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Spatial Portrait



3 Spatial Portrait

3.1 The Spatial Portrait sets out what Cheshire East and the surrounding area is like in 2013. It looks at 'Cheshire East's Key Characteristics' before painting a picture of each of its 'Principal Towns', 'Key Service Centres' and 'Local Service Centres' followed by a brief overview of the 'Other Settlements and Rural Areas'. Finally, the Spatial Portrait looks at the characteristics of and linkages with the 'Surrounding Areas'.

Cheshire East's Key Characteristics

3.2 The key 'Economic', 'Social', 'Environmental' and 'Connectivity' characteristics of the Borough are set out in the sections below.

Economic

3.3 The economy of Cheshire East is diverse and generally vibrant. The Borough provides 6.6% of the economic output in the North West⁽¹⁾ and 7.6% of the region's businesses - the highest share of any North West Unitary or District authority⁽²⁾. Its residents make up a significant proportion of the 'knowledge economy' workforce that drives the region: around 69,000 of its residents work in managerial or professional occupations - which is higher than in any other North West unitary or district authority apart from Manchester⁽³⁾. Cheshire East performs better than the regional and UK averages in skill levels⁽⁴⁾, business start ups⁽⁵⁾ and knowledge-based employment⁽⁶⁾.

3.4 The number of people employed in the pharmaceutical industry and in Research and Development (R&D) is significantly above the Great Britain average with particular concentrations in the former Macclesfield district, for example AstraZeneca⁽⁷⁾. Advanced engineering is a significant employer in the Crewe area, for example Bentley Motors. Crewe, Handforth and Knutsford are significant net importers of labour, whereas in Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Poynton and Sandbach there is a relative shortage of jobs and a large net outflow of workers, whilst Wilmslow's inflows and outflows are broadly equal⁽⁸⁾. The rural nature of the Borough is reflected in the relatively high number of people employed in agriculture which is above the England average⁽⁹⁾.

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- 1 Regional GVA NUTS3 data 2011, ONS
 - 2 Business Demography 2011: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, ONS
 - 3 Annual Population Survey, Apr 2012-Mar 2013, ONS. Figure relates to Standard Occupational Classification 2010 (SOC2010) Major Groups 1 (Managers and Senior Officials) and 2 (Professional Occupations)
 - 4 Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2012, ONS. Based on the proportion of the working-age (16-64) population who had a qualification at or above NVQ Level 4 (first degree level) as of 2012
 - 5 [1] Business Demography 2011: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, ONS. [2] Population estimates 2011, ONS. Based on the business birth rate (births per 10,000 residents aged 16+)
 - 6 Annual Population Survey Workplace Analysis, Apr 2012-Mar 2013, ONS. Based on the proportion of employment at Cheshire East sites which consists of people working as Managers and Senior Officials or in Professional Occupations (SOC2010 Major Groups 1 and 2)
 - 7 [1] AstraZeneca website information on its employment at local sites. [2] Local knowledge about other local pharmaceutical industry employment sites. [3] Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2011, ONS. Pharmaceuticals defined here as all activities that fall within SIC2007 code 21 and R&D as those covered by SIC2007 code 72
 - 8 [1] Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2011, ONS. [2] 2011 Census data on the numbers of local residents (of each town) who are in employment. Net commuting flows were calculated by deducting residence-based employment (Census figures) from workplace-based employment (BRES figures)
 - 9 [1] June 2010 Agricultural & Horticultural (A&H) Survey, Defra. [2] Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2010, ONS. The BRES excludes farm-based agricultural employment from its Local Authority estimates, so Cheshire East's agricultural employment share was calculated by taking the June 2010 A&H Survey estimate and dividing by total employment (2010 BRES figure plus the A&H Survey estimate)



Labour Force

3.5 The 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment data shows that over two-thirds (69%) of Cheshire East's economically active residents place of work is in the Borough.

3.6 An estimated 172,300 people were working in Cheshire East in 2011, as either employees or working proprietors. Of those working as employees (166,300), 70% were full-time and 30% part-time. 13% of employees worked in the health and social work sector, with manufacturing (12%), professional, scientific and technical activities (11%) and retail (11%) also accounting for a large proportion of the employee total⁽¹⁰⁾.

Income Levels

3.7 The latest available average (mean) household income figure (2010) for Cheshire East is £39,900 per year, however there are significant differences in income levels across the Borough⁽¹¹⁾. Seven towns and major settlements have a mean income below the Cheshire East average: of these, five (Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Nantwich and Sandbach) are in the south of the Borough; only Handforth and Macclesfield are in the north. Conversely, high mean incomes are more prevalent in the north of the Borough: Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow are all above the Cheshire East average (as is Middlewich further south). Mean incomes are also above the Borough average in Cheshire East's rural areas. This is shown in figure 3.1 below.

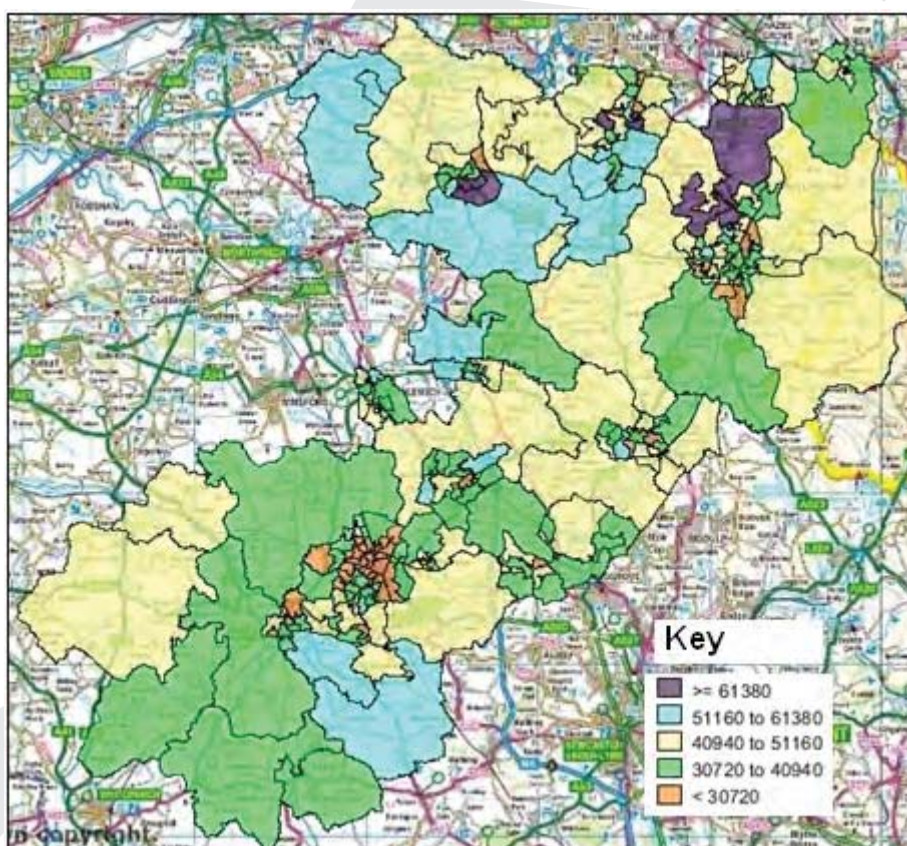


Figure 3.1 Mean Average Yearly Household Income in Cheshire East

10 Business Register and Employment Survey 2011, ONS

11 2010 Paycheck data, CACI Limited.



Skills

3.8 The Borough has major educational assets, in terms of skills development and knowledge transfer, in the form of Manchester Metropolitan University at Crewe and three Further Education colleges: South Cheshire, Reaseheath and Macclesfield. Jodrell Bank is of great scientific significance as a leading facility for radio-astronomy and scientific research in the UK.

