

Nantwich



Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plans

December 2022



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

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Context of the Study

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

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

Town Centre Vitality Plans

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

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

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

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



The 9 Key Service Centres which form part of this study

Aims and Objectives

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

They

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

Responding to the Impacts of COVID

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

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

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

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

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

Vitality Plan and Toolkit

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

The Vitality Report comprises of two sections:

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

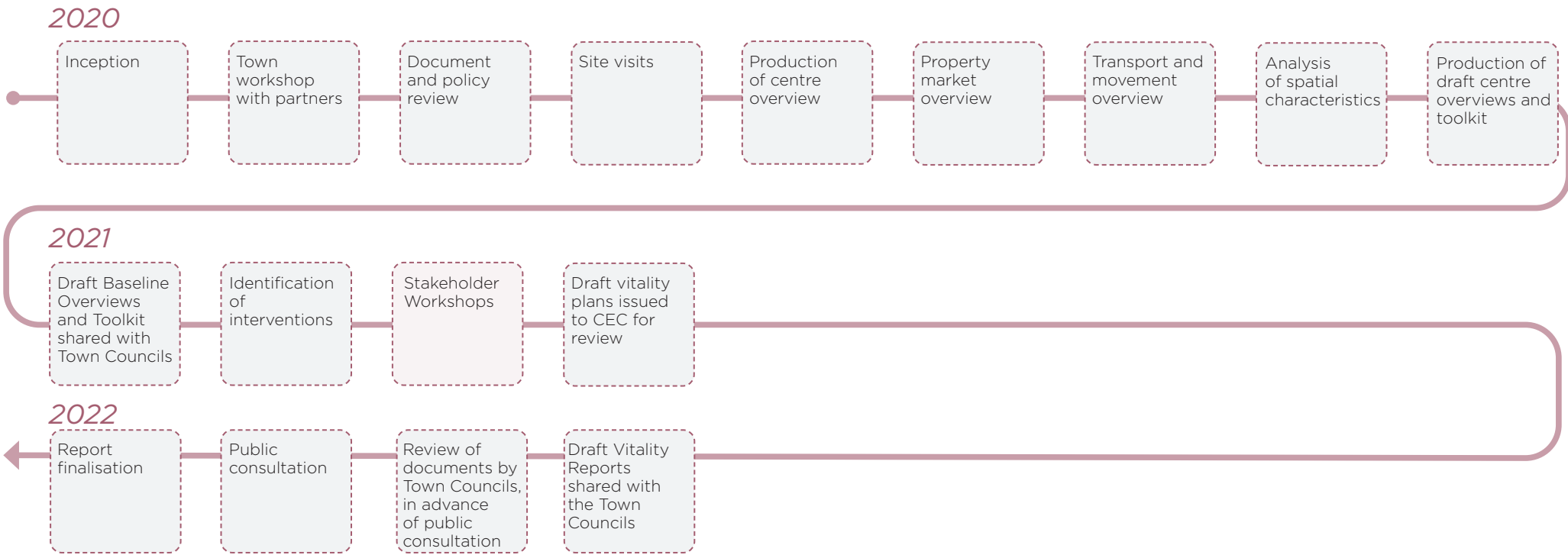
buildings, green and open spaces, access and its residents and businesses.

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

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

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

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



Baseline

Note:

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

02 Introduction to Nantwich

Nantwich’s Location within Cheshire East

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

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

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

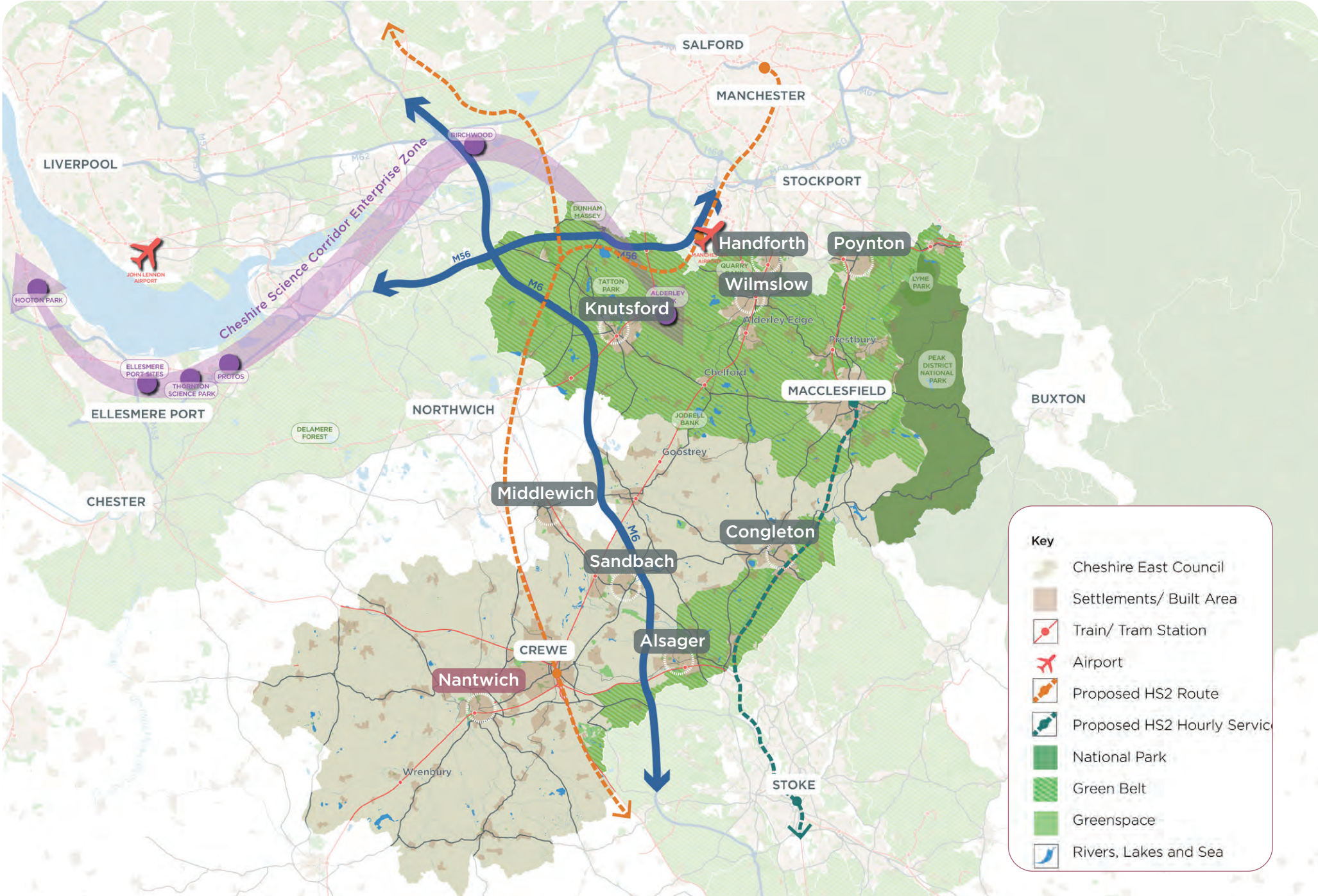
independent retailers and food and beverage operators. The vacancy rate is half that of the national average.

