

Ince Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2030



Helping Shape the Future of Our Community

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1. Introduction

1.1 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was updated in February 2019 and again in July 2021. This legislation replaced the former planning regulations with a new planning rulebook which puts localism at the heart of future planning. The NPPF states: "Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies of the area or undermine those strategic policies."

1.2 A Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in general conformity with the Local Plan which, in the case of Ince Parish, has been produced by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC). The Local Plan Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies was adopted in 2015 and Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies was adopted in 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan will provide policies for Ince to 2030 in line with the timescales of the Local Plan.

1.3 The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan has not identified any strategic housing need for Ince. The small village of Ince lies within the Green Belt and open countryside, and it has not been designated as a local service centre. Other than strategic employment allocations that fall within the Parish, development proposals must therefore accord with Policy STRAT9 of the Local Plan - Green Belt and Countryside, which restricts development to that which requires a countryside location and cannot be accommodated within identified settlements.

1.4 The strategic allocation site Ince Park falls within the parish. This is safeguarded in Policy STRAT4 of the Local Plan - Ellesmere Port, as a multi-modal resource recovery park and energy from waste facility for use in connection with the recycling, recovery and reprocessing of waste materials in line with Policy ENV 8 of the Local Plan - Managing waste. Policy EP6 - Ince Park, of Part Two of the Local Plan, gives further details of the safeguarded site and the criteria for its development. Additionally, Local Plan (Policy EP2) allocates land within the Parish to meet the strategic requirement for new employment development. This includes land at Station Road (5.5 hectares for use class B1) and land at Encirc Glass Ltd which lies partly within the Parish, although the allocation lies just outside (34 hectares for use classes B1, B2 and B8). A map of Ince's Strategic Allocations is included as Figure B.

1.5 A Neighbourhood Plan carries **legal status** for planning purposes and gives local communities a major say in influencing and shaping development. Neighbourhood Plans are not just about housing but can be used to help protect the countryside, rural nature, historic sites and certain aspects of infrastructure.

1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the

area, against which all planning applications are assessed. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with existing national and local planning policies. It adds important new policies and detail to tailor development to the needs of the area and to ensure that the distinctive local character is treasured and preserved.

1.7 Ince Parish Council formed a Working Group to lead the Neighbourhood Plan process and engaged Cheshire Community Action to help provide specialist advice and assistance. Working closely with CWaC, and with the wider local community, the Group has led on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan from its inception through to submission.

1.8 The Neighbourhood Plan is supported by separate Evidence Base documents, including a **Green Spaces** and **Significant Views** report, a report from **Cheshire Wildlife Trust**, a **Lost Footpath** report, an **Air Quality** report, a **Heritage Asset Audit**, and a **Conservation Area Appraisal**, which have informed the policy-writing and should be referred to for further detail. The supporting documents can be viewed on the website at www.inceparishcouncil.uk

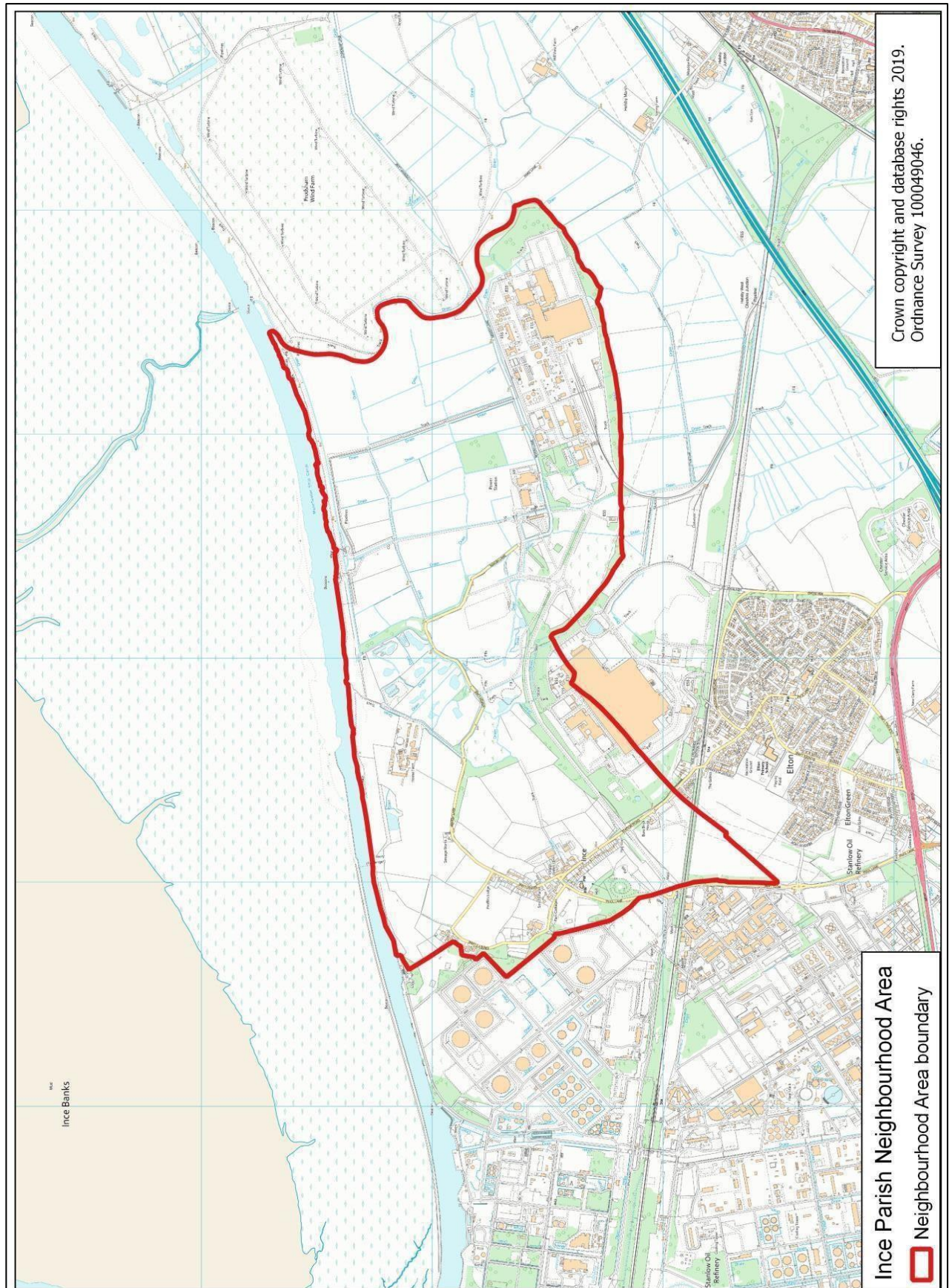
1.9 Although supported by the Parish Council, the Plan has been community led, community researched and the community will vote on whether to accept it or not.

1.10 The Neighbourhood Plan will offer the community a measure of control and influence to ensure that the parish grows and develops in an appropriate and acceptable way, helping to protect what the community values.

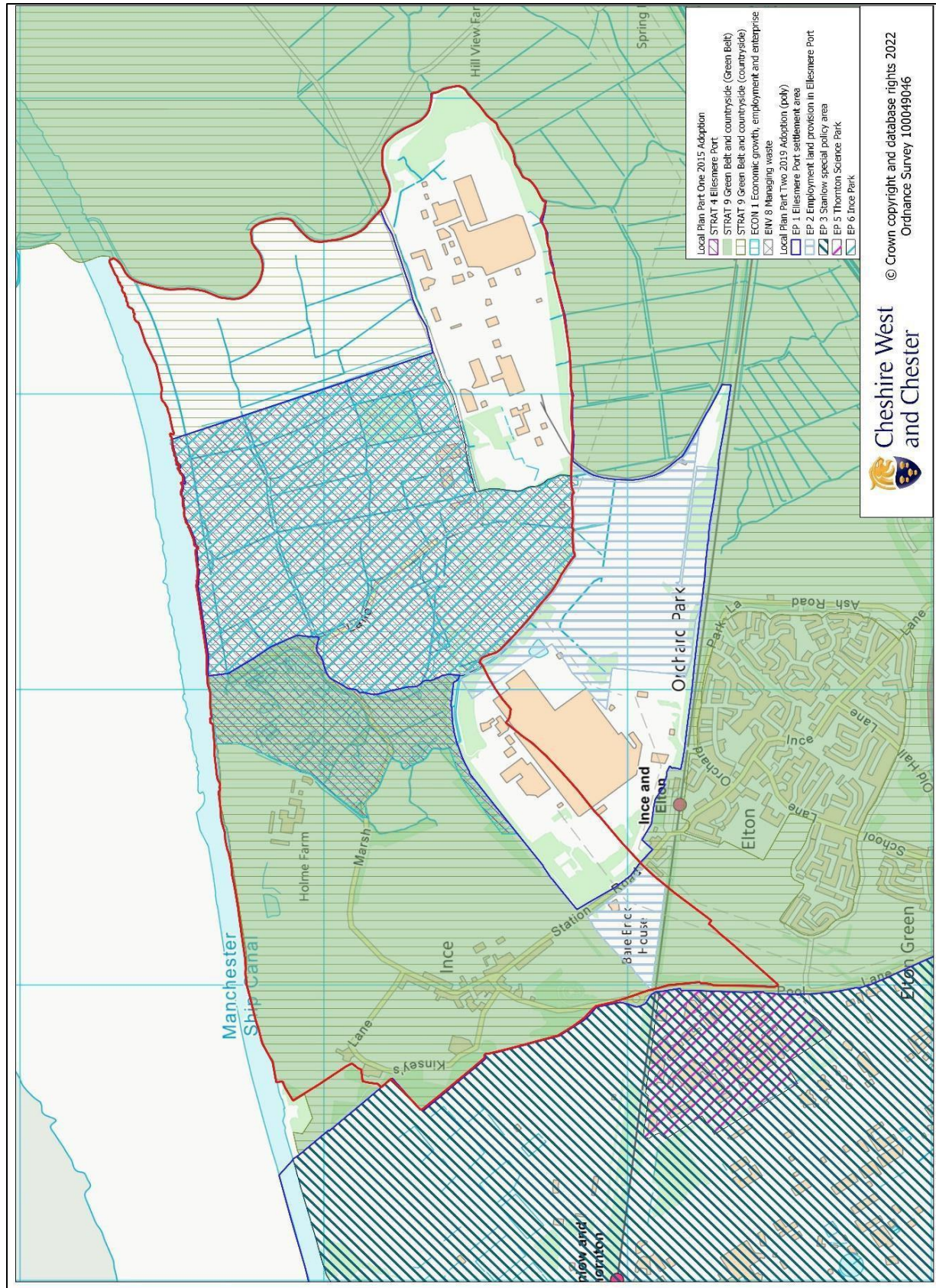
View from Station Road towards The Square



1.11 Figure A - Ince Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



1.12 Figure B - Map of Ince's Strategic Allocations



2. The Reasons for Developing the Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 Reverend F.G. Slater (former vicar of Ince), in his book "A Cheshire Parish" published in 1919, described Ince as:

"an old-world village, with fascinating history, with the remains of a mediaeval abbot's manor house, dignified even in decay; with a stately modern mansion whose gardens are the glory of the countryside; with a wide outlook upon the river and mountain, wood and plain, an outlook which embraces a score of Parish Churches, 2 Cathedrals and 2 ruined castles."

2.2 This description was still appropriate up until the early 1960s' when industry began its encroachment upon the village of Ince. The mansion (Ince Hall) and its beautiful gardens were destroyed to make way for oil tanks. Two farms, Mill Farm and Grove Farm, were also demolished.

2.3 Following this upheaval, other industries began to take hold of the land around Ince. The Marshes, loved by birdwatchers, riders and walkers alike, have since fallen to the hand of industry. The Parish Council and villagers fought a good battle to prevent this destruction, but to no avail.

2.4 Despite this upheaval, Ince village has 27 listed heritage assets. Ince is within the north Cheshire Green Belt, and beautiful views still remain as do green spaces which are important to the village. Wildlife can still be seen and enjoyed. Ince has a designated Conservation Area. This does not, however, include the Parish extension of the Marshes.

2.5 By preparing a Neighbourhood Plan it is hoped to protect and enhance the valued characteristics of the village, improving it to meet the needs of those who live, work, and visit here.

View over pasture land towards the estuary



View along Kinsey's Lane towards Badger Cottage



3. Developing the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 A Working Group was set up by Ince Parish Council in Autumn 2019 and was mandated to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. Throughout the exercise it was essential to involve the local community at each stage and to seek advice from CWaC and to keep them informed of progress.

3.2 Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan followed the statutory legislation set out by the Government in the Localism Act (2011). A list of the stages undertaken is included in **Figure C**. As a basis for discussion and developing the Neighbourhood Plan, the Working Group collected the data and evidence that describes the area and its issues.

