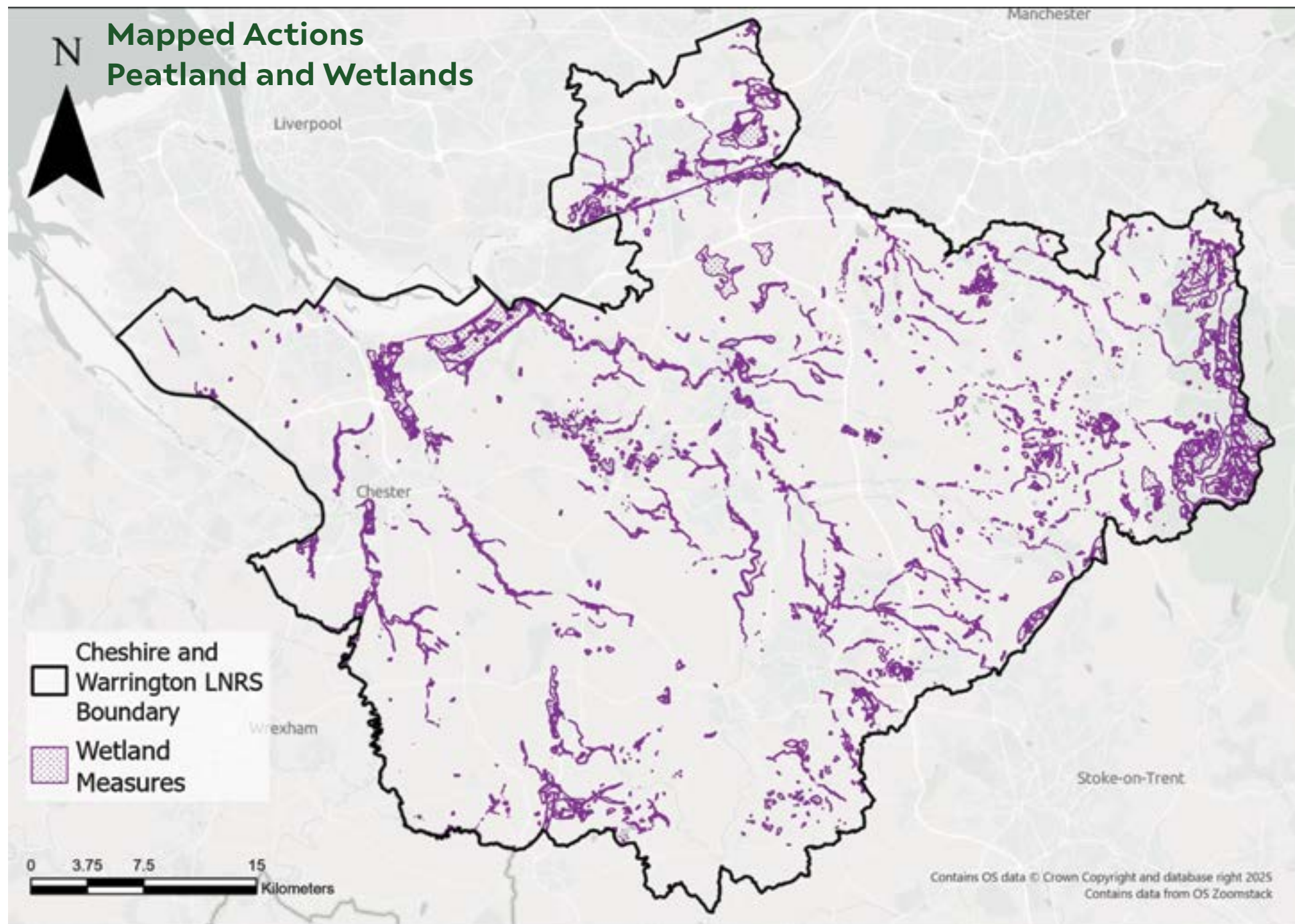
The mapped actions will steer developers on the type of habitat or best actions that could be delivered on site or off-site to achieve the strategic significance multiplier on their Biodiversity Net Gain units.

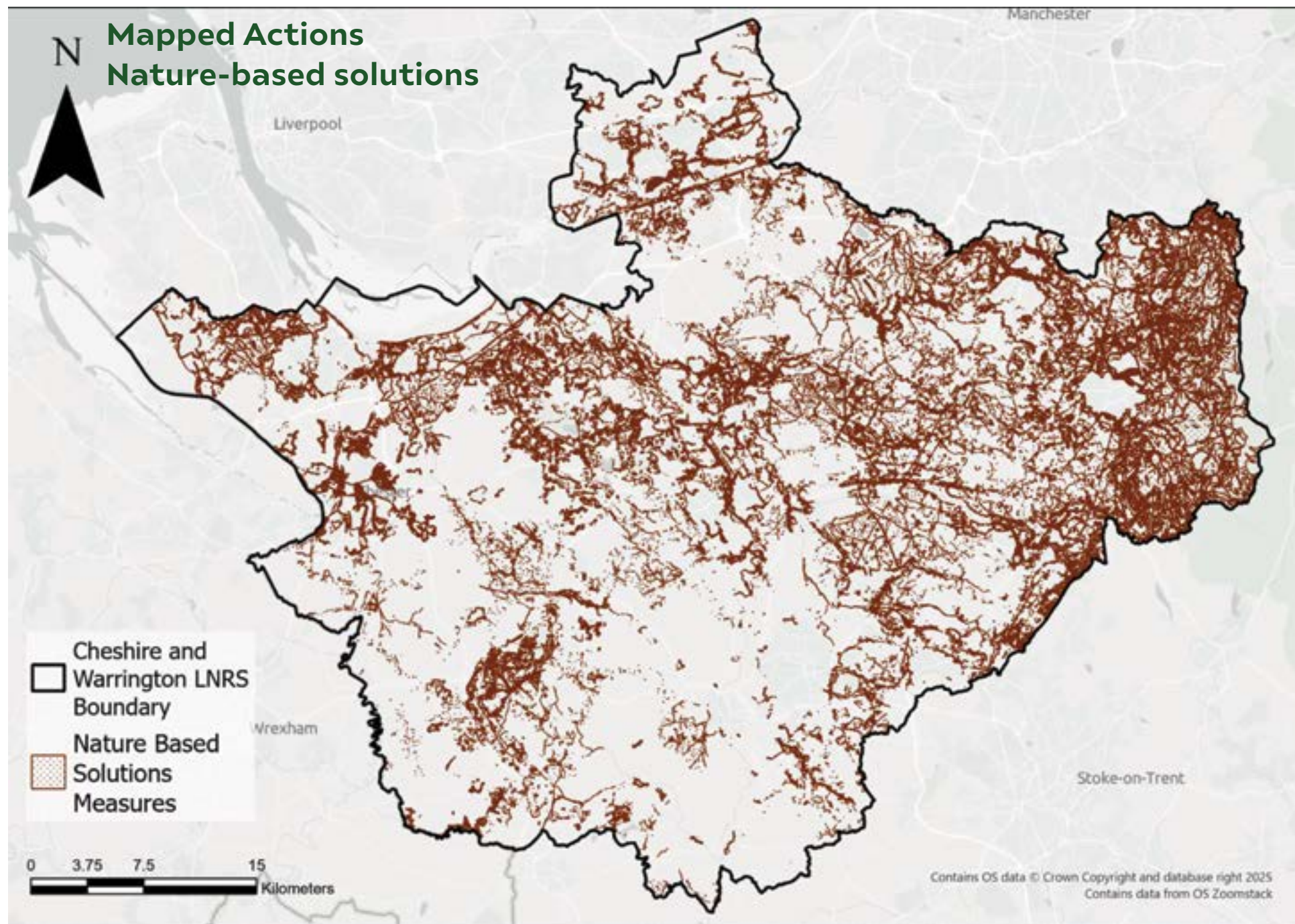


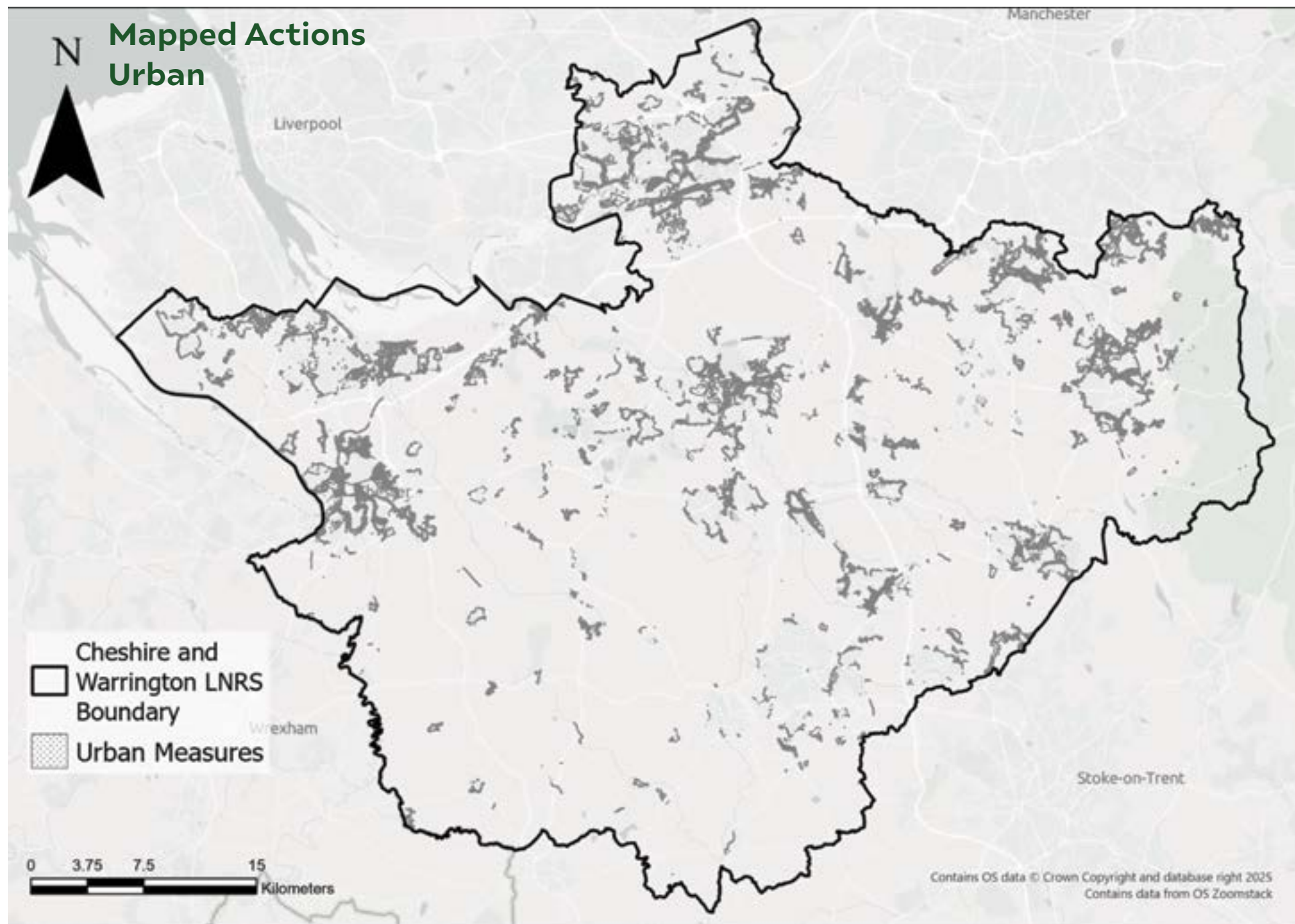














It is important for nature recovery considerations to prioritise, wherever possible, the mapped actions to the locations where they have been mapped. This is because the mapping has been developed with the best locations modelled for habitats and species to improve and thrive. LNRS also contains many unmapped actions and these can be undertaken wherever they are relevant to a location.

Unmapped actions range across the habitats, species and themes and can be delivered anywhere across the LNRS area that they apply. They can also provide wider environmental, social and economic benefits. You can see all the priorities and actions in the main document alongside other useful information. Appendix 7 also contains all the priorities and actions in a list with the mapped actions in bold to clearly identify both types. There is also further technical guidance on how to achieve all the actions.

Unmapped actions also include those activities wider than simple habitat or species actions that drive efforts to engage people to think about and get active in delivering nature recovery in their communities. There are actions around awareness raising, promoting awareness of habitats and species, developing investment opportunities as well as some, that target specific community groups such as schools with useful activities.

As a reminder, there is a requirement for all public bodies to have regard to the LNRS in its entirety including mapped and unmapped actions.





Users can access the Nature Network online and click on your site to see the relevant habitat and species actions that could be taken for that location. These key actions can bring the best results on a school field, across a parish council or community asset, on a landowners or farmer's estate, on council land or where a development is planned.

These actions offer nature recovery options for users to look at for inspiration. They can also check where else similar actions are needed, and share funding bids, equipment, or expertise with the support of the LNP.

Supporting your decision-making



The LNRS does not have statutory powers to restrict development or compulsory land changes. They provide information to help landowners and decision makers to decide how to manage land and make informed choices that benefit nature's recovery, place making, and the local economy.

Likewise, if you want to do nature conservation work in an area that isn't mapped as a priority area in the LNRS, you still can - The LNRS doesn't preclude investment and action in other areas (we'd like to see nature helped everywhere), it prioritises and maps those areas where action may be most beneficial.

The types of actions that LNRS's propose are intended to play an important role in meeting the government's targets and commitments for recovering nature and improving the environment. The government must track and report progress on these targets to determine where to focus efforts.

You can use LNRS's to help identify which environmental land management activities are most appropriate for your land and to see where there are opportunities for working with other land managers on landscape-scale nature recovery.

In future, LNRS's will help government when considering applications for funding specific nature recovery activities, by acting as criteria in applications for some schemes. LNRS's will also guide and incentivise landowners to create or enhance habitats for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Have a look at the nature network maps and see what you can find.

What next?

We will be working hard alongside the Local Nature Partnership (LNP), local authorities, river catchment partnerships, farmers, landowners, foresters, communities and individuals to drive nature's recovery across Cheshire and Warrington. Over the next 5-10 years, the priorities developed through an extensive engagement process will be key to help us achieve a nature positive future.

Developers will be encouraged to invest in on and off-site biodiversity net gain units in these priority areas, but other funding will be directed for ecosystem services and general nature improvement through the LNRS, with the support of the LNP. The LNRS will provide information to farmers and land managers to help them choose which options are appropriate for their land, to help groups of farmers and land managers to shape nature recovery priorities for their area, and to encourage collaboration across holdings and landscapes.

Cheshire and Warrington have very passionate and motivated farmers and landowners, who are willing to consider how investment in nature's recovery, carbon sequestration and other ecosystem services can be integrated into their farming businesses. This could provide us with the opportunity to map more land, in addition to the 37.5% coverage of Cheshire, where good opportunities exist to invest in nature's recovery over the next 5-10 years, to reverse the biggest decline in species experienced in any county across England over the last 70 years.

Delivering nature recovery: How to use this strategy

Every person and every organisation can take action to help nature's recovery, from landscape scale projects through to small actions at home in your garden or window box. There is something we can all do.

This section explains how different organisations and individuals can use this strategy and the accompanying interactive opportunity mapping.

This includes:

- Farmers and landowners
- Developers and planners
- Business
- Community groups, environmental charities and partnerships
- Residents
- Local authorities
- Town and parish councils

Appendix 7 provides some evidence-based resources with activities that can support the actions listed in the above habitats and themes and detailing the benefits to some sectors of taking action to deliver nature recovery.

Our **pledge map** shows many of the projects being carried out across Cheshire and Warrington by volunteers or residents at home in their garden:



We invite everyone to continue to share actions you intend to take for nature or to celebrate things you have achieved. By sharing your stories and pictures we may be able to inspire even more people, communities and organisations to take positive action for nature across Cheshire and Warrington.

Case studies

Chester Zoo's Networks for Nature project

Built upon the success of Chester Zoo's nature recovery corridor project, the Networks for Nature project aims to help people to connect with nature, make it more accessible, drive nature recovery, empower communities to protect and restore nature and more importantly, create a network for nature. So far, they have improved over 62 hectares for wildlife and directly engaged more than 12,000 people.

Chester Wetlands Project

This project aims to utilise an underused part of the Countess of Chester countryside park to restore an increasingly rare floodplain meadow habitat. The organisations involved include University of Chester, Environment Agency, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Bangor University, The Land Trust, The Conservation Volunteers, Chester Zoo and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Forestry England's expansion at Delamere Forest

Hondslough Wood is a 40ha woodland being created to buffer Delamere Forest and provide a space for people to enjoy, an improved habitat for wildlife and a sustainable supply of home-grown timber. This has been supported by Coronation Wood, a national scheme to create 2,000ha of woodland by 2026 and support government targets to boost tree planting across the UK.

Mersey Forest with Snugbury's ice cream farm

A popular ice cream farm in Cheshire have introduced more flavours to its menu thanks to the range of trees they've planted this season as part of an agroforestry scheme.

Snugburys is a family run ice cream parlour, operating alongside the farm business, which grows organic grass. Using Trees for Climate funding they've planted over 2,300 trees on their site near Nantwich.

The owner had done lots of research around agroforestry and worked alongside local farming advisors, ELM associates, to design a planting scheme which would work alongside their business.

Key features include:

- Walnut and hazelnut trees have been planted in rows, 36 meters apart, to allow machinery to fit in between the rows.
- The nut and fruit trees will provide additional flavours for the ice cream business.
- Landowner keen to farm with nature.

Farmers, landowners and foresters

Farmers and landowners work across over 60% of the land in Cheshire and Warrington and hold the key to nature's recovery by aligning their businesses, land use and farming practices acting as stewards for the habitats in this strategy. Whilst, also providing nature-based solutions to make their farms and assets more productive. As outlined in the farmland section and habitat sections of this strategy, restoring and replanting hedgerows, sensitively and sustainably managing woodland and grasslands as well as preventing runoff into our waterways while re-naturalising some of our rivers could have an instant impact in helping support nature's recovery across Cheshire.

Farmers and landowners can work with each other through the future farmer group and the Cheshire LNP to help shape nature's recovery, Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs), and more specifically the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Biodiversity Net Gain and other investment, funding, information, and expert guidance.

Farmers and landowners can use the strategy and maps to:

- Understand how their land fits into the nature network
- Inform strategic and business plans for their land
- Integrate opportunities for nature-friendly farming practices
- Inform and support applications for funding and project delivery on their land

Planners and developers

Biodiversity Net Gain is a statutory duty introduced in 2024 for all developments and from November 2025 for infrastructure developments, which enable developers to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. This means that any biodiversity on a development site must be retained and enhanced by 10% in area or quality, and if not possible, that nature is improved off-site.

Under the Environment Act 2021, local planning authorities and decision-makers must have regard to the LNRS in their policies including the Local Plan. Expected to come into force later in 2025, will make it a legal requirement for plan-makers to "take account" of LNRS's. The LNRS will help to inform better place-making. Moreover, the LNRS cannot be used to refuse development from taking place. It will instead help to encourage developers to identify and adopt the best nature enhancement measures on their sites, that will boost nature recovery.

Developers can use the strategy and map to:

- Integrate nature into the planning and place-making development process including master planning.
- Guide the most effective delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain on-site.
- Guide where off-site investment can provide the greatest benefits for nature (e.g buffers to irreplaceable habitats to protect and improve with resilience, additions to ecological corridors).
- Identify irreplaceable habitats which must be protected and retained.
- Install nature based solutions to reduce flooding, provide urban cooling, green space access and support the nature network.

The LNRS's will be one source of evidence used to inform the preparation of local plans that determine where development should occur (these plan preparation processes have their own consultation and engagement requirements so that different needs for land can be balanced by the plan maker).

Homes for Nature is an initiative which developers are encouraged to join, to provide positive developments for wildlife. Homes for Nature members commit to provide a bird-nesting brick or box installed for every new home built and hedgehog highways in-built to every development as a standard. This is in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain regulations. Other aspects from the Homes for Nature group include guides on how to implement SUDS, pollinator friendly landscaping, bat roosts, insect bricks and hibernacula, which can help make the development supportive of nature. Native, wildlife friendly plants used in gardens and landscaping, wildlife-friendly boundaries between gardens and open space, deadwood piles or bug hotels should all be a standard feature of any development.

Business

We hope that this strategy inspires businesses to support a healthy natural environment for the benefits it can bring to the workplace, retail environments, employee performance, attendance, and satisfaction. They may want to invest in nature-based solutions locally, so that their employees and customers benefit from quality environments to live, work and play, whilst meeting corporate social responsibility aims or targets to offset carbon emissions.

Nature is good for business- did you know? Employees with views of trees and landscapes took an average 23% less sick leave per year than employees with no view. Shoppers are willing to spend 9-12% more for goods and services in shopping areas with large mature trees. The cost to businesses from flooding is an estimated £82,000 per flooding event, loss of 50 working days and 40% reduction in productivity – installing rain-gardens, permeable surfaces in car parks and sustainable drainage systems is vital.

