Sandbach Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Cheshire East Council

Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all

Cheshire East Council

Contents

1. Introduction 4
   1.1. Background and Geographical Context 4
   1.2. Report Structure 5
   1.3. LCWIP Boundary 5
2. Policy and previous study context 7
   2.1. Key National Active Travel Guidance 7
   LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design 7
   Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans – Technical Guidance 7
   2.2. Regional Documentation 8
   Cheshire and Warrington LEP Transport Strategy 2023/24 8
   2.3. Cheshire East Documentation 8
   Cheshire East Local Plan – Local Plan Strategy 2010 – 2030 8
   Cheshire East Council Local Transport Plan 2019 – 2024 9
   Active Travel Strategy 10
   The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028 10
   Air Quality Strategy 11
   Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy 2018 11
   Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026 12
   2.4. Local Documentation 13
   Sandbach Local Transport Development Plan 13
   Sandbach Town Centre Vitality Plan 2023 16
   Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2010-2030 16
   Strategic Cycle Routes for Sandbach 2018 17
3. Gathering Information 18
   3.1. Introduction 18
   3.2. Population and Demographics 19
   Population Information 19
   Population Density 23
   Workplace Density 25
   Car Ownership 27
   Index of Multiple Deprivation 29
   3.3. Local Plan Sites and Development 31
   3.4. Transport Network and Movements 33
   Public Rights of Way 33
   Rights of Way Improvement Plan 35
   Existing Cycle Network 37

Method of Travel to Work....40
Distance Travelled to Work....43
3.5. Understanding Desire Lines....46
Travel to Work Flows....46
Propensity to Cycle Tool....49
Strava Metro....52
Location of Key Attractors....54
Mapping Origin and Destination Points....56
Identification and Classification of Desire Lines....58
3.6. Summary....61
4. Network Planning for Walking....62
4.1. Introduction....62
4.2. Network Plan....62
4.3. Key Area for Improvement – Walking....64
4.4. Establishing Walking Infrastructure Improvements....64
5. Network Planning for Cycling....71
5.1. Introduction....71
5.2. Network Plan....71
5.3. Key Area for Improvement – Cycling....73
5.4. Establishing Cycling Infrastructure....73
6. Prioritising Improvements....92
6.1. Appraisal....92
6.2. Recommended Sequencing of Investment....94
6.3. Benchmark Costs....95
7. Integration and Application....97
7.1. Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS)....97
7.2. Development Management....97
7.3. Funding Submissions....97
7.4. Next Steps....98
8. Public Consultation....99
8.1. Background of the consultation....99
8.2. Walking Route Updates....99
8.3. Cycling Route Updates....99
Appendix A – Appraisal Scoring Matrix....101
Appendix B – Appraisal....102

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Geographical Context

The Active Travel England (ATE) Self-Assessment in December 2023 identified that Cheshire East Council (CEC) has published Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) for all population centres over 20,000 but to improve performance in this criterion, LCWIPs are needed for all centres over 10,000. For CEC to demonstrate progress in the next assessment period, LCWIPs are to be developed for:

- Alsager;
- Handforth;
- Knutsford;
- Middlewich;
- Nantwich;
- Poynton; and
- Sandbach.

This LCWIP will deliver a prioritised list of walking routes and cycling routes for the town of Sandbach that are capable of attracting central government support and funding. The plans will look at improvements to active travel links within Sandbach. Approximately three walking routes and a Core Walking Zone, and three cycling routes will be prioritised for Sandbach and will be considered separately for both walking and cycling.

Local authorities were encouraged to begin developing LCWIPs following the publication of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS). Whilst the preparation of LCWIPs is not mandatory, those local authorities which develop LCWIPs are better placed to make the case for future investment. Therefore, CEC are working to deliver a prioritised list of walking and cycling routes across Cheshire East capable of attracting central government support and funding.

LCWIPs reflect on the current cycling and walking infrastructure provision, identify priorities for improvement, and outline strategies and implementation plans for improvements and active travel network development. The overarching objectives of an LCWIP are to promote active travel through the creation of safe, accessible, and sustainable infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Fundamentally, an LCWIP is a strategic transport planning document developed as a tool for network planning, securing funding and collaborating with a range of stakeholders.

The core aim of an LCWIP is to facilitate and encourage active travel journeys to be taken. The specific aims and objectives for this LCWIP include:

- Encourage active travel such as walking and cycling, reducing dependency on private vehicles.
- Create safe and accessible infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Promote sustainability, health, and quality of life in communities.
- Enhance connectivity, accessibility, and mobility within the community.
- Reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Foster economic development and tourism.
- Promote community involvement and engagement in the planning process.

The main outputs for the initial stages of the LCWIP is a network plan for walking and cycling, identifying key walking and cycling connections and routes.

To assist local authorities in the development of the LCWIP, the DfT published guidance[1] which outlines the core elements and tasks that should be considered. The guidance provides a methodological approach to planning the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure which can be adapted to a given

[1] Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Technical Guidance

local authority's context, geographic scope, and resources. The study approach used for the Sandbach LCWIP reflects the DfT guidance.

1.2. Report Structure

The following sections of the report are reflective of stages 1-6 of the LCWIP guidance[2] which is outlined in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1 LCWIP Guidance Stages

Stage	Name	Description
1	Determining Scope	Establish the geographical extent of the Sandbach LCWIP, and arrangements for governing and preparing the plan.
2	Gathering Information	Identify existing patterns of walking and cycling within Sandbach and potential new journeys. Review existing conditions and identify barriers to cycling and walking. Review related transport and land use policies and programmes.
3	Network Planning for Cycling	Identify origin and destination points and cycle flows within Sandbach. Convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required.
4	Network Planning for Walking	Identify key trip generators, core walking zones and routes within Sandbach, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required.
5	Prioritising Improvements	Prioritise improvements to develop a phased programme for future investment in Sandbach.
6	Integration and Application	Integrate outputs into Sandbach local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.

This report comprises:

- Section 2 Policy and Previous Study Context (Stage 2): reviews relevant policies for Cheshire East and Sandbach specifically;
- Section 3 Gathering Information (Stage 2): identifies existing patterns of walking and cycling through a review of existing conditions and identifies barriers to cycling and walking;
- Section 4 Network Planning for Walking (Stage 3): converts desire lines from Section 3 into a network of walking routes and determines types of interventions that may be appropriate;
- Section 5 Network Planning for Cycling (Stage 4): converts desire lines from Section 3 into a network of cycling routes and determines types of interventions that may be appropriate;
- Section 6 Prioritising Improvements (Stage 5): improvements that are needed to develop the programme in the future;
- Section 7 Integration and Application (Stage 6): how this LCWIP can be integrated in broader policy and ensure delivery cuts across a wide range of future investment programmes; and
- Section 8 Public Consultation: A summary of the LCWIP consultation undertaken in 2025.

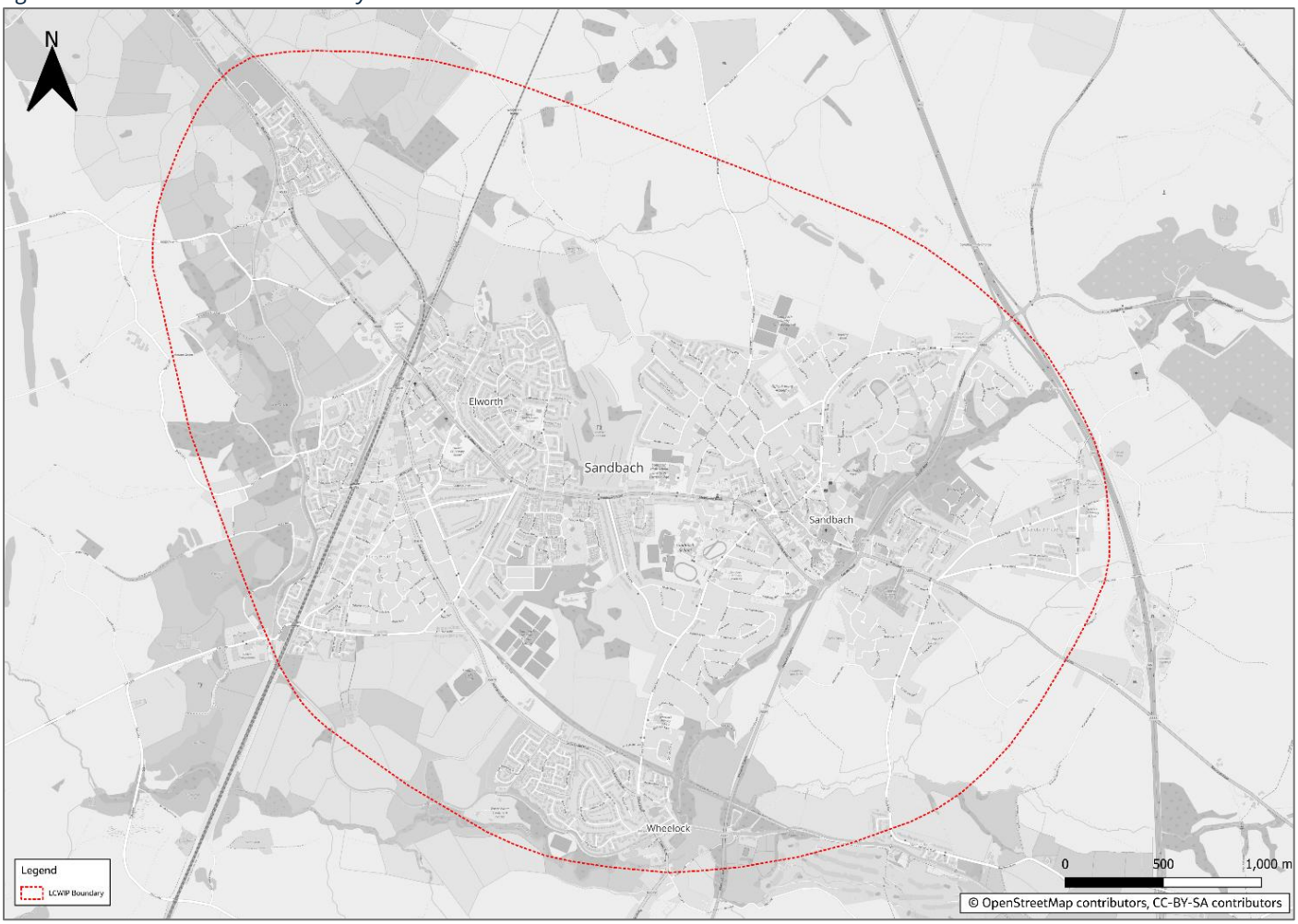
1.3. LCWIP Boundary

This LCWIP will consider the full extent of the area outlined in Figure 1-1 to develop a long-term plan to enhance walking and cycling infrastructure across Sandbach. The full extent of the area will be

[2] Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans technical guidance

considered, including employment areas and development sites, and all other trip attractors and destinations to develop a network of routes.

Figure 1-1 Sandbach LCWIP Boundary



2. Policy and previous study context

Prior to developing an evidence base, it is important to undertake a review of existing policies and local documentation. Sandbach is located to the north west of Stoke-on-Trent and to the east of Crewe. National, regional and town specific documentation will be reviewed to assess existing policies, identify any gaps and to help with the proposal of interventions.

2.1. Key National Active Travel Guidance

LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design[3]

LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design was published by the UK Government's DfT in July 2020 and provides guidance to local authorities on delivering quality cycle infrastructure and recommends that the design of cycle networks and routes are based on five core design principles:

- Coherent: Cycle networks should be planned and designed to allow people to reach their day-to-day destinations easily, along routes that connect, are simple to navigate and are of a consistently high quality;
- Direct: Cycle routes should be at least as direct – and preferably more direct – than those available for private motor vehicles;
- Safe: Not only must cycle infrastructure be safe, it should also be perceived to be safe so that more people feel able to cycle;
- Comfortable: Comfortable conditions for cycling require routes with good quality, well maintained - smooth surfaces, adequate width for the volume of users, minimal stopping and starting and avoiding steep gradients; and
- Attractive: Cycle infrastructure should help to deliver public spaces that are well designed and finished in attractive materials and be places that people want to spend time using.

The LTN also highlights the importance of engraining accessibility and inclusivity through all the core design principles.

LTN 1/20 will be integrated into the LCWIP development and will guide the design of schemes identified as part of the LCWIP. The five core design principles will also be considered when carrying out the Cycle Level of Service and the Walking Route Audit Tool.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans – Technical Guidance[4]

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS), are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level.

An LCWIP should provide the outputs of:

- A network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development;
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment; and
- A report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

The LCWIP process includes six stages, where overall the LCWIP should enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, ideally over a 10-year period and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle. These stages are set out in Table 1-1 in Section 1.2.

[3] LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design 2020

[4] Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans technical guidance

This policy is relevant in creating this LCWIP as it provides all the essential steps that need to be taken to identify cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. By following these steps, this LCWIP will create a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment.

2.2. Regional Documentation

Cheshire and Warrington LEP Transport Strategy 2023/24[5]

The Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership[6] (LEP) published an updated delivery plan for 2023/24 with a focus on continuing to support Cheshire and Warrington, national Government and businesses to achieve their mission of becoming the "the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK." The LEP plan is part of plans being developed that set out in more detail how priorities of the Strategic Economic Plan will be delivered up until 2040.

The strategy's central theme highlights improving connectivity, to unlock strategic and wider development sites for housing and employment and relieving congested areas.

The LEP document sets out key challenges for the transport network that will be addressed through the strategy:

1. Congestion on strategic routes;
2. Cross boundary movement;
3. Sub regional movement;
4. Dominance of car for mode share;
5. Low bus use;
6. Rural connectivity;
7. Accommodating development growth;
8. Modernising local rail services;
9. Increasing levels of cycling and walking; and
10. Digital connectivity.

This LCWIP will prioritise improving walking and cycling links within Sandbach, aiming to increase levels of walking and cycling, supporting the LEP Transport Strategy challenges.

2.3. Cheshire East Documentation

Cheshire East Local Plan – Local Plan Strategy 2010 – 2030[7]

The Cheshire East Local Plan, adopted in July 2017, sets out the council's plans for sustainable economic growth up until 2030. It is the council's most important tool in ensuring development of the Cheshire East area.

In order to deliver this vision for Cheshire East as a whole, the council has set four strategic priorities:

- Promote economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth;
- Create sustainable communities where all members are able to contribute and where all the infrastructure required to support the community is provided;
- Protect and enhance environmental quality of the built and natural environment; and
- Reduce the need to travel, manage car use and promote more sustainable modes of transport and improving the road network.

Within the Local Plan, the following policy applies to the transport aspects of a development:

[5] Cheshire and Warrington LEP Transport Strategy 2023/24
[6] Known formally now as Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington
[7] Cheshire East Local Plan - Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030

- Policy CO1: Sustainable Travel and Transport; within the Local Plan specifically refers to improving public transport and active travel (walking and cycling) provision.

The Local Plan sets out how the economy can continue to thrive by providing new land for development, whilst minimising the impact on the natural environment.

Cheshire East Council is preparing a new Local Plan in accordance with the Government's recently reformed plan-making system. A formal scoping consultation will be undertaken between 21 July and 1 September 2026 to help inform the development of the Plan.

Developments within the Local Plan are vital to take into consideration when developing an LCWIP. Development of the LCWIP will also help to meet Policy CO1.

Cheshire East Council Local Transport Plan[8]

Cheshire East Council adopted its LTP Strategy and Investment Framework in May 2026, which together set out a transport vision and policies, and a structured approach to investment that are robust, relevant and responsive to the needs of residents throughout Cheshire East.

The LTP Strategy sets out how the council will improve the way people travel around borough in the years ahead, shaped by today's challenges, new opportunities and the latest evidence. The LTP vision is "a well-connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East".

The LTP has identified four aims and six policies that set out how the borough will move towards the vision, recognising that different areas and communities have different travel needs.

One of the key aims of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) is 'Improving Connections for All', ensuring that everyone travelling within, to and from Cheshire East has access to a range of transport options and attractive alternatives to private car use. Supporting the aims and priorities of the LTP are a series of cross-cutting policies that provide a clear framework for achieving the Plan's vision and objectives. Policy LTP3 seeks to promote initiatives and infrastructure that support environmental sustainability and the transition to carbon neutrality, while Policy LTP4 aims to prioritise transport improvements in accordance with the transport user hierarchy. As shown in Figure 2-1, walking, wheeling and cycling sit at the top of Cheshire East Council's Transport User Hierarchy, reflecting the council's commitment to promoting active and sustainable travel choices.

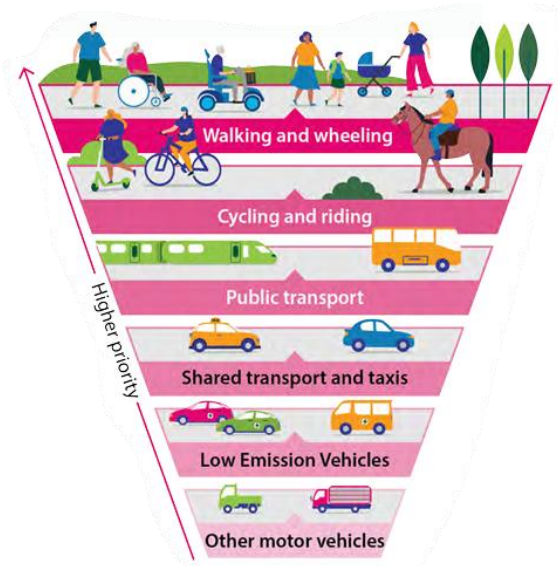


Figure 2-1 LTP Transport User Hierarchy

Alongside the LTP, the Investment Framework[10] guides how the council plans, prioritises, and delivers transport improvements across Cheshire East. This sets the way forward for a network that works for everyone: supporting growth, improving wellbeing, reducing environmental impacts and enhancing connections.

Development of this LCWIP will be in line with CEC's LTP, specifically though supporting the actions listed above.

[8] Cheshire East Council Local Transport Plan Strategy, 2026
[10] Cheshire East Council Investment Framework, 2026

Active Travel Strategy[11]

Cheshire East has developed an Active Travel Strategy, published in 2026, which sets out the vision for walking, wheeling and cycling across Cheshire East. This strategy replaces the existing Cheshire East Cycling Strategy (2017), bringing the vision up to date to ensure a more holistic, active travel approach, rather than solely focusing on one mode and responds to our rapidly changing world.

The Active Travel Strategy identifies five key opportunities to increase active travel across borough:

- Improving public health;
- Supporting our town and local centres and leisure destinations;
- High potential for a shift to more sustainable travel including public transport;
- Collaboration with partners and the community to develop active travel solutions; and
- Technology can support active journeys.

The Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for active travel in Cheshire East as "A borough where walking, wheeling and cycling is the easy option for short journeys, achieved through a connected, safe and accessible network that supports a healthy Cheshire East". This vision aligns closely and supports the overarching vision for the council's LTP. To help realise this ambition, the Strategy identifies three priority themes that will encourage active travel to become the first choice for appropriate journeys. These themes are intended to be delivered through a coordinated and integrated approach to support better outcomes and deliver demonstrable change:

- Create – create a more connected network for walking, wheeling and cycling and horse riders where appropriate;
- Culture – support a culture where walking, wheeling and cycling are the easy choices for local, short journeys; and
- Collaborate - collaborate with local communities, businesses and within the council to create a unified approach to walking, wheeling and cycling

Supporting the Collaborate theme, the council has an appointed an active travel champion. This individual helps encourage more people to travel by bike on safe cycle networks and to walk more of their day to day journeys.

An appendix to the Strategy, the Access Control Barrier Policy, further supports the council's active travel objectives by improving accessibility across the transport network and promoting greater consistency in service delivery across the borough. The policy establishes a clear, consistent and transparent approach to providing access for all users across the highway network, PRoW and wider access routes and sites. By reducing barriers to access wherever possible, the policy supports the council's priority of encouraging active travel and outdoor leisure activities.

The Sandbach LCWIP will promote walking, wheeling and cycling through the creation of safe, accessible and sustainable infrastructure, aligning with the main ambitions, priorities and actions of the Active Travel Strategy.

The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028[13]

The Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board provides vision and a coordinated drive to address the health and wellbeing needs of the local population in Cheshire East, to reduce unacceptable and

[11] Cheshire East Council Active Travel Strategy

[13] Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy

avoidable variations in health and healthcare. It acts as a link between NHS bodies, local authorities and other agencies (Police, Fire, 3rd Sector) and gives local people greater say in how care is provided.

The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS) was developed based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, a review into the borough's health, wellbeing and social care needs and challenges such as healthier places, mental wellbeing, ageing well and starting well. The JLHWS proposes how Cheshire East's Health and Wellbeing Board aims to have a positive impact on individual lives by ensuring it is responding to the needs of people now and in the future.

This policy is relevant to the LCWIP as the JLHWS aims to prioritise new walking and cycling infrastructure in areas with higher levels of deprivation and to promote active travel.

Air Quality Strategy[15]

Cheshire East Council produced a new Air Quality Strategy (AQS) in 2024 to update its approach to meeting statutory air quality responsibilities.

Improving air quality continues to be essential for protecting public health, as certain pollutants pose significant risks, particularly to vulnerable groups such as children, older adults, and people with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions. Road transport remains the primary contributor to local air pollutant emissions in Cheshire East.

The objectives of the AQS include maintaining and improving air quality across Cheshire East; embedding air quality considerations across all council functions through a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach; supporting wider council priorities and initiatives, including progressing toward net zero by 2045 target; raising awareness and understanding of air quality impacts on health, the environment, and biodiversity among stakeholders and communities; and strengthening collaboration with neighbouring authorities, businesses, and residents while acting as a central source of air quality information.

In relation to transport and air quality, the AQS aims to promote opportunities for active travel and other sustainable mobility options. This includes enabling walking, cycling, improved public transport, and cleaner vehicle technologies to support reductions in transport-related emissions.

The Sandbach LCWIP will set out a network of walking/wheeling and cycling routes in Sandbach. These routes will encourage individuals to walk or cycle more and lower usage of their private vehicles. This will in turn have benefits to the air quality of Sandbach and wider Cheshire East.

Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy 2018[17]

Cheshire East adopted their Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (SMOTS) in 2018, where the aim is to work together with schools and other delivery partners in the borough to implement measures that will provide opportunities for sustainable modes of travel to school.

As part of the strategy, the council has identified targets to increase the number of schools participating in promotional campaigns. The Air Quality and Parking Enforcement Team at Cheshire East Council are looking at working with schools in collaboration with Living Streets on their Walk Once a Week (WOW) initiative. The council is also looking at increasing the number of schools/colleges with bronze level accreditation via Modeshift STARS, however this is currently under review.

If these targets are achieved and if Cheshire East schools improve the number and quality of their Travel Plans through the usage of the Modeshift STARS system, the implementation of measures will increase the number of children using sustainable modes of travel to school.

[15] Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy

[17] Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy 2018

An increase in children using sustainable modes of travel to school will result in various outcomes, including:

- Outcome 1: a reduction in vehicle emissions;
- Outcome 2: an overall improvement to air quality;
- Outcome 3: improved road safety;
- Outcome 4: increased health and wellbeing of students, staff and parents/carers; and
- Outcome 5: increased educational attainment.

This strategy is supported by the LCWIP as by providing higher quality and more accessible walking and cycling networks within Sandbach, individuals may change the mode of transport to school from private vehicles to active travel modes such as walking and cycling. By making this change and increasing the number of children walking and cycling to school, Cheshire East will move towards achieving their five outcomes mentioned above.

Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026[18]

In 2011, Cheshire East Council published its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) with an aim to correctly record the Public Rights of Way network in Cheshire East, so it is easy to use, free from obstructions and delivers health and wellbeing, social, economic and environmental benefits.

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, published in 2020, requires all local authorities to have a Right of Way Improvement Plan that aims to;

- Assess to what extent local rights of way and other countryside access resources meet the current and future needs of the public;
- Assess the opportunities for exercise and enjoyment of the local authority area; and
- Assess the accessibility of local rights of way and routes to visually impaired people and those with mobility problems.

The ROWIP supports the Cheshire East LTP and Active Travel Strategy by prioritising the needs of users who walk, wheel or cycle.

Cheshire East has a vision for the ROWIP which is to:

- Recognise the economic, social and heritage value of public rights of way and the important means of accessing the countryside;
- Improve local rights of way to promote and encourage the use and enjoyment of them;
- Enhance opportunities for sustainable travel and development; and
- Maintain the public rights of way network and keep it in a good condition.

Cheshire East Council is in the process of creating a new ROWIP for 2026 to 2036, which was consulted on in Spring 2026[19].

Public rights of way are essential in encouraging people to walk and cycle. With the creation of the Sandbach LCWIP, more walking and cycling routes will be provided in the borough, supporting walking and cycling. The ROWIP routes will also be considered during the LCWIP route identification process.

[18] Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026

[19] Correct as of July 2026

2.4. Local Documentation

Sandbach Local Transport Development Plan[20]

Eleven Local Transport Development Plans (LTDPs) were created in 2022 across the Borough for the two principal towns and nine Key Service Centres which includes Sandbach.

The plans identify how a coordinated and integrated transport network can be delivered, covering all forms of transport including walking, cycling, buses, rail, and roads. Improvements included in the plans are complementary to regeneration plans across the Borough.

Sandbach's LTDP objectives are shown in Table 2-12 below.

Table 2-1 Local Transport Objectives

Number	Local Transport Objective	How the Active Travel package supports the objective
1	Improving transport access to and within Sandbach to support a thriving market town	Improving cycling and walking routes into the town centre from the residential areas to help provision of travel choice. Increased provision of secure cycle parking within the town centre. Good route signage for pedestrian and cyclists to, and around, the town centre.
2	Improving transport connections between the town centre and Sandbach train station	Improve walking and cycling routes to Sandbach railway station from the town centre and surrounding residential areas. Working with the rail operators and Network Rail to install secure cycle parking facilities at the railway station. In the long-term, work with the rail operator(s) and Network Rail to review whether a cycle hire scheme can be implemented at the station for rail passengers to use.
3	Supporting access from rural communities around Sandbach to key services and employment	Provide new and improved cycle and walking routes from rural areas to connect to town centre services. Remove current barriers with better on-road and off-road infrastructure to encourage more sustainable trips. Work with key services and employment sites to install secure cycle parking facilities.
4	Improving transport connections along key routes to and from Crewe, Congleton, Middlewich, and the Potteries, including access to key services such as Leighton and Macclesfield District Hospitals	Upgrade existing cycling and walking routes, and develop new routes to connect Sandbach with other key towns and services Use current assets such as the canal towpath network to provide high quality direct off-road routes for pedestrian and cyclists.

[20] Sandbach Local Transport Development Plan

Number	Local Transport Objective	How the Active Travel package supports the objective
5	Supporting access to education and employment sites	Working with the Sustainable Mode of Travel to School (SMOTS) programme, develop cycle routes and crossing facilities to support sustainable routes to schools. Work with planners and developers to ensure sustainable access is provided to new employment sites including the use of developer funding for schemes.
6	Strengthening the transport network to accommodate development such as the 'Capricorn' Local Plan site	Provide dedicated cycling and walking routes connecting the Capricorn site to local residential areas and Sandbach town centre to facilitate access to employment opportunities by sustainable modes. with developers to ensure walking and cycling infrastructure is provided to access new housing sites.