Figure C - List of Steps Undertaken to Prepare the Neighbourhood Plan

1. Decide to prepare a neighbourhood plan
2. Decide an area and qualifying body and designate area
3. Establish NP steering group and sub-groups
4. Identify funding opportunities
5. Early community engagement and evidence gathering
6. Draft key issues, vision and objectives and engage with the community on these
7. Draft policies and engage with the community again
8. Send all documents to CWaC for SEA screening and advice
9. Pre-submission consultation
10. Final Plan and supporting documents
11. Formal submission and publicity- This is the current stage of the Neighbourhood Plan
12. Appoint examiner
13. Examination
14. Review examiner's report and note contents
15. Dependant on the Examiner recommendation, discuss referendum date with CWaC - Dependant on the Examiner's recommendations
16. Publish decision statement and finalise plan
17. Referendum
18. Produce final version of plan
19. Plan implementation, monitor and review over time

3.3 The Key Stages in developing the Plan were:

- An initial public meeting was held, in June 2019, when the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan was introduced. This was led by Cheshire Community Action. At this meeting key issues were identified by the community.
- Questionnaires were sent out to the community, in July 2019, in order to gain an idea of who would like to be involved in the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan.
- A second public meeting was held in September 2019 in order to answer more in- depth questions regarding the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up in September 2019
- Approval of the Neighbourhood Plan area was gained from CWaC - see figure A (Designated Neighbourhood Area Map)
- A survey was sent out to the community, in December 2019, to gain a further understanding of what the community thought were the main issues to be included. There was an excellent response with 47% of households responding.
- An analysis of the survey was carried out and a vision and objectives created.
- Feedback on the vision and objectives was sought from the community through a questionnaire delivered in September 2020. This had another excellent response rate of 60%.
- A further survey was carried out in June 2021 in order to determine which green spaces and significant views residents felt should be included in the report. There was an excellent response with 60% of households responding.
- Separate reports were undertaken by the group, or were commissioned, which it was felt would address issues raised as important by the community and which would help inform the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. These included a Conservation Area Appraisal; a report on the Ince's natural environment; a non-designated heritage asset audit; a green space and significant views report; a report on lost footpaths and bridleways and an air quality report. They can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk
- The Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of a six week 'Regulation 14' consultation, where the comments of the local community and statutory consultees were sought.
- Amendments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan following the consultation, before the plan was formally submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council who will organise another six-week consultation.
- The Neighbourhood Plan will be independently examined. Should the examiner agree, the plan will then be the subject of a referendum. All residents of Ince who are on the electoral roll will be eligible to vote whether or not they would like Cheshire West and Chester Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Ince to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. If more than 50% of the people who vote, vote yes, the Neighbourhood Plan will be officially 'made' by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

4. Ince Today

4.1 Ince Parish has around 205 people, living in approximately 90 households. Based on the 2011 census, we know that:

- The population is older than the average in England, with Ince having less children under the age of 16 than the national average (16.3% as compared to 18.9% in England). Ince has more people over the age of 65 (24.1% of the population, as compared to the England average of 16.3%).
- The community is far less ethnically diverse than the England average, with only 4.9% of the community in Ince identifying as white non-British or other minority ethnic, compared to 20.2% in England.
- Average weekly income is lower in the parish than in England and Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC), with higher than average housing and council tax credit claimants living in the Parish, and unfortunately there are slightly more children living in poverty than the England average.
- In Ince 15.7% of people on average are living with a limiting long-term illness, slightly higher than the England average of 12.8%.
- There is a higher than average number of residents who are self-employed than the average for England, and a higher percentage who work from home than the average for England.
- The parish has a slightly larger proportion of detached homes than the England average of 22.3%. The parish has a higher than average percentage of terraced properties and semi-detached properties, but fewer flats. The parish also has a slightly higher proportion of owner occupied homes than average.
- House prices are lower than the average in England, but affordability remains an issue, with an overall affordability ratio of 14:1 (median house price as a ratio of median income).
- Households are less overcrowded than average, but there are slightly more people than average in fuel poverty.
- The car is relied upon heavily as a mode of transport, with more households having 3 and 4+ cars than the average, and far fewer with no car. The national average of economically active people using public transport to get to work is 11%, but in Ince the figure is only 3.3%.
- Ince has a lower population density than England, with 1.42 people per hectare, compared to 4.1 in England.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its vision, objectives and policies from the community. From the outset the Parish Council were determined that the residents should be kept informed and given every opportunity to inform the Steering Group of their views. Communication and consultation, in various forms, have played a major role in formulating the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2 It was therefore considered important to -

- Promote a high degree of awareness of the project
- Encourage everyone to contribute to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Promote consultation events and provide regular updates on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and its development

5.3 Key to this programme was publicity to gain residents engagement. This was gained via public meetings, surveys, newsletters, and electronic media via the Parish Council website at www.inceparishcouncil.uk

5.4 Further information on consultation methods and the results from the consultations can be found in more detail in the Consultation Statement that will accompany the submitted version of the Ince Neighbourhood Plan.

5.5 An initial public meeting was held, in June 2019, when the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan was introduced. At this meeting key issues were identified by the community. Following this meeting, questionnaires were sent out to the community, in July 2019, in order to gain an idea of who would like to be involved in the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan. A second public meeting was held in September 2019 in order to answer more in-depth questions regarding the Neighbourhood Plan process.

5.6 Another survey was sent out to the community, in December 2019, in order to gain a further understanding of what the community thought were the main issues to be included in the Plan. There was an excellent response with 47% of households responding. The survey asked what respondents liked about living in Ince; what they disliked; what would they miss if it were to disappear; whether they considered there to be any threats to the future of Ince; what type of place they would like Ince to be in 2030; what issues should be considered; and were asked to rate what was important to them. The top five ranking issues were air quality; tranquillity; historic and cultural features; the quality of the landscape and views; and hedges and hedgerows and the children's play area.

5.7 An analysis of the survey was carried out and a vision and objectives created. The vision and objectives were consulted upon in a further questionnaire delivered in September 2020. This had another excellent response rate of 60% and the results highlighted overwhelming support for the vision and objectives.

5.8 A further survey was carried out in June 2021 in order to find out which greenspaces and significant views residents felt should be included in the report. The results of this were analysed and the Greenspaces and Significant Views report was created. This had another excellent response rate of 60% return where no greenspace or view received less than 90% vote in favour of protection.

5.9 Suggested amendments to the Conservation Area boundary and suggested additions to non-designated assets and the local list will be consulted upon separately, but at the same time as the Neighbourhood Plan. Agreed additions to the local list and changes to the Conservation Area boundary must be undertaken by the local planning authority (CWaC). If CWaC agree to the proposed changes prior to the final publication of the Neighbourhood Plan, the changes to the Conservation Area and local list additions can be included in the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.10 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the list of statutory and other bodies provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council as required under Regulation 14, Town and Country Planning, England Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012. The six week consultation ran between 24th January and 13th March 2022. All the comments received were carefully considered and amendments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly. A full list of the comments received and the steering groups response can be found in the consultation statement which accompanies this submission version of the Ince Neighbourhood Plan.

St James The Great Church



6. Vision and Objectives

6.1 The vision and objectives are based on the key issues raised by local people during the initial stages of the consultation process. They have been summarised and refined by the Steering Group to form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2 The vision for Ince is:-

Vision

The traditional character of our small, rural parish, within the green belt and countryside, will be retained and enhanced. Future development will reflect our community's needs and aspirations and enhance the quality of life whilst respecting and preserving local landscape, historic features and natural assets. Ince will be an excellent place to live, work, visit and enjoy walking, cycling and horse riding. The environment will enhance the health and well-being of our village which will be a tranquil setting with a strong sense of community.

6.3 Following on from the vision, the following objectives have been identified, and the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan seek to deliver these objectives:

Objectives

- To protect and enhance the Conservation Area and heritage assets for the enjoyment of the community and visitors whilst maintaining the character and distinctiveness of our historic environment.
- To enhance and protect green and open spaces to ensure that they remain to the benefit of the community for future acceptable use.
- To identify, protect and enhance the biodiversity and various habitats whilst improving the connectivity of green infrastructure.
- To enhance and protect our historic landscape including hedgerows, trees, woodland and agricultural land and views.
- To support renewable energy sources which benefit our local community impacting favourably on health and well-being with emphasis on improving the quality of air and reduction in noise pollution.
- To improve access to our countryside through enhancement of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways which support the health and well-being of our community whilst also benefiting flora and fauna by enhancing and protecting green corridors between habitats.
- To actively support our rural economy that enables and encourages small scale employment opportunities and agricultural development and to ensure that appropriate industrial development is directed to the strategic employment sites.

7. Heritage and Conservation Policies

7.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To protect and enhance the Conservation Area and heritage assets for the enjoyment of the community and visitors whilst maintaining the character and distinctiveness of our historic environment.

Policy HER1 - Heritage

Proposals will be supported if they preserve or enhance Ince's designated and non-designated heritage assets. Proposals will be supported which preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Ince's Conservation Area, taking account of significant heritage assets. Proposals will be supported which preserve or enhance Ince's listed buildings, structures or any curtilages, and which conserve the significance of a listed building and its setting, securing its optimum use. Reference should be made to the most recent designated Conservation Area Appraisal.

Proposals for development must take into account the scale of any possible harm or loss and the significance of any heritage assets and will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that 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.

The historic integrity of the landscape and component heritage features and assets should be preserved, and the interpretation of these features will be promoted and supported where this would not be at odds with the conservation of these assets.

In relation to any buildings or structures which may be included on a local list of heritage assets, development proposals will be encouraged or supported where they are designed to preserve or enhance the significance of these non-designated assets. Reference should be made to the most recent Audit of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in the Parish of Ince, Cheshire, or any updated versions.

7.2 Evidence and Justification

7.3 Ince is very fortunate to have a long and rich history. It is uncertain when settlement commenced in Ince, but Ince was recorded in the Domesday Book as Inise, from the Primitive Welsh ynys, meaning "island". The name refers to the village's position on a low ridge in the marshlands around the rivers Gowy and Mersey. The Welsh or Celtic origins of the place name point to it being an identified place during or immediately after the Roman period.

7.4 As is detailed in the Ince Conservation Area Appraisal, Ince is a small but active agricultural village retaining many historic buildings. Surrounded by fields and marshes, its setting is inseparable from the views and open space of the Mersey, notwithstanding the encroachment of industry and development. Yet Ince has been a place of recurring historic significance and transformation throughout its long history, with structures and buildings testifying to each chapter: Roman maritime defence; medieval monastic institutions; Georgian promotion of transport, fishing, recreational activities and links with Liverpool; the 19th century transformation of the village by the Park-Yates family and estate as well as by the Manchester Ship Canal; and the 20th century impact of the decline of landed estates, of war, technology and changing agricultural practices. The special interest of Ince derives as much from the diversity of its history and architecture, as from its estuarial landscape and views.

7.5 There are twenty seven Listed Buildings in the parish. One is these is listed at Grade I, the highest grade, (Ince Manor) one at Grade II* the middle grade, (St. James' Church), and the rest are at Grade II. There are a wide range of listed buildings which include farmhouses; walls; cottages; houses; lamp posts; stocks; and a telephone box. The Listed buildings are shown on Figure D, below. There is also a Conservation Area in Ince (see figure E). Ince Manor monastic grange and fish pond is also a scheduled monument, as is a Roman Fortlet which lies 150m north east of Hall Farm.

7.6 The Neighbourhood Plan group commissioned Kathryn Sather & Associates to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal www.inceparishcouncil.uk Following a review of the listed heritage assets it was discovered that there were a number of buildings and structures that, whilst of some historical merit, did not benefit from statutory designation. A 'local list' was therefore prepared, with a great deal of input from the steering group, for consideration and consultation. Local assets were assessed against the five selection criteria of architectural or historical character; historical associations; local distinctiveness; group value; and townscape value and are described in detail in the report. The audit of non-designated assets can also be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk It is intended that a number of assets will therefore eventually be included on a local list of heritage assets following the appropriate publicity and procedures advised in Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) 7 being undertaken in conjunction with Cheshire West and Chester Council officers. A list of Ince's Locally Listed Buildings will be available from Ince Parish Council and the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER).

7.7 A locally listed asset is a building structure or feature, which whilst not listed by the Secretary of State for its national importance, is considered to be of local importance due to its architectural, historical or environmental significance. Historic England Advice note 7 (Local Heritage Listing) defines a local list as 'Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes identified by local planning authorities as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated'. Historic England define the process of local listing as a 'means for a community and a local planning authority to

identify heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local historic environment.'

7.8 The purpose of the local list is to ensure that care is taken over decisions affecting the future of these buildings, and that their significance is taken fully into account. Alterations should respect the particular character and interest of the building, and any works carried out should use appropriate materials and retain any features of architectural or historic interest. Although it is not necessary to apply for Listed Building Consent for works to a locally listed building, and locally listed designations are still generally subject to permitted development rights, planning decisions should consider the impact of proposed development on all heritage assets whether designated or not. The importance of protecting these assets is to ensure that their special interest is considered in planning decisions.

7.9 In addition to the list of non-designated heritage assets, a small number of buildings and structures have been identified as 'positive contributors' which are not included on the local list. A positive contributor is a heritage asset that makes a positive contribution to the surrounding area but is neither a designated nor non-designated heritage asset. They are classed as heritage assets as they are identified by the local authority as having a degree of significance, meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their heritage interest. They can include individual buildings or groups that contribute positively to the special architectural interest, character or appearance of the area and those that are distinctive, rare or unique. Their inclusion as positive contributors will also be consulted upon along with the non-designated assets that are proposed for inclusion on the local list, and form part of the audit that can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk

7.10 The list of non-designated assets, positive contributors and suggested amendments to the Conservation Area boundary were consulted upon at the same time, but separately to the Neighbourhood Plan. Agreed additions to the local list and changes to the Conservation Area boundary were undertaken by the local planning authority (CWaC).

7.11 The NPPF recognises that heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, and that these assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. This policy is in conformity with Policies DM 47 and DM48 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, Part Two. The justification for Policy DM48 states that often neighbourhood plans can identify local heritage assets as the communities who prepare these documents are best placed to understand the local features of heritage value and the special character which makes their village or town distinctive.

Policy HER2 – Ince Conservation Area

Development proposals in the most recently designated Ince Conservation Area (Figure E) must demonstrate how they have considered the Ince Conservation Area Character Appraisal and must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, taking account of the following:

- the layers of historical development expressed in the buildings and structures of Ince, and the variety of housing, illustrating the settlement's development over time;
- the well preserved vernacular architecture, the prevalence and widespread use of local sandstone, and the well -designed buildings of architectural and historic interest;
- the historic character and landscape setting of Ince, combining the Mersey estuary and surrounding fields and marshland;
- the importance of farming to the architecture, landscape and character of the area. Development should ensure that the footprint of new buildings and their scale fits into the agricultural nature of the settlement;
- the public open spaces and green spaces both at the heart of the Conservation area, and at its fringe, which contribute to the setting of the buildings and frame views into and out of the Conservation Area;
- the network of public footpaths; and the significant trees which add to the character and setting of the Conservation Area;
- the boundary treatments of stone walls which close to The Square are more formal, and elsewhere are more rural with stone walls of low and medium height sometimes incorporating bedrock, in various styles. Fence boarding and concrete posts should be avoided;
- the setting of the three landmark buildings of St. James Church, Ince Manor/Grange and 1-3 The Square.

