

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Local Plan



Local Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

June 2025



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Cheshire West
and Chester

Local Plan 2025 Issues and Options SA

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1 Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 This is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Plan Issues and Options. It provides an assessment of the potential sustainability impacts resulting from the proposed strategic spatial options.

1.2 It has been undertaken as an integrated impact assessment and therefore covers the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). It does not include Habitats Regulations Assessment as this will be undertaken separately by specialist consultants.

The Local Plan Update

1.3 The Council has prepared a Local Plan Issues and Options report. The new Local Plan will replace the current Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies document and Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies. Once in place, it will establish a strategy for growth and change over the plan period. It will allocate sites to deliver the strategy as well as allocate new sites for non-strategic development in the local authority area. The Local Plan will also set out the suite of planning policies that will be used to deliver sustainable development in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C).

1.4 The Local Plan will be prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and following the Town and country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It will be prepared in accordance with current government policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and also to reflect the government's online national Planning Practice Guidance (nPPG). In particular, the NPPF requires local authorities to take a positive approach to development, with an up-to-date Local Plan that meets objectively assessed needs, including local housing needs, as far as is consistent with sustainable development.

1.5 The decision to commence preparation of an update to the Local Plan under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was made by the Council's Cabinet in January 2025. Given the tight timescales to undertake the work and the anticipated additional changes to the planning system being brought in by government, Cabinet also delegated to the Cabinet Member for Homes, Planning and Safer Communities the authority to switch back to plan-making under the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA), should it prove necessary or expedient to do so.

1.6 The government have identified that Environmental Outcomes Reports will replace Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and SA in the future, but the timing for this is not yet clear. As such, the current process will be followed until any guidance or regulations are introduced that indicate otherwise.

SA and SEA

1.7 SA is a statutory requirement, set out in [section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act \(2004\)](#). SA is a systematic process undertaken from the start of development of a plan. It aims to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve sustainable relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. The role of SA is to ensure that the plan preparation process maximises the contribution to sustainable development and minimises potential adverse impacts.

1.8 The SA work undertaken so far and all future appraisal work will incorporate SEA. The SEA requirements were originally set out in the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and this was transposed into UK law by the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations \(2004\)](#). SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan, whilst SA includes social and economic effects alongside

environmental effects. The nPPG identifies that SA should meet all of the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), so a separate SEA should not be required ([Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 11-007-20140306](#))

Integrated Impact Assessment

Health Impact Assessment

1.9 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a means of assessing the likely effects of plans, programmes and projects on health. There is no statutory legal requirement for HIA, but the document '[A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive](#)' (ODPM 2005) suggests that HIA (and Equalities Impact Assessment) can be integrated with SEA in a SA. The guide also states that the SEA Directive requires consideration of the likely significant effects of a plan on health and responsible authorities may find it helpful to draw on the methods of HIA when considering how a plan may impact on health, how positive effects could be enhanced and negative effects reduced.

1.10 A HIA can help to highlight practical ways to enhance the positive health and well-being effects of a plan and avoid or reduce negative effects. A HIA can consider the potential health effects in relation to the proposed policy approaches of the CW&C Local Plan. The main objective of the HIA is to provide information to support the decision making in adopting the Local Plan.

1.11 A separate HIA has not been prepared, but the SA includes an assessment of the health impacts and the HIA findings are provided at Appendix 2 'Health Impact Assessment'.

1.12 The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines HIA as: 'a practical approach used to judge the potential health effects of a policy, programme or project on a population, particularly on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Recommendations are produced for decision-makers and stakeholders, with the aim of maximising the proposal's positive health effects and minimising its negative health effects. This approach can be applied in diverse economic sectors and uses quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques.'

1.13 According to '[HIA in spatial planning: a guide for local authority public health and planning teams](#)' (2020), HIA helps decision makers in local authorities make choices about actions that best prevent ill-health, promote good health and reduce health inequalities.

1.14 Health is determined by a wide range of factors. In order to understand the health impacts of the plan a social, economic and environmental appraisal of all the policy approaches in the plan needs to be carried out and the SA objectives were designed to provide this framework. Therefore whilst the population and housing, and health, wellbeing and equality SA topics focus directly on health, the SA framework as a whole helps to show impact on health, given that health is determined by a wide range of factors.

1.15 Appendix 2 provides additional details about the health impacts of the plan and provides a table showing the links between the sustainability objectives and health. The SA process follows the methodology set out in the Department of Health publication '[Health Impact Assessment of Government Policy](#)' (2010) as it involves screening of the policies, then an identification and assessment of significant effects and identification of potential mitigation measures.

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Equalities Impact Assessment

1.16 All public authorities are required by the Equalities Act 2010 to specifically consider the likely impact of their policies, procedure or practice on certain groups in society. This is done by assessing the impact on the following factors: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation.

1.17 The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality opportunity and foster good relations in the course of developing services. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is an integral part of the process of driving forward the equalities agenda both within the council and the borough as a whole.

1.18 There are three main duties, set out in the Equality Act 2010, which public authorities must meet in exercising their functions: to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

1.19 Having made this assessment, the EqIA will then set out the actions needed to ensure that any negative consequences for a particular sector of the community are eliminated, minimised or counterbalanced by other measures. In this case, the EqIA is designed to analyse what effect the CW&C Local Plan is likely to have on equalities groups within the borough.

1.20 Further information about the assessment of the Local Plan Issues and Options under the Equality Act is set out in Appendix 1. The Issues and Options have been reviewed to consider the likely impacts of the policy approaches on each of the nine protected characteristics from the Equality Act. For each protected characteristic, consideration has been given as to whether the Issues and Options is compatible or incompatible with the three main duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. The findings are set out in Appendix 1 'Equalities Impact Assessment'.

Rural proofing

1.21 Rural proofing refers to the process of ensuring that policies, strategies, and decisions take into account the unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities of rural areas. It is a key part of UK government policy to ensure that rural communities are not disadvantaged by national or local planning decisions.

1.22 Rural proofing is assessing what might affect outcomes in rural areas and adjusting policies or policy delivery when appropriate and practicable. Rural proofing ensures that rural areas are not overlooked and that the intended outcomes are deliverable in rural areas.

1.23 Rural issues have been considered throughout the SA and for each policy there has been a screening process, assessment of impacts and identification of mitigation measures. A rural proofing assessment was undertaken in order to highlight rural impact. This can be viewed at Appendix 3 'Rural proofing'.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.24 Plans may require appropriate assessment under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 \(as amended\)](#) if they are considered likely to have significant effects on protected European habitats or species. This would be undertaken through a Habitats Regulations Assessment. This is being prepared separately, by specialist consultants.

Marine Plan

1.25 There are two marine plans that are relevant to CW&C - the North West Inshore and North West Offshore Marine Plan and the Welsh National Marine Plan. The marine plans cover the area up to mean high water spring mark and include the tidal reach of estuaries. Land-use plans such as the Local Plan, cover areas down to the mean low water spring mark, so there is an overlap between the plans. The marine plans set out policies to inform decision-making for any activity or development which is in, or impacts on, a marine area.

1.26 Marine plans are prepared by the Marine Management Organisation, who are also the licensing authority for a range of development activities in the marine area.

1.27 Many of the policies within the marine plans have the potential to impact on, or be impacted by policies in the Local Plan - for example, those relating to: aggregates; energy; water treatment and disposal; climate change; carbon capture and storage; and tourism and recreation. Some of the marine plan policies are unlikely to have a significant relationship with the Local Plan, for example those relating to aquaculture, defence, fisheries and subsea cabling.

1.28 The policy approaches in the Local Plan Issues and Options generally align with the policies in the marine plans. When the next versions of the Local Plan policies are prepared, the marine plan policies will be considered and taken into account - to ensure that there are no conflicts and that the Local Plan continues to align with the marine plans. The Marine Management Organisation is a statutory consultee for the Local Plan and will be consulted on the Issues and Options and Sustainability Appraisal. The marine plans should also be taken into account during the development management process, when decisions are made on planning applications that could impact on the marine plan areas.

Scoping

1.29 A SA scoping report has been prepared to bring together the results of the initial stages of the SA process and set out baseline information on a wide range of topics, highlighting key trends, issues and objectives for the area. A key output of the SA scoping report was the sustainability framework and this is explained further in the 2 'Methodology' chapter. Since the scoping report was published in 2023, the sustainability framework objectives, sub-objectives and indicators have been simplified and amended. This has been done to take account of issues experienced when using the indicators to prepare the Annual Monitoring Report and to make the objectives, sub-objectives and indicators clearer, easier to use and to simplify the monitoring process. The updated objectives, sub-objectives and indicators are set out in the SEA Screening and SA Methodology report 2025 and are also included in the 2 'Methodology' chapter.

1.30 The SA scoping report provided baseline information and details of the plans, programmes and strategies that could influence the preparation of the Local Plan. This is covered in the 3 'Baseline update' chapter and any more recent baseline information or updates are included as required.

1.31 The scoping report identified the following topics to be covered in the appraisal:

- Climate change, energy and air quality
- Waste
- Land and resources
- Water
- Landscape, townscape and cultural heritage
- Biodiversity

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- Population and housing
- Health, wellbeing and equality
- Economy and employment
- Infrastructure

Structure of this report

1.32 This first chapter of the SA report provides an introduction to the Local Plan and SA and it explains which processes will be integrated into the SA and which will be undertaken separately.

1.33 Chapter 2 identifies the methodology and explains how the SA has been undertaken. It includes a review of the objectives and indicators in light of the responses received to the consultation on the SA scoping report.

1.34 The third chapter is an analysis of the baseline situation in the borough, based on the information provided within the SA scoping report

1.35 Chapter 4 provides an assessment of the compatibility of the Local Plan objectives and the sustainability objectives.

1.36 The fifth chapter is the appraisal of the spatial strategy and this assess the high-level housing and employment options as they are presented in the Issues and Options report. The strategic development options are quite broad at this stage, but the SA will provide information on the sustainability of each option to inform decision making and refinement of the options. The sixth chapter is the appraisal of the policy approaches. The policy approaches vary in the level of detail and certainty available.

1.37 Chapter 7 provides the conclusions of the appraisals and identifies the next steps in the process.

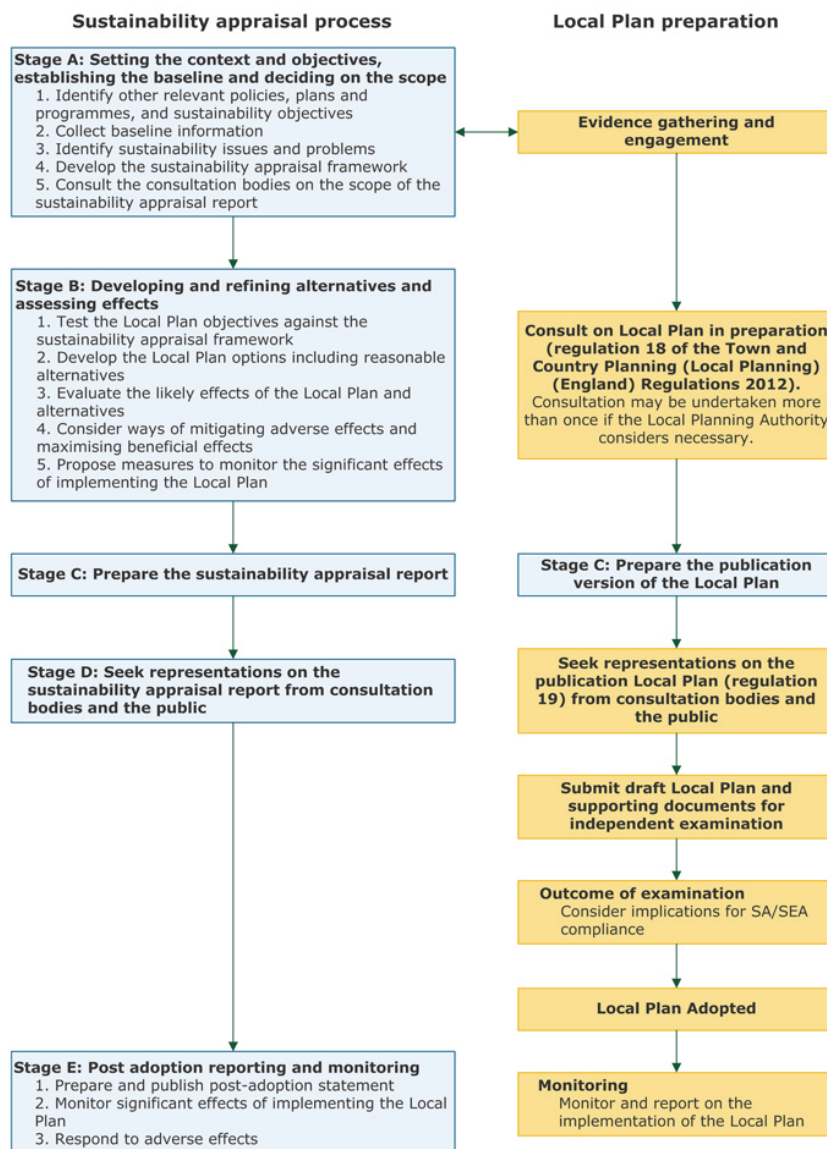
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Integration of SA and development of the Local Plan

2.1 The SA of the Local Plan will comply with legal requirements and has also been based on current best practice and the guidance on SA and SEA set out in nPPG, which involves undertaking SA as an integral part of the plan-making process.

2.2 The diagram below shows how the SA process should link to the preparation of a Local Plan. The diagram has been taken from the nPPG ⁽ⁱ⁾.

Figure 2.1 SA process and Local Plan preparation



Screening

2.3 A screening opinion was prepared in February 2023 to identify whether the Local Plan Update required SEA. At this stage the Local Plan Update would be an update to the Local Plan (Part One) only. The screening opinion concluded that the Local Plan Update is likely to have a significant

i https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7557f240f0b6360e4735dd/sea1_013.pdf

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environmental effect and will require SEA. The statutory environmental bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency - including Welsh equivalents) were consulted from 15 February to 15 March 2023. Historic England, Natural England and Cadw agreed that SEA was required. Natural Resources Wales responded to confirm that they noted the content of the screening opinion and did not have any further comments. We did not receive a response from the Environment Agency.

2.4 A screening determination was prepared and was consulted on alongside the scoping report from 3 July to 7 August 2023. No specific comments were received from the statutory environmental bodies in relation to the screening determination.

2.5 After August 2023 there were changes to the planning system under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act and delays to the implementation of the new system. A decision was made to begin preparation of a new Local Plan under the old system that would incorporate and update policies from both the Local Plan (Part One) and Local Plan (Part Two). As a result of this change to the scope of the Local Plan, a new screening determination was prepared and the SA methodology was updated. The statutory environmental bodies were consulted on the screening determination and new SA methodology from 12 March to 16 April 2025. Historic England confirmed that they agreed with the screening determination. Natural England commented on the methodology, but not the screening determination and Environment Agency noted and acknowledged the screening determination and also commented on the methodology. The other statutory bodies did not make comments at this stage.

Stage A - Scoping

2.6 The scoping stage needs to identify the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA report. It sets the context, objectives and approach to the assessment and identifies relevant environmental, economic and social issues and objectives.

2.7 The scoping stage was begun early in 2023 and consultation on the SA Scoping Report for the Local Plan Update was undertaken from 3 July to 7 August 2023. The involvement of key stakeholders and interested parties is important to ensure the the SA objectives, indicators and methodology are up-to-date and reflect the nature of the area covered and to ensure that all appropriate information is taken into account.

2.8 Three consultation responses were received (from Historic England, Natural England and Cadw). The appraisal objectives and indicators have been updated in light of the comments received. Natural England provided detailed comments and some of the proposed suggestions they made were outside the scope of the SA of the Local Plan. Natural England and the Environment Agency also made comments on the objectives and indicators in 2025.

2.9 The scoping stage involves development of an environmental, social and economic baseline for the area and this is covered in more detail in the 3 'Baseline update' chapter. For each thematic topic the scoping report provided details of: the policy context; baseline information; evidence gaps and proposed work; recent changes and anticipated trends; the scope and influence of the Local Plan for this topic area; and key sustainability issues and opportunities. The scoping report then used the information collected to develop a SA framework of sustainability objectives, appraisal criteria / sub-objectives and baseline indicators. The SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators were updated in March 2025 and the statutory environmental consultees were consulted on the amendments. The final version of the SA framework is included in table Table 2.1 'SA framework' below. The indicators are set out in Appendix 4 'SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators'.

Table 2.1 SA framework

	Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective
1	Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	<p>Will it ensure that new development is in accessible locations?</p> <p>Will it reduce the need to travel?</p> <p>Will it enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p>Will it encourage the use of lower carbon technologies and working practices?</p> <p>Will it reduce energy consumption?</p> <p>Will it protect peat resources?</p>
2	Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	<p>Will it improve local air quality or reduce air pollution?</p> <p>Will it ensure that new development is in accessible locations?</p> <p>Will it enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p>Will it achieve remediation and re-use of contaminated land?</p> <p>Will it protect the extent and quality of soils?</p> <p>Will it protect or improve water quality?</p> <p>Will it reduce noise pollution?</p>
3	Provide high quality, well designed housing to meet identified needs	<p>Will it help to meet identified housing needs?</p> <p>Will it provide well designed housing?</p>
4	Improve health, safety and well-being	<p>Will it promote active lifestyles?</p> <p>Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space?</p> <p>Will it reduce opportunities for crime?</p> <p>Will it affect the fear of crime and feelings of safety?</p> <p>Will it improve road safety?</p> <p>Will it help to protect existing health or community facilities and services?</p> <p>Will it provide new or improved health or community facilities or services?</p>

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	Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective
5	Reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport	<p>Will it reduce the need to travel?</p> <p>Will it increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p>Will it reduce congestion and travel times?</p> <p>Will it provide infrastructure that maximises accessibility by sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p>Will it connect new development with new or existing services or facilities via sustainable modes of travel?</p>
6	Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	<p>Will it safeguard shops and services in existing centres?</p> <p>Will it safeguard or improve the retail, leisure or service provision?</p>
7	Protect and conserve natural resources	<p>Will it focus development on previously developed land?</p> <p>Will it improve water efficiency?</p> <p>Will it avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?</p> <p>Will it protect or enhance peat resources?</p>
8	Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	<p>Will it safeguard mineral resources?</p> <p>Will it enable delivery of a steady and adequate supply of minerals?</p> <p>Will it promote the use of secondary/recycled aggregates?</p>
9	Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Will it protect and promote effective management of the borough's sites of ecological and nature conservation importance?</p> <p>Will it provide opportunities for the enhancement, creation or connection of habitats and to foster species conservation, diversity and resilience to climate change?</p> <p>Will it maintain, enhance and increase (rural and urban) tree cover and woodlands?</p> <p>Will it protect or increase the number and areas of RIGS?</p> <p>Will it impact on the extent or quality of soils?</p>

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	Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective
10	Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	<p>Will it help to reduce the amount of waste generated?</p> <p>Will it encourage increased recovery, recycling or composting to enable re-use of waste materials?</p> <p>Will it reduce the amount of waste sent for incineration or landfill?</p> <p>Will it result in new or enhanced waste management facilities to meet the waste management needs of the area?</p>
11	Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	<p>Will it protect or enhance the borough's landscapes or townscapes?</p> <p>Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space?</p> <p>Will it protect, maintain or enhance local character and distinctiveness?</p> <p>Will it provide high quality design?</p>
12	Conserve and enhance the historic environment	<p>Will it conserve, protect and/or enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and/or their setting?</p> <p>Will it ensure the protection and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets?</p>
13	Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	<p>Will it reduce the risk of flooding from all sources?</p> <p>Will it direct development towards areas of least flood risk?</p> <p>Will it promote or increase the number of relevant development proposals that incorporate SuDs?</p>
14	Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	<p>Will it reduce energy consumption?</p> <p>Will it promote energy efficiency?</p> <p>Will it result in an increase in the installed renewable energy capacity?</p>
15	Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	<p>Will it deliver regeneration?</p> <p>Will it improve economic conditions, particularly in deprived areas?</p> <p>Will it improve equality across the borough?</p>
16	Support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment	<p>Will it help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt?</p> <p>Will it support sustainable economic growth?</p>

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	Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective
		<p>Will it provide a balanced portfolio of employment land for the area by type and location?</p> <p>Will it maintain/safeguard high quality employment land and premises?</p> <p>Will it contribute to meeting the employment needs of the rural/urban area?</p> <p>Will it promote tourism and the visitor economy?</p> <p>Will it improve accessibility to jobs?</p> <p>Will it take account of the different locational requirements of different sectors?</p>

2.10 The objectives and sub-objectives have been separated into topic areas within the appraisal forms. The topic areas follow those identified in the scoping report and provide a way of grouping the objectives for reporting purposes. Where objectives could apply to several topics they have just been included in the most relevant topic(s) to avoid repetition as much as possible.

Stage B - Developing and refining options and assessing effects

2.11 The SA needs to consider and compare all reasonable alternatives and assess these against the baseline environmental, economic and social characteristics of the area and the likely situation if the plan were not to be adopted. This is set out in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.12 The SA findings will provide a detailed appraisal of the sustainability impacts and potential avoidance and mitigation measures. The SA findings are not the only factors taken into account when deciding on the preferred option to take forward in the Local Plan, but they will form an important input to the decision-making process.

Stage C - Preparing the SA report

2.13 This is the first iteration of the SA report and has been prepared to assess the Local Plan Issues and Options. The report describes the process undertaken to date and sets out the baseline information from the scoping report. It uses the methodology and SA framework from the scoping report 2023 and the screening and methodology report 2025. It sets out the findings of the appraisal of the strategic development options and policy options.

Stage D - Consulting on the Local Plan Issues and Options and the SA report

2.14 Consultation on the Local Plan Update Issues and Options report and the SA report will be undertaken in Summer 2025. The consultation responses received will feed into the next stage of preparation of the Local Plan and the associated SA.

Stage E - Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan

2.15 Preparation of the Local Plan and associated SA are still at a relatively early stage in the process and as such, it is too early to come up with detailed proposals for monitoring. However, the SA objectives and indicators will form the basis for future monitoring and it is likely that this will be done through the Annual Monitoring Report.