Within the LTDP, 45 transport schemes have been identified that relate to active travel schemes and initiatives which are displayed in Figure 2-1.

The Sandbach LCWIP will aim address some of the objectives in the LTDPs in relation to active travel, walking and cycling. The potential interventions and schemes as mentioned in Table 2-12 and Figure 2-1 will be considered further in this piece of work.

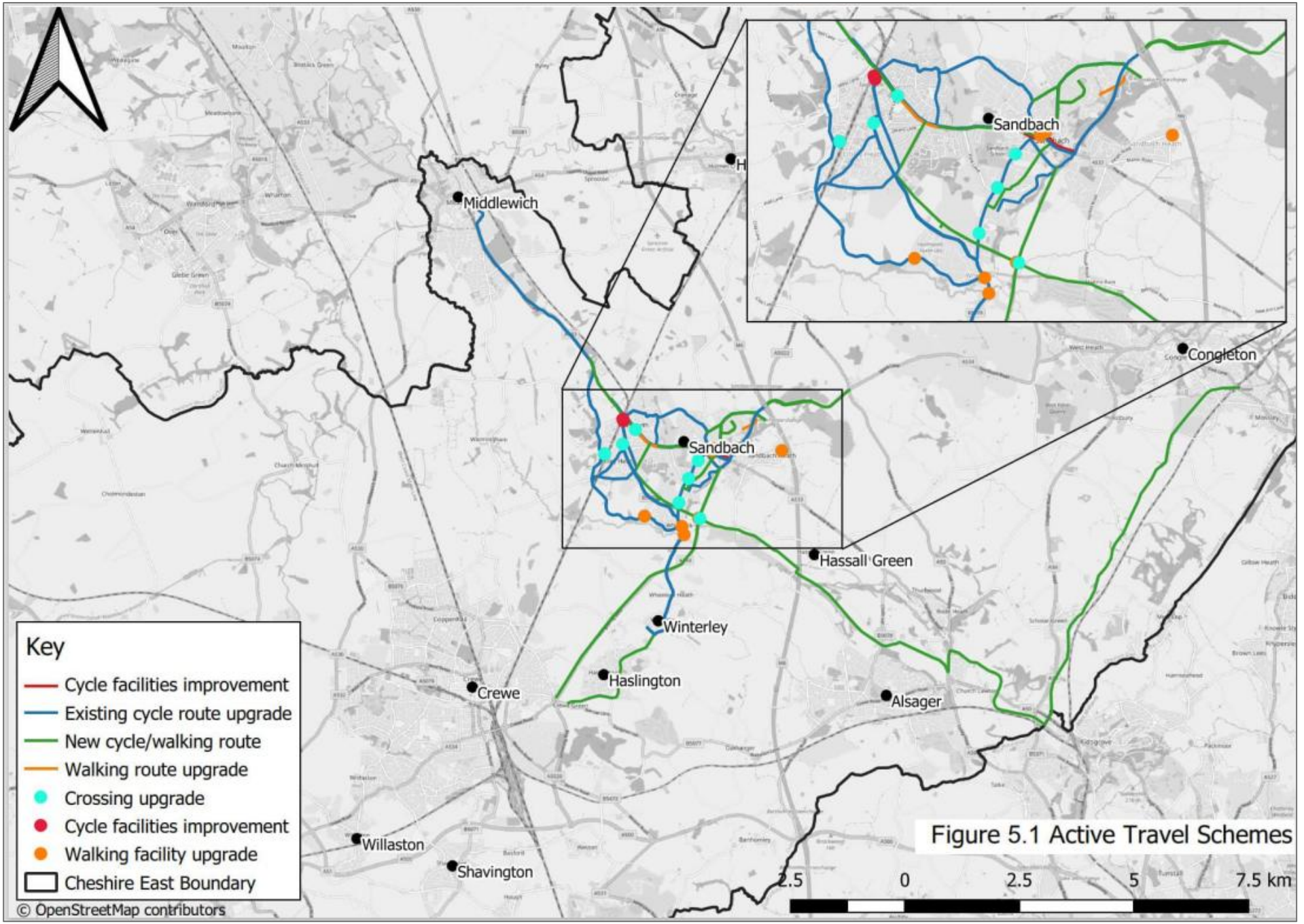


Figure 2-2 Active Travel Interventions in Sandbach (LTDP)

Sandbach Town Centre Vitality Plan 2023[21]

CEC is committed to supporting the vitality and viability of all town centres within the Borough. The Sandbach Town Centre Vitality Plan (TCVP) provides a sense of direction and identifies initiatives to support the town to better fulfil their potential, with its own unique opportunities and specific challenges and local groups/stakeholders.

The document outlines previous studies undertaken to assess the provision of active travel infrastructure in Sandbach. They have established the need for a range of improvements to better connect strategic walking and cycling routes with the town centre and its assets, such as:

- Delivering a movement plant to reduce car dominance;
- Encouraging walking and cycling; and
- Improving connections between key destinations and the centre.

The Sandbach TCVP aims to reduce car dominance and encourage footfall within the town centre. This would benefit local businesses and creating a healthier, safer environment. A number of areas have identified where car dominance could be reduced and pedestrian facilities should be improved:

- Hightown Drinking Fountain to High Street;
- High Street and The Cobbles;
- A533 Middlewich Road Roundabout; and
- Old Mill Road.

The plans also identify actions that can be taken to improve cycling and walking conditions. This includes the delivery of cycle and pedestrian crossing facilities at junctions, cycle parking, cycle and walking connections, improved signage and wayfinding, and maintenance of cycle paths to ensure safety and adequate lighting. Linkages with local cycling clubs, walking groups and relevant volunteer organisations could also be considered to encourage walking and cycling.

This LCWIP will contribute towards achieving the ambitions for a network of walking and cycling routes in Sandbach that encourage active travel for short trips. Suggestions within the TCVP will be considered in development of the routes.

Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2010-2030[22]

The Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) sets out policies to guide the sustainable development of Sandbach. It aligns with the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy to foster economic growth, build sustainable communities, safeguard and improve environmental quality, and encourage sustainable transportation.

Policy PC5 of the plan states that development sites and new facilities are expected to have publicly accessible links to footpath, cycle networks and green spaces where possible. To support this policy, the plan outlines high quality green links between existing public rights of way and other footpaths that will be provided in support of the policy.

Another main aim of the Sandbach NDP is to improve infrastructure of the town to develop a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system that contributes to the social, environmental and economic well-being of the residents, businesses and visitors to Sandbach. As well as, providing equal

[21] Sandbach Town Centre Vitality Plans 2023

[22] Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan 2010-2030

opportunities for everyone to access key services whilst maximising the use of 'green' alternatives to vehicular movements in Sandbach.

By providing a network of walking and cycling routes for cyclists and pedestrians, the LCWIP contributes to creating a more sustainable and active transportation network in Sandbach which is in line with the NDP.

Strategic Cycle Routes for Sandbach 2018[23]

This report outlines how improvements can be made to optimise cycling provision across five selected routes. These aim to encourage cycling for commuters, school students and provides safe access to the town centre. The routes are:

- Strategic Route 1: A533 Middlewich Road/London Road/Booth Lane;
- Strategic Route 2: Connections from Cookesmere Lane to A533 London Road;
- Strategic Route 3: Crewe Road;
- Strategic Route 4: Capricorn; and
- Strategic Route 5: Congleton Road.

This LCWIP will contribute towards achieving the ambitions for a network of walking and cycling routes in Sandbach that encourages active travel for short trips. Suggestions within the Strategic Cycle Routes for Sandbach will be considered in development of the routes.

[23] Strategic Cycle Routes for Sandbach 2018

3. Gathering Information

3.1. Introduction

In order to develop the Sandbach LCWIP routes, baseline data across Cheshire East has been gathered and analysed. This analysis has been carried out to help gain insight into the current and potential future demand for walking and cycling within the Sandbach area, along with the barriers towards active travel.

The analysis included the following datasets:

- Population Information;
- Population Density;
- Workplace Density;
- Car Ownership;
- Index of Deprivation;
- Planned New Development;
- Public Rights of Way;
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Existing Cycle Network;
- Method of Travel to Work;
- Distance Travelled to Work;
- Propensity to Cycle Tool;
- Strava Metro;
- Amenities; and
- Origin Destination Mapping.

3.2. Population and Demographics

Population Information

Figure 3-1, Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3 show the percentage of each age category in Sandbach using MSOA 2021 Census Data taken from ONS[24]. Analysis of these maps is shown below.

Aged 15 and under

Figure 3-1 shows that the highest percentage of individuals aged 15 and under are located around Wheelock, Ettiley Heath and Elworth in Sandbach where 18 to 25% of the population are aged 15 and under. This can be seen along Hind Heath Road, Salt Line Way, parts of London Road and Middlewich Road. To the north east of the town centre around Congleton Road and Hassall Green, the percentage of individuals aged 15 and under is lower at around 0 to 14%.

Aged 16 to 64

Figure 3-2 shows that the highest percentage of individuals aged 16 and 64 are located around Wheelock, Ettiley Heath and Elworth in Sandbach where more than 63% of the population are aged between 16 and 64. On the outskirts of Sandbach around Hassall Green, to the north and west of the town centre, the percentage of individuals aged 16 to 64 is lower, at around 58 to 60%.

Aged 65 and older

Figure 3-3 shows that the highest percentage of individuals aged 16 to 64 are located to the north east of Sandbach town centre, around Bradwall Road, Congleton Road and Old Mill Road, where more than 27% of the population are aged 65 and above. The area with the lowest percentage of individuals aged 65 and older is located around the centre of Sandbach where only between 0 and 15% of individuals are aged 65 and older.

It is important to ensure that good walking and cycling links are provided throughout the centre of Sandbach to ensure individuals no matter what age have the ability to access their everyday amenities with ease and confidence. As well as ensuring walking and cycling routes are accessible for all. Without good transport connectivity, individuals will not be able to access education and employment, which can in turn have an impact on GDP of the area.

[24] Age by Five-Year Age Bands - 2021 Census

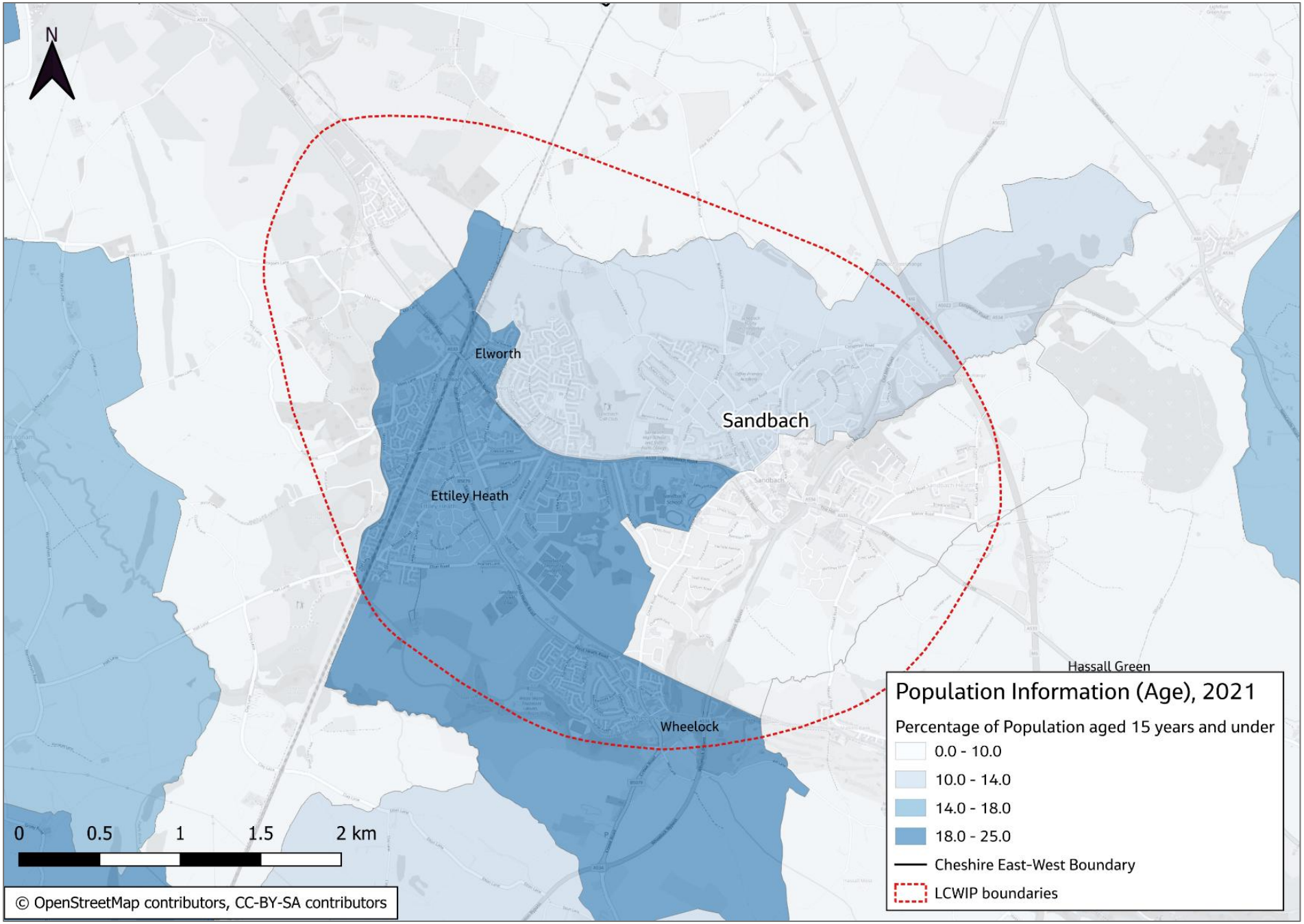


Figure 3-1 Percentage of the population aged 15 and under



Figure 3-2 Percentage of population aged 16 to 64

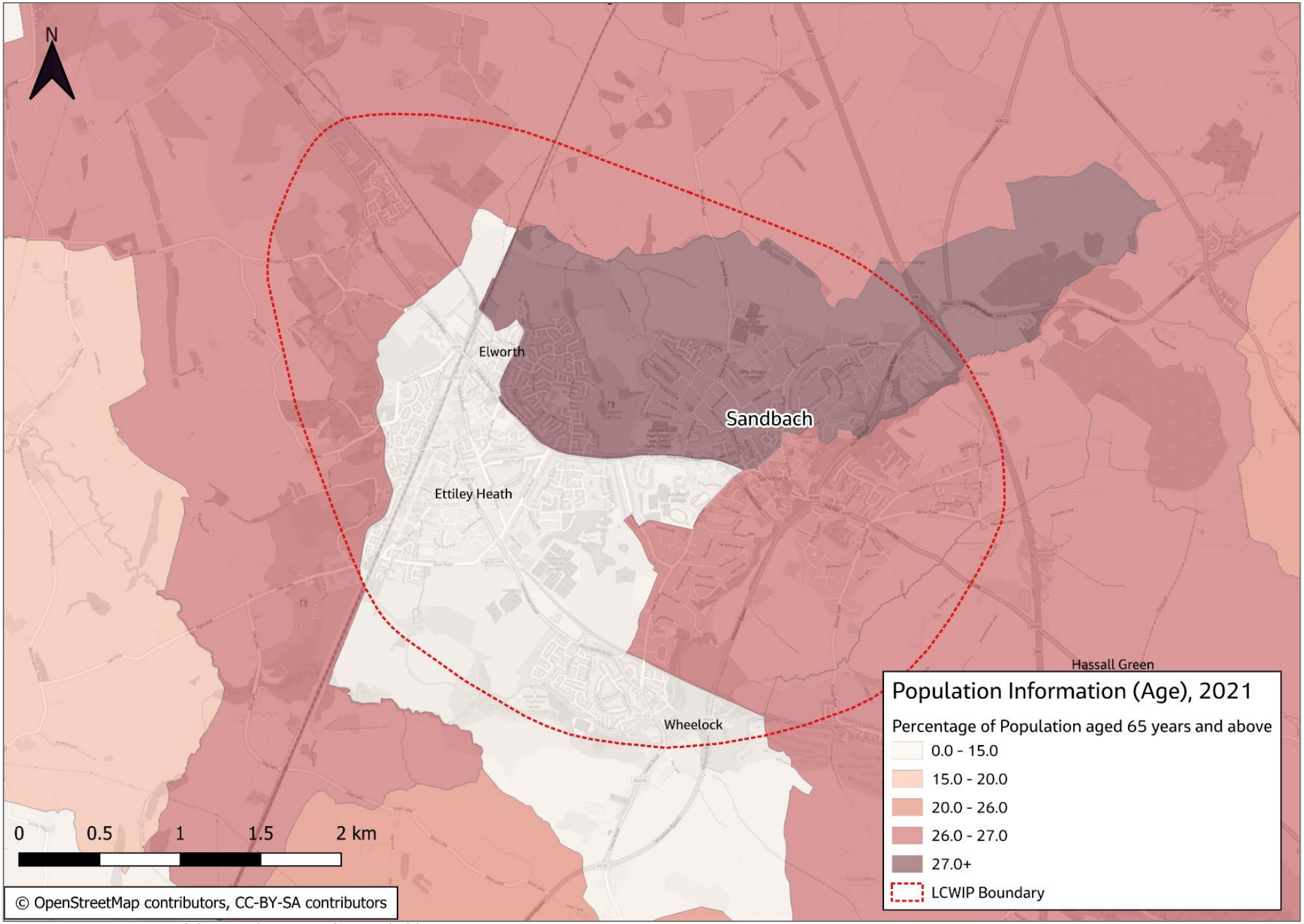


Figure 3-3 Percentage of the population aged 65 and older

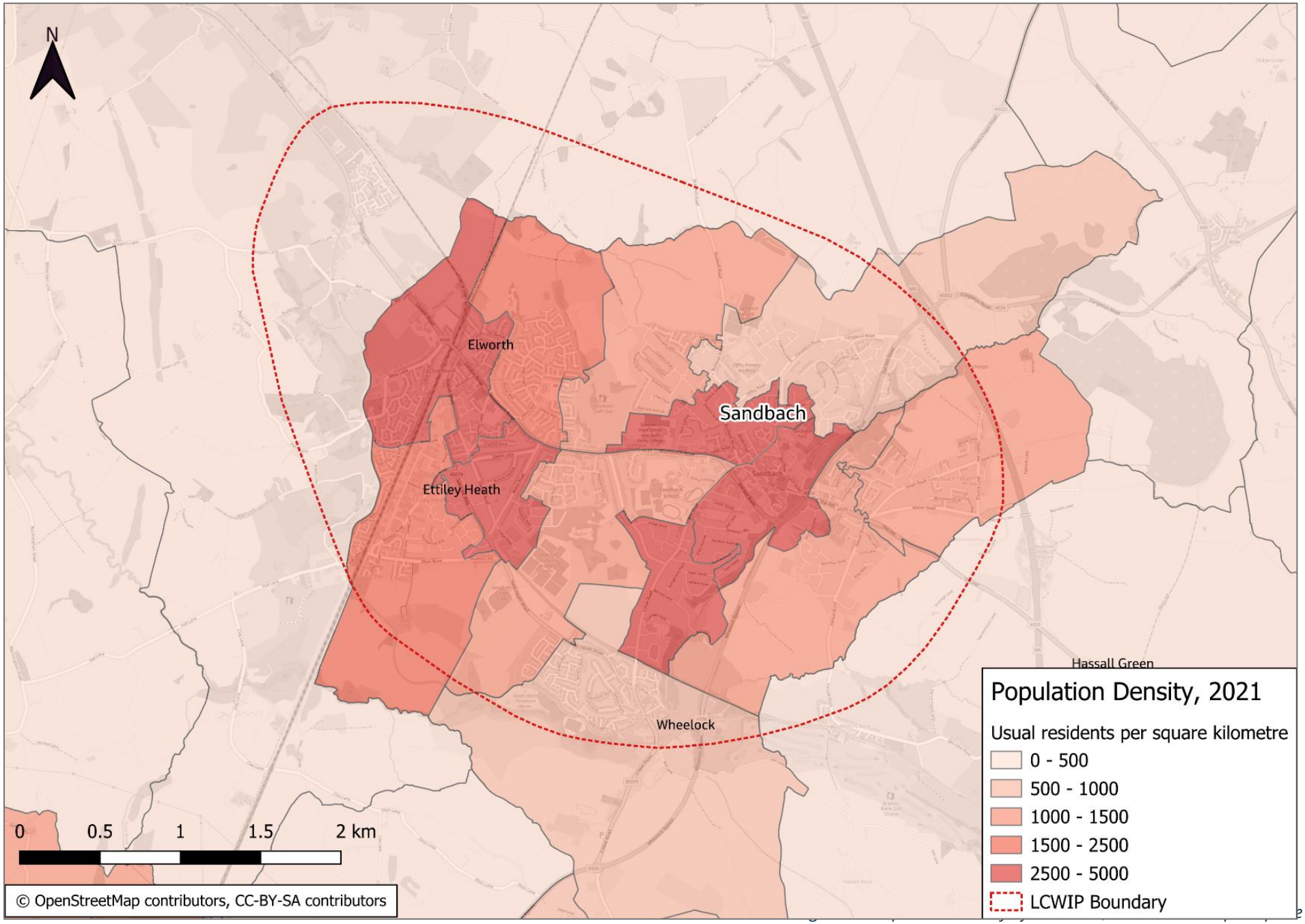
Population Density

Figure 3-4 shows the population density across Sandbach[25], this data shows where there are areas with higher poplation density and areas where there is a lower population density.

Figure 3-4 shows that the areas with the highest population density and most residents per square kilometre are located to the east and west of the town centre. Around Crewe Road, Salt Line Way in Ettiley Heath and London Road in Elworth, there are between 2,500 to 5,000 usual residents per square kilometre. Around the peripheries of Sandbach town centre, population density is lower at around 0 to 500 usual residents per square kilometre.

A higher population density could be explained in these areas where there is a more urbanised environment, where there are many shops, schools, doctors and accessibility to public transport. Population density may be higher in these areas due to residents wanting to be closer to these amenities. This suggests that there needs to be extensive walking and cycling links in these areas provided to ensure all individuals living in and around the town centre can access their everyday amenities with ease and without having to use a car.

[25] Population Density - 2021 Census


N
Elworth
Sandbach
Ettiley Heath
Wheelock
Hassall Green
0
0.5
1
1.5
2 km
© OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA contributors
Population Density, 2021
Usual residents per square kilometre
0 - 500
500 - 1000
1000 - 1500
1500 - 2500
2500 - 5000
LCWIP Boundary

e kilometre

Workplace Density

Figure 3-5 shows the density of the workplace population[26] across Sandbach, providing an indication of job density within Sandbach town centre. The 2021 Census was conducted during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic when many individuals were forced to work from home. Therefore, the 2011 Census gives a more accurate representation of workplace density within Sandbach.

Figure 3-5 shows that the highest number of person per hectare in the workplace population in Sandbach is lcoated to the north of the town centre. There are between 5 to 8 people per hectare in the workplace population around Congleton Road, Middlewich Road, Bradwell Road and around Sandbach Golf Club. Workplace density is also high around Wheelock and Ettiley Heath where there are between 3 and 5 persons per hectare. Employment density is much lower on the peripheries of Sandbach, where there is only between 0 and 1 persons per hectare.

These findings, show that north of Sandbach centre there is a higher proportion of individuals working within the town centre. This may be due to these areas being located in a more urbanised environment, where there are more job opportunities for individuals. Therefore, it is important that the areas that have high workplace population density are provided with good walking and cycling links in order to ensure individuals can walk or cycle to work easily and safely.

[26] Workplace Population Density - Census 2011

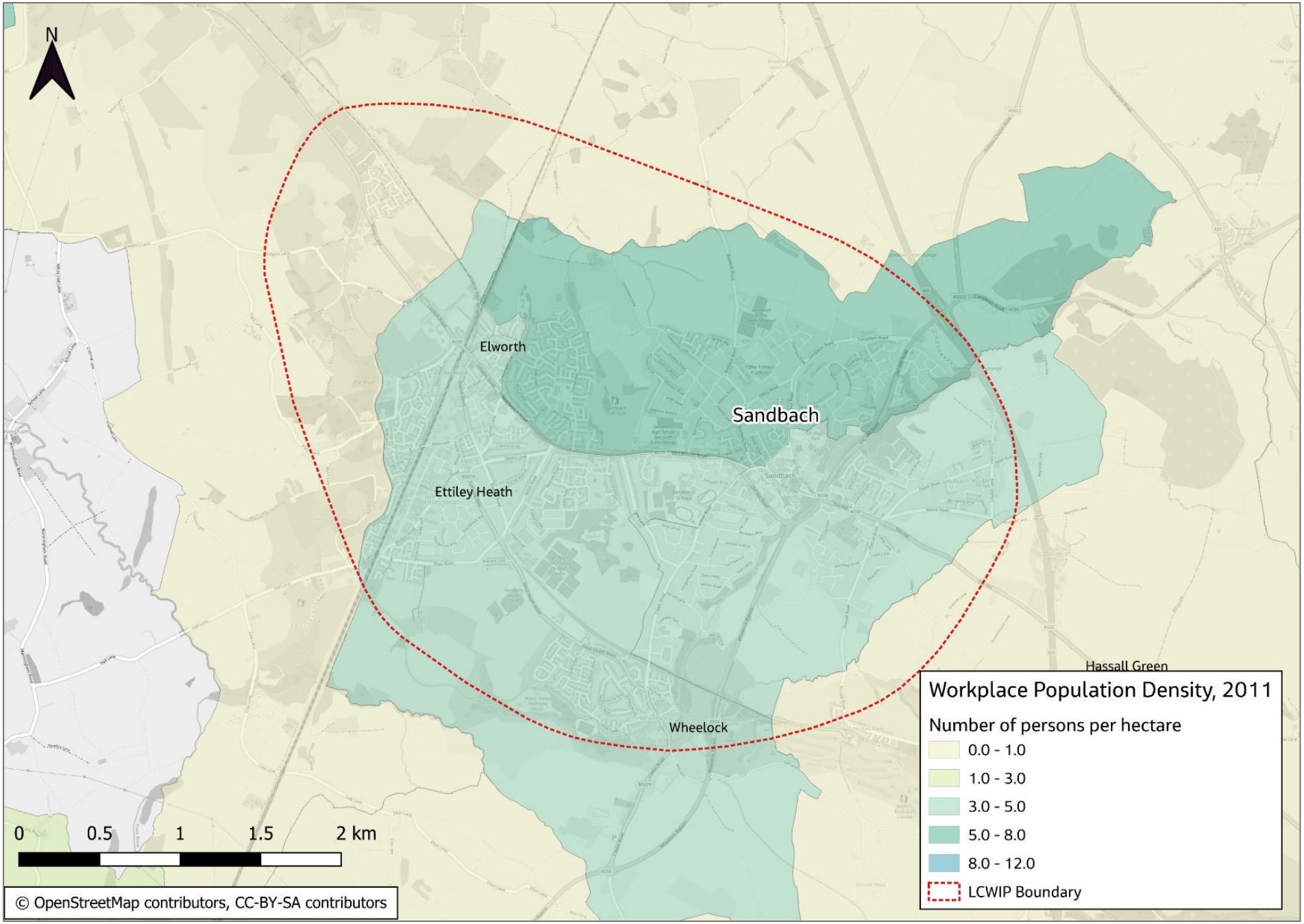


Figure 3-5 Workplace population density, number of persons per hectare

Car Ownership

Figure 3-6 shows the percentage of households in Sandbach that do not own a car or a van, taken from the 2021 Census[27].