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

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

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

Strategic Context Plan

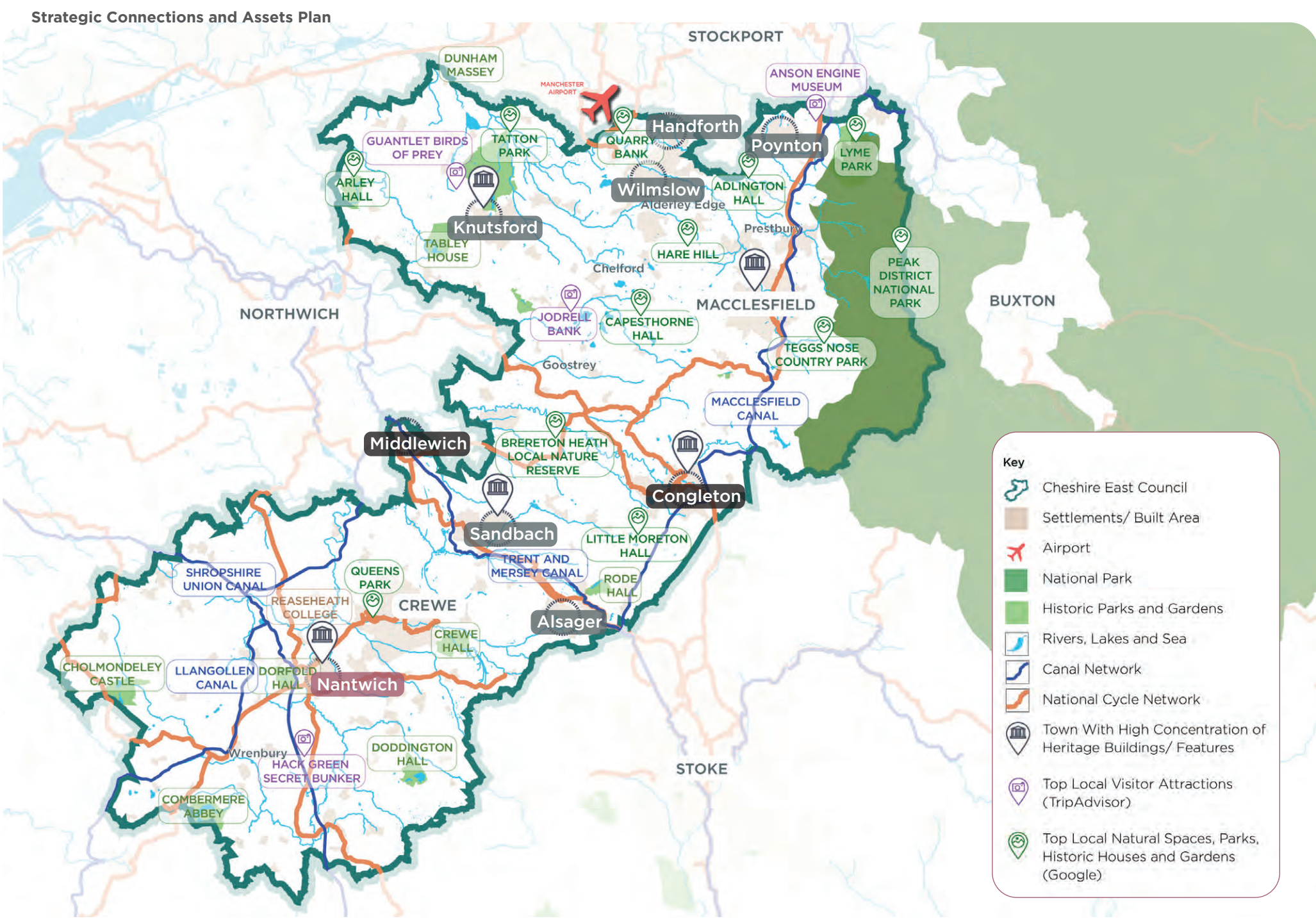


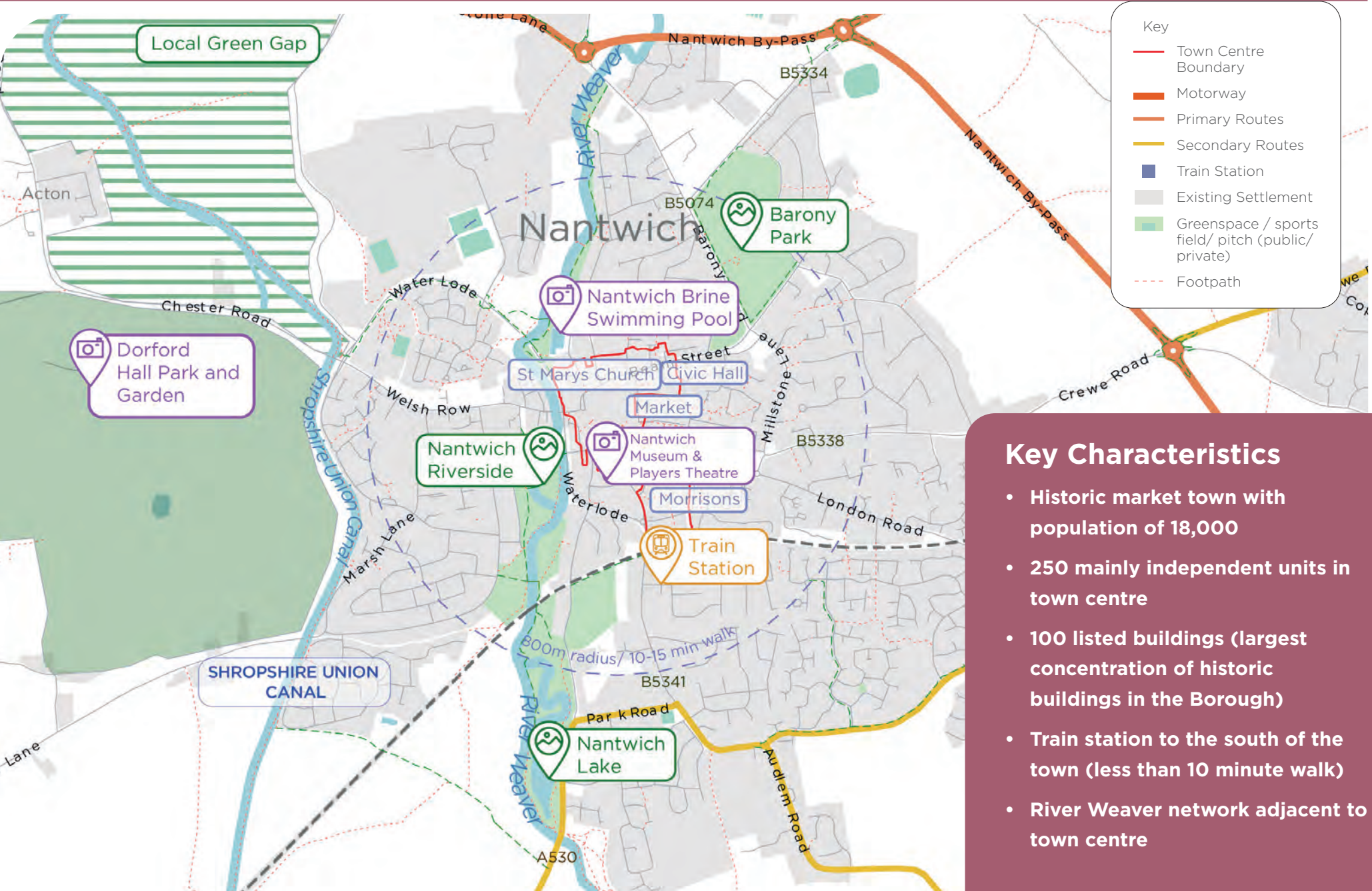
02 Introduction to Nantwich cont.

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

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

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





Nantwich Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

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

Vision

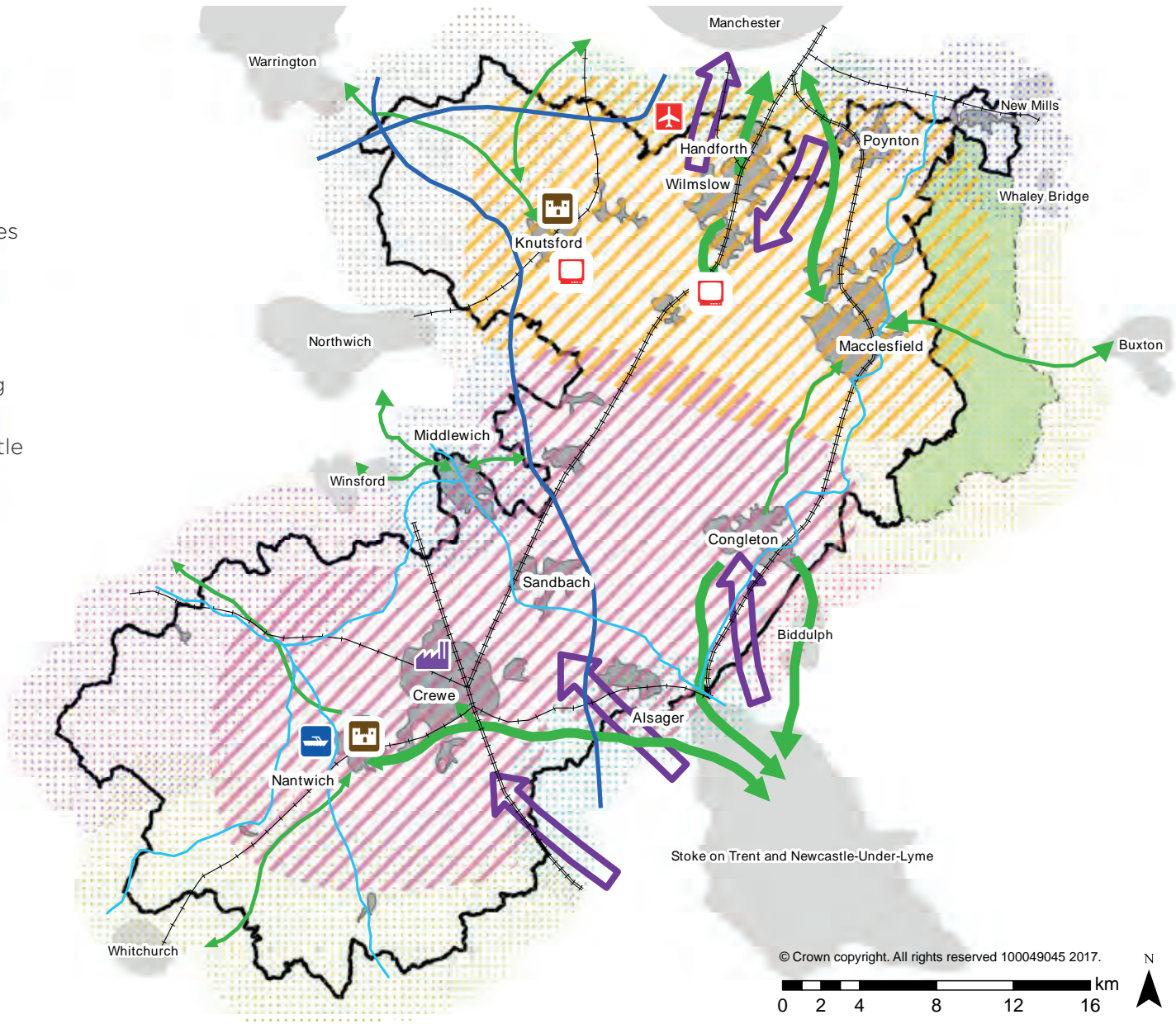
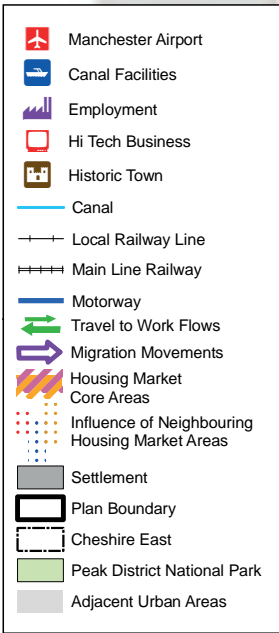
“Protecting our past, working for our future to improve the environment, local services and facilities making Nantwich an even better place.”

Corporate Priorities

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

Cheshire East Local Plan

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

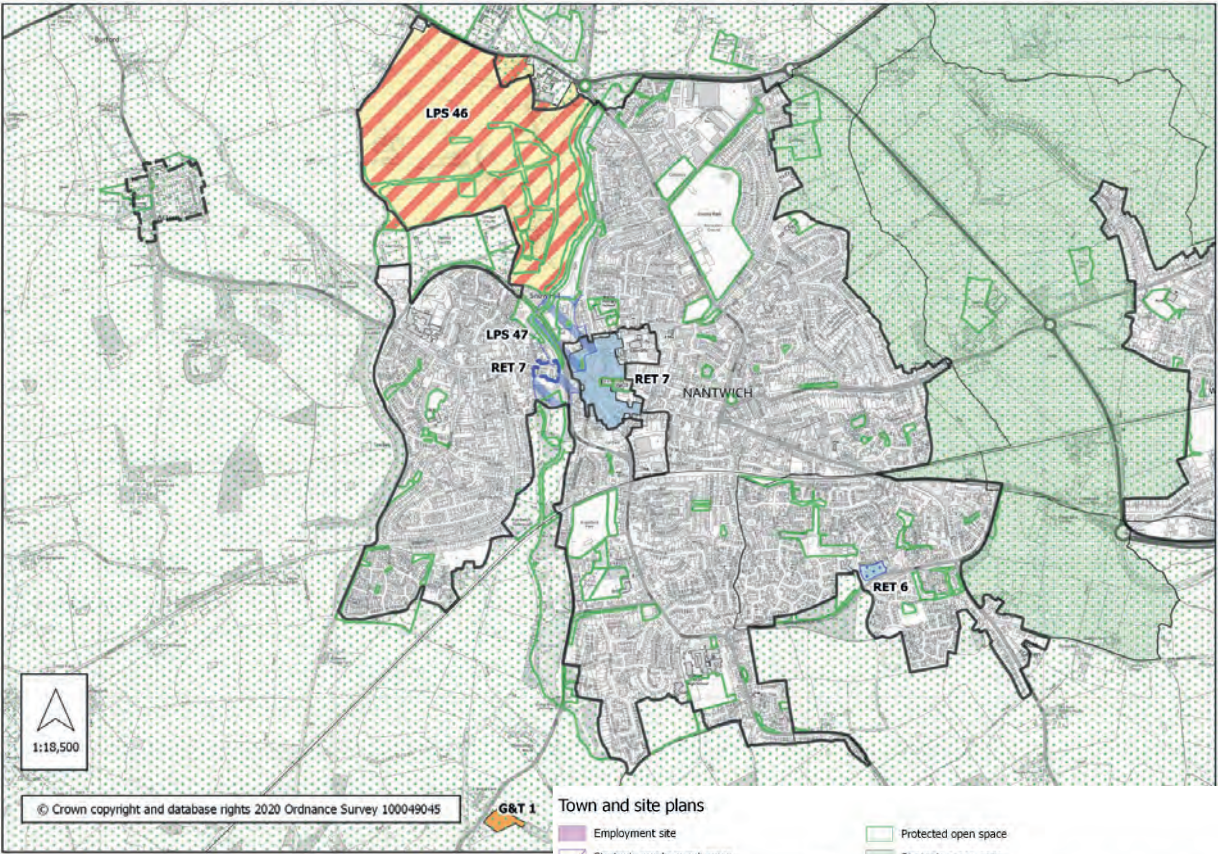


Local Plan Strategy 2017 (LPS) and Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) 2020