In 2021, 92 businesses were affected by the floods in Northwich. By introducing natural interventions upstream and in Northwich itself, such as re-connecting the rivers to their natural floodplain, holding the flow back in smaller streams and ditches through leaky dams, more hedgerows, woodlands and species rich grasslands can help reduce the likelihood of future flooding events by increasing infiltration into the ground and reducing peak flows during high rainfall events.

Businesses and other organisations can use this strategy to:

- Identify opportunities to invest in nature or take action to contribute to nature recovery.
- Act on their sites to create green space and nature friendly schemes.
- Identify team-building, volunteering or sponsorship opportunities.
- Support local charities and community groups running schemes.

Case Study: Bentley have implemented several new natural features around their manufacturing plant at Crewe. Their green wall alone produces around 40 kg of oxygen a year as well as helping to absorb heat, provide natural insulation and filter VOC toxins and dust. The living wall also attracts and supports local biodiversity. Bentley now has 300,000 flying bees located in hives at the edge of its factory site and has planted over 1,000 flowers around the site to support them. Although not the core aim of the scheme, the reduction in their CO2 emissions has been significant with the site now being considered carbon neutral.

Community groups, environmental charities and partnerships

Community groups, environmental charities and partnerships are vital to delivering nature recovery, and are often the local experts on the places and species that are most at risk. Many of these groups have been fundamental to developing this strategy.

Local community groups are key to recruiting, inspiring, training and coordinating dedicated volunteers, for nature recovery, but also for social and training reasons, so they can help build people's skills, provide green social prescribing, health and well-being schemes, tidy-ups and schemes to keep their neighbourhoods litter-free, safe and attractive.

We hope to continue working in partnership under the Cheshire Local Nature Partnership to deliver the actions in this Strategy and provide ideas and support to groups wanting to develop and deliver projects.

This Local Nature Recovery Strategy helps local volunteers and community groups to:

- Understand the needs of many of Cheshire and Warrington's most important habitats and species, to inform what action they can take to help.
- Understand how their local natural environment and green spaces fit within the nature network.
- Apply for funding for project delivery.
- Work with wider communities, local businesses, local authorities and landowners.
- Join networks of like-minded community groups to share support and information.

Residents

People who live in Cheshire and Warrington are vital for nature's recovery and there are lots of ways you can help.

You can use the strategy to:

- Understand what nature is on your doorstep and where the most valuable habitats are.
- Make your garden or land more wildlife-friendly and work with your neighbours to put in wildlife corridors, ponds, swift bricks and nesting boxes to make yours a wilder neighbourhood.
- Become a volunteer - check out the map on the **Local Nature Partnership** website of all the opportunities to get involved with others in helping wildlife (e.g. Friends & Conservation Groups, LNP partners like Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Groundwork, National Trust and others).
- Keep your eyes open – spotting and recording wildlife is vital - we need more people to use apps on their phones (iNaturalist, iRecord, Merlin) and learn what different species look like and record where you've seen them.
- Once you have learned some species, you can send information of what you've seen to Cheshire RECORD using email or the swift system. Understanding what species are where, helps us to understand how healthy their populations are and when we might need to act to help some that are in danger.
- Join in wildlife spotting events like the big garden birdwatch every January or the big farmland bird count in February.
- Use our **Pledge Map** to let us know what you're going to do for nature and how you are getting on.

Public sector, education, health and care settings

The key Defra agencies Natural England, Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency, are engaged in nature recovery and can use LNRS to inform their activities locally.

Institutions like the National Health Service (NHS), schools, colleges, universities, medical practices to care homes all have land and estates that could become places for nature that help the people they serve.

The benefits of nature have been well-documented and are becoming increasingly well-known and accepted in patient health and recovery, staff wellbeing, contributing to optimum learning environments, supporting social wellbeing and voluntary opportunities to tackle mental and physical health challenges.

We are delighted to see that more schools are seeing the benefit of using their outdoor spaces in diverse ways to support their children's learning and wider development, particularly through forest school. These opportunities are helping young people develop an understanding and connection to nature, with the potential to increase their value, use and stewardship of nature in the future.

Institutions can use this strategy and the resources in Appendix 7 to:

- Integrate nature into planning and enhancing their estates and assets.
- Understand what nature is on their doorstep and how they can become part of the nature network, creating new spaces for nature and ecological corridors or resting places from tiny forests to wildflower patches, bird boxes and ponds.
- Identify irreplaceable habitats which must be protected and retained.
- Install nature based solutions to reduce flooding, provide urban cooling, green space access and support the nature network.
- Involve staff and service users in nature based projects from spotting and identifying wildlife and species through to planting and caring for green spaces.

Local Authorities: Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council, Warrington Borough Council and Peak District National Park Authority

This Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a statutory policy document that will be used by local planning authorities to inform local planning policy and practice in line with the National Planning and Policy Framework and guide the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain.

The Strategy provides evidence of action by the Local Authorities as part of their enhanced biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021. It also guides them to consider how they might protect and enhance biodiversity further through all their other functions.

As landowners and managers, the priority and action mapping could help local authorities to manage their assets more effectively to support nature's recovery.

Town and Parish Councils

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance states that town and parish councils must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and Parish Councils can use this strategy to:

- Understand how their local area fits into the Nature Network and develop an action plan.
- Help deliver and manage more accessible, natural green spaces for their residents to enjoy.
- Support applications for project funding.
- Inform environmental and land use policies and Neighbourhood Plans.
- Inform responses to planning applications and ensure they refer to biodiversity and nature recovery.



How could we guarantee nature recovery and deliver this strategy?

Cheshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) brings together many of the key delivery organisations needed to ensure the actions identified in this Strategy get done.

Cheshire Local Nature Partnership provides leadership and coordinates joint initiatives and work to attract funding for nature recovery projects in our area. Its activities include:

- ✓ Establishing and maintaining a strong effective partnership for management and delivery.
- ✓ Administering and coordinating funding backed by robust and efficient procedures.
- ✓ Ensuring funding is targeted to agreed plans and objectives.
- ✓ Putting in place staffing and resourcing for LNP and to deliver joint projects and initiatives.
- ✓ Targets to increase financial investment into nature and nature-based solutions, through supporting farmers to choose which options are appropriate for their land and facilitate groups of farmers to collaborate across holdings.

Visit the CLNP website at: www.cheshirelnp.co.uk/

This Strategy enables the partnership to work together in a coordinated way to influence and support communities, landowners and strategic work for nature across the county, such as our catchment and landscape recovery partnerships.

The LNP supports the establishment of a Future Farming Group and continues to provide critical input for new opportunities.

The first step for the Local Nature Partnership was to create a delivery plan. It collates, monitors and records actions being taken across the partnership, along with landowners, communities and other organisations who are willing to share information, so that we can demonstrate how we are all taking action to deliver the LNRS, monitor what difference this is making, evaluate what is working well and what needs improving.

To measure progress, we use a monitoring framework , which is maintained by the Cheshire West and Chester Council, as the 'Responsible Authority', and Cheshire RECORD (Cheshire's Local Environmental Record Centre).

Some of the indicators that are included are:

1. Hectarage (ha) of land put forward for Biodiversity Net Gain, established and delivered.
2. Ha of land actively managed for sustainable food production and habitats.
3. Ha of sustainably managed woodland.
4. Ha of habitats created or enhanced.
5. % tree cover in urban and rural wards.
6. km of rivers re-naturalised across the catchments.
7. £££s of investment into nature recovery/carbon or water by private sector.
8. km of hedgerows restored in our landscape.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who contributed their time and effort to produce this strategy together for Cheshire and Warrington.

Our particular thanks go to:

Steering Group (Cheshire and Warrington LNP)

- Barnston Estate (Representing the CLA)
- Canal & River Trust
- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire RECORD
- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust (co-chair)
- Chester Zoo
- CPRE
- Environment Agency
- Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington
- Forestry Commission
- Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside
- Mersey Forest
- Mersey Rivers Trust
- National Trust
- Natural England
- NFU
- RSPB
- Sandstone Ridge Trust
- Tatton Group (Chair)
- United Utilities
- Warrington Borough Council
- Weaver Gowry Catchment Partnership
- Woodland Trust



Officers Group

- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Natural England
- Forestry Commission
- Environment Agency

Further Contributions

In addition to the contributions given by the Steering & Officers group, we would like to specially thank those who have provided the documents, facilitation and additional work for the LNRS, which include:

Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Cheshire RECORD for the Description of the Strategy Area technical document, Opportunity mapping, and Species shortlist and workshops

Edsential for the Cheshire and Warrington LNRS education pack.

Majestical for the creation and development of the public engagement video.

Quantum Strategy and Technology for the editing and formatting of the final draft document.

Rhizome Cooperative for their facilitation of the public workshops.

Chester Zoo for hosting the LNP workshops.

Cheshire Platters for providing food and refreshments during the public workshops.



Appendices

Appendix 1. Area Description: technical Version

Appendix 2. How LNRS relates to other council plans and strategies

Appendix 3. Methodology – how the LNRS was developed

Appendix 4: Step 5 mapping (Methodology and Interpretation)

Appendix 5. Species list report

Appendix 6. Stakeholder Engagement

Appendix 7. Delivery Guide to LNRS: Technical Information & Resources

Appendix 8. Benefits to Audiences



“The LNP are delighted to have been able to support the LNRS development, which represents a significant step forward to protecting and enhancing nature and our environment, and we look forward to being the key delivery partner once it is published. The strategy is just the start of a holistic approach to incorporating the three pillars of sustainable development, which is a rich natural environment, a growing circular economy and a strong community.”

Annette MacDonald, LNP co-chair

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Cheshire and Warrington
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
2025-2035

Findings of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation

1. Background to the consultation

The first ever Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington has been in development from 2023 to 2025. This sets out the priorities and actions for nature's recovery in Cheshire and Warrington over the next 5-10 years.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a statutory policy document, which Cheshire West and Chester Council has been designated as the responsible authority for the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington with the support of Cheshire East Council, Warrington Borough Council, Peak District National Park Authority and Natural England. The other DEFRA Arms-length bodies (Forestry Commission and Environment Agency) have also contributed alongside the Cheshire Local Nature Partnership. There are 48 responsible authorities across England.

To address the nature emergency, the government has made legally binding commitments to reverse the decline of nature and set it on the path to recovery. This is important for nature and for all the things that we rely on nature for, like clean water and food production. For nature to recover, targeted, co-ordinated and collaborative action will be required. The LNRS will help Cheshire Authorities to meet their enhanced biodiversity duties by steering broader action, beyond the impact of their own services. It will also help all stakeholders to more effectively address nature recovery and work together to achieve targets and delivery.

Cheshire West and Chester Council, having undergone a pre-consultation period of 28 days with the 4 Supporting Authorities, as set out in the LNRS Statutory Regs and Guidance, was able to go to consultation. Under regulations 12 of The Environment Act (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023, "A responsible authority must consult on its local nature recovery strategy (subject to regulation 11)."

The vision of the LNRS, "To mainstream nature's recovery into all decisions and activities so that nature, people and businesses thrive", was developed by the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Partnership (LNP)¹. The LNP is a collective of organisations, including Local Planning Authorities, environmental non-governmental organisations, farmers and landowners and DEFRA Arm's Length Bodies. As part of the LNRS process, priorities and actions (measures to support the priorities) were collaboratively developed to help ensure nature's recovery. Some of the proposals put forward included:

- Set up a county-wide 'Future Farming' group to develop solutions and promote good practice to support sustainable food production that aids nature's recovery
- Help to identify and develop a pipeline of BNG mitigation opportunities across the county to support development and major infrastructure
- Encourage an increase in tree cover and green infrastructure in wards of significant inequality
- Encourage more opportunities for people to engage with nature (where appropriate), for the benefit this can bring

¹ <https://cheshirelnp.co.uk/>

- Attract and target additional investment in nature where it can provide a range of eco-system services
- Ensure more, bigger, better, and connected natural landscapes across the county, following the Lawton principles.

Over the past year, there have been other engagement activities that assisted in developing the LNRS. The engagement methods used included an online survey, public workshops, individual meetings and presentations. From February to April 2024, the initial public survey engagement had over 900 participants, where everyone was given the chance to provide their vision for a nature positive future. Once the survey responses were reviewed, the survey respondents were invited to join the LNRS team in public workshops across Cheshire and Warrington, in Chester, Macclesfield and Warrington. In these public workshops, participants put forward priorities and actions for nature's recovery for the next 10 years for five themes (Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees/ Grassland and Heathland/ Watercourses/ Peatland and wetlands/ Nature-based solutions), which later on in the process, developed into seven themes including Farmland and Urban.

Following the public workshops, the LNP met virtually over 5 weeks to discuss the priorities put forward and voted upon which priorities would be most suitable for the strategy. In the latter parts of the priorities and actions development, the LNP members were asked to put forward suitable actions to address the priorities set out from the previous 5 weeks. This work was hosted on a miro board online, which was open from June through to early September in 2024 and managed by the responsible authority.

The LNP agreed the priorities and actions shortlist on the 15th of October 2024. The priorities and actions shortlist were confirmed by the responsible authority (RA)and Supporting authorities prior to submitting the consultation draft for public consultation in early 2025.

2. How the consultation was carried out

The consultation was open for 6 weeks, starting on 14th February 2025 and closing on 31st March 2025. There were multiple ways in which stakeholders could respond to the consultation and ensure their views were heard. These methods included an online survey and drop-in sessions, which were advertised on the Councils' consultation platforms which included [Participate Now](#). The face to face drop-in sessions took place at:

Cheshire West and Chester:

Chester - Storyhouse, Hunter Street, Chester, CH1 2AR

- Friday 28 February 11am - 1pm

Ellesmere Port - Ellesmere Port library, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG

- Wednesday 5 March 9am - 12pm

- Friday 7 March 1pm - 3pm
- Wednesday 12 March 9am - 12pm
- Friday 14 March 12pm - 4pm

Northwich - Northwich Weaver Hall Museum, London Road, Northwich, CW9 8AB

- Tuesday 25 February 10:30am - 12pm
- Wednesday 26 February 10:30am - 12pm and 2 - 4pm
- Thursday 27 February 10:30am - 12pm and 2 - 4pm
- Wednesday 5 March 2 - 4:30pm

Winsford - Winsford library, High Street, Winsford, CW7 2AS

- Monday 24 February 9am - 5pm
- Monday 3 March 9am - 5pm

Cheshire East:

Crewe - Crewe library, Crewe Lifestyle Centre, Moss Square, CW1 2BB

- Tuesday 11 March 10am - 12pm
- Thursday 13 March 2 - 4pm
- Tuesday 18 March 10am - 12pm
- Thursday 20 March 2 - 4pm

Warrington:

1 Time Square, Warrington, WA1 2NT

- Thursday 20 February 10am - 12pm
- Wednesday 26 February 11am - 1pm
- Tuesday 4 March 12pm - 2pm
- Monday 10 March 1pm - 3pm
- Wednesday 19 March 2pm - 4pm
- Friday 28 March 3 - 5pm

Paper copies of the survey were also available on request, and people were also able to respond to the consultation by e-mail, letter or telephone.

Communication methods to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the consultation and given the opportunity to have their say included press releases, emails to key stakeholder groups, Member briefings, social media and the presence of the consultation on the Council websites. Individuals from the Local Nature Partnership and the local authorities shared the consultation on their social media to contacts within the local area too.

3. Response to the consultation

The consultation received 145 online survey responses, 15 participants emailed, telephoned or sent us a letter telling us their views and 57 attendees were at the drop-in sessions.

4. Key messages

The key messages to emerge from the consultation process are as follows:

- There is a need for more detailed priorities and actions in each of the themes provided.
- There was overall support for the priorities and actions put forward for each theme but there was a need for further information to make it more high level and digestible at the same time.
- Hedgerows are a major part of the Cheshire landscape that respondents were very keen to see come back.
- Technical ecological terms in the document need to be separated from others and defined clearly.
- Due to the ambition reflected in the priorities and actions in the document, many of the respondents were worried that it was too ambitious to achieve it all within the next 10 years. A key cause for concern amongst the respondents was that Climate Change was not taken seriously enough within the document, especially with regards to the watercourses, Peat and wetlands and Tree species put forward.
- Another element spoken about throughout the document was the need to educate/raise awareness of the public to becoming better stewards of the natural environment.
- A key species that was highlighted in the species shortlist were Beavers. Although this is a keystone species, due to national policy requirements, there needs to be a discussion with the Local Nature Partnership on how this could potentially be delivered.

5. Detailed consultation findings

In the first question, respondents were asked to what extent did they agree or disagree with the vision of the strategy.

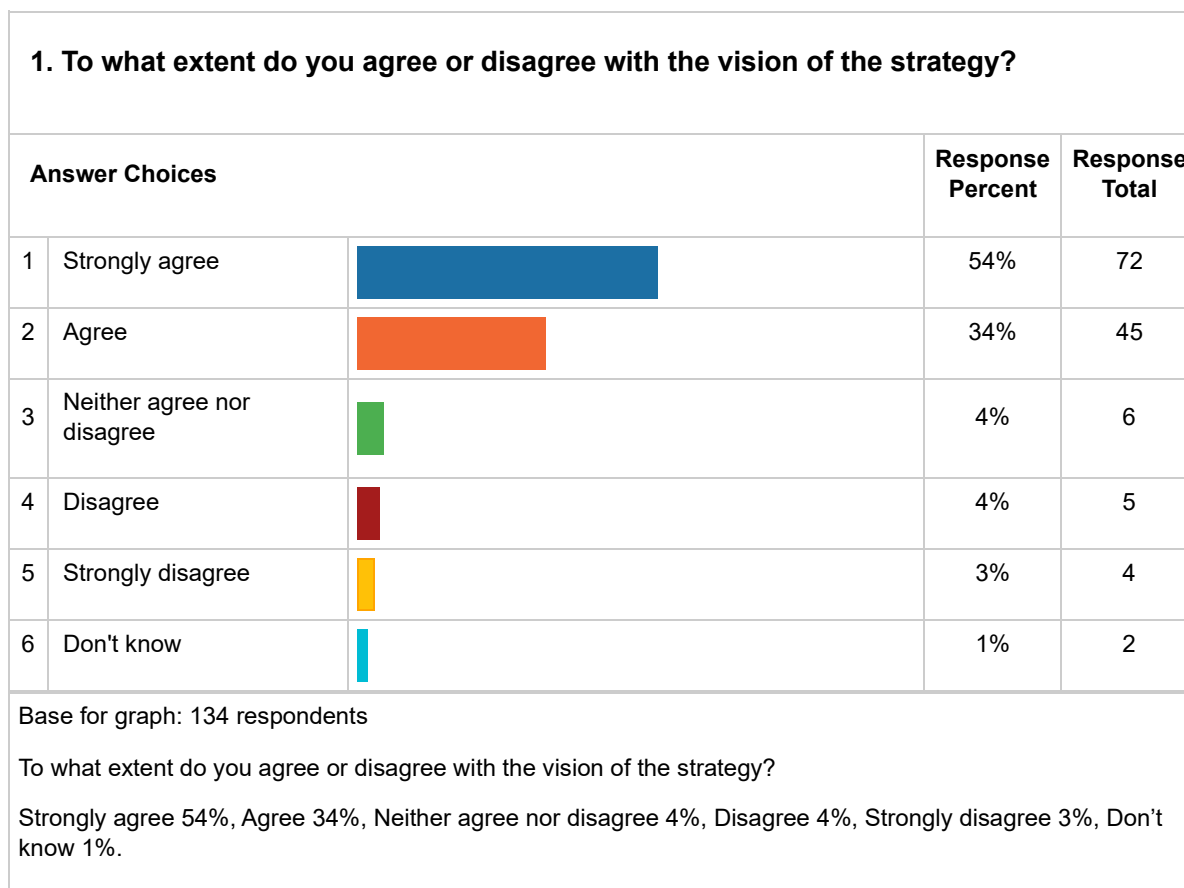
Chart 1: Level of agreement with the vision of the LNRS

Chart 1 above reflects that majority of the respondents (88%) agreed with the vision of the LNRS (54% strongly agreed, 34% agreed) and 7% disagreed (4% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed).

In the second question regarding the vision, respondents were asked whether they had any comments on the vision to help us fully understand whether the vision was the most suitable for the strategy. 75 comments were received on the vision, with some of the key messages as follows:

- Many people said that nature should be at the forefront of any decision making/planning in the local area.
- Some people commented that they generally agreed with the proposed vision.
- Some people were concerned that developers were not building enough houses on brownfield spaces but more so on the greenfield sites.
- A few people made comments relating to this vision being unachievable.

Following this section, respondents were asked to go through each habitat, theme and the species section within the strategy document. In each section, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the priorities set for each habitat and theme and whether the priorities were clear.

