

Wilmslow



## Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plans

December 2022



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

December 2022

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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.

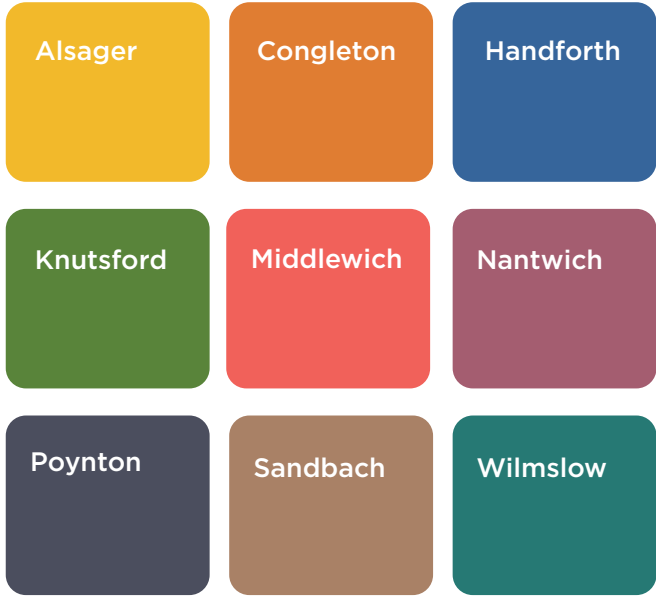
## Town Centre Vitality Plans

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 Council’s and develop such plans further.**

## Responding to the Impacts of COVID

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

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

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

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

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

## Vitality Plan and Toolkit

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

The Vitality Report comprises of two sections:

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

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

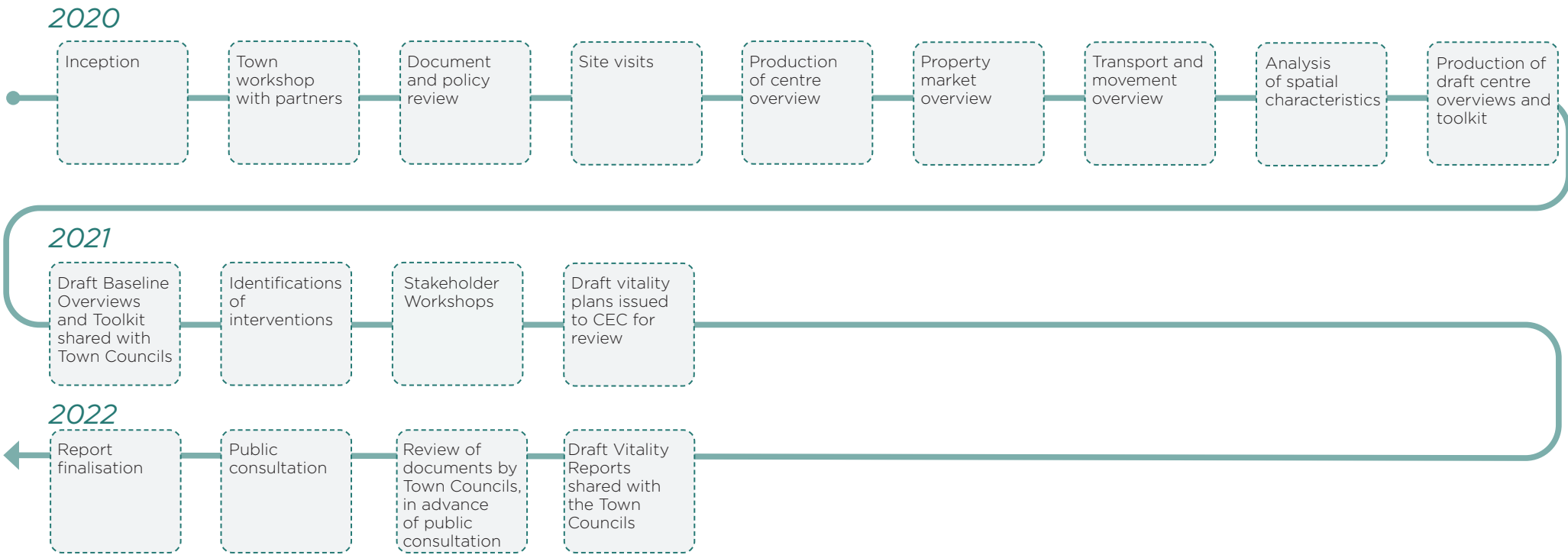
- Action Plan – has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Council and identifies actions which seek to support the established Vision and Objectives for the Centre responding to its challenges and opportunities. It sets out a series of actions, identifying a small number of priorities for intervention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

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

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

## Approach

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





# Baseline

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



## 02 Introduction to Wilmslow

### Wilmslow’s Location within Cheshire East

Wilmslow is located in the North of Cheshire East, 14 miles south of Manchester City Centre and 3 miles from Manchester Airport and the M56 which connects it to the M6 and M60, and is well connected by the A34 to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton. Wilmslow Station is on the West Coast Main Line providing local and long distance services. As such the town enjoys excellent local, national and international connectivity (see strategic plan)

Wilmslow has an excellent reputation as an attractive residential location offering a range of high quality homes within walking distance of its centre and accessible to attractive countryside. It is also well located to access a wide range of employment opportunities both within the Centre itself, its surrounding area (Airport City, Alderley Park and Waters Corporation) as well as access to those in the wider Manchester City Region and Cheshire.

The choice of homes include a range of historic/ large family detached homes set in attractive landscaped grounds as well as more modern estates around the edge but unlike many of the northern towns there is a relatively low proportion of terraces.

Importantly it also offers a good range of state and private educational facilities including Wilmslow High School and Wilmslow Guild. However these assets means that the town is sought after resulting in affordability issues.

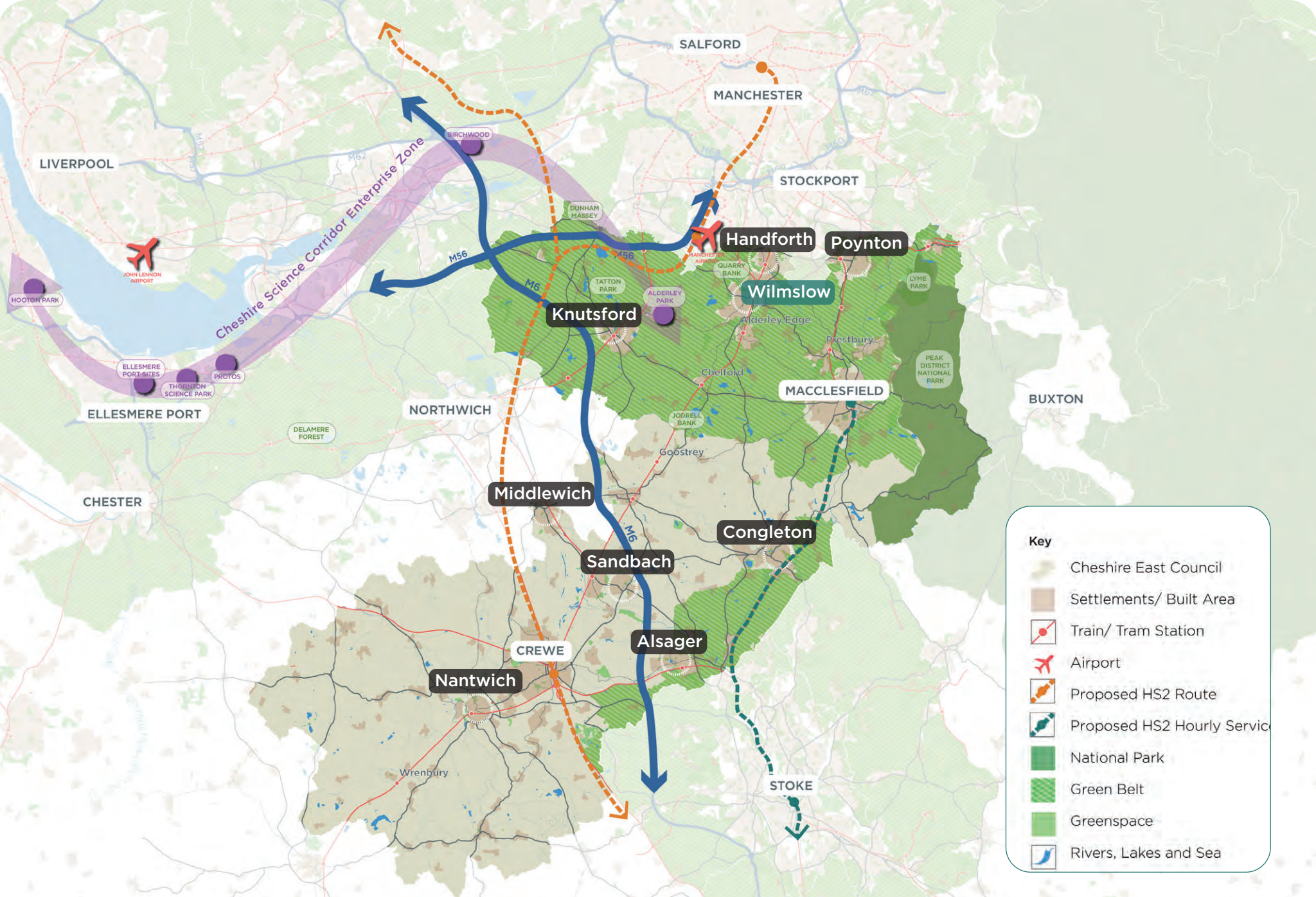
The Town Centre provides 241 units (Experian Goad Plan, September 2019), which are primarily located on Grove Street, Alderley Road and Water Lane, as well as a strong office market which attracts commuters in.

The town is bookended by two major supermarkets – Waitrose and Sainsburys and offers a choice of independent stores including Hoopers Department Store and a number of high end clothing and jewellery stores along Water Lane. Grove Street provides a pedestrian route offering a blend of national brands including Boots, Superdrug and Waterstones as well as a range of independents.

The Wilmslow Leisure Centre located in the heart of the centre offers a swimming pool and is a focal point for a number of annual sports events.

The Town holds a popular Artisan Market. The Green Room Theatre, Evans Theatre (in the Leisure Centre) and the Library and Wilmslow Guild, all support Wilmslow’s cultural offer. Recent investment in the Rex, independent cinema has enhanced the night time economy. The centre also accommodates a number of attractive and historic buildings include Grade I Listed St Bartholomew’s Church.

Strategic Context Plan

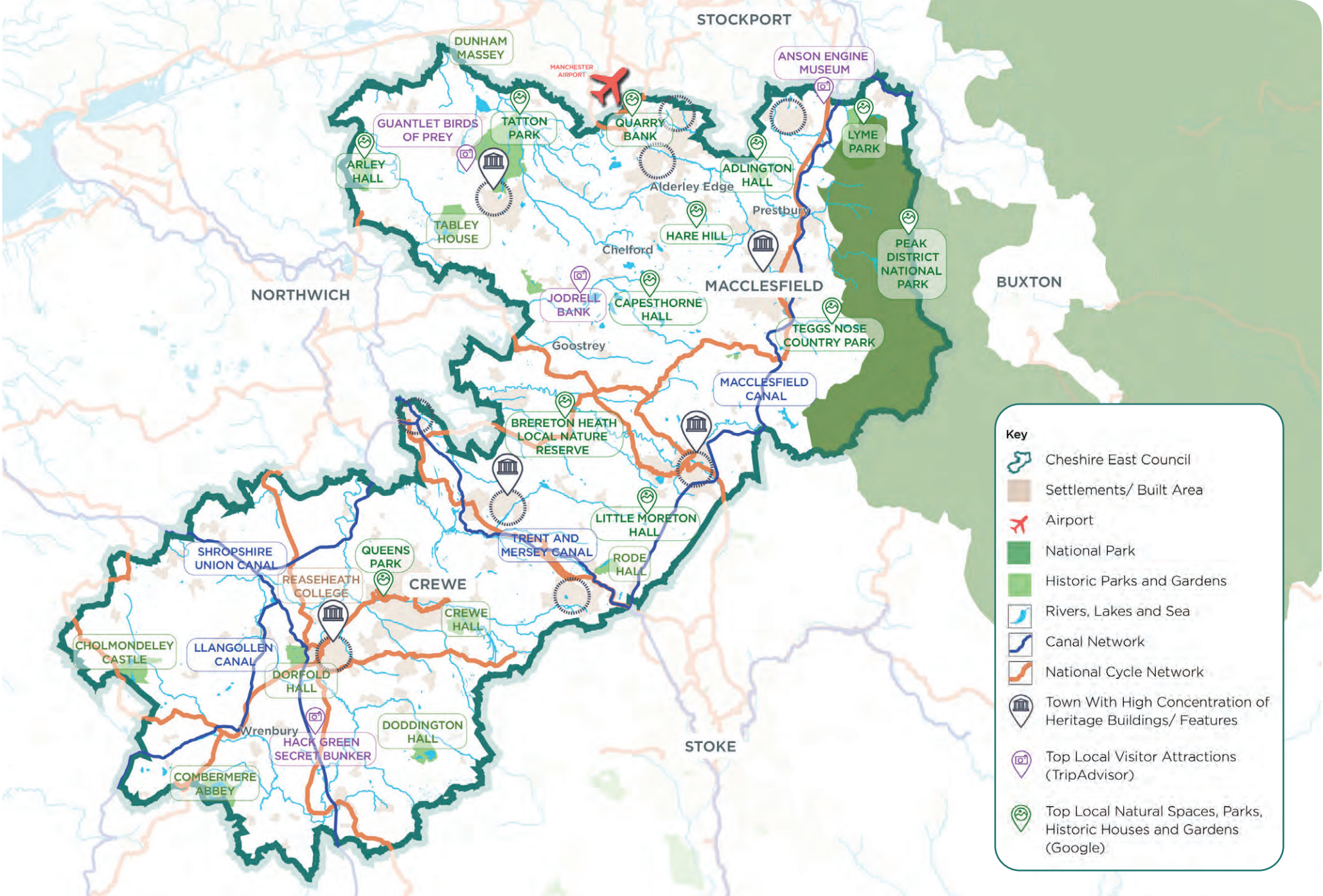




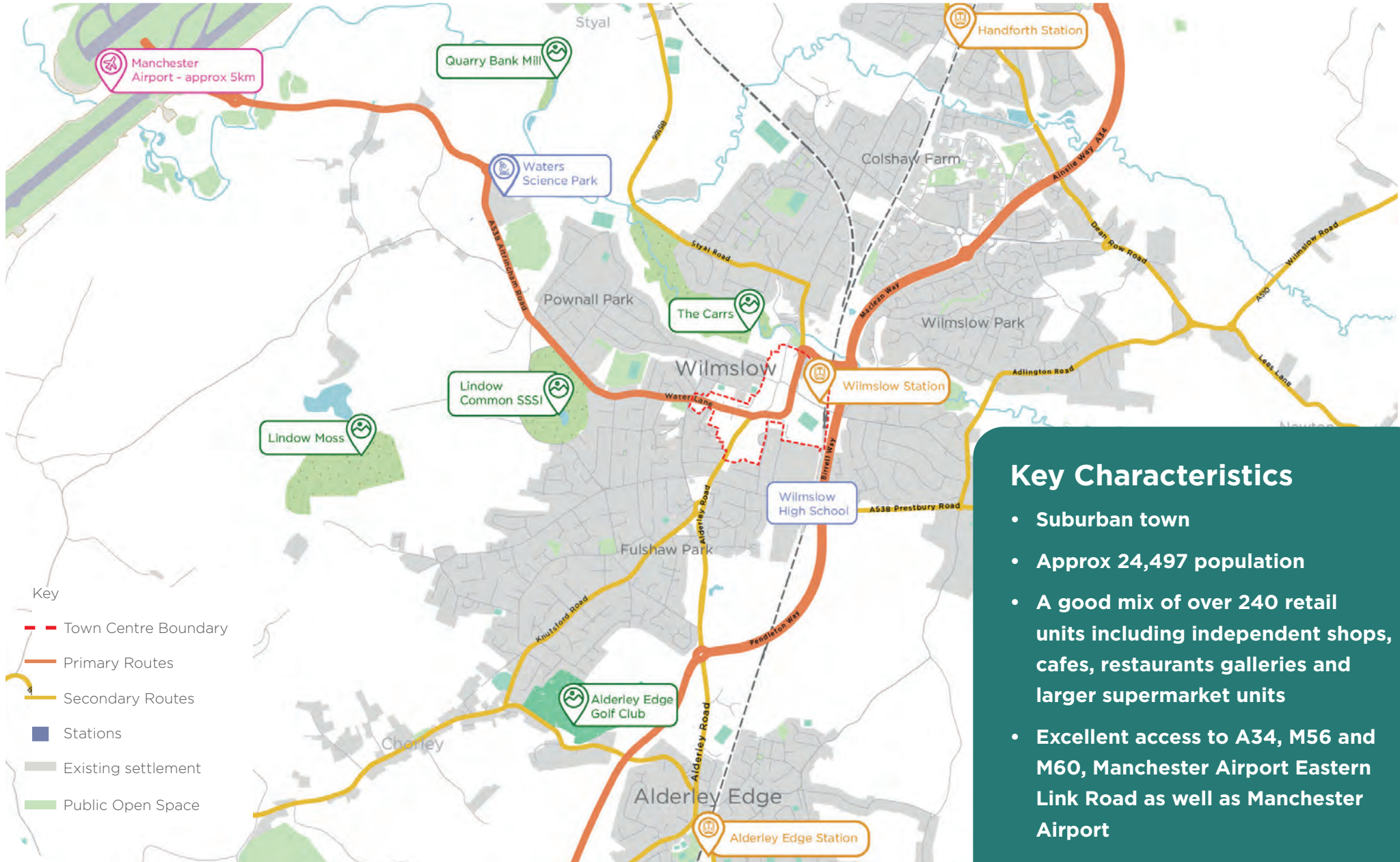
The Strategic Connections and Asset Plan sets Wilmslow in the context of blue and green assets and tourists attractions. It demonstrates Wilmslow's connectivity to a number of local tourist attractions including historic Quarry Bank Mill and Styal Estate, Dunham Massey (National Trust), as well as a number of attractive walking areas including the Carrs, Bollin Valley and Alderley Edge. Wilmslow is located within the Green Belt and surrounded by pastoral farmland, river valleys of the Bollin and Dean, moss land and heathland including protected landscapes at Lindow Common, an Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as being a Nature Reserve



Strategic Leisure/Tourism Assets







### Key Characteristics

- Suburban town
- Approx 24,497 population
- A good mix of over 240 retail units including independent shops, cafes, restaurants galleries and larger supermarket units
- Excellent access to A34, M56 and M60, Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road as well as Manchester Airport

### Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives

Wilmslow Town Council is proactive and initiated the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan which was delivered by the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group working with planning consultants Urban Imprint in 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following vision and objectives:

#### Vision

To sustain and enhance a dynamic community within Wilmslow which protects its special built and natural character and which promotes a user friendly and green environment with an increasingly attractive and thriving Town Core.