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

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

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



Local Stakeholders

Nantwich Corporate Strategic Plan (2020-2023)

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

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

Nantwich Town Council: A “Vision” for Nantwich 2019-2023

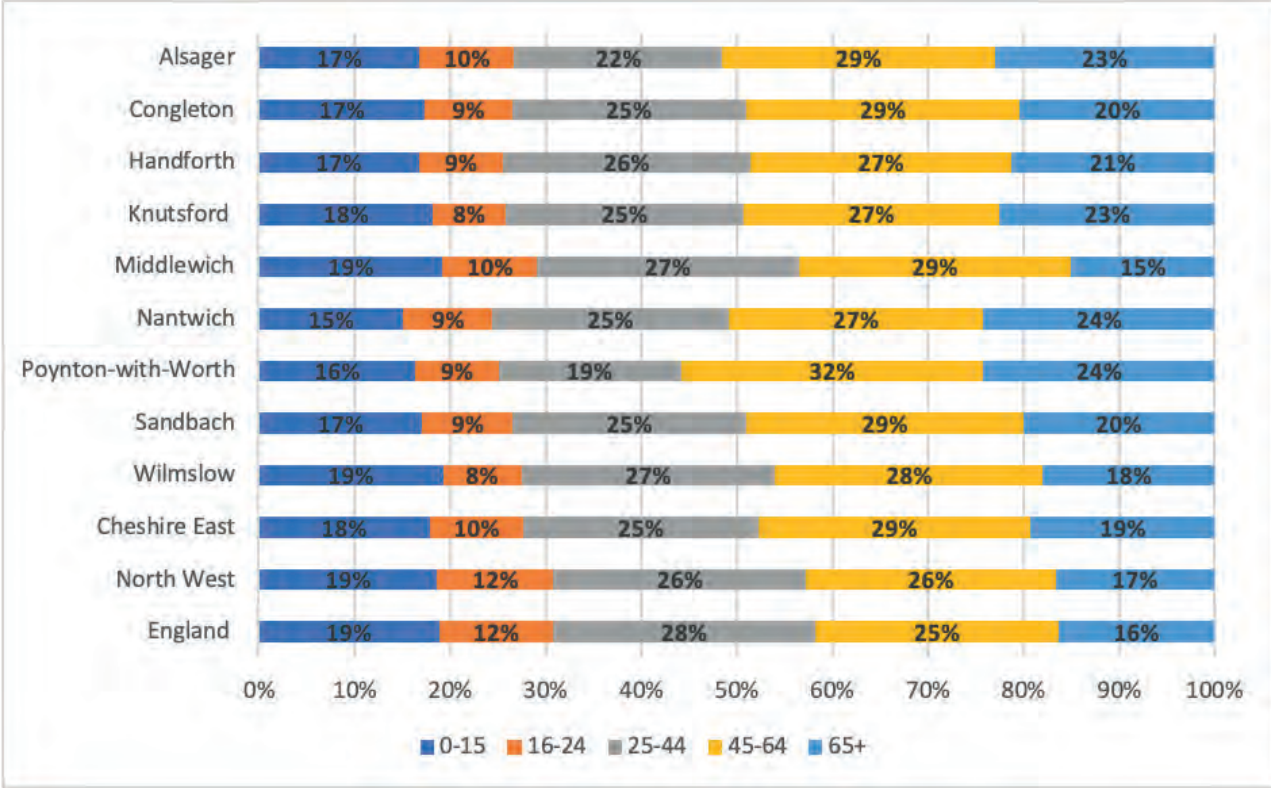
Future Direction includes:

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



Age

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



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

Ethnicity

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

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

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

Occupational Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, a large proportion of Nantwich residents were employed in higher order occupations including ‘managers, directors and senior officials’ (14.3%) and ‘professional occupations’ (21.8%) – a much higher rate than the wider Borough, regional and national benchmarks. Conversely, 15.3% were engaged in manual or elementary occupations. This is below the North West (19.8%) and England rate (18.3%). The occupational structure of Nantwich suggests a highly skilled workforce, which will in turn attract businesses (who want to attract highly skilled employees) to locate in the area.



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

Occupational Profile
Source: Census 2011
*Wilmslow BUA includes Alderly Edge and Handforth
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

Demographic Characterisation

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

- Dominant Age Groups
- 1. A Lavish Lifestyles

■ 1. B Executive Wealth

■ 1. C Mature Money

■ 2. D City Sophisticates

■ 2. E Career Climbers

■ 3. F Countryside Communities

■ 3. G Successful Suburbs

■ 3. H Steady Neighbourhoods

■ 3. I Comfortable Seniors

■ 4. J Starting Out

■ 4. K Student Life

■ 4. L Modest Means

■ 4. M Striving Families

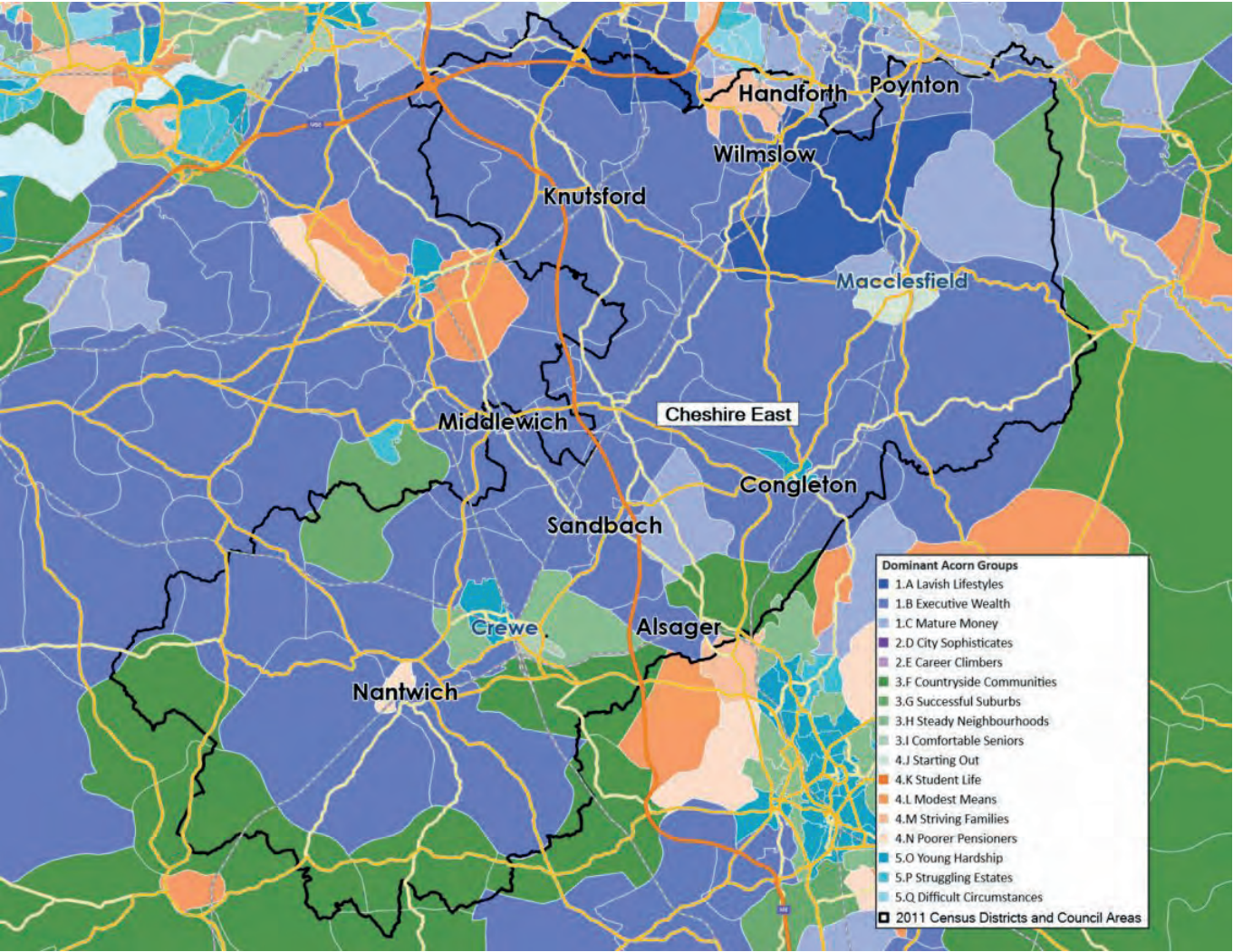
■ 4. N Poorer Pensioners

■ 5. O Young Hardship

■ 5. P Struggling Estates

■ 5. Q Difficult Circumstances

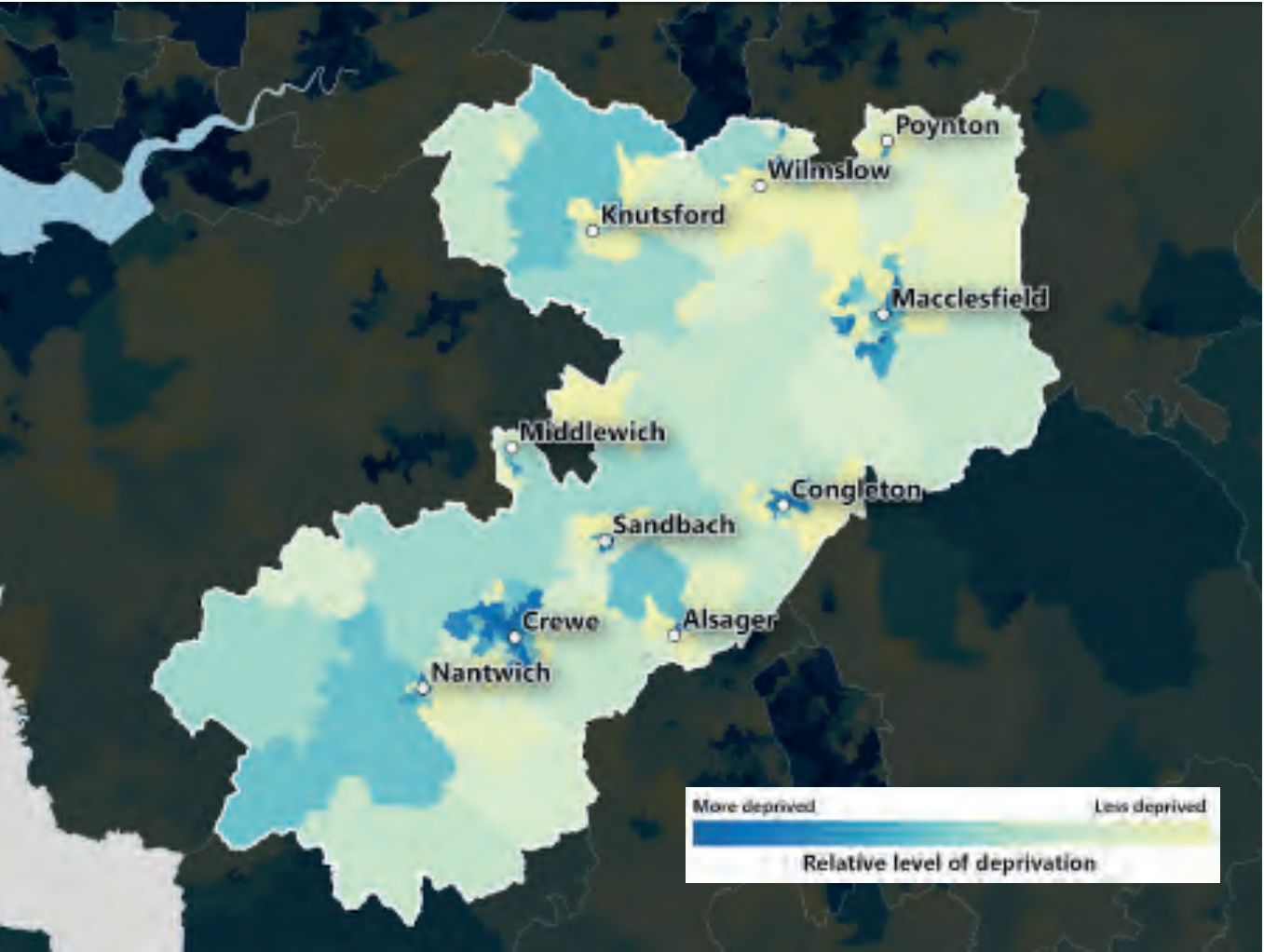
□ 2011 Census Districts and Council Areas



