

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report

September 2023

Quality information

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Non-technical summary

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) 2021-2030. The FNP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the adopted Cheshire west and Chester Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2).

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Central to the SEA process is publication of an Environmental Report alongside the draft plan that presents certain required information. The aim is to inform the consultation and, in turn, plan finalisation.

Preparing the Environmental Report essentially involves answering three questions:

1) What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point?**

- including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.

2) What are the SEA findings **at this stage?**

- i.e. in relation to the draft plan.

3) What happens **next**

This Environmental Report NTS

This is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Environmental Report for the FNP, in which the three questions are answered in turn. Firstly, there is a need to set the scene further by answering: *What's the scope of the SEA?*

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of topics and objectives, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for assessment. The SEA framework is presented below:

Table A: The SEA Framework

SEA topic	SEA objective
Air quality	Improve air quality within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area and minimise all sources of environmental pollution
Biodiversity	Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.
Climate change (adaptation)	Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change.
Historic environment	Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider historic environment.
Landscape	Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.
Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their life.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the FNP area.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Plan making / SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing **reasonable alternatives** in time to inform development of the draft plan, and then publishing assessment findings in the Environmental Report.

As such, Part 1 of this report explains how work was undertaken to develop and assess a ‘reasonable’ range of alternative approaches to the allocation of land for housing, or **housing growth scenarios**.

The process of arriving at housing growth scenarios involved a process of considering the strategic context (‘top down’ factors), alongside understanding of the sites available and in contention for allocation (‘bottom up’ factors). The process is set out in Section 5, and summarised in a flow diagram.

Ultimately two housing growth scenarios were identified as reasonable and so warranting formal assessment under the SEA framework – see Table B.

Table B: The reasonable housing growth scenarios
N.B. figures are for the CWaC Local Plan period (2010-2030)

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Supply		
Frodsham residual housing requirement ¹	32	32
Main brownfield site; Land Behind Health Centre	65	65
Remaining sites assessed in the SOA as suitable for allocation plus the Brook works site	30	-
Total new supply to 2030	95	65
Housing competitions and commitments²	218	218
Total new supply + completions and commitments	313	283
% difference from CWaC HRF (250)	+25%	+13%

Table C presents the assessment. Presented subsequently is the Frodsham NP Steering Group's response to the assessment, i.e. reasons for supporting the preferred approach, which is **Scenario 1**.

Assessment methodology:

Within each row of Table C (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SEA framework) the columns to the right hand firstly rank the scenarios in order of preference and then, secondly, highlight instances of a predicted significant positive (**green**), minor positive (**light green**), minor negative (**amber**), moderate negative (**pink**) or significant negative (**red**) effect on the baseline. Also, '=' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them).

¹ The housing requirement figure of 250 dwellings minus completions and commitments.

² Data taken from the CWaC Annual Monitoring Report 2021

Table C: Housing growth scenarios assessment

Topic	Scenario 1		Scenario 2	
Air Quality	2		1	
Biodiversity	2	2	1	1
Climate change (adaptation)	=		=	
Health & Wellbeing	1		2	
Historic environment	1 [?]		2	
Landscape	=		=	
Population & housing	1		2	
Transportation	2		1	

Key: Within each row, for each of the topics. the columns to the right hand side seek to both **categorise** the performance of each scenario in terms of ‘significant effects’ on the baseline (using **red**, **amber** and **light green** and **dark green**)³ and also **rank** the alternatives in order of performance. Also, ‘ = ’ is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them).

Summary discussion

The assessment shows a mixed picture, with both scenarios associated with pros and cons. Scenario 1 is results on the only significant positive, which relates to population and housing, whilst generating no major negatives. Scenario 2 also has no significant negatives but performs slightly less well in respect to population and housing. It does however perform marginally better with regards to air quality and transport given that a lower amount of housing would be planned in the urban areas. Conversely, scenario 1 performs better in terms of health and wellbeing and heritage.

It is for the decision-maker (also consultees), not this assessment, to assign weight to the various pros and cons and then arrive at a conclusion on which scenario is best-performing overall.

The plan-makers responded to the growth scenarios assessment as follows:

“The preferred approach is to take forward Scenario 1 as the basis for the FNP. This approach is considered to broadly align with the findings of the assessment, which finds Scenario 1 to perform well with respect to the majority of key sustainability issues, both in absolute terms and relative terms.”

Assessment findings at this stage

Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an assessment of the FNP as a whole, as it stands at the current time (pre-submission plan).

³ Red indicates a significant negative effect; amber a negative effect that is of limited or uncertain significance; light green a positive effect that is of limited or uncertain significance; and dark green a significant positive effect. No colour is assigned where effects are considered to be neutral or uncertain.

Assessment findings are presented as a series of narratives under the SEA framework. The assessment reaches the following overall conclusions:

Overall, the Plan appraisal has served to highlight the potential for both positive and negative effects of varying degrees of significance.

Significant positive effects are anticipated in relation to the population and housing SEA theme as a result of the growth strategy, which will meet and exceed strategic growth targets set in Local Plan (CWaC LPP1); helping to improve choice and potentially affordability in the market. The additional growth also serves to provide a buffer to better secure housing delivery.

Mixed effects are predicted for biodiversity; minor negative effects are highlighted in relation to policy EDVE2 which has the potential to increase recreational pressures on the Frodsham Marshes and the Mersey Estuary biodiversity sites.

On the other hand, minor positive effects are predicted for biodiversity due to FNP policies seeking to protect and enhance open green spaces which should help reduce habitat fragmentation and provide stepping-stones for biodiversity. It would be beneficial to make explicit mention of the biodiversity value of green and open spaces.

Minor negative effects are considered likely for the transportation topic due to the cumulative effects of development on traffic and congestion. This is despite positive intentions to promote walking and cycling, and to manage parking.

Minor long term positive effects are recognised for climate change adaptation as the Plan allocates development in areas at low risk of flooding and includes policies that seek to protect and enhance open green space (with explicit mention of rainwater harvesting).

Minor long term positive effects are predicted with respect to health and wellbeing as the Plan promotes good quality design, a varied mix of housing, encourages active travel and protects green space including recreation and play areas.

With regards to heritage, minor positive effects are expected due to the mitigation provided through the FNP Design Code and policy H6. The allocations and site specific policies also have the potential for positive effects as they help ensure the continued use of heritage assets such as the Grade II listed Brook House (whilst retaining and enhancing important features).

The Plan is expected to have neutral effects on landscape and air quality as development is allocated in areas of low landscape sensitivity and the scale of growth proposed is not expected to significantly impact air quality including at the AQMA.

Next steps

This Environmental Report is published alongside submission version of the FNP.

The 'submission' version of the plan will be submitted to CWaC (alongside this updated Environmental Report). The plan and supporting evidence will be then published for further consultation, and then submitted for examination.

If the outcome of the Independent Examination is favourable, the FNP will then be subject to a referendum, and the plan will be 'made' if more than 50% of those who vote are in support. Once made, the FNP will become part of the Development Plan for Cheshire west and Chester.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan ('FNP') 2021–2030.
- 1.2 The FNP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Parts 1 and 2. Once 'made', the FNP will form part of the Cheshire West and Chester Development Plan.
- 1.3 The FNP will be used to guide and shape development within the Plan area.
- 1.4 SEA is a required process for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising negative effects and maximising positive effects.⁴

SEA explained

- 1.5 It is a requirement that the SEA process is undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.6 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that "*identifies, describes and evaluates*" the likely significant effects of implementing "*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*".⁵ The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.7 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
 1. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
- including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
- i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 3. What happens next?

This Environmental Report

- 1.8 This report is the Environmental Report for the FNP. It is published alongside the 'submission' version of the Plan, under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended). It supersedes a previous version of the Environmental Report prepared in support of the Regulation 14 consultation.
- 1.9 This report answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn, to provide the required information.⁶ Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report.
- 1.10 However, before answering Q1, two further introductory sections are presented to further set the scene.

⁴ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process. The FNP was subject to screening, on the basis of which it was determined that there is a requirement for SEA (i.e. the plan was 'screened-in').

⁵ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

⁶ See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the report structure including its regulatory basis.

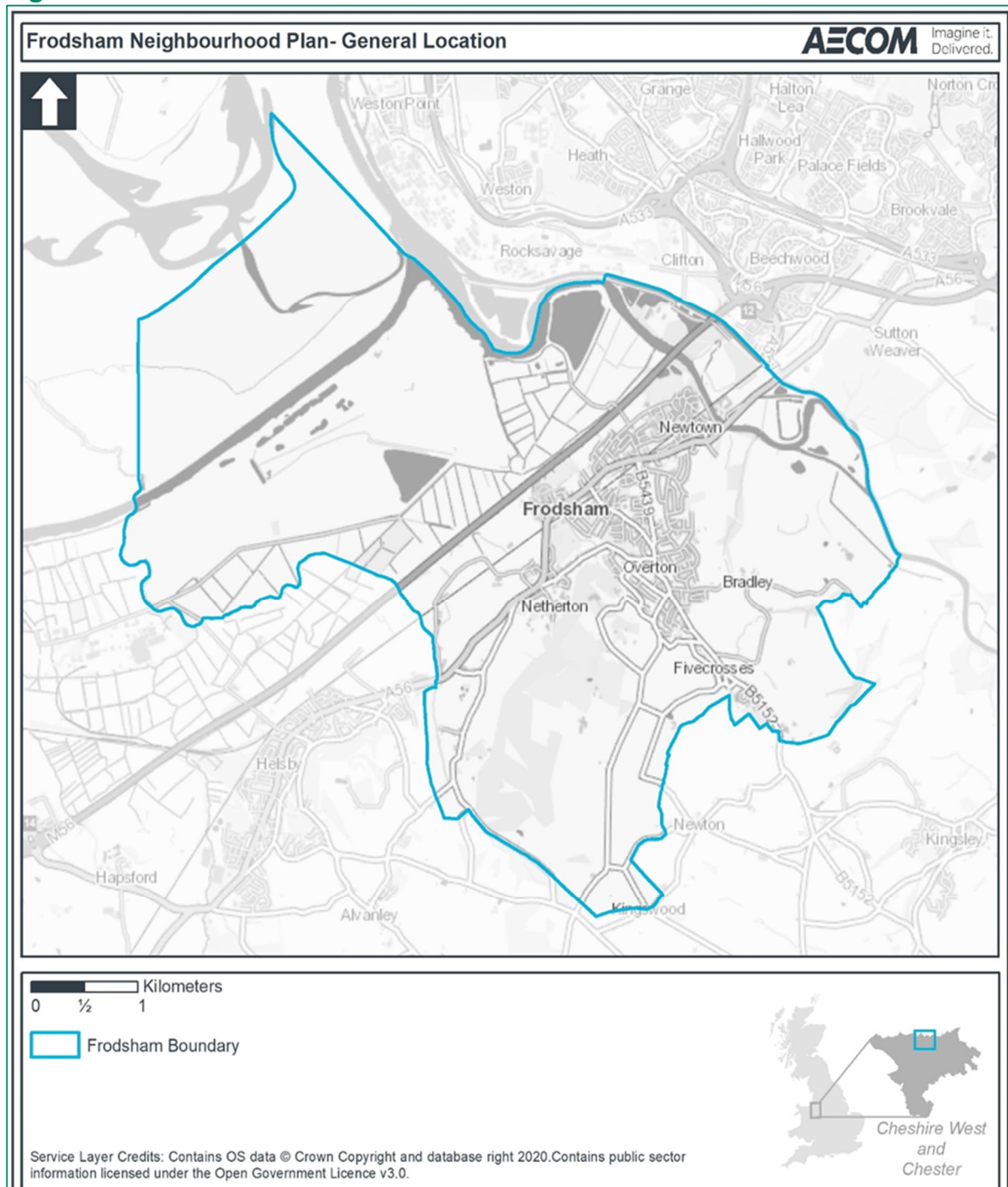
2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

Introduction

2.1 This section considers the context provided by the applicable Local Plan, which is the adopted Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 (LPP1 and LPP2), before setting out the established FNP vision and objectives.

2.2 Figure 2.1 shows the plan area.

Figure 2.1: The FNP area



The LPP1/LPP2

- 2.3 The Local Plan identifies Frodsham as a 'Key Service Centre' and allocates growth of 250 dwellings in Frodsham (Policy STRAT8) over the period 2010 to 2030. Policy ECON2 seeks to maintain the important role of Frodsham's centre as a retail and service centre. Policies SOC3 and SOC5 (LPP1) support mixed, balanced, sustainable communities through the provision of market and affordable housing that meets identified future needs.
- 2.4 The LPP1 policy SOC1 seeks affordable housing (AH) provision in rural areas (including Frodsham) on all new residential development (subject to viability) of three or more dwellings or those with a plot area of 0.1 ha and more.
- 2.5 The FNP is being prepared by Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and will cover the period 2021 to 2030.
- 2.6 The following vision has been established for the FNP at the current stage.

"Frodsham will:

Be thriving and sustainable

Value its community and heritage

Encourage innovation, collaboration and social cohesion

Promote access to services"

- 2.7 The FNP also includes the following aims and objectives;

Table 2-1 Aims and objectives of the FNP

Aim	Objective
<i>Frodsham will Value its community and heritage</i>	<i>To ensure the built environment fits in with the local character of Frodsham in terms of materials, scale, accessibility and sustainability.</i>
	<i>To encourage development of Frodsham's tourism and visitor economy.</i>
	<i>To designate and therefore protect Local Green Spaces.</i>
	<i>To prioritise developments that retain, conserve, maintain, protect and provide additional or new green and open spaces for community and social use.</i>
	<i>To ensure new pathways and signage are in a style sympathetic with those existing and compatible with the Conservation Area.</i>

Aim	Objective
To be thriving and sustainable	<p><i>To provide a mix of dwellings, that meet the needs of Frodsham now and in the future and address the changing demographics and the towns sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>To promote opportunities for residents and visitors to Frodsham to maintain and enhance their health and well-being by providing the provision of sports, recreation, cultural, leisure and play facilities that enrich their quality of life.</i></p> <p><i>To prioritise sustainable transport and reduce congestion and vehicle emissions.</i></p>
Frodsham will be thriving and sustainable and encourage innovation	<p><i>To encourage the growth of current businesses and support new businesses in Frodsham</i></p>
Promote access to services	<p><i>To ensure connections within the town and to adjacent areas facilitate easy and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists and are designed for the needs of an ageing population.</i></p>

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Introduction

- 3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e. the sustainability themes and objectives that should be a focus of the SEA. Supplementary information is presented in Appendix B.

Consultation

- 3.2 The SEA Regulations require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. As such, these authorities were consulted over the period 3rd August to 7th September 2021, and the responses received are detailed in the Scoping Report (Table AB1 Post Consultation modifications).

The SEA framework

- 3.3 Table 3.1 presents a list of topics and objectives that together form the back-bone of the SEA scope. Together they comprise a ‘framework’ under which to undertake assessment; derived from an understanding of policy context and baseline conditions.

Table 3-1 The SEA framework

SEA topic	SEA objective
Air quality	Improve air quality within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area and minimise all sources of environmental pollution
Biodiversity	Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.
Climate change (adaptation)	Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the FNP area.
Historic environment	Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider historic environment.
Landscape	Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.
Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their life.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 Work on the FNP has been underway for some while, with several consultation events having been held including a Frodsham wide Consultation in 2014 and Resident's Survey in 2017. The results of the consultations are available on the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan [website](#).
- 4.2 This is important context; however, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date. Rather, the aim is to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise **reasonable alternatives**.
- 4.3 More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration given to reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a particular issue that is of central importance to the plan, namely the allocation of land for housing, or **housing growth scenarios**.

Why focus on housing growth scenarios?

- 4.4 The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives ('scenarios') in relation to the matter of housing growth in light of the Plan objectives (see para 2.7), and because there is the likelihood of being able to differentiate between the merits of alternatives/scenarios in respect of 'significant effects'. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Who's responsibility?

- 4.5 It is important to be clear that:
- **Defining scenarios** - is ultimately the responsibility of the plan-maker, although the SEA consultant (AECOM) is well placed to advise.
 - **Assessing scenarios** - is the responsibility of the SEA consultant.
 - **Selecting a preferred scenario** - is the responsibility of the plan-maker.

Structure of this part of the report

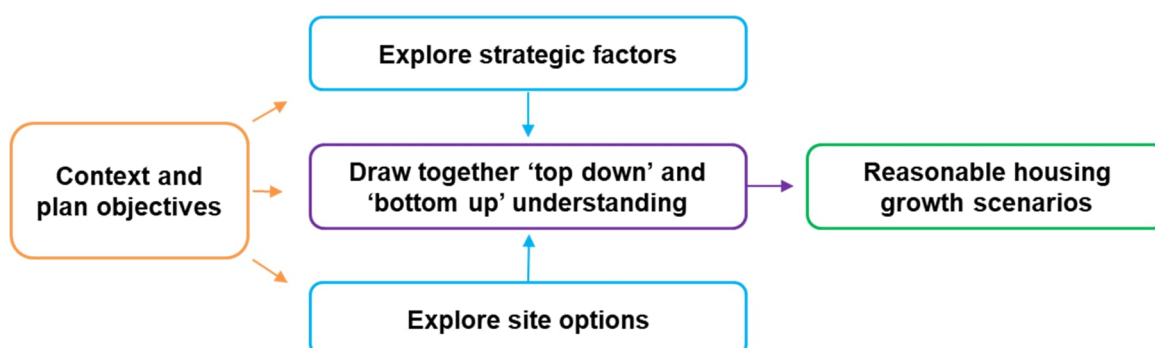
- 4.6 This part of the report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 5** - explains the process of defining scenarios;
 - **Chapter 6** - presents the outcomes of assessing scenarios;
 - **Chapter 7** - explains reasons for supporting the preferred approach.

5. Defining scenarios

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim here is to explain a process that led to the definition of a reasonable range of housing growth scenarios for assessment, and thereby present “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with”.⁷
- 5.2 Specifically, there is a need to: **1)** explain strategic factors with a bearing on defining scenarios; **2)** discuss work completed to examine site options (i.e. sites potentially in contention for allocation); and then **3)** explain how the ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ understanding generated through steps (1) and (2) were married together in order to arrive at reasonable housing growth scenarios.

Figure 5.1: Defining scenarios



Strategic factors

- 5.3 The aim of this section is to explore the strategic factors with a bearing on the establishment of reasonable housing growth scenarios. Specifically, this section of the report explores:
- Quantum – how many new homes must the FNP provide for?
 - Broad distribution – broadly where is more/less suited to allocation?

Quantum

- 5.4 The LPP1 identifies Frodsham as a key service centre within the Rural Area allocating ‘at least’ 250 new dwellings there, over the 20-year period between 2010 and 2030. Paragraph 5.75 explains that Frodsham is inset within the Green Belt and paragraph 5.66 adds ‘where a key service centre is constrained by Green Belt the level of development reflects the ability of the settlement to accommodate new development without Green Belt release’. However, there have been 2,655 housing completions and commitments in key service centres, 4,175 in total for the rural area since April 2014 (LPP1 Table 5.1). The LPP1 states, ‘there is only a very limited amount of additional housing to be provided’ (Paragraph 5.69).

⁷ Schedule 2(8) of the SEA Regulations.

- 5.5 It is good practice to provide for a 'supply buffer' on top of the requirement. For example, the plan might aim for a 10-20% buffer over-and-above LPP1's 250 housing requirement figure, which would suggest a need to identify a total supply of around 275-300 homes for Frodsham.

Broad distribution

- 5.6 There are several broad spatial considerations influencing housing growth scenarios in the NP area. The town is physically constrained by the North Cheshire Green Belt which surrounds it, covering most of the NP area. The LLP1 states that a *'key focus of the Plan's strategy is to channel the majority of new development towards the main urban areas. In order to meet future development needs to 2030 and to promote sustainable patterns of development, it has been identified that only in the case of Chester are there exceptional circumstances to amend the Green Belt boundary.'* Therefore, there is no provision for Green Belt release at strategic level.
- 5.7 There are heritage designations including a conservation area in the town centre, extends linearly along Main street/ High Street between the M56 and the railway line. Properties survive from the medieval period. Timber-framed and thatched cottages sit next to red brick and slate dwellings and more substantial and formal Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian structures. There are numerous listed and locally important buildings, including some unique structures listed buildings, a Scheduled Monument and a Registered Park and Garden.
- 5.8 A number of important biodiversity designations exist within Frodsham and the surrounding area including; the Mersey Estuary Ramsar (also SSSI and SPA site), the Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings SSSI, Beechmill Wood and Pasture SSSI and the Dunsdale Hollow SSSI. The Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) associated with these SSSIs covers the entirety of the NP area.
- 5.9 Parts of the wider area surrounding the settlement are also identified as being at risk of flooding with areas of flood risk zone 3 extending along the length of the M56 running through the NP area. Further Flood Zone 3 areas are found along the coast and the course of the River Weaver.

Site options

- 5.10 Having discussed strategic, 'top-down' factors with a bearing on establishing housing growth scenarios, the next step is to consider the site options that are in contention for allocation.
- 5.11 A key starting point is the Site Options Assessment (SOA, 2018), which examines sites, classifying the suitability of each for development on a three-point (red-amber-green) scale. The assessment considers all the sites in the Cheshire West and Chester Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2017 assessed as being suitable, viable and achievable for development. The SOA also assessed sites produced by FNP Call for Sites (CfS).
- 5.12 The assessment covered 24 sites; the 11 sites produced by the CfS and 13 additional sites from the HELAA⁸. A 'traffic light' rating of all sites was used, based on whether the site is an appropriate candidate to be considered for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.

⁸ The HELAA considered 20 sites in total within Frodsham, 4 of these were duplicated and considered within the CfS sites, 2 were discounted due to being in the Green Belt and 1 discounted due to availability issues.

- 5.13 The site assessment covered a range of factors that correspond to the SEA Framework objectives. As such, it was deemed unnecessary to undertake a separate appraisal of individual site options through the SEA process.

SEA Topic	Related SOA assessment criteria
Air quality	- No explicit criteria
Biodiversity	- Proximity to designated habitats - Ecological value - Tree Preservation Areas
Climate change (adaptation)	- Proximity to flood zones
Health and wellbeing	- Access to local amenities - Community value of site
Historic environment	- Proximity to heritage assets
Landscape	- Landscape sensitivity - Character
Population and housing	- Availability
Transportation	- Site connectivity - Public rights of way - Access to local amenities

- 5.14 The SOA uses the site information to categorise the sites not one of three categories. The traffic light rating indicates 'green' for sites that show no constraints and are appropriate as site allocations, 'amber' for sites which are potentially suitable if issues can be resolved and 'red' for sites which are not currently suitable. The judgement on each site is based on the three 'tests' of whether a site is appropriate for allocation – i.e. that it is **suitable, available and achievable**.

- 5.15 The SOA concluded that 9 sites would be appropriate for allocation in the FNP. However, since the SOA, the site at 3-15 Bridge La. is no longer available, the site at 29 Main St. (the Cheshire Cheese site) has been developed and the Ship Street Playing Field (FRO/060A) site is being proposed as an amenity green space. As a result of consultation on the Reg14 version on the neighbourhood plan it was identified that site FRO/005 was unavailable for development. All four of these sites are therefore omitted from the table below.

- 5.16 Three further sites were assessed as potentially suitable for development, but their availability could not be confirmed at the time. One of these, the Brook Works site, is now potentially available and therefore included in the list of potential sites below (Table 5.1).

Table 5-1 SOA sites assessed suitable for allocation in the FNP

SOA or CfS Reference	Location	RAG Rating
1	Land Behind Health Centre	
FRO/0004	Land at Penkmans Lane	
FRO/0038	Land off Greenfield Lane	
FRO/0039	Land to rear of 15-23 St Hilda's Drive	
FRO/0010	64 Main Street	
7	Brook Works ⁹ (previously unavailable)	

5.17 The remaining 12 sites in the SOA were judged unsuitable for allocation (9 in the Green Belt, 2 were under construction and 1 deemed to be not in conformity with national planning policy on playing fields).

⁹ This site was rated red as it was unavailable at the time – The FNP Steering Group have now confirmed that the site may be available and wish to include it in the FNP.

Figure 5-2 Map of Sites assessed in the SOA



The reasonable scenarios

5.18 To recap, the housing requirement figure for Frodsham is 250 dwellings (up to 2030). At 1 April 2022, 191 dwellings have been completed in the Frodsham spatial area (the settlement boundary for Frodsham as shown on the Local Plan policies map), and a further 27 dwellings have extant planning permission. Taking completions and commitments into account, this leaves a residual housing requirement of 32 dwellings.

5.19 The potential dwelling capacity of the available sites (as assessed in the SOA and currently available) is shown in in Table 5-2 below.

Table 5-2 List of available development sites

Site (FNP policy ref)	Area (ha)	Capacity ¹⁰
Land Behind Health Centre (S/01A)	0.84	65
Land at Penkmans Lane (S/10A)	0.1	2
Land off Greenfield Lane (FRO/0038A)	0.36	10
Land to rear of 15-23 St Hilda's Drive (FRO/0039A)	0.11	5
64 Main Street (FRO/0010A)	0.1	1
Brook Works (S/07)	0.32	12

5.20 In conclusion, on the basis of the discussion above (i.e. all of Section 5, read as a whole), these are the potential housing growth scenarios for assessment:

- Not to allocate any further development in Frodsham as the NP has fulfilled over 80% of the development requirement (and could therefore rely on windfall development). Given the locally assessed housing need this is considered an unsustainable option and therefore does not constitute a reasonable alternative.
- Allocate the largest brownfield site, Land Behind Health Centre, as this would be sufficient to deliver the residual housing requirement including a supply buffer (when completions and commitments are taken into account).
- Pursue a higher growth scenario developing all the available sites in Table 5.2, maximising growth to help meet identified housing need¹¹.

¹⁰ Based on the capacities proposed in the FNP

¹¹ Following Regulation 14 Consultation it was determined that one of the sites involved under Scenario 1 was no longer suitable/ available for development. Therefore, this site is not included in the updated scenario assessments.

6. Scenarios assessment

Introduction

- 6.1 The aim of this section is to present assessment findings in relation to the two reasonable housing growth scenarios introduced above and set out in Table 6.1.

Table 6-1 The reasonable housing growth scenarios

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Supply		
Frodsham residual housing requirement ¹²	32	32
Main brownfield site; Land Behind Health Centre	65	65
Remaining sites assessed in the SOA as suitable for allocation plus the Brook works site	30	-
Total new supply to 2030	95	65
Housing completions and commitments	218	218
Total new supply + completions and commitments	313	283
% difference from CWaC HRF (250)	+25%	+13%

Assessment findings

- 6.2 Table 6.1 presents assessment findings in relation to the two scenarios.
- 6.3 With regards to methodology: Within each row (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SEA framework) the columns to the right hand side seek to both **categorise** the performance of each scenario in terms of 'significant effects' on the baseline (using **red**, **amber** and **light green** and **dark green**)¹³ and also **rank** the alternatives in order of performance. Also, ' = ' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them).
- 6.4 The appraisal matrix is followed by a discussion, setting out reasons for the appraisal conclusions reached, with reference to available evidence.
- 6.5 Both alternatives have been appraised on a consistent basis, taking account of the potential for mitigation and enhancement offered by existing Local Plan and proposed NP policies (or yet unidentified mitigation / enhancement measures).

¹² The housing requirement figure of 250 dwellings minus completions and commitments.

¹³ Red indicates a significant negative effect; amber a negative effect that is of limited or uncertain significance; light green a positive effect that is of limited or uncertain significance; and dark green a significant positive effect. No colour is assigned where effects are considered to be neutral or uncertain.

- 6.6 It is considered useful to take a policy-on approach to assessment at this stage given that development will take place in the context of adopted Local Plan documents and a range of proposed policies in the draft FNP.

Table 6-1: Housing growth scenarios assessment / Draft Plan alternatives

Topic	Scenario 1		Scenario 2	
Air Quality	=		=	
Biodiversity	2	2	1	1
Climate change (adaptation)	=		=	
Health & Wellbeing	1		2	
Historic environment	1 ²		2	
Landscape	=		=	
Population & housing	1		2	
Transportation	2		1	

Discussion

6.7 The assessment shows a mixed picture, with each of the scenarios associated with pros and cons. Scenario 1 is best-performing in respect of the most topics (four versus two); however, it does not automatically follow that Scenario 1 is best-performing overall, as the topics are not assumed to be of equal importance. It is for the decision-maker (also consultees), not this assessment, to assign weight to the various pros and cons and then arrive at a conclusion on which scenario is best-performing overall. The following paragraphs explore the growth scenarios under the SEA framework.

6.8 **Air quality** – There is an AQMA in Frodsham at Fluin Lane. Successive CWaC air quality annual status reports have shown no exceedance in the NO₂ emissions at the AQMA and the AQMA is likely to be reviewed according to the latest report. Both scenarios perform well, in terms of minimising the need to travel and supporting modal shift away from the private car (by virtue of the sites being within the urban area with good access to services). Overall, the level of growth proposed, even when considered in combination with the Local Plan allocations, is unlikely to give rise to significant adverse effects on air quality. The increase in traffic associated with new development is counteracted by well-located development sites with good access to services and facilities. The provision of EV charging infrastructure and promotion of enhanced pedestrian and cycle links should encourage more sustainable modes of travel. There is little difference between the two scenarios in terms of growth proposed (Scenario 2 produces 30 fewer units than Scenario 1) therefore both scenarios perform comparably with **broadly neutral effects** expected overall.

- 6.9 **Biodiversity** – mixed effects are considered likely (reflected by the split scoring in table 6-1); the proposed housing site allocations are not expected to give rise to adverse effects on biodiversity but Policy EDVE2 has the potential for **minor negative effects** as it is likely to increase recreational pressures on the Frodsham Marshes and the Mersey Estuary biodiversity sites (though the magnitude of effects is limited).
- 6.10 **Minor positive effects** are predicted for policies GSRL1,3 and 4 as these will result in the protection and enhancement of open greenspaces within the Parish which would help reduce habitat fragmentation and provide stepping stones for biodiversity. Since both scenarios share the above mentioned policies there is relatively little difference in how the two scenarios perform with respect to biodiversity. Scenario 2 may be marginally preferable due to the lower growth proposed (lesser associated recreational pressure from residents). However, if the FNP incorporates the recommendations suggested herein and in the HRA, both scenarios are likely to produce minor positive effects overall.
- 6.11 **Climate change** (adaptation) – a key consideration is flood risk. The FNP places development in areas of low flood risk and none of the sites in question are subject to significant constraint. There are several policies seeking to protect and provide green open space. These are likely to produce favourable effects on adaptation as such spaces help reduce flood risk and act as carbon sequesters contributing directly to a reduction in atmospheric CO2 concentration. Two of the proposed sites (FRO/0038 and S/07) do overlap with areas of surface water flood risk, but the risk is 'low' and the need to implement sustainable urban drainage and flood mitigation measures in new development should ensure that significant effects are avoidable. In this respect, scenario 1 performs less well compared to scenario 2, which would not involve the same sites. Conversely, new development on previously developed land offers the potential to improve surface water run-off, which would be a greater opportunity under Scenario 1. In conclusion, the scenarios are judged to perform broadly on par having **minor long-term positive effects** on climate change adaptation.
- 6.12 **Health and wellbeing** – The main considerations are the provision of high quality public realm, the provision of open green and recreational space and encouraging active travel. In this context the Frodsham Design Code and FNP policies H2 and H5 are important as they seek to promote high quality development design. Other policies seek to protect and enhance open green space including recreational and play areas (GSRL1-4). Active travel is also promoted through FNP policies which facilitate active travel by placing residential development in well located sites, close to services and facilities, whilst other policies (e.g. H5, CA1) require new development to provide safe pedestrian access and footway connections to nearest walking/ cycling routes (H5, CA1) and seek to make Frodsham a cycle friendly town. As both scenarios share the above policies it is difficult to confidently differentiate the scenarios in these respects. Clearly, housing conditions can influence physical and mental health and having a suitable, well designed, affordable home is important to health and wellbeing. In this respect Scenario 1 is marginally preferable as it provides more housing growth than Scenario 2. In conclusion both scenarios are predicted to have **minor long term positive effects** on health and wellbeing.

6.13 Historic environment – Two of the housing sites allocated in scenario 1 (at 64 Main Street and at Brook Works) were assessed in the SOA as potentially impacting the historic environment. However, the mitigation provided through the FNP Design Code, policy H6 and the policies allocating the sites in the FNP should ensure appropriate developments that do not adversely impact the historic environment and the setting of the Frodsham Conservation Area. The policies have the potential for positive effects as they will help ensure the continued use of heritage assets such as the Grade II listed Brook House. Scenario 2 does not include these two sites and therefore no significant effects are anticipated (positive or negative). In conclusion, although Scenario 1 has minor constraints with respect to the historic environment, the mitigation provided through the Design Code and FNP policies should ensure no significant adverse effects are produced.