Manchester Airport

3.9 The proximity of Manchester International Airport provides considerable economic benefits to the Borough by providing access to national and international markets as well as supporting a substantial number of jobs, both directly and indirectly. In 2004, the Airport was estimated to contribute £1.7 billion of economic impact nationally, supporting over 35,000 jobs in the North West⁽¹²⁾.

Mineral Working

3.10 Mineral extraction plays an important role in both the local and wider economy. The mineral resources worked in Cheshire East are silica or industrial sand, construction sand, sandstone, salt (in brine) and peat. Permitted mineral sites are situated across the Borough as illustrated in figure 3.2 below.

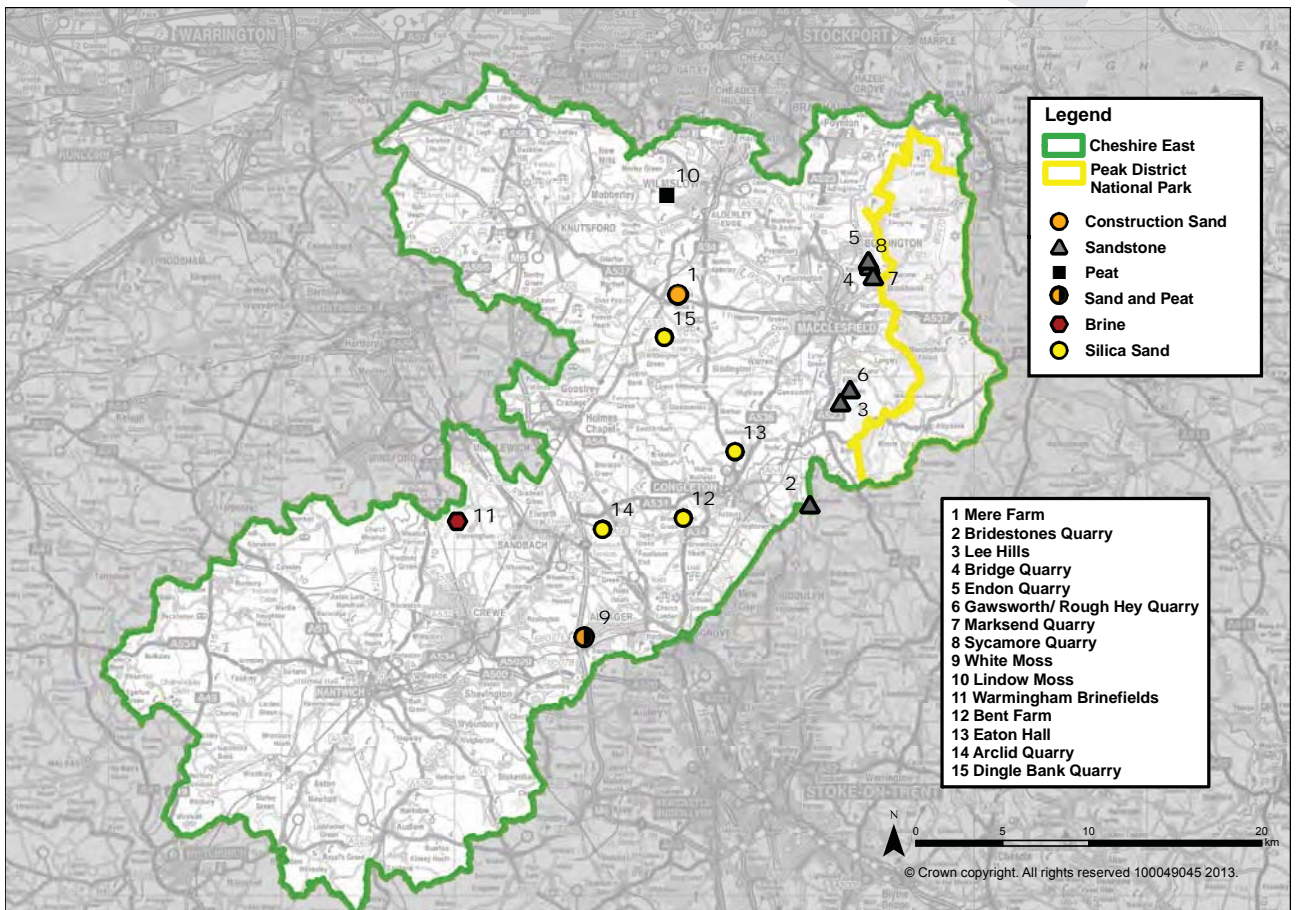


Figure 3.2 Mineral Sites in Cheshire East

12 Manchester Airport Masterplan to 2030



Waste Management

3.11 Evidence shows that about 870,000 tonnes of waste were generated in Cheshire East in 2009. This is predicted to fall to about 797,000 tonnes by 2030⁽¹³⁾. The principal types of waste arising in Cheshire East are municipal (including household), commercial and industrial (C&I), construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) and hazardous. The way in which waste is managed has been changing significantly with decreasing amounts being disposed of to landfill and increasing amounts being recycled.



Figure 3.3 Mineral Operations and Waste Collection in Cheshire East

Retailing

3.12 Cheshire East has a diverse retail offer, ranging from a mix of central and out-of-town multiple retailers in our larger towns, to stronger niche independent retailing in some of our smaller towns. In common with most of the country, some of our town centres have struggled in the face of changing consumer trends, particularly the growth in retailing via the internet and competitor destinations offering a larger mix of retail and leisure. However, there is strong evidence that new investment can recapture a larger share of local consumer expenditure and footfall, which is an approach being driven forward through regeneration programmes led by the Council with the support of our business communities.

13 Urban Mines (2011) 'Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils - Waste Needs Assessment Report'



Visitor Economy

3.13 The visitor economy is an important contributor to the Cheshire East economy with about 9,000 jobs associated with the tourism industry and a turnover of £700 million⁽¹⁴⁾. Major attractions include Tatton Park, Jodrell Bank, Lyme Park, Quarry Bank Mill, the canal network and the Peak District National Park. There are a number of National Trust properties in the Borough including Little Moreton Hall and Nether Alderley Mill.



Figure 3.4 Tourist Destinations: The Canal Network, Jodrell Bank and Tatton Park

Social

Local Housing Market

3.14 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010 and 2013 Update (SHMA) considers that, on the basis of migration and travel to work data, Cheshire East is an appropriate geography for planning purposes over which to assess and meet housing requirements and comprises of three functional housing market areas: one is focused on the former Macclesfield district and exhibits strong interactions with the South Manchester market; a second is focused on the former Crewe and Nantwich district and is largely self-contained; the third is centred around Congleton. At the Borough scale there are noticeable market interactions with North Staffordshire and South Manchester (see figure 3.5)

14 STEAM Report 2012, Marketing Cheshire. The figures relate to 2012 and turnover is in 2012 prices. The jobs figures includes indirect job creation