Over the 7 themes, we will also highlight respondents reasons for their answers and the comments given regarding the priorities and actions in its entirety.

Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

Respondents were asked to what extent do they agree or disagree with the priorities set out in the Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees section.

Chart 2: Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees Priorities shortlist level of agreement

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		58%	76
2	Agree		32%	42
3	Neither agree nor disagree		6%	8
4	Disagree		2%	3
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		0%	0
Base for graph: 131 respondents			answered	131
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	14
Strongly agree 58%, Agree 32%, Neither Agree nor disagree 6%, Disagree 2%, Strongly disagree 2%, Don't know 0%				

Chart 2 above displays that most respondents (90%) agreed with the priorities set out for the Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees (58% strongly agreed, 32% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 3: Clarity of the Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees priorities

4. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		77%	100
2	No		8%	11
3	Maybe		12%	16
4	Don't know		2%	3
Base for graph: 130			answered	130
Are the priorities clear?			skipped	15

4. Are the priorities clear?

Yes 77%, No 8%, Maybe 12%, Don't Know 2%

If you answered 'No', 'Maybe' or 'Don't know' please tell us why in the box below (29)

Chart 3 demonstrates that majority of the respondents (77%) felt that the priorities are clear and 8% believed that they were not clear.

In total, 27 comments were received, below is a summary of the key messages from these comments:

- Some people commented that they do not understand what the plan is for protecting the existing natural environment.
- A few people commented that there was not enough detail regarding the type of tree species to be planted.
- A few people were concerned that there was no mention of possible partnerships with the private sector.
- A few people made comments that there was no mention of research into the effects of climate change and there is no definition of the word “better”.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Woodland, Hedgerows and trees. 77 respondents commented on the priorities and actions.

- Many people said that the key action needed to improve Cheshire and Warrington's landscape is to reinstate lost hedgerows.
- In addition, there needs to be a maintenance programme for these and existing hedges and to stop developers removing ancient hedgerows and trees.
- Some people commented that we need to plant more trees and ensure both new and existing trees are maintained.
- Some people were concerned that there would be a risk of planting new woodland on productive farmland.
- A few people made comments that there needs to be more work with volunteer groups to speed up the process of planting new woodland, hedgerows and trees.

Grassland and Heathland

Similar to the Woodland, hedgerows and trees habitat section, the following charts will display whether the respondents agreed with the priorities and whether the priorities were clear.

Chart 4: Level of agreement with Grassland and Heathland priorities shortlist

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		54%	70
2	Agree		35%	46
3	Neither agree nor disagree		8%	11
4	Disagree		2%	2
5	Strongly disagree		1%	1
6	Don't know		0.00%	0
Base for graph: 130			answered	130
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	15
Strongly agree 54%, Agree 35%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 8%, Disagree 2%, Strongly disagree 1%, Don't know 0%				

Chart 4 shows that majority of respondents (89%) agreed with the priorities for the grassland and Heathland habitat section (54% strongly agreed, 35% agreed) and 3% disagreed (2% disagreed, 1% strongly disagreed).

Chart 5: Clarity of Grassland and Heathland priorities

7. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		80%	101
2	No		8%	10
3	Maybe		9%	12
4	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 127			answered	127

7. Are the priorities clear?

Are the priorities clear?

Yes 80%, No 8%, Maybe 9%, Don't Know 3%

skipped

18

The chart shows that many of the respondents (80%) felt that the grassland and heathland priorities were clear and 8% felt that they weren't clear.

25 of the respondents who felt that the priorities were not clear or were uncertain whether they were clear enough had the following key messages:

- There was not enough detail.
- A few people commented that semi-natural species-rich grasslands should not be confused with farmed grassland, which is a crop.
- A few people were concerned that the species rich grassland and heathlands were so rare that the coherence of the strategy was not understandable across a mainly developed area.
- A few people made comments relating to the need for more specific statements regarding proposals/targets.

24 respondents commented on the priorities and actions for Grassland and Heathland. Some of the key messages are:

- Some of the respondents stated that they would like to see an increase in biodiverse grasslands and that the sites were maintained for the benefit of people and pollinators.
- Some people commented that there needs to be more detail regarding how and when this will be achieved.
- A few people made comments relating to the fact that there needs to be a reduced amount of mowing and improving the way that species rich grasslands are established and maintained, including ensuring that planning stipulates enough habitat space for wildlife and that there needs to be improvement in agricultural practices to support the aims that the LNRS is looking to hit.

Watercourses

Chart 6: Level of agreement with Watercourses priorities

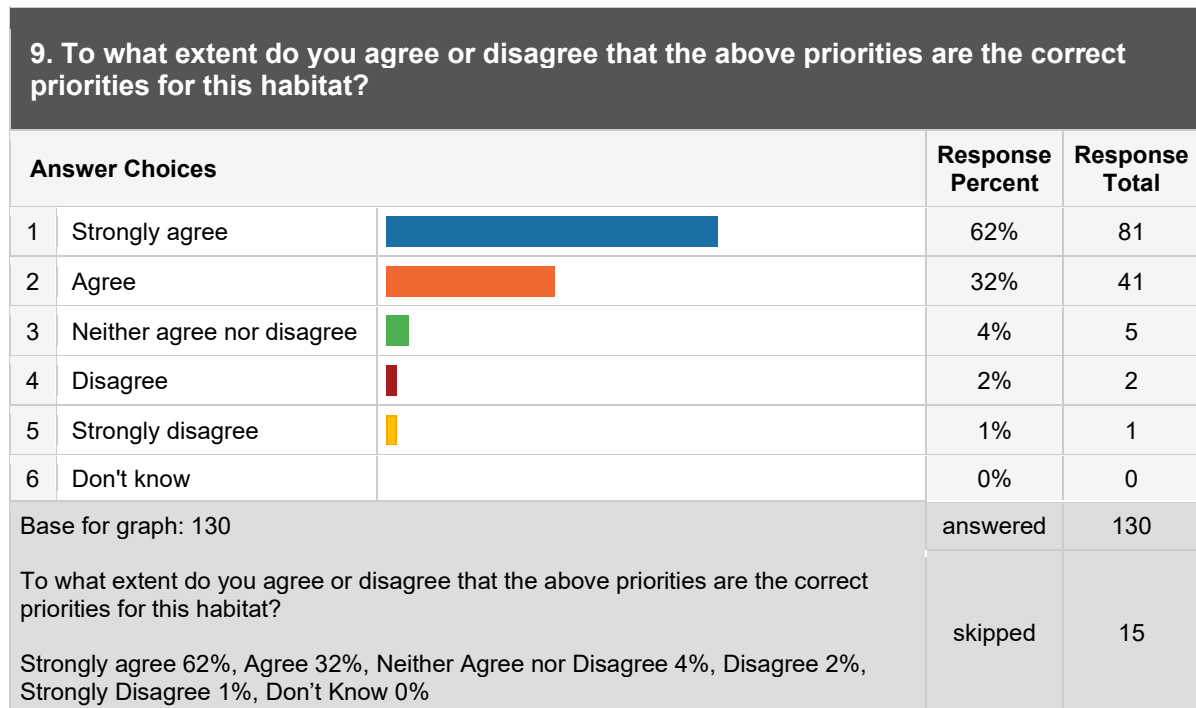
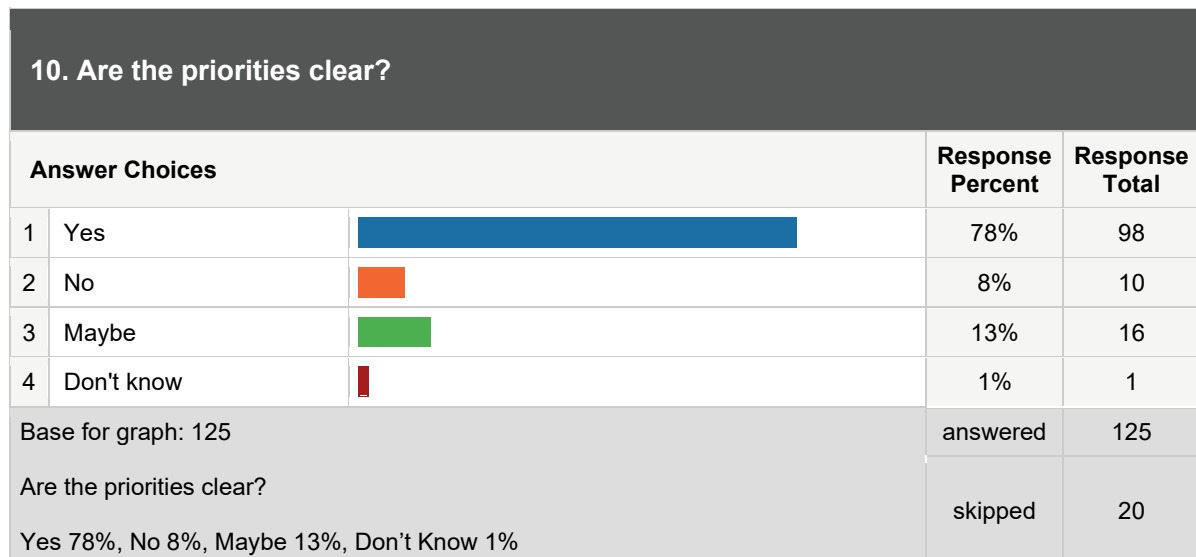


Chart 6 shows that majority of respondents (94%) agreed with the priorities for watercourses (62% strongly agreed, 32% agreed) and 3% disagreed (2% disagreed, 1% strongly disagreed).

Chart 7: Clarity of Watercourses priorities



The chart shows that the majority of respondents (78%) agreed that the watercourses priorities are clear and 8% disagreed. The number of respondents who weren't sure whether the priorities were clear were slightly higher to the previous two sections (13%).

23 comments were received about the clarity of the priorities. The key messages included:

- Some people commented that all waterways require better maintenance and monitoring
- Some people suggested that we need better enforcement of laws regarding pollution and litter
- Respondents wanted more specific detail included.
- A few people commented that there was a vagueness about the “functions as naturally as possible” priority, such as is it too canal-centric or does that mean that there will be a reintroduction of species into the watercourses.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Watercourses. 58 respondents commented in more detail regarding the priorities and actions for the watercourses section of the document. The key messages received were as follows:

- Some respondents felt that agriculture and industry should be held to account for pollution.
- Some people commented that they would like to have more emphasis on managing flooding and need more detailed information regarding the proposed actions
- Some people were concerned that we need to promote nature focused solutions.

Peatland and wetlands

Chart 8: Level of agreement with Peat and Wetland priorities

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		60%	78
2	Agree		27%	35
3	Neither agree nor disagree		8%	10
4	Disagree		2%	3
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		1%	1
Base for graph: 129			answered	129
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	16
Strongly agree 60%, Agree 27%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 8%, Disagree 2%, Strongly Disagree 2%, Don't know 1%				

The chart shows that the majority of respondents (87%) agreed with the Peatland and wetland priorities (60% strongly agreed, 27% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 9: Clarity of Peatland and Wetland Priorities

13. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		85%	105
2	No		4%	5
3	Maybe		7%	9
4	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 123			answered	123
Are the priorities clear?			skipped	22
Yes 85%, No 4%, Maybe 7%, Don't know 3%				

The chart shows that the majority of respondents felt that the priorities were clear (85%) and 4% disagreed.

11 comments were received. The key messages from these comments were:

- Most comments referenced that they would like more detailed information.
- A few people commented that they would support peat restoration.
- Some people are wanting no development allowed on peat bearing areas.
- A few people commented that climate change could prevent wetland expansion plans.

37 respondents shared comments about the priorities and actions for Peat and wetland. The key messages are as follows:

- Some respondents stated that Peatland and wetland habitats must be restored as a priority.
- Some respondents wanted us to promote awareness of peat's ability to capture and store carbon.
- Some respondents were asking for Peatland and wetland areas to have protection.
- A few respondents commented that Peat free alternatives for gardening must be encouraged.

Nature-based solutions

Chart 10: Level of agreement with nature-based solutions priorities

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		57%	73

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?				
2	Agree		30%	39
3	Neither agree nor disagree		9%	12
4	Disagree		2%	2
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		0%	0
Base for graph: 128			answered	128
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priorities are the correct priorities for this habitat?			skipped	17
Strongly Agree 57%, Agree 30%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 9%, Disagree 2%, Strongly Disagree 2%, Don't know 0%				

Chart 10 displays that the majority of respondents (87%) agree with the Nature-based solutions priorities (57% strongly agreed, 30% agreed) and 4% disagreed with them (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 11: Clarity of Nature-Based solutions priorities

16. Are the priorities clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		80%	98
2	No		3%	4
3	Maybe		15%	19
4	Don't know		2%	2
Base for graph: 123			answered	123
Are the priorities clear?			skipped	22
Yes 80%, No 3%, Maybe 15%, Don't Know 2%				

The chart shows that the majority of respondents think that the priorities are clear (80%) whilst 3% don't think that they are clear.

When asked for further comments, 18 comments were received. Key messages from these comments were:

- Some respondents felt that there needs to be more detail about the priorities.
- A few respondents commented that the wildlife corridors must be maintained and improved.

- A few of the respondents commented that there were undertones of urbanisation in the priorities.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Nature-based solutions. 51 respondents commented on the priorities and actions relating to the nature-based solutions. Key messages included:

- Some people said they want existing natural areas to be enhanced, improved and maintained.
- Some people commented that there needs to be better control of pollution and litter.
- Some people want planning decisions based on supporting nature.
- A few people made comments that they would like to see more native species re-introduced in areas where populations are depleted.

Farmland

Chart 12: Level of agreement with the Farmland priority

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		56%	74
2	Agree		31%	40
3	Neither agree nor disagree		6%	8
4	Disagree		2%	3
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 131			answered	131
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?			skipped	14
Strongly Agree 56%, Agree 31%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 6%, Disagree 2%, Strongly Disagree 2%, Don't know 3%.				

Chart 12 demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (87%) agreed with the priority proposed (56% strongly agreed, 31% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 13: Clarity of the Farmland Priority

19. Is the priority clear?		
Answer Choices		Response Percent
		Response Total

19. Is the priority clear?				
1	Yes		77%	97
2	No		7%	9
3	Maybe		12%	15
4	Don't know		4%	5
Base for graph: 126			answered	126
Is the priority clear?			skipped	19
Yes 77%, No 7%, Maybe 12%, Don't Know 4%				

Chart 13 shows that over three quarters of respondents agreed that the priority was clear (77%), with 7% not agreeing that it was.

24 comments were received; the key messages were:

- Some people said that Nature friendly farming needs to be encouraged.
- Some people commented that productive farmland should not be built on and sustainable, local food production must be encouraged.
- Some people were concerned about the livestock density and pollution.
- A few people made comments relating to how will farmers/growers be encouraged to do this.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Farmland. 59 comments were received; the key messages were:

- Many people said that they would like more encouragement of nature-friendly farming.
- Some people commented that there should be subsidies provided for farmers who adopt good practices.
- Some people were concerned that there needs to be more support for local food producers/growers over large firms,
- A few people made comments relating to the fact that there needs to be discouragement of the use of pesticides and chemicals.

Urban**Chart 14: Level of agreement with the Urban priority**

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		50%	66
2	Agree		27%	35
3	Neither agree nor disagree		12%	16
4	Disagree		8%	10
5	Strongly disagree		2%	3
6	Don't know		1%	1
Base for graph: 131			answered	131
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the above priority is the correct priority for this habitat?			skipped	14
Strongly agree 50%, Agree 27%, Neither agree nor disagree 12%, Disagree 8%, Strongly disagree 2%, Don't know 1%				

Chart 14 shows that 77% of respondents agreed that the Urban priority is the correct priority for this theme (50% strongly agreed, 27% agreed) and 10% disagreed (8% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 15: Clarity of the urban priority

22. Is the priority clear?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		73%	92
2	No		13%	16
3	Maybe		11%	14
4	Don't know		3%	4
Base for graph: 126			answered	126
Is the priority clear? Yes 73%, No 13%, Maybe 11%, Don't know 3%			skipped	19

Chart 15 shows that the majority of respondents (73%) said that the priority is clear, whereas 13% disagreed.

27 comments were received. Key messages taken from the comments were:

- Some people said that there needs to be more detail and explanation of the priority.
- Some people said that they don't know which species this will encourage/ benefit
- Some people wanted the wording to be Connectivity related rather than movement- and to create wildlife corridors.
- A few people commented that they were unsure how this will be achieved.

Respondents were asked if they had any views on the priorities and actions for Urban. 56 comments were received; the key messages were:

- Some people commented that safe wildlife corridors must be provided and maintained in the urban areas.
- Some people commented that we need to increase opportunities for active, green travel options to enhance people's connectivity with nature.
- Some people were concerned that the priority/actions do not focus on wildlife/nature in the existing urban environment.
- A few people commented that better publicity and education is needed.
- A few people commented that we must do more wildlife friendly building i.e. green roofs, warmer lighting.

Species Shortlist

Chart 16: Level of agreement with species shortlist

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above Species shortlist?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		35%	45
2	Agree		31%	40
3	Neither agree nor disagree		24%	31
4	Disagree		2%	2
5	Strongly disagree		2%	2
6	Don't know		6%	8
Base for graph: 128			answered	128
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above Species shortlist?			skipped	17
Strongly agree 35%, Agree 31%, Neither agree nor disagree 24%, Disagree 2%, Strongly disagree 2%, Don't know 6%				

Chart 16 shows that two-thirds of respondents (66%) agreed with the species shortlist (35% strongly agreed, 31% agreed) and 4% disagreed (2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed).

Chart 17: Are there any missing species in the shortlist

25. Are there any species missing that you feel should be included in the shortlist?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		45%	52
2	No		14%	16
3	Maybe		10%	12
4	Don't know		31%	36
Base for graph: 116			answered	116
Are there any species missing that you feel should be included in the shortlist? Yes 45%, No 14%, Maybe 10%, Don't know 31%			skipped	29

The chart shows that just under half of respondents (45%) believe that there are species missing from the shortlist, whereas 14% felt that there weren't any missing. Almost a third of respondents (31%) said that they didn't know if any were missing.

Respondents were asked to provide species they believe were missing from the species shortlist. In total, 50 respondents provided specific species or a group of species that they would like highlighted in the shortlist. Key species that were put forward were:

- Many people put forward garden birds
- Some people put forward Beavers
- Other species included: Newts/ Owls/ Curlew/ Wildflowers/ Lapwing/ Swift/Swallow/ Hedgehogs/ Hawks/Native crayfish/Slow worm.

Respondents were asked for further comments regarding the entire strategy document, with 43 respondents completing this section. The main points given were that:

- Many people were in general support of the document in its current format.
- Some people commented that there needs to be better public awareness about the document.
- Some people were sceptical that this will come to fruition.
- A few people commented that there needs to be more emphasis on the need to involve local interest/ volunteer groups in these plans.

6. E-mails/ drop-in sessions responses

In addition to the LNRS online survey responses, respondents were able to send in e-mail responses or join the Local authority officers at the face to face drop-in sessions.

Due to the timing of the drop-in sessions, there were many community organisations that attended the drop-in sessions rather than individuals. 15 organisations decided to send e-mail

responses providing their feedback on the draft document and local habitat map and over 54 attended the drop-in sessions in Chester, Winsford, Northwich, Crewe and Warrington.

The drop-in sessions key messages were that the residents wanted less housing and more nature in Cheshire and Warrington and there was an interest in how the LNRS was going to be delivered.

The key discussion that was had in Cheshire East was mainly centred around development and nature, especially certain legislative bills Government introduced during the consultation and the LNRS's relationship to those changes in policy was not clear at that point. Furthermore, other discussions centred around the species put forward on the shortlist, what plans were being put forward for the attendees specific locations and farming

7. What happens next?

Following the submission of this feedback report to the webpage of each respective council in the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region, the LNRS will follow the next steps:

1. A pre-publication draft of the document and map will be shared with the officer steering group (OSG) for final review.
2. Once the OSG have reviewed both parts of the LNRS and there is a full agreement on the consultation changes, then the LNRS will move into the pre-publication period.
3. The Pre-publication period is a statutory 28 day period, where the supporting authorities can object to the LNRS, as per regulation 13(1) of the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.
4. Once the pre-publication period has passed, the LNRS will be submitted to each local authority's cabinet for agreement to publish and the RA will submit a letter to the DEFRA Secretary of State on our intention to publish.

Finally, the Cheshire & Warrington LNRS will be published in November. Once the LNRS is published, the delivery and monitoring/reporting process will begin.

8. Appendix 1: Who took part

This section contains information from the 'About you' section of the survey.