CACI Acorn Classifications
Source: CACI

Index of Multiple Deprivation

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



Source: MHCLG, IMD 2019

Local Context

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

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

Key

Town centre boundary

Shopping core

Listed building

Primary vehicular routes

Cycle paths

Walking paths

Public right of way

Central green space

Train station

A detailed map of the Nantwich town centre. The River Weaver flows through the town, with the Waterlode crossing it. The map shows a grid of streets including King Place, Beam Street, Market Street, High Street, Mill Street, and others. Key locations are marked with blue boxes and labels: Nantwich Swimming Pool, Marks & Spencers, Civic Hall, Health Centre, Nantwich Market, St Mary's Church, Morrisons, and Aldi. The map also shows green spaces like Nantwich Primary School and various parks. A red dashed line outlines the town centre boundary. A brown dot indicates the train station location. The map includes a key for various features like listed buildings, primary vehicular routes, cycle paths, walking paths, public right of way, central green space, and the train station.

Spatial Review

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

- Quality of the place
- People
- Sense of Community
- Accessibility
- Gateways
- Wayfinding
- Attractions
- Amenities

- Sense of a Centre
- Character
- Public realm
- Green space
- Derelict Sites/ Vacant units
- Housing
- Covid measures

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Visit information

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

Quality of the place

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



People

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



Sense of Community

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



Accessibility

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



Gateways

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



Wayfinding

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



Amenities

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



Sense of a Centre

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



Character

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



Public Realm

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



Green space

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



Derelict Sites/ Vacant Units

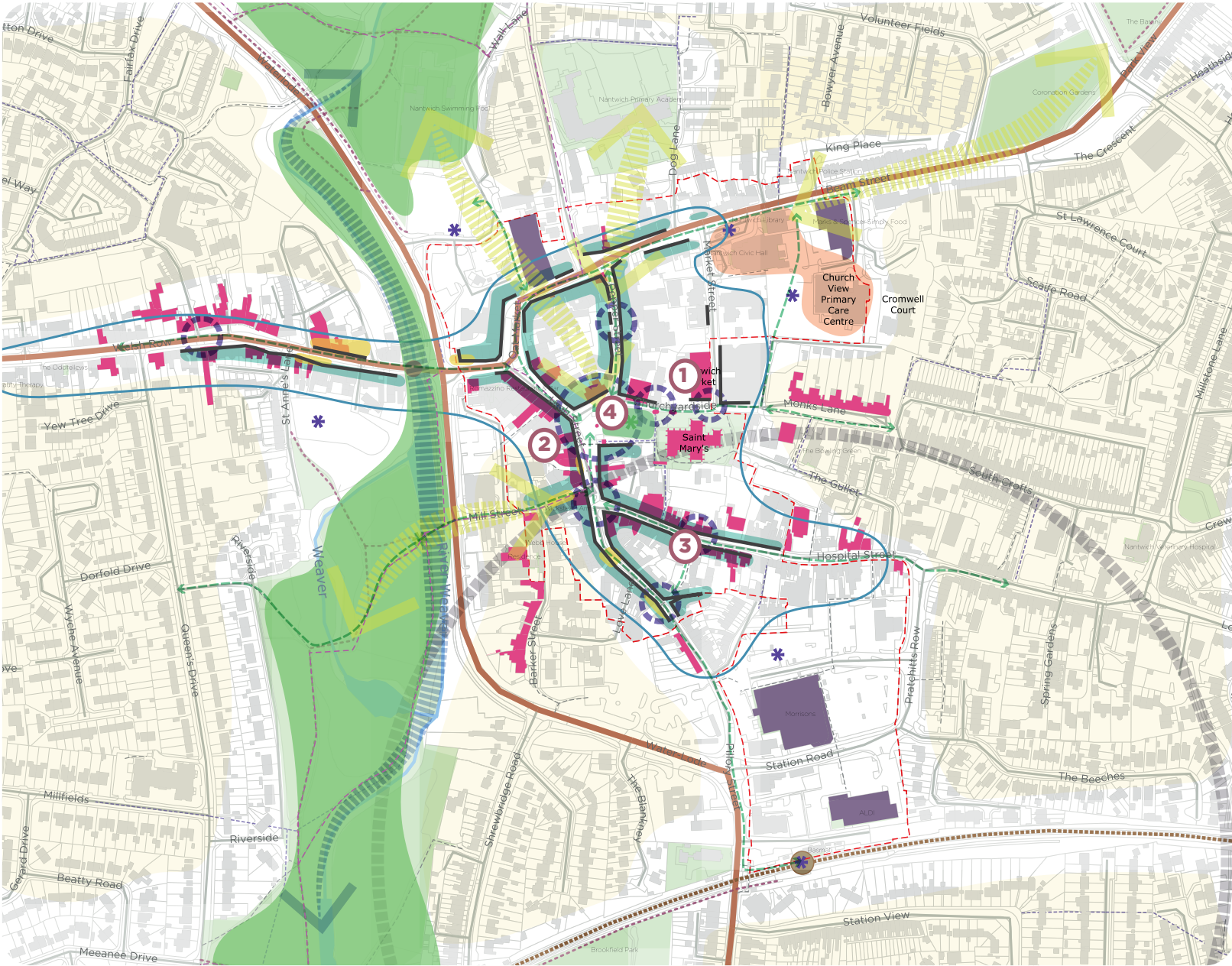
- Update 2022: Since the site visit in 2020 some of the units that were vacant have now been occupied, for example the former Laura Ashley store. Likewise, some other units have become vacant such as the Barclays Bank and Bratts on Church Yard Side.



Positive Features

Positive spatial elements are identified on the plan:

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



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



2 Large concentration of historic and heritage buildings create unique character



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



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

Negative Features

Negative spatial elements are identified on the plan:

Key

Local centre boundary

Local street network

Primary vehicular route

Arrival destinations (car parks/
train stations/ bus stops)

Streets and spaces dominated by
car parking

Streets with narrow footways /
poor pedestrian provision

Arrival gateways with a low
quality arrival experience

Areas of poor quality public
realm (primarily low grade /
aged materials, lack of street
furniture and tree planting)

Low quality frontages

Links with poor legibility to and
from the town centre

Local streets leading to
cul-de-sacs or unclear where
they connect to

Extent of area which reads as
part of the Town Centre

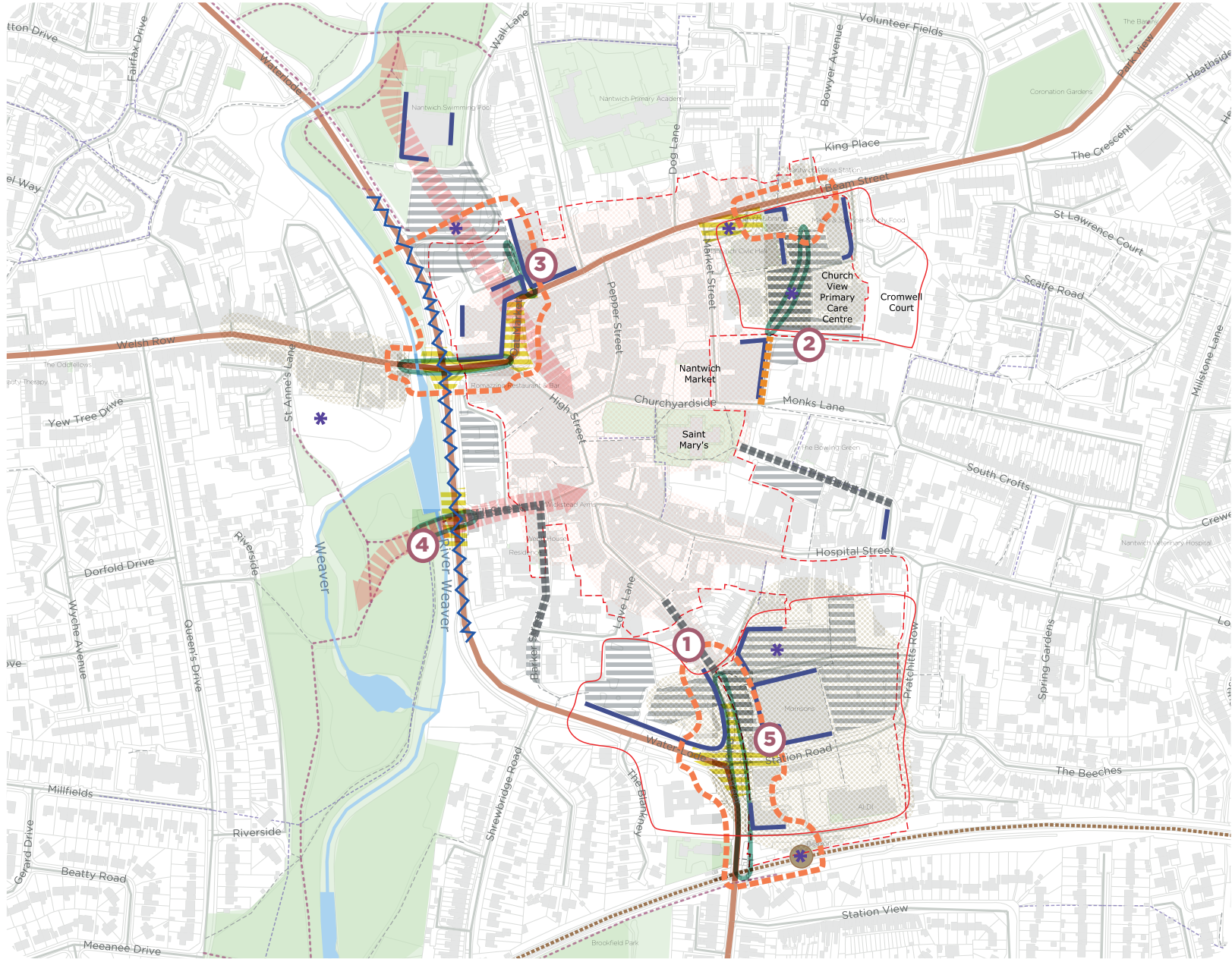
Areas which feel beyond the
extent of the Town Centre