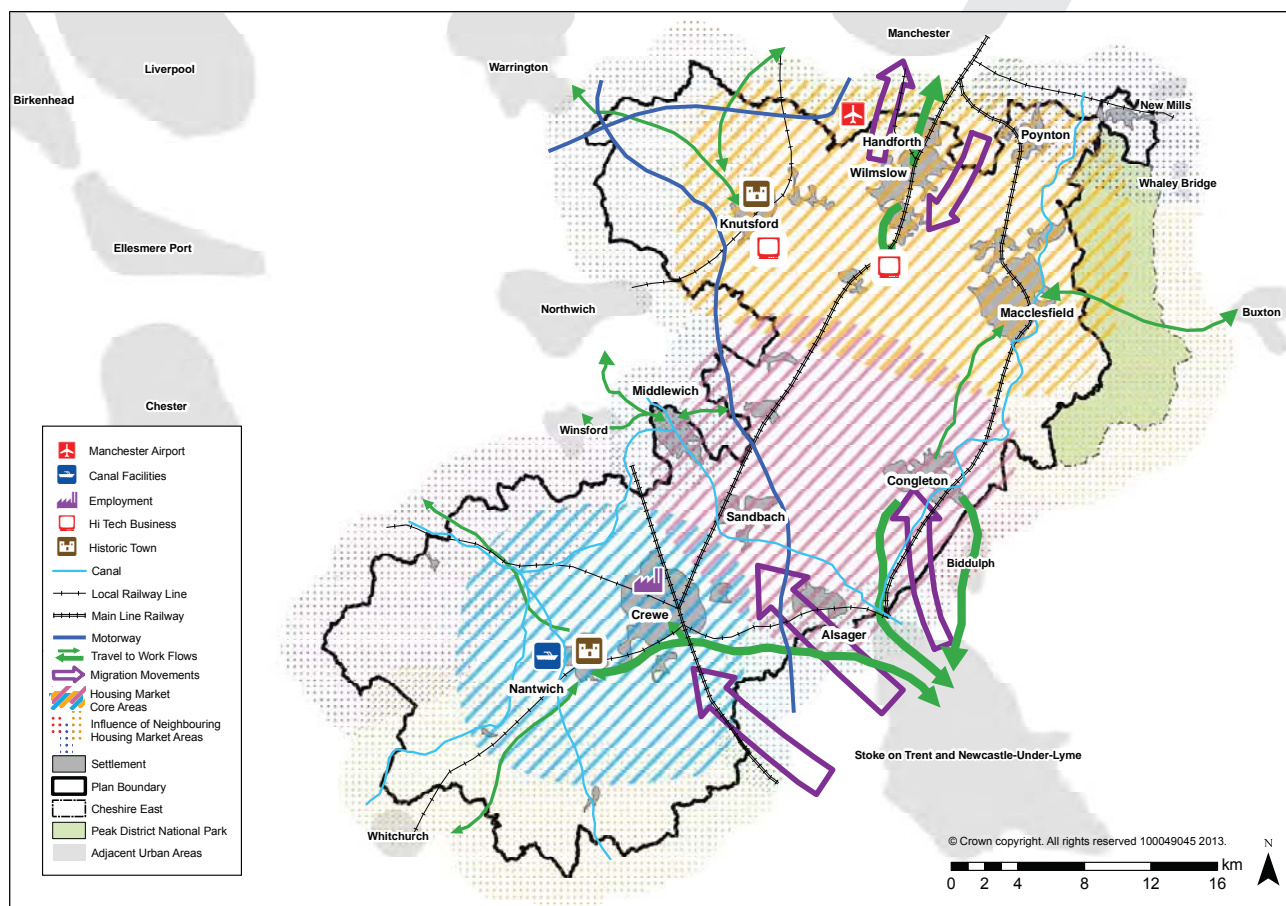


Figure 3.5 Cheshire East Functional Diagram

Population

3.15 Cheshire East has a population of 372,100, 51% (189,700) are female and 49% (182,400) are male⁽¹⁵⁾. This represents 0.66% of the population of England and Wales. The population pyramid in figure 3.6 shows the age distribution of Cheshire East residents. It reveals a lower than average proportion of both male and females for residents under the age of 40 compared to England & Wales. The proportions are particularly low (greater than one percentage point below the England & Wales average) for residents aged 20 to 34. Conversely, Cheshire East has an above average proportion of residents within each of the five year age bands over the age of 40. The relatively low proportion of people of working age and relatively high proportion of older people has implications for the housing needs of the population and for the future economic prosperity of the Borough.

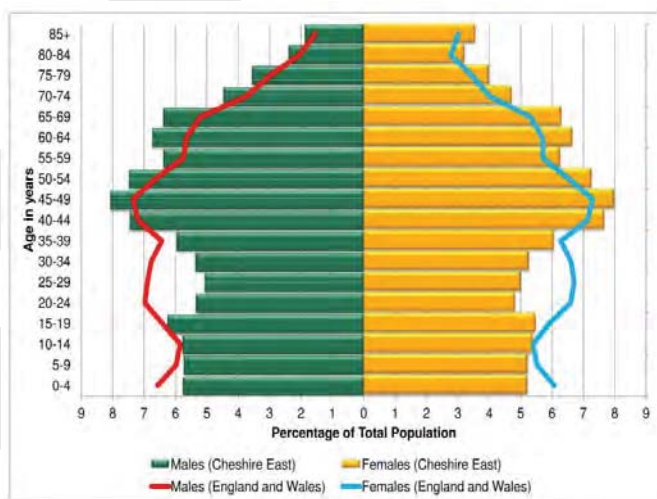


Figure 3.6 Population Pyramid for Cheshire East 2012 (Mid Year Estimates)

15 Mid-2012 Population Estimates, ONS



3.16 Over the ten year period from July 2000 until June 2010, 159,800 people moved into Cheshire East and 146,700 people moved out of the Borough. The result is a net in-flow of 13,100 people (an average of 1,310 each year)⁽¹⁶⁾.

Households

3.17 Information from the 2011 Census of population shows that within Cheshire East there were 159,400 households with an average household size of around 2.29 people. Housing need is expected to increase as a result of national trends, including predicted increases in the population and changes to household sizes resulting from an increased number of divorces and separations, and an ageing population. The 2011 Interim Household Projections show an increase in the number of households from 159,600 in 2011 to 170,000 in 2021. This equates to an average yearly increase of 1,000 households per year between 2011 and 2021.

House Prices

3.18 House prices across Cheshire East and its former districts have increased dramatically over the period 1996 to 2012 from median house prices of £59,833 in 1996 to £174,950 in the autumn of 2012, with median prices peaking at £185,843 during 2007⁽¹⁷⁾. This represents an increase of 192% in median house prices over a 16 year period.

3.19 Cheshire East has a ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings of 6.51 (2012 provisional, ratio of LQ prices to LQ earnings : table 576, CLG). This means that the price of a house at the top end of the cheapest quarter of all houses costs 6.51 times the earnings of a person who earns the most out of the lowest quarter of all earnings. In terms of relative affordability, the Borough is ranked the sixth least affordable District in the North West⁽¹⁷⁾.

Deprivation

3.20 The Index of Multiple Deprivation data (IMD 2010) combines a number of economic, social and environmental indicators to assess and identify levels of deprivation in a particular area. These indicators are then combined to provide an overall score identifying the level of deprivation at a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level.

3.21 There are 23 LSOAs in Cheshire East which are amongst the 25 per cent most deprived in England: most (fourteen) of these are in Crewe and three are in Macclesfield. Six other towns and major settlements each have a single LSOA that ranks among England's most deprived 25 per cent: Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Nantwich and Wilmslow. Five LSOAs, all in Crewe, are amongst the 10 per cent most deprived in England. Conversely, there are 121 LSOAs in Cheshire East which are amongst the 25 per cent least deprived, which includes 71 that are amongst the 10 per cent least deprived⁽¹⁸⁾.

Environmental

Landscape Character

3.22 Cheshire East's landscape is characterised by the contrast between the extensive flat lowland plain and gently rolling farmland bordered to the west of the Borough with the distinctive sandstone ridge and to the east by the rising Pennine foothills. The landscape is characterised by glacial deposits,

16 ONS, Internal Migration by Local Authorities in England and Wales, Mid-year (National Health Service Central Register). www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?&newquery=nhs&geographic-breakdown=Local+Authority+and+County&content-type=Reference+table&pageSize=50&applyFilters=true&sortBy=pubdate&sortDirection=DESCENDING

17 Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) update 2013

18 English Indices of Deprivation 2010, Department of Communities and Local Government



river valleys with wooded cloughs, unimproved features including mosses, heaths, meres and a number of designated parkland estates. There is also a diverse and valued range of flora and fauna in the Borough.