Appraisal methodology

2.16 The appraisal has been based on the framework of objectives, criteria and indicators set out in the SA scoping report 2023 and as updated by the screening and methodology report 2025.

2.17 The proposed strategic objectives for the Local Plan have been appraised against the SA objectives in chapter 4 'Assessment of Local Plan objectives'.

2.18 In chapter 5 'SA of the strategic development options', the spatial strategy options for the location of new development (housing and employment) have been assessed against the topics in the SA scoping report and their relevant SA objectives. In chapter 6 'SA of the policy approaches', the policy approaches have been assessed.

2.19 Chapters 5 and 6 both describe the policy approach and any significant negative or positive effects on the SA topic areas. They also identify any mitigation measures that may be required, or potential enhancement measures to improve positive impacts.

2.20 As the spatial strategy options are high-level at this stage, there will be some topic areas that can be screened out. Each policy approach also relates to a specific topic area, so is unlikely to affect all SA objectives. As such, the first stage of the assessment is to screen out the objectives where the choice of strategic option or policy approach would have little or no effect. The SA then focuses on those objectives which are likely to be significantly affected by the strategic options or specific policy approach and it streamlines the assessment so that it focuses on the significant effects.

2.21 The second stage is then to carry out a full assessment of the spatial development options and policy approaches. An overview of this is set out in Chapters 5 and 6. The full assessments are set out in Appendix 5 'Appraisal summary tables' of this report.

2.22 The appraisal has taken into account the range of impacts on the sustainability topics (short and long term, synergistic, permanent, temporary, indirect and secondary). This has included consideration of the temporal and spatial impacts on their own and then also in combination with other plans and programmes.

2.23 The spatial strategy options provide general growth areas but do not identify specific sites for development. As such, detailed site-specific issues have not been taken into account in the appraisal at this stage. Each specific site may have specific issues, for example contaminated land, biodiversity or heritage, but this would need to be assessed at a later stage in the process when specific site allocations are put forward.

2.24 A key part of the plan making process is the consideration of alternative options. Guidance in relation to sustainability appraisal and the preparation of Local Plans confirms that the options put forward in the plan making process should be reasonable, realistic and relevant. The options should also be sufficiently distinct in order to highlight the different sustainability implications of each, so that meaningful comparisons can be made. There are three different spatial strategy options, but there are no reasonable alternatives to the other policy approaches. The three spatial strategy options have been

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assessed separately, so that the options can be compared from a sustainability perspective. The outcomes of the appraisals of alternatives will be taken into account in policy development and will inform the final proposed policy approach of the Council. The consideration of alternatives is therefore an iterative process. Alternatives to the other policy approaches were considered as part of the process of preparing the policy approaches. However, no reasonable alternatives were found. In some cases, this is because we are still at an early stage in the process of preparing the Local Plan and some of the policy approaches are quite high-level and questions have been asked regarding the approach. The potential for reasonable alternatives will be re-considered when the consultation responses are taken into account and the Local Plan policies are prepared at the next stage. If any additional alternatives are identified and are considered to be reasonable, they will also be assessed through the SA as part of the iterative process.

2.25 The appraisal proforma included a section to identify any required mitigation of negative effects or improvement of positive effects. In some cases a policy approach scored more negatively because it didn't refer to a specific factor / requirement. If this requirement is covered by one of the other policy approaches it is not mentioned as mitigation to avoid repetition and because the Plan must be read as a whole.

Difficulties encountered

2.26 The main difficulties encountered during the appraisal process were:

- For some of the policy approaches it was difficult to decide if certain topics should be screened out as they weren't specifically mentioned in the policy approach, but could have been mentioned - or may be sufficiently covered by another policy approach.
- Due to the high-level, strategic nature of the options it has been difficult to anticipate the likely effects of each option, as many of the effects will depend upon the location of the sites chosen, and the scale and design of each proposal.
- Different policy approaches include different levels of detail at this stage, due to the availability of evidence and differences in progression of the decision making process. Some policy approaches include detailed policy wording, whilst others are more general and still include lots of questions. All appraisals have been undertaken based on the current policy approach wording and evidence available. Where policy approaches refer to retaining and updating the wording from a current Local Plan policy, any text/criteria within the issues and options policy approach was considered first. The detail provided in the current Local Plan policy was then considered and if this impacted on the appraisal scoring, a note was added to the appraisal to confirm that this text should be retained.
- The lack of detail and uncertainties in some policy approaches made them difficult to appraise. For example the policy approach TA 2 'Key local transport infrastructure priorities' was particularly high-level and suggests that existing transport infrastructure priorities are reviewed, so it is not currently clear what priorities will be taken forward. Policy approach EN 1 didn't specify the types of energy development covered, resulting in uncertainties for several objectives.
- Some policy approaches refer to specific sites - either as potential allocations or just as highlighted sites. Most of these sites have been taken from the existing Local Plan and therefore have already been subject to SA. As decisions have not yet been made on the strategic spatial approach, it is not clear exactly which sites will be taken forward. As such, no site specific appraisals have been undertaken at issues and options stage. Some of the allocations / sites identified did not include details of the proposed use, which made the appraisal of the associated policy approach more difficult. In some cases, part of the site had already been developed or was under construction.
- In some cases there were small scale impacts or indirect impacts of the policy approach on the objective and it was difficult to decide whether those impacts were significant or not.

3 Baseline update

3.1 The SA scoping report published in July 2023 includes a full review of international, national and local plans and programmes as well as the baseline position for the borough at that time and the key sustainability issues. The Local Plan 2025 SEA Screening and SA Methodology was published and circulated to the statutory environmental consultees in March 2025. The document identified that most of the baseline information, recent change and anticipated trends set out in the July 2023 report are still relevant and up to date. It explained that it wasn't considered necessary or pragmatic to update this information. The report stated that most of the evidence gaps are still applicable, but some of the proposed work has now been undertaken. The position at June 2025 is that the updated evidence base now includes:

- Waste Needs Assessment (2023)
- Local Aggregate Assessment (2024)
- Heritage Strategy (currently in preparation)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (currently in preparation)
- Design Code (currently in preparation)
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)
- Land Availability Assessment (currently in preparation)
- Local Transport Plan 4 (currently in preparation)
- Retail study (currently in preparation)
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (currently in preparation)
- Economic Development Needs Assessment (2025)

3.2 The sustainability key issues have been updated to reflect the current position and are summarised below:

Sustainability issues in the borough

3.3 CW&C is a diverse borough and includes the historic City of Chester, the industrial towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford, the market towns of Neston and Frodsham and many smaller villages and hamlets. It includes significant cultural, retail, visitor and major employment activity. It is bounded to the west by the Welsh border, to the north by Merseyside, to the east by Cheshire East and to the south by Shropshire. It has a wide range of landscapes, numerous statutory and non-statutory designated environmental assets and rich historic environments. The North Cheshire Green Belt covers a large part of the north of the borough.

Climate Change, Energy and Air Quality

- High levels of carbon emissions per capita in the borough relate to the impacts of industry in Ellesmere Port, Stanlow Oil Refinery and transport.
- High levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in three Air Quality Management Areas and high levels of Sulphur Dioxide in one Air Quality Management Area in the borough. New development could contribute to or be affected by poor air quality. Poor air quality can have a significant impact on people's health, such as increasing incidences of respiratory illness.
- Difficulties improving accessibility to services and facilities and reducing car use in the rural area.
- Additional renewable energy developments may impact negatively on the landscape, particularly if undertaken in greater numbers and at a larger scale.
- Energy performance of new buildings could be improved.

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- Loss or degradation of peat can result in greenhouse gas emissions.
- The HyNet hydrogen and carbon capture proposals include parts of CW&C. This provides opportunities for carbon reductions, but it is not yet clear whether there are other impacts that may result from novel technologies associated with low emission energy supply.

Waste

- National levels of recycling are increasing, but the rate of increase has now slowed.
- There have been recent changes to national recycling and waste management requirements, for example the requirement from March 2025 for businesses to separate recyclable waste. There will be additional changes in future such as the proposed deposit return scheme for drinks bottles that will be introduced from October 2027. Changes such as this will change the level of demand for different types of waste management facility.
- Use of landfill is reducing as residual waste is increasingly sent for treatment or is used for energy generation. Nationally, the emphasis is on developing new types of waste management facilities to deliver sustainable waste management including new facilities that take residual waste for treatment and produce an end product that can be re-used.
- Gowry Landfill has now closed and the planning permission for a landfill site at Kinderton Lodge has now lapsed. As such, there are no active or permitted landfill sites within the borough.
- In 2022, there were 4,762 incidents of fly-tipping within CW&C against a baseline of 4,086 incidents in 2018/19. In comparison to the 2023/24 monitoring period, there were 2,524 incidents. This shows there has been a reduction in fly-tipping incidents since the SA scoping report was published.

Land and resources

- The Green Belt should be protected. Green Belt boundaries can be altered through Local Plans, but only in exceptional circumstances. The evidence prepared for the Local Plan will need to identify whether exceptional circumstances exist and if so, which parts of the Green Belt need to be reviewed and amended.
- The Mineral Products Association identify in the 9th AMPS report (2021) as of the end of 2020, the rolling 10-year average for sand & gravel replenishment is 63%, indicating that sales continue to outstrip the tonnage of new reserves permitted.
- CW&C currently has an aggregate sand and gravel landbank of over the required 7 years, but does not have a 7 year landbank beyond the plan period.
- There may be additional pressure on provision of sand and gravel from the borough in the future as several quarries in the Greater Manchester and Merseyside area have recently closed and many of these authorities do not now have a 7 year supply of aggregates.
- It may be possible for some additional aggregate provision to come from additional marine extraction.
- Changes to government policy and taxation relating to re-use of buildings rather than demolition and on recycling of construction, demolition and excavation waste may influence levels of recycled aggregates. This will impact on the levels of primary aggregates required to be extracted to meet the 7-year supply.
- Changes to levels of housebuilding, employment development and major infrastructure schemes will impact on demand for minerals.
- Existing important sites of geological and geomorphological interest should be protected and enhanced.
- Development of vacant and derelict land should be prioritised.

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- Remediation of contaminated land should be promoted and encouraged.
- Large parts of the borough are in agricultural use, including some areas of best and most versatile agricultural land. If agricultural land is used for alternative purposes (e.g. housing or renewable energy), this will reduce the ability to produce food (crops or animal produce).

Water

- Demands on our water and wastewater systems will increase as the population grows and as a result of demand from industry. The level of potential future demand is difficult to predict.
- Uncertainty around water capacity and whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate new growth and development.
- Importance of water efficiency measures in order to make the best use of existing resources.
- The risk of water pollution arising from new development should be minimised.
- CW&C is situated within two operational catchments - all waterbodies within these catchments have varying ecological statuses and failed chemical statuses. Development should avoid impacts on the water quality of these water bodies.
- Nutrient neutrality is an issue in some parts of the borough, but currently just applies in very small areas, so doesn't have a major impact - although this could change in the future.

Landscape, townscape and cultural heritage

- The borough's designated and non-designated historic environment resource should be preserved and / or enhanced.
- Chester and its heritage assets should be preserved and / or enhanced.
- The character and appearance of the borough's landscape should be managed and / or enhanced.
- Open space should be provided to meet identified need and deficiencies.

Biodiversity

- Development within the borough could have an impact on wildlife and nature conservation.
- New development should ensure that provision is made for enhancement, mitigation and protection. Biodiversity Net Gain requirements will help with this.
- Providing space for and maintaining and improving biodiversity will be a key consideration in planning green infrastructure in the borough.
- The current Green Infrastructure and biodiversity network should be extended by creating new sites and green infrastructure linkages.
- A Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been prepared for CW&C and this identifies opportunities for improvements.
- The strain on environmental infrastructure from new allocations must be managed.
- The borough includes sites with statutory and non-statutory nature designations. The non-statutory conservation sites may be more vulnerable to development pressure and lack of management.

Population and housing

- National policy identifies that the new Local Plan must plan to meet the government's housing target (based on the new standard method), which was revised in December 2024. The figure for CW&C is a minimum of 1,914 new homes each year, which for a plan covering a 15-year period, would equate to a total figure of 28,710 new homes.
- The Local Plan will need to identify sites to deliver the right mix and type of new sustainable homes in sustainable locations,

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- The Local Plan will need to identify sites to address the need for affordable housing within the borough and within the rural area, and reduce homelessness.
- There is a need to reduce the impact of houses on the environment.
- Previously developed land should be used where possible and regeneration opportunities within existing identified settlements should be maximised.

Health, wellbeing and equality

- There is a general under supply of open space when compared to the recommended standard.
- Need to ensure that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable and liveable communities.
- Policies can support the pro-active approach to health, enabling people to live healthier lifestyles.
- Design of new developments should consider public security and incorporate active frontages and opportunities for overlooking to increase the feeling of safety. It should also promote active travel and enable accessibility for all that effectively incorporates open spaces.
- The night-time economy should be improved, leading to busier centres that feel safer.
- There is an ageing population and it is important that our town centres and public spaces cater for all ages and provisions are made for care in the community.
- Housing and site layouts can impact someone living with dementia, mental health issues or disabilities.
- Accessibility to services and jobs, especially in the rural area can lead to social isolation.
- There is inequality across the borough with low social mobility, especially for the young.
- There are pockets of deprivation, mainly in urban areas, with inefficient homes leading to additional costs.

Economy and employment

- Economic growth should be maintained and economic recovery continued, following the Covid Pandemic.
- The Local Plan should plan for green jobs, logistics needs or other potential economic growth sectors.
- The economy should be supported in urban and rural areas, including the visitor economy.
- The Local Plan should provide a sufficient portfolio of employment land and premises to meet forecast economic needs, by type and location.
- Services and facilities should be provided to support the visitor economy.
- Infrastructure should be provided to underpin the economy and enable economic growth.
- Brownfield and underutilised land and buildings should be developed and regenerated, to support local economic growth.
- Our high streets should be re-invented, providing a greater mix of uses to reduce vacancy rates.
- Local retail and services should be provided and supported, to meet day to day needs closer to people's homes.

Infrastructure

- The Local Plan will need to ensure that essential infrastructure is in place or programmed to ensure planned for growth can take place.
- Around 72% of the population own a private vehicle, and cars and vans represent the most popular travel to work method at around 38%. The next most popular is by foot at just 5%, suggesting a

relatively high level of car-dependency, especially in rural areas, but due to the nature of rural areas in the borough, car travel is currently inevitable.

- Traffic congestion is already a problem on the strategic network including parts of the M56, M53, A55 and A49. Known congestion problems also occur in a number of locations across Chester, Ellesmere Port and Northwich. On the wider rural and inter-urban network, a number of specific hot spots are understood to experience congestion.
- High levels of car ownership, means that congestion and improving access to public and community transport for those without a car remains an issue, and improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists is also critical.
- Rail connectivity within the borough and between the borough's urban centres is relatively poor with no direct services between Chester and Ellesmere Port, or between Ellesmere Port and either Northwich or Winsford, or between Chester and Winsford.
- Rail service frequencies on some routes are quite low - for example, Northwich is served by only one train per hour on the Chester-Manchester Piccadilly mid-Cheshire line route.
- Public transport links between the EP/Chester corridor in the west and the Northwich / Winsford corridor in the east are particularly poor.
- There are currently reducing bus services and falling patronage. There are multiple bus services, however some areas of the borough are not served by buses at all, or are only served with buses that run at limited times.
- A high quality and effective rural public transport service is essential to ensure people have access to facilities and services within and access to employment opportunities.
- It is necessary to ensure that the strategic and local road networks can accommodate additional traffic generated by new development.
- There is a requirement to reduce the need to travel by car through locating development proposals in the most accessible locations, and that are served by an attractive choice of sustainable transport modes.
- There is a need to increase 5G mobile coverage and gigabit-capable broadband provision.

4 Assessment of Local Plan objectives

4 Assessment of Local Plan objectives

4.1 This section discusses the outcome of the appraisal of the compatibility of the Local Plan (Part Two) objectives against the SA framework.

4.2 The Plan objectives are set out in table Table 4.1 'Local Plan objectives'. Tables Table 4.2 'SA objectives' and Table 4.3 'Outcomes of the appraisal' provide a summary of the outcomes of the appraisal. Within the Issues and Options report for the new Local Plan, the section on objectives provides two different options - one is a series of Local Plan objectives, which have been assessed below for compatibility with the SA objectives. The other option is to use the SA objectives.

4.3 The overall outcome of the appraisal is that none of the proposed Plan objectives are incompatible with the delivery of sustainable development as a whole. The Plan objectives that support development (e.g. housing, employment or infrastructure) have potential negative effects on the SA objectives relating to protecting or enhancing the natural environment, biodiversity, carbon emissions, waste, flooding and energy consumption - but this will depend upon the exact location, scale, nature and design of the development or proposals linked to that objective. The plan objectives that protect or enhance green infrastructure, landscape and townscape and Green Belt for example, may restrict development and could therefore have negative effects on the SA objectives relating to provision of housing, regeneration and supporting a sustainable economy. These impacts will also depend upon the exact areas to be protected and the location, scale, nature and design of proposed developments.

Table 4.1 Local Plan objectives

Reference number	Local Plan Objective
SO1	Develop the role of Chester as a sub-regional city, promote regeneration and development in the towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford and enable appropriate levels of development in the key service centres to support sustainable rural communities.
SO2	Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to support sustainable communities.
SO3	In rural areas, support farming, agriculture and diversification of the rural economy whilst ensuring development is of an appropriate scale and character.
SO4	Provide and develop reliable, efficient transport networks that support sustainable growth and improve accessibility to jobs and services.
SO5	Ensure all development is supported by the necessary provision of, or improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities in an effective and timely manner to make development sustainable and minimise its effect upon existing communities.
SO6	Promote mixed and balanced communities through the provision of a range of housing to meet market, affordable and specialist housing needs.
SO7	Support education and skills and ensure that deprived communities have access to services and employment.
SO8	Create stronger, safer and healthier communities by enabling access to leisure, recreational and community facilities and promoting walking and cycling.

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Reference number	Local Plan Objective
SO9	Support sustainable development and urban regeneration by supporting the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings and by locating the majority of development within and on the edge of the main urban areas and key service centres.
SO10	Protect the environmental quality and character of Cheshire West and Chester through maintaining the general extent and character of the North Cheshire Green Belt and Cheshire countryside.
SO11	Ensure new development does not create an unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on the amenity and health of residents.
SO12	Ensure new development is of sustainable and high quality design that respects heritage assets, local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape.
SO13	Manage, expand and improve green infrastructure and waterways networks, recognising their importance in delivering local environmental, social, economic and health benefits.
SO14	Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change by addressing flood risk and water management and support the development of new buildings and infrastructure that are resilient, resistant and adapted to the effects of climate change.
SO15	Take action on climate change by promoting energy efficiency and energy generation from low carbon and renewable resources.
SO16	Achieve sustainable waste management, using sustainable modes of transport and travel and the prudent use of our natural resources including water and mineral reserves.

Table 4.2 SA objectives

SA objective	Description of compatibility of SA objectives and Local Plan objectives
Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	As a whole, plan objectives work towards minimising carbon emissions and climate change. However, tensions exist where new development or infrastructure is proposed as depending on the location, type and design of the development there is the potential to negatively impact carbon emissions and climate change.
Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	Many of the objectives would have positive impacts on air, soil, water or noise pollution. However, tensions exist where new development or infrastructure is proposed as depending on the location, type and design of the development there is the potential to negatively impact on air, soil, water or noise pollution.
Provide high quality, well designed housing to meet identified needs	The plan objectives supporting housing and regeneration would help to support this objective. However, the plan objectives protecting and/or enhancing Green Belt, countryside, green

4 Assessment of Local Plan objectives

SA objective	Description of compatibility of SA objectives and Local Plan objectives
	infrastructure and natural resources may all make it more difficult to provide sufficient housing.
Improve health, safety and well-being	The plan objectives generally support the SA objective for health, safety and wellbeing.
Reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport	The plan objectives generally support reductions in the need to travel and increases in sustainable modes of transport. However, the plan objectives supporting rural diversification and provision of housing may increase the need to travel, depending on the location of development and opportunities for sustainable transport in that area.
Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	The plan objectives generally support the SA objective relating to viability of city, town and local centres.
Protect and conserve natural resources	This shows mixed results as the plan objectives supporting development (e.g. for housing, infrastructure, transport, recreational facilities or renewable energy) could have a negative impact on natural resources depending on the location, nature and design of proposals. The other plan objectives generally have a positive impact.
Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Most of the plan objectives do not have a strong relationship with this objective. The plan objective supporting prudent use of minerals will have a positive effect. The objectives relating to housing, employment, Green Infrastructure and renewable energy could potentially have negative effects depending on the location of development as they could sterilise minerals unless mineral safeguarding areas are avoided or prior extraction is undertaken.
Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	This shows mixed results as the plan objectives supporting development (e.g. for housing, infrastructure, transport, recreational facilities or renewable energy) could have a negative impact on biodiversity and geodiversity depending on the location, nature and design of proposals. The other plan objectives generally have a positive impact.
Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Many of the plan objectives do not have a strong relationship with this objective. The objective on waste management has a positive impact. The objectives relating to development (e.g. for housing, employment or rural diversification) could have a negative impact on waste generation depending on the nature and design of proposals.
Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening	This shows mixed results as the plan objectives supporting development (e.g. for housing, infrastructure, transport, recreational facilities or renewable energy) could have a negative impact on landscape or townscape depending on the location, nature and

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SA objective	Description of compatibility of SA objectives and Local Plan objectives
local distinctiveness and sense of place	design of proposals. The other plan objectives generally have a positive impact.
Conserve and enhance the historic environment	Many of the plan objectives do not have a strong relationship with this objective. The objective on design and respecting heritage assets has a positive impact. The objective to protect Green Belt may also have a positive impact by protecting the setting and character of Chester. The objective relating to developing the role of Chester could have a negative impact, depending on the location, nature and design of proposals.
Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	This shows mixed results as the plan objectives supporting development (e.g. for housing, infrastructure or transport) could have a negative impact on flooding. The other plan objectives generally have a positive impact.
Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	The objectives relating to development (developing the role of Chester, economic development housing and rural diversification) could have negative effects as they could increase energy use and potentially compete for land against renewable energy developments. The objectives relating to protection of Green Belt, landscape and provision of Green Infrastructure could also have negative impacts as they may make it more difficult to get permission for renewable energy developments. The objective relating to taking action on climate change and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy would have a positive impact.
Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	The plan objectives generally support this SA objective.
Support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment	The plan objectives are generally supportive of this SA objective. However, the objectives that relate to Green Belt, landscape and Green Infrastructure may have a negative impact as they could make it more difficult to undertake economic development.