Policy HER3 – Views and Setting of Ince Conservation Area

Development proposals in the most recently designated Ince Conservation Area (Figure E) must demonstrate how they have considered the Ince Conservation Area Character Appraisal and should respect or enhance the following:

- the important views into the Conservation Area - north along Station Road towards The Square and the church; north from the bottom of Parish Field, towards the church and churchyard; south from Kinsey's Lane towards the village centre; and south up Marsh Lane towards Ince Manor (and from further i.e. from Fens Wood);
- the important views out of the Conservation Area - north from The Square and Marsh Lane towards the estuary and Runcorn Bridge; north from Kinsey's Lane across the North Hills, adjoining fields and the estuary; north east from rear of Smithy Farm across fields towards the estuary; and west and South from the churchyard inland towards Helsby Hill; and the important views within the Conservation Area - north east along Pool Lane towards The Square and 1-3 The Square, view entering the village from Pool Lane, view from Kinsey's Lane towards Pool Lane, view across Wood Farm Field towards Hall Farm

Views and setting are not heritage assets, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated.

Significant views can be seen on Figure L.

7.13 Evidence and Justification

7.14 The Ince Conservation Area was designated in 1969, and an appraisal was first undertaken in 2004. Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the Parish Council commissioned Kathryn Sather & Associates to undertake a Conservation Area Appraisal of the Ince Conservation Area. The report can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies the points of importance to the Conservation Area and should be considered with any development proposal.

7.15 The Conservation Area Appraisal 2021 has recommended that there should be a number of boundary changes to the existing Conservation Area. The suggested changes include an extension to the Southeast to incorporate all of the farmyards of Village Green and Lower Green Farms and the former cricket field, adjacent to Lower Green Farm; a boundary extension to the south to include properties on Station Road, parish field and the reservoir; and a boundary extension to the north along Marsh Lane to Kinsey's Lane.

7.16 As detailed above in paragraph 7.14, proposed changes were consulted upon at the same time as the Neighbourhood Plan by officers from Cheshire West and Chester Council. Cheshire West and Chester Council approved revisions to the Conservation Area boundary in March 2023 as shown on Figure E.

7.17 The heritage assets and Conservation Area are an integral part of Ince's character and are strongly valued by the community. Indeed, the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire highlighted how strongly the community value the historic environment, with historic and cultural features ranking as one of the top five issues that residents considered to be of the most important to them. It is important that the heritage assets are protected from inappropriate development and, where possible, enhanced. The NPPF highlights the importance of conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Ince Manor



Old Hall Farm



Wood Farmhouse



Yew Tree Farm



Manor House The Square



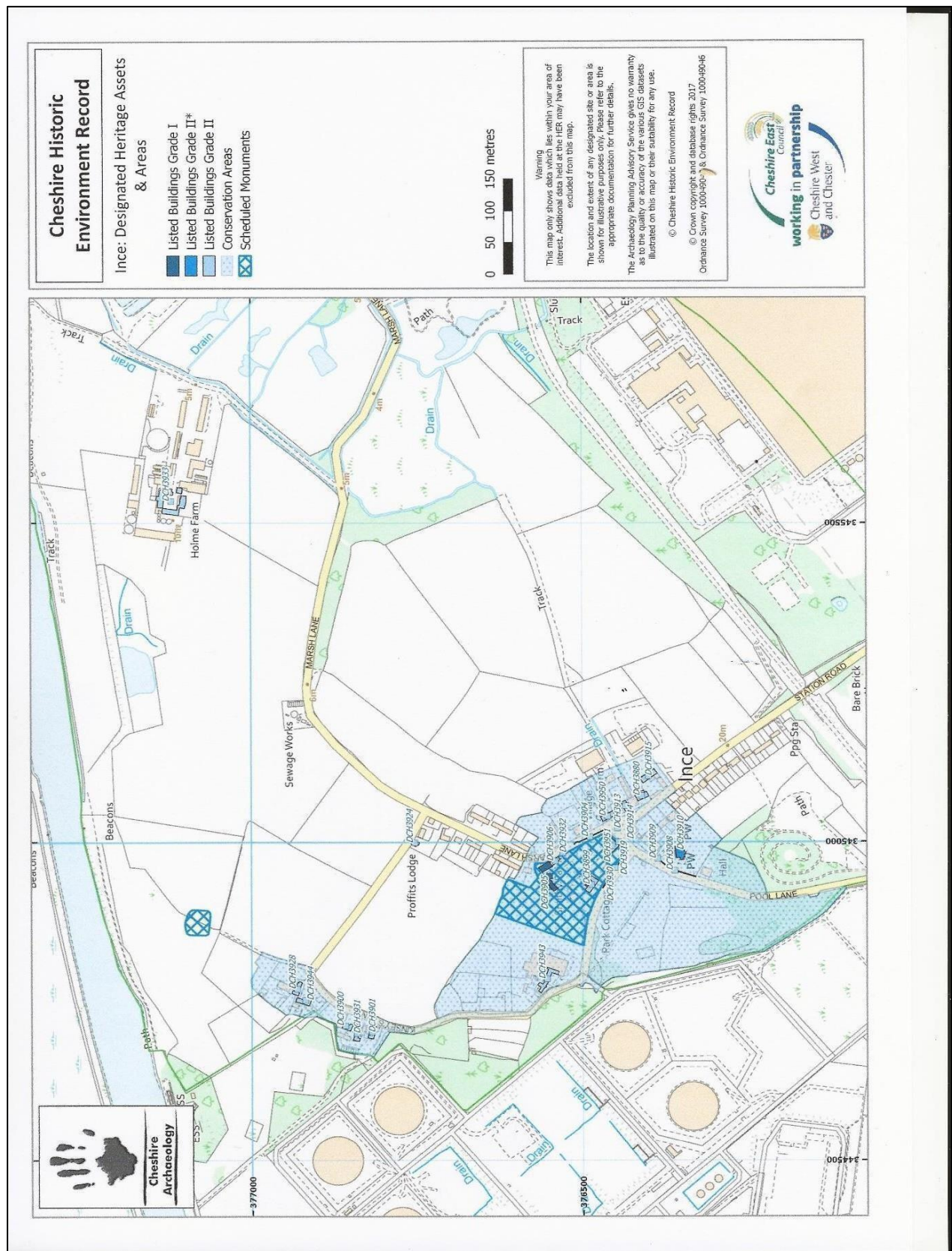
Photo of Ince Cricket Match in 1937



View towards Monastic Grange over Wood Farm field

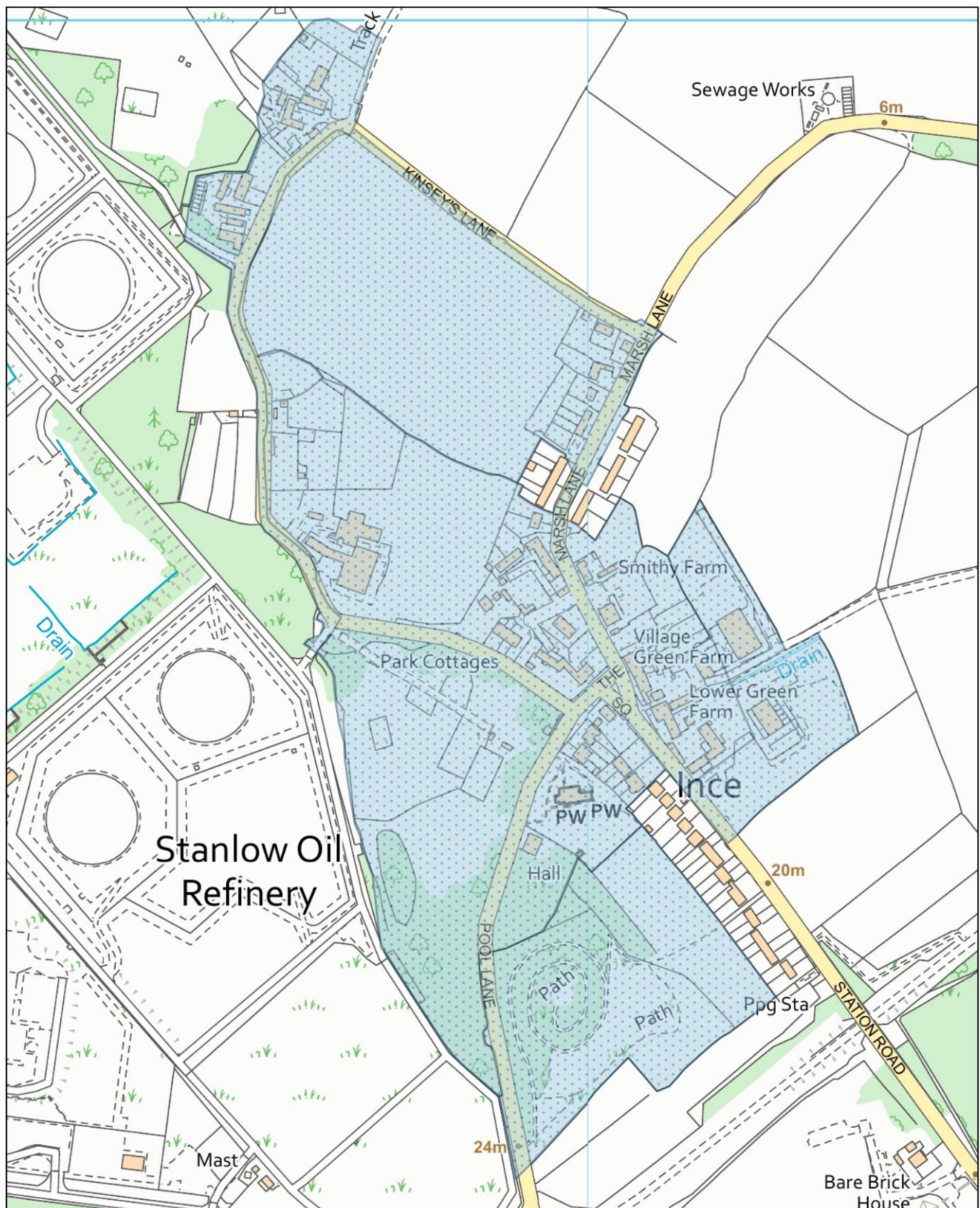


7.18 Figure D - Listed Heritage Assets in Ince



Note: Figure E shows the revised Conservation Area boundary (2023)

7.19 **Figure E - Ince Conservation Area**



8. Local Green Space Policy

8.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To enhance and protect green and open spaces to ensure that they remain to the benefit of the community for future acceptable use.

Policy LGS1 – Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Spaces, in line with NPPF paragraphs 101 and 102, and Local Green Space guidance in PPG:-

LGS1 – St. James' Churchyard

LGS4 – Fens Wood

LGS5 – Goldfinch Meadows

LGS6 – Ince Reservoir

LGS8 – Park Field Pool Lane

LGS9 – The Meadows Kinsey's Lane

LGS13 – The Parish Field

8.2 Evidence and Justification

8.3 The National Planning Policy Framework highlights that local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. Land designated as Local Green Space will benefit from development management policies consistent with those of Green Belts, as stated in NPPF paragraph 103 (2021). Policy ENV2 – Landscape of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part One supports the designation of Local Green Spaces, and the justification to the policy highlights that the designation of Local Green Spaces provides communities with the opportunity to safeguard green areas which are of particular significance to the local community. The importance of green spaces to the Council is highlighted by the approval of Cheshire West and Chester Council's Environmental Management Strategy in June 2021, covering parks and greenspaces, wildflower and grasslands, and play.

8.4 Local Green Space designation should only be used:

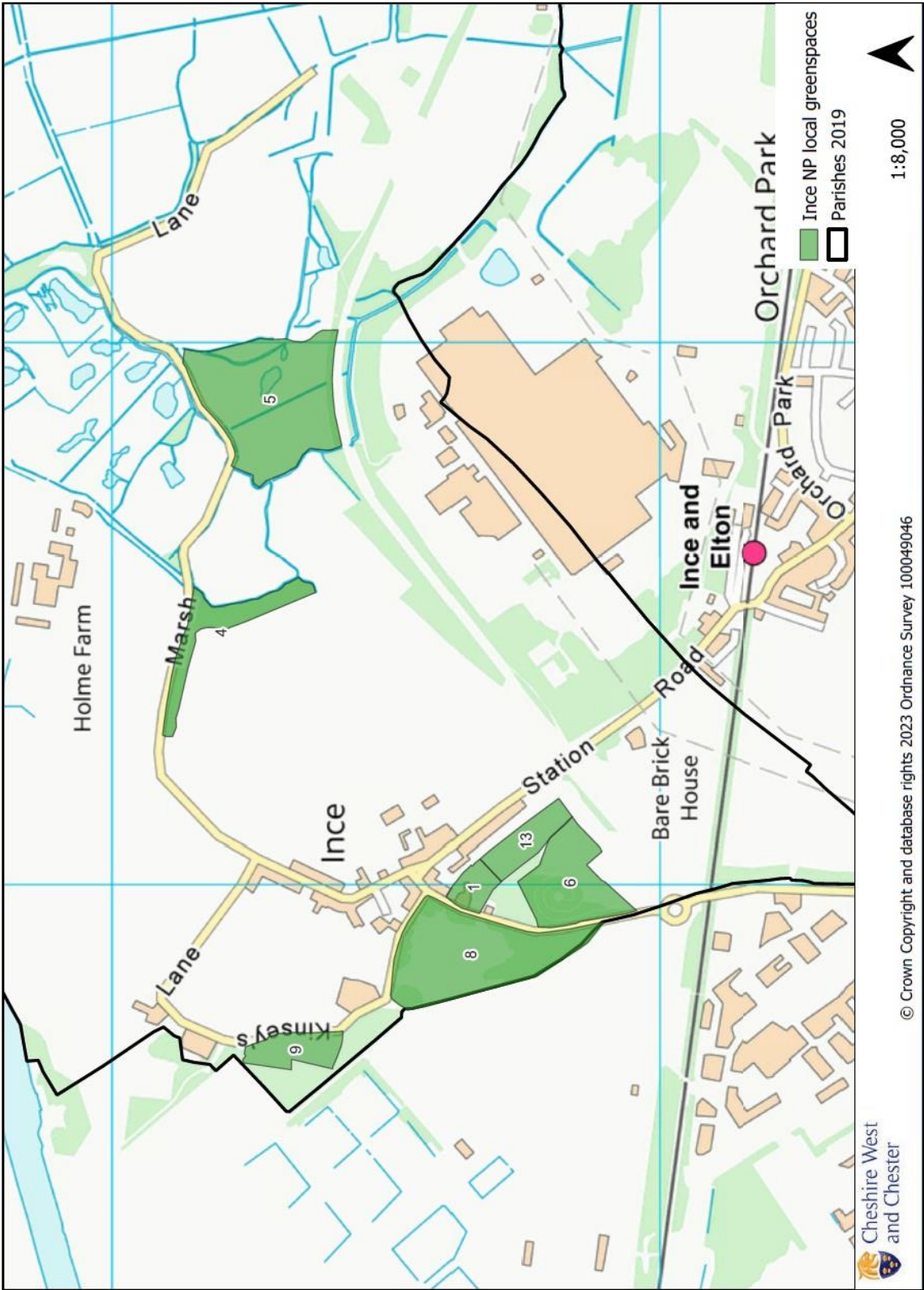
- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic

significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

8.5 The Neighbourhood Plan steering group have prepared a green space report, which can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk and which gives further information as to their value to the community and the contribution that they make to Ince, along with photographs and individual maps. Local green spaces are all considered to make an important contribution to the Parish, and a number were highlighted as making a valuable contribution to the setting or character of the conservation area. When residents were asked in the Neighbourhood Plan survey what they would miss most if it was to disappear, green spaces was the most popular answer. The Local Green Spaces are identified on Figure F.