#### Objectives

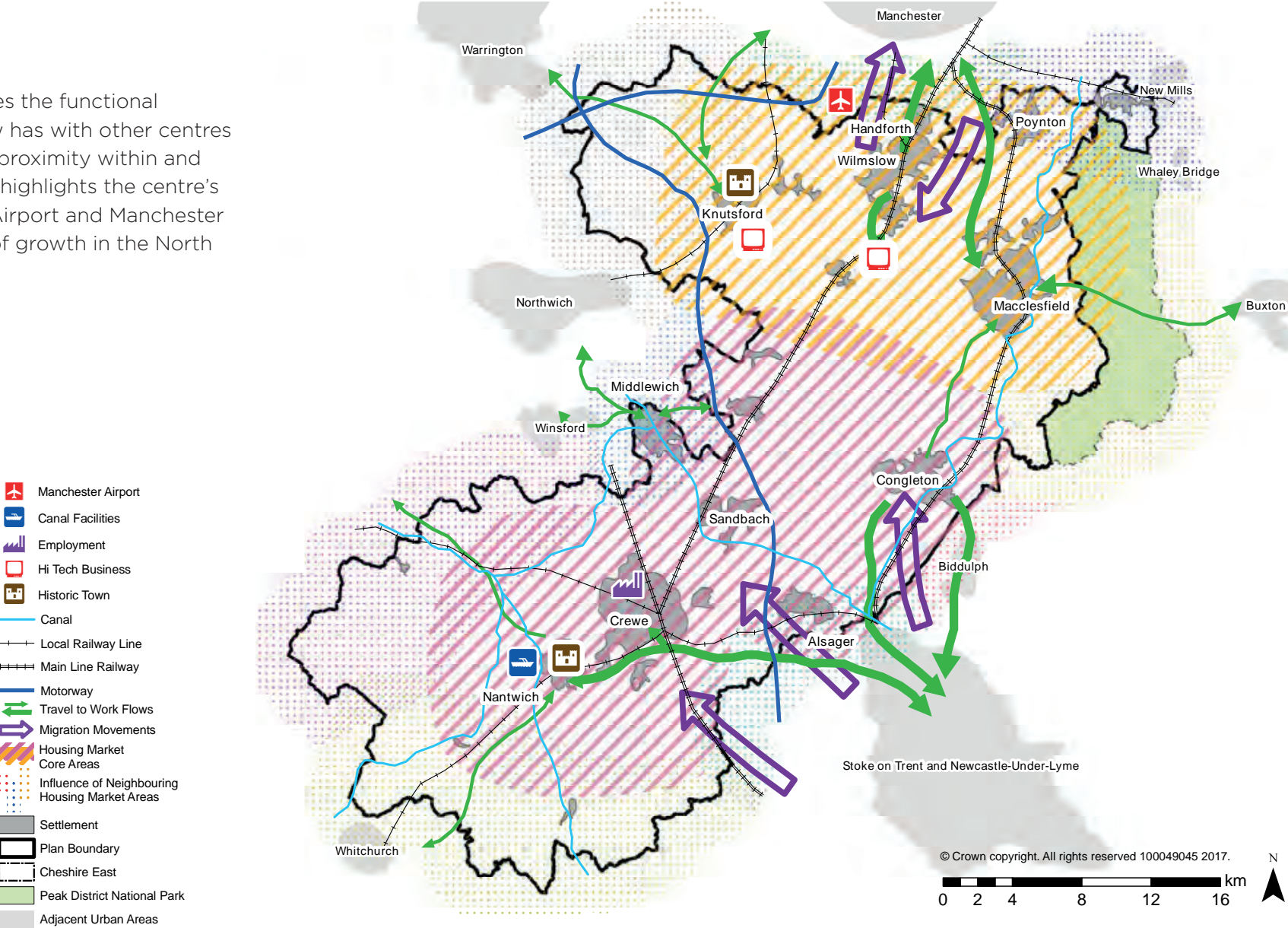
- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Heritage assets** - To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow’s designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town’s history
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



# 03 Policy Context

## Local Policy

The plan opposite identifies the functional relationship that Wilmslow has with other centres through connectivity and proximity within and out with Cheshire East. It highlights the centre's proximity to Manchester Airport and Manchester City Centre – key drivers of growth in the North West.



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

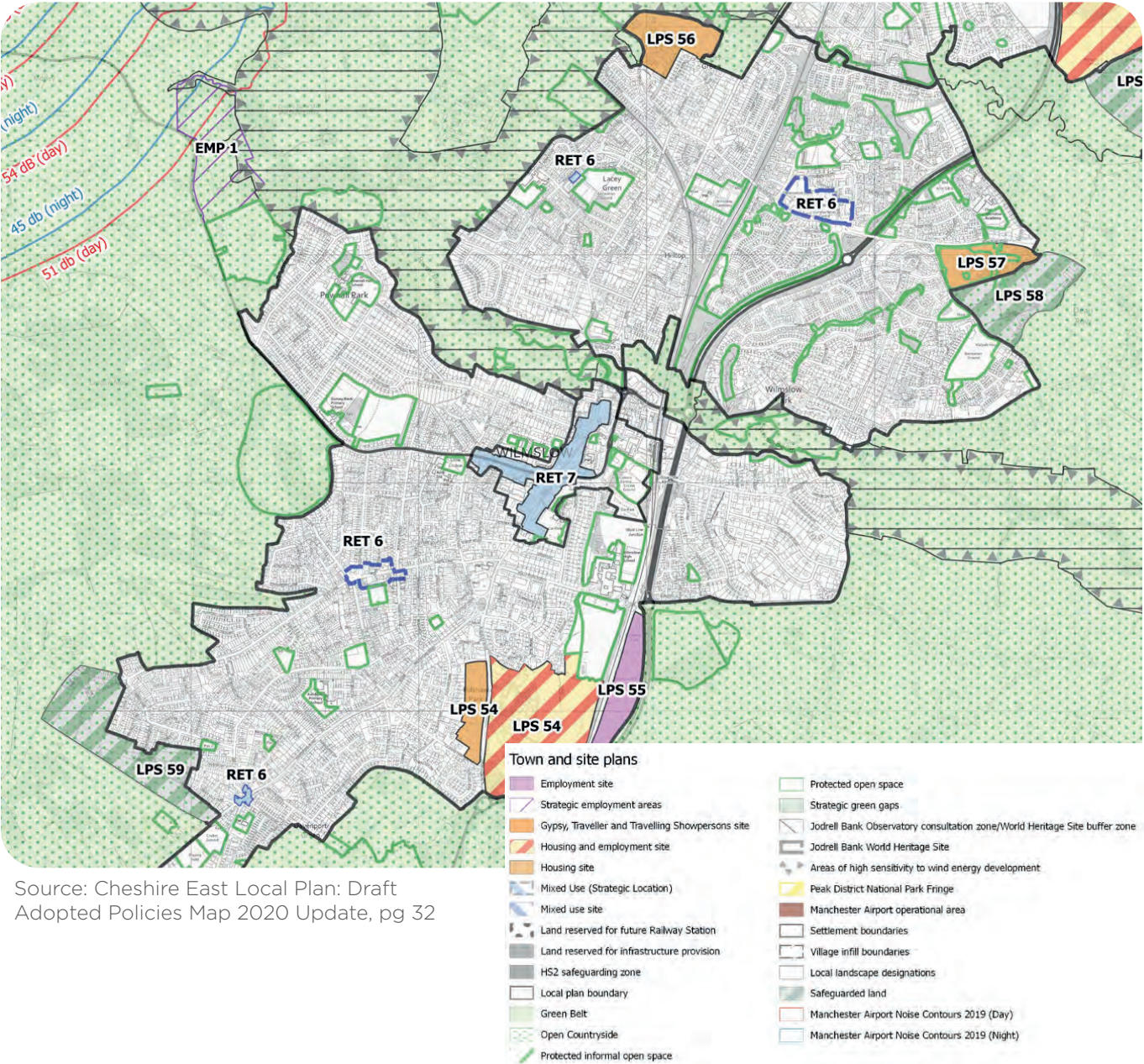
## Local Plan Strategy 2017 (LPS) and Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) 2020

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

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

The plan opposite identifies Local Plan Strategy sites in and around Handforth for growth in the future:

- Royal London including land to the west of Alderley Road;
- Wilmslow Business Park; LPS 56 Land at Little Stanneylands;
- Heathfield Farm;
- Safeguarded Land (with longer term development potential) ‘Land at Heathfield Farm, Wilmslow’ (9 hectares)
- Safeguarded Land (with longer term development potential) at Upcast Lane / Cumber Lane, Wilmslow (15 hectares)
- RET 7 ‘Supporting the vitality of town and retail centres’ which identifies town centre locations for main town centre uses to support their long term vitality and viability, in line with LPS Policy EG 5 ‘Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce’.



Source: Cheshire East Local Plan: Draft Adopted Policies Map 2020 Update, pg 32



Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan

The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group working with planning consultants Urban Imprint and finalised in November 2019. The Group was made up of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers who live in Wilmslow and who actively sought the views of the town’s residents throughout the process resulting in a referendum result of Yes 89 %, No 11 %.

The plan can be accessed at <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-plans-n-z/wilmslow-neighbourhood-plan.aspx>

Since the Plan was completed it has already become a widely used document both in influencing individual planning decisions in the town and also in informing and encouraging positive development.

Keen that the document, that took almost three years to create, did not sit on a shelf the Town Council set up an Implementation Group as a working Group of Wilmslow Town Council

The Town Centre Spatial Strategy identified that town centre uses should be concentrated to support a vibrant and active street scene.

Areas within the dotted black line show where the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support

improvements to the town centre environment and enhance existing community facilities through specific planning policies and aspirations over the short and longer terms.

The plan identifies six priority sites:

- Police, Fire and Ambulance Stations, Hawthorn Street (Policy KS2)
- British Legion, Grove Avenue (Policy KS3)
- Parsonage Green, Green Lane (Policy KS4)
- Library and South Drive Car Park (Policy KS5)
- Broadway Meadows Car Park (Policy KS6)
- Station Car Parks (Policy KS7).

The Neighbourhood Plan provides advice to applicants on a range of issues include biodiversity conservation

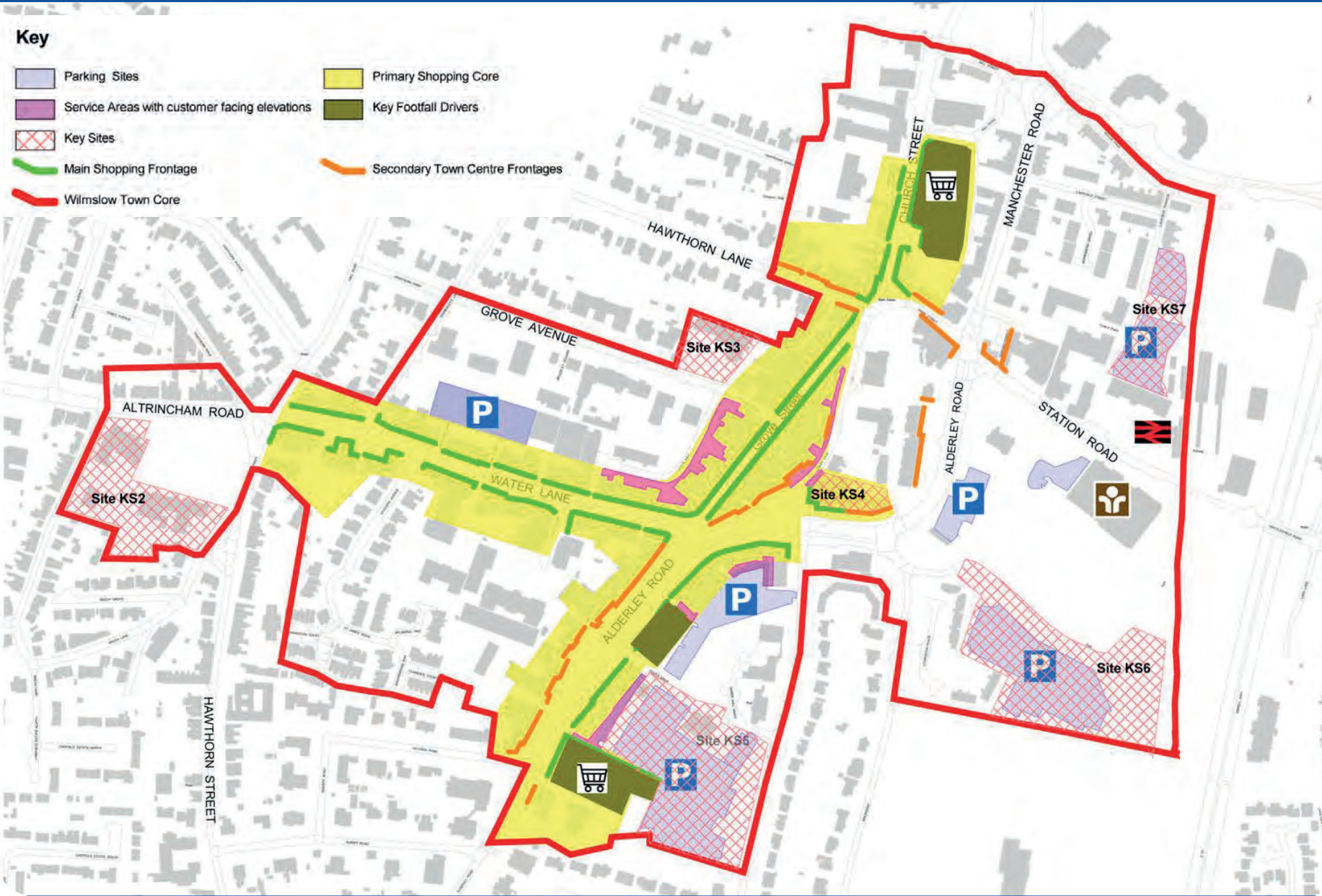
Business Engagement

Wilmslow Town Council has appointed Groundwork on a 12 month contract to manage the town centre and to undertake a feasibility study to investigate the interest in establishing a BID. A Town Centre Management Group has been established and a contact database has been set up with 240 businesses to support wider engagement with the business community. A Business Improvement District (BID) was established in November 2022



Spatial Strategy for the Town Core. Source: Wilmslow NDP, pg 20

Proposals Map 2

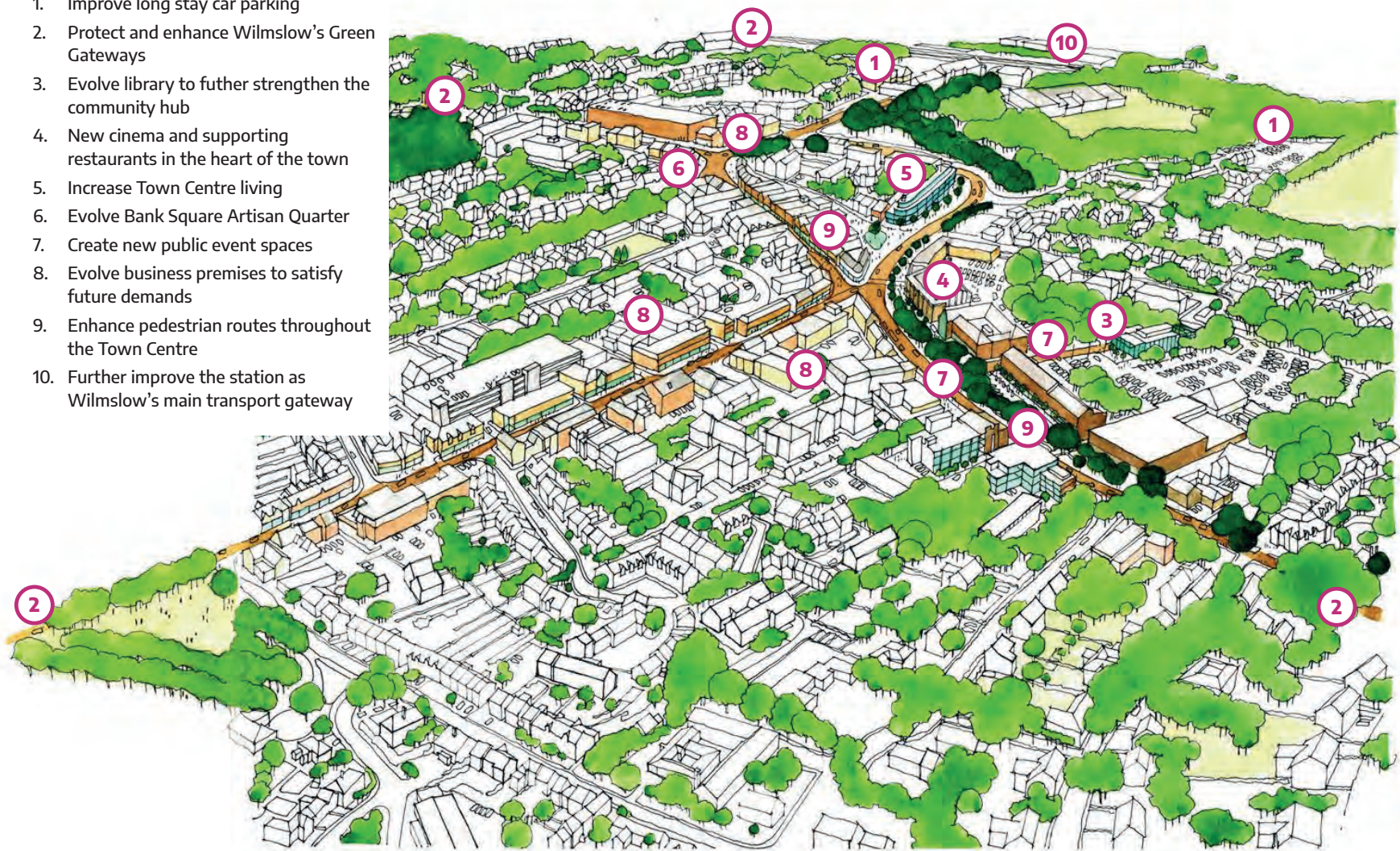


Proposals Map 2. Source: Wilmslow NDP, pg 105



Aerial view of the town core highlighting key initiatives merged (Artist's Impression)

- 1. Improve long stay car parking
- 2. Protect and enhance Wilmslow's Green Gateways
- 3. Evolve library to further strengthen the community hub
- 4. New cinema and supporting restaurants in the heart of the town
- 5. Increase Town Centre living
- 6. Evolve Bank Square Artisan Quarter
- 7. Create new public event spaces
- 8. Evolve business premises to satisfy future demands
- 9. Enhance pedestrian routes throughout the Town Centre
- 10. Further improve the station as Wilmslow's main transport gateway



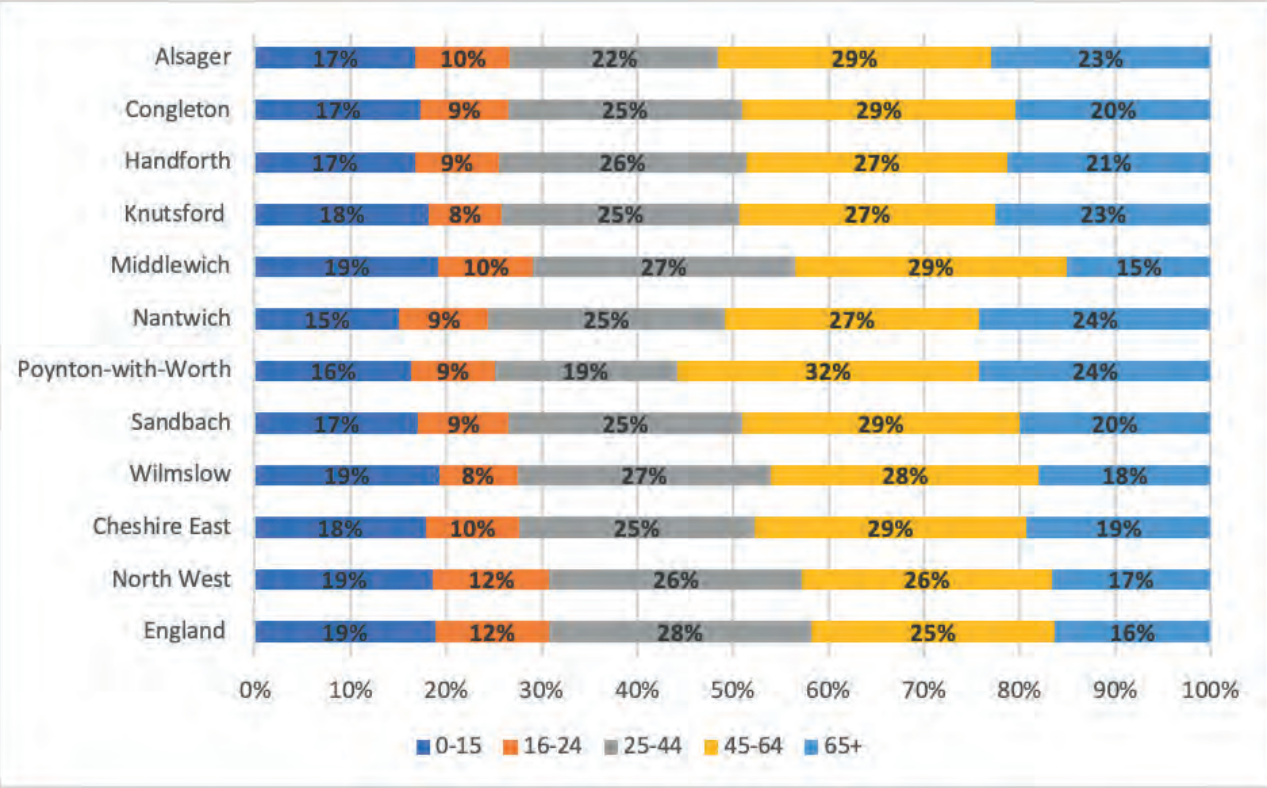
Key Initiatives.  
Source: Wilmslow NDP, page 73





Age

The 2011 Census data indicates that the Wilmslow parish area had a population of 24,497 residents representing 6.6% of Cheshire East’s total population (370,127). Wilmslow’s age profile is similar to that of Cheshire East. Compared to the other Key Service Centres Wilmslow has one of the highest proportions of 25-44 year olds which is the most economically active age group. Wilmslow also has one of the lowest average (mean) ages across the 9 KSC’s at 41 years old which is lower than the Cheshire East mean age but higher than the wider geographies of the North West (40) and England (39).