Nature Conservation

3.23 Key nature conservation sites are shown in the figure 3.7 below.

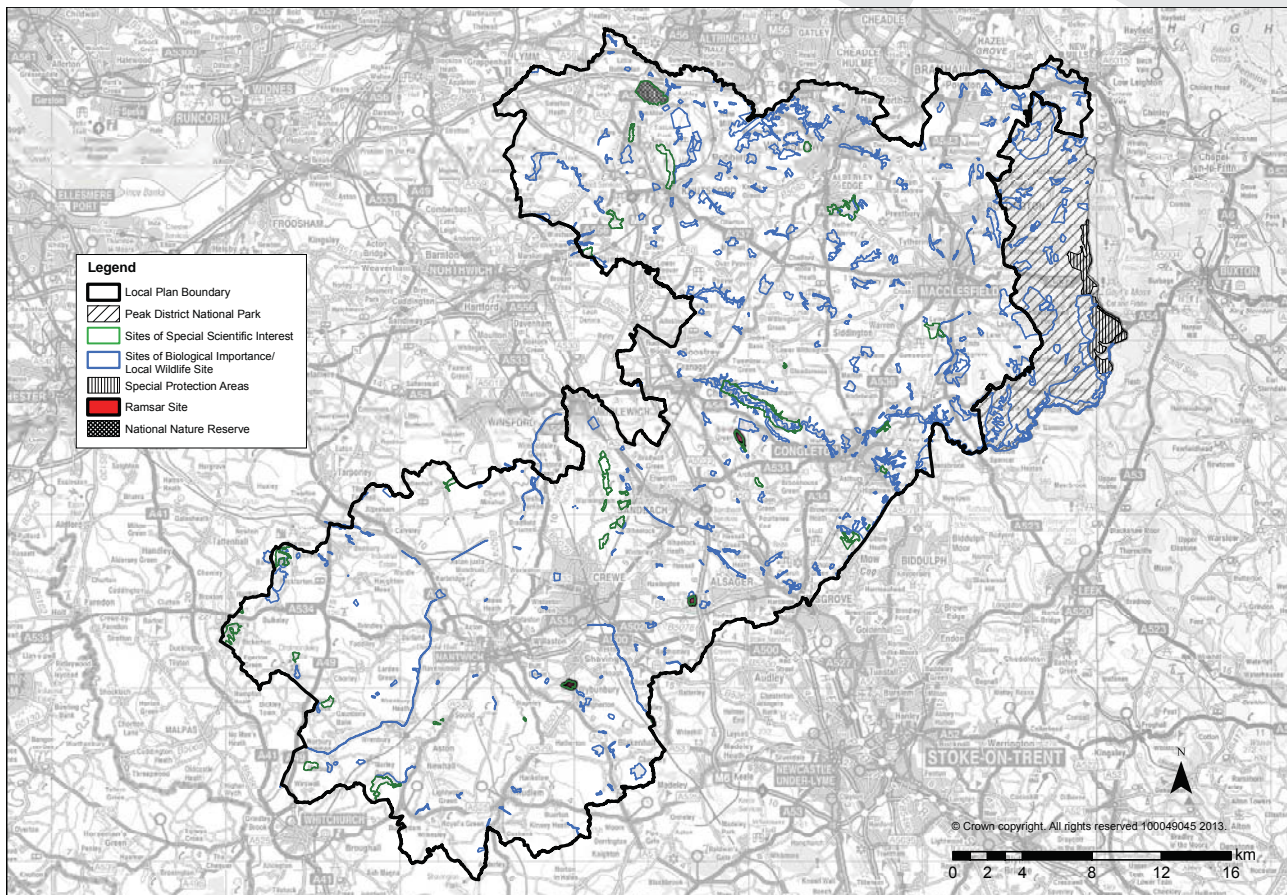


Figure 3.7 Key Nature Conservation Sites in Cheshire East

3.24 The most prominent environmental designations within Cheshire East are:

- The Peak District National Park;
- 1 Special Protection Area;
- 2 Special Areas of Conservation;
- 3 Ramsar designations (spread across nine component sites);
- 33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- 2 National Nature Reserves;
- 416 Sites of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Sites;
- 21 Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites;
- 8 Local Nature Reserves; and
- 1,210 Tree Preservation Orders.

Historic Environment and Heritage

3.25 Cheshire East contains a valued, varied and unique heritage, which includes a number of cultural and environmental assets. These assets include Macclesfield's industrial heritage, Crewe's



railway heritage, Tegg's Nose Country Park, Lindow Man at Lindow Moss, Bickerton and Peckforton Hills, Beeston Castle, the canal network, historic towns and parts of the Peak District National Park, amongst others. Other unique attractions include a wealth of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Borough also has a rich archaeological resource from the prehistoric period to the Second World War, including sites such as the Bridestones Neolithic chambered tomb, the Roman and medieval saltworking remains of Middlewich and Nantwich, the Saxon Sandbach Crosses and the defences of the former airfield at RAF Cranage.

3.26 Formal cultural designations present within Cheshire East include:

- 76 Conservation Areas of varying size and scale;
- 2,644 Listed Buildings covering different gradings;
- 108 Scheduled Monuments;
- 17 Registered Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest;
- 1 Registered Battlefield;
- 10 Areas of Archaeological Potential and 6,708 Sites of Archaeological Importance; and
- 387 Locally Listed Buildings.



Figure 3.8 The Built Environment: Little Moreton Hall, Peckforton Castle and Nantwich Town Centre

Green Belt

3.27 Cheshire East has around 400 square kilometres of land designated as Green Belt, located in the northern and south eastern parts of the Borough. These form part of the Green Belts surrounding Greater Manchester and the Potteries conurbations.



Carbon Dioxide Emissions

3.28 Statistics indicate that, in 2011, Cheshire East's residents, commerce and industry and other non-residential energy uses resulted in carbon dioxide emissions of 3.159m tonnes. This equates to 8.5 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per person, which is more than the regional average of 7.0 tonnes per person. However, CO₂ emissions per person have fallen in recent years: from 10.6 tonnes in 2005 and 9.2 tonnes in 2010⁽¹⁹⁾. This has implications for local, regional and national air quality.

Connectivity

3.29 The extensive road network in the Borough includes the M6 Motorway, which runs north to south through the centre of the Borough and the M56 running east to west at the northern end of Cheshire East. The M56 links to the M6 in the north of the Borough.