8.6 Figure F- Map of Local Green Spaces



9. Natural Environment Policies

9.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives:-

- To identify, protect and enhance the biodiversity and various habitats whilst improving the connectivity of green infrastructure.
- To enhance and protect our historic landscape including hedgerows, trees, woodland and agricultural land and views.

Policy NAT1 – Wildlife Sites, Indicative Wildlife Corridors and Biodiversity

Development must have regard to Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan policies ENV4 and DM44. Where development is proposed which would adversely affect local wildlife sites (Figure G), areas of high distinctiveness (Figure H) and the indicative wildlife corridor (Figure I), it will only be supported where the balance of the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the impact it is likely to have on the site and the wider network of sites. The enhancement of local wildlife sites, wildlife corridors and areas of high distinctiveness will be supported.

Areas identified on Figure H as supporting high distinctiveness habitat, which are not covered by strategic land allocations in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (policies ENV8/ STRAT4/ ECON1/ EP6 and EP2) shall be protected by at least a 15m buffer zone.

Development likely to have an impact on protected sites (statutory and non-statutory), protected/priority species, priority habitats or geological sites must be accompanied by an Ecological Assessment to meet the requirements of Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan policy DM44 and be carried out to industry standards. This may include bird surveys to determine the potential for any likely significant effects on the designated features of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar.

The indicative wildlife corridor network which lies out of the strategic land allocations in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (policies ENV8/ STRAT4/ ECON1/ EP6 and EP2) shall be protected by a 15m buffer zone. New developments must, where possible, not create divisions between existing indicative wildlife corridors (Figure I) and where possible should contribute to the creation of new or improved links.

Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity shall be supported.

New developments shall demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity using a biodiversity metric calculation and avoidance/ mitigation strategies. Compensatory measures (for example biodiversity offsetting) will be required if a net loss of biodiversity is required.

9.2 Evidence and Justification

9.3 The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is one of the core objectives of the planning system. The residents of Ince are keen to protect wildlife and nature conservation interests, and the tranquillity of the parish, along with the importance of the landscape and views were one of the issues that residents felt were most important. Recognising the importance of the countryside to local residents, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group commissioned Cheshire Wildlife Trust to undertake a study of Ince's natural environment, in order to inform and produce appropriate policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. The report 'Protecting and Enhancing Ince's Natural Environment' was finalised in April 2021 and can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk

9.4 The report identified areas of high distinctiveness habitat which are natural or semi natural habitats that are of significant or critical importance to wildlife due to their high biodiversity and ecological values. These should be a priority for conservation. Additionally, the report identified medium value habitats (medium distinctiveness) which provide important wildlife habitats in their own right. Additionally, the report identified key local and regional ecological networks within the Neighbourhood Plan area that should be protected through Neighbourhood Plan policies. The indicative wildlife corridors, buffer zones and areas of high distinctiveness apply outside of the strategic allocations (see Figure B) and extant planning permissions.

9.5 The study identified numerous major areas of high value (distinctiveness) habitat in the Neighbourhood Plan area which are recommended for protection, including Frodsham and Helsby and Ince Marshes Local Wildlife Site. This comprises of coastal floodplain and grazing marsh, which have high ornithological importance particularly for wetland and wading birds including curlews and black-tailed godwits, important grassland and wetland habitats and diverse flora and invertebrate interest. Curlews are listed as near threatened by the International Union for Nature Conservation and are of international importance. Grass snakes are also known to favour the damp habitats of the grazing marshes.

9.6 Two ecological mitigation areas have been created within Ince Park, which comprise of semi-improved neutral grassland, marshy grassland, swamp, agricultural fields and broadleaved woodlands. A series of ponds, ditches and scrapes have also been created to support wetland birds and water vole populations. These areas provide vital wetland habitat features and botanical diversity, providing habitat for creatures such as the brown hare, barn owls and bats. Due to their decline, marshy grassland and swamp are nationally important habitats, and support a variety of plants and invertebrates such as dragonflies and damselflies.

9.7 A potential local wildlife site is identified within the Neighbourhood Plan area, abutting the Station Road Railway Local Wildlife Site which lies immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. The site is a large expanse of open mosaic habitat offering suitable habitat for reptiles such as the common lizard. However, this land is allocated for employment under Local Plan (Part Two) Policy EP2.G. and so at this time it is not appropriate to be included as a Local Wildlife Site. If the employment allocation does not become developed, it is hoped that the site's designation as a local wildlife site could be revisited. If the site is developed, the wildlife value of the site must be considered in any proposals, along with an ecological evaluation and measures detailed as to how any adverse impacts are to be mitigated.

9.8 Undesignated areas of /medium habitat distinctiveness were also identified as they provide important wildlife habitats in their own right as well as acting as ecological stepping stones. These include grasslands and further woodlands and scattered trees and hedgerows which are invaluable for wildlife, supporting invertebrates, amphibians, bats, mammals and overwintering and breeding habitats for birds, many of which are in decline, such as the yellow hammer, house sparrow and bullfinch. There are also numerous scattered field ponds within the Parish, contributing to the permeability of the landscape for wildlife including protected species such as the great crested newt.

9.9 The Cheshire Wildlife Trust report highlighted that old meadows supporting species rich neutral or marsh semi natural grassland such as the areas of grazing marsh are the fastest disappearing habitats in the United Kingdom. These areas which are highlighted as medium value distinctiveness should therefore be thoroughly independently evaluated in the development management process should any development be proposed. If they are found to support species rich grassland they should be re-classified as high distinctiveness priority habitat.

9.10 The report also identified areas that act as a wildlife corridor network (figure I) with high ecological connectivity within and beyond the Ince Neighbourhood Plan area. The indicative wildlife corridors identify primary habitat and are core areas for biodiversity across Ince Marshes and the areas of Open Mosaic Habitat in the southwest of the Parish. The identified corridors link valuable areas of habitat including woodlands, grasslands and riparian habitat. The series of watercourses and marshy grassland and swamps support nationally and internationally important bird assemblages, water voles and a diverse array of wetland flora and invertebrates. The maps indicate that the semi natural blocks of broadleaved woodlands are likely to be ancient in origin, in which case they would be considered to be irreplaceable habitat.

9.11 The Cheshire Wildlife Trust report recommended that the indicative

wildlife corridor network (figure I) must be identified in the Neighbourhood Plan and protected from development, so that the guidance relating to ecological networks set out in the NPPF may be implemented at a local level. This network includes a buffer zone of 15 metres in places to protect notable habitats. Any potential developments should ensure that high distinctiveness habitats, wildlife corridors or core areas for wildlife are avoided. Any development adjacent to high or medium value distinctiveness habitats, wildlife corridors or core areas for wildlife should incorporate substantial mitigation to lessen impacts on wildlife while seeking to enhance their overall condition to achieve a net gain for biodiversity. Access to these sites by local wildlife and ornithological groups would be of benefit to the community.

9.12 Land at Ince Park (Protos) is safeguarded for a multi-modal resource recovery park and energy from waste facility for use in connection with the recycling, recovery and reprocessing of waste materials. Policy EP6 – Ince Park of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan provides criteria for the site's development. The overall Ince Park site extends to 104 hectares, with extensive ecological mitigation and sustainable drainage areas incorporated into the overall scheme. The developable area of the site is approximately 50 hectares and comprises various development plots. The Protos site is adjacent to the Mersey Estuary, a wetland area designated as Ramsar and SPA of international importance and SSSI. The site itself is a Local Wildlife site. The extant planning permissions for the site provide for ecological benefits through extensive ecological mitigation areas (approximately 50 hectares across five areas). It is important that development on the site, where possible, recognises and protects the wildlife corridors and their buffers within the site and does not create divisions.

9.13 Policy EP6 is clear that any development on the Ince Park site minimises and mitigates adverse impacts on nature conservation within and adjoining the site and that the ecological mitigation areas that form part of the consented resource recovery park are retained, or there is no net loss in the area and type of ecological mitigation provided within the borough. Additionally, the landscape mitigation areas that form part of the consented resource recovery park must be retained either in the consented form or through alternative equivalent provision and any development must provide appropriate landscaping that respects the landscape character of the site and its surroundings.

9.14 Policy DM44 of Part Two of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan highlights that development proposals should increase the size, quality or quantity of priority habitat within core areas, corridors or stepping stones and within corridors and stepping stones, improve the connectivity of habitats for the movement of mobile species. The policy highlights that development in buffer zones should minimise adverse impacts from pollution or disturbance, and

developments should contribute towards the integration and creation of green infrastructure and habitats in line with Local Plan (Part One) policy ENV3 - Green Infrastructure. The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/total-environment/landscape-character-assessment.aspx stresses the importance of creating a continuous network of wildlife corridors to increase biodiversity.

9.15 Providing net gain' for biodiversity is embedded in the guidance in the NPPF. Future development in Ince should respect the natural environment. The most intact landscapes, in terms of biodiversity, landform and historical/cultural associations should be valued highly when planning decisions are made. Protection and enhancement of Ince's natural assets is of the utmost importance for nature conservation and ecosystem services but it is also important for the enjoyment of future generations.