Chart 1: About you

27. Are you responding as.....? (Please select all that apply)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A resident of Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East or Warrington		75%	101
2	An employee of the local planning authorities		1%	1
3	A representative of a local business		3%	4
4	An elected member of the Local Authorities		1%	2
5	A Local Town or Parish Councillor		6%	8
6	A representative of a voluntary or community organisation		18%	24
7	A member of a local group with a specific interest in nature conservation		18%	24
8	A Farmer or Landowner		7%	10
9	Prefer not to say		0%	0
10	Other (please specify):		10%	13
Base for graph: 135			answered	135
Are you responding as.....? (Please select all that apply)				
A resident of Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East or Warrington 75%, An employee of the local planning authorities 1%, a representative of a local business 3%, An elected member of the local authorities 1%, A Local Town or Parish councillor 6%, A representative of a voluntary or community organisation 18%, A member of a local group with a specific interest in nature conservation 18%, A Farmer or a Landowner 7%, Prefer not to say 0%, Other (Please specify) 10%			skipped	10

The above table shows that the majority of respondents were residents (75%), with representatives of community and voluntary organisations, and Members of local groups with a specific interest in nature and conservation also making up 18% of the respondents, followed by farmers and landowners (7%) and local town or parish councillors (6%).

Chart 2: Gender

30. Are you....?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		40%	48
2	Female		53%	63
3	Prefer not to say		7%	8
4	Prefer to use own term		0%	0
Base for graph: 119			answered	119
Are you....? Male 40%, Female 53%, Prefer not to say 7%, Prefer to use own term 0%			skipped	26

The above table shows that just over half of respondents are Female (53%) with 40% responding being Male. 7% preferred not to say.

Chart 3: Age

31. Which age group do you belong to? (Please select one option only) Please note that if you are aged under 16 you need the permission of a parent, guardian or teacher to take part in this survey.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 16 (please provide the name or email address of your parent/guardian/teacher below)		0%	0
2	16-24		1%	1
3	25-34		11%	12
4	35-44		7%	8
5	45-54		23%	26
6	55-64		30%	34
7	65-74		20%	23
8	75+		8%	9
Base for graph: 113			answered	113
Which age group do you belong to? 16-24 1%, 25-34 11%, 35-44 7%, 45-54 23%, 55-64 30%, 65-74 20%, 75+ 8%			skipped	32

Almost three-quarters of respondents were aged 45 and over (73%). The lowest responding age group was 16-24.

Chart 4: Disability

32. Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? (Please select one option only)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		13%	15
2	No		80%	94
3	Prefer not to say		8%	9
Base for graph: 118			answered	118
Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? (Please select one option only)			skipped	27
Yes 13%, No 80%, Prefer not to say 8%				

The majority of respondents (80%) said that they have not got a disability or long-term health issue or illness whilst 13% said that they did.

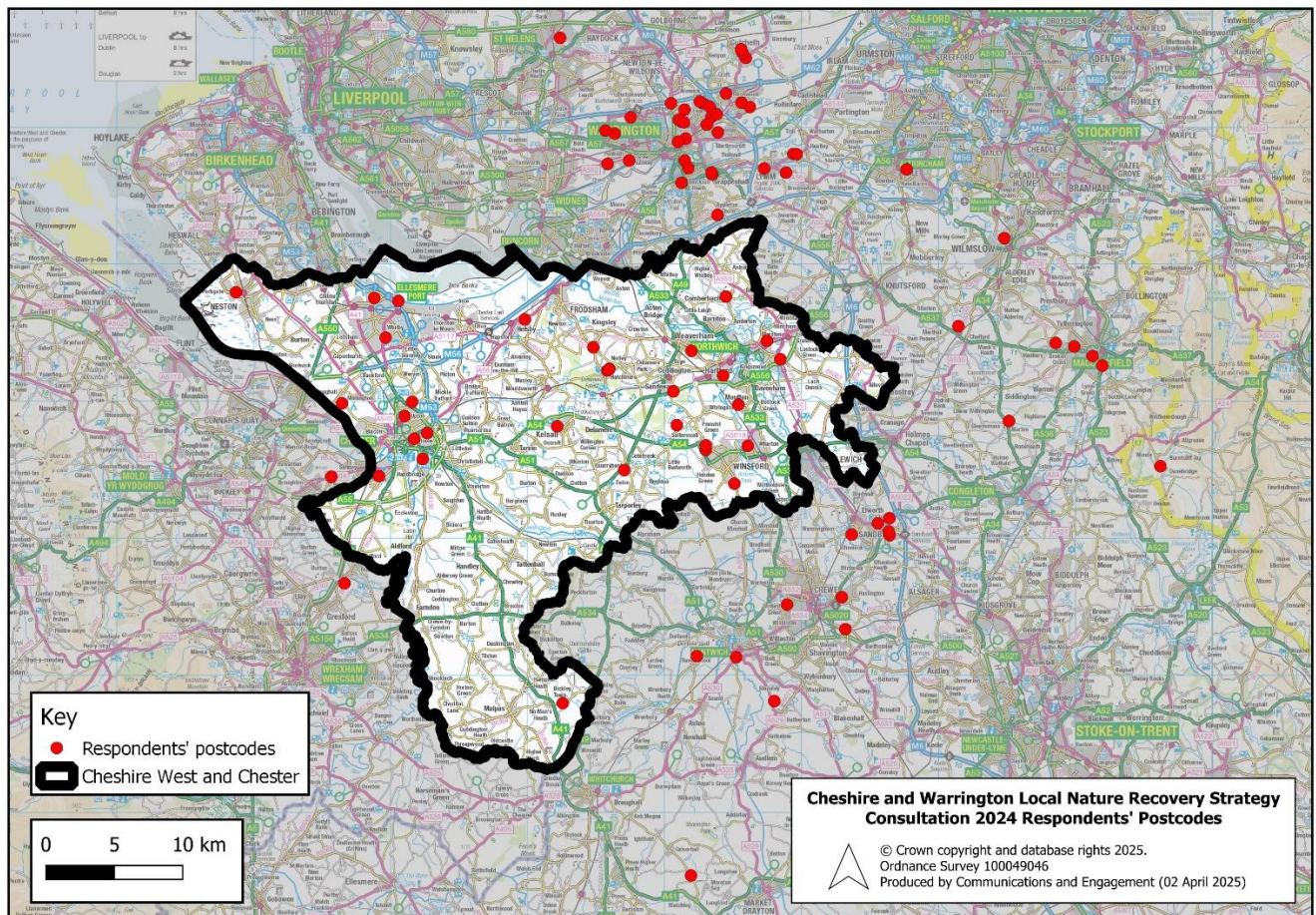
Chart 5: Type of disability

33. If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? (Please select all that apply)

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user		28%	5
2	Visual impairment		0%	0
3	Hearing impairment		11%	2
4	Learning disability or difficulty		0%	0
5	Mental Health issue		17%	3
6	Long standing illness or health condition		33%	6
7	Prefer not to say		28%	5
8	Other (please specify):		11%	2
Base for graph: 18			answered	18
. If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? (Please select all that apply)			skipped	127
Physical impairment that causes mobility issues e.g. wheelchair user: 28%, Visual impairment 0%, Hearing impairment 11%, Learning disability or difficulty 0%, Mental health issue 17%, Long standing illness or health condition 33%, Prefer not to say 28%, Other (please specify) 11%.				

Out of the respondents that did respond “Yes” in Chart 4 above, a third said they had a long standing illness or health condition (33%). 28% said they had a physical impairment (28%), 28% preferred not to say and 17% had a mental health issue. 11% had a hearing impairment.

Figure 1: Map of respondents



The map above shows the postcodes provided by 92 respondents that were complete and could be mapped within the outline of the West Cheshire boundary. As is seen in the map, there were responses from Cheshire East and Warrington as well. The boundary for West Cheshire is highlighted due to it being a computer generated map from Cheshire West and Chester Council’s website.

9. Appendix 2: Organisation responses

Good afternoon,

Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

With regard to the consultation in connection with draft Cheshire & Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy, please find below comments from the [REDACTED].

I have also uploaded some comments to the portal.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. It includes designated habitats and protected species and is also home to everyday wildlife and plants.

As well as being an important space for nature in its own right, it links isolated habitats, gives wildlife room to flourish, and provides nearly 9 million people with access and connection to nature on their doorstep.

Cheshire and Warrington LNRS

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and Local Habitat Map for Cheshire and Warrington, set out the priorities and actions for nature's recovery in this area over the next 5-10 years.

The LNRS sets out the main priorities for nature recovery across

[REDACTED] has reviewed the draft strategy and has the following comments to make to help shape the final local nature recovery strategy. Comments on the Local Habitat map have been made under separate cover.

Watercourse

With regard to the Priorities and Actions outlined for Watercourse, it is welcomed that canals are recognised as watercourses in the LNRS.

There is a section on page 42 that outlines brief characteristics of canals. [REDACTED] request that the document recognises that canals offer unique, diverse biodiversity habitats and provide broad ecological networks, along with their sustainable use as recreational corridors and multifunctional role which are important recreational corridors for a wide range of uses.

With regard to page 44, and the table for 'Priorities and Actions for Watercourses', please find my comments for the respective sections below:

'Cleaner and resilient watercourses with more abundant native wildlife'

- [REDACTED] request that 'Create and restore a variety of riverside (riparian) habitats' would be replaced with 'Create and restore a variety of watercourse or waterside (riparian) habitats', so that it refers to all watercourses.

- The table should make it clear and clarify that measures to improve water quality and address pollution sources, should be aimed at all watercourses. E.g. [REDACTED] suggest the inclusion of ‘reduce pollution of watercourses and catchments’.
- We request the inclusion of ‘Enhance canals by improving and creating better habitats for nature’ in this first section.
- We request consideration is given to reducing pollution during construction phase The whole river catchment, from source to sea, functions as naturally as possible.
- [REDACTED] request the removal of ‘Re-engineer canal banks using more natural materials and to encourage mix of planting’. The stability of canals and their supporting infrastructure can be affected by construction works, land management and drainage in proximity to them, and it is critical that any works do not impact the stability of such structures. [REDACTED] request the removal of this Action on the grounds of potential impact to the stability of the canal infrastructure.

At page 45, in the section ‘ How could we deliver cleaner and resilient watercourses with more abundant native wildlife’ the Trust has the following comments:

- [REDACTED] request amending to ‘ Create a variety of river and riverside adjacent habitats’ to Create a variety of ‘watercourse and waterside adjacent habitats’.
- [REDACTED] support the use and planned management of SUDS. It’s early consideration in the planning process helps its inclusion in the development process.
- [REDACTED] support reference to ‘Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is correctly implemented, monitored and strictly maintained’ and suggest the inclusion of advice that planning applications that include land within the site boundary that is within 10m of a canal or river must be supported by an assessment of the baseline condition of the watercourse

At page 64, with regard to the role that urban areas can do for nature recovery, [REDACTED] would suggest reference to the role that the waterway network can play is included, as a ready-made blue-green infrastructure network, that can maintain and bolster ecological networks to support restoring natural systems., alongside delivering co-benefits for climate change adaptation and health and well being.

Within the context of Natural England’s ‘Green Infrastructure Framework’ (advocating the provision of green/blue space in new development) and the government’s Environmental Improvement Plan (advocating that the public should be able to access green space or water, within a 15-minute walk from their home) [REDACTED] can evidence the benefit of the green/blue infrastructure offer of our network (within 1km of our assets) and the multifunctional health and well-being offer of our network to its users and adjacent communities.

[REDACTED] has recently published our Impact Report which shows how individuals and communities are benefitting from using and engaging with our network of canals. Our network, is one of the UK’s largest free-to-access blue spaces, with 10.3 million users that visit regularly, and 888 million unique visits recorded during 2022/23. The annual social value being generated by our network and activities is £4.6 billion including £1.1 billion cost savings to NHS derived from active use of the waterways and the towpaths. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Our network can therefore provide ready and easy access to blue-green space, the outdoors and nature, opportunities to connect people to place, nature and each other.

Nature based solutions

On page 69 of the draft LNRS, different types of nature based solutions are outlined. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would request the inclusion of the benefits of green and blue infrastructure and/or watercourses to be included in this section. The waterway network can contribute to supporting ecological habitats whilst providing access to nature for health and well-being and mitigating climate change. Blue and Green infrastructure can help mitigate climate change by balancing measures such as water transfers, mitigating the impact of flooding through providing flooding relief, water storage and surface water management.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bigger and better joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure is referred to in the Priorities and Actions table for Nature Based Solutions. [REDACTED] would suggest that watercourses should be recognised on page 69 -under the title 'Nature Recovery Opportunities For Nature Through Nature Based Solutions In The Urban and Rural Environment' For example, we suggest inclusion of Strategic planning of a multi-functional nature-rich green and blue space, especially in new developments, enables nature to recover and people to become more connected with nature. Watercourses, at the same time as supporting biodiversity enhancement, provide green/blue spaces that deliver co-benefits of climate change adaptation, and helping people connect with nature.

At page 69, [REDACTED] support reference to how 'Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is correctly implemented, monitored and strictly maintained' and suggest inclusion of advice of how BNG guidance requires having to include watercourse assessment with 10m of riparian zone.

Page 70 – with regard to the table for 'Priorities and Actions for Nature Based Solutions'

- [REDACTED] strongly support the priority of 'bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure'.
- Within the first section 'Nature, people and economy thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure' – no reference is made to aquatic species however it refers green/blue infrastructure. (This is the same for other sections referring to blue/green infrastructure).
- We suggest the inclusion of 'mitigate impact of polluting run-off' as well as 'Mitigate the impacts of pollution from waste, transport and landfill'.
- [REDACTED] support 'Install more Blue and Green Infrastructure in new developments' and we suggest the inclusion of 'installation of and connection between Green and Blue infrastructure
- [REDACTED] support 'Design buildings and infrastructure with nature benefits and improved placemaking in mind'. The Trust advocate that it is important that development maximises the potential benefit of green and blue infrastructure, along with greater access to nature.

- Water quality can be improved in the development process through construction management and drainage management plans

In the section entitled 'Better functioning watercourses for nature, people and a thriving economy', [REDACTED] support 'Promote the benefits of functional green and blue spaces for a vibrant economy' and suggest additional reference to 'along with access to green and blue infrastructure for fostering social interaction, physical activity, connection with nature and health and well-being.'

At page 71, In section entitled 'Nature, people and economy thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure', [REDACTED] has the following comments:

- [REDACTED] suggest the inclusion of blue space e. g Create communal green and blue space with natural features to support stronger connections between nature and people, particularly in areas of inequality
 - Within the context of Natural England's 'Green Infrastructure Framework' (advocating the provision of green/blue space in new development) and the government's Environmental Improvement Plan (advocating that the public should be able to access green space or water, within a 15-minute walk from their home) [REDACTED] can evidence the benefit of the green/blue infrastructure offer of our network (within 1km of our assets) and the multifunctional health and well-being offer of our network to its users and adjacent communities - [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] Our network can therefore provide ready and easy access to blue-green space, the outdoors and nature, opportunities to connect people to place, nature and each other.

At page 72, in the section entitled 'How could we ensure nature, people and economy are thriving through more, bigger, better and joined up Green and Blue Infrastructure', [REDACTED] has the following comments:

- [REDACTED] would suggest the inclusion of 'Promote the positive role of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas for nature, to provide environmental, economic and social benefits such as aiding urban cooling, protecting people from pollution and particulates from roads.

Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species

At page 75 [REDACTED] suggest replacing 'Eradicate' with 'Reduce' or 'Minimise' harmful Invasive Non-Native Species across all watercourses in Cheshire and Warrington.

At page 76 - [REDACTED] suggest replacing 'Require and support landowners to eradicate invasive non-native species' with 'Require and support landowners to manage, reduce extent of and minimise invasive non-native species.'

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

[REDACTED] welcome the proposed LNRS and inclusion of the benefits that waterways can bring in the document.

We would like to be kept informed of the progress of this document and be included on future consultations for this document as it evolves.

Kind regards

10. Appendix 3: Consultation information

Cheshire and Warrington LNRS consultation draft

OPEN

Environment and Communities Committee

13 November 2025

Revised Statement of Gambling Principles

Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director Place

Report Reference No: EC/09/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To give the Environment and Communities Committee the opportunity to consider the revised Statement of Gambling Principles, prior to its adoption.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Gambling Act 2005 requires local authorities to prepare and publish a statement of the principles that they propose to apply when exercising their functions under the Act during the three-year period to which the statement applies.
- 3 The Council is required to review its existing statement of principles and publish a revised version. In preparing a revised statement the Council must undertake a consultation exercise with stakeholders identified within the Gambling Act 2005.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment and Communities Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the draft revised Statement of Gambling Policy as set out at appendix 1 to the report
2. Recommend the draft revised Statement of Gambling Policy to Council for formal adoption.

Background

- 4 The Gambling Act 2005 requires licensing authorities to prepare and publish a statement of principles that it proposes to apply in exercising its functions under the Act.
- 5 The draft statement, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1, remains substantially the same as the previous iteration. There have been no matters in the previous 3 years that would require a change of content.
- 6 The Statement of Gambling Principles is the policy document that the Licensing Act Sub-Committee will use when determining contested applications under the Gambling Act 2005. Consequently, it needs to adequately guide applicants, objectors, Licensing Authority Officers, and Committee Members.
- 7 The statement must reflect that the Council is required to discharge its responsibilities under the Act with a view to promoting the three licensing objectives:
 - i. Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
 - ii. Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
 - iii. Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling
- 8 When undertaking the review officers have undertaken a light touch approach. This is because the gambling landscape, which needs to be addressed in the statement, has changed little in the last three years. Most gambling developments have taken place in areas such as online gambling and control of offshore gambling providers. These aspects of gambling are outside the scope of local authority powers and therefore not appropriate for inclusion in our Statement of Gambling Principles.
- 9 There have been no contested applications, and it has not been necessary for the Sub-Committee to use the statement in any decision-making process.

Consultation and Engagement

- 10 The consultation process followed was that laid down by The Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.
- 11 Given the minor and inconsequential changes to the statement, a decision was taken to run a shorter consultation period reflective of these limited changes.
- 12 The consultation ran between 9 June 2025 and 7 July 2025 and was limited to prescribed stakeholders only.
- 13 One consultation response was received, from the Beacon Counselling Trust. While the comments have been considered, no changes to the draft policy are proposed following this response. This is because the policy already deals with some suggestions and some suggestions are outside the scope of the policy. However, the response does suggest that there are opportunities for the Licensing Team to engage with the Trust and these will be explored further. The response is set out at Appendix 2.
- 14 The draft revised statement will be considered by the Licensing Committee at their meeting on 9 September 2025. The statement will then proceed to full Council for final adoption in December.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 15 The Statement of Gambling Principles is the policy document used by the Licensing Authority when making decision under the Gambling Act 2005. It forms part of the Council's Budgetary and Policy Framework.
- 16 The Council is required to adopt a Statement of Gambling Principles in accordance with section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005. By virtue of the legislation, final adoption of the Statement is reserved to full Council.

Other Options Considered

- 17 No other options have been considered. The Council is required by section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 to adopt a Statement of Gambling Principles. The route for adopting this document is set out both in legislation and by the requirements in the Council's Constitution.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do Nothing	Council will be in contravention of the	The decision-making process will be compromised leading

	requirements of the Gambling Act 2005	to legal and reputational risks
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 18 By virtue of section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 ('the 2005 Act') the Licensing Authority is required to prepare and publish a statement of the principles that it proposes to apply in exercising its functions under the 2005 Act during the three-year period to which the policy applies.
- 19 The drafting of the Statement of Principles must take into account the requirements of The Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 ('the 2006 Regulations'). In addition, the Gambling Commission's Guidance to Licensing Authorities ('the Guidance') prescribes that in determining its statement, the Licensing Authority must have regard to the Guidance and give appropriate weight to the views of those it has consulted.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 20 There are no financial implications in relation to the requested decision.
- 21 The work to review and revise the Statement of Gambling Principles has been delivered within existing resources and is funded through the Licensing Team's current budget provision.

Human Resources

- 22 There are no human resource implications.

Risk Management

- 23 It should be noted that the Gambling Act 2005 requires the Licensing Authority to have a Statement of Gambling Principles. However, there is no penalty that could be applied if the Licensing Authority did not adopt a Statement. Notwithstanding, any decisions taken where a policy was not in place could be subject to Judicial Review.

Impact on other Committees

- 24 There are no impacts on other Committees.

Policy

- 25 The Council is required to revise and adopt a Statement of Gambling Principles every three years.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 26 Consideration has been given to the application of the 'public sector equality duty' (in accordance with section 149 Equality Act 2010) to the recommendation. The decision requested is likely to have a neutral effect in terms of its impact on those individuals with 'protected characteristics.'
- 27 As part of the research undertaken when writing the Local Area Profile within the Statement of Policy, it has been identified that white, working-class males in the lower age ranges are most at risk from problem gambling. That profile includes characteristics which are protected under the Equality Act 2012
- 28 As part of the Gambling Commissions Operating Licence conditions and the Licence conditions and codes of practice, all gambling operators must have a policy setting out how they will ensure that gambling is conducted appropriately and in accordance with the Licensing Objectives. This is usually called a social responsibility policy and would include provisions setting out how an operator would protect those with protected characteristics from the harms caused by problem gambling.

