

Darnhall Parish

Neighbourhood Plan

The Way Forward – 2020 to 2030



**Submission version
June 2020**



Darnhall Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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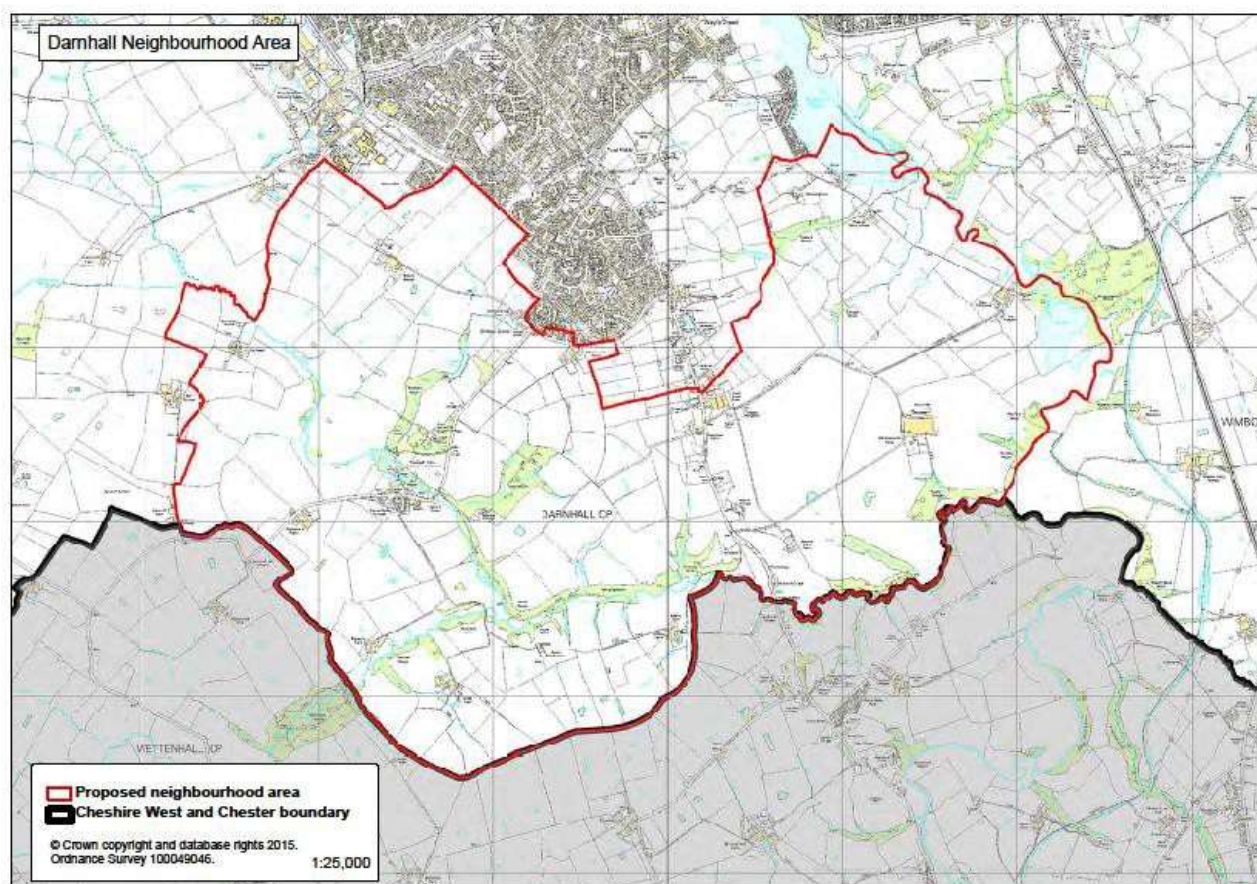
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1.0 Background and Area Overview

- 1.1** Neighbourhood Planning is a central government initiative introduced by the Localism Act (2011) and recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in 2019. The aim of the legislation is to empower local communities to shape new, appropriate and sustainable development in their area by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). The Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan (Part One) and have regard to national policy advice.
- 1.2** The current adopted Local Plans relevant to Darnhall are the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part 1) – Strategic Policies (adopted January 2015), and Local Plan (Part 2), Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (adopted July 2019). These plans set out the overall vision, strategic objectives, and planning policies for the Borough to 2030.
- 1.3** The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan is based on consultation with local residents together with evidence which has been collected from a number of national, regional and local sources. The key themes quickly became apparent and this Neighbourhood Plan puts into place a planning framework that provides further local clarity and guidance to regional and national planning legislation. Once adopted this Neighbourhood Plan will be a key policy document in planning strategy for the parish.
- 1.4** This document is a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in the Act. The Plan covers the period from 2020 to 31 March 2030. The area of the plan is co-terminus with the Darnhall Parish Boundary as shown in figure A. The neighbourhood area was designated on the 14th June 2016.

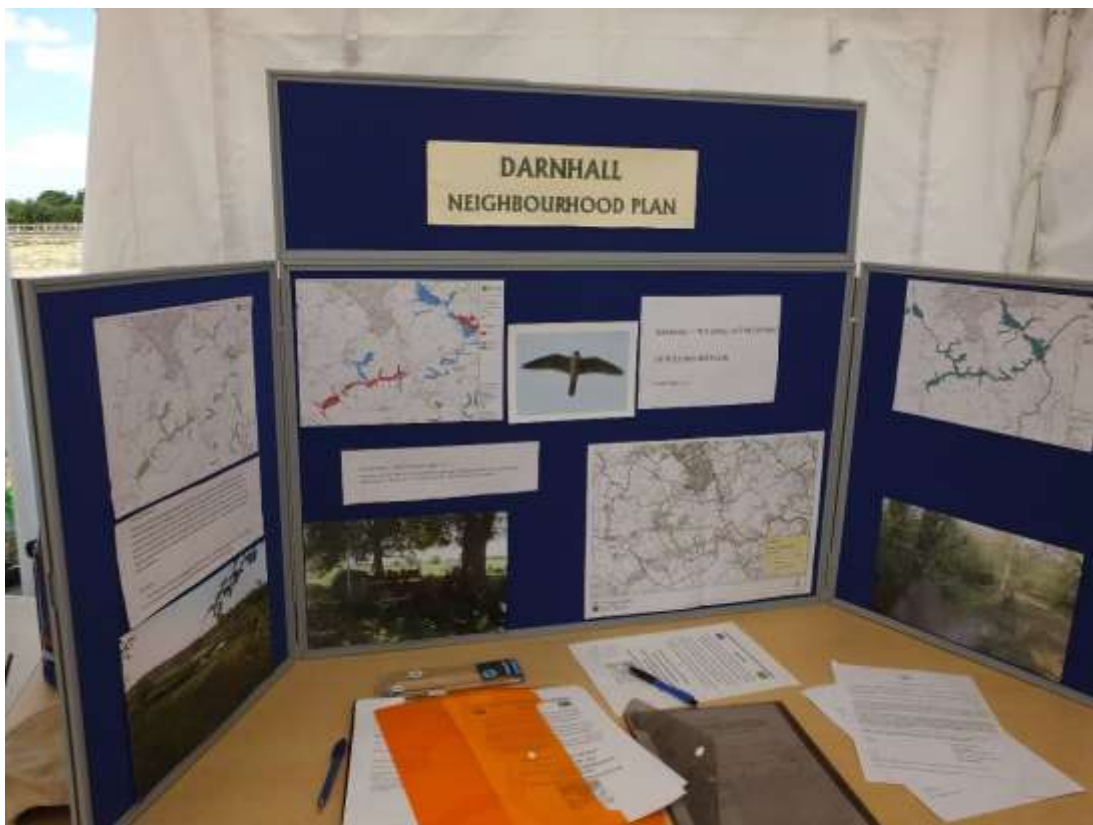
Figure A: Darnhall Neighbourhood Area



- 1.5** The Parish of Darnhall lies within the Unitary Authority area of Cheshire West and Chester. The Parish lies to the South and South West of the settlement boundary of the conurbation of Winsford and North of the Unitary Authority area boundary of Cheshire East. It occupies a section of the Cheshire Plain, the area is uniformly open land either laid to pasture for dairy farming, woodland or reserved as paddock for horses, interspersed with clusters of small residential properties including the hamlet of Darnhall. The area can be considered as possessing unique features including the Western aspect of the River Weaver Valley and Southern end of the Winsford Flashes including extensive areas of woodland.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1** The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for the community by the community. This document is the product of a programme of consultation and community events. Each stage of the project has evolved from the desires of the community, Steering Group and Parish Council. A comprehensive questionnaire survey, developed using feedback from early consultation events, was designed and delivered to all residences in the NPA. The questionnaire was also made available for completion online and via Darnhall Parish Council Website. Our Action Teams have then translated outcomes from all consultation work into a formal Planning Policy document and have checked their interpretation with the community on a regular basis.
- 2.2** Communication and consultation with the people of Darnhall and its immediate surroundings formed a major role in formulating this plan. This has been achieved through open meetings, public events at Darnhall Village hall, the Darnhall Show 2017 and 2018, the use of questionnaires, and the Darnhall Parish website.



3.0 Socio-economic Profile of Darnhall (2011 census)

- 3.1** Population of: 232
Number of homes: 92

The age profile of the usual resident population of Darnhall is in line with that of Cheshire West and Cheshire for the age groups 0 to 19 and 65+. Darnhall has a slightly lower proportion of age 20 to 39 (-6.5%) and a slightly higher proportion of age 40 to 64 (+5%) compared to CWaC. However, these differences are less significant due to the relatively low numbers in the Darnhall population.

4.0 Housing

- 4.1** 58% of residences in Darnhall are occupier owned, which is significantly lower than Cheshire West and Cheshire (71%) and lower than England & Wales (64%) averages. Rented/Leased properties with a private landlord make up 32% of properties, this is significantly higher than CWaC (11%) and England and Wales (15%) averages. This is due to a significant proportion of land and property in the parish being in the ownership of a single landlord, The Darnhall Estate. The proportion of social rented properties (3%) is much lower than CWaC (15%) and England & Wales (24%).

5.0 Employment and Commercial Activities

- 5.1** The predominant economic activity in the parish is dairy farming. The parish is also home to a range of other businesses including agricultural machinery and engineering supplies, metal fabrication, motor repairs and equestrian.
- 5.2** The proportions of the population aged 16 to 74 in full or part-time employment are in line with those of the surrounding areas. The rate of self-employment in Darnhall at 18% is double that of the CWaC average. The neighbourhood area has 11.6% of residents working from home which is a significantly higher than the CWaC average of 5.9%.
- 5.3** The proportion of residents driving or passengers in a motor vehicle to travel to work at 70% is in line with the CWaC average. The number of residents using public transport to travel to work is very low and therefore comparison with wider populations is less informative.

6.0 Community Facilities & Heritage Assets

- 6.1** Darnhall Village Hall provides the main meeting place and is the focus of much community and social activity within the Parish. Community consultation indicates that the village hall is a much valued asset and there is strong support for developing its facilities and use within the community. The village hall was built at the turn of the 20th Century and has recently undergone some major works to stabilise its foundations and replace the main hall floor, it is likely that more renovation work will be required in the future.
- 6.2** Weaver Methodist Chapel located on Swanlow Lane is the only place of worship within the Parish. Winsford Sailing Club located on Winsford Flash is a long established and well used facility.
- 6.3** The Neighbourhood Plan Area contains a number of designated heritage assets including farm buildings, Darnhall Mill and the stone construction Darnhall Bridge; together with many other non-designated heritage structures and sites (see Appendix 2).
- 6.4** Darnhall is home to one of the radio telescopes that make up the Jodrell Bank MERLIN (Multi-Element Radio Linked Interferometer Network) radio telescope array; linking six observing stations that together form a powerful telescope with an effective aperture of over 217 kilometres.



7.0 Landscape, Local Character and Environment

- 7.1** The tranquil rural Parish of Darnhall is exceptional for Cheshire in having large areas of interconnected woodlands. These, with the mudflats of the Flashes, form important wildlife sites, linking Ashbrook valley with its ancient clough woods and species rich sloping grassland.
- 7.2** Many of the fields still retain ponds known as marl pits, formed in the past when marl was dug out and spread in the fields to aid fertility. These ponds, along with ditches and water courses provide wildlife habitat and landscape diversity. Looking west from Darnhall there are views across to the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge and Beeston Crag and towards the east, glimpses of the Derbyshire hills.
- 7.3** The Flashes are three lakes along the course of the River Weaver. The lakes are called Top Flash, Middle Flash and Bottom Flash and they extend over some 200 acres (80 hectares), much of which lies within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Flashes were formed in the 19th Century by subsidence along the River Weaver valley caused by brine extraction. The Flashes provide a range of excellent habitats including open water, mud flats, scrub and woodland, providing habitat for rare birds, eels and fish.



8.0 History

- 8.1** From the time of the Conquest, the Norman earls of Chester had a manor and hunting lodge at Darnhall. There was an enclosed area where deer and wild boar could be hunted by the Earl and his guests. It was here that the last of the earls met his death in 1237 - poisoned by his wife. King Henry III and his son Edward I spent time at Darnhall.
- 8.2** In 1270, Darnhall was granted to Cistercians monks from Hereford who began to build an abbey here in 1274. However, the land was not suitable for the grand scale of building envisaged, and the locals were not cooperative, so five years later the monks left Darnhall to establish Vale Royal Abbey a few miles to the north. Darnhall then remained a satellite settlement and farm of Vale Royal between 1270 and 1535. It fell into private ownership with the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538.
- 8.3** Darnhall Hall, built on the site of the earlier monastery, became the family seat of Sir Rowland Hill; subsequently of the Corbetts, Lees and Verdin families. Thus, for nearly 750 years the people of Darnhall were tenants, first of the feudal Vale Royal abbots, and then of the various families who occupied the hall. Darnhall Hall was for a time the home of Charles Lee who was a British army officer who later became an American general at the time of the American War of Independence. A large proportion of the land in Darnhall today is the property of Darnhall Estates Ltd.



- 8.4** Darnhall Mill and its Mill Pool are first mentioned in the 1230s. In 1586, there is mention of the mill having two water wheels and there can be little doubt that this mill was a substantial building and larger than most corn mills in the county until it stopped working in 1975.



- 8.5** As a distinct area Weaver, a civil parish since 1866, became incorporated into Darnhall parish in 1892. Weaver is historically an interesting place having two separate entries in the Domesday Book (1086). It became one of the homes of one of Cheshire's most powerful families - the Stanleys who resided in the former Weaver Hall. The present hall is a 17th century building with a Grade II listing.

9.0 Basic Conditions

- 9.1** The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan must:
- a) have appropriate regard to national planning policy;
 - b) contribute to sustainable development;
 - c) be in general conformity with strategic policies in the Local Plan; and
 - d) be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

10.0 Vision for Darnhall

The local character of the area will be preserved as open rural countryside maintained through active farming. Its community facilities and open spaces will benefit people in both our own and neighbouring areas. The environment and wildlife will be conserved and it will be a place where local people can safely live, work, play and enjoy a high quality of life.

11.0 Objectives

- 11.1 **Objective One - To enhance and protect the countryside and natural environment of Darnhall Parish.**

Darnhall is an area of open countryside and agricultural land. The Parish contains ancient woodland and field boundaries which are connected to its social and economic farming history. The community wishes to preserve these historic hedgerows and ancient woodlands. The Parish has darker skies than in towns and cities.

- 11.2 **Objective Two - To ensure that previously developed site opportunities are encouraged for residential, commercial and agricultural development.**

Darnhall is an area of open countryside and agricultural land. Re-use of previously developed land and any brownfield sites for residential, commercial and agricultural use will be encouraged as such use would be beneficial to prevent loss of green fields.

- 11.3 **Objective Three - To encourage rural and agricultural development, enterprise, outdoor pursuits and recreation that respects the rural character of Darnhall Parish and supports the welfare of the community.**

The community have expressed support for developing the agricultural economy through proportionate diversification activities and improving community access to the countryside to support wellbeing and leisure.