Decoy Wood



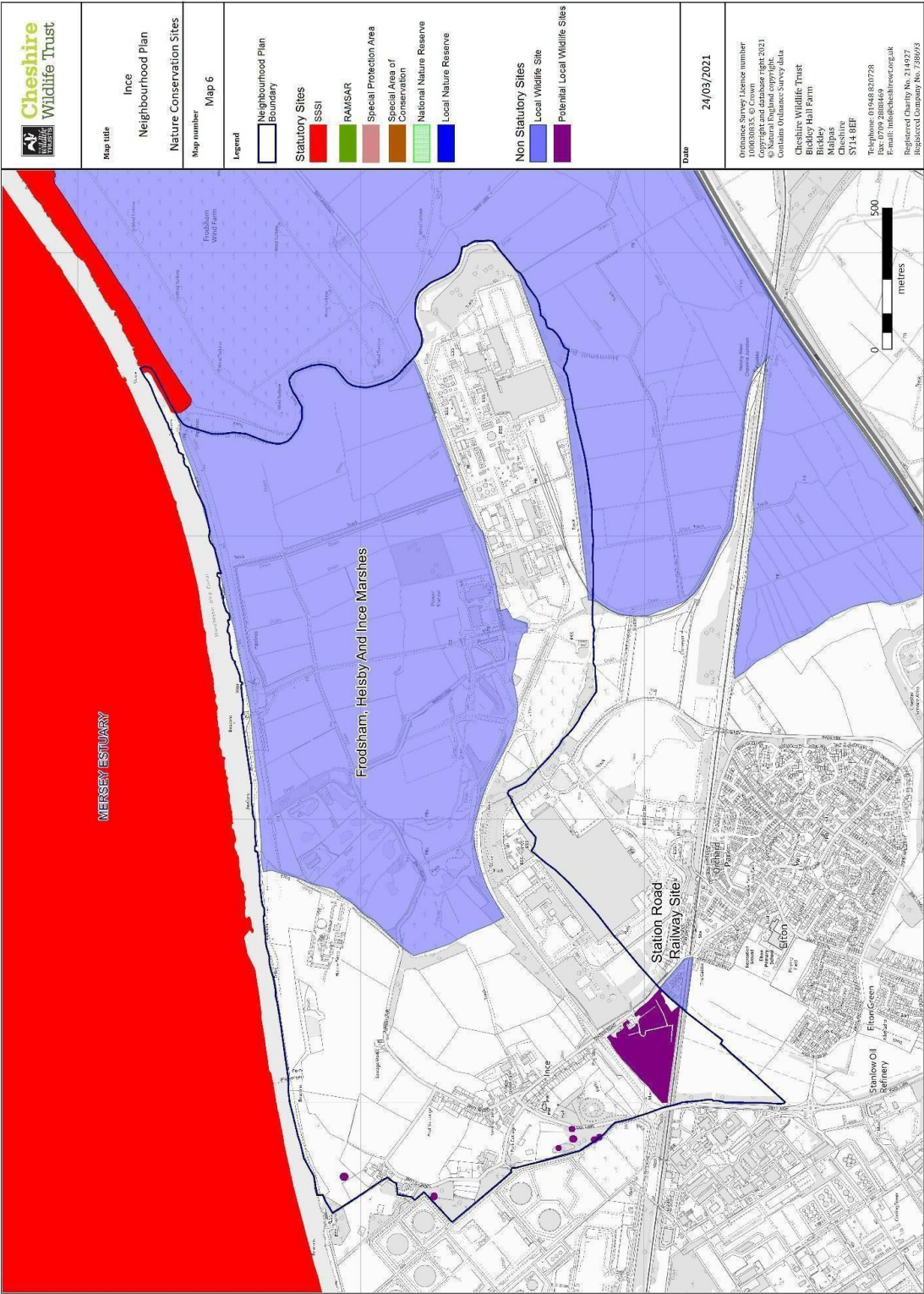
The North Hills



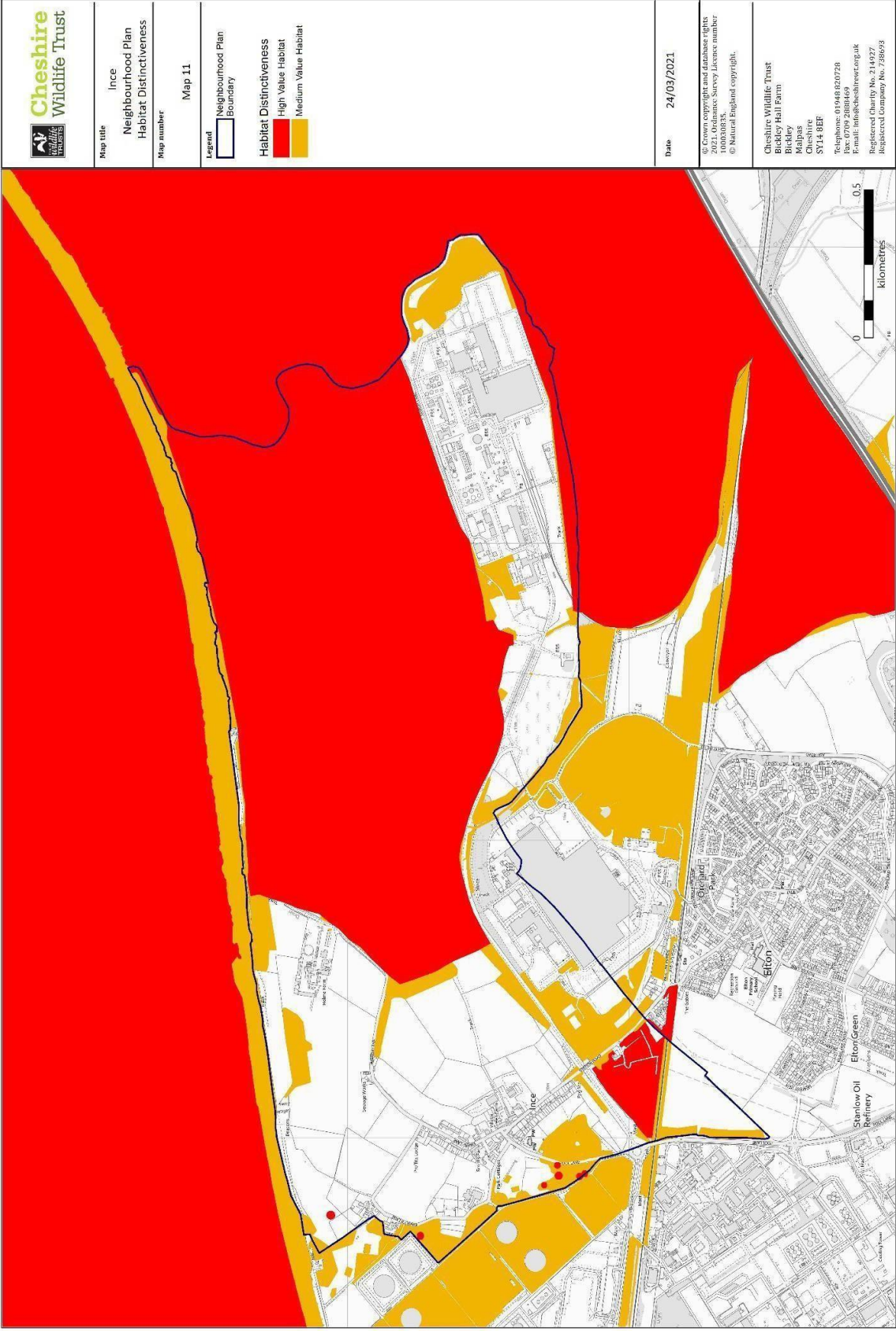
Goldfinch Meadows



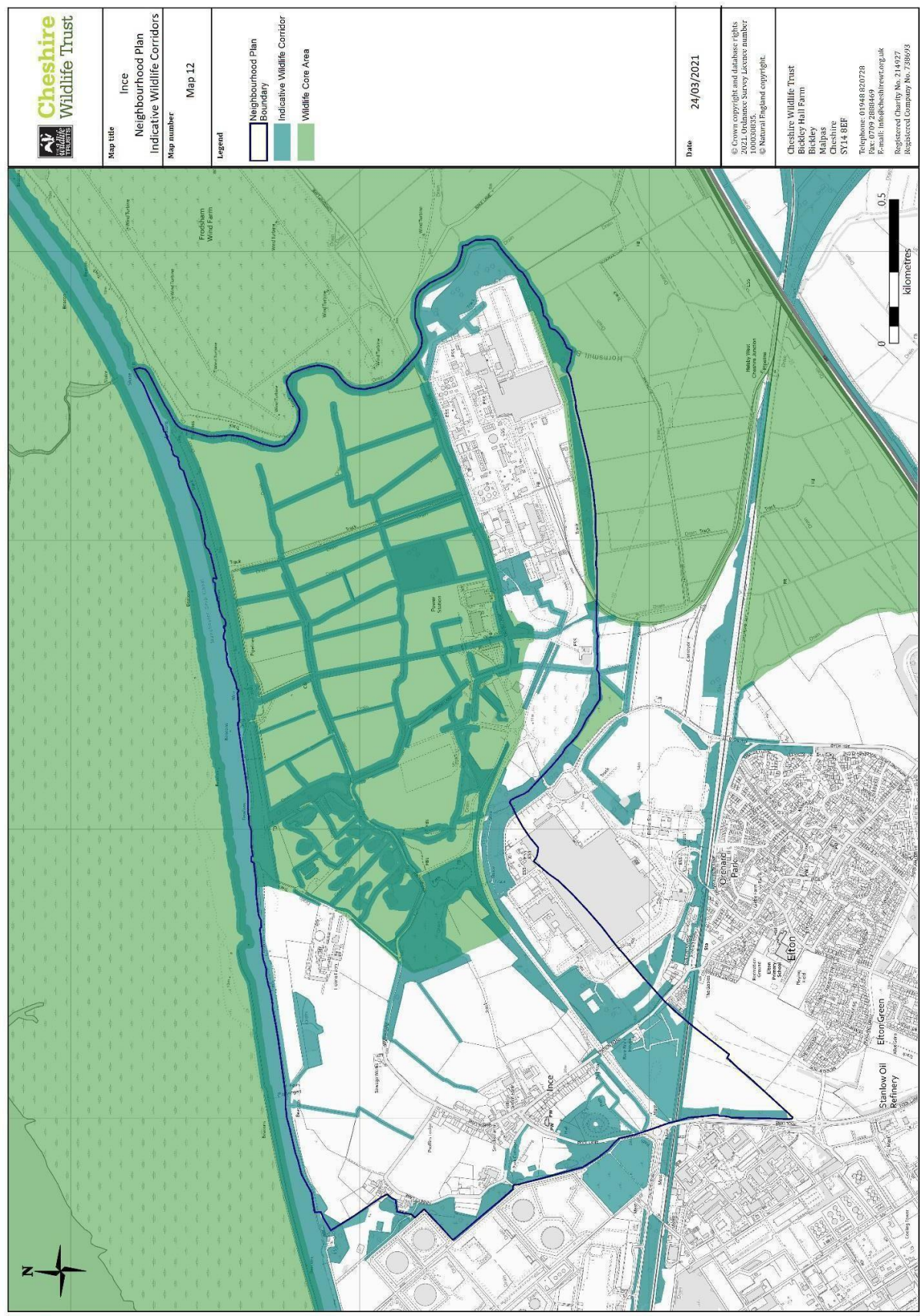
9.16 Figure G – Nature Conservation Sites



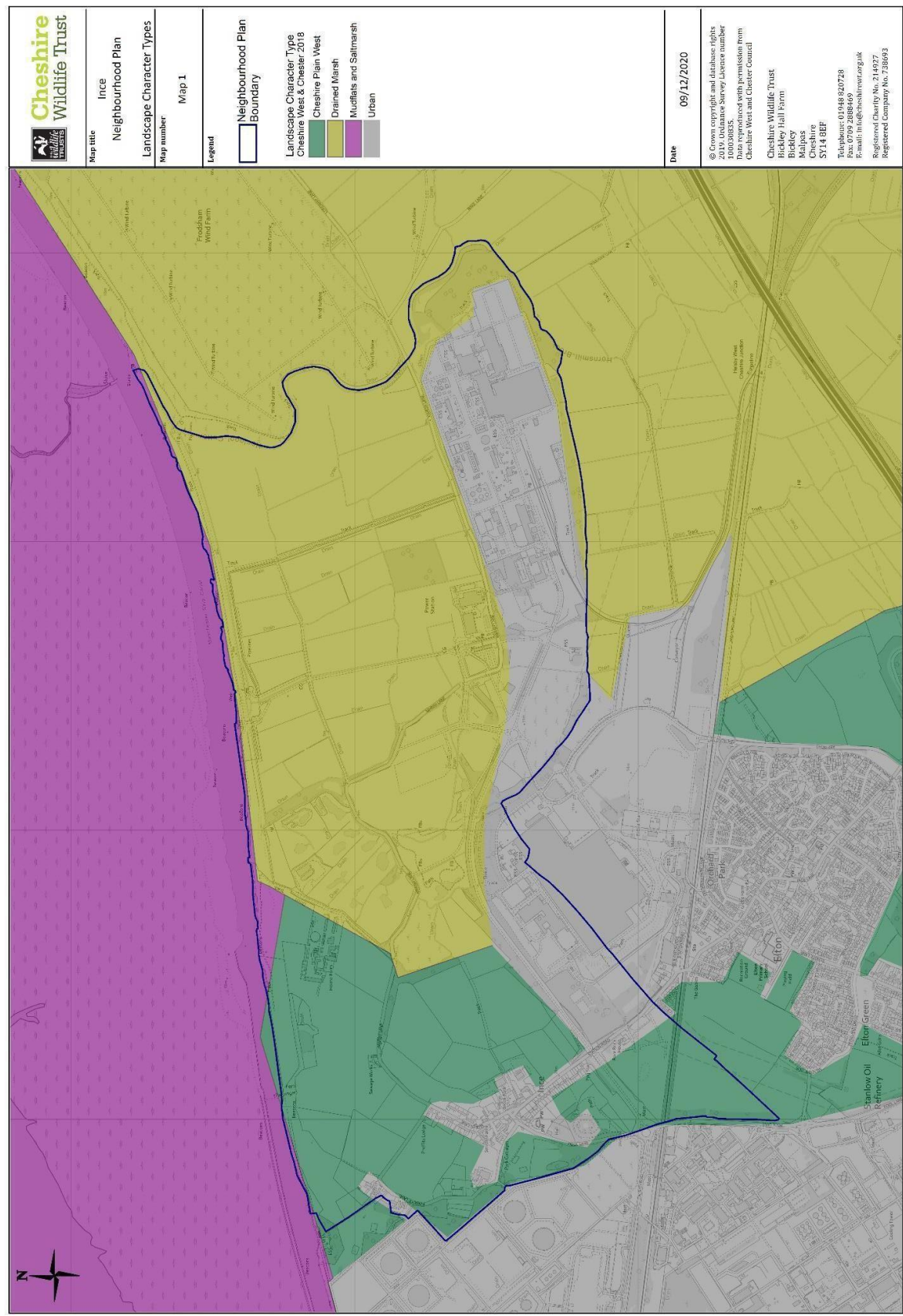
9.17 **Figure H – Map of Habitat Distinctiveness**



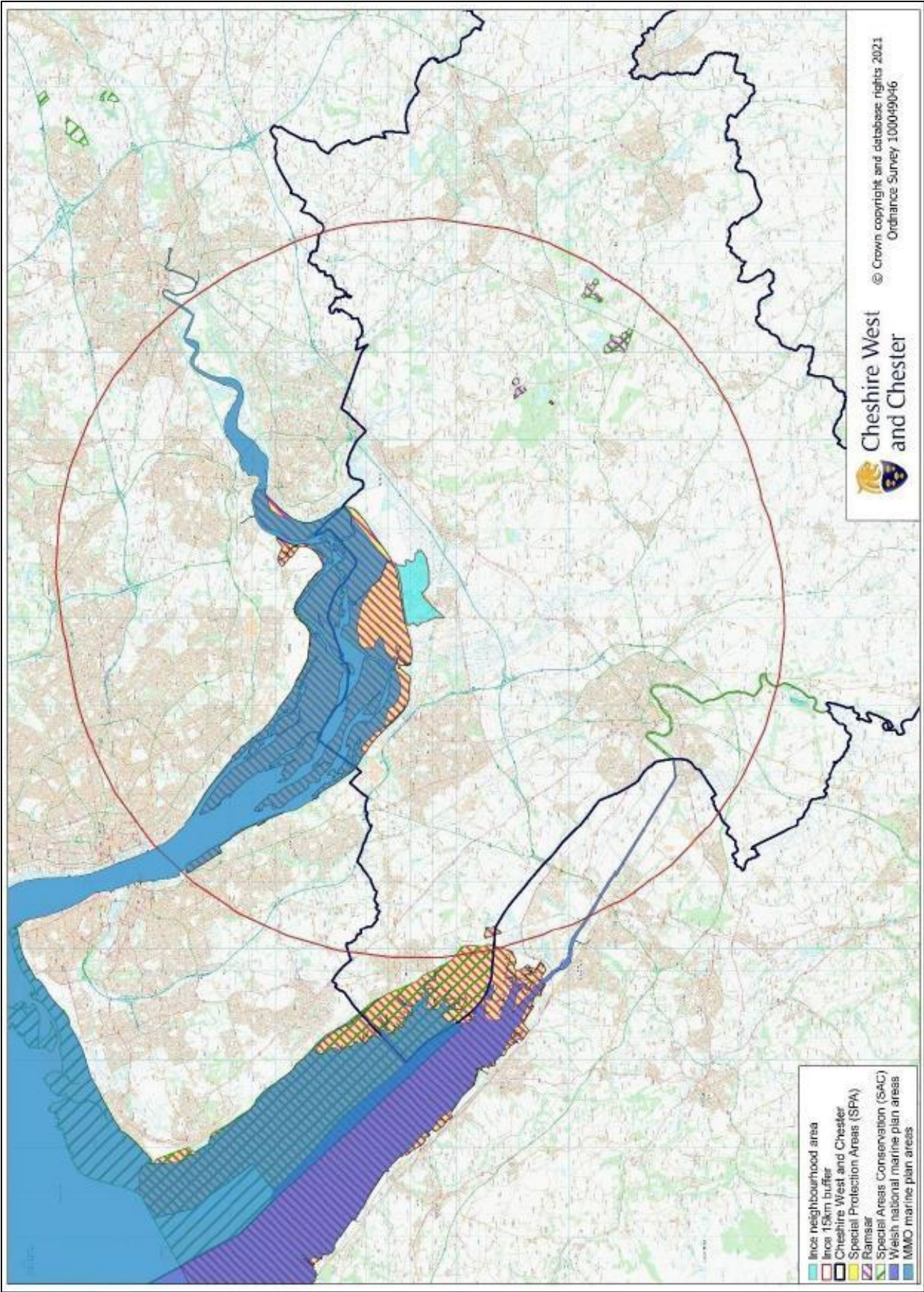
9.18 **Figure I – Indicative Wildlife Corridors**



9.19 Figure J - Landscape Character Types



9.20 **Figure K - Ince SEA Map**



9.21 Landscape Character and Design

Policy NAT2 – Landscape Character

In order to protect the identity of Ince Parish, new development in the greenbelt and open countryside must, where appropriate, respect and enhance the landscape character of the area, as defined in the CWAC Landscape Strategy (March 2016) - Part 1 and Part 2 Cheshire West and Chester Council - Local Plan (Part Two) evidence documents or any updated versions. Development will not be supported if it causes significant harm to the character or setting of the parish.

