

Places background paper - Northwich

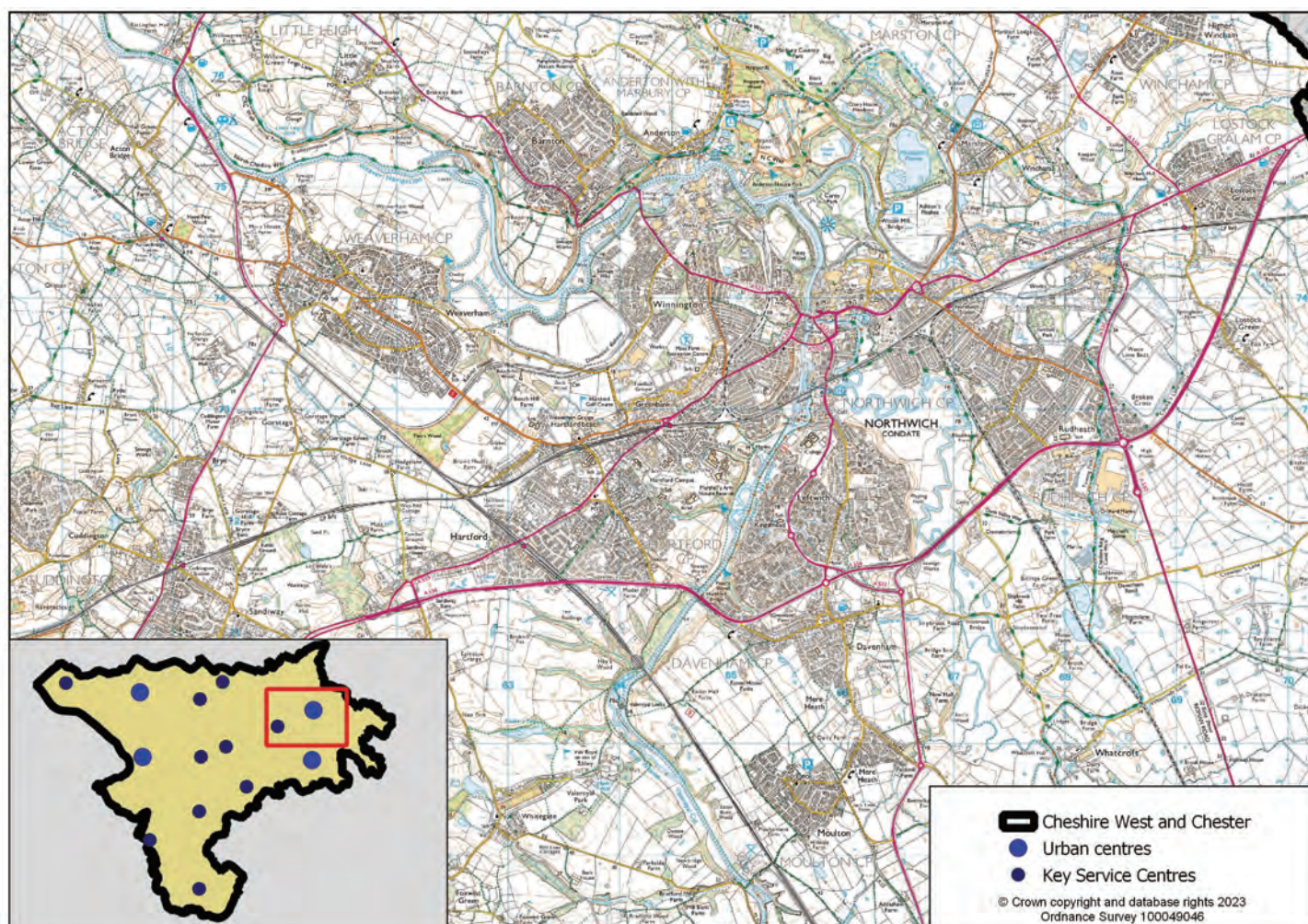
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1 Northwich

1 Northwich

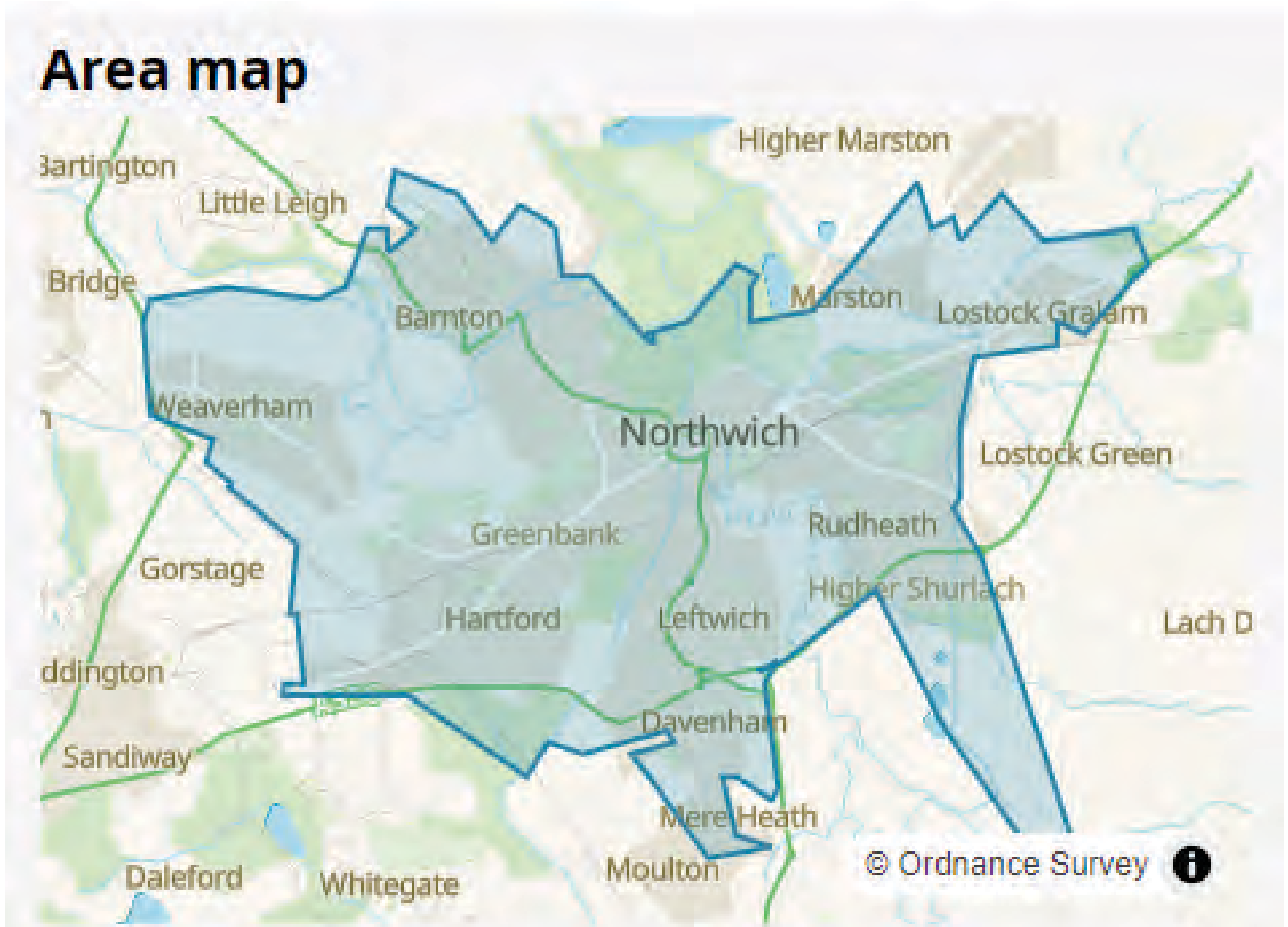
1.1 The town of Northwich and adjoining settlements of Anderton, Barnton, Davenham, Hartford, Lostock Gralam, Lower Marston, Lower Wincham, Rudheath and Weaverham combine to form the third biggest urban area in Cheshire West and Chester. The area has benefited from the stabilisation of former salt mines that had prevented large areas of the town coming forward for redevelopment. In particular, land stabilisation has enabled proposals to come forward that have significantly improved the town centre of Northwich and help enhance the town's role as a major retail and leisure destination. Northwich has good links to the wider countryside and significant heritage assets, including the distinctive black and white buildings of the town centre. The waterways of Northwich are a particular asset and its railway station provides access to the mid-Cheshire railway line that serves Greater Manchester and Chester.