- 11.4 **Objective Four - To conserve and enhance community assets and make them more accessible.**

Darnhall Parish contains a variety of heritage assets, community and recreational facilities which the community wish to safeguard.

- 11.5 **Objective Five - To promote safe access for non-vehicle users to all parts of the Parish.**

The community have expressed concern about connectivity within the parish and with nearby facilities in Winsford by safe pedestrian and cycle routes.

- 11.6 **Objective Six - To deliver improvements to local transport and communications that improve the experience of living in and visiting Darnhall.**

The community wish to see improvements in telecommunications, along with safer roads.

12.0 Neighbourhood Planning Policies

13.0 Countryside and Environment Policies

13.1 The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- To enhance and protect the countryside and natural environment of Darnhall Parish.

Policy CE1 – Biodiversity

Development will be supported where there is a net gain of biodiversity resources. The habitats and the wildlife corridor network shown on Figures B and C, along with the ancient woodlands and local wildlife sites shown on Figures C and D, shall be protected from new development unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the impact it is assessed to have on the site and the wider network of sites.

New developments shall demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity using appropriate evaluation methods and avoidance/ mitigation strategies. Compensatory measures (for example biodiversity offsetting) will be required where a net loss of biodiversity is demonstrated.

Policy CE2 - Natural Habitats

Proposals to protect and enhance all natural habitats will be supported. New developments must seek to provide for greater integration between existing wildlife corridors (Figure C) and where possible should contribute to the creation of new or improved links.

Policy CE3 – Hedgerows, Trees, and Watercourses

Any development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of an important natural feature, including trees and hedgerows and watercourses will not normally be permitted. Where it is demonstrated that integration of these features into the development is not possible and the assets would be lost, developments may be permitted in line with the requirements of Local Plan (Part Two) policy DM45. The retention of trees, hedgerows and other natural features in situ will always be preferable. Where the loss of such features is unavoidable, replacement provision must be of an equivalent or a greater amount to that which is lost. New tree planting will be supported within new developments, and throughout the Parish in line with The Mersey Forest Plan.

Policy CE4 - Dark Skies

The principal of dark skies is supported to minimise the impact on wildlife, ecology and local amenity. Whilst ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over street lights. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare. Where there is an overriding functional need for outdoor lighting installations, development will only be supported where applicants demonstrate measures proposed to support dark skies principles.

Policy CE5 – Landscape Character

In order to protect the identity of Darnhall Parish within its open countryside and farmland setting, new development must, where appropriate, respect and enhance the landscape character of the area, as defined in the Cheshire West and Chester Landscape Strategy 2016 or any updated versions. Having regard to the criteria of Policy RCLE6, future developments should respond positively to the local landscape character. Development will not be supported if it causes significant harm to the character of the rural setting of the parish.

Development should, where appropriate and viable –

- a) Conserve the low density, scattered settlement pattern that results in a quiet, tranquil landscape.
- b) Seek to ensure that new farm buildings do not threaten the settings of the older farmsteads, particularly the pre-Victorian and distinctive timber framed ‘black and white’ farmsteads.
- c) Ensure conversion of farm buildings is sensitive to the vernacular style, ensuring that features which accompany the conversion such as driveways and gardens do not ‘suburbanise’ the landscape.
- d) Ensure riding schools, stables and equestrian development does not accumulate to detract from the rural character of the area – with the sensitive integration of fencing, tracks, jumps and ancillary buildings.
- e) Maintain the rural character of the narrow, unmarked lanes – resist improvements such as additions of kerbs and lighting that would erode the rural character of the landscape.
- f) Protect the valley ‘crests’ from large scale built development that would detract from the ‘intimate’, hidden character of the Upper Weaver and Ash Brook valleys.
- g) Conserve and maintain the mill that is typical of tributaries of the Weaver and provides an indication of the former use of the river.

In particular, the visual prominence of the Sandstone Ridge looking west, Jodrell Bank and the Derbyshire Hills looking east should be protected. Other notable vistas include the tree lined avenue of Hall Lane and views from the Darnhall Plain towards the prominence of St John the Evangelist’s Church at Over. New development should seek to maintain or reinforce these views.

Policy CE6 – Surface Water Management

New development should be designed to manage surface water at source to minimise runoff. The preference is for genuine, above ground sustainable drainage features which provides linkage with policies CE1, CE2 and CE3.

The approach to surface water drainage should be considered in liaison with the Local Planning Authority, LLFA, the public sewerage undertaker and where appropriate the Environment Agency'. Surface water should be discharged in the following order of priority:

- An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.
- An attenuated discharge to surface water body.
- An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer, highway drain or another drainage system.
- An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.

Applicants wishing to discharge to public sewer will need to submit clear evidence demonstrating why alternative options are not available as part of the determination of their application.

Justification and evidence

- 13.2** The tranquil rural Parish of Darnhall is exceptional for Cheshire in having large areas of interconnected woodlands. These, with the mudflats of the Flashes, form important wildlife sites, linking Ashbrook valley to its ancient clough woods and species rich sloping grassland.
- 13.3** Many of the fields still retain ponds known as marl pits, formed in the past when marl was dug out and spread in the fields to aid fertility. These ponds, along with ditches and water courses provide wildlife habitat and landscape diversity. Looking west from Darnhall there are views across to the Sandstone Ridge at Beeston and towards the east glimpses of the Derbyshire hills.

- 13.4** Figure E shows the extent of ancient woodland, usually following water courses. The Cheshire Wildlife Survey shows the biodiversity of these areas as outstanding (classified as high distinctiveness) compared with other areas surveyed on the Cheshire Plain. Rare and endangered species were noted throughout these woodlands.
- 13.5** The Flashes (areas of flooded salt mine subsidence) were also noted to provide a range of excellent habitats including open water, mud flats, scrub and woodland, providing habitat for rare birds, eels and fish. Weaver Dairy House Farm Nature Reserve, situated adjacent to The Flashes, is working to enhance the biodiversity of this area. The reserve is hoping to encourage ground nesting lapwings which were common in Darnhall 30 years ago. The wildflower meadows in this area and the Ashbrook valley have been designated as sites of special scientific interest.
- 13.6** Many of the fields in Darnhall, such as the area around Beech House, have numerous marl pits and are close to wildlife corridors. These support species such as small mammals and amphibians.
- 13.7** It should be noted that the Cheshire Wildlife survey identified threats to Darnhall's valuable areas of mixed habitats. Sensitive areas should be protected from trample damage caused by increased activity such as dog walkers. This particularly applies to the Nature Reserve at Weaver Dairy House Farm. Light pollution affects foraging corridors and leads to reduction in bat numbers and species.
- 13.8** The Cheshire Wildlife Trust report on Darnhall states that:
- 'where development is allowed there should be no net loss of biodiversity'
 - Ecological networks should be established
 - The Flashes, the historic woodlands and the marl pits are of particular importance
 - The ancient woodland in Darnhall is highly likely to support roosts of UK priority bat species which will forage for insect prey along the woodland edge and watercourses and along any intact hedgerows
 - Light pollution interferes with bat foraging corridors
 - Any development should include bat boxes, 'bird bricks' and hedgehog fencing.

- 13.9** The mix of woodlands, fields, ponds, flashes and marshes in the Neighbourhood Plan area provide a cooling effect. This helps to mitigate the effects of climate change affecting the parish and the neighbouring urban area of Winsford.
- 13.10** The rural setting of Darnhall Parish within the landscape is important to the local community. The landscape is very rural, with large areas of interconnected woodlands, marl pits and Flashes. The landscape is characterised by the contrast of the open flat Cheshire plain with the Ash Brook valley; a narrow, steep and wooded valley containing tributaries of the River Weaver.
- 13.11** On a national level Darnhall lies within National Character area 61 Shropshire Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain, a pastoral area of rolling plain which is particularly important for dairy farming. More locally the Cheshire West and Chester Landscape Strategy 2016 which identified recognisable patterns in the landscape and classified 16 Landscape Character Types. Different aspects such as geology, landform, soils, vegetation and land use were used to identify character areas. The assessment is intended to be used as a basis for informing the development control process, informing new policies on landscape, and promoting public awareness of landscape character and the importance of conservation and enhancement of the landscape. The strategy highlighted the key characteristics of each character area, along with landscape management and built development guidelines.
- 13.12** There are three character areas applicable to Darnhall Parish (See Appendix 9 for Maps). The majority of the parish falls under LCA10a, the Darnhall Plain. The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to conserve the pastoral character and local built vernacular of the landscape, and enhance the condition of the hedgerow and tree network. Key characteristics include:
- Flat plain-like topography resulting from the uniform characteristics of the underlying Eldersfield Mudstone bedrock
 - The surface mantle of glacial till (boulder clay) gives rise to seasonally waterlogged soils that are suited to dairying on short term and permanent grassland, interspersed with some arable fields
 - Variety of field sizes – from small ancient irregular shaped fields near the Weaver Valley to fields enlarged in the 20th century around Weaverwood Farm

- Fields are bounded by an intact network of low thorn hedgerows with relatively few hedgerow trees. Ditches are also present along field boundaries
- The area is drained by a small number of brooks that drain into the Upper Weaver e.g. Ash Brook
- Field ponds, formed when pits were dug to extract marl for improving fields, are a common feature of the plain
- Recreational use of the landscape is limited to a few public rights of way that follow tracks and field boundaries across the farmland
- Low density of settlement – the settlement pattern is defined by scattered red brick farmsteads with large red brick dairy barns (with round windows) and some farmsteads in the distinctive timber framed 'black and white' style
- The road network includes narrow, rural unmarked lanes linking farmsteads and a busy section of the B 5074 linking Winsford with Crewe & Nantwich
- Long range views across the open, flat landscape with trees and farmsteads forming the skyline
- The church spire of St John the Evangelist's Church at Over is a feature visible across the plain.

13.13 Also falling within the parish is LCA15d, Ash Brook Valley. The Ash Brook Valley is a narrow, steep and wooded valley containing tributaries of the River Weaver. It includes Ash Brook between Darnhall and its confluence with the Weaver, and Wettenhall Brook between Wettenhall Wood and its confluence with Ash Brook. The boundaries of the valley are defined predominantly by landform with the top of the slopes meeting the adjacent Cheshire Plain East. The overall management objective for this landscape should be to conserve and enhance the ancient woodlands, unimproved grassland and wetland habitats of this tributary valley. Key characteristics include:-

- Steep, wooded valley containing the Ash Brook and Wettenhall Brook, tributaries of the River Weaver
- The steep valley sides support distinctive clough woodland, much of which is ancient seminatural woodland of oak, ash hazel and elm – the main east-west valley includes Wettenhall and Darnhall Woods, both SSSI
- A narrow band of alluvium on the valley floor gives rise to waterlogged soils that support some unimproved species rich grassland

- The majority of the valley is inaccessible to the public, although a public footpath crosses the valley at Brookside Wood
- Views are typically restricted to within the valley, for example there are views across the valley from either side, and from the valley floor to the valley sides. The top of the valley side forms a skyline
- Generally a quiet, tranquil landscape with a low settlement density
- Mills and stone bridges are a feature e.g. Darnhall Mill and Darnhall Bridge
- Darnhall radio telescope dish is a feature in the local landscape at the top of the valley to the south

13.14 LCA15a, Upper Weaver Valley is also applicable to Darnhall Parish. This is a relatively shallow valley containing the upper reaches of the River Weaver. The boundaries of the valley are defined predominantly by landform with the top of the slopes meeting the adjacent landscapes types of the Undulating Enclosed Farmland and Cheshire Plain East. The overall management objective for this landscape should be to conserve the ancient clough woodlands, unimproved grassland and wetland habitats of the Weaver Valley, seeking to extend and enhance these features where possible, and to restore the traditional field systems. Key characteristics include:-

- Relatively shallow valley containing the natural meandering course of upper reaches of the River Weaver
- Large flashes (formed by subsidence as a result of brine pumping) occupy the valley floor upstream of Winsford
- Steeper valley sides and series of steep sided tributary valleys support distinctive clough woodland, much of which is ancient e.g. Wimboldsley Wood SSSI
- Less steep valley sides support small/medium scale arable and pastoral fields, bounded by low gappy hedgerows
- Alluvium on the valley floor gives rise to waterlogged soils which generally support permanent pasture including unimproved and semi-improved species rich grassland
- The majority of the valley is inaccessible to the public, although there is some access on the edges of Winsford
- Views are typically restricted to within the valley, for example there are views across the valley from either side, and from floodplains to the valley sides. The top of the valley side forms a skyline
- Generally a quiet, tranquil landscape with a low settlement density

- 13.15** The Upper Weaver Valley is also an Area of Special County Value. ASCVs were initially identified through the former Cheshire County Council Structure Plan process in the 1970's for their landscape characteristics and features, scenic quality and the individual or combined presence of features of built heritage, archaeological, recreational and wildlife importance. The 2016 Local Landscape Designation Review concluded that the former county-wide ASCV designation remained appropriate as the areas are demonstrably special in their landscape character and scenic value, and they should be preserved and enhanced.
- 13.16** The Mersey Forest Plan details that in the Weaver Valley the wooded nature should be extended by planting on the valley shoulders, sides and, where appropriate, floor, buffering and connecting ancient woodland. In the Darnhall Plain (10a LCA), occasional woodlands should be created, buffering ancient semi-natural woodland. Tree planting should help to screen views of large-scale industry, and screen the visually intrusive urban area from the surrounding landscapes, whilst not obstructing long distance views of the Sandstone Ridge and Peak District.
- 13.17** United Utilities stressed the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan including a surface water management policy to highlight the challenge of managing the consequences of climate change, which include the increase in heavy rainfall events and therefore the need for new development to wholly embrace the most sustainable form of surface water drainage and the need to encourage the use of sustainable drainage systems.
- 13.18** The following documents and strategies support policies CE1 – CE6
- a. The Landscape Character Assessment of Cheshire West.
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/total-environment/landscape-character-assessment.aspx>
 - b. The life ECO net project, a project undertaken by Cheshire County Council and the life-environment programme of the European Union between 1999 and 2003. <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=cheshire+econet+project&ie=&oe=>
 - c. The report from Cheshire Wildlife Trust in November 2017 (see <https://www.darnhallparish.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html>)
 - d. The Mersey Forest Plan <https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/about/plan/>
 - e. Public Health England, Spatial Planning for Health 2018
-

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729727/spatial_planning_for_health.pdf

f. CWaC Ecological Network for Cheshire West and Chester

http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/sub/parttwosub

g. Local Landscape Designations: - Areas Of Special County Value In Cheshire West And Chester

http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/sub/parttwosub

h. CWaC Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy

http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/sub/parttwosub

i. CWaC Landscape Strategy

http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/sub/parttwosub

13.19 Future development within Darnhall should therefore respect the natural environment. The most intact landscapes, in terms of biodiversity, landform and historic/cultural associations should be valued highly when planning decisions are made. Protection and enhancement of Darnhall's natural assets is of crucial importance for nature conservation and ecosystem services; it is also important for the enjoyment of future generations.

Community Feedback

13.20 Consultations on the emerging NP highlighted the following issues in relation to Countryside and Environment:

- There should be no detrimental impact to wildlife and the environment where development is allowed.
- Wildlife corridors are valued and should be protected.
- Trees and hedges should be protected.
- Light pollution should be prevented where possible to reduce impact on wildlife and the environment.