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

Ethnicity

Broken-down by ethnic group the Census 2011 (latest) shows the resident population across the Cheshire East is predominantly white at 96.7% which is a higher proportion than the wider geographies of the North West (90.2%) and England (85.4%).The majority of the population in Wilmslow is also white (92.6%), however compared to other KSC’s Wilmslow has the highest proportion of Asian/Asian British residents (4.4%/1,087 people).

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

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



Occupational Profile

At the time of the 2011 Census, a large proportion of Wilmslow residents were employed in higher order occupations including ‘managers, directors and senior officials’ (18.3%) and ‘professional occupations’ (24.6%) – a much higher rate than the wider Borough, regional and national benchmarks. Conversely, just 9.6% were engaged in manual or elementary occupations. This is around half the North West (19.8%) and England rate (18.3%). The occupational structure of Wilmslow suggests a highly skilled workforce, which will in turn attract businesses (who want to attract highly skilled employees) to locate in the area.

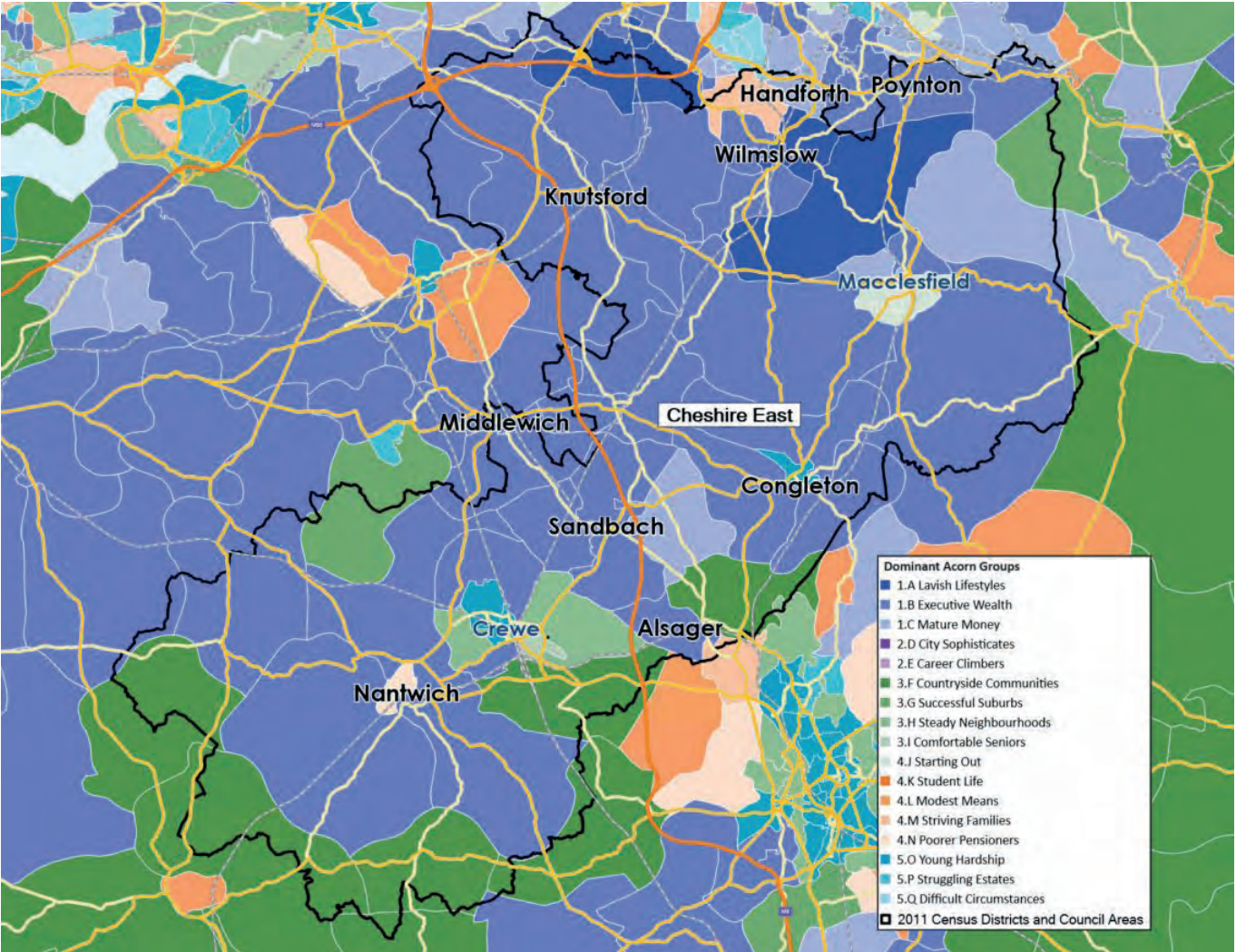
Built Up Area	Alsager	Congleton	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow	Cheshire East	North West	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	12.8	11.7	17.2	11.9	14.3	14.9	12.6	18.3	13.6	9.9	10.9
Professional occupations	22.3	18.9	26.2	15.8	21.8	24.0	19.9	24.6	19.6	16.3	17.5
Associate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

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

Demographic Characterisation

CACI Acorn classifications of local postcode geographies provide precise information and an in-depth understanding of different consumer types by analysing significant social factors and consumer behaviour. Demographic analysis of Cheshire East area demonstrates diverse segmentation groups across the area. The dominant Acorn groups in Wilmslow are Lavish Lifestyles and Executive Wealth

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



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



Index of Multiple Deprivation

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

See the Neighbourhood plan for further details e.g. NE5 Biodiversity Conservation



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





## Local Context


Wilmslow is located in the North of Cheshire East, 14 miles south of Manchester City Centre and 3 miles from Manchester Airport and the M56 which connects it to the M6 and M60, and is well connected by the A34 to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton.


Wilmslow is recognised for its affluent population, with the town centre offering a number of independent dining and leisure opportunities and surrounding open spaces. Town centre living remains at the periphery of its boundary leaving the town centre very much a hub of day time activity.


Key


 Local Centre boundary


 Primary retail core


 Historic Assets

 Primary routes

 Cycle paths

 Pedestrian routes

 Central Open Space

 Wilmslow Station



## Spatial Review

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

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



Visit information

	Visit 1	Visit 2
Date of visit:	Monday 14th September 2020	Monday 26th October 2020
Time of day:	12-3pm	1-3pm
Weather:	Sun	Heavy rain and sun
Mode of transport:	Car	Car
COVID 19 Lockdown Status	Eased restrictions, rule of six indoors and outdoors	Tier Two - rule of six indoors and outdoors

Quality of the place

- Medium sized, well kept town
- Large houses close to the town centre
- Large range of shops and services
- Number of quiet, green spots to sit in



People

- People sitting outside Nero
- People sitting outside restaurants - business / causal
- Varied demographic along Grove Street



Sense of Community

- Noticeboards seem up to date
- Lots of planters
- Lots of activities ad community pride advertised





## Accessibility

- Approx 10 minute walk from train station, via Station Road
- Designated parking - on street or in designated car parks
- No segregated cycle routes
- Wide, high capacity highways



## Gateways

- 3 gateways into the town however they fell under dressed and car dominated.
- Alderley Road / Water Lane Junction
- Manchester Road / Mill Street / A538 Roundabout
- Church Street
- Poor quality Tesco building at a key junction in the town



## Wayfinding

- Well sign posted town for both pedestrians and vehicles
- Information boards dotted across the centre





Attractions

- Good range of cafes and restaurants, signs of outdoor seating
- Rex independent cinema
- Hoopers Independent Department Store
- Cycle Cafe
- Grove Street pedestrianised high street



Amenities

- Library, leisure centre, community club, churches, health centres - public and private
- Waitrose, Sainsburys, Co-op, Tesco Express, plus a range of independents



Sense of a Centre

- Defined high street at Grove Street
- Retail offer extends down Alderley Road
- Grove Street is dated however a neat pedestrianised high street





Character

- Town Centre is fairly level, however the topography slopes along Mill Street
- Some heritage buildings
- Dated shop fronts, signs of some regeneration
- Little central residential



Public Realm

- Pavement and road surfaces are tired and worn in places
- Some newer areas of hard landscaping, outside Cycle Cafe



Green Space

- Boulevard along Alderley Road
- Landscaped area at Mill Street offers a nice stop, with views to St Bartholomew's Church
- Little Lindow provides a nice space along Water Lane





Derelict Sites/ Vacant Units

- Vacant sites along primary retail core take away from the vibrancy of the town, this is likely to raise in the short term at least due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Even prior to COVID High Street brands were leaving the town centre
- There could be further evidence of this as we come out of lockdown



Housing

- Good mix of historic and modern homes
- Large Victorian/ Edwardian homes to the south of town centre
- Mix of larger homes with garden, apartments and terraced homes

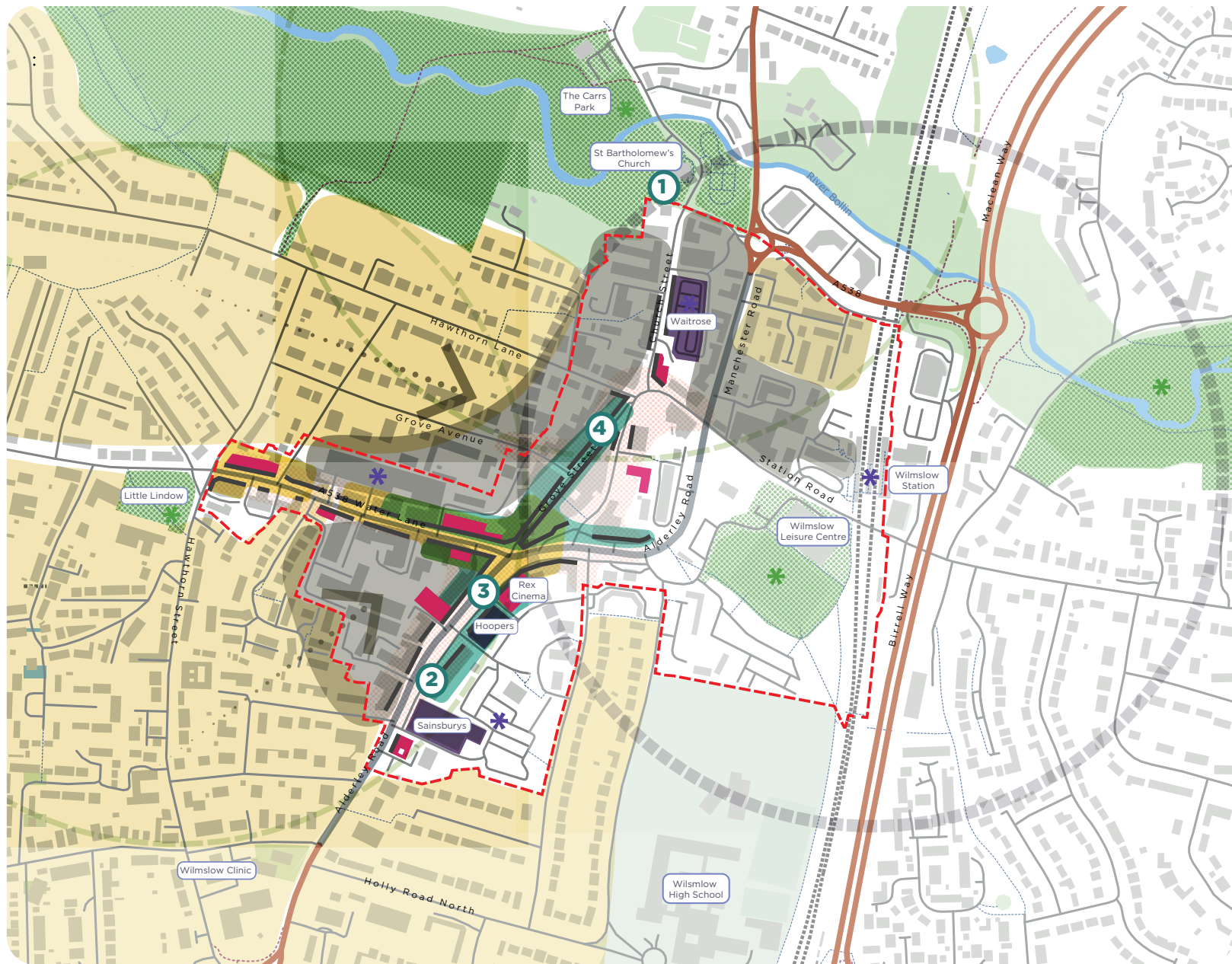




Positive Features

Positive spatial elements are identified on the plan:

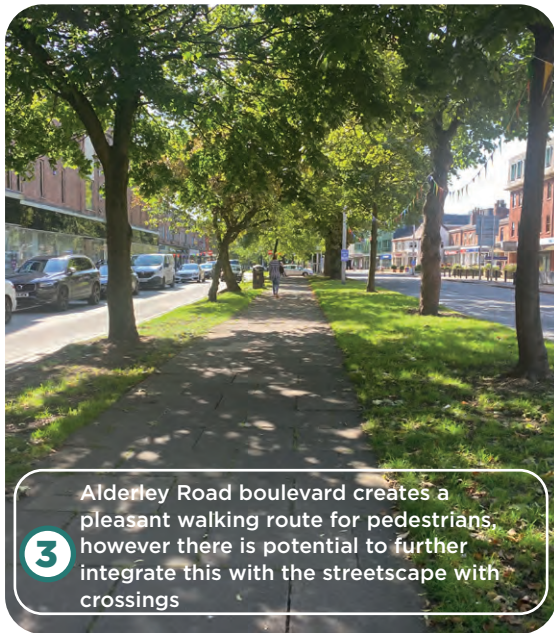
- Key
- Local Centre boundary
  - Local street network
  - Birrell Way bypass
  - Arrival destinations
  - Anchor retail locations
  - Anchor open space / recreational areas
  - Areas with a concentration of F&B uses
  - Areas with a concentration of retail uses
  - Well defined building frontages with active ground floor uses
  - Buildings of historic or townscape quality that help reinforce character
  - Local businesses within close proximity to the town centre
  - Local residential areas within immediate proximity to the town centre
  - Wilmslow Station 400m proximity to the town centre (5 minutes walk)
  - Carrs Park and Little Lindlow within 400m proximity to the town centre (5 minutes walk)



1 St Bartholomew's Church, an area north of the town centre providing historical character and rich open space.



2 Well defined shop frontages create active streetscapes. Tree planting and planters create an attractive and welcoming space, with adequate space for both pedestrians and vehicles.



3 Alderley Road boulevard creates a pleasant walking route for pedestrians, however there is potential to further integrate this with the streetscape with crossings



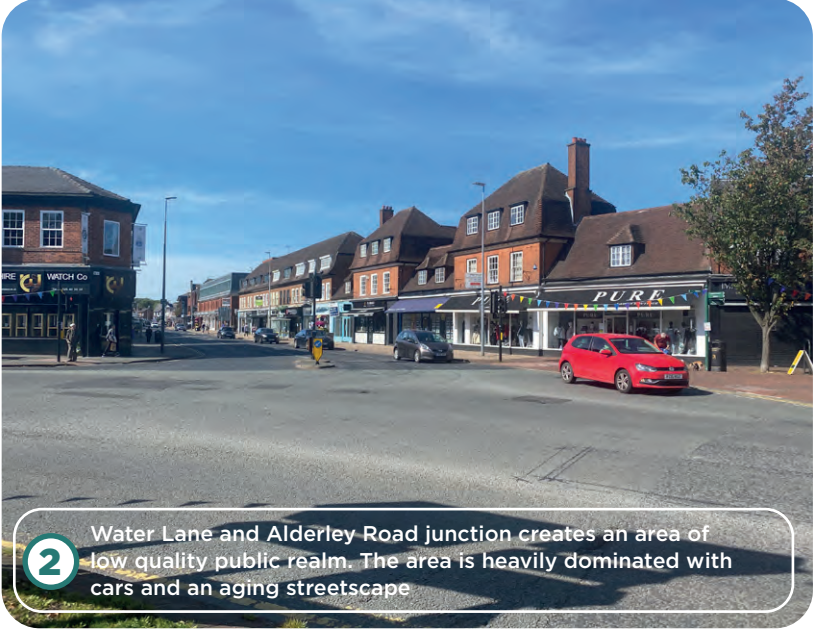
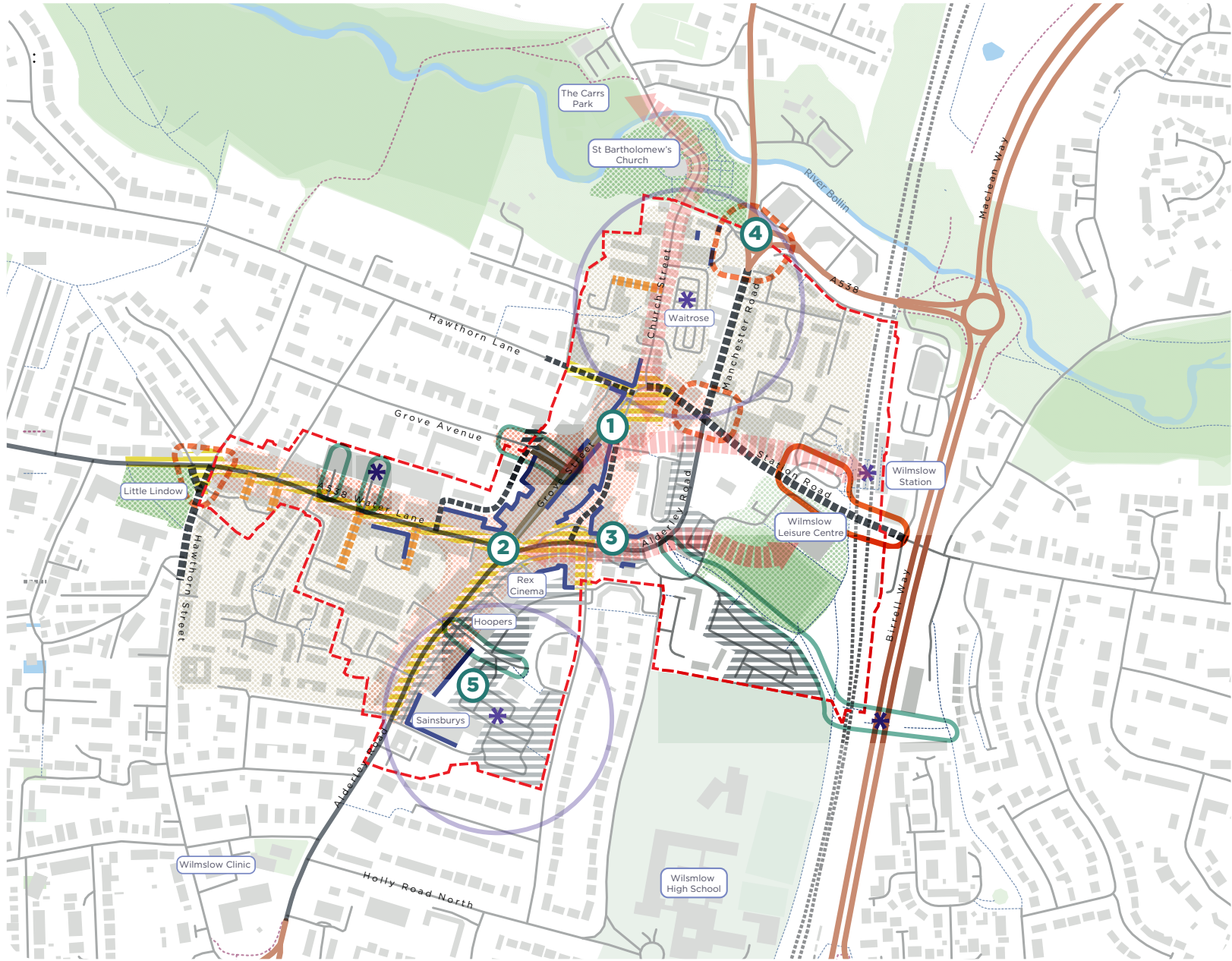
4 Grove Street provides a pedestrian zone and designated 'high street' within the town centre which helps to build the heart of Wilmslow



Negative Features

Negative spatial elements are identified on the plan:

- Key
- Local Centre boundary
  - Streets and spaces dominated by car parking
  - Streets with narrow footways / poor pedestrian provision
  - Arrival gateways with a low quality arrival experience
  - Arrival gateway constrained by railway over-bridge and narrow footways
  - Areas of poor quality public realm (primarily low grade / aged materials, lack of street furniture and tree planting)
  - Pedestrianised high street with dated public realm and aesthetic
  - Low quality frontages
  - Arrival destinations
  - Links with poor legibility to and from the town centre
  - Local streets leading to cul-de-sacs or unclear where they connect to
  - Extent of area which reads as part of the Town Centre
  - Areas which feel beyond the extent of the Town Centre
  - Key assets which feel disconnected from the Town Centre
  - Immediate catchment for anchor retail