4.4 Key - N = negative, P = positive, N/A = not applicable or neutral

Table 4.3 Outcomes of the appraisal

	Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	Provide high quality, well designed housing to meet identified needs	Improve health, safety and well-being	Reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport	Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	Protect and conserve natural resources	Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	Conserve and enhance the historic environment	Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	Support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment
SO1	N	N	P	P	P	P	N	N/A	N	N	N	N	N	N	P	P
SO2	N	N	N/A	P	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	N/A	N	N	P	P
SO3	N	N	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N	N/A	N	N	N	N/A	N	N	N/A	P
SO4	P	N	N/A	N/A	M	P	N	N/A	N	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P
SO5	P	N	N/A	P	P	P	N	N/A	N	N/A	N	N/A	N	N/A	P	P
SO6	N	N	P	P	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N/A	N	N/A	P	P
SO7	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P
SO8	P	P	N/A	P	P	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P
SO9	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P
SO10	P	P	N	P	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	P	N/A	N/A	N
SO11	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P	P
SO12	N/A	N/A	N	P	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
SO13	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	N	P	N/A	P	N/A	P	N/A	N/A	N
SO14	P	P	P	P	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P	P
SO15	P	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N	N	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	P	N/A	P
SO16	P	P	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	N/A	P	N/A	N/A	P	P	N/A	N

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5 SA of the strategic development options

Introduction

5.1 The strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern and scale of places and need to make sufficient provision for homes, employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the NPPF.

5.2 The strategic policy approaches are SS 1 'Housing needs', SS 2 'Employment needs', SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy' and SS 5 'Spatial strategy options' (options A, B and C). The appraisals of these policy approaches are summarised in this chapter and the scoring is set out in the table at Appendix 5 'Appraisal summary tables'.

5.3 Policy SD 1 is a strategic policy approach, but is based on the theme of sustainable development, rather than levels and locations of development. As such, it is summarised within chapter 6 'SA of the policy approaches' under the SA topics, rather than in this chapter.

5.4 Each policy approach has been assessed individually, but this has made it difficult to judge impacts in some instances as the strategic policy approaches will all have a significant impact on each other and on the Plan approach as a whole.

5.5 All impacts of the strategic policy approaches were considered to be short, medium and long term - as they are likely to have affects throughout the plan period. Most of the impacts were considered to be permanent, given the strategic nature of the policy approaches. However, a few were considered to be temporary and permanent for specific topics, as there could be temporary impacts, for example during the construction phase of development.

SS 1 'Housing needs'

5.6 This policy approach is for the Council to deliver a minimum of 1,914 new homes each year, over the plan period. The housing figure is based on the government's standard method number and as such, the Council do not have any reasonable alternative housing figures. However, there is a question within the Issues and Options report asking whether there is any reason for the Council not to plan for delivering a minimum of 1,914 new homes each year. It isn't considered likely at this stage that a strong case could be put forward with reasons not to plan for the proposed housing figure, but if further evidence came to light which suggested that the figure of 1,914 could not be met, further appraisal work would be undertaken to assess any reasonable alternative figures.

5.7 The impacts of this policy approach were quite difficult to assess, when looking at the housing figure alone - as the effects will depend on the location, scale and design of housing developments, which is covered through policy approaches SS 3, SS 4, SS 5 and all the associated topic based policy approaches. When assessed individually most of the topics scored as neutral as the effects were uncertain, but as the housing figure is significantly higher than the current housing figure, there is the potential for more negative effects.

5.8 This policy approach scores positively for the population and housing topic as it will help to meet housing needs, although it doesn't specify mix and type of housing or design of housing as this is covered by other policies.

5.9 It was highlighted that there is the potential for many different indirect environmental, social and economic effects, but this will be influenced by the spatial development strategy and location of development. No secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects were identified.

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5.10 The only suggested mitigation or improvement is for the policy approach to set a housing figure for the plan period as a whole, rather than specifying an annual figure. This would provide additional flexibility in the amount of housing provided each year and this could reduce or change the effects on the SA topics.

SS 2 'Employment needs'

5.11 This policy approach is for the Council to deliver a minimum of 9.9 hectares of employment land each year, over the plan period. The employment figure is based on the findings of the Economic Needs Assessment (2025), which looked at a range of methods to derive employment needs (in line with national policy and planning practice guidance), labour demand, labour supply, past take-up and/or future property market requirements. The report concludes that the most robust approach is for the authority to plan for around 198 hectares of employment land over a 20-year period. This equates to 149 hectares over 15 years). As such, the Council do not have any reasonable alternative employment figures. However, there is a question within the Issues and Options report asking whether there is any reason for the Council not to plan for delivering a minimum of 9.9 hectares of employment land each year. It isn't considered likely at this stage that a strong case could be put forward with reasons not to plan for the proposed employment figure, but if further evidence came to light which suggested that the figure of 9.9 hectares could not be met, further appraisal work would be undertaken to assess any reasonable alternative figures.

5.12 The impacts of this policy approach were quite difficult to assess, when looking at the employment land figure alone - as the effects will depend on the location, scale and design of employment developments, which is covered through policy approaches SS 3, SS4, SS 5 and all the associated topic based policy approaches. When assessed individually most of the topics scored as neutral as the effects were uncertain, but as the employment land figure is significantly lower than the figure in the current Local Plan, it is anticipated that there would be fewer negative effects.

5.13 This policy approach scores positively for the economy and employment topic as it will help to support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment. It doesn't specify types or locations of employment as this is covered by other policies.

5.14 It was highlighted that there is the potential for many different indirect environmental, social and economic effects, but this will be influenced by the spatial development strategy and location of development. No secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects were identified.

5.15 There were no suggested mitigation or improvement measures.

SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles'

5.16 Policy approach SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles' sets out the main principles for directing new development and allocating land. It identifies that development will be directed to previously developed sites first, as they are the most sustainable locations. It also identifies that redeveloping urban sites comes with a range of choices and high quality design will be important. It also identifies that where there are not enough planning permissions and opportunities for redevelopment within urban areas and towns, the approach will be to develop on the edge of settlements in locations with the best access to public transport and existing services and infrastructure.

5.17 This policy approach scores very positively in terms of the climate change objective and infrastructure objective, as it focuses development on accessible and sustainable locations. It also scores positively in relation to landscape, townscape and cultural heritage as it refers to design, but there could potentially be some negative impacts on landscape, townscape and cultural heritage

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depending on the location of sites. It also scores positively in terms of population and housing and economy and employment. It is assumed that the spatial strategy principles relate to housing and employment development, but this isn't clearly specified in the policies. It scores positively in terms of health and wellbeing and vitality and viability of centres as it refers to open space, services and facilities.

5.18 Impacts on land and resources are generally uncertain. The focus on previously developed land is positive, but there may be negative effects on soils and agricultural land through development outside settlements. There is the potential for negative effects on the supply of mineral resources and on flooding and biodiversity, depending on the location of sites.

5.19 There is the potential for cumulative effects from individual developments and for indirect impacts on air quality due to the location of development, but no secondary or synergistic effects were identified. In the mitigation and improvement section it was suggested that the policy approach could include reference to policy approach SD 1 'Sustainable development'.

SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy'

5.20 This policy approach sets out a settlement hierarchy, based on the status and role of settlements. It identifies 6 specific centres (Chester; Ellesmere Port; Northwich; Winsford; Neston and Parkgate; and Frodsham) and states that an individual place-based policy for each of these settlements will be prepared. It also identifies 8 settlements that have a level of facilities and services that meet the day-to-day needs of residents (Cuddington and Sandiway; Farndon; Helsby; Kelsall; Malpas; Tarporley; Tattenhall and Tarvin). The policy approach also recognises that smaller settlements could accommodate infill development.

5.21 This policy approach scores positively in terms of: carbon emissions and climate change; land and resources; population and housing; health, wellbeing and quality; economy and employment; and infrastructure. This is because it will help to provide housing and employment and focuses development in key settlements, in accessible locations and predominantly on previously developed land.

5.22 Impacts were considered uncertain in terms of air pollution, geodiversity, water quality, flooding and landscape/townscape, as impacts will depend upon the exact locations of development. There was the potential for negative impacts on mineral resources, heritage and biodiversity as there are significant mineral/heritage/biodiversity resources in the listed areas, but impacts will depend on the exact location of development.

5.23 Potential cumulative impacts from individual development were identified, including potential cumulative impacts with developments outside the borough. There was also the potential for indirect impacts on other authorities that rely on minerals from CW&C. No secondary or synergistic impacts were identified.

5.24 In the mitigation and improvement section it was suggested that the policy approach could be reviewed when the spatial development option is chosen. It was also recommended that the findings of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are taken into account. In terms of landscape, townscape and cultural heritage it was suggested that the policy approach could refer to conserving the character and setting of all settlements, not just smaller settlements. In terms of biodiversity, it was recommended that the hierarchy of ecological designations and features that contribute towards the Green Infrastructure and biodiversity network is taken into account.

SS 5 'Spatial strategy options'

5.25 Policy approach SS 5 'Spatial strategy options' provides three initial options for growth:

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- Option A - Retain the Green Belt
- Option B - Follow current Local Plan level and distribution of development
- Option C - Sustainable transport corridors

5.26 All of the options are capable of accommodating at least 29,000 new homes and 149 hectares of employment land. The three options have all been assessed separately against the appraisal criteria.

Option A

5.27 Option A assumes that any new development areas are located outside the Green Belt.

5.28 For housing development it includes:

- Major development in and to the south of Northwich of just over 5,000 homes.
- Significant urban extensions to the south/west of Winsford of more than 11,000 homes.
- Growth around places that are not located in the Green Belt, such as Tarporley, Tattenhall, Malpas and Farndon.
- More limited development to the south/east of Tarvin, Kelsall and Cuddington and Sandiway on sites that are not in the Green Belt.

5.29 For employment development it includes:

- Refurbishment and redevelopment of sites in existing employment areas, retaining key employment locations of: Origin, Ellesmere Port; Winsford Industrial Estate; Woodford Park; Gadbrook Park; Chester West/Sealand Industrial Estate.
- For new large scale industrial/warehousing provision, if this did not deliver enough sites for employment needs, then explore greenfield extensions not located in Green Belt. Indicative locations include: south/ west Gadbrook Park; north/east of Winsford Industrial Estate; west Woodford Park; and east of Protos.
- For office development, focus primarily on town centres or established business parks, including Gadbrook Park.
- Outside of the main settlements and market towns, potential for smaller scale employment or mixed use development, appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement, to meet local employment needs

Option B

5.30 Option B follows the strategy and settlement hierarchy set out in the current Local Plan (Part One) Policy STRAT 2. It locates most new development in, or on the edge of the main urban areas, with an appropriate level of new development focused on smaller settlements that have adequate services and facilities and access to public transport. However, since the Local Plan (Part One) was put in place, there is now a much more limited supply of previously developed land to accommodate new development, so large areas of Green Belt and / or countryside are likely to be needed.

5.31 For housing development it includes:

- Large urban extensions around: Chester; Ellesmere Port; Northwich and Winsford.
- Total Green Belt release of sites to deliver 11,000 homes.
- Relatively limited development in Cuddington and Sandiway; Farndon; Frodsham; Helsby; Kelsall; Malpas; Neston and Parkgate; Tarporley; Tarvin; and Tattenhall of 3,000 homes in total.
- 2,500 homes across the rest of the rural area, including both Green Belt and non-Green Belt land.

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5.32 For employment development it includes:

- Refurbishment and redevelopment of sites in existing employment areas, retaining key employment locations of: Origin, Ellesmere Port; Winsford Industrial Estate; Woodford Park; Gadbrook Park; Chester West/Sealand Industrial Estate; and commercial sites in the Green Belt at Urenco and Chester Business Park.
- For new large scale industrial/warehousing provision, if this did not deliver enough sites for employment needs, then explore greenfield extensions. Indicative locations include: south/west Gadbrook Park; north/east of Winsford Industrial Estate; west of Woodford Park; and east of Protos;. In the Green Belt, explore the potential around: Wincham; south of Ellesmere Port; and north of Clayhill Industrial Estate, Neston.
- For office development, focus on primarily on town centres or established business parks, including: Chester Business Park and Gadbrook Park.
- Outside of the main settlements and market towns, the potential for smaller scale employment or mixed use development, appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement, to meet local employment needs.

Option C

5.33 Option C focuses new homes in and around settlements on the railway network and on main bus route corridors. This approach could have a greater impact on the Green Belt if multiple developments took place along corridors.

5.34 For housing development it includes:

- A more distributed pattern of development.
- More modest urban extensions around: Chester; Ellesmere Port; Northwich; and Winsford.
- Smaller settlements with a rail station, such as :Cuddington and Sandiway; Helsby; Frodsham; and Neston and Parkgate would take a bigger role in accommodating development.
- Total Green Belt release of sites to deliver more than 12,000 homes.
- Potential for further development in places and the rural area along bus corridors including: Farndon; Malpas; Tarporley; Tarvin; and Tattenhall.
- Potential for an enhanced role around rural rail stations including: Acton Bridge; Capenhurst; Delamere; Elton; Hooton; Lostock Gralam; and Mouldsworth.

5.35 For employment development it includes:

- Refurbishment and redevelopment of sites in existing employment areas, retaining key employment locations of: Origin, Ellesmere Port; Winsford Industrial Estate; Gadbrook Park; and commercial sites in the Green Belt at Urenco, Capenhurst.
- For new large scale industrial/warehousing provision, if this did not deliver enough sites for employment needs, then explore greenfield extensions, particularly with multi-modal opportunities (port/rail) for freight, or locations close to existing or planned railway stations for passengers. Indicative locations include: Origin eastern employment area; south/west Gadbrook Park incorporating a new railway station; Wincham, Lostock Gralam; south/east of Winsford Industrial Estate; and north of Clayhill Industrial Estate, Neston.

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- For office development, focus primarily on town centres or established business parks. This could include well connected sites such as: Chester Business Quarter; and Gadbrook Park subject to a new railway station south/west of Gadbrook Park.
- Outside of the main settlements and market towns, the potential for smaller scale employment or mixed use development close to local railway stations, appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement, to meet local employment needs.

Alternatives and growth areas

5.36 There are many other alternatives for the spatial strategy, but no other alternatives that are considered to be reasonable. The three options are the only reasonable alternatives.

5.37 A series of potential growth areas have been identified, showing potential locations for future housing, employment and mixed use development. A different set of potential growth areas is suggested for each spatial strategy option. There is a large amount of overlap between the potential growth areas for each option, but they are different. The potential growth areas are based on sites submitted through a previous 'call for sites' exercise, undeveloped Local Plan allocations, the Land Availability Assessment and a desktop review of existing information. Some areas of land have been excluded that are subject to constraints that would act as potential 'showstoppers' to restrict future development, including: Local Green Spaces; designated habitats sites; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets; key settlement gaps; Areas of Special County Value; strategic open space; areas of flood risk; hazard zones. Exclusion of these types of land has been taken into account in the appraisal of the options.

Appraisal findings

5.38 In terms of climate change, energy and air quality, option C scored very positively as distribution of development is based on the settlements with the best sustainable transport opportunities. Option B scored positively as it is based on the more sustainable settlements and option A scored negatively as some development is proposed in Chester, Northwich and Winsford. Winsford is a sustainable location, but currently has slightly more limited sustainable transport connections, especially connections to Chester. Option A also provides for some development in smaller settlements such as Tattenhall and Malpas, which provide some, but not all services, so additional travel is likely to be required. The options had no direct relationship with energy.

5.39 All three options were screened out for waste, as they have no direct relationship with waste generation or waste management.

5.40 All three options scored negatively for land and resources. All three scored negatively for contaminated land, previously developed land and soils. They would re-use previously developed land where possible, but would all have a much greater percentage of development on greenfield land and agricultural land. There was a neutral impact in terms of geodiversity, as none of the identified growth areas had a significant impact on RIGS. Option A scored negatively in terms of minerals as some of the proposed growth areas are within mineral safeguarding areas. Options B and C scored very negatively in terms of minerals as most of the proposed growth areas are within mineral safeguarding areas.

5.41 Impacts on water were considered neutral / uncertain for all options. Further information is required from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan about the need for water treatment and from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment about flood risk. Any development may increase flood risk, but generally the

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growth areas avoid areas of higher flood risk. More information is required in relation to surface water flooding. Northwich, Winsford and Farndon are generally at a greater risk of flooding.

5.42 All three options scored negatively for landscape and townscape as there is the potential for negative impacts and on key views and designated landscapes, but this will depend upon the exact location of development. Option A scored negatively for potential negative impacts on the historic environment, but it provides for a lower amount of development in Chester and protects the Green Belt, which would help to protect the setting of Chester. Options B and C scored very negatively for the historic environment as they promote a greater level of development in Chester.

5.43 Impacts on biodiversity were considered neutral / uncertain for all three options. The options protect biodiversity sites and ancient woodland, but have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity depending on the location and design of development. There is also the potential for positive impacts on biodiversity through Biodiversity Net Gain, which is not specifically mentioned in the policy approach, but would be required as part of most developments.

5.44 All three options scored very positively for population and housing, as they will have positive effects on housing provision. They also scored positively in terms of health, safety and well-being as development is likely to have positive impacts on active lifestyles and protect health and community facilities due to the fact that the options generally promote development in or around key settlements. Impacts on open space, crime, road safety and provision of new health or community facilities or services will depend upon the exact location, nature and design of developments. All three options are likely to result in some regeneration and redevelopment of previously developed land. There is no direct relationship with noise pollution and this was screened out.

5.45 All three options scored very positively for economy and employment as they will help to provide a mix of employment sites. They scored positively in terms of regeneration as they are likely to result in some regeneration and redevelopment of previously developed land. Impacts on deprived areas will depend upon the exact location, nature and design of development.

5.46 The scores for infrastructure were mixed. Option A scored negatively as it proposes more development in Northwich and Winsford, and Winsford currently has slightly more limited sustainable transport option. It is not yet clear what additional infrastructure is required or will be provided as part of proposed developments. Options B and C scored positively as they include more development in and around Chester, which currently has higher levels of sustainable transport provision. All three options scored positively for vitality and viability of centres, as additional development in or close to centres is likely to help to safeguard existing shops and services.

5.47 Overall, none of the options score more positively than the others. Option C is better than option B, which in turn is better than option A in terms of carbon emissions and climate change, but option A scores better in terms of mineral resources and the historic environment. Options B and C score better than option A in relation to infrastructure. All of the other scoring is similar for each option.

5.48 The secondary, indirect, cumulative and synergistic effects will depend upon the sites taken forward. Cumulative effects are possible within mineral safeguarding areas or in areas of higher quality agricultural land. Indirect impacts are possible for other authorities who rely on minerals from CW&C.

5.49 In terms of mitigation and improvement, it was suggested that site options are chosen away from Air Quality Management Areas and close to sustainable transport options. Further information is needed on agricultural land classification and contamination to help decide between sites. The growth areas should exclude RIGS. There is a separate policy approach protecting mineral safeguarding areas and requiring prior extraction, but development may still impact on minerals.

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6.1 A summary table setting out the appraisal scores for each policy approach against each objective is set out at Appendix 5 'Appraisal summary tables'. Information is set out below to summarise the anticipated effects of each policy.

Period covered by the effects

6.2 All of the effects of the policy approaches were considered to be either long term, or short, medium and long term - as they are likely to have affects throughout the plan period.

6.3 For most policy approaches the impacts were considered to be temporary and permanent as development, or protection of a specific aspect of the environment would have some impacts that would be time-limited (for example only during construction or restoration stages) and some impacts that would be permanent (for example new buildings). A few of the policy approaches were considered to be temporary only - as the type of development would be temporary, for example solar farms, wind farms and quarries. These types of development have a limited life span and the land would be returned to it's former use (or an alternative) use afterwards. Other policy approaches have temporary impacts, such as Gypsy and Traveller sites, as the level and nature of the use may change over time.

Spatial area covered by the effects

6.4 All policy approaches relate to the whole borough apart from the following locationally specific policy approaches or where they relate to a specific site, designation or a development type that is concentrated in certain areas: CH 1 'Chester', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', EP 2 'Origin - Stanlow and Thornton Science Park', EP 3 'Origin – Protos', FR 1 'Frodsham', HO 4 'Rural exception sites', HO 6 'Houses in multiple occupation', MI 1 'Middlewich', MISC 1 'Safeguarded areas around aerodromes', MISC 2 'Jodrell Bank', MISC 3 'Waterways and mooring facilities', MS 3 'Safeguarding', MS 4 'Oil and Gas development', NO 1 'Northwich', NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate', WI 1 'Winsford', WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate'.

Transboundary effects

6.5 The policy approaches have also been assessed to consider whether there are any likely transboundary effects. These effects only relate to outside the CW&C boundary and not outside the UK. In summary the likely transboundary effects of the policy approaches are:

- With neighbouring authorities (or Wales) due to proximity with the boundary (dependant on location and the policy approach taken): CH 1 'Chester', MI 1 'Middlewich', SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 5 'Spatial strategy options', WI 1 'Winsford'.
- Where proposed allocations/sites/regeneration areas are located close to the authority boundary or have sub-regional importance: EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', EP 2 'Origin - Stanlow and Thornton Science Park', EP 3 'Origin – Protos', WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate'.
- Where cultural or community services and facilities are likely to attract visitors from outside the borough: OS 2: 'Cultural and community facilities', VE 1 'Visitor economy'.
- Where existing/proposed designations may affect designations in neighbouring areas or catchments: FW 1 'Flood risk and water management', GI 1 'Green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity', LA 1 'Landscape', LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value', MISC 1 'Safeguarded areas around aerodromes', MISC 2 'Jodrell Bank'.