Map 1.1 Northwich location



2 Socio-economic profile

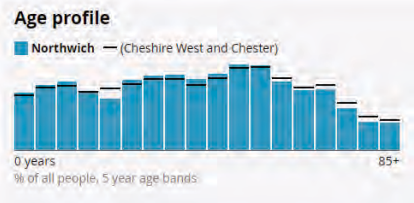
Map 2.1 Northwich area map



Northwich: ONS – Custom selected area. The data and boundaries displayed in this profile are aggregated from small areas on a best-fit basis, and therefore may differ slightly from other sources: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>

2 Socio-economic profile

Table 2.1 Northwich socio-economic profile

Topic	Settlement figure		Borough figure		Settlement share of borough total
Population					
Total existing population (Census 2021 , rounded to the nearest 100 people)	54,700		357,200		15,31%
<div>Age Profile</div> <div><p>Age profile</p><p>■ Northwich — (Cheshire West and Chester)</p><p>0 years 85+</p><p>% of all people, 5 year age bands</p></div> <div>(Census 2021)</div>	Age	%	Age	%	
	0-4:	5.1	0-4:	4.9	
	5-9:	5.8	5-9:	5.6	
	10-14:	6.1	10-14:	5.7	
	15-19:	5.2	15-19:	5.2	
	20-24:	4.6	20-24:	5.5	
	25-29:	6.2	25-29:	5.9	
	30-34:	6.6	30-34:	6.3	
	35-39:	6.7	35-39:	6.3	
	40-44:	6.3	40-44:	5.8	
	45-49:	6.8	45-49:	6.4	
	50-54:	6.7	50-54:	7.3	
	55-59:	7.6	55-59:	7.4	
	60-64:	6.1	60-64:	6.4	
	65-69:	5.3	65-69:	5.6	
	70-74:	5.4	70-74:	5.8	
	75-79:	3.7	75-79:	4.2	
	80-84:	2.5	80-84:	3.0	
	85+:	2.4	85+:	2.7	
Households					
Number of households	23,900		155,200		15.40%

Socio-economic profile 2

Topic	Settlement figure		Borough figure		Settlement share of borough total
(2021 Census, rounded to the nearest 100 households)					
Household size (2021 Census, percentage of all households)	1 person in household	30.2%	1 person in household	30.2%	N/A
	2 people in household	35.6%	2 people in household	36.4%	
	3 people in household	16.7%	3 people in household	16.1%	
	4 or more people in household	17.6%	4 or more people in household	17.2%	
Household composition (2021 Census, percentage of all households)	One person household	30.2%	One person household	30.2%	N/A
	Single family household	66.1%	Single family household	65.3%	
	Other household types	3.8%	Other household types	4.4%	
Accommodation type (2021 Census, percentage of all households)	Whole house or bungalow	89.4%	Whole house or bungalow	87.4%	N/A
	Flat, maisonette or apartment	10.1%	Flat, maisonette or apartment	11.9%	
	A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure	0.5%	A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure	0.7%	
Number of bedrooms (2021 Census, percentage of all households)	1 bedroom	963%	1 bedroom	7.0%	N/A
	2 bedrooms	27.8%	2 bedrooms	23.1%	
	3 bedrooms	43.4%	3 bedrooms	45.7%	
	4 or more bedrooms	22.6%	4 or more bedrooms	24.3%	
Tenure of household (2021 Census, percentage of all households)	Owns outright	35.0%	Owns outright	37.1%	N/A
	Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	36.0%	Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	32.4%	

2 Socio-economic profile

Topic	Settlement figure		Borough figure		Settlement share of borough total
	Social rented	3.3%	Social rented	14.6%	
	Private rented or lives rent free	15.8%	Private rented or lives rent free	15.8%	
Employment					
Economic activity status (2021 Census, % of people aged 16 years and over)	Economically active: In employment	60.6%	Economically active: In employment	57.2%	N/A
	Economically active: Unemployed	2.6%	Economically active: Unemployed	2.8%	
	Economically inactive	36.8%	Economically inactive	40.0%	
Employment history (2021 Census, % of people aged 16 years and over not in employment)	Not in employment: Worked in the last 12 months	11.7%	Not in employment: Worked in the last 12 months	12.3%	
	Not in employment: Not worked in the last 12 months	67.3%	Not in employment: Not worked in the last 12 months	67.3%	
	Not in employment: Never worked	21.0%	Not in employment: Never worked	20.5%	
Occupation (2021 Census, % of people aged 16 years and over in employment)	Managers, directors and senior officials	13.4%	Managers, directors and senior officials	14.0%	
	Professional occupations	19.4%	Professional occupations	20.5%	
	Associate professional and technical occupations	13.6%	Associate professional and technical occupations	13.2%	
	Administrative and secretarial occupations	8.8%	Administrative and secretarial occupations	8.9%	

Socio-economic profile 2

Topic	Settlement figure		Borough figure		Settlement share of borough total
	Skilled trades occupations	9.1%	Skilled trades occupations	9.3%	
	Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8.6%	Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8.8%	
	Sales and customer service occupations	8.8%	Sales and customer service occupations	8.2%	
	Process, plant and machine operatives	7.2%	Process, plant and machine operatives	6.9%	
	Elementary occupations	11.1%	Elementary occupations	10.2%	
Travel to work and transport					
Number of cars or vans (2021 Census, % of all households)	No cars or vans in household	14.1%	No cars or vans in household	16.7%	N/A
	1 car or van in household	42.3%	1 car or van in household	40.8%	
	2 cars or vans in household	33.4%	2 cars or vans in household	32.0%	
	3 or more cars or vans in household	10.2%	3 or more cars or vans in household	10.5%	
Distance travelled to work (2021 Census, % of people aged 16 years and over in employment)	Less than 10km	30.0%	Less than 10km	32.7%	N/A
	10km to less than 30km	19.7%	10km to less than 30km	18.6%	
	30km and over	5.1%	30km and over	5.2%	
	Works mainly from home	32.5%	Works mainly from home	31.5%	
	Other	12.7%	Other	12.1%	
Method of travel to workplace (2021 Census, % of people aged 16 years and over in employment)	Work mainly at or from home	32.5%	Work mainly at or from home	31.5%	N/A
	Underground, metro, light rail, tram	0.1%	Underground, metro, light rail, tram	0.1%	

2 Socio-economic profile

Topic	Settlement figure		Borough figure		Settlement share of borough total
	Train	0.6%	Train	0.8%	
	Bus, minibus or coach	0.8%	Bus, minibus or coach	1.7%	
	Taxi	0.4%	Taxi	0.6%	
	Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.4%	Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.4%	
	Driving a car or van	52.2%	Driving a car or van	50.8%	
	Passenger in a car or van	4.2%	Passenger in a car or van	3.9%	
	Bicycle	1.8%	Bicycle	2.0%	
	On foot	6.3%	On foot	7.4%	
	Other method of travel to work	0.8%	Other method of travel to work	0.9%	

Availability of services and facilities 3

3 Availability of services and facilities

Northwich Local Retail Centre (June 2023)

3.1 Weaverham - this is a busy centre in Northwich and is anchored by a Co-Op. There is a diversity of uses including a bakery, florist and newsagent and many of the shops had visitors. Parking is on the street and in a linear car park in front of the shops. The centre is attractive with large trees and open space opposite. Within this part of Northwich not many centres are available, which results in Weaverham being a busy centre for residents to meet their day to day needs. The centre is on a route into the Northwich town centre, but probably not used by people outside the local area. There is a bus stop at the centre with a route servicing Frodsham and Northwich, however this is not very frequent and it is unlikely that this contributes to the footfall in the centre.

3.2 Hartford -this is a busy centre within a self contained parade of shops on a main route into Northwich town centre. There is open space opposite the centre and the road is very wide. There is parking along the street and outside the shops. Nearby there is a park and church as well as a train station. In the wider area, a Sainsburys local is also available for local residents. There is a good amount of passing trade, mainly by car. There are buses running through the centre and it is located between two train stations on the route from Chester to Manchester. The centre has a Co-Op and is supported by other smaller shops which mainly operate in the day, but there is a pub and restaurant.

3.3 Castle Street - this centre is located 0.8km southwest of Northwich town centre and is a linear local centre located on the A559, a main route into the town centre. The centre is mainly located to the south of the street and has a diverse range of uses. The centre is accessible by bus and surrounded by high density housing. There is parking on the road and there are some small car parks. Due to the traffic, the centre feels very busy and does have a good passing trade, but can be dominated by cars as the pavement is not wide. The centre is anchored by Tesco Express, but has a number of pubs and restaurants, hot food takeaways and uses that provide for day to day need as well as other retail such as a showroom. The centre can therefore attract footfall throughout the day and evening. This is reflected by the generally low vacancy rate.

