AECOM

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy – Plan Review

Draft Scoping Report

October 2016

WARRINGTON Borough Council

CONTENTS

1. Background

1.1 Introduction to the Scoping Report

1.1.1 This document is a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. It has been prepared as part of the SA process which will support the review of the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy.

1.1.2 Having successfully passed the test of soundness at public examination, the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted by the Council in July 2014. However, a landowner applied to the High Court to reverse the decision to adopt certain aspects of the Plan relating to housing.

1.1.3 In February 2015, the High Court ruled in favour of the Landowner on three of nine issues, which means that the following parts of the Plan have been quashed.

- The housing target of 10,500 new homes (equating to 500 per year) between 2006 and 2027.
- References to 1,100 new homes at the Omega Strategic Proposal.

1.1.4 In response to the court ruling, the Council sought to re-establish an appropriate housing target through a Primary Plan Alteration that was focused on housing needs and distribution. As such, an SA Scoping Report was prepared and consulted upon in May 2015 setting out the focus of the SA in the context of a primary plan review focused on housing growth and distribution.

1.1.5 To inform a new housing target, it was necessary to gather further evidence to identify the need for new housing and jobs. As the studies progressed, it became clear that the needs for housing and jobs were different to those that formed the basis of the adopted Local Plan. Furthermore, it became clear that these needs cannot be met within the existing urban area and on greenfield sites outside of the Green Belt. The release of Green Belt land to accommodate future development needs will require the Council to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

1.1.6 As a result, the Council considers it necessary to widen the scope of the Plan review to focus on three strategic matters.

1. The provision of land and level of housing development that can be accommodated within Warrington, taking into account Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN);

2. The provision of land for economic development and a growing local economy, taking into account Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN); and

3. Ensuring the timely delivery of new and improved physical and social infrastructure required to meet the needs of new development and mitigate the impacts on existing communities.

1.1.7 Given the potential need to release land from the Green Belt the Council is proposing to a 20 year plan period.

1.1.8 Given that the release of Green Belt land is intended to be a permanent undertaking, there may be a need to potentially release further land in the longer term, and therefore the need for safeguarded land will also need to be considered as part of the plan review.

1.1.9 The opportunity to include policies for minerals and waste and gypsy and traveller needs (which are not covered by the existing Local Plan) will also be explored through the plan review process.

1.1.10 Given the increased scope of the Plan review and the time that has passed since the previous Scoping Report consultation; an update to the SA Scope has been undertaken, with the findings presented in this report.

1.2 A summary of the SA process

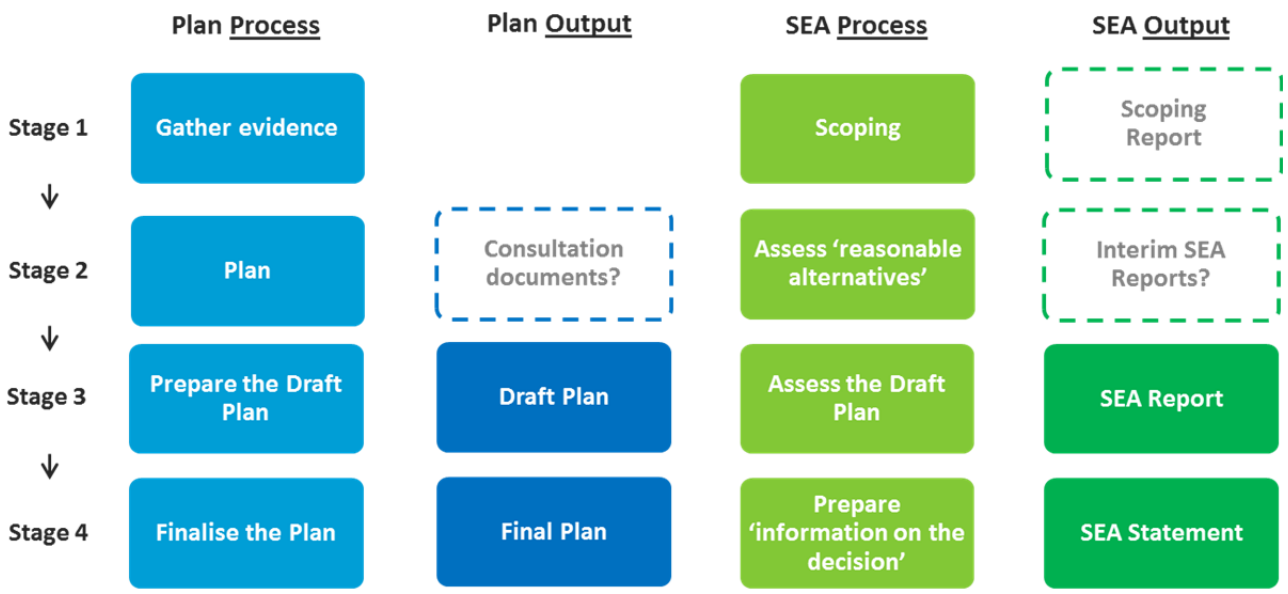
1.2.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process for helping to ensure that Local Plans achieve an appropriate balance between environmental, economic and social objectives. SA should help to identify the sustainability implications of different plan approaches and recommend ways to reduce any negative effects and to increase the positive outcomes.

1.2.2 SA is also a tool for communicating the likely effects of a Plan (and any reasonable alternatives), explaining the decisions taken with regards to the approach decided upon, and encouraging engagement from key stakeholders such as local communities, businesses and plan-makers.

1.2.3 Although SA can be applied flexibly, it is a legal requirement under the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive).[1] The regulations set out prescribed processes that must be followed. In particular the Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'.[2] The SA/SEA report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses when finalising the plan.

1.2.4 SA/SEA can be viewed as a four-stage process that produces a number of statutory and non-statutory outputs. As illustrated in Figure 1.1 below, 'Scoping' is a mandatory process under the SEA Directive, but the publication of a scoping report is a voluntary (but useful) output.

Figure 1.1 *– SEA as a four step process*



[1] Directive 2001/42/EC: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/sea-legalcontext.htm
[2] Regulation 12(2) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/regulation/12/made

2. Introduction (To Part 1)

2.1 Introduction to scoping

2.1.1 In essence, scoping is the process of gathering information about the area and factors likely to be affected by the Plan (alterations). This information helps to identify what the key issues are and which of these should be the focus of the SA process.

2.1.2 Whilst the publication of a Scoping Report is not a legal requirement, it is a good way of presenting the findings of the scoping exercise to the statutory consultation bodies (which are English Heritage, Natural England and The Environment Agency) and other interested parties. This allows for effective consultation and allows for the scope of the SA to be refined as appropriate.

2.1.3 The scope of the SA must be set out in an SA Report, with several key requirements emanating from the SEA Regulations. To ensure that these requirements are met, the Scoping Report has been structured so that it answers the following questions as set out in **table 2.1.**

Table 2.1: *Scoping questions answered*

Scoping Question	Corresponding requirement (The report must include…)
What's the Plan seeking to achieve?	• An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan'
What's the sustainability 'context'?	• The relationship of the plan with other relevant plans and programmes' • The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level
What's the sustainability 'baseline' at the current time?	• The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected
What's the baseline projection?	• The likely evolution of the current state of the environment without implementation of the plan'
What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?	• Any existing environmental problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance

2.2 Establishing the sustainability context

2.2.1 An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing 'sustainability context' messages (e.g. issues, objectives or aspirations) set out within relevant published plans, policies, strategies and initiatives (PPSIs). Sustainability context messages are important, as they aid the identification of the 'key sustainability issues' that should be a focus of the SA. Key messages from this review are summarised under what has been considered the most relevant 'sustainability topic'.

2.2.2 Of particular importance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF[3]). The NPPF, read as a whole, constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system. The NPPF also reflects international and European legislation that planning has a role in implementing. The framework is therefore heavily represented in the contextual review.

[3] CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf (accessed 08/2012)

2.3 Establishing the current and projected baseline

2.3.1 Another important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing the situation now for a range of sustainability issues.

2.3.2 Doing so helps to enable identification of those key sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for the appraisal of significant effects.

2.3.3 Just as it is important for the scope of SA to be informed by an understanding of current baseline conditions, it is also important to ensure that thought is given to how baseline conditions might 'evolve' in the future under the no plan / business as usual scenario. Doing so helps to enable identification of those key sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for appraising significant effects.

3. What's the scope of the sustainability appraisal?

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section sets out the scope of the SA by drawing upon the key messages from relevant plans and programmes, the current baseline position and the projected baseline.

3.1.2 The scope of the SA was originally established in the SA Scoping Reports published in 2006 and 2009 (*prepared in support of the Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy*). These reports both established an SA Framework and methodologies for undertaking appraisals; which have remained fairly consistent throughout the Local Plan Core Strategy preparation process.

3.1.3 It is important to refresh the scope of the SA over time to reflect new policies and programmes and changes to the baseline position. This is particularly important when the Plan preparation process spans over a long period of time, or where a Plan review or alteration is proposed *(as is the case here*). As such, the scope of the SA has been updated on a number of occasions, with the findings presented in the following documents.

- Submission SA Report, September 2012 [LDF0135]
- Addendum to the SA Report, January 2014 [LDF154]
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Local Plan Amendment (May 2015)

3.1.4 This latest Scoping Report draws upon these previous scoping exercises, updating the scope of the SA again when it is considered that the policy context or baseline position has changed substantially (and to reflect the wider remit of the Plan review).

3.2 Structure of the Scoping Report

3.2.1 To structure the Scoping Report and avoid duplication of evidence, the scope of the appraisal has been presented within one of eight sustainability themes (listed below).

3.2.2 These themes and topics have been identified by grouping similar sustainability objectives together as established in the original SA Framework (presented most recently in the last SA Scoping Report (May, 2015). How these themes link with the proposed issues identified in Schedule 2(6) has also been identified *(in brackets*).

Sustainability themes and topics covered

Economy and regeneration *(material assets)*	Health and Wellbeing *(human health, population)*	Accessibility *(Climatic factors)*	Housing *(material assets)*	Natural Resources *(soil, water, air)*	Built and natural heritage *(cultural heritage, landscape)*	Biodiversity and Geodiversity *(biodiversity, flora, fauna, landscape)*	Climate Change and resource use *(climatic factors, material assets)*
- Employment	- Health and wellbeing	- Accessibility	- Housing	- Water	- Built heritage	- Biodiversity	- Energy
- Education	- Community safety			- Soil and land	- Landscape character	- Geodiversity	- Climate change
- Regeneration	- Population			- Air quality			- Waste
	- Green infrastructure						- Resilience

NB: it should be noted that there are links between different 'topics' and that some information could cut across (or be relevant to) several themes.

3.3 What is the plan seeking to achieve?

3.3.1 The Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy sets out a planning framework for guiding the location and level of development in the borough up to 2027 as well as a number of principles that will shape the way that Warrington will develop between now and then.

3.3.2 The Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy contains six strategic objectives as follows:

W1 To secure the regeneration and renewal of the older areas of the town, strengthen existing neighbourhoods and make the most efficient use of infrastructure, ensuring development brings benefits to their host communities whilst: supporting growth in the local and sub-regional economy by providing 277 Hectares of employment land between 2006 and 2027.

W2 To maintain the permanence of the Green Belt and the character of the countryside in the borough and protect them from inappropriate development.

W3 To strengthen the role of Warrington Town Centre as an employment, retail, leisure and cultural destination as well as a transport hub for the borough and the wider region

W4 To be as accessible as possible whilst reducing the need to travel and providing opportunities to move people and goods by non-car modes.

W5 To secure high quality design which reinforces local distinctiveness and protects, enhances and embraces the borough's built and natural assets.

W6 To minimise the impact of development on the environment through the prudent use of resources and ensuring development is energy efficient, safe and resilient to climate change.

3.3.3 The current Local Plan was prepared to facilitate a much lower level of development which could be accommodated without the need for any release of Green Belt. This is reflected in the first two of the six strategic objectives which underpin the Plan (W1 and W2 above). The first objective establishes the level of development to be delivered to 2027 and the second objective reaffirms the current extent of the Green Belt. The remaining objectives relate to strengthening the town centre, reducing the need to travel, ensuring high quality design and maintaining and enhancing environmental quality.

3.3.4 Whilst the first two objectives and the detailed policies which sit under them are no longer consistent with Warrington's identified development needs *(W1 was also deleted as a consequence of the High Court Judgement),* the other objectives and associated detailed policies are still considered appropriate to guide future development. Furthermore, they accord with the NPPF, are consistent with the Council's Warrington Means Business programme and were found to be sound following the Examination in Public in 2014.

3.3.5 The Council therefore considers that it is appropriate and more expedient to review the existing Local Plan, rather than preparing an entirely new Plan from scratch. The review will focus on identifying additional land to meet its housing and employment needs, together with ensuring that the supporting infrastructure to accommodate growth is delivered. The review will also need to ensure that any release of Green Belt land does not compromise the ongoing regeneration of Inner Warrington and the town centre. In addition, the current Plan does not contain all of the necessary policies relating to minerals and waste or allocate sites to accommodate the needs for permanent gypsy and traveller's. The review will, therefore, also need to consider if these matters should be included in the Plan.

3.3.6 Following confirmation of the preferred development option, the Council will assess all of the existing visions, objectives and policies in the Plan to establish if they require major or minor alteration. As a minimum though, new objectives will need to be developed to replace W1 and W2.

3.4 Economy and regeneration

Contextual review

3.4.1 The *NPPF* outlines that the planning system should contribute to building a strong, responsive economy by 'ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure'[4].

3.4.2 Local plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. The improvement of transport links and the provision of adequate digital infrastructure can facilitate the 'significant untapped potential' of rural areas to contribute to economic growth and employment[5].

3.4.3 High streets at the heart of our communities, otherwise known as the *Mary Portas Review* states that in order to revitalise town centres and high streets it is necessary for Local Authorities to re-imagine these places, ensuring that they offer something new and different that neither out-of-town shopping centres nor the internet can offer, rather than simply relying on retail provision[6].

3.4.4 *Parades of shops: towards an understanding of performance and prospects DCLG (2012)* advises that lower order retail and service facilities, which provide neighbourhood level provision, can provide economic resilience, act as a 'hub' for local communities, and play an important role in the shopping hierarchy because of their accessibility[7].

3.4.5 In 2013 the Council published '*Warrington Means Business'*, its programme to promote economic growth and regeneration, updating the earlier 2009 Warrington Regeneration Framework. The Warrington Means Business programme identifies major development and regeneration schemes and complements this with wider plans to upgrade local and strategic infrastructure, to enhance the quality of Warrington's residential and natural environment and a package of softer measures to support new and existing businesses.

3.4.6 The Warrington Means Business programme is being delivered by Warrington & Co, Warrington's urban regeneration partnership. Warrington & Co brings together the private and public sector to promote economic development and physical regeneration under the guidance of a private sector led board.

Employment: the current and projected baseline

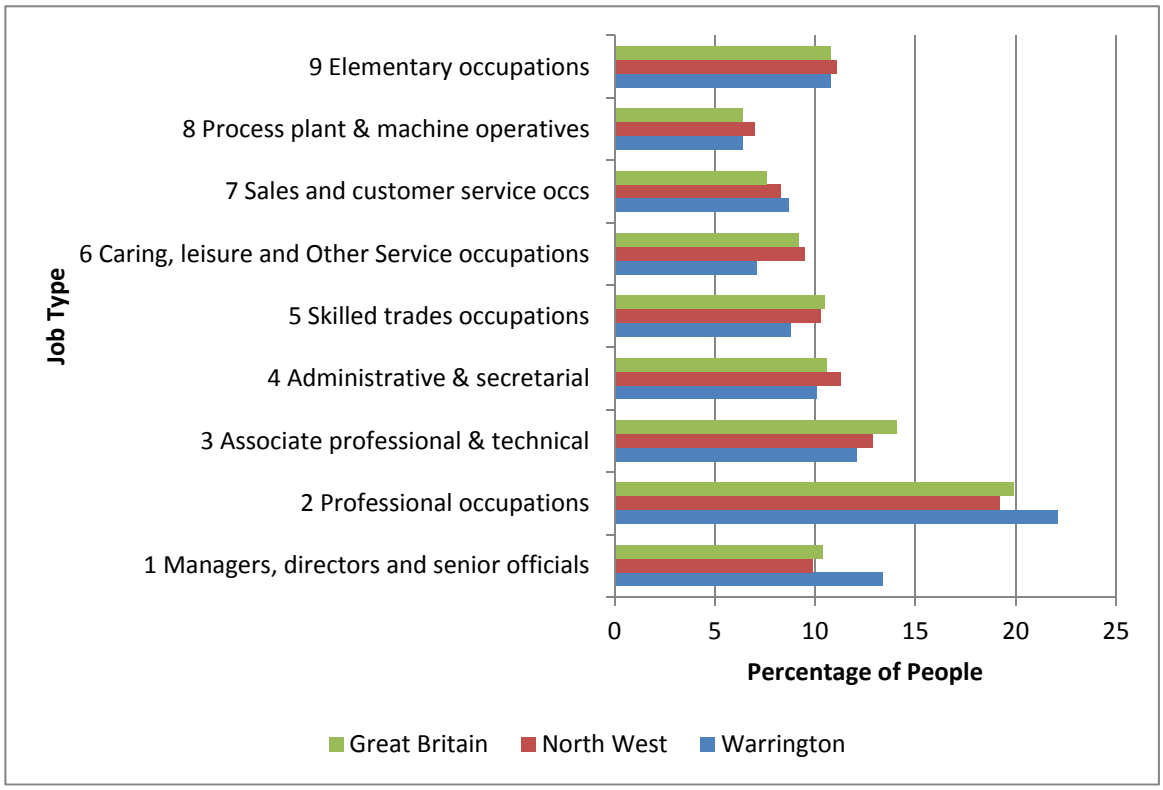
3.4.7 As of March 2016, 80.7 % of economically active people in Warrington were in employment. This represents an increase of 2.8% since December 2014 (77.9%). The economically active people in Warrington compares well with the rest of the North West (75.5%) and Great Britain as a whole (77.8%). Unemployment levels (4%) were also lower than in the North West (5.3%) and Great Britain (5.1%)[8].