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- Where existing/proposed infrastructure or transport networks may have cross-boundary effects: MISC 3 'Waterways and mooring facilities', TA 1 'Transport and Accessibility', TA 2 'Local Infrastructure Priorities'.
- Where waste, minerals or energy related development may have cross-boundary effects: EN 1 'Energy supplies and energy related development', EN 3 'Solar energy', EN4 'Sustainable energy and heat', EN 5 'Low carbon fuel and carbon capture', MS 1 'Minerals Supply', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', MS 3 'Safeguarding', MS 4 Oil and Gas development, MW 1 'Managing waste', SD 1 'Sustainable development'.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

6.6 For all topic areas there is the potential for secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects, depending on the location of development and from existing and new developments. For all area-based policies, there are potential cumulative effects from different developments within that area. More specific effects are set out below. If the secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects relate to one specific topic, they are described in the topic sections rather than provided in the list below.

- EG 1 has potential cumulative effects from individual developments.
- EP 1 has potential cumulative effects from existing and new industry.
- EP 2 has potential cumulative effects and synergistic uses within Stanlow.
- EP 3 has potential cumulative effects and synergistic uses within Protos.
- GI 1 has potential cumulative effects from developments contributing to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- GT 1 has potential cumulative effects, but this will depend on locational criteria and the level of need established through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.
- EN 3 acknowledges that the cumulative effects of renewable energy schemes should be carefully considered.
- HO 1 acknowledges the cumulative effects of student accommodation in Chester.
- HO 6 has potential cumulative effects in specific locations, but the policy aims to mitigate concentrations.
- ID 1 has potential cumulative effects from different infrastructure developments.
- LA 1 has potential positive cumulative effects through the designation of protected landscapes, open spaces and key settlement gaps.
- LA 2 has potential positive cumulative effects through the designation of ASCVs throughout the borough.
- MI 1 has potential cumulative effects with any sites close to Middlewich coming forward through the Cheshire East Local Plan.
- MISC 3 has potential cumulative effects from different developments along the same waterway.
- OS 1 has potential cumulative effects from the development of different areas of open space.
- OS2 has potential cumulative effects from different cultural developments, including developments in neighbouring boroughs.
- TA 2 has potential cumulative effects from different transport schemes.
- TC 1 has potential cumulative effects with other types of development in town centres and local retail centres.
- VE 1 has potential cumulative effects from different visitor economy developments, including developments in neighbouring boroughs.

Screened-out policies

6.7 The following policy approaches have been screened out for all topics:

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- VI 1 'Vision' - this is very high-level and does not need to be assessed within the SA.
- OB 1 'Objectives' - this identifies the two alternatives for objectives, which are discussed below. OB 1 itself does not need to be assessed.
- OB 1 Option A 'Use the Local Plan objectives' - the Local Plan objectives have been assessed against the SA objectives in Chapter 4.
- OB 1 Option B 'Use the SA objectives' - as this proposes using the SA objectives, it is not necessary to assess it against the SA objectives.
- MISC 4 'Meeting the outstanding housing requirement in Tattenhall' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be superseded by the updated site allocations and as such, it is not necessary for it to be assessed.
- MISC 5 'Employment land provision in the rural area' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be superseded by updated site allocations and as such, it is not necessary for it to be assessed.
- MISC 6 'New agricultural and forestry buildings' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be adequately covered by a combination of national policy and the suggested policy approach in GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside' and as such, it is not necessary for it to be assessed.
- MISC 7 'Rural diversification of land based businesses' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be adequately covered by a combination of national policy and the suggested policy approaches in GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside', TC 1 'Town centres' and VE 1 'Visitor economy' and as such, it is not necessary for it to be assessed.
- MISC 8 'Equestrian development' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be adequately covered by a combination of national policy and the suggested policy approach in GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside' and as such, it is not necessary for it to be assessed.
- MISC 9 'Shopfronts' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be adequately covered by a combination of national policy, the forthcoming Cheshire West and Chester Design Guide and the suggested policy approaches in HE 1 'Historic environment' and DS 1 'High quality design' and as such, it is not necessary for it to be assessed.
- MISC 10 'Advertisements' - it is possible that this policy will be deleted as it may be adequately covered by a combination of national policy, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, the forthcoming Cheshire West and Chester Design Guide and the suggested policy approaches in HE 1 'Historic environment' and DS 1 'High quality design' and could potentially be deleted.

Climate change, energy and air quality

6.8 The climate change topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.1 Climate change objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure that new development is in accessible locations? • Will it reduce the need to travel? • Will it enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport? • Will it encourage the use of lower carbon technologies and working practices? • Will it protect or enhance peat resources?
Reduce air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve local air quality or reduce air pollution?

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Objective	Sub-objective
Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce energy consumption? • Will it promote energy efficiency? • Will it result in an increase in the installed energy capacity?

6.9 There are ten policy approaches that are screened out and will not have a significant relationship with carbon emissions and climate change. The majority of policy approaches scored either positively or very positively in relation to carbon emissions. Policy SD 1 'Sustainable development' scores very positively as it sets specific requirements for new developments to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

6.10 The area based policy approaches for CH 1 'Chester', NO 1 'Northwich' and FR 1 'Frodsham' all score very positively as they are very accessible locations. Policy approach EP 3 'Origin - Protos' refers specifically to supporting the low carbon energy transition and maximising opportunities to transport products by non-road modes of transport and therefore scores very positively. Policy approach TA 1 'Transport and accessibility' scores very positively as it aims to reduce the need to travel, support sustainable modes of transport and ensure that new developments are in more sustainable locations. Policy approach ID 1 'Infrastructure and development contributions' also refers to encouraging sustainable transport links and reducing car dependency. Policy MW 1 'Managing waste' also scores very positively as it requires that opportunities to share infrastructure, such as sustainable transport options are maximised and it also safeguards existing and planned port and rail infrastructure.

6.11 Policy OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation' has more indirect effects on carbon emissions and climate change, but still scores very positively as it supports open space and associated trees to absorb and retain carbon. Provision of open space closer to homes will also help to reduce the need to travel. Policy DS 2 'Sustainable construction' has very positive effects as it aims to achieve carbon net zero in new developments and will have a positive impact on lower carbon technologies. Policy DS 3 'climate adaptation' also scores very positively as it requires development to include measures to provide resilience to climate change impacts.

6.12 In addition to the very positive effects described above, 23 of the policies score positively and eight are neutral. The neutral scores are generally where the effects are uncertain as they will depend upon the location, scale and design of development.

6.13 No policy approaches scored very negatively in terms of carbon emissions. Five scored negatively, including SS 5 'Option A', which is described below. VE 1 'Visitor economy' scores negatively as despite directing major leisure, tourism, cultural attractions and visitor accommodation to the main centres, it also supports visitor attractions elsewhere, which is likely to increase the need to travel. WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate' also scores negatively as it refers to parking provision and isn't particularly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. HO 5 'Rural exception sites' is likely to result in development in less accessible locations. Policy MS 4 'Oil and gas development' scores negatively as oil and gas are fossil fuels and are therefore likely to release CO₂.

6.14 The objective to reduce air pollution scores very similarly to the carbon emissions objective. The key differences are for SS4 'Settlement hierarchy', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', EP 3 'Origin - Protos', WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate', FR 1 'Frodsham', TA 1 'Transport and accessibility', TA 2 'Local transport infrastructure priorities', HO 1 'Mix and type of housing in new developments and specialist housing', HO 6 'Houses in Multiple Occupation', OS 1: Open space, sport and recreation', OS 2 'culture and community facilities', EN 1 'Energy supplies and energy related development; and MS 1 'Minerals

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supply', which all score more negatively (either moving from positive to neutral or from very positive to positive). This is because they have less impact on air quality than they do on carbon emissions and accessibility.

6.15 Policy approaches VE 1 'Visitor economy' and MS 4 'Oil and gas developments' change from negative for carbon emissions to neutral for air pollution. This is because both these policy approaches refer specifically to the need to assess, mitigate or prevent detrimental impacts on air quality (although they may still increase the need to travel).

6.16 Policy approach HW 1 'Heath and well-being' is screened out for carbon emissions and climate change, but scores very positively in terms of air pollution as it refers to preventing significant adverse impacts on health or quality of life due to air pollution. Policy MS 2 'Proposals for mineral development' is very positive in terms of air pollution as it refers to the need for any odour, dust or particle emissions to be controlled, mitigated or removed at source.

6.17 The objective to reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources is screened out for most policy approaches, as they don't specifically refer to or influence energy consumption or efficiency. Policy approaches SD 1 'Sustainable development', DS 2 'Sustainable construction', DS 3 'Climatic adaptation', EN 2 'Wind energy', EN 3 'Solar energy', EN 4 'Sustainable energy and heat' as they all specifically refer to and promote either reduced energy consumption, energy efficiency or increased use of energy from renewable resources.

6.18 Policy approaches CH 1 'Chester' and EP 2 'Origin - Stanlow and Thornton Science Park' score positively in terms of energy as the CH 1 policy approach refers to hydropower in the explanatory text and EP 2 supports the lower energy transition at Stanlow (but the refinery is currently a high energy user). Policy approach MW 1 'Managing waste' supports energy recovery and therefore scores positively.

6.19 Policy approaches GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside' and ID 1 'Infrastructure and developer contributions' score positively in terms of energy. GB 1 refers to other uses appropriate to the countryside, which could include renewable energy (although that isn't currently clear). ID 1 refers to renewable energy connections and EV charging networks, but energy consumption impacts will depend upon the type of infrastructure proposed.

6.20 Four policy approaches were neutral for energy. Policy approaches EP 3 'Origin - Protos', GI 1 'Green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity' and EN 1 'Energy supplies and energy related developments' scored negatively for energy. EP 3 supports sustainable energy generation, but is not a renewable resource. GI 1 protects higher grade agricultural land, which could reduce provision of solar farms. EN 1 refers to energy generation, but doesn't specify that it needs to be renewable energy. Policy approach MS 4 'Oil and gas developments' scored very negatively.

6.21 Out of the three spatial strategy options, option C 'Sustainable transport corridors' scores very positively for carbon emissions and climate change, as it focuses on accessible locations with good transport links. Option B 'Current Local Plan level and distribution' scores positively as it also concentrates on accessible locations. Option A scores negatively as it promotes a larger amount of development in less accessible locations.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

6.22 General secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects that cover all topic areas are set out above. This section, just identifies any secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects that are specific to the climate change, energy and air quality topic area.

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- SS 3 has potential indirect effects on air quality due to location of development, accessibility and the need to use the private car.
- TA 2 has potential positive cumulative effects on climate or emissions from multiple developments surrounding rail infrastructure and park and ride etc.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EN 1 - Consider referencing low carbon energy transition, support for industrial decarbonisation or renewable energy generation. Clarify types of energy and scope of 'energy related' development. Scope to include energy efficiency measures.
- EP 2 - Refer specifically to air pollution in the sentence that relates to potential for pollution.
- EP 3 - Refer specifically to air pollution in the sentence that relates to potential for pollution.
- GB 1 - Policy outline could set out 'other uses' which may be considered as appropriate to the countryside.
- GT 1 - Clarify the locational criteria and links to the settlement strategy.
- HO 1 - Air quality impacts would be assessed on individual planning applications.
- LA 1 - Specify which elements and criteria from ENV2 are to be retained or the policy as a whole.
- LA 2 - Specify which elements and criteria from LPP2 policy GBC2 are to be retained.
- MS 1 - Policy approach could refer to air quality and sustainable transport.
- MS 4 - Could mention low carbon technology or working practice.
- OS 2 - Specify in the policy which parts of policy DM39 are to be retained.
- SS 5 Options A, B and C - Choose site options away from AQMAs and close to sustainable transport options.
- TA 1 - Could discuss EV parking in the parking section of the policy in order to further promote electric cars and reduce emissions further.
- TA 2 - Could encourage more sustainable travel through railway infrastructure expansion, park and ride etc rather than road improvements for private vehicles.
- WI 2 - Could refer to improving pedestrian, cycle and public transport access and links between the station and the site.

Waste

6.23 The waste topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.2 Waste objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it help to reduce the amount of waste generated? • Will it encourage increased recovery, recycling or composting to enable re-use of waste materials? • Will it reduce the amount of waste sent for incineration or landfill? • Will it result in new or enhanced waste management facilities to meet the waste management needs of the area?

6.24 There are 45 policy approaches that are screened out as they have no direct relationship with waste. Out of the remaining policy approaches, five are neutral, three are very positive, five are positive and one is negative. The policy approaches that scored very positively for waste are MW 1 'Managing waste', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port' and HO 6 'Houses in multiple occupation'. Policy MW 1 aims to manage waste in line with the waste hierarchy and therefore scores very positively. EP 1 could provide additional

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waste developments and could therefore encourage increased recovery, recycling or composting and result in new or enhanced waste management facilities. HO 6 requires that provision is made for waste and recycling facilities at houses in multiple occupation.

6.25 The policy approaches that scored positively are SD 1 'Sustainable development', EP 3 'Origin - Protos', TA 1 'Transport and accessibility', DS 1 'High quality design', EN 5 'Low carbon fuel and carbon capture'. SD 1 will help to reduce the amount of waste and refers to the circular economy and EP 3 includes a site allocated for resource recovery and waste, so it will contribute to meeting waste management needs. TA 1 refers to maximising opportunities to transport materials and waste products by non-road modes of transport and DS 1 refers to providing for the sustainable management of waste. ENV 5 refers to the waste hierarchy for proposals including waste or waste products. Policy approach MISC 1 'scored negatively as it could have a negative impact on waste management as it could restrict facilities that could attract birds (such as landfill sites).

6.26 The spatial strategy options were all screened out for waste as they do not have a direct relationship with waste.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- TA 1 has potential positive secondary effects on enhanced waste management facilities due to sustainable transport of waste products.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EN 1 - Potential to mention the circular economy, to reuse industrial materials.

Land and resources

6.27 The land and resources topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.3 Land and resources objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Reduce soil pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it achieve remediation and re-use of contaminated land? Will it protect the extent and quality of soils?
Protect and conserve natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it focus development on previously developed land? Will it avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?
Protect, enhance and manage geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it protect or increase the number and area of RIGS?
Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it safeguard mineral resources? Will it enable delivery of a steady and adequate supply of minerals? Will it promote the use of secondary / recycled aggregates?

6.28 For the objective to reduce soil pollution, ten policy approaches were screened out as they have no direct relationship with soil pollution.

6.29 Four policy approaches scored very positively, 11 scored positively, 17 were considered neutral, ten scored negatively and four scored very negatively. The policy approaches that scored very positively were SD 1 'Sustainable development', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', EN 1 'Energy supplies and energy related

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developments'. These policy approaches scored very positively as they refer to enhancing or restoring degraded and despoiled land, encourage or focus on redevelopment of previously developed land and / or limit use of best and most versatile agricultural land. Policy approach MS 5 'Restoration also scores very positively as it requires restoration of quarries, which will have positive impacts on soils.

6.30 The policy approaches that scored positively included SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy' CH 1: Chester, EP 2: Origin - Stanlow and Thornton Science Park; NO 1 'Northwich', W 1 'Winsford', GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside', GI 1 'Green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity', EN 2 'Wind energy', EN 3 'Solar energy'. They generally scored positively because they focus development on previously developed land, and / or protect greenfield land or agricultural land.

6.31 The policy approaches that scored negatively included NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate', VE 1 'Visitor economy', HO 5 'Rural exception sites', OS 2 'Culture and community facilities', EN 5 'Low carbon fuel and carbon capture', MW 1 'Managing waste'. These policy approaches include or promote development that could be on greenfield land. The four policy approaches that scored very negatively were EP 3 'Origin - Protos', MS 1 'Minerals supply', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', MS 4 'Oil and gas developments'. These policy approaches either specifically refer to development on greenfield sites, or are very likely to impact negatively on soils due to the nature of the type of development.

6.32 Most of the scores for protecting and conserving natural resources are very similar to the scores for soil. The key differences are that EP 3 'Origin - Protos' scores very negatively for soil and negatively for natural resources, as it is greenfield land, but not high grade agricultural land. GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside' and OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation' score positively for soil, but neutral for natural resources as it is uncertain whether they would impact on high grade agricultural land. TC 1 'Town centres' scores neutral for soil, but positive for natural resources as impacts on greenfield land and soils are uncertain, but impacts on agricultural land are unlikely. FW 1 'Flood risk and water management' scores positively for soil, but is screened out for natural resources as it supports natural flood management, which could have a positive impact on soils, but is unlikely to impact significantly on agricultural land. MW 1 'Managing waste' scores negatively for soil pollution, but neutral for natural resources as it could involve development on greenfield sites, therefore affecting soils, but it specifically states that facilities on farms should avoid high grade agricultural land.

6.33 The objective to protect, enhance and manage geodiversity was screened out for 38 policy approaches. It is scored as neutral for 12 policy approaches, mainly because the exact location of development hasn't been decided, so it is not possible at this stage to understand impacts on geodiversity and Regionally Important Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). Five policies scored negatively and two policies scored positively. The policy approaches that scored negatively were VE 1 'Visitor economy' and OS 2 'Cultural and community facilities', which could potentially impact negatively on geodiversity depending on the location of proposals. Policy approaches MW 1 'Managing waste', MS 1 'Minerals supply' and MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development' also scored negatively and could impact on geodiversity, particularly given the fact that these types of development are likely to have significant impacts underground. The policy approaches that scored positively were LA 1 'Landscape', LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value' as they generally protect greenfield land and this could also help to protect geodiversity.

6.34 The objective to provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals was screened out for 20 policy approaches. It scored neutral for 15 policy approaches, mainly because the exact location of development hasn't been decided, so it is not possible at this stage to understand the impacts on minerals. It scored negatively for 12 and very negatively for three. It scored positively for three and very positively for four policy approaches. The policy approaches that scored negatively include SS 3

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'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', WI 1 'Winsford', WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate', FR 1 'Frodsham', VE 1 'Visitor economy', HW 1 'Health and wellbeing' and OS 2 'Cultural and community facilities' - all of which may potentially involve development within mineral safeguarding areas. The three policy approaches that scored very negatively were NO 1 'Northwich' and Spatial Strategy Options B and C - many of the development areas linked to these policies are within mineral safeguarding areas. The three that scored positively were EP 3 'Origin - Protos', LA 1 'Landscape' and LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value'. These policies either protect greenfield land (which may also include mineral safeguarding areas) or in the case of EP 3, safeguard port and rail infrastructure for minerals. The four policy approaches that scored very positively were MS 1 'Minerals supply', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', MS 3 'Mineral safeguarding' and MS 5 'Restoration' as they all relate specifically to minerals and will therefore help to safeguard mineral resources and / or deliver a steady and adequate supply of minerals.

6.35 The spatial strategy options A, B and C all score negatively as they would re-use previously developed land where possible, but are likely to have a greater percentage of development on greenfield land, which could therefore impact negatively on extent and quality of soils. They score very negatively for natural resources and agricultural land as they could have a significant impact on best and most versatile agricultural land. The options were all neutral for geodiversity as the current potential sites are unlikely to impact the number or area of RIGS. Option A scored negatively for minerals as some of the proposed development areas are within mineral safeguarding areas. Options B and C scored very negatively as many of the development areas are within mineral safeguarding areas.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- GB 1 has potential for secondary or cumulative effects at site-specific level and impacts will depend on the approach to previously developed land and Grey Belt.
- There are potential cumulative effects from all policies proposing new development if the location of development is within mineral safeguarding areas. If large parts of mineral safeguarding areas are sterilised, this could have a significant effect on future mineral supplies.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EN 1 - Could encourage the use of secondary/recycled aggregates, unless covered elsewhere in the plan.
- EN 3 - Could include the relevant criteria from EN1 within EN3 e.g. preferred location of development.
- EN 4 - Could include the relevant criteria from EN1 within EN4 e.g. Mitigating any negative impacts.
- EN 5 - Consider locations where this could apply and links to other policies such as Stanlow Special Policy Area. Could specifically mention link to EN1 regarding prioritising previously developed land and using existing infrastructure.
- GB 1 - Clarify whether 'other uses' includes minerals developments.
- GT 1 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment will provide further evidence.
- MS 1 - Could add section on avoiding RIGS.
- MW 1 - Need to make sure that new waste facilities are not in areas of RIGS.
- SS 4 - Review alongside chosen spatial option.
- SS 5 Options A, B and C - Further info needed on agricultural land classification and contamination to help decide between sites. Could add policy relating to agricultural land and contamination. Ensure growth areas exclude RIGS. There is a separate policy protecting MSAs and requiring prior extraction, but there may still be potential issues

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Water

6.36 The water topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.4 Water objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Reduce water pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it protect or improve water quality?
Protect and conserve natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve water efficiency?
Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce the risk of flooding from all sources? Will it direct development towards areas of least flood risk? Will it promote or increase the number of relevant development proposals that incorporate SuDs?

6.37 For the objective relating to water pollution, 24 policy approaches were screened out, as they don't have a significant relationship with water pollution. Two policy approaches scored very positively, three scored positively, 16 were neutral, 13 scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.38 The policy approaches that scored very positively were FW 1 'Flood risk and water management', as it specifically includes a section on water quality, supply and treatment. Also, GI 1 'Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity', as it states that the standards and requirements will be set to deliver natural flood management solutions in order to manage flood risk and improve water quality. The policy approaches scoring positively were EP 2 'Origin - Stanlow and Thornton Science Park', EP 3 'Origin - Protos' and ID 1 'Infrastructure and developer contributions'. EP 2 and EP 3 refer to minimising impacts on the local environment and pollution, but don't specifically refer to water quality. It is possible that developments at Stanlow and Protos could impact negatively on water quality, but the wording of the policy approach should help to prevent this. ID 1 has positive impacts as it seeks to the infrastructure needs of water and sewage operators.