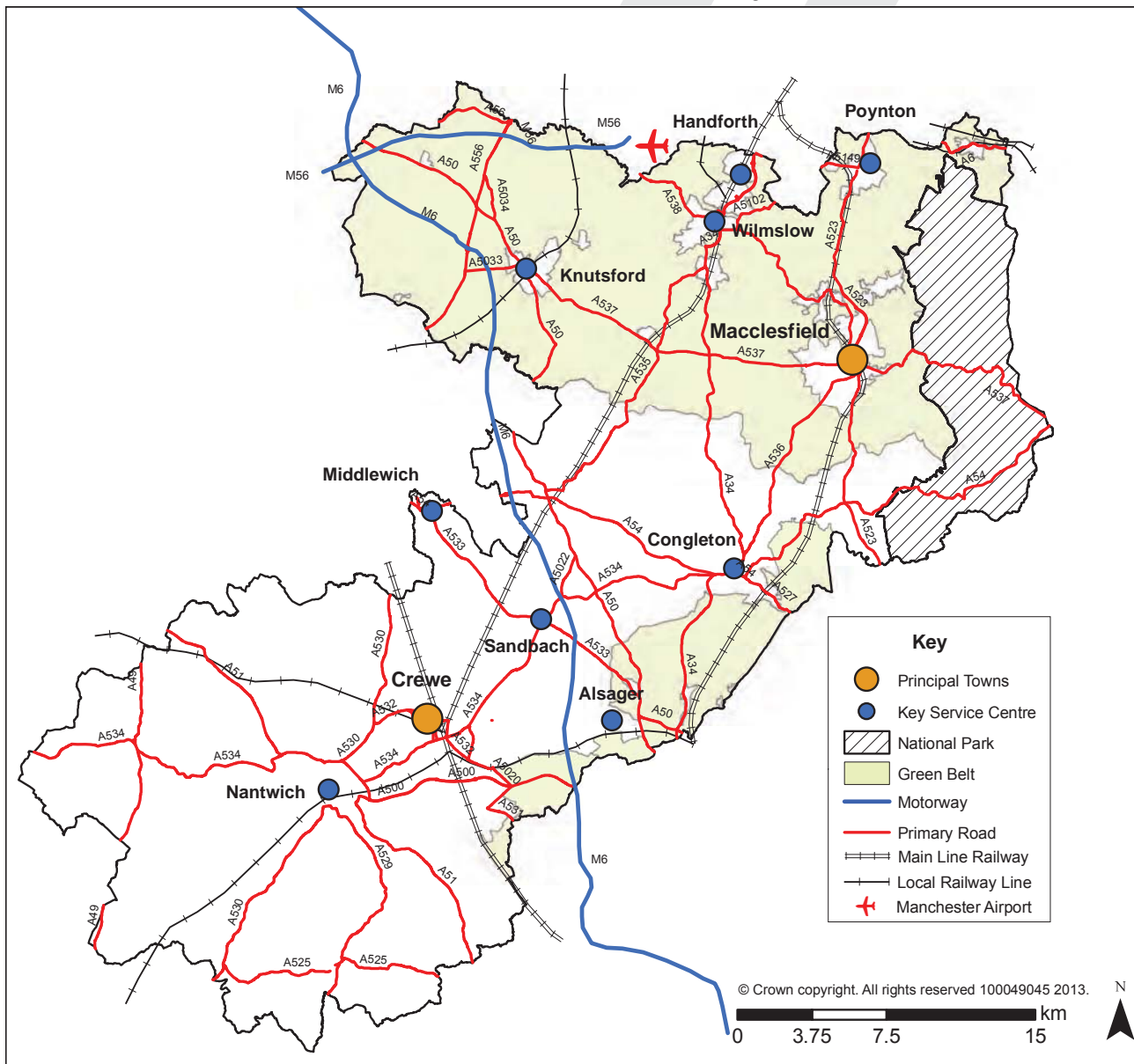


Figure 3.9 Connectivity Map of Cheshire East

19 Local and Regional CO₂ Emissions Estimates for 2005-11, produced by Richardo - AEA for the Department of Energy and Climate Change, Jul 2013. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change/series/sub-national-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics



3.30 The rail network is accessible from 22 railway stations across the Borough. Crewe and Macclesfield are on separate branches of the West Coast Main Line giving access to Greater Manchester and London Euston. Central Government has announced plans for a High Speed 2 rail route from London, through the Borough and up to Manchester and beyond. The initial preferred route from the Department for Transport follows the West Coast Main Line, via Crewe, before passing to the west of Middlewich and through the High Legh area before splitting, with a line going north over the M56 to Manchester Airport and a separate line towards Wigan. Cheshire East Council is supportive of the economic impacts of High Speed Rail but wants to keep environmental impacts to a minimum.

3.31 In addition, Manchester International Airport lies immediately to the north of the Borough, offering worldwide services.

Principal Towns

3.32 The Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield are the largest settlements in the Borough. They provide a wide range of services and opportunities for employment, retail, education and leisure. They serve large catchment areas with high levels of accessibility and public transport provision. However, the two towns are very different in their history, character and urban form.

Crewe

3.33 Crewe is the largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 72,900⁽²⁰⁾. It is a major employment centre with a diversified base in education, manufacturing, services and distribution. Major employers include Bentley Motors, Mornflake, Leighton Hospital and Manchester Metropolitan University. Crewe is the primary shopping centre in the south of the Borough, but the town centre is in need of major investment. The town is also noted for the award winning Crewe Business Park, regarded as the country's first 'green business park'.

3.34 Crewe is often referred to as the 'Gateway to the North West'. It was established as a major railway hub in the late 1830s and it remains a significant railway interchange on the West Coast Main Line with over 1.1 million passengers changing trains per year⁽²¹⁾. As a consequence of the existing railway infrastructure there are problems with railway lines forming significant barriers to connectivity within the town.

3.35 Crewe's unemployment rate is higher than the Borough average⁽²²⁾. In addition, Crewe residents have the lowest average (mean) income within Cheshire East⁽¹¹⁾. Several parts of Crewe are particularly disadvantaged⁽¹⁸⁾ and in parts of the town, male life expectancy is around 10 years less than some of the more affluent areas of Cheshire East; for females, the gap is nearly 15 years⁽²³⁾.

Macclesfield

3.36 Macclesfield is the second largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 52,300⁽²⁰⁾. It is situated in the north eastern part of the Borough on the River Bollin. It is close to the borders of Greater Manchester to the north, and the Peak District to the east.

3.37 Macclesfield was established as a settlement in the 13th Century and later developed around the silk and textiles industries. Present day industries include pharmaceuticals, plastics, architectural and engineering services and advertising and market research⁽¹⁰⁾. One of the world's largest

20 Mid-2011 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas, ONS

21 Station Usage Estimates 2011-12, Office of the National Rail Regulator

22 [1] June 2013 Claimant Count, ONS. [2] Mid-2011 population estimates for Local Authorities and Lower Layer Super Output Areas, ONS

23 Source: Life Expectancy at Birth, Department of Health. Figures relate to 2006-10



pharmaceutical companies, AstraZeneca, is located at the Hurdsfield Industrial Estate in Macclesfield and also at nearby Alderley Park. In addition, many residents work in Greater Manchester.

3.38 Macclesfield has an important retail centre with just under 500 shops. The Cheshire East Strategic Planning Board granted consent in June 2013, subject to a Section 106 legal agreement, for the Silk Street Town Centre Redevelopment which proposes a cinema, shops, restaurants and offices. Although the northern part of Cheshire East is largely very prosperous, Macclesfield suffers localised problems, with some areas of the town experiencing multiple deprivation⁽¹⁸⁾. Its unemployment rate exceeds the Borough average⁽²²⁾.

3.39 The town is well served by bus routes. The railway station is on the West Coast Main Line with direct regular services to Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham, Manchester and London Euston.

Key Service Centres

3.40 Cheshire East is characterised by its many smaller towns, each with its own distinctive history, character and form. These towns lie at the heart of the Borough, and their vitality and growth is essential for the prosperity of the Borough as a whole. Such towns serve as Key Service Centres for a wider locality and usually have a good range of facilities including shops, schools and cultural and leisure facilities.

3.41 The Key Service Centres of Cheshire East are: Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Alsager

3.42 Alsager is a small town in the south east of the Borough with a population of 11,800. It lies east of Crewe and is close to the Potteries conurbation to the south. It was a small farming village until the 19th century when, due to its rail connections and rural character, it became popular with managers from the nearby Potteries. During the Second World War, a large armaments factory was built outside the town at Radway Green, and the town grew to house the influx of factory workers. This site, now with a range of occupiers, remains the town's largest employment location.

3.43 Alsager town centre stretches along the main street and has about 100 retail units. In addition, the town centre includes the recently remodelled Milton Park, a large area of public open space.

3.44 The number of jobs available within the area is low⁽⁸⁾, although the unemployment rate is lower than the Cheshire East average⁽²²⁾. Income levels are generally below the Cheshire East average⁽¹¹⁾. One of the major employers in the town, Twyford, has closed its manufacturing operation (although its distribution operation remains open).

3.45 The town is served by several bus routes that provide access to Crewe, Hanley, Kidsgrove, Nantwich and Sandbach. The Railway Station, which is a short walk from the town centre, provides links to Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Lichfield and on to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston. Junction 16 of the M6 motorway is a short distance away.

Congleton

3.46 Congleton is a large market town with a population of 26,500⁽²⁰⁾. It lies on the River Dane in the east of the Borough. In its early days, it was an important centre of textile production, especially lace and leather gloves. Currently, the principal industries in Congleton include the manufacture of airbags. There are a number of light engineering factories and sand extraction occurs on the Cheshire Plain, although many of the town's residents work in Manchester, Macclesfield and Stoke-on-Trent⁽²⁴⁾.