Other Implications

- 29 Gambling as an activity can have significant and devastating effect on problem gamblers and their families and friends. As identified in the Area Profile the number of premises licensed for gambling in Cheshire East is comparatively low. Additionally, we have recently seen a number of betting shops surrender their licences. Statistically, there could be either 3,354 or 1,864 problem gamblers in the Borough (depending on which measure is used). It can therefore be seen that despite the relatively low number of licensed premises there could still be significant harm being caused to residents. What we are not able to identify is by which method problem gamblers are gambling in Cheshire East (e.g. betting shops, scratch cards, or online gambling etc).
- 30 The Council cannot regulate online gambling within Cheshire East. The regulation of these activities is within the remit of the Gambling Commission. The Commission, in their participation in gambling annual report, has recently reported that online gambling activity has increased.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	22/10/25	27/10/25
Hilary Irving	Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer	30/10/25	30/10/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Wendy Broadhurst	Principal Accountant	05/08/25	05/08/25
Julie Gregory	Head of Legal Services	05/08/25	11/08/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Chris Allman	Director of Planning & Environment	12/08/25	12/08/25
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	24/10/25	27/10/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Kim Evans, Licensing Team Leader licensing@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	1. Draft Revised Policy 2. Consultation Response

Background Papers:	Gambling Act 2005 The Gambling Commission's guidance for licensing authorities
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Cheshire East Council

Statement of Gambling Principles

Gambling Act 2005

2026 to 2029

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Cheshire East Area Profile

Appendix 2 Summary of gaming machine categories and entitlements

Appendix 3 Summary of machine provisions by premises

Appendix 4 Summary of gaming entitlements for clubs and alcohol-licensed premises

Appendix 5 Scheme of Delegation

Appendices 1 - 5 are included to provide further information to those interested in these matters. As the information contained within these appendices are subject to change by Central Government, they are not to be considered a part of the Statement of Principles required by section 349 of the Act. They will be subject to reasonable amendment to ensure that they remain accurate and correctly reflect the appropriate entitlements. Any amendment of this nature will not be considered a review of the Statement. As such the requirements for consultation will not apply.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Gambling Principles is published by Cheshire East Council, as the Licensing Authority, in accordance with Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005. The Act requires the Licensing Authority to prepare and publish a Statement of Principles which sets out the policies that the Licensing Authority will generally apply to promote the Licensing Objectives when making decisions on applications made under the Act.
- 1.2 The Licensing Authority has produced this Statement of Principles in accordance with the provisions of the Act and having regard to the provision of the Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission under Section 25 of the Act.
- 1.3 In exercising most of its functions under the Act, the Licensing Authority must have regard to the Licensing Objectives as set out in section 1 of the Act. The Licensing Objectives are:
- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
 - Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
 - Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling
- 1.4 As required by the Gambling Act 2005, the draft Statement of Principles was subject to formal consultation with:
- Cheshire Constabulary
 - Representatives of those carrying on gambling businesses within the Borough of Cheshire East.
 - Representatives of those persons likely to be affected by the exercise of the Licensing Authority's functions under the Act

2 General Principles

- 2.1 The Licensing Authority recognises the need to avoid, so far as possible, duplication of existing legislation and other regulatory regimes.
- 2.2 The Licensing Authority recognises that it may only consider matters within the scope of the Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, the Act and the Codes of Practice. It is also recognised that there may be issues raised, such as the likelihood of the applicant obtaining planning permission, which are not relevant for the purposes of the Act.
- 2.3 Nothing in this Statement will undermine the rights of any person to make an application under the Act and have the application considered on its individual merits; or undermine the right of any person to make representations on any application or seek a review of a licence or permit where provision has been made for them to do so within the Act.
- 2.4 The Licensing Authority recognises that unmet demand is not a relevant consideration when considering an application for a premises licence under the Act. Each application will be considered on its merits without regard to demand.

- 2.5 The Licensing Authority also recognises that the location and proximity of premises to be used for gambling to other premises such as, for example, schools and premises used by vulnerable persons, may be a relevant consideration with respect to the objective of protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling. The type of gambling which is to be offered will also be relevant.
- 2.6 Each application will be considered on its merits and the Licensing Authority will take into account any proposals by the applicant or licence holder which show how the licensing objectives may be satisfied.
- 2.7 In carrying out its licensing functions under the Act the Licensing Authority will aim to permit the use of premises for gambling as long as it is considered to be:
- In accordance with any relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission
 - In accordance with any relevant Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission in accordance with this Statement of Principles, and
 - Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives

3 Gambling Prevalence and Problem Gambling

- 3.1 In 2010 NatCen's British Gambling Prevalence Survey showed that 73% of the population, had participated in some form of gambling in the past year with 56% of the population participating in some form of gambling other than the National Lottery. The 2010 survey remains the most current survey conducted by NatCen.
- 3.2 The most popular gambling activities are:

Type	% of adult population
National Lottery	59%
National Lottery scratch cards	24%
Betting on horse races	16%
Playing slot machines	13%
Online gambling	5%
Placed bets by internet	4%
Fixed Odds Betting Terminals	4%
Gambled in a casino	4%

- 3.3 Men were more likely to gamble than women (75% compared with 71%). People in higher income households were more likely to gamble; 72% in the highest income households; 61% in the lowest income households. Those with higher levels of education were less likely to gamble; 61% of those with a degree gambled compared with 73% who were educated to GCSE/O level equivalent.
- 3.4 Gambling participation was lowest among the youngest and oldest age groups and highest among those aged 44-64.
- 3.5 Gambling prevalence rates were highest among those who were either married or had been married (75%), respondents who were White/White British (76%), those whose highest educational attainment was GCSEs or equivalent (76%) or had other

qualifications (78%), those from lower supervisory/technical households (79%), those in paid work (78%), those with the highest personal income (79% for the 4th income quintile and 76% for the highest income quintile) and those living in the East Midlands (80%).

- 3.6 Two measures of problem gambling showed rates of problem gambling in the general population of 0.9% and 0.5%. A significant association was found between problem gambling and being a young male with parents who gambled. It was also associated with smoking and poor health.
- 3.7 The GamCare Annual Review 2020/2021 showed that the number of calls made to the National Gambling Helpline were up by 9% based on the previous year's figures with the number of individuals seeking support or treatment increased by 8%. Working males under 35 years were most likely to see support and treatment. Anxiety and stress, family/relationship difficulties, financial problems, and debt are the primary reasons for gambling given by those seeing support or treatment services.
- 3.8 A pilot project in Cheshire was commenced in collaboration with Beacon Counselling Trust in 2017. This project trained Cheshire Constabulary custody staff to screen for problem gambling, understand the complexities of the issue and, where possible, to signpost to local support services.
- 3.9 The pilot was launched in three custody suites across Cheshire with 609 screening have taken place and 85 (14%) resulted in a brief intervention to minimise gambling-related harm. Of those 17 (20%) have been referred into more structured counselling treatment with local providers.
- 3.10 In April 2021, following the successful pilot, the project has been rolled out to a further five police forces. This includes our neighbours in Manchester and Merseyside.
- 3.11 When gambling becomes a problem it can have devastating repercussions on a person's everyday life and functioning. For many clients who access GamCare's services (eg counselling) this may mean the breakdown or near breakdown of their relationships, damage to their physical and psychological health and substantial financial loss and debt. It should be acknowledged that the harm caused by problem gambling extends beyond the problem gambler themselves to include their family and friends. And can disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in society.

4 Cheshire East Area Profile

- 4.1 Cheshire East's administrative area contains the industrial town of Crewe, the old mill towns of Macclesfield, Bollington and Congleton, the market towns of Alsager, Nantwich, Knutsford and Sandbach, the salt town of Middlewich, the town of Wilmslow as well as the smaller settlements of Holmes Chapel and Poynton.
- 4.2 A full profile of the Borough is set out at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 As the persons most at risk from problem gambling are white, young males from a low income background this is most likely to affect the residents of Crewe and to a lesser extent Macclesfield. These are also the areas that already have the highest

numbers of licensed gambling premises. It will therefore be incumbent upon applicants to demonstrate that they will take appropriate steps to follow the Gambling Commission's relevant Codes of Conduct and the Council's Statement of Gambling Principles to ensure that none is exploited or harmed by gambling.

5 The Gambling Act 2005

5.1 Gambling is defined in the Act as either gaming, betting, or taking part in a lottery.

- Gaming means playing a game of chance for a prize
- Betting means making or accepting a bet on the outcome of a race, competition, or any other event ; the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring; or whether anything is true or not
- A lottery is where persons are required to pay in order to take part in an arrangement, during the course of which one or more prizes are allocated by a process which relies wholly on chance

5.2 The Act provides for three categories of licence:

- Operating licences
- Personal licences
- Premises licences

5.3 In accordance with the Act, the Gambling Commission has responsibility for issuing operating and personal licenses and the Licensing Authority is responsible for issuing premises licenses.

5.4 The main functions of the Licensing Authority, and the functions subject to this Statement, are:

- Licence premises for gambling activities
- Grant permits for gambling and gaming machines in clubs
- Regulate gaming and gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises
- Grant permits to family entertainment centres for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines
- Grant permits for prize gaming
- Consider notices given for the temporary use of premises for gaming
- Consider occasional use notices for betting at tracks
- Register small societies lotteries

5.5 It should be noted that:

- Spread betting is regulated by The Financial Services Authority
- Remote (on-line) gambling is dealt with by the Gambling Commission
- The National Lottery is regulated by The National Lottery Commission (which merged with the Gambling Commission in October 2013)

5.6 This Statement of Principles relates to all those licensable premises, notices, permits and registrations identified as falling within the provisions of the Act, namely:

- Casinos
- Bingo Premises
- Betting Premises
- Tracks
- Adult Gaming Centres
- Family Entertainment Centres
- Club Gaming and Club Machine Permits
- Prize Gaming and Prize Gaming Permits
- Temporary and Occasional Use Notices
- Registration of small society lotteries

5.7 The Categories of Gaming Machine Regulations 2007 (as amended) define four classes of gaming machine, categories A, B, C and D, with category B divided into a further 5 sub-categories. A full list of the categories of Gaming Machine, together with the current maximum stakes and prizes, is set out in Appendix 2.

5.8 A breakdown of automatic entitlements in gambling premises is set out appendix 3 and a break down of automatic entitlements in alcohol licensed premises is set out at appendix 4.

6 Responsible Authorities

6.1 A Responsible Authority may make representations about an application for a premises licence or may request a review of a premises licence. Sections 157 and 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 set out those bodies classified as Responsible Authorities in terms of the Act.

6.2 The Licensing Authority will apply the following principles when designating, in writing, a body which is competent to advise the authority about the protection of children from harm:

- the need for the body to be responsible for an area covering the whole of the licensing authority's area
- the need for the body to be answerable to democratically elected persons, rather than any particular vested interest group etc

6.3 Therefore the Licensing Authority will continue to designate the Cheshire East Local Safeguarding Children Board for the purpose of advising it on the protection of children from harm.

6.4 Section 211(4) of the Act provides that in relation to a vessel, but to no other premises, responsible authorities should also include navigation authorities within the meaning of section 221(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991 that have statutory functions in relation to the waters where the vessel is usually moored or berthed or any waters where it is proposed to be navigated at a time when it is used for licensable activities. These would include:

- The Environment Agency
- The British Waterways Board
- The Secretary of State acting through the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

- 6.5 The contact details of all the Responsible Bodies under the Gambling Act 2005 will be available on the Licensing Authorities website.

7 Interested Parties

- 7.1 In addition to Responsible Authorities, 'Interested Parties' can make representations about licence applications, or apply for a review of an existing licence. These parties are defined in Section 158 of the Gambling Act 2005 as follows:
- Lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities, or
 - Has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities, or
 - Represents persons in either of the two groups above
- 7.2 In determining whether someone lives sufficiently close to a particular premises so as to be affected the Licensing Authority will take into account, among other things:
- The size of the premises
 - The nature of the premises
 - The distance of the premises from the person making the representation
 - The nature of the complainant
 - The potential impact of the premises
- 7.3 In determining whether a person has a business interest which could be affected the Licensing Authority will consider, among other things:
- The size of the premises
 - The catchment area of the premises, and
 - Whether the person making the representation has business interests in the catchment area that might be affected
- 7.4 Business interests will be given a wide interpretation and could include for example partnerships, faith groups and medical practices.
- 7.5 Representations made on the grounds that an applicant would be in competition with an existing business or that there is allegedly no demand for additional gambling premises will not be considered to be relevant.
- 7.6 Trade associations, trade unions, residents' and tenants' associations will not, however, generally be viewed as interested parties unless they have a member who can be classed as one under the terms of the Gambling Act 2005 i.e. lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities.
- 7.7 Representatives of Interested Parties may include MPs, Ward Councillors and Parish Councillors. Residents' and tenants' associations, trade unions and trade associations may also represent interested parties if they have members living sufficiently close to the premises. Except in the case of Councillors or MPs representing the ward or wards likely to be affected, when written evidence will be required that a person or body represents an interested party.

- 7.8 If individuals approach Ward Councillors or Parish Councillors, care should be taken that the Councillor is not a member of the Licensing Committee or Licensing Act Sub-Committee, which will deal with the application, nor has an interest which would prevent them from addressing the Committee or Sub-Committee. If there is any doubt, advice should be sought from the Legal Team or Licensing Team.
- 7.9 Details of those persons making representations will be made available to applicants and, in the event of a hearing being held, will form part of a public document (including publication on the Council's website).

8 Premises Licences

- 8.1 Premises can be 'any place' but the Act prevents more than one premises licence applying to any one place. A single building could be subject to more than one premises licence provided they are for different parts of the building and those parts can be genuinely regarded as being different 'premises'.
- 8.2 There are particular requirements for entrances and exits from parts of a building covered by one or more licences to be separate and identifiable so that the separation of the premises is not compromised and that people are not allowed to 'drift' accidentally into a gambling area. The Gambling Act 2005 (Mandatory and Default Conditions) Regulations 2007 set out the access provisions for each type of premises.
- 8.3 A licence to use premises for gambling will normally be issued only in relation to premises that are ready to be used for gambling. Where premises have not yet been constructed, an applicant may apply for a provisional statement – See Section 20.
- 8.4 An application for a premises licence may only be made by persons who have a right to occupy the premises.
- 8.5 Except in the case of a betting track premises licence, an application for a premises licence can only be made by a person who either holds an operating licence authorising him to carry on the activity in respect of which a premises licence is sought, OR has made an application for an operating licence which has not yet been determined.
- 8.6 When considering applications for premises licences the licensing authority cannot take into consideration the expected 'demand' for facilities. It should also be noted that moral objections to gambling are not a valid reason to reject applications.
- 8.7 Applications for the grant, transfer or variation of a Premises Licence should be accompanied by an assessment that demonstrates how the applicant will promote all the Licensing Objectives.
- 8.8 Premises licences granted must be reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives as follows:

Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime

- 8.9 The Gambling Commission will be taking a leading role in preventing gambling from being a source of crime.
- 8.10 The Gambling Commission will deal with Operating Licences and Personal Licences so the Licensing Authority will not be concerned about the suitability of an applicant. If concerns arise about a person's suitability, the Licensing Authority will bring those concerns to the attention of the Commission.
- 8.11 The Licensing Authority will take into consideration the proposed location of gambling premises in terms of this Licensing Objective. Where an area has known high levels of organised crime, the Licensing Authority will consider carefully whether gambling premises are suitable to be located there.
- 8.12 Where appropriate, conditions may be attached to a premises licence requiring the provision of door supervisors. For example, if the premises cannot be adequately supervised from the counter, door supervision may be necessary.
- 8.13 There is a distinction between disorder and nuisance. The Licensing Authority will consider factors such as whether police assistance was required and how threatening the behaviour was to those who could see or hear it in determining that distinction. It should be noted that issues of nuisance cannot be addressed under the Act.

Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

- 8.14 The Gambling Commission does not expect Licensing Authorities to become concerned with ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way as this will either be a matter for the management of the gambling business or will relate to the suitability and actions of an individual. Both issues will be addressed by the Commission through the Operating and Personal Licensing regime.
- 8.15 Because betting track operators do not need an operating licence from the Commission the Licensing Authority may, in certain circumstances, require conditions to ensure that the environment in which betting takes place is suitable.

Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

- 8.16 Apart from one or two limited exceptions, the intention of the Act is that children and young persons should not be allowed to gamble and should therefore be prevented from entering gambling premises which are 'adult-only' environments.
- 8.17 In practice, steps will generally be taken to prevent children from taking part in, or being in close proximity to, gambling. There may also be restrictions on advertising so that gambling products are not aimed at children or advertised in such a way that makes them particularly attractive to children.
- 8.18 The Licensing Authority will not normally grant a premises licence for premises which are located close to schools.

- 8.19 When considering whether to grant a premises licence or permit the Licensing Authority will consider whether any measures are necessary to protect children, such as the supervision of entrances, the segregation of gambling from areas frequented by children and the supervision of gaming machines in non-adult gambling specific premises, such as pubs, clubs, betting tracks etc.
- 8.20 The Act does not define the term 'vulnerable persons' but the Licensing Authority considers that this will include people who gamble more than they want to, people who gamble beyond their means, and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling, perhaps due to a learning disability, the state of their mental health or the effects of alcohol or drugs.
- 8.21 Licence Holders will be expected to make information publicly available about organisations that can provide advice and support, both in relation to gambling itself and to debt e.g. GamCare, Gamblers Anonymous, National Debtline, local Citizens Advice Bureau and relevant independent advice agencies.
- 8.22 The Licensing Authority is aware of the general concern surrounding betting machines that permit high volumes of betting activity by individuals, for example Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs). Applicants should consider where such betting machines are located and monitor use to ensure excessive gambling does not take place. The Licensing Authority is also aware that Central Government is considering this issue.

9 Adult Gaming Centres

- 9.1 The Licensing Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate that there will be sufficient measures in place to meet the Licensing Objectives, for example, to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the premises.
- 9.2 Appropriate licence conditions may cover issues such as:
- Proof of age schemes
 - CCTV Supervision of entrances / machine areas
 - Physical separation of areas
 - Location of entry
 - Notices / signage
 - Specific opening hours
 - Self-barring schemes
 - Provision of posters and/or information leaflets and helpline numbers/website addresses for organisations such as GamCare, Gamblers Anonymous, Gordon House Association, National Debtline and local Citizens Advice Bureau and other relevant independent advice agencies.

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

10 Betting Premises (other)

- 10.1 The Licensing Authority must be satisfied that the primary use of the premises is to operate as a betting premises in accordance with the principles outlined in paragraph 16 of this Statement. The applicant will be expected to demonstrate that

they can offer sufficient facilities for betting and, unless it does so, should not be making gaming machines available on the premises.

10.2 The Licensing Authority will take the following into account when considering the number, nature and circumstances of betting machines an operator wants to offer:

- the size of the premises
- the number of counter positions available for person-to-person transactions
- the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by children and young persons (it is an offence for those under 18 to bet) or by vulnerable people

11 Betting Tracks including other sporting venues

11.1 Tracks may be subject to one or more than one premises licence, provided that each licence relates to a specified area of the track.

11.2 The Licensing Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate that there will be sufficient measures in place to ensure that entrances to each type of premises are distinct and that children are excluded from gambling areas and do not have access to adult only gaming facilities.

11.3 It should be noted that children and young persons will be permitted to enter track areas where facilities for betting are provided on days when dog-racing and/or horse racing takes place, but that they are still prevented from entering areas where gaming machines (other than category D machines) are provided.

11.4 Appropriate licence conditions may cover issues such as:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-barring schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

11.6 Where the applicant holds a Pool Betting Operating Licence and is going to use the entitlement to four gaming machines, if these machines are above category D, the applicant must demonstrate that they will be located in areas from which children are excluded. Children and young persons are not prohibited from playing category D gaming machines on a track.

11.7 The Licensing Authority will consider restricting the number and location of betting machines in respect of applications for track premises licences.

- 11.8 When considering the number, nature and circumstances of betting machines an operator wants to offer, the Licensing Authority will take into account:
- the size of the premises
 - the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by children and young persons (it is an offence for those under 18 to bet) or by vulnerable people
- 11.9 The Licensing Authority will normally attach a condition to track premises licences requiring the track operator to ensure that the rules are prominently displayed in or near the betting areas, or that other measures are taken to ensure that they are made available to the public. For example, the rules could be printed in the race-card or made available in leaflet form from the track office.