3.4.8 The types of occupation in Warrington are shown in **Figure 3.1**. The job types are divided into Standard Occupational Classification (Soc) groups. Warrington has a lower percentage of lower classification jobs, except elementary occupations, than both the North West and Britain. It has considerably more people in professional occupations than the North West and is on a similar level with Britain and the North West for managers, directors and senior officials.

[4] DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf
[5] Federation of Small Businesses (2012) The Missing Links - Revitalising our rural economy [online] available at: http://www.fsb.org.uk/policy/assets/rural_report_web_final_proof.pdf
[6] High streets at the heart of our communities: The Government's response to the Mary Portas Review [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portasreviewresponse
[7] DCLG (2012) Parades of shops: towards an understanding of performance and prospects [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/regeneration/pdf/2156925.pdf
[8] ONS annual population survey (March, 2016) via nomis

3.4.9 Warrington has 47.8% of its jobs classified as 'Managers, directors and senior officials', 'professional occupations' and 'associate, professional and technical'. This is up 1.8% compared to December 2014 (46%). It does have a a lower proportion of jobs in service industries and skilled trades however when compared to both the North West and Great Britain[9].

Figure 3.1: Percentage of people in employment type, March 2016



Source: ONS (2016) via nomis

3.4.10 **Table 3.1** below shows the gross weekly pay. The average weekly pay for Warrington is higher than that of the North West and for Great Britain. The difference in pay between men and women on average in Warrington is also higher than that of the North West and Great Britain.

Table 3.1: Gross weekly pay (2015)

Gross weekly pay (£)	Warrington	North West	Great Britain
Full time workers	545.6	492.0	529.6
Male full time workers	593.7	529.9	570.4
Female full-time workers	479.8	441.8	471.6

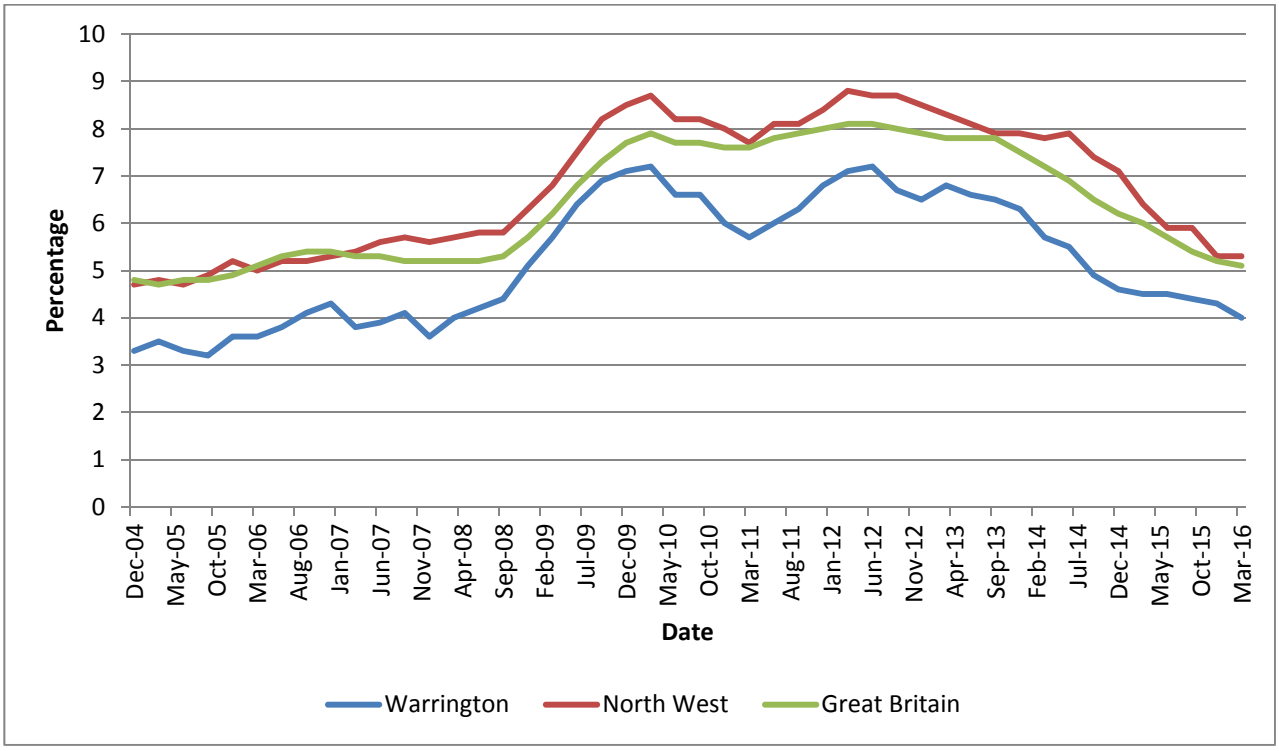
Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – resident analysis

3.4.11 Unemployment in Warrington has consistently remained lower than the North West and British average over the last ten years (see **Figure 3.2**). It is expected that this trend will continue, as it is supported by aspirations for economic growth by the Local Enterprise Partnership and is also reflected in Objective E2 of the Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.

3.4.12 In line with Objective E2, 2013/14 saw the completion of 19.28 ha of employment land. This was due to large scheme completions at Omega. The average annual take up rate of land for development for employment uses in Warrington between 2006 and 2014 was 10.7 ha per annum[10].

[9] ONS annual population survey (March, 2016) via nomis
[10] Warrington Borough Council (2014) Employment Land Availability Statement [online] available at: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8628/employment_land_availability_statement_2014.pdf

Figure 3.2: Unemployment level time series (2004-2016)



Source: ONS (2016) via nomis

Education: The current and projected baseline

3.4.13 In December 2015, 42.1% of people in Warrington had an NVQ level 4 or above. This is more than the North West average (32.6%) and the Great Britain average (37.1%). 5.5% of people in Warrington have no qualifications compared to the North West which has 9.8% of people and Great Britain which has 8.6% of people without qualifications.

3.4.14 In just over ten years, Warrington's NVQ4 qualifications and above has risen over 15%, from 26.1% of the population in December 2004 to the 42.1% in December 2015. Warrington has in fact seen a rising trend across all qualification types, NVQ1, 2, 3 and 4 with the number of people without qualifications decreasing from 14.4% in December 2004 to 5.5 % in December 2015[11].

3.4.15 The positive trends in terms of improved education levels in Warrington are considered likely to continue as educational facilities are upgraded, apprenticeship schemes are promoted and job opportunities are created.

Regeneration: The current and projected baseline

3.4.16 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 provides indicators of deprivation at local authority and lower super output area level (LSOA). (Lower super output areas are a statistical geography and are smaller in size than wards. They are a cluster of around 1,500 people).

3.4.17 Taken from the Warrington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) (2015), it appears deprivation levels in Warrington compared to other Local Authorities has increased slightly since 2010. With an average score of 19.3 compared with 18.5 in 2010, Warrington now ranks 147th out of 326 local authorities on the rank of 'Average SOA score' measure compared with 153rd in 2010. This places Warrington within the 45th centile, meaning 55% of local authorities within England are less deprived than Warrington;

[11] Nomis ONS - Annual Population Survey (2016)

- Analysis of the 'Local Concentration' and 'Extent' measures confirms that extreme deprivation affects a concentrated section of the population in Warrington and levels are not evenly spread across the borough;

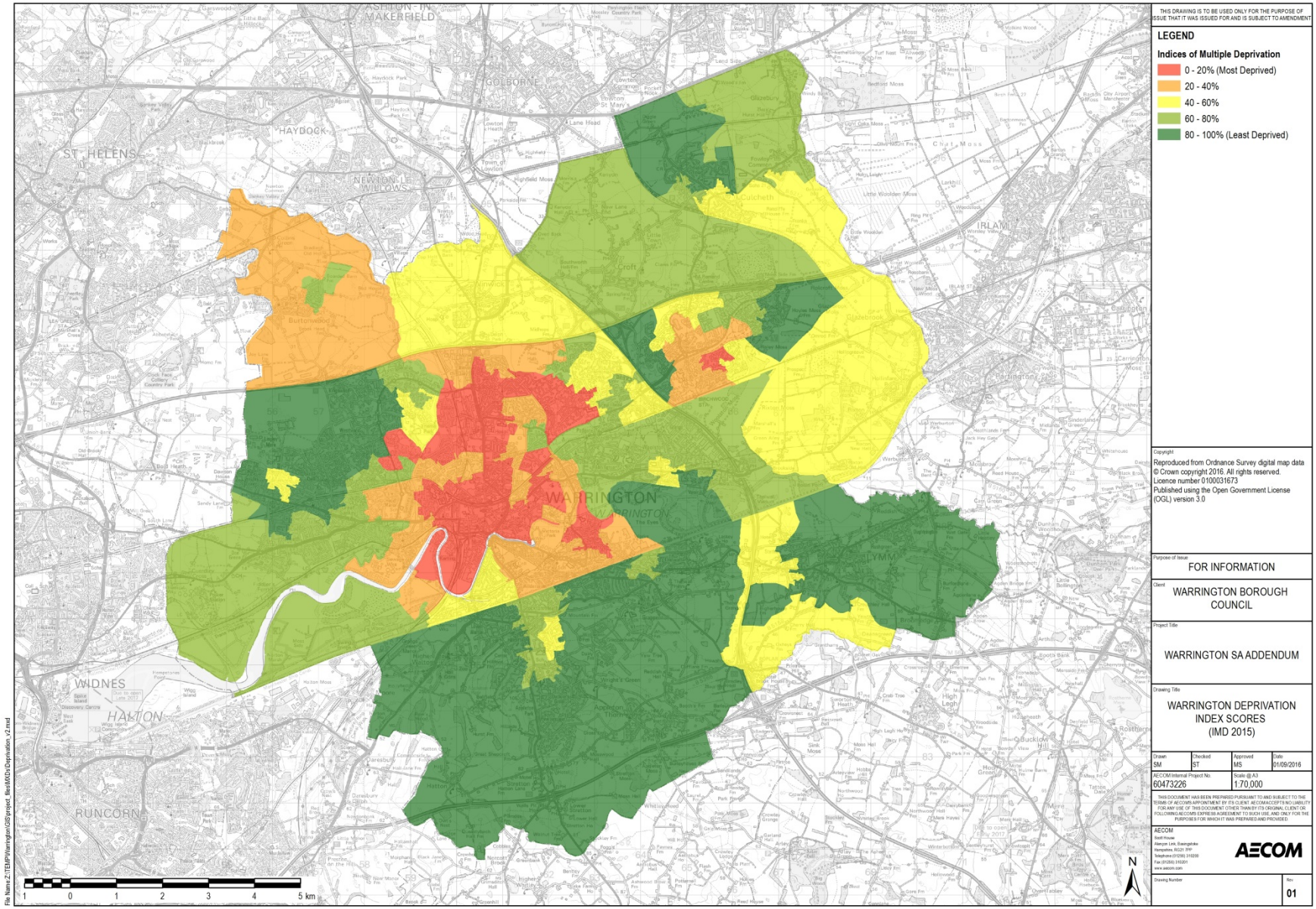
- The absolute numbers of people in Warrington experiencing Income and Employment deprivation has increased; but there has been a small relative improvement in national ranking on the Employment measure since 2010;

- Warrington is ranked 90th worst (out of 326 local authorities) on the percentage of LSOAs falling into the most deprived 10% nationally. This means that Warrington falls within the worst 28% of local authorities nationally[12].

3.4.18 It is difficult to project the baseline, as deprivation is a complex interaction between multiple factors. Despite efforts to tackle deprivation through regeneration and community development initiatives, there has been little change in Warrington's position in the last 10 years; with a slight decline between 2010 and 2015. This trend may therefore be expected to continue. However, the Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is predicated on a strategy of regeneration and renewal that will help to tackle deprivation and support communities in the areas of greatest need. This could help to reduce deprivation in Warrington in the longer term.

[12] Warrington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) (2015) The English Indices of Deprivation [online] available at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9153/jsna_2015_-_deprivation_profile_imd_2015pdf.pdf

Figure 3.3: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015)



3.5 Health and Wellbeing

Contextual review

3.5.1 The *NPPF* identifies the importance of the social role of the planning system, which is defined as "*supporting vibrant and healthy communities*", with a core planning principle being to "*take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all*". The *NPPF* also outlines that high quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

3.5.2 *Fair Society, Healthy Lives ('The Marmot Review')*[13] investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that that there is: "*overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities*".

3.5.3 To ensure that the built environment promotes health and reduces inequalities for all local populations there is a need to:

- Fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality;

- Prioritise policies and interventions that both reduce health inequalities and mitigate climate change by improving active travel; good quality open and green spaces; the quality of food in local areas; and the energy efficiency of housing; and

- Support developments which provides high quality social infrastructure, including education, skills and sports facilities.

3.5.4 The Warrington Partnership and the Warrington Health and Wellbeing Board have updated *The Warrington Health and Wellbeing Strategy* for the years 2015-2018. The Strategy, adopted in July 2015, is the overarching document for wellbeing in the borough. There are a series of priority outcomes, including the following which are particularly relevant to the Local Plan Review:

- A strong economy which maximises opportunities for everyone, continuing to attract investment into key regeneration and infrastructure initiatives;

- Increase the amount of affordable housing;

- Increase the numbers of people using sustainable travel; and

- Reduce social exclusion[14].

3.5.5 The Council has been working closely with its NHS Partners in preparing the *NHS Strategic Estates Plan for Warrington.* The Estates Plan provides an overview of existing NHS facilities, details committed improvements and provides an overview of capacity of health facilities against planned future housing development across the borough. Through this work it has been identified that there are parts of the borough which already have insufficient capacity to provide primary care for new esidents and further areas will become progressively more constrained in the period to 2030 with new development.

[13] The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf

[14] Warrington Partnership (2015) Warrington Partnership (2015) Warrington Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 -18 [online] available at www.warringtontogether.co.uk/media/.../health-and-wellbeing-2015-18-low-res.pdf

Population: The current and projected baseline

3.5.6 Warrington's resident population now stands at 207,700 (midyear estimate 2015), rounded to the nearest hundred) which represents an increase of 1,300 (0.6%) from 2014.By 2021 the population of Warrington is projected to increase to 216,000 people, a percentage change of 4.9% from 2014. Significantly, the age group with the greatest projected percentage change in population is 65+ Years[15]. This has implications on a series of factors that affect the economy and social wellbeing of the Borough. This growth in the ageing population is likely to place increased demand on health and social support services in the future.

Health and wellbeing – the current and projected baseline

3.5.7 Taken from the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2016[16], the headlines for health and wellbeing in Warrington include:

3.5.8 *Health outcomes*: There have been improvements in life expectancy in Warrington. Fifteen years ago (2001) average life expectancy at birth for a Warrington male was 74.9 years; latest data shows that this has increased to 78.6 years. For women life expectancy has increased from 79.1 years to 81.7 years. Progress has also been made in tackling the major causes of premature death in Warrington. Deaths amongst those aged under 75 resulting from cancer have reduced by 23% in Warrington over the past fifteen years. Premature deaths from heart disease and stroke have reduced by over 58% since the year 2001, this is greater than the reduction across England as a whole of 54%.

3.5.9 *Health improvement*: There have been major achievements, locally, nationally, and internationally in tackling smoking. Smoking prevalence has reduced significantly, and Public Health lobbying has resulted in the implementation of a number of national polices and changes to legislation. Smoking prevalence within Warrington dropped from over 21% in 2001 to 13% in 2013. Substantial progress has been made over the past fifteen years in tackling teenage conceptions. Rates within Warrington almost halved between 1998 and 2013. Alcohol harm reduction has been a major focus of Public Health action in recent years. In the past Warrington has had one of the highest rates in the country of admissions to hospital for alcohol related conditions and estimates of hazardous drinking were higher than even North West rates. The targeted focus has resulted in measurable improvements; the rate of hospital admissions related to alcohol has reduced considerably and there has been an increase in the number of people being discharged from treatment services alcohol-free or drinking to safe levels.

3.5.10 *Health protection*: Lots has been achieved over the past fifteen years (2001-2016) in terms of ensuring that systems are in place to adequately protect the health of the local population. Childhood immunisation rates are generally higher than the national average. New screening programmes have been introduced and uptake is high, and much work has been undertaken to ensure that effective processes are in place to prevent and respond to infection control issues.

3.5.11 *Tackling health inequalities*: The substantial variation in levels of socio-economic deprivation in Warrington leads to significant differences in health outcomes. Much work has been undertaken to raise awareness of the issue and foster a collaborative approach to addressing some of the wider determinants of health that impact substantially on health outcomes and health inequalities. The work of the Neighbourhoods Team and the regeneration of the Bewsey and Dallam area highlight the co-ordinated and sustained approach that is required across partner agencies to address issues and improve outcomes over the long term.

[15] ONS Population estimates (2015) https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2

[16] Warrington Borough Council (2016) The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2016 [online] available at: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10901/public_health_annual_report_2016.pdf

3.5.12 Demands on healthcare in the Borough are most likely to increase due to a growing population and an increase in the proportion of elderly residents. The types of services required may also alter in relation to the change in population profile as associated illnesses may differ.