Figure B: Areas of Habitat Distinctiveness

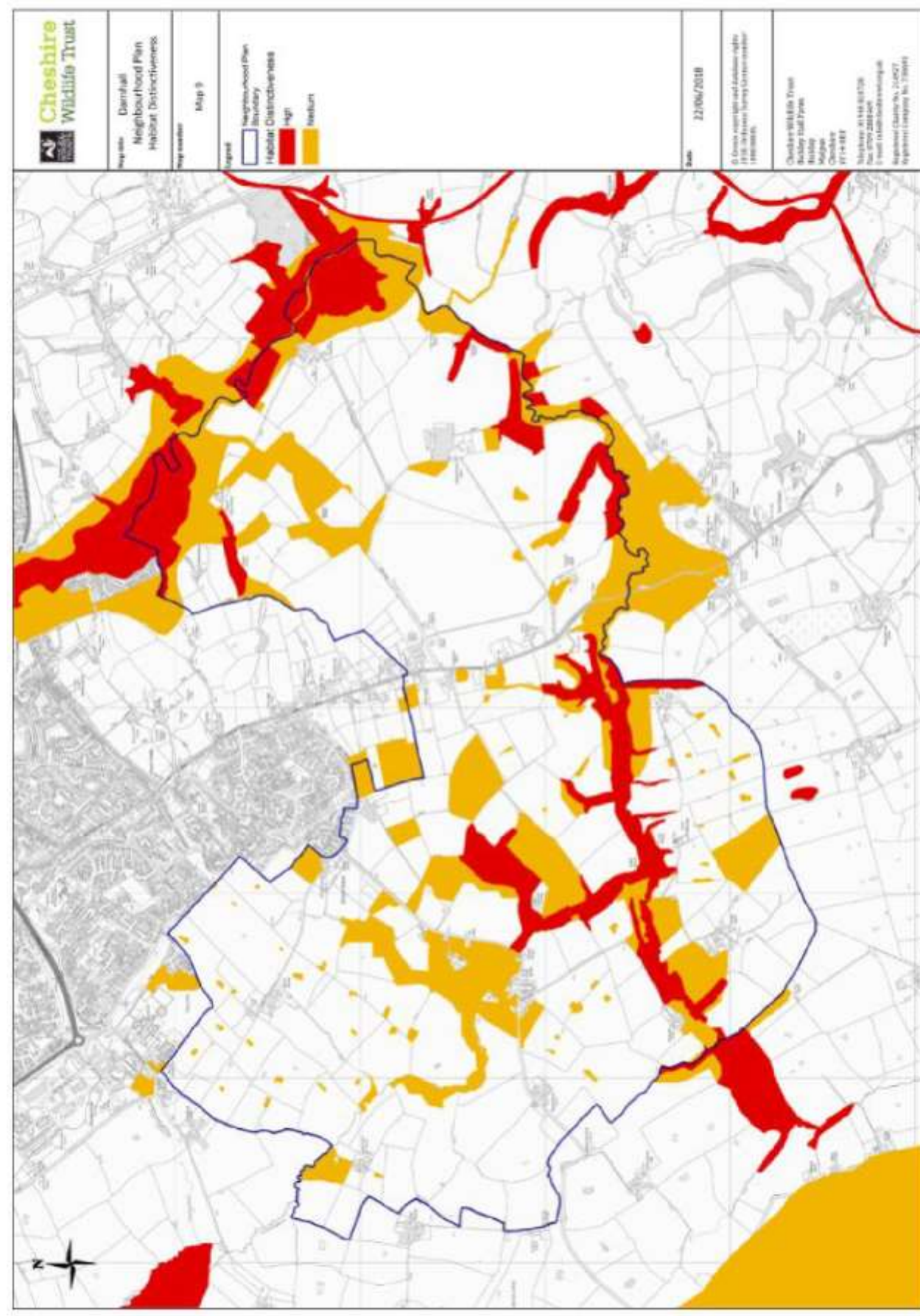


Figure C: Indicative Wildlife Corridors

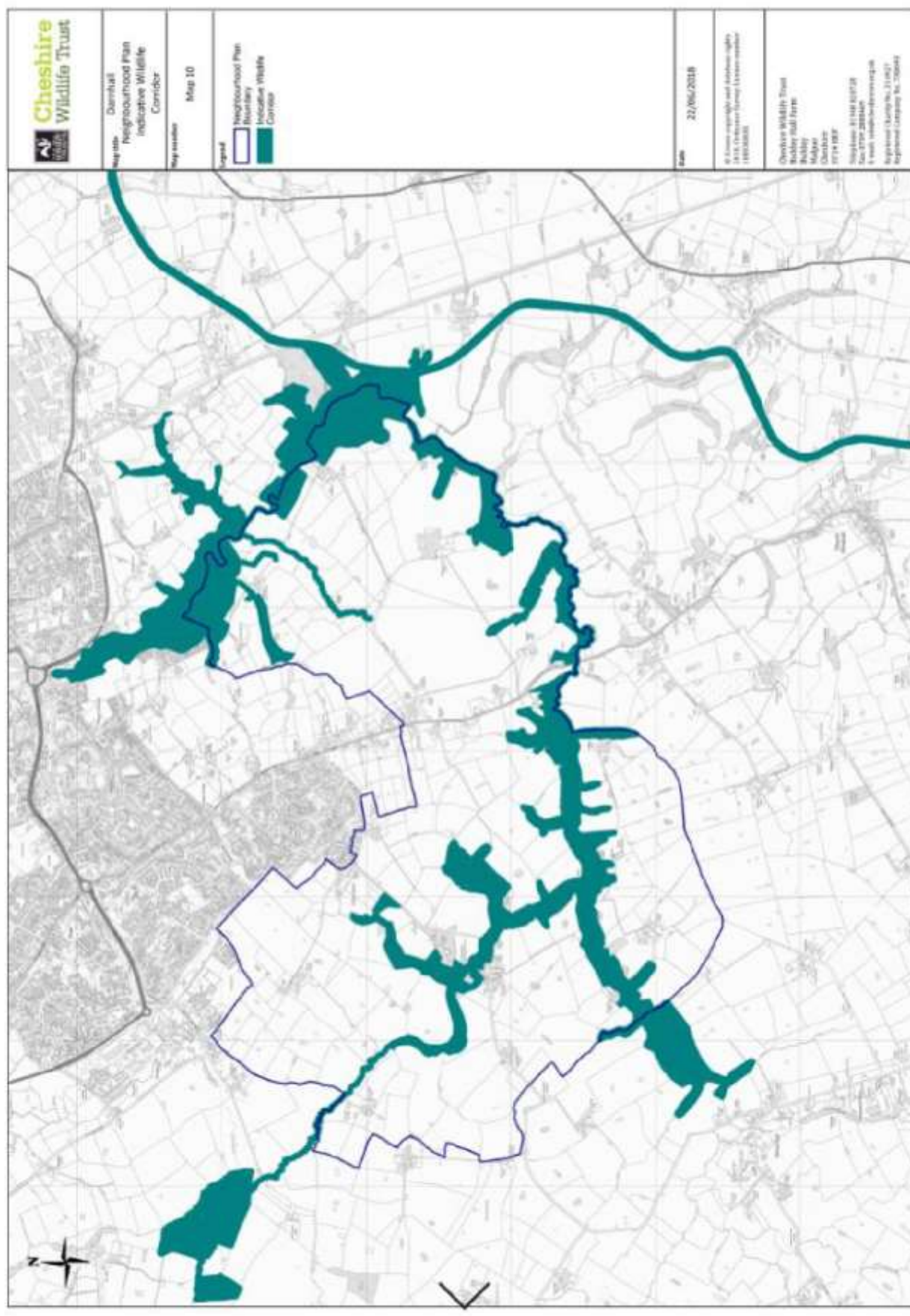


Figure D: Nature Conservation Sites

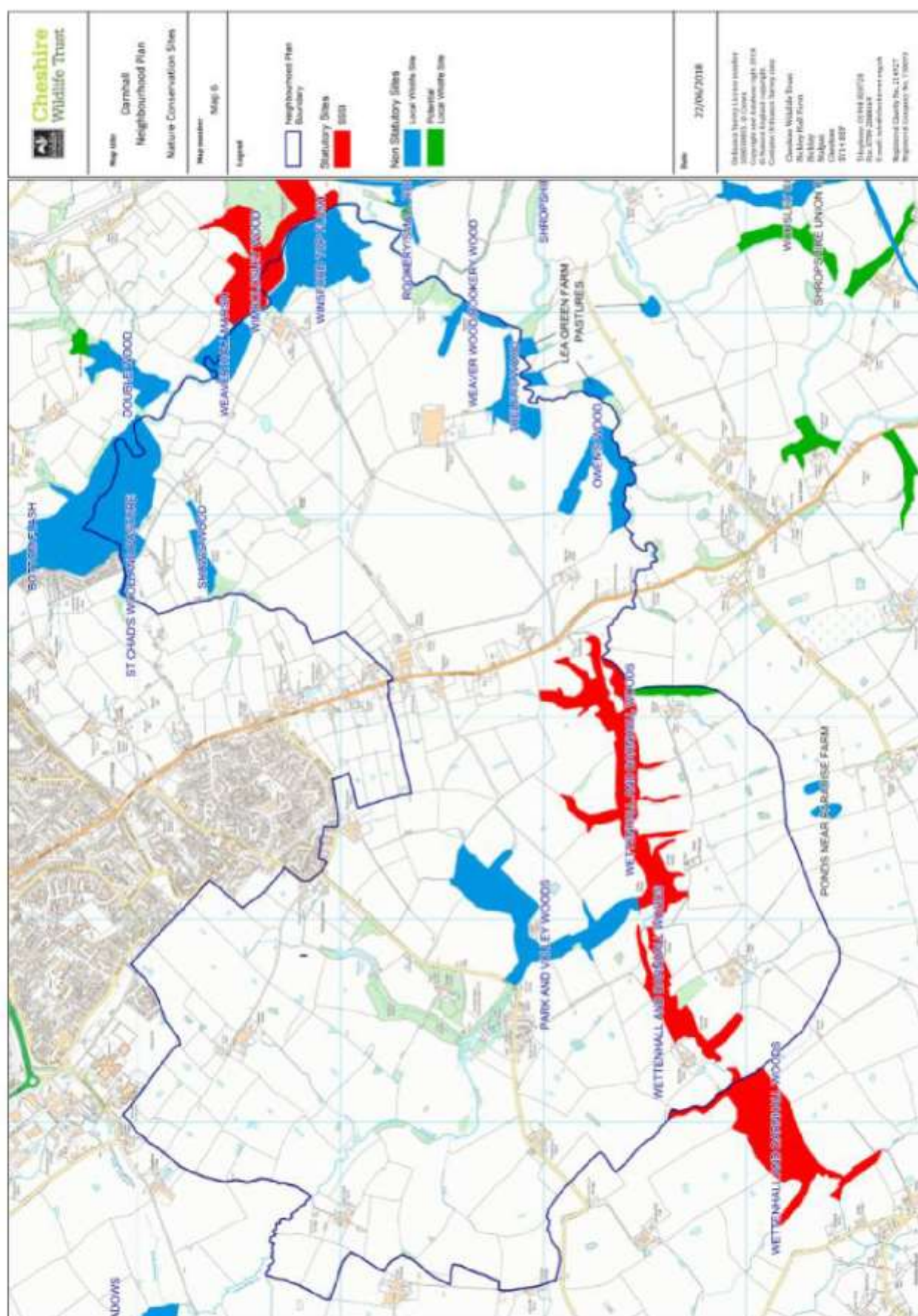
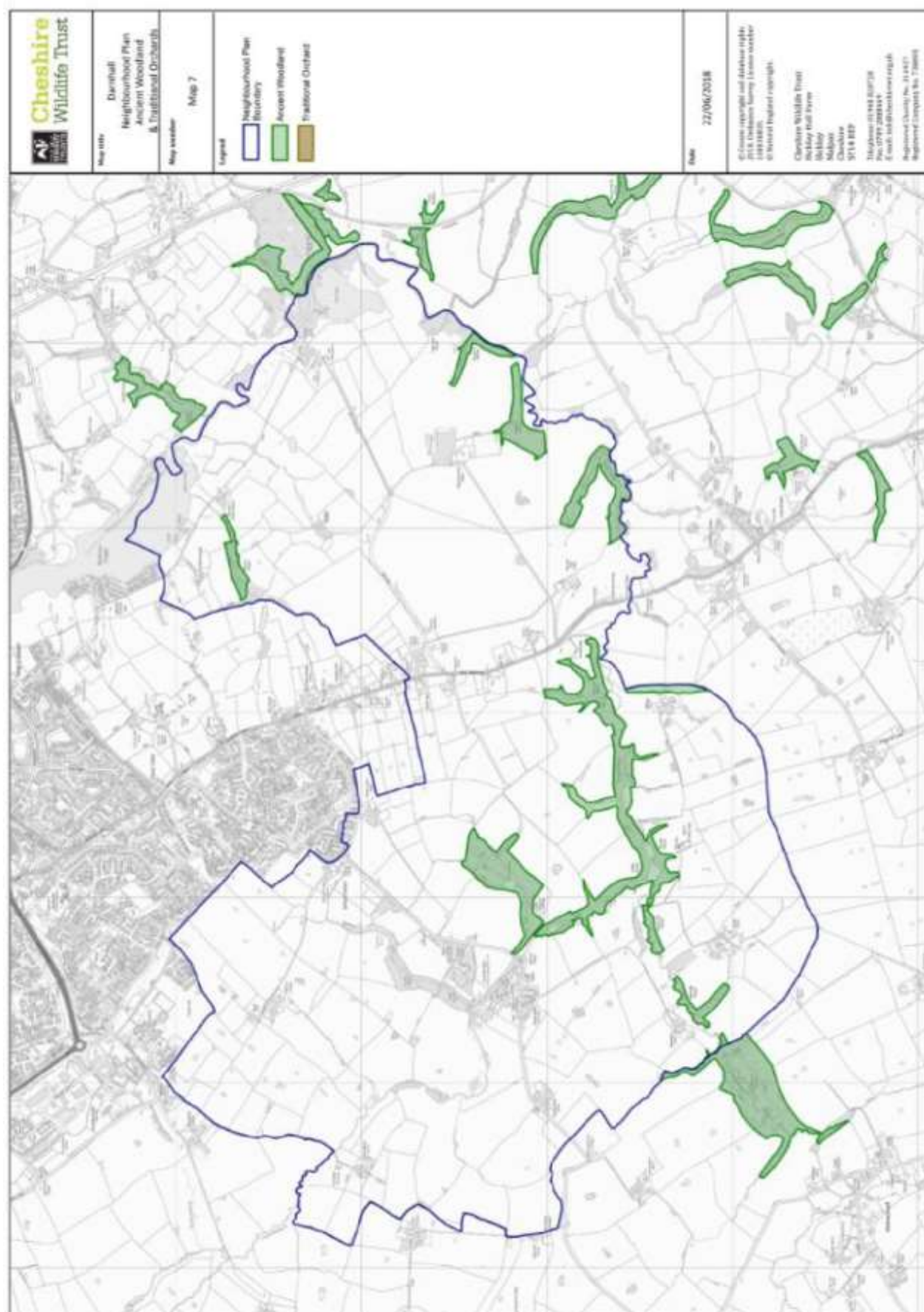


Figure E: Ancient Woodland



14.0 Residential, Commercial and Local Economy Policies

14.1 The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- To ensure that previously developed site opportunities are encouraged for residential, commercial and agricultural development.

Policy RCLE 1 – Rural Economy

Subject to respecting the Parish of Darnhall's built and landscape character, and environmental, traffic, parking and residential impacts being acceptable, the following will be supported –

- a. Proposals which support the rural economy and agriculture, horticulture, forestry and equestrian enterprises where they contribute positively to the environment and do not cause unacceptable visual or landscape harm
- b. Proposals that promote or provide facilities for home working, and businesses working from home
- c. The re-use of existing rural buildings, for business and enterprise, where buildings are of permanent construction and can be reused without major reconstruction
- d. The diversification of farms and rural businesses where development is sympathetic to their distinctive character, materials and form
- e. Replacement buildings
- f. The expansion of existing buildings to facilitate the growth of established businesses, proportionate to the nature and scale of the site and its setting.

Policy RCLE 2 - Loss of Employment Sites

Loss of existing local employment sites (Figure F) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable and the premises /site/ business has been actively marketed for at least 12 months at an appropriate market price.