Figure 3-6 shows the areas with the highest car ownership are located around the peripheries of Sandbach town centre, such as Arclid, Elton and Moston Green, where only 0 to 5% of households do not own a car or a van. Areas with lower car ownership are located closer to the middle of Sandbach town centra around Old Mill Road, High Street and Bradwall Road where 25 to 40% of the population do not own a vehicle.

Due to these areas of Sandbach having lower car ownership, it is essential that these areas as well connected to workplaces and key amenities via walking and cycling links. Providing individuals work within a suitable distance to walk or cycle to work with walking and cycling links means that they can travel to work via active travel. Furthermore, it is essential these walking and cycling links have good connections to public transport, such as nearby bus stops and train stations, to ensure that those that work further distances can access work opportunities. Providing good walking and cycling links to areas with high car ownership will encourage modal shift if quality facilities are available in the area.

[27] Car or Van Availability - 2021 Census

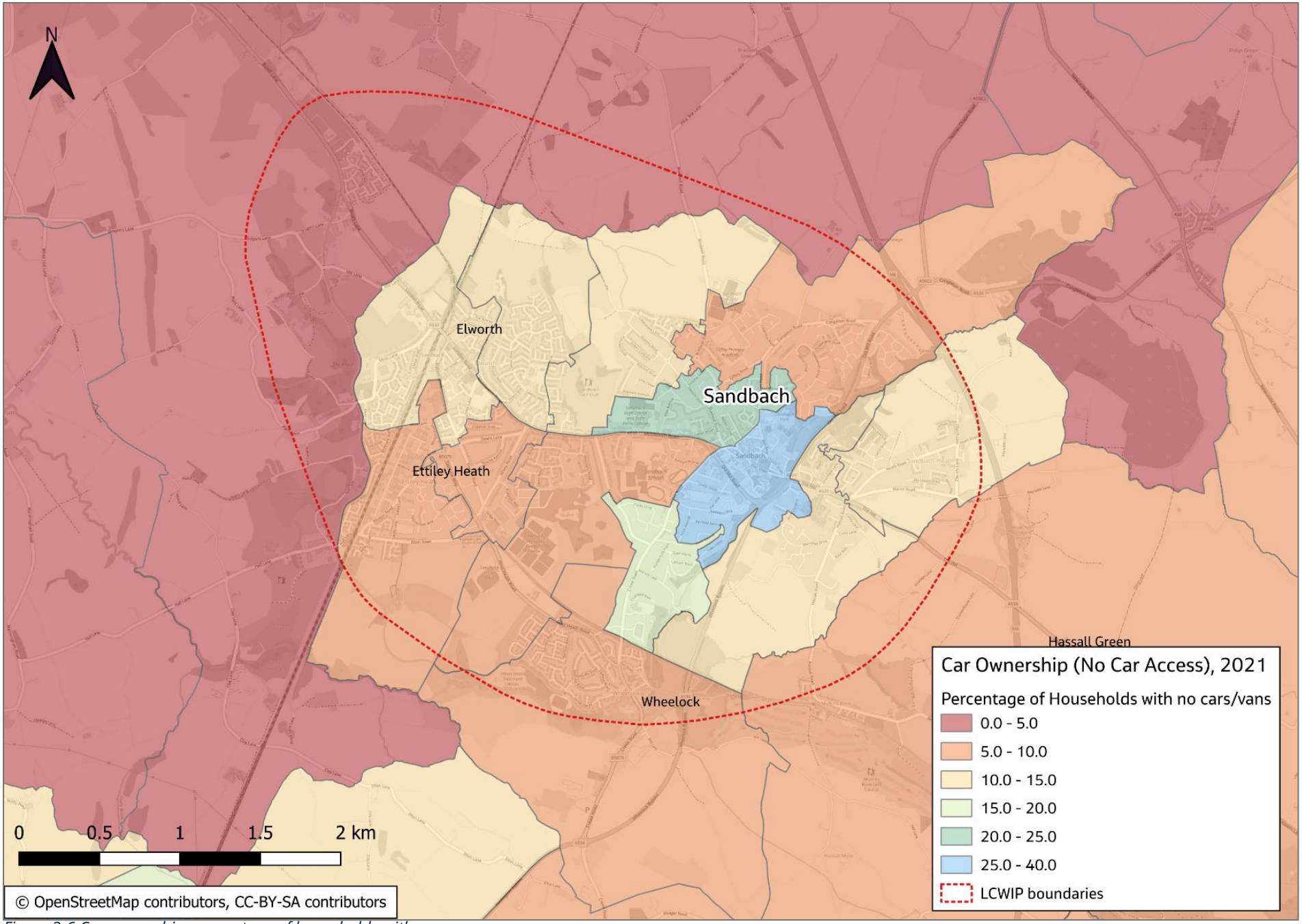


Figure 3-6 Car ownership, percentage of households with no cars or vans

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Figure 3-7 illustrates the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation[28] for Sandbach. Index of Multiple Deprivation measures relative levels of deprivation by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) boundaries. The Index of Multiple Deprivation tool measures many different factors, such as, income, health, crime, living environment and barriers to house and services. The scoring system of 1 represents the most deprived areas and 10 represents the least deprived areas.

Figure 3-7 shows that areas to the north of the town centre sit in the top 10% least deprived areas nationally. This can be seen around Offley Primary Academy, Sandbach Golf Club and Congleton Road. There is also a small section of Sandbach situated to the south of Middlewich Road which lies in the top 10 to 20% least deprived areas nationally.

[28] Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

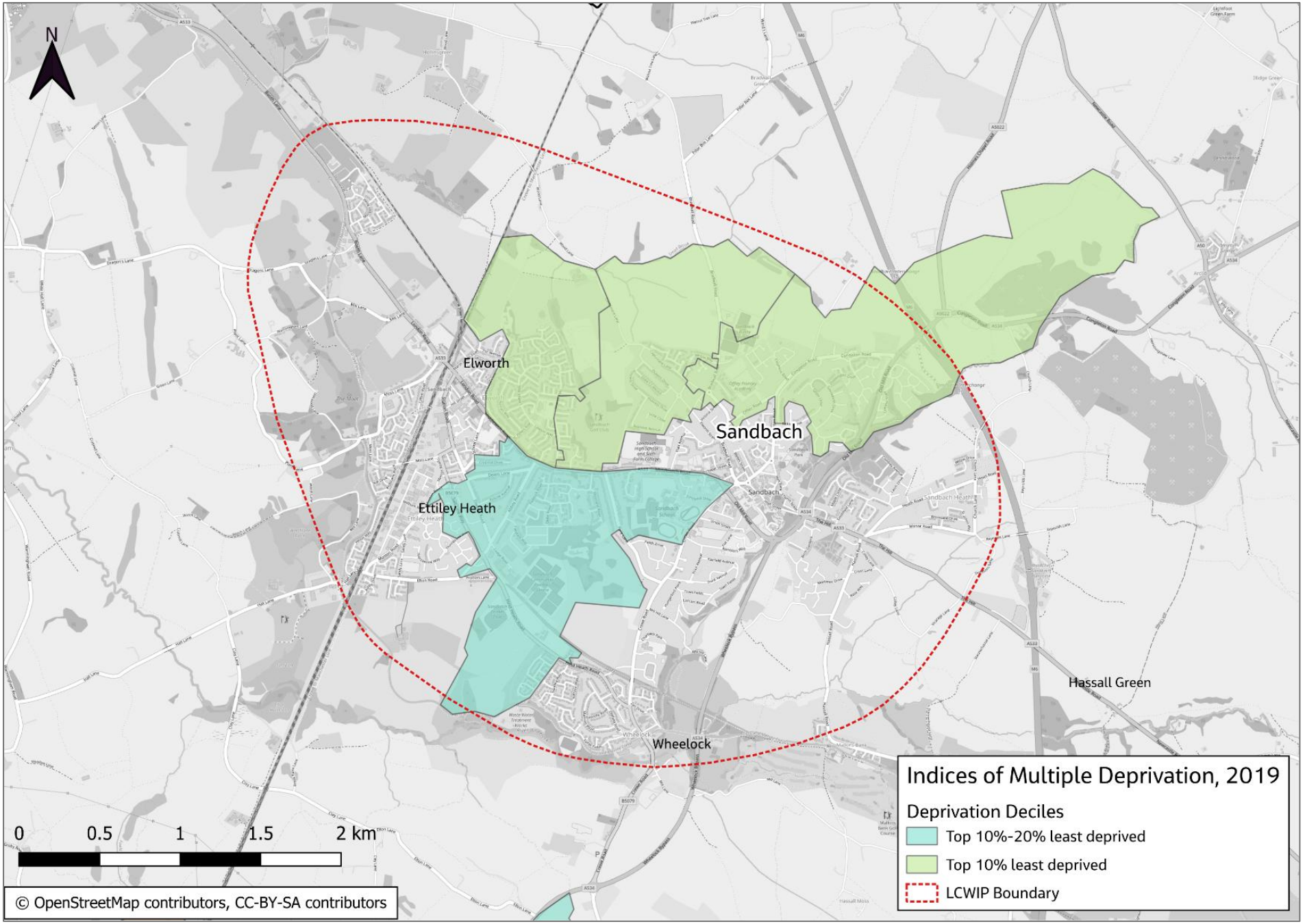


Figure 3-7 Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019

3.3. Local Plan Sites and Development

Figure 3-8 shows the future development and land use for Sandbach, taken from the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030[29].

Sandbach has allocated land adjacent to J17 of M6, south east of Congleton Road for growth in the future for housing and employment.

The development will be achieved through a mixed use employment led development consisting of:

- 20 hectares of employment land;
- 450 new homes to support the delivery of the 20 hectares of employment land;
- Provision of appropriate retail for local needs;
- Provision of appropriate leisure uses, potentially including a hotel, public house or restaurant; and
- Incorporation of green infrastructure;
    - Retention, where possible, of important hedgerows that have a cumulative screening impact on development and contribute to the habitat value of the site;
    - Protection and enhancement of the wildlife corridor and Local Wildlife sites; and
    - Open space including a multi use games area and an equipped children's play area.

Furthermore, to ensure the long-term viability of these walking and cycling routes proposed, connections to this future development will be factored into the LCWIP planning process.

[29] Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030

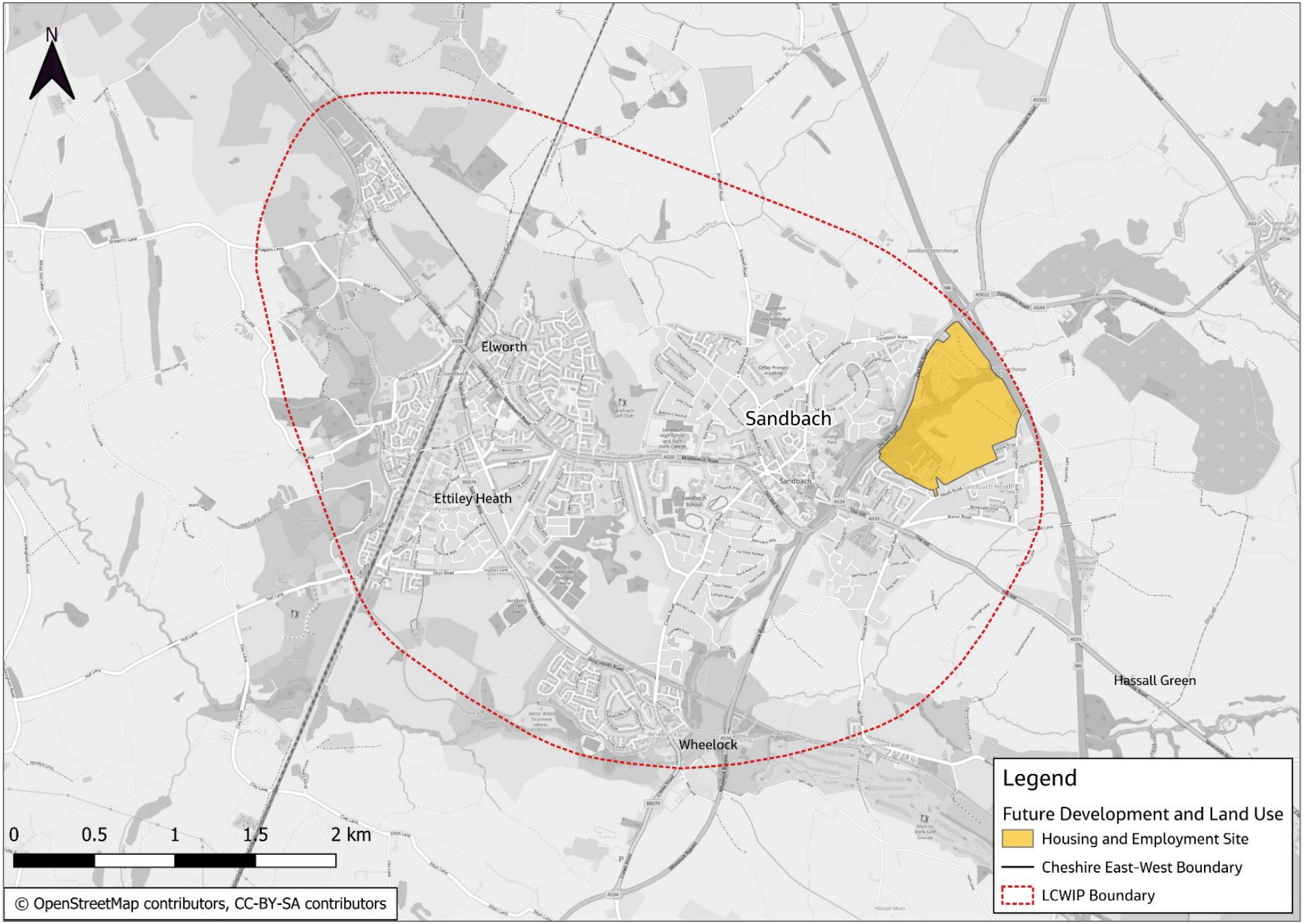


Figure 3-8 Future development and land use in Sandbach

3.4. Transport Network and Movements

Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) allow the public to walk, cycle, ride or sometimes drive along specific routes over land which may belong to somebody else, and the land is normally privately owned.

PRoW can provide a leisure route for individuals to use as well as providing access to work, education and local facilities. This in turn can benefit the local economy due to increase footfall to local businesses. Due to individuals having access to PRoW throughout the Sandbach area, individuals may choose to walk instead of using the private vehicle, therefore reducing congestion, and improving air quality.

PRoW are split into four different categories:

- Footpaths – for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Bridleways – for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- Restricted byways – for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs; and
- Byways open to all traffic (BOAT) – for any kind of transport, including cars (but they're mainly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders).

Figure 3-9 shows that there is a number of public footpaths throughout Sandbach. Footpaths provide the ability for people to walk around Sandbach easily. The existing PRoW network in Sandbach, combined with the proposed Sandbach LCWIP walking and cycling routes will create an attractive option for individuals wanting to walk throughout Sandbach.

Figure 3-9 shows that there is only a small section of bridleway located in Sandbach, therefore there may be opportunities within the development of the proposed Sandbach LCWIP to upgrade some of the footpaths to bridleways, so routes can be used by cyclists and horse riders.

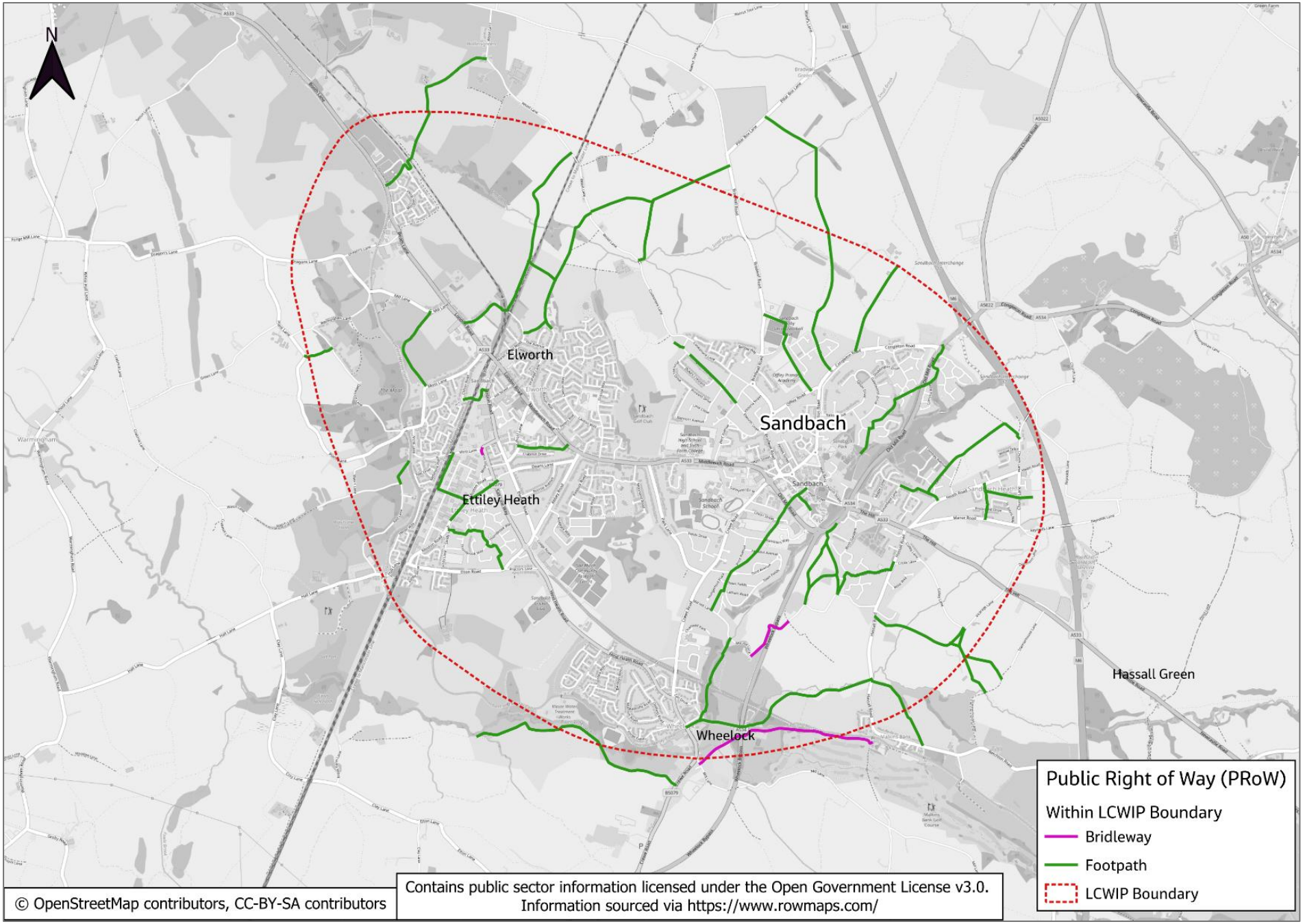


Figure 3-9 Public Rights of Way

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

A RoWIP, set out in Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 requires local authorities to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The aim of a ROWIP is to[30]:

- Assess the extent to which local rights of way and other countryside access resources meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- Assess opportunities for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area; and
- Assess the accessibility of local rights of way and other routes to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.

Figure 3-10 shows Cheshire's RoWIP routes that are located in Sandbach. The category with the largest area of improvements are the routes for equestrian and cycling use, as well as there being transport suggestions. Equestrian and walking improvements are suggested on the outskirts on Sandbach whilst transport suggestions are concentrated in the centre of the town. The suggested improvements will help guide the proposed walking and cycling routes within the Sandbach LCWIP, ensuring routes can be used by pedestrians, cyclists and other users.

[30] Cheshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2011-2026)

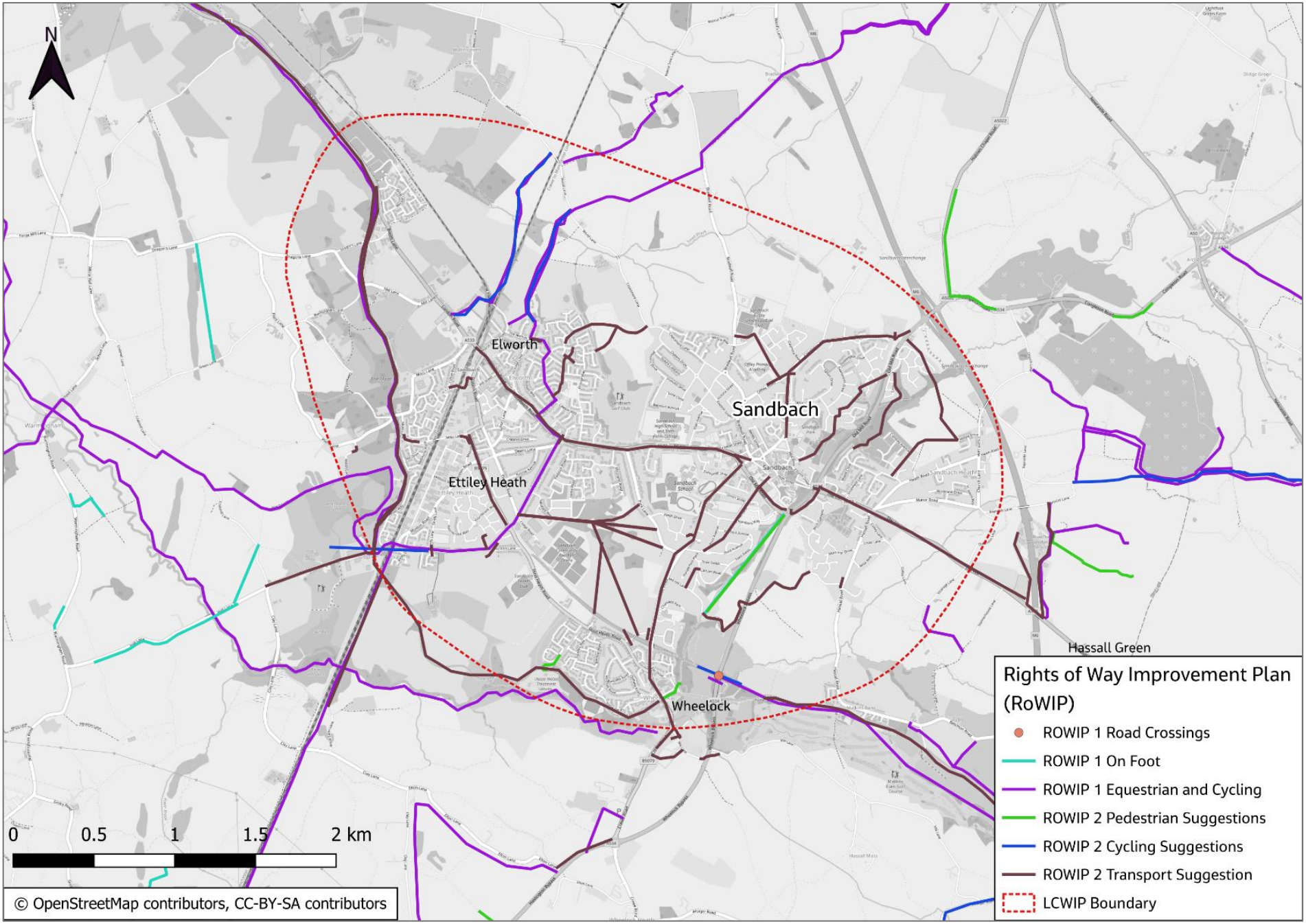


Figure 3-10 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Existing Cycle Network

National Cycle Network

The Sustrans Cycle Network is a UK-wide network of signed paths and routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and exploring the outdoors[31].

Figure 3-11 shows the existing National Cycle Network (NCN) that runs through Sandbach. The National Cycle Network connects through the west of Sandbach town centre down the south east via routes 5 and 451. Route 5 runs through Elworth road and connects to Route 451 on Wheelock Rail Trail which runs along Betchton Road towards Hassall Green.

With the provision of the existing NCN and the proposed Sandbach walking and cycling routes, Sandbach will have enhanced accessibility around the town centre, in turn providing the opportunities for increased levels of walking and cycling.

Existing Cheshire East Cycle Network

Figure 3-12 shows the existing Cheshire East cycle routes through Sandbach. As well as the NCN running through the town, there are some local cycling routes running south of Middlewich Road, parallel to the National Cycle Network. Two local cycle routes also run north of Middlewich Road via Bradwall Road and Platt Avenue. The regional cycle route south of the town centre runs along Crewe Road and connects to various local cycling routes as it runs towards Sandbach town centre. Local cycle routes also run to the east of the centre via the High Street and branch off towards Brickhouses and Malkin's Bank.

This LCWIP will take into consideration these local and regional cycle routes to ensure high quality accessible walking and cycling routes are created for Sandbach.