6.14 Minor positive effects are expected through FNP policies which seek to retain the Brook Works site and ensure its continued use into the future. Scenario 1 is therefore judged to be preferable to Scenario 2 in this respect.

However, it will be important to ensure that new development sites are appropriately designed, especially when higher densities are being proposed than in the HELAA.

6.15 Landscape – The spatial strategy allocates housing growth within the existing urban built-up areas of the town. The SOA concluded that all the sites allocated for development are in areas of relatively low landscape sensitivity. The FNP Design Code and FNP policies such as GSRL1-GSRL4 and H2 are predicted to have beneficial impacts on the landscape and townscape character of Frodsham, serving to protect key aspects of the landscape such as open green spaces and important view and vistas. Both scenarios perform comparably with both predicted to have **neutral effects** on Landscape. Despite more sites being allocated in scenario 1, the sites are of a low sensitivity, and therefore effects are no greater than for scenario 2.

6.16 Population and housing - the primary consideration is meeting housing needs in Frodsham. On this basis, there is a clear preference for Scenario 1, which would meet and exceed (by 25%) the housing requirement set by the CWaC Local Plan. Whilst Scenario 2 would also meet the Local Plan HRF (13% more than the HRF), there would be fewer homes in total. The FNP steering committee's housing survey highlighted the need for affordable tenures such as Starter Homes, social, rented and shared ownership tenures which are seen as a priority to enable younger residents to remain in the area. Therefore Scenario 1's larger growth is likely to deliver greater choice of tenures in the market to meet the needs of residents. In conclusion, Scenario 1 leads to a prediction of **significant positive effects**. Scenario 2 performs less well, but still gives rise to **minor positive effects**.

6.17 Transportation – key issues around minimising the need to travel, supporting modal shift away from the private car and supporting safe walking/cycling are discussed above.

- 6.18 Both scenarios benefit from FNP policies locating development sites in well-connected locations with good access to local services and policies requiring development proposals to provide safe pedestrian access and footway connections to nearest walking/ cycling routes which should encourage active travel and reduce car journeys.
- 6.19 At the scale of growth involved for either scenario, it is considered unlikely that major infrastructure improvements would be achieved associated with housing growth. In conclusion, the scenarios perform comparably with **minor negative effects predicted** due to the increase in traffic associated with housing growth. Scenario 2 is marginally preferable in this respect due to the lower growth and avoiding sites that could contribute further to congestion.

7. The preferred approach

Introduction

- 7.1 The aim of this section is to present the plan-makers reasons for supporting the preferred approach, in light of the scenarios assessment presented above.

Reasons for supporting the preferred approach

- 7.2 The preferred approach is to take forward Scenario 1 as the basis for the FNP. This approach is considered to broadly align with the findings of the assessment, which finds Scenario 1 to perform well in terms of the majority of key sustainability issues, both in absolute terms and relative terms.
- 7.3 With regards to Scenario 2, the assessment highlights that it does not perform quite as well in terms of health and wellbeing, heritage and housing delivery. Conversely, this option performs marginally better in terms of biodiversity, transport and air quality.
- 7.4 The process of defining and assessing growth scenarios serves to highlight that there are only minor factors to differentiate the scenarios in respect of planning for growth at Frodsham. Nonetheless, there is a need to make a choice, and Scenario 1 is considered to be most appropriate on balance in terms of sustainable development. Importantly, the preferred approach will deliver benefits to the Neighbourhood Area and meet the requirements set out in the Local Plan relating to housing provision.

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 2)

8.1 The aim of this section is to present a proportionate assessment of the current 'version of the FNP; which includes a range of policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These policies are set out in Table 8.1 below for reference. Given the iterative nature of SEA, the appraisal here builds upon and feeds into the consideration of the growth scenario effects; as discussed in Section 6.

Table 8-1 FNP policies

Policy no.	Title
H1	Location of housing development
FRO/0010A	64 Main Street
FRO/0010B	Design Principles/ requirements
FRO/0038A	Land off Greenfield Lane
FRO/0038B	Design Principles/ requirements
FRO/0039A	Land to the rear of St Hilda's Drive
FRO/0039B	Design Principles/ requirements
S/01A	Land at Frodsham Health Centre
S/01B	Design Principles/ requirements
S/07A	Brook Works Main Street
S/07B	Design Principles/ requirements
S/10A	Land at Penkman's Lane
S/10B	Design Principles/ requirements
H2	Housing Layout and Design
H3	Housing Mix and Type
H4	Affordable Housing – The Local Connection Test
H5	Design and Character
H6	Heritage assets
EDVE1	Business and Employment
EDVE2	Tourism and the Visitor Economy
EDVE3	Retail and Services
GSRL1	To designate Local Green Space
GSRL2	Protecting and Enhancing Green and Open Space
GSRL3	Maintaining our Green and Open Spaces
GSRL4	Creating New Green / Open Spaces
GSRL5	Enhancing Health and Wellbeing in the Community
CA1	Footpaths and Cycle paths
CA2	Electric Vehicles
CA3	Parking
CA4	Application of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Agreements

Methodology

- 8.2 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 3.1) as a methodological framework.
- 8.3 All of the policies within the plan are considered in the assessment (including the potential for mitigation and enhancement), but rather than providing commentary on the effects of each policy individually, a conclusion is drawn on the effects of the Plan when read 'as a whole' (i.e., the cumulative effect of all the policies considered in combination). This is important because plan policies do not act in isolation and can also help to mitigate effects arising as a result of development and / or other plan policies.
- 8.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g. in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 8.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. For example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e. the potential for the FNP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

9. Assessment of the FNP

Introduction

- 9.1 The assessment is presented below under eight topic headings, reflecting the established assessment framework (see Section 3). A final section (Chapter 10) then presents overall conclusions. Throughout the assessment consideration is given as to whether measures can be implemented to mitigate negative effects and maximise positive effects.

Air quality

- 9.2 Air quality is an important issue in Frodsham, given the AQMA at the junction of Fluin Lane and Bridge Lane. The AQMA was designated in 2015 due to exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ objective, mainly due to road traffic emissions. The latest data from CWaC's monitoring network indicates that the NO₂ objective was not exceeded at residential properties in Frodsham and no exceedance of the PM₁₀ national objectives has been recorded in the AQMA. Similarly, PM_{2.5} monitoring shows that background levels were well below EU limits¹⁴.
- 9.3 CWaC's Air Quality Annual Status Report (2020/2021) states that; *'there is a discernible downwards trend in NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations over time'*. The report also states that CWaC has installed numerous EV charging points and plans to expand the charging network significantly over the next few years.
- 9.4 Other measures being pursued by CWaC to encourage the switch to electric vehicles include the use of planning conditions on new developments, revised parking standards and the trialling of an e-scooter scheme. Whilst some of the recent decline in emissions may be associated with Covid-19 and working from home, earlier, pre-pandemic, air quality reports show similar trends for the Frodsham AQMA.
- 9.5 In terms of housing allocations, the sites allocated in the FNP are within existing urban areas and centrally located with good access to services and facilities. The largest site allocated; Land behind the Health Centre, is around 700m (as the crow flies) from the AQMA. However, this brownfield site is well located with good access to public transport (including the railway station), health, leisure, retail facilities and employment opportunities, all of which should significantly reduce the number and frequency of car journeys. Some of the policies within the FNP such as H1 (Location of housing development) are potentially positive as they support active travel by locating development in accessible locations including brownfield sites within the settlement boundary. There is also a preference for any additional development to be located within 800m of the junction of Church St and Main St, which ought to encourage car free travel for local trips in new developments.
- 9.6 The accompanying policy for Site FRO/0038 states that consideration should be given to a one-way system and/or solutions to narrow lanes.

¹⁴ [CWaC 2020/2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report \(Sept. 2021\)](#)

- 9.7 This is positive in relation to reducing congestion and improving traffic flow (with secondary effects in terms of air quality), but it is uncertain what this solution would be and whether it could be funded.
- 9.8 Pooling funding from all the site allocations in the Plan could be a way to secure the necessary enhancements to the road network, but this would require the use of Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 9.9 Policies H5 (Design and Character) and CA1(Footpaths and Cycle Paths) are also positive with respect to air quality as they require development proposals to provide safe pedestrian access and footway connections to nearest walking / cycling routes; which is likely to facilitate active travel, potentially reducing car journeys.
- 9.10 Policy CA2 encourages the provision of EV charging points in all new developments. Policy CA1 (Footpaths and Cycle Paths) is likely to encourage walking and cycling journeys as it seeks to make Frodsham a cycle friendly town by supporting proposals that implement the recommendations set out in a Cycle Strategy for Frodsham. The latter suggests improvements to make *'Frodsham a sustainably connected and cycle friendly town in order to satisfy the needs of those cycling to places of education, employment and leisure'*¹⁵. The strategy includes a safe cycle route linking the Town Centre and Overton to Helsby High School with connections further afield linking Chester, through Frodsham to Runcorn and Warrington via a single scheme. Connection to Runcorn and Warrington (important for commuters) are also proposed. Recreation and leisure routes are also proposed through the Weaver Valley and at Lady Heyes, Kingsley Village and Delamere Forest. These would potentially enable access to services and facilities within Frodsham and Kingsley.
- 9.11 Overall, the level of growth proposed, even when considered in combination with the Local Plan allocations, is unlikely to give rise to significant adverse effects on air quality. The increase in traffic associated with new development is counteracted to an extent by well-located development sites with good access to services and facilities. Furthermore, the provision of EV charging infrastructure and promotion of enhanced pedestrian and cycle links should encourage more sustainable modes of travel. As a result, no significant deviations from the baseline are anticipated, and **broadly neutral effects** are concluded overall.

¹⁵ [Cycle North Cheshire report "A Cycle Strategy for Frodsham"](#)

Biodiversity

- 9.12 There are several international, European and national, protected biodiversity sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These include Mersey Estuary SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, Beechmill Wood and Pasture SSSI, Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings SSSI and Dunsdale Hollow SSSI. Additionally, there are several Local wildlife Sites (LWS) such as at Frodsham and Overton Wood, East Clifton Top, Sutton Bridge Lagoon, Frodsham Marshes and Hob Hey Wood. The Mersey Estuary also overlaps part of the North West Marine Plan area. These and other significant habitats in Frodsham are given protection at strategic level through policies in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Parts 1 and 2.
- 9.13 In terms of housing sites, all of Frodsham parish is within the Impact Risk Zone of up to three SSSIs, namely Beechmill Wood and Pasture, Dunsdale Hollow, and Frodsham Rail and Road Cuttings. However, the site check (GIS data in Magic Map) indicates that developments of 50 or more residential units outside of the existing settlements / urban areas would require consultation with Natural England on likely risks. The only site in the FNP that is larger than 50 units is at Land behind the Health Centre which is allocated for up to 65 dwellings but the site is within the existing settlement/ urban area of Frodsham and therefore does not fall within the categories requiring consultation with NE. Nevertheless, the site (despite being brownfield) contains trees and other vegetation and is likely to have value to biodiversity. Development at the scale proposed is likely to lead to disturbance to species and a loss of habitat. It is also considered that it could be difficult to achieve biodiversity net gain on site given the number of dwellings being proposed. The accompanying site policy states that mature trees should be retained wherever possible, but it is likely that there is biodiversity value beyond only mature trees. It could be more beneficial to state that a landscape / biodiversity buffer zone should be retained around the site, which coincides with much of the existing vegetation. This would help to reduce the loss of vegetation, and also aid in screening the new development.
- 9.14 Cumulatively, new residential developments in Frodsham should consider recreational disturbance impacts on the coastal designated sites (Mersey Estuary). This issue was considered in the Habitats regulations assessment (HRA) of the FNP¹⁶.
- 9.15 The HRA considered the impacts of the FNP on European sites in the FNP area. This included several possible impact pathways including air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressures. At the screening stage, one site; the Mersey Estuary Ramsar SPA was identified as being potentially susceptible to recreational pressure. The HRA identified (screened-in) two FNP policies; H1 (Location of housing development) and EDVE2 (Tourism and visitor economy) as likely to have significant effects and assessed further to ascertain their likely effects on Mersey Estuary Ramsar SPA. The remaining policies were screened out as they are not likely to produce significant effects. The proposed housing sites allocated by the FNP are within 4.5km of the Mersey Estuary Ramsar and SPA. The closest site to the SPA boundary is FRO/0039 (Land to rear of 15-23 St Hilda's Drive), which is 2.3km away.

¹⁶ AECOM report (Oct. 2021) "Habitats Regulations Assessment: Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan"

- 9.16 Residential development within the FNP area may lead to increased visitors to the Mersey Estuary Ramsar/SPA when considered in-combination with growth across the district (including the amount of housing allocated for Frodsham in the Local Plan) and in surrounding districts. However, Frodsham is relatively isolated from the SPA/Ramsar due to the M56, Frodsham Marsh and the Manchester Ship Canal. The most accessible parts of the SPA/Ramsar are on the opposite side of the River Mersey. Consequently, growth in Frodsham would probably make a very minor contribution to recreational pressure in the SPA/Ramsar site.
- 9.17 Policy EDVE2 (Tourism and the visitor economy) seeks to enhance visitor attractions in Frodsham and promote the future use of the Weaver navigation and the adjoining riverside and the Sandstone Ridge. The policy is likely to result in increased visitor numbers to these areas with an associated increase recreational pressures on the sensitive receptors such as the Frodsham Marshes. The latter also serves a valuable role in providing supporting habitat for the Mersey Estuary/ Ramsar site. The HRA identified recreational pressures as an impact pathway on the Mersey Estuary therefore there could be some potential adverse effects in terms of biodiversity. However, the policy does acknowledge these issues and states that development will need to demonstrate that environmental impacts have been addressed, and that no adverse effects upon the function or ecological value of Frodsham Marshes occurs.
- 9.18 There are several policies within the FNP seeking to protect and enhance green and recreational space provision in the Parish. Policies GSRL1 (To designate local greenspace) and GSRL2 (Protecting and enhancing green and open spaces) and GSRL3 (Maintaining our green and open spaces) support the designation and protection of Frodsham's local green spaces affording priority to developments that retain, protect and provide new green space for communal use. The accompanying text to GSRL1 includes an extensive list of potential sites for designation as Local Green Space.
- 9.19 Some of the spaces identified in these policies serve an important function as biodiversity habitats and maintaining them can help reduce fragmentation resulting from development. Therefore, this set of policies is likely to produce **positive effects** on biodiversity. Enhancements could be achieved through a more proactive approach to biodiversity protection and enhancement. For example, the emphasis in the green / open space policies appears to be on recreation, community and cultural activities. They would benefit from more explicit reference of the need to protect and enhance the biodiversity value of open space.
- 9.20 Overall, mixed effects are considered likely; the proposed housing site allocations are not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects on biodiversity, but there could be minor negatives in relation to the loss of trees and vegetation.
- 9.21 Policy EDVE2 has the potential for **minor negative effects** as it could increase recreational pressures on the Frodsham Marshes and the Mersey Estuary biodiversity sites. However, the HRA confirms that the effects would not be significant.
- 9.22 **Minor positive effects** are predicted for policies GSRL1,2, 3 and 4 as these will result in the protection and enhancement of open greenspaces within the Parish which could help reduce habitat fragmentation and provide stepping-stones for biodiversity.

- 9.23 However, the policies could be improved with a more explicit focus on the value of green and open spaces for biodiversity and by seeking to enhance biodiversity value as well as community and recreational value.

Climate change (adaptation)

- 9.24 In terms of climate change adaptation, the NP area falls predominantly within Flood Zone 1, although there are stretches of Flood Zone 2 and 3 running along the Mersey Estuary, the River Weaver and a band along the M56. There is potential for surface water flooding to occur across the FNP area, although areas susceptible to this are scattered amongst areas with lower risk of fluvial flooding.
- 9.25 In terms of housing site allocations, all of the sites allocated in the FNP are in areas at low risk of flooding from rivers (Flood Zone 1). In this respect, neutral effects are anticipated.
- 9.26 In terms of surface water flood risk throughout the Plan area, the larger three sites (Brook Works, Land at Greenfield Lane and Land at the Health Centre) are previously developed and therefore changes to rates of run-off are unlikely to be significantly worse as a result of development. In fact, on these sites it is possible that an improvement could be achieved through the provision of gardens and / or community green space. There will also be opportunities to implement sustainable urban drainage measures into new developments to help better manage surface water run-off and flood risk (the Local Plan Part 2 also seeks an improvement from previously developed sites in terms of surface water run off).
- 9.27 In terms of surface water flood risk to new developments, the Brooks Work site and Greenfield Lane site both contain areas that are at 'low risk' of flooding (i.e. this area has a chance of flooding of between 0.1% and 1% each year). This risk would need to be managed through mitigation measures. It is considered that the existing policy framework is sufficient to ensure that significant effects do not arise (i.e., there is a requirement in the Local Plan DM Policy 40 for flood risk assessments to be undertaken to demonstrate that flood risk is managed and acceptable). The NP also requires the consideration of SUDs, which complements DM41 in the Part 2 Local Plan.
- 9.28 Well planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to and manage the risks of climate change (including flood risk). Green open spaces can provide several flood mitigation features; by providing space for flood water, reducing permeability of built-up areas and attenuating surface water flow. Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within Frodsham is therefore a key means to promoting climate change adaptation measures within the FNP.
- 9.29 In this context, policies GSRL1 (To Designate Local Green Spaces) and GSRL2 (Protecting and Enhancing Green and Open Spaces) and GSRL3 (Maintaining Our Green and Open Spaces) which support the designation and protection of Frodsham's local green spaces are likely to have beneficial effects.
- 9.30 Areas of green, open space also offer climate change mitigation services through carbon sequestration and a reduction in urban heat island effects. Policy GSRL3 in particular mentions that support will be given to rainwater harvesting within green and open spaces. Therefore, this set of policies is expected to have positive effects on climate change adaptation.

- 9.31 Overall, most of the new development will be located within areas of minimal flood risk (both fluvial and pluvial). A proportion of new development will be located in areas of some greater surface water flood risk, but this would still be low risk. There will be a need to manage these risks and seek to improve existing run-off rate, but there are suitable policies in place to ensure that significant effects are avoidable. Therefore, the residual effects are expected to be **neutral**.
- 9.32 Wider measures in the Plan seek to protect enhance and provide green and open space which should help to ensure the area is broadly more resilient to climate change. This could lead to **minor long-term positive effects** with regards to climate change adaptation.

Health and wellbeing

- 9.33 The health and wellbeing of residents will be supported by FNP policies which support a high-quality public realm (through the FNP Design Code which is a supporting document to the FNP), local distinctiveness and landscape / townscape character. This is discussed to some extent under the 'Landscape' and 'Historic Environment' SEA themes below.
- 9.34 Policy H5 (design and character) requires new development to demonstrate adherence to the design principles and guidance in the Frodsham Design Codes and the Frodsham Town Design Statement.
- 9.35 Policy H2 (Housing layout and design) requires all developments to respect views and vistas in Frodsham and include appropriate planting schemes wherever possible.
- 9.36 A high-quality living environment will also be supported through GSRL set of policies (GSRL1 to 4), which seek to protect (including through Local Green Space designations) and enhance the Plan area's most valued open and green spaces. Community engagement highlighted that parks, gardens, recreation facilities and green spaces, are all highly valued and appreciated by residents and visitors. This set of policies supports developments that retain, protect and provide new green space for communal use. The accompanying text to GSRL1 includes an extensive list of potential sites for designation as Local Green Space including play areas and formal and informal recreation areas. The health benefits of such spaces is highlighted in GSRL2 which promotes developments that enhance foot and cycle paths and embed physical activity e.g. through the provision of public exercise equipment in parks in green spaces.
- 9.37 Several policies support increased use of open space for events and recreation, which is positive for health. However, it is possible that this could lead to amenity issues if it attracts littering. In this respect, Policy GSRL3 is beneficial as it mentions the need for open spaces to be well served by recycling facilities.
- 9.38 An important policy in the FNP is GSRL5 (Enhancing Health and Well-Being in the Community) which seeks to encourage exercise and recreation through the use of public open space.
- 9.39 Residents' health and wellbeing is further supported by policies (H1) which facilitate active travel (walking and cycling) by locating development in accessible locations including centrally located brownfield sites within the settlement boundary.

- 9.40 Similarly, the FNP requires developments to provide safe pedestrian access and footway connections to nearest walking/ cycling routes (H5, CA1) and aims to make Frodsham a cycle friendly town.
- 9.41 It is considered that the FNP will support health indicators relating to housing by providing high-quality new homes that meet identified local housing needs. The FNP allocates around 97 new homes to enable the delivery of sustainable housing tailored to meet the needs of the parish. This will enable the FNP to meet and exceed CWaC's housing requirement for the NP area thus ensuring flexibility in the type, size and affordability of new homes in the parish.
- 9.42 Overall, the proposed spatial strategy and policy provisions seek to protect resident health and wellbeing, deliver improved public realm, open green and recreational spaces and promote active travel opportunities. The housing allocations seek to meet specific community needs, and support downsizing and the provision of affordable housing. As a result, **potential moderate long-term positive effects** on health and wellbeing are anticipated.

Historic environment

- 9.43 There are numerous historic environment assets which contribute to the attractiveness and character of Frodsham. Future growth in the Plan area has potential to affect the setting and significance of assets.
- 9.44 In terms of housing site allocations, two of the allocated sites (at 64 Main Street and Brook Works) were assessed in the SOA as potentially impacting the historic environment. The 64 Main St. site (FRO/0010) is within the Frodsham conservation Area (CA) and is adjacent to a Grade 2 listed entrance / gates associated with the Army Premises next door. The site, currently a restaurant, is allocated for 1 dwelling in Policy FRO/0010A/B. The policy requires that the building is retained or converted in keeping with the current scale and respecting the character of the CA setting. It also requires that any work carried out should minimise the effect on the adjacent Grade II listed structure. Materials and architectural style should respect the existing character and the CA setting. Given the existing commercial premises in this location and with appropriate mitigation (as provided through the policy) it should be possible to develop this site without adversely impacting the adjacent listed building and the character and setting of the CA. It should be noted that an application has already been submitted to the Council for reuse of the building as 3 residential units.
- 9.45 The Brook Works site is allocated for up to 12 residential units as well as business use in policy S/07A. The site comprises Brook House, a Grade II listed building which is currently used for residential and business use (small workshops). The policy stipulates that the Grade II listed building should be retained and the heights, and materials used in any development should respect the existing setting and the CA. The policy is potentially positive as it would help ensure this heritage asset remains in use into the future. The policy provisions should help ensure a development that is appropriate to the character and setting of the CA. This is likely to be positive given that the building could otherwise fall into disrepair. A recommended enhancement would be to require that features within the Listed Buildings are restored and enhanced (rather than only requiring that the buildings must be 'retained').

- 9.46 Policy H6 (Heritage assets) states that development should protect or enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. The policy stipulates that the special interest and character and appearance of the CA must be retained and seeks to preserve special features and traditional materials. The policy also promotes the sensitive re-use of redundant heritage assets.
- 9.47 A primary plan aim is for Frodsham to ‘value its community and heritage’ with the associated objective to ‘ensure the built environment fits in with the local character of Frodsham in terms of materials, scale, accessibility and sustainability’. The cumulative effects of growth on the historic environment could also have negative implications, particularly as a result of increased traffic and congestion. The Plan seeks to combat this through well located (for facilities and services) and well connected developments that integrate pedestrian and cycle paths within developments and linking to surrounding streets, spaces and access to sustainable transport.
- 9.48 Overall, the potential for **minor positive effects** is recognised, namely through the policies seeking to preserve the character and settings of the historic environment including the CA and policies seeking to ensure the continued appropriate use of heritage assets and re-use of under-used heritage assets.

Landscape

- 9.49 The spatial strategy in the FNP allocates housing growth within the existing urban built-up areas of the town. The SOA concluded that all the sites allocated for development are in areas of relatively low landscape sensitivity.
- 9.50 The adopted Local Plan (CWaC LPP2) policy ENV2 (Landscape) seeks to protect and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness by identifying key gaps with the objective of protecting these by maintaining their character, supporting designation of Local Green Space and protecting the borough’s estuaries and undeveloped coast. Policy GBC2 includes Frodsham Hill in a list of Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) highlighting their special landscape character and scenic value. The policy states that such areas ‘must be protected from development that would unacceptably harm their landscape character, appearance or setting’. However, depending on the scale of development, a lack of overall vision and framework could result in the delivery of less sympathetic development styles, layouts and material choice.
- 9.51 In this context the FNP’s Design Code (FDC) is central as it seeks to ensure the preservation of the character of Frodsham’s landscapes. This includes requirement that ‘development should be planned to respond to existing view corridors...’ and ‘key vistas should be protected by controlling development densities and building heights, particularly when in the sight lines of local landmarks.’ The FDC also advocates ‘high quality designs which use local materials, forms, massing and detailing to reflect the existing built fabric of Frodsham’. Frodsham’s heritage assets and townscape character are also offered protection in the FDC which states that ‘developments will be required to respect and respond positively to these assets, and must ‘protect or enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged significance’.

- 9.52 Development would be required to 'respect the existing character area and conservation area setting, including minimising any work that may affect the heritage assets located near to any development'.
- 9.53 Other policies within the FNP such as GSRL1 – GRSL3 (relating to green and open spaces) and H2 (Housing layout and design) will also have beneficial impacts on the landscape character of Frodsham, serving to protect key aspects of the landscape and townscape such as open green spaces and important view and vistas.
- 9.54 Overall, given that the proposed development sites are in areas of low landscape sensitivity with policy mitigation provided at strategic and neighbourhood levels (as well as through the FNP Design Code), then **neutral effects** are predicted on landscape.

Population and housing

9.55 Local Plan policies STRAT 2 to STRAT 8 (LPP1) seek to ensure that new development in Cheshire west and Chester is brought forward in line with identified needs. The Plan also makes provision for a specific level of development to be brought forward in Frodsham, identified as one of ten Key Service Centres. The Plan allocates 250 dwellings in Frodsham (Policy STRAT8). Policy ECON2 seeks to maintain the important role of Frodsham's town centre as a retail and service centre.

9.56 Policies SOC3 and SOC5 (LPP1) support mixed, balanced, sustainable communities through the provision of market and affordable housing that meets identified future needs.

9.57 The FNP policies (FRO/005/0010/0038/0039 and S/01/07/10) seek to deliver around 97 new homes across 6 sites, within the existing urban settlement of Frodsham. The sites in order of size are listed below:

- The largest site is at Land behind Frodsham Health Centre (policy S/01A); a large (0.84ha) brownfield site (former school) within 200m of the retail and service centres at Church St and Main St. The site is allocated for a high density development of up to 65 dwellings. The scheme is envisaged to help provide smaller homes for older residents looking to downsize as well as starter homes for young families.
- Land off Greenfield Lane (policy FRO/0038) is allocated for up to 10 dwellings and on the northern edge of Frodsham High street (currently Frodsham Sea Scouts HQ).
- The Brook Works site is located for up to 12 units and comprises a Grade II listed building (currently in mixed residential and business use) located in the Frodsham Conservation area.
- Land to rear of St Hilda's Drive (policy FRO/0039) comprises a 0.11ha plot within an existing residential area, surrounded by the rear gardens of properties on St Hilda's Drive and a 2-storey block of flats.
- Two small sites at: Penkmans Lane (2 units allocated in policy S/10A), and 64 Main street (1 unit in policy FRO/0010A).

9.58 The sites combined will provide up to 97 new homes. When completions (191) and commitments (27) are taken into account, a total of 315 new dwellings would be delivered over the Local Plan period (2010-2030). This represents a 25% uplift to the housing requirement figure for Frodsham thus meeting and exceeding the housing identified in the Local Plan. This additional provision serves to provide an element of flexibility in the housing choice (types, size and affordability). Therefore, significant long-term positive effects are anticipated in this respect.

9.59 The FNP seeks to complement Local Plan Policy SOC3 (Housing mix and type) which supports mixed, balanced, sustainable communities, providing a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes. The FNP policy H3 (Housing mix and type) requires proposals for new housing to provide a mix of house types, tenures and sizes that takes local needs into account. Policy H4 (Affordable housing – the local connection test) requires development sites of 3 or more dwellings or greater than 0.1ha to include 30% affordable housing (AH).

- 9.60 This is to be provided in perpetuity and offered to those with local connection to Frodsham. These policies are predicted to have positive effects as they help offer a mix of types, sizes and tenure increasing choice in the market as well as providing AH.
- 9.61 Policy H4 should also help create sustainable communities by providing affordable options to younger residents and young families to remain in the area by offering them more affordable housing options. The FNP steering group conducted a housing needs survey that identified a need for downsizing to release larger properties that are currently under occupied.
- 9.62 This would be particularly beneficial to growing families in need of larger properties and would also benefit some of the older residents who may wish to live in smaller more manageable and / or suitably adapted properties. The site at Frodsham Health Centre (allocated in policy S/01A) is favoured by the community for such a development.
- 9.63 One of the aims of the FNP is to 'be...thriving and sustainable' with the accompanying objective to 'provide a mix of dwellings, that meet the needs of Frodsham now and in the future, and address the changing demographics and the towns sustainability'. This was echoed in the housing survey which highlighted the need for affordable tenures such as Starter Homes, social, rented and shared ownership tenures which are seen as a priority to enable younger residents to remain in the area.
- 9.64 Overall, **significant long-term positive effects** are anticipated as a result of the growth strategy, which will meet and exceed Frodsham's housing requirement figure thus providing a buffer to better secure housing delivery and potentially deliver more choice and flexibility in the local housing market. The housing policies are also likely to help younger residents to remain in the area ensuring the long-term sustainability of Frodsham's community.

Transportation

- 9.65 The NP area is connected to the strategic road network by the M56 which passes through the centre of the Plan area and connects Frodsham to Manchester, Warrington, Runcorn to the east and Ellesmere Port in the west. The A56 also connects Frodsham to Chester to the south and to Warrington in the north. There are several smaller B roads (B5393 and B5152) which provide access to the more rural parts of Frodsham to the south beyond the main settlement.
- 9.66 The Frodsham residents' survey highlighted concerns regarding traffic and congestion in the area. Traffic and congestion on the A56 have increased noticeably with the expansion of the Frodsham settlement boundaries, especially during busy periods. In residential areas, roads tend to have lower levels of traffic, but on-street parking contributes to congestion in some locations, particularly near schools and businesses at peak times. There are also some small lanes and streets that contribute to congestion and access problems.
- 9.67 The FNP seeks to address the traffic implications of additional development by locating development sites in well-connected locations with very good access to local services, retail, health and leisure facilities.

- 9.68 Policies such as CA1 and CA3 are also likely to have beneficial effects as they require development proposals to provide safe pedestrian access and footway connections to the nearest walking / cycling routes which should encourage active travel and reduce car journeys.
- 9.69 Policy CA2 is likely to encourage cycle journeys as it seeks to make Frodsham a cycle friendly town by supporting proposals that implement the recommendations set out in a Cycle Strategy for Frodsham. The latter proposes several cycle routes linking the Town Centre to schools and employment centres in neighbouring towns.
- 9.70 Several policies address the issue of on-street parking by requiring new development to include adequate off-street parking and parking to be provided either on a drive or courtyard for specific housing allocations (S10, FRO/005B, FRO/0038, FRO/0039).
- 9.71 This set of policies is potentially helpful in alleviating some of the on-street parking issues and associated congestion on residential roads described above.
- 9.72 Nearly half of residents rely on a private car to travel to work,¹⁷ though the proportion of residents who work from home is higher in Frodsham than in the wider Borough. Working from home is likely to have increased substantially since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. This positive trend in relation to transport is considered likely to prevail in the short term, further supporting reduced congestion at peak times, and subsequently contributing towards meeting climate commitments.
- 9.73 The FNP's policy GSRL2 is supportive of digital connectivity as it promotes the provision of high-quality broadband / internet access throughout the town, including in parks and green spaces. This is potentially beneficial as it would enable more residents to work from their homes, local parks, public spaces, cafes or neighbourhood centres, instead of having to travel to an office. Similarly, policy EDVE1 identifies locations (such as Brook House) where offices, flexible light industrial units and 'working from home' business hubs are promoted. Having such facilities in centrally located premises would enable more residents to work locally without the need to travel further afield and /or commute to traditional places of work.
- 9.74 Overall, whilst measures are implemented to bolster sustainable transport connections, including active travel connections, **minor long-term negative effects** are anticipated as a result of a likely residual increase in vehicular traffic in the area. Coupled with narrow lanes and congestion issues in parts of Frodsham, an increase in car traffic would likely be negative.