Policy RCLE 3 – Commercial Development Scale, Design and Amenity

All new employment development must be of a high quality of design which:

- i. Is in keeping with the size, height, scale, mass, materials, layout, access and density of existing adjoining business development;
- ii. Demonstrates that the amenities of neighbouring dwellings will not be adversely affected through overlooking, loss of light, over-dominance or general disturbance;
- iii. Provides an appropriate level of landscaping which complements and enhances the rural character of the local area and;
- iv. Provides adequate parking to the requirements set out in Cheshire West and Chester's parking standards Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy RCLE 4 – Housing Development

All residential development must accord with the Local Plan (Part One) STRAT1, STRAT 9 and ENV5.

Acceptable types of new housing development include:

- Re-use of existing rural buildings which are of permanent construction and can be reused without major construction that would lead to an enhancement of the immediate area and are in accordance with STRAT9
- Redevelopment of brownfield sites subject to the criteria listed in policies DM1, DM19 and DM22 of the Local Plan (Part Two)
- Where fully justified and assessed, a minimal level of enabling development consistent with ensuring an historic building's future in an appropriate viable use, in accordance with ENV5.

Policy RCLE 5 - Design

To ensure that buildings, characteristic features and materials are representative of the settlement character of Darnhall parish, new development will be encouraged, where appropriate and viable, to:

- a) Complement and enhance the size, height, scale, mass, rural skyline, materials, layout, access and density of existing development in the area
- b) Use local materials and incorporate features to maintain the local vernacular and enhanced sense of place, as detailed in Appendix 4 (Parish Building Design features). This includes
 - brick, both standard stretcher and Flemish bonds, generally rustic reds using either grey or red mortar
 - banded or decorative brickwork immediately below rooflines
 - stone or arched brick lintels
 - small terracotta roof tiles or slate with pitched, open gables or Jerkinhead roofs

- gabled dormer windows
- gable end walls with timber and render finishes in lieu of brickwork, with painted vertical uprights and white rendered infills.

c) Demonstrate that development does not result in a significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings through overlooking, loss of light or over-dominance

d) Provide an appropriate level of landscaping which compliments and enhances the rural character of the area

e) Provide garden space commensurate to the size of the proposed dwelling and the prevailing pattern of development in the locality

f) Provide boundary treatments which reflect the local character, including hedgerows, Cheshire railings, walls and structured banks

g) When adjoining open countryside, provide a sympathetic transition between the rural and village landscapes, through appropriate landscape design and boundary treatments.

h) Incorporate SUDS which avoids all non-permeable surfaces and minimises run-off by managing surface water at source. Every option within the surface water hierarchy should be investigated before discharging to the public sewer network.

Policy RCLE 6 – Renewable Energy Installations

Wind Turbines

There are areas of the Neighbourhood Plan Area that are of high landscape sensitivity and would not be appropriate for wind turbine development (see map Appendix 7).

In all cases proposals for wind turbine installations will be subject to an assessment of their impact on landscape character, residential amenity, and local infrastructure in accordance with the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, Cheshire West and Chester Council Landscape Sensitivity Study and Guidance on Wind and Solar Photovoltaic Developments and Environment Agency guidance. In Particular, consideration must be given to the impact on the Merlin Network Radio Telescope and the preservation of the local landscape character and sensitivity in the Neighbourhood Plan area to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the network of fields, hedges, woods and ponds and views across the Darnhall Plain to the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge and Beeston Castle.

Solar Generation Installations

Small domestic or agricultural solar panels will be supported, especially where they are mounted on buildings. Any negative visual impact should, where possible, be mitigated through siting, layout and design where necessary to include tree and hedge planting.

Ground mounted solar energy developments will only be supported where they accord with policy DM52 of the Local Plan (Part Two). In particular, consideration must be given to the preservation of the local landscape character and sensitivity of the NP area, to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the network of fields, hedges, woods and ponds and views across the Darnhall Plain to the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge and Beeston Castle.

Justification and evidence

- 14.2** The Neighbourhood Plan sets out to preserve the nature and character of the parish as a rural area with a strong agricultural economy yet offering the community opportunity for business diversification and expansion.
- 14.3** The predominant economic activity in the Neighbourhood Plan area is dairy farming. The parish is also home to a range of other businesses including agricultural machinery and engineering supplies, metal fabrication, motor repairs and equestrian.
- 14.4** The Neighbourhood Plan will support the expansion of small businesses and enterprises as well as rural tourism and local facilities that will benefit the local economy and the wider community, whilst respecting the rural character of the area.
- 14.5** The Cheshire West and Cheshire Local Plan (Part One) classifies the Neighbourhood Plan Area as countryside. The guidance on development in these locations is set out in STRAT 9 of the Local Plan (Part One). This states the following:

“Within the countryside the following types of development will be permitted:

- *Development that has an operational need for a countryside location such as for agricultural or forestry operations*
- *Replacement buildings*
- *Small scale and low impact/ farm diversification schemes appropriate to the site, location and setting of the area*
- *The reuse of existing rural buildings, particularly for economic purposes, where buildings are of permanent construction and can be reused without major reconstruction*
- *The expansion of existing buildings to facilitate the growth of established businesses proportionate to the scale of the site and its setting”*

- 14.6** Development that requires a rural location, in accordance with the Local Plan (Part 1) Strat 9 and Local Plan (Part 2) DM19 will therefore be supported. Brownfield sites will be encouraged where the proposed development is sustainable (that it contributes to social well-being and the local economy) and does not cause harm to the wider landscape and setting of Darnhall. As the area is designated as countryside and is largely made up of agricultural land, the re-use of previously used brownfield sites would make beneficial use of such land and help to prevent loss of green fields.

- 14.7** New dwellings in the countryside, outside of identified settlements, that do not fall

within one of the exceptions listed in policy DM19, are not generally supported. New dwellings would create isolated development in unsustainable locations, and increases reliance on the use of private vehicles to access facilities and services. Housing in the rural area should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities(iii) and in sustainable locations as identified in Local Plan (Part One) policy STRAT 8 and Local Plan (Part Two) policy R 1.'

14.8 All of the southern and central area of Darnhall is a Ministry of Defence no fly zone where wind turbine installation is not permitted. In addition areas of landscape within the Neighbourhood Plan area have strong inter-visibility and wider views which make installation of wind turbines inappropriate. Similar considerations apply to larger solar installations.

14.9 Merlin stands for the Multi-Element Radio-Linked Interferometer Network, Jodrell Banks array of six observing stations that together form a powerful telescope with an effective aperture of over 217 kilometres. The base telescope is either the Lovell Telescope or the Mark II at Jodrell Bank. Then there are a cluster of two telescopes in the immediately surrounding countryside, both of which are 25 metre dishes. One of these is sited at Darnhall.

14.10 Jodrell Bank Observatory is one of the world's leading radio astronomy observatories, and is a prominent feature within the Cheshire landscape. In 2019 it was awarded World Heritage Status by UNESCO in recognition of its internationally significant heritage, science and cultural impact. The World Heritage Site inscription acknowledges Jodrell Bank's scientific endeavours and its role in achieving a transformational understanding of the universe.

14.11 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the re-use of brownfield sites. Paragraph 84 states: *'The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.'*

14.12 The following plans, documents and strategies support these policies:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Parts One and Two:-

https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/pl

anning_policy

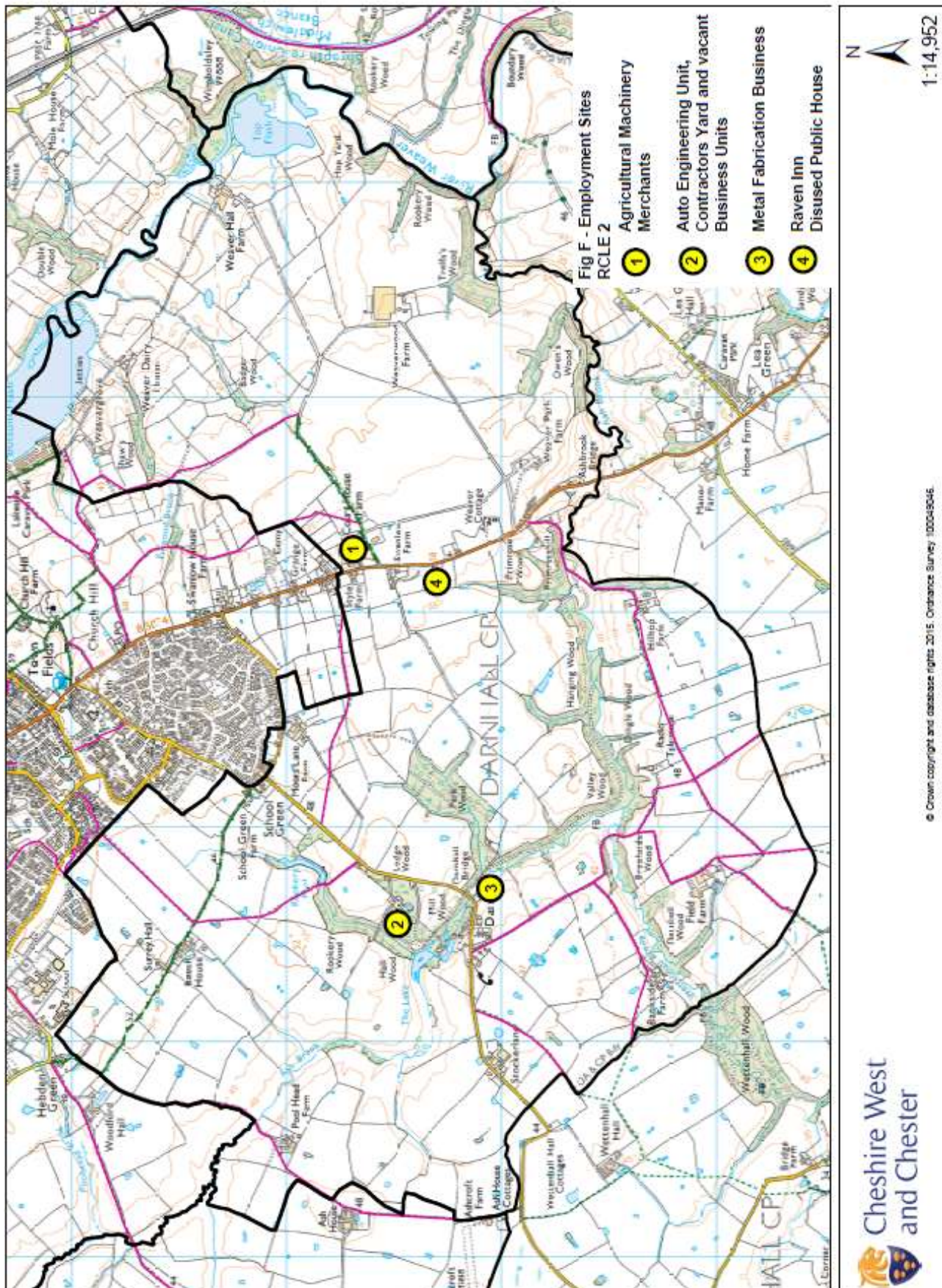
- for renewable energy policy see Part One ENV7 and Part Two DM51
- for proposals for residential development see Part Two DM 19 Point 7 i – vii
- Low Carbon & Renewable Energy Study
<http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site369/LEB41%20Low%20Carbon%20and%20Renewable%20Energy%20Study.pdf>
- Landscape Sensitivity Study on wind turbines and solar voltaic developments pp49 and 50 re Darnhall Plain and Ashbrook Valley, and fig 1 p123 appendix
http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/sub/parttwosub
- Winsford Neighbourhood Plan
http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/np/winsford_ref?tab=files
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust Environmental report
<https://www.darnhallparish.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html>
- Cheshire West and Chester's Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document
http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/spd/parking_standards_spd?tab=info&x=188&y=41

Community Feedback

14.13 Consultation on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan revealed the following key issues in relation to Residential, Commercial and Local Economy:

- Existing businesses should be promoted and supported.
- Development should be appropriate in scale and design to local building character and the rural environment.
- The rural environment and open countryside of Darnhall should be enhanced and maintained to sustain appropriate separation between the NPA and Winsford.

Figure F: Employment Sites



15. Recreation and Social infrastructure Policies

15.1 The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives

- To encourage rural and agricultural development, enterprise, outdoor pursuits and recreation that respects the rural character of Darnhall Parish and supports the welfare of the community.
- To conserve and enhance community assets and make them more accessible.
- To promote safe access for non-vehicle users to all parts of the Parish.

Policy RSI 1 - Community Facilities

The retention, continued use, refurbishment and improvement of community facilities and buildings will be supported in accordance with the CWAC Local Plan Part 2 DM39 and policy STRAT 11 of CWaC's Local Plan (Part 1).

Community facilities in the NPA include –

Darnhall Village Hall

Weaver Methodist Church

Winsford Flash Sailing Club

The development of new community facilities will be supported, in line with other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy RSI 2 – Heritage Assets

Proposals which conserve the significance of and preserve or enhance Darnhall's historic and archaeological assets and their setting will be supported, including the site of the ancient abbey, hall, mill, bridge structures and farm buildings, particularly if the proposals would help retain the assets in active use.

Proposals for development must take into account the scale of any possible harm or loss and the significance of any heritage and archaeological assets and will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that substantial benefits will be achieved when weighed against the harm or loss. Measures should be put in place to avoid or minimise impact or mitigate damage.

POLICY RSI 3 – Access to the Countryside

- i. Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network (Appendix 5) its enhancement where possible, and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes. The route, construction and appearance of any new tracks, paths, PROWs or links between existing pedestrian routes must be appropriate and sensitive to the character of the locality and the surrounding area, sensitive to biodiversity.
- ii. Any development that leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW would need to provide mitigation, such as an alternative replacement.
- iii. Any new development must provide easy, accessible traffic-free routes for non-motorised users (to include pedestrians, disabled people, people with prams or baby-buggies, cyclists and where appropriate equestrians) to the nearby countryside. The provision of any such additional routes will be supported.
- iv. The needs of non-motorised users (as described above) must be taken into account in all traffic planning, but especially in relation to rural lanes and roads. Hazards arising from an increase in vehicle numbers where agricultural buildings are converted to residential or commercial use will need to be taken into consideration. Measures to be taken to ensure this may include, for example, separation of pedestrians/cyclists from vehicular traffic where possible, improvements to signage, or means of speed reduction.

Policy RSI 4 – New Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

i) Where new development necessitates justified contributions to community infrastructure, or should other funding sources arise, contributions towards or delivery of the pedestrian and cycleway projects listed below and shown on Figure G will be supported -

- From Style Farm to the Footpath starting at Primrose Hill
- From Hall Lane to the Footpath near Stocker Lane

ii) In accordance with objectives and policies set out in the Winsford Neighbourhood Plan Sections 6.3 & 6.4, the provision of a connected network of pedestrian and cycle routes adjacent to the Bottom Flash for the enjoyment of the area South of Winsford and the Station Quarter will be encouraged. To complete such networks land within the Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan Area may have to be accessed. This provision will be supported subject to any impact on biodiversity and the environment being acceptable or successfully mitigated, with measures introduced to protect the local ecology, wildlife habitats and specifically the Nature Reserve at Weaver Dairy House Farm.