[31] The National Cycle Network - Sustrans.org.uk

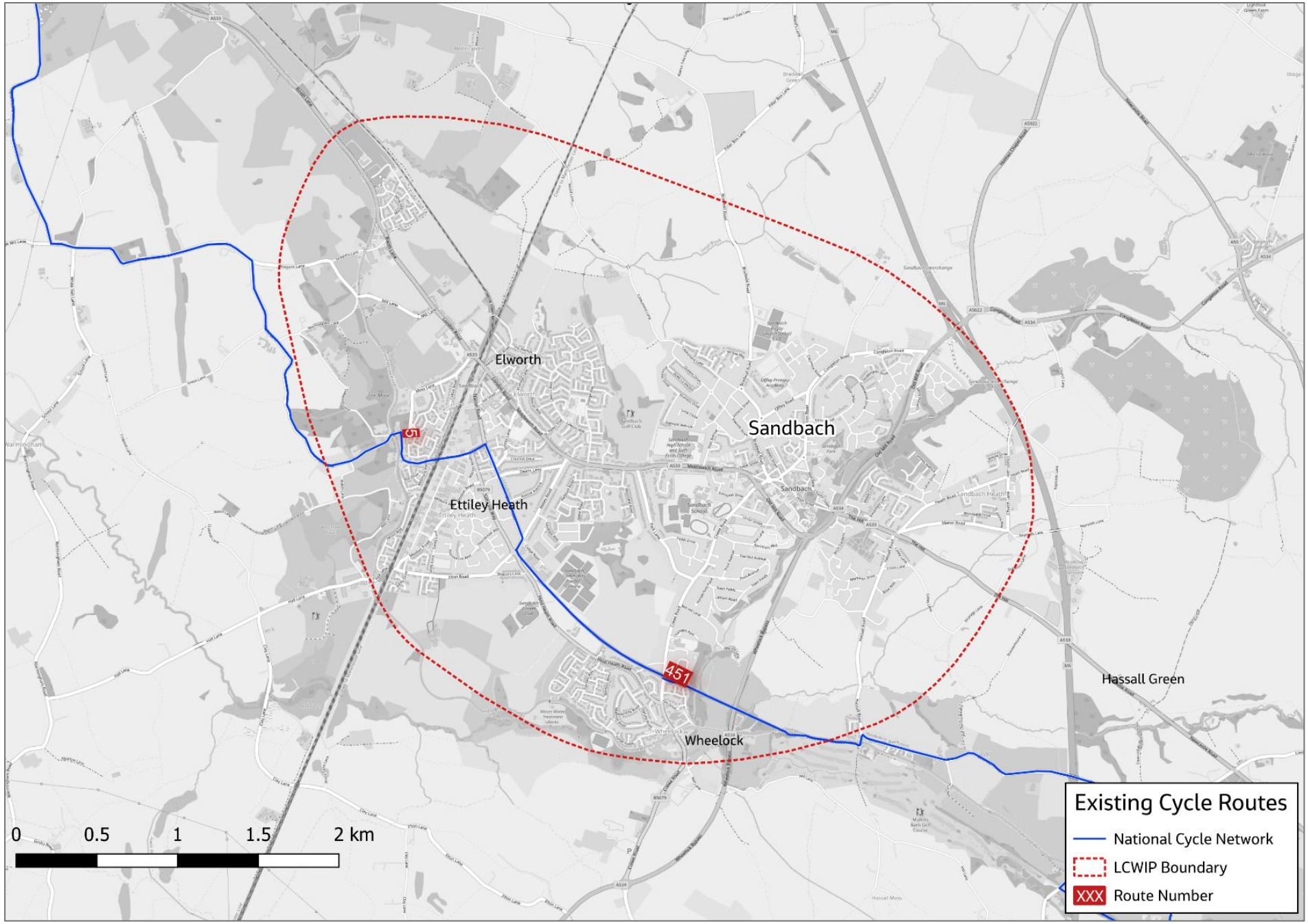


Figure 3-11 Existing Cycle Routes in Cheshire East

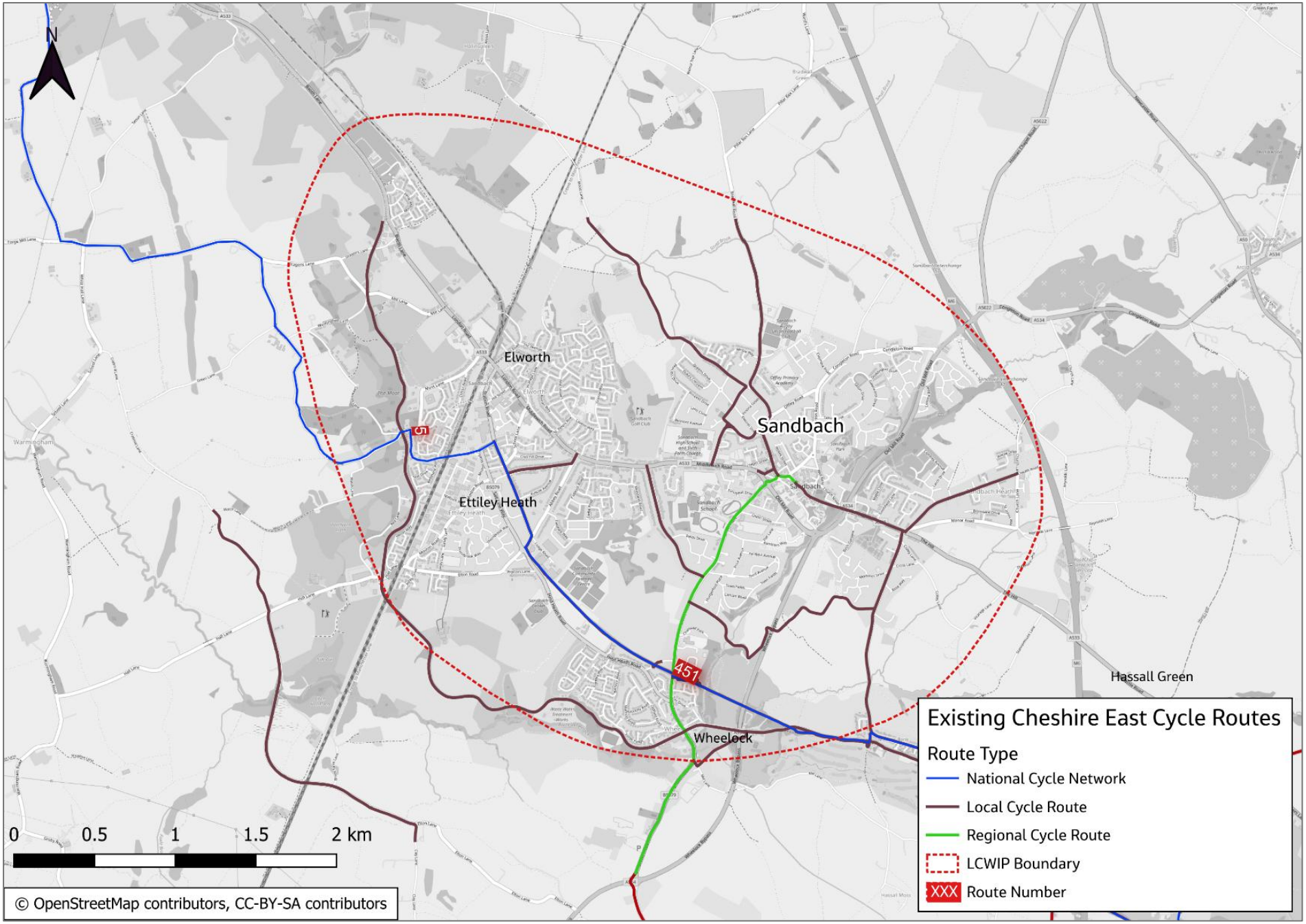


Figure 3-12 Existing Cheshire East Cycle Routes in Sandbach

Method of Travel to Work

Figure 3-13 and Figure 3-14 show the percentage of employed people within Sandbach that cycle and walk to work. This data is taken from the 2011 Census[32], this is due to the 2021 Census being carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore data may be skewed and not reliable as many people worked from home during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Therefore, the 2011 data provides a more accurate representation on the percentage of employed population that cycle to work.

Cycling

Figure 3-13 shows that areas in the centre and to the south of the town have the largest percentage of individuals cycling to work. Around Wheelock, Elworth and north of Middlewich Road, 2%+ of individuals cycle to work. Areas to the west of the centre of Sandbach have the lowest percentage of individuals cycling to work, at around 0-0.5% in Brickhouses and Betchton Heath. Ettiley Heath and east of Elworth have 1-3% of the population cycling to work.

Walking

Figure 3-14 shows that the areas to the north of the town centre have the largest percentage of individuals walking to work. Around Middlewich Road, Congleton Road and Old Mill Road, 10%+ of individuals walk to work. Around Cooksmere Lane, north west of the town centre and south east of the town centre around Crewe Road have between 8-10% of individuals walking to work. The surrounding areas have 5-8% of people walking to work.

The percentage of individuals walking and cycling to work is still low when compared to other modes of transport, even in the town centres. Therefore, the Sandbach LCWIP will target improvements to areas within the towns, to improve the number of people walking and cycling to work so these methods of travel to work can be made a more attractive option.

[32] Method of Travel to Work (2011 Census)

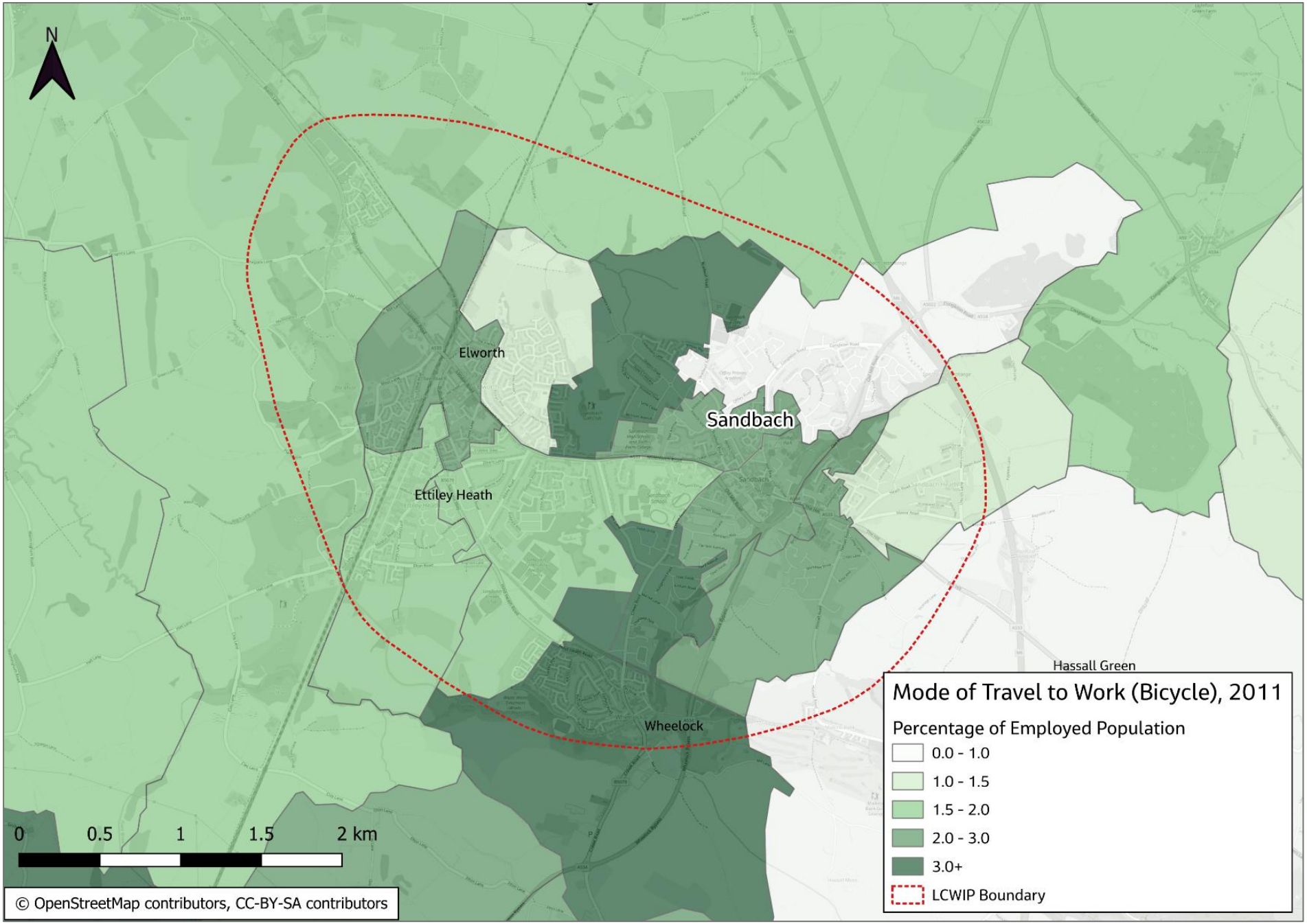


Figure 3-13 Percentage of trips to work via bicycle, 2011

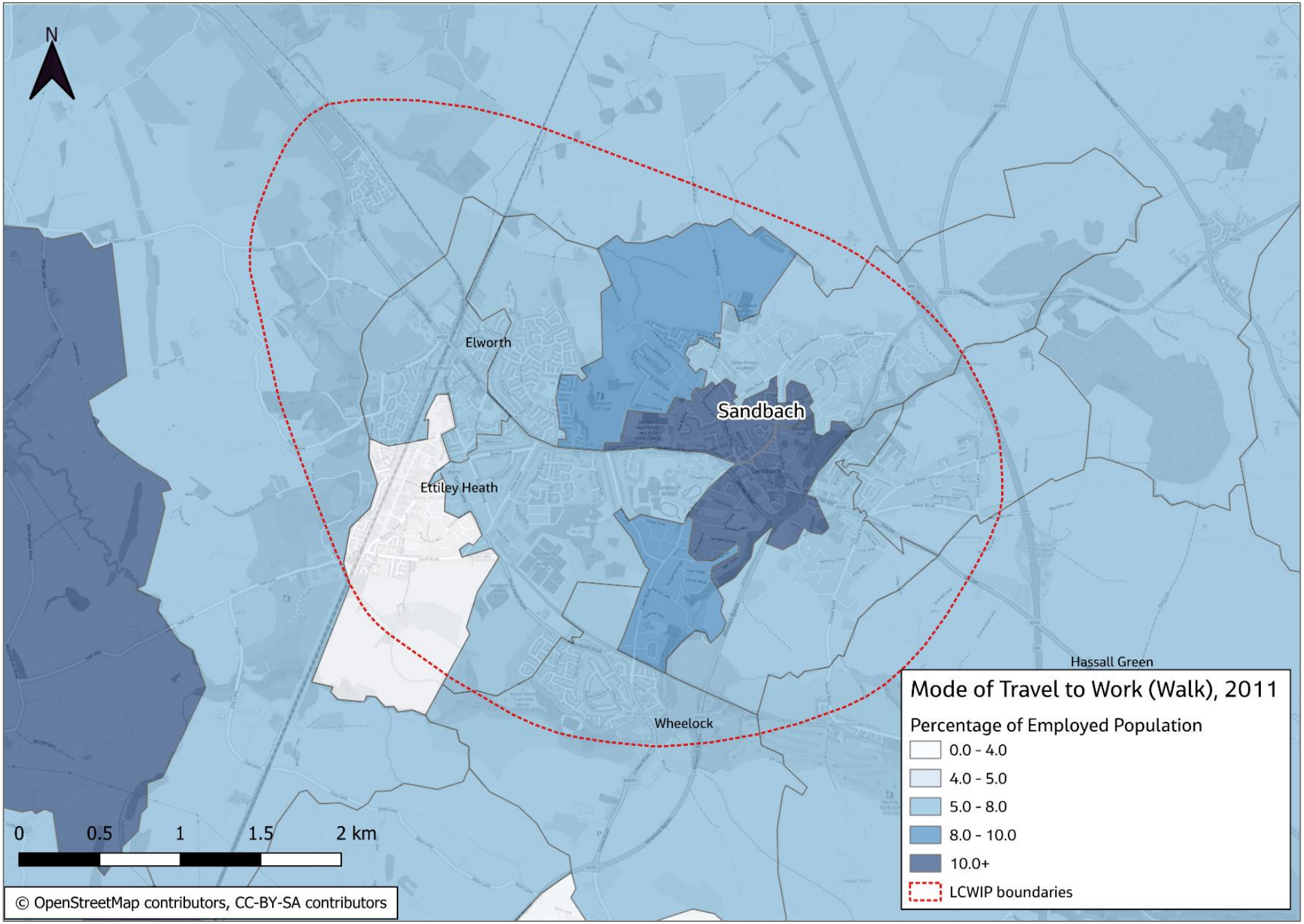


Figure 3-14 Percentage of trips to work via walking, 2011

Distance Travelled to Work

LCWIP guidance states that a realistic walking distance that people will walk is around 2.5km and the distance someone is willing to cycle is around 5km. Therefore, trips under 5km have been looked at for the Sandbach area.

Figure 3-15 shows the percentage of work trips that are under 2km and Figure 3-16 shows the percentage of work trips under 5km using the 2011 Census.

Under 2km

Figure 3-15 shows that the largest number of tryps to work under 2km are located in the centre of the town around Congleton Road, Middlewich Road and Old Mill Road. 20-25% of all trips to work from these locations are under 2km. Areas surrounding this have between 18-20% of all trips to work under 2km. This shows potential for walking and cycling.

Under 5km

Figure 3-16 shows that the largest number of trips to work under 5km are located in the centre and south of Sandbach town centre. This is the areas surrounding Middlewich Road, Congleton Road, Old Mill Road and Wheelock Bypass. Here, 30-35% of trips to work are under 5km.

The percentage of trips to work under 2km and 5km may be higher in Sandbach town centre due to more job opportunities being located in these areas, which can be seen in Figure 3-5. Areas exhibiting a higher concentration of short work trips of under 2km and 5km present a significant opportunity to promote active travel. By creating accessible walking and cycling routes throughout Sandbach, residents are more likely to choose active modes for commuting, reducing reliance on private vehicles.

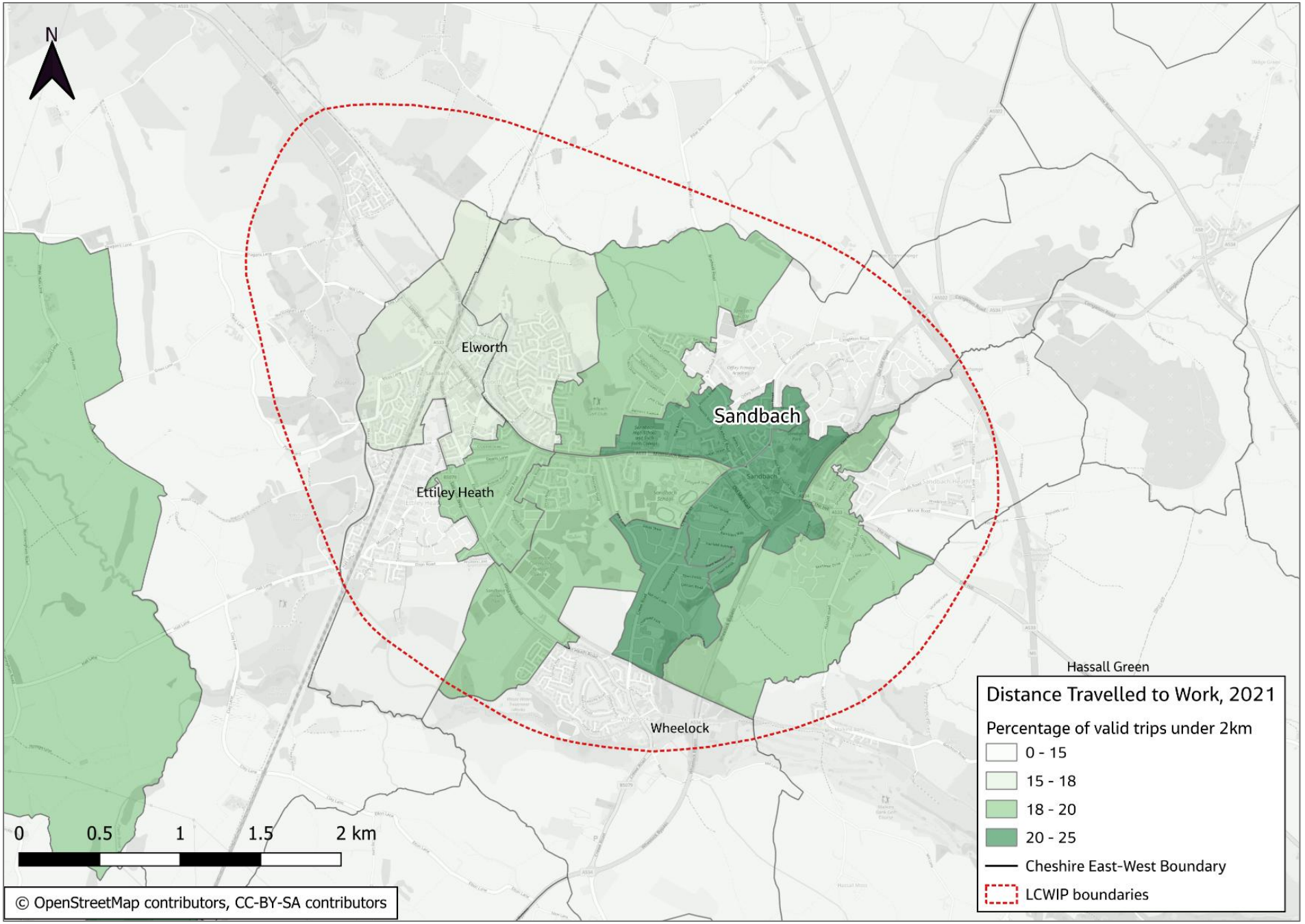


Figure 3-15 Percentage of trips to work under 2km, 2011

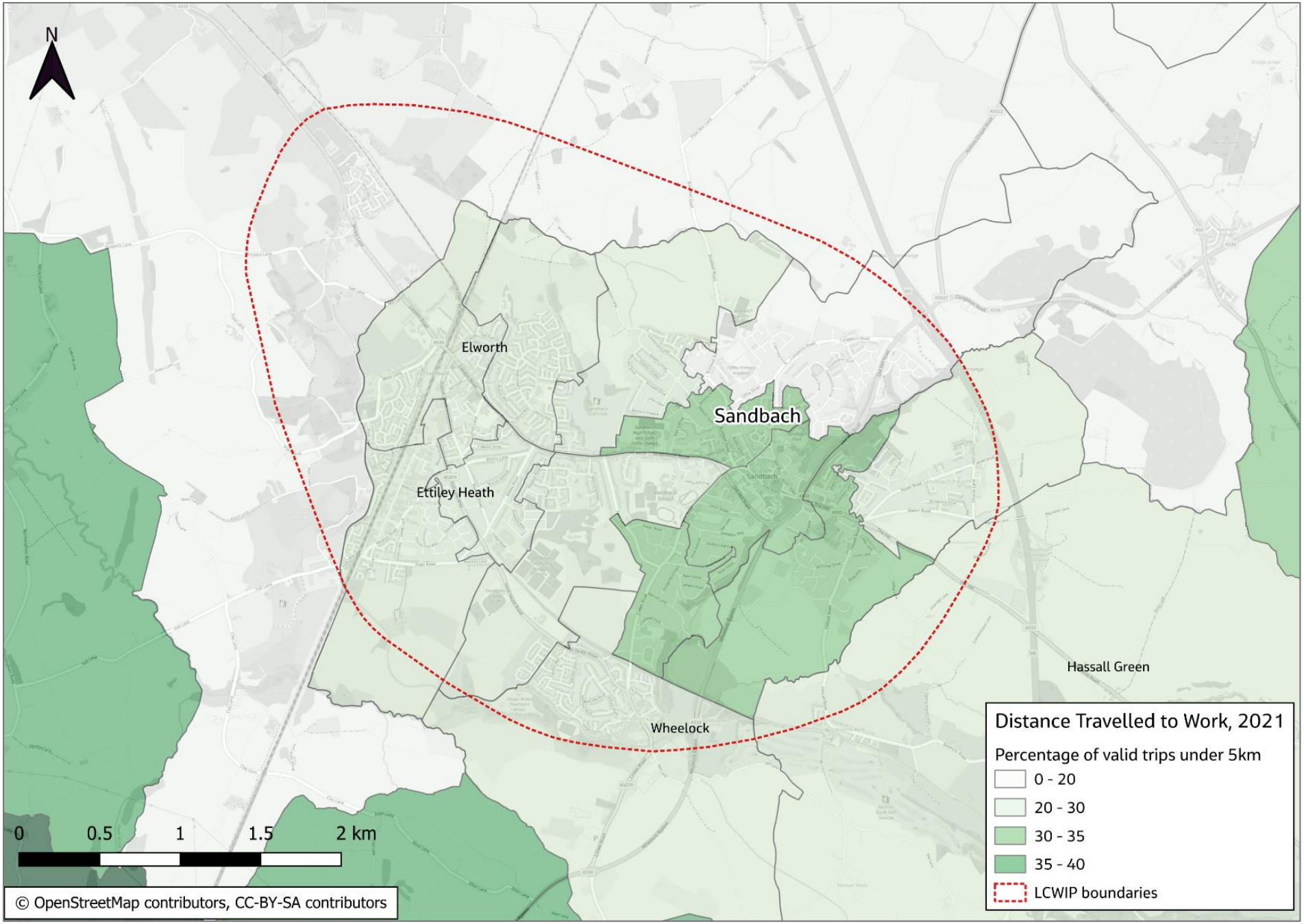


Figure 3-16 Percentage of trips to work under 5km, 2021

3.5. Understanding Desire Lines

Travel to Work Flows

Figure 3-17 and Figure 3-18 illustrate travel to and from work patterns in Sandbach at MSOA level by all modes of transport. It is important to note that the figures represent travel flows based on each MSOA's central point. Therefore, some flows may depict trips originating or terminating at locations that are not necessarily the most populated areas within the MSOA. 2011 Census data is used here due to the 2021 Census being carried out during the lockdown as a result of Covid-19. This meant many individuals forced to work from home, and as a result travel to work flows decreased. Therefore, the 2011 Census gives a more accurate representation of where people are travelling to and from for work.

Outflows – out from Sandbach

Figure 3-17 shows that the highest flows of travel to work from Sandbach of between 100 to 150 are from Sandbach station to Crewe, Coppenhall, Nantwich and Crewe Green with some internal flows within the town centre. Other flows of between 50 and 75 are from Sandbach station to Middlewich, Knutsford and Holmes Chapel.

Inflows – into Sandbach

Figure 3-18 shows that the highest flow volumes of travel to Sandbach of between 50 to 75 flows are from the east of the town centre towards Hind Heath Road, Sandbach town centre and north of the town centre. Flows into Sandbach can also be seen from Crewe and Middlewich. There are internal flows within Sandbach between 100 and 150 flows between around Hind Heath Road and north of Sandbach town centre and from around the A533 towards the north of the town centre.

These areas where there are higher flows will be taken into consideration when proposing the walking and cycling routes for Sandbach.