6.39 Most of the area-based policy approaches (CH1, EP1, NO 1, NO 2, WI 1, WI 2, FR 1 and NP 1) scored negatively as there is the potential for new development in these areas to impact negatively on water pollution, but impacts are not currently clear and will depend upon the exact location, nature and design of development. The other policy approaches that scored negatively were EN 5 'Low carbon fuel and carbon capture', MS 1 'Minerals supply', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', MS 4 'Oil and gas developments' and MISC 1 'Safeguarding areas around aerodromes'. For EN 5 there is the potential for green hydrogen developments to impact on water quality as it uses large quantities of water. Minerals developments have the potential to impact on water quality as water may be used for the extraction of sand and brine. MISC 1 may have a negative impact on water quality as it could restrict development of water treatment facilities if they have the potential to attract birds.

6.40 For the objective relating to water efficiency, the majority of policy approaches (46 in total) were screened out, as they don't have a significant relationship with water efficiency. Three policy approaches scored very positively, one policy approach scored positively, six were neutral, four were scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.41 The policy approaches that scored very positively were SD 1 'Sustainable development', FW 1 'Flood risk and water management' and DS 2 'Sustainable construction'. SD 1 refers to improving water efficiency. FW 1 is a detailed policy on flood risk and relates to all sources and directs development to

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areas of least risk. It also includes reference to SuDs. Policy approach DS 2 states that new dwellings will be required to meet the higher National Housing Standard for water consumption with all none-residential development achieving at least BREEAM excellent standard for the water category. The policy approach scoring positively was DS 3 'Climate adaptation' - which seeks to conserve water supplies.

6.42 The policy approaches that scored negatively were EN 5 'Low carbon fuel and carbon capture', MS 1 'Minerals supply', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', MS 4 'Oil and gas developments'. They have the potential for negative effects on water efficiency as water may be used in the production of green hydrogen and the extraction of sand and brine.

6.43 For the flooding objective, 24 policy approaches were screened out, as they don't have a significant relationship with flooding. Three policy approaches scored very positively, ten policy scored positively, 14 were neutral, seven scored negatively and none scored very negatively. The scoring was very similar to that for the water pollution objective, except that it scored very positively (rather than neutral) for SD 1 'sustainable development' as the policy specifically refers to the flood risk sequential test, exception test, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and SuDs. It scored negatively for SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', rather than being screened out because there is a potential negative effect, depending on the location of sites. It scored positively, rather than negatively for NO 2 'Gadbrook Park' as the policy refers to minimising and mitigating flood risk. It scored neutral rather than negatively for WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate', MS 1 'Minerals supply' and MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', M 4 'Oil and gas developments' and MISC 1 'Safeguard areas around aerodromes'. It was screened out for HO 1 'Mix and type of housing in new developments and specialist housing' and EN 1 'Energy supplies and energy related development', EN 4 'Sustainable energy and heat' and EN 5 'Low carbon fuel and carbon capture' (rather than being neutral or negative). It scored positively, rather than being screened out for OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation', LA 1 'Landscape' and LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value', DS 3 'Climate adaptation' this is because provision of open space and protection of landscape or Areas of Special County Value could also help to reduce flood risk and / or provide SuDs. DS 3 specifically refers to minimising the risk and impact of flooding.

6.44 The spatial strategy options A, B and C all scored neutral for water pollution and flooding because impacts are uncertain. They will depend upon the exact location, nature and design of development and further information is required from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. They were all screened out in relation to water efficiency.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- There are potential cumulative effects from all policies proposing new development if the location of development is within flood risk areas or increases run-off.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EN 1 - Criteria 5 relates to 'natural environment' could provide more detail on whether this includes water.
- EN 4 - Could include the relevant criteria from EN1 within EN4 e.g. Mitigating any negative impacts.
- EP 2 - Could specifically refer to water pollution.
- EP 3 - Could specifically refer to water pollution.
- LA 1 - Could refer to natural water resources and SuDs to maximise potential benefits of landscape designations, open space and key settlement gaps on reductions in risk of flooding.
- LA 2 - Could refer to natural water resources and SuDs to maximise potential benefits of ASCVs on reductions in risk of flooding.

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- MS 1 - Could cover water issues in policy approach MS 2.
- MS 2 - Refer to protection of water quality, water efficiency and flood risk / water storage within the policy.
- MS 4 - Could consider risk to water resources and quality in policy.
- MS 5 - Policy could refer to water quality and flooding and how restoration can have positive impacts.
- NO 1 - Could include specific reference to flood risk issues in Northwich Town Centre.
- OS 1 - Could refer to SuDs and flood risk in the policy to maximise potential benefits of provision of open space on reductions in risk of flooding.
- SD 1 - Could add reference to water quality.
- SS 3 - Could include reference to policy approach SD1.
- SS 4 - Take account of the findings of the SFRA.
- SS 5 Options A, B and C - Need to assess sites in more detail in terms of sequential and exception test for all forms of flooding where applicable.
- WI 1 - Include specific reference to flood risk issues in Winsford.

Landscape, townscape and cultural heritage

6.45 The landscape, townscape and cultural heritage topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.5 Landscape, townscape and cultural heritage objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect or enhance landscapes or townscapes? • Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space? • Will it provide high quality design?
Conserve and enhance the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it conserve, protect and/or enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and/or their setting? • Will it ensure the protection and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets?

6.46 For the objective relating to protecting, enhancing and managing the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, 16 policy approaches were screened out. 12 policy approaches scored very positively, 22 scored positively, 14 were neutral, six scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.47 The 12 policy approaches that scored very positively included FR 1 'Frodsham', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate', GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside', HO 5 'Rural exception sites', HO 6 'Houses in Multiple Occupation', OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation', FW 1 'Flood risk and water management' LA 1 'Landscape', LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value', GI 1 'Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity' DS 1 'High quality design', and EN 2 'Wind energy'. All of these policy approaches either specifically refer to protection of landscape/townscape or will have significant positive impacts on landscape, townscape or distinctiveness and sense of place. The policy approaches that scored positively included most of the area based policies, plus VE 1 'Visitor economy', HO 2 'Delivering affordable housing', HO 3 'Proposals for residential development', HW 1 'Health and well-being', OS 2

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'Cultural and community facilities', HE 1 'Historic environment', DS 3 'Climate adaptation', EN 1 'Energy supplies and energy related developments' EN 3 'Solar energy', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development', MS 5 'Restoration' and MISC 3 'Waterways and mooring facilities'. These policies are also likely to have a positive impact on landscape or townscape, but there is more uncertainty around potential effects. The six negative scoring policy approaches were the three spatial strategy options (A, B and C), GT 1 'Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpersons accommodation', MW 1 'Managing waste', MS 1 'Minerals supply'. Policy approach GT 1 identifies that the policy may need to include provision for safe storage and maintenance of equipment and any open storage has the potential for negative effects on landscape or townscape. The nature of minerals and waste developments means that they have the potential for negative effects on landscape and townscape, but this will depend upon the location and design of proposals.

6.48 For the objective relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment, 41 policy approaches were screened out. Three policy approaches scored very positively, six scored positively, 12 were neutral, six scored negatively and two scored very negatively. The policy approaches that scored very positively were CH 1 'Chester', NO 1 'Northwich' and HE 1 'Historic environment' and MS 1 'Minerals supply'. CH 1 specifically protects areas of archaeological significance and refers to protecting the heritage of Chester. NO 1 refers to protecting the unique heritage assets and character of Northwich conservation areas, town centre and its outskirts. Policy HE 1 specifically relates to the historic environment and will have very positive effects. MS 1 seeks to support environmentally acceptable proposals that enable the use of locally sourced building stone for architectural and heritage purposes. The policy approaches that scored positively were GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside', LA 1 'Landscape', LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value', DS 1 'High quality design' and MS 5 'Restoration' as they all either refer specifically to heritage, or will protect areas (such as Green Belt), which are likely to help to protect the historic environment and setting of Chester for example.

6.49 The six policy approaches that scored negatively were SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy', Spatial Strategy option A, NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate' and HO 1 'Mix and type of housing in new developments and specialist housing'. They all have the potential for negative effects on heritage assets, depending upon the exact location, nature and design of development. The two policy approaches that scored very negatively were the Spatial Strategy options B and C and this is described more below.

6.50 The spatial strategy options (A, B and C) all scored negatively in relation to protecting, enhancing and managing the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape. This is because they have the potential for negative impacts on landscape, townscape, key views and designated landscapes but this will depend upon the exact location and design of proposed developments. Option A scored negatively in terms of conserving and enhancing the historic environment because development could impact on the historic environment and setting, but this option provides for a lower amount of development in Chester and protects the Green Belt, which would help to protect the setting of Chester. Options B and C scored very negatively because they identify the potential for a greater level of development in Chester.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- DS 3 has potential indirect positive effects on townscapes, through better designed buildings.
- HW 1 has potential indirect positive effects on landscape and townscape through provision of access to open space and design requirements relating to health and wellbeing.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- DS 1 - Policy approach could refer to high quality design of open space.

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- DS 3 - To further improve design, the policy approach could link to policy approach DS 1.
- EN 4 - Could include the relevant criteria from EN1 within EN4 e.g. Mitigating any negative impacts on the landscape.
- EP 2 - Could reference non-designated heritage assets.
- GB 1 - Policy approach references Green Belt Review evidence (to be prepared) which could inform mitigation.
- GT 1 - Consider restricting open storage in particular locations, or screening where appropriate.
- HO 1 - Consider any heritage effects through specific planning applications.
- ID 1 - Could reference to protection of heritage assets and good design within the policy approach.
- LA 1 - Could make specific reference to historic landscapes in the policy.
- LA 2 - Specify which elements and criteria from LPP2 policy GBC2 are to be retained.
- MS 5 - Policy could make reference to sites becoming areas of public open space once aftercare has been completed.
- OS 1 - Could refer to design of open space to fit in with the character of the area and maximise multi-functional benefits.
- OS 2 - Specify in the policy which parts of policy DM39 are to be retained e.g. scale and location of development.
- SS 4 - Could refer to conserving character and setting of all settlements, not just smaller settlements.
- SS 5 Options A, B and C - When assessing sites avoid / protect heritage assets.

Biodiversity

6.51 The biodiversity topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.6 Biodiversity objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect and promote effective management of the borough's sites of ecological and nature conservation importance? • Will it provide opportunities for the enhancement, creation or connection of habitats and to foster species conservation, diversity and resilience to climate change? • Will it maintain, enhance and increase (rural and urban) tree cover and woodlands?

6.52 For the objective relating to protecting, enhancing and managing biodiversity and geodiversity, 27 policy approaches were screened out. Seven policy approaches scored very positively, six scored positively, 18 were neutral, 12 scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.53 The six policy approaches that scored very positively were SD 1 'Sustainable development', FW 1 'Flood risk and water management', LA 1 'Landscape', LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value', GI 1 'Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity' MS 1 'Minerals supply' and MS 5 'Restoration'. SD 1 refers to tree planting, biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure. FW 1 mentions natural flood management systems and multi-functional benefits for biodiversity. It also refers to conserve and enhance riverside habitats. LA 1 and LA 2 protect and enhance greenfield areas, which is also likely to have positive benefits for biodiversity. GI 1 specifically relates to biodiversity and therefore has very positive impacts. MS 1 identifies the need to consider potential impacts on protected sites, to avoid any significant detrimental impacts on biodiversity and MS 5 seeks opportunities for restoration of minerals sites to enhance habitats and biodiversity.

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6.54 The policy approaches that scored positively were NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside', OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation' and DS 3 'Climate adaptation', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development' and MISC 3 'Waterways and mooring facilities'. NO 2 specifically refers to integrating and enhancing ecological networks, green infrastructure and providing biodiversity net gain. GB 1 and OS 1 could have indirect positive effects by restricting development in Green Belt and countryside and protecting and providing open space. DS 3 refers to green / blue infrastructure and living roofs. MS 2 refers to use of natural landforms, landscape features and tree planting to screen developments. It also requires that illumination levels do not cause a detrimental impact on wildlife. MISC 3 requires development proposals to make a positive contribution towards biodiversity and ecological networks.

6.55 The policy approaches that scored negatively were SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy', MS 4 'Oil and gas developments' and MISC 1 'Safeguarded areas around aerodromes'. Most of the area based policies also scored negatively for biodiversity, apart from NO 2 (which scored positively), FR 1 and MI 1 (which were both neutral). SS 3, SS 4 and MS 4 and the area based policies could have negative effects, depending on the location and design of development. MISC 1 could prevent enhancement of habitat sites or creation of new sites if there could be a risk of bird strike in one of the safeguarding areas.

6.56 The spatial strategy options (A, B and C) all scored neutral for biodiversity as they would all avoid protected biodiversity sites and ancient woodland, but have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity, depending on the location and design of development. There is also the potential for positive impacts through Biodiversity Net Gain as part of new developments.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

6.57 FW 1 has potential secondary or indirect effects on biodiversity and nature from multi-functional SuDs.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- CH 1 - Could refer to River Dee biodiversity designation.
- EN 1 - Could link to biodiversity policies on enhancements or net gain.
- EN 2 - Could consider how this links to Green Infrastructure or biodiversity networks or sensitive areas for biodiversity, or the LNRS.
- EN 3 - Could consider how this links to Green Infrastructure or biodiversity networks or sensitive areas for biodiversity, or the LNRS.
- EN 4 - Could consider how this links to Green Infrastructure or biodiversity networks or sensitive areas for biodiversity, or the LNRS and promote opportunities for enhancement.
- EP 3 - Check links with biodiversity requirements and LNRS.
- FR 1 - Refers to managing impacts on designated sites - but this could be improved further to avoid, minimise and mitigate.
- GT 1 - Could consider screening of open storage, which could increase tree cover.
- LA 2 - Specify which elements and criteria from LPP2 policy GBC2 are to be retained.
- MS 2 - The policy could make reference to biodiversity net gain.
- MS 4 - Could link to biodiversity policies on enhancements or net gain.
- NP 1 - Refers to managing impacts on designated sites - but this could be improved further to avoid, minimise and mitigate.
- OS 1 - Could refer to use of new open space as suitable alternative natural greenspace and protection of sites of ecological and nature conservation importance.

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- SS 4 - Take account of hierarchy of ecological designations and features that contribute towards Green Infrastructure or biodiversity networks.
- WI 1 - Refer to protection of biodiversity within the policy.
- WI 2 - Could refer to ecological mitigation within the area and safeguard ecological mitigation areas.

Population and housing

6.58 The population and housing topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.7 Population and housing objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Provide high quality, well designed housing to meet identified needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it help to meet identified housing needs? • Will it provide well designed housing?

6.59 For the objective relating to population and housing, 34 policy approaches were screened out. 11 policy approaches scored very positively, 12 scored positively, 4 were neutral, seven scored negatively and two scored very negatively.

6.60 The policy approaches that scored very positively were SS 1 'Housing needs', all three Spatial options (A, B and C), CH 1 'Chester', WI 1 'Winsford', FR 1 'Frodsham', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate', HO 1 'Mix and type of housing in new developments and specialist housing', HO 2 'Delivering affordable housing' and HO 5 'Rural exception sites'. All of these policies either support development in specific areas (including housing development), or relate to housing / specific types of housing. The policy approaches that scored positively were SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', NO 1 'Northwich', MI 1 'Middlewich', TA 2 'Local transport infrastructure priorities', HO 3 'Proposals for residential development', HO 4 'Essential rural workers dwellings', HO 6 'Houses in multiple occupation', GT 1 'Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpersons accommodation' and DS 1 'High quality design'. These policy approaches all support development (including housing development) in specific areas, or support particular types of housing development, or design of housing. The seven policy approaches scoring negatively were SD 1 'Sustainable development', GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside', OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation', LA 1 'Landscape', LA 2 'Areas of Special County Value', HE 1 'Historic environment' and MISC 2 'Jodrell Bank'. These policy approaches restrict housing development in particular areas, or would make it more difficult / expensive to obtain planning permission for housing development. The two policy approaches scoring very negatively were NO 2 'Gadbrook Park' and MS 3 'Safeguarding'. Policy approach NO 2 prevents housing development on that site. Policy approach MS 3 prevents development in mineral safeguarding areas unless certain criteria are met.

6.61 Spatial options A, B and C all scored very positively for population and housing because they will have significant positive effects on housing provision.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- MS 3 has potential negative cumulative effects on housing by limiting development in mineral safeguarding areas.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EP 1 - Could refer to identifying sites to meet housing needs and identify allocations if required.

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- HE 1 - Could add some flexibility to the policy in relation to housing, retail, leisure or service developments
- HO 1 - Evidence from Housing Needs Assessment can provide further detail for policies.
- HO 2 - Evidence from Housing Needs Assessment can provide further detail for policies.
- HO 3 - Clarity on what the policy will cover, or what is covered through other policies of the plan or NPPF.
- HO 4 - Could consider design policies in rural areas.
- SS 1 - Could set a figure for the plan period rather than an annual figure - additional flexibility could reduce / change impacts.

Health, wellbeing and equality

6.62 The health, wellbeing and equality topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.8 Health, wellbeing and equality objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Improve health, safety and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it promote active lifestyles? • Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space? • Will it reduce opportunities for crime? • Will it affect the fear of crime and feelings of safety? • Will it improve road safety? • Will it help to protect existing health or community facilities and services? • Will it provide new or improved health or community facilities or services?
Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve economic conditions, particularly in deprived areas? • Will it improve equality across the borough?
Reduce noise pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce noise pollution?

6.63 For the objective relating to health, safety and well-being, 24 policy approaches were screened out. Five policy approaches scored very positively, 32 scored positively, 9 were neutral, 1 scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.64 The policy approaches that scored very positively were FR 1 'Frodsham', HW 1 'Health and well-being', OS 2 'Culture and community facilities', GI 1 'Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity' and MS 4 'Oil and gas developments'. FR 1 refers to protecting and enhancing the network of accessible green and open spaces and to facilitating easy and safe access for walking, wheeling and cycling. It also refers to vehicle and cycle parking, which could improve safety. Policy approach HW 1 specifically relates to health and well-being. It seeks to provide high quality green and open space, protects cultural, sport, recreation and leisure facilities and covers the health impacts of new developments. OS 2 requires play facilities, sport and recreation facilities and it supports proposals for new or improved community facilities, including health facilities. GI 1 refers to the creation of a network of green infrastructure that will create opportunities for walking, leisure and recreation. MS 4 includes criteria to minimise impacts of minerals developments on local communities through noise, vibration and odour. The policy approaches that scored positively are too many to list, but it included several

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area based policies and policies relating to Green Belt, transport, economic growth, open space, landscape and design.

6.65 The policy approach that scored negatively was EP 1 'Ellesmere Port'. This policy approach refers to development in proximity to hazardous installations and the need in exceptional cases to strike a balance between the need for investment and regeneration and the degree of risk involved.

6.66 For the objective relating to regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reducing inequalities, 46 policy approaches were screened out. Two policy approaches scored very positively, 16 scored positively, 6 were neutral and none scored very negatively.

6.67 The policy approaches that scored very positively were CH 1 'Chester', EG 1 'Economic growth, employment and enterprise'. CH 1 identifies specific regeneration areas and EG 1 promotes sustainable economic growth in the borough and wider sub-region, supporting existing businesses and attracting new inward investment. The policy approaches that scored positively included SD 1 'Sustainable development', SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy', all three spatial strategy options (A, B and C), EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', WI 1 'Winsford', FR 1 'Frodsham', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate', TA 1 'Transport and accessibility', TA 2 'Local transport infrastructure priorities', ID 1 'Infrastructure and developer contributions', HO 2 'Delivering affordable housing', OS 2 'Cultural and community facilities'. The area-based policies will help to deliver regeneration in those areas. SD 1 refers to regeneration of deprived areas and should have positive effects on equality through support to walking, wheeling and cycling. TA 1 helps to support town centre economies and vitality and provision of alternatives to the private car should help to improve equality. TA 2 has the potential for positive impacts through improved transport options providing better access to areas of employment. It is proposed that ID 1 will link with the economic growth policy to maximise employment opportunities. HO 2 should help to provide equality in provision of housing. OS 2 supports the provision and retention of community facilities and should improve health and social inclusion, whilst reducing inequality.

6.68 For the objective relating to noise pollution, 50 policy approaches were screened out. Five policy approaches scored very positively, three scored positively, 10 were neutral, 2 scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.69 The policy approaches that scored very positively were EP 2 'Origin - Stanlow and Thornton Science Park', EP 3 'Origin - Protos', HW 1 'Health and well-being', MS 2 'Proposals for minerals development' and MS 4 'Oil and gas developments'. EP 2 and EP 3 require development to minimise noise generation and impacts on health and residential amenity. HW 1 specifically states that development which generates noise will only be permitted where it does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on human health. MS 2 ensures that any unavoidable noise is controlled, mitigated or removed at source and noise levels will not have a significant detrimental effect on residents or human health. MS 4 also provides criteria that would have positive impacts on controlling noise.

6.70 The policy approaches that scored positively were VE 1 'Visitor economy', GI 1 'Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity' and MW 1 'Managing waste'. VE 1 specifically refers to conditions limiting hours of use if an increase in the level or duration of noise is likely at Oulton Park. GI 1 scores positively as increasing tree and hedgerow cover could lead to a slight reduction in noise pollution. MW 1 identifies that new development will need to set out arrangements for the management and operation of facilities, including hours of operation.

6 SA of the policy approaches

6.71 The two policy approaches that scored negatively were EP 1 'Ellesmere Port' and MS 1 'Minerals supply'. EP 1 could have negative effects through supporting industrial developments. MS 1 could have negative effects from aggregate extraction operations - however, policy MS 2 refers to control of noise during mineral extraction.