¹⁷ 2011 Census

10. Conclusions and recommendations

- 10.1 This chapter summarises the appraisal findings in relation to each of the SEA themes. Where appropriate, recommendations have been made with regards to mitigation and enhancement measures at this stage¹⁸.
- 10.2 Overall, the Plan appraisal has served to highlight the potential for mostly positive effects. Significant **long-term positive effects** are anticipated in relation to the population and housing SEA theme as a result of the growth strategy which will meet and exceed strategic growth targets set in Local Plan; helping to improve choice and potentially affordability. The additional growth also serves to provide a buffer to better secure housing delivery. The provision of smaller dwellings (at the land behind Frodsham Health Centre) will help to facilitate downsizing for older residents who may wish to move to smaller more manageable homes and also enable young adults to get a foothold on the property ladder through affordable tenures (such as affordable rents and First Homes).
- 10.3 **Neutral effects** are predicted for the Air Quality SEA Theme as the small increase in traffic associated with new development is counteracted by well-located development sites with good access to services and facilities. Furthermore, the provision of EV charging infrastructure and promotion of enhanced pedestrian and cycle links should encourage more sustainable modes of travel.
- 10.4 Mixed effects are predicted with respect to biodiversity; whilst neutral effects are predicted in relation to the spatial growth strategy, potentially **minor negative effects** are predicted through Policy EDVE2 as it may lead to increased recreational pressures on the Frodsham Marshes and the Mersey Estuary biodiversity sites.
- 10.5 **Minor positive effects** are anticipated on the historic environment through policies seeking to preserve the character and settings of the historic environment including the Frodsham Conservation Area and policies seeking to ensure the continued use of heritage assets and re-use of 'redundant' ones. Further enhancements could be made to policy through explicit mention of the need to restore and enhance heritage features, rather than only 'retention'.
- 10.6 **Minor positive effects** are expected in relation to health and wellbeing, predominantly reflecting the potential for; improved public realm, connected and resilient development, and the allocation of Local Green Space, walkways and cycle routes.
- 10.7 **Minor negative effects** on transportation are considered likely due to increased traffic and congestion within the Plan area.
- 10.8 **Neutral effects** are predicted on landscape as the proposed development sites are in areas of low landscape sensitivity with policy mitigation provided at strategic and neighbourhood levels as well as through the FNP Design Code.

¹⁸ It should be noted that the SEA process is iterative, and therefore mitigation and enhancement measures proposed at previous stages of appraisal may already have been taken into account in the revised versions of the Plan. As such, the focus on this stage is on any remaining recommendations.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

11. Plan finalisation

- 11.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the submission version of the FNP.
- 11.2 The 'submission' version of the plan will be submitted to CWaC (alongside an Environmental Report Update, if necessary). The plan and supporting evidence will be then published for further consultation, and then submitted for examination.
- 11.3 If the outcome of the Independent Examination is favourable, the FNP will then be subject to a referendum, and the plan will be 'made' if more than 50% of those who vote are in support. Once made, the FNP will become part of the Development Plan for Cheshire West and Chester.

12. Monitoring

- 12.1 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report.
- 12.2 It is anticipated that monitoring of significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan (identified through this SEA) will be undertaken by CWaC as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 12.3 The SEA has not identified any potential for significant negative effects that would require closer monitoring.
- 12.4 A significant positive effect is predicted for the population and housing theme. It is suggested that the following monitoring measures be included in the AMR in relation to housing delivery in Frodsham:
- Annual net housing completions.
 - Affordable housing delivery.

Appendices

Appendix I: Meeting the Regulations

As discussed in Chapter 1 above, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. Table AI.1 links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst Table AI.2 explains this interpretation. Table AI.3 identifies how and where within this report the requirements have been met.

Table AI.1: Questions answered by this report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

	Questions answered		As per regulations, the report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level ▪ Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan ▪ The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be affected ▪ Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) ▪ The likely significant effects associated with alternatives ▪ Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan ▪ The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table AI.2: Interpretation of the regulations

Schedule 2	Interpretation of Schedule 2		
The report must include...	The report must include...		
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>	i.e. answer – <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level		
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected		
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance		
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>	
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach')	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.		
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]	
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan		
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]	

Table AI.3: ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SEA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements are met

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
A) The Environmental Report must present certain information	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report.
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’).
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix II.
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA’). Also, Appendix II presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “ <i>how...considerations have been taken into account</i> ”, Chapter 7 explains ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e. explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives assessment.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives assessment findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an assessment of the draft plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned when finalising the plan, and specific recommendations are made in Section 9 and 10.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 4 and 5 deal with 'Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 sets out reasons for selecting the preferred option (in-light of alternatives assessment).
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 12 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.
B) The Report must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan	
Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the 'pre-submission' version of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to informing Regulation 14 consultation.
C) The report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	This Environmental Report, and consultation responses received, will be taken into account when finalising the plan.

Appendix II: SEA Scoping Report

Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment
Scoping Report

December 2021

Quality information

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Revision History

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V2 Revised post consultation revision	December 2021	Ian McCluskey	Associate Director

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Acronyms

AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
ASR	Air Status Report
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
FNPP	The draft Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan
FTC	Frodsham Town Council
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LEP	Local Economic Partnership
LNR	Local Nature Reserves
LPP1	Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan Part 1 (adopted 2015)
LPP2	Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan Part 2 (adopted 2019)
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NWMP	North West Marine Plan
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

1. Introduction

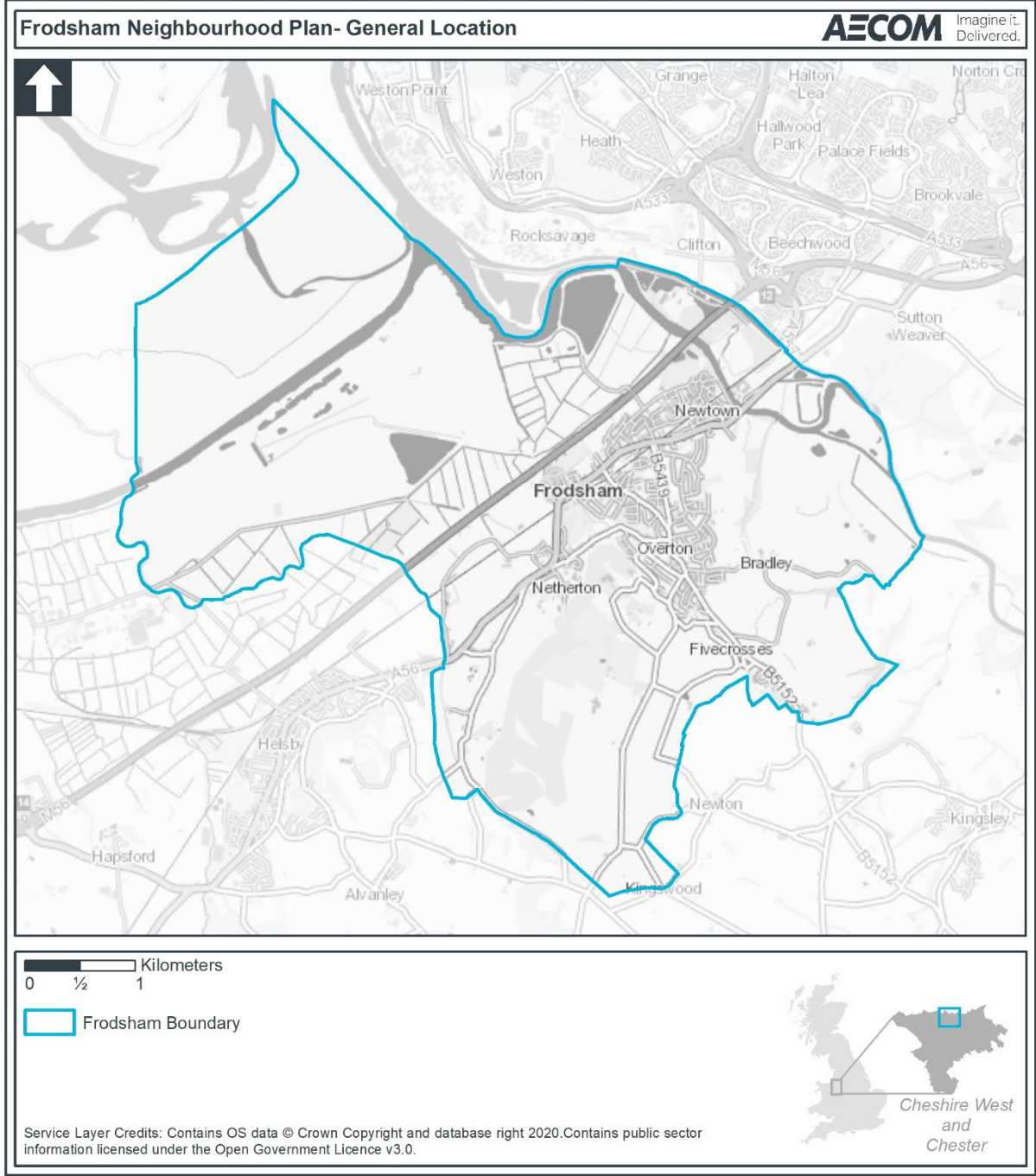
Background

- 1.1 Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, on behalf of Frodsham Town Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the sustainable future growth of the Town. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of Frodsham NDP on behalf of the Town Council.
- 1.2 The NDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2 (LPP1 and LPP2, respectively). The NDP will form part of the development plan for Frodsham, alongside the Local Plan (parts 1 and 2).
- 1.3 NDPs are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Cheshire West and Chester, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the Neighbourhood Planning process where appropriate.
- 1.4 The Key information relating to the Frodsham, NDP is presented in the table below (Table 1-1).

Table 1-1. Key facts relating to the NDP for Frodsham

Name of Responsible Authority	Frodsham Town Council
Title of Plan	Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood Planning
Purpose	<p>The Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Parts 1 and 2.</p> <p>Once ‘made’ the Frodsham NDP will be used to guide and shape development within the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
Timescale	To 2030
Area covered by the plan	The Neighbourhood Plan area comprises the Civil Parish of Frodsham. It is located approximately 3 miles south of Runcorn, 16 miles (26 km) south of Liverpool, and 28 miles (45 km) southwest of Manchester. The River Weaver runs to its northeast and on the west it overlooks the estuary of the River Mersey. The A56 road and the Chester–Manchester railway line pass through the town, and the M56 motorway passes to the northwest. Frodsham is an electrical ward in the Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority (LPA).
Summary of content	The Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and a range of policies including allocation of sites for housing development within the Neighbourhood Plan area
Plan contact point	Gill Hesketh; frodshamplan@gmail.com

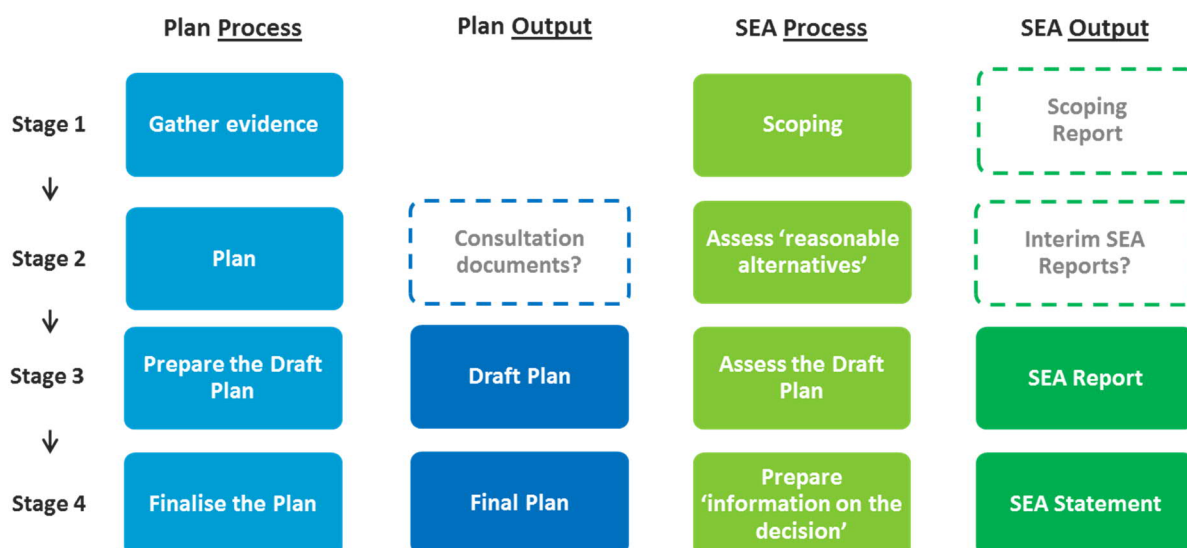
Figure 1-1 Frodsham NP Area Location



SEA explained

- 1.5 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative environmental effects and maximising positive effects.
- 1.6 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (otherwise known as the SEA Regulations) require an environmental assessment to be carried out on certain plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This plan has been determined to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment by Cheshire West and Cheshire Council. To meet this requirement, the plan is undergoing a SEA process which incorporates satisfies the requirements of the SEA Regulations.
- 1.7 SEA can be viewed as a four-stage process that produces a number of statutory and non-statutory outputs. As illustrated in Figure 1.2 below, 'Scoping' is a mandatory process under the SEA Regulations, but the publication of a scoping report is a voluntary (but useful) output. This is the stage of SEA that is covered in the Scoping Report.

Figure 1-2: SEA as a four step process



Introduction to scoping

- 1.8 One of the first stages in the SEA process is to establish the key issues that the appraisal should focus on and to set out appraisal methods. This is called 'scoping', and involves a review of relevant policies, plans and programmes (a 'contextual review') and information about the current and future state of the environment, economy and social factors (the 'baseline'). This information is then used to set out a framework for undertaking strategic environmental assessments as the plan is developed.
- 1.9 The Regulations¹ require that certain statutory bodies are consulted on the scope of a SEA. This can be done in a number of ways, but most often a Scoping Report is produced that presents the key information and a methodology for how future appraisals will be undertaken. Statutory Consultees have 5 weeks to comment on the scope of the appraisal. In England, the statutory consultees are Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England.
- 1.10 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:
- Defining the broader context for the Frodsham NDP and associated SEA (i.e. EU, UK Government and local policy and commitments), to summarise the regulatory and legislative landscape;
 - Establishing the baseline for the SEA, (i.e. the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the Frodsham NDP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects;
 - Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a focus of the SEA; and
 - Developing a SEA Framework comprising objectives and appraisal questions based on these issues, which can then be used to appraise the draft plan.

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Scoping outcomes

- 1.11 The SEA Regulations and guidance document (the NPPG for example) encourage proportionate assessment and therefore it is important to scope out issues where it is apparent that the Plan could not affect the topic area in a significant way. In order to do this, an initial scoping sifting exercise has been undertaken.
- 1.12 As a result, a number of SEA topic areas have been scoped-out early without the need to establish a more detailed baseline position. For other topics, further detail was gathered through the scoping process, which led to additional topics being SCOPED OUT.
- 1.13 **Air Quality, Biodiversity, Climatic Factors (adaptation), Historic Environment, Landscape, Population and Housing and Transportation** have been identified for further assessment at the next stages of the SEA process.
- 1.14 The relevant SEA topic areas and the reasons for the scoping decisions are set out in Table 1-2 below.

Table 1-2: Scoping outcomes

SEA topic area	Scoping Outcomes
Air Quality	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process, and subsequently SCOPED IN . There is an AQMA in the NP area and the FNP can potentially have effects (positive or negative) on air quality
Biodiversity	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently SCOPED IN . There are numerous sites of biodiversity importance within the NP area and the NP can potentially impact these.
Climatic factors	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently climate change mitigation SCOPED OUT as the FNP is limited in its scope to influence mitigation. Climate change adaptation has been SCOPED IN as the Plan can impact resilience and adaptation (e.g. flood risk)
Historic Environment	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently SCOPED IN . There are numerous heritage assets and a conservation area which can be impacted by the FNP.
Landscape	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently SCOPED IN . There are sensitive landscapes in the FNP area and the FNP can potentially have effects (positive or negative) on these.
Waste	The Plan is unable to influence this to a significant extent and therefore this topic area can be SCOPED OUT . Key issues relating to waste will be to ensure adequate access for waste collection, and storage that does not affect the street scene.
Minerals	The plan does not pose any sterilisation risk to mineral resources. Therefore, this topic area can be SCOPED OUT .
Land, Soil and Water Resources	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process, but subsequently SCOPED OUT
Population and Housing	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently SCOPED IN .
Health and Wellbeing	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently SCOPED IN as the FNP can potentially contribute to increased Health and Wellbeing.
Transportation	Considered in greater detail through the scoping process and subsequently SCOPED IN . FNP policies have the potential to engender effects (positive or negative) on this topic.

Structure of this Scoping Report

1.15 The outcomes of the scoping exercise for the topic areas further considered in the scoping process (following the initial sift) have been presented as follows:

- Chapter 2: Air Quality;
- Chapter 3: Biodiversity;
- Chapter 4: Climatic factors (Flood Risk and Climate Change);
- Chapter 5: Historic Environment;
- Chapter 6: Landscape;
- Chapter 7: Land, Soil and Water Resources;
- Chapter 8: Population and Housing;
- Chapter 9: Health and Wellbeing; and
- Chapter 10: Transportation.

1.16 In accordance with the SEA Directive, the final chapters of the report summarise the overarching sustainability issues, set out the SEA Framework and outline the next stages in the process. To demonstrate a clear trail of how the SEA objectives have been identified, each topic Chapter (which is scoped into the SEA) concludes with suggested objectives and supporting criteria for inclusion in the SEA Framework. A site assessment framework is included is set out in Appendix A. This will be used to appraise the development sites allocated in the FNP.

2. Air Quality

2.1 This theme focuses on air pollution, in particular; air quality hotspots and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality.

Policy context

2.2 Table 2-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 2-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
The Clean Air Strategy	2019	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633269/air-quality-plan-overview.pdf
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
The North West Marine Plan	2021	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004490/FINAL_North_West_Marine_Plan_1_.pdf
The Cheshire West and Chester Low Emission Strategy (2018 – 2021)	2018	https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/pests-pollution-food-safety/pollution-and-air-quality/low-emission-strategy-180219.pdf
Cheshire West and Chester Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP)	2011	https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/local_transport_plan_20112026#:~:text=Cheshire%20West%20and%20Chester%20Council%27s%20Local%20Transport%20Plan,the%20local%20area%20in%20the%20years%20to%20come.
The CWCC Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
The CWCC Local Plan Part 1	2019	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/

2.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks early planning to reduce/ mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green

infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused in locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.

- Marine planning ensures that the right activities happen in the right place, at the right time and in the right way in marine areas. Marine plans provide guidance on things to promote or avoid in certain marine locations. The Marine Plan relevant to The FNP is the North West Marine Plan (NWMP). It is a legal requirement for marine plans to be considered in all decisions that affect England's marine area, now and into the future. Section 58(3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act requires that public authorities must have regard to marine plans when taking any decisions which relate to the exercise of any function capable of affecting the UK marine area. This can include decision making relating to Neighbourhood Plans. The policies set out in marine plans apply only in their area (i.e. up to the mean high- water springs mark – which includes the tidal extent of any rivers), but if a proposed activity is likely to affect the plan area, this should be acknowledged and considered. The FNP includes the intertidal area forming part of the Mersey Estuary and therefore also covers part of the North West Marine Plan area. The FNP falls within the North West Marine Plan area and is therefore required to comply with its policies. Of particular relevance here is Policy NW-Air-1 which stipulates that proposals must assess their impacts on local air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. Proposals likely to increase air pollution and/or emissions must demonstrate that they will; in order of preference: avoid, minimise, mitigate air pollution and/ or greenhouse gas emissions in line with current national and local air quality objectives and legal requirements. Proposals that cannot avoid, minimise or mitigate air pollution and or greenhouse gas must not be supported.
- The FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the FNP area. The CWCC LPP1 policy SOC5 (Health and well-being) and CWCC LPP2 policy DM31 (Air quality) seek to protect residents from the effects of air pollution by disallowing development that gives rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life due to air pollution for example (SOC5). DM31 requires that development near AQMAs be designed to mitigate the impact of poor air quality. It also requires an air quality assessment for developments likely to significantly impact air quality. Where such an assessment identifies unacceptable impacts, appropriate mitigation must be submitted ensuring that new development is appropriate or the location and unacceptable risks are avoided.
- Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to publish annual Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASRs) to discharge their monitoring obligations under Part IV of the Environment Act (1995). LPAs are required to review air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated, an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) must then be put in place. Frodsham has one AQMA, designated in 2015 due to exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ objective which is related to road traffic in this location.
- To improve air quality across the UK, national strategies have in the last few decades focused on regulatory frameworks, investment by industry in cleaner processes and a shift in the fuel mix towards cleaner forms of

energy (largely at point sources). Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (as a significant source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), recent objectives outlined in the Clean Air Strategy seek to recognise wider sources (including smaller contributors and diffuse sources) that contribute to poor air quality. This includes; power generation, heating our homes, producing food, manufacturing consumer goods and powering transport.

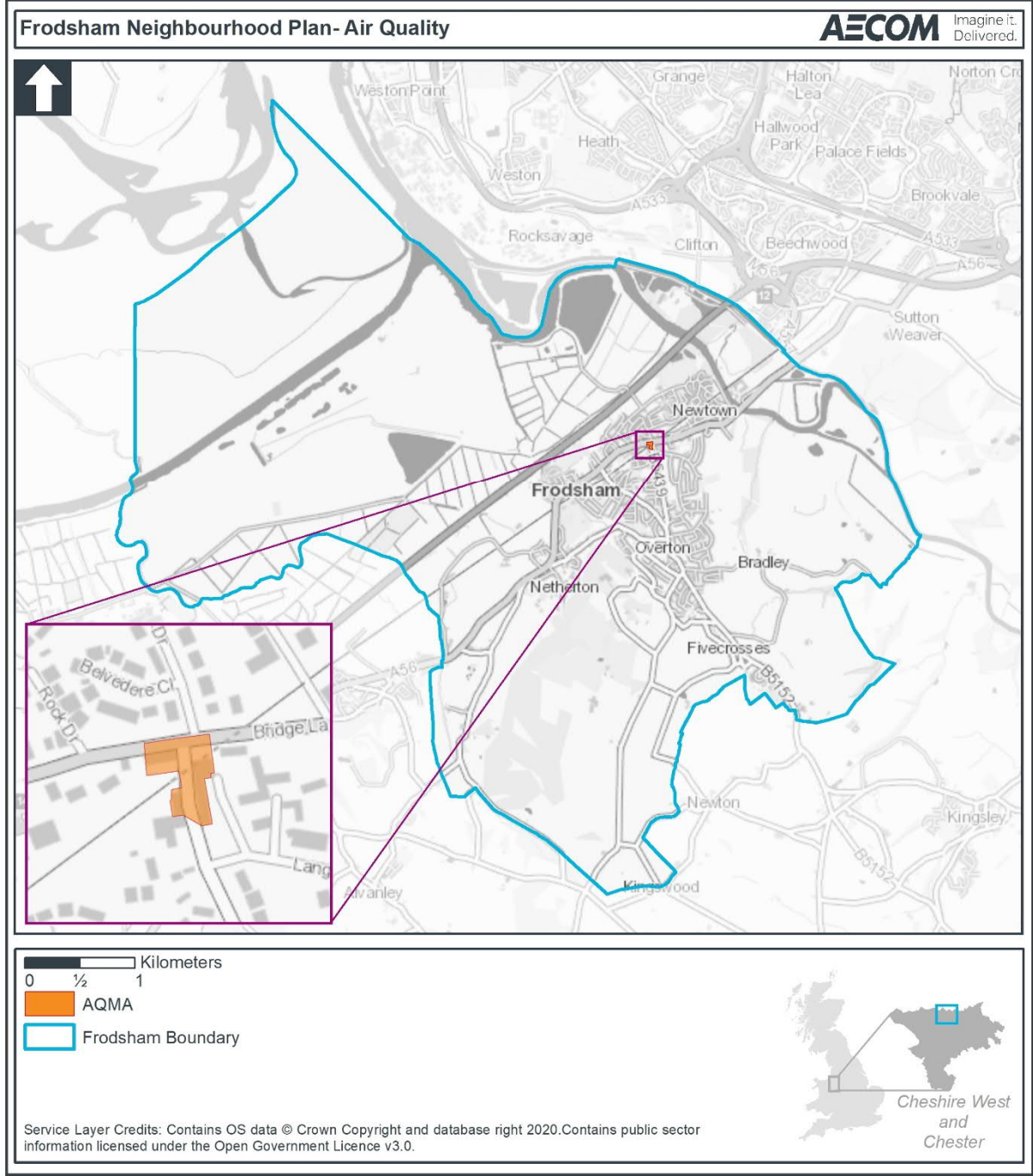
- The Cheshire West and Chester Low Emission Strategy (2018 – 2021) (LES) and the CWCC Local Transport Plan seek to address health impacts of air pollutants such as NO₂ and Particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and indirectly tailpipe hydrocarbon emissions. This is to be achieved through various means including; modal shift to public transport, cycling, and walking, reducing kilometres driven and adoption of low emission vehicles (LEVs).

Baseline Summary

- 2.4 CWCC's Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)² states that there is currently one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Frodsham. The designated area (See Figure 2-1) incorporates Fluin Lane (Nos 2, 4, 6 and 8), High Street (Nos 70, 70a, 72, 72a, 74, 76 and 78), Manor Farm, Bridge Lane and Manor Farm Court (Nos 7, 8, 9 10, 11 and 12).
- 2.5 The AQMA was designated in 2015 due to exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ objective which is related to road traffic in this location. However, data from 2018 indicated that the NO₂ objective was not exceeded at residential properties in Frodsham.
- 2.6 No exceedance of the PM₁₀ (particulates less than 10 micrometres in diameter) national objectives has been recorded in the AQMA. Similarly, 2.5 micron particulate (PM_{2.5}) monitoring shows that background levels well below EU limit levels. The report states that; '*there is a discernible downwards trend in NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations over time*'.
- 2.7 CWCC is pursuing a number of measures to deliver improvements in air quality through its Low Emissions Strategy (LES). These include a focus on modal shift to encourage low emissions/ sustainable transport, improving the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and reducing emissions from public transport/ licences vehicles. The Council anticipates that the LES will deliver significant improvements in local air quality over time. The Council is also continuing with the introduction of 20mph speed zones (started in 2016) which can help reduce NO_x and PM₁₀ emissions.

² Cheshire West and Chester Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (June 2019); <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/pests-pollution-food-safety/pollution-and-air-quality/air-quality-review-and-assessment/reports/air-quality-annual-status-report-2019.pdf>

Figure 2-1 Location of Frodsham AQMA



Summary of future baseline

- 2.8 Exceedance of national NO₂ levels was observed at the AQMA in Frodsham in 2015. However, no exceedance has been recorded since 2015 and the latest ASR states that emissions are on a downward trend.
- 2.9 New employment and / or housing provision within the NDP area can potentially have adverse effects on air quality through increased traffic flows and associated vehicular pollutants such as NO₂. In the absence of the NDP, the amount of growth anticipated is not expected to lead to significant changes to the baseline position.
- 2.10 CWCC's LES initiative along with improvements and growth in low emissions vehicles and EVs is likely to lead to a reduction in transport related emissions in the long term and could offset increases associated with traffic from new development.
- 2.11 The implementation of the CWCC Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026, which aims to reduce transport related emissions and encourage sustainable transport, is likely to lead to a reduction in transport related emissions.

Key issues

- 2.12 The key issues are as follows:
- There is one Air Quality Management Area within the NP. No exceedance of national emissions limits has been observed in this AQMA since 2015 and the emissions recorded are on a downward trend.
 - Traffic and congestion have the potential to increase vehicular emissions and reduce air quality in the area though low emissions vehicles could offset this to an extent.

Scoping outcome

- 2.13 New development proposed within the FNP is likely to lead to increased vehicular traffic. Whilst no exceedance of monitored pollutants has been observed at the AMQA since 2015 and the levels are declining, the additional traffic generated by new development could adversely impact the air quality at the AQMA. The Plan can potentially contribute to air quality improvements. This is evident from the Plan aims and objectives seeking to achieve environmental improvements. Therefore, air quality has been **SCOPED IN** of the SEA.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Biodiversity SEA theme?

- 2.14 Considering the key issues discussed above it is proposed that the Sea should include the following objective:

Table 2-2 SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Air quality

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Improve air quality within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area and minimise all sources of environmental pollution	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and encourage more sustainable transport options? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Encourage development which reduces the need to travel outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Locate and design development so that current and future residents will not regularly be exposed to poor air quality? • Implement measures (such as appropriate planting and provision of green infrastructure) which will help support good air quality in an around the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Ensure development connects to the existing road network, promoting ease of access and suitably mitigating any potential increases in local congestion?

3. Biodiversity

- 3.1 This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats and species within and surrounding the FNP area.

Policy Context

- 3.2 Table 3-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 3-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
The 25 Year Environment Plan The Environment Bill	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
The Cheshire region Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	2007	https://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-06/BAP%20list%20-%20updated%20April%202011.pdf
North West Marine Plan	2021	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004490/FINAL_North_West_Marine_Plan_1_.pdf
The Mersey Forest Plan	2014	https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/The_Mersey_Forest_Plan_web_version_single_new.pdf
The CWCC Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
The CWCC Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/

- 3.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with NPPF, which places significant emphasis on improving biodiversity and securing measurable net gains in development, alongside protection and conservation of designated
- sites and important species and habitats. This includes utilising a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale. Support is given to establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures, particularly in consideration of climate change.
- Over the past decade, policy (e.g. The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to “replenish depleted soil, plant

trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.” Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.

- The emerging Environment Bill will provide further provisions in relation to biodiversity when granted royal assent. The Bill will set parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Bill identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- The Cheshire region Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) offers a series of specific plans for each of the threatened species and/or habitats within the area with the intention to protect their levels within the Cheshire region.
- The FNP is required to be in conformity with the North West Marine Plan (NWMP). Of particular relevance are policies NW-BIO-1, NW-BIO-2. These support proposals that enhance the distribution of priority habitats and species and require potential adverse effects be avoided, minimised or mitigated. Proposals that cannot avoid, minimise and mitigate or, as a last resort compensate for, significant adverse impacts will not be supported. Policy NW-BIO-3 seeks to support proposals that conserve, restore or enhance coastal habitats requiring proposals to take account of the space needed for coastal habitats. Proposals are required to demonstrate that they will (in order of preference) avoid, minimise, mitigate or compensate for net habitat loss.
- The Mersey Forest covers more than 500 square miles in Merseyside and North Cheshire and was chosen as one of 12 areas of England to be the focus of a long-term tree planting programme to improve the local environment for the benefit of people, wildlife and the economy. Over nine million trees have been planted thus far (which absorbed over half a million tonnes of carbon dioxide) and created over 3,000 hectares of woodland. The Mersey Forest Plan is a long term strategic guide to the work of The Mersey Forest team and partners. It is accompanied by a Delivery Plan which sets out monitoring and shorter-term activities, covers a five year period and is reviewed annually.
- The FNP is required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan Parts 1 and 2. With respect to biodiversity; the CWCC LPP1 policy ENV4 (Biodiversity and geodiversity) and CWCC LPP2 policy DM44 (protecting and enhancing the natural environment) seek to safeguard and enhance biodiversity through identification and protection of sites of international, national, and local importance. The policies stipulate that development should not result in any net loss of natural assets and should seek to provide net gains. Where loss/damage to habitats is unavoidable because of exceptional overriding circumstances, mitigation and compensation would be required to ensure there is no net loss of environmental value. Development likely to have an impact on protected sites must be

accompanied by an Ecological Assessment that meets a set of criteria set out in the policy. CWCC LPP2 policy DM45 supports development that conserves, manages and enhances (where possible) existing trees, woodlands, orchards and hedgerows. Where this is demonstrated as being not possible proposals must include replacement trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the site or offsite (if not practicable) at a ratio of at least two new trees for each tree lost. Development affecting existing and new woodlands should support the aims and policies of the Mersey Forest Plan where relevant.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

- 3.4 Cheshire has a range of wildlife species and habitats³. A number of these are protected sites; the designation of which helps to preserve the biodiversity and the character of the areas. Nature designations within Frodsham are presented in the following table (Table 3-2) and illustrated in Figure 3-1.

Table 3-2 Nature Designations within Frodsham

Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Mersey Estuary SPA
Ramsar Sites	Mersey Estuary Ramsar
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Mersey Estuary
	Beechmill Wood & Pasture
	Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings
	Dunsdale Hollow
Local Wildlife Sites	Frodsham and Overton Wood
	East Clifton Tip
	Sutton Bridge lagoon
	Frodsham Marshes
	Hob Hey Wood
Community Forest	Mersey Forest

International

- 3.5 A major aim of the Birds Directive is to conserve the habitats of qualifying wild birds in order to ensure their survival and reproduction. The Special Areas of Protection Designation is a key mechanism in achieving this. The Mersey Estuary SPA provides important habitats such as intertidal mud and sandflats, areas of rocky shore and areas of saltmarsh. These habitats support

³ These are considered in greater detail in the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the FNP (AECOM report Oct. 2021).

internationally important populations of Black-tailed godwit, Dunlin, Golden Plover, Pintail, Redshank, Shelduck, Teal and waterbird assemblage. The SPA overlaps the Mersey Estuary Ramsar and SSSI discussed below.