3.5.13 Improved education on healthy eating may help reduce child obesity levels.

3.5.14 An increase in energy prices could lead to a higher proportion of people living in fuel poverty.

Community Safety – The current and projected baseline

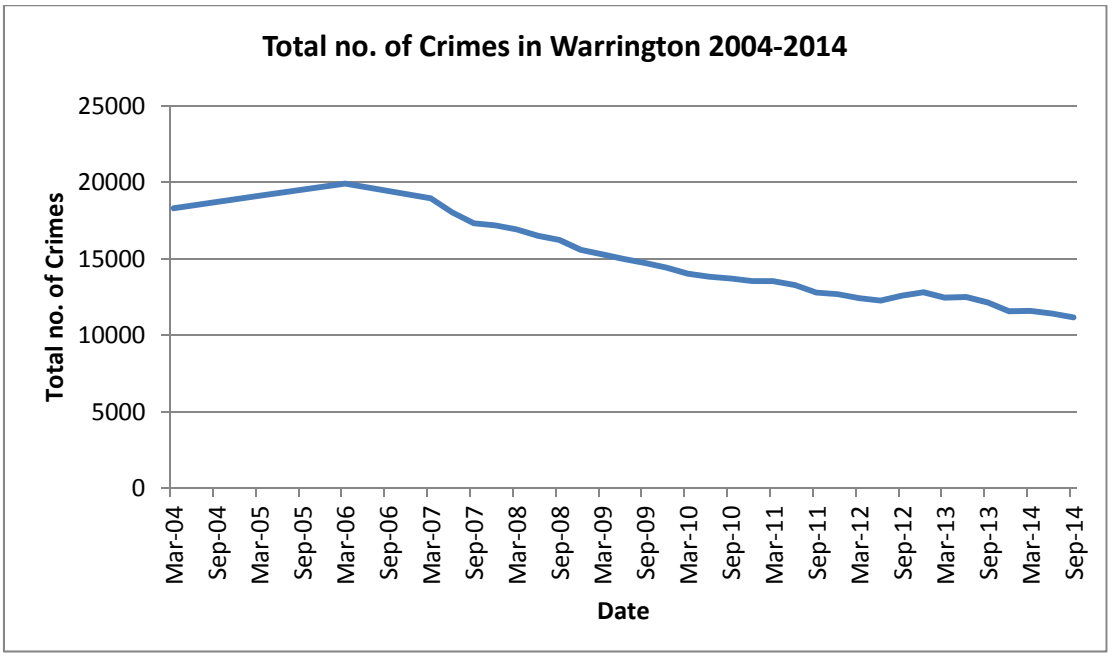
3.5.15 In Warrington between 2004 and 2014, the overall crime rate has fallen steadily. **Figure 3.4** below shows the total recorded crimes between 2004 and 2014[17].

3.5.16 The natures of the crimes are shown in **Figure 3.5,** along with a comparison of September 2013 and September 2014. In 2014, the crime type with the highest rate in Warrington was 'criminal damage and arson'. This however had decreased by 161 offences overall from 2013. Significant reductions were also found in 'all other thefts' (213 fewer offences) and vehicle offences (191 fewer offences)[18].

3.5.17 It is reasonable to assume that the crime rates will continue to fall steadily within the Borough, in keeping with the trend of the last decade. However, crime rates are influenced by a range of factors, which could lead to variations in this trend (most likely this trend could plateau). Particularly important factors would be a reduction in public spending on policing and rehabilitation, an increase in unemployment, a shortage of affordable housing, or a lack of community and youth facilities. It is difficult to predict trends in these factors, but the Adopted Local Plan does seek to address these issues, which could help to maintain the downward trend.

3.5.18 Urban areas and deprived areas have traditionally experienced higher rates of crime, and these trends are also expected to continue.

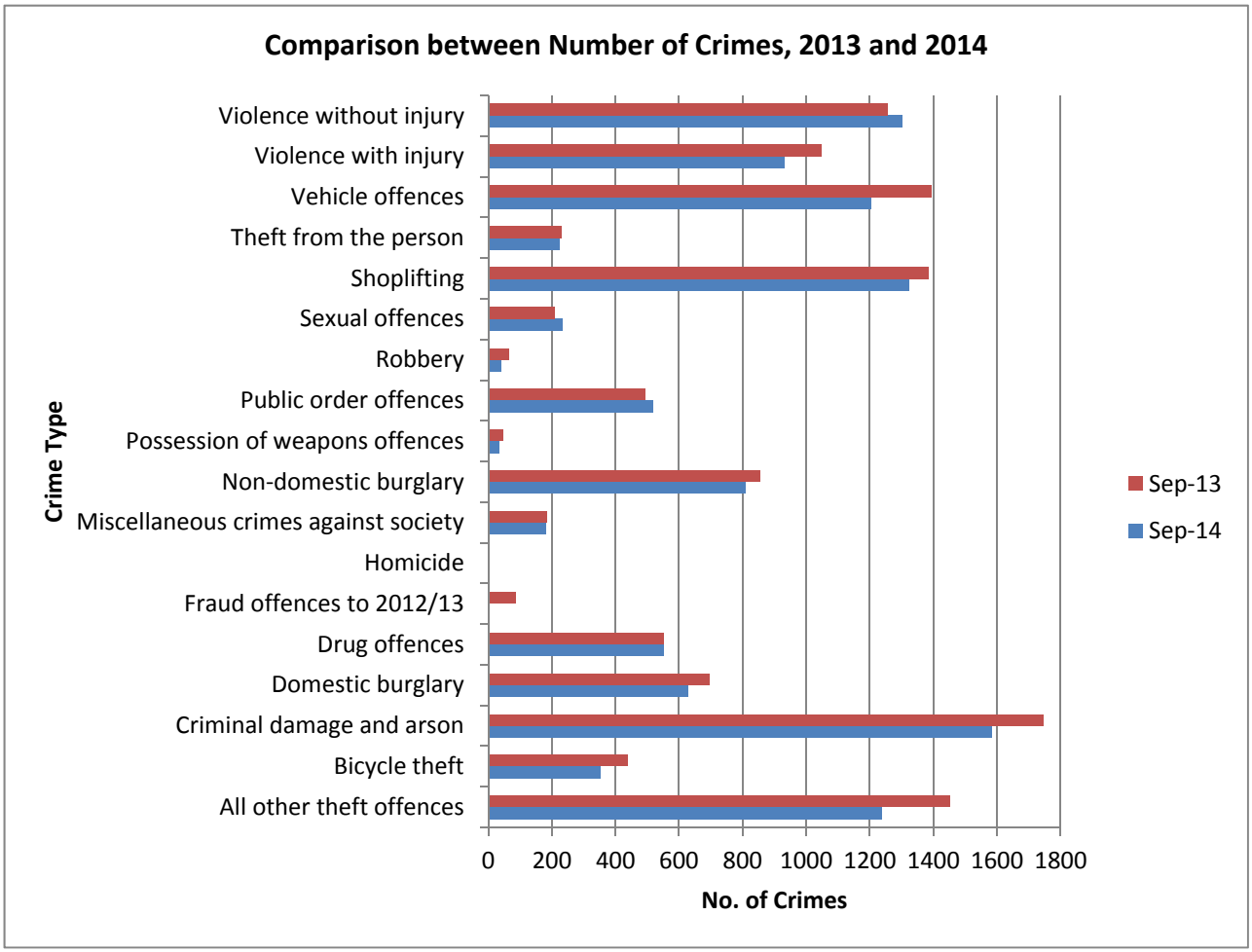
Figure 3.4: Crime in Warrington 2004-2014



Source: ONS – Crime Survey England and Wales (2014)

[17] Crime Survey England and Wales (2014) http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-september-2014/rft-08.zip (accessed April 2015)
[18] Ibid.

Figure 3.5: Comparison in crime in Warrington from 2013-2014



Source: ONS – Crime Survey England and Wales (2014)

Open space and recreation – Current and projected baseline

3.5.19 The total number of open space sites across the borough increased between 2012 and 2015; however variations have been experienced across the typology of sites. Most of the types of open space sites have increased in number since 2012. The largest increases were experienced with regards to Green Corridors (+62 sites), Parks & Gardens (+40 sites), and Natural/ Semi Natural Green Space and Incidental Space, both of which increased by 30 sites. Equipped Play Sites have experienced a decrease in number, but have countered this by combining the remaining sites, enabling larger facilities. On balance, there was a positive change across the borough which resulted in +145 extra open space sites being made available, equating to 260 hectares[19].

3.5.20 Each ward across the Borough has varying access to the types of open space. The largest provisions of allotment space are located in Latchford West (3.91 ha), Lymm (3.68 ha), and Fairfield & Howley (2.66 ha), compared to 14 of the 22 wards which do not have access to any allotment spaces. Bewsey & Whitecross has the greatest provision of Equipped Play spaces, with 1.38ha, whilst Stockton Heath has the lowest provision at just 0.08ha. With regards to Green Corridors, Westbrook is recorded as the ward with considerably the highest provision (22.28ha), Whittle Hall has the largest amount of Incidental Space (7.70ha), and Burtonwood & Winwick has the largest provision of Informal Play sites (12.35ha).

[19] Open Space Audit 2015, Warrington Borough Council (2016), Available: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning_policy/1905/evidence_base/3, Accessed: 20/10/16

3.5.21 Predominantly, the overall distribution of all open space sites shows a tendency to be concentrated towards the higher density populations within the centre of the Borough, with varying spread depending on the typology of the site.

3.5.22 The Borough has enough Swimming Pool, Sports Hall, and Tennis facilities to meet the current demand. Many of the health and fitness suites operate on a 'registered membership use only' basis, which limits users especially in the west of the Borough where it accounts for over 80% of suites available[20].

3.6 Accessibility

Contextual Review

3.6.1 The *NPPF* states that the transport system should be *''balanced in favour of sustainable transport''*, with developments to be located and designed to facilitate these modes of travel, in order to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure and other activities. Planning policies should also aim for *''a balance of land uses''* and wherever practical, key facilities should be located within walking distance of most properties.

3.6.2 Higher levels of walking and cycling could reduce congestion, improve local environmental quality, improve personal health and reduce transport-related CO_2 emissions[21]. Plans should therefore ensure that strategic policies support and encourage both walking and cycling[22].

3.6.3 The *One Warrington: One Future - Local Transport Plan (LTP3)*[23] sets out the Local Transport Plan Strategy for the period 2011-2030. The objectives of LTP3 are to build and manage a transport network that:

- Is integrated and customer focused and reduces the need to travel by car;
- Enables the regeneration of the Borough and supports economic growth;
- Maintains the highway, minimises congestion for all modes of travel and enables Warrington's 'smart growth';
- Improves everyone's access to health, employment, education, culture, leisure and the natural environment;
- Improves everyone's access to the town centre by all modes of travel;
- Enhances accessibility for those in disadvantaged communities or groups;
- Improves neighbourhoods and residential areas;
- Improves safety and security for all modes of travel;
- Enhances the image and profile of the place;
- Improves the quality of public space making Warrington more welcoming;
- Protects and enhances the natural environment;
- Reduces the impact of traffic on air quality in Warrington and helps to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change;
- Makes Warrington safer, sustainable and healthier; *and*

[20] Warrington Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (2015), Available: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning_policy/1905/evidence_base/3, Accessed: 20/10/16

[21] Lancaster University, University of Leeds & Oxford Brookes University (2011) Understanding Walking and Cycling: Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations [online] available at: http://www.its.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/UWCReportSept2011.pdf (accessed 08/2012)

[22] National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2012) Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation, Public Health Guidance PH41[online] available at: http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH41

[23] Warrington Borough Council Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2030

- Integrates with transport networks outside Warrington to enhance the sustainability of cross boundary travel.

Accessibility: The current and projected baseline

3.6.4 Warrington lies at the hub of the region's communications network. The M6, M56 and M62 motorways intersect within the borough, providing excellent access to all parts of the region and beyond. Warrington also lies on the region's main North-South (West Coast Main Line) and East-West (Trans-Pennine) rail routes.

3.6.5 Taken from the 2011 Census and Annual Monitoring Reports (2014 and 2015[24]), the following list identifies some key statistics relating to travel in Warrington:

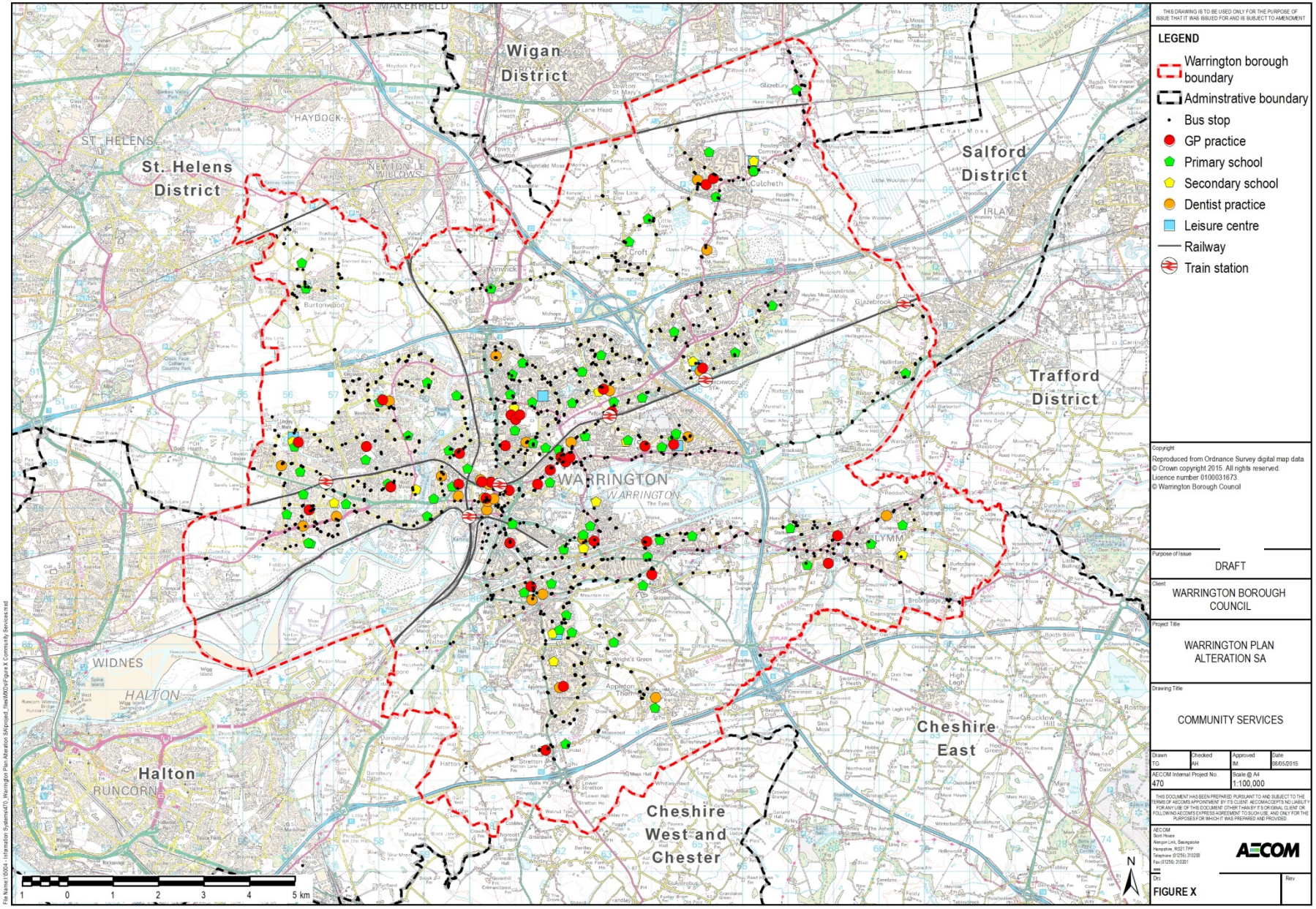
- The percentage of households with no car is lower in Warrington (19.3%) than regionally (28.0%) and nationally (25.6%) (Census 2011);
- The percentage of households with one car is similar in Warrington to the regional and national situation at approximately 41.8% (Census 2011);
- There is a higher percentage of households in Warrington with two or more cars/vans (38.9%) than both regionally (29.5%) or nationally (32.1%) (Census 2011);
- The latest travel to work data for Warrington shows 59.2% of commuters into Warrington come from within the Warrington Area, followed byHalton (5.5%), Manchester (5.0%) and Trafford (3.8%). (AMR 2015);
- Car ownership in Warrington is higher than regional and national levels with higher percentages of households (38.9% compared to 29.5% regionally and 32.1% nationally) owning two or more vehicles and lower percentages owning no car at all (AMR 2015); and
- A lower percentage of residents aged 16 to 74 in employment in Warrington cycle or walk (6.4%) than is the case regionally (7.6%) or nationally (8.2%) (AMR 2014).

3.6.6 **Figure 3.6** illustrates the location of key services and facilities throughout the Borough. As would be expected, the town centre of Warrington is served by the widest range of services and facilities. There is also a good range of essential facilities and good access links from other settlements outside the Warrington urban area including areas such as Lingley Mere, Birchwood and Padgate, which have good train and public transport links. Other larger settlements such as Lymm and Culceth are served by a range of facilities, but are more likely to be reliant on private car use to access higher order services and employment. Smaller settlements in 'rural' areas such as Appleton Thorn, Burtonwood, Winwick and Croft are served by a lower number of essential services, and rely upon larger service centres to access GPs, secondary schools and other services.

3.6.7 As well as establishing how accessible essential services are in terms of proximity, it is also important to understand whether services are capable of accommodating further growth. This will help to identify where development would need to fund expansions to facilities such as schools and GPs, where this may not be possible (due to site constraints for example) or where a surplus exists and development would actually make facilities more viable.

[24] Warrington Borough Council Annual Monitoring Reports https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning_policy/1903/local_plan/3

Figure 3.6: Community facilities and services



3.7 Housing

Contextual Review

3.7.1 The *NPPF* seeks to significantly boost the supply of new homes. To achieve this it states that local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.

3.7.2 The *NPPF* states that in order to create *''sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities''* authorities should ensure affordable housing is provided.

3.7.3 *DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015)* sets the policy context for traveller sites, stating that planning authorities use robust evidence to identify needs; set appropriate targets or criteria based policies; and ensure that traveler sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally (which means that sites should be accessible, safe, well integrated with existing communities and limits effects on the environment).

The current and projected baseline

3.7.4 In 2015/16, Warrington saw the completion of 595 net additional new dwellings (taken from 615 gross completions minus 20 losses). This compares to 687 net new additional dwellings reported in the last monitoring period.