6.72 The spatial options (A, B and C) all scored positively for health, safety and well-being and for regeneration. Development is likely to have positive impacts on active lifestyles and protection of health and community facilities. Exact impacts will depend upon the location, nature and design of proposals. Noise pollution was screened out for all three spatial options.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- DS 1 has potential indirect positive effects on health as if waste is managed well through design, this is likely to create healthier, cleaner environments.
- TC 1 has potential indirect positive effects on equality as protection of shops and services in town centres and local retail centres should help to ensure all sectors of the community are able to access them.
- EG 1 has potential indirect positive effects on equality as provision of new employment may make employment more accessible to all members of the community, depending on the location of development.
- The spatial strategy and area based policies may have indirect or cumulative effects on health as the proposed level of development may result in the need for, or provision of new healthcare facilities.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EG 1 - Could refer to noise within the policy.
- EN 1 - Consider if noise should be referenced in criteria 5, or covered through other policies of the plan. Public safety reference is only in relation to the associated developments (roads, fencing etc) but should be considered for the facility as a whole, for example if the policy allows for hazardous installations or extensions to these. Could include pipelines within criteria 7.
- EN 5 - Could mention public safety restrictions, or link to hazardous installations policy.
- EP 1 - Could refer to the canal corridor and access to open space. Could also refer to the need to reduce noise pollution from industrial development.
- EP 3 - Could refer to HSE requirements.
- FR 1 - Could refer to health and community facilities.
- GT 1 - Consider safe highways access in locational criteria, unless covered by other plan policies.
- HO 1 - Depends on the outcome of the Housing Needs Assessment.
- HO 2 - Depends on the outcome of the Housing Needs Assessment.
- MISC 3 - Could refer to opportunities to reduce crime and improve safety through design.
- MS 1 - The policy could add a section based on operators needing to provide timings of operation in order to mitigate impacts on residential amenity.
- MS 2 - The policy approach could refer to hours of operation to help to mitigate impacts on residential amenity.
- NP 1 - Could refer to health and community facilities.
- OS 1 - Could refer to design of open space to maximise multi-functional benefits, for example on health - and to design out crime.
- OS 2 - Specify in the policy which parts of policy DM39 are to be retained e.g. scale and location of development.
- WI 1 - Could refer to improving pedestrian and cycle links.

SA of the policy approaches 6

Economy and employment

6.73 The economy and employment topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.9 Economy and employment objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt? • Will it support sustainable economic growth? • Will it provide a balanced portfolio of employment land for the area by type and location? • Will it maintain/safeguard high quality employment land and premises? • Will it contribute to meeting the employment needs of the rural/urban area? • Will it promote tourism and the visitor economy? • Will it improve accessibility to jobs? • Will it take account of the different locational requirements of different sectors?
Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it deliver regeneration? • Will it improve economic conditions, particularly in deprived areas?

6.74 For the objective relating to supporting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and providing opportunities for economic growth and investment, 20 policy approaches were screened out. 17 policy approaches scored very positively, 20 scored positively, 6 were neutral, 7 scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.75 The policy approaches that scored very positively included those relating to employment needs, the spatial strategy options (A, B and C), nearly all the area-based policy approaches (except FR 1 and MI 1, which scored positively), economic growth, visitor economy, energy supplies and low carbon fuel and carbon capture. This is because all of these policy approaches support economic development in general, support development in a particular area or support development of a specific type. The spatial strategy principles, settlement hierarchy, and policy approaches relating to Green Belt, transport, infrastructure, town centres, essential rural workers dwellings, rural exception sites, culture and community facilities, renewable energy, waste and minerals supply will all have a positive effect on employment as they will have indirect effects.

6.76 The policy approaches that scored negatively were SD 1 'Sustainable development', HW 1 'Health and well-being', HE 1 'Historic environment', DS 1 'High quality design', MS 3 'Mineral safeguarding', MISC 1 'Safeguarding areas around aerodromes' and MISC 2 'Jodrell Bank'. These policies will either restrict opportunities for employment developments, or increase potential costs.

6.77 For the objective relating to promoting regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reducing inequalities, 37 policy approaches were screened out. 8 policy approaches scored very positively, 19 scored positively, 6 were neutral and none scored negatively or very negatively.

6 SA of the policy approaches

6.78 The policy approaches scoring very positively were CH 1 'Chester', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', NO 1 'Northwich', WI 1 'Winsford', WI 2 'Winsford Industrial Estate, EG 1 'Economic growth, employment and enterprise', HO 4 'Essential rural workers dwellings', HO 5 'Rural exception sites'. The area based policies referred to scored very positively because they will result in new development, including development in areas requiring regeneration. Policy approach HO 4 could have a positive effect on rural equality by providing access to housing for needs linked to rural enterprises and HO 5 could give access to homes for people who work in rural areas. The policy approaches scoring positively included those relating to the spatial strategy, the spatial options (A, B and C), some of the remaining area based policies (EP 2, EP 3, NO 2 and NP 1), those relating to transport, infrastructure, town centres, visitor economy, cultural and community facilities, energy supplies and waterways and mooring facilities. These policies will either direct development to specific areas or will have indirect impacts on regeneration.

6.79 The spatial options (A, B and C) all scored very positively in terms of supporting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy because they will provide a range of employment sites. They all scored positively for regeneration because they are likely to result in some regeneration and redevelopment of previously developed land in urban areas. Impacts on deprived areas will depend upon the exact location, nature and design of development.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- HE 1 has potential indirect effects on economy through protection of heritage assets, which will retain/improve the attractiveness of areas to visitors.
- DS 1 has potential indirect effects on economy as well designed areas are likely to be more attractive to future investment and development.
- TA 1 has potential indirect effects on economy as provision of sustainable transport opportunities may improve attractiveness of areas for employment investments.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- GB 1 - Policy outline could include the bullets from STRAT9 to be clear which economic uses are covered that are appropriate to the countryside. Also to make it clear development must be of an appropriate scale and design to not harm the character of the countryside as STRAT9 wording.
- HE 1 - Could add some flexibility to the policy in relation to employment developments or in regeneration areas.
- HO 3 - Consider alongside employment policies regarding changes of use.
- ID 1 - Could refer to infrastructure that would support regeneration, particularly in deprived areas.
- OS 2 - Specify in the policy which parts of policy DM39 are to be retained.
- TA 2 - Could provide a focus towards regeneration of areas through travel and transport such as railway expansions.

Infrastructure

6.80 The infrastructure topic area includes the following objectives and sub-objectives:

Table 6.10 Infrastructure objectives and sub-objectives

Objective	Sub-objective
Reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport? Will it reduce congestion and travel times?

SA of the policy approaches 6

Objective	Sub-objective
wheeling or sustainable modes of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide infrastructure that maximises accessibility by sustainable modes of transport? Will it connect new development with new or existing services or facilities via sustainable modes of travel?
Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it safeguard shops and services in existing centres? Will it safeguard or improve the retail, leisure or service provision?

6.81 For the objective relating to reducing the need to travel and increasing the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable transport, 27 policy approaches were screened out. 12 policy approaches scored very positively, 21 scored positively, six were neutral, four scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.82 The policy approaches that scored very positively were SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', CH 1 'Chester', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', NO 1 'Northwich', NO 2 'Gadbrook Park', FR 1 'Frodsham', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate', TA 1 'Transport and accessibility', TA 2 'Local transport infrastructure priorities', ID 1 'Infrastructure and developer contributions', OS 1 'Open space, sport and recreation' and MW 1 'Managing waste'. SS3 and the area-based policy approaches score very positively as they focus on accessible and sustainable locations. TA 1, TA 2 and ID 1 specifically relate to transport or infrastructure and therefore will help to reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable transport. OS 1 scores very positively as the provision of open space close to homes will help to reduce the need to travel and enable walking, wheeling and cycling. It also refers to protecting and enhancing recreational routeways. MW 1 refers to the need to maximise opportunities to share infrastructure such as sustainable transport. It also identifies the need to manage waste close to its source and reduce the need to travel.

6.83 The policy approaches that scored positively included those covering sustainable development, settlement hierarchy, spatial options B and C, Ellesmere Port (EP 2 and EP 3), Winsford, Middlewich, town centres, visitor economy, housing mix and type, houses in multiple occupation, cultural and community facilities, landscape, areas of special county value, Green Infrastructure and energy supplies. These policy approaches generally relate to development in sustainable locations, or would have indirect positive impacts on provision of transport infrastructure. The four policy approaches that scored negatively were spatial strategy option A, WI 1 'Winsford Industrial Estate', HO 4 'Essential rural workers dwellings', HO 5 'Rural exception sites'. WI 1, HO 4 and HO 5 scored negatively as they are likely to encourage development in less sustainable locations, which are less likely to be accessible by walking, wheeling, cycling or sustainable modes of transport.

6.84 For the objective relating to protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres, 45 policy approaches were screened out. Five policy approaches scored very positively, 15 scored positively, three were neutral, two scored negatively and none scored very negatively.

6.85 The policy approaches that scored very positively were NO 1 'Northwich', WI 1 'Winsford', FR 1 'Frodsham', NP 1 'Neston and Parkgate', TC 1 'Town centres'. NO 1, WI 1, FR 1 and NP 1 all refer to regeneration or protection of or improvements to town or local centres in that area. The policy approaches that scored positively were SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles', SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy', strategic spatial options A, B and C, CH 1 'Chester', EP 1 'Ellesmere Port', TA 1 'Transport and accessibility', TA 2 'Local transport infrastructure priorities', ID 1 'Infrastructure and developer contributions', EG 1 'Economic growth, employment and enterprise', VE 1 'Visitor economy', HO 1 'Mix and type of housing in new

6 SA of the policy approaches

developments and specialist housing', OS 2 'Cultural and community facilities' and MISC 3 'Waterways and mooring facilities'. These policy approaches generally support development in accessible locations close to retail centres, so would have indirect positive effects on these centres. The two policy approaches that scored negatively were HE 1 'Historic environment' and DS1 'High quality design'. They scored negatively because the heritage or design requirements could make it more difficult or costly to obtain planning permission for retail or leisure uses.

6.86 The spatial strategy option A scored negatively for reducing the need to travel and increasing the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport and options B and C scored positively. This is because option A includes more development in Northwich and Winsford, which have lower levels of sustainable transport provision, whereas options B and C include more development in Chester, which has higher levels of sustainable transport. It is not clear yet what additional infrastructure is required or will be provided as part of proposed development.

6.87 All the spatial strategy options (A, B and C) scored positively for the objective to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres. This is because additional development is likely to help to safeguard existing shops and services. This exact impacts will depend on the nature and location of development.

Secondary, indirect, cumulative or synergistic effects

- SS 4 has potential cumulative effects on services and facilities depending on the level and location of development.

Mitigation or improvement measures

- EN 1 - Some types of energy development may require freight movements and could include criteria on location/use of multi modal facilities.
- EN 5 - Could refer to multi modal transport (port, rail etc) for freight/movement of goods. Also utilising existing infrastructure/pipelines wherever possible.
- EP 1 - Could provide more detail on future town centre regeneration. Some of these developments are already ongoing.
- HE 1 - Could add some flexibility to the policy in relation to retail, leisure or service provision.
- HO 3 - Consider alongside retail policies regarding changes of use.
- OS 2 - Specify which parts of policy DM39 are to be retained e.g. criteria for the loss of shops and services.
- WI 2 - Could refer to provision of pedestrian and cycle links.

7 Conclusion and next steps

Summary of significant effects resulting from the strategic development options

7.1 The spatial strategy options are set out in SS 5. Option A is based on retaining the Green Belt', option B is based on the current Local Plan level and distribution of development and option C is based on sustainable transport corridors. The scoring for each option is set out in the table in Appendix 5 'Appraisal summary tables'.

7.2 If the options are compared, in terms of climate change, energy and air quality option C scores very positively, option B scores positively and option A scores negatively. This is because the distribution of development in option C is based on the settlements with the best sustainable transport opportunities. Option B is based on the more sustainable settlements, whereas option A includes a relatively greater amount of development in Winsford, which currently has relatively limited bus and train services. Option A also provides for some development in smaller settlements such as Tattenhall and Malpas, which provide some, but not all services, so additional travel is likely to be required. The options had no direct relationship with energy.

7.3 All three options were screened out for waste, as they have no direct relationship with waste generation or waste management.

7.4 All three options scored negatively for land and resources and for contaminated land, previously developed land and soils. They would re-use previously developed land where possible, but would all have a much greater percentage of development on greenfield land and agricultural land. Option A scored negatively in terms of minerals as some of the proposed growth areas are within mineral safeguarding areas. Options B and C scored very negatively in terms of minerals as most of the proposed growth areas are within mineral safeguarding areas.

7.5 Impacts on water were considered neutral / uncertain for all options. Further information is required from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan about the need for water treatment and from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment about flood risk. Any development may increase flood risk, but generally the growth areas avoid areas of higher flood risk.

7.6 All three options scored negatively for landscape and townscape as there is the potential for negative impacts and on key views and designated landscapes, but this will depend upon the exact location of development. Option A scored negatively for potential negative impacts on the historic environment, but it provides for a lower amount of development in Chester and protects the Green Belt, which would help to protect the setting of Chester. Options B and C scored very negatively for the historic environment as they promote a greater level of development in Chester.

7.7 Impacts on biodiversity were considered neutral / uncertain for all three options. The options protect biodiversity sites and ancient woodland, but have the potential to impact on biodiversity and geodiversity depending on the location and design of development.

7.8 All three options scored very positively for population and housing, as they will have positive effects on housing provision. They also scored positively in terms of health, safety and well-being as development is likely to have positive impacts on active lifestyles and protect health and community facilities.

7 Conclusion and next steps

7.9 All three options scored very positively for economy and employment as they will help to provide a mix of employment sites. They scored positively in terms of regeneration as they are likely to result in some regeneration and redevelopment of previously developed land. Impacts on deprived areas will depend upon the exact location, nature and design of development.

7.10 Option A scored negatively for infrastructure as it proposes more development in Northwich and Winsford, which have lower levels of sustainable transport provision. It is not yet clear what additional infrastructure is required or will be provided as part of proposed developments. Options B and C scored positively as they include more development in and around Chester, which has higher levels of sustainable transport provision. All three options scored positively for vitality and viability of centres, as additional development in or close to centres is likely to help to safeguard existing shops and services.

7.11 Overall, there isn't a specific option that scores more positively than the others. Option C is better than option B, which in turn is better than option A in terms of carbon emissions and climate change, but option A scores better in terms of mineral resources and the historic environment. Options B and C score better than option A in relation to infrastructure. All of the other scoring is similar for each option.

7.12 Several of the suggested mitigation and improvement measures relate to factors to take into consideration when choosing sites / allocations for development. This includes proximity to Air Quality Management Areas and sustainable transport links, agricultural land classification, RIGS and mineral safeguarding areas.

Significant effects resulting from the policy approaches

7.13 As this is still a relatively early stage in Plan preparation, many of the policy effects are neutral or uncertain. The appraisals identified that impacts on many of the objectives are dependent upon the location, nature and design of development and this has not yet been decided in detail. More information will be available at the next stage in the process, once decisions have been made on locations of development and allocations are identified.

7.14 Most of the policy approaches would have a neutral or positive effect on climate change, energy and air quality. The policy approaches with very positive effects include those relating to sustainable development, spatial strategy principles, transport and accessibility, infrastructure, open space, sustainable construction, climate adaptation, managing waste, minerals and the area-based policies relating to accessible and sustainable locations. Only one policy approach would have very negative effects (MS 4 'Oil and gas developments', in relation to energy) and only a small number of policy approaches would have negative effects (including policy approaches relating to local transport infrastructure priorities, green infrastructure, energy supplies, rural exception sites and visitor economy).

7.15 Most policy approaches were screened out in relation to waste and the remaining policy approaches generally scored neutral / uncertain or positive. Very positive effects are anticipated from the policies relating to Ellesmere Port (as it includes waste sites), houses in multiple occupation (as the policy specifically refers to managing waste) and the policy relating to managing waste. The only policy approach having negative effects on waste is the policy relating to safeguarded land around aerodromes (as this may reduce opportunities for waste proposals that could attract birds and therefore risk increasing bird strike).

7.16 In terms of land and resources, the anticipated effects were quite mixed. Very positive effects were anticipated from the policies relating to sustainable development, Ellesmere Port, energy supplies, minerals (in terms of minerals supply) and minerals restoration. The very positive effects were often due to specific wording in the policies that protected land and / or resources. Very negative effects

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were anticipated in relation to some of the spatial strategy options and some of the minerals policies (in relation to soil pollution and natural resources).

7.17 The anticipated effects of the policy approaches on water were mixed. Effects were uncertain for many of the policy approaches, which is probably linked to the fact that impacts depend on location and also because the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are still being prepared. Very positive effects are expected from the policy approaches relating to sustainable development, flood risk and water management, green infrastructure and sustainable construction. No very negative effects were anticipated, but negative effects were identified resulting from the policy approaches relating to the spatial strategy principles, the area based policies close to key watercourses, low carbon fuel and carbon capture (as these developments can involve significant amounts of water), minerals, oil and gas developments and safeguarded areas around aerodromes.

7.18 Most policy approaches scored positively or neutral in relation to landscape, townscape and cultural heritage. Most of the area based policies scored positively. Policies relating to Green Belt and Countryside, Green Infrastructure, historic environment, high quality design, wind energy, rural exception sites, houses in multiple occupation, open space, flood risk, landscape and Areas of Special County Value all scored very positively. No policy approaches scored very negatively. The policy approaches relating to spatial strategy options, settlement hierarchy, housing mix and type, managing waste, minerals supply and Gypsies and Travellers scored negatively for some aspects of this topic.

7.19 The appraisals for the biodiversity topic were quite mixed, with quite a few positive and negative scores. The policy approaches relating to sustainable development, flood risk, landscape, Areas of Special County Value, minerals, restoration and Green Infrastructure scored very positively. There were no identified very negative effects for biodiversity, but the policy approaches relating to the spatial strategy principles, settlement hierarchy, oil and gas developments, safeguarded land around aerodromes and most of the area-based policies scored negatively as development could have negative effects on biodiversity.

7.20 In relation to the health, well-being and equality topic, the scores were generally quite positive. The policy approaches relating to some of the area-based policies scored very positively, along with economic growth (due to impacts on regeneration), proposals for minerals development and oil and gas development (as they refer to minimising noise pollution) and the health and well-being and open space policy approaches. The sustainable development policy scored negatively as it could restrict opportunities for regeneration. The Ellesmere Port policy approach also scored negatively in terms of health and noise, due to the industrial nature of the area. The minerals supply policy approach scores negatively as it doesn't specifically refer to noise.

7.21 The appraisals for the economy and employment topic were generally quite positive. Most of the area-based policy approaches scored very positively as they support economic development and regeneration. The employment needs policy approach scored very positively and the policy approaches relating to energy supplies, low carbon fuel, essential rural workers dwellings and rural exception sites. The sustainable development policy approach, historic environment and high quality design policy approaches scored negatively as they could restrict development or make it more difficult or costly.

7.22 The infrastructure topic also scored positively for the majority of the policy approaches. It was very positive for many of the area-based policy approaches, for the spatial strategy principles, transport, infrastructure, managing waste and open space policy approaches. No policy approaches scored very negatively and only the essential workers dwellings, rural extension sites, historic environment and high quality design policy approaches scored negatively.

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Monitoring

7.23 Monitoring indicators have been put forward within the scoping report (2023) and updated methodology for monitoring the significant effects of the Local Plan. The indicators have been based on the indicators identified for the Local Plan (Part Two) and the indicators have been updated to recognise limitations in availability of information. The list of indicators is set out in Appendix 4 'SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators'. It is recommended that the monitoring of the significant effects is incorporated into the overall monitoring framework of the Local Plan, which is undertaken through preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report. Arrangements for monitoring may be updated at future stages of the Plan.

Conclusion and next steps

7.24 This appraisal of the Local Plan demonstrates that there are no major sustainability concerns, and no significant reasons to not proceed with the Local Plan as prepared. Whilst there are still some uncertainties, development of the policies and identification of specific areas and allocations for development should help to make the appraisal process easier at the next stage.

7.25 Some significant effects of the policies have been identified, including negative impacts when the policies are assessed individually. However, the policy framework as a whole generally includes measures to mitigate and/or control these and provides a robust framework for assessing the impacts of planning applications. Mitigation and improvement measures have also been suggested within this report to either mitigate negative effects or improve positive effects. These should be taken into account when preparing the next version of the Local Plan, as part of an iterative process.

7.26 This SA report concludes that the Plan generally addresses the sustainability objectives of the SA and on balance when the Local Plan is viewed as a whole it provides a policy framework to bring about new development in the borough sustainably.

7.27 The SA report and a Non-technical Summary (NTS) of the SA report will be published for consultation alongside the Local Plan Issues and Options. The findings of the SA will be taken into account, along with consultation responses received, when the updated version of the Local Plan is prepared. A new version of the SA will then be prepared, assessing the updated policies and any site allocations.

1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Introduction

1.1 This appendix sets out the findings of the assessment of the anticipated effects of the CW&C Local Plan Issues and Options on equality issues. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is intended to predict the equality consequences of the implementation of a proposed Plan. As well as assessing the equality consequences, it can also produce recommendations as to how positive impacts can be enhanced and how any negative impacts can be mitigated or avoided.

1.2 The EqIA derives from The Equality Act 2010 which requires the Council to work towards eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation or any conduct prohibited by the Act, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

1.3 The 2010 Act places a public sector equality duty on public bodies when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate conduct which results in inequality or discrimination based on protected characteristics as well as also considering socio-economic disadvantages. This is done by assessing the impact on the following factors, defined by the 2010 Act as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

1.4 The EqIA will help to identify the actual or potential effects of the policy approach on different people and to:

- consider if there are any unintended consequences for some groups;
- consider if the policy approach will be fully effective for all target groups;
- help identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects or discrimination;
- advance equality and to foster good relations; and
- to document the results of this process.

National Policy

1.5 This EqIA also seeks to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024. More specifically the paragraphs detailed below:

- **Paragraph 16** Early, representative and effective engagement and collaboration with neighbourhood, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged so that Local Plans reflect a collective vision.
- **Paragraph 63** The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include those who require affordable housing, families with children, looked after children, older people, students,

1 Equalities Impact Assessment

people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

- **Paragraph 96** The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see.

Local Policy

Cheshire West and Chester Equality and Diversity Policy and objectives 2024-2028

1.6 The Council respects and values differences and recognises the importance of setting out a clear commitment to promoting fairness and tackling discrimination. The Council will ensure that its services are available equally to all, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief, pregnancy, social or economic status, making sure that no one is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

1.7 'Everybody In' is the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) brand, raising awareness of the diversity of our communities and comprising of three elements: influencing and championing equality through partnership work, promoting equal life chances for everyone and supporting communities to get on well together.