- 3.6 In addition to the SEA, the FNP has undergone a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Its objective is to identify if any particular site allocation proposed in the FNP has the potential to cause an adverse effect on the integrity of European designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation, SACs, Special Protection Areas, SPAs, and Ramsar sites designated under the Ramsar convention), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to determine whether site-specific or policy mitigation measures are required. The HRA is a separate process from the SEA.
- 3.7 Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. It aims to protect and conserve rare wetland habitats for their importance in conserving biological diversity. The Mersey Estuary Ramsar, also a SSSI a SPA, is an internationally important site for wildfowl and consists of large areas of intertidal sand and mudflats. The site also includes an area of reclaimed marshland, salt-marshes, brackish marshes and boulder clay cliffs with freshwater seepages. The area includes important roosting sites for wildfowl and waders at high tide. Throughout the winter the estuary supports large numbers of wildfowl and waders. The birds feed on the rich invertebrate fauna of the intertidal sediments as well as plants and seeds from the salt-marsh and adjacent agricultural land. The estuary is also a valuable staging post for migrating birds in spring and autumn.⁴ Good water quality and sediment quality are particularly important for this SSSI. The birds using the area as roosting and feeding grounds are vulnerable to disturbance from human activities such as bait digging, dog walking and wildfowling. Natural England's views about management (VAM) state that It is important to create space to enable landward roll-back to take place in response to sea-level rise, and to allow the system to be dynamic and retain the flexibility to respond to associated changes such as the movement of physical features within the system, e.g. migrating subtidal sandbanks. The habitats within this site are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides.

National

- 3.8 There are over 4,100 Sites of Specific Scientific Importance (SSSI) in England, which cover around 8% of the country's land area. SSSIs are recognised as amongst the country's very best wildlife and geological sites. There are several, overlapping, SSSI designated sites within the NP area (Figures 3.1 and 3.2) including; the Mersey Estuary (discussed above), Beechmill Wood and Pasture, Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings SSSI and Dunsdale Hollow SSSI.

⁴ Natural England Designated Sites View available at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1001398&SiteName=mersey&countyCode=&responsePerson=&unitId=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

- 3.9 The Beechmill Wood and Pasture SSSI covers an area of 6.2 ha at the eastern boundary of the NP area. Beechmill Wood is a small clough (steep valleys) woodland on the south side of the River Weaver. The mix of soil types and variation in drainage result in increased diversity adding to the wildlife value of the woodland. The main habitats are broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland (lowland) and neutral grassland (lowland). Much of the woodland is dominated by ash and wych elm forming a nationally rare woodland type. The side valley running north-south is dominated by pedunculate oak and because ash is not present it is an uncommon woodland type in Cheshire cloughs⁵. The site also includes an unimproved field which is very rich with plant species and grasses. Natural England (NE) states that deer management and protection from rabbits and livestock is important here. Careful management of surface drainage is also essential to prevent adverse changes in plant species composition. All the habitats here are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides. Access to site and recreational activities may also need to be controlled.
- 3.10 Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings SSSI is a natural inland geological site comprising a sequence of sandstone exposures representing part of the Triassic Helsby Sandstone Formation. Sedimentary structures have been formed in large dome-shaped and transverse desert dunes. At Pinmill Brow the desert dunes are overlain by the Tarporley Siltstone Formation which had a very different origin, being laid down by either marine intertidal or fluvial deposition⁶. The VAM for this SSSI states that it is important to maintain the rock exposures free of vegetation. Threats include collection of geological specimens which needs to be carefully managed to ensure geological resource is conserved. Developments and tree planting that obscure rock exposures are considered main threats to such sites.
- 3.11 Dunsdale Hollow SSSI is on a steep north-west facing escarpment of Upper Mottled and Keuper Sandstone. It is an acidic lowland birch and sessile oak woodland⁷. This type of woodland is often found in the uplands but its occurrence in a lowland landscape is very unusual and it is found on only one other site in Cheshire on the Peckforton Hills. The ground flora which is composed of wavy hair-grass, broad buckler-fern, bluebell and bramble. On the steep banks of the sandstone outcrops there are good stands of great wood-rush, an uncommon plant in Cheshire. An open glade leading to the bottom of the slope is dominated by bracken. Threats to the status of the SSSI include unmanaged deer, rabbits and livestock, and invasive species.

⁵ Natural England Designated Sites View at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1001736&SiteName=beechmill&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

⁶ Natural England Designated Sites View at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1002577&SiteName=frodsham%20rail&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

⁷ Natural England Designated Sites View at [occurs on a steep north-west facing escarpment of Upper Mottled and](#)

- 3.12 Natural England collects data on the condition of SSSIs and Table 3-3 below sets out the condition of the local SSSIs;

Table 3-3 SSSI Conditions⁸

SSSI Site	% area Favourable	% area Unfavourable Recovering	% area Unfavourable No change
Mersey Estuary	29.3%	26.4%	44.3%
Beechmill Wood and Pasture	69.2%	30.8%	0.0%
Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings	100%	0.0%	0.0%
Dunsdale	100%	0.0%	0.0%

- 3.13 SSSI Impact Risk Zones, map zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is designated. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. The majority of the NP area falls within SSSI Impact Risk Zones for the Mersey Estuary SSSI and the Beechmill Wood and Pasture SSSI (figure 3.1). Activities such as residential development (depending on scale and proximity to SSSI), infrastructure, commercial and industrial development and associated externalities such as waste and air pollution can potentially have detrimental impact on SSSIs.

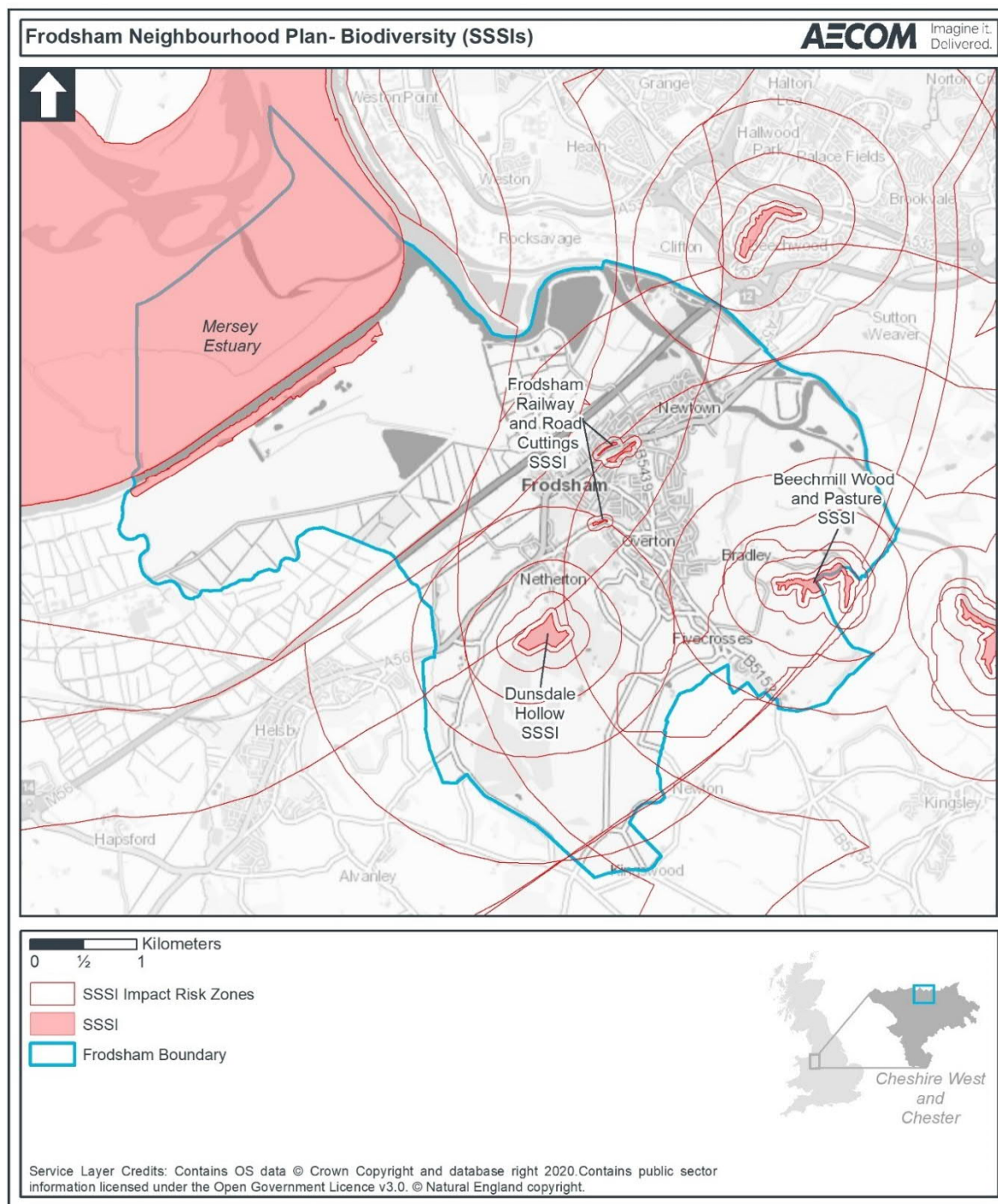
Local

- 3.14 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are areas of land that are especially important for their wildlife. They provide corridors for wildlife, forming key components of ecological networks. The Wildlife Trusts work with local authorities, statutory agencies, landowners and other local partners to establish effective systems for identifying, managing and monitoring Local Wildlife Sites. Local Wildlife Sites are identified and selected locally using scientifically-determined criteria and ecological surveys. The CWCC website lists numerous local wildlife sites including five in the NDP area such as Frodsham and Overton Woods and Frodsham Marshes (table 3-1).

⁸ Natural England (2021)

- 3.15 The Mersey Forest area overlaps the majority of the NDP area. In urban areas the Mersey Forest Plan aims to plant individual trees, groups of trees and small woodlands on appropriate and available urban areas, settlements and employment sites, such as school playing fields, open spaces, streets, highway verges, in the grounds of large institutions, derelict land, and development sites. The plan targets planting to meet identified green infrastructure needs.
- 3.16 Within Frodsham urban areas the indicative woodland cover target is 10% which compares to just 2% in 2012. In the west and north west of the NDP area; namely the areas comprising, drained marshes, mudflats and saltmarshes of Frodsham Marsh, no change in net woodland cover is required (2% in 2012) as woodland planting is deemed inappropriate here. It is important to maintain the open nature of these designated areas.
- 3.17 A target of 30% woodland cover is assigned to Frodsham Ancient Woodlands Forest Park (from 10% in 2012). The plan involves establishing a woodland framework around Frodsham and Helsby, linking to the Sandstone Ridge and long distance trail, and into the Weaver Valley (excluding the sandstone escarpment ridge line). A woodland buffer will be created on suitable land between the settlements and the motorway⁹.
- 3.18 The FNP includes the intertidal area forming part of the Mersey Estuary which overlaps part of the North West Marine Plan area. The NWMP¹⁰ sets out priorities and directions for future development within the plan area, informs sustainable use of marine resources and helps marine users understand the best locations for their activities, including where new developments may be appropriate. The plan also provides guidance on things to promote or avoid for some locations. The north west inshore marine plan area stretches from the Solway Firth border with Scotland and the River Dee border with Wales, taking in a total of approximately 4,900 square kilometres of sea. It includes: any area submerged at mean high water spring tide and the waters of any estuary, river or channel, so far as the tide flows at mean high water spring tide. The Plan areas are very busy, with a large variety of existing activities competing for limited space. There are low-lying coastlines and diverse marine environments that share the space with the numerous activities. The coastal area is home to a range of communities, with urban centres found in the southern part of the inshore marine plan area and predominantly rural communities to the north. The north west marine plan areas are of particular importance to several bird species, reflected in the number of statutory and non-statutory designated sites. Coastal areas are characterised by estuaries in the north and south with Morecambe Bay, the largest area of continuous intertidal mudflats and sandflats in the United Kingdom. The offshore marine plan area is characterised by muds, sands and gravels, which support a variety of benthic species and provide important spawning, nursery and feeding grounds for fish species. Marine plan areas are sensitive to recreational pressures and disturbance as well as water pollution from surface water runoff and wastewater.

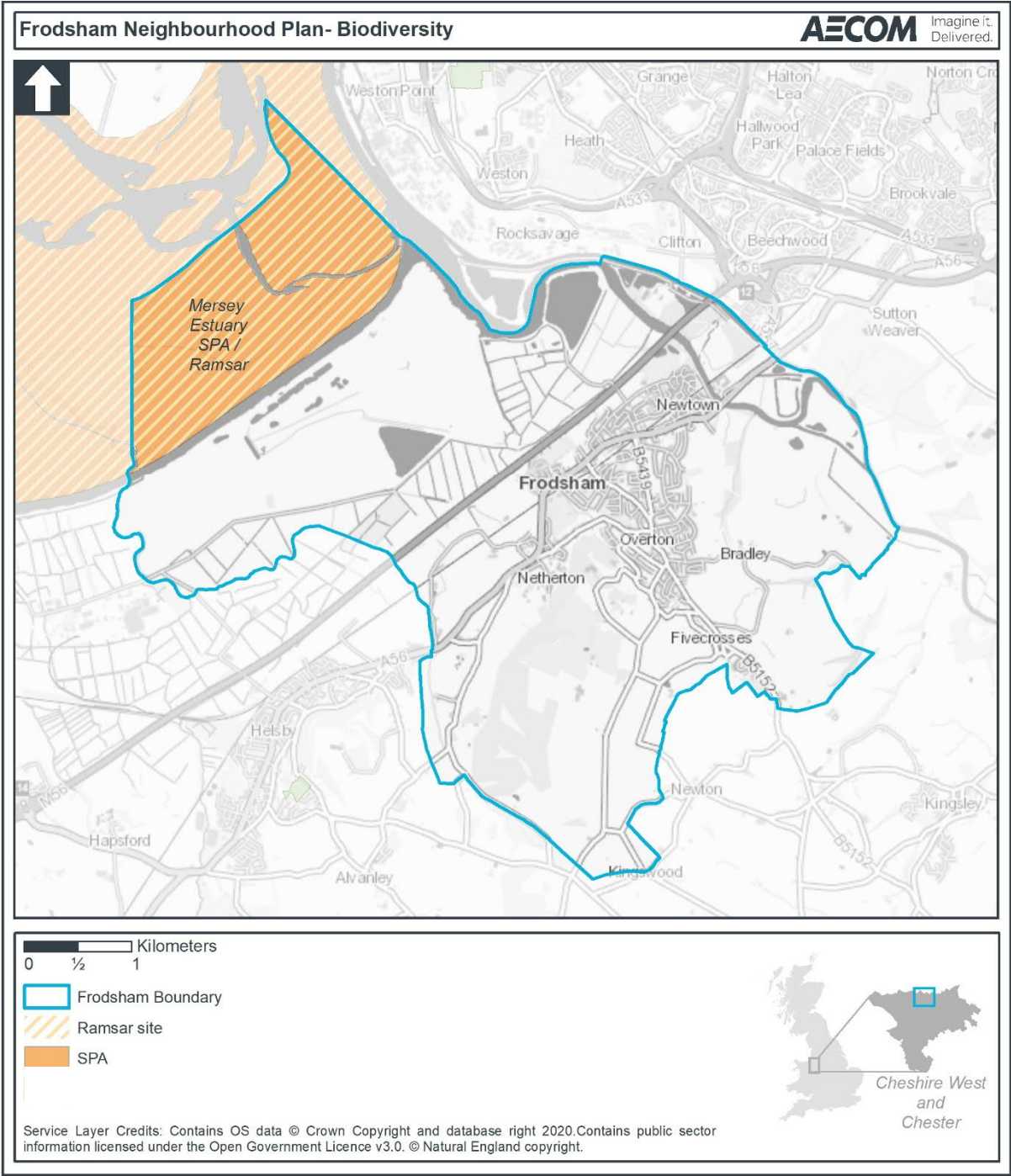
Figure 3-1 Biodiversity Designations & IRZs in Frodsham



⁹ Source: The Mersey Forest Plan at <https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/about/plan/#policy>

¹⁰ Marin Management Organisation (Jan 2020) North West Inshore and North West Offshore Marine Plan Draft for consultation at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/857301/DRAFT_NW_Marine_Plan.pdf

Figure 3-2 Mersey Estuary SPA/ Ramsar



Future Baseline

- 3.19 A number of factors threaten protected and priority species and habitats within Frodsham. Notably recreational pressures, climate change, unsuitable land management and invasive species.
- 3.20 Development within the NDP area could encroach on certain habitats, threaten local species, and impact biodiversity networks in the absence of effective mitigation measures.
- 3.21 Increased development in the NDP area will place increased pressure on areas of biodiversity value and on marine plan areas due to land take for development and an increase in population. An increase in population is likely to lead to an increase in leisure and recreational pressure and increased demand for natural resources such as water. New development may lead to an increase in disturbance through human activity, loss of habitat, increased predation (e.g. from domestic pets), atmospheric, light, land and water pollution.
- 3.22 Habitats and species are likely to continue to be afforded protection through higher level planning policy (including LPP1 and LPP2) and whilst these areas face increasing pressures from future development, planning policy should safeguard the most valued areas and protect ecological networks.

Key headline issues

- 3.23 There are several sites of high biodiversity importance within the NDP area. These include the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar/SSSI, the Beechmill wood and pasture, Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings and Dunsdale Hollow SSSIs. The risk impact zones associated with these SSSIs extend and overlap with all of the NP area.
- 3.24 The Mersey Forest plan area covers the majority of the NDP area and aims to significantly increase woodland cover in the area.
- 3.25 The FNP overlaps part of the North West Marine Plan area. Development in the NDP area could place increased pressures on areas of biodiversity value due disturbance and polluted water runoff (or wastewater discharge)

Scoping outcome

- 3.26 The SEA topic 'Biodiversity' has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. There is potential for localised effects at sites that could be identified for development, as well as increased recreational pressure.
- 3.27 It will also be important to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects upon the North West Marine Plan areas and the numerous important biodiversity designated sites in the NDP area such as, the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar/SSSI, the Beechmill wood and pasture, Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings and Dunsdale Hollow SSSIs.
- 3.28 There may also be opportunities to enhance ecological networks and achieve net biodiversity gains through targeted local policies

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Biodiversity SEA theme?

- 3.29 The SEA topic 'Biodiversity' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 3-4 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 3-4 SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Biodiversity

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support connections between habitats in the Plan area? • Avoid significant impacts on designated sites within the NP area including; the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar/SSSI, Beechmill wood and pasture, Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings and Dunsdale Hollow SSSIs? • Avoid significant impacts from air pollution, urban water drainage and surface water runoff, on the designated biodiversity sites and areas forming part of the North West Marine Plan. • Support continued improvements to the designated sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change?

4. Climatic Factors (flood risk and climate change)

- 4.1 This theme focuses on activities contributing to climate change, climate change mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change including flood risk.

Policy Context

- 4.2 Table 4.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 4-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
Clean Air Strategy	2019	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019
Clean Growth Strategy	2017	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932122/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf
UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023	2018	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-second-national-adaptation-programme-2018-to-2023
Draft Flood Risk Management Plans	2021	https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/fcrm/flood-risk-management-plans-information-page/
North West Marine Plan	2021	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004490/FINAL_North_West_Marine_Plan_1_.pdf
CWCC 'climate emergency' declaration	2019	The Climate Emergency (cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)
The CWCC Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwcc/ldf/adopted-cwac-lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
The CWCC Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwcc/ldf/cw-lp-part-two/

4.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP is required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks proactive planning approach to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and deliver long-term resilience; including through reuse, regeneration and conversion.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government's commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.
- The draft flood risk management plans (FRMPs) for England cover the period from 2021 – 2027. They include measures for the flood risk areas identified in 2017 for surface water flooding and in 2018 for main river and sea flooding. The EA worked with Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and risk management authorities (RMAs) to produce the FRMPs which are undergoing public consultation at time of writing). These strategic plans focus on areas at nationally significant area of flood risk or FRAs. The FRMP will also contribute to the delivery of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (FCERM). The latter sets out a long term approach to resilience and adaptation.
- The FNP is required to comply with the requirements of the NWMP. Of particular relevance are policies NW-CC-1, NW-CC-2 and NW-CC-3. Policy NW-CC-1 supports proposals that conserve, restore or enhance habitats that provide flood defences or carbon capture. Proposals likely to have significant adverse impacts on such habitats must demonstrate that they will follow the mitigation hierarchy, otherwise they will not be supported. Policy NW-CC-2 requires proposals to demonstrate, for the lifetime of the projects, that they are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Policy NW-CC-3 stipulates that proposals likely to have significant adverse impacts on coastal change or on climate change adaptation, inside or outside of proposed project areas, should only be supported if they demonstrate that they will follow the mitigation hierarchy.

- CWCC declared a 'climate emergency' in May 2019 and has been engaging with a range of partners, climate experts, community groups to understand the challenges and opportunities the Climate Emergency presents for Borough. Two plans have been produced setting out these challenges and the actions that will be taken to achieve carbon neutrality in the borough. The first is the Climate Emergency Response Plan which focuses on the borough wide response to the climate crisis. The second is the Carbon Management Plan which sets out the actions the Council needs to take to be carbon neutral by 2030. The plan provides an overview of the Council's current position in relation to carbon emissions and outlines the targets to reduce emissions throughout Council services over the next ten years.
- The LLP1, policy ENV1, the LPP2 policies DM40 and DM41 address flood risk and water management. They seek to reduce flood risk by requiring 'all development must follow the sequential approach to determining the suitability of land for development, directing new development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding and where necessary apply the exception test'. Developers will be required to demonstrate, provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) at the planning application stage (where necessary). Development proposals are required not to increase flood risk on site or elsewhere. New development will be required to include or contribute to flood mitigation, compensation and/or protection measures, where necessary, to manage flood risk associated with or caused by the development. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) implementation would be required for new development (where feasible). The LPP1 policy ENV 3 'Green Infrastructure' (GI) supports the creation, enhancement, protection and management of a network of high quality multi-functional Green Infrastructure. This will be achieved by incorporating new and/ or enhanced GI into development or contributing to its provision. The policy also supports Increased planting of trees and woodlands, particularly in urban areas and the urban fringe.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

Greenhouse gas emissions

- 4.4 The total per capita emissions figures for Cheshire West and Chester Borough (table 4.2) are double the corresponding figures for the North West region and England as a whole. The commercial and Industrial sector is the biggest contributor, making up nearly 60% of per capita emissions in the borough. This is largely due to emissions arising from the borough's industrial corridor situated to the north of Chester. This includes the Stanlow Oil Refinery (Ellesmere Port) which is the largest individual emitter.
- 4.5 The overall trend shows declining emissions with levels in 2018 around 40% down on 2005 levels. This is similar to the levels of reductions observed for the wider region and nationally.
- 4.6 The transport sector is the second largest contributor to per capita emissions in the borough, with levels around 47% higher than those observed for the North West region and England. Again, this is likely to be associated with the substantial industrial sector in the borough.

Table 4.2: Per capita local CO₂ emission estimates; industry, domestic and transport sectors (kt CO₂)¹¹

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2018
Cheshire West & Chester								
Industrial & Commercial	12.0	11.9	10.8	9.1	9.2	7.1	7.7	6.3
Domestic	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.2	1.7	1.6	1.6
Transport	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.8
Total per capita	17.8	17.5	16.0	14.0	14.1	11.7	12.1	10.6
North West								
Industrial & Commercial	3.9	3.7	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.3	2.0	1.9
Domestic	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.5
Transport	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
Total per capita	8.7	8.3	7.3	6.8	6.9	5.9	5.4	5.3
England								
Industrial & Commercial	3.79	3.61	2.96	2.73	2.80	2.27	1.85	1.80
Domestic	2.49	2.37	2.13	1.96	2.03	1.63	1.43	1.42
Transport	2.27	2.23	2.03	1.95	1.88	1.92	1.93	1.88
Total per capita	8.49	8.14	7.04	6.55	6.62	5.72	5.12	5.00

¹¹ National Statistics UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018>

Effects of climate change and adaptation

- 4.7 Climate change projections for the United Kingdom published as part of the UKCP18¹² programme provide detailed probabilistic projections of climate change. Although there is uncertainty in climate change predictions; the projected general trend is a move towards warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. However, natural variations mean that some cold winters, some dry winters, some cool summers and some wet summers will still occur. The following changes are likely to have taken place by 2070s. The changes mentioned below relate to an area in central England based on the 10-90th percentile range (low to high emissions) of emission scenario¹³:
- In UKCP18, the probabilistic projections provide local low, central and high changes across the UK, corresponding to 10%, 50% and 90% probability levels. These local values can be averaged over the UK to give a range of average warming between the 10% and 90% probability levels. By 2070, in the high emission scenario, this range amounts to 0.7°C to 4.2°C in winter, and 0.9°C to 5.4°C, in summer. For precipitation, corresponding ranges of UK average changes are -1% to +35% for winter, and -47% to +2% for summer, where positive values indicate more precipitation and negative values indicate reduced precipitation (drier summers).
 - Hot summers are predicted to become more common, with the probability of a hot summer rising from the current 20-25% to up to 50% by the middle of the century.
- 4.8 Based on the above; in the future Frodsham is likely to experience, a warmer climate, with drier summers and potentially wetter winters, which means that extreme events such as floods and droughts are likely to become less predictable and possibly more frequent.

Flood risk

- 4.9 A level 1 strategic flood assessment¹⁴ was completed in 2016 for Cheshire West and Chester and looked at areas that would be at risk of pluvial flooding (surface water flooding), rivers/sea (fluvial/tidal), groundwater flooding, sewers and artificial sources such as such as reservoirs and canals. This helped to identify areas at particular risk of flooding in the borough.

¹² Further information on the UKCP18 programme is available from:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/index>

¹³ Projections from UKCP18 Climate Change Over Land, which correspond to two emissions scenarios (Low and High). The medium emissions scenario - describes a world that has rapid economic growth, quick spreading of new and efficient technologies, and a global population that reaches 9 billion mid-century and then gradually declines. It also relies on a balance between different energy sources. The high emissions Scenario is characterised by similar economic and population trends as the medium emission scenario but with more reliance on power generation from fossil fuels. The low emissions scenario represents a more integrated ecologically friendly world, characterised by clean and resource efficient technologies, and lower global greenhouse gas emissions.

¹⁴ Cheshire West & Chester Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) available at http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/ev_base/sfra2016

- 4.10 The assessment included potential development sites within the borough and made recommendations pertaining to their suitability. The assessment makes two broad sets of recommendations A,B,C and D.
- 4.11 Recommendation A 'Consider withdrawal of site' lists potential development sites with 10% or greater proportion of their area in Flood Zone 3b. Flood Zone 3b refers to areas of functional floodplain (excluding developed sites protected by flood defences) these are at greater risk of flooding with a flood risk frequency of 1 in 20 or 1 in 25 years. No Frodsham sites are included in the Recommendation A list.
- 4.12 Recommendation B 'Exception Test'; applies to sites where the exception test would be required¹⁵. Such sites would need a more in-depth assessment (level 2 SFRA). Developers (and LPA) are advised to try and avoid the risk areas where possible. Recommendation B applies to sites where 10% or more of the site is within flood Zone 3a. The following Recommendation B sites are within the NDP area;

Table 4-3 Recommendation B 'Exception Test' sites in the NDP area¹⁶

SFRA Level 1 Site Reference	Site description-Location
JBA1427	Chapelfields, Frodsham
JBA2097	Land to north of Sutton Causeway, south-west of Weaver Navigation, Frodsham
JBA2098	Land south-east of Sutton Causeway, north of Frodsham Bridge, Frodsham

¹⁵ NPPF Para. 158/160; refers to a method used to demonstrate that flood risk to development will be managed satisfactorily allowing necessary development to proceed in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available.

¹⁶ Source: Cheshire West and Chester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Final Report March 2016 available at http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/ev_base/sfra2016?tab=files

- 4.13 The SFRA also categorises some sites as Recommendation C 'Consider site layout and design'; it recommends that these should undergo a review of site layout and / or design at the development planning stage in order for development to proceed. A Level 2 SFRA or site-specific FRA would also be required. These sites contain less than 10% within flood Zone 3 (3a or 3b). This list includes one site within the NDP area namely, the Land east of Weaver Lane, Ship Street, Frodsham (SFRA reference JBA1570). The remaining sites that are within Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 1, are listed under Recommendation D 'Development permitted subject to FRA'. These are considered to be at lower risk of flooding and development could be permitted, provided a site-specific FRA shows they can be safe and the sites can be shown to be sequentially preferable.
- 4.14 Figure 4.1 indicates the location of flood risk zones 2 and 3 in Frodsham. There is a band of Flood Zone 3 along the length of the M56 running through the NDP area. There is also a Flood Zone 3 area along the coastal area north west of the NDP area and the River Weaver.

Climate change adaptation

- 4.15 There is no baseline information or data relating specifically to climate change adaptation. However, there is a range of green infrastructure that will benefit communities in terms of flood risk, hotter summers and wetter winters. The borough includes international and national, natural environmental designated sites, marshes and forests. The Cheshire green belt covers 42% of the borough's land area. The borough also benefits from blue infrastructure, such as rivers, other water bodies and the sea.
- 4.16 CWCC's open space study (2016-2030) assessed the existing provision of open space within the borough. The assessment states that Frodsham has a total provision of around 122 ha of open space which includes; allotments, amenity green space, parks, recreation grounds, play space, natural green space, education, churchyards and cemeteries (Table 4.3). The assessment developed an open space standard against which it assessed provision in Frodsham. The study concluded that there is an undersupply of all types of open space in Frodsham with the exception of parks and recreation grounds. The total shortfall for each types of open space is reproduced in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4-4 Open space provision in Frodsham¹⁷

Type	Existing Provision
Allotments	1.23
Amenity Green Space	3.44
Park and Recreation Ground	12.44
Play Space (children)	0.39
Play Space (youth)	0.14
Natural Green Space	98.83

Table 4-5 Open space shortfall in Frodsham

Type	Shortfall (Ha)
Allotments	-0.13
Amenity Green Space	-2.01
Play Space (children)	-0.06
Play Space (youth)	-0.13
Total shortfall	-2.33 Ha

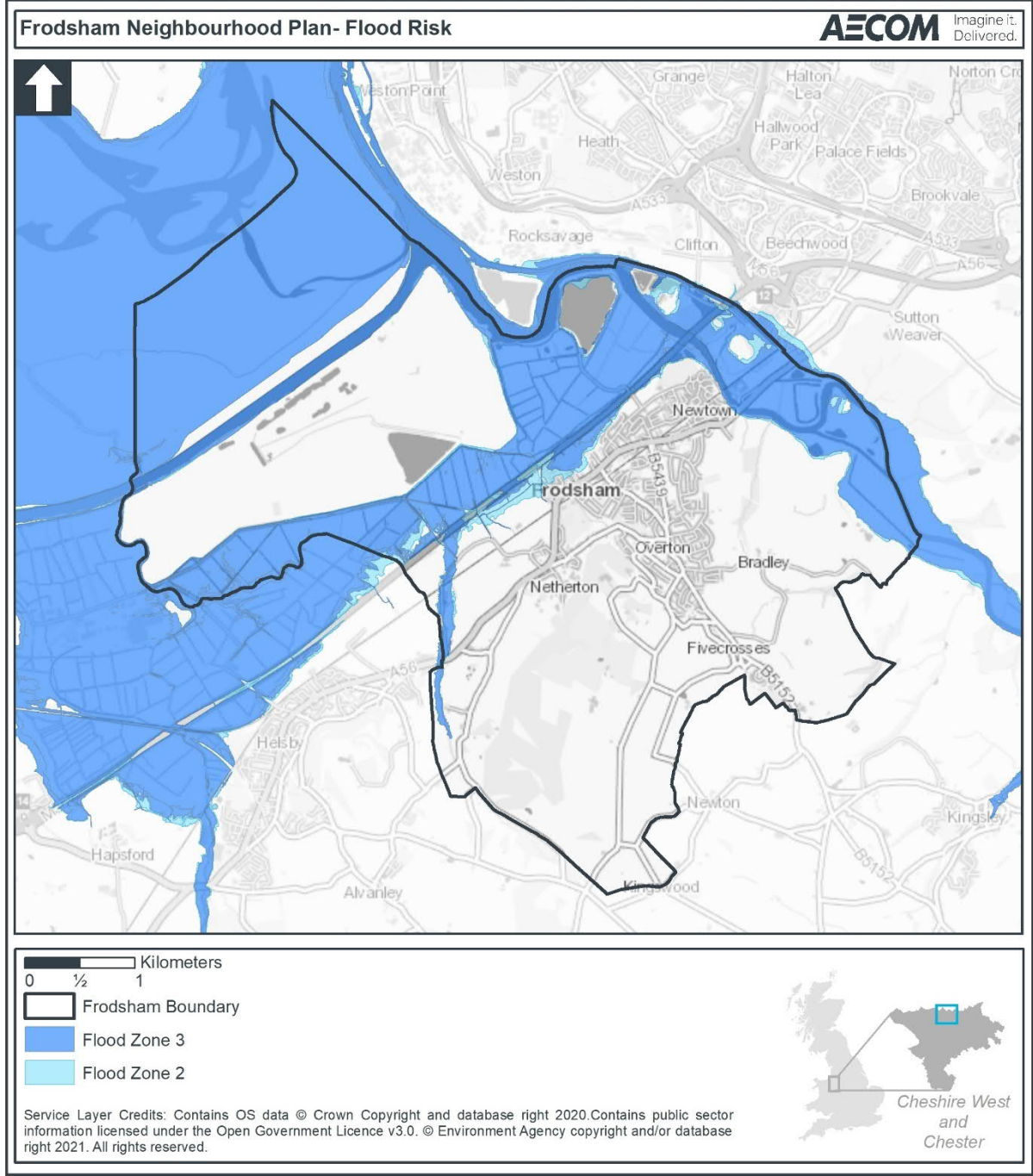
- 4.17 The CWCC Open Space Study also assessed accessibility of the existing open space within the borough. The findings for Frodsham are reproduced in table 4-6.