3.7.5 Of the 615 gross new dwellings in this period, 580 (94%) were on previously developed land (PDL). 161 of these were affordable housing completions. This percentage is a significant increase on that reported in the previous monitoring period (2014/15).

3.7.6 As stated in the National Planning Policy Guidance, the 2012 sub-national household projections should form the starting point for establishing the objectively assessed housing need for Warrington. However the overall figure may be affected by further factors such as formation rates, local demographics, employment trends and 'market signals'.

3.7.7 Warrington Borough Council released their latest SHMA (in conjunction with Halton and St Helens) in January 2016. It provides the information to understand the housing need for Warrington and the 'Mid Mersey' HMA as a whole. The 2012 projections estimate that there were 87,981 households in Warrington in 2014, which is anticipated to rise to 106,682 2037. This is an average increase of 840 households per year between 2014 and 2037.

3.7.8 There are currently 8 authorised pitches within the Borough. This is down from 20 in 2013/2014 as the expiration of the temporary permission at Two Acre Caravan Park in Walton previously provided 15 pitches. This has now become an unauthorised development[25].

3.7.9 Between 2013-2014, overall average house prices in Warrington increased by 4.8% (from £134,750 to £141,469), there was also an increase of 2.2% in the North West (from £108,420 to £110,790) and a 6% increase in England and Wales as a whole (£161,755-£171,323). In 2014-15, average house prices have increased in Warrington from £141,469 to £149,857.

[25] Warrington Borough Council (2016) Annual Monitoring Report [online] available: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10037/amr_2015.pdf

Table 3.2: Average House Prices 2014

	Detached (£)	Semi-Detached (£)	Terraced (£)	Maisonette/flat (£)	All (£)
Warrington	251,621	122,589	82,688	99,485	141,469
North West	215,265	113,021	66,713	105,221	110,790
England and Wales	269,366	161,647	129,223	164,432	171,323

Source: Land Registry (April 2014) / Warrington AMR 2014

3.7.10 Warrington Borough Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) findings are contained in the 2016 AMR. The detailed assessment findings stated that a total of 538 sites, covering approximately 1,695 Hectares, were identified for and subsequently included within the 2016 SHLAA. Of the 538 sites, 490 (90%) were rolled forward from the 2015 study and hence 48 sites are new sites.

3.7.11 Of the 538 sites identified, 151 (28%) had a planning approval (including New Town 7(1) permission) on the 1st April 2016. 328 (61%) of the 538 sites identified constituted previously developed land, 192 (36%) were on greenfield land and 18 (3%) were considered to be part previously developed/part greenfield.

3.8 Natural Resources

Contextual Review

Water

3.8.1 *The NPPF* states that local planning authorities should produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.

3.8.2 The *White Paper, Water for Life* says that authorities should encourage and incentivise water efficiency measures at the demand side[26].

3.8.3 In most cases, and for most of the time, in North West England, there is adequate water available for abstraction. The regional priorities as set out in the *Water Resources Management Strategy* are to reduce the contribution to climate change and to protect sensitive environmental habitats, predominately in Cumbria[27].

3.8.4 *The Marine Policy Statement (MPS*) is the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment[28.] All public authorities taking authorisation or enforcement decisions that affect or might affect the UK marine area must do so in accordance with the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the UK Marine Policy Statement unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

Air quality

3.8.5 The *NPPF* identifies that 'Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan'.

3.8.6 The *UK Air Quality Strategy*[29]' sets out air quality objectives and policy options to further improve air quality in the UK. This is supplemented by more recent guidance on how air pollution and climate objectives can be realised together through an integrated policy approach.

Soil and land

3.8.7 The *NPPF* calls upon the planning system to protect and enhance soils. It should also prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of *'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'*.

3.8.8 The *NPPF* also calls for planning policies and decisions to 'encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the *NPPF* requires local planning authorities to ''*set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances''*. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.

3.8.9 In *Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England*[30], a vision is set out for the future of soils in the country. An element of this vision is the condition of soils in urban areas, which are to be ''*sufficiently valued for the ecosystem services they provide and given appropriate weight in the planning system''.* Good quality soils in urban areas are recognised as being ''*vital in supporting*

[26] Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper)
[27] United Utilities, Final Water Resources Management Plan, 2015
[28] HM Government (2011) UK Marine Policy Statement [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69322/pb3654-marine-policy-statement-110316.pdf
[29] Defra (2007) Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [online] available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/air-quality/approach/
[30] Defra (2009) Safeguarding our soils: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69261/pb13297-soil-strategy-090910.pdf

ecosystems, facilitating drainage and providing urban green spaces for communities". That planning decisions take sufficient account of soil quality is a concern of the report, in particular in cases where significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved. Preventing the pollution of soils and addressing the historic legacy of contaminated land is another element of the reports vision. Changing demands on our soils need to be better understood and it must be ensured that appropriate consideration is given to soils in the planning process.

Water: The current and projected baseline

3.8.10 The majority of Warrington is built on the floodplain of the River Mersey, with about three quarters of the urban area lying between 5 and 12 metres above sea level (AOD). The main source of fluvial flooding is the River Mersey and its five key tributaries, which flow through the centre of the borough.

3.8.11 The Manchester Ship Canal plays a vital role in managing fluvial flood risk along the Mersey. Although principally a navigation canal, the canal provides a floodwater bypass channel for Warrington, which significantly reduces the incidence of flooding from fluvial flows.

3.8.12 As a requirement of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) the water quality of rivers and lakes in England must be established in terms of their ecological and chemical quality. Measures must then be put in place to protect and improve water quality. Ecological quality is categorised as; bad, poor, moderate, good or high and chemical quality is assessed as a pass, fail or does not require assessment. Water quality in Warrington was assessed in 2009 as part of the River Basin Management Plan process. The findings at that time were that:

- The River Mersey's ecological quality was classed as 'moderate', with its' chemical quality failing. For 2015 it was predicted that it has moderate potential' but its status is 'at risk';
- The Sankey Canal was classed as having 'moderate' ecological quality, and it was predicted that it had 'moderate potential' for 2015;
- Sankey Brook was classed as having poor ecological quality, although the chemical quality was classed as good. Its status is 'at risk', but the predicted ecological quality for 2015 was for there to be an improvement to 'moderate'.[31]

3.8.13 The Water Framework Directive should ensure that there will be no deterioration in the ecological status of Warrington's rivers from 2009 baseline conditions.

3.8.14 *The Water Framework Directive* seeks to ensure that the hydromorphology *(the physical form and flow)* of rivers is protected and restored where damage has occurred. The ecology of Warrington's rivers has suffered greatly due to physical modification, and this is one of the reasons for failure to meet WFD requirements. Channels have been straightened, deepened and over-widened, culverts installed and weirs constructed and this has negatively impacted the ecological status of several rivers in Warrington. By 2027, Warrington's rivers must either reach "*good ecological status*" or "*good ecological potential*" (the latter for "*heavily modified*" waterbodies).

3.8.15 Good ecological status is defined as conditions slightly lower than those seen in a natural pristine river. Good ecological potential is the best a river can be for ecology whilst still fulfilling a flood risk management, water resource or navigation purpose. There can be no deterioration in the ecological status of Warrington's rivers from 2009 baseline conditions. Measures have been identified in the River Basin Management Plan to enhance hydromorphology and, therefore, improve river habitats for wildlife and overall ecological status. Some of these enhancement measures may also reduce flood risk in Warrington through increased flood water storage.

3.8.16 Warrington is at risk from many different sources of flooding including; main rivers, ordinary watercourses, surface water runoff, sewer flooding and the residual risks associated with artificial water bodies such as the Bridgewater Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and reservoirs.

[31] Environment Agency (2013), Flood Risk and Management (accessed online) http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?topic=wfd_rivers&layerGroups=default&lang=_e&ep=map&scale=8&x=361618&y=388610

3.8.17 As a result of climate change, flood risk in Warrington is likely to become more of an issue, with an increase in the frequency and depth of flooding of floodplains expected. In addition, more intense storm events as a result of climate change could lead to an increase in surface water flooding and flash flooding across the Borough.

3.8.18 These risks have the potential to be alleviated through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The Adopted Local Plan (Policy QE4) also states that the Council will only support development proposals where the risk of flooding has been fully assessed and justified by an agreed Flood Risk Assessment.

Air Quality: The current and projected baseline

3.8.19 Warrington Borough Council is responsible for the review and assessment of air quality in the Borough. There are three AQMA designations in Warrington;

- AQMA 1 - A 50m continuous strip on both sides of the M6, M62 and M56 motorway corridors.
- AQMA 2 - An area of central Warrington bounded by Parker Street, Wilson Patten Street, Bold Street, Museum Street, Winmarleigh Street and Sankey Street.
- AQMA 3 - Residential properties on Baxter St, Lancaster St, Green St, and Lovely Lane surrounding the Sankey Green Roundabout.

3.8.20 All three AQMAs are designated due to their levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2). An Air Quality Action Plan has been produced that is appended to the Local Transport Plan 3 as part of the Implementation Plan. This Action Plan covers all three AQMAs; presenting a series of short term and long term actions in the key areas of 'network management', 'smarter choices', 'motorised travel', 'public transport', 'active travel', and 'safety and security'[32].

3.8.21 The three AQMAs are currently under review and there is a consultation exercise being undertaken by the Council proposing to extend the town centre AQMA (2) to include all of the main arterial routes out of Warrington up to the motorways. The outcome of the consultation and the completion of the AQMA review could mean that a larger area falls within areas that will need to be protected in terms of air quality and exposure to sensitive receptors.

Soil and Land: the current and projected baseline

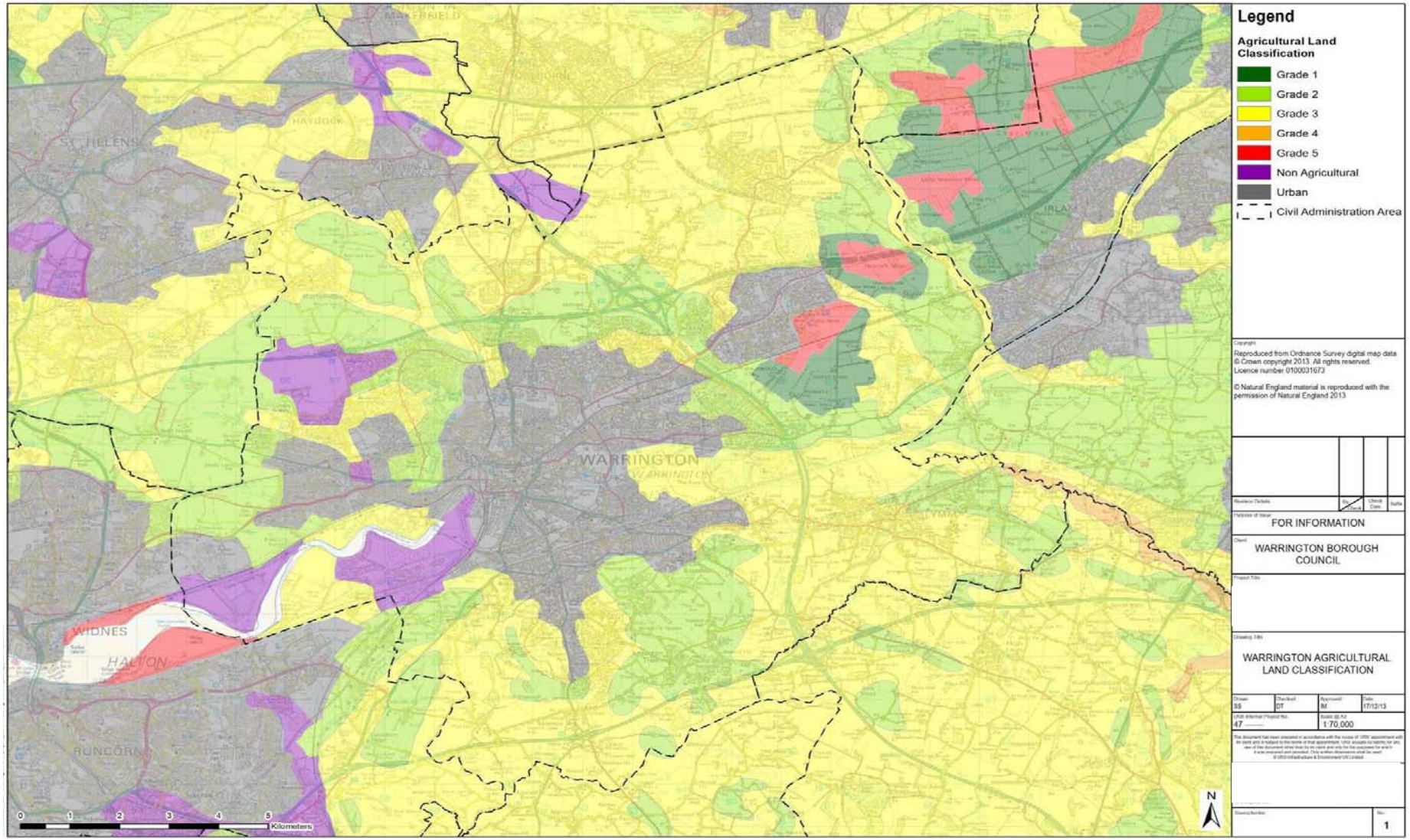
3.8.22 In Warrington during the 2014/15, monitoring period, the percentage of dwellings completed on previously developed land has remained high at 98%. 2014/15 also saw the completion of 128,520 Sq.M. (1,383,389 Sq.Ft.) of new commercial floorspace across 5 sites totalling 63.91 Ha. This was similarly achieved on previously developed land.[33]

3.8.23 The Agricultural Land in Warrington is predominantly Grade 2 and 3, which is classified as 'the best and most versatile. There are only two pockets of Grade 1 land, which are located to the east of the Borough, in the fields north of Manchester Road. The Agricultural Land in Warrington is shown in **Figure 3.7**. It should be noted that Grade 3 land is not split between Grade 3a (which is classified as 'best and most versatile' and Grade 3b (which is not).

3.8.24 The Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy prioritises urban regeneration, which will help to minimise effects on agricultural land. However, the Plan review could result in the release of greenfield land, which would be likely to result in a loss of some agricultural land.

[32] Warrington Borough Council (March 2011) Local Transport Plan 3 Implementation Plan; Air Quality Action Plan
[33] Warrington Borough Council (2015) Annual Monitoring Report [online] available: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10037/amr_2015.pdfl

Figure 3.7 - Agricultural Land Classification in Warrington



Minerals

3.8.25 In terms of Geology, Carboniferous Pennine Coal Measures are present in the north-western tip of Warrington, whilst younger, Permo-Triassic rocks cover much more of the Borough. Glaciofluvial Deposits are located predominantly in the central northern areas of the Borough. Sand and gravel has historically been quarried in the Borough, and Southworth Quarry, an active sandstone quarry, is also located near its northern border in Croft Parish. This is the only aggregate producing quarry in Warrington, and has planning permission for operation until 2025.

3.8.26 Coal Bed Methane is extracted within the Borough, whilst clay is extracted at sites in the east (Rixton).There are also sites of secondary and recycled aggregate production at Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, Southworth Quarry and Woolston Deposit Ground Bed No. 1.

3.8.27 According the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Halton, and Warrington Joint Local Aggregate Assessment[34], the priorities for Warrington with regards to minerals include:

- Prioritise the use of secondary and recycled material
- Safeguard critical transport infrastructure
- Provide for windfall applications appropriately
- Monitor landbank adequacy annually

[34] Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Halton, and Warrington, Joint Local Aggregate Assessment (2014), Available: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning_policy/1905/evidence_base/5 , Last Accessed: 20/10/16

3.9 Built and natural heritage

Contextual review

3.9.1 At an international level, the *European Landscape Convention (2002),* seeks to support and promote the protection, management and enhancement of landscapes.

3.9.2 *The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological* Heritage (1992) seeks to protect and record the archaeological heritage, which includes all remains and objects and traces of human activity from past times. A key relevant principle within the convention is to ‘*’integrate the conservation and archaeological investigation of archaeological heritage in urban and regional planning policies”.*

3.9.3 At the national level, the *Government White Paper: Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (2007)*[58] seeks to put the historic environment at the heart of the planning system.

3.9.4 The *NPPF* states that Authorities should set out a positive strategy in their local plan for the ‘’*conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment*’’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk. Assets should be recognised as being an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance; taking account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation can bring, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.

3.9.5 The planning system should protect and enhance valued landscapes. Particular weight is given to ‘‘*conserving landscape and scenic beauty”*. Local Authorities should adopt policies and measures for the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, whether outstanding or ordinary, that determine the quality of people’s living environment[35].

3.9.6 Authorities are encouraged to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, with inappropriate development not to be approved except in very special circumstances[36].

Warrington Conservation Area Management Proposals

3.9.7 *Bridge Street Management Proposal* focuses on the restoration of a variety of historic and locally significant buildings along the street. The proposal also seeks to ensure the character of the area is maintained through the monitoring of the streetscape via the suggestion of photographic studies and an urban design study. These studies would centre on targeting frontage and street aesthetics.

3.9.8 *Buttermarket Street Conservation Area Management Proposals* strives to protect shop frontages on the street that might not have listed building status. The proposal suggests several aesthetic amendments to the streetscape such as tree planting and the repainting of street furniture and roadside barriers.

3.9.9 *Church Street Management Proposals* proposes infill of development on derelict sites, consideration of design of development within the conservation area, as well as changes/replenishment of street furniture and signage. The proposal suggests that these smaller changes to the street are to be followed up by periodic photographic studies in order to identify and act upon any unauthorised works.

3.9.10 *Town Hall Management Proposals* seek to form a strategy for the Town Hall building and ground external works, signage and access. The former baths adjacent to the Town Hall are also considered as requiring an urban design and regeneration strategy. There is also emphasis on preserving the character of the area through the investigation of unauthorised works or signage.