Development should, where possible –

- a) Maintain the low density, scattered settlement pattern and the rural setting of the village, conserve the green spaces and hedgerows within the village, and in areas of green belt and open countryside, conserve the remaining open, undeveloped areas of the marshes.
- b) Respect the open, expansive and visually sensitive landscape of the estuary.
- c) Ensure that new boundary treatments and surfacing, wherever possible, recognise, respond to and reflect the traditional vernacular of existing landscape elements that define the landscape character, in order to prevent encroaching sub-urbanisation.

In particular, the wide, expansive views across the green belt towards the marshes, estuary and the SSSI should be respected. New development should seek to maintain or reinforce these views. Significant views are detailed in the 'Significant Views within the Parish of Ince' www.inceparishcouncil.co.uk and can be seen in **Fig L in 9.36**. Where development is likely to impact any significant views as detailed in the document, a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment or similar study should be undertaken to evaluate any impacts the proposal would have upon the landscape.

Policy NAT3 - Design and Wildlife

In order to protect and enhance the local wildlife, all development should, where possible -

- a) Incorporate measures to improve wetland bird habitat into any scheme that could impact the wetland bird population within the parish.
- b) Embed out of bounds areas and dark corridors along watercourses, woodland edges and hedgerows into the environmental design of a scheme.
- c) Incorporate directional, low spillage (bat sensitive) lighting on the outside of buildings or in carparks and along pathways and watercourses.
- d) Install hedgehog-friendly fencing as standard, purposely designed to allow the passage of hedgehogs from one area to another.
- e) Create south facing banks or bunds for reptiles, butterflies and other invertebrates and incorporate bee bricks and bat/bird boxes into the design of buildings, ideally made of highly durable material such as woodcrete.
- f) Ensure that any surface water discharge to a sensitive habitat location is supported by a drainage design which incorporates a treatment train that secures no unacceptable detriment to the receiving habitat.
- g) Incorporate sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) which incorporate an appropriate treatment train that secures no unacceptable detriment to the receiving habitat.

Policy NAT4 – Residential Design

In order to respect the natural and built character of Ince, new residential extensions and development should, where appropriate and viable-

- a) Be of high-quality design and in keeping with local materials and style.
- b) Resist suburban style fencing, garden boundaries, kerbs and lighting unless there are overriding reasons of highway safety.
- c) Soften built edges by introducing small scale planting schemes using native broadleaved species, seeking to integrate garden boundaries with the rural landscape through the use of native hedgerows rather than close-board fencing.
- d) Ensure conversion of farm buildings is sensitive vernacular style, maintaining the existing structure of simple form and sandstone/ red brick finish and ensuring that features which accompany the conversion such as driveways and gardens do not 'suburbanise' the landscape.
- e) Ensure that the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and SBD (Secured By Design) are considered and crime preventative measures implemented.

9.22 Evidence and Justification

9.23 The rural and agricultural setting of Ince Parish within the landscape is very important to the local community. The Conservation Area Appraisal 2021 describes Ince itself as a small but active agricultural village retaining many historic buildings and attracting recreational users on foot, horseback and bicycles for its landscape and biodiversity. Surrounded by fields and marshes, its setting is inseparable from the estuarial landscape, and the views and open space of the Mersey, notwithstanding the encroachment of industry and development.

9.24 The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan has not identified any strategic housing need for Ince. The small village of Ince lies within the Green Belt and open countryside, and it has not been designated as a local service centre. Other than strategic employment allocations that fall within the Parish, development proposals must therefore accord with Policy STRAT9 of the Local Plan – Green Belt and Countryside, which restricts development to that which requires a countryside location and cannot be accommodated within identified settlements.

9.25 On a national level, the Parish of Ince lies within National Character Area (NCA) 61 the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain and extends to NCA 62 the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge; a discontinuous ridge rising sharply from the Cheshire

Plain, and NCA 64 - the Mersey Valley Character Area. Cheshire West and Chester Council have produced a Local Landscape Character Assessment Landscape Strategy (2016) that incorporates 16 Landscape Character Types (LCTs).

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/total-environment/landscape-character-assessment.aspx

Different aspects such as geology, landform, soils, vegetation and land use have been used to identify recognisable patterns that have been categorised into different LCTs. This Landscape Strategy is intended to be used as a basis for planning and the creation of future landscape strategies, as well as raising public awareness of landscape character and creating a sense of place. The strategy highlights the key characteristics of each character area, along with landscape management and built development guidelines.

9.26 These guidelines, along with recommendations from the Cheshire Wildlife Trust report Protecting and Enhancing Ince's Natural Environment (2021) have been incorporated into this policy.

9.27 There are three character areas applicable to Ince Parish (See Figure J). A large part of the Ince Neighbourhood Planning area falls within the Cheshire Plain West landscape character area, which has been subdivided, with Ince falling within LCA 9a Dunham to Tarvin Plain. The overall management strategy for this landscape should be to conserve and restore the historic field pattern of hawthorn hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees, enhance the grassland and small woodland network, and limit the influence of urban and industrial development to the north on the rural character of the plain. Key characteristics include:-

- A broad, gently shelving and mostly flat plain landscape characterised by hedges and hedgerow trees providing limited vistas;
- Wide areas of improved grassland for dairy farming and fodder crops;
- Limited woodland, confined to isolated coverts and copses, although hedgerow oaks are important elements of the landscape;
- Extensive network of small field ponds which are generally inconspicuous in the landscape;
- Petro-chemical and Industrial development outside the character area is prominent across the north of the LCA.

9.28 Also falling within the parish is LCT 4 Drained Marsh - with Ince lying within LCA 4a: Frodsham, Helsby and Lordship Marshes. This landscape character type 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, giving the impression of an open unenclosed landscape. The flat, open nature of this landscape often provides expansive views of the surrounding area including the Dee and Mersey estuaries, which are intrinsic to its existence and character. The close proximity to industrial sites and the open views of these areas also has a significant impact. 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. Key characteristics

include:-

- A flat, low-lying landscape of former mudflats and saltmarsh alongside the Mersey Estuary, contrasting with surrounding built development;
- The flat landscape is 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;
- Land to the north of Lordship Lane is used as a deposit ground for dredging from the Manchester Ship Canal and supports a range of wetland habitats;
- Land to the south of Lordship Lane is in agricultural use - a mixture of pasture and arable with incomplete thorn hedgerows;
- The area is of local, national and international importance for its breeding, wintering and passage birds which add movement to the landscape;
- An isolated, bleak and open landscape - settlement is limited to isolated farms linked by rough tracks between ditches;
- A system of surfaced tracks and bridleways serve the area, including National Cycle Route (NCR) 5;
- The flat, open landscape provides clear views to and from the adjacent Frodsham Sandstone Ridge and Helsby Hill;
- Industrial works at Ince Marshes form a backdrop in views to the west.

9.29 A small part of the parish lies within LCT16 Mudflats and Salt marsh, in particular LCA 16a: Stanlow and Ince Banks. This is a landscape character type of large tracts of intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh within the Dee and Mersey Estuaries. Both are habitats of international importance for birds. Estuary marsh within Cheshire is used for wildfowling and stock grazing. It has a very open aspect and due to spring tide flooding, trees are totally absent. These are flat, open areas which afford views of the estuarine landscape and beyond e.g. to the Clwydian Hills and Liverpool. The overall management objective for this landscape should be to conserve the naturalistic and dynamic qualities of this landscape, relatively undisturbed by humans. Key characteristics include:-

- A flat, open and expansive landscape of mudflats, sandflats and salt marsh alongside the Mersey Estuary;
- A naturalistic landscape with winding channels forming intricate patterns in the salt marsh;
- Excavation of the Manchester Ship Canal in the later 19th century resulted in the creation of the Stanlow and Ince Banks, an area of embanked land at the southern edge of the mudflats;
- A dynamic landscape composed of rising and falling tides, constantly shifting sediments and flocks of over-wintering birds;
- Recognised as an internationally important site for wildfowl (the area immediately outside the Neighbourhood Plan designated area is protected by SSSI);
- A remote and peaceful landscape of international importance for nature

conservation and relatively undisturbed by humans and devoid of settlement;

- Long, uninterrupted views and large skies;
- Industrial works at Ince Marshes form a striking backdrop.

9.30 One of the key landscape characteristics of Ince is its setting close to the Marshes and the estuary, where the landscape is expansive and open. As it is so open and flat, the Cheshire Landscape Study states that this open character means that there is little opportunity for screening any large scale elements, or mitigating visual impact without the mitigation measures themselves being highly visible, making it a visually sensitive landscape. Despite being fringed by industry to the west and southeast, Ince village has remained rural in character, not least because of the open setting to the north and east, with unbroken views across fields and marsh to the estuary. Significant views across the estuary are detailed in the 'Significant Views within the Parish of Ince' document which was prepared by the steering group to help inform the Neighbourhood Plan, as the importance of views to the community was highlighted by respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. The report can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk

9.31 The Cheshire Landscape Strategy highlights development guidance for the character areas. The Strategy stresses the importance of conserving the estuarine habitats; creating a network of wildlife corridors; maintaining the rural setting to villages which are features of the landscape; maintaining the low density, scattered settlement pattern; conserving the local vernacular; ensuring that new development is high quality and resists suburban style fencing, kerbs, boundaries and lighting; and the need to soften built edges through sensitive planting schemes.

9.32 The Cheshire Wildlife Trust Protecting and Enhancing Ince's Natural Environment also made recommendations as to how the design of new developments could help to increase biodiversity and protect wildlife, such as installing hedgehog friendly fencing, SUDs and bat friendly lighting, which have been incorporated into the policy. Future development within Ince should therefore respect the natural environment. The landscape, in terms of biodiversity, landform and historic/cultural associations should be valued highly when planning decisions are made.

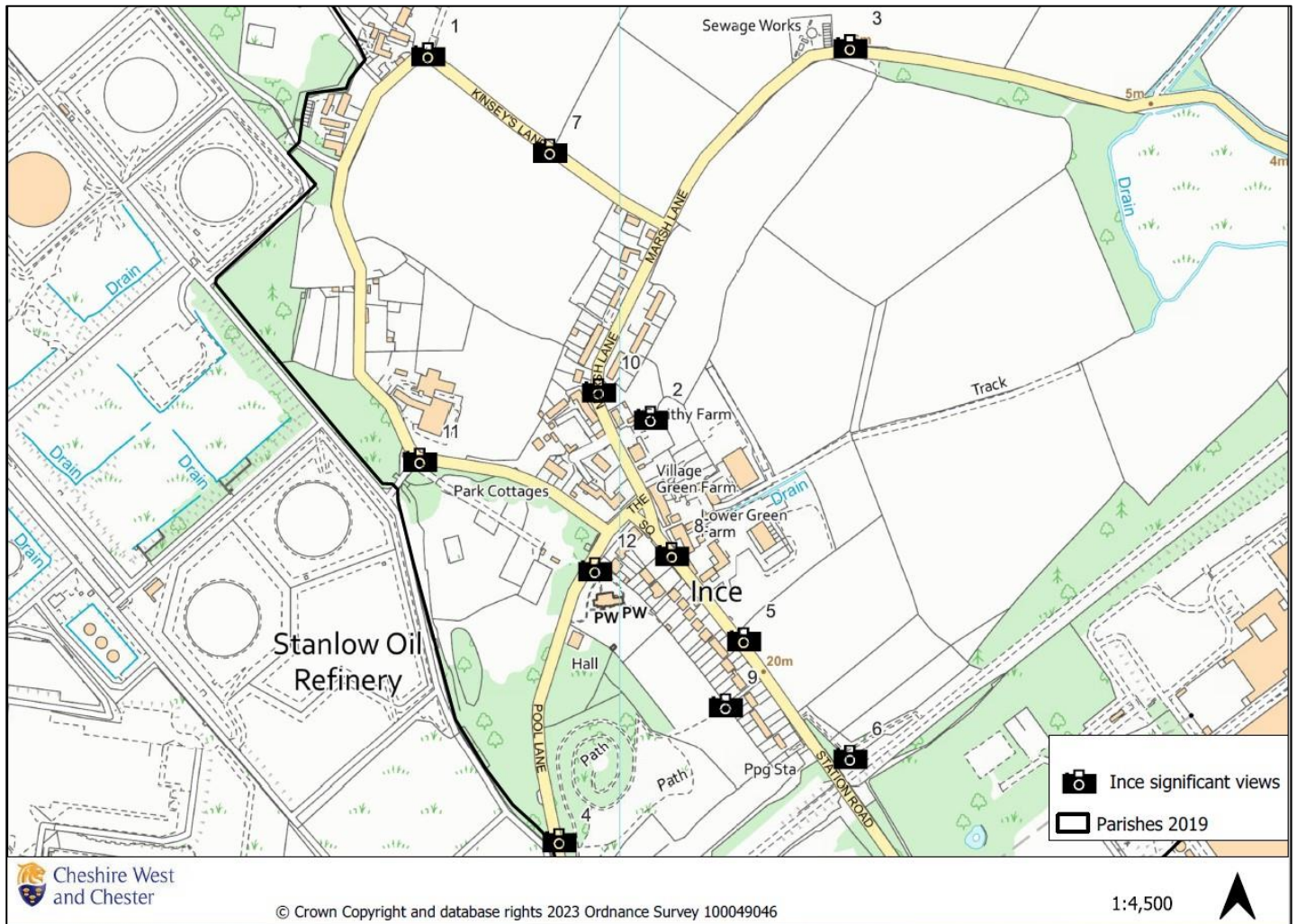
9.33 Local Plan policy DM3 highlights that development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design that respects the character and protects the visual amenity of the local area. Policy ENV6 states that development should respect local character and achieve a sense of place through appropriate layout and design and be sympathetic to heritage, environmental and landscape assets. The NPPF stresses that developments should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, and that policies should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

9.34 Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) focuses on tactical design and the effective use of the built environment, which when applied, reduces both crime and the fear of crime. CPTED comprises of seven attributes -

1. Access and movement - places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security.
2. Structure - places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict.
3. Physical security - the measures which are used on individual dwellings to ensure that they withstand attack.
4. Surveillance - design ensuring that residents are able to observe the areas surrounding their home. Surveillance can be facilitated by ensuring that front doors face onto the street; that areas are well illuminated and blank walls are avoided.
5. Activity - places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times.
6. Management and maintenance - the processes are in place to ensure that a development is free from signs of disorder. This signals that the area is cared for.
7. Defensible space - the ownership of space in a neighbourhood should be clearly defined. For example: public (e.g. pavement); semi-public (e.g. front garden); semi-private (e.g. rear garden) and private (e.g. inside the home).