¹⁷ Source: Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study 2016-2030 available at https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/ev_base/oss_pps?tab=files

Table 4-6 Summary of open space access issues

Type	Current Access
Allotments	Small gaps are present within the south of Frodsham.
Amenity Green Space	Access generally good with a small gap in the south and west.
Parks and Recreation Grounds	Access good throughout Frodsham.
Play Space (Children)	Thin strip with no access to provision within the north east and south.
Play Space (Youth)	No access to Play spaces (Youth) along the east of Frodsham.
Natural Green Space	Access is generally good.
Natural Greenspace, green corridors and Rights of Way	Frodsham has a good network of ROW, linking with natural space.

Figure 4-1 Fluvial Flood Risk in the NDP area



Summary of future baseline

- 4.18 There is potential for climate change to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the NDP area. Such weather events are likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (including fluvial flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.
- 4.19 In terms of climate change, GHG emissions could decrease through the adoption of energy efficient measures and cleaner energy (especially in Industry and transport sectors, key contributors in the NDP area). However, increases in population could counteract this.
- 4.20 Flood risk at any specific location may be influenced by local factors such as existing formal or informal flood defences and the capacity of existing drainage systems or road/rail culverts. The adoption of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) and introduction of Green Infrastructure within development schemes may reduce the speed of surface water run-off and have positive effects in terms of mitigating flood risk.
- 4.21 Development in any instance has the potential to exacerbate flood risk within and in the vicinity of the NDP area by increasing the volume of surface water run-off, or by introducing areas of hard standing which could increase the speed of surface water run-off. The risk would be greatest if development were to take place in proximity of Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 areas.
- 4.22 In the absence of the Plan, there will still be a need to satisfy policy measures relating to flood management.

Key headline issues

- 4.23 The key issues are as follows:
- Average per capita CO₂ emissions are substantially higher in the borough compared to the rest of the North West and England.
 - Total greenhouse gas emissions are on a downward trend.
 - The NDP area falls predominantly within Flood Zone 1, although there are stretches of Flood Zone 2 and 3 running along the Mersey Estuary, the River Weaver and a band along the M56.
 - There is potential for surface water flooding to occur across the NDP area, although areas susceptible to this are scattered amongst areas with lower risk of fluvial flooding.
 - The likelihood of flooding from fluvial and non-fluvial sources could be exacerbated by development in the NDP area. However, opportunities for mitigation exist in sustainable design and Sustainable Urban Drainage.

Scoping outcome

- 4.24 With regards to climate change mitigation, the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on carbon emissions. It is limited in the ability to implement higher standards of energy efficiency, and there are no plans in the scope of the Plan to identify areas of potential for renewable energy schemes. The scale of growth will not lead to significant emissions beyond what might be otherwise experienced in the absence of the Plan (likewise, any reduction is not likely to be significant). Therefore, this factor has been **SCOPED OUT** of the SEA process.
- 4.25 Resilience to climate change and flood risk has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. There is the potential to explore how resilience to climate change can be enhanced as well as contributing towards flood risk mitigation. Flood risk could also be an important factor in terms of the site selection process.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Climatic Factors SEA theme?

- 4.26 The SEA topic 'Climatic Factors' has been scoped in to the SEA, with a focus on resilience and adaptation. Table 4-7 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 4-7: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Climatic Factors

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Ensure flood risk and erosion is not increased and where possible reduced • Sustainably manage surface water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the plan area? • Avoid placing development in areas that are at the greatest risk of flooding?

5. Historic Environment

5.1 This theme focuses on designated and non-designated heritage assets (including archaeology) and their setting.

Policy Context

5.2 Table 5-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 5-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
The National Design Guide	2019	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management	2019	https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017	https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016	https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/
Historic England Advice Note 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2018	https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/
North West Marine Plan	2021	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004490/FINAL_North_West_Marine_Plan_1_.pdf
The CWCC Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
The CWCC Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/

5.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
 - Heritage assets should be recognised as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, taking account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of conservation.
 - The importance of protecting the historic environment, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.
 - The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.
 - With regards to Conservation Areas (CA); recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plans which positively contribute to the significance and value of CAs.
- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which ultimately seeks to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- The Historic environment plays an important role; contributing to healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- Historic England’s Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of particular relevance for the FNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and / or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets;
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- The FNP is required to conform with the NWMP and policy NW-HER-1 is of particular relevance here as it seeks to conserve and enhance marine and coastal heritage assets. Proposals that may cause harm to the significance of heritage assets must demonstrate that they will follow the mitigation

hierarchy. Where it is not possible to mitigate then public benefits for proceeding with the proposal must outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets.

- The FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the FNP area which contain policies directly relating to the historic environment. The LPP1 policy ENV5 seeks to protect heritage assets requiring that development safeguard and enhance designated and on-designated heritage assets and their settings. Development would be required to positively respond to such assets and their settings, avoiding loss or harm to their significance. The policy also supports the viable re-use of heritage-at-risk assets.
- In addition to conserving the historic environment, the FNP should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay. Development likely to have significant, unavoidable, adverse impacts will not be permitted. The policy is further reinforced by LPP2 policy DM46 which pertains to the protection of Conservation Areas.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

Designated Heritage Assets

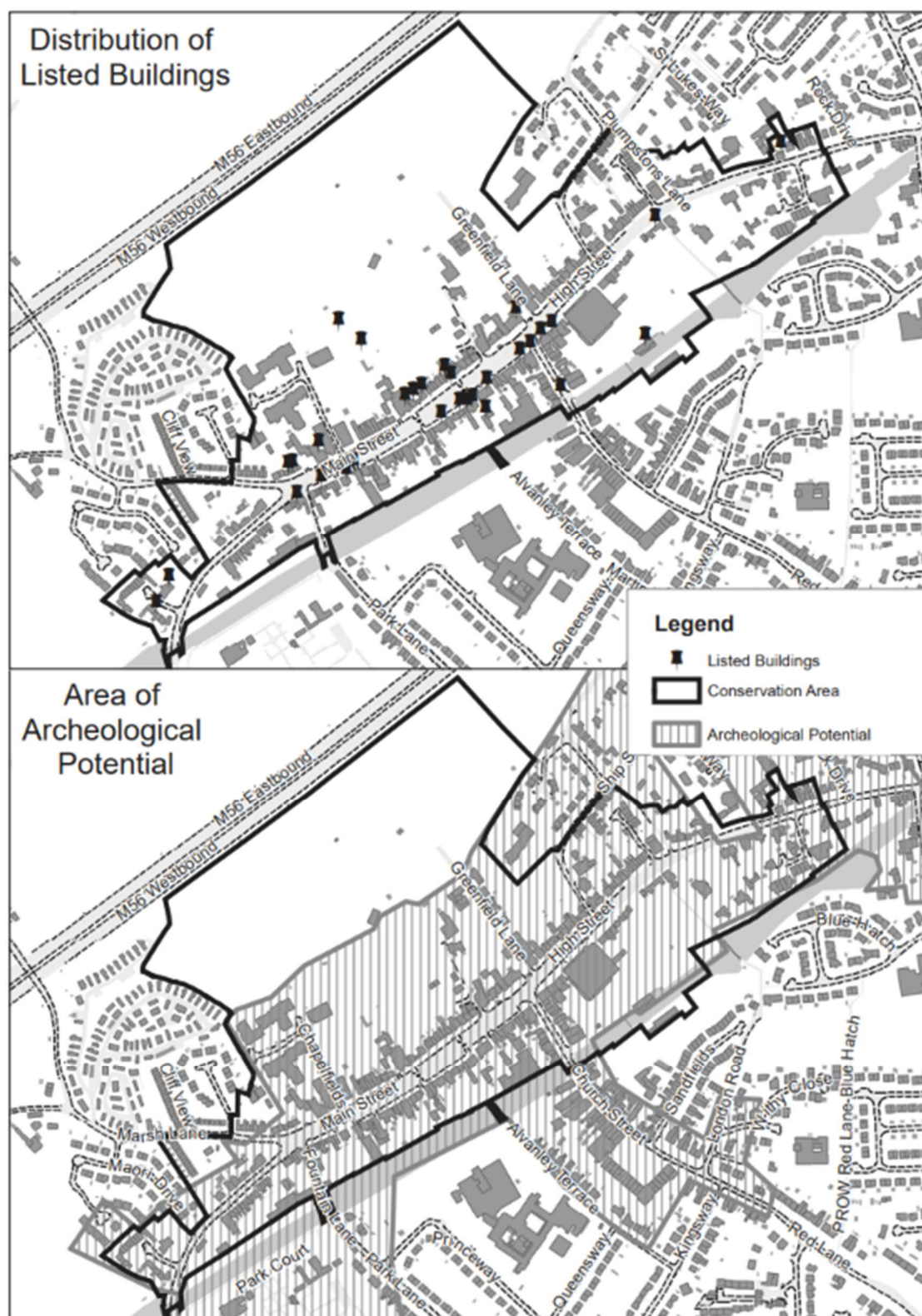
- 5.4 The NDP area contains a Conservation Area (CA) and numerous heritage assets (see figure 5-1) including 62 listed buildings, a registered Park and Gardens and a Scheduled Monument (Table 5-1). These heritage assets have been designated by Historic England as being of special interest by way of their historic and architectural value. However, there are likely to be numerous other, non-designated buildings or features, within the area that have local historic or architectural merit.

- 5.5 Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area sits astride a long established highway (figure 5-1). The part of the town that forms this conservation area is constrained between more recent parallel-aligned transport links, a railway and a motorway. It is essentially linear in urban form and character. Properties survive from the medieval period. Timber-framed and thatched cottages sit next to red brick and slate dwellings and more substantial and formal Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian structures. There are numerous listed and locally important buildings, including some unique structures¹⁸. The CA area appraisal notes there has been some inappropriate alterations (e.g. shop fronts and fascias). Threats to the CA character include disrepair and residential development of contrasting, often inappropriate, design and scale. Examples include; inappropriate materials such as uPVC windows and doors. Through traffic, background noise from the M56 and parking on the main street are cited as creating further adverse impacts such as hazard, noise and smell.
- 5.6 Scheduled Monuments are nationally important archaeological sites. Permission to alter scheduled monuments is required from the Secretary of State. The NP area has one Scheduled Monument in the form of a Hillfort on the crest of the sandstone ridge at Woodhouse Hill. The fort is one of a number of hillforts on the sandstone outcrop which bisects the county from the Mersey estuary to the Welsh border near Wrexham.¹⁹

¹⁸ Source: Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area Appraisal (August 2006) available at [https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/conservation-and-design/conservation-area-appraisals/Frodsham\(Town\)conservationareaappraisal_part1.pdf](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/conservation-and-design/conservation-area-appraisals/Frodsham(Town)conservationareaappraisal_part1.pdf)

¹⁹ Heritage Gateway, List Entry Summary available at https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=1013297&resourceID=5

Figure 5-1 Frodsham Conservation Area



Source: Frodsham (Town) Conservation Area Appraisal

Table 5-2 Frodsham Heritage Assets

Designations

Grade I	1
Grade II*	1
Grade II	62
Scheduled Monuments	1 (hillfort, woodhouse hill)
Registered Parks and Gardens	1 (Castle Park)

Heritage at Risk

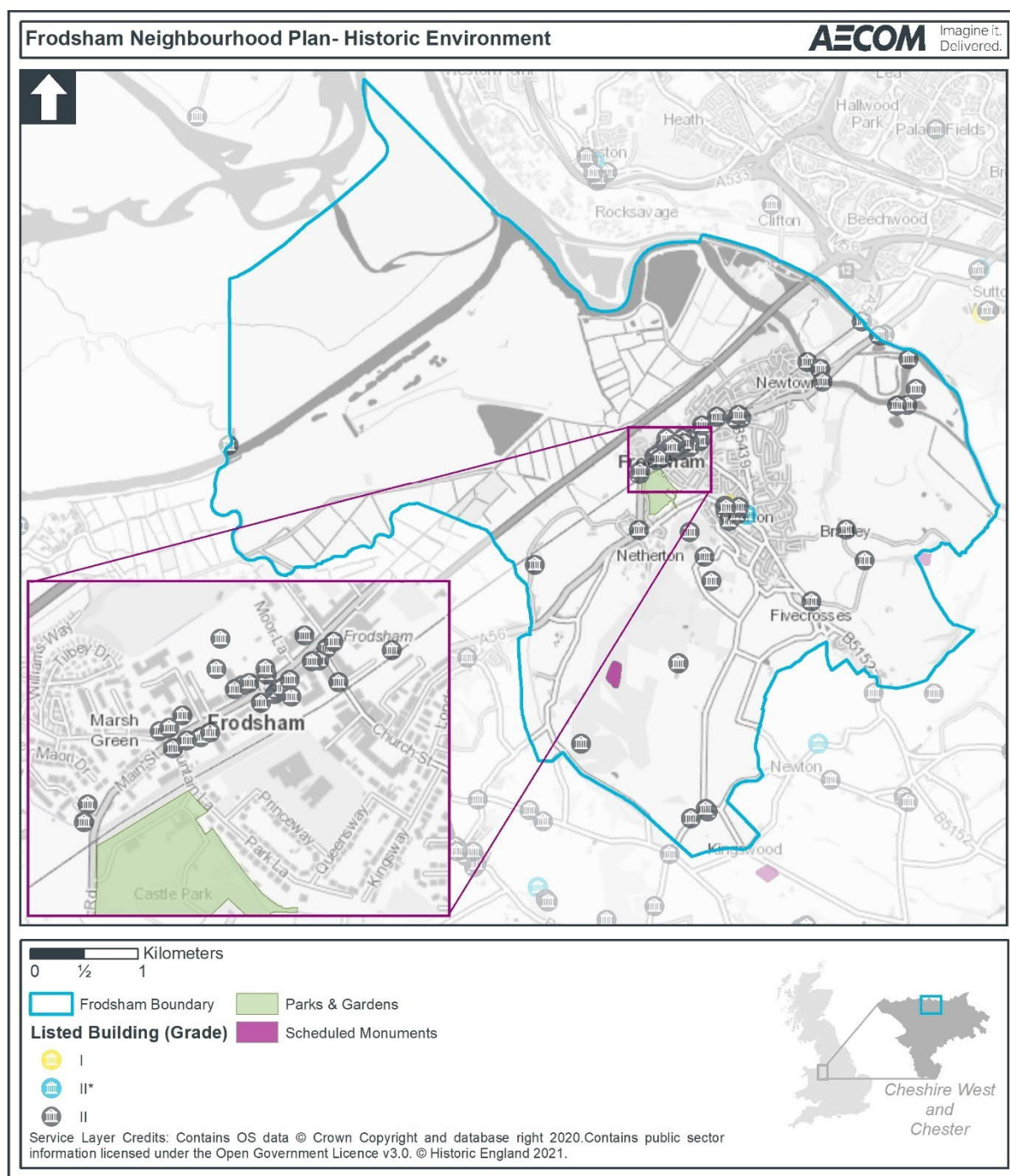
- 5.7 Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights some of the Grade I, Grade II (within London) and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, wreck sites and registered parks and gardens in England deemed to be 'at risk'. There are currently no heritage at risk entries on the Register for Frodsham.

Locally important features

- 5.8 In addition to designated heritage assets, the NP area is likely to contain many non-designated buildings and sites that contribute to the historic environment. The Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) currently lists 93 entries for Frodsham. These are mainly buildings But also include other assets of historic interest such as, an Anti-Aircraft Battery (at Overton), boundary stones, wells, Radio Station (Frodsham Hill), Fish Ponds, Mills etc.
- 5.9 There are around 400²⁰ sites of archaeological interest within the NDP area. The majority being Medieval, Roman, Bronze Age, Neolithic and Anglo-Saxon.

²⁰ ARCHI UK https://www.archiuk.com/cgi-bin/archi_new_search_engine.pl?search_location=SJ%2052%2077&search_type=archi_town_search&pwd=freesearch@freesearch.com&TownName=FRODSHAM&county=Cheshire&search_range=10000&period=&font_size=&placename=Frodsham&info2search4=archi_town_search&keywords=

Figure 5-2 Heritage designations in Frodsham



Summary of future baseline

- 5.10 The numerous heritage assets in the NP area render the area sensitive to change. Heritage assets are significant not only due to their physical presence but also due to their setting. The NPPF defines setting as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.” Setting includes, for example, key views of the asset in its wider context. Development pressures and poor management of heritage assets may lead to the gradual degradation and erosion of the historic environment in the FNP area.
- 5.11 Development in the NDP area has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets and upon the character of the townscape. This may lead to negative effects, such as the delivery of unsympathetic design and material use. Conversely, it could lead to positive effects through redevelopment of derelict and underused land and buildings. In the absence of a plan, there is less strategic direction for Frodsham though; meaning that negative effects may be more likely to occur.
- 5.12 It should be noted that historic environment designations and the historic environment related policies within the Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2) would offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings regardless.

Key headline issues

- 5.13 The key issues are as follows:
- The NDP area contains numerous heritage assets including a Scheduled Monument, Listed Buildings and a registered Park and Gardens, which could be affected by policies and proposals within the plan (either positively or negatively). Furthermore, there are numerous non-designated heritage assets in the NP area which are particularly vulnerable to change, and these must be similarly protected by assessing the impacts of policies / proposals on their significance and contribution to the historic environment. Assessment of the significance of affected heritage assets (a statement of heritage significance) must stem from the interest(s) of the heritage asset (archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic)²¹.

²¹ Historic England Advice Note 12 “Statements of Heritage Significance: “Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets”

Scoping outcome

- 5.14 Historic Environment has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA as there is potential for significant effects upon heritage assets and their settings. It is also important to ensure that the wider character of the built and natural environment is protected and enhanced.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Historic Environment SEA theme?

- 5.15 The SEA topic 'Historic Environment' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 5-3 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 5-3 SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Historic Environment

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider historic environment.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve, better reveal the significance, and enhance heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment? • Contribute to better management of heritage assets? • Identify and protect / enhance features of local importance? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment? • Consider the impact on setting in a manner proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected. • Promote heritage-led regeneration? • Lead to the repair and adaptive re-use of a heritage asset and encourage high quality design?

6. Landscape

- 6.1 This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within or near to the FNP area, as well as landscape character, landscape quality and visual amenity.

Policy Context

- 6.2 Table 6-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 6-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
The National Design Guide	2019	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/local_plan_part_two
Frodsham Design Code	2019	AECOM report commissioned by the FNP Steering Group

- 6.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:
- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to FNP conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
 - The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and

habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.

- The FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan policies covering the FNP area. The CWCC LPP2 policy ENV2 (Landscape) seeks to protect and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness by identifying key gaps in LP land allocations and between settlements in the greenbelt and protecting these by maintaining their character, supporting designation of Local Green Space and protecting the borough's estuaries and undeveloped coast. Policy DM49 (Registered parks and gardens) seeks to protect landscapes registered as Historic Parks and Gardens by ensuring great weight is given to the assets' conservation and significance.
- The FNP Steering group commissioned AECOM to produce a Design Code for Frodsham with the aim of providing design principles and codes for all development in Frodsham Parish, which can be applied to potential development sites. A series of design codes have been produced to provide guidance for developments in Frodsham. Of particular relevance to landscape and townscape are:
 - Key Views and Vistas (KVV) requires development to be planned to respond to existing view corridors and reinforce views of existing landmarks. The spacing of development should allow for long distance views of Frodsham Hill or open countryside. Key vistas should be protected by controlling development densities and building heights, particularly when in the sight lines of local landmarks.
 - Environmental Designations (GI-ED) includes the requirement that development enhance biodiversity and geodiversity wherever possible. This will involve restoring and increasing the total area of natural habitats and landscape features.
 - Open Space (GI-OS) requires residential development to provide appropriate quantity and quality of outdoor private amenity space. Development adjoining public open spaces should enhance the character of the space helping create a sense of place.
 - Woodland, Tress and Hedgerows (GI-WTH) requires schemes to replace trees, hedgerows and woodland lost through new development. The spacing of development should reflect the rural character and allow for long distance views of the countryside from the public realm. Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design. Within the countryside, frontage areas should preserve the rural character of the roads by retaining grass verges, hedgerows and trees.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

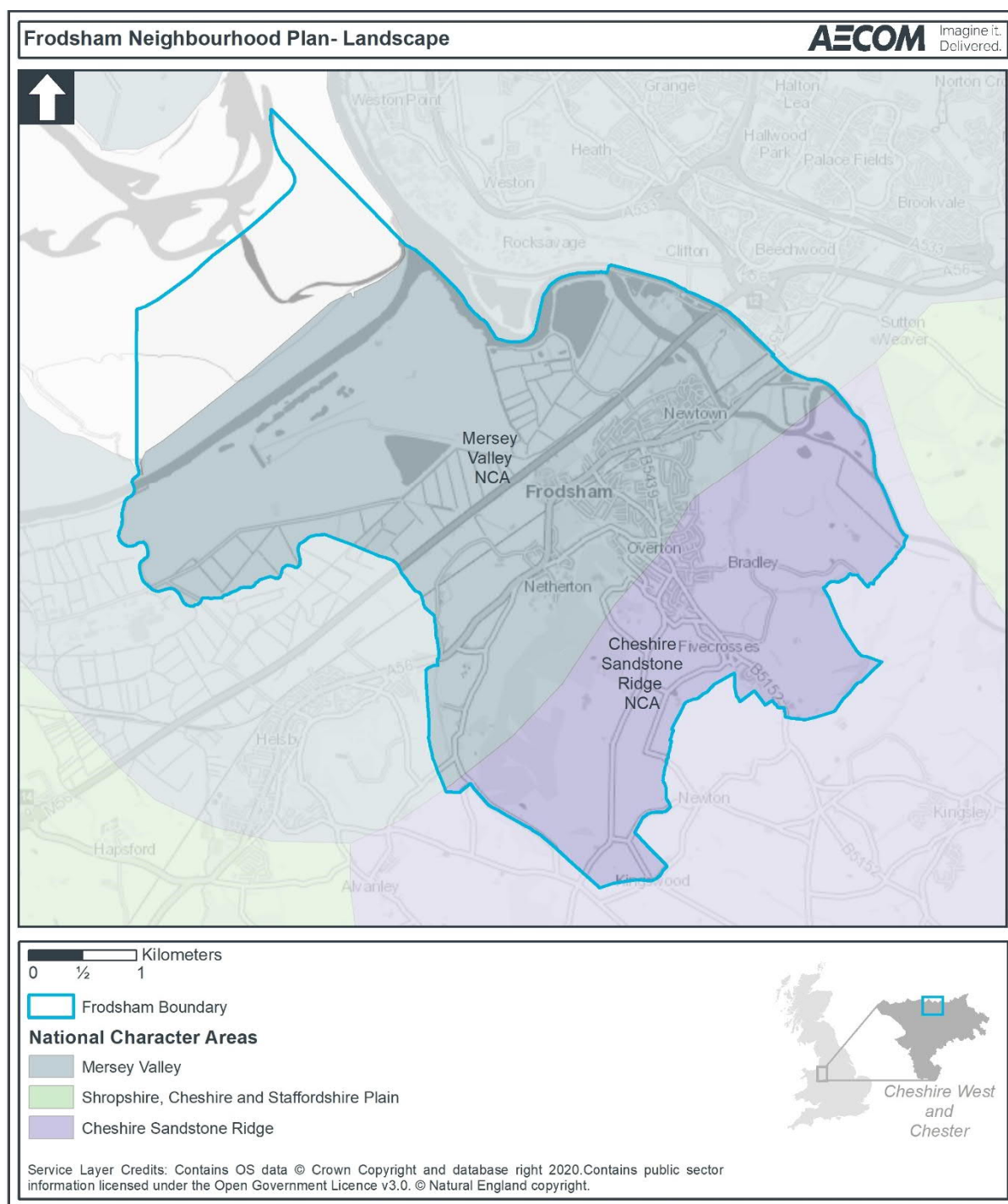
- 6.4 National Character Areas (NCAs) are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision making framework for the natural environment. In this regard, the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan area falls within two NCAs: the 'Mersey Valley' NCA and the 'Cheshire Sandstone Ridge' NCA (Figure 6-1).
- 6.5 The Mersey Valley NCA consists of a wide, low-lying river valley landscape focusing on the River Mersey, its estuary, associated tributaries and waterways. Farmland in the north of the Mersey Valley NCA is predominantly arable, while in the south there is a mix of arable and pasture. Urban and industrial developments line the banks of the River Mersey. Industrial infrastructure is often prominent, with large-scale, highly visible development including chemical works and oil refineries.²²
- 6.6 A number of Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) have been prepared for the Mersey Valley NCA which highlight areas that could be enhanced and/or protected by development brought through the Plan. These are detailed below:
- SEO 1: Conserve and enhance the Mersey Valley's rivers, tributaries and estuary, improving the ability of the fluvial and estuarine systems to adapt to climate change and mitigate flood risk while also enhancing habitats for wildlife and for people's enjoyment of the landscape.
 - SEO 2: Promote the Mersey Valley's historic environment and landscape character and positively integrate the environmental resource with industry and development, providing greenspace within existing and new development, to further the benefits provided by a healthy natural environment, as a framework for habitat restoration and for public amenity.
 - SEO 3: Manage the arable and mixed farmland along the broad linear Mersey Valley, and create semi-natural habitats, woodlands and ecological networks, to protect soils and water, enhance biodiversity, increase connectivity and improve the character of the landscape, while enabling sustainable food production.
 - SEO 4: Manage and enhance the mossland landscape in the east, safeguarding wetlands including the internationally important lowland raised bogs, to conserve peat soils, protect and enhance biodiversity, conserve archaeological deposits, contribute to landscape character and store carbon.

²² Natural England (2013): '60 Mersley Valley' [online] available at:
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6387892108656640?category=587130>

- 6.7 The Cheshire Sandstone Ridge NCA is situated between Malpas and Frodsham. Compared with the surrounding plain, the NCA has a strong mosaic of broadleaved mixed woodland comprising ancient woodland and some post-medieval conifer plantations, with large blocks of commercially managed conifers to the east. A thick layer of glacial till covers the lower slopes of the ridge and the surrounding plain is punctuated by numerous ponds and meres. Lowland heath was once more widespread, but now consists solely in discrete areas.²³ The NCA has been shortlisted for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation. The AONB designation offers protection under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.
- 6.8 A number of Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) have been prepared for the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge NCA, which highlight areas that could be enhanced and/or protected by development brought through the Plan. These are detailed below:
- SEO 1: Manage and enhance the rivers, streams and wetland habitats, including flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland, protecting them from diffuse pollution and maintaining the integrity and unique conditions for the preservation of the lakes and standing waters of internationally important sites.
 - SEO 2: Manage and expand areas of semi-natural woodland, restore and reinstate hedgerows and hedgerow trees, protect and restore ancient woodland, for example in the Delamere Forest Park and throughout the Mersey Forest, thus reducing habitat fragmentation to benefit landscape character, biodiversity, resource protection and climate regulation while enhancing the recreational, educational and experiential qualities of the NCA.
 - SEO 3: Protect and manage the geological sites, with an emphasis on demonstrating the strong link between geology and its influence on landscape and industrial development, and promoting greater understanding of the link between wildlife and geodiversity, particularly in the distribution of habitats and species, recognising the importance of former extraction sites for both geodiversity and biodiversity.
 - SEO 4: Manage and, where appropriate, expand areas of characteristic heathland and other priority habitats, including lowland meadows and lowland grassland, thus reducing habitat fragmentation to benefit landscape character, sense of place, biodiversity and resource protection while enhancing the recreational and experiential qualities of the NCA.

²³ Natural England (2014): '62 Cheshire Sandstone Ridge' [online] available at:
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5655719219036160?category=587130>

Figure 6-1 Frodsham National Character Areas



- 6.9 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is an assessment of the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular landscape. The Chester and Cheshire West LCA details 16 separate landscape types and 53 separate landscape areas within the authority. The main settlement area of Frodsham is identified as an 'Urban area'. However, the north westernmost part of the Plan area falls within the 'Drained Marsh' LCT and, beneath this, the Frodsham, Helsby and Lordship Marshes LCA.²⁴
- 6.10 The Drained Marsh LCT is located on former saltmarsh or mudflats adjacent to the Dee and Mersey estuaries. It is drained by inter-connecting networks of drainage channels arranged in a regular, often linear pattern, and this gives the impression of an open unenclosed landscape. The former marsh resulted from the marine and alluvial deposits of clay, salt and silt deposited under tidal and estuarine influence. This overlies Kinnerton Sandstone, Chester Pebble Beds and Wilmslow Sandstone. Soils comprise humic and alluvial gleys on the improved reclaimed coastal floodplain. Small patches of scrub are common, with few trees. Where there are hedgerows they are mostly grown out and in poor condition. Reeds and other aquatic or emergent plants are mainly restricted to ditches. The drained marsh has ornithological interest as a wintering ground for wading birds and wildfowl as well as birds of prey. Marshland is an unappealing location for settlement and as such these areas have remained largely unsettled, restricted to a few isolated farms.²⁵
- 6.11 The Frodsham, Helsby and Lordship Marshes LCA (shown in Figure 6-2) underlies the north westernmost part of the Plan area. Key characteristics of this landscape include²⁶:
- A flat, low lying landscape of former mudflats and saltmarsh alongside the Mersey Estuary, contrasting with surrounding built development (previously designated as an Area of Significant Local Environmental Value).
 - Strong interconnection and intervisibility with LCT 16 Mudflats and Saltmarsh to the north.
 - A landscape etched with a distinctive pattern of straight drainage ditches which delineates the field pattern of planned 19th century enclosure.
 - Incomplete hedgerow boundaries provide partial enclosure along some field boundaries.
 - Canal dredging grounds defined by high earth embankments.
 - An isolated, bleak and open landscape, where settlement is limited to isolated farms linked by rough tracks between ditches.

²⁴ Cheshire West and Chester Gov (n.d.): 'LCT 4: Drained Marsh' [online] available at: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/landscape-assessment/LCT4_Drained_Marsh.pdf

²⁵ Cheshire West and Chester Gov (n.d.): 'LCT 4: Drained Marsh' [online] available at: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/landscape-assessment/LCT4_Drained_Marsh.pdf

²⁶ Cheshire West and Chester Gov (n.d.): 'LCT 4: Drained Marsh' [online] available at: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/landscape-assessment/LCT4_Drained_Marsh.pdf

- Although much of the LCA is actively farmed, the degraded hedgerows and broken fencing shows this to be a landscape in need of improved management. Some land to north of Lordship Lane remains in use for canal dredgings and has undergone change as a result of the preliminary works for the permitted windfarm.
- Wet grassland species have been lost and ditches are eutrophic as a result of the intensive agricultural use of the land.

6.12 The Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority indicate that the overall management strategy for this landscape should be to enhance and restore the condition of habitats and features of the marshes whilst safeguarding its open character, through measures such as²⁷:

- Encouraging recreational development as a means of managing some of the more derelict and degraded areas of the landscape.
- Maintaining the distinctive field pattern that reveals the planned 19th century enclosure of the marsh.
- Seeking to restore thorn hedgerows that are falling into decline.
- Considering opportunities to create views across the Mersey Estuary.
- Conserving the 'remote' character of the marshes away from the main transport corridor of the M56.
- Consider views to and from the Frodsham Sandstone Ridge and Helsby Hill when planning any change.