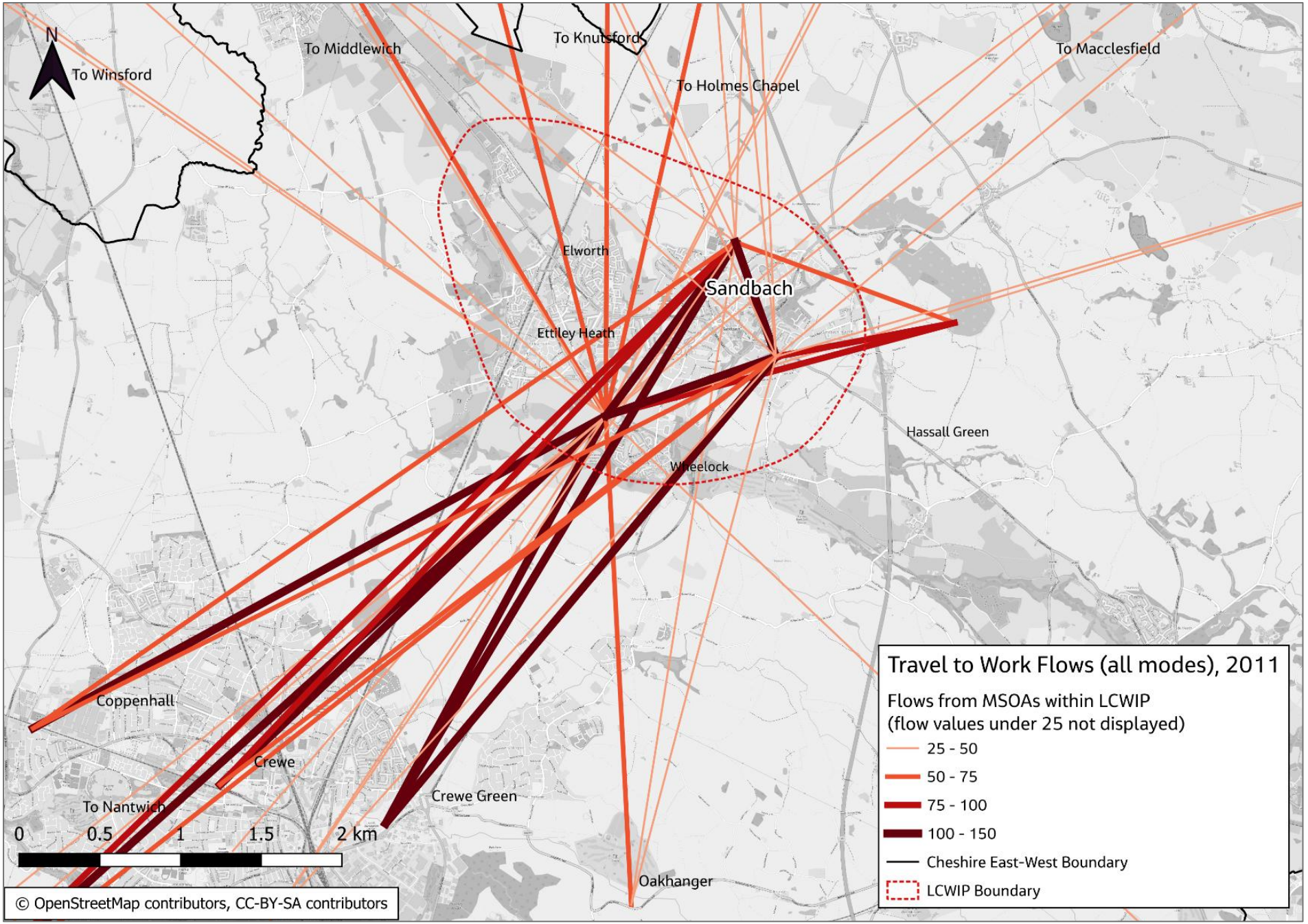


Figure 3-17 Flows from MSOAs within Sandbach

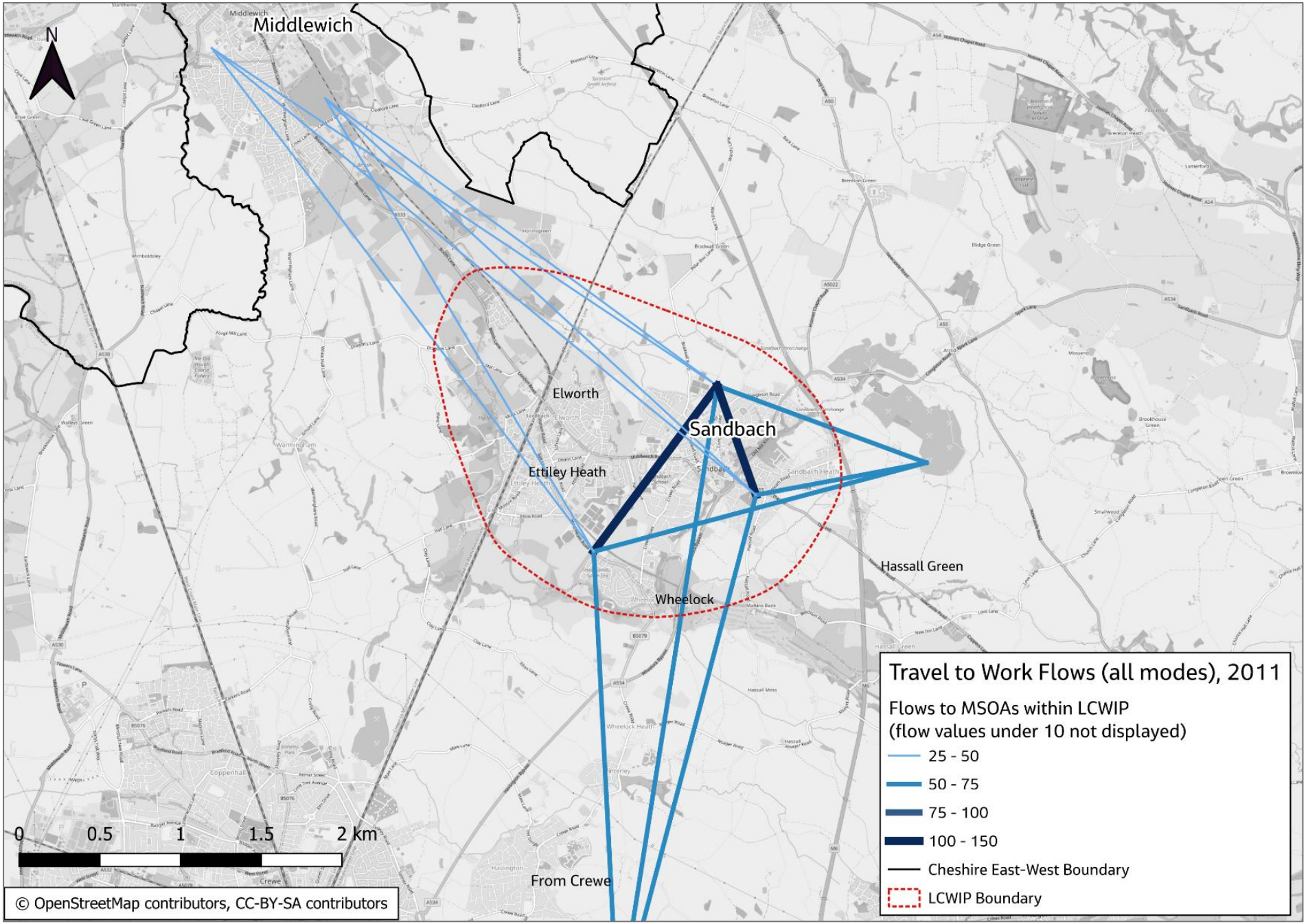


Figure 3-18 Flows to MSOAs within Sandbach

Propensity to Cycle Tool

The Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) is a web-based mapping tool that was designed to help prioritise investments and interventions to promote cycling[33].

The PCT allows users to explore different cycling scenarios and cycling potential is calculated using functions based on trip distance (people are likely to cycle a shorter trip compared to a longer trip) and the hilliness (people are more likely to cycle on flatter routes and be discouraged by trips involving slopes).

The PCT has been used for the scenario of Government Target (Near Market). This scenario models a doubling of cycling nationally, corresponding to the proposed target in the Department for Transports draft Cycling Delivery Plan, to double cycling in England between 2013 and 2025. The Government Target (Near Market) models the increase as occurring as a function of trip distance and hilliness, plus sociodemographic and geographical characteristics. This includes age, ethnicity, income deprivation and more. The PCT has also been used to model the 'Go Dutch' scenario which envisions achieving cycling levels comparable to the Netherlands by considering local terrain, land use, and trip distances in England and Wales. It aims to create a cycling-friendly future where infrastructure and cultural norms align to encourage widespread cycling.

Levels of cycling to work (%)

Figure 3-19 shows the PCT for the Government Target (near market) scenario for Sandbach. The figure shows that the highest levels of cycling to work are located in the north and south of the town centre, around Congleton road and Wheelock, where 3-5% of individuals cycle to work. Other areas of Sandbach have slightly lower levels of cycling to work, around 1-3%. These areas are located around Elworth, Ettily Heath and around the centre of Sandbach town centre. This data shows that currently Sandbach has low levels of cycle to work, therefore providing walking and cycling links within and around Sandbach town centre will mean individuals will be encouraged to walk or cycle to work and school due to the short distance and infrastructure put in place from this LCWIP.

Cyclist flows

Figure 3-19 shows cycling flows for Sandbach town centre. The highest flows at around 10-30 cyclists can be seen running along Crewe Road, Congleton Road, Old Mill Road, Middlewich Road, Abbey road and Wheelock Rail Trail. Flows can also be seen linking Sandbach north east towards Brickhouses. Due to these areas having the highest flows of cyclists, these areas will be taken into consideration when creating walking and cycling routes for the Sandbach LCWIP.

Travel to school

Figure 3-20 shows the percentage of the population cycling to school and cycle flows between LSOAs in Sandbach, taken from 2011 School Census[34]. The map shows that the major attractors of cycling to school are along Crewe Road, Bradwell Road, Offley Road and to the east of the town centre around Station Road and Elworth Road. Even though there are many flows in this area, cycling to school levels are low at around 0-1%. This shows that there is potential to increase cycling to school in Sandbach.

[33] Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT)

[34] Propensity to Cycle Tool - Cheshire

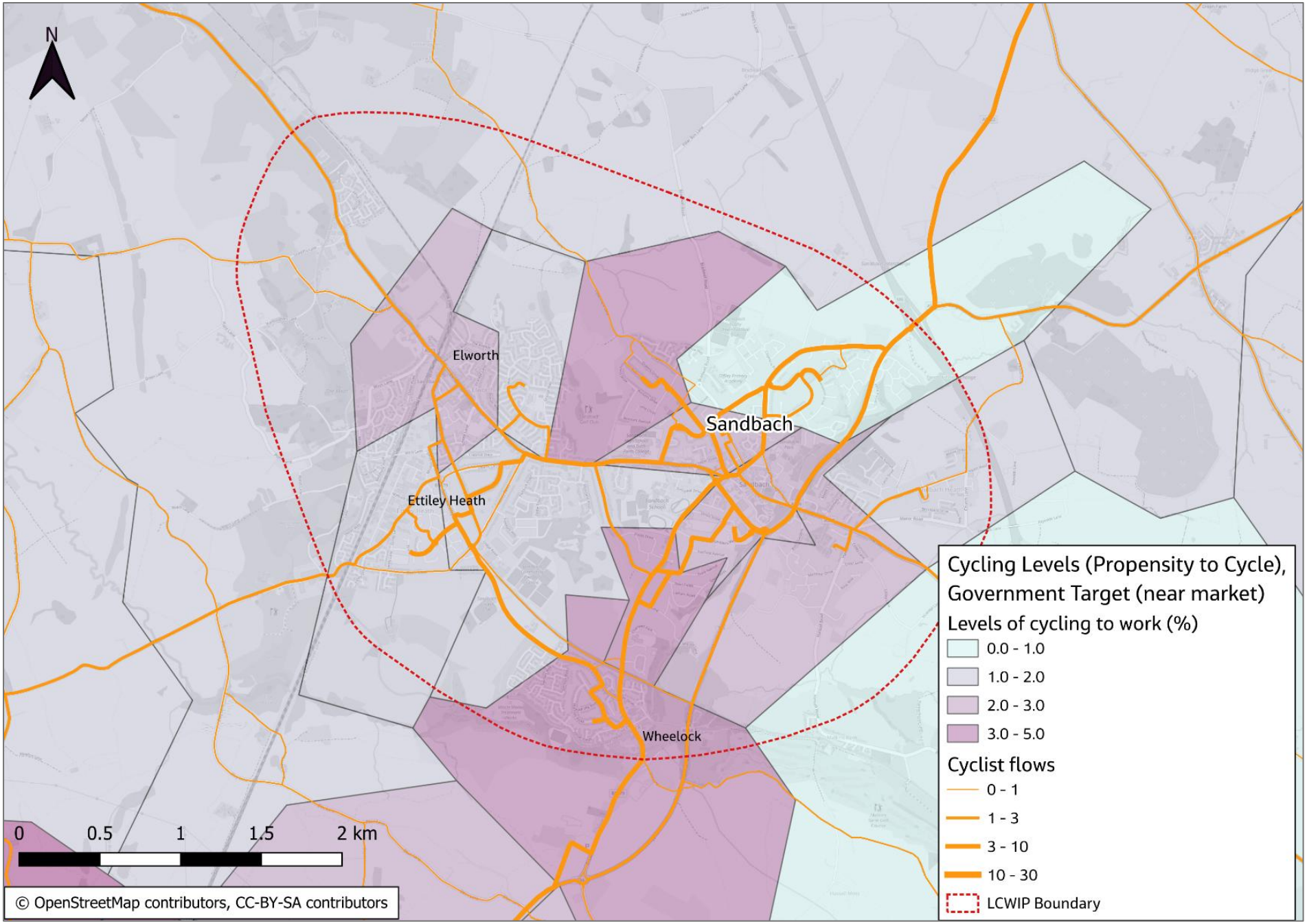


Figure 3-19 Propensity to Cycle Tool

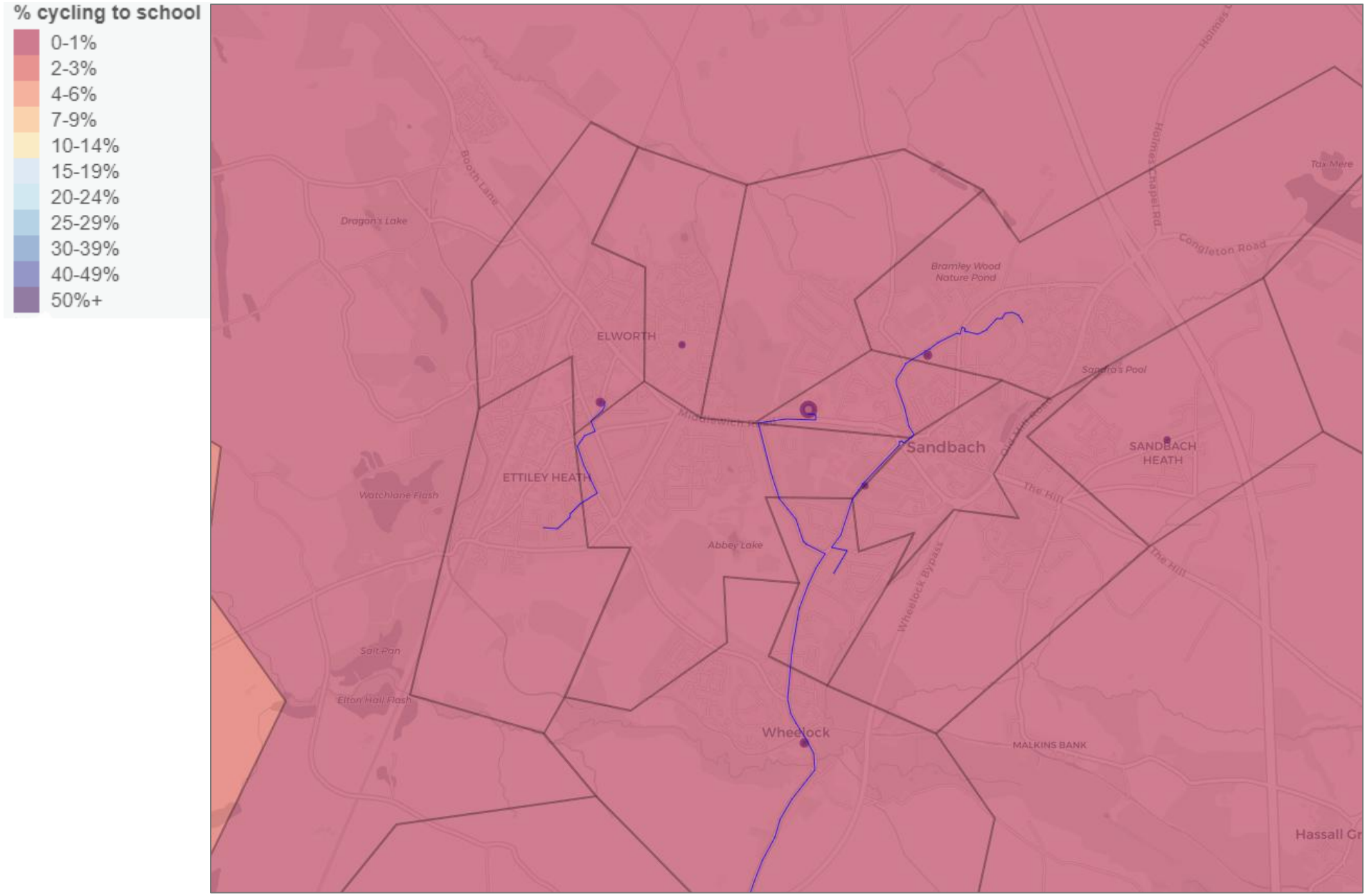


Figure 3-20 Percentage of the population cycling to school and cycle flows between LSOAs (2011 School Census)

Strava Metro

Strava Metro[35] is a free tool which analyses data from those using the Strava app to track their walking and cycling movements using mobile phone GPS. This data enables Strava Metro to collate a vast data source, showing trends of movements within a given area, such as which routes people favour.

As this is an opt-in source, Strava Metro does not cover the entire population and is more associated with leisure and tourism movements, however, studies have shown that this is representative of the overall population. Users also have the opportunity to identify journeys as leisure or commuting, although this is not required, so gives some insight into both types of journeys. Some statistics are set out below:

Cycling:

- In 2023 the total number of cycling trips completed in Cheshire was 489,684. The 2022 total was 544,050. This means that there was 45,366 fewer cycling trips completed in 2023 compared to 2022.

Walking:

- In 2023 the total number of walking trips completed in Cheshire was 1,850,641. The 2022 total was 1,657,256. This means there was 193,385 more walking trips completed in 2023 compared to 2022.

Figure 3-21 and Figure 3-22 show the number of walking and cycling trips between 2019 and 2023.

The number of trips has shown a high increase for walking, however, a decrease for cycling. This increase in walking trips between 2022 and 2023 is partly due to Strava Metro becoming a more popular app for leisure, and also the impact of COVID-19 resulting in more people walking and cycling locally for leisure. However, the decrease in cycling trips may be partially due to the weather in 2023 being worse than 2022, therefore putting people off going cycling for leisure or commuting purposes.

Data has been analysed from Strava Metro using the streets and heatmap function to find the most commonly used roads for walking and cycling in Sandbach, these have been outlined below:

- Walking
    - Middlewich Road;
    - Crewe Road;
    - Wheelock Rail Trail; and
    - Congleton Road.
- Cycling
    - High Street;
    - Crewe Road;
    - Bradwall Road; and
    - Middlewich Road.

Due to these areas in Sandbach having the highest levels of walking and cycling activity, these roads and locations will be considered when creating the potential routes for the Sandbach LCWIP. This is due to these areas having the highest demand for walking and cycling; therefore this demand needs to be met with high quality walking and cycling routes.

[35] Strava Metro | Dashboard

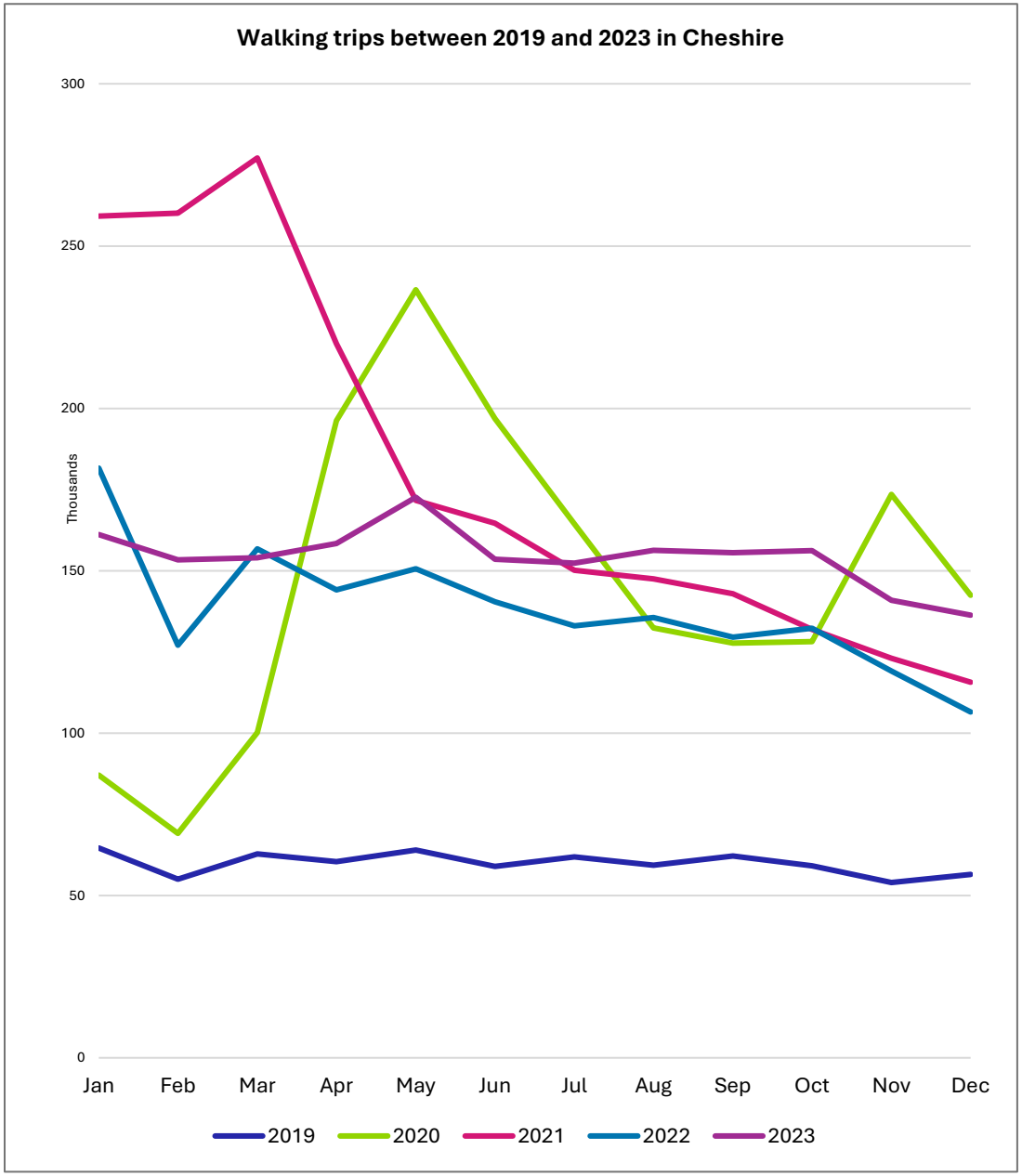


Figure 3-22 Number of walking trips in Cheshire between 2019 and 2023 (Strava Metro)

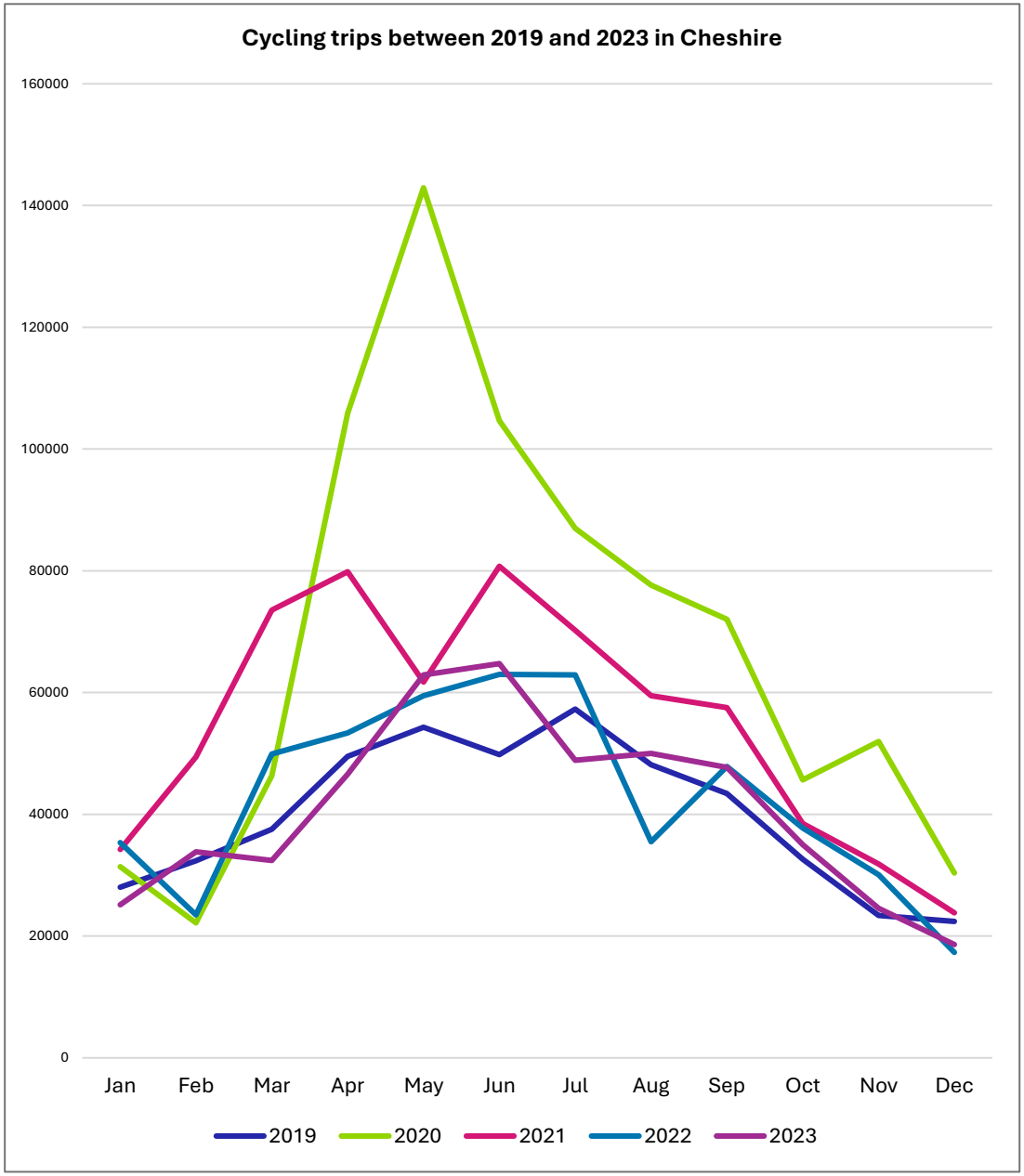


Figure 3-21 Number of cycling trips in Cheshire between 2019 and 2023 (Strava Metro)

Location of Key Attractors

Figure 3-23 shows the location of points of interest in Sandbach. This includes educational establishments, public transport options, healthcare facilities, leisure centres and other local services.

Figure 3-23 shows that there are a cluster of amenities around Sandbach town centre. There are multiple local services located around Sandbach station, Middlewich Road and High Street off Old Mill Road. There are a cluster of healthcare facilities around Old Mill Road and High Street.

Due to the cluster of amenities around the centre of Sandbach, this highlights the importance of connecting Sandbach town centre via walking and cycling routes, so individuals can access their everyday amenities with ease. The proposed Sandbach LCWIP will take into consideration the areas where there are clusters of amenities when proposing walking and cycling routes.



Figure 3-23 Location of key attractors and services in Sandbach

Mapping Origin and Destination Points

Origin and destination points were identified across Sandbach.

A trip origin typically refers to an area which is likely to be the starting point for frequent trips, such as residential areas.

A trip destination typically refers to those areas which are likely to be the end point of a journey, such as employment, schools or retail areas and transport interchanges.

Employment sites, educational establishments and future development sites were therefore mapped and trip generators in close proximity to each other were clustered to simplify the analysis.