[35] Council of Europe (2000) The European Landscape Convention [online] available at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm
[36] DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf

Warrington Conservation Area Appraisals

3.9.11 *The Bewsey Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)* established that a significant level of progress had been made in improving the declining condition of the area around Bewsey Street. The document states that of the list of some 13 problem areas identified in the designation report, 9 have been 'satisfactorily resolved' and two have been 'partly resolved'. The appraisal confirms that Bewsey Street's conservation area status has *''undoubtedly helped to restore confidence in the future of the street as a residential and business location''*.

3.9.12 *Bridge Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2006)* concluded that further changes were required to reflect new issues on the public realm since the implementation of the plan over almost three decades ago. The appraisal notes the mediocre quality of some of its ground floor frontages on Lower Bridge Street which convey *''an air of neglect and an area which is undervalued''*. The document priorities further enhancement of the scheme in relation to Lower Bridge Street, as well as highways signs and street furniture that are in keeping with local character across the area.

3.9.13 *Buttermarket Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)* identified numerous issues associated with the core of conservation area, including inappropriate design features and other visually intrusive elements of the streetscape along Buttermarket Street and at its junction with Academy Street and Scotland Road. The document also identifies several development opportunities along Dial Street and Fennal Street along with a proposed revision of the Buttermarket Street Conservation Area boundary line.

3.9.14 *Church Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)* identifies new appropriate design standards for new developments on 'gap sites'. It also indicates that general improvements and the redevelopment of existing 'mediocre' buildings at the western extremity of the conservation area, could form a more visually appealing gateway to the area. The document also provides several objectives associated with revisions to the public realm.

3.9.15 *Plamyra Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)* divides identified issues between public and private sector. The private sector issues comprise of appropriate alterations to architectural features and the aesthetic of private properties, as well as their general upkeep. This is outlined with the intention of establishing a clearer standard for design across the conservation area, which property owners should conform to. The public sector issues are predominantly focused on removing unnecessary signage, renewing street furniture and ensuring the area's upkeep. The document also proposes several strategies of utilising vacant properties including a Technical School, along with confirmation that outside of a few minor amendments, the Conservation Area boundary shall remain largely unaltered.

3.9.16 *Town Hall Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)* outlines a number of 'short-medium term' and 'medium /longer term' measures to target identified issues from the report. shorter-term measures primarily consist of urban design and public realm improvements along with a regeneration program for the former baths and potentially their adjacent areas too. The longer-term measures set out a plan for the reinstatement of the Town Hall railings flanking the 'Golden Gates' along with their central carriage crossing restoration. It also outlines the desire for a strategy for the use and management of Bank Park.

Built Heritage: The current and projected baseline

3.9.17 In 2015, there were 375 listed buildings recorded in the Borough, of which seven are Grade I. There are also 13 Scheduled Monuments (mostly moated halls in the Green Belt) and 16 designated conservation areas[37].

[37] English Heritage (2015) Heritage Counts – Understanding the Assets available [online] at: http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/local-authority-profiles/

3.9.18 The Council has identified a local list of buildings of community interest, whether inside or outside a Conservation Area. Of the 623 buildings listed, many include local landmarks and buildings that would fail to meet criteria for statutory listing, but add to the character of the local area.

3.9.19 There are eleven designated heritage assets classed as 'at risk' in Warrington[38] as of December 2015. These are:

- Bewsey Street, Bewsey (Conservation Area);
- Bridge Street, Warrington Town Centre (Conservation Area);
- Church Street, Warrington Town Centre (Conservation Area);
- Town Hall, Warrington Town Centre (Conservation Area);
- Bradlegh Old Hall moated site and fishpond, Burtonwood and Westbrook (Scheduled Monument);
- Bowl Barrow west of Highfield Lane, Winwick (Scheduled Monument);
- Church of St. Oswald, Golborne Road, Winwick (Grade I Listed Building);
- Church of St. Thomas, London Road, Stockton Heath (Grade II* Listed Building);
- Bank Quay Transport Bridge (Grade II* Listed Building);
- Gatehouse to Bradlegh Old Hall, Burtonwood and Westbrook (Grade II* Listed Building/Scheduled Monument); and
- Hurst Hall North Barn, Culcheth and Glazebury (Grade II* Listing Building).

3.9.20 There are areas identified within the borough for their potential archaeological value including parts of the town centre and Stockton Heath.

3.9.21 According to The Cheshire Historic Towns Survey[39], Warrington is split into five archaeological character zone. There are primary and secondary characteristics for each zone, which though not exhaustive contribute to a zone's distinct features.

Table 3.3: *Archaeological character zones within Warrington*

Zone	Primary characteristics
Warrington Zone 1: *Roman Wilderspool*	Roman roads, cemetery, settlements, industry
Warrington Zone 2: *Norman Warrington*	St Elphins Church, Motte and Bailey Castle, tenements, market places
Warrington Zone 3: *Late Medieval Warrington*	Medieval settlement, Warrington Bridge, Market Places, Augustinian Friary
Warrington Zone 4: *Bank Quay Industrial Centre*	Industrial sites
Warrington Zone 5: *Post Medieval Expansion*	Industrial estates, domestic expansion
Lymm Zone 1: *Medieval Settlement*	Settlement, The Cross

[38] English Heritage (2016) Heritage at risk available [online] at: http://risk.historicengland.org.uk/register.aspx?rs=1&rt=0&pn=1&st=a&ua=Warrington+(UA)&ctype=all&crit=

[39] Cheshire County Council & English Heritage (2003) Cheshire Historic Towns Survey [online] at: http://www.cheshirearchaeology.org.uk/?page_id=223

Landscape Character: The current and projected baseline

3.9.22 Warrington's landscape has taken many thousands of years to evolve and develop. Farming has shaped most of the present landscape, which continues to evolve. As farming techniques become ever more efficient and mechanised, it is likely to cause a corresponding impact on the landscape. Another feature of Warrington's landscape is the exploitation of minerals, stone, sand and salt, as well as the deposition of waste materials which will likely have a permanent effect on the landscape.

3.9.23 The landscape is vital for a healthy environment and for providing habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna. The landscape can also provide leisure and tourism benefits, boosting the rural economy.

3.9.24 The Warrington Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment (2007)[40] assesses the Borough as having six different character types. Within these character types they include distinctive features. These are listed below.

Character type 1: Undulating enclosed farmland

- Stretton & Hatton;
- Appleton Thorn;
- Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook & Rixton;
- Croft;
- Burtonwood; and
- Penketh & Cuerdley.

Character type 2: Mossland Landscape

- Rixton, Woolston & Risley Moss;
- Holcroft & Glazebrook Moss;
- Stretton & Appleton Moss; and
- Pill Moss.

Character type 3: Red Sandstone Escarpment

- Appleton Park & Grappenhall;
- Massey Brook; and
- Lymm.

Character type 4: Level Areas of Farmland and Former Airfields

- Limekilns;
- Former Burtonwood Airfield; and
- Former Stretton Airfield.

Character type 5: River Flood Plain

- River Mersey/Bollin;
- River Glaze; and
- Sankey Brook.

Character type 6: Inter-Tidal Areas

- Victoria Park to Fiddlers Ferry.

3.9.25 These Character Areas from the Landscape Character assessment will need to be respected as they provide base information on the visual status of the landscapes around Warrington, from which Visual Impact Assessments can be judged. These assessments are required when visually dominant developments are proposed.

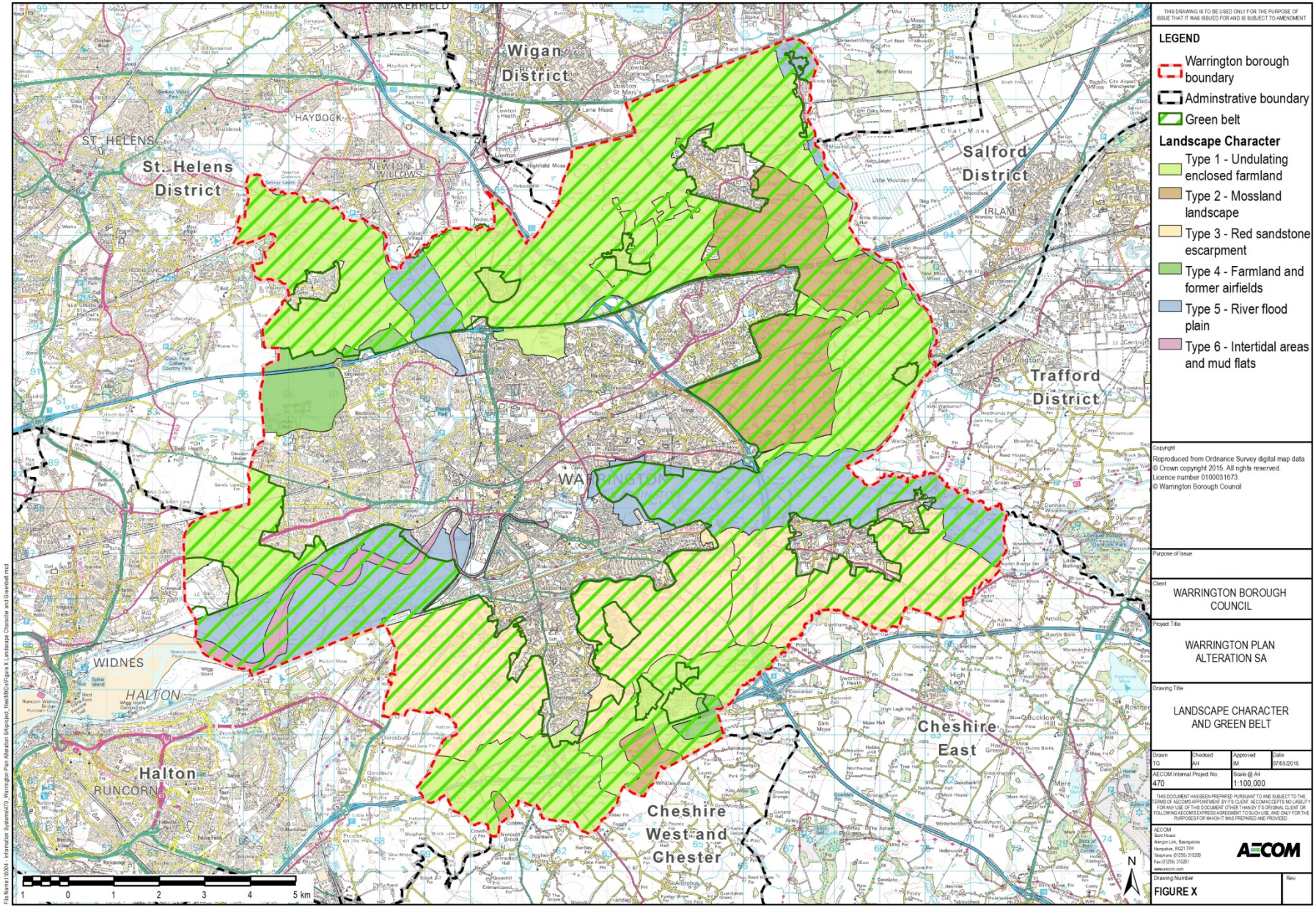
3.9.26 **Figure 3.8** shows the extent of these character areas across the borough. This figure also illustrates the extent of the Greenbelt, which is drawn fairly tightly around the urban areas and contributes to the protection of landscape character in the countryside.

[40] Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007), http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/938/landscape_character_assessment_lca_final_report. (Accessed April 2015)

3.9.27 Alongside these local assessments, there are National Character Areas (produced by Natural England) which cover areas of Warrington. These are Mersey Valley, Lancashire Coal Measures and the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain.

3.9.28 These National Character Areas provide profiles which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Figure 3.8 – Landscape character areas and Green Belt



3.10 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Contextual Review

3.10.1 The *Natural Environment White Paper* states that there is a need to halt the overall decline in biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services; and restore them in so far as feasible and seek to deliver net gains in biodiversity where possible[41].

3.10.2 The NPPF also says that Local plans should support healthy well-functioning ecosystems, encourage the 'preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and promote the 'protection and recovery of priority species. There is a need to protect and maximise the value of areas already rich in wildlife; expand, buffer, and create connections and stepping stones between these areas; and make the wider landscape more permeable to wildlife.

3.10.3 The Wildlife Trust document *A Living Landscape* says that Local plans should adopt a 'landscape approach' to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This focuses on the conservation of biodiversity over large areas of land (i.e. at the landscape scale) where habitat patches that are now fragmented would once have functioned more as an interconnected whole[42].

3.10.4 The TCPA and Wildlife Trust guidance document, Planning for a Healthy Environment, suggests that positive planning for 'green infrastructure' is recognised as part of planning for ecological networks and making the built environment permeable for wildlife[43].

3.10.5 The guidance document *Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs Today,* suggests that 'New development should incorporate green space consisting of a 'network of well-managed, high-quality green/open spaces linked to the wider countryside[44]'. These spaces should be of a range of types (e.g. community forests, wetland areas and public parks) and be multifunctional, for instance as areas that can be used for walking and cycling, recreation and play, supporting of wildlife, or forming an element of an urban cooling and flood management system.

3.10.6 Green infrastructure is defined as being: 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities'.

3.10.7 According to the *NPPF*, Local Authorities should set out strategic approach to Green Infrastructure in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

3.10.8 *Mersey Forest Plan (Sept 2013): The Refreshed Mersey Forest Plan* incorporates the concept of green infrastructure. The purpose of the plan is to achieve environmental, social and economic benefits for local people through the creation of a community forest – in simple terms it seeks to substantially increase tree cover across Merseyside, Warrington and North Cheshire over the next ten years.

[41] Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf
[42] The Wildlife Trusts (2010) A Living Landscape: play your part in nature's recovery [online] available at: http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/alivinglandscape
[43] The Wildlife Trusts & TCPA (2012) Planning for a healthy environment: good practice for green infrastructure and biodiversity [online] available at:: http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/2012/07/06/planning-healthy-and-natural-environment
[44] TCPA (2012) Creating garden cities and suburbs today [online] available at: http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Creating_Garden_Cities_and_Suburbs_Today.pdf

The current and projected baseline

3.10.9 There are three SACs in Warrington;

- Holcroft Moss;
- Risley Moss; and
- Rixton Claypits.

3.10.10 There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within Warrington's boundary. These are:

- Woolston Eyes (breeding bird assemblage);
- Rixton Clay Pitts (grassland and rare species);
- Risley Moss (mosses, open water habitat and vegetation); and
- Holcroft Moss (peat bogs/mosses).

3.10.11 The conditions of these SSSIs at the time of the latest surveys are as follows[45]:

***Table 3.3**: SSSI Condition*

SSSI	Condition	Last assessment	Condition risk threat
Woolston Eyes	100% favourable condition	Dec, 2010	Medium
Rixton Clay Pitts	75% unfavourable recovering 25% favourable	June, 2013	No identified condition threat
Risley Moss	100% unfavourable recovering	June, 2013	Low / No identified condition threat
Holcroft Moss	100% unfavourable recovering	June, 2013	High

3.10.12 There are four Local Nature Reserves in Warrington; Rixton Clay Pits and Risley Moss (which are also SSSIs), Paddington Meadows and Colliers Moss.

3.10.13 As well as these designated sites, Warrington also has over 50 Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, known as Local Wildlife Sites which represent the best local wildlife sites in the Borough and are vital to the maintenance of biodiversity of the town.

3.10.14 In the 2014 Annual Monitoring Report[46], it stated during the monitoring period of 2013-14 there was a net gain of 378ha of land recognised for its biodiversity importance within the Borough. This was due to the designation of several new Local Wildlife Sites such as Rixton Moss. There have been no further changes since then.

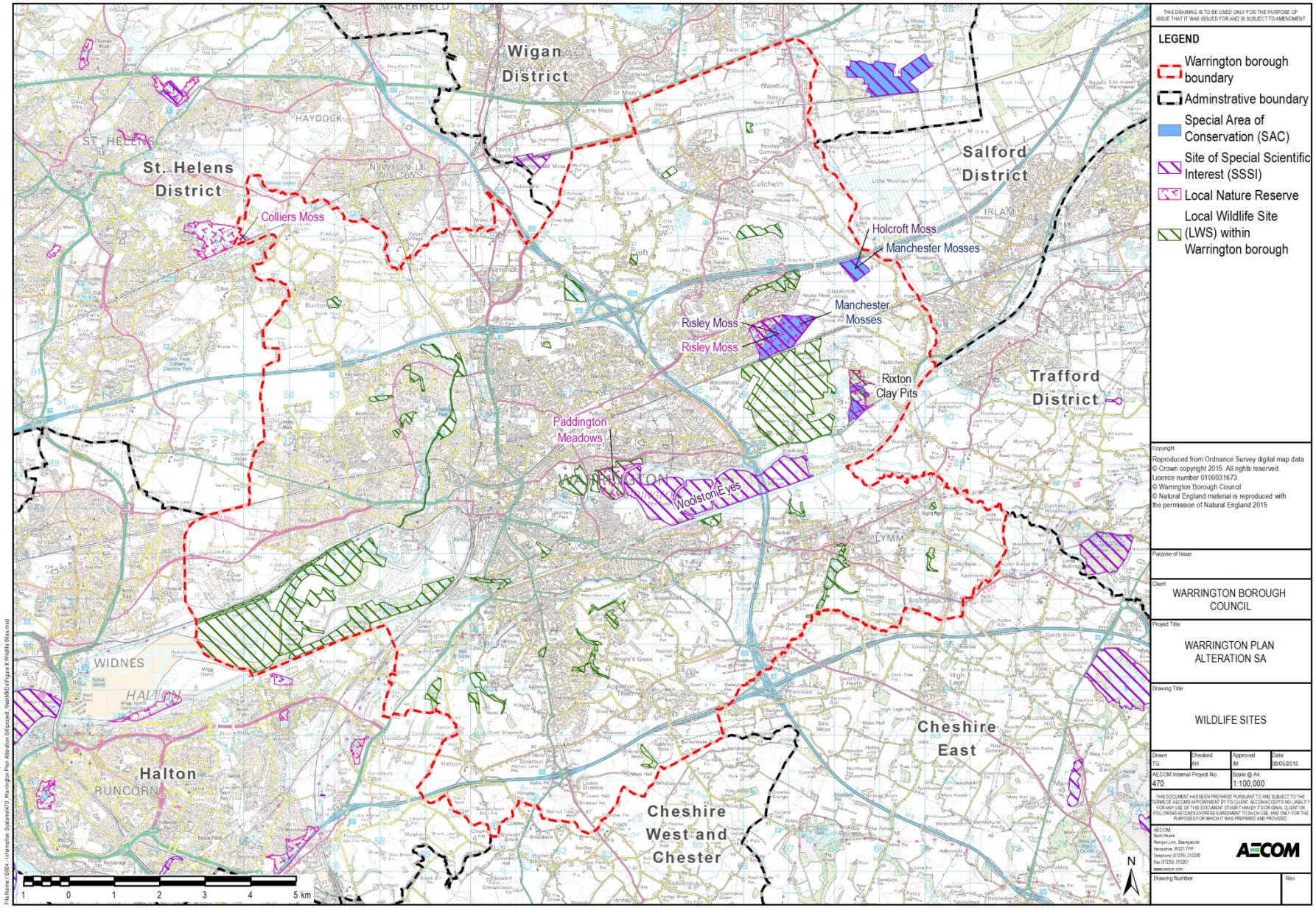
3.10.15 It is assumed that the number of designated sites would be unlikely to alter substantially in the foreseeable future although improvement should continue. The Adopted Core Strategy provides both biodiversity protection and crucially enhancement in Warrington.