Key assets which feel
disconnected from the Town
Centre

400m from Nantwich train
station (5 minute walk)

Nature of roads create barriers
for pedestrians between town
centre and park

Area which has seen erosion of
historic grain



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



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



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



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



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

Summary of Spatial Elements

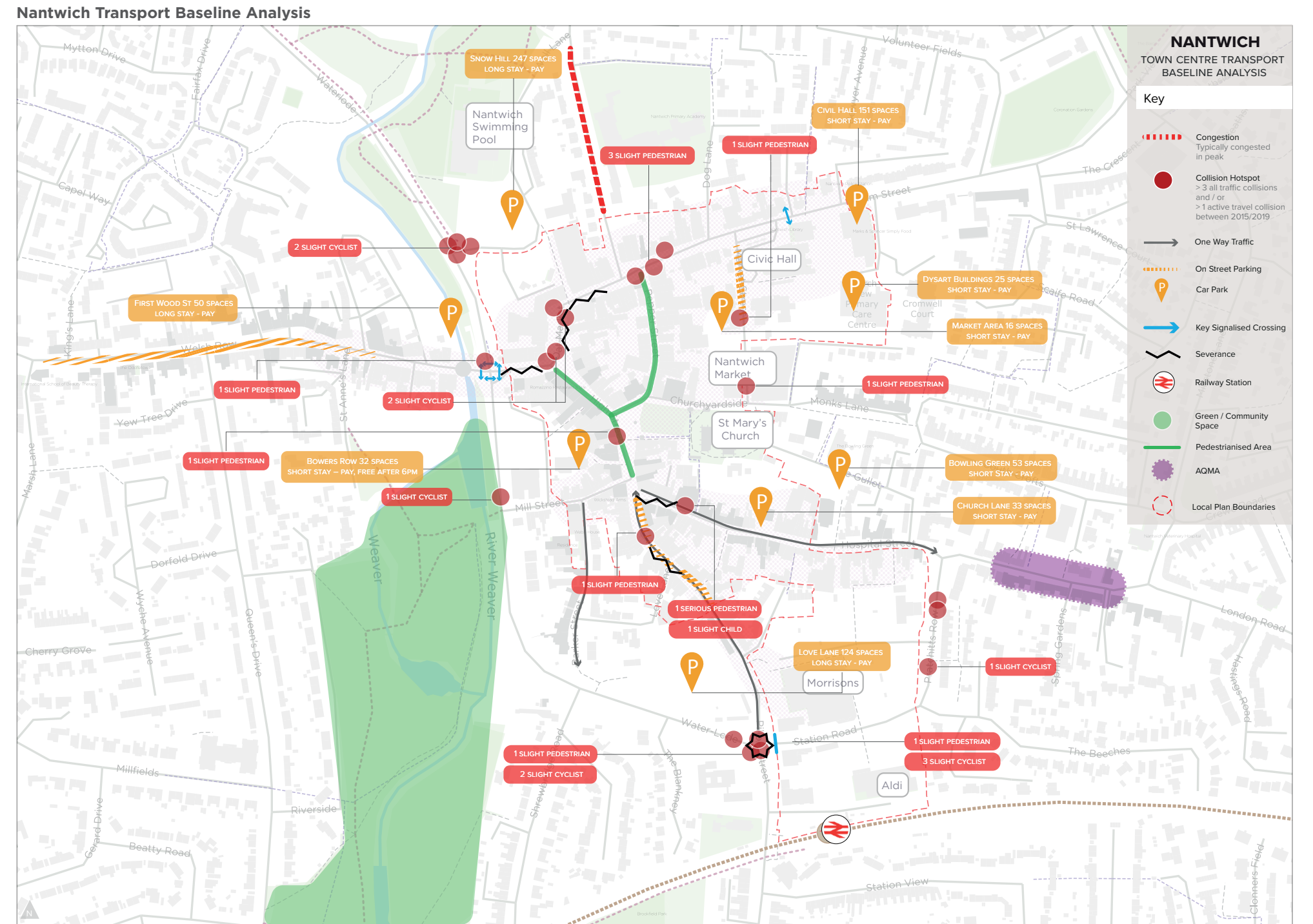
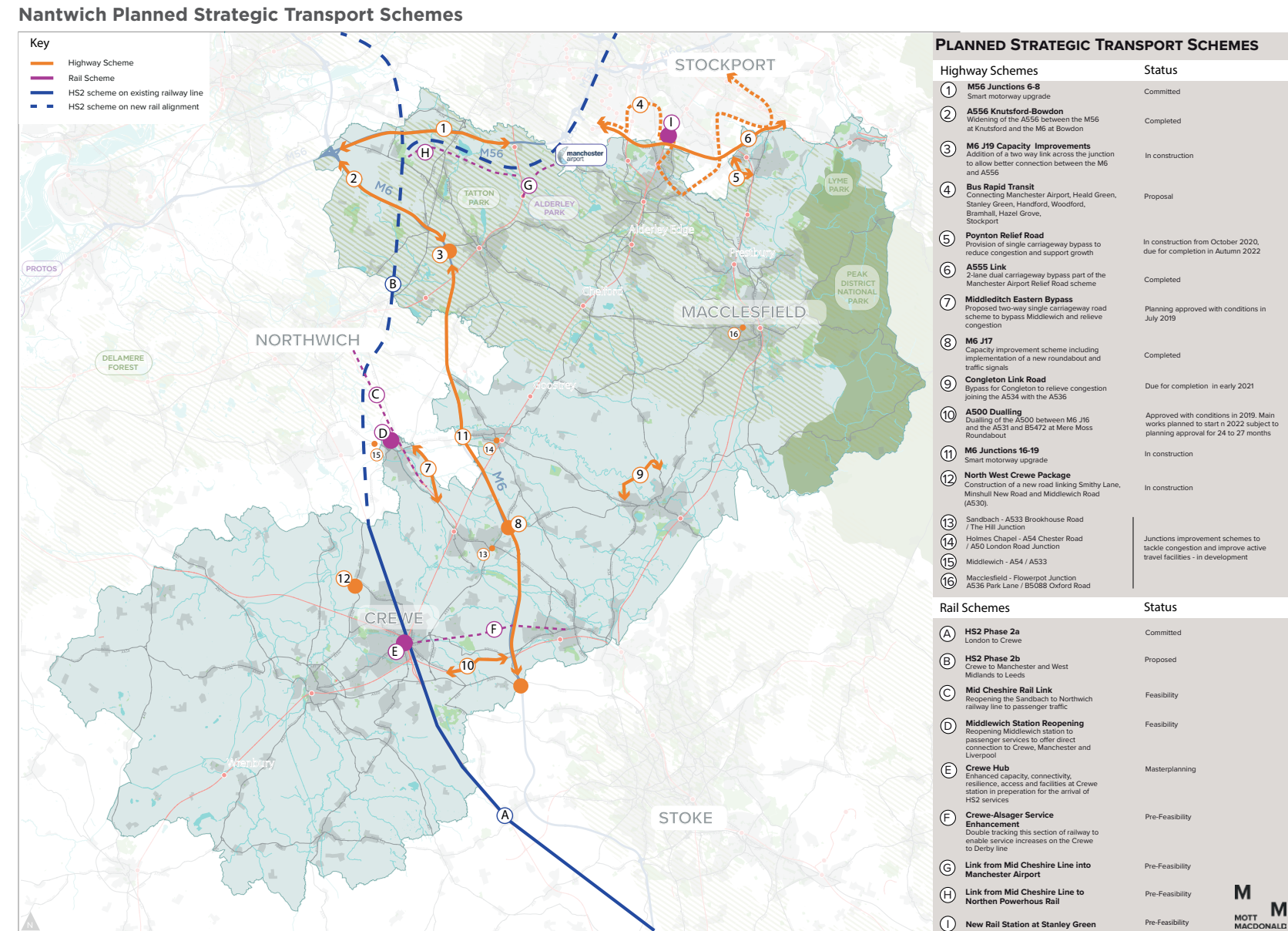
The tables below and on the following page identify the key positive and negative spatial attributes for the town centre:

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

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

06 Connectivity and Accessibility

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



Car Parking

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

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

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

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

Public Realm

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

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

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

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

Road Safety

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

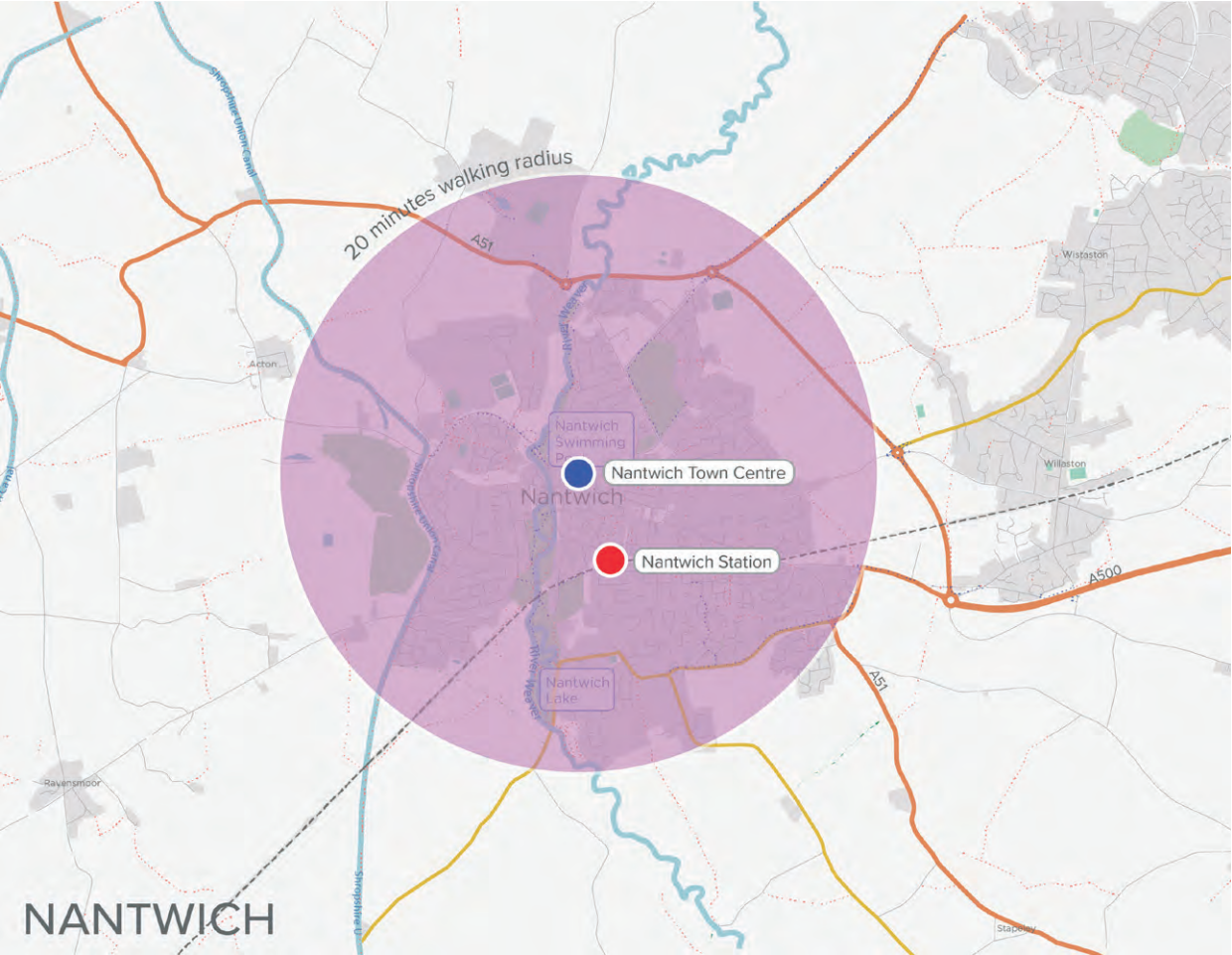
Active Travel

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

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

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

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



Nantwich 20-Minute Walk Isochrone

Public Transport

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

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

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

Movement Trends

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

Local Aspirations

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

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

4% of people living in Nantwich work within the town centre

40% of residents travel between 5 and 30km to work

Public transport accounts for 5% of commuter trips

20% of households in Nantwich do not have access to a car, 29% have access to 2 or more vehicles

66% of residents in Nantwich in employment drive to work by car

7 minute walk between town centre and railway station

Active travel accounts for 16% of commuter trips

06 Connectivity and Accessibility cont.

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

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

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

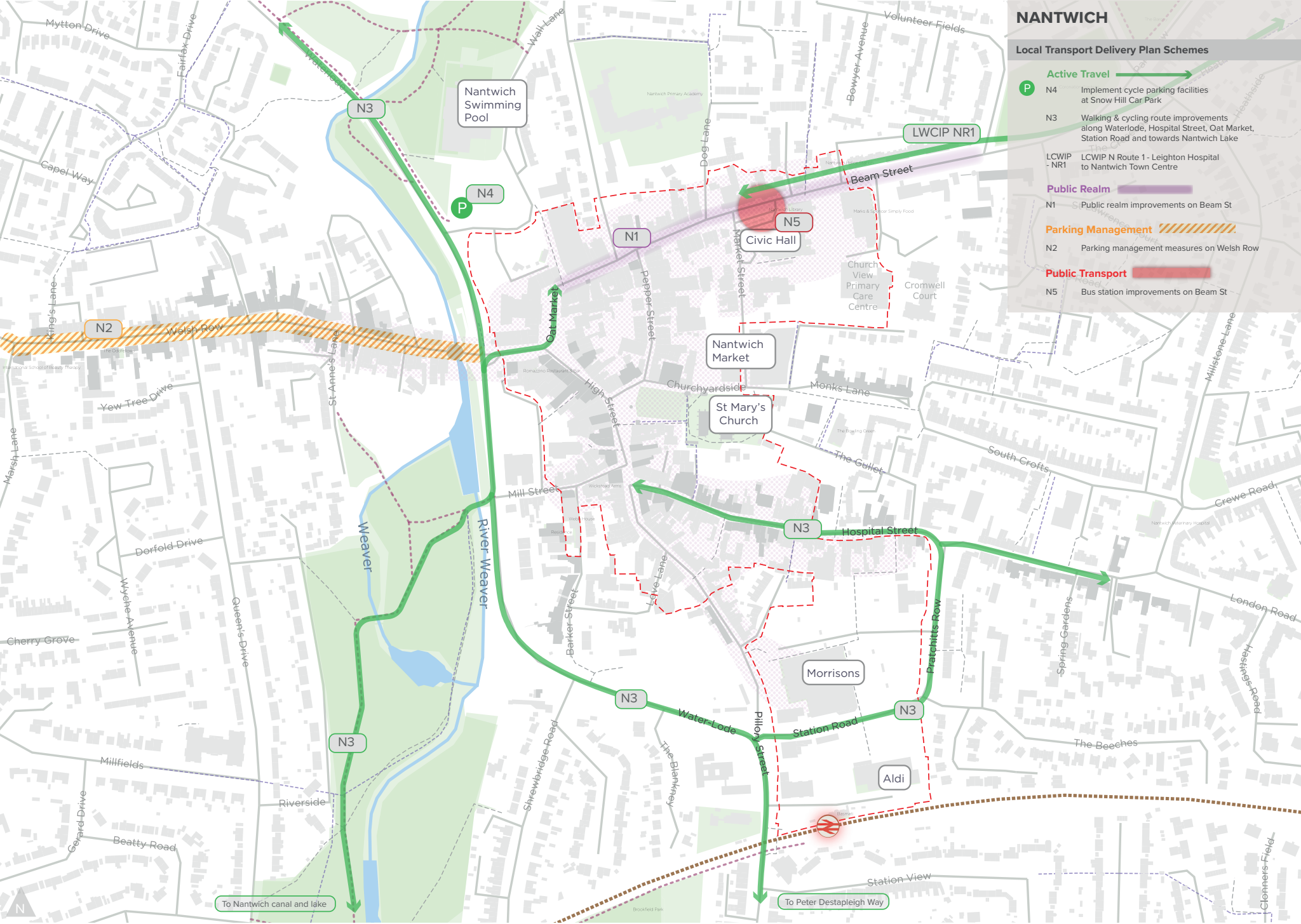
For full information on LTDP and the latest version of the LTDP please refer to the Highway pages of the CEC website.

Nantwich LTP and LCWIP Schemes

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

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

Nantwich Local Transport Development Plan Schemes



Retail and Leisure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The development of Nantwich’s leisure centre is currently underway



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

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

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

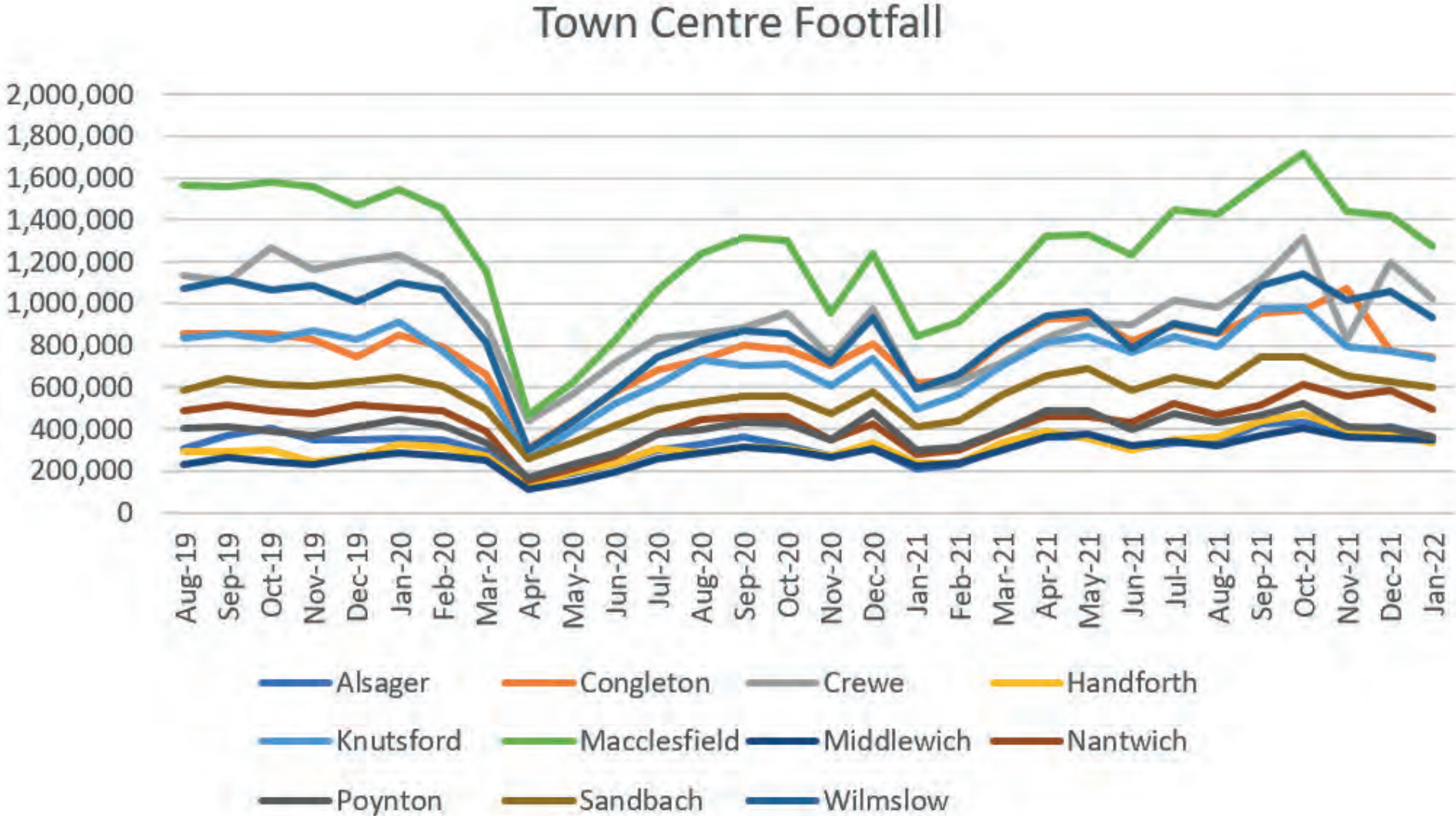
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres
The finance and business space identified in the table (derived from the GOAD survey) only relates to ground floor office floorspace within the town centre. Nantwich’s office market in considered further on p55