Summary of Spatial Elements

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

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
Positives					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wide footpaths which allow for ease of movement</li><li>Some newer areas of hard landscaping, outside Cycle Cafe</li><li>Pedestrianised high street</li><li>Abundance of street planting and seating</li><li>Potential opportunities for alfresco activity</li></ul>	<p>3 potential vehicular gateways into the town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Alderley Road / Water Lane Junction</li><li>Manchester Road / Mill Street / A538 Roundabout</li><li>Church Street</li><li>Railway Station also creates an arrival point at Station Road</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Boulevard along Alderley Road creates a pleasant pedestrian route</li><li>Landsaped area at Mill Street offers a nice stop, with views to St Bartholomew's Church</li><li>Access to the Carrs, with links to wider countryside e.g River Dean and Styal Country Park.</li><li>Lindow Common is not only a recreational green space, but an important Site of Special Scientific Interest &amp; Local Nature Reserve adjacent to the wider peatlands of Lindow Moss</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>St Bartholomew's Church provides a beautifully landscape area to the north of the town centre</li><li>Hoopers department store has a long standing history with the town centre</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Defined high street at Grove Street which is well maintained and provides a good pedestrianised route</li><li>Attractive boulevard which lines the retail offer that extends down Alderley Road</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Anchor retail destinations provide focal points to the town: Hoopers, Sainsburys and Waitrose</li><li>Well sign posted town for both pedestrians and vehicles</li><li>Information boards dotted across the centre</li></ul>

Public Realm	Gateways	Open Space	Heritage	Townscape Quality	Legibility
Negatives					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pavement and road surfaces are tired and worn in places</li><li>Disconnect of public realm due to variation of materials and textures</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Car dominated</li><li>Built environment does not frame the gateways adequately</li><li>No sense of arrival or destination points</li><li>Poor signage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Poor signage to areas of open space - Little Lindow and The Carr's Park</li><li>Potential over provision of green space along Alderley Road that doesn't best frame the streetscape</li><li>No defined community square</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Little offer of heritage buildings, and those that are of heritage value aren't celebrated or well known within the town centre.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dated shop frontage along main high street detracts from the overall vibrancy</li><li>Very few residential offers within the town centre - residential seems to skirt the end of the TC boundary</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Difficult to identify a central gathering point in the town</li><li>Varied mix of old and new therefore hard to distinguish an identity for the town</li></ul>

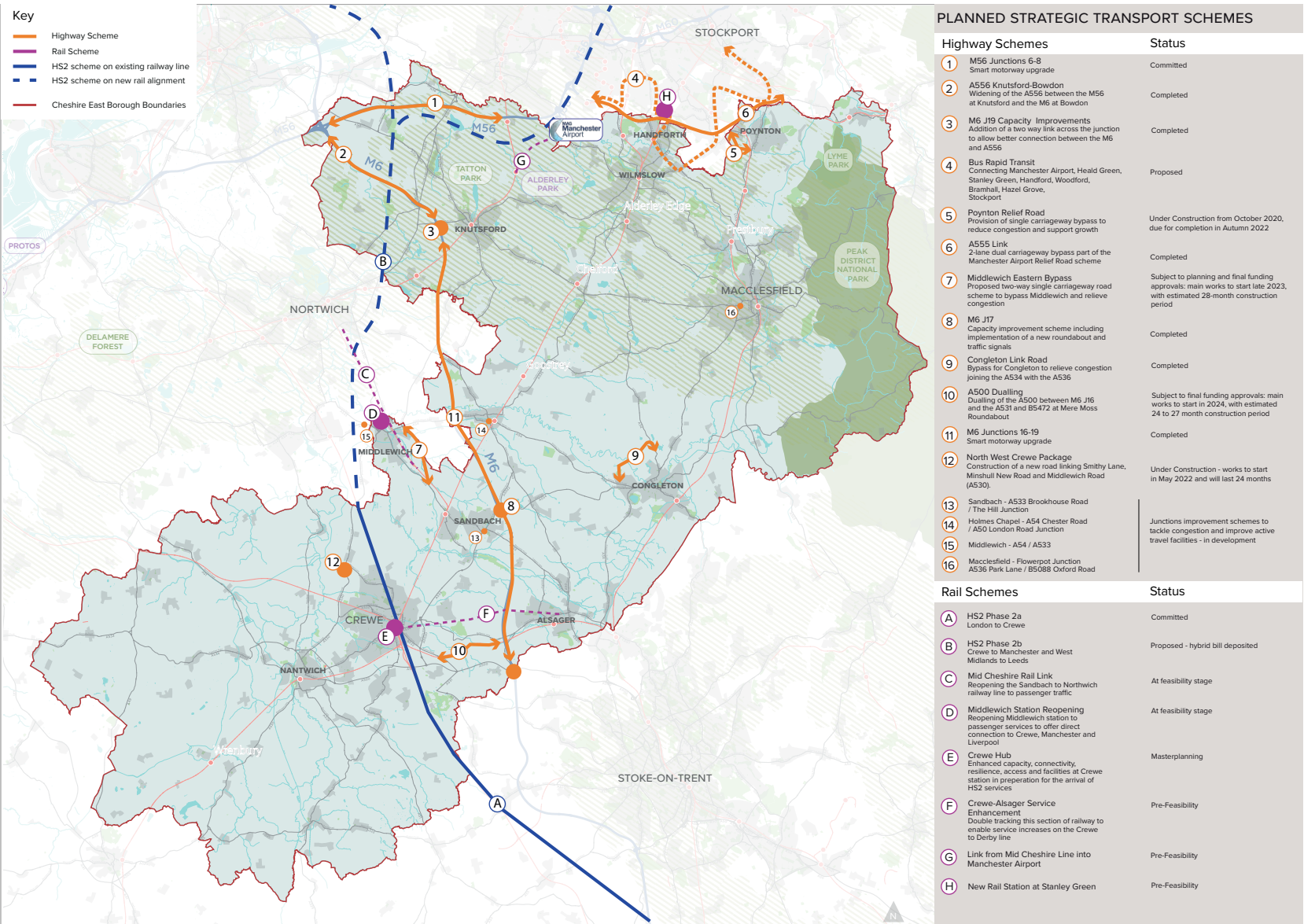


# 06 Connectivity and Accessibility

Wilmslow is located in the North of Cheshire East, 14 miles south of Manchester City Centre and 3 miles from Manchester Airport and the M56 which connects it to the M6 and M60, and is well connected by the A34 to Manchester, Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton. Wilmslow Station is on the West Coast Main Line providing access to Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport, Crewe and London Euston.

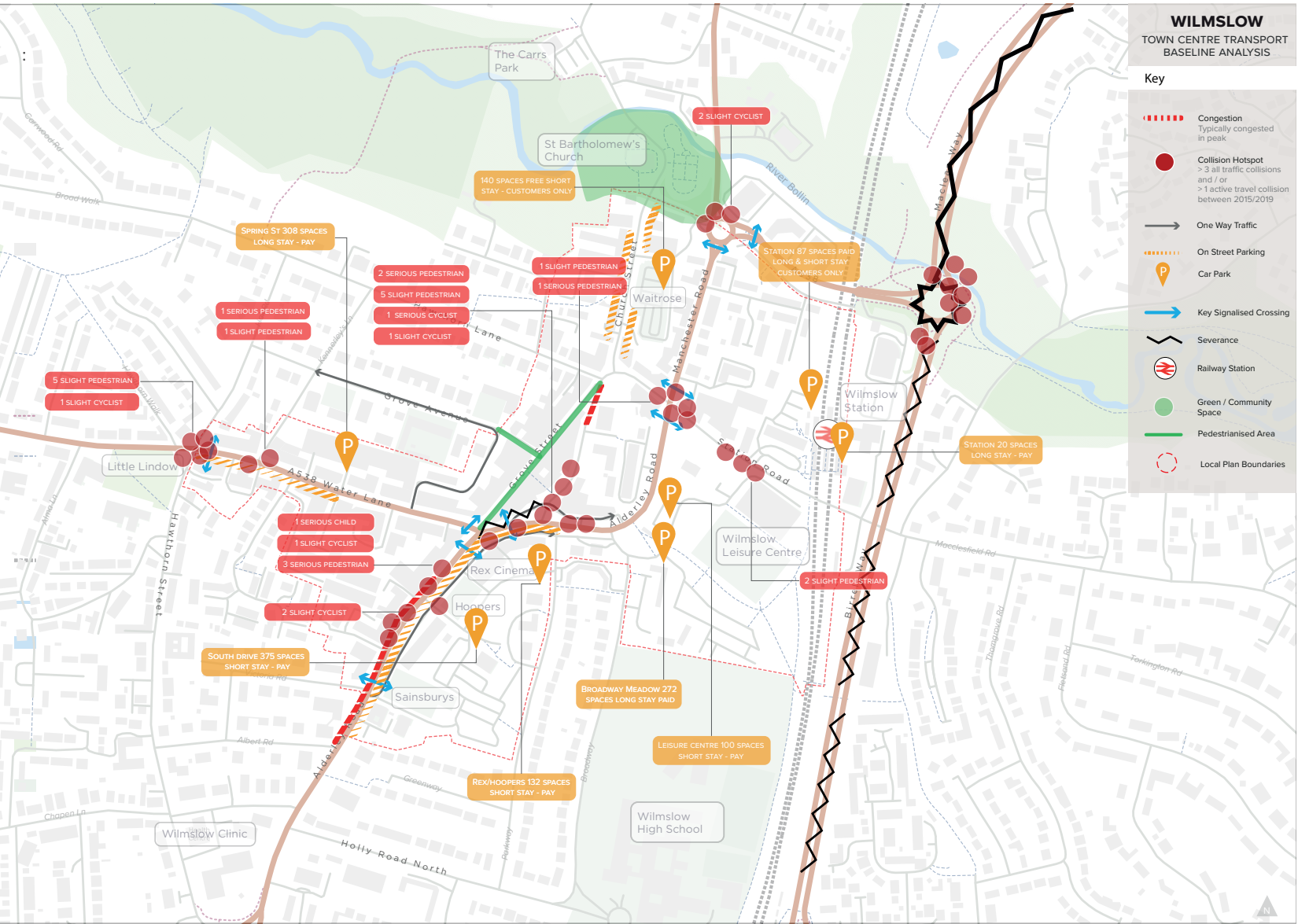
While road access to Macclesfield and Congleton is generally good, public transport's connections are more challenging – as there is no direct rail service and bus services are limited. Likewise, rail capacity in the vicinity of Stockport station is a key issue as this limits services interacting with North Cheshire.

Wilmslow Planned Strategic Transport Schemes



The road network has benefited from investment which has eased north south movement although east west movement suffers from congestion particularly given that the centre connects A34 and Airport/M56. This also impacts on surrounding streets such as Hawthorn Street. Congestion is a cross cutting theme in the Neighbourhood Plan in particularly the disconnect it causes in the town centre and the impact that it has at the junction of Alderley Road and Water Lane.

Wilmslow Transport Baseline Analysis





Car Parking

Public car parking across Wilmslow town centre comprises a number of short and long stay off-street car parks, and on-street car parking along key streets such as Alderley Road and Church Street. Off-street parks are all paid with inconsistent parking tariffs between the various locations which is likely to cause confusion amongst visitors. On-street parking provided is generally limited to 1-hour maximum stay.

As there is a significant amount of formal on-street parking in proximity to shops and key facilities within the town centre, a number of streets within the main retail areas of the town centre become dominated by vehicles. This reduces opportunities for enhanced public realm and the quality of the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

There is a long-held aspiration for a MSCP at Broadway Meadows (NP Policy KS6). CEC is currently assessing the feasibility<sup>1</sup> of the delivery of this linked to a wider parking strategy to ensure sufficient short stay parking for shoppers while relieving parking pressure on key routes such Alderley Rd – creating the potential to improve the pedestrian environment.

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

Town Centre	Car Park ID	Parking Spaces	Duration	Pricing
Wilmslow	Waitrose Car Park	140	Short Stay	Free (for customers only – 2hr limit)
	Station Car Park (west)	87	Long Stay	Paid
	Station Car Park (east)	20	Long Stay	Paid
	Spring St Car Park	308	Long Stay	Paid
	South Drive Car Park	375	Short Stay (330)	Paid
	Long Stay (45)	Paid		Paid
	Rex / Hoopers Car Park	132	Short Stay	Paid
	Broadway Meadow Car Park	272	Long Stay	Paid
	Leisure Centre Car Park	100	Short Stay	Paid
	TOTAL	1434		

Stay limited to 4-hrs or less.

<sup>1</sup>This is currently on hold due to high number of local office workers working from home resulting in uncertainty over longer term demand for long stay car parking in the centre

TCVPs.

Public Realm

Footways within the town centre are generally wide (>3m) and clutter free. However, materials appear particularly aged along A538 Water Lane and B5086 Alderley Road. Where opportunities for enhanced public realm exist in terms of available space or gateways to the centre, the area is often dominated by vehicles in terms of on-street parking or large junctions, for example the Green Lane/Alderley Road junction. Reconfiguration of junctions, more frequent



crossings, rationalised on-street parking, and higher quality public realm should therefore be considered.

Road Safety

Several streets and junctions within the centre of Wilmslow present road safety concerns particularly for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. This includes the Hawthorn Street/A538 Water Lane junction where 5 collisions resulted in slight injury have occurred over the last 5 years. Additionally, several collisions have occurred at the Alderley Road/South Drive junction - 3 involving pedestrians and 1 involving a cyclist. Pedestrian safety measures, such as reduced carriageway widths, tightened junction



radii and more frequent crossing points should therefore be considered in this area.

Active Travel

The town centre is situated within 20-minute walk time of the majority of surrounding residential areas and therefore presents good opportunities for walking and cycling access. However, infrastructure to support sustainable modes is currently limited.

Although routes along key pedestrian desire lines are provided with footways within Wilmslow, a lack of signage and natural wayfinding towards the town centre creates poor legibility. This is more problematic for visitors who may be arriving

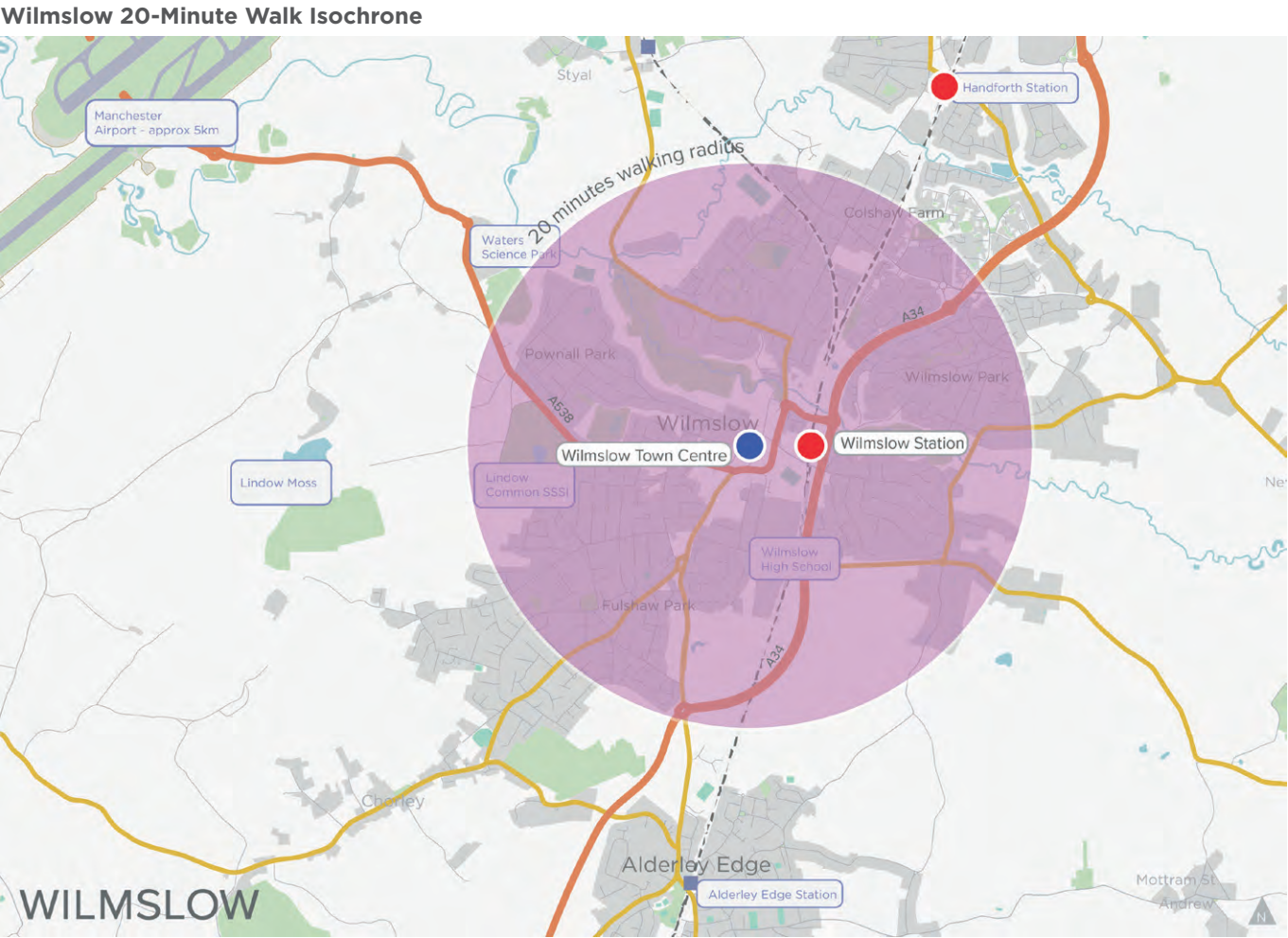




at the rail station or off-street car parks in the surrounding areas.

In terms of access for pedestrians and cyclists from the surrounding area, the presence of the A34 to the east of the town centre causes a major severance for surrounding large residential areas reducing opportunities to access the town centre via active travel modes and contributing to the parking concerns. This is particularly an issue for residents in the north east of the town where the Bollin Valley Roundabout and dual carriageway with no crossing facilities creates a major barrier to pedestrian and cyclist activity.

The highway dominated environment around the town centre not only reduces perceptions of safety for pedestrian and cyclists, but also provides an unattractive offer in comparison to car use and is therefore unlikely to promote behaviour changes. The dominance of car travel in the area also contributes to worsening air quality which is highlighted by the AQMAs present in the vicinity of the town centre near Tatton Street and Hallow Lane.



## Public Transport

Wilmslow station is served by 5 trains per hour to Manchester Piccadilly and 4 trains per hour between Crewe and Liverpool Lime Street. The station provides car parking, cycle parking and bike hire facilities.

The station is approximately a 5-minute walk to the centre of Wilmslow via a direct route along Station Road. Although footways and a number of pedestrian crossings are provided between the station and the town centre, the route is poorly signed with pedestrians required to navigate large junctions before accessing the main retail core, the presence of which is also unclear from the adjacent highway network. The station forecourt also appears tired.

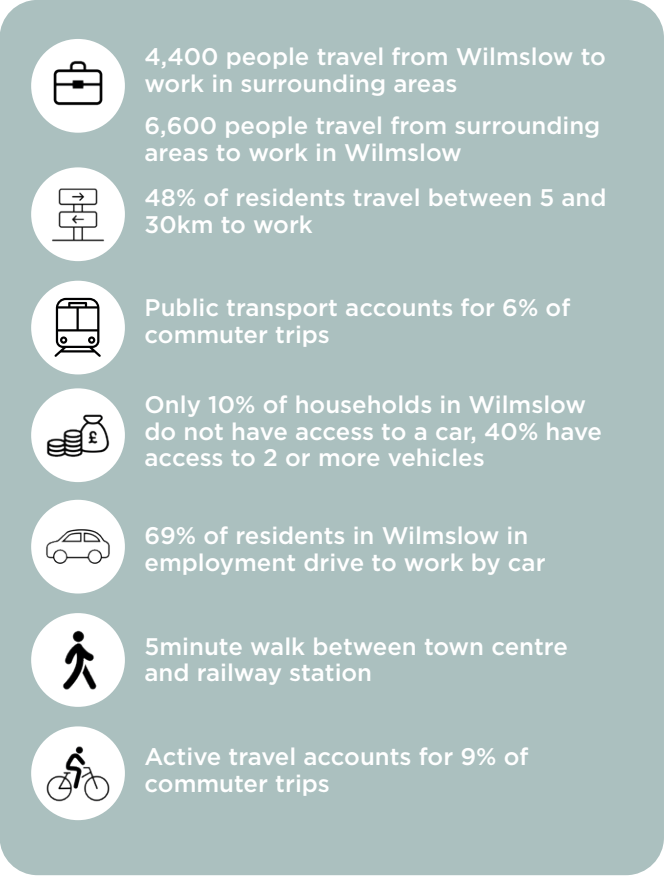
Bus stops are provided along Green Lane and Alderley Road providing hourly services to Knutsford, Altrincham and Macclesfield. Although bus interchange facilities are well placed to provide access to the centre, the services are

limited in terms of frequency and availability during evenings and weekends.