Justification and Evidence

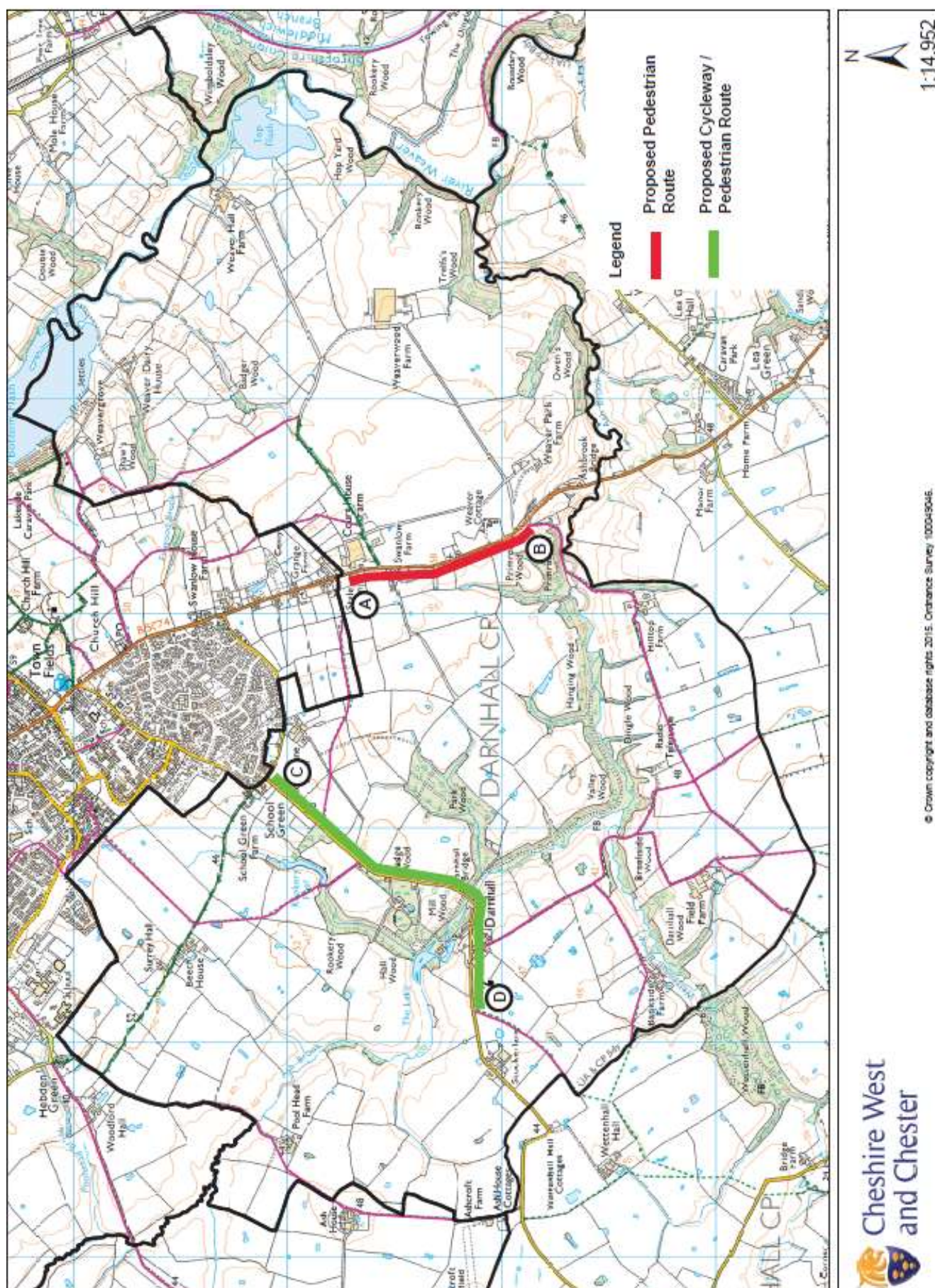
15.2 Darnhall offers a number of facilities that can benefit residents in the Parish and surrounding areas, including the town of Winsford. These include a network of pedestrian routes within easy walking distance of Winsford to reduce dependency on motor vehicles (see map of Public Rights of Way in Appendix 5). The National Cycle Network Route 551 Newcastle to Nantwich to Winsford runs through the Neighbourhood Plan Area on Hall Lane and Darnhall School Lane. The Winsford Neighbourhood Plan aspires to provide further pedestrian and cycle routes, and access into the Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan area would be required for their completion. Any such provision would be welcomed, subject to there being no unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment.

15.3 Darnhall benefits from its setting of open countryside and areas of natural beauty and biodiversity. Outdoor pursuits such as fishing, walking and sailing can be accessed at Winsford Flashes, an area of Special County Value which includes a nature reserve at Weaver Dairy House Farm and areas of protected woodland.

Access to the open countryside of Darnhall for residents and from neighbouring Winsford promotes wellbeing and general health because of clean air, tranquillity and the cooling effect of countryside on urban surroundings. The consultation with residents showed strong support for footpaths and bridleways as a source of exercise, enjoyment of the natural environment, and leisure.

- 15.4** Residents would like to see a pedestrian route/cycle way as marked in green between points C and D on Figure G, from the start of Hall Lane and the footpath near to Stocker Lane. This would improve safety for cycle users and pedestrians on this section of the national cycle network and would improve access to Darnhall Village Hall from all parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area and nearby communities. The survey of Darnhall residents showed support for an extension of the public roadside footway or a new footpath from point A on the map- at Style Farm, to point B,- the footpath starting at Primrose Hill. Funding for this could arise from the community infrastructure levy or any developer contributions which may be received if, for example, the derelict pub - The Raven were to be redeveloped. Whilst there are no current proposals to redevelop the pub, an application may come forward in the future. The site is on a main road which currently has no footway on either side of the road. The provision of a footway or a footpath here, as well as benefitting the local community, would help to make any redevelopment of the Raven site more sustainable. Either new footpaths or a new carriage footway, or a combination of both, which improves public safety and access would be supported.
- 15.5** There are a number of heritage sites in the parish (see Appendix 2) which are much valued and add to the character of the parish. Darnhall Village Hall, also a valued community facility, is a well-used meeting place for local organisations, societies, parish council and other groups. The hall can be booked for conferencing and private social events. Community feedback highlighted the desire to maintain the asset of the village hall.
- 15.6** The Local Plan (Part 2 DM37) supports the improvement, extension and connectivity of public rights of way (PROW). The NPPF states the importance of access to high quality open spaces for health and wellbeing and to reduce pressure on sensitive European sites. CWaC Local Plan (Part 1 ENV 5) states that any development of heritage assets should safeguard and enhance the building and its setting and do no harm. Any development proposals that have an adverse effect on such sites will not be permitted.

Figure G– Proposed Pedestrian and Cycle Routes



15.7 The following documents and strategies support these policies –

- National Planning Policy Framework
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
- Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, Part 1 ENV5, Part 2 DM47, DM48 and DM50
https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy
- Public Health England, Spatial Planning for Health 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729727/spatial_planning_for_health.pdf
- Winsford Neighbourhood Plan
http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/np/winsford_ref?tab=files

Community Feedback

15.8 Neighbourhood Plan consultations revealed the following key issues in relation to Recreation and Social Infrastructure:

- Improvement of public rights of way to support connectivity and leisure opportunities would be welcomed.
- Darnhall Village hall is a valued community amenity that residents would not like to see lost.
- Protection of heritage assets and the environment was important to residents.



16. Transport and Communications Policies

16.1 The Darnhall Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective

- To deliver improvements to local transport and communications that improve the experience of living in and visiting Darnhall.

Policy TC 1 – Telecommunications and Broadband

The development of advanced high quality communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband and improved mobile network coverage, will be supported, subject to:

- a) Development being kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network.
- b) Development being sympathetic to its surroundings and camouflaged where appropriate.
- c) Development must not impair the effective operations of the Merlin site radio telescope.

Provision for the installation and maintenance of information connection networks, such as superfast broadband, is required within new developments.

New development should be accessed by fibre to the premises (FTTP) or similar technology enabling access to superfast broadband speeds of at least 30 megabits per second (or the most recent Government requirements, if higher). Where this is not possible, adequate ducting should be provided to enable fibre to premises connection at a later date, unless it can be shown that this is not economically viable in this location.

Justification and evidence

- 16.2** Residents regard the telephone and broadband as essential. Some residents experience black-spots where there is little, or unreliable, mobile signal, across a range of providers. Parts of the Parish also struggle to get reasonable telephone land-line connection, which when coupled with poor mobile reception, makes communication difficult. Many of the outlying residents have installed fibre broadband

to combat the difficulties of using their telephone land-line to obtain reasonable internet connections.

- 16.3** As more than double the National and Cheshire West and Chester Borough average of people work from home (Overview Profile 2011 census results; Darnhall Parish,) reliable communications are essential regardless of whether employment is agriculturally based or in other areas of business.
- 16.4** There are no working telephone boxes in the Parish – the old one located adjacent to the Village hall now contains a working defibrillator.
- 16.5** The lack of mobile coverage is highlighted in the maps in Appendix 8 – Mobile coverage. One of the aims of the NPPF is to support high quality communications infrastructure. The NPPF highlights that supporting high quality communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing.

Policy TC 2 – Traffic

Development must not create any unacceptable impacts on the local road network, including impacts on pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, road safety, parking and congestion. Mitigation measures should be incorporated into proposals to minimise any adverse issues. Where appropriate, new developments may be asked to contribute to the delivery of sustainable transport projects in accordance with policy RSI4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Justification and Evidence

- 16.6** The NPA contains one major road, the B5074, Swanlow Lane between Winsford, Leighton Hospital and Crewe. The majority of the other roads are narrow country lanes and traffic speed along these is already of local concern. From the B5074 the unclassified Moors Lane and Darnhall School Lane join Hall Lane to head in a south westerly direction, through the old Parish centre and on towards Tarporley and Nantwich. Apart from a very few paved roads into residential closes there are a number of unadopted farm access tracks.

16.7 Public transport is limited, there is a half hourly bus service, between Crewe and Winsford, runs along the B5074, in both directions with two bus stops within the Parish. There is no bus service for other locations in the Parish. The roads have limited pavements. There is a network of rural PROWS across the Parish which link to roads rather than pavements. Footpath connectivity between some parts of the Parish including the village hall, is poor, with no safe or direct route between settlements within the parish. Residents and walkers are concerned for their safety in traffic. Concern has been expressed for a number of years about the speed of traffic on the B5074 and is evidenced in the Consultation survey. The speed limit has recently been reduced from the national speed limit to 50 mph, but residents have raised concerns that speed remains too high. The nearest rail service is 3 miles away across the Weaver valley and links the area to Liverpool and Crewe. For residents this either means a car journey, or a walk and two buses, across town. The station is located outside the plan area but provides a relatively regular hourly service to Liverpool and Crewe and then onto the West Coast mainline network. The 2011 census shows that the NPA is an area of high car dependency.

16.8 The promotion of sustainable transport is one of the aims of the NPPF, which highlights the importance of walking, cycling and public transport.

Community Feedback

16.9 Consultation on the emerging NP revealed the following key issues in relation to Transport and communications:

- Traffic speeds on local roads was a concern.
- Improvements for pedestrian safety were desired.
- Provision of fibre broadband and improved mobile phone reception to all within the community was required.



Glossary of terms that appear in this document.

Amenity – A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area.

Biodiversity – A measure of the number and range of species and their relevant abundance in a community.

Brownfield Land – Previously developed land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

Cheshire West and Chester Council – The local authority for the Parish of Darnhall

Community Facilities – Facilities providing for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

Community Infrastructure – The basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society. It includes community buildings and halls, leisure facilities, cultural facilities, education services, healthcare facilities and renewable energy installations.

Consultation Statement (Statement of Consultation) – A statement accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan for Darnhall is required by the Localism Act. The statement must set out what consultation was undertaken and how this provided the basis of the NP.

Countryside – The area outside a settlement boundary.

Development – Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as “the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land”. Most forms of development require planning permission.

Development Plan – A plan comprising the Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Development Framework. This includes adopted local plans and neighbourhood plans also it is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Evidence Base – A researched, documented, analysed and verified basis for preparing the Darnhall NP. It consists of many documents produced over a period of years by the local authority as part of the process of developing its Core Strategy.

Examination – An independent review of the NP carried out in public by an Independent Examiner.

Green Corridors – Green spaces that provide avenues for wildlife movement, often along streams, rivers, hedgerows or other natural features, which connect green spaces together.

Greenfield – Land on which no development has previously taken place.

Independent Examiner – Anyone with appropriate qualifications and skills and who meets certain requirements set out in the Localism Act. This could be a planning consultant or other planning professional, an employee of another

local authority or a planning inspector.

Infill Development – The filling of a small gap (up to two dwellings) in an otherwise built-up frontage in a recognised settlement.

Infrastructure – All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.

Local – Within our NPA.

Local Wildlife Sites – Sites with ‘substantive nature conservation value’, they are defined areas identified and selected locally for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species with a national, regional and local context.

Localism Act – An Act of Parliament that became law in April 2012. The Act introduces a new right for local people to draw up ‘Neighbourhood Development Plans’ for their local area.

Mitigation Statement – The best effort to minimise significant harm that it is deemed cannot be wholly or partially avoided.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Published by the Government in March 2019, it sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Neighbourhood Plan – The full title in the Localism Act is ‘Neighbourhood Development Plan’. It is a document for a defined area, subject to examination in public and approval by local referendum. It will be used in the determination of planning applications.

Open Space – All spaces of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which may offer opportunities for sport and recreation or act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.

Plan Period – The period for which the Darnhall NP will set policy for the NPA. This will be from the adoption of the plan until 2030 by agreement between Darnhall Parish Council and CWaC.

PROW – Public Right of Way

Referendum – A general vote by the electorate on a single policy question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. In the case of the NP, the referendum will decide whether or not to adopt the plan.

Residential Amenity – The quality of the living environment for occupants of a dwelling house including its associated external spaces.

Rural Area - The area outside identified settlements (such as Winsford).

Sensitive Development – Blends with and compliments existing properties in all aspects of footprint, shape and height; incorporating some of the local features with regards to brickwork, window design, roof pitch materials of construction etc.

Settlement Boundary - A settlement boundary defines the limits of

development and makes clear where development will and will not be allowed, regardless of other constraints.

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Sustainability Appraisal – A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents.

Steering Group – A group of local people representing the Parish Council, community groups and businesses that collated and guided the work on the NP.

Strategic Environmental Assessment – Assessments made compulsory by the European Directive (the SEA Directive). To be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisals of Development Plan Documents and NPs where required.

Transport Assessment – An assessment of the availability of, and levels of access to, all forms of transport. In relation to a proposed development it identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated effects of the development.

Wildlife Corridor – Strips of land, for example along a hedgerow, conserved and managed for wildlife, usually linking more extensive wildlife habitats.

Appendix 1 - Consultation Summary

Consultations were held, with Parish Residents and the local community, attending functions such as The Parish assembly, the Darnhall Show in July and Christmas fair at the Village Hall in 2017, with regards to their interests, concerns and priorities for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Darnhall.

The community comments informed the design of the Darnhall NP Questionnaire which was published for consultation in the autumn of 2017. The Questionnaire was delivered to local Businesses and all of the 92 residences that were occupied within the Parish Boundary, as well as other nearby residents. The questionnaire was also made available on the Parish Council website and could be completed online. Questionnaire responses closed at the end of January 2018.

77% of those replies were from Residents within the Darnhall Parish boundary. Every one of the respondents confirmed that they agreed with the aims of the Draft Vision expressed at the start of the Questionnaire and that they deemed it important to them.

Of the 63 anonymously completed Questionnaires that were returned a significant majority placed maintenance and use of the Darnhall Village Hall as a major concern.

Almost all respondents were concerned about protecting the environment, especially with regards to safeguarding local farms, woodlands, waterways, footpaths and hedgerows against further housing development, and were in favour of enhancing wildlife corridors.

A very large percentage of the respondents believed it important to maintain the distinctive boundary between rural parish of Darnhall and the urban conurbation of Winsford.

90% of the replies were against any development that had a harmful visual impact, and that any existing building alterations/conversions should retain the existing character of the area, this included proportionate and sympathetic redevelopment of Brown Field sites and the protection of open vistas.

Residents expressed concern at the state of the disused and derelict former public house 'The Raven' and its large plot of land on Swanlow Lane. Various suggestions were put forward by respondents to restore and /or develop the building and its site. At present the site is not designated as 'brown field'.

Concern was expressed with regards to the impact of future increased traffic incurred with any development in the parish, especially considering the rural nature of the local roads. Many respondents expressed concern regarding the current disregard to, and enforcement of, the existing speed limits in the NPA.

The below documents Appendices 1.1 and 1.2 summarise the analysis of the structured questionnaire responses and other comments made by respondents.

Appendix 1.1 - Analysis of Questionnaire data

Darnhall Parish Neighbourhood Plan

The sample comprises the 63 anonymously completed and returned Questionnaire responses.