Footfall

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

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

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



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



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

Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres

Employment

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

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

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



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

Residential Market Context

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

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

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

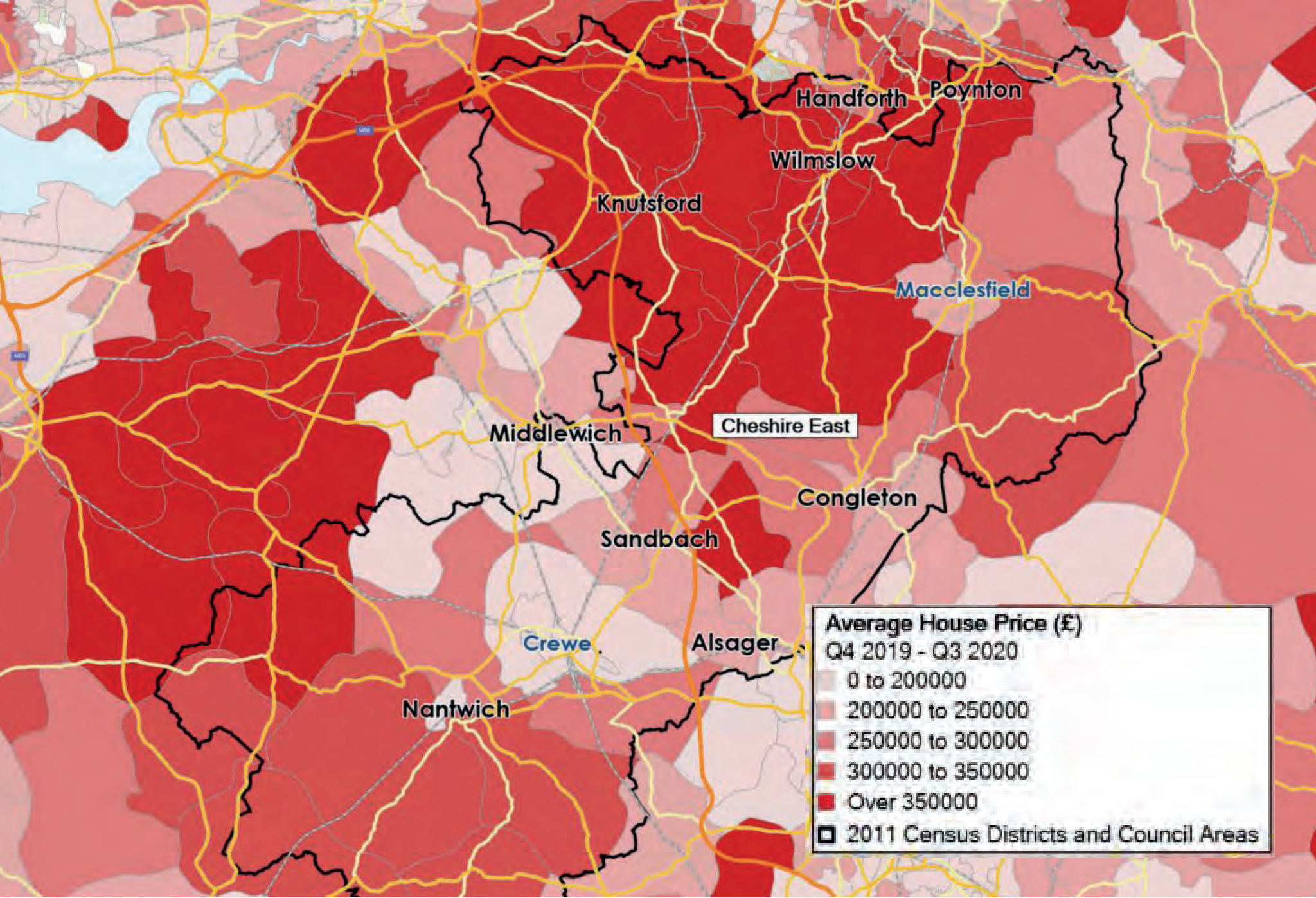
Average achieved house prices in Nantwich over the last year were around £270,000, offering a relatively affordable location compared to many other parts of Cheshire East.

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

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

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

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



08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

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

Strengths

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

Weaknesses

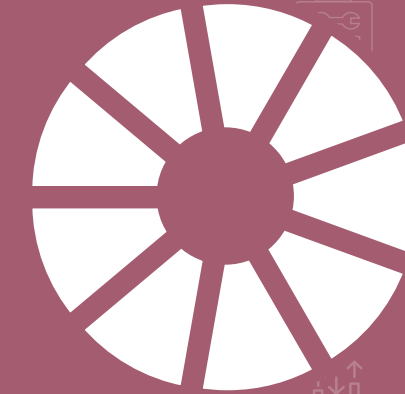
- Dependent on footfall/catchment
- Public transport - concern that people cannot get to the centre - loss of local bus routes into Nantwich on Saturday (e.g. from Stapeley) and issues with bus subsidy concern that services could reduce further
- Quality of the riverside - The riverside margin has become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

Opportunities

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

Threats

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



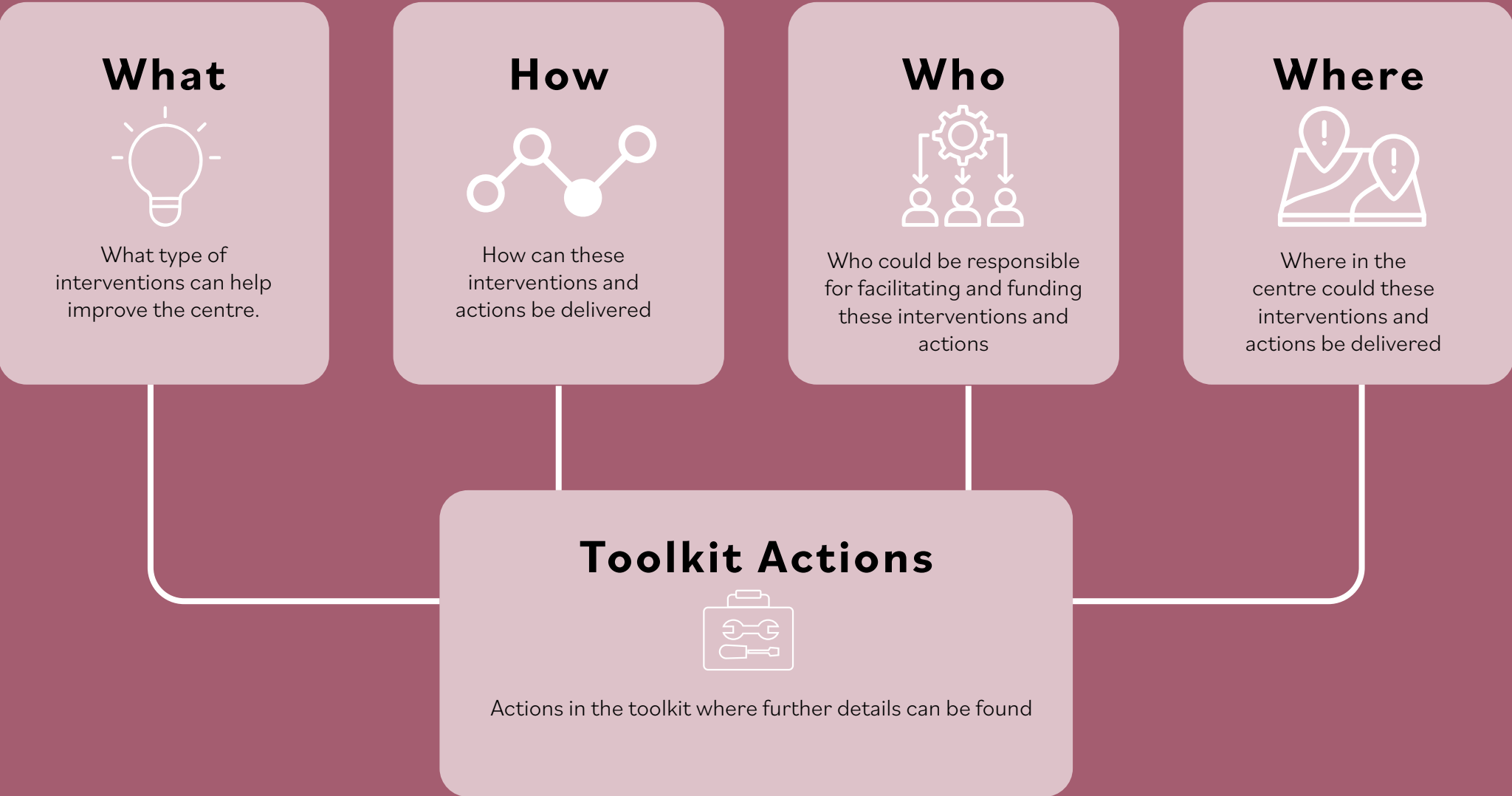
NANTWICH ACTION PLAN

09 Priority Areas for Intervention

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

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

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



Vision and Objectives

Vision Statement

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

Objectives

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

Role of the Centre

Nantwich plays a number of important roles:

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

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

Areas for Intervention

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

Potential actions are identified in Section 10:



Spatial Action Plan

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

- The four priority actions which have emerged from the public consultations are:
- **Action 1: Connecting green assets**
 - **Action 2 : Enhancing the Swine Market**
 - **Action 8 Tackling void properties**
 - **Action 9 Car parking strategy**

Action Plan

Action 1 - Connecting green assets

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

Action 2 - Enhancing the Swine Market

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

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

Action 3 - Arrivals and journeys

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

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

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

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

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



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

Movement Action Plan

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

Town Centre Movement Schemes suggested in addition to LTDP potential Schemes

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

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



Park Lane, Poynton

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



Frodsham Street, Chester

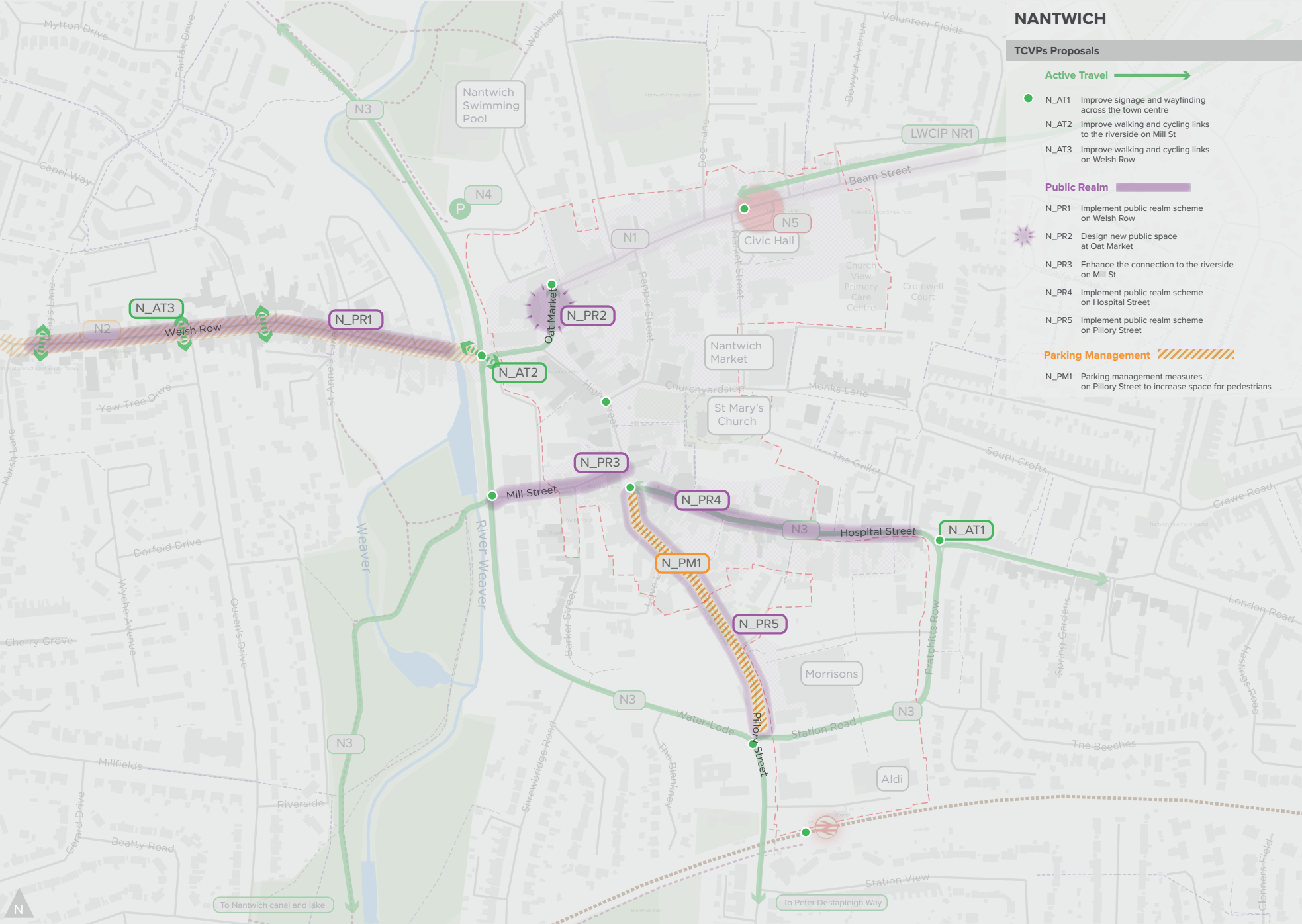
A level surface pedestrian priority street, which would provide a good model to explore on Pillory and Hospital Street. (photo credit: MottMacdonald)