²⁷ Cheshire West and Chester Gov (n.d.): 'LCT 4: Drained Marsh' [online] available at: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/landscape-assessment/LCT4_Drained_Marsh.pdf

Figure 6-2 The Frodsham, Helsby and Lordship Marshes²⁸



²⁸ Cheshire West and Chester Gov (n.d.): 'LCT 4: Drained Marsh' [online] available at: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/planning-and-building-consultancy/total-environment/landscape-assessment/LCT4_Drained_Marsh.pdf

6.13 At the parish level, Frodsham Town Council conducted a review of landscape and townscape types within the local area. Seven landscape types were identified, listed below²⁹:

- LCT 1: Estuary.
- LCT 2: Reclaimed Saltmarsh.
- LCT 3: Floodplain.
- LCT 4: Valley-side.
- LCT 5: Scarp Foot.
- LCT 6: Wooded Escarpment.
- LCT 7: Undulating Elevated Land.

6.14 With regards to townscape, fifteen townscape areas were identified within the town, these are shown in Figure 6-3 and detailed in Table 6-1.

²⁹ K Gee (2008) Landscape Character Assessment of Frodsham Civil Parish UNPUBLISHED.

Table 6-2 Townscape areas, Frodsham³⁰

Townscape area	Key characteristics	Extent
Townscape Area 01: Marsh Lane	The area is predominantly residential. Many properties are brick built with pitched slate or tile roofs.	The Marsh Lane Townscape Area comprises properties on the northwestern edge of the town and is bounded by the embankment of the Chester to Warrington railway line in the southeast.
Townscape Area 02: Motorway Buffer Zone	The area is predominantly green infrastructure comprising a mixture of recreational open space and wildlife habitat that has developed from agricultural land since the Preston Brook to Hapsford section of the M56 was opened in 1971.	The Motorway Buffer Zone is an area of Green Belt land between the Town Policy Boundary and the M56.
Townscape Area 03: Commercial Core	The public face of the Commercial Core is a diverse mix of buildings mostly with domestic origins. The character of the core owes much to its surviving historic buildings and their use of contrasting building materials and styles.	The area is located between Castle Park and Marsh Lane Townscape Areas in the west and the Frodsham Bridge Townscape Area to the east.
Townscape Area 04: Ashton Drive	The area has grown in discrete phases since the mid-20th century and each development retains much of its original character, e.g. among the older developments are the tile hung 'Cornish' houses on Ship Street and Hayes Crescent.	The Ashton Drive area lies on the northern edge of Frodsham and is bisected by the railway line: the larger part, north of the railway, has vehicular access from Ship Street and St Hilda's Drive; whilst the southern part is reached from Volunteer Street.

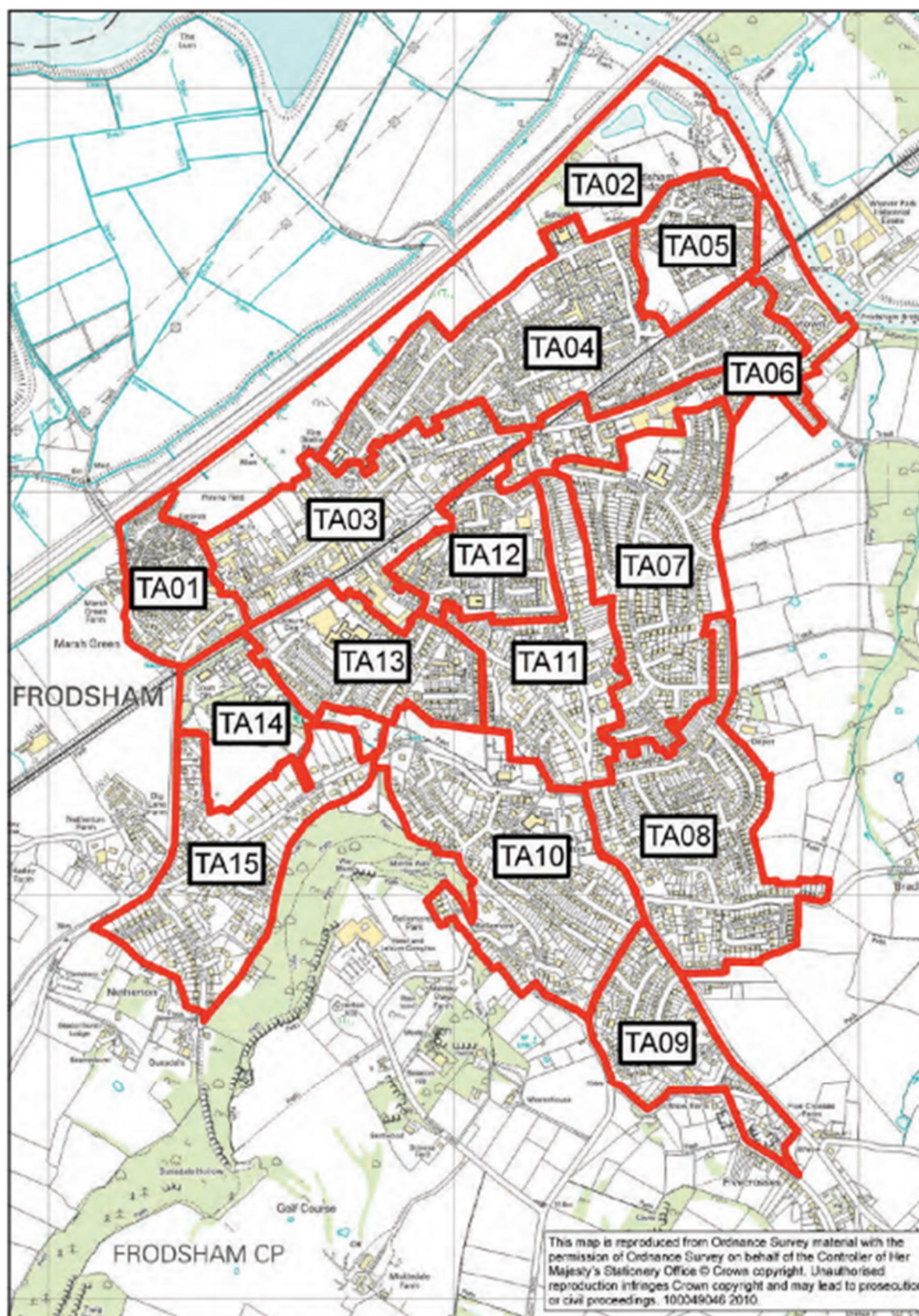
³⁰ Frodsham Town Council (2010): 'Frodsham Design Statement' [online] available at: <http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreprs/Town%20Design%20Statement%20-%20Frodsham%20-%20July%202010.pdf>

Townscape Area 05: Saltworks Farm	Detached houses in a variety of styles predominate along the curving principal road with semi-detached and terraced properties common on the cul-de-sac spurs.	This townscape area is located in the northeast of Frodsham, in the residential hub at Saltworks Farm.
Townscape Area 06: Frodsham Bridge	Frodsham Bridge Townscape Area is characterised by its domestic / commercial mix concentrated along the south side of Bridge Lane.	Frodsham Bridge Townscape Area reaches the Town Policy Boundary at the river's edge in the east and the Green Belt/Town Policy Boundary in the south. The area extends westwards along Bridge Lane to its junction with Fluin Lane.
Townscape Area 07: The Lakes	Properties vary in size and type: they are mostly 2-storey detached houses and dormer bungalows, e.g. Penrith Close and Borrowdale Close, with semi-detached houses in Silverdale Close and Thirlmere Close, and semi-detached bungalows in Keswick Drive. Building materials are predominantly brick with tiled roofs in a variety of modern styles.	The area is on the eastern side of town on land that rises to the south and east. The medieval salt route / hollow way, leading to Bridge Lane and the former river port, marks the area's eastern edge and the Town Policy Boundary.
Townscape Area 08: Doric Avenue	The Doric Avenue Townscape Area is predominantly residential and reflects development that has taken place since pre-Victorian times to the late 20 th century resulting in a wide variety of property types and styles.	Doric Avenue is central to this townscape area and links two busy access routes: Townfield Lane and Bradley Lane.

Townscape Area 09: Five Crosses	Five Crosses Townscape Area is almost entirely residential, but includes former sandstone quarries, now wildlife habitat, on the west side of Kingsley Road. The area reflects development has taken place since the Victorian era to the late 20 th century, resulting in a large range of architecture.	The area lies on the southern edge of town, between Kingsley Road and Manley Road, on land that rises to the southwest below the wooded slopes of Beacon Hill.
Townscape Area 10: Overton	Overton Townscape Area is mainly residential but includes a core of small businesses and community facilities centred on School Lane and the northern ends of Hillside Road and Bellemonte Road.	The area is situated at Overton in the south west of Frodsham.
Townscape Area 11: Fluin Lane	The Fluin Lane Townscape Area is entirely residential and development ranges from Victorian to 21 st century in age.	The Fluin Lane Townscape Area extends southwards from the western end of Langdale Way and rises steadily to Townfield Lane.
Townscape Area 12: Community Centre	A large amount of 1960s development surrounds older property in this area. Specific design features that contribute to local distinctiveness include decorative brickwork detail on eaves, gable ends and chimneys, terracotta roof ridge tiles, doorways and front wall detail in Sandfields.	The Community Centre Townscape Area lies between Church Street and Fluin Lane with railway property forming its northern boundary.
Townscape Area 13: Kingsway	The Kingsway Townscape Area is predominantly residential and properties demonstrate a diversity of styles with ages ranging from Victorian to 21 st century. Most are medium sized semi-detached houses with a few bungalows and some larger properties interspersed.	The Kingsway Townscape Area is bounded by the railway embankment to the northwest and by the extensive green wedge of Castle Park and Churchfields to the south.

Townscape Area 14: Castle Park	Castle Park Townscape Area forms the major part of the Frodsham (Castle Park) Conservation Area; most of the park is a Registered Historic Park and Garden, the lower park is part of the Frodsham Area of Archaeological Potential, and all of it is part of the green infrastructure.	The Castle Park area is situated at the site of the fortified manorhouse / “castle” in late medieval times in the west of Frodsham.
Townscape Area 15: Howey Lane	The Howey Lane Townscape Area is characterised by its verdant appearance and is a valuable component of the town’s green infrastructure. The area extends out to the Green Belt on three sides, and to Castle Park in the north.	The area is located in the south west of Frodsham and extends out to the Green Belt / Town Policy Boundary on three sides, and to Castle Park in the north.

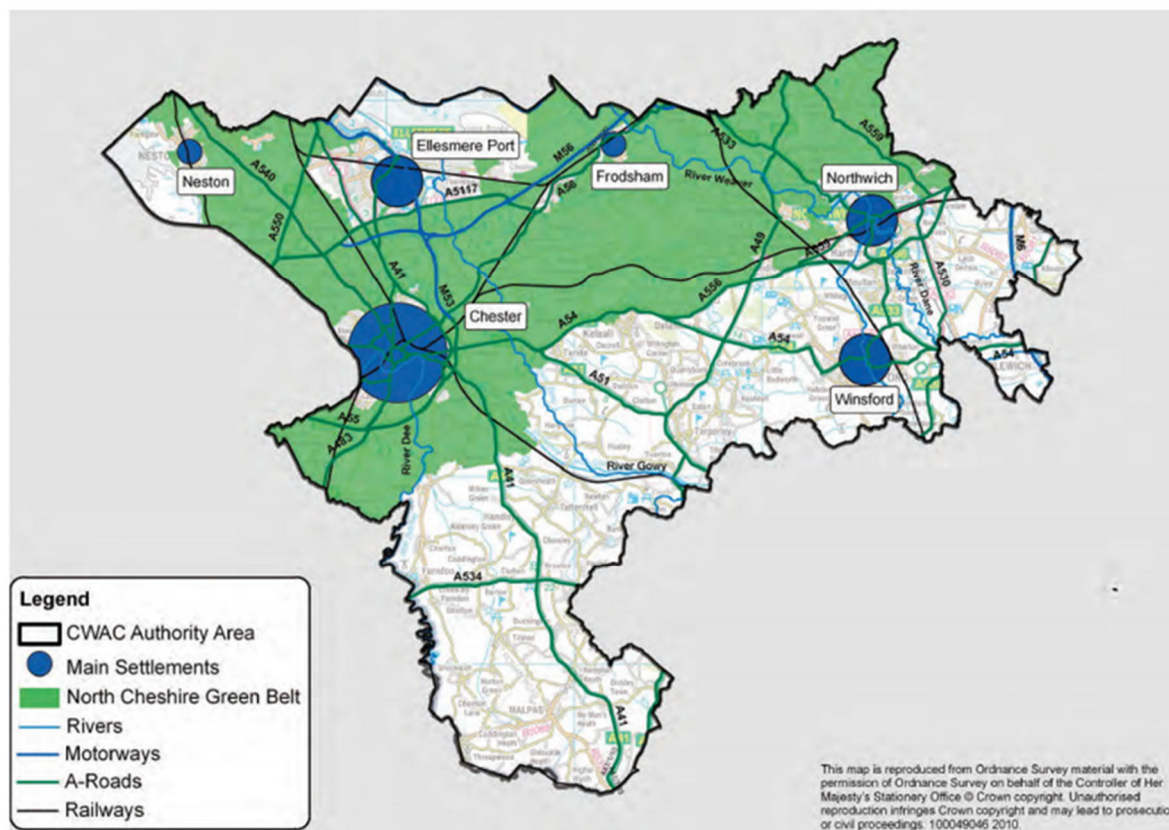
Figure 6-3 Frodsham Townscape Areas³¹



³¹ Frodsham Town Council (2010): 'Frodsham Design Statement' [online] available at: <http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreps/Town%20Design%20Statement%20-%20Frodsham%20-%20July%202010.pdf>

- 6.15 Green belts act as important mechanism to prevent urban sprawl/extensive urbanisation within an area, and protect the countryside. The North Cheshire Green Belt covers the entirety of the Plan area (shown in Figure 6-4, below).

Figure 6-4 North Cheshire Green Belt³²



Summary of future baseline

- 6.16 Several policies noted within the adopted local plan provide some protection to current landscape features in Frodsham, including STRAT 9 (Green belt and countryside), ENV2 (Landscape) and STRAT 8 (Rural Area).
- 6.17 However, depending on the scale of development, a lack of overall vision and framework could result in the delivery of less sympathetic development styles, layouts and material choice. This could have a disruptive impact on the landscape through the lack of cohesive development. Insensitive development could also result in the loss of landscape features and adverse visual impact. Conversely, sensitive development presents an opportunity to enhance the existing townscape character of Frodsham whilst respecting the key characteristics of the landscape.

³² Frodsham Town Council (2010): 'Frodsham Design Statement' [online] available at: <http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreps/Town%20Design%20Statement%20-%20Frodsham%20-%20July%202010.pdf>

Key headline issues

6.18 The key issues are as follows:

- There are valuable landscapes in the NP area that make a significant contribution to the character of the area. These comprise the Drained Marsh LCT and its corresponding LCAs.
- The North Cheshire green belt, which encompasses the majority of the Plan area will require protection in line with Policy STRAT 19 of the Local Plan.
- Frodsham Town Council have noted fifteen townscape areas, each with their own unique characteristics that contribute to the sense of place of the Plan area. Development brought forward through the plan will need to take into account the style, layout and massing of current features of notable landscape value within these areas.
- The Local Plan's policies offer a degree of protection to landscape assets and their settings, but insensitive development could have a disruptive impact on landscape

Scoping outcome

6.19 Landscape has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA as there is potential for significant effects upon the character of landscapes. The FNP allocates sites for housing which can potentially have impacts (positive and negative) on landscape.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Landscape SEA theme?

6.20 The SEA topic 'Landscape' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 6-3 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 6-3: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Landscape

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve, better reveal the significance and enhance landscape assets? • Contribute to better management of landscape assets? • Identify and protect/enhance features of local importance? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the surrounding landscape? • Improve linkages to open space and the countryside? • Preserve and enhance the North Cheshire Green Belt?

7. Land, Soil and Water Resources

7.1 This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, the extent of mineral resources, water supply resources and water quality in the FNP area.

Policy Context

7.2 Table 7-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 7-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil and water resources

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England	2009	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england
Future Water: The government's water strategy for England	2011	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-water-the-government-s-water-strategy-for-england
Water for Life	2011	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228861/8230.pdf
United Utilities' Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)	2019	https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/water-resources/water-resources-management-plan/
North West River Basin District Management Plan	2015	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718335/North West RBD Part 1 river basin management plan.pdf
Cheshire Replacement Minerals Local Plan	2019	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc/ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?pointId=1419339111281

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc/ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/local_plan_part_two
Cheshire Waterways Strategy	2016	http://chester.westcheshiregrowth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/01/Chester-Waterways-Strategy-FINAL.pdf#:~:text=Main%20focus%20of%20Chester%E2%80%99s%20Waterways%20Strategy%20is%20on,through%20Chester%20to%20the%20Welsh%20border%20at%20Saltney.

7.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero waste economy.
- The United Utilities WRMP further highlights the acute stresses that the catchment faces in the coming years and the challenges faced by the council in terms of securing water resources into the future in one of the driest regions in England. The Plan sets out how the organisation will ensure the sufficient supply of water over a 25-year period (2020-2045). The plan objective is to manage demand, offsetting future demand pressures through leakage reductions (20% by 2025 and over 40% by 2045) and increased resilience.

- The FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Cheshire Replacement Minerals Local Plan, which form part of the Local Development Frameworks for each county. These plans identify and safeguard sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.
- Furthermore, the FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the FNP area, which contain policies specifically relating to efficient land use, the sustainable use of resources, soil protection, the efficient use of water, and protection for water quality.
- Additionally, the Cheshire Waterways Strategy (2016) presents opportunities to enhance and improve waterways systems in Cheshire.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

Soil resources

- 7.4 The Agricultural Land Classification categorises land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land (BVM) and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. Figure 7-1 shows that a large portion of the Plan area is underlain by Grade 3 quality land, according to the pre-1988 assessment. Though it is not possible to ascertain whether this land is Grade 3a or 3b, the 'Predictive BMV Land Assessment' for the North West indicates a high likelihood of BMV land in Frodsham, in particular, in the north west of the Plan area (>60% likelihood). Additionally, there are some smaller areas of Grade 2 quality land at localized spots outside the main town of Frodsham.
- 7.5 Further, as illustrated in Figure 7-2, a more detailed assessment conducted post-1988 indicates that part of the Plan area is underlain by Grade 2 ('very good quality' land) and 3a ('good quality' agricultural land). Some of this area lies adjacent to Frodsham town, the main developed part of Frodsham.
- 7.6 With regards to minerals, the NDP overlaps a relatively small mineral safeguarding area (MSA) at the north eastern tip of the NDP, an area lying between the M56 and the A56 just before Junction 12 of the M56. However, it should be noted that the quality of the map in the assessment is not sufficiently clear to rule out other MSAs in the area.³³ It is recommended that this is evaluated by the council at a later stage of the planning process.

³³ Cheshire West and Cheshire (2019): 'Local Aggregate Assessment' [online] available at: https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/minerals_and_waste/laa?tab=files

Figure 7-1 Indicative Agricultural Land Classification

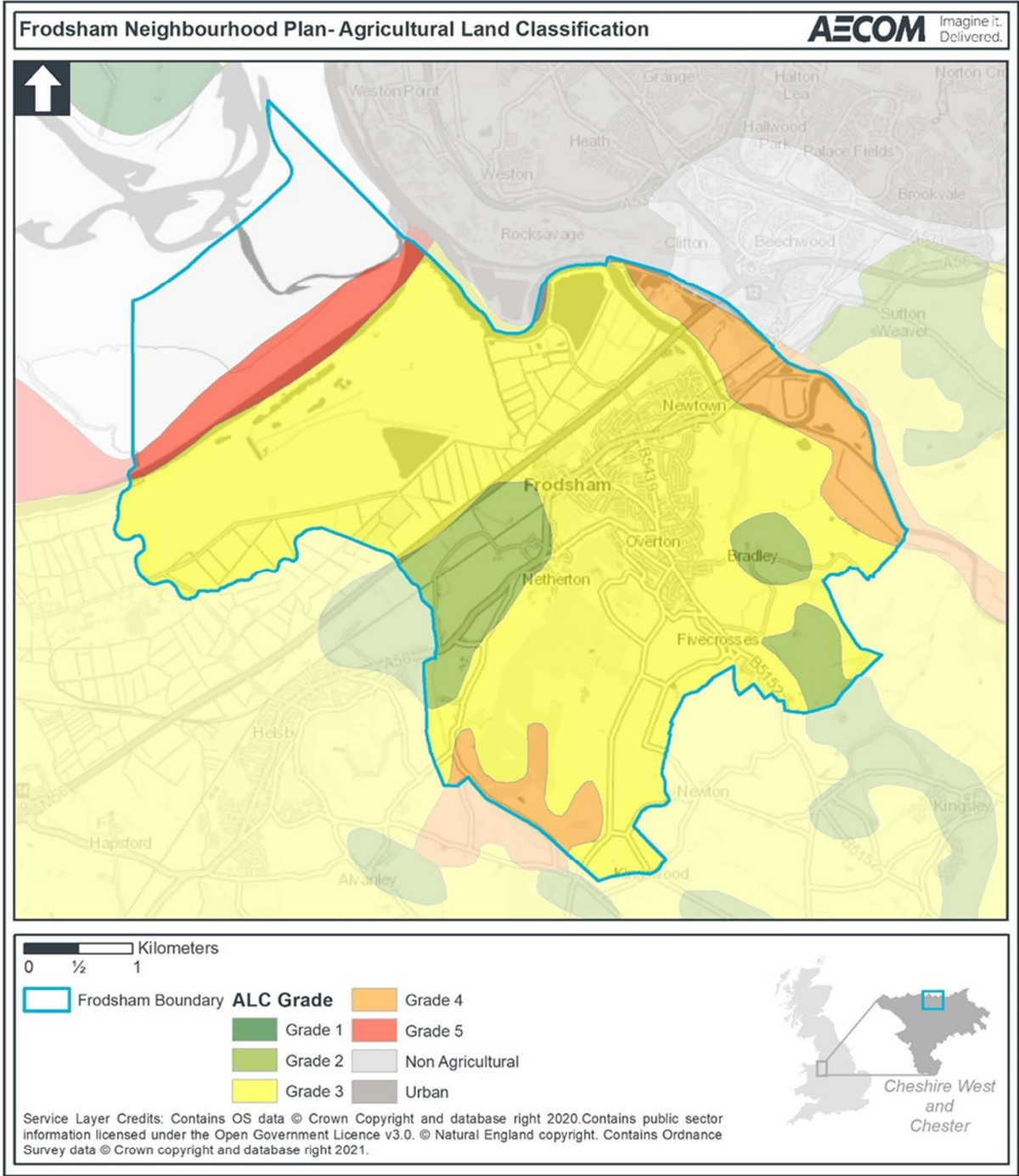
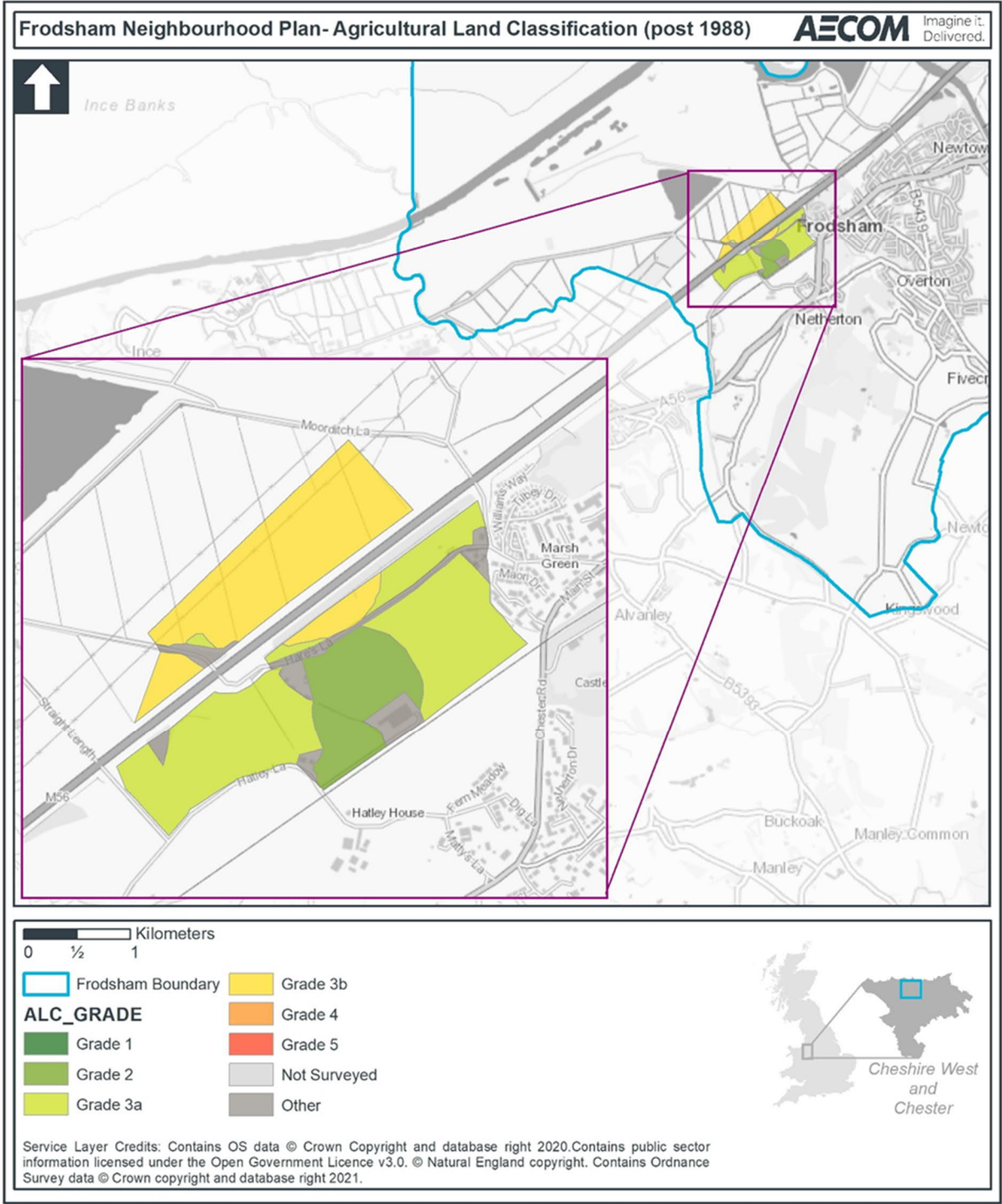


Figure 7-2 Agricultural Land Classification (Post 1988)



Watercourses and water quality

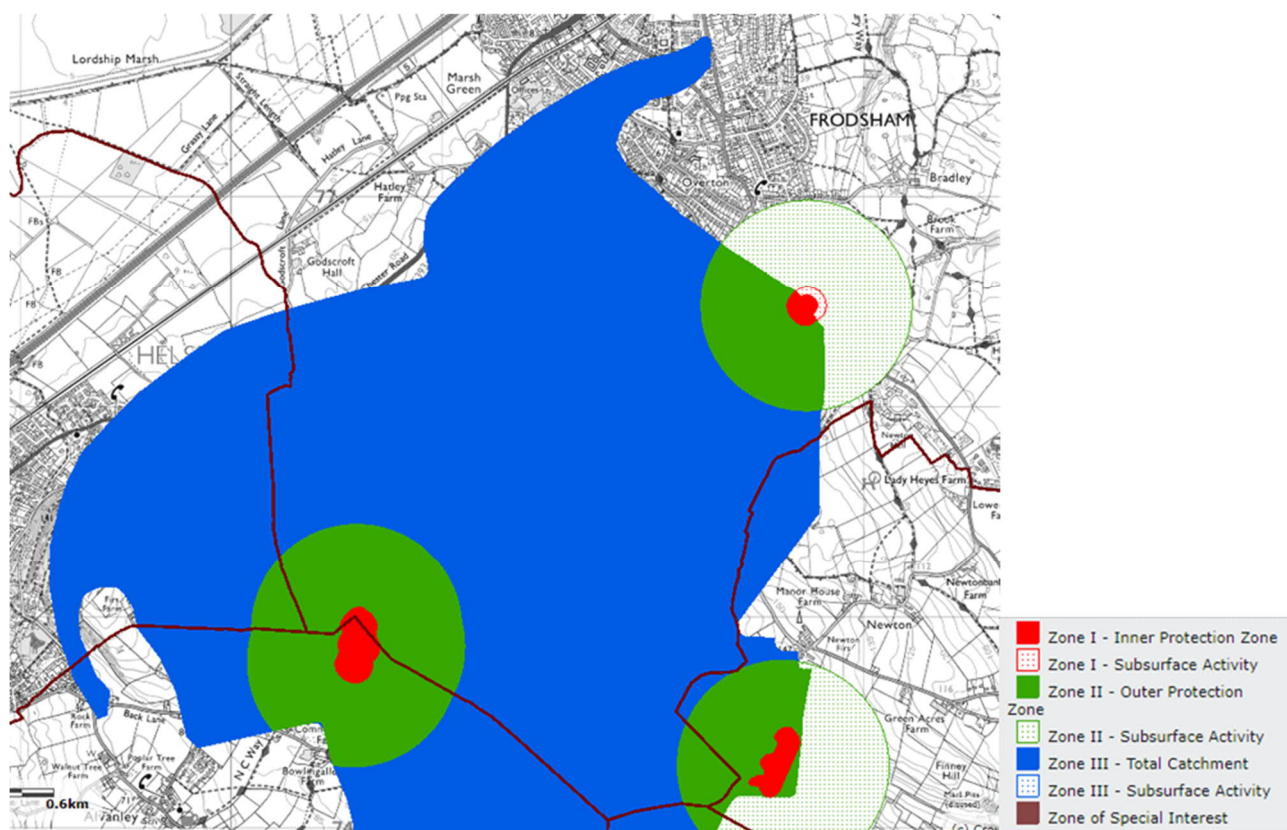
- 7.7 The Frodsham Plan area falls within the North West River Basin District, Weaver Gower Management Catchment and Weaver Lower Operational Catchment. The Weaver Lower Operational Catchment is located in north Cheshire and the main river in the catchment is the river weaver. Ultimately, the catchment drains into the Mersey Estuary, joining the Manchester Ship Canal at Runcorn. Around 80% of the river basin district is rural, with the majority of land being used for agriculture.³⁴
- 7.8 The River Weaver runs through the north east side of the Plan area. The Environment Agency (EA) measures the quality of England's rivers in two ways. An ecological measure examines the diversity and health of its wildlife, while a chemical measure assesses whether rivers contain too much sewage, phosphate or other harmful substances. As of 2019, the ecological status of the river is 'moderate', whilst the river failed to meet standards for good chemical status. The main reasons for not meeting the required chemical status included poor livestock management, urbanisation, sewage discharge, and poor soil and nutrient management.³⁵
- 7.9 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been designated by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. In this regard, there is one SPZ within Frodsham, which covers the westernmost extent of the Plan area, shown in Figure 7.3.
- 7.10 The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwaters have nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwaters are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) within which, Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. The majority of the Plan area falls within a Surfacewater NVZ: Peckmill Brook, Hoolpool Gutter at Ince Marshes.³⁶

³⁴ Environment Agency (2015): 'North West river basin district management plan' [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718335/North_West_RBD_P art_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf

³⁵ Environment Agency (2019): 'Catchment Explorer' [online] available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3524>

³⁶ Environment Agency (2019): 'Peckmill Brook NVZ' [online] available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ReasonsForNotAchievingGood/489518>

Figure 7-3 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) in the NA



7.11 The water suppliers for the Frodsham area are United Utilities (UU). UU's water resources management plan states that over 50% of the region's water comes from resources in Cumbria and Wales. The water travels through an extensive network of pipes known as large diameter trunk mains and huge, gravity-fed aqueducts bringing water from Cumbria. The geographical area that relies on these water sources is home to over seven million people.³⁷

Summary of future baseline

7.12 In terms of water quality; requirements set out in the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. However, water quality could be affected by pollution incidents in the area, increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, modification, and the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies.

7.13 Development which requires sewage treatment may, if not designed correctly or located appropriately, result in an increased risk of pollution to groundwater and surface water. Development will therefore need to have due consideration to the capacity of sewage works.