12 Bingo Premises

- 12.1 It is important that, if children are allowed to enter premises licensed for bingo, they do not participate in gambling, other than on category D machines.
- 12.2 Where category C or above machines are available in premises to which children are admitted the Licensing Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate that there will be sufficient measures in place to ensure that:
- all such machines are located in an area of the premises separated from the remainder of the premises by a physical barrier which is effective to prevent access other than through a designated entrance
 - only adults are admitted to the area where the machines are located
 - access to the area where the machines are located is supervised
 - the area where the machines are located is arranged so that it can be observed by staff of the operator or the licence holder
 - at the entrance to, and inside any such area, there are prominently displayed notices indicating that access to the area is prohibited to persons under 18
- 12.3 The Licensing Authority will take account of any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission about the particular issues which should be taken into account in relation to the suitability and layout of bingo premises and appropriate conditions will be attached to the premises licence.

13 Casinos

- 13.1 This Licensing Authority has not passed a 'no casino' resolution under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005 but is aware that it has the power to do so. Should the Council decide in the future to pass such a resolution, this Statement of Principles will be updated. Any such decision must be made by the full Council.
- 13.2 This Licensing Authority is not currently able to issue premises licences for casinos. Should the Government propose that more casinos can be licensed in the future, the Licensing Authority will review its position and this Statement of Principles will be updated.

14 (Licensed) Family Entertainment Centres

14.1 The Licensing Authority will expect applicants to demonstrate that there will be sufficient measures in place to meet the Licensing Objectives, for example, to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machine areas.

14.2 Appropriate licence conditions may cover issues such as:

- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-barring schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare, Gamblers Anonymous, the Gordon House Association, National Debtline and local Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Measures / training for staff on how to deal with suspected truant school children on the premises

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

15 Licence Conditions

15.1 There are three types of conditions that can be attached to premises licences:

- Mandatory – Conditions prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State which must be attached
- Default – Conditions prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State which will be attached unless specifically excluded by the Licensing Authority
- Conditions attached by the Licensing Authority

15.2 Any conditions imposed by the Licensing Authority will be appropriate, proportionate and will be:

- relevant to the need to make the proposed building suitable as a gambling facility
- directly related to the premises and the type of licence applied for
- fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises
- reasonable in all other respects

15.3 Applicants are encouraged to offer their own suggested conditions to demonstrate how the Licensing Objectives can be met.

15.4 There are conditions which the Licensing Authority cannot attach to premises licences which are:

- any condition which makes it impossible to comply with an operating licence condition

- conditions relating to gaming machine categories, numbers, or method of operation
- conditions which provide that membership of a club or body be required (the Gambling Act 2005 specifically removes the membership requirement for casino and bingo clubs)
- conditions in relation to stakes, fees, winnings or prizes

15.5 Where a condition is attached to a premises licence requiring door supervisors, the Licensing Authority will normally require those door supervisors to be Security Industry Authority (SIA) registered.

15.6 Door supervisors employed in house at casinos or bingo premises are exempt from being registered by the SIA but the Licensing Authority considers that it is best practice for door supervisors working at casinos or bingo premises to have SIA training or similar. The Licensing Authority will also expect door supervisors employed at casinos or bingo premises to have a clear Disclosure and Barring check over the previous three years prior to their employment at the casino or bingo premises.

16 Primary Gambling Activity

16.1 The primary activity of each premises licence type is specified on the premises licence when it is issued. Section 150 of the Gambling Act 2005 authorises the provision of gambling facilities for the following types of premises licences:

- Casino premises
- Bingo premises
- Betting premises, including tracks and premises used by betting intermediaries
- Adult gaming centre premises (for category C and D machines)
- Family entertainment centre premises (for category C and D machines) (note that, separate to this category, the Licensing Authority may issue family entertainment centre gaming machine permits, which authorise the use of category D machines only).

16.2 In betting premises the primary activity will be betting, with gaming machines as an ancillary offer on the premises. The Commission have provided information relating to the primary gambling activity. This guidance sets out the requirements on the operator to ensure that their premises operate within the terms of the Act and the relevant conditions. It should be noted that the Act does not permit a premises to be licensed for more than one gambling activity.

16.3 The Licensing Authority will take decisions in accordance with the Commission's guidance and codes of practice on primary gambling activity, and will have regard to the advice which it issues from time to time, and will expect applicants to operate premises in line with the Commission's Guidance and conditions on their operator licence. The Licensing Authority will monitor the operation of premises and report any potential breach of operating licence conditions to the Commission. Applications for new premises licences, or to vary an existing licence, will be expected to be clear that the premises are intended to be used for the primary gambling activity proposed. For example a betting (other) premises licence application that only has 4 gaming machines but no betting counter or associated

betting facilities shown on the proposed plans, will not be considered as offering the primary gambling activity in accordance with that indicated on the application.

17 Buildings divided into more than one premises

- 17.1 The Guidance states that a building can, in principle, be divided into more than one premises, and subject to more than one premises licence provided they are for different parts of the building, and the different parts of the building can be reasonably regarded as being different premises. An example is given of the units within a shopping mall, where each unit is a separate self-contained premises that is contained within one building. It is also possible for licensed premises to be located next to each other. The Licensing Authority will follow this guidance.
- 17.2 Whether different parts of a building can be reasonably regarded as different premises will depend on the circumstances of the individual building and how any division is proposed. To agree to accept applications to grant or vary a licence for a building which has been divided, the Licensing Authority will need to be satisfied that the different premises are genuinely separate premises, and not an artificially created part of what is readily identifiable as a single premises.
- 17.3 In considering whether different areas of a building are genuinely separate premises the Licensing Authority will take into account factors which will include:
- whether there are separate registrations for business rates in place for the premises
 - whether the premises are owned or operated by the same person
 - whether the premises are operated independently of each other

18 Separation of premises within a single building

- 18.1 When considering proposals to divide a building into genuinely separate premises the Licensing Authority will also need to be satisfied that the form of separation between the premises is appropriate.
- 18.2 The separation between one premises and another must be clearly defined. Any barrier used to separate one premises from another must be permanent and constructed so the public cannot go from one premises to another. The Licensing Authority would not, for example, be likely to consider that separation of areas of a building by ropes, or by low level, or moveable partitions to be appropriate.
- 18.3 It may be acceptable for staff working in adjacent premises to have access through barriers between premises to enable them access one premises from the other. The applicant must demonstrate that in providing this staff access there are suitable control measures in place that will ensure the safety and security of staff and that will effectively prevent the public from using the same access point to enter the other premises.

19 Access to premises

- 19.1 The Gambling Act 2005 (Mandatory and Default Conditions) Regulations 2007 restrict access to different types of licensed gambling premises. In considering proposals to divide a building into different premises the Licensing Authority will

have to be satisfied that proposals to divide buildings are compatible with the mandatory conditions which relate to access between premises.

- 19.2 The requirement and restrictions relating to access are set out in paragraph 7.26 of the Commission's Guidance. In certain circumstances customers are restricted from accessing different types of gambling premises directly from other licensed premises.
- 19.3 The Guidance at paragraph 7.25 states 'There is no definition of "direct access" in the Act or regulations. However, it could be said that there should be an area separating the premises concerned (for example a street or café), which the public go to for purposes other than gambling, for there to be shown to be no direct access.'
- 19.4 It is the Licensing Authority's opinion that any area which separates licensed premises, and from which those premises can be accessed, must be genuinely separate premises which are habitually and actually used by members of the public other than those using the licensed premises.
- 19.5 The Licensing Authority does not consider that provisions which prohibit direct access between licensed premises are satisfied where licensed premises are separated by an area created artificially within a building principally for members of the public attending the licensed premises, irrespective of whether this area is unlicensed or provides non-gambling facilities, for example refreshments or ATMs.
- 19.6 Where the Licensing Authority is satisfied that a building can be divided into separate premises and properly satisfy the statutory provisions, the Licensing Authority will expect applicants to ensure that:
- Premises are configured so that children are not invited to participate in, have accidental access to, or closely observe gambling to which they are prohibited from taking part
 - Entrances to and exits from parts of a building covered by one or more premises licences should be separate and identifiable so that the separation of different premises is not compromised and people do not 'drift' into a gambling area. In this context it should be possible to access the premises without going through another licensed premises or premises with a permit
 - Customers should be able to participate in the activity named on the premises licence

This is not an exhaustive list and the Licensing Authority will consider other aspects based on the merits of the application.

20 Provisional Statements

- 20.1 An applicant may apply for a provisional statement in respect of premises expected to be constructed, altered or acquired.
- 20.2 Applications for provisional statements will be dealt with in a similar manner to applications for a premises licence.

- 20.3 Where a provisional statement is granted and an application subsequently made for a premises licence, the Licensing Authority will disregard any representations made which address matters that could have been addressed when the provisional statement was considered unless there has been a change of circumstances.
- 20.4 A premises licence will be granted in the same terms as the provisional statement unless
- representations are received which address matters that could not have been addressed when the provisional statement was considered
 - there has been a change of circumstances
 - the premises have been constructed or altered otherwise than in accordance with the plans and information included with the application for the provisional statement

21 Reviews of Licences

- 21.1 Requests for a review of a premises licence can be made by interested parties or responsible authorities, including the Licensing Authority. However, it is for the Licensing Authority to decide whether the review is to be carried out. This will be on the basis of whether the request for the review is relevant to the matters listed below:
- any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission
 - any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
 - the Licensing Objectives
 - the Licensing Authority's Statement of Principles
- 21.2 The Licensing Authority may reject an application for review if it thinks that the grounds on which the review is sought:
- are not relevant to the relevant code of practice or guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, the Licensing Objectives or the Licensing Authority's Statement of Principles
 - are frivolous
 - are vexatious
 - 'will certainly not' cause the Licensing Authority to revoke or suspend the licence or to remove, amend or attach conditions on the premises licence
 - are substantially the same as grounds cited in a previous application relating to the same premises (the Licensing Authority will consider the length of time that has passed since the earlier application in deciding whether this is a reasonable reason to reject the review application)
 - are substantially the same as representations made at the time the application for the premises licence was considered. While the licensing authority will consider the length of time that has passed since the representations were made, it will not normally review a licence on the basis of the same arguments considered on the grant of the premises licence
- 21.3 General objections to gambling as an activity are not likely to be considered relevant reasons for a review. Other examples of irrelevant considerations include demand for gambling premises, issues relating to planning, public safety and traffic congestion.

- 21.4 The Licensing Authority itself, as a responsible authority can initiate a review of a particular premises licence, or any particular class of premises licence, for any reason which it thinks is appropriate. This includes reviewing a premises licence on the grounds that a premises licence holder has not provided facilities for gambling at the premises. This is to prevent people from applying for licences in a speculative manner without intending to use them, or to ensure that the principle of primary use is applied.
- 21.5 The Licensing Authority may review any matter connected with the use made of a particular premises if it has reason to believe that the premises licence conditions are not being observed, or for any other reason which gives it cause to believe a review may be appropriate.
- 21.6 A responsible authority or interested party may apply to the Licensing Authority to review a premises licence. Such reviews can be made in relation to, amongst other things:
- if there are repeated incidents of crime and disorder associated with the premises or the gambling activity which the premises operator has failed to adequately address
 - where incidents that have adversely affected one or more Licensing Objectives have occurred at a premises that could have been prevented if advice and guidance from a responsible authority had been heeded
 - if the premises due to the activities being undertaken is either attracting children or people likely to be involved in crime and disorder
- 21.7 As a review of a premises licence can lead to its revocation the Licensing Authority will consider whether informal actions to ensure timely or immediate compliance have been exhausted prior to an application being made. The Licensing Authority accepts that an application for review may be appropriate without informal measures being taken, but will seek to establish that all options have been considered in determining review applications.

22 Permits

- 22.1 Permits regulate gambling and the use of gaming machines in a premises which does not hold a premises licence. They are required when a premises provides gambling facilities but either the stakes are very low or gambling is not the main function of the premises.
- 22.2 The Licensing Authority is responsible for issuing the following permits:
- alcohol licensed premises gaming machine permits
 - club gaming permits and club machine permit
 - prize gaming permits
 - unlicensed family entertainment centre gaming machine permits
- 22.3 The Licensing Authority can only grant or reject an application for a permit and cannot attach conditions. Therefore, the Licensing Authority will consider a number of factors before determining an application for a permit to ensure that the permit holder and the premises are suitable for the proposed gambling activities.

23 (Alcohol) Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits

- 23.1 Premises licensed to sell alcohol are automatically entitled to have 2 gaming machines of categories C or D provided that:
- the requisite notice has been served on the Licensing Authority
 - the appropriate fee has been paid
 - any code of practice relating to the location and operation of gaming machines is complied with
- 23.2 The Licensing Authority can remove the automatic authorisation if:
- provision of the machines is not reasonably consistent with the pursuit of the Licensing Objectives
 - gaming has taken place on the premises that breaches a condition of section 282 of the Gambling Act (i.e. that written notice has been provided to the Licensing Authority, that a fee has been provided and that any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission about the location and operation of the machine has been complied with)
 - the premises are mainly used for gaming
 - an offence under the Gambling Act has been committed on the premises
- 23.3 If a licensed premises wishes to have more than 2 machines, then a permit is required.
- 23.4 The Licensing Authority must take account of the Licensing Objectives and any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission issued under Section 25 of the Gambling Act 2005 when considering an application for a permit. The Licensing Authority may also consider such matters as it thinks are relevant. Such matters will be decided on a case by case basis but generally there will be regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.
- 23.5 The Licensing Authority will expect the applicant to demonstrate that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that children and young people do not have access to the adult only gaming machines. Such measures may include notices and signage, adult machines being in sight of the bar or in sight of staff that will monitor that the machines are not being used by those under 18. As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, applicants may wish to consider the provision of information leaflets/helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare, Gamblers Anonymous, the Gordon House Association, National Debtline, local Citizens Advice Bureau, and any other relevant and independent advice agencies.
- 23.6 It is recognised that some alcohol licensed premises may apply for a premises licence for their non-alcohol licensed areas. Any such application would most likely need to be applied for, and dealt with as an Adult Gaming Centre premises licence.
- 23.7 The Licensing Authority may decide to grant an application with a smaller number of machines and/or a different category of machines than that applied for. No other conditions can be attached to the permit.

- 23.8 The holder of a permit must comply with any Code of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission about the location and operation of the machines.

24 Club Gaming and Club Machines Permits

- 24.1 Members clubs and Miners' welfare institutes (but not commercial clubs) may apply for a club gaming permit or a club machine permit. Commercial clubs may apply for a club machine permit. The club gaming permit will enable the premises to provide gaming machines (three machines of categories B, C or D), equal chance gaming, and games of chance as set out in regulations. A club machine permit will enable the premises to provide gaming machines (three machines of categories B4, C or D).

- 24.2 A club must meet the following criteria to be considered a members' club:

- It must have at least 25 members
- It must be established and conducted wholly or mainly for purposes other than gaming (unless the gaming is permitted by separate regulations)
- It must be permanent in nature
- It must not be established to make a commercial profit
- It must be controlled by its members equally

Examples of these include working men's clubs, branches of the Royal British Legion and clubs with political affiliations.

- 24.3 The Licensing Authority may only refuse an application on the grounds that:

- the applicant does not fulfil the requirements for a members' or commercial club or miners' welfare institute and therefore is not entitled to receive the type of permit for which it has applied
- the applicant's premises are used wholly or mainly by children and/or young persons
- an offence under the Act or a breach of a permit has been committed by the applicant while providing gaming facilities
- a permit held by the applicant has been cancelled in the previous ten years
- an objection has been lodged by the Gambling Commission or the Police

- 24.4 There is also a 'fast-track' procedure available under the Act for premises which hold a club premises certificate under the Licensing Act 2003 (Schedule 12 paragraph 10). Under the fast-track procedure there is no opportunity for objections to be made by the Gambling Commission or the Police, and the grounds upon which a Licensing Authority can refuse a permit are reduced. The grounds on which an application under this process may be refused are:

- that the club is established primarily for gaming, other than gaming prescribed under schedule 12
- that in addition to the prescribed gaming, the applicant provides facilities for other gaming
- that a club gaming permit or club machine permit issued to the applicant in the last ten years has been cancelled

- 24.5 There are statutory conditions on club gaming permits that no child uses a category B or C machine on the premises and that the holder complies with any relevant provision of a code of practice about the location and operation of gaming machines.

25 Prize Gaming Permits

- 25.1 Gaming is prize gaming if the prize is not affected by the number of people playing or the amount paid for or raised by the gaming. Prize gaming may take place without a permit in various premises. These are casinos, bingo halls, adult gaming centres, licensed and unlicensed family entertainment centres and travelling fairs.
- 25.2 In exercising its functions in respect of prize gaming permits, the Licensing Authority need not, but may, have regard to the Licensing Objectives and must have regard to any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission.
- 25.3 It should be noted that there are conditions in the Act with which the permit holder must comply, but that the Licensing Authority cannot attach conditions. The conditions in the Act are:
- the limits on participation fees, as set out in regulations, must be complied with
 - all chances to participate in the gaming must be allocated on the premises on which the gaming is taking place and on one day
 - the game must be played and completed on the day the chances are allocated and the result of the game must be made public in the premises on the day that it is played
 - the prize for which the game is played must not exceed the amount set out in regulations (if a money prize), or the prescribed value (if non-monetary prize)
 - participation in the gaming must not entitle the player to take part in any other gambling
- 25.4 The Licensing Authority cannot attach any other conditions to this type of permit.
- 25.5 During the application process, the applicant will be expected to set out the types of gaming that they are intending to offer and will also be expected to demonstrate:
- an understanding of the limits to stakes and prizes set out in regulations
 - That the gaming offered is within the law
 - Clear policies that outline the steps to be taken to protect children from harm
- 25.6 The Licensing Authority will only grant a permit after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police. This will enable the Licensing Authority to determine the suitability of the applicant in terms of any convictions that they may have that would make them unsuitable to operate prize gaming, the suitability of the premises in relation to their location, and issues about disorder.
- 25.7 Given that the prize gaming will particularly appeal to children and young persons, the licensing authority will give weight to child protection issues.

26 Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre (uFEC) Gaming Machine Permits

- 26.1 Where Category D gaming machines are to be provided at premises which do not have a premises licence but will be wholly or mainly used for making Category D gaming machines available for use, an application may be made for a permit.
- 26.2 A uFEC can form a part of larger premises provided it is separate and identifiable.
- 26.3 In exercising its functions in respect of uFEC permits, the Licensing Authority need not, but may have regard to the licensing objectives and must have regard to any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission.
- 26.4 The Licensing Authority cannot attach conditions to this type of permit but will consider the following matters in determining the suitability of an applicant for a permit.
- 26.5 Applicants will be expected to show that there are policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. These may include appropriate measures and training for staff in dealing with:
- Suspected truant school children on the premises
 - Unsupervised young children on the premises
 - Children causing problems on or around the premises
- 26.6 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a full understanding of the maximum stakes and prizes of the gambling that is permissible in uFECs and that staff are trained to have a full understanding of the maximum stakes and prizes.
- 26.7 Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have no relevant convictions as set out in Schedule 7 of the Act.
- 26.8 The Licensing Authority will not normally grant a uFEC permit for premises that are located close to schools.

27 Temporary Use Notices

- 27.1 Temporary Use Notices allow the use of premises for gambling where there is no premises licence but where a gambling operator wishes to use the premises temporarily for providing facilities for gambling. Premises that might be suitable for gambling would include hotels, conference centres and sporting venues.
- 27.2 The Licensing Authority can only grant a Temporary Use Notice to a person or a company holding a relevant operating licence.
- 27.3 Currently, Temporary Use Notices can only be used to permit the provision of facilities for equal chance gaming, where the gaming is intended to produce a single overall winner.
- 27.4 The Licensing Authority will object to temporary use notices where it appears that they are being used to permit regular gambling in a set of premises.
- 27.5 A set of premises may not be the subject of temporary use notices for more than 21 days within a 12 month period.

- 27.6 In determining whether a place falls within the definition of a 'set of premises' the Licensing Authority will take into consideration ownership/occupation and control of the premises. For example, a large exhibition centre will normally be regarded as one set of premises and will not be allowed separate temporary use notices for each of its exhibition halls. Individual units in a shopping centre may be regarded as different sets of premises if they are occupied and controlled by different people.

28 Occasional Use Notices

- 28.1 The Licensing Authority has little discretion but to accept occasional use notice at 'tracks'. However the Licensing Authority must ensure that the statutory limit of 8 days in a calendar year is not exceeded. The Licensing Authority will, however, consider the definition of a 'track'. The applicant will also need to demonstrate that they are responsible for the administration of the 'track' or is an occupier, and therefore permitted to make use of the notice. It should be noted that the definition of track in the Act is wider than dog tracks or horse racecourses and includes places where races or other sporting events take place. This could include major halls, hotels and other venues in Cheshire East. If notices are given for a single track which would permit betting to occur for more than 8 days per year the Licensing Authority has an obligation to issue a counter notice preventing such a breach occurring.
- 28.2 Where betting takes place on a track on eight days or less in a calendar year, betting may be permitted by an occasional use notice without the need for a full premises licence.
- 28.3 A track includes a horse racing course, a dog track or any other premises on any part of which a race or other sporting event takes place or is intended to take place. This could include, for example, agricultural land upon which a point-to-point meeting takes place. The track need not be a permanent fixture. Those giving occasional use notices will be expected to demonstrate that the premises fall within the definition of a track.