## Movement Trends

Travel to work data (Census 2011) suggests that Wilmslow is a net importer of commuters - more people are travelling to work in the area than are commuting out of the area. This is a different trend to that observed across all other TCVP towns. A high proportion of people travelling to work in the area is likely to create a high demand for parking within the vicinity of the town centre. Links to public transport hubs such as the rail station should therefore be strengthened to encourage a modal shift of people travelling into the area on a regular basis.

Car ownership within the area is also high with 90% of residents having access to a car and 40% of residents having access to 2 or more vehicles. This further increases the need to consider parking management and attractive walking and cycling links to reduce the number of people driving to the town centre.



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



06 Connectivity and Accessibility cont.

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

In Wilmslow the LTDP sets out a wide range of actions that CEC are exploring. In Wilmslow, the LTDP focuses strongly on active travel interventions to improve conditions for those on foot and cycle. Parking management is also a key focus and several reviews are set out across the TCVP area.

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

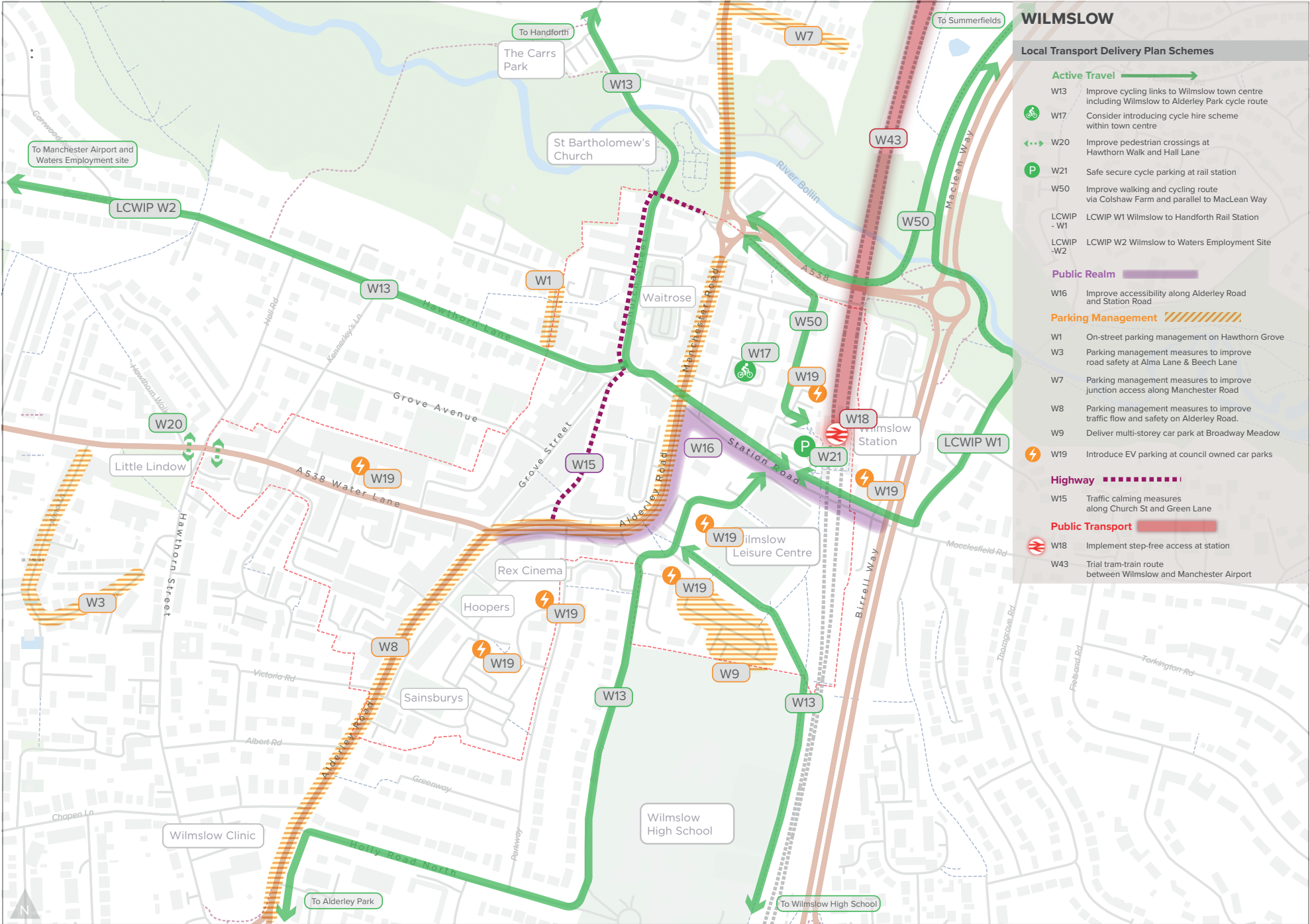
For full information on LTDP and the latest version of the LTDP please refer to the Highway pages of the CEC website.

Wilmslow LTP and LCWIP schemes

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	W13	Improve cycling links to Wilmslow town centre including Wilmslow to Alderley Park cycle route	Improve cycling links to Wilmslow town centre along Broadway, Church Street, Hawthorn Street, Holly Road North – and including Wilmslow to Alderley Park cycle route.	£1m-£5m
	W17	Consider introducing cycle hire scheme within town centre	Consider introducing a cycle hire scheme in Wilmslow and Alderley Edge centres.	Revenue Funding
	W20	Improve pedestrian crossings at Hawthorn Walk and Hall Lane	Improve pedestrian crossing points by providing dropped kerbs and reducing the junction mouth width where appropriate at numerous locations including Hawthorn Walk and Hall Lane junctions with the A538 Altrincham Road.	£1m-£5m
	W21	Safe secure cycle parking at rail station	Improve cycle parking facilities at Wilmslow train station.	<£100k
	W50	Improve walking and cycling route via Colshaw Farm and parallel to MacLean Way	Improve walking and cycling route between Handforth Garden Village, Handforth rail station and Wilmslow via Colshaw Farm and parallel to MacLean Way.	£1m-£5m
	LCWIP-W1	Wilmslow to Handforth Rail Station	LCWIP route: Wilmslow to Handforth Rail Station identified in Wilmslow LCWIP.	£1m-£5m
Public realm	LCWIP-W2	Wilmslow to Waters Employment Site	LCWIP route: Wilmslow to Waters Employment Site identified in Wilmslow LCWIP.	£1m-£5m
	W16	Improve accessibility along Alderley Road and Station Road	Improve the streets in Wilmslow town centre and Alderley Edge village centre to make them more attractive and accessible (particularly for pedestrians and people with disabilities) along Alderley Road and Station Road.	£1m-£5m
Parking Management	W1	On-street parking management on Hawthorn Grove	Review parking management of on-street parking to improve parking turnover and traffic flow along Hawthorn Grove.	<£100k
	W3	Parking management measures to improve road safety at Alma Lane & Beech Lane	Introduce parking management measures on Alma Lane and Beech Lane including any junctions – implementing parking management measures to improve road safety and access at junctions.	<£100k
	W7	Parking management measures to improve junction access along Manchester Road	Introduce parking management measures to improve junction access along Manchester Road, including the Manchester Road/Copperfield's junction.	<£100k
	W8	Parking management measures to improve traffic flow and safety on Alderley Road.	Introduce parking management measures on Alderley Road to improve traffic flow – as traffic collision data gathered indicates a high number of collisions along this section of the network.	<£100k
	W9	Deliver multi-storey car park at Broadway Meadow	Deliver a multi-storey car park at Broadway Meadow.	5-10mil
	W19	Introduce EV parking at council owned car parks	Introduce electric vehicle charging points at Council owned car parks within Wilmslow and Alderley Edge.	<£100k
Highway	W15	Traffic calming measures along Church St and Green Lane	Implement traffic and speed calming measures along Church St, Chancel Lane, Mill St and Green Lane in Wilmslow.	<£100k
Public transport	W18	Implement step-free access at station	Introduce step-free access to the Manchester Airport platform at Wilmslow train station.	<£1m
	W43	Trial tram-train route between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport	Trial tram-train route on the existing rail line between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport.	>£10m

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

Wilmslow Local Transport Development Plan Schemes





Retail and Leisure

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

Wilmslow is one of the larger KSC in Cheshire East. Overall, the centre provides 241 units (Experian Goad Plan, September 2019) which are primarily located on Grove Street, Alderley Road and Water Lane.

The centre is anchored by two food stores: Sainsbury’s at the southern end and Waitrose at the northern end. In addition, convenience goods provision includes Tesco Express and Co-op Food convenience stores. However with the exception of a tobacconist, there are no independent convenience operators likely to due to the size of the Waitrose and Sainsbury’s store. The proportion of convenience goods floorspace is above the UK average. The current proportion of units in comparison goods use is also above the UK average (29%) with predominantly clothing/ footwear retailers but also a number of high end jewellers.

	Units				Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK Average (%)		Sq.m	%	UK Average (%)
Convenience	13	5	9		7,690	19	15
Comparison	80	33	29		14,030	34	34
Retail Service	50	21	15		5,270	13	7
Leisure Service	52	22	25		7,470	18	26
Financial and Business Service	23	10	10		3,510	9	7
Vacant	23	10	12		3,520	8	11
TOTAL	241	100	100		41,220	100	100

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

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

Particular improvements were noted in the leisure service provision since the 2016 report, there has been a significant increase in the number of units (+13) - compared to only 2 since 2009. At the time of the survey there were 6 bars/pubs, 26 café’s/restaurants and 10 takeaway outlets. The leisure provision in the town has been boosted by the opening of the Rex Cinema following refurbishment of the old theatre on Alderley Road, previously in retail use.

At this stage, it is unclear what the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic will be on Wilmslow's retail and leisure occupiers. Whilst pre COVID, Wilmslow benefited from additional footfall from its significant local office market which supported its local shops, cafes and restaurants, this has been lost during lockdown. The relocation of 3,000 Royal London employees to Alderley Park has had an impact on local hospitality businesses including pubs and hotels. Whilst in the longer term new homes which will be built on the site should support the centre in the short term, compounded by the slow return of workers to some of the town’s offices this has impacted on footfall in the centre. However, it is anticipated that in the future more flexible working habits should mean that Wilmslow will continue to benefit from the spend of workers both working from offices in Wilmslow and from those working from home.

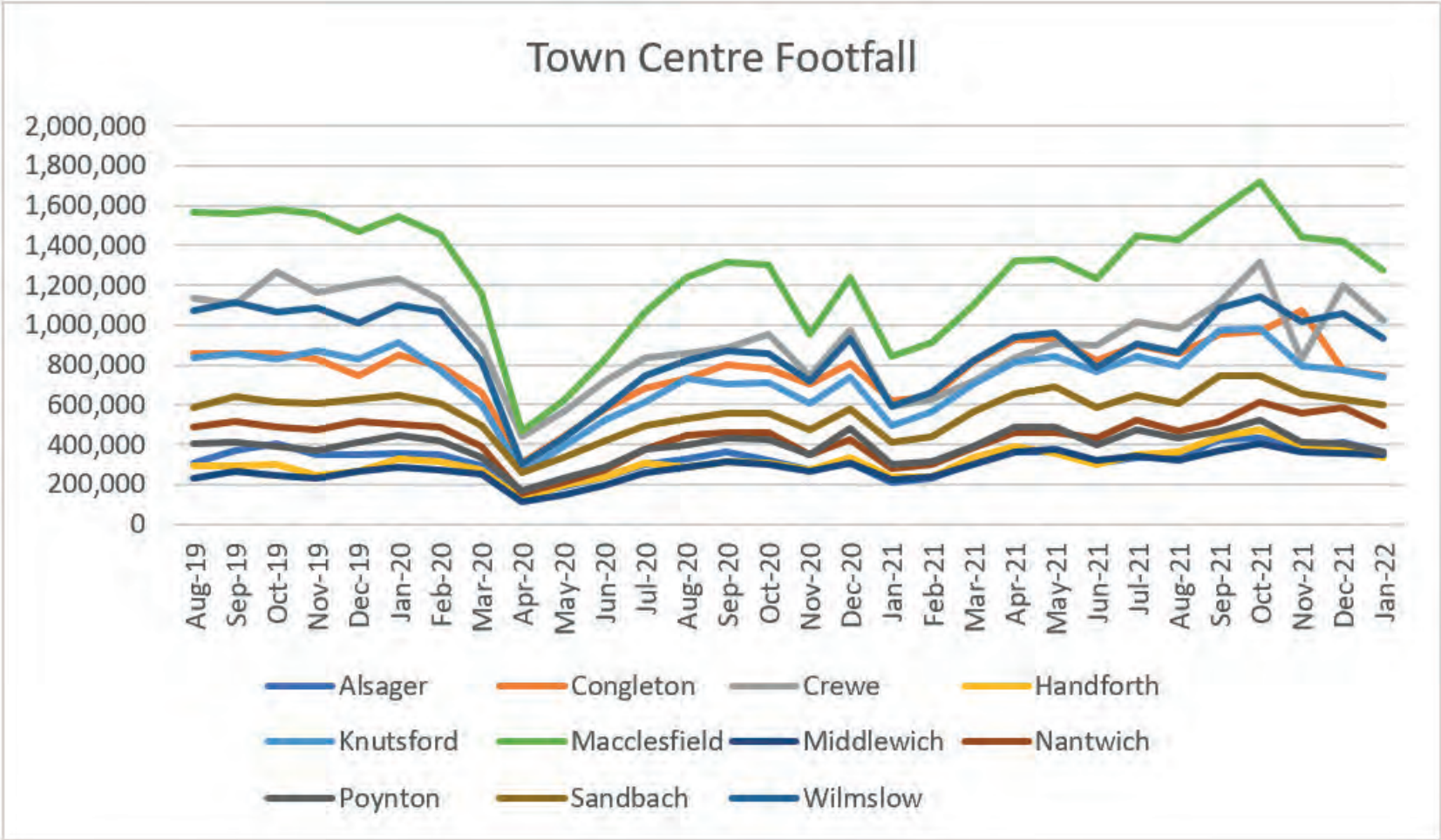
Over recent years a number of national brands had already closed their doors in the town and in some cases these were being reoccupied by cafes and bars. Given its affluent catchment, it is anticipated that although there may be a short term impact on some occupiers, longer term - given the breadth of the offer - the centre should return to being an attractive location for retail and leisure occupiers. The focus should be on attracting independents rather than nationals.



Footfall

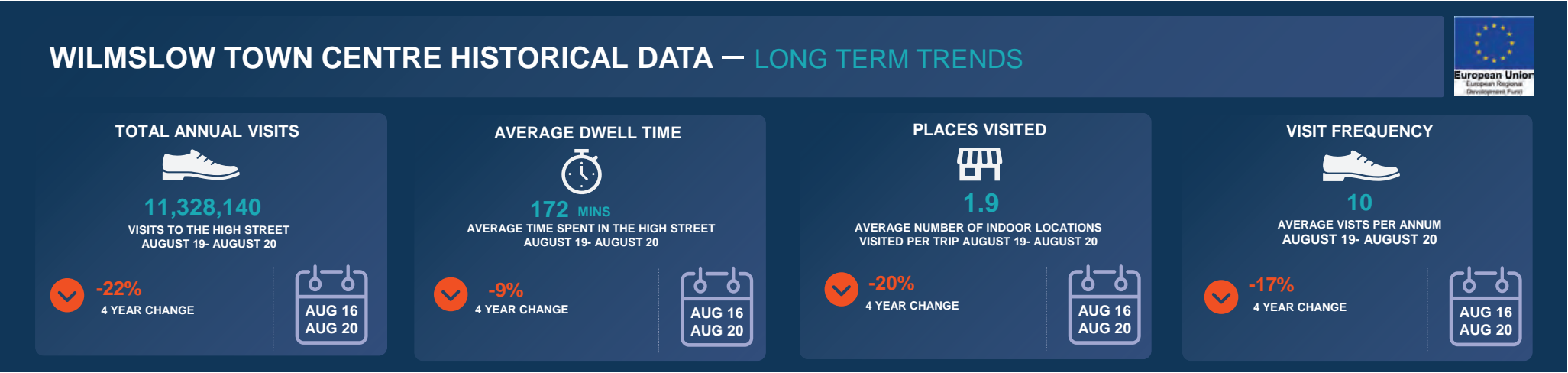
In recognition of the important relationship between footfall and vitality, CEC is now commissioning regular monitoring of footfall across the centres. The below figure shows the footfall in all the key centres between August 2019 and December 2020. It starkly shows the impact of Covid on footfall, across Cheshire East particularly in March and November last year (during national lockdowns) and some bounce back in December. In August 2019 Wilmslow was the third most visited centre in Cheshire East (just over 1m) and retained this position throughout the period – with just under £1m visitor per month in December 2020. Covid has had a significant impact on footfall, both during enforced lockdowns but also in further accelerating online retail use. The ability of a centre to attract a wide range of visitors (rather than just relying on shoppers) will have a significant impact on how centres emerge from Covid.

Although as noted above, the relocation of Royal London and the slow return of some to local offices has impacted on footfall given the multiple roles that Wilmslow plays in terms of shops and services, office location, leisure (including F&B and sport) and as a place to live it should be more resilient than centres with a more limited offer.



Source: Visitor Insight Baseline Report: August 2019-2021





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

## Employment

Wilmslow benefits from having a strong office market within the heart of the town including standalone office buildings on the high street as well as offices around the edges such as Riverside Business Park on Bollin Way. The current office supply is predominantly owned and managed by the Emerson Group who have 400,000 sq. ft of offices in the town centre across 50 units accommodating a number of large occupiers. These significantly support the vitality and viability of the town.

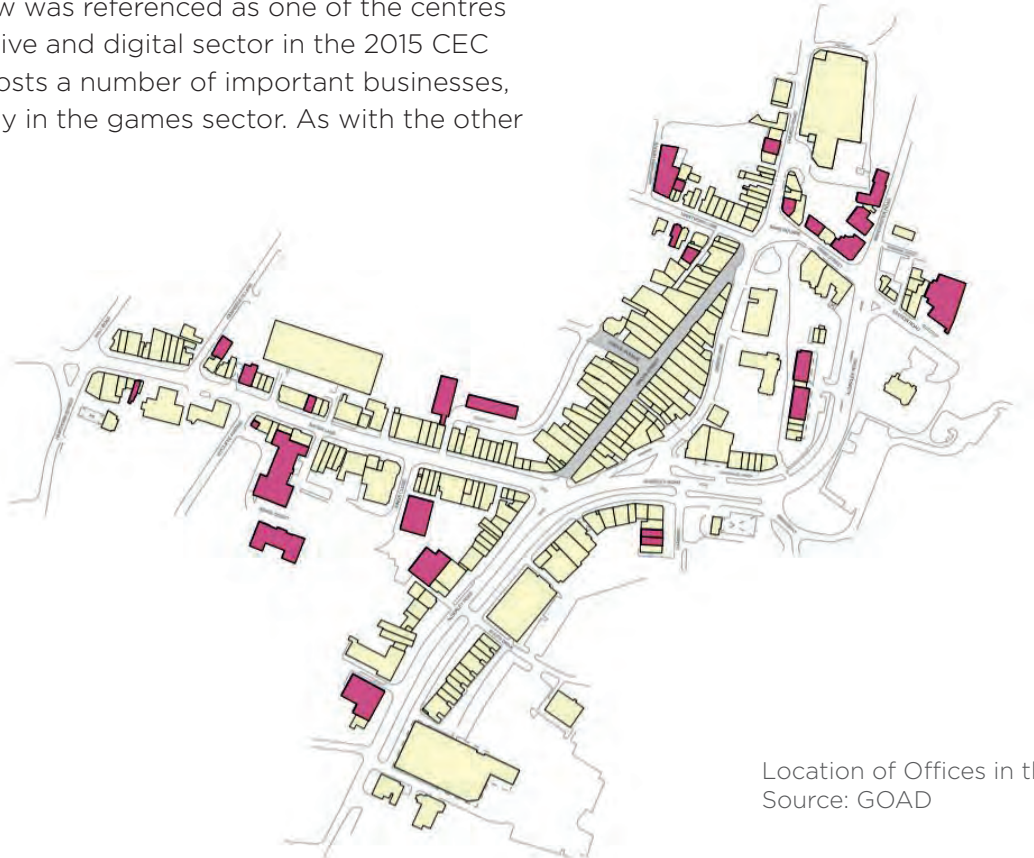
It is also accessible to a wide range of employment opportunities in the wider area - Airport City, Alderley Park and Waters Corporation - as well as being well connected to those in the wider Manchester City Region. In addition, planning permission was recently approved for a 190,000 sq ft business park off Pendleton Way.