1.8 In 2023 the Council launched the 'BeYou' campaign to further develop EDI work with the aim of creating belonging and nurturing growth.

All together Fairer: Health and Care Partnership Plan 2024-2029

1.9 Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership have published its plan for 2024-2029. The plan sets out how we will work together to address the key challenges facing people across Cheshire and Merseyside. The plan is built around four core strategic objectives:

- tackling health inequalities in outcomes, experiences and access;
- improving outcomes in population health and healthcare;
- enhancing productivity and value for money; and
- helping to support broader social and economic development.

Baseline Data

1.10 Provided below is general baseline data surrounding equality:

- The population in Cheshire West and Chester is an estimated 365,061. In 2022, the median average age in the borough was 43.7 with people of working age (ages 16-64) representing 61.2% of the population. The population is forecast to increase by 8% (c. 28,500) over the next 8 years to reach around 393,500 in 2033.
- In the borough, 91.17% of the population are white British with 8.8% representing other ethnic minorities. English is the main language spoken by the majority, 96.7% of residents in the borough. 3.3% of residents speak a language other than English as their main language. Polish is the most common with almost 1 in every 100 residents, 0.8% (2,843) of residents in the borough speaking Polish as their main language.
- Cheshire West and Chester female life expectancy is significantly better than the England average, male life expectancy is similar to England. Health life expectancy is similar to England for both males and females. Life expectancy for women is 83.5 years for women and is 79.4 years for men.

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- Around 26,700 residents in Cheshire West and Chester live in neighbourhoods that rank in the top 10% most deprived areas in England. The median household income in the borough is £37,800 with 20% of households are estimated to be in income based poverty. 11% (18,147) of households in the borough are living in fuel poverty, lower than the percentage in England at 13.1%.
- Car/van ownership in the borough has been steadily increasing with 83% of the borough's households reporting to have at least one car or van in the 2021 census. The percentage of households reporting to have a car or van is consistently higher than for England.
- The main religion in the borough is Christianity with around 54.5% of the borough declaring they were Christian in the 2021 census. There was then 37.8% of people who declared No Religion and the next biggest religious group is Muslim at around 1% of the borough.
- The portion of adults who are classed as overweight increased in 2022/23 to 68.3% from 65.4% the previous year. The change is not statistically significant but prevalence is now significantly worse than the England average of 64%. The percentage of physically active adults in Cheshire West and Chester is significantly better than the England average as 72.4% compared to 67.1%.
- According to 2022 stats published by ONS males account for 48.9% of the borough and females made up 51.1% of the population. The sex ratio was 95.63 males to every 100 females.

1.11 There is little baseline information available that is directly relevant to other protected characteristics including gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, sex or sexual orientation.

Methodology

1.12 The Local Plan Issues and Options has been reviewed to consider the likely impacts of the policy approaches on each of the nine protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 listed above. As well as considering these identified groups, the EqlA will explore impacts regarding socio-economic factors as this is an issue in some areas of the borough. For each protected characteristics, consideration has been given to whether the Local Plan is compatible or incompatible with the three main duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

1.13 A colour coded scoring system has been used to show the effects that the Local Plan is likely to have on each protected characteristic, as shown below:

Table 1.1

Score	Likely effect
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative

1.14 This assessment considers differential and disproportionate impacts of the policy approaches on protected characteristic groups. Differential equality effect is one which affects members of a protected characteristic group differently from the rest of the general population because of specific needs, or recognised vulnerability or sensitivity associated with their protected characteristic. A disproportionate equality effect arises when an impact has a proportionately greater effect on a protected characteristic group than on the general population overall at a particular location.

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1.15 The councils' policies, procedures and service delivery may have differential impacts on certain groups, and these will therefore be highlighted in the EqlA screening. Likely differential impacts must be highlighted and described, as some may be positive. Where likely significant adverse impacts are identified, consideration should be given to opportunities to reduce or mitigate this through a full EqlA.

1.16 Prior to these results being produced, an assessment of the policy approaches was undertaken, in order to screen out the policy approaches that will not have any impact relating to equality.

1.17 The findings of the assessment of the Local Plan Issues and Options policy approaches are presented in the table below with summary of key results:

Key results from the SA

1.18 During the sustainability appraisal stage of the Issues and Options, under the Health, Wellbeing and Equality objective, there is a sub objective 'will it improve equality across the borough' which is in place to assess the direct impact of the policy on equality. The majority of the policies were screened out in this sub-objective due to not having any direct impacts on equality. Policy approaches involving flood risk, landscape, design, environment and minerals were all screened out due to no direct impact or relation to equality.

1.19 In regards to equality, the areas of protected characteristics that were positively impacted the most from the Issues and Options policy approaches were age and disability as well as socio-economic factors. This is because these characteristics are the ones that can be impacted directly from the content in the policies such as through targeting development around deprived areas, providing accessible transport infrastructure and providing housing mix that will meet the need for all ages and disabilities.

1.20 The protected characteristics of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, sex and sexual orientation have be screened out / scored neutrally on effects from the Issues and Options policy approaches as there was no direct impacts on these characteristics from the policies content.

1.21 The only possible negative impact on equality could be through policy HE 1 'Historic environment'. This is because the protection of heritage assets could make some equalities adjustments more difficult, such as wider doorways or ramps to accommodate wheelchairs. This is likely to be rare and there may be alternative design solutions to achieve adjustments whilst still protecting heritage assets and due to this it was screened out.

1.22 The table below provides information on each individual protected characteristic and their impacts from the Issues and Options policies:

Table 1.2

Protected Characteristics	Likely Effect Overall	Justification	Mitigation Measures (if required)
Socio-Economic	+	The Issues and Options includes a number of policy approaches that support communities in lower socio-economic areas. These policy approaches will help to ensure that communities from these backgrounds are still receiving the same opportunities as those in higher socio-economic areas.	None required.

Equalities Impact Assessment 1

Protected Characteristics	Likely Effect Overall	Justification	Mitigation Measures (if required)
		<p>Policy TA 1 and TA 2 - supports sustainable transport and travel across the borough allowing all socio-economic backgrounds to have access to employment and facilities.</p> <p>Policy SS 5 - the three spatial options identified in the issues and options will all result in regeneration and redevelopment across the borough, having a positive impact on all areas even those in the lower socio-economic areas.</p> <p>Policy EP 1 - the policy approach will help to provide employment close to deprived areas, benefiting lower socio-economic areas.</p> <p>Policy EG 1 - positive effects on lower socio-economic areas as the policy promotes sustainable economic growth in the borough and wider sub regions</p>	
Age	+	<p>There are a number policies in the Local Plan Issues and Options that will seek to ensure that the needs of all ages are met in the borough, including:</p> <p>Policy CH 1 - the policy approach identifies specific regeneration areas within the policy approach, which will support residential development that could include housing for young, vulnerable or older people.</p> <p>Policy WI 1 - supports regeneration of the town centre and provides facilities which may impact on accessibility of these facilities to those with mobility issues including older people.</p> <p>Policy DS 2 - makes sure that new development achieves high levels of energy and water efficiency. These requirements could reduce fuel and water costs which will impact older people.</p> <p>Policy TC 1 - supports the development and growth of the economy in the town centres which will have benefits on all ages, particularly for families.</p>	None required.

1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Protected Characteristics	Likely Effect Overall	Justification	Mitigation Measures (if required)
		<p>Policy HO 1 - this policy approach relates to mix and type of new housing, this will help to make sure that properties are provided to meet the requirements and therefore the age structure of the local economy. The policy also discusses specialist accommodation which will ensure requirement for accommodation for older persons. The policy mentions student accommodation supporting purpose-build student accommodation having positive effects for younger people.</p> <p>Policy HO 6 - sets out the circumstances under the change of use from a dwelling to a House in Multiple Occupation will be supported. This could benefit younger people and families.</p> <p>Policy OS 1 and OS 2 - the policy approaches set open space quantity standards, including provision of play space for children and younger people. This will have an overall positive effect on age.</p>	
Disability	+	<p>The Local Plan Issues and Options includes a number of policy approaches that could directly impact the needs of disabled people and those in care, including:</p> <p>Policy TA 1 and TA 2 - identifies the provision for development to be in accessible locations with provision for alternatives to the private car. Positive impacts from improved transport options to provide better access to employment.</p> <p>Policy HO 1 - the policy approach makes provision for meeting the needs of residents with disabilities, including specialist accommodation.</p> <p>Policy OS 2 - the policy approach supports provision and retention of community facilities, local services and access to sport and recreation. This will improve social inclusion and reduce inequality.</p>	The policy approaches referencing improved links / routes to public transport could include more specific detail around access for disabilities.

Equalities Impact Assessment 1

Protected Characteristics	Likely Effect Overall	Justification	Mitigation Measures (if required)
		There are other policy approaches that will have positive indirect impacts on disability by providing open space and improving accessible transport infrastructure.	
Gender Reassignment	0	The Local Plan Issues and Options does not include any direct or indirect references to gender reassignment and does not include policy approaches or proposals that are considered to have a direct effect on this protected characteristic.	None required.
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	0	The Local Plan Issues and Options does not include any direct or indirect references to marriage and civil partnerships and does not include policy approaches or proposals that are considered to have a direct effect on this protected characteristic	None required.
Pregnancy and Maternity	+	<p>The Local Plan Issues and Options contains policy approaches which seek to provide and maintain access to community facilities and services in the borough. Community facilities include libraries, social services, health facilities, churches and community centres, which are potentially relevant to pregnancy and maternity. Improvement and creation of these uses could enhance support and reduce isolation for parents, particularly outside of the main urban areas.</p> <p>Policy OS 2 - encourages retention and introduction of new community facilities to serve the local communities.</p>	None required.
Race	+	The Local Plan Issues and Options aims to achieve improvements and development opportunities that are open to and will benefit all sections of the borough's population. Therefore, the Issues and Options are considered to have a positive effect on race.	None required.
Religion or Belief	+	Policies in the Local Plan Issues and Options seek to provide and maintain community services and facilities within Cheshire West and Chester, which includes places of worship and culture facilities. In particular:	None required.

1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Protected Characteristics	Likely Effect Overall	Justification	Mitigation Measures (if required)
		Policy OS 2 - supports proposals for new and improved community facilities and services and prevents loss of existing community facilities provided certain criteria are met.	
Sex	0	The Local Plan Issues and Options does not include any direct or indirect references to sex and does not include policies or proposals that are considered to have a direct effect on this protected characteristic.	None required.
Sexual Orientation	0	The Local Plan Issues and Options does not include any direct or indirect references to sexual orientation and does not include policies or proposals that are considered to have a direct effect on this protected characteristic.	None required.

2 Health Impact Assessment

Introduction

2.1 This appendix sets out the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the CW&C Local Plan Issues and Options (policy approaches). There is no statutory requirement to undertake a HIA, but it is considered best practice and reflects the Council's commitment to improving health in the borough.

2.2 A HIA is used to evaluate the potential health effects of a policy or plan. This HIA aims to identify positive and negative health and wellbeing impacts that may arise from the Local Plan Issues and Options policy approaches. A HIA is also beneficial for highlighting health inequalities amongst different population groups.

2.3 Health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition will be used in the HIA. It covers both the factors that support health, the determinants of health and ill health. Well-being is defined as 'a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment.'

2.4 The measurable changes in the health status of an individual, group or population are described as 'health outcomes'. These may be intended or unintended, and may not become apparent for many years.

Methodology

2.5 This HIA will focus on the determinants of health. These are the social, environmental and cultural factors that indirectly influence health and wellbeing. This can include what we eat and drink, where we live, where we work and the connections we have with other people and organisations.

2.6 The Department of Health publication 'Health Impact Assessment of Government Policy' (2010) sets out a methodology for HIA that includes an SA screening as the first stage. If the policy is screened in, health impacts are identified, described and recommendations made to improve the policy.

2.7 The HIA has been undertaken as part of the SA to ensure that the health impacts are fully assessed and integrated into the appraisal of the Local Plan. This was also done to ensure that mitigation measures can be identified and implemented fully.

2.8 The 'population and housing' and 'health, well-being and equality' SA topics relate directly to health. Most of the other topics will have an indirect impact on health. The table below shows the links between the sustainability objectives and health.

	Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-objective	Topic Area	Link to Health
1	Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	<p>Will it ensure that new developments are in accessible locations?</p> <p>Will it reduce the need to travel?</p> <p>Will it enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport?</p>	Climate change, energy and air quality	Climate change can result in weather conditions that can increase risk to health for example flooding and high temperatures.

2 Health Impact Assessment

	Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-objective	Topic Area	Link to Health
		Will it encourage the use of lower carbon technologies and working practices?		
2	Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	Will it improve local air quality or reduce air pollution?	Climate change , energy and air quality	Air pollution can have serious impacts on health and should therefore be mitigated.
3	Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Will it reduce energy consumption? Will it promote energy efficiency? Will it result in an increase in the installed renewable energy capacity?	Climate change, energy and air quality	No significant links to health.
4	Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Will it help to reduce the amount of waste generated? Will it encourage increased recovery, recycling or composting to enable re-use of waste materials? Will it reduce the amount of waste sent for incineration or landfill? Will it result in new or enhanced waste management facilities to meet the waste management needs of the area?	Waste	Ineffective or unsafe waste management such as fly tipping can result in health problems.
5	Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	Will it achieve remediation and re-use of contaminated land? Will it protect the extent and quality of soils?	Land and resources	Poor soil quality can have a negative impact on health.
6	Protect and conserve natural resources	Will it focus development on previously developed land? Will it avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?	Land and resources	No significant link to health.

Health Impact Assessment 2

	Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-objective	Topic Area	Link to Health
7	Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	Will it increase the number and areas of RIGS?	Land and resources	No significant link to health.
8	Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Will it safeguard mineral resources? Will it enable delivery of a steady and adequate supply of minerals? Will it promote the use of secondary/recycled aggregates?	Land and resources	No significant link to health.
9	Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	Will it protect or improve water quality?	Water	Water quality issues can result in health problems.
10	Protect and conserve natural resources	Will it improve water efficiency?	Water	No significant link to health.
11	Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	Will it reduce the risks of flooding from all resources? Will it direct development towards areas of least flood risk? Will it promote or increase the number of relevant development proposals that incorporate SuDS?	Water	Flooding can result in loss of life or health problems.
12	Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	Will it protect or enhance the borough's landscape? Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space? Will it provide high quality design?	Landscape, townscape and cultural heritage	Protecting the landscape can help to improve well-being and provide opportunities for walking and cycling. Local distinctiveness can help to improve community cohesion.
13	Conserve and enhance the historic environment	Will it conserve, protect and/or enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and/or their setting?	Landscape, townscape and cultural heritage	No significant link to health.

2 Health Impact Assessment

	Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-objective	Topic Area	Link to Health
		Will it ensure the protection and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets?		
14	Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Will it protect and promote effective management of the borough's sites of ecological and nature conservation importance?</p> <p>Will it provide opportunities for the enhancement, creation or connection of habitats and to foster species conservation, diversity and resilience to climate change?</p> <p>Will it maintain, enhance and increase (rural and urban) tree cover and woodlands?</p>	Biodiversity	Green infrastructure and biodiversity can improve mental health and wellbeing and habitats can provide opportunities for walking and cycling.
15	Provide high quality, well designed housing to meet identified needs	<p>Will it help to meet identified housing needs?</p> <p>Will it provide well designed housing?</p>	Population and housing	Providing new housing will help to prevent overcrowding and provide choice. Providing a mix of housing types to meet identified needs and specialist groups should help to ensure that those with specific disabilities or medical needs are catered for, as are people for all ages.
16	Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	<p>Will it safeguard shops and services in existing centres?</p> <p>Will it safeguard or improve the retail, leisure or service provision?</p>	Population and housing	Direct link to health in terms of access to health facilities, poverty, social inclusion and access to services.
17	Improve health, safety and wellbeing	<p>Will it promote active lifestyles?</p> <p>Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space?</p> <p>Will it reduce opportunities for crime?</p>	Health, wellbeing and equality	Direct link to health in terms of fear of crime, feelings of safety and road safety.

Health Impact Assessment 2

	Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-objective	Topic Area	Link to Health
		<p>Will it affect the fear of crime and feelings for safety?</p> <p>Will it improve road safety?</p> <p>Will it help to protect existing health or community facilities and services?</p> <p>Will it provide new or improved health or community facilities or services?</p>		<p>Direct link to health as active lifestyles will in turn lead to healthier lifestyles</p> <p>Direct link to health in terms of access to health facilities, poverty, social inclusion and access to services.</p>
18	Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	<p>Will it improve economic conditions, particularly in deprived areas?</p> <p>Will it improve equality across the borough?</p>	Health, wellbeing and equality	Improvements and regeneration to deprived areas should help to improve mental health and wellbeing in these areas.
19	Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	<p>Will it reduce noise pollution?</p>	Health, wellbeing and equality	Noise pollution can have a negative impact on health
20	Support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment	<p>Will it help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt?</p> <p>Will it support sustainable economic growth?</p> <p>Will it provide a balanced portfolio of employment land for the area by type and location?</p> <p>Will it maintain/safeguard high quality employment land and premises?</p> <p>Will it contribute to meeting the employment needs of the rural/urban area?</p> <p>Will it promote tourism and the visitor economy?</p> <p>Will it improve accessibility to jobs?</p>	Economy and employment	<p>Provision of employment opportunities should enable more people to access employment and therefore improve mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Improving accessibility to jobs should enable more people to access employment and therefore improve mental health and wellbeing.</p>

2 Health Impact Assessment

	Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-objective	Topic Area	Link to Health
		Will it take account of the different locational requirements of different sectors?		
21	Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities?	<p>Will it deliver regeneration?</p> <p>Will it improve economic conditions, particularly in deprived areas?</p>	Economy and employment	Improvements and regeneration to deprived areas should help to improve mental health and wellbeing in these areas.
22	Reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport	<p>Will it increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p>Will it reduce congestion and travel times?</p> <p>Will it provide infrastructure that maximises accessibility by sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p>Will it connect new development with new or existing services or facilities via sustainable modes of travel?</p>	Infrastructure	<p>Increasing walking, wheeling or sustainable transport will have positive impacts on health.</p> <p>Reduction in congestion will lead to a decrease in emissions which will positively impact health through lower pollution levels.</p>
23	Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	<p>Will it safeguard shops and services in existing centres?</p> <p>Will it safeguard or improve the retail, leisure or service provision?</p>	Infrastructure	<p>Safeguarding local shops and services can help to ensure that people can easily access fresh food. Protection and improvement of services could include health services and sports facilities that would have a direct impact on health.</p> <p>Social and leisure infrastructure should help to support community cohesion and influence wellbeing.</p>

Health Impact Assessment 2

2.9 The SA process involves a screening of the policy approaches as a first instance. At this stage, an assessment was made to determine whether each policy approach would have a significant effect on each of the sustainability objectives. As such, through this stage, an assessment was made as to whether the policy approach would have a significant impact on health. Details of the policy screening process are provided in Chapter 4.

2.10 For the policy approaches where a potential significant impact was anticipated or identified, the next stage was to identify the impacts and make any necessary recommendations to improve the policy approach.

Key findings from the SA

2.11 The main findings are that there will be a different range of effects on health. Overall, the sustainability appraisal concluded that the Plan will generally have positive impacts on health when assessed against the objective 'health, well-being and equality', however there were a few policy approaches that were negative or uncertain on the impacts. Most of the policy approaches performed positively, with a few scoring very positively.

2.12 The area policy approach for Frodsham (FR 1) scored very positively in terms of health. The policy approach refers to protecting and enhancing the network of accessible green and open spaces, facilitating easy and safe access for walking, wheeling and cycling and refers to adequate vehicle and cycle parking that could help to improve safety. For these reasons, the policy approach would lead to promoting healthier lifestyles and would therefore have a positive effect overall on health.

2.13 The policy approach for health and well-being (HW 1) also scored very positively, as expected. The policy approach seeks to provide high quality green and open space for residents, which will help to promote active lifestyles through sports, recreation and leisure offers. The policy approach also seeks for developments to support and protect cultural, sport, recreation and leisure facilities that are valued by the local community. For these reasons, this policy approach scores very positively.

2.14 The cultural and community facilities policy approach (OS 2) score very positively regarding health. The policy approach is to include the requirement to secure play and play community access for sport and recreation. The policy approach also supports proposals for new or improved community facilities including health provision.

2.15 Green Infrastructure policy approach (GI 1) performs very positively on health as the policy approach seeks for the creation of a network of green infrastructure that will help to create opportunities for walking, leisure and recreation and increase the quantity and quality of open space. This will therefore positively impact health.

2.16 The Ellesmere Port area policy approach (EP 2) is the only policy from the SA that scored negatively on impacts to health. The policy refers to development in proximity to hazardous installations and the need in exceptional cases to strike a balance between the need for investment and regeneration and the degree of risk involved. There was however, cross reference to the health and well-being policy approach on how to mitigate impacts from hazardous installations.

2.17 The mineral policy approaches (Policies MS 2, MS 4, MS 5) all performed well in terms of health as they seek to make sure that odour, dust or particle emissions are controlled, noise and vibration levels will not have detrimental impact on human health and there is possible positive impacts on community facilities as there is opportunities for restoration to improve or enhance community use.

2 Health Impact Assessment

2.18 There are a few of the energy policy approaches that have uncertain impacts on health. Energy supplies and energy related developments (EN 1) covers a wide range of energy developments, which may include hazardous installations and pipelines. Criteria 7 says 'associated developments' should not cause risk to public safety. Wind energy (EN 2) states that proposals should minimise and adequately mitigate glint and glare effects which is linked to health and could therefore help to mitigate any negative effects. Low carbon fuel and carbon capture developments (EN 5) has uncertain impacts because these uses could include hazardous installations and pipelines. This is not stated how it will be mitigated and therefore could be positive or negative impacts.

2.19 When viewed as a whole, the policies providing requirements and information about health and indirect positive impacts on health for example through protection and provision of open spaces should mean that the Local Plan Issues and Options would have a positive impact on health overall.