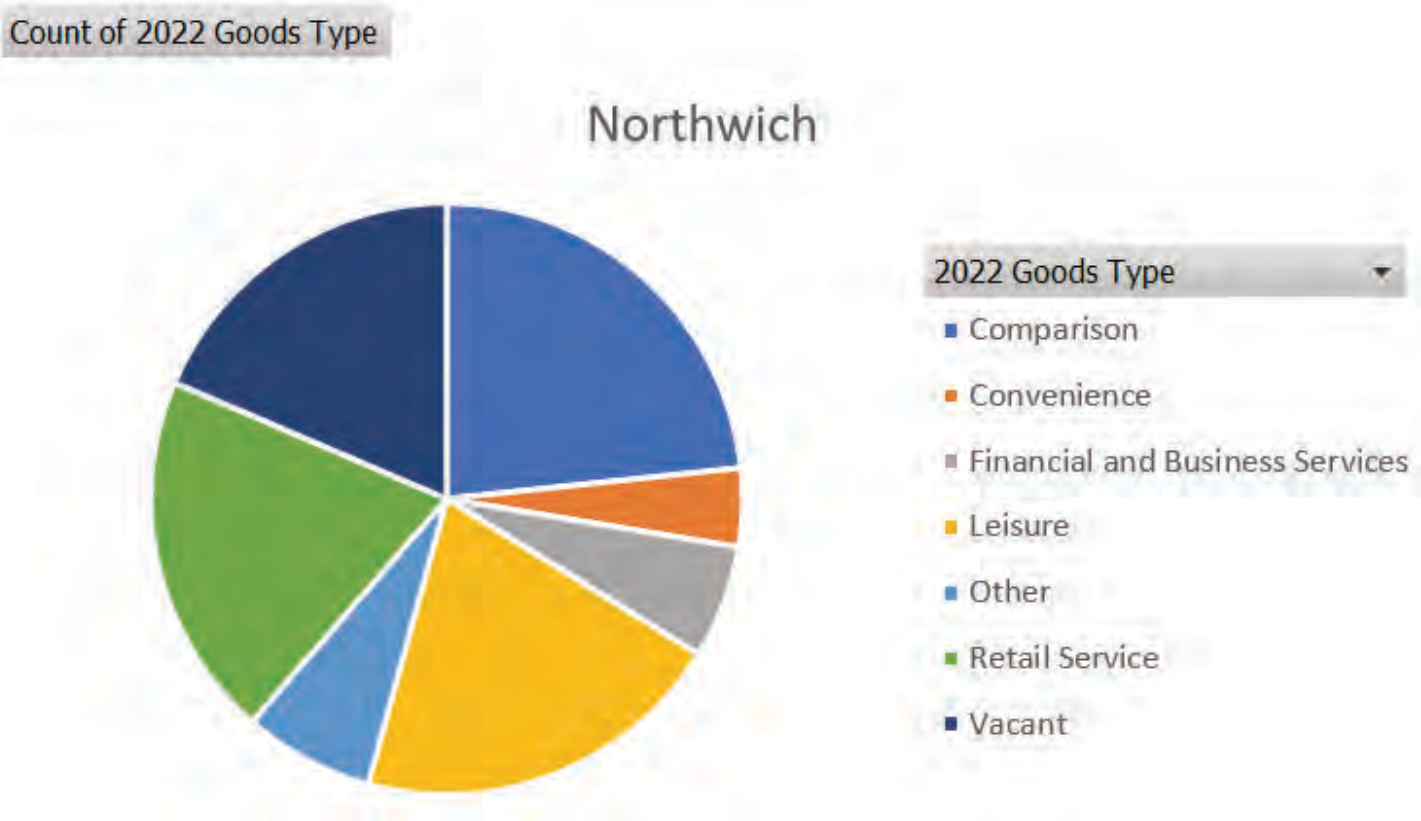
3.4 Kingsmead - this centre is located off the A533 and is a purpose-built centre at the entrance to the large residential area of Kingsmead. The centre does feel self-contained, however it doesn't feel inviting to walk to and is dominated by cars, with a very busy car park. There is a dedicated cycle path on the pavement to the centre and a bus stop with a more limited service than other centres. The centre is anchored by Tesco Express and does have a diverse range of units including uses beyond retail such as a nursery and medical centre. The school is behind the centre, but is not visible. There are some vacancies and as a small centre, this does make an impact. There is limited retail here but does offer other uses such as a pub and hot food takeaway which attracts visitors in the day and evenings.

3.5 Davenham - this centre is mainly located along London Road, off the A533 which is a busy road. The centre diverse and is spread along the road however it does feel like a village centre and included a petrol station and Spar. There are places to sit and dwell due to more space between the road and buildings such as a pocket park and alfresco seating outside the pubs. The centre is served by a bus and parking is limited.

3.6 Local Retail Centres in the borough have been surveyed (Spring/Summer 2023) to ascertain the 'health' of the centres in terms of vacancy rates compared to the previous year. The retail offer in each settlement and a breakdown of the commercial goods type (2022) is provided in the graph below (e.g. comparison, convenience, leisure uses).