Towns like Wilmslow are likely to benefit in the medium term from the anticipated new normal of office working arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic - hybrid working (splitting time between the office, home and meeting locations). Wilmslow’s residential and associated offer are likely to attract workers going forward who want to live in an attractive centre, well serviced by local amenities and well connected to larger employment locations where they may work

a few days a week. Whilst its strong existing office market will remain important for workers who want to collaborate or meet clients in the office in the longer term, in is acknowledged that footfall is likely to be impacted until more workers return more often to the office.

Wilmslow was referenced as one of the centres for creative and digital sector in the 2015 CEC study. Hosts a number of important businesses, especially in the games sector. As with the other

Cheshire East towns that are important in this sector (incl. Macclesfield/Bollington, Knutsford and Congleton), aspects such as quality of place, vibrancy and attractiveness of the town are important locational factors alongside connectivity and access to talent.



Location of Offices in the Town Centre.  
Source: GOAD



Residential Market Context

The town enjoys an excellent reputation as an attractive residential location offering a range of high quality homes within walking distance of the centre and accessible to attractive countryside.

The choice of homes include a range of historic/ large family detached homes set in attractive landscaped grounds as well as more modern estates around the edge but unlike many of the northern towns there is a relatively low proportion of terraces.

Importantly it also offers a good range of state and private educational facilities including Wilmslow High School and Wilmslow Guild. However these assets means that the town is sought after resulting in affordability issues.

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

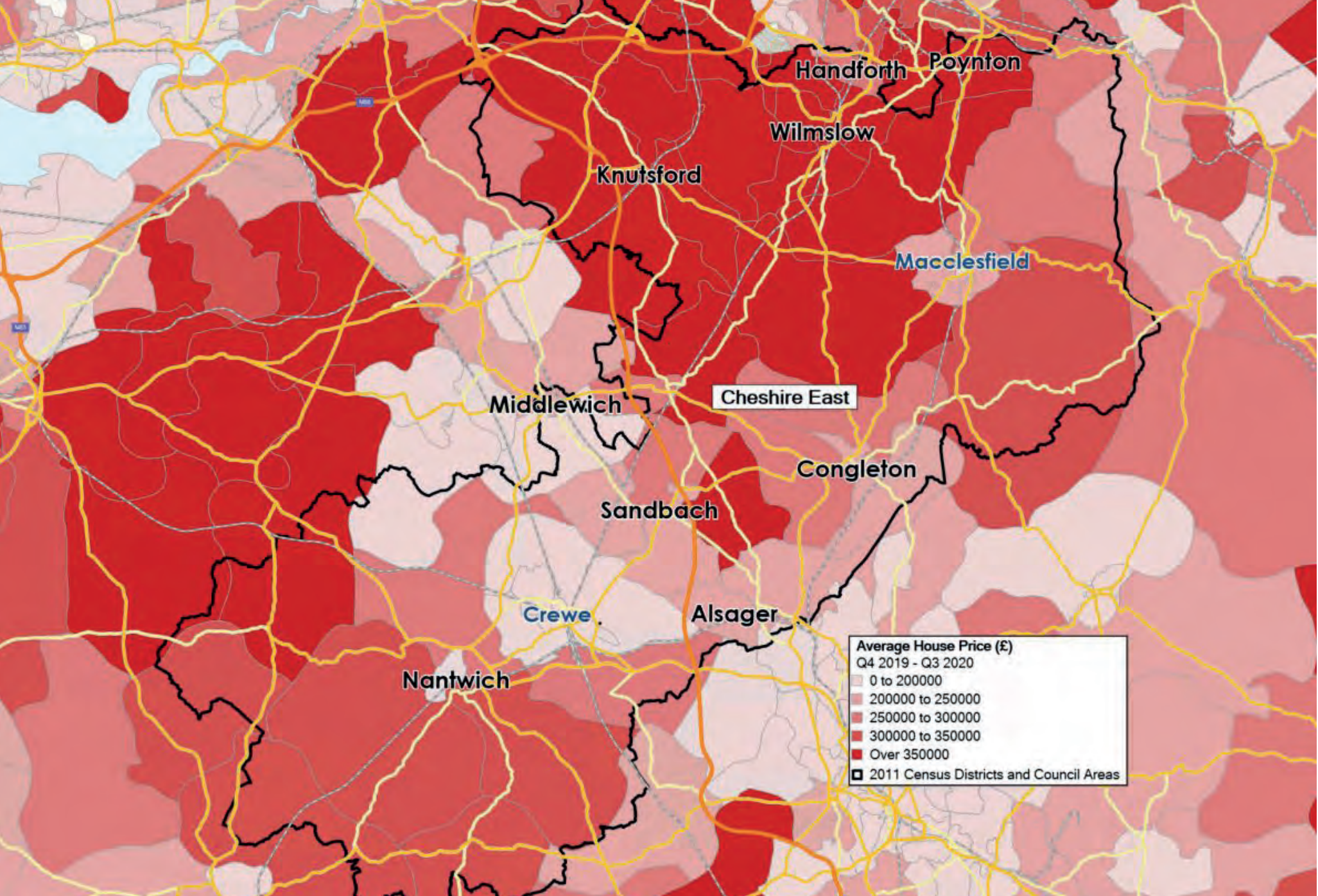
The Wilmslow parish area had a total of 10,615 households, representing 6.6% of Cheshire East’s total residential stock (159,441). In terms of housing mix, Wilmslow is characterised by larger house types with 39.5% being detached properties which is one of the highest proportions across the 9 KSC’s next to Alsager (39.9%).

This offer has recently been further enhanced by Chapelwood, on the edge of the high street, which offers independent living for the over 60s in 57 one, two and three bedroom homes, complemented by health and wellbeing facilities, including a spa, gym, restaurant and owners’ lounge for socialising with friends, family and neighbours.

The Local Plan allocated sites have the capacity to deliver 722 homes by 2030. Although this sought after housing market certainly adds to the appeal of the centre it does mean that it is not inclusive in terms of ability to meet all housing needs.

Dwelling Type/Area	Detached	Semi Detached	Terrace	Flat	Other	Total Households
Alsager	39.9%	40.4%	11.6%	8.1%	0%	5,183
Congleton	36.3%	35.4%	19.3%	8.9%	0.2%	11,561
Handforth	26.1%	23.1%	27.9%	22.8%	0.1%	2,936
Knutsford	38.8%	34.2%	19.7%	7.0%	0.4%	5,671
Middlewich	39.0%	26.0%	19.7%	15.3%	0%	5,910
Nantwich	20.8%	30.6%	26.8%	21.6%	0.2%	6,710
Poynton-with-Worth	42.7%	39.2%	10.5%	7.2%	0.3%	6,024
Sandbach	39.1%	36.1%	17.6%	6.8%	0.3%	7,840
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)  
Most recent consistent data available across the 9 centres





# 08 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

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

### Strengths

- Strategic location - national and international transport links - connections to Manchester Airport, key motorways, A34 and train station
- Retail/leisure offer - mix of national brands and independents including a number of luxury brands which serve its affluent catchment area. Key attractors to the town:
  - Hoopers Independent Department Store
  - Rex Independent Cinema - started to support evening economy
  - Monthly market
  - Luxury good including cars and jewellery
- Centre offers a balanced lifestyle for residents - shops, employment, leisure centre, cafés, bars and restaurants and a range of good schools
- Strong local office market accommodating a wide range of businesses which support the local shops and F&B offer. Located within the Cheshire East Science Corridor
- Environmental assets - Green approaches and central boulevard and gateway to rolling Cheshire Countryside, Carnival Fields, Little Lindow etc.
- Programme of events including monthly artisan market and Wilmslow half marathon, Cycle cafe is a draw for cycling clubs/ groups
- Choice of parking which does not dominate the streetscape - provided in MSCP or tucked away from the main routes
- Brand - build upon assets quality and luxury, nice place to visit
- Active charity and volunteer sector particularly with respect to improving the town (clean team, Wilmslow in bloom, friends of the Carrs, etc.)
- ‘Wilmslow’s Way Better’ brand

### Weaknesses

- Traffic dominates parts of the town - need to create the right conditions that make people want to walk/cycle - safer streets with reduced traffic dominance
- Car park strategy - conflict between workers and resident’s car parking, aspiration/need for an additional MSCP would benefit from more nip in. Could Green Lane be made into one-way to provide on-street parking bays?
- Town centre feels somewhat disjointed - public realm doesn’t seem to link together leading to a lack of character within the area. Lacks a central location, no natural square which can draw people together for larger scale gatherings. Parts look tired and in some cases scruffy particularly along Alderley Road, Grove Street
- Retail offer - National retailers disappearing e.g. Paperchase/ Laura Ashley. Independents on outskirts
- Weak evening economy especially in comparison to neighbouring towns (such as Alderley Edge).

### Opportunities

- Affluent population on doorstep untapped, huge potential and growing (Handforth Garden Village, Woodford and Adlington)
- Scope to enhance programme of events building upon strengths such as cycling linked to Cycle café and Wilmslow half marathon.
- Create more places to dwell
- Make more of the boulevard - to better showcase Rex and Hoopers
- Exploit the cultural/history and natural assets - cinema, F&B, gallery space, art trail etc. capitalised on links to Romany, Turing, Lindow Pete, etc as well as natural assets such as The Carrs and Lindow Moss
- Define the brand of Wilmslow - find its niche which sets it apart from other towns in Cheshire.
- Wilmslow was referenced in the 2015 CEC study as one of the centres for the creative & digital sector (number of important businesses, especially in the games sector)
- Better interpretation/outdoor “tourist information centre” explaining the history and notable features/residents to attract visitors
- Harness Rex Cinema as catalyst to support night economy support independent cafes and bars etc. Would also be supported by more residential development in the centre
- No conference space - should make more of proximity of the Airport. Scope for more hotels?
- Support pop ups in vacant units and wraps on vacant units
- Create clearer clusters of uses in areas - e.g. dining zone
- Enhancing Wilmslow’s digital and on line presence – scope to introduce town wide free WIFI
- Create a “community hub” connecting Library, Cinema and Leisure Centre
- Proactive town council
- Tap into strong business base better
- Reduce the dominance of the highway - improve pedestrian facilities
- Encourage more independents esp. convenience stores such as cheese shop, butchers, bakers, deli
- Active travel to the Carrs

### Threats

- Competition - competition form Trafford Centre, Handforth Dean, Cheadle and online retailers and going forward surrounding service centres implementing the same improvements. Number of high street retailers closed/left - Laura Ashley, paperchase etc.
- Traffic using the town more to pass through on the way to other destinations such as Alderley Edge/Airport
- COVID-19 and potential closure of retail and leisure outlets.
- COVID-19 Emergency Active Travel Fund measures weak/non-existent in Wilmslow
- COVID -19 potential impact on office demand if existing buildings do not respond to new ways of working – need to ensure offices are vibrant places which attract employers to collaborate and are great places that clients want to visit
- Lack of coordinated investment and public realm improvements.
- Tesco Block is an eyesore - need to improve the appearance of this key gateway





# WILMSLOW ACTION PLAN

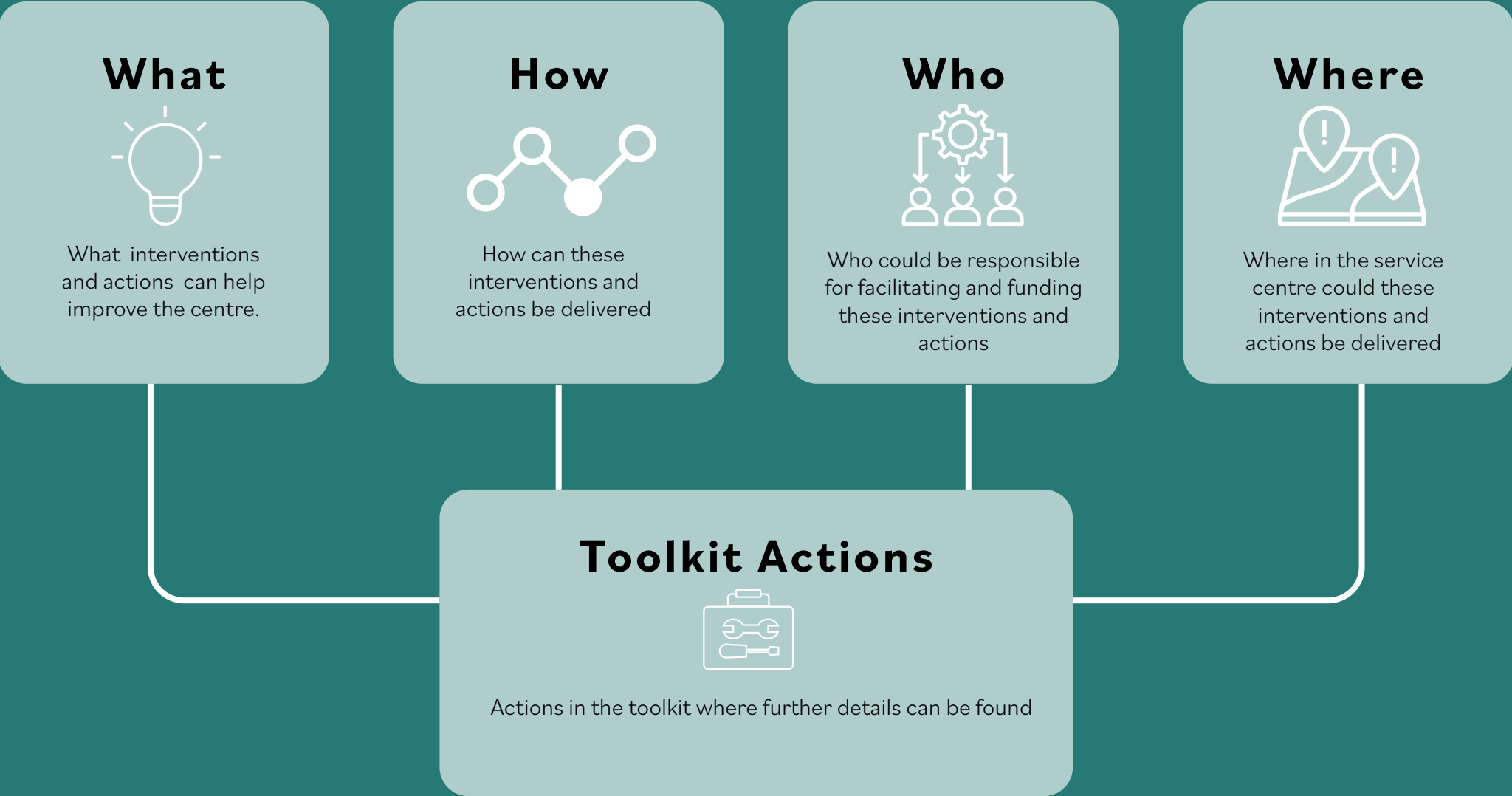


# 9 Priority Areas for Intervention

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

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

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





# Vision and objectives

## Vision Statement

To sustain and enhance a dynamic community within Wilmslow which protects its special built and natural character and which promotes a user friendly and green environment with an increasingly attractive and thriving Town Core.

## Objectives

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Heritage assets** - To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow’s designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town’s history
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space

- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.

## Role of the Centre

Wilmslow plays a number of important roles:

- Local centre for local catchment accommodating 240 retail, leisure and hospitality companies, 40 food, drink and restaurant and 45 specialist health and beauty businesses
- Employment hub accommodating 160 office and professional service companies
- Leisure hub – home to The Rex (independent cinema), Wilmslow Leisure Centre and a number of attractive green areas which attract visitors from wider catchment including The Carrs. Little Lindow and Lindow Common

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

## Areas for intervention

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

Potential actions are identified in Section 10:





# Spatial action plan

The Spatial Action Plan illustrates key features of the Centre and identifies where proposed actions could be delivered. It highlights the Centre’s significant green assets and how these could be better connected and gateways strengthened. It also highlights how the Boulevard could be enhanced to support visitors to dwell more in the Centre supporting vitality.

The three priority actions which have emerged from the public consultations are

- **Action 2: Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre**
- **Action 3: Improving the Town’s Core**
- **Action 9: Better Management of Movement**

**Key**

Town centre boundary

Main routes into and out of town

Open green spaces

Parks & recreational destinations

Arrival gateways to Wilmslow - Visible, clear and eye catching signage - a welcome to the Town.

Station arrival

Improved management and provision of car parking across the town within existing car parking locations

**Action Plan**

**Action 1 - Strengthening green space & links**

Pedestrian focused streets with temporary & permanent environmental improvements which link to important green assets

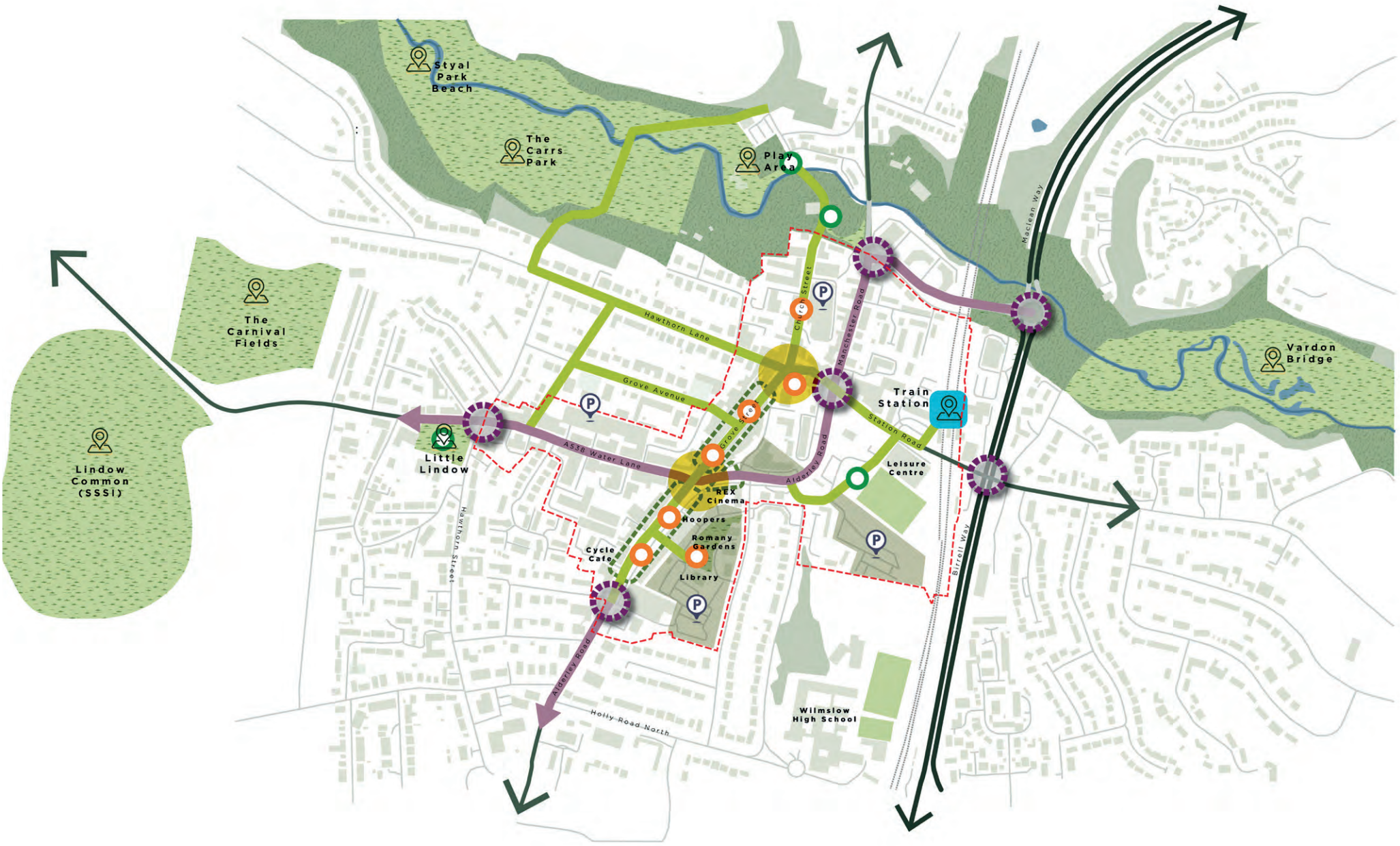
Areas where upgrades to public realm and existing streets can help to increase footfall and dwell time

Improvements to junctions where pedestrian movements across should be prioritised. Improvements can include aesthetic as well as functional upgrades helping to create a continuous, joined up journey to destinations

**Action 2 - Creating more opportunities to dwell**

Indicative locations for temporary interventions along key streets which encourage dwell time, active travel, ground floor active uses

Investment and upgrades to existing open space amenities to further improve the variety of activities available for all





# Movement action plan

A series of schemes have been identified through the TCVP process, building upon those set out in the LTDP.