3.10.16 The development of further species action plans would provide an improved foundation for the protection of the various species and increase awareness of their locations so measures may be put in place for enhanced protection.

3.10.17 **Figure 3.9** shows the location of these designated wildlife sites throughout the Borough and in neighbouring authorities.

[45] Natural England - Condition of SSSI report [online] at: www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk (accessed 12/2013)
[46] Warrington Borough Council (2014) Annual Monitoring Report http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/8187/amr_2014 (accessed 04/2015)

Figure 3.9 - Designated wildlife sites



3.11 Climate Change and Resource Use

Contextual Review

3.11.1 According to the *NPPF*, the need to *''support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate''* is a core planning principle. Planning should also play a key role in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions in order to meet the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008.

3.11.2 Local Plans should also take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.

3.11.3 Local plans should encourage transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion; notably through concentrating new developments in existing cities and large towns and/or ensuring they are well served by public transport.

3.11.4 The *NPPF* also states that Planning authorities are encouraged to 'adopt proactive strategies' to adaptation. New developments should be planned so that they avoid increased vulnerability to climate change impacts. Where new development is at risk to such impacts, this should be managed through adaptation measures including the planning of green infrastructure.

3.11.5 Development should also be directed away from areas at highest risk from flooding, and should 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.

3.11.6 *The Flood and Water Management Act*[47] sets out the following approaches to flood risk management:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting at risk properties (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment, such as management of the land to reduce runoff and harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water; and Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage.

3.11.7 *The National Adaptation Programme: Making the Country Resilient to a Changing Climate (Defra, 2013)* promotes the adoption of measures to improve resilience (for businesses, communities and the built and natural environment) to the likely effects of climate change, including the need to manage flood risk, protect and enhance green infrastructure and urban heating,

3.11.8 *Climate Local – A New Strategy for Climate Change in Warrington (Jun 2013***)** refreshes the Council's pledge to take action on climate change and to lead Warrington toward a sustainable, low carbon future. It identifies three main priorities for action: reducing the Council's own carbon emissions; helping to reduce carbon emissions across the borough as a whole; and adapting Warrington to cope with changing weather. Climate Local is an overarching document that commits the Council to setting appropriate targets and actions under each of the three priority areas. A number of existing strategies and frameworks already include strong targets and commitments to reduce the impact of climate change. The Carbon Management Plan that was published in March 2011 sets an ambitious target of reducing the Council's own carbon emissions by 40% of 2009/10 levels by April 2015. The recently published Climate Resilience and Adaptation Framework 2013-2018, identifies a number of actions that the Council is going to undertake over the next five years in order to adapt to climate change.

3.11.9 The Council's *Flood Risk Management Strategy (March 2011):* aims to ensure that the Council prioritises its investment in managing the flood risk in Warrington in the best way possible in the next

[47] Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents

five years. It identifies where and what the flood risk is, how it can be managed and prioritises the delivery the identified measures.

3.11.10 The Government's *Review of Waste Policy in England (2011)* recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials. As such, it sets out a vision to move beyond our current 'throwaway society' to a 'zero waste economy'. The report recognises that planning will play a critical role in delivering this ambition.

3.11.11 The *Waste Management Plan for England (2013)* concludes that from the 2011 review, further policy measures are not needed to meet the key objectives of the revised Waste Framework Directive

3.11.12 The National Planning Policy for Waste (DCLG, 2014) states that waste planning authorities ''should prepare Local Plans which identify sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of their area for the management of waste streams''. Key principles for waste management are identified including:

- Managing waste with the proximity principle in mind;
- Encouraging the use of previously developed land and redundant agricultural land
- Consideration of environmental, social and physical constraints (infrastructure);
- Seeking to avoid Green Belt;

Waste: The current and projected baseline

3.11.13 In Warrington between 2013 and 2014, there was reduction of 1,884 tonnes in total municipal waste arisings. There was also an increase of 7,792 tonnes in the amount of recycled/composted waste that was collected[48].

3.11.14 The 2015/16 monitoring period saw an increase of 3,472 tonnes in the total municipal waste arisings when compared to the previous monitoring period. This is the first time in nine years that there has been an increase in the total municipal waste arisings. There was another increase of 1,153 tonnes in the amount of recycled/composted waste that was collected (up from 54,102 to 55,255 tonnes).

3.11.15 Whilst, in general terms the 2015/16 monitoring period saw the continued effects of the Council's new municipal waste disposal contract[49], which has seen a significant reduction in the amount of waste being landfilled, there has been a modest increase in the amount of waste being landfilled and composted and a consequently increase in the total amount of municipal waste arising when compared to the previous monitoring period (up from 94,323 to 97,795 tonnes). However, the amount of waste incineration has also increased by 2,117 tonnes from 38,554 to 40,671 tonnes.

3.11.16 It is unclear why there has been an increase in the amount of municipal waste arisings but it could be a result of the economic recovery and the subsequent increase in the amount of new development that has started to take effect.

[48] Warrington Borough Council (2014) Annual Monitoring Report http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/8187/amr_2014 (accessed 04/2015)

[49] In 2013/2014 a new municipal waste disposal contract came into effect which now sees non recyclable municipal waste diverted to an Energy from Waste (EfW) facility as opposed to being landfilled

Energy and Climate: The current and projected baseline

Carbon emissions and energy

3.11.17 In 2014, the estimate of total carbon dioxide emissions for Warrington was 4.9 tonnes per head. This represents a 1.0 tonne per head decrease compared to 2013[50].

3.11.18 Warrington is intersected by several Motorways (M56, M62) so it is important bear in mind where emissions originate, as much of these emissions cannot be directly influenced by the Local Plan.

3.11.19 Table 3.4 below shows figures in Warrington between 2005 and 2014. There is a general downward trend from 2005 to 2014 (shown in Figure 3.10) although in some years there was an increase in emissions. Overall significant progress has been made in the last ten years, with a particular reduction in emissions from the industry and commercial total.

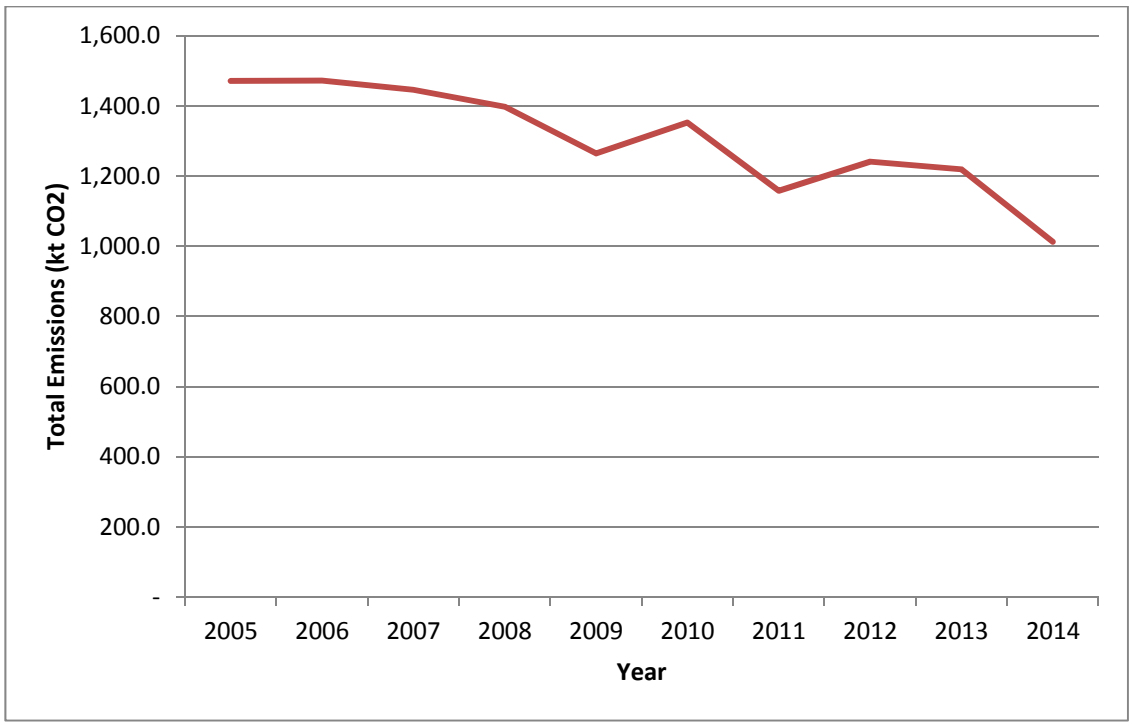
Table 3.4: CO_2 Emissions between 2005 and 2014

Year	Industry and Commercial Total	Domestic Total	Transport Total	Grand Total	Per Capita Emissions (t)
2005	693.7	487.9	290.0	**1,471.5**	7.6
2006	705.9	484.1	282.2	**1,472.2**	7.6
2007	687.7	474.5	284.1	**1,446.3**	7.4
2008	652.0	472.0	273.7	**1,397.7**	7.1
2009	569.9	429.7	264.9	**1,264.5**	6.3
2010	634.5	459.1	259.3	**1,352.9**	6.7
2011	507.4	397.7	253.3	**1,158.5**	5.7
2012	568.1	427.2	246.3	**1,241.5**	6.1
2013	561.9	415.7	241.8	**1,219.4**	5.9
2014	422.8	343.9	246.0	**1,012.7**	4.9

Source: Department for Energy and Climate Change

Figure 3.10 – *Warrington CO_2 emissions estimates 2005-2014 (kt CO2)*

[50] Department for Energy and Climate Change (2015) 2005 to 2014 UK local and regional CO2 emissions – data tables available [online] at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/532949/2005-2014_UK_local_authority_and_regional_CO2_emissions_data_tables.xlsx



Source: Department for Energy and Climate Change

3.11.20 Historically, increased development will result in a greater amount of greenhouse gas emissions. The North West Sustainable Energy Strategy sets a target of 10% of North West electricity requirements being met by renewable sources by 2010 (at least 15% by 2015 and at least 20% by 2020).

3.11.21 Meeting this target will be dependent upon the successful delivery of a range of carbon reduction activities, including tighter standards for the performance of buildings and an increased provision of low-carbon energy[51].

3.11.22 It is anticipated that emissions will continue to fall over time as emissions targets tighten, the energy efficiency of homes is improved, low carbon energy schemes come on line and vehicle efficiency continues to improve.

3.11.23 The Council granted planning permission for eight development schemes that included condition(s) relating to energy efficiency and /or elements of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy generation within the monitoring period[52]. In addition, there have been nine applications for the installation of renewable energy schemes to existing buildings. All of which have been for the installation of solar panels.

Resilience

3.11.24 The Government's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy outlines the importance of building resilience to the effects of climate change that are already predicted to happen in the future. A key principle for adaptation is the need to take action early to avoid costly effects in the future (as identified in the Stern Report). The Plan review can have effects upon resilience in a number of ways, including through flood risk management, and particularly through the enhancement of Green Infrastructure (GI). GI can help to reduce the risk of flooding, provide shelter for biodiversity and people, and enhance sustainable transport links.

Flooding

[51] North West Sustainable Energy Strategy (2006), http://www.4nw.org.uk/downloads/documents/aug_06/nwra_1156410969_North_West_Sustainable_Energy_.pdf. (Accessed 12/2013)
[52] Warrington Annual Monitoring Report (2016)

3.11.25 The Warrington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Volume 2 (2011) followed on from the 2008 Volume which looked at fluvial, tidal, surface water and sewer flood risk. The report looked at each source of flooding in detail. Warrington is at risk from many different sources of flooding including, main rivers, ordinary watercourses, surface water runoff, sewer flooding and the residual risks associated with artificial water bodies such as the Bridgewater Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and reservoirs.

3.11.26 The main source of flooding is the River Mersey and its five key tributaries, which flow through the centre of the borough. Flooding can be both fluvial and tidal in nature with the tidal limit of the Mersey located at Howley Weir, central Warrington.

3.11.27 The Environment Agency's June 2011 Flood Map indicated there are 6789 homes, businesses and other buildings within the 1 in 100-year fluvial or 1 in 200-year tidal flood extent (Flood Zone 3) within Warrington. These properties have a 1% (fluvial) or 0.5% (tidal) chance of flooding in any given year. This number rises to 14670 properties when the extreme 1 in 1000-year fluvial and tidal flood event is considered[53].

3.11.28 **Figure 3.11** sets out the Environment Agency flood maps, as updated in May, 2015.

3.11.29 Since 2006, the Annual Monitoring Report (2016) reports there have been no planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flooding and water quality grounds..

[53] Warrington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Volume 2 (2011)

Figure 3.11 - *Flood Risk Classification, May 2015.*

4. What are the key issues that should be a focus of the appraisal?

4.1 Key sustainability issues

4.1.1 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, a range of sustainability issues have been identified to ensure that the SA remains focused. **Table 4.1** below presents a list of the key issues grouped under a series of sustainability themes. In the main, these issues remain unchanged from those identified in the SA Report published alongside the final Submission version of the Local Plan Core Strategy in September 2012.

Table 4.1: *Key sustainability issues identified through scoping*

Sustainability theme	Key sustainability issues relevant to the Local Plan
Economy and regeneration	• **Pockets of Deprivation –** Deprivation across the borough as a whole is below regional and national averages, though there has been a slight worsening in overall deprivation from 2010-2015. There are high levels of multiple -deprivation, particularly in the inner areas of Warrington. Bewsey and Whitecross, Orford, Poplars and Hulme, Poulton North and Latchford East all have SOAs in the 10% most deprived in England. • There are also specific pockets of deprivation in the 'Education, Training and Skills' and Employment' domains; particularly in the inner areas of Warrington. • **Employment needs** – The 2016 Economic Development Needs Assessment identifies a need for an additional 276 hectares of employment land. • **Economic Growth** – There is a need to continue to promote sustainable economic growth and to support aspirations to transform Warrington from a new town to a 'New City', with corresponding economic growth. • **Town centres** – There is a need to promote the vitality and viability of town centres.
Health and Wellbeing	• **Ageing population** – Life expectancy in the Borough is above regional averages, and similar to national figures. There are significant changes to the structure of the population anticipated with a 37.8% increase in 65 to 74 year olds and an increase of 75.1% in over 74 year olds between 2006 and 2026. • **Fear of Crime and Antisocial behaviour –** Levels of crime within the borough have fallen steadily over the last 5 years and are similar to regional and national averages. However, household surveys show fear of crime at night is higher than national figures. • **Pockets of Health Deprivation** – There are pockets of health deprivation, with the IMD2015 showing high levels of health deprivation in the inner parts of the borough in particular. • **Green Infrastructure** – Green infrastructure provides multi-functional benefits for health and wellbeing and should be protected and enhanced.
Accessibility	• **Accessibility of Employment –** Travel to work by public transport / walking / cycling figures for Warrington are lower than regional or national average. Use of car is higher and the problem is exacerbated by the New Town Development pattern. • **Increasing car use and dependency –** National trend exacerbated by New Town car dependency. • **Rising traffic volumes and traffic congestion.** • **High levels of commuting into and out of the Borough.**

Sustainability theme	Key sustainability issues relevant to the Local Plan
Housing	• **Housing delivery** - There is a pattern of solid housing completions over the last 5 years, with the majority taking place on brownfield land. • **Housing needs** - The 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment update in 2016 established that the full objectively assessed need for housing in Warrington is 984 new homes per annum up until 2037. • **There remains a shortage of Affordable Housing -** As Identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016. • **There remains a shortage of Gypsy and Travleller and Travelling Show people accommodation –** As identified in the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2014
Natural Resources	• **Pollution, air quality and climate change** – Three AQMAs are designated within the Borough. One is related to the motorway network; one is focused on Wilson Patten Street and around Bank Quay Station; and a third is focussed on Sankey Green Island. • **Quality of land and waterways in the Borough –** A legacy of the towns industrial past. There are a large number of potentially contaminated sites within the Borough and a significant length of Warrington's rivers are graded as having poor chemical and biological quality. • **Soil quality –** Warrington contains considerable areas of Agricultural Land classified as Grade 2 and 3a (i.e. Best and Most Versatile). The release of Green Belt land could potentially affect such areas. • **Mineral resources –** There is a need to protect mineral resources and supporting infrastructure from sterilisation.
Built and natural heritage	• **Protection and enhancement of the historic Environment –** There is a significant number of historic assets in the Borough & a number of buildings / monuments have been identified as being in vulnerable or deteriorating condition. • **Landscape character –** There is a need to preserve and enhance the character of Warrington's countryside, whilst recognising the need to release Green Belt land.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	• **Protection & Enhancement of Biodiversity and geodiversity Assets –** There are significant nature conservation and wider green infrastructure assets in the borough that need to be protected, enhanced and made more resilient.
Climate Change and resource use	• **Flood protection in the borough –** Areas within the Borough are identified on the Environment Agency's Indicative Floodplain maps. • **Renewable energy and energy efficiency** – There is a need for a more pro-active approach to energy production and usage. • **Amount of waste entering land fill** – There are European and National targets for waste reduction and an increase in reuse, recycling and composting.