³⁷ United Utilities (2019) Water Resources Management Plan. Available at: <https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/water-resources/water-resources-management-plan/>

- 7.14 There is potential for amounts of agricultural land to be lost to development, as future development is likely to fall within or adjacent to the built area of Frodsham, which had been predicted to be predominantly underlain by Grade 3 quality land (>60% likelihood).

Key headline issues

- 7.15 The key issues are as follows:
- The NDP area mainly consists of non-agricultural land and Grade 3 agricultural land. Some of this is likely to be best and most versatile land. Development should seek to avoid the loss of high quality land wherever possible by prioritising development on pre-existing brownfield sites.
 - There are Surfacewater NVZs and Groundwater Source Protection Zones in the NDP area, which present potential constraints to development. Additionally, development could affect water quality, but effects could be avoided. Consequently, it will be important for future development to avoid any detrimental impacts on water quality both on and off-site.
 - The FNP could also seek to support extended measures to improve the resilience of water supplies, including through local water recycling schemes and opportunities to increase efficiency in water use.

Scoping outcome

- 7.16 The topic of 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' has been **SCOPED OUT** of the SEA, as the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on land and water quality.
- 7.17 There are important soil resources in the NDP area that ought to be avoided. However, the limited scale of development proposed in the NDP is unlikely to allocate sites exceeding 10 ha in total, and so a significant effect upon soil resources is considered unlikely in any event. For this reason, soil is scoped out of the SEA. This does not mean that higher quality agricultural land should not be protected.

- 7.18 Whilst the NDP area does overlap a SPZ and a NVZ (adverse impacts are primarily associated with agricultural land use), it is considered unlikely that significant effects upon water quality would occur as a result of the NDP. However, it is important that areas within Zones 1 and 2 SPZ are avoided when allocating sites for development. The potential development sites being considered in the draft NP do not overlap Zone or Zone II³⁸. In terms of potential effects on European sites, produced by increased surface water runoff, the Mersey Estuary is over 50km² and drains an extensive area of north-west England. Therefore, surface water runoff from the development proposed in the FNP is unlikely to produce significant effects. Moreover, all the FNP allocated sites are on the opposite side of the M56 from the SPA/Ramsar site and are separated from it by both Frodsham Marsh and the Manchester Ship Canal. Impacts associated water quality due to surface water runoff have therefore been **SCOPED OUT**.
- 7.19 In terms of wastewater treatment; United Utilities (the wastewater utility for the NP area) is set to invest in wastewater treatment and sustainability and have the capacity to accommodate the additional allocated sites and housing numbers proposed within the FNP³⁹. Changes in water quality as a result of the discharge of sewage effluent have therefore been **SCOPED OUT**.

³⁸ One site assessed falls within a Zone II (subsurface) but this was rejected in the site assessment process as it falls within the green belt.

³⁹ United Utilities (2019) Water Resources Management Plan. Available at: <https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/water-resources/water-resources-management-plan/>

8. Population and Housing

Focus of theme:

- 8.1 The theme focuses on population demographics and housing delivery and affordability in the FNP area.

Policy Context

- 8.2 Table 8.1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 8-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the population and housing

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017	2017	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/land/helaa2017?tab=files
The CWCC Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
The CWCC Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/

- 8.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which on the whole seeks to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities, including health facilities, educational facilities and open space. The NPPF recognises the benefits of a range of local provisions supporting community needs, including in rural areas. The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities, including through the protection and retention of Green Belt land. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents. It also requires the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community to be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site where possible.
- The FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plan which contains policies specifically relating to housing, community services and facilities, accessibility and infrastructure requirements.

- The CWCC Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) informed the preparation of the CWCC LPP2. It identifies sites and broad locations (including in the FNP area) for housing and employment land available to meet the future needs for housing and employment land. The assessment concluded that the total potential capacity meets and significantly exceeds the minimum Local Plan requirement.
- Meeting objectively assessed future housing needs in the borough is one of the main objectives of the CWCC LPP1. Policy STRAT 2 Strategic Development, identifies a requirement for at least 22,000 (or 1,100 net new dwellings per annum) new dwellings for the period up to 2030. Policies STRAT 2 to STRAT 8 (LPP1) seek to ensure that new development in the Borough is brought forward in line with identified needs, focusing the majority of new development within or on the edge of the main urban centres. The plan also makes provision for a specific level of development to be brought forward in Frodsham, identified as one of ten Key Service Centres. The Plan allocates 250 dwellings in Frodsham (Policy STRAT8). Policy ECON2 seeks to maintain the important role of Frodsham's town centre as a retail and service centre. Policies SOC3 and SOC5 (LPP1) support mixed, balanced, sustainable communities through the provision of market and affordable housing that meets identified future needs.
- The LPP1 policy SOC1 seeks affordable housing (AH) provision in rural areas (which include Frodsham) on all new residential development (subject to viability) of three or more dwellings or those with a plot area of 0.1 ha and more.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

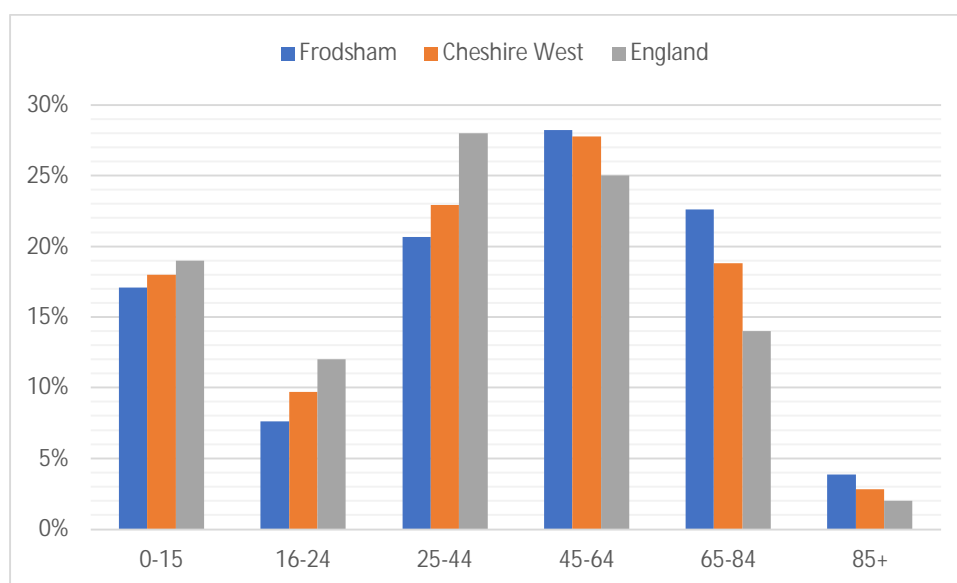
Age Structure

- 8.4 In 2019, the population of Frodsham was estimated to be 9,171 (ONS Parish population estimates) having increased by around 1% since 2011. In comparison, Cheshire West and Chester has seen a 4% increase in population since 2011.
- 8.5 Table 8-2 and figure 8-1 show the age structure of the local population in comparison to that of the rest of Borough and England. It is apparent that Frodsham has a lower proportion of residents in the 0-15, 16-24 and 25-44 age groups compared to the wider Borough and England as whole. The trend is reversed for the 65 and over age groups with Frodsham showing a higher proportion of residents in these age groups compared to West Cheshire and Chester and England. Both Frodsham and Cheshire West have a slightly higher proportion of residents in the 45-64 cohort compared to England.

Table 8-2 Age Structure in 2019 (ONS)

	Frodsham	Cheshire West & Chester	England
0-15	17%	18%	19%
16-24	8%	10%	12%
25-44	21%	23%	28%
45-64	28%	28%	25%
65-84	23%	19%	14%
85+	4%	3%	2%
Total population	9,171	343,071	56,287,00

Figure 8-1 Population distribution by age group in 2019



Housing Delivery and Tenure

- 8.6 With regards to housing delivery, Table 8-3 shows that over the last 5 years 2,066 dwellings were completed, per annum, on average; which is considerably higher than the target set in the emerging local plan (1,100 dpa). A total of 14,993 net completions have been achieved in the Borough over the period 2011 to 2020 or 1,666 dpa.

Table 8-3 Net Housing Completions in Cheshire West & Chester⁴⁰

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Completions (net)	1,769	2,017	2,542	2,152	1,849
Housing target	1,100 dpa				

- 8.7 With regards to housing tenure, data from the 2011 census shows that the proportion of owner occupation in the NDP area is substantially higher than in the wider region and England as a whole (Table 8.3). Conversely, the proportion of rented accommodation (private and social rents) is smaller in the NDP area compared regional and national levels. A small proportion of tenures are shared ownership tenures which is line with the rest of the region and England. The social rented sector is notably lower in Frodsham (10%) compared to the corresponding levels for the North West (15%) and England (18%).

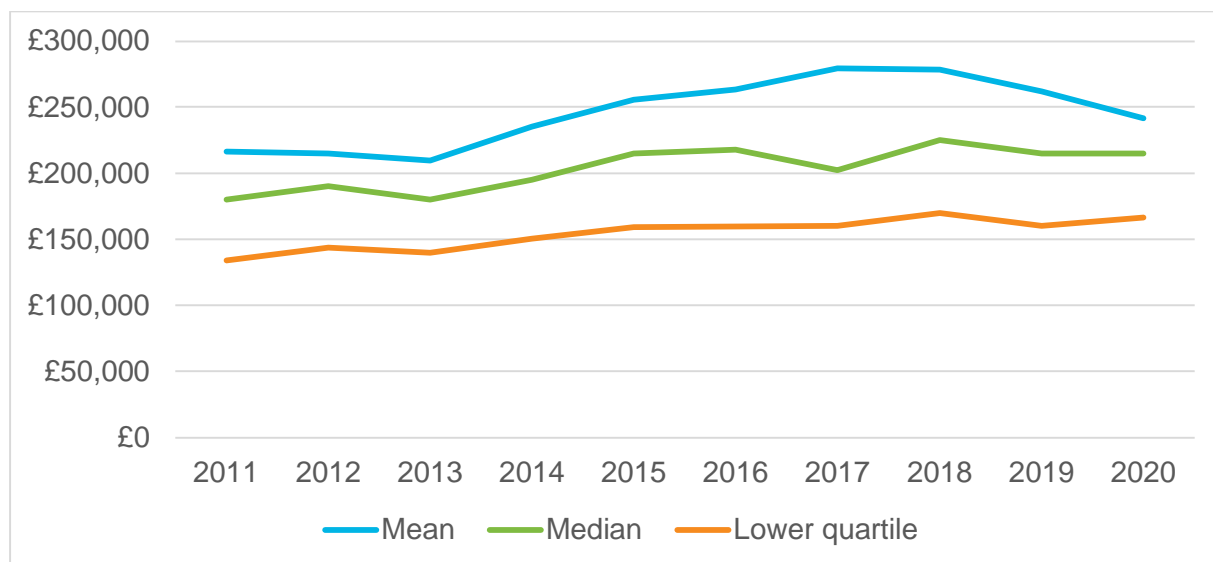
Table 8-4 Housing Tenure in 2011 (ONS Housing Tenure)

	Frodsham	The North West	England
Owned (Total)	77%	65%	63%
Shared Ownership	0.8%	1%	0.8%
Socially Rented	10%	18%	18%
Private Rented	11%	15%	17%
Living Rent Free	1%	1%	1.2%

⁴⁰ Source: CWCC Local Plan annual monitoring report 2020 available at: http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/mon/

- 8.8 The average house price in Frodsham in 2020 was £241,556⁴¹ around 3.3% lower than the average property price for England as a whole (£249,402). Figure 8-2 shows property price trends in the NDP area over the past 10 years. This shows that prices have fluctuated over the past 10 years, but the overall trend shows increasing prices over this period. The average property price increased by just under 12% in the past ten years in Frodsham.

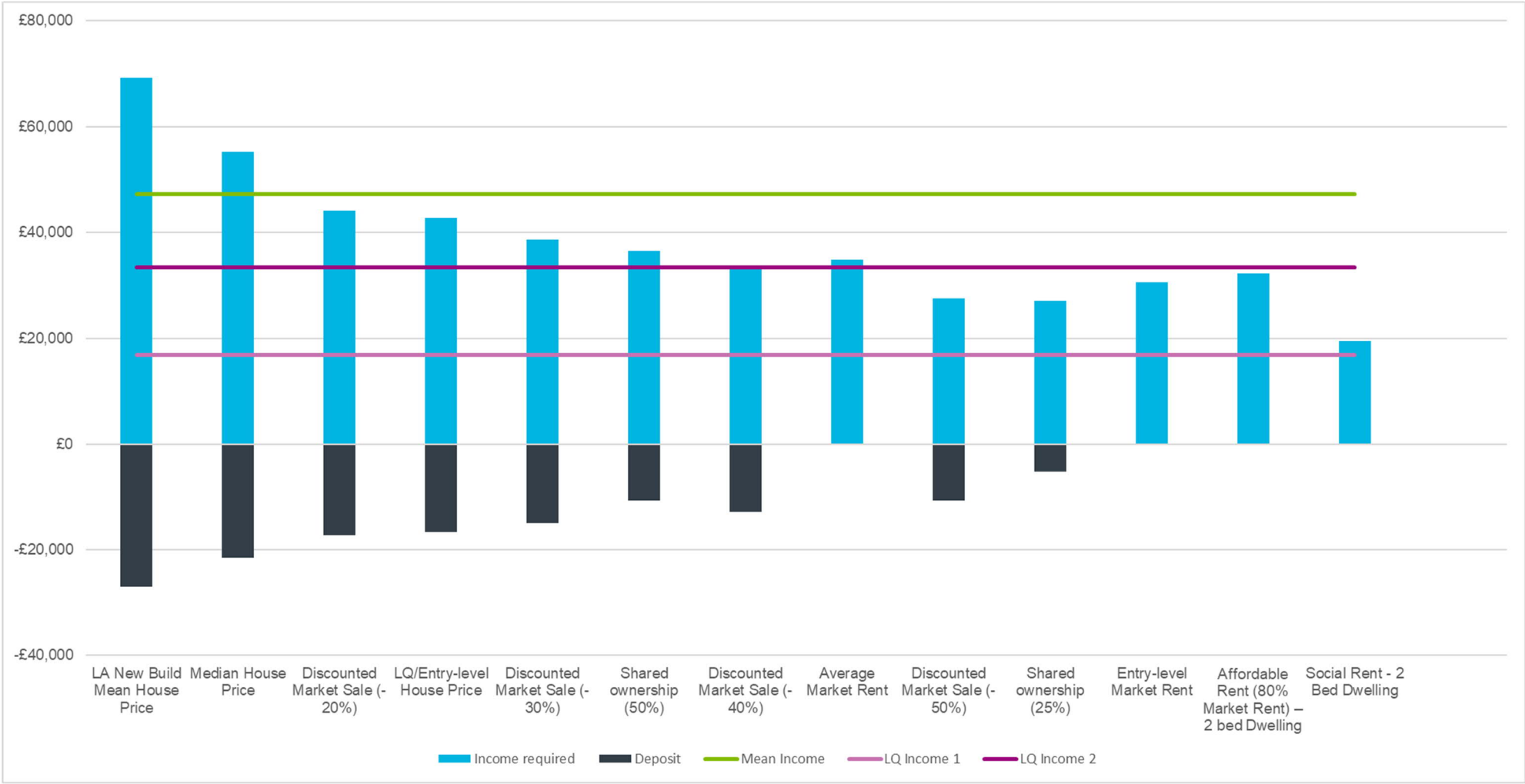
Figure 8-2 House prices in Frodsham 2011-2020



- 8.9 The average household income in the NDP area is around £47,300 and lower quartile income is around £16,777 (or £33,554 for double earning LQ households). Preliminary affordability thresholds calculations carried out by AECOM (Figure 8.3) indicate that average price market homes and average new builds are unaffordable to average income households in Frodsham. Potential affordable tenures for such households include entry-level homes, discounted market homes and shared ownership tenures. For double earning LQ households the only affordable ownership options would be heavily discounted (40-50%) market homes and shared ownership homes. Notably none of the ownership or rental options are affordable for single earning LQ households.

⁴¹ Source: Land Registry PPD and AECOM calculations

Figure 8-3 Affordability thresholds in Frodsham



Summary of future baseline

- 8.10 Population in the NDP area grew by 1% since 2011. The largest age group is the 45-64 (28%) and smallest is the 16-24 group (8%). The older age groups (65 plus) constitute around 27% of the resident population. Given the large proportion of 45 plus cohort (55%) and the relatively small proportion of 16-24% cohort, the population may flatline or decline overtime.
- 8.11 Over the past five years the rate of delivery of new housing in the borough has consistently exceeded annual targets set in the local plan. The borough has a demonstrable land supply, in excess of that required for the housing allocated in the adopted Local Plan. Therefore, the delivery rate of new housing is likely to continue to meet annual targets.
- 8.12 The Local Plan sets allocates 250 dwellings for the NDP area (to 2030) or 12.5 dpa on average over the local plan period. The latest CWCC annual monitoring report⁴² shows that 180 new dwellings have been completed since 2010 (an average of 18dpa) and a further 29 have extant planning permissions, leaving a residual 41 units to 2030. The sites allocated for housing in the draft FNP add up to around 116 new dwellings which is 33% above the Local Plan housing requirement for Frodsham (once completions and commitments are taken into account).
- 8.13 The NDP area has a high level of home ownership (77%) substantially exceeding the corresponding figure for the wider region and England. This combined with the low levels of shared ownership and rental tenures (private and social) may serve to make ownership increasingly unaffordable in Frodsham.
- 8.14 Average house prices in Frodsham are slightly lower than the average for England. However, the affordability thresholds calculation shows that the income required to buy an average market home for sale is higher than the average household income in Frodsham. Discounted homes (e.g. through the recently introduced First Homes initiative) offer potential ownership options to average income households, whilst for households on double lower quartile incomes more heavily discounted options (45-50%) and shared ownership tenures are likely to be affordable. Importantly none of the ownership or rental tenures are currently affordable to single earning lower quartile income households. In the long term house prices are likely to continue to increase, though prices may fluctuate in the interim.
- 8.15 Social and economic changes as a result of COVID-19 may affect housing including but not limited to, housing need, affordable housing need, the type of housing required locally and house prices. However, the long term impact of COVID-19 is uncertain at this stage.

⁴² Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2020 available at <http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/file/5765218>

Key headline issues

8.16 The key issues are as follows:

- The NDP area has an increasingly ageing population profile.
- Net housing completions trend in Cheshire West and Cheshire currently exceed targets set in the local plan.
- Average market housing is unaffordable to average income households in the NDP area. Other routes to ownership such as First Homes, shared ownership and rent-to-buy potentially offer a route to ownership in the NA. However, substantial discounts on market homes (40-50%) would be required for households on double LQ income to enable them to access ownership tenures.
- None of the ownership or rental tenures are affordable to those households likely to be in the most acute need such as single earning LQ households.
- The recently introduced First Homes scheme, offering discounted market homes, may offer residents a step onto the property ladder. Analysis carried out herein suggests that higher discounts (40%-50%) may be more appropriate than the nominal 30% First Homes discount to benefit the widest group of residents in the NA.
- It is likely that COVID-19 will have an effect on housing factors, but these are uncertain at this stage.

Scoping outcome

- 8.17 The SEA topic 'Population and Housing' has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. The NDP intends to allocate sites for housing delivery. It includes policies pertaining to affordable housing which will influence the nature of housing delivered within the Plan area, associated infrastructure and services required to support sustainable communities.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Population and Housing SEA theme?

- 8.18 The SEA topic 'Population and Housing' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 8-5 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 8-5: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Population and Housing

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupiers throughout their life.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs? • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Create sustainable communities with good access to a range of local services and facilities?

9. Health and Wellbeing

- 9.1 This theme focuses on health indicators and deprivation, healthcare provision in the FNP area and influences on residents' health and wellbeing, including access to open space and the countryside.

Policy Context

- 9.2 Table 9-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 9-1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020	https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/local_plan_part_two
Cheshire West and Chester Health Improvement Strategy	2018	file:///C:/Users/lauren.egan/Downloads/health%20improvement%20strategy%202018-2022.pdf
Cheshire West and Chester Playing Pitch Strategy (updated)	2018	https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/ev_base/oss_pps

9.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities, including; green infrastructure, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure is further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
- The 2020 Health Equity in England report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined for the poorest 10% of women.
- The FNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Local Plans covering the area, which contain policies directly relating to access to healthcare, green infrastructure and open spaces, and design that supports active travel opportunities.
- The Cheshire West and Chester Health Improvement Strategy identifies local health challenges and sets out how, over the next four years, the council will support residents to live and enjoy healthy lifestyles.
- The Cheshire West and Chester Playing Pitch Strategy (2018) has been developed from research and analysis of playing pitch provision and usage within Cheshire West and Chester to inform local planning policy.

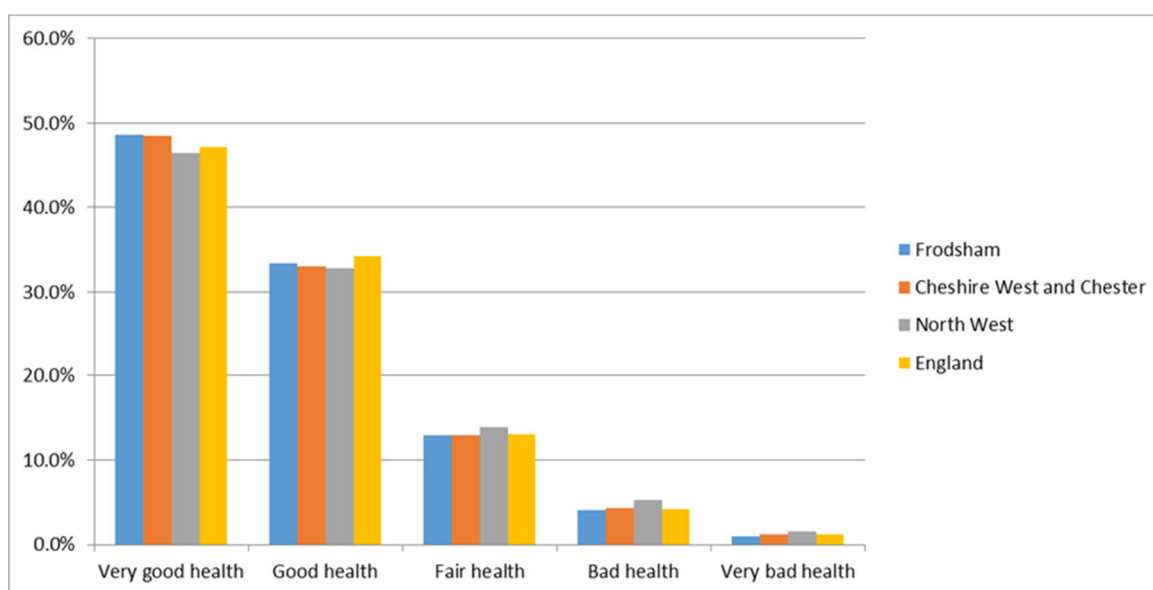
Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

Health indicators

- 9.4 General health in Frodsham (shown in Figure 9-1) is good. 89.1% of residents report at least 'good' if not 'excellent' health as per the 2011 Census, compared to 81.5% at the district level, 79.3% at the regional level and 81.4% nationally. A very low proportion of residents have 'very bad' health (0.98%).

Figure 9-9-2 Residents General Health (Census 2011: KS301EW)



- 9.5 With regards to long term health conditions, a large proportion of the population are not limited by their long-term health conditions (81.3%), in line with figures for Cheshire West and Chester (81.4%).
- 9.6 Information from the Cheshire West and Chester Health Improvement Strategy presents data from 2017 regarding the health and wellbeing of the district/unitary authority population.⁴³ Key issues include:
- Breastfeeding initiation is 68.9% in the area compared to the England average of 74.3%.
 - At six to eight weeks after birth, 35.4 per cent of mothers are still breastfeeding compared with the England average of 43.8 per cent.
 - Almost one fifth of children in their school reception year are either overweight or obese (23.1%), slightly higher than the England average of 21.9%.
 - A third of children aged 10-11 are either overweight or obese (33.6%), similar to the England average of 34.2%.

⁴³ Cheshire West and Chester Council (2018): 'Health Improvement Strategy' [online] available at: <file:///C:/Users/lauren.egan/Downloads/health%20improvement%20strategy%202018-2022.pdf>

- 176,970 adults (64.2%) are overweight or obese, similar to the England average of 64.8 per cent 69,860 adults (25.5%) are obese.
- 24.2% of adults are inactive (i.e. do less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week).
- 23.8% of people are using outdoor space for exercise/health reasons.
- 923 deaths per year are attributed to physical inactivity and the annual cost to the local authority is £17.3 million.
- On average, local residents spend seven hours per day in sedentary positions. The most sedentary age group is 14-18 year olds, with lack of time and motivation being the most frequently cited reasons.

9.7 Local Health Profiles provide an overview of health for each local authority in England. The local authority health profile⁴⁴ for Cheshire West and Chester notes the following key indicators:

Table 9 2 Local Authority health profile, Cheshire West & Chester (2017-19)

	Life expectancy at birth (male)	Life expectancy at birth (female)	Under 75 mortality rate from all causes	Under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases	Under 75 mortality rate from cancer	Suicide rate
CW&C	80.1	83.3	324	68.3	133.0	8.4
North West	78.4	82.1	383	86.1	142.4	10.6
England	79.8	83.4	326	70.4	129.2	10.1

Health services

9.8 The nearest hospital services are located at Halton (Halton General Hospital), 4km from the centre of the Plan area. The Frodsham Health Centre at Princeway offers GP Services through the Knoll Centre, which is accessible by a 10-minute walk for most residents in the catchment area.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Public Health England Frodsham Local Authority Health Profile [online] available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/ati/202/are/E06000009>

⁴⁵ Active Cheshire (2018): 'Active Design Summary' [online] available at: [http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreprs/Active%20Design%20Ready%20Assessment%20Summary%20Frodsham%2017.5.18%20\(1\)DRAFT.pdf](http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreprs/Active%20Design%20Ready%20Assessment%20Summary%20Frodsham%2017.5.18%20(1)DRAFT.pdf)

Deprivation

9.9 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

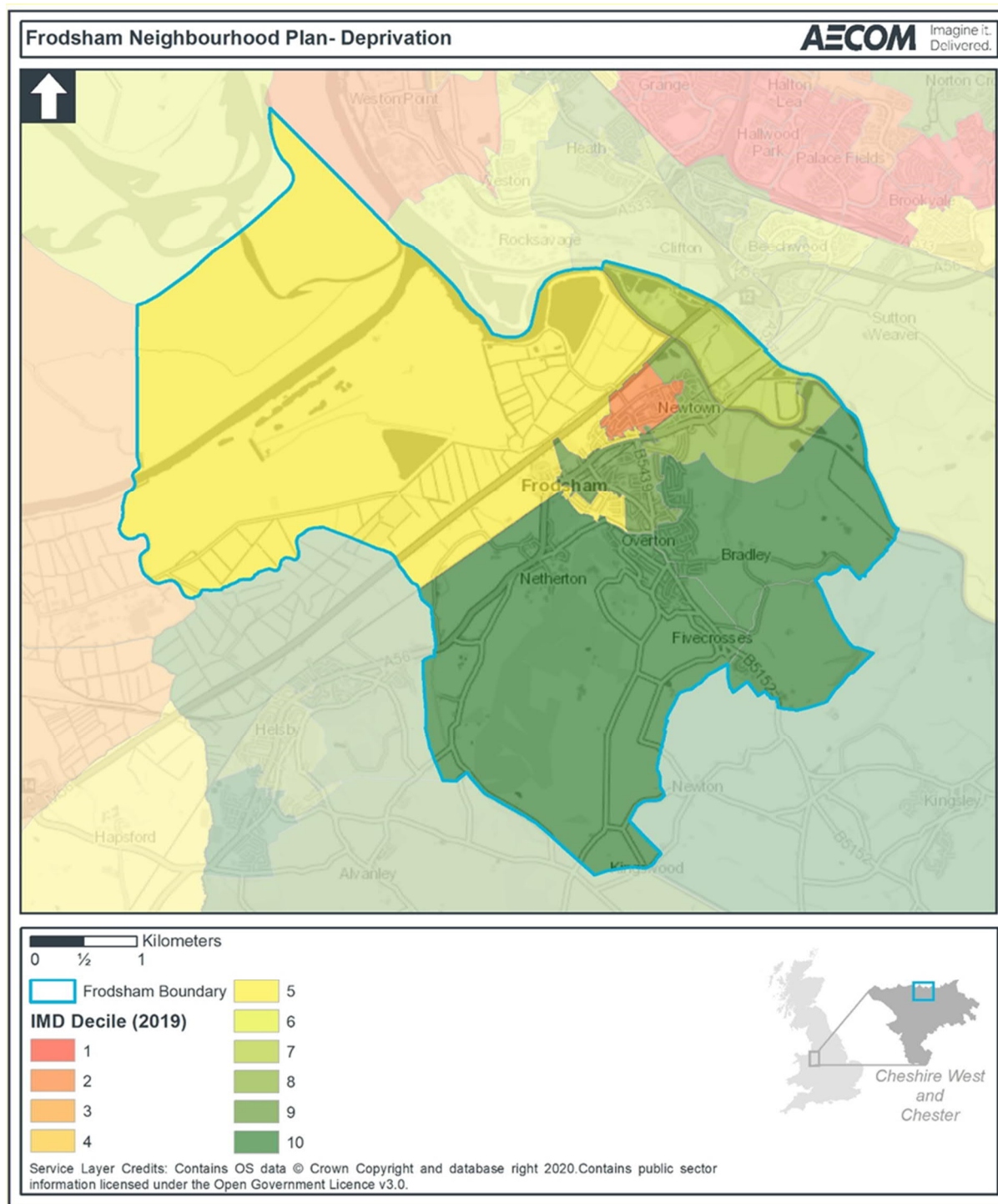
- Income: The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work.
- Employment: The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness / disability, or caring responsibilities.
- Education, Skills and Training: The lack of attainment and skills in the population.
- Health Deprivation and Disability: The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered.
- Crime: The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- Barriers to Housing and Services: The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.
- Living Environment: The quality of the local environment, including the quality of housing stock, air quality and road traffic incidents.

Two indices, subsets of the Income deprivation domain, are also included:

- Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index: The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
- Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index: The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

9.10 As illustrated in Figure 9-2, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019) data for the NDP area show that the north westernmost part of the Plan area falls within decile 5 (50% least deprived areas in England), and the south easternmost part of the Plan area falls with decile 10 (10% least deprived areas in England). A small part of the area, at Newtown, falls within a highly deprived area (one of the 20% most deprived area).

Figure 9-2 Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 in and around the NDP area



Open greenspace and sport/play facilities

- 9.11 The Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study (2019)⁴⁶ identified provision for areas of open greenspace and recreation (such as parks), and areas of deficit. Table 9-3 shows that there is a deficit of allotments, amenity greenspace and play spaces in Frodsham.