3 Availability of services and facilities

Figure 3.1 Northwich retail goods by type

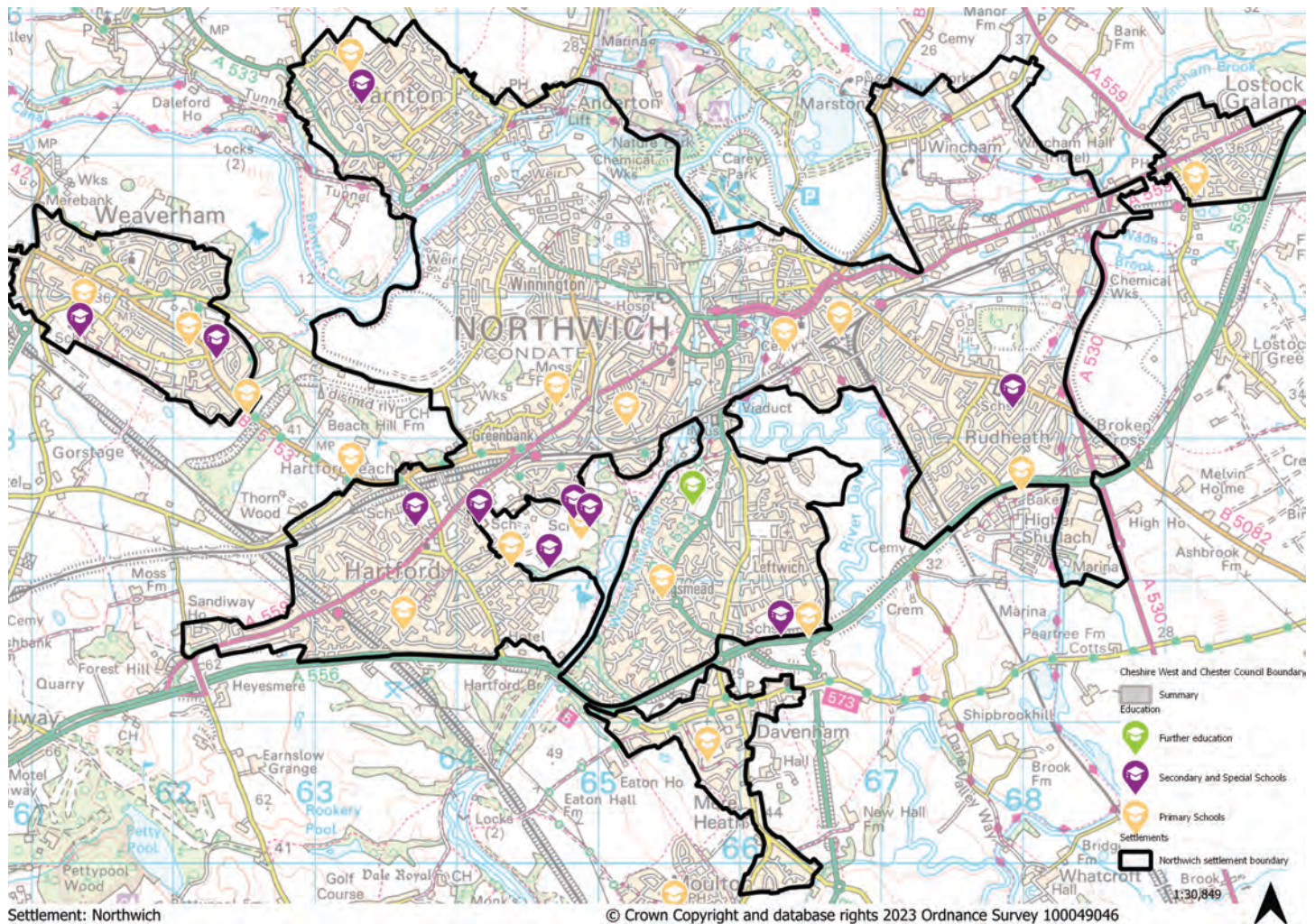


Availability of services and facilities 3

Social and community infrastructure

Education

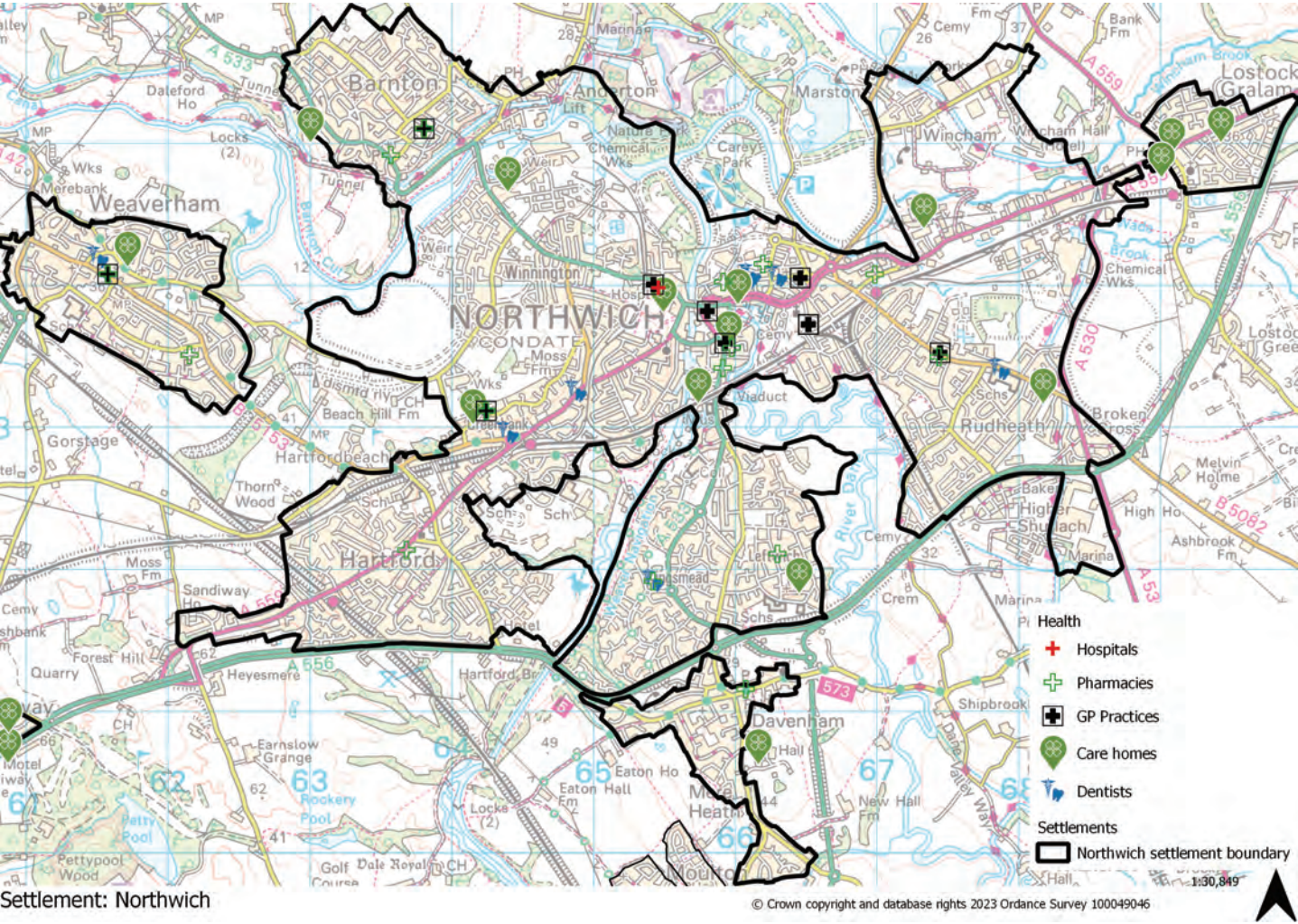
Picture 3.1



3 Availability of services and facilities

Health

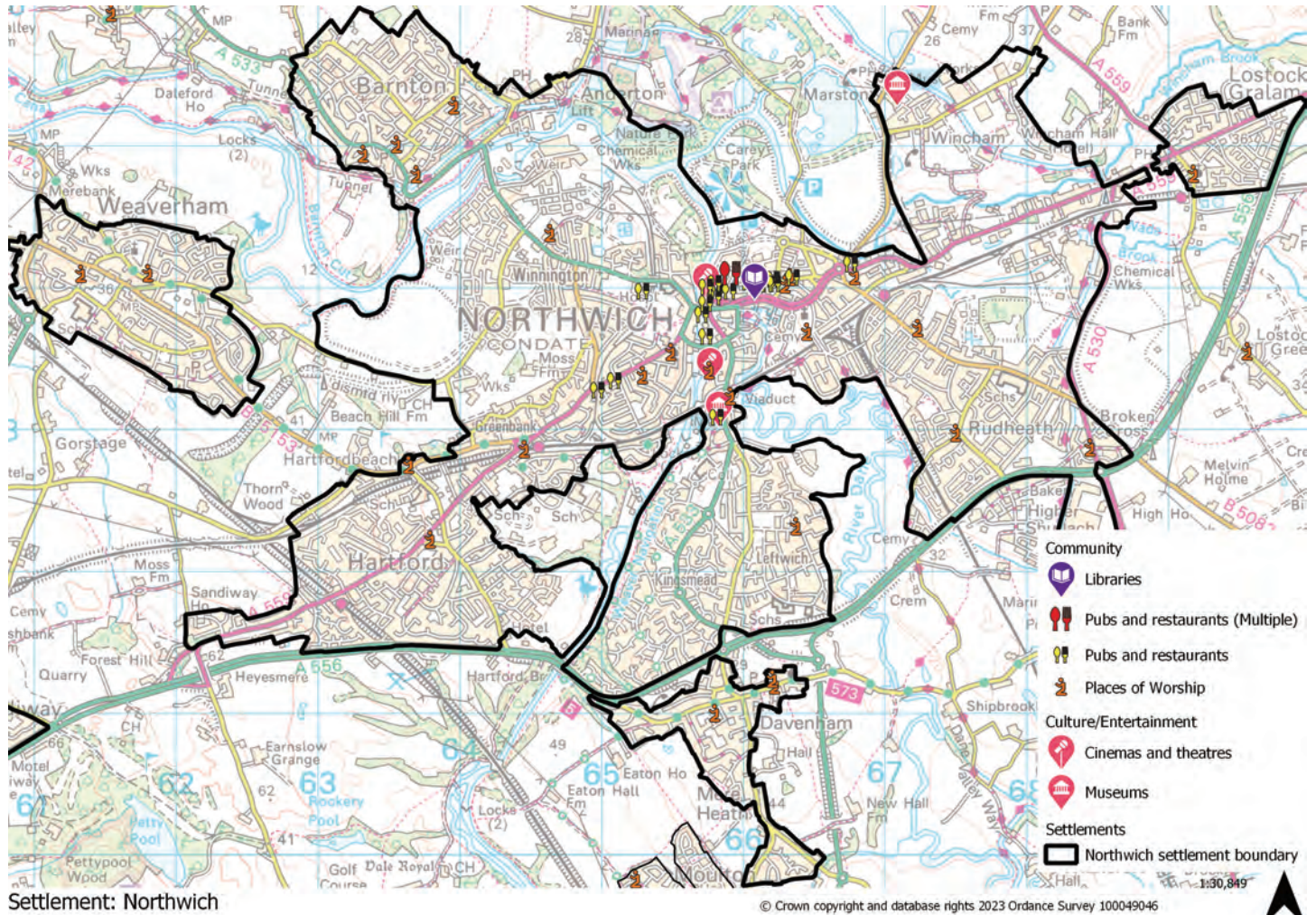
Map 3.1 Northwich health facilities



Availability of services and facilities 3

Community, culture and entertainment

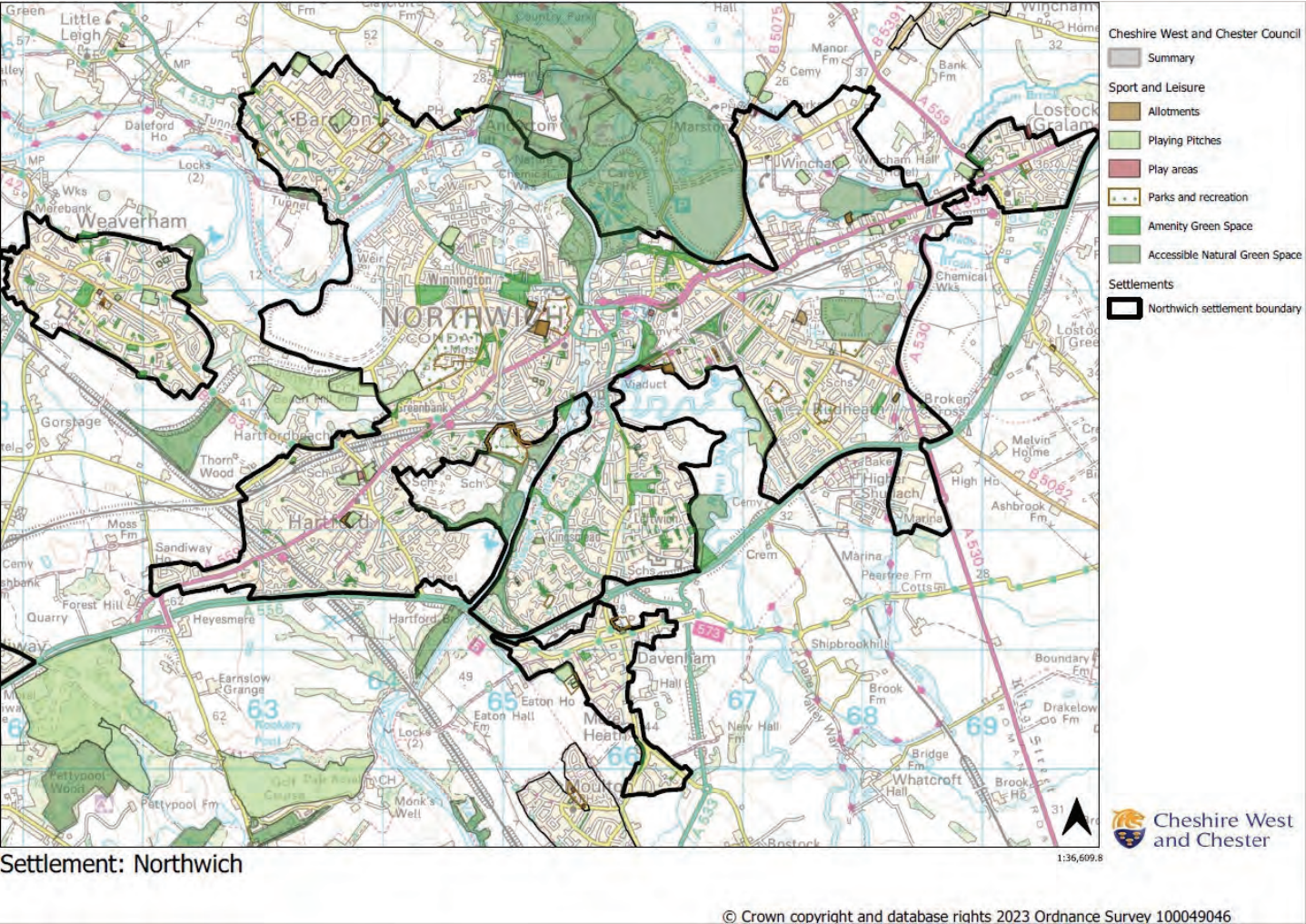
Map 3.2 Northwich community facilities



3 Availability of services and facilities

Green infrastructure, sport and leisure

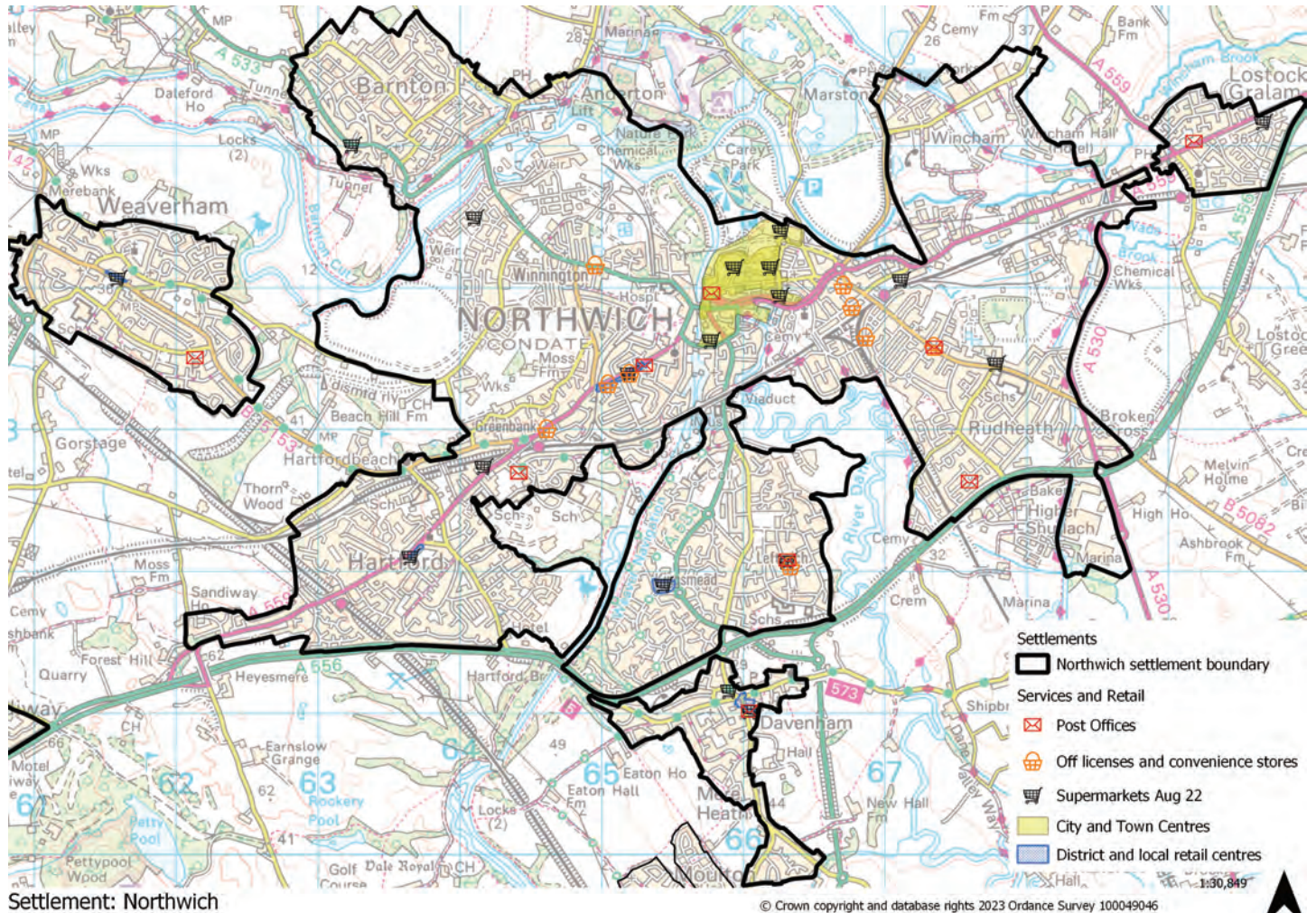
Map 3.3 Northwich green infrastructure