29 Travelling Fairs

- 29.1 The Act defines a travelling fair as 'wholly or principally' providing amusements and they must be on a site that has been used for fairs for no more than 27 days per calendar year. Travelling fairs do not require a permit to provide gaming machines but must comply with legal requirements about the way the machines are operated.
- 29.2 It will fall to the Licensing Authority to decide whether, where category D machines and/ or equal chance prize gaming without a permit is to be made available for use at travelling fairs, the statutory requirement that the facilities for gambling amount to no more than an ancillary amusement at the fair is met.
- 29.3 The Licensing Authority will also consider whether the applicant falls within the statutory definition of a travelling fair. The Licensing Authority notes the 27 day statutory maximum for the land being used as a fair each calendar year applies to the piece of land on which the fairs are held, regardless of whether it is the same or

different travelling fairs occupying the land. The Licensing Authority will monitor any travelling fairs that take place in Cheshire East that offer gambling as an ancillary use to the fair through liaison with the Event Safety Advisory Group. The Licensing Authority will ensure that the 27 day statutory maximum for the land being used is not breached. The Licensing Authority will advise travelling fair operators if requested of the statutory time period remaining for the land they intend to use.

30 Small Society Lotteries

30.1 The Licensing Authority is responsible for the registration of small society lotteries.

30.2 A society is a non-commercial organisation established and conducted:

- for charitable purposes
- for the purpose of enabling participation in, or of supporting sport, athletics or a cultural activity
- for any other non-commercial purpose other than that of private gain and the proceeds of any lottery must be devoted to those purposes

30.3 The total value of tickets to be put on sale per single lottery must be £20,000 or less or the aggregate value of tickets to be put on sale for all lotteries in a calendar year must not exceed £250,000. If either of these values is exceeded, the society will need to be licensed by the Gambling Commission to operate large lotteries.

30.4 Applications for registration must be made in accordance with the Small Society Lotteries (Registration of Non-Commercial Societies) Regulations 2007.

30.5 An application may be refused on the following grounds:

- An operating licence held by the applicant for registration has been revoked or an application for an operating licence by the applicant for registration has been refused within the past 5 years
- The applicant is not a non-commercial society
- A person who will or may be connected with the promotion of the lottery has been convicted of a relevant offence
- Information provided in or with the application for registration is found to be false or misleading

30.6 Registrations run for an unlimited period, unless the registration is cancelled or revoked.

30.7 The limits placed on small society lotteries are as follows:

- At least 20% of the lottery proceeds must be applied to the purposes of the society
- No single prize may be worth more than £25,000
- Rollovers between lotteries are only permitted where every lottery affected is also a small society lottery promoted by the same society and the maximum single prize is £25,000

- Every ticket in the lottery must cost the same and the society must take payment for the ticket before entry into the draw is allowed

30.8 No later than three months after each lottery draw, returns must be sent to the Licensing Authority containing the following information:

- The arrangements for the lottery
- The total proceeds of the lottery
- The amounts deducted for prizes
- The amounts deducted for expenses
- The amount applied to the purposes of the society
- Whether any expenses incurred in connection with the lottery were not paid for by deduction from the proceeds and, if so, the amount of such expenses and the sources from which they were paid

31 Exchange of Information

31.1 The Licensing Authority will act in accordance with the provisions of Section 350 of the Act in its exchange of information with the Gambling Commission. The Licensing Authority will also have regard to Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission to Local Authorities on this matter, as well as any relevant regulations issued by the Secretary of State under the powers provided in the Act.

3.1.2 The Council will at all times ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. However, information will be shared with anyone provided there is a lawful basis to do so. This may include the sharing of personal and/or special category data.

32 Enforcement

32.1 The Licensing Authority will operate within the principles of natural justice and take into account the Human Rights Act 1998. It will have regard to Commission Guidance and will endeavour to avoid unnecessary duplication with other regulatory regimes as far as possible and to be:

- Proportionate: only intervening when necessary and remedies will be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised
- Accountable: able to justify its decisions, and be subject to public scrutiny
- Consistent: implementing rules and standards fairly in a joined-up way
- Transparent: open, and keep conditions placed on premises licences simple and user friendly
- Targeted: focusing on the problems, and aiming to minimise the side effects

32.2 The main enforcement and compliance role for the Licensing Authority is to ensure compliance with the premises licences and other permissions which it grants itself. The Gambling Commission will be the enforcement body for operating licences and personal licences. Similarly, concerns about manufacture, supply or repair of gaming machines will not be dealt with by the Licensing Authority, but the Licensing Authority will be alert to the way premises are operated and will notify the Gambling Commission if it becomes aware of matters of concern in the operation of the premises.

- 32.3 The Licensing Authority will comply with the Enforcement Policy approved by the Council. This Policy includes provisions for licensing offences and is available on the Council's website.

33 Scheme of Delegation

- 33.1 The Licensing Committee has delegated certain decisions and functions and has established a Sub-Committee to deal with them.
- 33.2 Many of the decisions and functions will be purely administrative in nature and the grant of non-contentious applications, including for example those licences and permits where no representations have been made, will be delegated to Licensing Authority Officers. The table shown at Appendix 5 sets out the agreed delegation of decisions and functions to the Licensing Committee, Sub-Committee and Officers. This form of delegation is without prejudice to Officers referring an application to a Sub-Committee or Full Committee if considered appropriate in the circumstances of any particular case.

34 Definitions of Gambling Activities

Adult Gaming Centres

Adult gaming centres (AGCs) are a category of gambling premises contained within the Act. Persons operating an AGC must hold a gaming machines general operating licence from the Commission and must seek a premises licence from the licensing authority. The holder of an adult gaming centre premises licence may make available for use up to four category B3 or B4 machines, any number of category C or D machines.

Amusement arcades

These are not referred to as such in the Act. See Adult Gaming Centres and licensed and unlicensed family entertainment centres.

Betting

Betting means making or accepting a bet on the outcome of a race, competition, or any other event; the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring; or whether anything is true or not true.

Bingo

Bingo has no statutory definition in the Act. It has its ordinary and natural meaning. The distinction between cash bingo, where cash prizes are derived from the stakes, and prize bingo, where prizes were not directly related to the stakes paid, under the previous legislation has been removed for commercial operators, and the holder of a bingo operating licence will be able to offer any type of bingo game, whether cash or prize. That means that premises with a bingo premises licence, or a casino premises licence (where the operator holds a bingo as well as a casino operating licence), will be able to offer bingo in all its forms. So too will alcohol-licensed premises, club and miners' welfare institutes (up to a total weekly prize value of less than £2,000).

Prize bingo is traditionally played in arcades, or travelling funfairs. For these operators, prize bingo is subsumed within the allowances for prize gaming in the Act. This means that adult gaming centres, both licensed and unlicensed family entertainment centres, travelling fairs, and any premises with a prize gaming permit will be able to offer prize gaming, which includes prize bingo. There will be Government Regulations issued setting the prize limits.

Casino

'An arrangement' whereby people can participate in one or more casino games.

Casino Games

Games of chance not being equal chance gaming ie games in which players stake against a 'bank'.

Equal chance gaming

This is a game where the chances of winning are equally favourable to all participants, and which does not involve playing or staking against a "bank". It is immaterial how the 'bank' is described and whether or not it is controlled by a player.

Exempt activities

Private betting is betting which takes place between inhabitants of the same premises or between employees of the same employer.

Private gaming (which is gaming that takes place in private dwellings and on domestic occasions) is exempt from licensing or registration providing that no charge is made for participating; only equal chance gaming takes place; and it does not occur in a place to which the public have access.

Non commercial Gambling is when no part of the proceeds/profits will be for private gain. The proceeds/profits are the sums raised by the organisers, for example, by way of fees for entrance or participation, or by way of stakes, minus an amount deducted by the organiser in respect of costs reasonably incurred in organising the event including the provision of a prize. The following conditions would also have to apply:

- The profits will be for a purpose other than that for private gain;
- The players are informed that the purpose of the gaming is to raise money for a specified purpose other than that of private gain;
- The event must NOT take place in premises which either have a premises licence or on premises relying on a temporary use notice under the new act;
- The gaming must not be remote.

Any Regulations made by the Secretary of State will need to be complied with and will include for example regulations limiting the amounts staked and limiting participation fees. If the profits from the activity used for a purpose other than that which was specified, an offence would be committed.

Gambling

Gambling is defined as either gaming, betting or participating in a lottery.

Games of chance

Includes games that involve elements of both chance and skill. This includes games in which skill can eliminate an element of chance and includes games that are presented as involving an element of chance. It does not include a sport. Playing a game of chance need not involve other participants.

Gaming

Gaming means playing a game of chance for a prize

Gaming machines – Categories

The table at appendix 2 sets out the different categories with the maximum stakes and prizes that apply.

Gaming Machines by Premises Type

The table at appendix 3 sets out the different automatic entitlements at each type of premises.

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

Fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) are electronic machines, sited in betting shops, which contain a variety of games, including roulette. Each machine accepts bets for amounts up to a pre-set maximum and pays out according to fixed odds on the simulated outcomes of games.

The Act classifies FOBTs as B2 gaming machines. Up to four machines can be sited on betting premises. The maximum stake on a single bet is £100, the maximum prize is £500.

Licensed Family Entertainment Centres

These premises require operating licences from the Gambling Commission. They will be able to offer gaming machines in categories C and D. Gaming machines are a form of gambling which is attractive to children and Licensed Family Entertainment Centres may contain machines of the Category D machines on which they are allowed to play as well as category C which they are not permitted to play on.

Lottery

A lottery is where persons are required to pay in order to take part in an arrangement, during the course of which one or more prizes are allocated by a process which relies wholly on chance.

Operating Licence

The Act requires that individuals or companies who intend to provide facilities for certain types of gambling must obtain an operating licence from the Gambling Commission. In general, these licences cover the principal commercial forms of gambling operation. Operating licences may be issued for the following forms of gambling:

- A casino operating licence
- A bingo operating licence
- A general betting operating licence
- A pool betting operating licence
- A betting intermediary operating licence
- A gaming machine general operating licence (for an adult gaming centre)
- A gaming machine general operating licence (for a family entertainment centre)
- A gaming machine technical operating licence (to manufacture, supply, install, adapt, maintain or repair a gaming machine or part of a gaming machine)
- A gambling software operating licence (to manufacture, supply, install or adapt gambling software)
- A lottery operating licence

Premises Licence

A premises licence issued by a Licensing Authority authorises the provision of facilities on casino premises, bingo premises, betting premises, including tracks, adult gaming centres and family entertainment centres.

Track

A horse-race course, dog track or other premises on any part of which a race or other sporting event takes place or is intended to take place.

Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centres

These premises can provide category D machines providing prizes of up to £5 cash or £8 in goods. Stakes are limited to 10p (or 30p for a goods prize). They can also offer prize bingo.

35 Glossary of Terms

Act:	The Gambling Act 2005
Adult:	Means an individual who is not a child or young person
Applications:	Applications for licences and permits as defined separately in this Policy and the Guidance.
Borough:	The area of Cheshire administered by Cheshire East Borough Council
Child and Young Person:	The Act includes the definition of a child at S.45 as: Meaning of “child” and “young person” (1) In this Act “child” means an individual who is less than 16 years old (2) In the Act “young person” means an individual who is not a child but who is less than 18 years old.
Code of Practice:	Means any relevant code of practice under section 24 of the Gambling Act 2005
Council:	Cheshire East Council
Default Condition:	Means a specified condition provided by regulations to be attached to a licence, unless excluded by Cheshire East Council
GamCare:	GamCare is a leading provider of information, advice, support and free counselling for the prevention and treatment of problem gambling. GamCare is a national charity and was founded in 1997.
Guidance:	The Gambling Commission under section 25 of the Act are required to issue guidance on the manner in which local authorities are to exercise their functions under the Act, in particular, the principles to be applied by local authorities in exercising their functions under the Act.
Interested Party:	Interested parties are defined under section 158 of the Act. To accept a representation from an interested party, the council must take the view that the person: (a) lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities, (b) has business interests that might be affected by the authorised

activities

(c) represents persons in either of these groups.

Interested parties can also be a councillor or an MP

Licensing
Authority:

Cheshire East Council

Licensing
Objectives:

The Act contains three licensing objectives which underpin the functions that the licensing authorities will perform

1. Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime

2. Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

3. Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

Mandatory
Condition:

Means a specified condition provided by regulations to be attached to a licence

NatCen:

National Centre for Social Research. Conducted the British Gambling Prevalence Surveys of 1999, 2007 and 2010 on behalf of the Gambling Commission

Notifications:

Means notification of temporary or occasional use notices

Premises:

Any place, including a vehicle, vessel or moveable structure

Regulations:

Regulations made under the Gambling Act 2005

Representations:

In dealing with applications the Council is obliged to consider representations from two categories of person, referred to in the Act as interested parties and responsible authorities.

Responsible
Authority:

Responsible authorities are public bodies that must be notified of applications and that are entitled to make representations to the Licensing Authority in relation to applications for, and in relation to, premises licences. All representations made by responsible authorities are likely to be relevant representations if they relate to the licensing objectives.

Section 157 of the Act identifies the bodies that are to be treated as responsible authorities.

They are:

(a) a licensing authority in England and Wales in whose area the premises is wholly or partly situated

(b) the Gambling Commission

(c) the chief officer of police or chief constable for the area in which the premises is wholly or partially situated

(d) the fire and rescue authority for the same area

(e) (i) in England and Wales, the local planning authority, or

(ii) in Scotland, the planning authority

- (f) the relevant authority as defined in section 6 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- (g) an authority which has functions in relation to pollution to the environment or harm to human health
- (h) anybody, designated in writing by the licensing authority as competent to advise about the protection of children from harm
- (i) HM Revenue & Customs
- (j) any other person prescribed in regulations by the Secretary of State.

Cheshire East – Area Profile (spring 2015)

Introduction

Cheshire East is the third biggest unitary authority in the North West and the thirteenth largest in the country. It therefore has a wide breadth of social grades, age profiles and ranges of affluence. There is a clear link between these measures and the likelihood of a person gambling. It also needs to be acknowledged that there are clear differences between the type of person who gambles responsibly and the type who is identified as a problem gambler. This profile will therefore concentrate on the measures that can contribute to gambling and problem gambling.



People

Cheshire East has an estimated population of 372,700¹, the population density is 3.2 residents per hectare², making Cheshire East less densely populated than the North West (5.0 per hectare) and England (4.1 per hectare).

Between the 2001 and 2011 Census, the median age of residents has increased from 40.6 years to 43.6 years³. Between the same years, the number of over 65s has increased by 11,700 residents or 26%, which is a greater increase than the North West (15%) and England & Wales (20%).

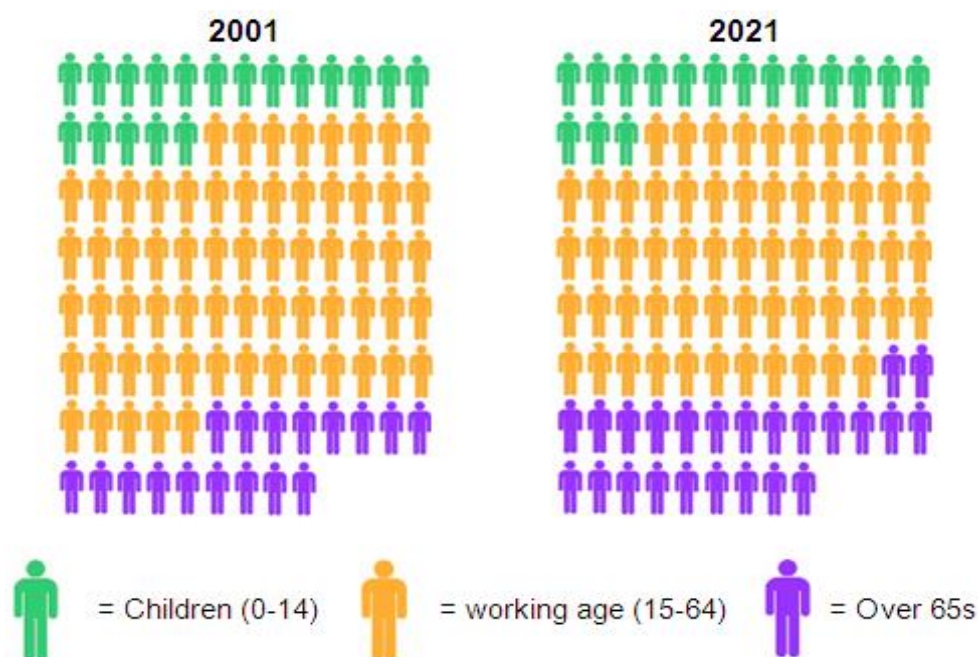
¹ 2013 Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, NOMIS, Crown Copyright

² 2011 Mid-year population estimates and UK Standard Area Measurements (SAM) 2011, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

³ 2001 and 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

From 2011 to 2021 the population was expected to increase by 15,700 people (4.2%) to 385,800, a greater increase than the North West (3.7%) but less than England (7.5%)⁴. The number of children (aged 0-14) is estimated to increase by 4%, with a slight decrease (-2%) in those of working age (15-64). The number of residents over the age of 65 is expected to increase substantially by 19%, however this increase is similar to England (20% increase). Caution should be exercised when using any predictions about the future population, as they assume trends in recent years will continue into future years.

Figure 1: Proportion of residents by broad age groups – change over 20 years⁵



Economy

Cheshire East contains 5.1% of the North West region's working-age residents⁶, but accounts for an even greater share (5.7%) of the region's employees⁷. In terms of economic output, its contribution is much greater still, at 6.9%⁸.

The proportion of working age residents who are claiming job seekers allowance benefit is low (1.0%) when compared to the North West (2.0%) and England (1.9%) averages⁹. Within Cheshire East there are large disparities – from 0.1% in Adlington & Prestbury to 2.7% in West Coppenhall and Grosvenor. If all out-of-work benefits are included rather than just those actively seeking work, 7.8% of residents of working age receive an out-of-work benefit¹⁰, ranging from 1.4% in

⁴ 2012 Sub-National Population Projections, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

⁵ 2001 and 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright & 2012 Sub-National Population Projections, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

⁶ 2013 Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

⁷ 2013 Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

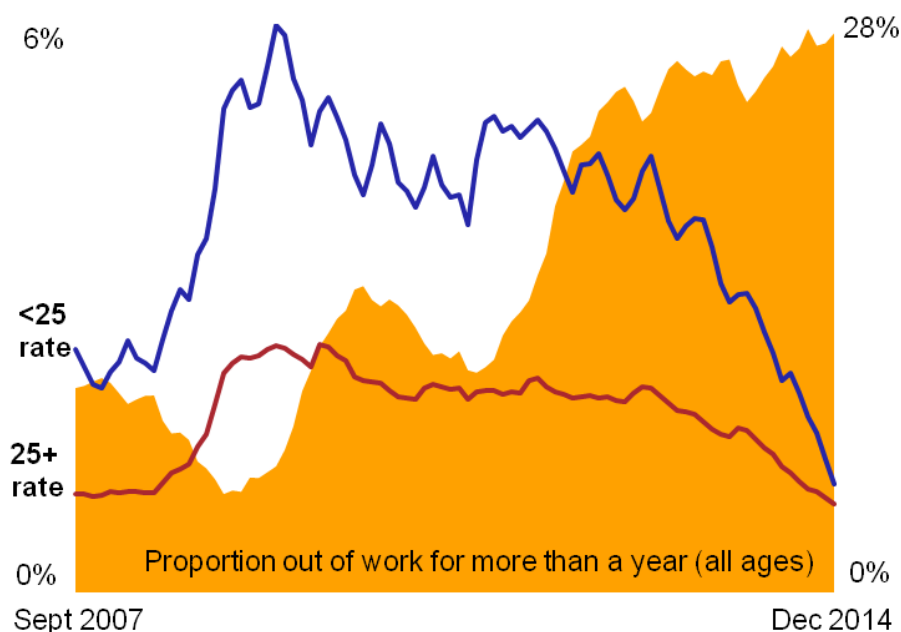
⁸ Regional GVA NUTS3 (1997-2013), Table 3.1, Regional Gross Value Added (Income Approach), Office for National Statistics

⁹ December 2014, JSA Claimant Count, DWP and 2013 mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics, NOMIS, Crown Copyright

¹⁰ Out-of-work benefits, 4 quarter average July 2013 – June 2014, Department for Work and Pensions. Calculations consistent with NI 152/153

Macclesfield Town Tytherington to more than one in four residents of working age (26.5%) in East Coppenhall, Crewe.