They are intended to strengthen and expand the existing LTDP proposals – with a stronger emphasis on public realm and enhancing the street environment.

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

Type	Ref	Scheme	Description	Costing <sup>1</sup>
Active Travel	W_AT1	Improve wayfinding across town centre at key gateways	Improve signage and wayfinding across town at key gateways and landmarks.	<£100k
	W_AT2	Provide cycling link on Alderley Road (north) to Wilmslow town centre	Introduce a cycle route on Alderley Road (north) towards Handforth.	<£1m
	W_AT3	Improve cycling and walking links on Alderley Road (south) to Wilmslow town centre	Improve walking and cycle routes between Alderley Road (south) and the town centre building up on the existing boulevard layout - connecting south towards Alderley Park.	<£1m
	W_AT4	Provide cycling link on Water Lane to Wilmslow town centre	Introduce a cycle route on Water Lane towards Manchester Airport – there is opportunity of reallocating highway space on Water Lane as currently there is plenty of on-street parking provided while there is Spring Street MSCP available (with access from Water Lane).	<£1m
Public Realm	W_PR1	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Hawthorn Lane	Implement a public realm scheme on Hawthorn Lane to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment.	£1m-£5m
	W_PR2	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Alderley Road (south)	Implement a public realm scheme on Alderley Road (south) to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment for people to dwell and spend time.	£1m-£5m
	W_PR3	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Water Lane	Implement a public realm scheme on Water Lane including improvements to pavement materials, street furniture and planting which is currently tired and underwhelming. Undertake review of parking management to explore opportunities for better use of space e.g. temporary parklets.	£1m-£5m
	W_PR4	Increase pedestrian priority and slow traffic speeds on Green Lane	Implement a public realm scheme on Green Lane to enhance accessibility and create safer pedestrian environment.	£1m-£5m
Parking Management	W_PM1	Temporary parking suspensions for trial pop-up uses on Alderley Road (south)	Trial pop-up uses for the service roads, both through localised changes (e.g. parklets) and temporary full suspension of parking on market days.	<£100k
Highway	W_H1	Improve pedestrian and cycle safety at key junctions	Explore and implement quick wins for improving safety for those on foot or cycle across the town, including enhanced/new crossings and advanced stop lines on major junctions.	<£100k

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

[cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1](https://cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=48d6af7045d2495c81a1850a2c8a72c1)



Passeig de Sant Joan, Barcelona Linear green space introduced along busy main road, to provide opportunities to stop and rest. (Photo credit: MottMacDonald)

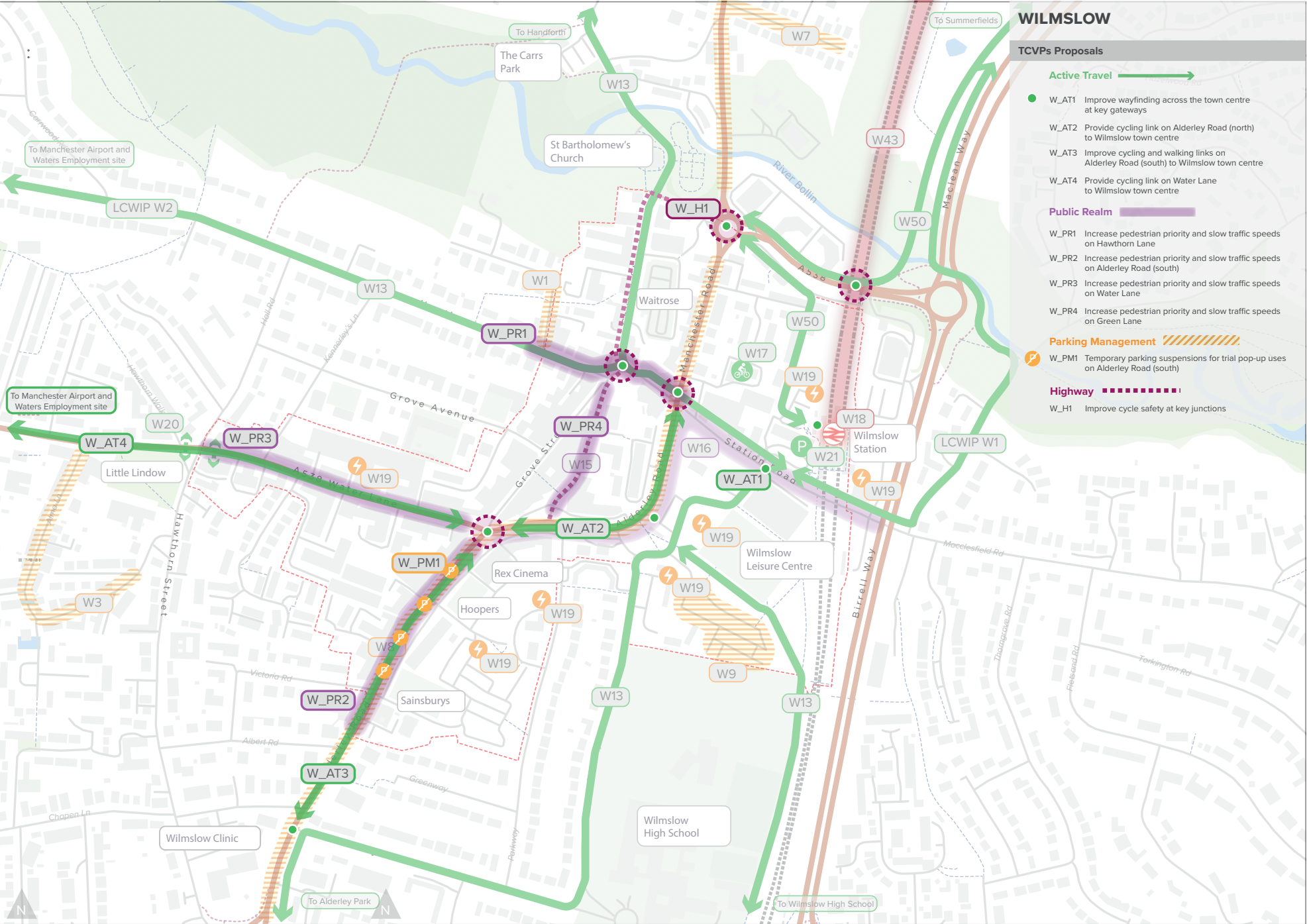


Pedestrian Super-crossing, Nottingham. Wide and direct crossing of busy A-road to better balance the needs of people and vehicles. (Photo credit: MottMacDonald)



Jamaica St, Liverpool. Public realm enhancement and segregated cycle lane to upgrade active travel facilities along busy routes – as Wilmslow’s Alderley Rd. (Photo credit MottMacDonald)

## Wilmslow Town Centre Viability Plan Proposals





# 10 Potential Actions



## Action 1: Strengthening green space and links

### What

Wilmslow benefits from a number of green assets on its edges and through its centre however there is scope to make more of these to enhance the visitor experience and support healthier lifestyles.

### How

This is a key priority for the Town Council and something they are already making good progress on. They have commissioned Annabelle Tugby Architects to carry out a series of feasibility studies on the town centre public realm – with a focus on Bank Square, Grove Street and Water Lane including the link to Little Lindow. Working with CEC they are delivering Little Lindow Park improvements – investment (CEC £77,000 and WTC £90,000) to renovate and revitalise the park. Planning is underway and work are due to be completed in Autumn 2022.

- Opportunity to create an easily identifiable walking route through the town, made up of a variety of different features designed to bring elements of the Towns green spaces into the Town Centre. This animated link would connect Wilmslow’s important surrounding spaces such as Lindow Common, Carnival Fields, Little Lindow, the Carrs and Vardon Bridge, making each more accessible and connected with the Town Centre. The routes could consist of a variety of installations, designed as temporary or permanent features which offer visitors opportunities for dwell space and interaction. Clear coordinated signage, and wayfiniding along the route as well as urban parklets, pop up uses, pop up spaces, enhanced existing public realm, spill out space, urban grow spaces and additional tree planting and soft landscaping could combine to create a series of links which better connect Wilmslow with its existing green space assets
- By further activating the green spaces and parks across Wilmslow and establishing a network of ‘Parklet Streets’ to them, the offer of the town will be significantly enhanced and diversified. Uses across the existing larger outdoor spaces could include pop up markets, mini festivals and music concerts which would feel more immediately accessible and connected with events, local businesses and other amenities within the Town Centre
- Consideration could be given to expanding the Friends of the Carrs model to support maintenance of green spaces and delivery of events
- Engage with local artists to install more public art in parks and on key routes targeting local community funds such as Tesco and Big Local Lottery Fund
- Align to Action 6 create a series of Wilmslow Walks to highlight local walks and links to existing walks in the wider area

### Who

- Wilmslow Town Council
- CEC / ANSA
- Community Groups – investigate rolling similar model to “Friends of the Carrs” to other green spaces
- Seek support from local businesses - materials, expertise and volunteers
- Engage with specialist groups such as City of Trees who seek to support tree planting across Greater Manchester and the wider area and Incredible Edible which supports greening projects by supporting communities to grow food
- Mersey Forest (there is a partnership agreement with Mersey Forest and there will shortly be a collaboration agreement with CWT)
- Volunteers – Canal and River Trust can share their expertise of supporting the establishment of volunteer groups particularly expertise in encouraging active travel, biodiversity, health/ wellbeing and heritage.
- WIG is in discussion with leading expert on peat to consider how to raise awareness of the ancient peat bogs at Lindow Moss

### Where

- Initial focus should be on the following space and improving the connections between them:
  - Green boulevard along Alderley Road
  - Little Lindow. The Town Council is looking to reinstate peat boggs and to establish Lindow Moss Partnership.
- The Carrs
- Lindow Common
- Carnival Fields
- Longer term other locations could be added including ensuring links to walks in the rest of Cheshire and South Manchester
- Manchester Road



### Action 1 supports the following objectives:

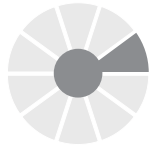
- **Built Environment** -providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
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- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure**- To create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

- 1b Introduce a programme of events which open-up and connect different parts of the centre for a limited time
- 1d Use lighting
- 4d Planting in pots to define space for certain uses
- 4e Enhance gateway sites
- 5a Upgrade the public realm with high quality materials
- 5d Instant greening
- 7a Parklets
- 7b Multi-generational play space
- 11a Design a holistic public realm scheme
- 15c Community food growing
- 18d Provide allotments and concrete gardens on leftover space
- 25d Raise awareness in the public realm





## Action 1: Strengthening green space and links

### Wilmslow's network of Parklet Streets

Establishing key streets across the Town which already provide a link to surrounding outdoor spaces. A programme of events, installations and features along these important links to encourage activity and vibrancy within the Town Centre to continue into it's outdoor spaces (and vice versa) - a chance to diversify Wilmslow's Town Centre offer to one which connects the town with it's impressive and varied greenspaces. Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group is working up proposals for improvements to pocket parks. Creating a better balance for all users of the town is an explicit aim of the action plan, the design and accessibility is to be determined by detailed applications.



Use of colourful planters to frame spaces and create points of orientation. Culture Mile, Farringdon, London. (Photo Credit: Culture Mile Part 2. Used with permission from Richard Wolfströme.)



Spill out space on paving and into parking bays can be shaped by flexible planters offering new dwell spaces (Photo Credit: Getty.)



Accessible shared cycle and walking path, (Garda, Italy (Photo Credit: MottMacdonald.)





# Action 2: Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre (Priority from public consultation)

## What

Encouraging visitors to stay longer in a local centre increases the potential for them to spend more money in the centre. Whilst Wilmslow has a number of attractive parks around its edge it is recognised that there is no large central area for congregating in the Centre of Wilmslow, although there are a number of areas that could be better utilised and linked.

## How

Review existing space and consider how it would be enhanced to encourage more dwelling, for example;

- Businesses along Grove Street have offered more seating areas during lockdown which has animated the space and this could be expanded and enhanced. This is a great space to enliven the wide pedestrian route and harness space which is not impacted by passing traffic to spend time.
- The installation of picnic tables on the grassed area on Alderley Road learning lessons from Mediterranean countries.
- Pop up stalls/vans on Bank Square and using green areas (such as Leisure Centre) and car parks spaces more for events
- Creation of a pocket park outside the Tesco building to improve this hight profile location at the heart of the Centre which is currently dominated by highways parking and pavements.

WIG has commissioned some feasibility work to look into some aspects of this.

## Who

- Town Council
- Local Businesses

## Where

Initial focus on

- Grove Street
- Green Boulevard
- Bank Square

This should also include a logical and visual link between the areas above



## Action 2 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



## Toolkit Actions

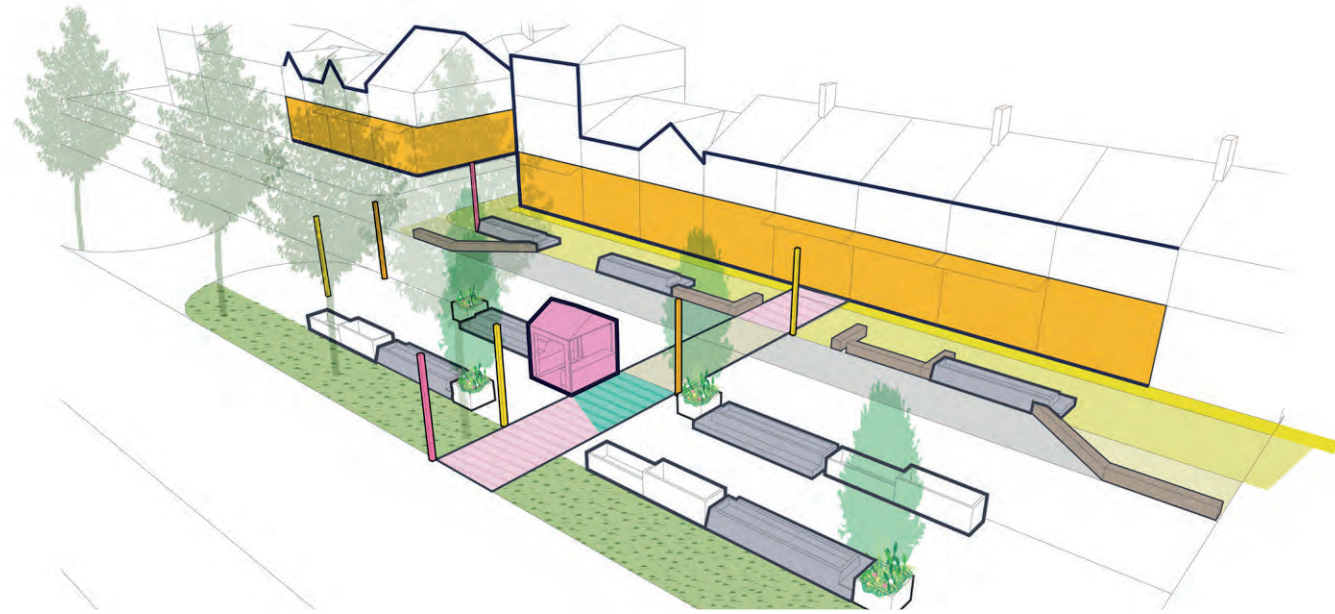
- 1a Improve the evening offer
- 1c Enable autumn and winter al-fresco dining
- 1d Use lighting
- 4a Provide pop-up seating
- 7a Parklets
- 9b Repurposing of assets
- 9c Curated Events
- 14a Quick-wins and temporary interventions to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces – e.g. planters, parklets and street furniture
- 17 Markets
- 18b Provide new places to sit
- 18c Implement road closures
- 25a Meanwhile uses



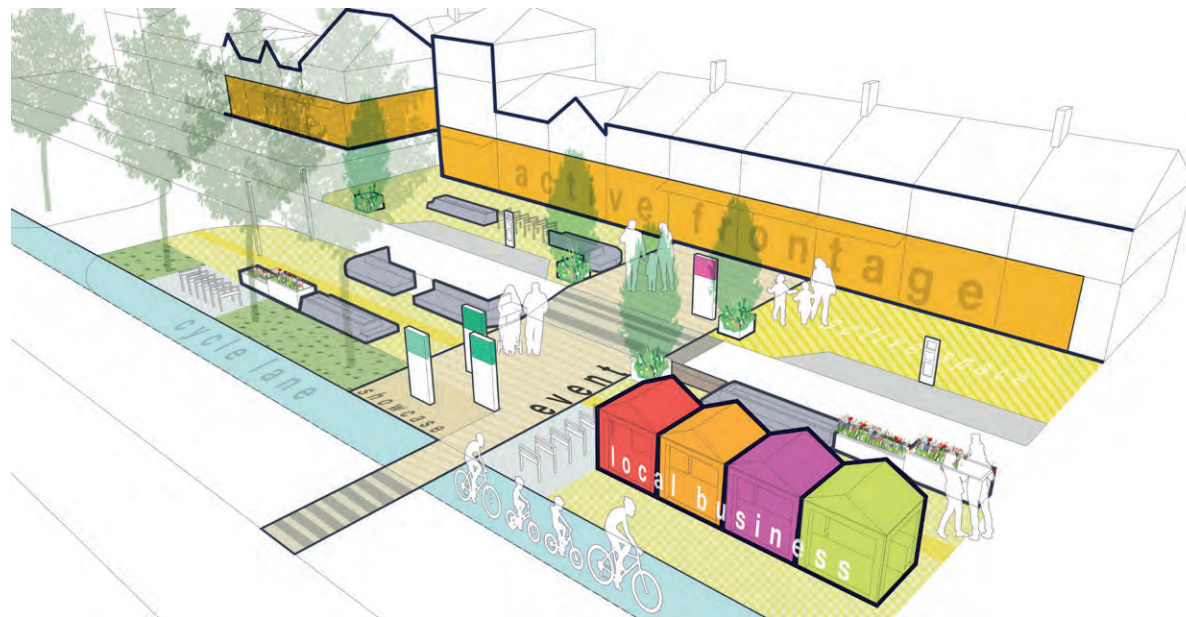


## Action 2: Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre (Priority from public consultation)

**An example of temporary or low cost interventions to make the most of currently underused space / car dominated space (i.e. box planters & seating, painted crossings, build outs and organised spaces to dwell).**



**Continuing to evolve the offer of underutilised spaces through more permanent interventions (i.e. carriageway narrowing, public realm materials, F&B space etc)**



### Precedent Images

Wilmslow currently lacks a distinctive, spacious central area for people to congregate - and Letchworth (right) provides a great example of how to create a public space encouraging people to dwell and spend time in the town centre.

The choice of stone pavements and warm textures on Leys Ave – combined with the new planting and seating - enhances the look and feel of the space, effectively transformed into a pedestrian priority area. In the medium to long-term this approach could be extended to the Alderley Road service road.

While Letchworth illustrates a transformational public realm approach, there are also temporary interventions that can be introduced to increase pedestrian priority and trial designs to reduce traffic dominance.

For example, the parklets installed in Bath town centre and the trial street pedestrianisation in Dublin (right) both incorporate street furniture and planting – and have collected very positive feedback as pedestrian-friendly spaces.

This kind of interventions would allow to trial pop-up uses of the highway space on streets in Wilmslow – reclaiming space for pedestrian activities and businesses' spill-out.



Leys Ave, Letchworth Garden City – Public realm investment (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



Bath – Parklets (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



Dublin - Trial Pedestrianisation (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)





## Action 3: Improving the town's core (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Whilst Wilmslow boasts a number of attractive green space and buildings across the Centre there are pockets of poorer quality areas that detract from the Centre. Also some assets are hidden away would benefit from their profile being raised.