Availability of services and facilities 3

Local retail and services

Map 3.4 Northwich retail and services



4 Accessibility / access to public transport

4 Accessibility / access to public transport

Map 4.1 Northwich accessibility

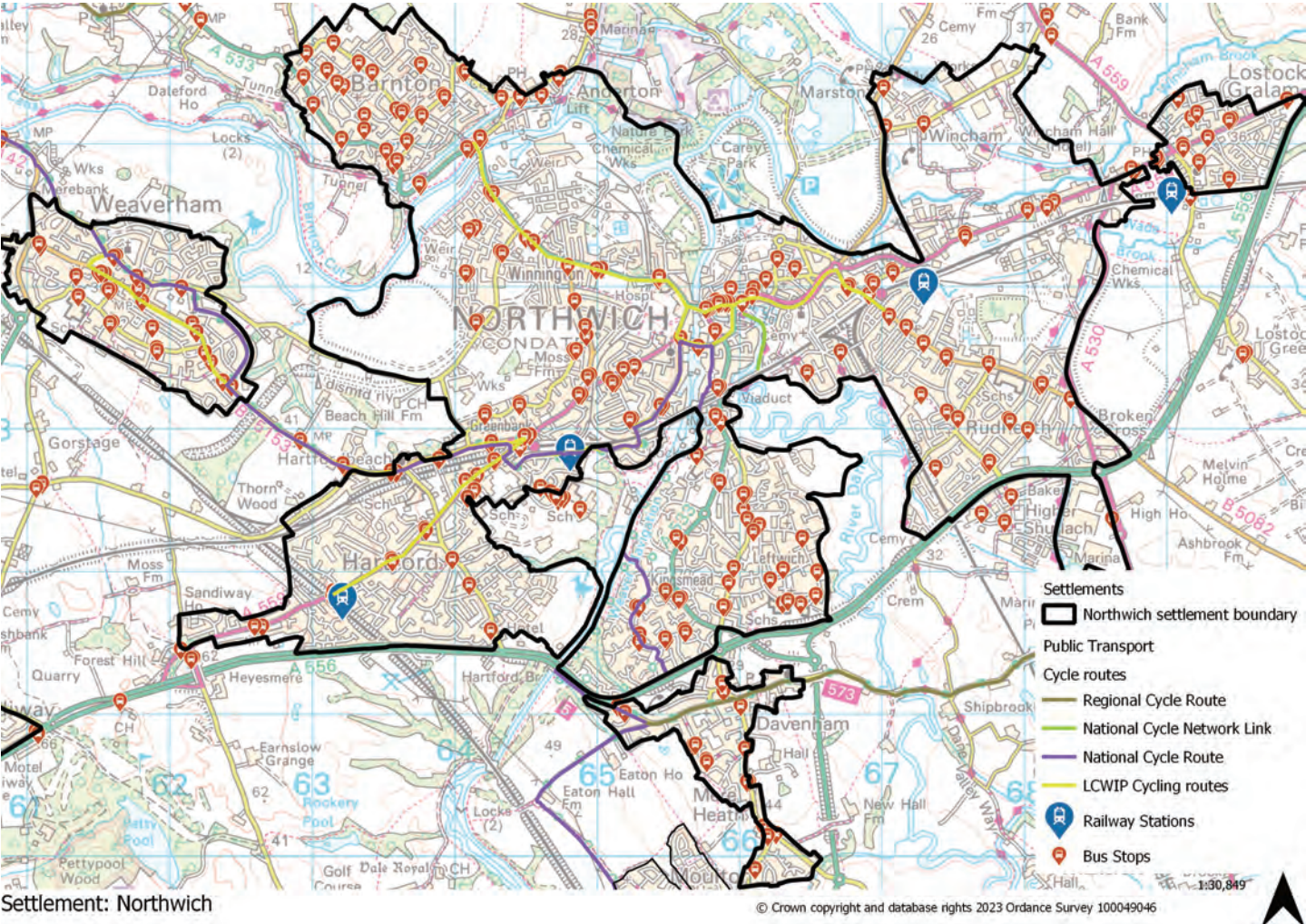


Table 4.1 Distance to other towns/higher order service centres

From Northwich to:	Distance (approximate miles)	Approximate travel time by bus	Approximate travel time by train	Approximate travel time by bicycle	Approximate travel time by car
Chester	18	59 minutes	34 minutes	1 hour 39 minutes	40 minutes
Ellesmere Port	23	1 hour 30 minutes (no direct service)	58 minutes (no direct service)	1 hour 44 minutes	33 minutes