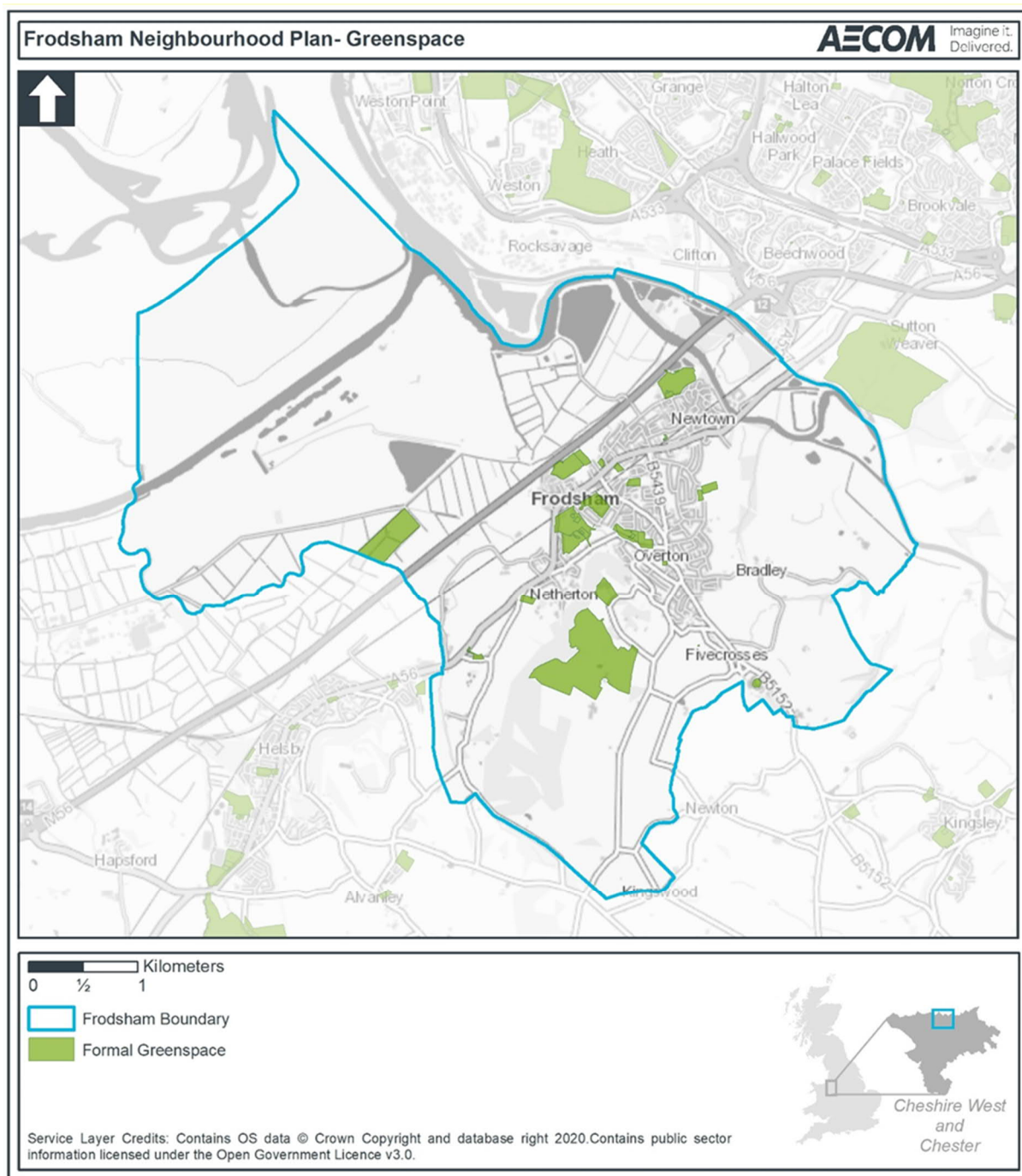
Table 9-3 Existing provision and deficit of open space (ha) in Frodsham

	Allotment	Amenity greenspace	Park and recreation ground	Play space (children)	Play Space (youths)	Natural green space
Provision	1.23	3.44	12.44	0.39	0.14	98.83
Supply/ deficit	-0.13	-2.01	7.9	-0.06	-0.13	n/a

- 9.12 Greenspaces are shown in Figure 9-3, below. Greenspace is mostly located in the centre of Frodsham, as well as some parts of the south west.

⁴⁶ Cheshire West and Cheshire Council (2017): 'Open Space Study' [online] available at: https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/ev_base/oss_pps

Figure 9-3 Greenspace in Frodsham



Summary of future baseline

- 9.13 Frodsham is a generally healthy community with an ageing population. The accessibility of development will be particularly important in terms of supporting resident health and wellbeing. The importance of local services and facilities, and access to open green spaces and recreational areas has been further highlighted through the ongoing pandemic. Furthermore, as a rural area, residents are more susceptible to social isolation. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.
- 9.14 There is a deficit of play spaces for both children and youth in Frodsham as well as amenity greenspace. The NDP area can benefit from improving access to current provision as well as enhancing sites which better appeal to the expectations and demands of users from a broad range of age and mobility.

Key headline issues

- 9.15 The key issues are as follows:
- Frodsham has a broadly healthy population, with good access to medical services in the town centre. However, the ageing population is likely to place additional pressures on health and social services.
 - The majority of the NDP area is within the 50% least deprived category with only small pockets of deprivation.
 - There are several health and recreational facilities within the NDP area, though there is a deficit in play spaces and amenity greenspace.

Scoping outcome

- 9.16 Whilst the scale of development proposed is unlikely to produce significant effects on health and wellbeing. The Plan has the potential to engender effects on health and wellbeing. For example, the plan can help improve open/ green space provision. With this in mind the SEA topic 'Health and Wellbeing' has been **SCOPED IN** to the SEA.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Health and Wellbeing SEA theme?

- 9.17 The SEA topic 'Health and wellbeing' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 9.4 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 9-4: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Health & Wellbeing

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the FNP area.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoid negative impacts to the quality and/ or extent of existing recreational assets, including formal and informal footpaths? • Contribute to reducing social isolation?

10. Transportation

10.1 This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in the FNP area.

Policy Context

10.2 Table 10-1 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the FNP SEA.

Table 10-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation and movement

Document Title	Year of publication	Weblink
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2019	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead	2017	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-investment-strategy
The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy	2016	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-active-travel-investment-models
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-the-transport-decarbonisation-plan
Cheshire West and Chester Transport Strategy	2017	https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/public-transport/transport-strategy/transport-strategy.aspx
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 1	2015	http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files
Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part 2	2019	https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/local_plan_part_two

10.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However,

it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.

- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions and increasing safety.
- The Cheshire West and Chester Transport Plan identifies the transport investment priorities and policies at a more localised scale, but ultimately complement the aims of the national strategies discussed above. Alongside the transport and access policies of the Local Plan, the FNP will be required to be in general conformity with the strategic policy aims.

Baseline Summary

Summary of current baseline

Modes of travel

- 10.4 According to Census data (shown in Figure 10-1), a large proportion of residents travel to work by car (47.1%), higher than figures for Cheshire West and Chester (45.0%), the North West (39.0%), England (37.0%). Additionally, a low proportion of residents travel to work via public transport in Frodsham (3.3%), and travel to work via foot or bicycle (3.1%).

- 10.5 Car ownership in the Plan area, (shown in Figure 10-2) is high (84.1%), higher than Cheshire West and Chester (81.4%), the North West (72.0%) and England as a whole (74.0%).

Figure 10-1 Methods of Travel to Work

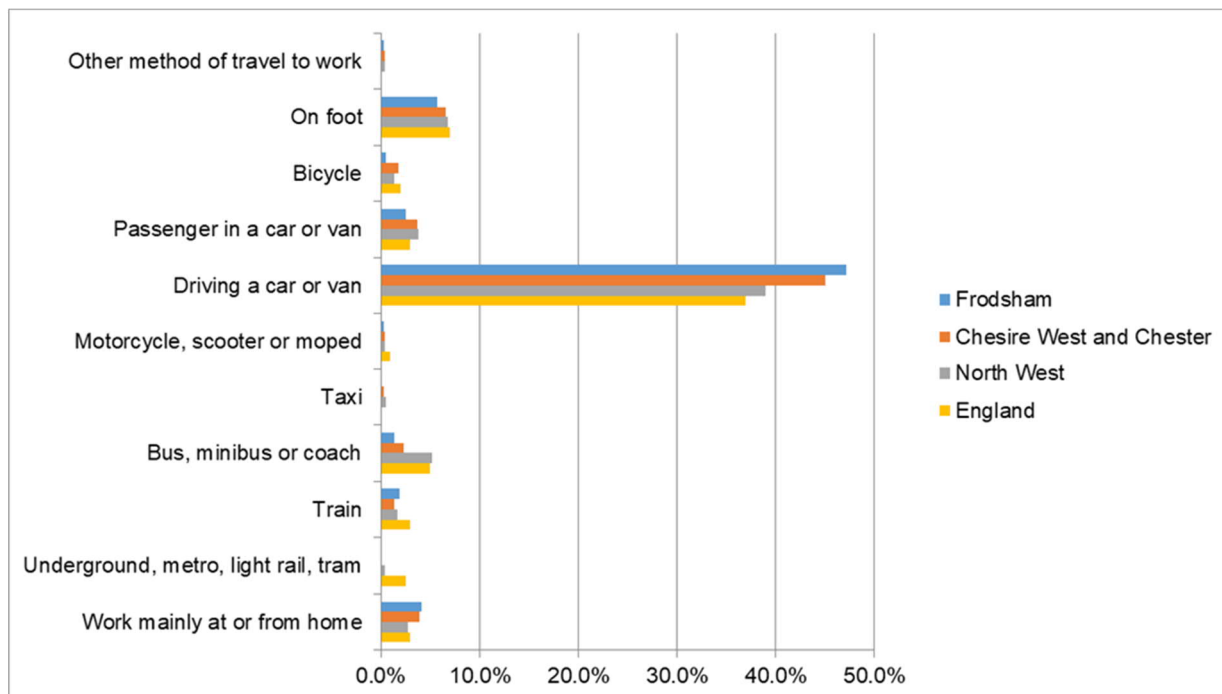
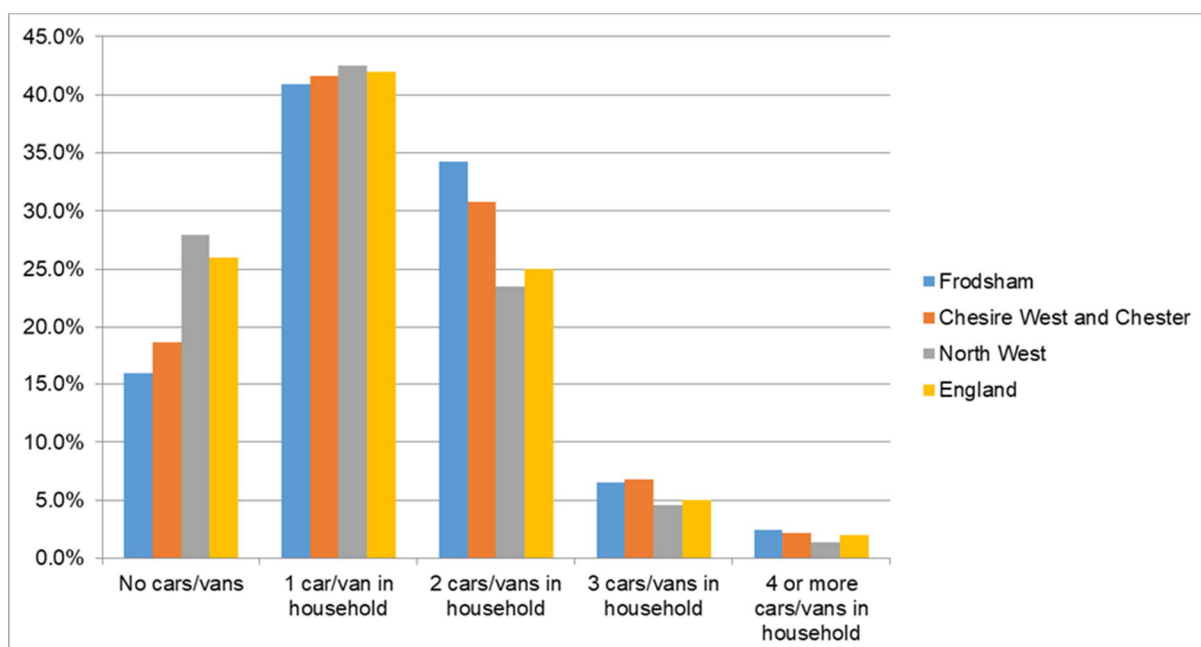


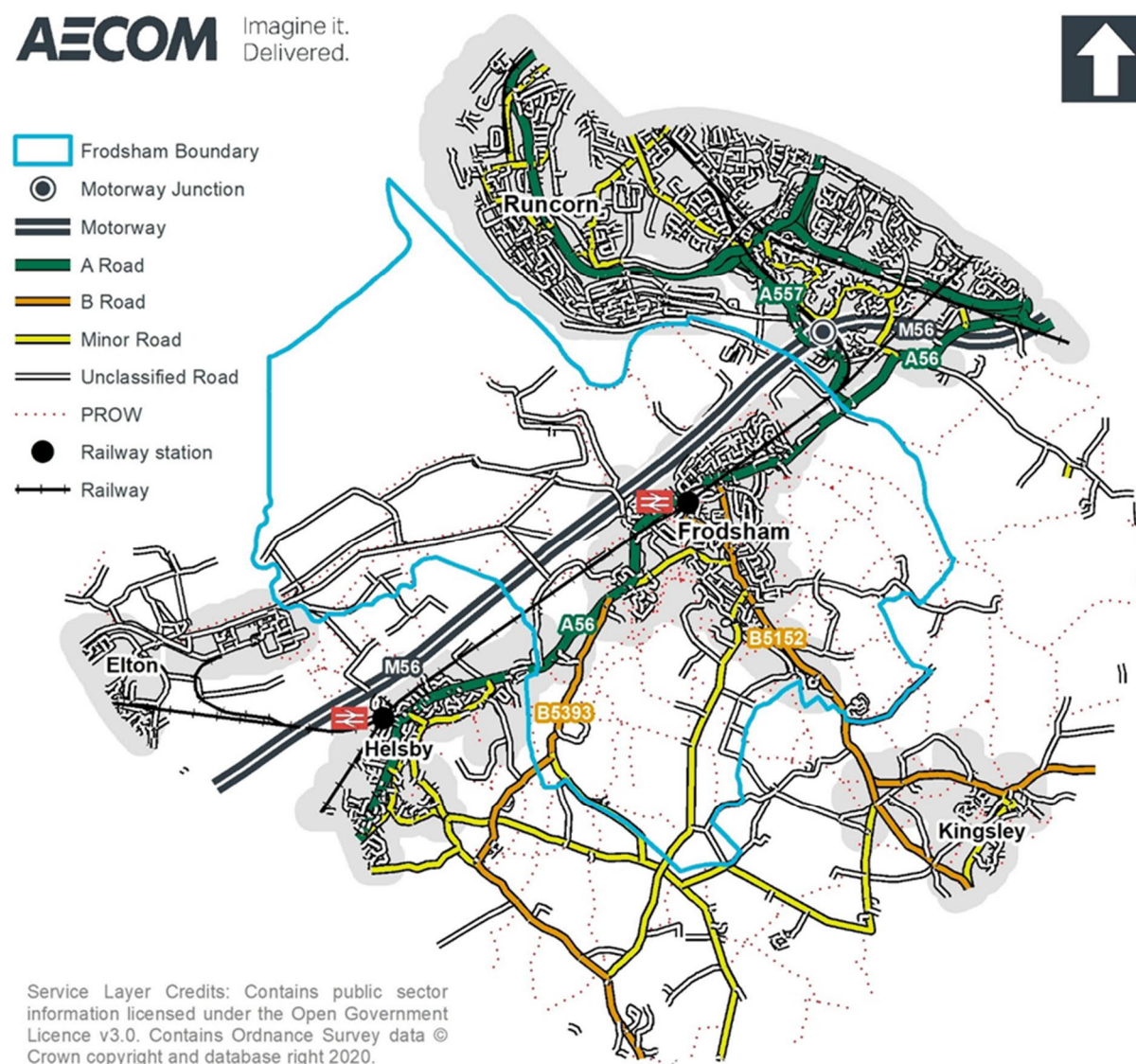
Figure 10-2 Car/ Van Ownership



Wider transport network

- 10.6 The West Cheshire Borough possesses extensive motorway, trunk road and rail networks which carry a significant amount of local, regional and national traffic. Traffic patterns are also influenced by the nearby conurbations of Merseyside and Greater Manchester and there are also strong commuter links with North East Wales.
- 10.7 With regards to the local road network, the M56 passes through the centre of the Plan area and connects Frodsham to Manchester and the smaller towns of Warrington, Runcorn to the east and Ellesmere Port in the west. The A56 Chester to Warrington road is routes along Main Street and High Street. In addition, there are several smaller B roads (B593 and B5152) which provide access to the more rural parts of Frodsham to the south beyond the main settlement.

Figure 10-3 Road network in Frodsham



Traffic and congestion

- 10.8 The Frodsham residents' survey highlighted resident's concerns surrounding traffic and congestion in the area.⁴⁷ Traffic and congestion on the A56 has increased noticeably with the expansion of the Frodsham settlement boundaries, especially during busy periods of the day.
- 10.9 With the exception of Main Street, residential roads carry little traffic but on-street parking contributes to traffic congestion in Marsh Lane and there is intrusive background noise from the M56 throughout the area. Several roads are busy at peak periods especially near the school and local businesses, and on-street parking can inhibit free traffic flow.⁴⁸

Rail and bus network

- 10.10 Frodsham rail station is situated in the centre of the settlement. The station is operated by Transport for Wales, which provide services to Manchester and Liverpool Lime Street every half hour, Monday through to Sunday. Frodsham is also served by a less frequent Northern rail service which runs Monday-Friday from Leeds to Ellesmere Port.
- 10.11 With regards to the bus network, there are four bus routes serving Frodsham. The 48 and 48A run between Frodsham and Northwich, with the two other services terminating in Chester.
- 48 - Frodsham, High Street, Morrisons to Northwich, Watling Street (via Acton Bridge).
 - 48A - Frodsham, High Street, Morrisons to Northwich, Watling Street (via Delamere).
 - 2 - Chester Bus Interchange – Runcorn, a bus service operated by Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire.
 - X30 - Chester Bus Interchange - Warrington Bus Interchange, a bus service operated by Arriva North West.

Pedestrian and cycle routes

- 10.12 National cycle route number 5 passes through the centre of the Plan area runs through Chester to North Wales.

⁴⁷Frodsham plan group (2017): 'Frodsham Residents Survey 2017' [online] available at: <http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreps/CWaC-YourVoiceMatters-FinalStatsFeb2018.pdf>

⁴⁸ Frodsham Town Council (2010): 'Frodsham Design Statement' [online] available at: <http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreps/Town%20Design%20Statement%20-%20Frodsham%20-%20July%202010.pdf>

10.13 Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) shown in Figure 10-3, are expansive along the southern part of the Plan area and provide connections to more rural locations and their specialist services, such as farms. The town centre of Frodsham is described as 'very walkable' and this is reflected with the presence of frequent pedestrian cut-throughs that significantly reduce journey distance, compared to the normal road routes. The residents of Frodsham have suggested that the quality of pavements could be improved to increase the likelihood of them walking more often in the town.⁴⁹

Summary of future baseline

10.14 In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the Plan area is likely to continue trends which favour the private vehicle as the primary mode of transport. New development therefore has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional localised congestion issues which in turn may reduce road safety.

10.15 A greater local population through the delivery of Local Plan housing allocations and other developments and subsequent demand for public transport could provide opportunities to increase bus provision. However, Frodsham is unlikely to experience the scale of growth that would be likely to add significant congestion to the local road network or make major improvements to public transport viable.

10.16 Though PRoWs in the area are expansive, resident surveys have indicated there is potential to improve the quality of pavements and walkways in Frodsham, which could be implemented as part of the planning process.

Key headline issues

10.17 The key issues are as follows:

- The Neighbourhood Plan area is well served by the highway network, and benefits from good railway and bus connectivity. However, development could potentially lead to increased traffic and improve the viability of public transport.
- The majority of residents are likely to travel to work by car/ van, but it is likely that trends could change as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic, and the changing role of town centres, indicated by a relatively high proportion of residents who choose to work from home.
- Accessibility by PRoWs in the Plan area is good, and plan making offers the opportunity to improve existing pathways to increase access to key services in Frodsham.

⁴⁹ Active Cheshire (2018): 'Active Design Summary' [online] available at: [http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreprs/Active%20Design%20Ready%20Assessment%20Summary%20Frodsham%2017.5.18%20\(1\)DRAFT.pdf](http://frodshamplan.org.uk/images/docsandreprs/Active%20Design%20Ready%20Assessment%20Summary%20Frodsham%2017.5.18%20(1)DRAFT.pdf)

Scoping outcome

10.18 Whilst the level of growth proposed is unlikely to produce transport infrastructure improvements, the FNP can potentially have effects, positive or negative, on the level of traffic in the NP area. With this in mind the SEA topic 'Transportation' has been **SCOPED IN** of the SEA.

What are the SEA objectives and appraisal questions for the Transportation SEA theme?

10.19 The SEA topic 'Transportation' has been scoped in to the SEA. Table 10-3 presents the SEA objective and appraisal questions that will be used to assess the plan in relation to this theme.

Table 10-3: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions: Transportation

SEA Objective	Supporting Questions
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more use of sustainable transport modes? • Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities? • Extend or improve active travel networks? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure improvements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce impacts on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities?

11. The SEA Framework and Methodologies

The SEA Framework

- 11.1 The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA topics (as set out in Chapters 2-10).
- 11.2 The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and ancillary questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Development Plan Document (and any reasonable alternatives).
- 11.3 Table 11.1 below outlines the full SEA Framework, which brings together the objectives and questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA topic chapter. The Framework focuses on those issues that have been identified as the most important to consider in the preparation of the Plan; but acknowledging the limited influence that the Plan can have in some areas.

Table 11-1 The SEA Framework

SEA Objective	Supporting questions (will the option/ proposal help to...?)
Improve air quality within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area and minimise all sources of environmental pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and encourage more sustainable transport options? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Encourage development which reduces the need to travel outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Locate and design development so that current and future residents will not regularly be exposed to poor air quality? • Implement measures (such as appropriate planting and provision of green infrastructure) which will help support good air quality in an around the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Ensure development connects to the existing road network, promoting ease of access and suitably mitigating any potential increases in local congestion?
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity habitats and species; achieving a net environmental gain and stronger ecological networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support connections between habitats in the Plan area? • Avoid significant impacts on designated sites within the NP area including; the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar/SSSI, Beechmill wood and pasture, Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings and Dunsdale Hollow SSSIs? • Avoid significant impacts from air pollution, urban water drainage and surface water runoff, on the designated biodiversity sites and areas forming part of the North West Marine Plan. • Support continued improvements to the designated sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change?
Avoid and manage flood risk and support the resilience of the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Ensure flood risk and erosion is not increased and where possible reduced

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably manage surface water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the plan area? • Avoid placing development in areas that are at the greatest risk of flooding?
Protect, enhance and manage the integrity, distinctive character and setting of heritage assets and the wider historic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve, better reveal the significance, and enhance heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment? • Contribute to better management of heritage assets? • Identify and protect / enhance features of local importance? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment? • Consider the impact on setting in a manner proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected. • Promote heritage-led regeneration? • Lead to the repair and adaptive re-use of a heritage asset and encourage high quality design?
Protect, enhance and manage the distinctive character and appearance of landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve, better reveal the significance and enhance landscape assets? • Contribute to better management of landscape assets? • Identify and protect/enhance features of local importance? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the surrounding landscape? • Improve linkages to open space and the countryside? • Preserve and enhance the North Cheshire Green Belt?
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of occupants throughout their life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs? • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing? • Create sustainable communities with good access to a range of local services and facilities?
Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the FNP area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoid negative impacts to the quality and/ or extent of existing recreational assets, including formal and informal footpaths? • Contribute to reducing social isolation?
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more use of sustainable transport modes? • Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities? • Extend or improve active travel networks? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure improvements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce impacts on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities?

12. Next Steps

Subsequent stages for the SEA process

12.1 Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage in a six-stage SEA process:

- Screening (NPPG Stage A)
- Scoping (NPPG Stage B)
- Assess reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing preparation of the draft plan (NPPG Stage C)
- Assess the draft plan and prepare the Environmental Report with a view to informing consultation and plan finalisation (NPPG Stage D/E)
- Publish a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption in order to 'tell the story' of plan-making/SEA (and present 'measures decided concerning monitoring') (NPPG Stage F)

12.1.1 The next stage will involve establishing and appraising reasonable alternatives for the Plan. This will involve consideration of strategic issues such as the growth and distribution of housing, and site options. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back so that they can be considered when preparing the draft plan.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

12.1.2 Involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies. The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.

12.1.3 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, in particular the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues and the proposed SEA Framework.

12.1.4 Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to the below contacts;

Omar Ezzet,	AECOM	omar.ezzet@aecom.com
Gill Hesketh	Frodsham NP Group	frodshamplan@gmail.com

12.1.5 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

13. Glossary

Agricultural Land - Agricultural land is classified into five grades. Grade one is best quality and grade five is poorest quality. A number of consistent criteria are used for assessment which include climate (temperature, rainfall, aspect, exposure, frost risk), site (gradient, micro-relief, flood risk) and soil (depth, texture, stoniness).

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – This is a measure of deprivation in England, for every local authority and super output area seven domains of deprivation are measured: (Income, Employment, Health deprivation and Disability, Education Skills and Training, Barriers to Housing and Services, Crime the Living Environment). This allows all 32,482 SOAs to be ranked according to how deprived they are relative to each other. This information is then brought together into one overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004.

LNR – Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.

NNR - Many of the finest sites in England for wildlife and geology are National Nature Reserves (NNR). There are currently 224 across the country and almost all are accessible and provide great opportunities for people to experience nature.

Objective – A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends Option For the purposes of this guidance option is synonymous with 'alternative' in the SEA Directive Plan For the purposes of the SEA Directive this is used to refer to all of the documents to which this guidance applies, including Development Plan Documents. Supplementary Planning Documents are not part of the statutory Development Plan but are required to have a sustainability appraisal.

RAMSAR – Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Locally Important Geological Sites – LIGs are designated by locally developed criteria and are currently the most important designated sites for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected areas such as SSSIs.

SAC – Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. Article 3 of the Habitats Directive requires the establishment of a European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified in Annexes I and II of the Directive

Scheduled Monument - A 'nationally important' archaeological site or historic building, which is given protection against unauthorised change.

Scoping – The process of deciding the scope and level of detail of a Sustainability Appraisal.

Screening – The process of deciding whether a document requires a SA.

SEA Directive – European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

SEA Regulations – The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which transposed the SEA Directive into law).

SPA – Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.

SSSI – SSSIs are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites. They include some of our most spectacular and beautiful habitats - large wetlands teeming with waders and waterfowl, winding chalk rivers, gorse and heather-clad heathlands, flower-rich meadows, windswept shingle beaches and remote uplands moorland and peat bog.

Super Output Area (SOA) – SOAs are a new geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. Three layers of SOA have been devised: Lower Layer - Minimum population 1000; mean 1500. Built from groups of SOAs (typically 4 to 6) and constrained by the boundaries of the Standard Table (ST) wards used for 2001 Census outputs. Middle Layer - Minimum population 5000; mean 7200. Built from groups of Lower Layer SOAs and constrained by the 2003 local authority boundaries used for 2001 Census outputs. Upper Layer - To be determined; minimum size c.25, 000.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. In the UK, SEA is increasingly used to refer to an environmental assessment in compliance with the 'SEA Directive'

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – Generic term used to describe a form of assessment which considers the economic, social and environmental effects of an initiative. SA, as applied to Local Development Documents, incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Sustainability Issues – The full cross-section of sustainability issues, including social, environmental and economic factors.

Appendix A Site Assessment Framework

Context

Is the site:	Greenfield
Greenfield: land (farmland, or open space, that has not previously been developed)	Brownfield
Brownfield: Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated infrastructure.	Mixture
	Unknown
Biodiversity Considerations	Yes, Significant negative effects
Is the site within or adjacent to the following policy or environmental designations? What impact would development have on the site's habitats and biodiversity? :	Yes, Potential for negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Belt Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) National Park European nature site SSSI Impact Risk Zone Site of Importance for Nature Conservation Site of Geological Importance 	No/ Neutral effects
Climatic Factors	Yes, Significant overlap
Is the site within or adjacent to	Yes, partial overlap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood Zones 2 or 3 	No/ Neutral effects
Ecological value?	Yes
Could the site be home to protected species such as bats, great crested newts, badgers etc.?	Unknown
	No

Context

Landscape	High sensitivity
Is the site low, medium or high sensitivity in terms of landscape?	Medium sensitivity
Low sensitivity: site not visible or less visible, existing landscape is poor quality, existing features could be retained	Low sensitivity
Medium sensitivity: Development would have only moderate impact on landscape character	
High sensitivity: Development would significantly detract from the landscape and important features unlikely to be retained- mitigation not possible	
Agricultural Land	Significant loss
Loss of high quality agricultural land (Grades 1,2 or 3a)	Moderate loss
	No loss
Historic Environment	
Is the site within or adjacent to, or likely to have significant effects on, the setting of heritage assets, associated one or more of the following heritage designations or assets?	Yes; Potential for significant negative effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation area Scheduled monument Registered Park and Garden Registered Battlefield Listed building Known archaeology Locally listed building 	Yes; Potential for minor negative effects Limited or no impact or no requirement for mitigation
Health and Wellbeing	Poorly located
Is the site, in general terms, close/accessible to local amenities such as (but not limited to): Town centre/local centre/shop	Moderately located
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment location Public transport School(s) Open space/recreation/ leisure facilities Health facilities Cycle route(s) 	Favourably located
Where a site is poorly located if > 800m, moderately located if 400m to 800m, and favourably located < 400m from services.	

Context

Other key considerations

Yes

Are there any Tree preservation Orders on site?

Unknown

Public Right of Way

No

Existing social of community value

Appendix B Post Consultation modifications

The initial draft of the SEA scoping report was sent to the Statutory Consultees⁵⁰ and CWCC on the 3rd of August 2021. Following a 5 week consultation period, several representations/ comments were received. These are addressed in this revised scoping report. The revisions/ modifications are summarised in (Table B-1).

Table AB1 – Summary of consultation responses and revisions made.

Consultee responses	Response
<p>Natural England</p> <p>provided a formal response to the consultation requesting that:</p> <p>The impacts of air quality on biodiversity be included in the assessment and,</p> <p><i>‘the Strategic Environmental Assessment has not referred to the need for a HRA screening. Natural England advise that the HRA is carried out at an early stage along-side the SEA.’</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality is now scoped into the SEA • The impacts of air pollution on biodiversity now specifically mentioned in the SEA framework (Table 3-4 third bullet). • An HRA has been undertaken in parallel to the SEA. This is now discussed in paragraph 3.6.
<p>The Environment Agency</p> <p>Provided a formal response. It requested that:</p> <p>Effects to habitats and biodiversity of key water features, such as ponds, ditches and water courses be considered (e.g. the River Weaver) by adding a supporting question to Table 3-4 to address this.</p> <p>The response also highlighted the need for all new development to ensure 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) from c 2023.</p> <p>The EA suggested reference should be made to other flood related plan such as Flood Risk Management Plans (currently being updated), surface Water Management Plans. Adding that any sites allocated to development in flood risk zones 2 and 3 should be subject to the sequential test. And except test (where necessary). Flood risk assessments should use the up to date sources for flood risk tests. <i>‘If development not already allocated through the Local Plan is identified for location in flood zone 2 and/or</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional bullet added to Table 3-4 regarding ‘protection and improvement of key water features’ • BNG is discussed in chapter 3 and included in the supporting questions in Table 3.4 • Updated section 4.3 to include other flood risk management plan. • Added bullet (2) to the supporting questions in Table 4-7

⁵⁰ The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

3, then a requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to look in to updating the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment outputs that cover the Neighbourhood Plan area or individual site specific flood risk assessment(s) might be required.'

The EA suggested the inclusion of an additional supporting question in Table 4-7 to ensure flood risk from all sources is addressed.

Historic England	
<p>Provided a formal response. It pointed to advise notes HEAN3 and HEAN8 as these provide guidance for the assessment. The response goes on to highlight the importance of addressing the historic environment's significance, condition, sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change and likely effects o alternatives.</p> <p>HE noted that the Heritage at Risk register does not include Grade II listed buildings outside London requesting this be clarified in para. 5.7</p> <p>HE recommended that the Site Assessment Framework in Appendix A should fully acknowledge the setting of heritage assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEAN3 and HEAN8 are referenced in the Historic Environment chapter. The guidance and the response comments will be taken into consideration when appraising alternatives in the SEA environmental report. • Amended para. 5.7 to clarify this issue. • Historic environment section of the Site Assessment Framework has now been expanded to include explicit reference to effects on the setting of heritage assets.
CWCC	
<p>CWCC provided a detailed response which is summarised below</p> <p>Air quality should be scoped in.</p> <p>Relevant policies from the North West Marine Plan should be referred to in the report.</p> <p>HRA- to be mentioned in report clarifying that this is a separate process to SEA.</p> <p>Chapter 6 (Landscape) should mention the fact that the Sandstone ridge is being considered as a future AONB. Also Design Code to be referenced in this chapter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality has been scoped into the scope of the SEA • NWMP policies are now discussed in greater detail with reference made to the relevant policies. • This is now clarified in para. 3.6 • The proposal to designate the Sandstone Ridge as an AONB is now mentioned in para. 6.7 • Design Code is now discussed under para.6.3

Water resources –impacts of development on water resources should be scoped in.

Population and housing (Ch.8) – Clarification required as to what is meant by ‘responsive range of housing etc.’ in the SEA framework section (Table 8.5).

Ch.9 Health and Wellbeing, specifically Open Space should be scoped into the SEA.

Ch.10 Transportation to be scoped into the SEA.

- This and the EA response have been considered. Clarification as to why water resources has been scoped out is now included in further detail in chapter 7 under the scoping outcome section. The effects of the NP on quality of water bodies (in terms of biodiversity) is included in the SEA framework section for biodiversity (Ch.2).
- Table 8.5 amended to provide more clarity.
- The Health and Wellbeing topic (including Open Space) is now scoped into the SEA.
- Transportation is now scoped into the SEA

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