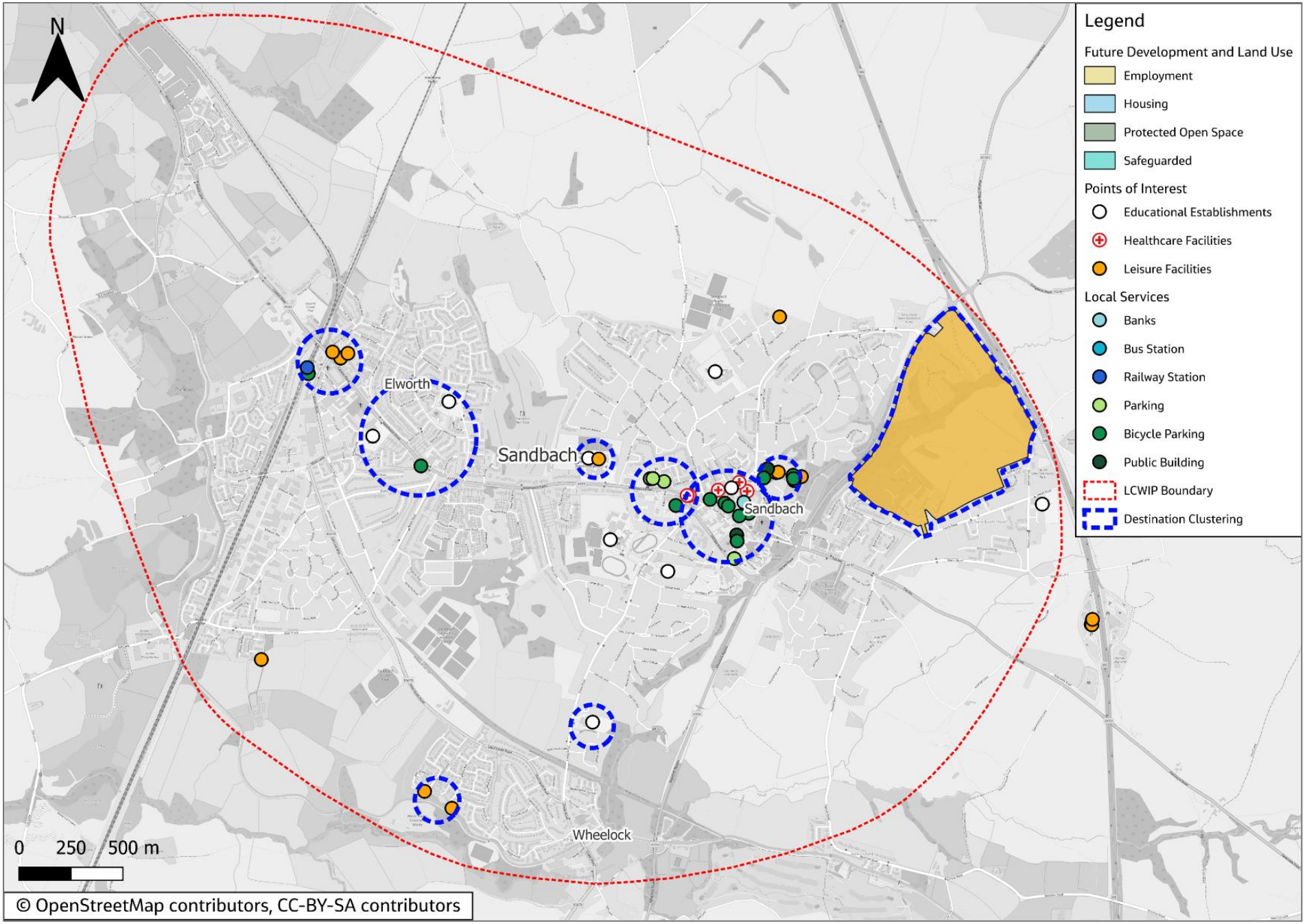


Figure 3-24 Origin and destination points in Sandbach

Identification and Classification of Desire Lines

Following the identification of trip origins and destinations, desire lines were identified to reflect the most popular routes of travel.

Desire lines have been created for shorter routes, between 0 to 2km and for longer routes that are 2km and over.

Desire lines were created using travel to work Census data, Strava Metro data and the PCT to assist the identification of key cycling desire lines within the LCWIP area. The Government Target Near Market scenario was used for the PCT tool.

Following the initial analysis, an appraisal was carried out to assess the deliverability and the alignment of these desire lines against the objectives outlined in the LTP4. These objectives include:

- Growth and economic strength through connectivity;
- Improve access to services;
- Protect and improve built and natural environment;
- Promote health, wellbeing and physical activity;
- Improve maintenance and management of transport networks; and
- Improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

The shortlist of the desire lines can be found in Figure 3-25, these desire lines were then taken forward to create routes for this LCWIP.

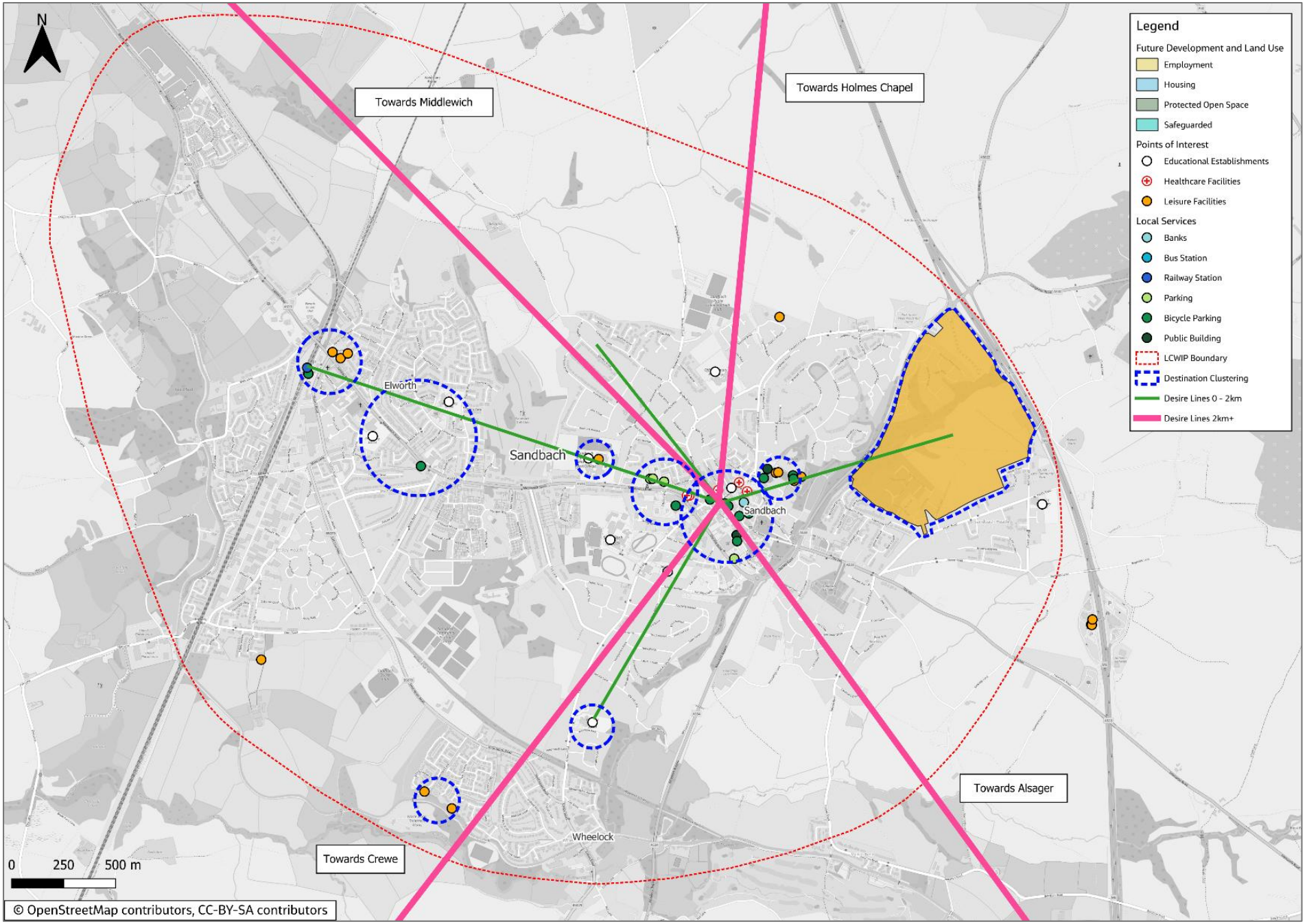


Figure 3-25 Original 0-2km and 2km desire lines in Sandbach

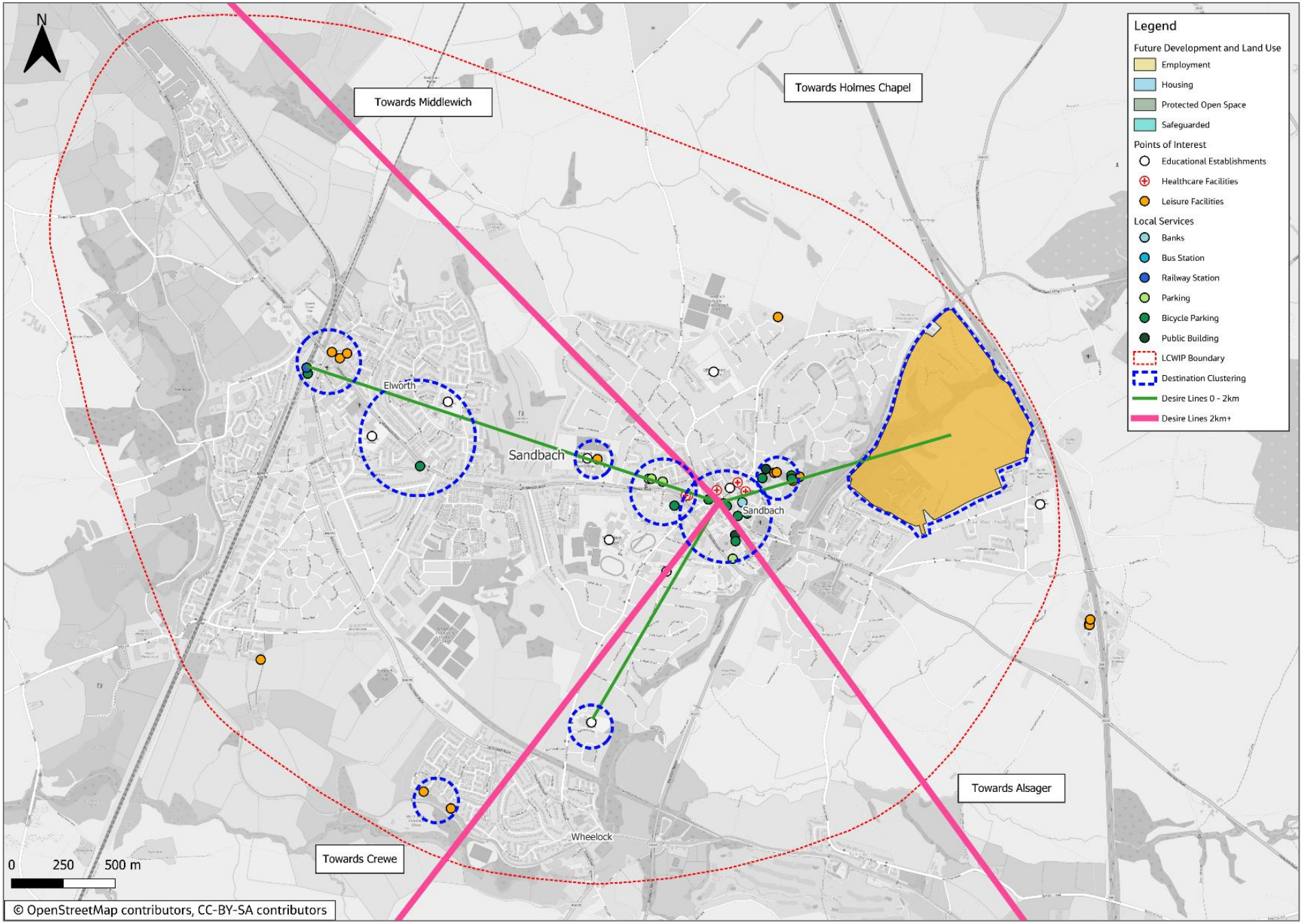


Figure 3-26 Shortlisted 0-2km and 2km desire lines in Sandbach

3.6. Summary

A review of baseline data for Sandbach has demonstrated that:

- Areas with lower car ownership are located closer to the middle of Sandbach town centre. Due to these areas of Sandbach having lower car ownership, it is essential that these areas as well connected to workplaces and key amenities via walking and cycling links.
- There is only a small section of bridleway located in Sandbach, therefore there may be opportunities to upgrade some of the footpaths to bridleways, so routes can be used by cyclists and horse riders throughout Sandbach.
- The highest travel flows from Sandbach are from Sandbach station to Crewe, Coppenhall, Nantwich, and Crewe Green, with internal flows within the town centre.
- A significant proportion of work trips are under 5km, presenting an opportunity to promote walking and cycling within Sandbach.
- The cluster of amenities around the centre of Sandbach highlights the importance of connecting Sandbach town centre via walking and cycling routes, so individuals can access their everyday amenities with ease.

Desire lines have been identified using the PCT Tool, travel to work flows and Strava Metro, to help identify potential trip origin and destinations that can be converted into routes. Travel patterns indicate strong internal commuting flows within Sandbach.

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A review of baseline data for Sandbach has demonstrated that:

- Areas with lower car ownership are located closer to the middle of Sandbach town centre. Due to these areas of Sandbach having lower car ownership, it is essential that these areas as well connected to workplaces and key amenities via walking and cycling links.
- There is only a small section of bridleway located in Sandbach, therefore there may be opportunities to upgrade some of the footpaths to bridleways, so routes can be used by cyclists and horse riders throughout Sandbach.
- The highest travel flows from Sandbach are from Sandbach station to Crewe, Coppenhall, Nantwich, and Crewe Green, with internal flows within the town centre.
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Desire lines have been identified using the PCT Tool, travel to work flows and Strava Metro, to help identify potential trip origin and destinations that can be converted into routes. Travel patterns indicate strong internal commuting flows within Sandbach.

4. Network Planning for Walking

4.1. Introduction

The analysis of baseline data through a review of local policy documents and background data forms a solid evidence base. This supports the next step of beginning to create a network plan for people walking with the aim of forming a coherent and well-established network.

The future walking network plan has been derived through identifying links between those areas which are identified as trip origins and trip destinations. As part of this process, corridors have been identified, incorporating the route which most pedestrians and cyclists will follow to access a particular destination. Through creating a network plan, this LCWIP identifies the core routes which require improvement.

As part of this process, a meeting was held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 via Teams. Local representatives, including town councillors and representatives of local walking and cycling groups, with a good knowledge and local understanding were invited including representatives from the Town Council to help inform the walking routes created in this LCWIP. The walking network map was also consulted on and updated as part of public consultation in 2025, the details of which are included in Chapter 8.

4.2. Network Plan

A Core Walking Zone (CWZ) has been identified, comprising a number of walking trip generators that are located within the town centre. The intention of a CWZ is to create an attractive walking environment without specific routes. Such an environment could include separation between pedestrians and motorists, public realm improvements, or wide footways/footpaths.

The CWZ within Sandbach encompasses the town centre and extends to include Sandbach School, Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College, Sandbach Primary Academy, St Mary's Church, Waitrose and the High Street.

The walking network plans for Sandbach are displayed below in Figure 4-1.

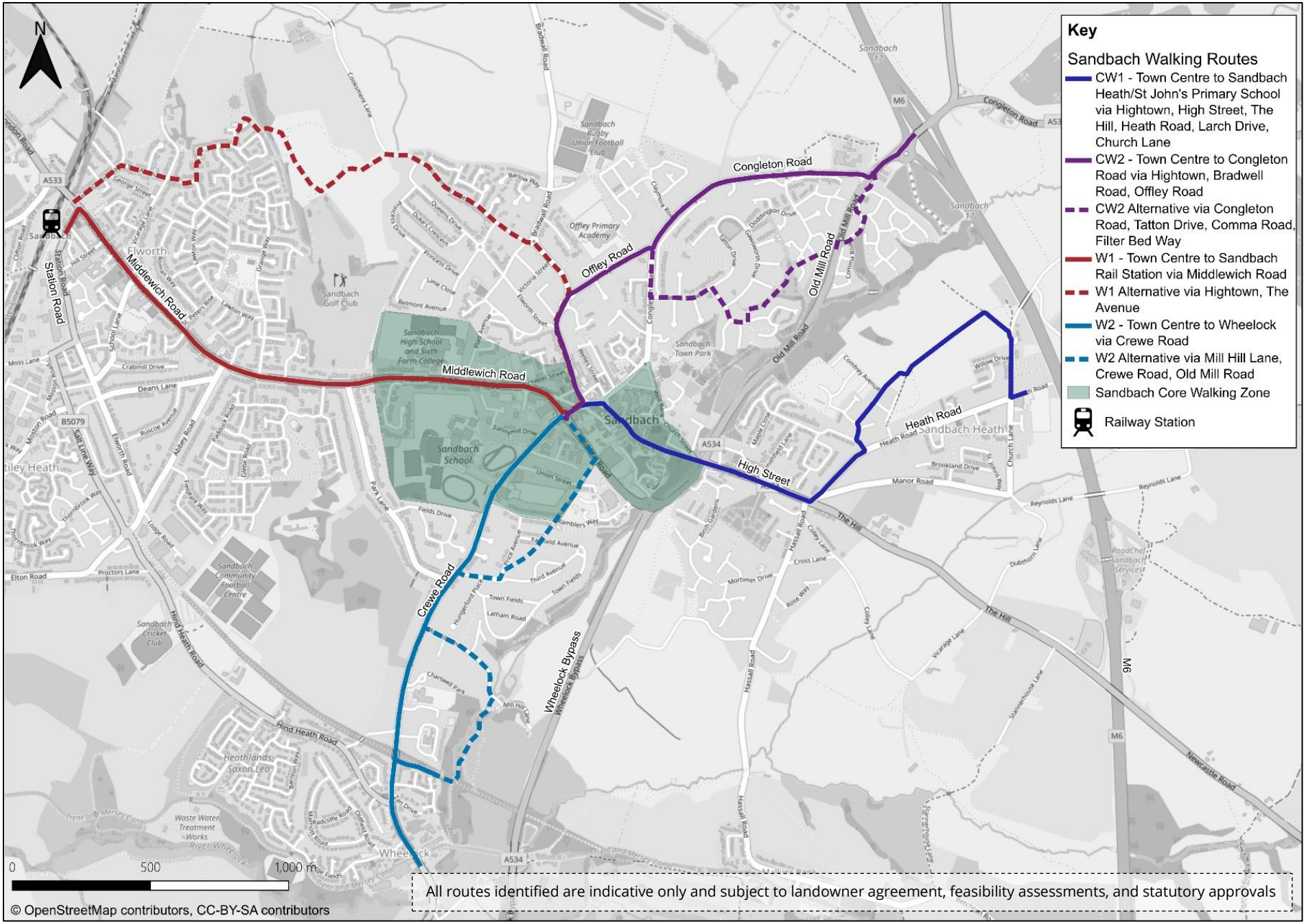


Figure 4-1 Sandbach Network Plan for Walking

4.3. Key Area for Improvement – Walking

To identify the areas where improvements to walking infrastructure are required, and the types of interventions which are most suitable, the routes were audited utilising the Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT). Audits were undertaken using local knowledge, knowledge obtained through site visits and online research.

The WRAT comprises an auditing methodology which is focused around the five core design outcomes for pedestrian infrastructure. These design outcomes are similar to those required for cycling. The core design outcomes are:

1. Attractiveness (maintenance, fear of crime, traffic noise and pollution);
2. Comfort (condition, footway width, crossing width, footway parking, gradient);
3. Directness (footway provision, quality of crossing provision);
4. Safety (traffic volume, traffic speed, visibility); and
5. Coherence (dropped kerbs and tactile paving).

The assessment considers the needs of vulnerable pedestrians who may be older; visually impaired; mobility impaired; hearing impaired; with learning difficulties; buggy users, or children.

The core design outcomes are scored on a 0 - 2 scale, with 0 as the lowest score and 2 as the highest score. The WRAT was completed as part of the walking audits and the routes were scored accordingly. Following the scoring, these areas were identified as requiring the greatest improvement:

- **W1** – uneven paving, parking on the footway, missing tactile paving, high traffic flows;
- **W2** – lighting not present on access to the Wheelock Rail Trail. Footway parking, narrow access to the Wheelock Rail Trail, lack of signage; and
- **W3** – uneven footway, crossing island needs expanding, cars parked on the footway, crossing in stages, missing tactile paving.

These routes are outlined within Table 4-1 below along with their WRAT scores pre and post intervention.

Table 4-1 Walking Route Audit Tool Results

Route	Audited walking route	WRAT score (max. score of 40)	Potential score with interventions (max. score of 40)
1	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Train Station	32	38
2	Sandbach Town Centre to the Wheelock Rail Trail	20	35
3	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Heath / St John's Primary School	21	37

The WRAT then informed the selection of interventions on the routes.

4.4. Establishing Walking Infrastructure Improvements

During the development of the LCWIP, improvements for walking have been identified along each route to create a high-quality network that aligns with the LCWIP design objectives.

Further feasibility and design work is required to understand in more detail, the opportunities, constraints and detailed costings alongside any impacts or benefits for stakeholders.

A wide range of design guidance can be utilised to develop schemes to ensure high quality streets and pedestrian links. Interventions have been suggested that are aligned with national guidance and lessons learnt from the delivery of previous active travel schemes.

The proposed route improvements on the future walking network are outlined in more detail in the detailed maps and interventions below. Please note W3 is incorporated into CW1 in Section 5.

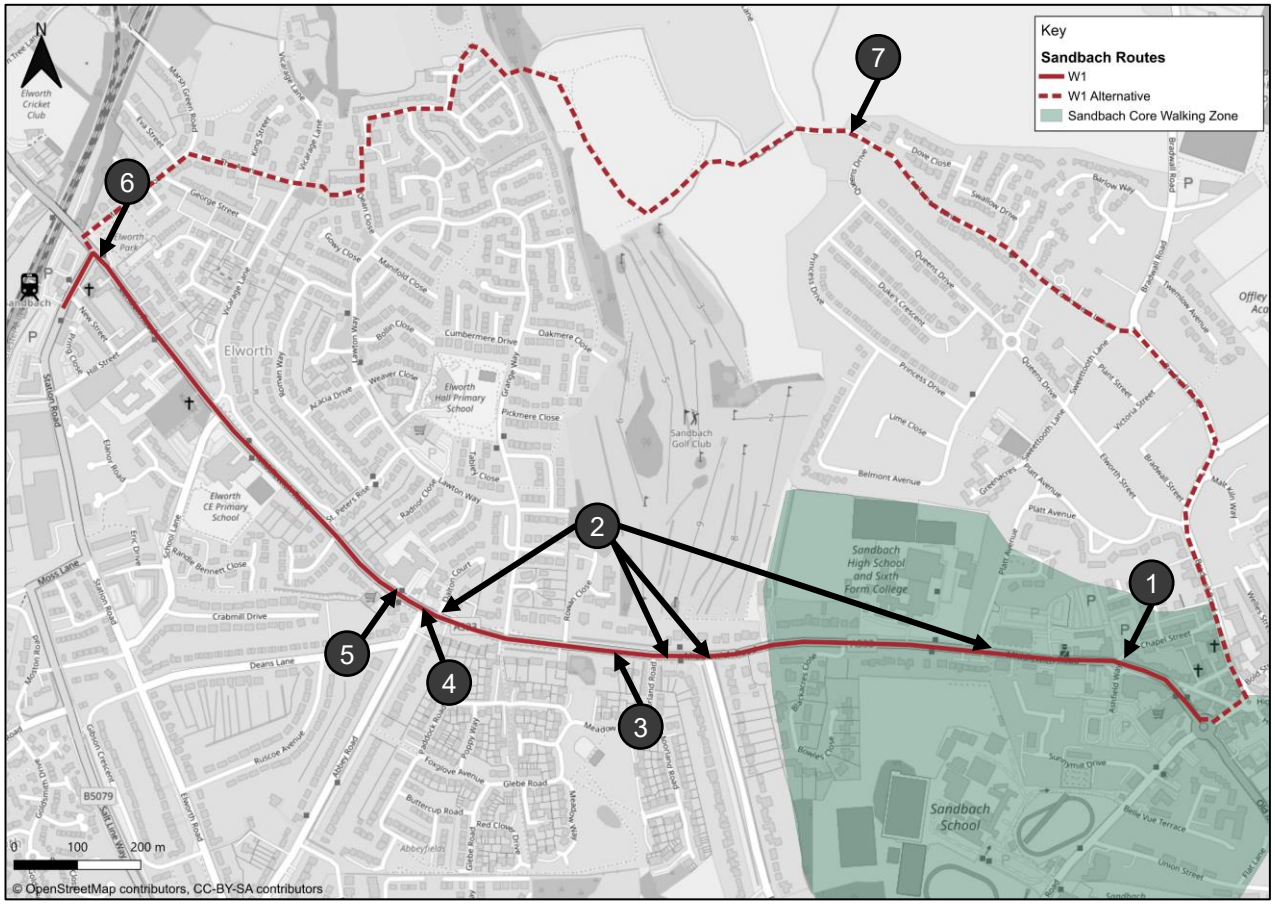
Sandbach Core Walking Zone

Ref	Location	Description of CWZ interventions
-	**Throughout**	Improved wayfinding and signage throughout to key destinations / attractors e.g., shops, leisure and rail station.
-	**Throughout**	Secure, safe, cycle parking at key locations within the town centre, including schools.
-	**Throughout**	Review of lighting throughout residential areas to ensure users feel safe.
-	**Throughout**	Install new and renovate existing dropped kerbs and tactile paving throughout the area. Ensure routes are well maintained and vegetation managed.
1	**A533 / Hightown / Crewe Rd Roundabout**	Consider Cyclops or Dutch Roundabout.
2	**A533 / Ashfield Way junction**	Consider upgrade to a Pelican crossing and reducing the number of crossings to reduce waiting times. Explore removal of guard railing at Ashfield Way junction.



W1 – Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Rail Station

Ref	Location	Description of walking interventions
-	**Throughout**	Ensure there are drop kerbs and tactiles paving at all crossing locations. Currently some tactile paving and dropped kerbs are placed close to the main carriageway, reposition these, where required, to meet the current standards.
1	**Middlewich Road between Chapel Street and Platt Avenue**	Review/remove/rationalise street furniture to ensure access for all pedestrians, such as the lighting columns along Middlewich Road.
2	**Junction mouths: Moorland Rd, Abbey Rd, Platt Ave, Park Ln**	Narrow junction mouths and set back crossings. Ensure tactiles and dropped kerbs are maintained on all side roads. Depending on the traffic flow on Abbey Road, potential to implement a Zebra crossing for pedestrians to cross the side road.
3	**Middlewich Road**	Consider reducing highway width to extend the footway where needed and if feasible, creating more space for pedestrians. Footway space could also be increased by utilising grass verge areas, if feasible. Traffic calming measures and speed limits reductions on Middlewich Road in accordance with the CEC Speed Management Strategy.
4	**Middlewich Road**	Where there is uneven surfaces or defects in the path, potential to resurface to make it safe for pedestrians. Depending on the traffic flow on Abbey Road, a potential to implement a Zebra crossing for pedestrians to cross the side road.
5	**Middlewich Road**	Vegetation clearance and maintenance is needed to expose the whole footway. Review/remove/rationalise street furniture to ensure access for all pedestrians, such as the bin by the bus stop along Middlewich Road. Footway narrows, utilise as much space from the carriageway to extend the footpath to a 2m minimum width, reallocating the bus stop if feasible.
6	**Middlewich Park outside Elworth Park**	Formalise parking outside Elworth Park due to parking on the footway, reducing the width of the footway for those accessing Elworth Park. Investigate the potential to remove the lay by and create a grassy area to create an inviting space for residents.
7	**Alternative route**	Alternative route suggested which would take pedestrians away from Middlewich Road and utilise routes through residential areas.