Winsford	7	24 minutes	N/A	31 minutes	16 minutes
Middlewich	7	44 minutes	N/A	45 minutes	16 minutes
Crewe	15	1 hour 8 minutes	55 minutes (no direct service)	1 hour 24 minutes	33 minutes

Accessibility / access to public transport 4

Table 4.2 Frequency of train services from Northwich

Main train routes from Northwich	Days	Frequency
Chester	Daily	1/1 hour and 1/2 hour Sunday
Manchester	Daily	1/1 hour and 1/2 hour Sunday

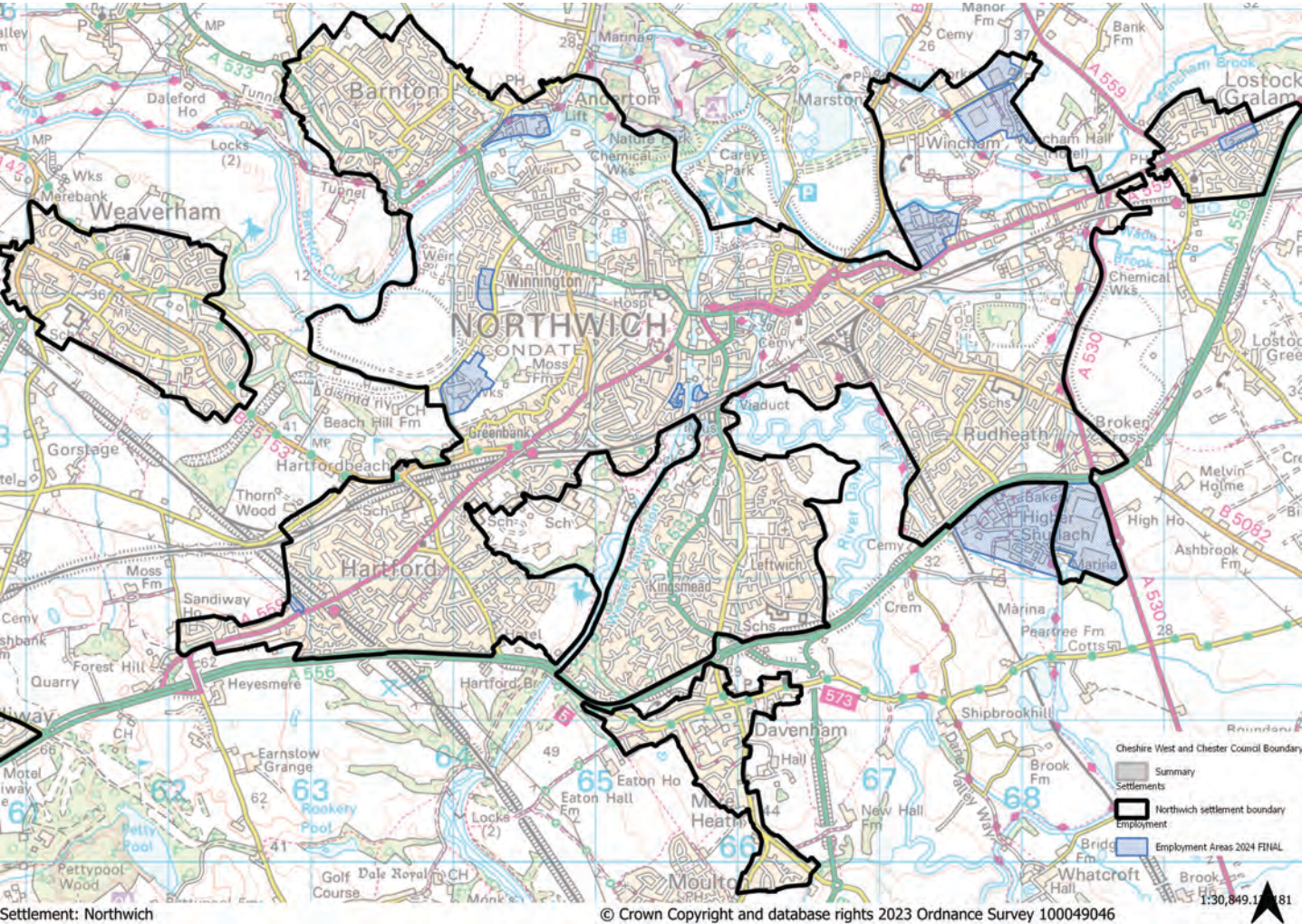
Table 4.3 Frequency of bus services from Northwich

Bus routes from Northwich	Days	Frequency
Warrington	Mon- Sat	1/1 hour
Crewe	Mon-Sat	1/1 hour
Frodsham	Mon-Fri	1/2 hour
Chester	Mon-Sat	1/1 hour
Knutsford	Mon-Sat	1/2 hour
Winsford	Fri and Sat	1/1 hour