4.2 The SA Framework

4.2.1 The sustainability issues identified through scoping have been used to establish eighteen sustainability objectives, which have been grouped under eight 'sustainability appraisal themes'.

4.2.2 The sustainability objectives presented in **Table 4.2** remain broadly unchanged (*from the SA Framework established in the Submission SA Report, 2012*) as a result of the scoping updates undertaken and presented in this Scoping Report. However, a set of supporting questions have been established to help identify the effects that may arise through the Plan review process.

4.2.3 Given that the focus of the plan review will primarily be on housing and employment growth (with potential release of Green Belt), the sub-criteria seek to identify how different targets / strategies might affect the baseline position relating to each of the sustainability objectives. There may also be potential for a wider plan review to include policies and/or sites relating to waste, minerals and Gypsies, Travellers and travelling show-people, as reflected in the criteria.

4.2.4 Taken together; the SA themes, objectives and supporting criteria make-up the 'SA Framework', which provides the basis for undertaking appraisals.

Table 4.2: *The 'SA framework'*

SA Theme	SA objectives	Sub criteria / supporting questions
Economy and regeneration	1. Strengthen the local economy and ensure sustainable economic growth	- Will the level and distribution of housing support the local workforce? - Will new employment be supported by a workforce in a wider travel to work area?
	2. Improve the education and skills of the population overall	- Will local schools be able to cope with the proposed level and distribution of housing? - Will new employment growth and types help to support skills development and aspirations? - Will access to education be equitable for different social groups?
	3. Reduce poverty, deprivation and social exclusion and secure economic inclusion	- To what extent will the level and distribution of housing help to regenerate deprived areas and minority groups? - To what extent will new employment growth benefit deprived communities and minority groups?
Health and Wellbeing	5. Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	- Will new housing and employment have good access to open space and active transport options? - Will local health services be able to cope with proposed levels of housing?
	7. Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime	- Will development be designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime?
	8. Enable groups to contribute to decision making and encourage a sense of community identity and welfare. 10. Provide, protect or enhance leisure opportunities, recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to the countryside	- Will new housing have good access to open space, sport and recreational facilities on foot and by public transport? - How will the levels and distribution of housing and employment affect community cohesion? - How will development help to protect and enhance a network of multi-functional green infrastructure that encourages active travel and recreation?

SA Theme	SA objectives	Sub criteria / supporting questions
Accessibility	4. Reduce the need to travel, especially by car, improve choice and the use of more sustainable modes 9. Protect and enhance accessibility for all the essential services and facilities.	- Will new housing and employment be close to public transport links, or be capable of supporting / delivering new services? - Will new housing development be within walking distance of essential services such as schools and health facilities? - Will new housing and employment be in areas that are likely to encourage car usage? - Will new development increase congestion on key routes?
Housing	6. Ensure access to good quality, sustainable, affordable housing	- Is new housing likely to be affordable given the viability of available land? - Will there be enough homes to meet identified needs of all social groups? - Is housing likely to be of a high quality design?
Natural Resources	14. Protect, manage and improve local environmental quality including land, air and controlled waters and reduce the risk of flooding. 16. Ensure the sustainable and prudent use and management of natural resources including the promotion of natural resources including the promotion of sustainable drainage and water conservation.	- Will new development contribute to air quality problems, particularly within Warrington's three AQMAs. - Can waste water treatment plants cope with proposed levels of housing and employment growth? - Could there be a loss of Grade 1, 2 or 3 agricultural land? - What effect will the level of development proposed have on surface water run-off? - Could development need to be allocated in areas at risk of flooding? - Could development sterilise potential or known reserves of minerals?
Built and natural heritage	11. Protect and where possible enhance the significance of historic assets and their setting.	- How will new development affect designated and locally important heritage assets and their settings? - How will development affect the historic environment?
	12. Protect and improve the quality and character of places, landscapes, townscapes and wider countryside whilst maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.	- Will development alter the character of landscapes and the countryside? - Will development affect the tranquility of areas? - Will new development affect the function of the Green Belt and strategic green infrastructure networks?
	19. Ensure high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm that is appropriate to the locality.	- Is development likely to be of a high quality design?

SA Theme	SA objectives	Sub criteria / supporting questions
Biodiversity and Geodversity	13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	- To what extent are different levels of housing and employment development likely to affect biodiversity? - To what extent does new development development provide opportunities to enhance green infrastructure (including benefits for wildlife). - To what extent can potential effects on wildlife be mitigated at strategic sites?
Climate Change and resource use	15. Limit, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. 17. Increase energy efficiency and production of renewable energy. 18. Minimise waste and maximise reuse, recovery and recycling.	- To what extent can household waste be managed locally? - Does development present opportunities to establish decentralised energy networks? - Could development 'sterilise' areas that are suitable for wind energy? - Are there opportunities to enhance green infrastructure networks?

5. Appraisal methods

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter sets out the proposed methods and assumptions for undertaking the appraisals. The SA Framework set out in **Table 4.2** is at the heart of the appraisal process, although the approaches to appraisal will differ slightly for various elements of the Plan. For example, the appraisal of policies would be presented differently to the appraisal of strategic site options.

5.2 Appraisal assumptions

5.2.1 It is important to set out any assumptions that will be made when undertaking the SA. This includes assumptions about what aspects of the Plan need to be (re)appraised, the findings from previous stages of appraisal of the Local Plan and any limitations.

5.2.2 It is important to recognise that some policies within the Local Plan Core Strategy have been adopted, are uncontested, and will not be substantially affected by the plan review process. The SA should therefore be undertaken in this context, without the need to duplicate previous stages of appraisal. A review of the policy appraisals ought to be undertaken to predict the effects of the Plan as a whole. However, there will be some policy areas that are unlikely to change.

5.2.3 Having said this, it is also acknowledged that the Plan review process is evidence-led and that evidence prepared in support of the review may result in the need to consider wider changes to the plan.

5.2.4 The SA should be focused on those issues relating to the plan review (i.e. housing and employment provision and Green Belt release) and those covered by the two SA Addendum that were found to be 'deficient' *(i.e. the Main Modifications relating to the allocation of strategic sites for housing).* The Plan review may also involve consideration of waste and minerals and gypsy and traveller accommodation. If this is the case, the SA will need to provide adequate coverage of these issues as well.

5.3 Appraisal methodology

Appraising the housing and employment strategies (and any reasonable alternatives)

5.3.1 The Local Plan Core Strategy Review will identify fresh, evidence-based housing and employment targets for inclusion in the Plan.

5.3.2 Whilst the regeneration-focused element strategy in the Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is expected to remain in place (*provided the evidence does not suggest that wider plan changes may be necessary*), it will still be necessary to identify different ways in which a higher level of housing and employment could be delivered. This will involve looking at the distribution of housing and employment and it might also be appropriate to test different levels of growth in the SA.

5.3.3 The Council has identified how the spatial distribution and site assessment processes will fit together to form 'top down' and 'bottom-up' approach to establishing a preferred approach for the Plan. There will be a need to appraise the Plan at corresponding scales, which means there will need to be appraisal of strategic alternatives and individual site options. The SA will identify and evaluate 'likely significant effects' on the baseline / likely future baseline associated with each sustainability objective in the SA Framework. Effects will be forecast taking into account the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regs and current levels of knowledge. Hence account will be taken of the probability, duration, scale, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible.

5.3.4 The appraisal findings could be presented in a number of ways. Key to any approach taken is the need to clearly demonstrate why impacts have been determined as 'significant' or not as the case may be. It is also important to present the findings in a reader-friendly format. The example below illustrates our proposed approach to summarising the impact findings when comparing alternative housing strategies.

Figure 5.1: *Example of a strategic alternative appraisal*

Biodiversity	1: Brownfield only	-	2. Partial greenfield	-	3. Further greenfield release	⇩
Nature of effects	Increased housing on greenfield land (alternative 3) could have a negative effect on biodiversity through the loss and fragmentation of habitat. Effects would be small scale, permanent and would occur in the short, medium and long term. There would be negligible effects associated with alternatives 1 and 2 which would avoid greenfield land.					
Sensitivity of receptors	The majority of land lost and disturbed under alternative 1 would not affect designated wildlife sites.					
Likelihood of effects	Mitigation measures such as habitat buffers could be secured as part of developments on affected sites. This would reduce the effects, although it is likely that biodiversity would be affected to some extent.					
Significance	Although alternative 2 presents the potential for negative effects, receptors are not sensitive, and mitigation measures would make widespread effects unlikely. Therefore the effects are not considered to be significant for either alternative.					

Appraising strategic site options

5.3.5 In order to deliver the spatial strategy, it is likely to be necessary to allocate strategic sites in the Local Plan at certain locations. To inform this process, a site appraisal process would need to be undertaken to identify the sustainability credentials of a range of reasonable site options for housing and employment (and potentially Gypsy and Travellers, Travelling Show People, Minerals and Waste).

5.3.6 This process would provide an appreciation of the issues from the 'bottom up', whilst an appraisal of strategic alternatives would provide the strategic direction from the 'top down'. The Council has set out how this process will be undertaken within the Scope and Contents Document (October 2016). Part of this process will be to take account of findings from the SA (including site specific appraisals). The Spatial Distribution and Assessment Methodology is available to view in Appendix A of the Council's Local Plan Review Scope and Contents Document (October 2016).

5.3.7 Using the SA framework as a starting point, a site appraisal methodology has been developed which identifies a range of criteria for assessing the constraints and opportunities associated with potential site options.

5.3.8 A proforma will be completed for each site option, and would be presented as a technical appendix to the SA Report. A summary of the effects identified for each site will also be included in the SA Report, with accompanying rationale as to why sites have been selected or discarded.

5.3.9 The SA site appraisal findings will feed into the Council's overall site selection methodology. It should therefore be noted that whilst the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) findings are considered by the Council in its progression of options and form part of the evidence supporting the Local Plan, the SA findings are not the sole basis for a decision; other factors play a key role in the decision-making process.

5.3.10 It should also be noted that the site assessment in the SA does not take account of any potential for the provision of services and facilities if the site were to be developed. This is to ensure that sites are treated consistently with the same level of detail.

5.3.11 **Appendix A** presents the proposed SA site appraisal framework in full, including any assumptions and limitations.

Appraising the Local Plan Core Strategy 'as a whole'

5.3.12 The Council has undertaken an initial policy review, which can be found in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan Review (Regulation 18 Consultation) Scope and Contents Document (Oct 2016). This review demonstrates that most plan policies will require some alteration, but that many will only be minor factual alternations.

5.3.13 As most of the policies in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy have already been appraised, it is not considered necessary to (re)appraise the implications of those policies again (as individual policies) unless the amendments are likely to lead to significant changes to the appraisal findings.

5.3.14 However, it will be necessary to establish what effects the Local Plan Core Strategy is likely to have in light of any changes made as a result of the Plan Review in its entirety. This is because the Local Plan needs to be read 'as a whole', and it will therefore be important to consider how the existing adopted policies (that do not change substantially) interact with any new or amended policies *(i.e. the cumulative and synergistic effects).*

5.3.15 The appraisal of the plan as a whole will draw upon those appraisals already undertaken at previous stages of plan making (including as appropriate the Submission version of the SA Report [2012] and the SA Report Addendum, January [2014]). The appraisals will however be updated as necessary to reflect the updated scope and any changes to policies that are made.

6. Next steps

6.1 Consultation on the Scope of the SA

6.1.1 The Regulations require that: 'When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies'. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, The Environment Agency and English Heritage.

6.1.2 Consultation on the scope of the SA was undertaken on a number of occasions as the adopted Local Plan was being developed. This included the preparation and publication of two scoping reports in 2006 and 2009, and updates to the scope being presented in several SA Reports, including in the SA Report for the Submission of the Local Plan (September, 2012), and the SA Report Addendum (January, 2014).

6.1.3 A Scoping Report was also published in May 2015 in support of the Primary Plan Alteration consultation. Comments were received in response to this consultation, and our response to these has been factored into this updated document (see Appendix B).

6.1.4 However, as discussed previously, there is a need to update the scope of the SA again so that it is up to date and focuses on the appropriate issues relevant to the latest iteration of the plan-making process *(i.e. the Local Plan alterations relating primarily to housing, employment, Green Belt and potentially minerals and waste and gypsy and travellers).*

6.1.5 This Scoping Report presents those updates to the scope and the proposed methodologies for appraising the Local Plan Review.

6.1.6 This Scoping Report has been sent to the three consultation bodies for a period of five weeks to invite their feedback and input on the scope of the SA. Following this period of consultation the Scoping Report will be finalised, taking consultation feedback into account as considered appropriate.

6.2 Consultation questions

6.2.1 We have set out some key questions below to help stimulate thinking about the scope of the SA:

1) Are there other policies, plans and strategies or relevant legislation or regulation that you feel may be relevant to the SA of the Local Plan Core Strategy Review?

2) Do you agree that the key sustainability issues affecting Warrington that are relevant to the Local Plan Core Strategy Review have been identified? If not, are there others which you think should be included?

3) Do you agree that the draft SA objectives put forward provide an appropriate framework for assessing the sustainability effects of the Local Plan Core Strategy Review?

4) Are the number, focus and level of detail of the proposed objectives and sub-objectives appropriate and proportionate given the aims, geographical scope and likely influence of the Local Plan Core Strategy Review?

5) Do you agree with the broad approach outlined for appraising site options?

6) Do you have any specific comments on Appendix A - draft Site Appraisal Framework and the criteria proposed to assess the likely significant effects of allocating sites in the Local Plan Core Strategy Review?

6.3 Timetable for the Local Plan Core Strategy Review

6.3.1 The Council has prepared an updated Local Development Scheme which sets out the key milestones for the preparation of the primary plan alterations.

6.3.2 The Council in the process of finalising key evidence in support of the plan alterations in relation to housing land supply (SHLAA) and housing needs (SHMA) and employment land needs. This work will help the council to identify an appropriate strategy for delivering sustainable growth. Appraisal of reasonable alternatives through the SA will be an important part of this process.

6.3.3 The planning authority intends to undertake the first stage of statutory consultation on the plan alterations between October and December 2016. This Scoping Report update has been published at the same time.

6.3.4 An interim SA report will be published alongside the draft plan at around May 2017 as part of a further 'Regulation 18' consultation. This will identify the effects of the preferred approach and any reasonable alternatives.

6.3.5 Following this consultation, a draft version of the revised Local Plan will be prepared reflecting the preferred plan alterations (*taking into consideration consultation responses and SA findings*). A further consultation is planned to be undertaken in December 2017 in line with 'Regulation 19' of the Regulations at 'Publication stage'.

6.3.6 It is the intention to submit the updated Local Plan Core Strategy to the Secretary of State in February 2018, and provided the Inspector finds the Plan sound, the estimated date of adoption is October 2018.

Appendix A – draft Site Appraisal Framework

SA objectives	Criteria	Use	Significant positive effects likely	Positive effects likely	Negative effects likely	Significant negative effects likely	Rationale, assumptions and limitations
Economy and regeneration							
Strengthen the local economy and ensure sustainable economic growth	EC1: Would site development lead to the loss of employment land?	Housing and jobs	Employment development proposed	Not allocated for employment	Yes – low quality employment site	Yes – High quality employment site	Creation of employment land will help to encourage investment and job creation. Loss of employment land may not necessarily affect the economy negatively. Low quality / high quality as defined in the Employment Land Review
	EC2: Distance to Principal Road Network by vehicle.	Jobs	<1mile	<3miles	>3miles	>4miles	It is assumed that sites with good access to the principal road network will be more attractive to developers.
Improve the education and skills of the population overall	Not applicable	-	-	-	-	-	The location of development is not considered likely to have an effect on the level of skills and education. New development would be expected to contribute to new school places (if possible) However, accessibility to a school can have an effect on whether pupils can attend the schools they want and can get there in a sustainable, healthy way. Therefore, criteria ACC1 and ACC2 are relevant for this SA objective.
Reduce poverty, deprivation and social exclusion and secure economic inclusion	EC3: How close is the site to key employment sites?	Housing	<1200m away	1.2km – 3km away	3km – 5km	>5km away	It is assumed that access to a job will help to reduce levels of deprivation. The closer job opportunities are likely to be more accessible to communities that do not have access to a car.
Health and Wellbeing							
Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	Not applicable.	-	-	-	-	-	A range of factors influence health and wellbeing. The location of a site is unlikely to have a major effect, unless this impairs access to health facilities, open space and jobs. These factors are already covered by other aspects of the framework such as accessibility.

SA objectives	Criteria	Use	Significant positive effects likely	Positive effects likely	Negative effects likely	Significant negative effects likely	Rationale, assumptions and limitations
Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime	Not applicable.	-	-	-	-	-	The location of a site is not likely to have a major effect on crime and the fear of crime. Scheme layout and design can have an effect, but this would be addressed for individual planning proposals.
Enable groups to contribute to decision making and encourage a sense of community identity and welfare.	HW2: Is the area supported by community facilities? (*Village halls, places of worship, community centres)*	Housing	New facilities could be delivered (only applicable for large scale development that creates critical mass)	Community facilities within 1200m	Community facilities within 1200m-2000m	Loss of community facilities. No community facilities within 2000m	Access to a community facility is considered positive in terms of enabling groups to meet, build identities and engage in decision making. It is recognised that physical access to facilities does not necessarily encourage community development. Qualitative data will also be sought about the usage, condition and capacity of facilities
Provide, protect or enhance leisure opportunities, recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to the countryside	HW 3: Access to local natural greenspace (ANGST). To what extent do the sites meet the following ANGST[54] standards? 1. *Natural greenspace at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres from home;* 2. *At least one accessible 20 hectare greenspace site within two kilometre of home.*	Housing	Standards met for both criteria.	Standards met for 1 criteria only	Standards not met for either criteria.	N/A	A negative impact is scored where standards are not met as it would require further consideration of mitigation measures. In some instances development could enhance provision, but this is not assumed at this stage. ANGST is considered a useful measure of the sustainability of locations.
	HW4: Access to formal play space	housing	<200m / On site facilities	<400m	<800m	>800m	Play spaces provide opportunities for child and adult interaction. Such sites should be accessible within a short walk, hence the lower thresholds. It should be acknowledged that lack of facilities may actually not be an issue of new development contributes to or creates on site facilities.