There are 92 residential properties within the Parish of Darnhall.

48 of the responses were from Residents and 15 from Non-Residents, this suggests that responses to the survey have been received from more than 50% of residences in the Parish. The surveys were mostly hand delivered and it was apparent from feedback that many residents chose to respond as households. A small number of surveys were completed using an on-line portal and these are included in the findings.

The findings are reported for the combined totals for Residents and Non-Residents.

Age

95% of the respondents were between the ages of 36 and 75.

Parish residency

77% of the replies were from Residents within the Darnhall Parish.

Interests

13% reported to have either Land or Business interests in the Parish.

Page	Question ref	Analysis
2	Q1.0 Draft Vision	100% were either “very” or “quite” in agreement with the Draft Vision for the Parish.
3	Q1.1 Character of built environment	95% were in favour of protecting the character of the parish environment.
3	Q1.2 Trees & Hedgerows	94% were in favour of safeguarding existing trees and hedgerows.
4	Q1.3 Footpaths	86% believed that Public Footpaths should be maintained and, if possible, extended and improved.
4	Q1.4 Bridle & Cycleways	92% believe that new developments should incorporate and extend Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle tracks.
5	Q1.5 Visual Impact	90% believed that development that has a harmful visual impact on the Countryside, should be discouraged.

5	Q1.6 Woodlands & Wildlife corridors	95% were supportive of proposals to maintain and enhance woodlands and create wildlife corridors.
5	Q1.7 Light Pollution – Dark skies	73% were supportive of dark skies and minimising light pollution.
6	Q2 Protecting Community Assets	From a detailed list of Parish Assets respondents identified Darnhall Village Hall (27%) and Parish Woodlands (24%) as most significant. This question did not contain a graded response element.
7	Q3 Traffic Safety	95% of responses expressed concern about excessive speed and lack of enforcement on Parish roads.
9	Q4.1 Barn Conversions	88% were in favour of conversions or extensions retaining the existing character of the original building.
9	Q4.2 Brownfield development	94% believed that Brownfield sites should be developed in a way that is sensitive to the rural surroundings.
9	Q4.3 Community safety, peace & wellbeing	This question did not contain a graded response element_– see comments analysis.
10	Q4.4 Open vistas	88% were against any development resulting in the loss of important open vistas.
10	Q4.5 Open countryside boundary separation	91% believed it important to preserve the Boundary between Darnhall's rural Parish and Winsford Town.
10	Q4.6 Future of active farming	This question did not contain a graded response element – see comments analysis.
11	Q4.7 Farm diversification & parish economy	This question did not contain a graded response element – see comments analysis.

11	Q4.8 Improving parish assets, enterprise & tourism	This question did not contain a graded response element – see comments analysis.
11	Q5.0 Parish Housing Needs	This question did not contain a graded response element – see comments analysis.

Appendix 1.2 - Analysis of Questionnaire free-text comments

Darnhall Parish Neighbourhood Plan

The sample comprises the 63 anonymously completed and returned Questionnaire responses. Where more than one respondent made the same or very similar comments, a single representative comment has been drafted to reflect the common view. The Q Ref provides an anonymised reference back to individual questionnaire responses to support the integrity of the data.

Page	Question	Q Ref R=Resident N=Non-Resident	Comment summary
2	Q1.0 Draft Vision	R32	<i>Raven – Demolish</i>
		R33	<i>Enhance & protect countryside</i>
		N5	<i>Housing, business and education needs to be met without sacrifice to countryside</i>
		R3	<i>No restriction on size of buildings making businesses non-viable</i>
		R29	<i>Develop community services e.g. allotments Darnhall residents can not access allotment plots in Winsford</i>
		N2	<i>Sympathetic development – so people feel they belong</i>
		R12	<i>Support aims, joined up plan with Winsford & Northwich e.g. cycle routes</i>
		R13	<i>Organise events to attract locals from further afield</i>
		R19	<i>Make more of Darnhall being 'new' centre of Cheshire</i>
3	Q1.1 Character of built environment	R32	<i>Design & architecture features of Cheshire should feature in new development</i>
		R33	<i>Traditional building materials</i>
		R34	<i>Use of Cheshire Brick & character build</i>
		R35	<i>Red brick as per estate buildings</i>
		R37	<i>Traditional & in keeping build</i>
		R11	<i>Keep local design – fit with environment</i>
		R15	<i>Proportionate size & design</i>
		R19	<i>Traditional character in modern design</i>
		R12	<i>Farmhouses – moderate size fits with landscape</i>
		R10	<i>Local materials, sandstone, brick, slate</i>
		N2	<i>Traditional Cheshire magpie</i>
		N8	<i>Traditional medium density – but up to date architecture in right location should not be excluded</i>
		N1	<i>Blend in with Darnhall Estate properties</i>
		N3	<i>Small properties that fit into the landscape</i>
		R36	<i>Protect against revised plans by developers & preserve green areas</i>
		R13	<i>Minimum amount of building – not obscuring views</i>
		R30	<i>New development should be discouraged</i>
3	Q1.2 Trees	R31 & R3	Replant and additional planting Like to see Hall Lane trees replanted

	Hedgerows	N5 R37 N2 R26, 29 R33 R11 R18 R12 R32	Replace trees – replanting Takes a long time to grow a tree Must safeguard hedgerows Hedgerows important for wildlife Development should protect trees and hedgerows Protect all wildlife, trees & hedgerows May be occasions where existing trees, hedgerows have to be sacrificed Protect trees, hedgerows, ditches important for character of Parish Pleased with care with which farmers tend to hedgerows & fields
4	Q1.3 Footpaths	R33 R35 R18,11 R12 R19 R30 R11 N10	Bridleways should be maintained Safe & properly maintained footpaths & styles Value footpaths – re-route along field boundaries Value for dog walking and birdwatching Better maintenance Moved here for countryside walks New footpath Court House farm to Weaver Park farm (avoiding Swanlow Lane) All of them, access to our countryside
4	Q1.4 Bridle Cycleways	& R32 R3, 19 R29 R12 N3 R37, 13	Walking important leisure activity in local community & cycling & horse riding – every opportunity to improve facilities Cycleways more important now Cycling is dangerous on country lanes Cycling helps to promote Darnhall tourism Cycleway to Wettenhall Any new development should have safe clear connectivity
5	Q1.5 Visual Impact	R32 R3 R18 R12 R11 R17 R19 N2	Retain pastoral character Wind turbines should not be allowed Very important visual impact – no wind turbines Darnhall is old and beautiful – don't want large developments Enough expansion in Winsford without coming into Darnhall Depends on circumstances Landscape and drainage should be considered Countryside is under threat all measures to protect should be taken
5	Q1.6 Woodlands Wildlife corridors	& R3 R11 N2 R33 R34 R37	Modern farming practices carried on – leave part of fields for wildlife Natural resources are good for mental health Wildlife is interconnected and mutually dependent Woodlands and wildlife corridors should be supported Wildlife desperately needs protection With new development increasing around Winsford we need to encourage wildlife we have

		R30	Horse Chestnut trees on Hall Ln replanted
5	Q1.7 Light Pollution – Dark skies	R31	Street lighting is required
		R18	Disagrees
		R15,11,12	Agree in principal need to be balanced with need of drivers
		R22	Balance with safety and security
		R34	Light pollution is a problem but safety to be considered
		N2	Pleasant viewing night sky – balance with safety
6	Q2 Protecting Community Assets	R3	Restore waterfall
		R5	Restore Darnhall Mill
		R13	Village Hall extended
		N2	Action to halt siltation of Winsford flash
		N10	Darnhall wood SSSI, Woodlands, Ash Brook & tributaries
7	Q3 Traffic Safety	R6	Roads busier tractors large & too fast on narrow roads
		R3	Speed limits needed
		R1, R32	Court House Farm to Bridge should be 40mph
		N1	Swanlow Ln speed limit extended
		R34	Speed limits past Village & Village Hall
		R14, 15	Speed bumps everywhere
		N2	Swanlow Ln, Moors Ln busy Traffic
		R12	20mph speed limit Darnhall School Lane
		R26, N10	Enforcement
		R35, 11,13	No footpath Hall Lane
		R37	New development needs adequate parking
		R30	Weight restriction Hall lane and through village
9	Q4.1 Barn Conversions	R6	State of the Raven - Blot
		R12, 19	Fit with surroundings Encourage redevelopment of existing properties
		R11	Any conversion restricted in height
9	Q4.2 Brownfield development	R9	Any development better than none if impact good
		R33	Re use existing rural buildings
		R11, 15	Development fit with surroundings
		R13	No ultra modern properties or apartments
		N1	No more than 2 properties on Raven site
		R30	Building in Winsford reached ridiculous proportions ‘for God’s sake stop’
		R29	Sensitive to rural surroundings – no development preferred
9	Q4.3 Community	R2, 8	Preservation of Rural Area most important

safety, peace &
wellbeing

		R3	Don't want new comers complaining about rural activities
		R34	Controlling development is very important to wellbeing
		R33	No development permitted if harm caused to Darnhall residents
		R12	Agree safety issues but communities need to progress
		R11, 15	Peaceful area – protected from excessive development & traffic
		N2	Road infrastructure inadequate Swanlow Ln due to new development in Winsford
		N3	New farm barns screened with hedges and trees – shouldn't create light pollution
			No development on or near valuable wildlife habitat
		R21	Area becoming over developed no sign of infrastructure – schools, medical, transport
10	Q4.4 Open vistas	R18	Want to maintain views but not sacrosanct
		R19	Darnhall does not want to remain in a time warp
		R12,18	Rural area should be preserved
		R2, 11, 12	View is beautiful one of the reasons we live here
		R36, 5	Beautiful views, behind Village Hall, behind Weaver Chapel
		N2, R25	South from Winsford
		N3	East to Derbyshire, West to Beeston
		N4	Winsford to Beech House farm and Beeston
		N10	School Green to Sandstone ridge
		N5	Open fields Moors Lane, Darnhall (Hall) Lane
		R34	Top, Bottom flash, Shaws and Badgers woods – River Weaver
		R33	Darnhall Wood SSSI
10	Q4.5 Open countryside boundary separation	R1	Darnhall must avoid creeping Development from Winsford
		R9, N10	Darnhall needs to preserve open countryside
		R12, 11	Too easy for urban areas to swallow up rural communities
		R18, 19	Need to maintain rural boundary
		R29	Loss of profitable farmland for housing very sad
		N3	Stop creeping urbanisation
		N5	Identity to be retained
		R12	Liaison with WNP to ensure fit
		R19	Winsford & Darnhall need to work together
10	Q4.6 Future of active farming	R37	Loss of open countryside would result in farming not having area sufficient to be sustainable
		R7	If we don't have farming 100% we wouldn't be able to feed ourselves
		R34, R3	Every acre lost to house builders is an acre lost to farming, food production & animal welfare
		R18, 11,12,20, 14, 29,	Impact of loss of countryside on farm business viability

		N5, N2	Planning permission should not be given for existing farm land
		N7	Farming must be protected
		N4	Darnhall remains rural farming community
		R32	Active farming must be preserved for the benefit of all
		R22	Heart of Parish
		N1	Development kept to absolute minimum
		N3	Any public amenity & tourism developments must be protected and maintained through contracts
11	Q4.7 Farm diversification & parish economy	R34	
		R12 R34, R1, 21, 29, 35, 11, N1, 2, 3	Glamping, tea shop, Cycle route – flashes, Kennels, Cattery Farm shop / market
		R36	None
		N4	Small commercial conversions
		N5	Micro business units, crafts
		N10	Horse riding stables
11	Q4.8 Improving parish assets, enterprise & tourism	R35, 18, 3, 19, 20, 11, 37	Improve use of Village Hall - Community hub
		R34, 9 R35, 14, 37, 1, 10, 13 N5	Flashes – camping, adventure, leisure, tourism Improve, publicise & better signage for footpaths & walks
		N2	Continuance Darnhall Show
		R22	More school / education in community
11	Q4.9 Parish Housing Needs	R12	Brownfield – small development
		R18	Raven site – pub, café, shop
		R3, N3	House & businesses (garden centre), Low density bungalows
		R36, 3, 15, 11, 13, 14, 16, N3	Bungalows & accessible properties
		R37 R22	Family homes 3-4 bed
		R15, 11, 16, 24, 34, 38 N1, 5, 7, 6	Starter / affordable homes for local community young people & agricultural workers
		R1	Housing for over 55's

R36	Social housing aimed at local residents only
R19	Few self-build

Appendix 2 –Community Assets - Heritage Sites & Community Facilities

Woodlands & Water Courses

Darnhall Wood SSSI*
 Park Wood SBI* plus Valley Wood
 Shaws Wood SBI
 St Chads Wood SBI
 Brookhouse Farm Meadows SBI
 Weaver Wood SBI

Other Woodlands of high wildlife value:-
 Trelfas Wood, Owens Wood, Hanging
 Wood, Primrose Wood, Hall Wood,
 Rookery Wood

Nature Reserve at Weaver Dairy House
 Farm.
 Winsford Flashes -Top Flash, Bottom Flash
 Trelfas Hole
 Ash Brook & tributaries

**SSSI Site Special Scientific Interest*

**SBI Site Biological Interest*

Community Facilities

Darnhall Village Hall
 Weaver Methodist Chapel
 Winsford Flash Sailing Club

Heritage Buildings & Structures

Weaver Hall Farmhouse (Grade II Listed)
 Weaver Dairy House Farmhouse (Grade II
 Listed)
 Darnhall Mill House (Grade II Listed)
 Darnhall Mill (Grade II Listed)
 The Stables Yard (Grade II Listed)
 Weaver Park Farmhouse (Grade II Listed)
 Darnhall Bridge (Grade II Listed)

*(Source: English Heritage, confirmed
 23.05.2016)*

Non designated Heritage assets:-

Stables Farmhouse
 School Green Farmhouse
 Beech House Farmhouse
 Darnhall Knobbs
 Ashbrook Bridge

Other Heritage Assets

Darnhall Radio Telescope (One of seven UK
 sites in the MERLIN network led by Jodrell
 Bank Observatory)

Archaeological Features

	Source ref
Weaver Hall Farmhouse	822/1
Dairy House Farm	821/1
Darnhall	815/1
Earthworks at Dairy House Farm	821/3
Road at Wimboldsley Wood	1015/1
Darnhall Grange	815/3
Darnhall Corn Mill	815/5
Darnhall Abbey	815/2
Weaver	822/0/0
Mill at Dairy House Farm	821/2
Searchlight Battery at Moor Lane Farm	7534
Sand Pit, Darnhall School Lane	4308
Brick Field East of Beech House	4301
Unnamed findspot in Darnhall Parish	2806
Darnhall Hall	815/4
Sand Pit, South of Shaw's Wood	4311
Medieval Fishpond	815/0/1