24 2001 Census, ONS



3.47 Congleton has a reasonably vibrant town centre with about 260 retail units. Planning permission was granted in February 2012 for a retail development in the town centre that will increase the town's attractiveness. The development will take the form of an extension to the Bridestones Centre through to Mill Street, providing a new home for the town's market.

3.48 The town is served by several bus routes and has its own Railway Station with direct services between Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester. The M6 motorway is a short distance away.

Handforth

3.49 Handforth is a suburban area on the northern edge of Cheshire East with a population of 6,600⁽²⁰⁾. In the 1950s, two overspill housing estates were built in the area to re-house people from inner city Manchester.

3.50 The town has a small shopping centre containing about 70 retail units. The Handforth Dean Retail Park to the east of Handforth contains a number of large format retailers.

3.51 Average (mean) household income levels are the third lowest in Cheshire East (out of 25 settlement areas)⁽¹¹⁾. A large proportion of jobs in Handforth are located at the Stanley Green industrial estate and the Handforth Dean Retail Park. There is a very high level of in-commuting, particularly from Stockport. There is a smaller, but still substantial volume of out-commuting (with the majority of residents working outside Handforth)⁽²⁵⁾.

3.52 There is no direct road access between the settlement of Handforth and Handforth Dean. Access to the Retail Park is only available from the A34 bypass. Once constructed, the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road will provide quick road access to the airport and M56 motorway, about 4 km to the north-west. Handforth has its own Railway Station with two trains per hour serving Crewe and Manchester. Regular buses serve Macclesfield, Manchester, Stockport and Wilmslow.

Knutsford

3.53 Knutsford is said to be named after King Canute, who by tradition forded the nearby River Lily. The town later prospered in the 18th and 19th Centuries and has many historic buildings. Today, Knutsford has a distinctive character and identity and contains a number of employment areas including Parkgate Trading Estate, Longridge Trading Estate, Booths Park, Radbroke Hall and others. The town has a population of 13,200⁽²⁰⁾. It lies in the north east of the Borough approximately 19km to the south west of Manchester and 18km north west of Macclesfield. After the Second World War, overspill housing estates were created in the town to accommodate families from Manchester. The town has one localised pocket of deprivation which ranks among England's most deprived 25%⁽¹⁸⁾. Tatton Park borders the town to the north.

3.54 Within the town centre there are over 200 retail units, making it an important shopping centre in the Borough. It contains many buildings of architectural and historic importance.

3.55 There are daytime bus services linking Knutsford with Altrincham, Macclesfield, Northwich and Wilmslow. The railway station is centrally located and has one train per hour to Chester, Manchester, Northwich and Stockport. There are significant levels of out-commuting to Manchester, Trafford and Cheshire West & Chester⁽²⁴⁾.

25 Sources for information on overall net commuting flow: [1] BRES 2011, ONS. [2] 2011 Census data on the numbers of local residents (of each town) who are in employment, ONS. Net commuting flows were calculated by deducting residence-based employment (Census figures) from workplace-based employment (BRES figures). Source for information on commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities, such as Stockport: 2001 Census, ONS (2011 Census commuting data not yet available)



Middlewich

3.56 Middlewich is a market town with a population of 13,600⁽²⁰⁾. It dates back to prehistoric times with salt extraction from the Iron Age and throughout Roman times to the present day with British Salt employing around 125 people. The closeness to the M6 motorway has led to the creation of a large distribution and business park at Midpoint 18.

3.57 The town centre has about 80 retail units and is centred on Wheelock Street. In recent years tourism has become increasingly important, with the annual Folk and Boat Festival being a notable attraction. The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the town and is an important tourism and recreational resource.

3.58 Although a railway line passes through the town, it is currently used solely for freight movements. There is no railway station or passenger rail service within the town. Bus services provide access to Crewe, Holmes Chapel, Congleton, Northwich, Sandbach and Winsford. The M6 motorway is a short distance away, linked to the town by the A54. An Eastern Bypass for Middlewich has been partially constructed in recent years. The construction of the final section linking to the A533 Booth Lane to the south of the town will open up further land for employment development as well as improving environmental conditions in the town centre. The timing of this project, which is largely dependent upon private sector funding is currently being programmed.

Nantwich

3.59 Nantwich is a historic market town with a population of 17,900⁽²⁰⁾. It dates back to Roman times, when it was a centre for the production of salt. Nantwich has a thriving town centre with about 250, mainly independent, units. The town contains more than 100 listed buildings, and has the largest concentration of historic buildings in the Borough. It is also a popular destination for tourists and visitors drawn from its large rural hinterland.

3.60 2011 data suggest that Nantwich's jobs density (the ratio of jobs to working age residents) is neither particularly high nor particularly low (compared to other Cheshire East towns) and the number of out-commuting journeys is only moderately greater than the number of inward commuters.⁽²⁶⁾

3.61 Nantwich railway station lies on the Crewe to Cardiff line by way of Shrewsbury. Bus services are relatively good with regular services to residential areas of the town and to Crewe.

Poynton

3.62 Poynton is a former mining town but now an attractive residential area with links to nearby Greater Manchester. It has a population of 13,000⁽²⁰⁾ and lies in the north eastern corner of the Borough, 11km north of Macclesfield and 8km south of Stockport.

3.63 The shopping centre has about 120 retail units. A programme of environmental improvements has recently been completed in the town centre.

3.64 Two buses per hour serve the town, providing links to Bollington, Stockport and Macclesfield. The Railway Station is on the western side of the town and has one train per hour serving stations between Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent.

26 [1] BRES 2011, ONS. [2] Mid-2011 Population Estimates for LSOAs, ONS. [3] 2011 Census data on the numbers of local residents (of each town) who are in employment, ONS. Net commuting flows were calculated by deducting residence-based employment (Census figures) from workplace-based employment (BRES figures).



Sandbach

3.65 Sandbach is a market town with a population of 18,000⁽²⁰⁾. Its origins date back to Saxon times and it is widely famed for its weekly Thursday market and the ancient Saxon Crosses. It contains a number of areas and features of historical and architectural value as well as encompassing several significant areas of local environmental importance. The town grew around truck manufacturing industries, but since their closure in 2002 there have been significant changes in its employment base with considerable losses of manufacturing jobs.

3.66 The town centre has about 190 retail units. Sandbach is now the headquarters of Cheshire East Council, which is the town's largest employer.

3.67 There is a railway station on the edge of the town providing services to Crewe, Manchester and Manchester Airport. There are also frequent bus services to Congleton, Crewe, Northwich and Macclesfield. The town lies adjacent to Junction 17 of the M6 motorway.

Wilmslow

3.68 Wilmslow, with a population of 23,700⁽²⁰⁾ lies in the north of the Borough. The town is noted for its high quality housing and shopping as well as the historic Quarry Bank Mill and Styal Estate, making it a sought-after location.

3.69 The town centre has about 230 retail units and is also served by the out-of-town Handforth Dean Retail Park. The town has a strong office sector both within the town centre and also on a number of large peripheral office parks. A large number of residents work in Manchester, with other significant commuter flows to Stockport, Trafford and Macclesfield town⁽²⁴⁾. The nearby Manchester International Airport is also a major employer.

3.70 The town has easy road access to the M60 and M56 motorways. Manchester Airport is 5km to the north. Access will be improved when the western section of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road is completed. Wilmslow has a local bus network serving destinations including Knutsford, Macclesfield, Manchester Airport, Manchester and Stockport. The Railway Station is on the West Coast Main Line and is served by local and long-distance services. Direct destinations served include London Euston and Manchester Piccadilly.

Local Service Centres

3.71 Local Service Centres are small towns or large villages which provide a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of local people, including those living in nearby settlements. They typically have a range of shops, health and leisure facilities, and employment opportunities.