Figure 2: Job Seekers Allowance claimants (unemployment) for young people (under 25) and others (over 25), with the proportion of people of all ages claiming for more than one year¹¹



Average (median) household income levels are high (£33,000) compared to Great Britain (£28,500)¹². However, there is a considerable range of average household income levels at ward level, from £18,800 in Crewe St Barnabas ward to £56,900 in Prestbury. Across Cheshire East there are 16 of 231 statistical areas (LSOAs)¹³ which are within the top 20% of most deprived areas in England (figure 3), affecting 28,800 or 7.7% of Cheshire East's population¹⁴. 11 of these areas are in Crewe, with 2 in Wilmslow/Handforth, 2 in Macclesfield and 1 in Congleton. Overall, relative deprivation levels were worse in 2010 than 2007, as only 14 areas were within the top 20% of most deprived areas.

Acorn data is socio-economic data that analyses the residents and places them in classifications, depending on various factors such as demographics, affluence and spending habits. There are seventeen Acorn groups, with the 'Executive Wealth' group being the largest in Cheshire East (27%) a considerably higher proportion than the UK average (12%). There are also approximately five times more residents in the 'lavish lifestyles' groups within Cheshire East compared to the UK, although this group constitutes a small proportion of all Cheshire East's residents (6%).

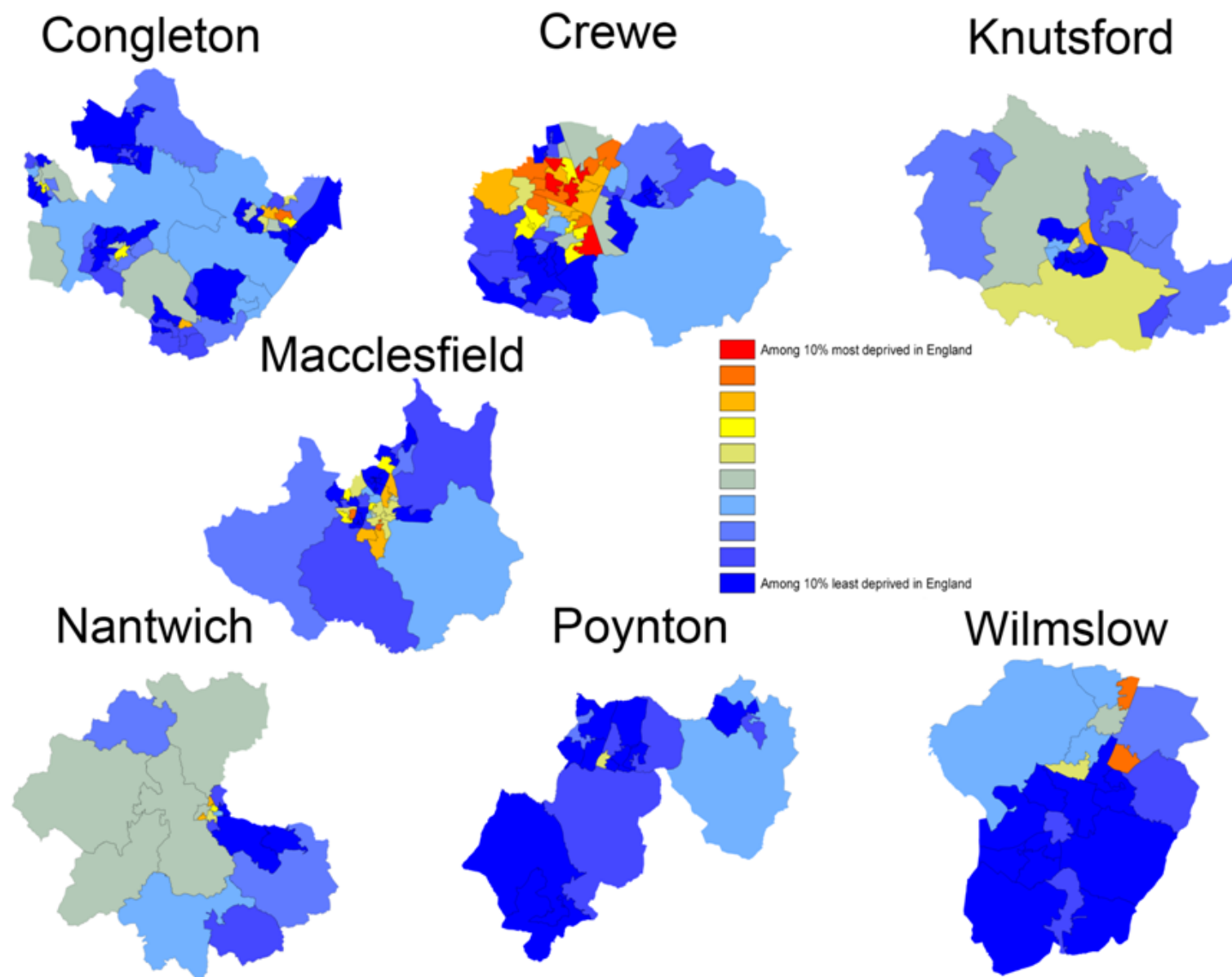
¹¹ December 2014, JSA Claimant Count, DWP and 2013 mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics, NOMIS, Crown Copyright

¹² 2013/14 Paycheck, CACI Ltd. Figures are median values

¹³ Lower Super Output Areas

¹⁴ Indices of Deprivation 2007 and 2010, Department for Communities and Local Government with mid-year population estimates, 2013, Office for National Statistics

Figure 3 Deprivation by LAP, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010



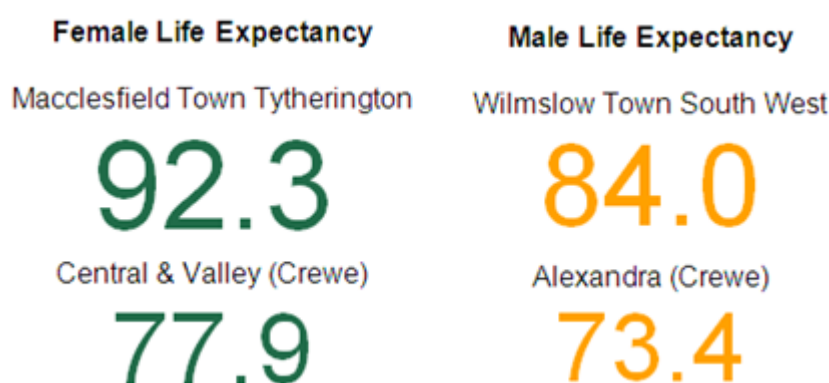
Health

In the 2011 Census, 17.5% of residents reported they had a long term problem or disability which limited their day to day activities, an increase from 16.7% in 2001¹⁵. In a recent survey of the Council's Citizens Panel, 74% of respondents described their general health as 'good or very good' and 5% described it as 'bad or very bad'¹⁶.

Life expectancy (LE) in Cheshire East is higher than regional (North West) and the national (England & Wales) averages. LE at birth for females is 83.6 years, compared to 81.8 years in the North-West and 83.1 years nationally¹⁷. LE at birth for males is 80.4 years, compared to 78.0 in the North West and 79.4 nationally.

There is a noticeable difference within the female population of around 14 years between the lowest rates in Central & Valley (Crewe) and the highest in Macclesfield Town Tytherington¹⁸. For males, there is an 11 year gap between the lowest rates in Alexandra and Crewe and the highest in Wilmslow Town South West.

Figure 4: Male and Female Life Expectancy at birth¹⁹



Smoking rates are generally relatively low. An estimated 16.6% of the adult population are current smokers, which is lower than the North West (23.6%) and England (22.2%). Rates vary from 7.9% in Adlington & Prestbury to 34.3% in St Barnabas²⁰.

Healthy eating rates are relatively high, with an estimated 31.4% regularly consuming their '5 a day', higher than both the North-West average (26.2%) and England (28.7%).

¹⁵ 2001 and 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

¹⁶ Autumn 2011 Survey, InfluenCE, Cheshire East Research and Consultation Team

¹⁷ Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by local areas in England and Wales, 2011-13, Office for National Statistics. National refers to the figure for England

¹⁸ Life Expectancy at Birth for MSOAs, 2006-10, Department for Health

¹⁹ Life Expectancy at Birth for MSOAs, 2006-10, Department for Health

²⁰ 2006-08 Estimates of Adults' Health and Lifestyles, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Education

The qualification levels of working age residents in the Borough (aged 16-64) is high. An estimated 31% have a degree level qualification or equivalent and above, much higher than the North West (21%) and England & Wales (25%)²¹. Conversely, the proportion of residents with no qualifications (9%) is lower than the region (12%) and nationally (11%).

Prevalence of Licensed Gambling Premises

There are a total of 30 licensed gambling premises in Cheshire East, broken down into the following categories:

Town	Type	Number
Betchton (M6 Services)	Adult Gaming Centre	2
Crewe	Adult Gaming Centre	2
Macclesfield	Adult Gaming Centre	1
Total		5

Town	Type	Number
Congleton	Betting Shop	2
Crewe	Betting Shop	9
Handforth	Betting Shop	1
Knutsford	Betting Shop	1
Macclesfield	Betting Shop	4
Middlewich	Betting Shop	1
Nantwich	Betting Shop	1
Sandbach	Betting Shop	1
Wilmslow	Betting Shop	3
Total		23

Town	Type	Number
Crewe	Bingo	2
Total		2

There are no casinos and no licensed family entertainment centres.

The largest number of licensed premises are in the towns of Crewe and Macclesfield

²¹ Annual Population Survey January 2011 – December 2011, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright

Conclusion

According to NatCen's British Gambling Prevalence Survey of 2010 the rates of problem gambling in the general population are 0.9% and 0.5% (depending on the measures used). This would equate to a problem gambling population in Cheshire East of 33,543 and 18,635.

According to information available from the Gambling Commission there are 13,489 licensed gambling premises in the UK.

The number of licensed betting premises has decreased significantly. This decreased predated any economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and 2021. And may link to the Government's decision to change the law relating to fixed odds betting terminals. The increase in use of online gambling facilities may also be a factor.

Whilst gambling is prevalent across the country this prevalence appears to be concentrated in the main city areas and primarily in the London Boroughs.

As the persons most at risk from problem gambling are white, young males from a low income background this is most likely to affect the residents of Crewe and to a lesser extent Macclesfield. These are also the areas that already have the highest numbers of licensed gambling premises. It will therefore be incumbent upon applicants to demonstrate that they will take appropriate steps to follow the Gambling Commission's relevant Codes of Conduct and the Council's Statement of Gambling Principles to ensure that no one is exploited or harmed by gambling.

Summary of gaming machine categories and entitlements

Category of machine	Maximum stake (from April 2019)	Maximum prize (from Jan 2014)
A	Unlimited - No category A gaming machines are currently permitted	
B1	£5	£10,000*
B2	£2	£500
B3A	£2	£500
B3	£2	£500
B4	£2	£400
C	£1	£100
D - non-money prize (other than a crane grab machine or a coin pusher or penny falls machine)	30p	£8
D - non-money prize (crane grab machine)	£1	£50
D - money prize (other than a coin pusher or penny falls machine)	10p	£5
D - combined money and non-money prize (other than a coin pusher or penny falls machine)	10p	£8 (of which no more than £5 may be a money prize)
D - combined money and non-money prize (coin pusher or penny falls machine)	20p	£20 (of which no more than £10 may be a money prize)

* With option of max £20,000 linked progressive jackpot on premises basis only

Summary of machine provisions by premises

Premises Type	Machine Category						
	A	B1	B2	B3	B4	C	D
Large casino (machine/table ratio of 5-1 up to maximum)		Maximum of 150 machines. Any combination of machines in categories B to D (except B3A machines), within the total limit of 150 (subject to machine/table ratio)					
Small casino (machine/table ratio of 2-1 up to maximum)		Maximum of 80 machines. Any combination of machines in categories B to D (except B3A machines), within the total limit of 80 (subject to machine/table ratio)					
Pre-2005 Act casino (no machine/table ratio)		Maximum of 20 machines categories B to D (except B3A machines), or any number of C or D machines instead					
Betting premises and tracks occupied by pool betting			Maximum of 4 machines categories B2 to D (except B3A machines)				
Bingo premises				Maximum of 20% of the total number of gaming machines which are available for use on the premises categories B3 or B4**		No limit on category C or D machines	
Adult gaming centre				Maximum of 20% of the total number of gaming machines which are available for use on the premises categories B3 or B4**		No limit on category C or D machines	
Family entertainment centre (with premises licence)						No limit on category C or D machines	
Family entertainment centre (with permit)							No limit on category D machines
Clubs or miners' welfare institute (with permits)					Maximum of 3 machines in categories B3A or B4 to D*		
Qualifying alcohol licensed premises						1 or 2 machines of category C or D automatic upon notification	
Qualifying alcohol licensed premises (with gaming machine permit)						Number of category C-D machines as specified on permit	
Travelling fair							No limit on category D machines

* It should be noted that members' clubs and miners' welfare institutes are entitled to site a total of three machines in categories B3A to D but only one B3A machine can be sited as part of this entitlement. Commercial clubs are entitled to a total of three machines in categories B4 to D.

** Adult gaming centre and bingo premises are entitled to make available a number of Category B gaming machines not exceeding 20% of the total number of gaming machines which are available for use on the premises. Premises in existence before 13 July 2011 are entitled to make available four (adult gaming centre premises) or eight (bingo premises) category B gaming machines, or 20% of the total number of gaming machines, whichever is the greater. Adult gaming centre premises and bingo premises licences granted on or after 13 July 2011 but before 1 April 2014 are entitled to a maximum of four or eight category B gaming machines or 20% of the total number of gaming machines, whichever is the greater; from 1 April 2014 these premises will be entitled to 20% of the total number of gaming machines only, but not B3A machines.

Summary of gaming entitlements for clubs and alcohol-licensed premises

	Members' club or MW institute with club gaming permit	Bridge or whist club	Members' club or commercial club with club machine permit	Members' club, commercial club or MW institute without a club gaming permit or club machine permit	Pubs and other alcohol licensed premises
Equal chance gaming	Yes	Bridge and/or Whist only	Yes	Yes	Yes
Limits on stakes	No limit	No limit	Poker £1000 per week £250 per day £10 per person per game Other gaming No limit	Poker £1000 per week £250 per day. £10 per person per game Other gaming No limit	Poker £100 per premises per day. Other gaming £5 per person per game Cribbage & dominoes No limit
Limits on prizes	No limit	No limit	Poker £250 per game Other gaming No limit	Poker £250 per game Other gaming No limit	Poker £100 per game Other gaming No limit
Maximum participate on fees – per person per day	Bridge and/or whist* £20 Other gaming £3	£18 (without club gaming permit) £20 (with club gaming permit)	Bridge and/or whist* £18 Other gaming £3 (commercial club) £1 (members' club)	Bridge and/or whist* £18 Other gaming £1	None permitted
Bankers or unequal chance gaming	Pontoon Chemin de Fer	None permitted	None permitted	None permitted	None permitted
Limits on bingo	Maximum of £2,000 per week in stakes/prizes. If more then will need an operating licence.	No bingo permitted	Maximum of £2,000 per week in stakes/prizes. If more then will need an operating licence.	Maximum of £2,000 per week in stakes/prizes. If more then will need an operating licence.	Maximum of £2,000 per week in stakes/prizes. If more then will need an operating licence.

* On a day when no other facilities for gaming are provided

TABLE OF DELEGATION OF LICENSING FUNCTIONS

MATTER TO BE DEALT WITH	FULL COUNCIL	SUB-COMMITTEE	OFFICERS
Three year licensing policy	X		
Policy not to permit casinos	X		
Fee Setting - when appropriate		X (Full Committee)	
Application for premises licences		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Application for a variation to a licence		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Application for a transfer of a licence		Where representations have been received from the Commission	Where no representations received from the Commission
Application for a provisional statement		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Review of a premises licence		X	
Application for club gaming /club machine permits		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Cancellation of club gaming/ club machine permits		X	
Applications for other permits			X
Cancellation of licensed premises gaming machine permits			X
Consideration of temporary use notice and occasional use notices			X
Decision to give a counter notice to a temporary use notice		X	

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Consultation Response from Beacon Counselling Trust:

Thank you for asking Beacon Counselling Trust to comment on the Cheshire East revised Gambling Statement of Licensing Principles. We were pleased to see recognition of the work we have done with Cheshire Constabulary. This work has developed, and we continue to work with Public Health and the Criminal Justice System across the NW to promote awareness of gambling related harm (GRH) and this work informs our comments below:

The figures used in the Principles Statement state that the main vulnerable group in Cheshire East is young white males on low incomes. This information should be informed by an Area Risk Assessment that looks at the key factors that increase the risk of GRH. Deprivation is without doubt a key factor but recent surveys by the Gambling Commission and research (for example by Liverpool John Mores University and Swansea University) have indicated that gambling related harm is more prevalent than previously thought and there are some particularly vulnerable groups that need to be considered. For example : Armed Forces Veterans are 10 times more likely to suffer GRH and those with neurodiverse conditions are also at significantly increased risk. Young people and those living on their own are also at increased risk as well as those with co-morbidities such as drug and alcohol addiction. It would be good to see recognition of this in the principles document and identification of the high-risk areas in which people need to be upskilled in their awareness of GRH.

The lack of awareness in society and in many public and private employers means that it is important that advertising and location of gambling activity is controlled so that vulnerable groups (especially young people) are not impacted as the Principles correctly state. . We believe this should be accompanied by a requirement for licenced facilities to promote awareness of the risk of GRH and of local services that can support and help those impacted by their gambling or by that of a significant other. Between 6-10 people are impacted by an individual's harmful gambling.

Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) has reached more than 20,000 individuals in the past year through its community outreach and support programmes leading to over 8,000 people accessing treatment and support for gambling-related harms. Through a combination of community outreach, education, and therapeutic intervention, this extensive engagement led to 8,174 individuals taking the crucial step of accessing free timely support. Beacon Counselling Trust has seen a steep rise in self-referrals, and this is part in due to the presence of awareness raising with professionals and BCT outreach

teams in the wider community with presence in community centres to GP surgeries, attending health events, engaging with other third-sector organisations and developing referral pathways with other health services and local authorities. BCT's flagship Bet You Can Help training programme (which is delivered free) has also empowered hundreds of professionals and community members across healthcare, education, criminal justice and armed forces sectors to identify and respond to gambling harms. By breaking down stigma and making help more accessible, Beacon's work is transforming how communities respond to gambling harms - one conversation at a time. The figure of people impacted in Cheshire East could be 60-70,000, possible higher if affected others are taken into account. The Area Risk Assessment would identify where this help might best be targeted.

The requirements for notices/signage should include information on how and where to get advice, treatment and support and be prominently and clearly displayed. In many cases the industry has made such information hard to access for example by putting advice/warnings in small print or in places where it is less likely to be noticed. The policies and procedures required should also indicate what training and awareness raising applicants should make sure are in place to ensure staff are able to identify and signpost those at risk or in need of help.

We welcome working further with Cheshire East to provide prevention, education and early intervention and offer treatment service that currently have no waiting list. Our training programme is free and our treatment and support also.

Thank you once again for asking us to comment.

Environment and Communities Committee Work Programme 2025-26

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Is the report for decision or scrutiny?
29 January 2026								
EC/13/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 - 2029/30 Provisional Settlement Update	All Committees are being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified in the Constitution and linked to the budgets approved by the Finance Sub Committee in 2025. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy. Finance Sub Committee will also receive an update on the Local Government Financial Provisional Settlement	Interim Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
EC/15/25-26	Local Plan Update	To provide an update to members on the progress in delivering the new Local Plan.	Director of Planning and Environment	Yes	Yes	No	No	Decision
EC/16/24-25	Strategic Leisure Review - Implementation Update	To provide an update to Committee in relation to the implementation of the initiatives brought forward under the Strategic Leisure Review and where appropriate set out any additional savings proposals.	Director of Planning and Environment	Yes	Yes	No	No	Decision /Scrutiny
26 March 2026								
EC/16/25-26	Service Budgets 2026/2027	The purpose of the report is to set out the allocation of budgets for 2026/27, for all Committees, following Council's approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2026, as determined by Finance Sub	Interim Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
EC/17/25-26	Animal Welfare Licensing Policy	To approve a reviewed and updated Animal Welfare Licensing Policy 2026-2029	Director of Planning and Environment	TBC	No	No	Yes	Decision
EC/14/25-26	Carbon Programme Update and Action Plan Refresh	To update on the Council's carbon neutral plan target of 2030 and the annual 2045 Action Plan summary.	Director of Planning and Environment	No	No	No	No	Scrutiny
EC/12/25-26	Third Financial Review of 2025/26	To note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFs and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements	Interim Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer)	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny

**Environment and Communities Committee
Work Programme 2025-26**

Briefing Reports/Reports for noting

Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Expected Circulation Date via the Members Hub
Cleaner Crewe - Project Update	To consider an update on the initial implementation phase of the project.	Head of Environmental Services	November 2025

Note: These reports will be circulated outside of committee meetings.

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