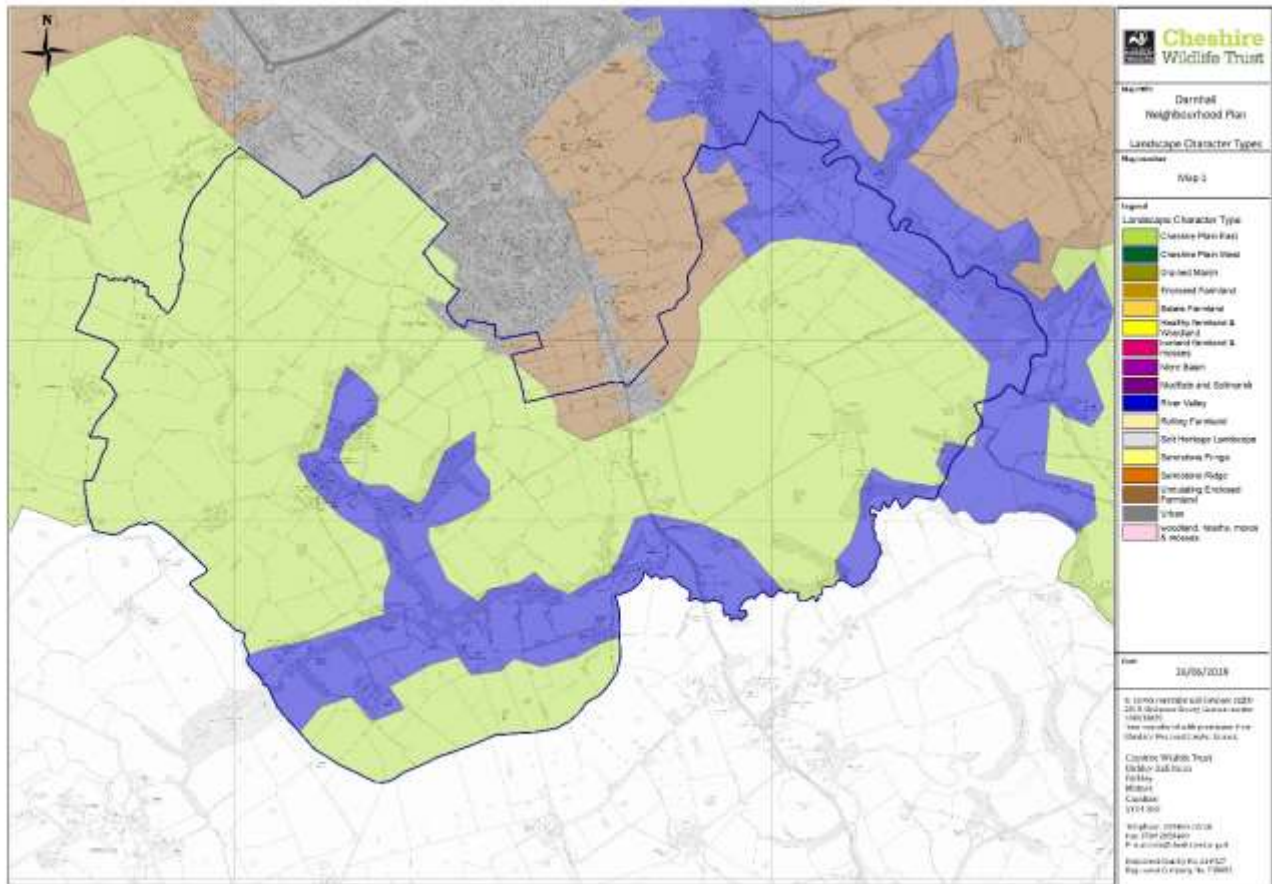
Source: Revealing Cheshire's Past

<http://rcplive.cheshiresharedservices.gov.uk/MultiResults.aspx>

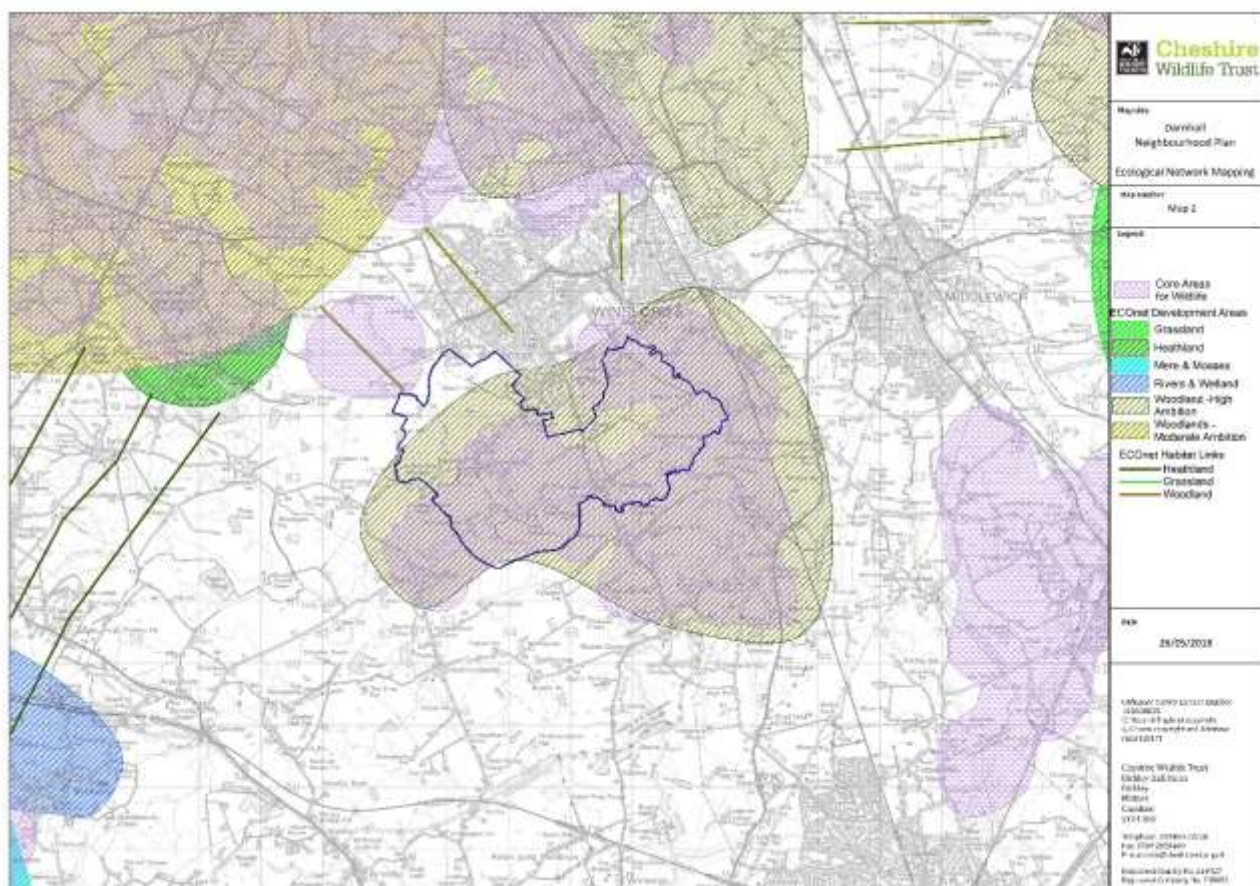
Appendix 3 - Cheshire Wildlife Trust Maps

Protecting and Enhancing Darnhall's Natural Environment, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, November 2017, can be accessed via Darnhall Parish Council website <http://www.darnhallparish.co.uk/> A number of the maps created for the report are displayed below:

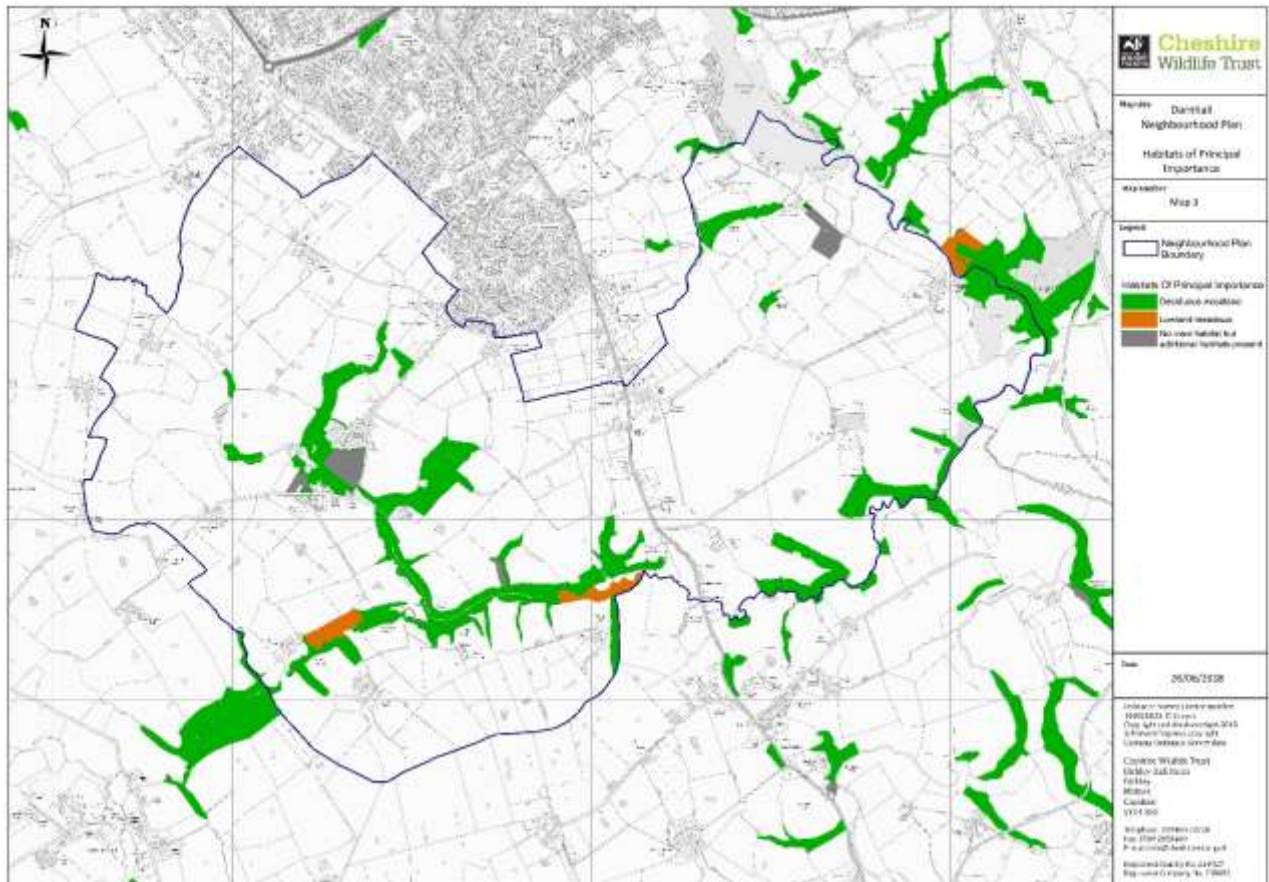
Map 1: Landscape Character Types



Map 2: Ecological Network



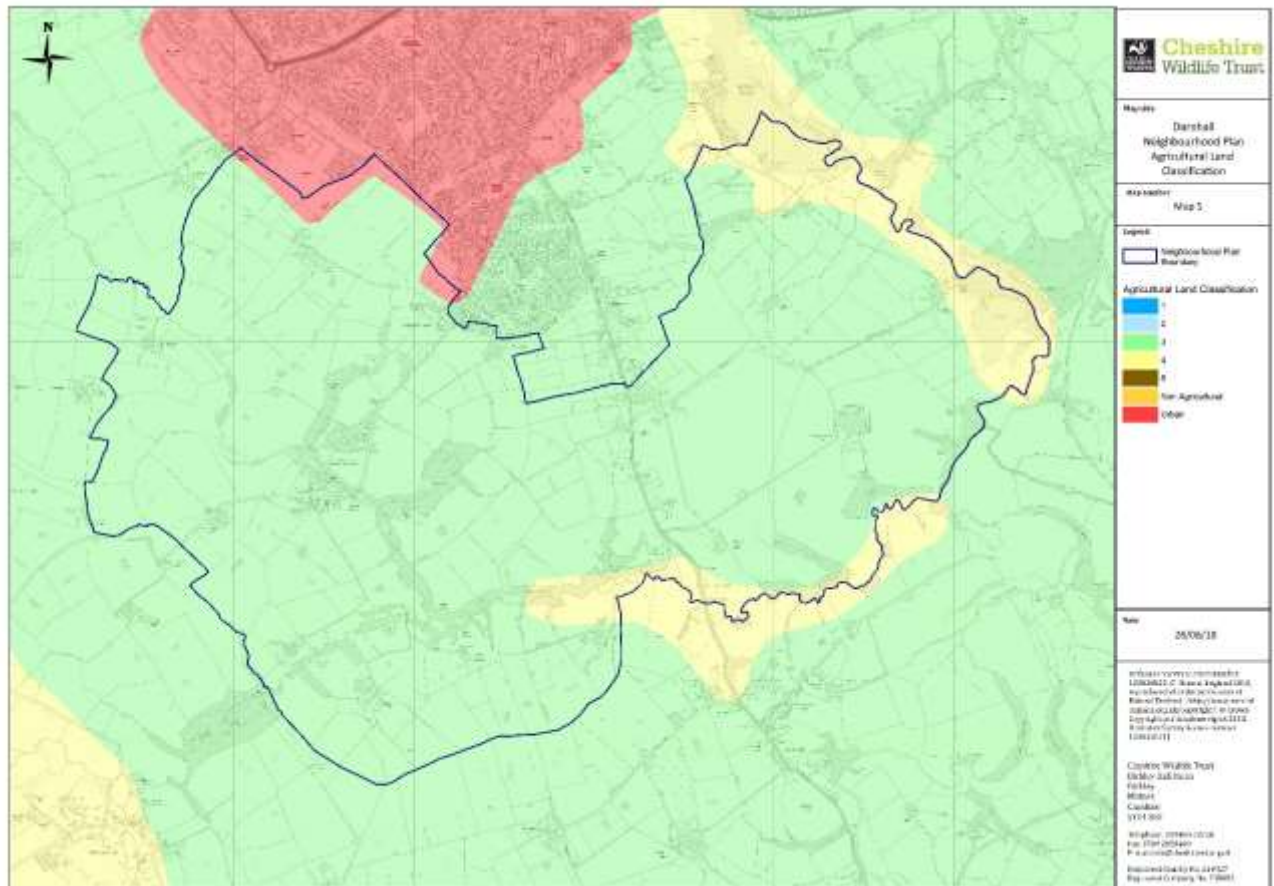
Map 3: Habitats of Principle Importance



Map 4: Land Cover Habitats



Map 5: Agricultural Land Classification



Appendix 4 - Parish Building Design Features

Key Local Vernacular Design Features in the Darnhall area

Being a very historic area there is a mixture of styles in the local vernacular, but some key design features include

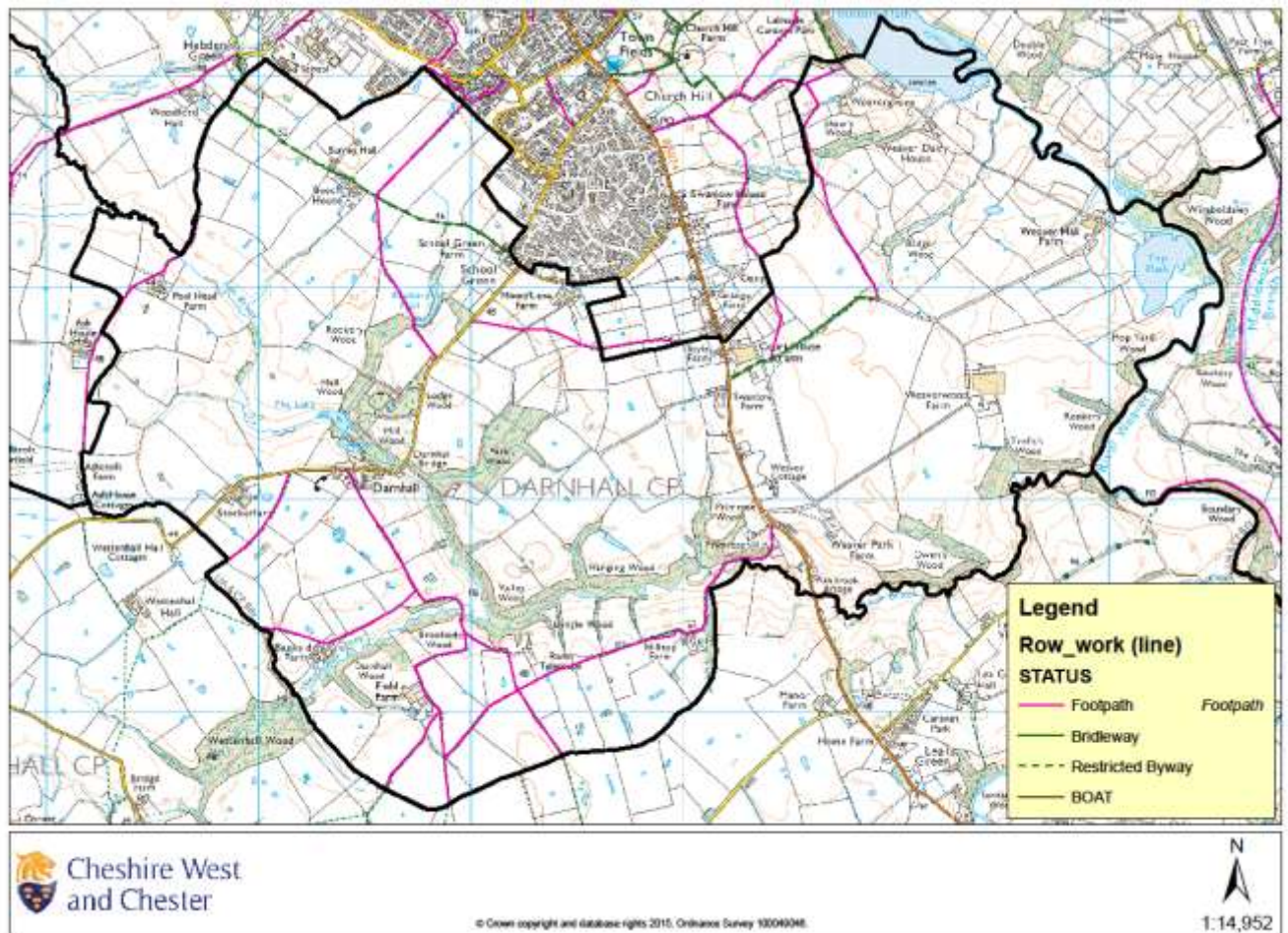
A scale of domestic residential buildings which range from small 2 - 3 bed cottages, to short mews developments, modest detached properties and large farm houses.