5 Employment opportunities

5 Employment opportunities

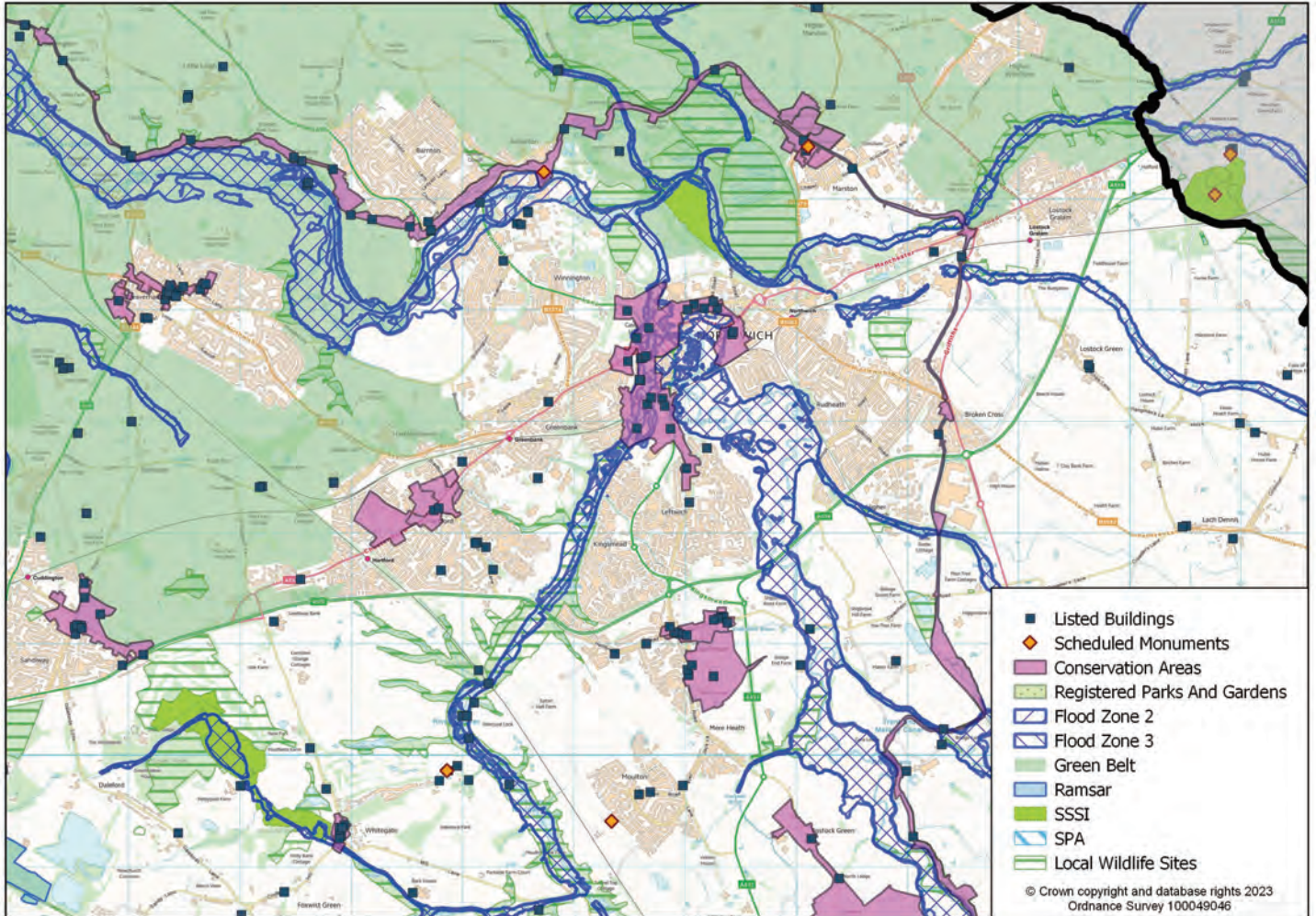
Picture 5.1



Constraints - natural / built environment 6

6 Constraints - natural / built environment

Map 6.1 Northwich constraints



Landscape character

Table 6.1 Landscape character assessment

Landscape Character Type	General Description
Salt Heritage Landscape (Northwich) - to the north	The Northwich Salt Heritage Landscape is an area of formerly extensive salt works on the northern outskirts of Northwich. It incorporates the confluence of Wade Brook and Marbury Brook with the River Weaver and a large area of subsidence flashes. To the north lies the Mere Basin and to the south is the urban area of Northwich. The presence of salt in CWaC has resulted in three unique and valuable wildlife habitats: saltflashes- lakes caused by subsidence, lime beds produced by spoil from the chemical industry and inland salt marsh due to natural brine springs and spillage from the salt industry.
Cheshire Plain East (Stublach and Lostock Plain) - to the east	A large expanse of flat and very slightly undulating, predominantly pastoral land covering a large proportion of the Cheshire West and Chester landscape, separated by the physical barrier of the prominent north-south Sandstone

6 Constraints - natural / built environment

Landscape Character Type	General Description
	Ridge. The Stublach Plain forms a flat pastoral plain influenced in part by features associated with the brine/salt extraction and gas storage industries. The Lostock Plain is located to the east of Northwich between the built up area and the Cheshire West and Chester borough boundary. It is a distinct area defined by its function as a brine field and is influenced by above ground structures associated with brine/salt extraction and underground ethylene /gas storage.
River Valley (Mid-Weaver, Dane and Lower Weaver) - to the north and south	The Mid Weaver Valley has fairly low, but steep valley sides. It flows between Winsford and Northwich and contains the course of the Weaver Navigation as well as the Winsford Salt Works. The floodplain is narrow, the valley sides rising steeply to the East Winsford Undulating Enclosed Farmland to the east, and to the Eaton, Marton & Over Undulating Enclosed Farmland to the west. The Lower Weaver Valley has fairly low, but steep valley sides which flows from Northwich to the Mersey Estuary. The boundaries of the valley are defined predominantly by landform with the top of the slopes meeting the adjacent landscapes types of the Undulating Enclosed Farmland and Cheshire Plain East. The Dane Valley is a relatively shallow valley containing the course of the River Dane. It runs from Sproston Wood (where it enters the borough) to its confluence with the River Weaver in the centre of Northwich. The boundaries of the valley are defined predominantly by landform with the top of the slopes meeting the adjacent landscapes types of the Undulating Enclosed Farmland and Cheshire Plain East.
Undulating enclosed farmland (east Winsford) - to the south	The East Winsford Undulating Enclosed Farmland represents a finger of gently undulating farmland sandwiched between the valleys of the River Weaver and the River Dane which lie to the west and east respectively. The Kingsmead and Leftwich estates in south Northwich lie immediately to the north, with the industrial estates of Winsford to the west. To the south the landscape gradually forms a transition to the flat lowland of the Wimboldesley & Sproston Plain.

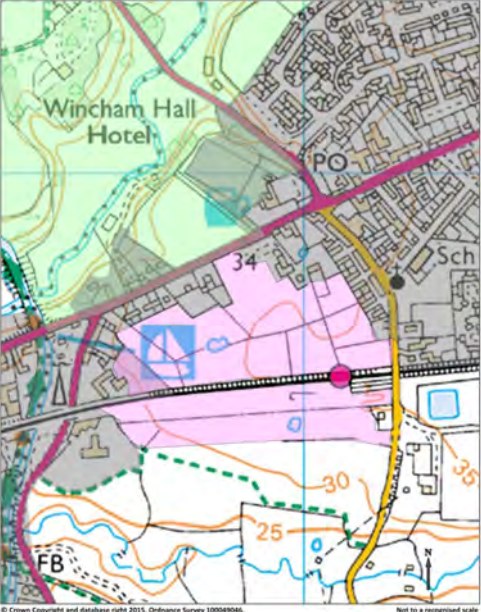
Key Settlement Gaps

6.1 Policy GBC3 of the Local Plan (Part Two) identified five key settlement gaps (KSGs) around Northwich where the threat of coalescence or erosion of settlement identity was likely due to pressure from development. Within a key settlement gap, development will only be supported where it does not harm the settlement separation and identity functions of the gap. The network of key settlement gaps contributes towards protecting landscape character and distinctiveness.