3.72 Local Service Centres in Cheshire East are Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury.

Other Settlements and Rural Areas

3.73 The remaining other settlements and rural areas contain fewer facilities, if any. As a result, people living in these communities generally have to travel to larger centres for jobs, schools, health care and other services.



Surrounding Areas

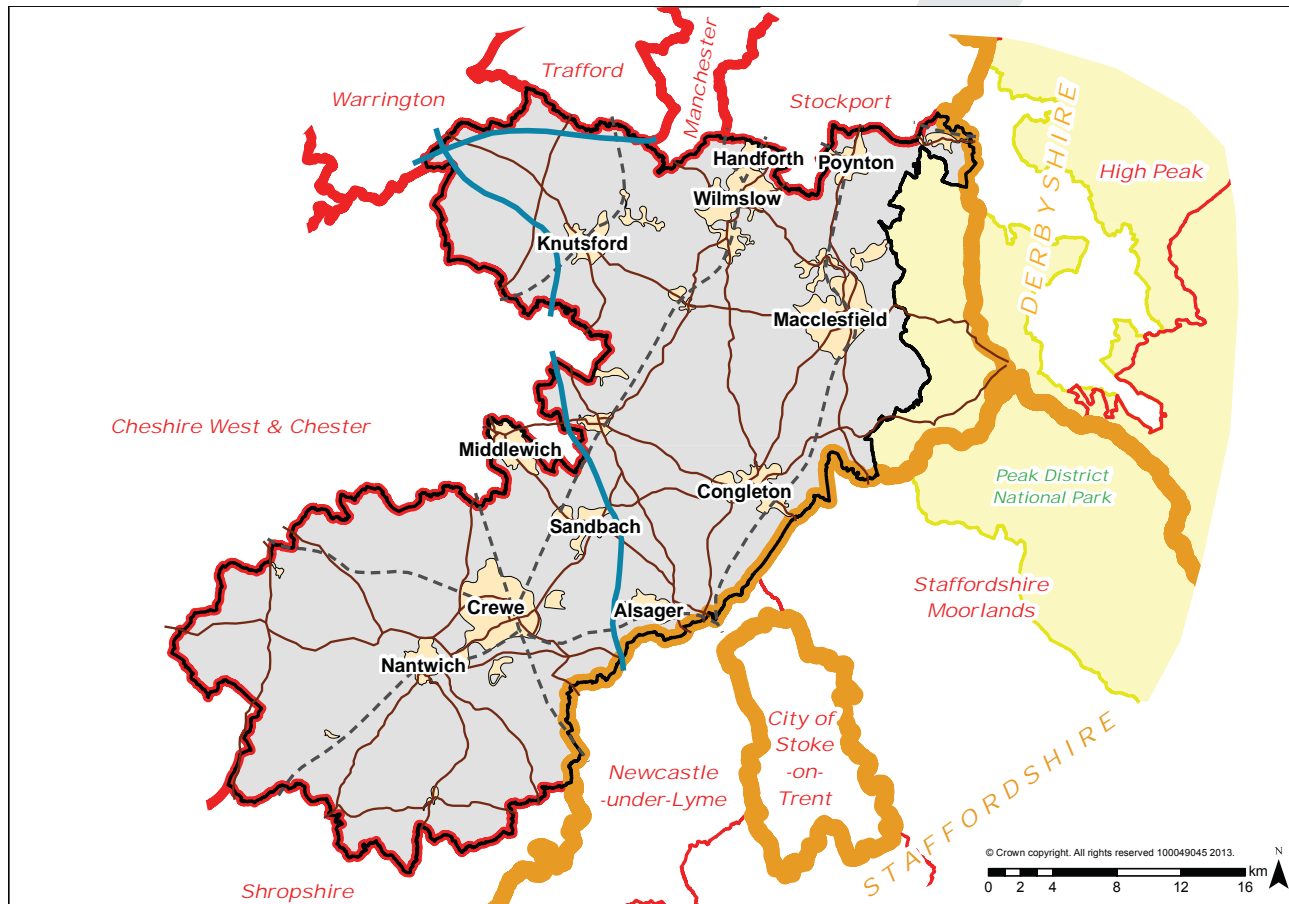


Figure 3.10 Neighbouring Authorities

The Potteries

3.74 North Staffordshire is known as ‘The Potteries’ after the porcelain industry that made the area world famous. The Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme joint Core Strategy identifies that the area faces significant economic and social difficulties and that these issues persist, despite government intervention, ongoing investment and the considerable efforts of many stakeholders to effect the transformation of the area.

3.75 The sub-region’s topography and historical development has meant that the conurbation has developed as an unusual collection of distinct but connected settlements rather than a conventional single centre city structure. However the nature of this settlement pattern has, to some extent, amplified the adverse impacts of several decades of economic decline, decentralisation of services and employment, and out migration.

3.76 However, the Core Strategy also identifies the many assets of the area including: the valuable canal network, serving the region’s growing leisure and tourism industries; the historical landscapes, townscapes and buildings of the sub region, which are irreplaceable, not only for their intrinsic architectural and aesthetic value and their contribution towards creating a collective sense of place and civic pride, but also for their contribution towards making the sub- region an economically attractive and competitive focus for inward investment.

3.77 The North Staffordshire Green Belt surrounds Stoke and Newcastle with its northernmost extent covering part of Cheshire East (known locally as the South Cheshire Green Belt) – south of Alsager and Congleton and south east of Crewe.



3.78 Housing regeneration continues as a key policy initiative in the Potteries despite the reduction in government housing market renewal monies as there remains a high proportion of residential properties in sub-standard condition.

3.79 Despite its economic difficulties, the Potteries is still a focus for employment. Travel to Work flows are particularly pronounced from the Cheshire East towns of Alsager, Congleton and Crewe, although with respect to the latter there is also a reverse flow.

Greater Manchester

3.80 Greater Manchester comprises the areas of ten Metropolitan Borough Councils. However the main commercial focus is Manchester City Centre and the adjoining city of Salford. The City Centre is the pre-eminent office, retail, cultural and educational location which has also seen substantial residential development in recent years particularly in the form of apartments. Salford, particularly the Quays area, has also experienced a great deal of regeneration particularly attracting media industries and other cultural activities. Trafford Park (within Trafford Metropolitan Borough) is the largest industrial estate in Europe.

3.81 The latest draft Greater Manchester Strategy identifies that Manchester's population is the fastest growing in the UK which presents a massive opportunity to link the jobs created with providing places to live that encourage people to stay and contribute to success. But it also presents huge challenges, including an ageing population and concentrations of unemployment coupled with low skills. Planned changes to the welfare system mean that demand for services will only increase unless there are radical reforms that improve the effectiveness of services, increasing the self-reliance of Greater Manchester's residents and reducing demand for those services.

3.82 The south side of the Greater Manchester conurbation is generally quite affluent and includes the substantial retail attraction of the Trafford Centre and nearby business opportunities at Trafford Park and Carrington. Manchester International Airport is the third largest UK airport and is already a major employer. However this is set to increase significantly with the development of Airport City. Although the Airport is linked to the M56 motorway, further road connections on the Stockport / Cheshire East boundary are needed as part of the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) proposals. These comprise the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, but there are associated schemes, including connecting to the Poynton Relief Road in Cheshire East.

3.83 Greater Manchester is surrounded by Green Belt, which, on the south side of the conurbation, extends into Cheshire East covering the northern third of the Borough and known locally as the North Cheshire Green Belt.

3.84 Manchester City Centre is a major travel to work destination from all around the conurbation and beyond, including from the northern parts of Cheshire East. More locally, on the south side of Greater Manchester, there are daily commuting movements into Cheshire East, especially to the high technology and pharmaceutical industries in the north of the Borough. Added to this mix are movements associated with the Airport which are set to increase following the implementation of planned developments.