- Materiality uses brick, both standard stretcher and Flemish bonds, generally rustic reds using either grey or red mortar
- Banded or decorative brickwork immediately below rooflines be that the gable or eaves face
- Stone or arched brick lintels are commonly expressed
- Roofs are generally made up of either small terracotta tiles or slate with pitched, open gables or Jerkinhead roofs
- Gabled dormer windows are regularly used in Darnhall's historic building fabric
- Gable end walls also have timber and render finishes in lieu of brickwork, with painted vertical uprights and white rendered infills.





Appendix 5 - Public Rights of Way map - Darnhall



Appendix 6

Darnhall Parish Council **Parish Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022**

Economy

1. Encourage sustainable growth of local businesses – Parish Council to work with local businesses.

Transport

1. Reduce vehicle speeds on local roads and lanes – Parish Council to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the police.
2. Support improved bus services in the area - Parish Council to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Countryside and Wildlife

1. Protect and improve the countryside, natural environment and biodiversity within the Parish – Parish Council work with the community and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Planning

1. To support the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Darnhall
2. Consideration of residential applications under Strat 9 of Local Plan
3. To explore opportunities from available funding sources to support general improvements to local infrastructure; including - electricity capacity, gas supply and provision of high speed broadband to existing properties

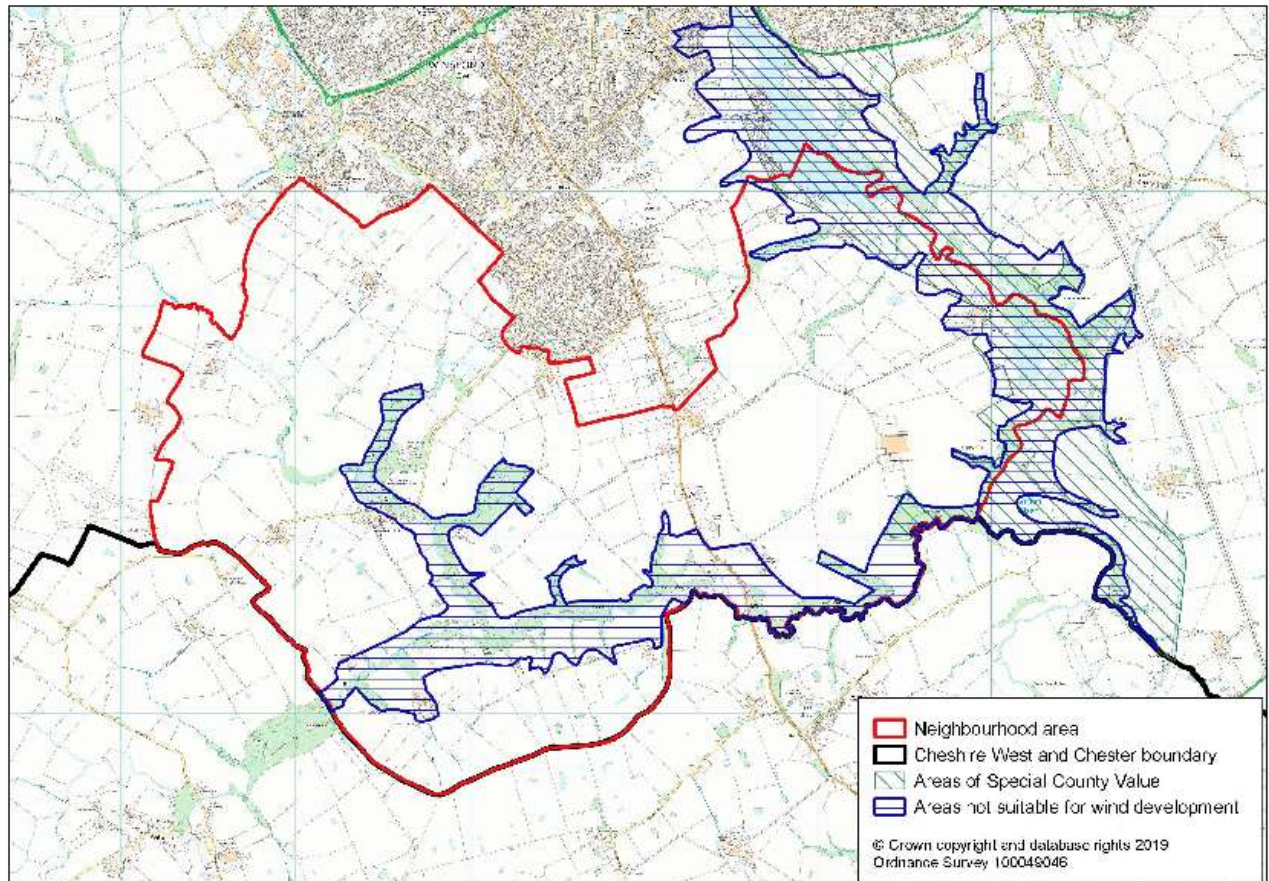
Parish Council to work with land owners, and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Recreation and Social Infrastructure

1. Support the improvement and use of Darnhall Village Hall and other community facilities in the Parish - Parish Council to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council.
 - 1.1 To stabilise the structure of the Village Hall and replace the floor in the Hall
 - 1.2 To develop community engagement in the life of the parish
2. Support improvement of the Public Rights of Way network including footpaths, cycleways and Bridleways, to deliver enhanced connectivity and leisure opportunities - Parish Council to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Appendix 7

Landscape Sensitivity Study



Appendix 8 – Maps Highlighting Mobile Coverage

EE network voice coverage



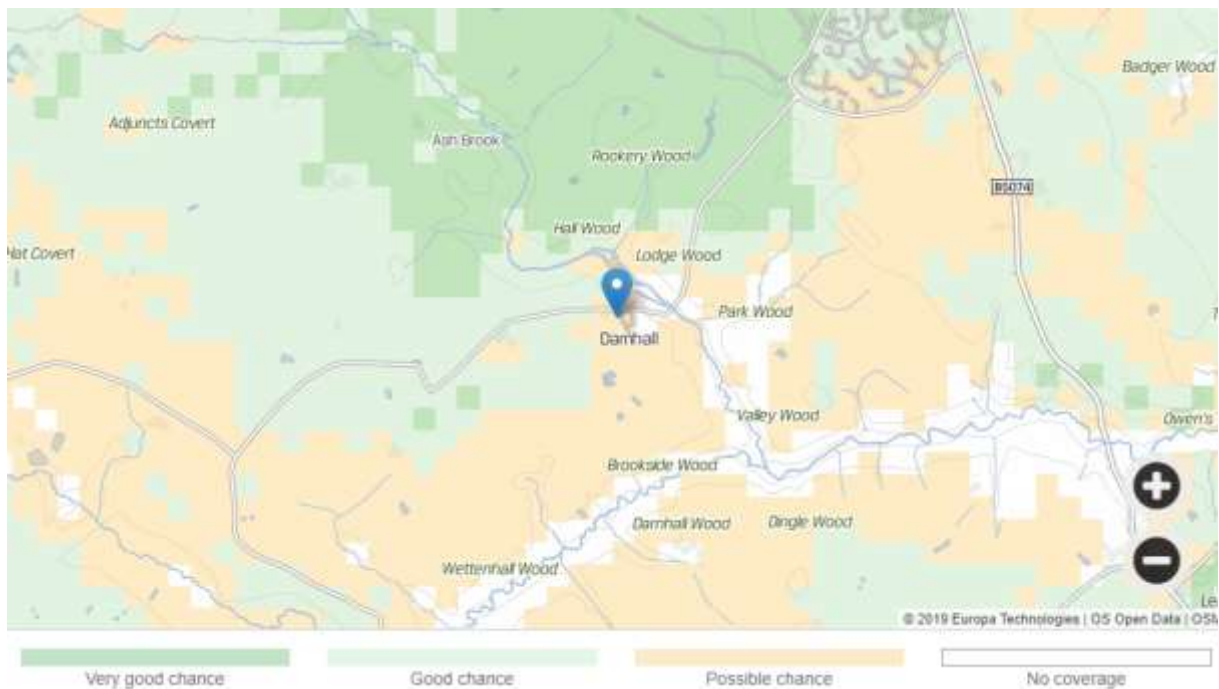
O2 network voice coverage



Three network voice coverage



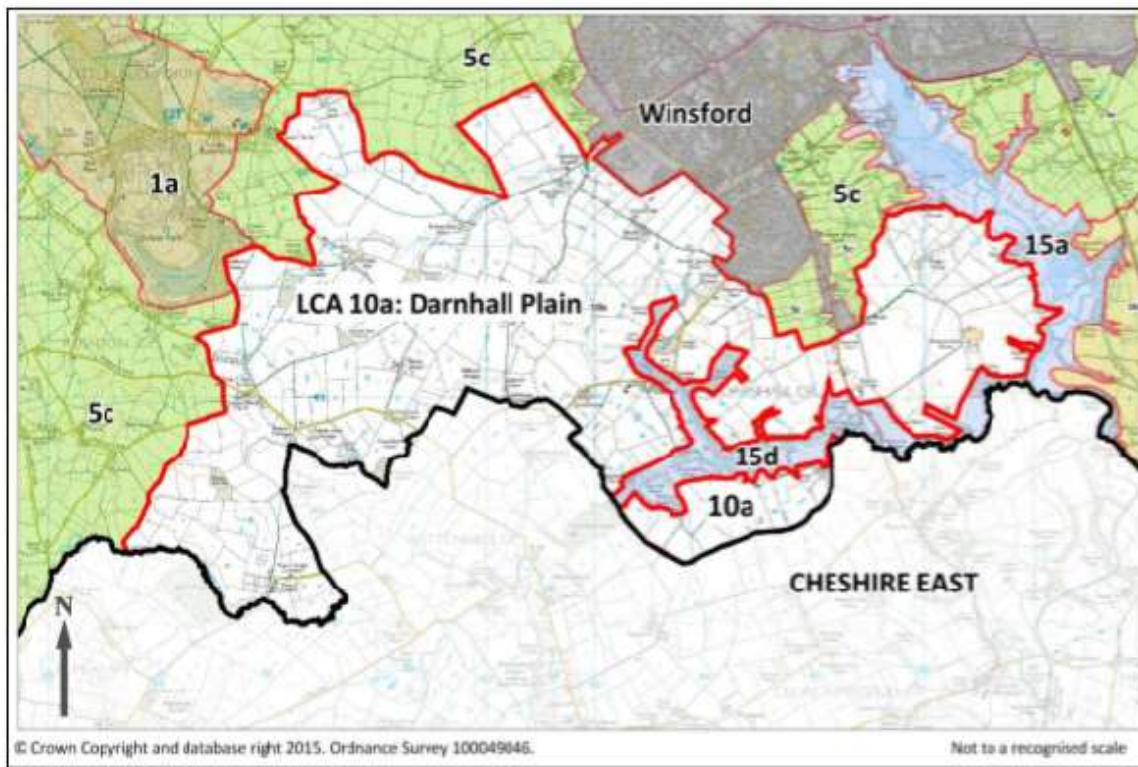
Vodafone network voice coverage



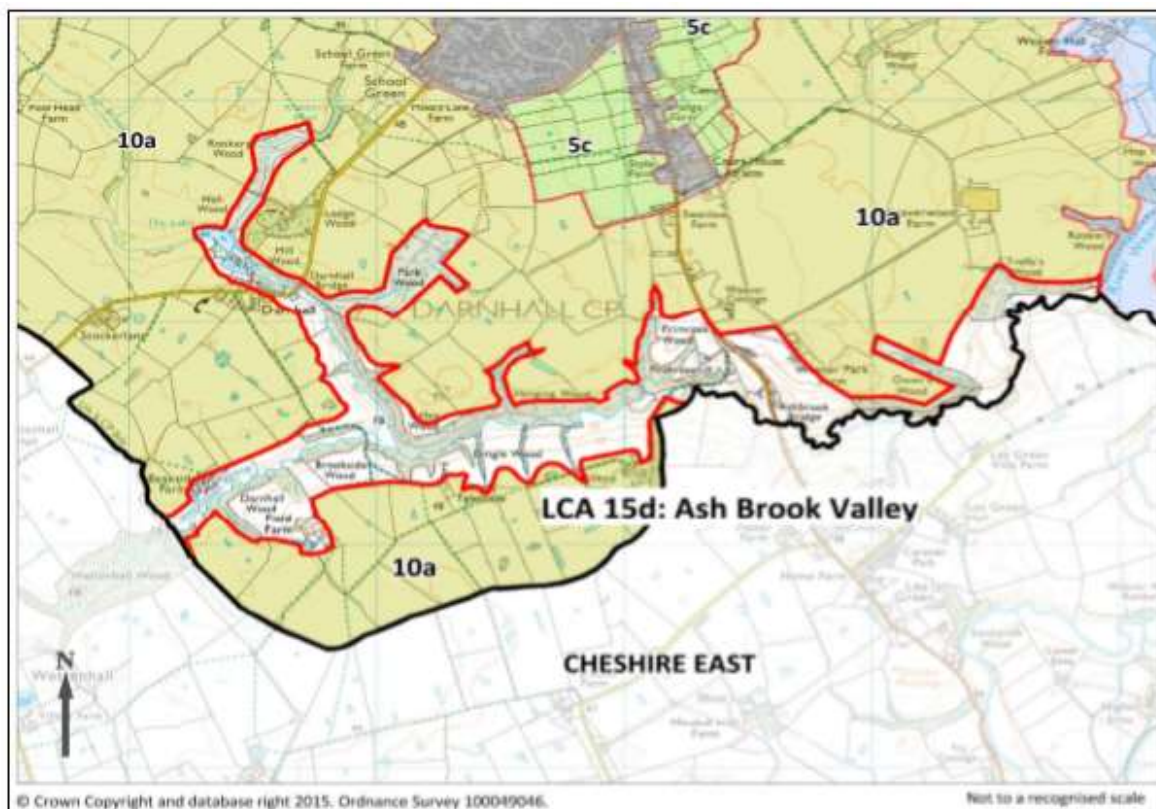
(Source of network coverage maps: <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage> accessed 16.09.2019)

Appendix 9 – Landscape Character Areas

LCA 10a: Darnhall Plain



LCA 15d: Ash Brook Valley



LCA 15a: Upper Weaver Valley