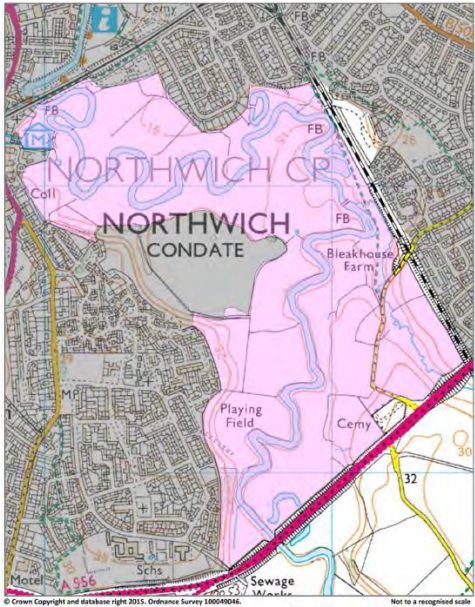
Table 6.2 Northwich key settlement gaps

Key Settlement Gap	Function of the KSG
Lostock Gralam and Northwich KSG	The area does perform a clear separation function between Lostock Gralam and Northwich. From the A559 between Lostock Gralam and Northwich

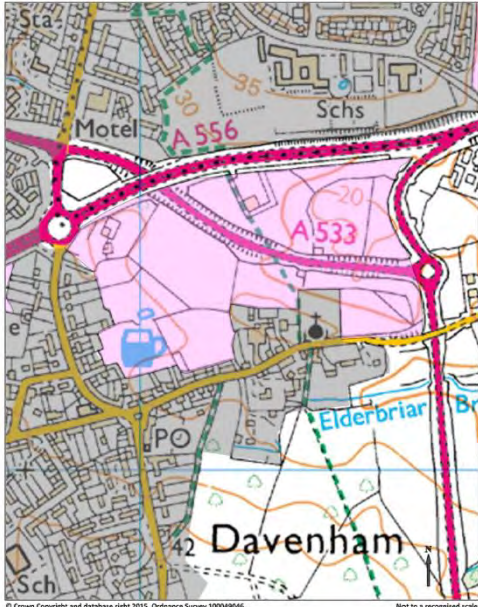
Constraints - natural / built environment 6

Key Settlement Gap	Function of the KSG
	<p>(which defines its main public edge) the break is defined by around 200m of dense garden boundary trees/shrubs with no views into the site/space. To the north of the A559 is Green Belt. From the south-east the site is prominent from Station Road bridge over the railway. Here some open space is visible and characterised by a flat area of horse grazing and associated equine related facilities and equipment. A large leylandii hedge bisects the site west-to-east blocking views beyond. The area is not prominent in wider landscape. The western edge of Lostock Gralam is clearly defined by settlement edge.</p>
Leftwich and Rudheath (Dane Valley) KSG	<p>The area represents a clear landscape unit (as reflected within past and emerging Landscape Character Assessments) serving to distinctly and</p>

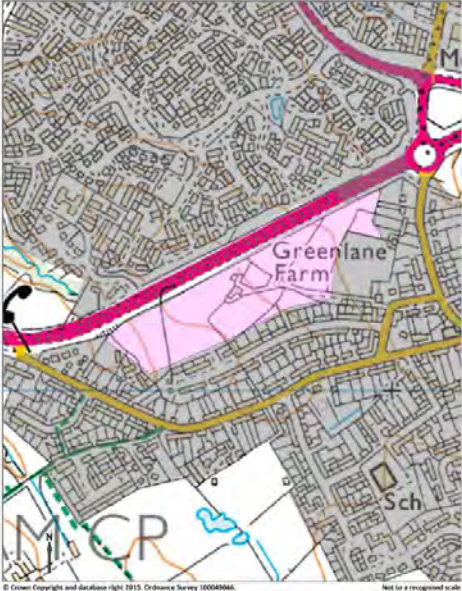
6 Constraints - natural / built environment

Key Settlement Gap	Function of the KSG
	<p>effectively separate a general ‘horseshoe’ of ‘facing’ southern neighbourhoods of Northwich. The river valley and pronounced valley sides afford the area a significant degree in integrity as landscape unit with distinct multiple valued environmental components therein. The area presents a significant visual and possibly even stronger perceptual break between major residential areas.</p>
Davenham and Leftwich KSG	<p>The area is heavily characterised by a blend of Cheshire Plain hedges, trees and pasture whilst bisected by significant modern road infrastructure</p>

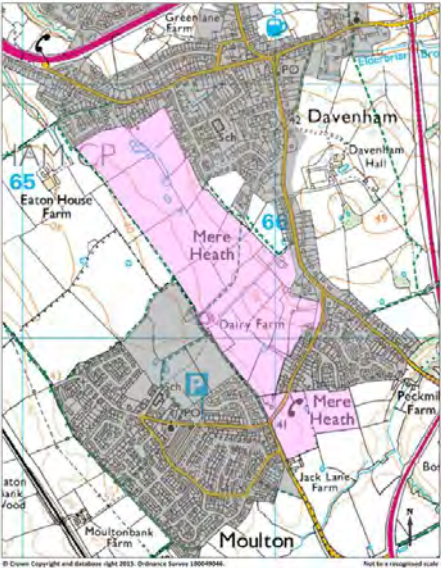
Constraints - natural / built environment 6

Key Settlement Gap	Function of the KSG
	<p>and associated structural planting. The space does serve to separate the settlements perceptually, as do the roads, although in a harsh physical barrier sense rather than perception of space. Area is partly characterised by periods of road noise through the daytime and peak periods. Area serves to retain the attractive screened northern edge of Davenham village, particularly the undiluted views of the Church of St Winifred.</p>
<p>Davenham Village and Leftwich Grange (Kingsmead) KSG</p>	<p>Relatively small, narrow linear green space south of major road infrastructure which does afford a perceptual break, particularly for residents of Green</p>

6 Constraints - natural / built environment

Key Settlement Gap	Function of the KSG
	Lane area. Strongly influenced by major road infrastructure. Currently experiencing development to eastern parts, with separation functions being eroded consequently.
Davenham and Moulton KSG	Area of relatively flat and low-lying Cheshire Plain pasture falling between extensive residential areas. Locally the extent of separation is fragile. Recent

Constraints - natural / built environment 6

Key Settlement Gap	Function of the KSG
 <p>The map illustrates the Key Settlement Gap (KSG) between Davenham and Moulton. The KSG is highlighted in pink and includes areas like Mere Heath, Dairy Farm, and Jack Lane Farm. The map also shows surrounding settlements and roads.</p>	<p>development consents will serve to further erode the extent of an open break between settlements when constructed, without fully removing the perception of break and separation.</p> <p>A perception of clear separation is however becoming eroded, and whilst partial development of the area may be accommodated in places which would not further erode that identity, other areas would be likely to remove a sense of clear separation and hence settlement identity if lost to development. Inter-visibility is mitigated to some extent by hedgerows and hedgerow trees from ground level, but from upper floor views this will be quite pronounced, particularly to the southern edge of Davenham. In places urban edges are visually abrupt.</p>

7 Northwich profile summary

7 Northwich profile summary

Socio-economic profile

- Northwich is a large town located in the east of the borough which has a 15.31% share of the borough’s population.
- The age profile shows that the highest percentage of residents are between 55 and 59.
- There are 23,900 households in the settlement, mostly 3 bedroom houses or bungalows, with the majority being 2 person households owned with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership.
- 60.6% of residents are in employment, which is higher than the borough figure. The primary occupation of working residents is professional.
- 42.3% of the households have 1 cars or van which is higher than the borough average.
- 32.5% of residents work from home which is higher than the borough figure and where they do travel to work the main method is by driving a car or van.

Availability of services and facilities

- As well as the retail and leisure offer in Northwich Town Centre and Barons Quay, there are a number of Local Retail Centres surrounding Northwich which offer ‘local’ supermarkets, convenience stores, Post Offices, GP surgeries, libraries, community halls and schools. These include Weaverham, Hartford, Castle Street, Davenham and Kingsmead.

Social and community infrastructure

- Education – Primary school, secondary and special schools, further education facilities.
- Health – Hospital, GP practices, pharmacies, dentists and care homes.
- Community, culture and entertainment – Places of Worship, libraries, leisure centre, pubs and restaurants, cinema, theatre and museums.

Accessibility/access to public transport

- Northwich is accessed via the A556 which links the town to Manchester airport and the M6 to the east and Chester to the west. The A533 links the town to Frodsham and Runcorn to the north west and Middlewich to the south east. Northwich is also served by an hourly train between Chester and Manchester (two hourly on a Sunday).

Employment opportunities

Table 7.1 Northwich employment opportunities

Number of jobs (2021)	Economically active (excluding full-time students)	Economically inactive	Jobs less economically active population	Job density
27,010	31,050	18,791	-4,040	0.87

Constraints natural/built environment

- Much of Northwich Town Centre is covered by an extensive Conservation Area with a high concentration of Listed Buildings. Flood risk (both fluvial and surface water) also poses a constraint to the Town Centre and the east of the Town Centre in the Dane Valley. There are a number of

Northwich profile summary 7

Local Wildlife Sites to the north west of the built up settlement area. Detailed information on the landscape character and designated Key Settlement Gaps which surround Northwich is provided in the Northwich chapter of this paper.

- Designated heritage assets which are engrained within the character and history of the waterway in this location include the Grade II listed Winnington Swing Bridge, Town and Hayhurst Swing Bridges within Northwich Town Centre, which are owned and managed by the Trust. The Hunts Large and Small Locks are both Grade II listed structures sited within Northwich Conservation Area. Anderton Boat Lift is sited to the north of Northwich, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a historic example of a working boat lift.