### How

- Tesco Block -The Tesco block is a prominent area which detracts from the appearance of the town at a key junction. See emerging illustrations.
- Library – creating improved linkages through planting and signage between the library and Alderley Road should improve usage
- Grove Street – during lockdown a number of local cafes have started to spill out onto Grove Street increasing its vibrancy. More local businesses should be encouraged to do this alongside some investment in planting. The area could then be seen more as an extension to the Boulevard and support a more continental feel to the Centre with attractive places to dwell

### Who

- Town Council
- Local businesses in the vicinity of the areas
- Landlords
- Local developers

### Where

Initial priority should be given to the following areas:

- Tesco Block
- Library – linked to Action 1 improving linkages between key community
- Grove Street



### Action 3 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Heritage assets** - To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow's designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town's history
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space

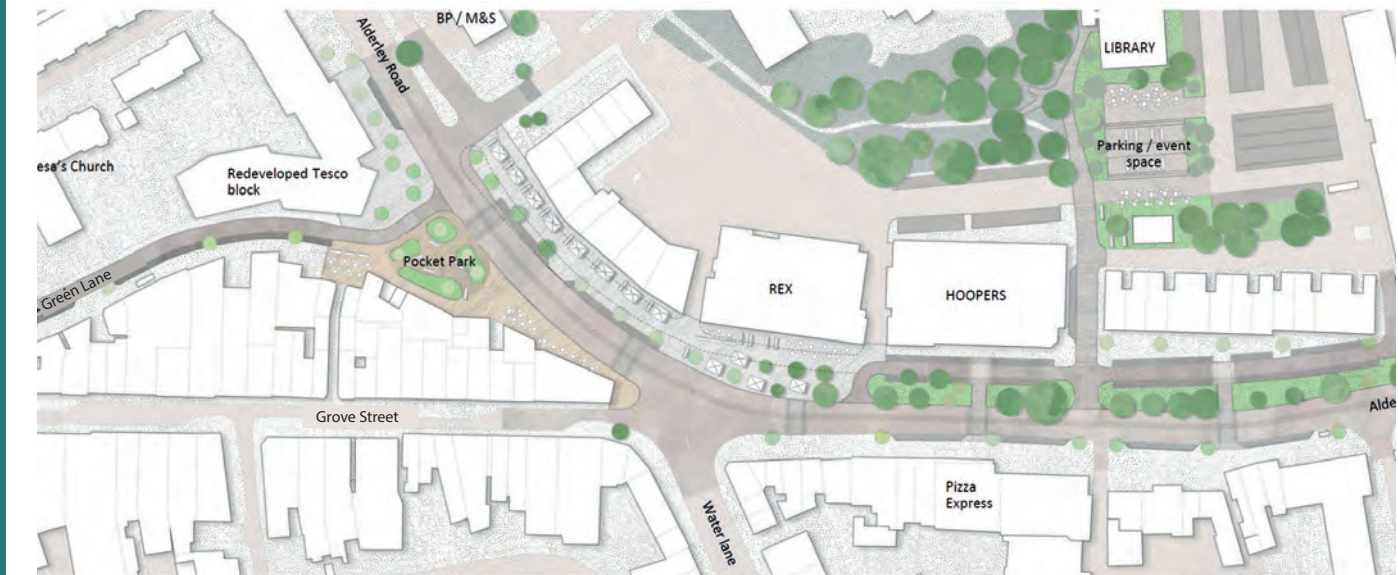


### Toolkit Actions

- 1d Use lighting
- 5b Redesign existing shop fronts to provide a fresh and consistent experience
- 5c Dressing vacant sites
- 9a Repurposing of assets
- 15a Annual/ regular events
- 15b Community organised artwork
- 19a Affordable start-up space to help new businesses establish themselves
- 20b Use space and activities to attract people to a forgotten part of town centre and create new place identity/ Reinvigorated alleyways
- 21a managed activation of underutilised space
- 21b Flexible office space
- 21c Empty unit exhibitions
- 22a Creating exciting new spaces
- 22b Bringing vacant buildings back into residential use
- 23 Redevelopment plans



Wilmslow Public Realm Masterplan (Image Credit: Annabelle Tugby Architects 2021)







## Action 4: Creating stronger gateways into the Centre

### What

Make more of welcoming visitors into the centre clearly demonstrating when they have arrived and how they can get to key destinations within the Centre maximising the opportunity to showcase the town assets. This in turn should support landlords to invest more in their properties

Improved gateways also offer an opportunity to capture passing visitors and commuters for example, along busy surrounding streets, inviting more impromptu and regular visits to the Town Centre.

The TC has just accessed £160,000 from CEC for landscape improvements and a new play area for Little Lindow.

### How

- Enhanced gateway signage and/or features, which could be linked to a Town Centre branding campaign / local arts & sculpture / lighting, to clearly illustrate distinctive welcome points to the Town Centre - a unique to Wilmslow arrival experience. Gateway features could also be informative, regularly updated to communicate latest attractions, events and things to do across the town
- Connecting physical signage with virtual trails and smart phone app technology, (for example using QR codes / augmented reality) so those visiting have a seamless journey from Town Centre arrival to interaction and wayfinding across the Town Centre
- Establishing themed spotter trails to encourage visitors to explore different parts of the centre. For example a trail celebrating Alan Turing or spotter trails within shop windows for younger children and families to uncover across the Town

### Who

- Town Council
- Local businesses

### Where

Key gateways to focus on could include:

- Manchester Road & A538 approach to the Town Centre - local signage as well as a more visible presence onto the Birrell Way & MacLean Way

- Station Road & Manchester Road - an important nodal point from Train Station to Town Centre Mill Street / Manchester Road
- Water Lane and Hawthorn Street junction at Little Lindow
- Alderley Road in proximity to the Coach & Four pub and bus stop



Culture Mile, Farringdon, London. (Photo Credit: Culture Mile Part 2. Used with permission from Richard Wolfströme.)



### Action 4 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

- 4b Better signage
- 4c Better bus stops
- 4e Enhance gateway sites
- 5a Upgrade public realm
- 5d Dressing vacant spaces
- 15b Community organised artwork





# Action 5: Expanding the events programme

### What

Wilmslow already has an established programme of events, many of which are organised by Voluntary Groups, including monthly Artisan Market, Festival of Nature including the Car Free Street Day and a track record of holding regular great sporting events such as Wilmslow Half Marathon. These should be expanded to attract a wider mix of attendees and promoted widely to raise awareness.

### How

- Re-establish the existing programme of events (post Covid) and consider themes around which new events could be established. The recent Film & Fashion event utilising the Rex Cinema and the opening of the House of Gucci to showcase a number of local businesses including Black White Denim was a great local initiative and scope exists to replicate this around other films
- Hold events across a variety of locations including Leisure Centre, Carnival Park and other open spaces
- The Wilmslow’s Way Better communication channels can be used to promote activities as can the Communication Officer
- Review if scope to allow service roads along Alderley Road to be used for staging events

### Who

- Town Council
- BID and local businesses
- Voluntary Groups

### Where

- Across the town (see Priority Action 2)



## Action 5 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



## Toolkit Actions

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



# Action 6: Raising the Centre’s profile

### What

Wilmslow has just launched a new website and brand for the town Wilmslow’s Way Better (see below) to be a collective voice of businesses. It showcases many exciting aspects of the town; its wellbeing, food and beverage, cinema, businesses, shopping and how to explore the wider area, offering news and newsletters as well as how to get to the centre and where to park. Ideally this should become the go to single website/ platform for the time Town which provides links to other partners websites to showcase what the town offers in terms of shops, amenities, events, education and opportunities to get involved.

### How

- Scope to grow and continue to showcase what the town has to offer via the Wilmslow’s Way Better platform. Next steps could include making links to other partner’s websites such as CEC, Town Council and Marketing Cheshire to enhance “footfall” on the pages
- The Wilmslow Hub, formerly Rex Revival Group, comprises of a small number of volunteers in Wilmslow who aim to promote what Wilmslow has to offer in terms of upcoming events, local initiatives, clubs and voluntary organisations. The Wilmslow Hub aims to be a place where the community feels welcome to ask questions about their towns groups and clubs, discusses

local issues and wishes to encourage community spirit via the sharing of information

- Improved signage (physical and virtual via app/ QR code) to stop people just passing through
- Establish Town Ambassadors
- Better promote existing ongoing activities in the centre (e.g. leisure centre classes), events and raise awareness of businesses
- Ensure that key messages from the Vitality Plan are fed into the Visitor Economy Strategy that is being prepared by CEC
- Establish stronger links with tourist attractions in the local area including Quarry Bank Mill
- Hold events across a variety of locations including Leisure Centre, Carnival Park and other open spaces
- Transition Wilmslow is currently working with the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Group to establish a “Countryside Access Guide to Wilmslow and its Environs”. This will complement the existing cycle guide

### Who

- Town Council / Marketing and events sub group
- Groundwork
- BID and local businesses
- Voluntary Groups

### Where

- N/A



## Action 6 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



## Toolkit Actions

- **2a Create a smarter High street**
- **3b Appointment of town centre champions**
- **3c Destination management plans**
- **6a Establishing a BID**
- **10a Independent shop guides**
- **12a Create an App**
- **12b Creation of Local Brand**
- **12c Set-up an online platform**
- **12d Introduce WIFI/town app**







# Action 7: Mobilising the business community

## What

Wilmslow benefits from a large business community including professional services and health and beauty in addition to retail and leisure. A Business Improvement District has just been established.

## How

Business collaboration – recent Film & Fashion Festival is a great example of how businesses can collaborate to entice a wider audience into the Centre to spend more money around an exciting event. More events where businesses can collaborate around a film is a great idea which should be replicated. Not only does this collaboration potentially support the Town but it can help individual businesses to thrive creating improved business conditions and new opportunities to drive revenue

If engaged around issues/opportunities that relate to their core function, businesses may be able to provide the following to support the Town’s aspirations:

- Sponsorship
- Materials
- Technical support
- Volunteers

## Who

- CEC
- Town Council
- Groundwork
- BID and local businesses especially larger (such as the Emerson Group) and dynamic/innovative/creative businesses

## Where

- Across Wilmslow



## Action 7 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Heritage assets** - To celebrate and enhance Wilmslow’s designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst encouraging more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and understand the town’s history
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



## Toolkit Actions

- 5b Redesign existing shop fronts
- 6a Establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID)
- 13a Business profiles
- 13b Community wealth building
- 19a Affordable start up space
- 21c Empty unit exhibitions
- 25e Prioritise more sustainable businesses
- 25f Tap into local talent



# Action 8: Making more of community assets

## What

Better link existing community assets to establish a community hub providing an enhanced local offer. Focus on Library, The Rex Cinema and Wilmslow Leisure Centre and the routes between

## How

- WIG has commissioned a feasibility study into the potential of creating a new public space in front of the library linking to Alderley Road Boulevard.
- Project should be considered alongside Action 1 (Green Links) and 9 (Management of cars)
- Scope for the Town Council to consider playing a more active role in the management of some of these assets

## Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- Wilmslow Hub

## Where

Within and between Library, The Rex Cinema and Wilmslow Leisure Centre



## Action 8 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Community, Leisure and Recreation** – To promote Wilmslow as a destination rich in community and leisure facilities
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space



## Toolkit Actions

- 3a Managing assets
- 4e Enhance gateway sites
- 9a Repurposing assets
- 9b Curated events
- 10a Independent shop guides
- 16a Self-guided heritage tours
- 21c Empty unit exhibitions







## Action 9: Better management of Movement (Priority from public consultation)

### What

Although the A34 bypasses Wilmslow town centre, significant traffic volumes are frequently observed in the town centre and congestion can build up on key routes – along Manchester Road, Alderley Road and Water Lane.

There is a need to increase pedestrian priority, slow traffic speeds and reduce the dominance of highway infrastructure especially in the heart of the centre. The evidence base that underpins the Wilmslow Parking Strategy (published in February 2020) suggests that the demand for off-street parking exceeds supply. However, the Council needs to review whether demand continues to exceed supply following the COVID-19 pandemic. There is also a need to consider whether car parking management can be improved to help achieve a better balance in long stay vs short stay car parking. A review of on-street parking is needed to improve parking turnover and use of street space. This could include better use of service road space for pop-up kerbside activity. This review should be completed as part of the wider parking strategy for the town, which is set out in the Wilmslow Parking Strategy.

The Wilmslow Parking Strategy identified a potential opportunity to deliver a multi-storey car park at Broadway Meadow. Initial high level feasibility work has been completed, and the Council is continuing to monitor ticket sales for all car parks in Wilmslow. Once demand, travel patterns and consumer behaviours have stabilised following the recovery from the pandemic, the assumptions used within the high level feasibility work will need to be reviewed.

The Council should also consider introducing EV charging points at Council owned car parks in line with the borough-wide EV Strategy and Implementation Plan, which has been adopted to guide the roll out of charging provision, including Wilmslow.

Link to CEC's Share the Road campaign calling for the public to be kind and considerable to each other to help keep each other safe on the road.

### How

- Undertake review of car parking in the town centre to ensure there is sufficient supply of parking in appropriate location for key users - very short stay shoppers to pop in, medium stay for longer visitors and longer stay for workers. Consideration also needs to be given to the residential parking in the vicinity of the centre.
- Undertake viability study for Broadway Meadow MSCP once more normal post COVID-19 office working patterns are established.
- Support development of public realm proposals, including public and business consultation on proposals.
- Trial pop-up uses for the service roads, both through localised changes (e.g. parklets) and temporary full suspension of parking on market days.

### Who

- CEC Parking Services
- CEC Highways
- Town Council

### Where

- Broadway Meadow (MSCP)
- Town Centre
- Alderley Road (inc Service Road)
- Hawthorn Grove (parking management review)
- Alma Lane & Beech Lane (parking management review)



### Action 9 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Business** – To promote Wilmslow as a thriving and diverse business community
- **Natural Environment** – To protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



### Toolkit Actions

- 11a design a holistic public realm scheme
- 14b Reduce traffic speeds
- 14c Enhanced crossings
- 14a Quick-wins and temporary interventions to manage traffic speeds and create more pedestrian friendly spaces – e.g. planters, parklets and street furniture in all cases
- 14e Decked and multi-storey car parks
- 14f Better managed car parking
- 20a Remove clutter from key pedestrian routes and simplify crossing points
- 25c Facilitate modal shift





# Action 10: Embracing cycling

## What

Given its demographics and its existing assets, in particular the established cycling café, there is scope to expand the local cycling culture to support the wellbeing of residents as well as attracting more visitors into the Centre. This could encourage interest in cycling and improve related facilities.

Support the introduction of high-quality safe cycling routes throughout the town, as identified by the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Consider the location of cycle hubs linked to improve green links (Action 1) and provide safe secure cycle parking throughout the town centre and at the railway station.

Consider introducing a cycle or e-scooter hire scheme in the town centre.

## How

- Explore quick wins for improving cycling safety on key streets throughout the town (e.g. providing Advanced Stop Lines on major junctions).
- Explore design options for routes identified as key active travel connections in the Local Transport Development Plan (LTDP).
- Explore design options for Wilmslow to Handforth Rail Station, as identified in the LCWIP.
- Explore design options for Wilmslow to Waters Employment Site, as identified in the LCWIP.
- Improve signage and wayfinding across town.

## Who

- Town Council
- CEC
- CEC Cycling Champion

## Where

- Wilmslow town centre
- Wilmslow train station
- Station Road



Opportunities for bicycle and scooter rentals would encourage visitors and residents to cycle to different destinations within the town (Photo Credit: Getty)



Park Lane, Liverpool Streets with higher flows of traffic will require segregated cycle tracks if they are to attract use by people of all ages and abilities (Photo Credit: MottMacDonald)



## Action 9 supports the following objectives:

- **Built Environment** – To sustain Wilmslow as a desirable place to live, work and play by providing new homes for all ages which address local needs, include community and green spaces and encourage an environmentally sensitive, sustainable approach.
- **Town Core** – To maximise the visual quality of the Town Core, improving and encouraging access by sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of vehicles and the creation of an attractive accessible destination space
- **Transport, Access and Infrastructure** – To create a safe, pedestrian- friendly environment. To promote alternatives to vehicular use by improving cycling and walking facilities. To support the improvement of public transport.



## Toolkit Actions

- 7e Bike and scooter parking



# Centre Wide Actions

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

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

2. **Creation of a Centres Forum** - Establishment of forum where key representatives from each of the centres could come together on a regular basis to receive updates from CEC about common issues/ opportunities would be beneficial. It is also recognised that during the preparation of the Vitality Plans that a number of the centres are making a great progress overcoming specific issues. By coming together and sharing progress and discussing issues

it is considered that the centres would be better able to share best practice and to identify actions where they could collaborate with other centres to drive economies of scale/value for money. Some meetings may just be held between the centres (within out representation from CEC officers) whilst others could include CEC and/or other partners such as C&W LEP, Groundwork etc.

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

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

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

6. **Improved platform for communicating activities** - the preparation of the Vitality Plans has demonstrated that all of the centres are proactively trying to improve their centres. However it is recognised that many stakeholders will not be aware of all these efforts. Consideration therefore needs to be given as to how to amplify to more local residents, shoppers, visitors and businesses what is going on. Wilmslow has just launched a new website which is a significant step to support this. Now the focus

should be on adding more content and sharing this through a variety of channels and to ensure that these are also linked to other key partners for example CEC and the other centres (so collectively they reinforcing each other’s profiles)

7. **Enhanced engagement with local businesses** - many of the centres benefit from having a range of national, and in some cases international businesses, many of which are innovating in their specialist areas. There is a significant benefit to the centres and their businesses to collaborating. Whilst restrictions on public sector revenue budgets is putting pressure on what CEC can support there is an increasing recognition by businesses, especially corporates, for the need to support their local communities (Corporate Social Responsibility). This can be in the form of grants, offering expertise or encouraging their employees to volunteer. Even smaller businesses often want to give back to the communities in which they operate. This can be in the form of materials and/or specialist expertise (e.g. marketing which has been harnesses by Wilmslow in setting up the Wilmslow’s Way Better brand and website). All centres

should seek to better engage with their local businesses to determine how they can collaborate to support each other’s objectives. This type of collaboration can give centres a significant boost particularly when it happens around public realm (investment and maintenance), marketing and branding.

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



# 11 Delivery

## Governance and Delivery

The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group (WIG) is tasked with driving the aspirations of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan and the Wilmslow Town Council forward and good progress is being made in achieving this. A number of feasibility studies have been undertaken and more are ongoing investigating how public realm (which has been identified as the key priority) can be enhanced. Progress is also being made in accessing funding to deliver projects for example the Little Lindow park improvements.

Going forward WIG will continue to be a major driver for the delivery of the agreed actions emerging from the Vitality Plan. Having established a range of potential projects that will support Wilmslow to thrive, further work is now required to determine a detailed action plan setting out who will do what and by when.

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

- Defining the details of the proposed action
- Considering how it could be funded
- Determining who needs to be involved in supporting its delivery and what their role will be

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

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

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

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

It is acknowledged that partners will need to determine their appetite and ability to deliver the proposed actions. Depending on resources it may be determined that additional staff may need to be recruited to support the pace of delivery of the Vitality Plan and supporting Action Plans as Wilmslow has recently done with the appointment of a part time communications officer.

## Communication and Engagement

Wilmslow Town Council recognises the importance of harnessing its local businesses to support the Centre to thrive. They appointed Groundwork to support managing the Centre with a specific focus on engaging with local businesses. The BID has been voted in and started in November 2022.

The launch of the Wilmslow’s Way Better is a powerful brand and platform to support enhanced communication with a range of partners. The focus at this stage has been on engaging businesses but it also works well for engaging with residents and visitors. The role out of the brand and establishment of the vibrant website has already delivered a step change in the ability of Wilmslow to communicate with a wider audience to improve both the perceptions of the centre but importantly in terms of what it has to offer.

In parallel to this enhanced business engagement the recent appointment of a part time Communication and Community Engagement officer for Wilmslow will support enhanced communication with local residents.

There is a need to begin to share important messages with key stakeholders including:

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

- How to get involved

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

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

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

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

- Enhanced website and strengthen profile on social media – building upon the Wilmslow’s Way Better to include recent investment and future proposals
- Public engagement consultations – the draft Vitality Plan will be consulted upon and this be used to continue the dialogue with local residents

- Piggybacking Events – for example a stall at markets showcasing what’s on in Wilmslow and how to get involved

- Existing and enhanced business networking events – to share emerging ideas, test support and encourage ideas to refine and support their delivery

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

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



Funding

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

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

between stakeholders and community support is essential

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

The recently established BID will generate spend which will be spent on locally agreed priorities. The Vitality Plan and subsequent agreed Action Plan will be a useful tool to supporting the BID process.

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

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

Phasing

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

The public consultation identified the following as priority interventions:

- Creating more opportunities to dwell in the centre
- Improving the Town’s Core
- Better Management of Movement

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

Covid has taught us important lessons about testing new approaches. For example temporary road closures to gauge whether reducing car access to encourage cycling or to provide outside dining space would benefit local centres. This approach should be continued so that rather than a public realm project having to be worked up in huge detail and then significant resources found to deliver it more temporary solutions can

be tested in terms of their impact and determine whether a more permanent solution is required or desirable. Changes are much more likely to be embraced by businesses and supported by local residents if they know that ideas are being tested and monitored and if they do not work can be reverted back to how they were.

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

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

Phasing Key

Ongoing

Short Term

Medium Term





Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Groundwork is currently supporting the Town Council to engage with businesses and they have developed a dashboard to demonstrate engagement with businesses this includes the following indicators

- Activity with contacts
- Vacant Retail property
- Trading Accounts
- Business activity broken down by retail and non retail

They are also tracking business confidence.

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

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

Technical Terms

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





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