Seville, Spain

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

Nantwich Town Centre Viability Plan Proposals



10 Potential Actions



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

What	How
<p>Nantwich has a fantastic asset next to it’s characterful historic town centre, a linear greenspace corridor which follows the River Weaver providing an opportunity to further diversify Nantwich’s offer to both visitors and residents.</p> <p>Nantwich is a small town in terms of it’s size and population – though it’s town centre punches well above it’s weight. The small footprint of the town, its narrow historic streets, make it more attractive to walking and cycling for short trips than many others. However, with an affluent population and large retail/ leisure catchment, car use remains high for trips to the town centre.</p> <p>Several proposals are set out in the Local Transport Deliver Plan (LTDP) and Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for improving conditions for journeys on foot and cycle. These proposals should be supported and progressed, helping build confidence for those who presently feel less comfortable on foot or cycle than in their car.</p>	<p>Investment into the river corridor and it’s surrounding greenspaces to enhance a valuable community and environmental asset to the town. This could be achieved through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating a co-ordinated network of improved walking and cycling links that sustainably connect planned new development and the town centre with the riverside and other green assets• Lots of community interest in the potential to enhance the landscape attractiveness/ wildlife value of Brookfield Park and other vital green spaces such as Barony Park, Queens Drive and Nantwich Walled Garden• Interpretation and information points to explain the town’s natural heritage as well as celebrating built heritage features of the riverside i.e Grade II Listed Nantwich Bridge which could be further enhanced through the website and other social platforms• A co-ordinated series of spaces within the corridor for cultural and community events• Enhanced and protected habitats to encourage biodiversity• Creating a variety of landscape types to help diversify the offer of the corridor park ranging from urban food grow spaces, wildflowers, adventure play spaces, dwell spaces with benches and picnic areas, quiet spaces• Improved entrance points, signage, crossing points and lighting to encourage more trips into the riverside, pathways and green assets• Ensure green routes are safe and well maintained including removing overgrown trees and hedges, ensuring even surfaces, removing graffiti, adequate bin provision and lighting <p>Potential actions to support walking and cycling include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the location of cycle hubs linked to improved green links and provide safe secure cycle parking throughout the town centre and at the railway station.• Explore design options for routes identified as key active travel connections in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP). This includes Beam St, Hospital St, Station Road, and Water-Lode.• Enhance the connection with the riverside particularly via Mill St and enhancing the gateway junction at Welsh Row / Water-Lode (B5341).

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

Who

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

Where

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



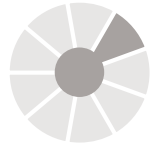
Action 1 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town



Toolkit Actions

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



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

Re imagining the riverside

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

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



Precedent Images

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

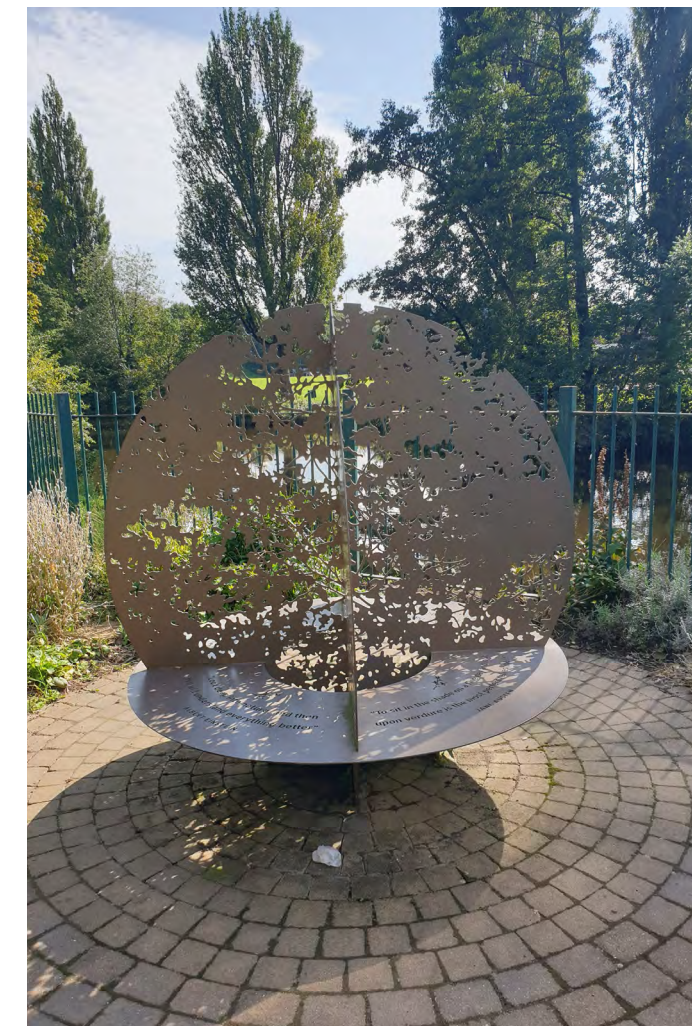
Something similar could be designed for the riverside corridor, and take account of movement between the more urban setting of the river around Welsh Road into the parkland areas to the south.



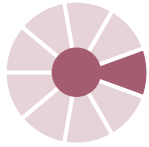
Grey to Green, Sheffield, Credit: Sheffield City Council



Sponge Park, Gorton



Artwork and seating along the River Dane in Congleton Park



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

What

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

How

- Short term:
- Façade improvements to existing businesses – investment in consistent signage and shop frontage design to compliment the historic town centre core’s aesthetic
 - Ensuring void spaces are utilised and activated with temporary or meanwhile uses
 - Engagement with local artists / school groups to create a shutter art programme to help reduce the negative visual impact of the area once retailers close
 - Introduce more seating areas, bicycle parking and dwell space.
- Longer term:
- There may be an opportunity to redevelop the dated retail and residential units which front onto the Swine Market with more modern mixed use development. Ensuring active ground floor frontage will be important.
 - A co-ordinated public realm design for the area which links pedestrians and activity with the Town’s historic core, its riverside and Welsh Row. Traffic calming, improved pedestrian crossings, increased pedestrian space, potentially through the removal of the island, and a consistent public realm visual aesthetic can help to connect assets such as the Pool and Welsh Row with the Towns Historic core.

Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- Local businesses

Where

- Swine Market junction



The Swine Market area in Nantwich, 2020



Action 2 supports the following objectives:

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



Toolkit Actions

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



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

Short term change

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

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



Used with permission from [Architectural Emporium](#)

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

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



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

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



Action 3: Arrivals and Journeys

What

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

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

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

How

Primary Gateways –

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

Secondary gateways –

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

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

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

Consideration could be given to the following areas:

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

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

Who

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

Where

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



Action 3 supports the following objectives:

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



Toolkit Actions

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



Action 3: Arrivals and Journeys

Precedent Images

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

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



Trial pedestrian priority measures, Avignon, France



Public realm scheme, Frodsham Street, Chester



Public realm enhancement to increase pedestrian priority, Garda, Italy

Quick wins: Pillory Street

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

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



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

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



Action 4: Showcasing Nantwich’s Heritage and Tourist Assets

What

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

How

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

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

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

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

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

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

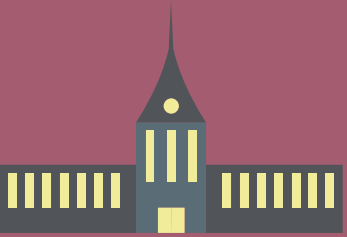
The tourist information office would benefit from being more prominent/higher profile with extended opening hours to encourage greater utilisation. More could also be made of the Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker located south of Nantwich.

Who

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

Where

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



Action 4 supports the following objectives:

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



Toolkit Actions

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



Action 5: Further embracing Nantwich’s Business Community

What

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

How

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

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

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

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

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

- Sponsorship
- Materials
- Technical support
- Volunteers

Who

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

Where

- Across Nantwich



Action 5 supports the following objectives:

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



Toolkit Actions

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



Action 6: Raising Nantwich’s Profile

What

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

How

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who

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

Where

- N/A



Action 6 supports the following objectives:

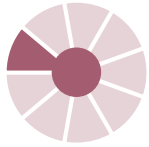
- **Planning a sustainable future for our town**
- **Preserve and promote local arts, heritage, culture and tourism**
- **Supporting people, groups and organisations to help create and maintain a thriving community**
- **Delivering more services locally to meet the needs and aspirations of our community**



Toolkit Actions

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





Action 7: Making more of Community Assets

What

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

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

How

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

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

consultation has endorsed strong support for the proposals.

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

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

Who

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

Where

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



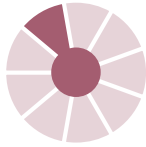
Action 7 supports the following objectives:

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



Toolkit Actions

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



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

What

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

How

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

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

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

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

Working with artists to create murals on blank façades.

Who

- Town Council and CEC working with landlords and local developers

Where

- Vacant units/poor quality shop fronts



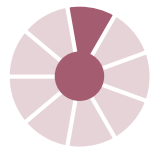
Action 8 supports the following objectives:

- Planning a sustainable future for our town



Toolkit Actions

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



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

What

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

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

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

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

How

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

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

Who

- CEC
- Town Council

Where

- Across Nantwich



Action 9 supports the following objectives:

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



Toolkit Actions

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



Centre Wide Actions

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

1. Appointment of CEC Centre Champion

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

2. Creation of a Centres Forum

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

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

3. Centre Focused Meetings in CEC

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

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

4. Streamlining maintenance of public realm and greenspace

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

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

5. Increasing importance of sustainability

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

6. Improved platform for communicating activities

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

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

7. Enhanced engagement with local businesses

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

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

8. Greater ownership of community assets

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

11 Delivery

Governance and Delivery

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Communication and Engagement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Funding

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

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

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

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

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

Phasing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Monitoring and Evaluation

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

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

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

Technical Terms

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



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