9.35 Secured by Design (SBD) is the UK Police initiative supporting the principles of 'designing out crime' through the use of effective crime prevention and security standards. A SBD application may be needed for a development that may be particularly vulnerable to crime. CPTED and SBD principles should be considered and aspired to in all developments.

9.36 Figure L – Significant Views



1. View over Wood Farm field towards Monastic Grange
2. View from field behind Smithy Farm towards estuary
3. View towards higher part of village from Fens Wood across Village Green field
4. View entering Ince village from Pool Lane
5. View of Cricket Field from Station Road towards Ince Marshes
6. View towards Cricket Field and The Square from lower Station Road path
7. View from Kinsey's Lane over maize field towards Manchester Ship Canal
8. View towards the Square from Station Road
9. View from the bottom of the Parish field towards the church
10. View of the Manor House from Marsh Lane
11. View from Kinsey's Lane towards Pool Lane
12. View towards the estuary over The Square

View over Farmland Towards the Estuary



View from The North Hills over the Estuary



View over Wood Farm Field towards the Estuary



View over The Old Cricket Field and King's Croft Field



9.37 Trees and Hedgerows

Policy NAT5 – Trees and Hedgerows

Any development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality or setting of trees and hedgerows which contribute to the setting and character of Ince will not normally be permitted. Proposals must be designed in line with the mitigation hierarchy detailed in Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Policy DM44, with compensatory measures only considered as a last resort. The retention of trees and hedgerows in situ will always be preferable. Where the loss of such features is unavoidable, replacement provision must be at a ratio of at least two new trees for each tree which is lost, with hedgerows requiring a 3:1 replacement ratio.

New tree planting will be supported within new developments, and throughout the Parish in line with The Mersey Forest Plan.

9.38 Evidence and Justification

9.39 The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2016) classifies the parish as largely lying within the landscape character types of Cheshire Plain West and Drained Marsh. The key characteristics of the Cheshire Plain West character type includes a broad, gently shelving and mostly flat plain landscape characterised by hedges and hedgerow trees providing limited vistas. Hedgerow oaks are important elements of the landscape and there is an extensive network of small field ponds which are generally inconspicuous in the landscape. The Drained Marsh character type is a flat, open landscape which provides expansive views of the surrounding area including the Dee and Mersey estuaries.

9.40 The Character Assessment highlights the importance of planting and conserving native hedgerows; encouraging the retention and management of field ponds that are of wildlife importance and contribute to the diversity of the landscape; replacing lost hedgerows; managing existing woodlands; planting simple pockets of trees and woodlands to ensure the continuation of these declining characteristic features; and creating a continuous network of wildlife corridors to increase biodiversity.

9.41 The Cheshire Wildlife report 'Protecting and Enhancing Ince's Natural Environment' detailed that the overall management strategy for these landscapes should be to conserve and restore the historic field pattern of hawthorn hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees and enhance the grassland and small woodland network. This should be done by maintaining an intact hedgerow network and ensuring a young stock of hedgerow trees; by replacing hedgerows where they have been lost, utilising appropriate species of hawthorn and oak standards; by conserving the remaining

hedgerow trees and seeking opportunities to encourage a new generation of hedgerow trees to increase their presence in the landscape. Existing small woodlands and coverts should be managed to ensure a diverse canopy structure and rich ground flora. The retention and management of field ponds and brooks that are of wildlife importance and contribute to the diversity of the landscape should be encouraged, and opportunities considered to plant simple, small pockets of trees and small blocks of woodland in field corners to ensure the continuation of these declining characteristic features.

9.42 There are many trees, hedgerows, and field ponds in the parish, which are a valued local characteristic, adding much to the rural feel of the parish and being vital for biodiversity and wildlife, and which must be protected and enhanced. The Cheshire Wildlife Trust report highlights that the important wildlife habitat in Ince is mainly associated with the floodplain grazing marsh and related habitats along the Manchester Ship Canal and within Ince Marshes. Additionally, there are black poplars which have declined massively through the UK's landscape and are now a rarity. There are a number of ancient, veteran and notable trees with cultural and landscape value, and which support many species such as bryophytes (non-vascular land plants such as Liverwort and Mosses), invertebrates, lichens and fungi. Throughout the parish there are blocks of woodland which are of medium habitat distinctiveness. As well as providing habitats for wildlife, these woodlands provide important ecosystem services, such as locking up carbon and reducing air pollution. There are also scattered trees and hedgerows and field ponds throughout the parish, which are important landscape features. In addition to being vital for wildlife they are an important feature of the wildlife corridors. Along with their ecological value the hedgerows, trees, marshes, and field ponds contribute greatly to the landscape character and historical value of the area.

9.43 The Ince Conservation Area Appraisal (2021) www.inceparishcouncil.uk has as an action the need to preserve existing visually important trees, shrubbery and hedges which contribute to important views. The appraisal also highlights the importance to the area of a number of groups of trees, along with individual trees which contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area, or which constitute part of the parish's history and identity. These include:-

- Park Field and all its trees
- Trees forming the boundary of the bank of land with the former north park on Kinsey's Lane
- The wooded area south of Wood Farm
- The band of mixed trees to either side of the gates to the churchyard, the sycamore in the churchyard and the trees to immediate the south of the Village Hall
- The mature ash trees to the west of The Square above the retaining wall
- The two mature trees (horse chestnut and sycamore) near to the site of the former Vicarage to the south of the Conservation Area
- Trees to the south of the former cricket field
- Trees at Big Wood, and trees at Decoy Wood. Many of these trees have Tree Preservation Orders attached to them.

9.44 The benefits of preserving trees and hedgerows in the parish are therefore numerous, for example they provide essential habitats for wildlife; provide pleasant scenery for walking and outdoor activities which help reduce stress; produce oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide and air pollution; are essential to maintain the rural feel to the parish; help reduce traffic noise and dust and help to reduce surface water run-off from roadways and buildings.

9.45 The NPPF highlights the important contribution that trees make to the character and quality of urban environments, stating that they can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. The NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. The local plan Policy ENV3 highlights that the creation, enhancement, protection, and management of a network of high quality multi- functional Green Infrastructure will be supported, partly achieved through increased planting of trees and woodlands. Policy ENV4 stresses that development should not result in any net loss of natural assets and should seek to provide net gains. Where there is unavoidable loss or damage to habitats, sites or features because of exceptional overriding circumstances, mitigation and compensation will be required to ensure there is no net loss of environmental value. Policy DM45 indicates that development will be supported where it conserves, manages and, wherever possible, enhances existing trees, woodlands, traditional orchards, and hedgerows.

Park Field



Kinsey's Lane



Big Wood



10 Climate Change Policies

10.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To support renewable energy sources which benefit our local community impacting favourably on health and well-being with emphasis on improving the quality of air and reduction in noise pollution.

Policy CC1 – Renewable Energy

Developments should be designed to minimise energy consumption, through the use of sustainable materials, high energy efficiency levels, the incorporation of renewable energy initiatives and the efficient design of the building.

Proposals for renewable energy facilities will be supported that are in accordance with local plan policies ENV7, DM51, DM52 and DM53. Regard will be given to the wider benefits to the community of providing energy from renewable sources, as well as the potential impacts on residential amenity, the natural and built environment and the open and visually sensitive local landscape character, particularly on views across the estuary. Any negative visual impact must be mitigated through siting, layout, design, landscaping and planting.

10.2 Evidence and Justification

10.3 In 2019 Cheshire West and Chester Council unanimously declared that the borough is in a Climate Emergency. The Council agreed that climate change presents a threat to our way of life and recognised the need to act in-line with worldwide agreements on Climate Change and the best available evidence, which states that, to limit emissions to 1.5°C, there is a requirement to reach 'net zero' by 2045.

10.4 The Neighbourhood Plan supports renewable energy technologies in principle and would support renewable energy schemes that lead to tangible benefits to the community, via such methods as community owned schemes, community investment or developer investment in other low carbon initiatives or benefit fund within the Parish (for example green infrastructure, footpath and cycleway improvements). Any proposals that are county matters, require an Environmental Impact Assessment, or are nationally significant infrastructure projects, are 'excluded' development types.

10.5 Dependent on the scale and benefit to the community, potential ideas for renewable energy include wind power, solar energy, anaerobic digestion (waste only), energy storage and heat pumps. Micro (house scale) renewable energies will be supported.

10.6 The NPPF stresses that the planning system should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure, and ensure that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impact). The NPPF states that local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.

10.7 Pollution

Policy CC2 – Air Quality

Development proposals should be in accordance with Local Plan policies SOC5 and DM31 air quality. Proposals for major development (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Management Procedures) (England) Order 2010) must be accompanied by an appropriate air quality assessment that demonstrates that the proposed development would not lead to deterioration of the air quality in any part of Ince such that the air quality of such part ceases to meet the legal requirements for air quality. Where an air quality assessment identifies an unacceptable impact on or from air quality, an appropriate scheme of mitigation must be submitted, which may take the form of onsite measures or, where appropriate, a financial contribution to off-site measures.

10.8 Evidence and Justification

10.9 One of the main concerns of local residents is the issue of air pollution, with air quality being ranked the highest when residents were asked to rate what was most important to them in the Neighbourhood Plan survey.

10.10 Cheshire West and Chester Council have also recognised the negative impacts of air pollution, and in 2018 produced a Low Emission Strategy

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/pests-pollution-food-safety/pollution-and-air-quality/low-emission-strategy-180219.pdf#:~:text=The%20Cheshire%20West%20and%20Chester%20Low%20Emission%20Strategy,2%20and%20PM%2010%20and%20indirectly%20tailpipe%20hydrocarbon>

The report highlighted that air pollution is increasingly associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. The Low Emissions Strategy detailed that the annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion. There is clear evidence that PM2.5 (particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometres) has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases. The estimated fraction of mortality attributable to particulate matter in Cheshire West and Chester is 5.2% or 161 deaths per year. This figure rises to 285 deaths per year when the effects of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) are taken into account.

Reductions in air pollution can therefore deliver significant improvements in local health outcomes.

10.11 Recognising the concerns of residents, Ince Parish Council commissioned Air Pollution Services to review baseline air quality in the Parish to support the Neighbourhood Plan. Air pollution can be an important consideration for neighbourhoods when developing their policies for the plan, especially where there is a risk of poor air quality in the local area. Air Pollution Services produced their report in 2020. It can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk

10.12 The report concluded that the current air quality in the Parish is considered likely to be acceptable, although there may be elevated levels of SO₂ in the local area. The report stated, however, that there is a potential for further industrial facilities within Ince, which may pose a risk to members of the public in the future, potentially both for SO₂ and other pollutants.

10.13 Local authorities have a responsibility to investigate air quality within their boundary as part of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime. Where an Air Quality Objective has been exceeded, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The local authority is required to work towards improving conditions in these areas. The Air Pollution Services report highlighted that the Ince Parish border is approximately only 50 m from the nearest AQMA, which is declared for exceedances of SO₂, and there is another AQMA within 1.5 km (see Figure L).

10.14 Policy DM31 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan on 'air quality' states that development must not give rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life, from air pollution. In particular, development proposals within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area will be expected to be designed to mitigate the impact of poor air quality on future occupiers. An air quality assessment will be required for development proposals that have the potential for significant air quality impacts, including those which:

1. are classed as major development and have the potential, either individually or cumulatively, for significant emissions; or
2. are likely to result in an increase in pollution levels in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); or
3. are likely to expose people to existing sources of air pollutants.

10.15 Where an air quality assessment identifies an unacceptable impact on or from air quality, an appropriate scheme of mitigation must be submitted, which may take the form of on-site measures or, where appropriate, a financial contribution to off-site measures.

Legend

- Neighbourhood Boundary
- AQMA

Map showing the Ince and Elton area, including the Neighbourhood Boundary (red outline) and the AQMA (blue shaded area). The map includes roads such as M56, A517, and B5132, and landmarks like the railway and the River Mersey. A legend, scale bar (0-2 km), and north arrow are provided.

10.17 Sustainable Transport

Policy CC3 – Sustainable Transport

Development will not be supported where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Developments that reduce vehicle usage, and extensions or improvements to pedestrian, equestrian and cycle routes and facilities along with any improvements to public transport services will be supported.

In order to improve the sustainability of travel, transport and road safety, all developments that are likely to generate significant amounts of movement shall be accompanied by a Transport Assessment. This should include an assessment of the impact that any increase in traffic would have on the roads in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The assessment should incorporate steps to mitigate any harmful effects and the timetable to deliver that mitigation and, where appropriate, a Travel Plan consistent with the provisions of STRAT 10 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.

The provision of charging points for electric vehicles will be supported.