[54] Natural England (2010) Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenapace Standards (available online) at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/40004?category=47004

Accessibility							
Reduce the need to travel, especially by car, improve choice and the use of more sustainable modes Protect and enhance accessibility for all the essential services and facilities.	ACC1: How accessible is the site to the nearest primary school on foot?	Housing	0-5min walk (0-400m) / Site development will provide new school	5 - 12.5 min walk (400m-1000m)	12.5 - 25min walk (1000 - 2000m)	> 25 min walk (2000m)	2000m is considered to be the maximum 'reasonable walking distance55' which could encourage less car use or shorter journeys by other forms of transport. Distance is measured from site boundary. The capacity of nearby primary schools will also need to be taken into account and further evidence will be sought to establish whether schools are capable of accommodating growth, and if not whether expansion would be possible. 1000m is considered an acceptable walking distance to schools'2
	ACC2: How accessible is the site to the nearest Secondary school?	Housing	<1200m away	1.2km – 3km away	3km-5km	>5km away	
	ACC3: How well served is the site by a bus service?	Housing and jobs	Regular bus service within 400m	Low frequency bus service within 400m Regular bus service within 400m-800m	Low frequency bus service within 400m-800m Regular bus service within 800m-1200m	Low frequency bus service more than 800m away Regular bus service more than 1200m away	The Manual for Streets suggests that 'walkable neighbourhoods' will typically have access to a range of services and facilities within 800m[56]. 'Regular' is considered to be a stop which is serviced 3 times in one hour. Low frequency is considered to be a stop which is serviced less than 3 times in one hour.
	ACC4: How accessible is the site to the nearest train station?	Housing and jobs	<1200m away	1.2km – 3km away	3km-5km	>5km away	<1200m is considered a reasonable walking distance[57].
	ACC5: What is the overall distance to a GP service or health centre?	Housing	<1200m away	1.2km – 3km away	3km – 5km	>5km away	It is assumed that closer facilities will enable communities to better access healthcare, particularly those without access to a car. If information is available about the capacity of GP facilities, this will need to be factored into the appraisal. If there is limited capacity at a nearby GP for example, then the reality might be that the nearest GP is much further away.

[55] CIHT (2000) Providing for Journeys on Foot
[56] Department for Transport (2007) The Manual for Streets
[57] [57] CIHT (2000) Providing for Journeys on Foot

Housing							
Ensure access to good quality, sustainable, affordable housing	HO1: To what extent will the development help to meet housing needs? *Deliverability and scale*	Housing	Site is available for development within the next 5 years Or Site is available for development within the plan period and will deliver over 750 dwellings and a high amount of affordable homes	Site is available for development within the plan period	Site is potentially available for development over the plan period There may be issues with the delivery of affordable housing)	Site not available for development (i.e. screened out)	Provision of a higher level of development would contribute more significantly to the Borough's housing targets and would achieve economies of scale. As per policy SN2 in the Adopted Local Plan, affordable housing targets will be higher on sites on Greenfield and outside of inner Warrington. It is important to recongise that availability may change over time. This assessment does not consider viability.
Natural Resources							
Ensure the sustainable and prudent use and management of natural resources including the promotion of natural resources including the promotion of sustainable drainage and water conservation.	NR1: What are the potential impacts on air quality?	Housing	-	Development more than 1km from AQMA	Housing development within 1km of an AQMA	Development within 75m of AQMA	An Air quality Assessment is generally requested for proposals within 75m of an AQMA. The scale of development will vary from between approximately 150 dwellings to 1500 dwellings at any given site. There may also be the potential for cumulative effects if more than one site is proposed in any area. These factors will need to be taken into account when strategic options are being assessed. It is recognized that development in areas that are not currently AQMAs could worsen air quality in these areas. If possible a qualitative assessment of the effects on air quality in general will be undertaken to supplement this objective assessment.=
Protect, manage and improve local environmental quality including land, air and controlled waters and reduce the risk of flooding.	NR2: Could development of the site lead to the remediation of land potentially affected by contamination?	Housing and Jobs	Site is potentially contaminated and could be remediated.	Site is not thought to be contaminated	Site is potentially contaminated but may be difficult to remediate.		Most contaminated land is unlikely to be remediated without development funding. The presence of contamination could therefore be viewed positively where viability is not adversely affected.
	NR3: Would allocation of the site result in the loss of High Quality Agricultural Land?	Housing and Jobs	Does not contain any agricultural land grade 1-3b	Contains less than 10hectares of agricultural land 1-3	Contains more than 10 hectares of agricultural land class 1-2 or a total of 20 hectares1-3	Contains more than 20 hectares of agricultural land class 1-2	Although there is little guidance, the loss of 20 hectares triggers consultation with DEFRA/Natural England, which can be considered significant.

	NR4: Does the site fall within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, as identified by the Environment Agency?	Housing and Jobs	-	Falls outside	Site falls within Zone 2 or 3	Site falls within zone 1 (inner protection zone)	Potential for negative impacts in zones 1-3. However, type of use would be important and mitigation would be possible.
	NR5: Is the site (or part of) within an identified flood zone?	Housing and Jobs	-	Site predominantly within flood zone 1 (>70%)	Contains areas of flood zone 2/3 (>30%)	Site contains large areas within flood zone 2/3 (>80%)	Provided that a site is not wholly within a flood zone 2/3 it should be possible to avoid and/or mitigate impacts. However, proximity to zone 1 is preferable as it reduces the risk and potential cost of mitigation. Sites wholly within zones 2 and 3 should be sieved out. However, for those sites where it is considered mitigation could still be implemented a 'red' categorization is given.
	RU3: Is there potential for safeguarded or identified mineral reserves to be sterilised?	Housing and Jobs	-	Not within identified areas / no effects	Within safeguarded / identified areas of importance, but unlikely to be a significant issues / losses	Within safeguarded / identified areas of importance	This will be reliant upon availability of data.
Built and natural heritage							
Protect and enhance places and buildings of historic cultural and archaeological value.	BNH1: Proximity to designated heritage assets • *Conservation Area* • *Nationally listed buildings* • *Scheduled Ancient Monuments* • *Registered Park or Garden.*	Housing and jobs	Opportunity to protect and / or enhance heritage assets	No heritage assets within or adjacent (50m) to the sites	Site contains or is within 50m from: Grade II heritage features Conservation area Registered park or garden	Site contains or is within 50m from: Grade 1 and II* heritage assets, Registered park or garden	The criteria combine a consideration of various heritage features to avoid potential duplication. E.g. an asset could be listed, in a consideration area and also a SAM. Proximity to heritage assets does not necessarily mean that impacts will occur, but it is assumed that they may be more likely ad this provides an objective mechanism for identifying potential issues. Will seek to supplement this with a qualitative assessment as outlined below.
	BNH2: Effects upon the significance and setting of heritage assets / the historic environment.		Opportunity to enhance heritage the historic environment	The historic environment is unlikely to change from its baseline position	Development could have negative effects on the historic environment but mitigation ought to be possible	Development likely to have significant effects upon the historic environment that cannot be mitigated	A qualitative assessment of sites will be undertaken if possible. This would involve a more holistic assessment of the potential effects of development on the historic environment, which cannot be achieved through a proximity based criteria alone.

Protect and improve the quality and character of places, landscapes, townscapes and wider countryside whilst maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.	BNH4: Capacity of the landscape to accommodate development, while respecting its character.	Housing and jobs	High	Medium-high Medium.	Medium-low	Low	Relies upon the findings of Landscape Character Assessments and capacity studies.
Ensure high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm that is appropriate to the locality.	Not applicable	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Biodiversity and Geodversity							
Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	BG1: Could allocation of the site have a potential impact on a European Site SSSI, SPA or SAC?	Housing and jobs	-	Outside catchment area	Within catchment area	Within 400m	The distance thresholds used are greater for European sites, then SSSIs, then local sites to reflect their level of designation. This does not mean that effects are automatically more significant though. It is assumed that sites within or adjacent to (<50m) a SSSI are more likely to have a direct impact. However, it is recognised that proximity does not necessarily equate to impacts as this is dependent upon the scheme design and type/condition of wildlife sites, *Measurements from site boundaries*
	BG1: Could allocation of the site have a potential impact on a SSSI	Housing and jobs	-	>400m	<400m	Within or adjacent to a designated site (<50m from site boundary)	
	BG2: Could allocation of the site have a potential adverse impact on designated Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserve, RIGs, Potential Wildlife Sites or any other site of wildlife or geodiversity value such as Ancient Woodland (including where BAP species have been recorded)?	Housing and jobs	-	<200m No BAP species recorded	Contains or is adjacent to (50m) a local wildlife site / BAP species have been recorded within 50m of the site. Suitable for biodiversity offsetting.	Contains a locally important site not suitable for biodiversity offsetting	

	BG3: What is the potential impact on TPOs?	Housing and jobs	-	No TPOs on site	TPOs present that could potentially be protected *(i.e. confined to boundaries)*	Multiple TPOs that would be difficult to protect (*i.e. scattered throughout*)	Development on a site containing multiple TPOs that are not confined to one area would be likely to result in unavoidable loss of these assets.
Climate Change and resource use							
Limit, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Increase energy efficiency and production of renewable energy.	Not applicable	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Site location may present opportunities to develop heat networks. However, the information required to make an accurate assessment of potential is not available.
Minimise waste and maximise reuse, recovery and recycling.	RU1: Would allocation of the site result in the use of previously developed land?	Housing and jobs	Predominantly brownfield (>70%)	Partial Brownfield (>30%)	Site is predominantly Greenfield (>70%)	-	Brownfield redevelopment is considered likely to have a positive effect on the baseline position by encouraging reuse of land.
	RU2: Is there good access to a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)?	Housing	<5km	5km-10km	>10km	-	Use of HWRCs is by car. Access by foot is typically prohibited and unlikely.

APPENDIX B: Consultation feedback on the Scoping Report (February 2016)

Consultee	Comment	Response
United Utilities	No comments made at this stage	N/A
Manchester Airport Group	No comments made at this stage	N/A
Network Rail	No comments made at this stage	N/A
Environment Agency	There is no mention of the need to improve the hydromorphology of rivers in Warrington.	Noted. Reference added to section 3.8 under contextual review and baseline position.
	There can be no deterioration in the ecological status of Warrington's rivers from 2009 baseline conditions. Measures have been identified in the River Basin Management Plan to enhance hydromorphology and, therefore, improve river habitats for wildlife and overall ecological status. Some of these enhancement measures may reduce flood risk in Warrington through increased flood water storage. Therefore, it is crucial that this aspect of the WFD is highlighted and assessed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment.	Noted. Text added to the updated Scoping Report in Section 3.8

Consultee	Comment	Response
Historic England	The report does not refer to the full list of policies relevant to the Historic Environment. The baseline information in the scoping report on the historic environment should include all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged. This not only involves undesignated (or local heritage assets) but the potential for unrecorded archaeology, and historic landscape character areas for example. SA Objective 11 needs to make reference to the setting of heritage assets. Concerns raised about the site appraisal framework: - Terminology needs to be correct and correlate to that in the NPPF. - Effects on setting cannot be determined solely by distance. - There is no reference to archaeology. - Should refer to heritage assets to ensure all are covered. - The methodology seems to suggest that certain effects can only be significant for certain assets and not for others.	The scoping report has been updated to take account of suggestions made. The following have been added to the contextual review: • European Landscape Convention (2002) • European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1992) • Government White Paper: Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (2007) The baseline position has been updated to include reference to locally listed buildings and archaeology. SA Objective 11 includes reference to the setting of heritage assets. *''Protect and where possible enhance the significance of historic assets and their setting''* The site criteria relating to the historic environment have been amended. There are now three criteria that are related to the historic environment and character of settlements. BNH1 measures proximity to designated heritage assets. This allows for an objective comparison of sites, but it is acknowledged that the effect on the significance of heritage assets and setting cannot be fully determined through proximity alone. BNH2 seeks to identify potential effects upon the significance and setting of heritage assets / the historic environment by providing a qualitative assessment of site options. This would complement BNH1, adding a further level of detail where sites are highlighted for their potential to have effects. BNH3 addresses the potential for effects upon archaeological sites.
Marine Management Organisation	Refer to the Marine Policy Statement for guidance on any planning activity that includes a section of coastline or tidal river.	Added to the Scoping Report contextual review.
Natural England	Reference Natural Character Areas and how they identify opportunities for positive environmental change and provide the best available information and evidence as a context for local decision making and action plans.	Added to the Scoping Report baseline.

Consultee	Comment	Response
	There should be a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of geodiversity, and the promotion of opportunities for the incorporation of geodiversity interest as part of development.	Agreed. This will be a factor we take into consideration through the appraisal process.
	It is suggested that an objectives compatibility matrix is completed at this stage to compare the SA objectives to those in the Local Plan review.	At this stage the Council has indicated that Plan Objectives 1 and 2 are likely to change in response to the Plan Review. At the moment, the other objectives remain the same. As the Plan review progresses, the objectives may be amended, at which point it would be more appropriate to undertake a compatibility assessment.
	More weight should be given to Green Infrastructure, ideally in the form of a separate objective.	Further discussion of GI has been added under health and wellbeing, Climate Change topics. We consider that green infrastructure is covered adequately in the SA Framework through a number of objectives and sub-criteria (see below), reflecting its multi-functional value and as a cross-cutting theme. ***SA Objective 10.*** *Provide, protect or enhance leisure opportunities, recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to the countryside* SA13 – Sub criteria *To what extent does new development development provide opportunities to enhance green infrastructure (including benefits for wildlife).* SA15 – Sub criteria *Are there opportunities to enhance green infrastructure networks?* We have further highlighted the importance of GI tthrough the addition of additional sub-criteria as follows: SA-10 – Sub criteria *How will development help to protect and enhance a network of multi-functional green infrastructure that encourages active travel and recreation?* SA12 – Sub Criteria *Will new development affect the function of the Green Belt <u>and strategic green infrastructure networks?</u>*

Consultee	Comment	Response
	There is no reference to protected species. We recommend that protected species could specifically be included in the SA	Noted. Scoping report updated.
Satnam Planning Services	Add further detail to High Court ruling.	The High Court Ruling provides context to the Local Plan Review. It is not necessary to discuss the High Court Ruling in detail within the Scoping Report. The SEA Regulations remain the same, and the case did not set precedence with regards to the SEA process. The conclusions relating to SA of the Addendum was that it did not cover all relevant elements of the Regulatory requirements (*notably the precision of a non-technical summary*) and to make it clearer how the topics in the SEA Regulations had been considered.
	There should be an assessment of how development can positively improve deprived areas.	The Scoping report acknowledges that the Local Plan Core Strategy is predicated on a strategy of regeneration and renewal that will help to tackle deprivation and support communities in the areas of greatest need. The report also identifies the need to tackle pockets of deprivation as a key issue and this is followed through into the SA Framework and site assessment methodology. Assessment will take place upon the Plan Review (including reasonable alternatives).
	Suggests the addition of further key issues for the SA (in Section 4): education, open space, availability of services, ability to absorb traffic impacts and if sustainable patterns of development can be provided.	The key issues acknowledge that there are areas that suffer from deprivation in the '*education, training and skills domain'*. The assessment process will cover effects upon services and facilities, transport, accessibility and a whole range of other factors as outlined in the SA Framework (Table 4.2) and Site Assessment Methodology (Appendix A).

Consultee	Comment	Response
	Amendments to High Court Challenge wording in Section 5.	Detailed references to the High Court Challenge have been removed as the scope of the Plan review has widened. The correct process for undertaking SA/SEA is being undertaken in good faith by professional consultants and it is not considered necessary to include detailed discussions of the High Court Ruling in this Scoping Report. The case does not set any particular or novel precedent for how the SA/SEA process should be delivered; rather it simply notes the 'deficiency' relating to the information required to be presented in an Environmental Report (*ie. that there was no non-technical summary to accompany the Addendum*). It is stated in the Scoping Report that the Plan Review will need to be appraised 'as a whole' to take account of any changes. This will also mean there needs to be a reconsideration of any reasonable alternatives to the overall strategy (before it is finalised), as well as undertaking individual site appraisals.

Consultee	Comment	Response
	Amendments suggested to the Draft Appraisal Framework.	*Education capacity* – The ability of developments to contribute to the creation of new schools or the expansion of existing schools is not included within the site appraisal framework. This is considered to be a matter that requires detailed information about the potential for expansion and the potential for new facilities and how this may be affected by multiple developments. Therefore, appraisal of individual site options on an objective basis is difficult. These strategic matters will however be taken into consideration when appraising the overall effects of the Plan Review (and reasonable alternatives) which will set out how much and where new development could be located. Distance to the primary road network is included as a criterion in the site appraisal framework. *EC2: Distance to Principal Road Network by vehicle.* The potential negative effect of the loss of employment land is included as a criterion in the site appraisal framework. *EC1: Would site development lead to the loss of employment land?* The potential for developments to link to green infrastructure and open space is covered by criteria in the site appraisal framework. *HW2: Is the area supported by community facilities?* *HW 3: Access to local natural greenspace (ANGST).* *HW4: Access to formal play space*
Satnam Planning Services	A '*brownfield first*' approach should not be factored into the site appraisal.	The criterion in the site appraisal framework that deals with brownfield/greenfield land (RU1) is considered in the context of resource use. This is only one of many sustainability factors that are considered when assessing the potential effects of site options. It is considered appropriate to include this site criterion.