3 Rural proofing

Introduction

3.1 Rural proofing is a method of ensuring that policies take account of rural circumstances and needs. The initiative has been promoted by The Commission for Rural Communities with recommendations that as policies are developed, policy makers should:

- consider whether their policy is likely to have a different impact in rural areas, because of particular circumstances or needs;
- make proper assessments of those impacts, if they're likely to be significant;
- adjust the policy where appropriate, with solutions to meet rural needs and circumstances.

3.2 Rural proofing is assessing what might affect outcomes in rural areas and adjusting policies or policy delivery when appropriate and practicable. Rural proofing ensures that rural areas are not overlooked and that the intended outcomes are deliverable in rural areas. Rural proofing applies to all policies, programmes and initiatives as well as to both the design and the delivery stages. The Government still have a commitment to make rural proofing a reality at national and local levels. In March 2024 Defra published its third annual rural proofing report, which demonstrated the progress that was being made on key issues for rural areas. In practice, rural proofing will highlight and moderate overly restrictive planning policies that are based on a narrow definition of sustainable development that may have an adverse impact on smaller settlements in rural areas.

Methodology

3.3 Rural issues have been considered through the SA and for each policy there has been screening process, assessment of impacts and identification of mitigation measures. The SA objectives include those that assess or could impact on rural issues and include the following questions:

- Will it improve the health, or access to health facilities, particularly in those areas identified as in need?
- Will it improve equality across the borough?
- Will it contribute to meeting the employment needs of the rural/urban area?
- Will it deliver urban/rural regeneration?
- Will it safeguard shops and services in the area?
- Will it safeguard and improve the retail, leisure and service provision?
- Will it provide new or improved health or community facilities or services?

3.4 As such, rural proofing has been integrated into the SA process. However, for clarity, the key findings of the SA in relation to rural proofing have been extracted and are shown in the table below.

Results of rural proofing

3.5 The table below provides a summary of the appraisal of the Plan from a rural perspective. Within the table there is a list of rural proofing topics. The comments section identifies the potential impacts of the Issues and Options, key policies and any required mitigation measures.

3 Rural proofing

Rural proofing topic	Comment and mitigation measures if required
<p>Will the Plan affect the availability of public and private services?</p>	<p>The Plan will have direct positive impacts on the provision of public and private services by protecting existing services and facilities.</p> <p>Policy approach CH 1 refers to Chester regeneration areas and states that development proposals within the city centre must not detract from the viability of the services at identified local centres.</p> <p>EP 1 supports regeneration proposals and new investment in and around the town centre, including supporting the vitality of the town centre.</p> <p>Policy approach OS 2 relates to the provision of culture and community facilities and states that proposals for new or improved facilities will be supported where they are of an appropriate scale. It also seeks to avoid the loss of community and cultural facilities,</p> <p>Policy MS 5 relates to restoration of minerals and oil and gas sites and states that opportunities for community use should be maximised</p> <p>The Issues and Options will have indirect impacts, aiming to direct development in the most sustainable areas and to the centres with some existing service provision, in order to support these services.</p>
<p>Will the policies rely on existing service outlets, such as schools, libraries and GP surgeries?</p>	<p>Most of the policy approaches in the Issues and Options will rely on existing service outlets and following the selection of one of the preferred spatial strategies. The strategies aim to direct development to the most sustainable areas, with some existing services.</p> <p>Some of the policy approaches refer to provision of links to to existing services or facilities.</p> <p>Policy approach ID 1 refers to the provision of new services and infrastructure, it sets out the requirements and identifies that they may come forward through developer contributions.</p>
<p>Will the policy rely on private sector or public-private partnership?</p>	<p>The private sector will play a major role in delivering the required development set out in the Issues and Options. Public sector organisations will also play a key role in delivery of certain elements such as affordable housing, health provision etc.</p>
<p>Will the cost of delivery be higher in rural areas where clients are more widely dispersed and economies of scale can be harder to achieve?</p>	<p>Some of the policy approaches that place restrictions or requirements on new development may increase the cost of development. The cost would be similar across the borough, but could have a greater impact in rural areas due to the lack of economies of scale.</p>

Rural proofing 3

Rural proofing topic	Comment and mitigation measures if required
Will the policy rely on local institutions for delivery?	<p>CW&C will support Parish Councils in the production of their neighbourhood plans. The Issues and Options also states that new housing development outside a local service centre boundary will be supported where proposals are in line with Policy HO 5.</p> <p>New development will mainly be delivered by private organisations, housing associations and registered providers, however some development may come forward through Local Community Right to Build Orders.</p>
Accessibility and infrastructure	<p>The Issues and Options sets out policy approaches relating to accessibility and infrastructure and will aim to direct development to the most accessible areas. This predominantly will be in the four main urban areas, but development is also permitted within the key service centres, which are considered to be the most accessible and sustainable rural settlements due to provision of services, facilities and public transport.</p> <p>Policy TA 1 will positively impact accessibility and infrastructure to rural areas by the promotion of rail lines and stations. These improvements to rail should help to improve rail facilities in both urban and rural areas.</p>
Will the policy affect travel needs or the ease / cost of travel?	<p>Increasing population has meant that public transport provision to some of the rural settlements will become more viable although it is recognised that many journeys will still be car based. The Issues and Options aims to direct development to the most sustainable areas, therefore reducing travel needs and the cost of travel. This should help to improve rail facilities in both urban and rural areas.</p>
Does the policy rely on infrastructure (e.g. Broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery?	<p>Some new and improved infrastructure will be required to support new development in rural areas. Policy approach ID 1 sets out infrastructure and developer contributions that should provided improvements to current infrastructure. The requirements in the policy approach relate to both urban and rural needs and therefore should help to improve telecommunications provision across the borough.</p>
Will delivery of the policy be challenged at the 'edges' of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	<p>CW&C are working closely with neighbouring authorities on any cross boundary issues in order to achieve good planning and to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. No significant issues regarding accessing facilities have been raised.</p>
Is the policy dependent on new buildings or development sites?	<p>The Issues and Options identify possible growth areas on the edge of existing settlements for new development. These sites are concentrated within or on the edge of urban areas but there are some proposed employment sites identified in order to meet rural employment needs (policy approach EG 1).</p>

3 Rural proofing

Rural proofing topic	Comment and mitigation measures if required
Does the policy rely on communicating information to clients?	The Issues and Options will be published and will undergo a consultation period allowing for stakeholders and residents including Parish Councils and rural estates etc to be able to comment.
Will the policy impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed?	<p>Policy approach GI 1 refers to the protection of best and most versatile agricultural land allowing for more agricultural businesses to grow.</p> <p>Policy approach MISC 6 sets the criteria for new agricultural and forestry buildings as well as policy approach MISC 7 supporting rural diversification of land based businesses. However, the Issues and Options report identifies that these policies may be sufficiently covered by national policy and other policy approaches and could be deleted.</p> <p>These policies should have a positive impact on rural businesses.</p>
Will the policy affect land-based industries and rural economies and environments?	<p>There are a couple of policies in the Issues and Options that address land-based industries and rural economies:</p> <p>Policy VE 1 mentions having regard for supporting the development and diversification for land-based rural businesses, as referenced in the NPPF paragraph 88b.</p> <p>Policy MISC 7 discusses rural diversification of land based businesses. However, the Issues and Options report identifies that this policy may be sufficiently covered by national policy and other policy approaches and could be deleted.</p> <p>These policies will impact on rural businesses, but aim to protect the landscape and environment.</p>
Will the policy affect people on low wages or in part time or seasonal employment?	This is outside the remit of the Issues and Options. However, the general provision of employment allocations and support economic developments in the rural area could provide additional employment opportunities.
Will the policy target disadvantaged people or places?	The Issues and Options aims to achieve improvements in the more deprived areas by concentrating development and regeneration in these areas. This will mainly be in the urban areas and will be achieved through the growth area options. However, the Issues and Options does direct some development to the key service centres and local service centres and this development should help to contribute to the economy and provide jobs for local people, as well as supporting local services.

SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators 4

4 SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
1) Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	Will it ensure that new development is in accessible locations?	Percentage of new residential developments of over 10 units within 800 metres of a city centre, town centre or local retail centre
		Percentage of employment development within 800 metres of a city centre, town centre or local retail centre
	Will it reduce the need to travel?	Percentage of new residential developments of over 10 units within 800 metres of a city centre, town centre or local retail centre
	Will it enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport?	Number of tonnes of NOx emitted annually from road transport
		Mode of transport used by residents to travel to work in CWaC (% of employed residents)
	Will it encourage the use of lower carbon technologies and working practices?	Total CO ₂ emissions
		CO ₂ emissions per capita arising from domestic industry and commerce
	Will it reduce energy consumption?	Housing energy efficiency (average SAP rating of private sector dwellings)
		Number of households in fuel poverty
		Number of non-domestic buildings achieving a BREEAM rating of excellent
	Will it protect peat resources?	Number of new developments granted on areas with potential peat resources
2) Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution.	Will it improve local air quality or reduce air pollution?	Annual average background nitrogen dioxide concentration in AQMAs (ug/m ³)
		Number and extent of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
		Number of tonnes of NOx emitted annually from road transport
		Number of tonnes of PM10 emitted annually from road transport
	Will it ensure that new development is in accessible locations?	Percentage of new residential developments of over 10 units within 800 metres of a city centre, town centre or local retail centre

4 SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
	Will it enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport?	
	Will it achieve remediation and re-use of contaminated land?	Percentage of planning applications approved on contaminated land with a contamination assessment.
	Will it protect the extent and quality of soils?	Number of planning applications permitted on Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land
		Percentage of new and converted dwellings built on previously developed land
		Percentage of employment floorspace completed on previously developed land.
	Will it protect or improve water quality?	Number of planning applications granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on water quality grounds
	Will it reduce noise pollution?	
3) Provide high quality, well designed housing to meet identified needs	Will it help to meet identified housing needs?	Number of new dwellings approved and completed (net and gross)
		Annual net dwelling completions in the last five years
		Deliverable five year housing supply
		Type and size of new dwellings completed
		Number of affordable dwellings approved and completed.
		Number of self contained older persons dwellings and communal extra care bedspaces approved and completed
		Number of student dwellings (self contained and communal bedspaces) approved and completed.
		Number of additional gypsy and traveller pitches and plots approved and delivered
		Number of new HMO properties
		Provision of sites for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons accommodation
	Will it provide well designed housing?	

SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators 4

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
4) Improve health, safety and well-being	Will it promote active lifestyles?	Percentage of physically active adults
		Obesity percentages of children in the borough
	Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space?	Total amount of open space per 1,000 persons
	Will it reduce opportunities for crime?	Domestic burglaries per 1000 households
		Violent crime per year per 1000 population in the LA area
	Will it affect the fear of crime and feelings of safety?	Fear of crime (Community Survey)
	Will it improve road safety?	Total number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions
		Total number of children (aged under 16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions
	Will it help to protect existing health or community facilities and services?	Number of applications approved involving loss of a health or community facility (e.g demolition or conversion to an alternative use)
	Will it provide new or improved health or community facilities or service?	Number of applications approved involving provision of new health or community facilities or improvement of existing facilities
5) Reduce the need to travel and increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport	Will it reduce the need to travel?	Percentage of new residential developments of over 10 units within 800 metres of a city centre, town centre or local retail centre
	Will it increase the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling or sustainable modes of transport?	Percentage of new residential developments of over 10 units within 800 metres of a city centre, town centre or local retail centre
		Percentage of new residential development of over 10 units located within or adjacent to an urban area or Key Service Centre (or equivalent)
	Will it reduce congestion and travel times?	
	Will it provide infrastructure that maximises accessibility by sustainable modes of transport?	Percentage of major applications providing connections to new/existing services by sustainable modes of transport
	Will it connect new development with new or existing services or facilities via sustainable modes of travel?	Percentage of major applications providing connections to new/existing services by sustainable modes of transport

4 SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
6) Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	Will it safeguard shops and services in existing centres?	Vacancy rates within town centres
		Total loss of town centre floorspace in local retail centres
	Will it safeguard or improve the retail, leisure or service provision?	Amount of floorspace developed for town centre uses
		Percentage of approved planning applications in and out of centre
		Amount of completed floor space in centre for town centre uses
7) Protect and conserve natural resources	Will it focus development on previously developed land?	Amount of completed floor space across the borough for town centre uses
		Percentage of new and converted dwellings built on previously developed land
	Will it improve water efficiency?	Percentage of employment development completed on previously developed land
		Percentage of major planning applications with a completed sustainable construction checklist referring to water efficiency measures.
	Will it avoid the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land?	Percentage of new residential developments of over 10 units that includes a condition relating to water efficiency
8) Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Will it safeguard mineral resources?	Number of planning applications permitted on Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
	Will it protect peat resources?	
	Will it enable delivery of a steady and adequate supply of minerals?	Percentage of permitted planning applications for non-mineral development in sand and gravel Mineral Safeguarding Areas that include a mineral resource assessment and are not exempt from MSA requirements
		Supply of permitted reserves of sand and gravel
		Sand and gravel sales per annum
	Will it promote the use of secondary/recycled aggregates?	Sand and gravel landbank
		Percentage of total aggregate sand and gravel produced that is from secondary and recycled sources

SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators 4

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
9) Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	Will it protect and promote effective management of the borough's sites of ecological and nature conservation importance?	The percentage area of land designated as sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) within the local authority area in favourable condition
		Number and total area of new statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites
	Will it provide opportunities for the enhancement, creation or connection of habitats and to foster species conservation, diversity and resilience to climate change?	Number and total area of internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites.
	Will it maintain, enhance and increase (rural and urban) tree cover and woodlands?	Scale of tree cover in rural and urban areas.
	Will it increase the number and area of RIGS?	Number and area of RIGS
	Will it impact on the extent or quality of soils?	Number of planning applications permitted on Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
10) Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Will it help to reduce the amount of waste generated?	Local Authority Collected Waste
		Total amount of Commercial and Industrial Waste
		Kilogrammes of household waste collected per head
	Will it encourage increased recovery, recycling or composting to enable re-use of waste materials?	% of local authority collected waste recycled and composted
		% of local authority collected waste sent for energy recovery
		% of Commercial and industrial waste recycled
	Will it reduce the amount of waste sent for incineration or landfill?	% of local authority collected waste landfilled
		Amount of commercial and industrial waste produced in the borough sent for energy recovery / landfill / treatment
	Will it result in new or enhanced waste management facilities to meet the waste management needs of the area?	Capacity of new waste management facilities

4 SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
11) Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	Will it protect or enhance the borough's landscapes?	
	Will it increase the quantity or quality of open space?	Total amount of open space (ha) per 1,000 persons.
	Will it provide high quality design?	
12) Conserve and enhance the historic environment	Will it conserve, protect and/or enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and/or their setting?	Number of listings on the Heritage at Risk Register
		Number of heritage assets (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments)
	Will it ensure the protection and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets?	Number of listings on the Heritage at Risk Register
		Number of heritage assets (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments)
13) Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	Will it reduce the risk of flooding from all sources?	Number of planning applications granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood risk grounds
	Will it direct development towards areas of least flood risk?	
	Will it promote or increase the number of relevant development proposals that incorporate SuDS?	Percentage of relevant development incorporating SuDS
14) Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Will it reduce energy consumption?	Annual average domestic consumption of electricity (Kilowatt Hours)
		Annual average domestic consumption of gas (Kilowatt hours)
	Will it promote energy efficiency?	Housing energy efficiency (SAP rating)
	Will it result in an increase in the installed renewable energy capacity?	Installed capacity from renewable energy sources

SA framework, objectives, sub-objectives and indicators 4

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-objective	Indicator
15) Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas and reduce inequalities	Will it deliver regeneration?	
	Will it improve economic conditions, particularly in deprived areas?	Number of LSOA in 20% most deprived in the borough
	Will it improve equality across the borough?	Number of households in fuel poverty
		Local Authority ranking in the social mobility index
16) Support a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy and provide opportunities for economic growth and investment	Will it help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt?	-Employment land supply and distribution, by type and location (STRAT 2(F))
	Will it support sustainable economic growth?	-Employment land completions, by type and location (STRAT 2 (F))
	Will it provide a balanced portfolio of employment land for the area by type and location?	-Employment land loss, by type and location
		-Employment by broad industrial sector
	Will it maintain/safeguard high quality employment land and premises?	-Enterprise births and deaths (ECON1 (C i)) - Number of businesses (ECON 1 (C))
	Will it contribute to meeting the employment needs of the rural/urban area?	-Number of visitors to the borough (STEAM data on visitor economy) - Number of day and overnight visitors to the borough (ECON 3 (Ai))
	Will it promote tourism and the visitor economy?	- Number of borough residents in employment (ECON 1)
	Will it improve accessibility to jobs?	- Unemployment rate (ECO 1 (B))
	Will it take account of the different locational requirements of different sectors?	- Number of businesses (ECON 1 (C)) - Cumulative employment land completions by type and location (AMR) (STRAT 2(E)) (The same indicators for all appraisal criteria / sub-objective)

5 Appraisal summary tables

5 Appraisal summary tables

Table 5.1 SA summary of effects

Key	
	Very positive
	Positive
	Neutral
	Negative
	Very negative
	Screened out / no impact

Table 5.2

	SD1: Sustainable development	SS 1: Housing needs	SS 2: Employment needs	SS 3: Spatial strategy principles	SS 4: Settlement hierarchy	SS 5: Spatial strategy options	Option A - Retain the Green Belt	Option B - Current LP level and distribution	Option C - Sustainable transport corridors
SA Objectives and Sub-objectives									
Areas likely to be significantly affected	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C	Grey	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C
Any likely transboundary effects?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Climate change, energy and air quality									
Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Light Green	Green	Orange	Light Green	Green
Reduce air pollution	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Orange	Light Green	Green
Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Waste									
Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Land and resources									
Reduce soil pollution	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Grey	Orange	Orange	Orange
Protect and conserve natural resources	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Grey	Red	Red	Red
Protect, enhance and manage geodiversity	Grey	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Grey	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Grey	Orange	Red	Red
Water									
Reduce water pollution	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Protect and conserve natural resources	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Manage and reduce the risk of flooding	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow

Appraisal summary tables 5

Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres	SD1: Sustainable development	SS 1: Housing needs	SS 2: Employment needs	SS 3: Spatial strategy principles	SS 4: Settlement hierarchy	SS 5: Spatial strategy options	Option A - Retain the Green Belt	Option B - Current LP level and distribution	Option C - Sustainable transport corridors
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[illegible]

5 Appraisal summary tables

[illegible]

Table 5.4 SA Summary of policy approaches GB 1, TA 1, TA 2, ID 1, EG 1, TC 1, VE 1, HO 1, HO 2, HO 3

[illegible]

5 Appraisal summary tables

[illegible]

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[illegible]

5 Appraisal summary tables

Table 5.5

	HO 4: Essential rural workers dwellings	HO 5: Rural exception sites	HO 6: Houses in Multiple Occupation	GT 1: Gypsy, Traveller, Showpersons	HW 1: Health and well being	OS 1: Open space, sport and recreation	OS 2: Cultural and community facilities	FW 1: Flood risk and water management	LA 1: Landscape	LA 2: Areas of Special County Value
SA Objectives and Sub-objectives	Rural	Rural	Chester, urban areas	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C, adjacent areas	CW&C	CW&C
Areas likely to be significantly affected										
Any likely transboundary effects?	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Climate change, energy and air quality										
Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Yellow	Grey	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Reduce air pollution	Grey	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Green	Light Green	Yellow	Grey	Light Green	Light Green
Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Waste										
Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Grey	Grey	Green	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Land and resources										
Reduce soil pollution	Yellow	Orange	Grey	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Protect and conserve natural resources	Yellow	Orange	Grey	Yellow	Light Green	Yellow	Orange	Grey	Light Green	Light Green
Protect, enhance and manage geodiversity	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Yellow	Orange	Grey	Light Green	Light Green
Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Water										
Reduce water pollution	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Yellow	Green	Grey	Grey
Protect and conserve natural resources	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Green	Grey	Grey

Appraisal summary tables 5

[illegible]

5 Appraisal summary tables

[illegible]

Table 5.6 SA summaries of policy approaches GI 1 HE 1, DS 1, DS 2, DS 3, EN 1, EN 2, EN 3, EN 4, EN 5

[illegible]

5 Appraisal summary tables

[illegible]

Appraisal summary tables 5

[illegible]

5 Appraisal summary tables

Table 5.7 SA summaries for policy approaches MW 1, MS 1, MS 2, MS 3, MS 4, MS 5, MISC 1, MISC 2, MISC 3

SA Objectives and Sub-objectives	MW 1: Managing waste	MS 1: Minerals supply	MS 2: Proposals for minerals development	MS 3: Safeguarding	MS 4: Oil and gas developments	MS 5: Restoration	MISC 1: Safeguarded areas around aerodromes	MISC 2: Jodrell Bank	MISC 3: Waterways and mooring facilities
Areas likely to be significantly affected	CW&C	CW&C	CW&C	Safe guarded areas	CW&C	CW&C, safe guarded areas	Areas affected by safe guarded zone	Areas affected by safe guarded zone	CW&C water ways
Any likely transboundary effects?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Climate change, energy and air quality									
Minimise carbon emissions and climate change	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Grey	Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Yellow
Reduce air pollution	Light Green	Orange	Green	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Yellow
Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources	Light Green	Grey	Grey	Grey	Red	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Waste									
Minimise waste generation and manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Orange	Grey	Grey
Land and resources									
Reduce soil pollution	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey
Protect and conserve natural resources	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey
Protect, enhance and manage geodiversity	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Provide a steady and adequate supply of minerals	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Grey	Grey
Water									
Reduce water pollution	Grey	Orange	Orange	Grey	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Grey	Yellow

5 Appraisal summary tables

	MW 1: Managing waste		
	MS 1: Minerals supply		
	MS 2: Proposals for minerals development		
	MS 3: Safeguarding		
	MS 4: Oil and gas developments		
	MS 5: Restoration		
	MISC 1: Safeguarded areas around aerodromes		
	MISC 2: Jodrell Bank		
	MISC 3: Waterways and mooring facilities		

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