3.85 Previous regional plans have placed a high priority on urban regeneration in Greater Manchester with a particular focus on housing in the City Centre and nearby inner city areas, as well as areas suffering most from de-population and derelict land in the north and east of the city. This policy focus has been replicated in the Core Strategies of the relevant local authorities and inevitably (due to the inherent lack of greenfield sites) is heavily dependent on the redevelopment of previously developed land. Not surprisingly, the delivery of this policy approach was hit by the post-2007 recession, but in the immediately preceding years was remarkably successful. The latest draft of the Greater Manchester Strategy considers a move away from the previous policy approach and seeks to review the land supply to support growth in those locations most attractive to the market. This recognises



that failure to provide appropriate sites in areas where the market wants to invest, both in housing and employment uses, risks Greater Manchester losing development and investment to other areas.

Cheshire West and Chester

3.86 The Borough of Cheshire West and Chester was created in 2009 at the same time as Cheshire East and is an area of wide contrasts. The generally affluent historic city of Chester is sub-regionally important for its retail and visitor attractions. There are also numerous smaller towns that grew significantly through industrial activity and each has pockets of deprivation, including Northwich and Winsford. Both these towns developed from the on-going salt extraction industry and relate quite closely to Cheshire East, especially Middlewich, in terms of access to local jobs and services.

3.87 The emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) aims to regenerate and improve Northwich and Winsford and recognises the inter dependence of these towns with Middlewich that is encompassed by joint working through the Weaver Valley Partnership Board. The emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan also identifies an opportunity for housing development adjacent to Middlewich on land within Cheshire West. However, it is presently considered that this site is not required to meet Cheshire West and Chester's development needs. If such land is to be developed in the future, then road improvements around the north of Middlewich (in Cheshire West) are likely to be required.

3.88 It is recognised that there are cross boundary movements of waste in both directions between Cheshire West and Chester and its neighbouring areas. The emerging Local Plan will identify sufficient land to meet Cheshire West and Chester's predicted waste management requirements and safeguard consented waste management facilities including Kinderton Lodge near Middlewich. Mineral resources of sand, gravel, salt and brine are extracted in Cheshire West and Chester and the emerging Local Plan seeks to provide a continued supply of these contributing to sub-national (regional) supply guidelines.

Warrington

3.89 In 1968, Warrington was designated as a New Town, primarily to take economic advantage of its unique position at the hub of the region's transportation network, evidently aided by the arrival of the region's motorways. Warrington has evolved from being a medium-sized industrial town to the home of major national and international companies.

3.90 The emerging Warrington Core Strategy highlights that since the end of the New Town era, strategic planning policies have sought to arrest outward growth of the town. This is partly through recognition that Warrington is nearing its natural limits of expansion and partly acknowledging that the New Town development had remarkably little effect on the older urban areas of inner Warrington. Recent efforts to date have therefore focused on regenerating and 'restructuring' the older core of the town. The Warrington Core Strategy intends to continue with this approach and to help to create a strong identity for the town.

3.91 Warrington attracts commuters from a wide area due to its high concentration of businesses and good transport connectivity. However, in respect of Cheshire East, it is primarily residents of Knutsford that travel to work in the town.

Peak District, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands

3.92 The Peak District National Park covers parts of Derbyshire and Staffordshire as well as the north eastern extremity of Cheshire East Borough. The National Park has its own planning authority and development plans.



3.93 The National Park is a complex tapestry of different landscapes but there are three distinct areas: the less populated upland moorland areas and their fringes (the Dark Peak and Moorland Fringes); the most populated lower-lying limestone grasslands and limestone dales and the Derwent and Hope Valleys (the White Peak and Derwent Valley); and the sparsely populated mixed moorland and grassland landscapes of the south west (the South West Peak).

3.94 The National Park Authority identifies challenges that broadly fall into seven closely related themes:

- Landscapes and conservation
- Recreation and tourism
- Climate change and sustainable building
- Homes, shops and community facilities
- Supporting economic development
- Minerals
- Accessibility, travel and traffic

3.95 In essence, the Park Authority is seeking to meet the everyday needs of local residents, as well as catering for visitors, controlling mineral extraction and balancing all this with the task of protecting the attractive landscape of the area.

3.96 The designation of the National Park excludes the main settlements in High Peak Borough. New Mills, the largest town, and Whaley Bridge are adjacent to the north east boundary of Cheshire East. These towns mainly look to Greater Manchester but will benefit from the proposed SEMMMS road improvements. Further south is the spa town of Buxton which is a visitor attraction in its own right and one that is located close to Cheshire East for day trips. The emerging High Peak Local Plan seeks to establish and consolidate Buxton as England's leading spa town.

3.97 Staffordshire Moorlands District is partially within the National Park but the area to the south west that borders Cheshire East is outside the Peak District and is characterised by an orientation mainly towards Stoke-on-Trent. The former mining town of Biddulph is the main settlement bordering Cheshire East. It has house prices lower than Congleton and Macclesfield so attracts home buyers from these towns, though a significant proportion of the local housing stock is of poor quality. The nearby Cheshire East towns provide a counter attraction for Biddulph residents in terms of shops and services. The emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy seeks to strengthen and consolidate Biddulph town centre.

Shropshire

3.98 Shropshire is a largely rural area. The Shropshire Core Strategy identifies the need for the county's market towns and rural settlements to become more sustainable places that are resilient to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Core Strategy identifies five spatial zones reflecting the individual distinctiveness of different parts of Shropshire, the North East Zone borders Cheshire East. Within this zone, Whitchurch is the nearest key settlement to Cheshire East with which it is well connected by road and rail (it is on the Crewe to Cardiff line). Whitchurch has a range of services including a community hospital and numerous local employers. There is a modest level of two way commuting between Whitchurch and Nantwich / Crewe (and on to Manchester).

Duty to Cooperate

3.99 In preparing the Core Strategy, the Council is complying with the 'Duty to Cooperate', as introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the NPPF. The Council has set this out in detail in its Draft Duty to Cooperate Statement, which accompanies this document. Activities undertaken include:



- **Consultation with key stakeholders:** the Council has engaged and cooperated with the prescribed organisations and authorities, as set out in the legislation and regulations, and in compliance with its adopted Statement of Community Involvement;
- **Collaboration and cooperation in plan making:** the Council continues to work jointly with partners to address key planning issues across the area; and
- **Consideration of cross boundary impacts:** The Council has engaged proactively with neighbouring authorities in considering and addressing strategic and site-specific cross-boundary impacts arising from both Cheshire East's plans, and the plans of our neighbours.

3.100 It should be noted that this Duty is an ongoing process and does not stop with the production of the Core Strategy.

3.101 The Council has a strong and established record of commitment of collaboration and cooperation with neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders. For example, the Council is actively involved with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership on a range of initiatives, has worked closely with Stockport Council in relation to the former Woodford aerodrome development, and will continue to play an active role on groups relating to Manchester Airport, HS2 and South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMS).

3.102 Part of the role of the Core Strategy is to assess the wider implications of the local policy approach and to manage cross-boundary effects together with those plans and strategies of other authorities and agencies. A number of potential cross-boundary impacts have been taken into account of in the preparation of the Draft Core Strategy including:

- Housing growth and regeneration - to ensure that Cheshire East provides for its own housing needs, whilst limiting any impacts of this on the adjoining authorities' ability to regenerate their own urban housing areas.
- Employment development - to ensure that Cheshire East provides sufficient employment land to meet its own legitimate economic growth aspirations without undermining investment in neighbouring areas.
- Green Belt - to minimise the loss of Green Belt land in the Borough in ways consistent with the sustainable location of new development and balanced with retaining the openness of the countryside in the long term.
- Infrastructure -to establish the means to provide for all the infrastructure needed to help deliver the development proposed in the plan.
- National Park / Recreation - to protect the natural attractions of the area and sensitively cater for visitor trips.
- Minerals – to ensure an appropriate supply of Cheshire East's key mineral resources is planned for, including a contribution towards the North West's sub-national aggregate apportionment.
- Waste - the need to appropriately deal with locally-generated waste in ways that minimise dependence on neighbouring areas.



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