10.18 Evidence and Justification

10.19 In Ince private car ownership and usage constitute the predominant method of transport. The number of households with no car is 15.7%, compared to the average in England of 25.8%. Approximately 38% of all homes own at least 2 or more cars, which is higher than the England average of 32% (census 2011). Whilst cars are essential for many people, the provision of public transport and the encouragement of walking and cycling routes is vital in order to help to address the issues of climate change, reduce congestion and parking problems, and provide equality of opportunity. Currently, public transport is not adequate for people who work, which is reflected in the fact that only 3% of people use public transport to get to work, compared to the national average of 11% (Department of Transport data 2011). The problems are exacerbated by the remoteness of Ince from some facilities. For example, the nearest secondary school is over 7km away, compared to the England average of 2km (Commission for Rural Communities 2010).

10.20 The Neighbourhood Plan survey indicated that 25% of respondents disliked the lack of public transport available (the joint most popular response) with others disliking traffic in general, along with the prevalence of lorries and heavy goods vehicles in the Parish.

10.21 Cheshire West and Chester Council have recognised that the most significant local source of pollution in the borough is vehicle emissions. The primary objective of their Low Emission Strategy is to reduce traffic emissions by promoting sustainable

transport and encouraging the use of low emission vehicles and technology. In order to reach carbon neutrality targets, Cheshire West and Chester Council have identified that by 2025, a 17 per cent reduction in total travel demand will be required, alongside a 25 per cent reduction in car travel. Their Climate Change Emergency Response Plan 2020 indicates that where travel is required, however, there is a substantial carbon benefit derived from using public transport, and that where car travel is unavoidable, these cars would need to be low or zero carbon, with a transition to 100 per cent electric or hydrogen vehicles by 2050. <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/the-climate-emergency/documents/climate-emergency-response-plan.pdf> Additionally, Cheshire West and Chester Council have recently adopted a Parking Standards Supplementary Document , which requires new residential development to have an Electric Vehicle Charging Point installed onsite.

10.22 Air pollution concerns are high on Ince residents' main issues and they would like the Neighbourhood Plan to address this by promoting and supporting sustainable transport initiatives to reduce pollution.

The heart of the village is surrounded by narrow country lanes

Kinsey's Lane



Kinsey's Lane



11. Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways Policy

11.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To improve access to our countryside through enhancement of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways which support the health and wellbeing of our community whilst also benefiting flora and fauna by enhancing and protecting green corridors between habitats.

Policy FBC1 - Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways

Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network and cycleways (Figure N), their enhancement where possible, and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes. The construction and appearance of any new tracks, paths or links between existing footpaths must be appropriate and sensitive to the character of the locality and the surrounding area.

Any development that leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW or cycleway will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances, and then only if a suitable alternative can be provided. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community.

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.

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. 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.

Any proposals to create new links or routes, whether footpaths, bridleways or cycleways will be supported.

11.2 Evidence and Justification

11.3 The results of consultations throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process highlighted how popular the footpaths, bridleways and Public Rights of Way in Ince Parish are. The Public Rights of Way within the Parish can be viewed on Figure N. Ince is the focal point of an important recreational resource for the wider area and is popular with walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as bird watchers, photographers, and people who just want to enjoy the spectacular views across the estuary. Its network of public footpaths and tracks facilitate these activities, and their preservation, maintenance and enhancement are supported. The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment highlights the importance of encouraging walking, cycling, rowing and horse riding whilst safeguarding the nature conservation interests of the area.

11.4 There are a number of footpaths within the Conservation Area, which allow for views of heritage assets, and connectivity between different parts of the village and the wider Parish. The churchyard is connected by footpaths and overlooks the village, and the wooded areas within the Parish are crossed by footpaths. The Parish Field is integrated with other parts of the village by footpaths.

11.5 The National Cycle Route 5 includes a section from Elton through Ince and across the marshes, and is well used by cyclists, horse riders and walkers, despite being in a poor state of repair. Some of the footpaths have also been poorly maintained or are unpassable after heavy rain. The path of the visitor trail at Goldfinch Meadows is frequently submerged, and Snipe Haven is often inaccessible.

11.6 Whilst the network of public footpaths facilitates activities such as walking riding and cycling, unfortunately changes of ownership and uses of land have had a negative impact on the network. Several public footpaths have been identified as no longer present, or they appear interrupted by development, resulting in the loss of historic connectivity. FP44 leads from The Square through the farmyard of Village Green, for example, but rather than connecting to nearby Elton, it terminates where it meets the new road to the recycling plant.

11.7 The lost footpaths and bridleways can be seen on Figure O, and further details of the lost footpaths are given in the 'Lost Paths/Bridleways in Ince Parish' which was prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group in 2021 and can be viewed at www.inceparishcouncil.uk The paths and bridleways have been well used in the past by walkers, cyclists and horse riders alike, and it would be beneficial to have them reinstated as far as possible. Development that would lead to opportunities to reinstate lost paths, and to enhance interconnectivity between existing footpaths will be supported.

Parish Council Aspiration

Any proposals to create new links or routes, whether, footpaths, bridleways or cycleways will be supported (Figure O).

1. The path from Marsh Lane through Holme Farm
2. The path/bridlepath from Middle Lane towards the Protos factory on Lordship Lane
3. The path from the restricted byway towards Elton Lane
4. Path across field to Lordship Lane
5. Path across Kemira road bordering the ENCIRC factory

11.8 As highlighted in Policy CC3 of the Neighbourhood Plan, increasing opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding is likely to lead to a reduction in car travel and improvements in road safety, reducing the prevalence of air and noise pollution and helping to reach carbon neutrality targets. Footpaths and bridleways can also form important ecological green corridors, benefiting flora, fauna and wildlife and increasing biodiversity.

11.9 The policy seeks to deliver one of the NPPF's aims of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and also of promoting healthy communities. The NPPF indicates that policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks. The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Policy DM37 highlights that development incorporating or adjacent to the following must protect and, wherever possible, enhance and extend Public Rights of Way, footpaths/bridleways, cycle routes and canals and waterways.

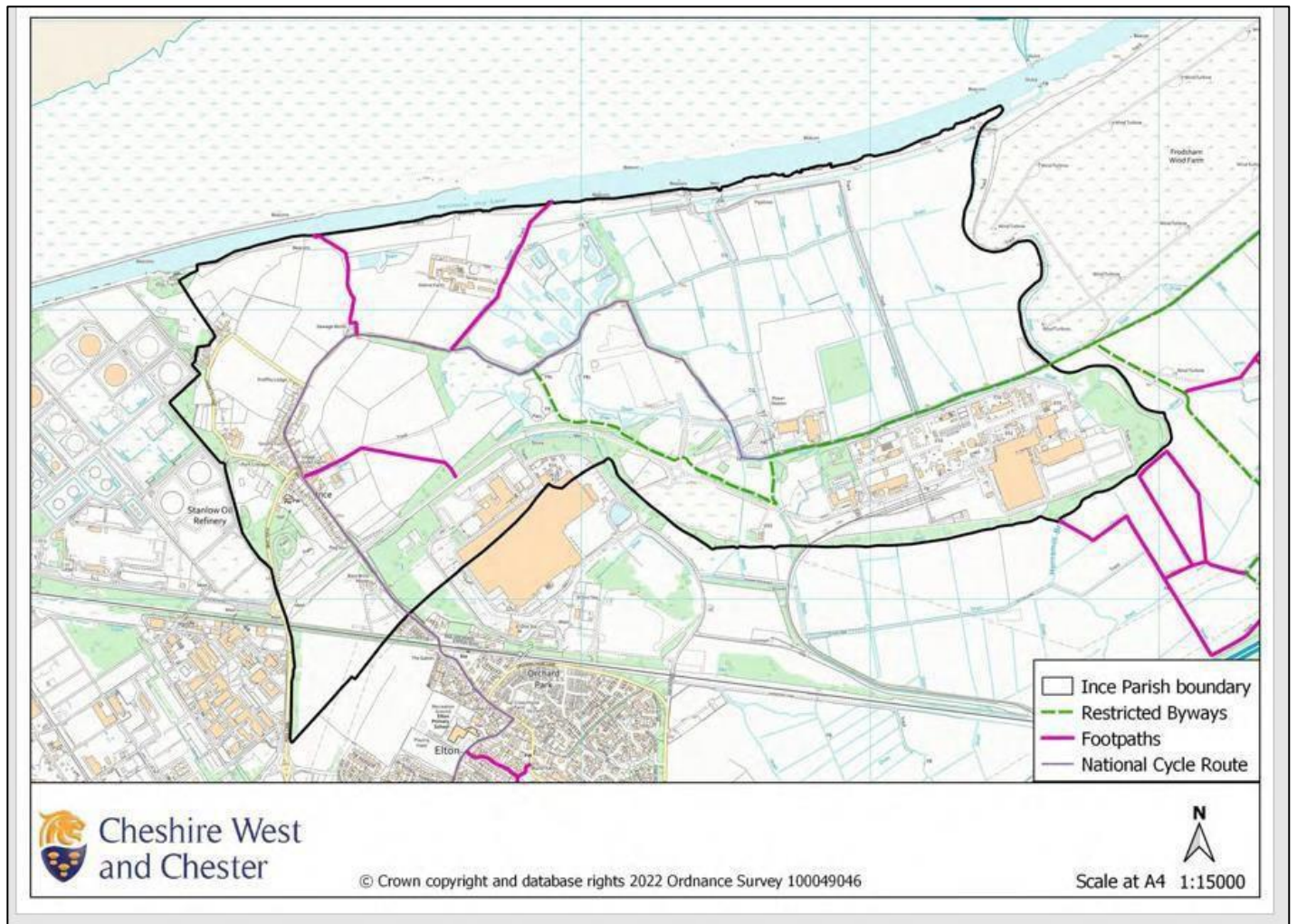
Banks of the MSC where 2 footpaths could be joined to create a circular route



Banks of the Manchester Ship Canal



11.10 Figure N - Public Rights of Way



11.11 Figure O – Map of Lost Footpaths and Bridleways



Lost footpath/bridleway (2)



Lost footpath/bridleway (2)



Above lost footpath/bridleway could link with Goldfinch Meadow creating a circular route for walkers and riders



12. Economy Policies

12.1 The Ince Neighbourhood Plan has the following objective:-

- To actively support our rural economy that enables and encourages small scale employment opportunities and agricultural development and to ensure that appropriate industrial development is directed to the strategic employment sites.

Policy ECDEV1 - Rural Economy

Outside of the existing and designated employment areas, and subject to respecting Ince's built and landscape character, the Green Belt and countryside, along with environmental, traffic, and residential amenity impacts being acceptable, the following will be supported -

- A) Development proposals which support the rural economy and agriculture
- B) Proposals that promote or provide facilities for home working, and businesses operating from home;
- C) The sympathetic conversion of existing buildings for business and enterprise;
- D) The diversification of farms and rural businesses which are of an appropriate scale and reflect the rural character.

12.2 Evidence and Justification

12.3 Ince has a higher than average proportion of people aged 16-74 who work from home (6% compared to the England average of 3.5%) (2011 census). Only 3% of working residents use public transport to get to work, compared to the England average of 11%. (Department of Transport 2011). A higher number of 16-74-year-olds in the Parish work less than 2km from home than the England average (34% compared to 20%). The rural economy and existing small businesses are a vital part of village life, and any opportunities to develop either existing small businesses or that would enable the start-up of new small businesses appropriate to the rural area would be supported.

12.4 There are farmsteads in Ince which offer an opportunity for rural economic development, should they choose to diversify. Home working is already higher than the national average, and with improvements to broadband and advances in technology, this is likely to continue to grow. This may help enable the start-up of new businesses, and help to reduce travelling, traffic congestion and pollution.

12.5 The NPPF highlights the importance of supporting a strong competitive economy. To support a prosperous, rural economy, planning policies should enable the

sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; the development and the diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Policy ECDEV2- Employment Development

Industrial or large- scale employment uses in the Parish will be directed to the existing and designated employment areas as detailed in Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan policies STRAT4 (Ellesmere Port); ECON1 (Economic growth, employment and enterprise); and EP2 (Employment land provision in Ellesmere Port).

Employment development must be appropriately sited, designed and constructed to limit its influence on the rural setting and with extensive mitigation planting as necessary, and where appropriate indicative wildlife corridors within employment developments should be protected and enhanced.

12.6 Evidence and Justification

12.7 Although essentially a small rural parish in the Green Belt, Ince is surrounded to the west and southeast by large scale industrial developments. Major employers within the Parish include, Protos, Encirc glass (part) and CF Fertilisers. One of the major concerns of residents which was highlighted throughout Neighbourhood Plan consultations was concern regarding the encroachment of industry. Industry was the top answer given by respondents when asked what they disliked about living in Ince. When asked what they felt to be a threat to the future of Ince, 76% of respondents replied that they believed that the encroachment of large industrial plants was the main threat. Industrial expansion was also the most popular answer given by respondents when asked what issues they would like to see considered when the Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared.

12.8 Any large-scale employment development should therefore be directed to the existing employment areas and those allocated in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan. The Local Plan identified and safeguarded land at Ince Park (Protos) as essential to meet the future economic growth of the area, safeguarding land at Ince Park as a multi modal resource recovery park and energy from waste facility. Additionally, the Local Plan (Policy EP2) allocated land within the Parish to meet the strategic requirement for new employment development. This includes land at Station Road (5.5 hectares for use class B1) and land at Encirc Glass Ltd which lies partly within the Parish, although the allocation lies just outside (34 hectares for use classes B1, B2 and B8).

12.9 The Local Plan policy EP2A indicates that any development on the Encirc Glass Ltd allocation must be compatible with surrounding land uses, in particular the

amenity of nearby residents; minimise and mitigate harm to the landscape and visual impacts; and minimise and mitigate impacts on the surrounding ecological network and designated sites of ecological importance. Local Plan Policy EP2G recognises that the Station Road allocation is in a sensitive location, stressing that any development must therefore be of a high standard of design, incorporating landscaping and mitigation to minimise impacts on nearby residents. Development must also preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the approach to Ince village and the setting and significance of designated heritage assets and minimise and mitigate impacts on the surrounding ecological network.

12.10 In order to respect the rural character of Ince, any new large scale employment use will therefore be more appropriately directed to the existing employment sites within the Parish, or the employment allocations detailed in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.