Google Maps: Narrow junction mouths & set back crossings, e.g. Platt Avenue



Google Maps: Footway space can be increased by utilising grass verge areas, if feasible.



Google Maps: Central refuge needs upgrading and made wider for wheelchairs and prams.



Google Maps: Footway narrows, utilise as much space from the carriageway to extend the footpath, reallocating the bus stop if feasible.



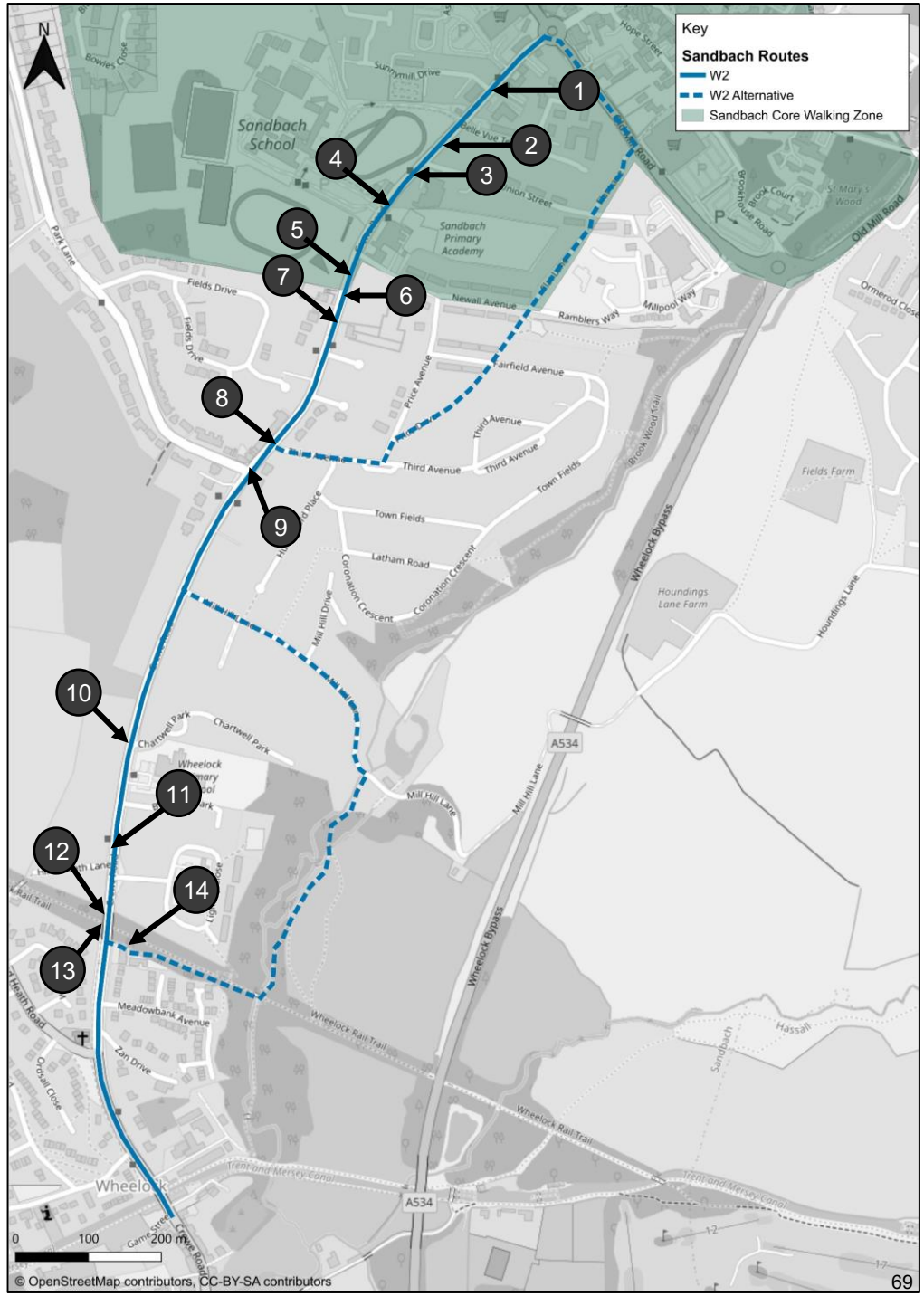
Site Visit: Condition of existing tactile paving along Middlewich Road



Site Visit: Parked cars reducing footway width along Middlewich Road

W2 – Sandbach Town Centre to Wheelock

Ref	Location	Description of walking interventions
-	**Throughout**	If delivered alongside C2, ensure interventions are complementary.
1	**Crewe Road**	Install new and renovate existing dropped kerbs and tactile paving throughout the area. Traffic calming measures and reduction in speed limits on Crewe Road in accordance with the CEC Speed Management Strategy.
2	**Crewe Road**	Bus stop on Crewe Road obstructs footway, potentially unpassable for wheelchair users. Relocate to the rear of the footway.
3	**Crewe Road**	Presence of parking on the footway. Measures to formalise parking, ensuring clear wide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
4	**Crewe Road**	Footway on the southbound side of the footway narrows, therefore pedestrians should use the footpath that runs parallel to the hedgerow along Crewe Road. Signage is needed to direct pedestrians off the footpath and onto the footpath that runs parallel to Crewe Road. Installation of lighting to address any perceived safety concerns.
5	**Crewe Road**	Removal of barriers at the entrance/exit to the footpath to ensure wheelchairs and prams can access the footpath. Ensure adequate spacing in line with CEC Access Control Policy.
6	**Crewe Road**	Potential to provide a Zebra/Pelican crossing at the exit of the footway so pedestrians can access either side of the footway with ease.
7	**Crewe Road**	Presence of parking on the footway. Measures to formalise parking, ensuring clear wide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
8	**Crewe Road / Third Avenue**	Third Avenue has a wide junction entrance. Introduce junction tightening and raised tables, where required, to limit vehicle turning speeds making it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross side roads.
9	**Crewe Road**	Current cycle provision is on road. Width on the road to create a light segregated facility where feasible, or at a minimum a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists on the southbound footpath, or segregated facilities if widths allow. Review on-road parking along the footway which can restrict movement of cyclists and pedestrians. Install tactile paving to benefit pedestrians.
10	**Crewe Road outside Wheelock Primary School**	Install tactile paving at Chartwell Park side road. Consider the option to convert the pelican crossing to a toucan crossing to access the school.
11	**Crewe Road**	Removal of central reservation, to allow the footway to be widened. Potential to introduce an improved crossing point across Crewe Road between Hind Heath Lane and Wheelock Primary School.
12	**Crewe Road / Lightley Close**	Install tactile paving to ensure those with visual impairments can cross side roads with ease.
13	**Crewe Road**	Pinch point of the bridge going over the Wheelock Rail Trail. Investigate the potential to make one-way for vehicles across the bridge with shuttle working signals. This would mean a light segregated facility, or at a minimum a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists could be provided at the pinch point.
14	**Access to the Wheelock Rail Trail from behind Fast Fit Tyres**	Work with landowners to widen the ramped access to the Wheelock Rail Trail to ensure ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists. Vegetation clearance and maintenance is needed. Install lighting and signage. Drainage is needed.



Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of W2 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes



Google Maps: Tactile paving to be provided throughout the extent of Crewe Road



Google Maps: Reallocation of the bus stop along Crewe Road to ensure there are no barriers for wheelchairs or pedestrians



Google Maps: Removal of barriers at the entrance/exit to the footpath to ensure wheelchairs and prams can access the footpath.



Google Maps: Width on the road to create a light segregated facility where feasible, or at a minimum a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists on the southbound footpath, or segregated facilities if widths allow



Google Maps: Pinch point over the bridge along Crewe Road



Google Maps: Ramped access to the Wheelock Rail Trail from Crewe Road

5. Network Planning for Cycling

5.1. Introduction

The analysis of baseline data through a review of local policy documents and background data forms a solid evidence base to support the next step of beginning to create a network plan for cycling with the aim of forming a coherent and well-established network.

The future cycling network plan has been derived through identifying links between those areas which are identified as trip origins and trip destinations. As part of this process, corridors have been identified, incorporating the route which most cyclists will follow to access a particular destination. Through creating a network plan of routes, this LCWIP identifies the core cycle routes which require improvement.

As part of this process, a meeting was held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 via Teams. Local representatives, including town councillors and representatives of local walking and cycling groups, with a good knowledge and local understanding were invited including representatives from the Town Council to help inform the cycling routes created in this LCWIP. The cycle network map was also consulted on and updated as part of public consultation in 2025, the details of which are included in Chapter 8.

5.2. Network Plan

This section will set out the proposed cycle routes. They have been recommended based on an analysis of the information including information from the PCT, awareness of existing infrastructure projects and growth in employment and housing. Investing in these routes as a priority is likely to have the biggest impact in achieving growth in cycling levels in the study area.

Illustrated below are the five cycling routes that have been identified for Sandbach.

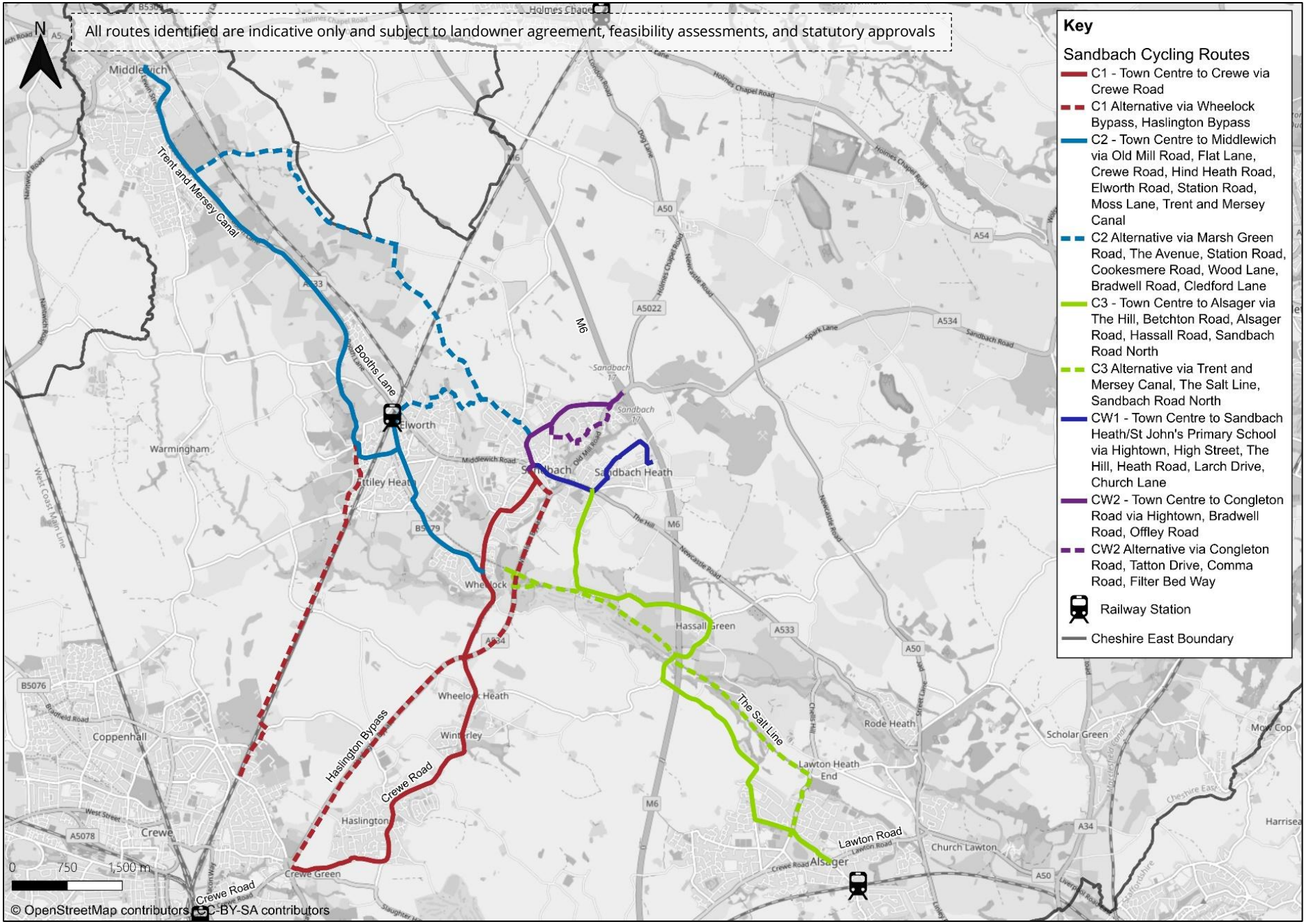


Figure 5-1 Sandbach Network Plan for Cycling

5.3. Key Area for Improvement – Cycling

To identify the areas where improvements to cycling infrastructure are required, and the types of interventions which are most suitable, the routes were audited utilising the Cycling Level of Service Tool (CLOS). Audits were undertaken using local knowledge, knowledge obtained through site visits and online research.

The CLOS comprises an auditing methodology which is focused around the five core design outcomes for cycling. These design outcomes are similar to those required for walking. The core design outcomes are:

1. Cohesion (connections, wayfinding, density of network);
2. Directness (distance, gradients, time delay);
3. Safety (speed of traffic, risk of collision, design);
4. Comfort (surface quality, wayfinding); and
5. Attractiveness (social safety, impact on pedestrians, street clutter, cycle parking).

The core design principles are scored on a 0 - 2 scale, with 0 as the lowest score and 2 as the highest score. The CLOS was completed as part of the cycle audits and the routes were scored accordingly. Following the scoring, these areas were identified as requiring the greatest improvement:

- **C1** – no priority given to cyclists at crossing A534 roundabout, little signage, high speed limits along the route, cyclists sharing carriageway with vehicles;
- **C2** – narrow access to the Wheelock Rail Trail, overgrown vegetation, no cycle provision along the route, resurfacing needs to be investigated; and
- **C3** – narrow, multiple crossings along the route, no separation between cyclists and vehicles, unlit, lack of signage.

These routes are outlined within Table 5-1 along with their CLOS scores pre and post intervention.

Table 5-1 Cycle Level of Service Results

Route	Audited cycling route	CLOS score (max. score of 50)	Potential score with interventions (max. score of 50)
1	Sandbach to Crewe	24	43
2	Sandbach to Middlewich	21	45
3	Sandbach to Alsager	20	41

The CLOS then informed the selection of interventions on the routes.

5.4. Establishing Cycling Infrastructure

During the development of the LCWIP, improvements for cycling have been identified along each route, which aims to create a high-quality network in line with LCWIP design objectives.

Further feasibility and design work is required to understand in more detail, the opportunities, constraints and detailed costings alongside any impacts or benefits for stakeholders.

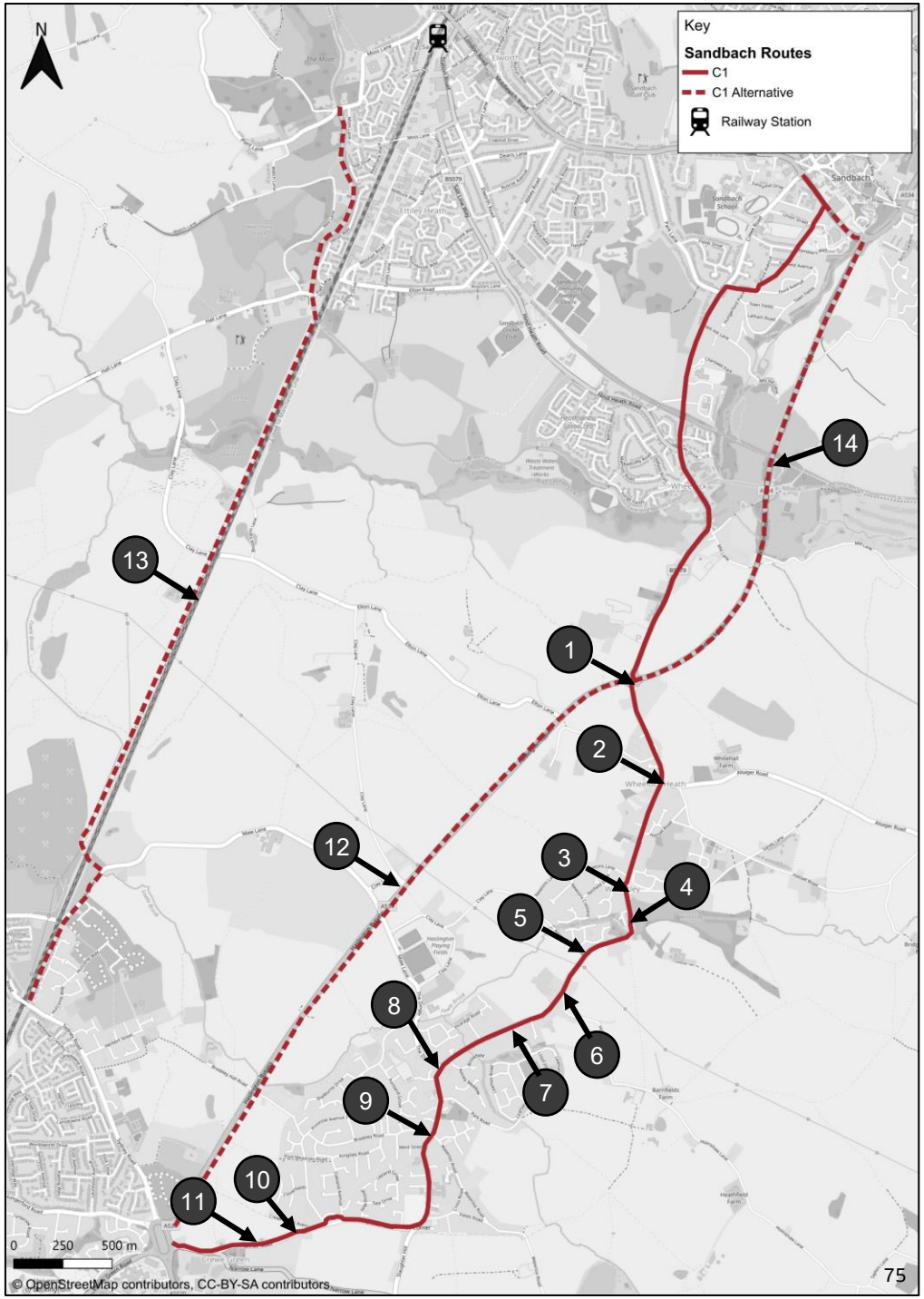
A wide range of design guidance can be utilised to develop schemes to ensure high quality streets and cycling links. Interventions have been suggested that are aligned with national guidance and lessons learnt from delivery of previous active travel schemes. All schemes developed will be in accordance with the latest guidance - LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design where feasible.

The proposed route improvements on the future cycling network are outlined in more detail in the maps and interventions below.

C1 – Sandbach Town Centre to Crewe

Ref	Location	Description of cycling interventions
-	**Throughout**	General directional signage for pedestrians/cyclists along the route for coherence. Consider reduction of speed limit throughout the residential areas to 20mph. Consider if any complimentary measures at nearby schools could be implemented.
1	**Crewe Road from Alsager Road to A534 roundabout**	Upgrading of the junction at the A534 roundabout to consider pedestrian / cyclists movements, this can be in the form of an addition of a Toucan/parallel crossing on the A534 roundabout, in particular on the south and east arms. This will make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the roundabout to get onto the A534.
2	**Crewe Road / Alsager Road**	Install a toucan or parallel crossing to aid crossing the road for pedestrians and cyclists.
3	**Crewe Road between Pool View and Alsager Road.**	Utilise grass verges to widen the footway to create a shared walking and cycling pathway. Maintenance of existing benches and bins to improve quality of the public realm.
4	**Pool View**	Install a toucan or parallel crossing to ensure safety of cyclists. General wayfinding and signage.
5	**Crewe Road between Kent's Green Lane and Pool View**	The existing footway width is not wide enough to accommodate all footway users such as wheelchairs and prams, therefore potential to widen the footway to 1.5m. When crossing side roads ensure tactile paving is of high quality to ensure safe crossing for pedestrians. The road widens once reaching Kent's Green Lane, potential to create a wide shared path for walkers and cyclists or the potential to create segregated cycle lane.
6	**Crewe Road between Canon Ward Way and Kent's Green Lane**	Due to limited widths within the highway, consider introducing an off-road cycle track behind the hedge which may require discussions with adjacent landowners. Potential for removal of barriers along the road such as trees in order to widen footway for pedestrians using the route.
7	**Crewe Road near Canon Ward Way**	Consider a Toucan crossing instead of traffic lights, this would reduce the impact of the traffic lights on the narrow footway in this area.
8	**Crewe Road between Delves Broughton Close and Canon Ward Way**	Consider alternatives to on-street parking for terraced housing as this limits the width of the footway. If there's an alternative found, there could be width to create an off-road shared walking / cycling infrastructure. Grass verges can be removed along Crewe Road to widen the footway to Canon Ward Way. Streetscape to be reviewed in order to change the character of the environment and promote lower speeds and shared space.
9	**Crewe Road through Haslington**	Consider gateway feature to village and environmental enhancements to reinforce speed limit and complement existing calming measures. Include side road junction narrowing / pedestrian priority crossings. Particular focus at Bradeley Road / Waterloo Road junction. Consider speed limit reduction to 20mph if appropriate. Ensure where there is any crossing of a side street there are dropped kerbs and tactile paving to ensure safe crossing.
10	**Crewe Road / Crewe Green Avenue**	Review on-road parking along the footway which can restrict movement of cyclists and pedestrians. Install tactile paving to benefit pedestrians.
11	**Crewe Road**	Widening of existing path to create a facility for pedestrians and cyclists using the grass verges. Some pinch points along the route that would need to be considered in more detail. If appropriate, review speed limit to make this safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
12	**Long term aspiration along Haslington Bypass**	Investigate scope for provision of shared bi-directional off-road cycle route along the A534 to the A534/Crewe Road roundabout as an alternative to the route via Haslington.
13	**Long term aspiration parallel to the West Coast Main Line**	Long term aspiration of Cheshire East and partners for a high-quality route from the canal in Elworth to the west of Sandbach, following parallel to the railway into Crewe. Work with partners to investigate options. Careful consideration required to ensure there is lighting provision, suitable widths and that the area is activated so it is perceived as being safe for users.
14	**A534 to route 4 via Wheelock Rail Trail**	Link to the Wheelock Rail Trail. This would benefit from an at grade separated crossing of the A534 to prevent severance of the Wheelock Rail Trail. Sustrans have completed a feasibility study which recommends the installation of a bridge over the A534.

Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of the following route because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes





Google Maps: Crewe Road / Alsager Road



Google Maps: Crewe Road between Pool View and Alsager Road



Google Maps: Crewe Road between Kent's Green Lane and Pool View



Google Maps: Crewe Road between Cannon Ward Way and Kent's Green Lane



Google Maps: Crewe Road / Cannon Ward Way



Google Maps: Crewe Road between Delves Broughton Close and Cannon Ward Way



Google Maps: Crewe Road between Delves Broughton Close and Cannon Ward Way



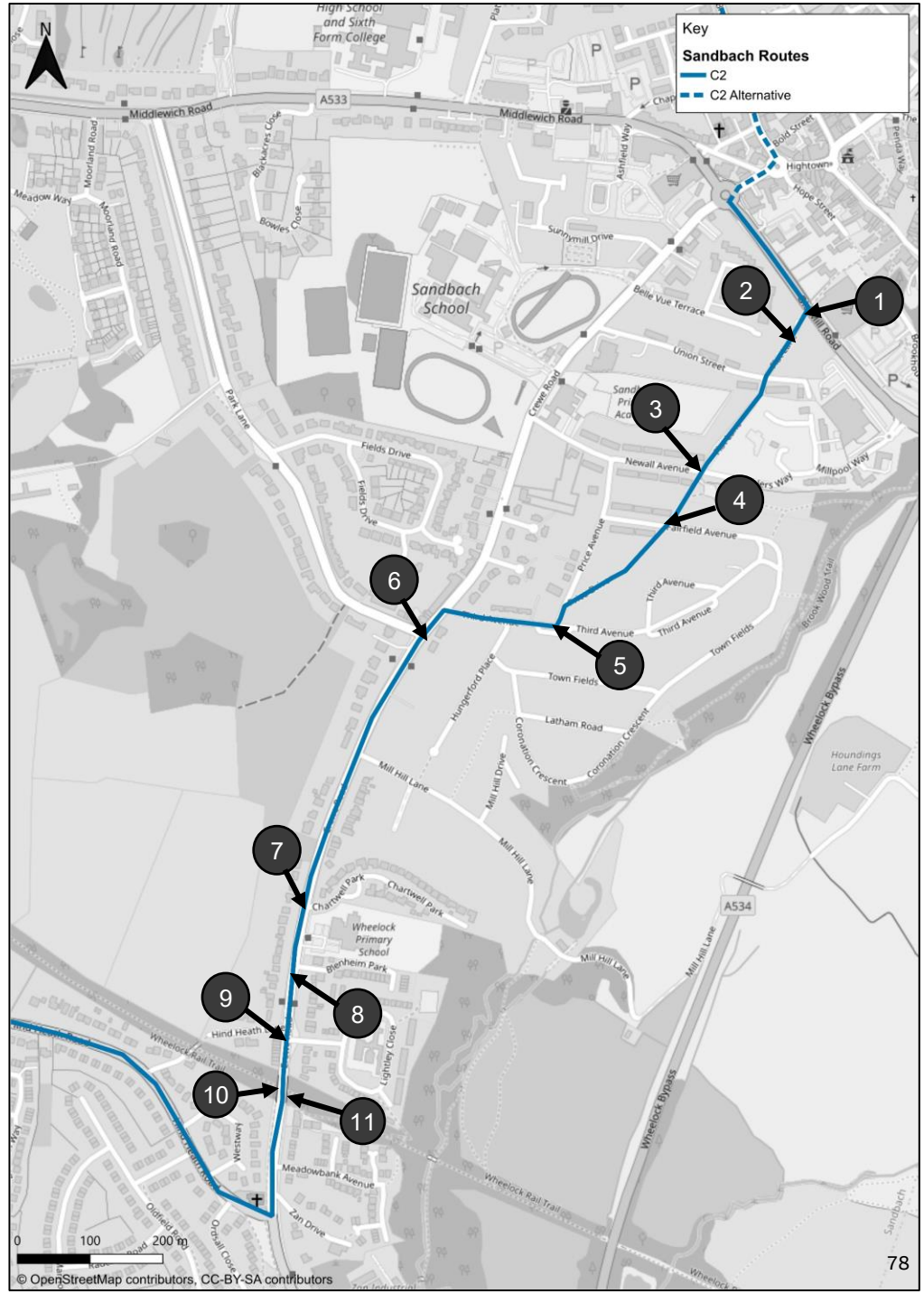
Google Maps: Crewe Road / Crewe Green Avenue



Google Maps: Crewe Road between Delves Broughton Close and Cannon Ward Way

C2 – Sandbach Town Centre to Middlewich

Ref	Location	Description of cycling interventions
-	**Throughout**	General directional signage for pedestrians/cyclists along the route for coherence. Consider reduction of speed limit throughout residential areas to 20mph. Consider if any complimentary measures at nearby schools could be implemented.
1	**A533 from Hightown to Flat Lane**	Upgrade path to shared use for pedestrians and cyclists and widen to 3m where possible utilising grass verge. Upgrade to Toucan / parallel crossing across A533. Route links with LCWIP route 5 at this location.
2	**A533 to Flat Lane**	Consider removal of gates on entrance to Flat Lane and at Union Street to ensure all types of bikes, pedestrians and those with wheelchairs and prams for example can access Flat Lane. Ensure route is well maintained to improve perception of safety.
3	**Play Park at Ramblers Way**	Consider removal of bollards at the entrance of the path to ensure cyclists and pedestrians can access. Widen the path into the play park to ensure there is enough room for cyclists and pedestrians to pass each other in line with LTN 01/20. On-street parking also restricts movement so potential to investigate this further.
4	**Fairfield Avenue to Price Drive**	Consider removal of the gate at the start of Price Drive off Fairfield Avenue to ensure cyclists and all types of pedestrians can access the footpath. Resurfacing of the footpath to improve the condition and widen where possible by clearing/reducing vegetation to achieve minimum widths. Improve lighting along the route to improve perception of safety. Ensure LTN 1/20 compliant access controls in line with emerging CEC Access Control Policy.
5	**Third Avenue / Crewe Road**	Improvement of dropped kerb quality so bikes can access the route comfortably. Widening paths to create a route for pedestrians and cyclists by utilising grass verge. Potential to add in tactile paving to ensure pedestrians can cross safely.
6	**Crewe Road**	Current cycle provision is on road. Width on the road to create a 3m shared space for pedestrians and cyclists on the southbound footpath, or segregated facilities if widths allow. Review on-road parking along the footway which can restrict movement of cyclists and pedestrians. Install tactile paving to benefit pedestrians.
7	**Crewe Road outside Wheelock Primary School**	Install tactile paving at Chartwell Park side road. Convert the pelican crossing to a toucan crossing to access the school.
8	**Crewe Road**	Relocation of central refuge to expose as much of the road as possible to ensure a 3m shared space for pedestrians and cyclists can be provided, or segregated facilities if widths allow.
9	**Crewe Road / Lightley Close**	Install tactile paving to ensure those with visual impairments can cross side roads with ease.
10	**Crewe Road**	Pinch point of the bridge going over the Wheelock Rail Trail. Removal of the northbound footway to widen the southbound footway to create a 3m shared space for pedestrians and cyclists, or segregated facilities if widths allow.
11	**Access to the Wheelock Rail Trail from behind Fast Fit Tyres**	Work with landowners to widen the ramped access to the Wheelock Rail Trail to ensure ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists. Vegetation clearance and maintenance is needed. Install lighting and signage.



Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of C2 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes



Site Visit: Entrance to Flat Lane from A533



Site Visit: Play Park / bollards at Ramblers Way



Site Visit: Footpath along Price Drive



Site Visit: Narrow footpath off Ramblers Way



Site Visit: Footpath along Price Drive



Site Visit: Footpath on Third Avenue



Google Maps: Existing cycle facility along Crewe Road



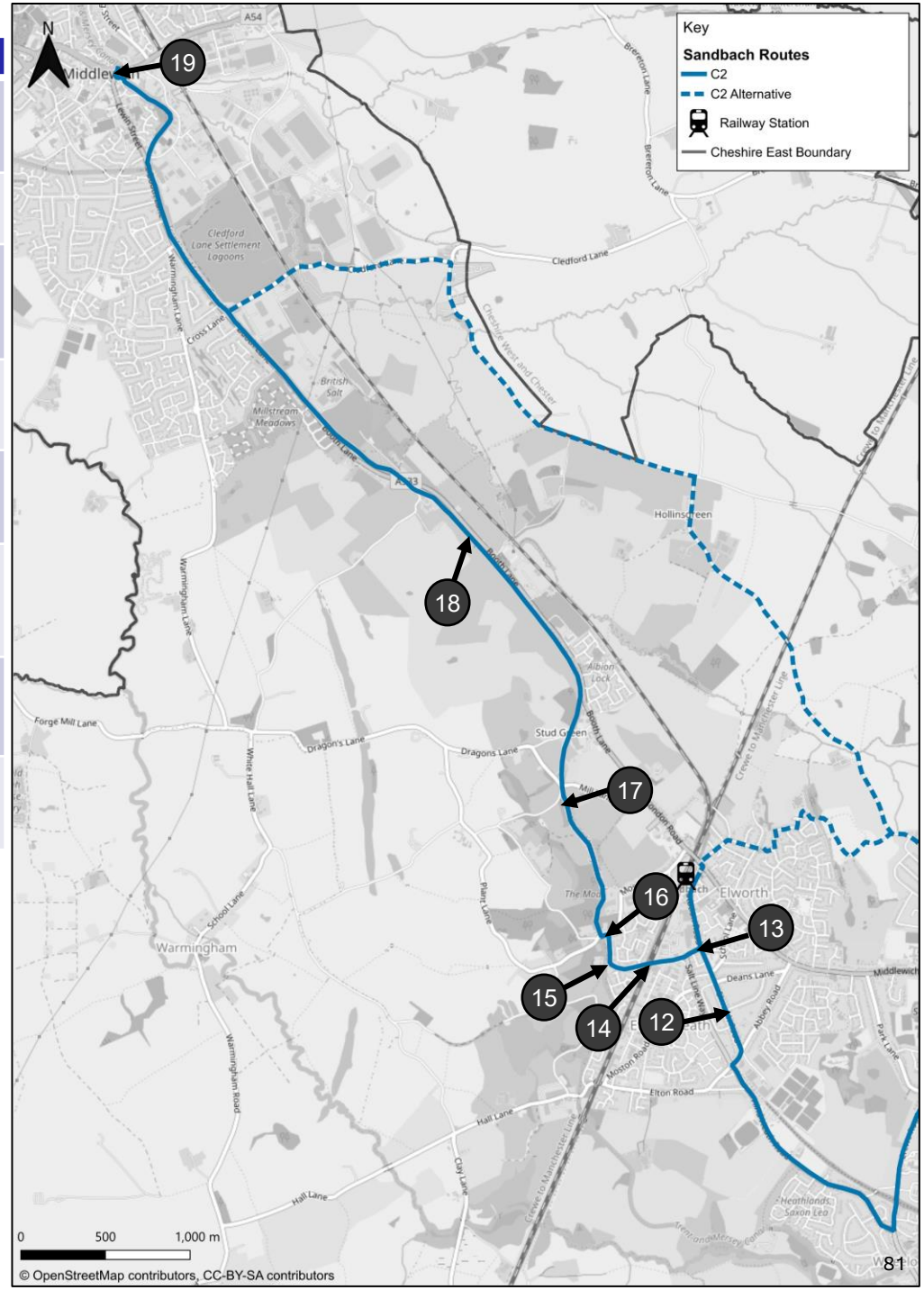
Google Maps: Pinch point over the bridge along Crewe Road



Google Maps: Ramped access to the Wheelock Rail Trail from Crewe Road

C2 – Sandbach Town Centre to Middlewich

Ref	Location	Description of cycling interventions
12	**Abbey Road / Elworth Road**	Gateway feature to improve access to Wheelock Rail Trail. Toucan crossing of Abbey Road at the end of the Wheelock Rail Trail near or at the roundabout. Utilise width along Elworth Road to create a segregated cycle lane utilising grass verge. Tactile paving to allow those with visual impairments to cross safely.
13	**Station Road / Moss Lane**	Due to short stretch of road, provide on road cycle lane. If not feasible, potential to provide traffic calming measures or consider reducing the speed of traffic to 20mph to slow down vehicles. Rationalise footway to one side of the road to create more width on the footpath.
14	**Moss Lane**	Lighting improvements due to limited lighting in the area. This will improve perception of safety and encourage use. Quiet residential street so a quiet lane approach can be adopted. Measures need to be provided for safe access for cyclists over Moss Lane Railway bridge, including signage and dropped kerbs. Consideration given to green time of signals to recognise cyclists crossing the bridge. The carriageway surface should be repaired and maintained.
15	**Oakwood Lane – bridge over the canal**	Traffic calming measures to slow down traffic and consider a reduction to the speed limit. No dedicated provision for pedestrians or cyclists, adopt a quiet lane approach for cyclists. Potential to consider widening to create a dedicated pedestrian facility, along with improving the access to the canal for pedestrians.
16	**Access to the Trent and Mersey canal from Oakwood Lane**	Upgrade the surface quality of the access to the canal from Oakwood Lane, currently steep and muddy. Cheshire East Council to liaise with the Canal River Trust regarding the improvements to the canal path. Work in partnership regarding available funding and certain identified issues.
17	**Trent and Mersey Canal from Sandbach to Middlewich Town Centre**	Improve the lighting along the first stretch of the canal from Oakwood Lane to ensure visibility and safety. Potential to provide benches, bins, and regular maintenance to improve attractiveness. Consider resurfacing of the canal to improve condition. Potential for some pinch points regarding width and bridges, however there is scope for widening in some areas e.g. hedge removal. Potential to consider adding links/crossings to housing along the route.
18	**Canal bridge near Mercer Place/Booth Lane**	Low bridge – Follow Canal and Rivers Trust guidance r.e. bridge heights – potential to utilise warning signs instead of increasing bridge height. At the moment, cyclists will struggle to cycle under the bridge without having to dismount. Removal of the steps leading over the bridge, replace with ramped access so cyclists can leave the canal easily if needed.
19	**Canal access at Leadsmithy Street**	Linking with route 3 and route 2, improve this area and provide a gateway feature that is inviting for users to raise awareness of the route. Route continues along the canal as part of route 2. Access should be considered to the town centre.



Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of C2 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes



Site Visit: Canal condition Mercer Place/Booth Lane



Site Visit: Access to the canal from Mercer Place/Booth Lane and height of bridge



Site Visit: Canal width Mercer Place/Booth Lane



Site Visit: Bridge over Oakwood Lane leading to the canal



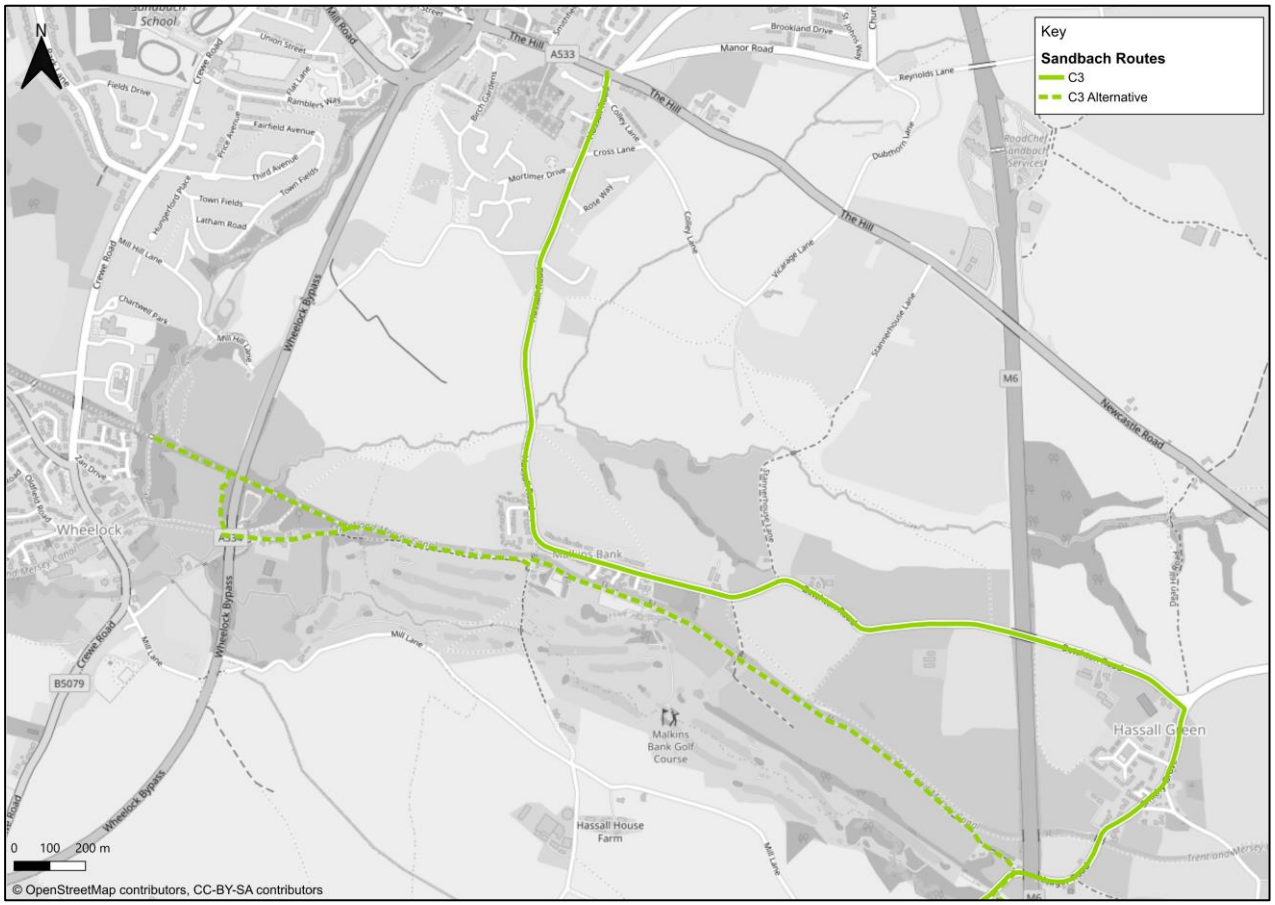
Site Visit: Canal condition off Oakwood Lane



Site Visit: Canal bridge going under Oakwood Lane

C3 – Sandbach Town Centre to Alsager

Ref	Location	Description of cycling interventions
-	**Throughout**	General direction signage for cyclists along route. Consistent lighting, such as solar studs along the full length of off-road path. Vegetation clearance to enhance visibility on path, improving perceptions of personal safety.



C3 – Sandbach Town Centre to Alsager

Ref	Location	Description of cycling interventions
-	**Throughout**	General directional signage for pedestrians/cyclists along route. Consistent lighting, such as solar studs, along the full length of off-road path.
1	**Alsager Road**	Provide short stretch of path using the grass verges on the northbound side of Alsager Road. Currently 60 mph road, consider reducing the speed limit for the small stretch of road to ensure safety for cyclists.
2	**Alsager Road**	Install an informal crossing of Alsager Road. Signs warning vehicles of cyclists crossing the carriageway.



Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of C3 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes



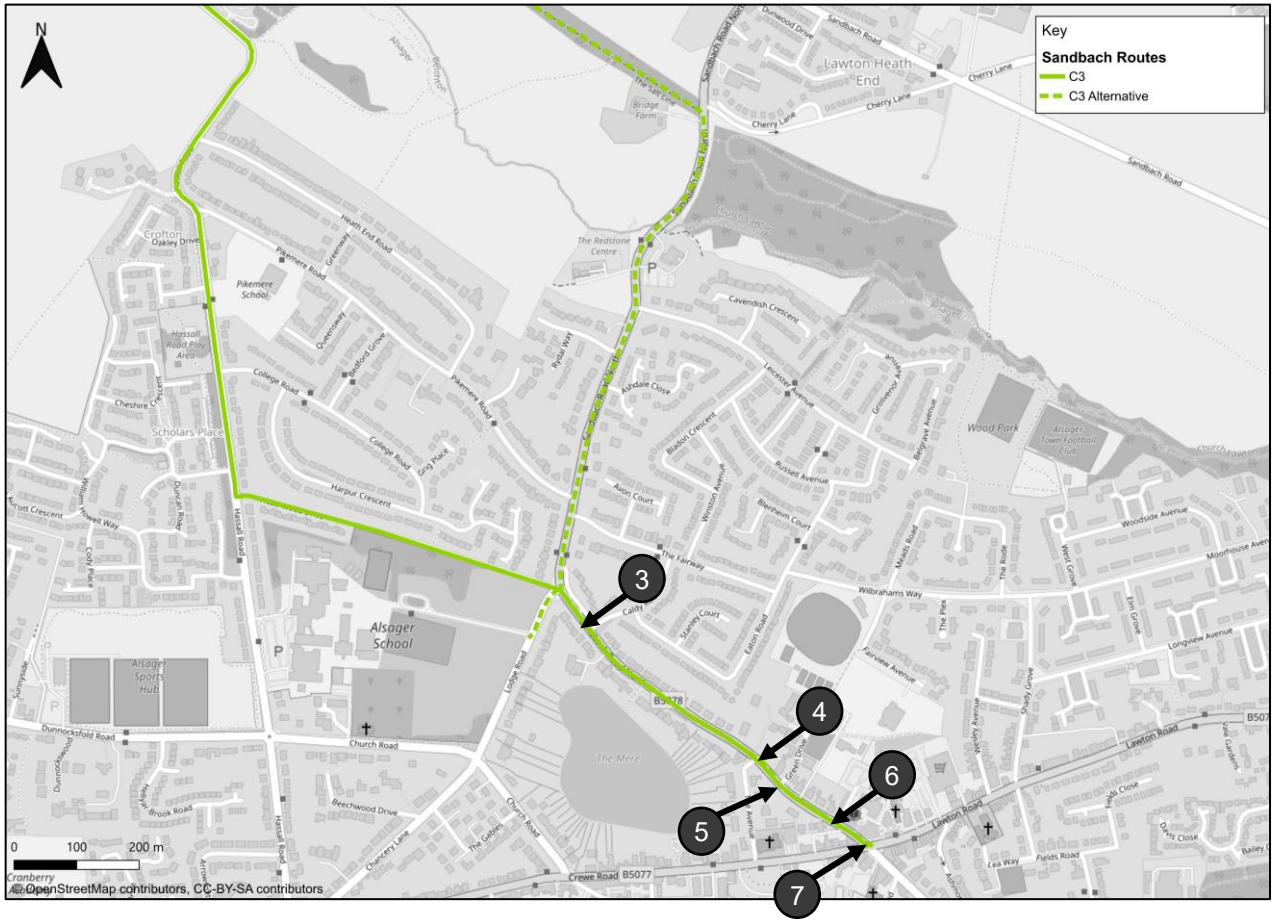
Google Maps: Removal of k-frame barrier on the entrance/exit to the Salt Line.



Google Maps: Short stretch of path proposed using the grass verge along Alsager Road.

C3 – Sandbach Town Centre to Alsager

Ref	Location	Description of cycling interventions
-	**Throughout**	Investigate options to provide general directional signage for pedestrians/cyclists along the route.
3	**Sandbach Road North/Sandbach Road South junction**	Tighten junction to reduce vehicle speeds and allow enhanced visibility for cyclists crossing.
4	**Sandbach Road North between Crewe Road junction and Asda Supermarket**	Provide a shared-use path at minimum or an advisory cycle lane if traffic flows allow, removing the centre line on the carriageway to increase width available. Provide traffic calming measures such as; reduced speed limit in line with CEC Speed Management Strategy, speed cushions to slow down vehicles, signage to warn vehicles of cyclists on the carriageway, formalise parking and cut back of vegetation to expose as much carriageway as possible.
5	**Sandbach Road North**	A shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists to be provided utilising space on the existing grass verge along Sandbach Road North. Side road priority improvements for cyclists.
6	**Sandbach Road North**	Some cases of cars parked on the existing footway. Address kerbside parking to enable pedestrians and cyclists to use the full width of the proposed shared path. Potential to introduce single or double yellow lines to address this issue where feasible.
7	**Sandbach Road North/Caldy Road**	Existing footway on the northbound side of Sandbach Road North narrows. Provide dedicated crossing facilities for cyclists (Toucan/parallel) to provide a safe route to cross over to the southbound side of Sandbach Road where provision for cycling is of higher quality. A shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists to be provided utilising space on the existing grass verge along Sandbach Road North.



Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of C3 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes



Google Maps: Tighten junction at Sandbach Road North.



Google Maps: Provide a shared-use path at minimum or an advisory cycle lane if traffic flows allow.



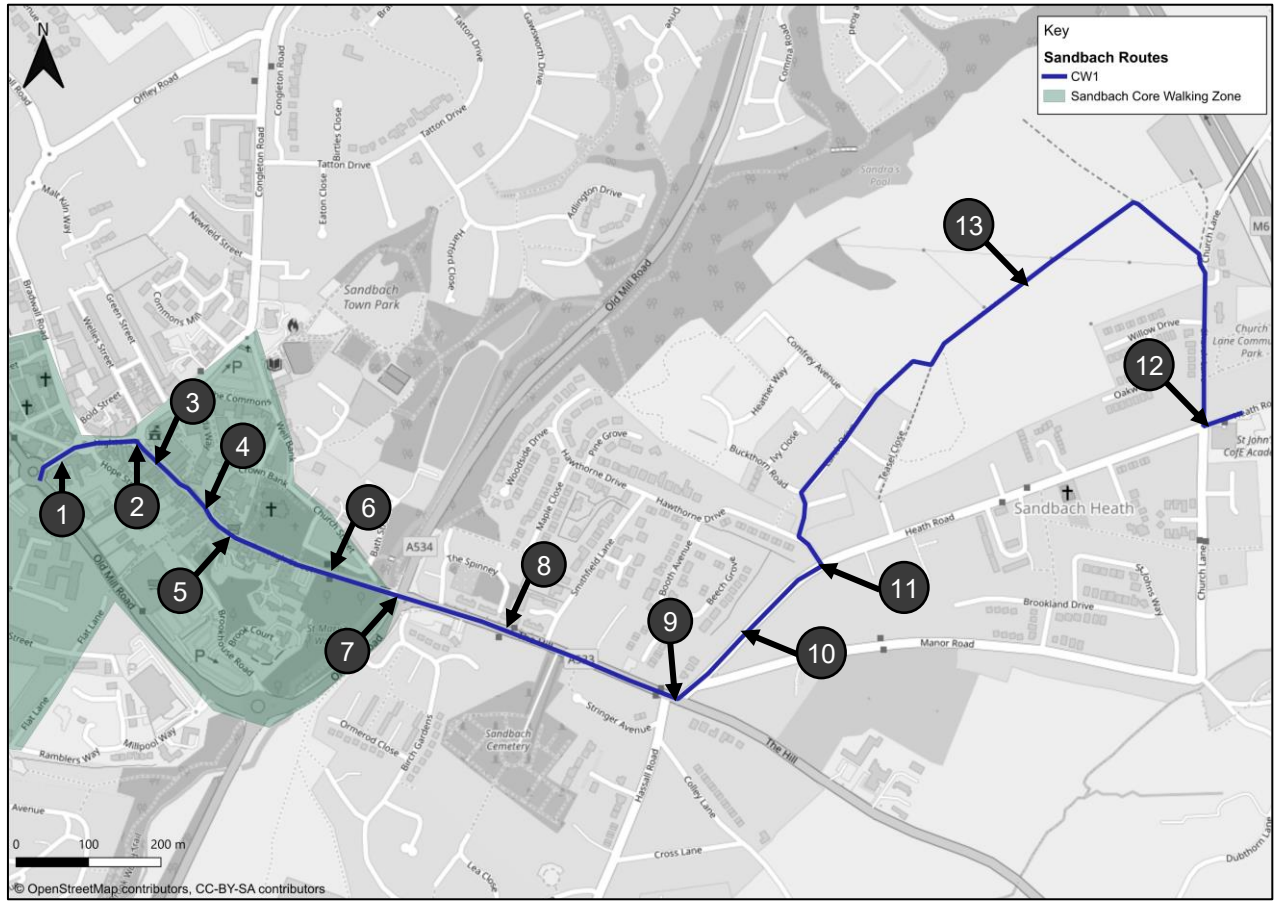
Google Maps: Parking along the footway along Sandbach Road North.



Google Maps: Crossing required along Sandbach Road North.

CW1 – Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Heath/St John's Primary School

Ref	Location	Description of walking and cycling interventions
1	**Hightown**	Investigate the potential to provide a light segregated facility where feasible, or at a minimum a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists. Ensure there are dropped kerbs and tactile paving to ensure those with visual impairments can use the route safely. Investigate the potential to improve pedestrian crossings along Hightown.
2	**High Street**	There is an existing contraflow cycle lane eastbound along High Street. Investigate the scope to create a bi-directional segregated cycle lane down High Street to ensure safety for cyclists.
3	**High Street**	Cars parked along the footway, due to this cars move into the cycle lane to overtake the parked cars. Address kerbside parking to ensure cyclists can travel safely down High Street.
4	**High Street**	Where there is uneven surfaces or defects in the path, potential to resurface to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists.
5	**High Street**	Ensure there are dropped kerbs and tactile paving to ensure those with visual impairments can use the route safely.
6	**High Street**	Review cycle lane width at bollards to ensure 1.5m width.
7	**High Street / A533**	Cycle lane ends, current crossing of the A533 could be improved to ensure safety. Removal of barrier along A533 footpath and conversion of Pelican crossing to a Toucan crossing to ensure cyclists and pedestrians can cross the A533 safely.
8	**A533**	Due to the limited width on the footway for cyclists and a segregated cycleway not possible, direct cyclists to on-carriageway by providing traffic calming measures such as; reduced speed limit in line with CEC Speed Management Strategy, speed cushions to slow down vehicles, signage to warn vehicles of cyclists on the carriageway, formalise parking and cut back of vegetation to expose as much carriageway as possible. Traffic counts would be required to ensure this is a feasible approach. Junction treatment at Smithfield Lane, due to poor visibility when crossing currently. Provide a Toucan along the A533 so pedestrians and cyclists can cross the busy road.
9	**Heath Road**	Quiet residential street so a quiet lane approach could be adopted. Provide traffic calming measures such as speed cushions to slow down vehicles and signage to warn vehicles of cyclists on the carriageway to reduce vehicles speeds along Heath Road. Where there is uneven surfaces or defects in the path, potential to resurface to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists.
10	**Heath Road**	Presence of parking on the footway limiting the width of the footway and carriageway. Formalise parking management to expose as much of the carriageway as possible.
11	**Heath Road**	Ensure there are dropped kerbs and tactile paving to ensure those with visual impairments can use the route safely. Where there is uneven surfaces or defects in the path, potential to resurface to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists.
12	**Heath Road outside St Johns CoE Primary School**	Signage to warn vehicles of school children crossing Heath Road.
13	**Footpath 14 running parallel to Heath Road**	Work with developer to improve access to school via Footpath 14.



Interventions have not been suggested for some sections of CW1 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes



Google Maps: provide a light segregated facility where feasible, or at a minimum a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists along Hightown.



Google Maps: There is an existing unsegregated cycle lane moving eastbound along High Street.



Google Maps: Address kerbside parking to ensure cyclists can travel safely down High Street.



Google Maps: Remove central reservation bollards to ensure cyclists can use the whole width of the cycle lane.



Google Maps: Removal of barrier along A533 footpath and conversion of Pelican crossing to a Toucan crossing to ensure cyclists and pedestrians can cross the A533 safely.



Google Maps: Widen the eastbound footpath to a light segregated facility where feasible, or at a minimum a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists along the A533.

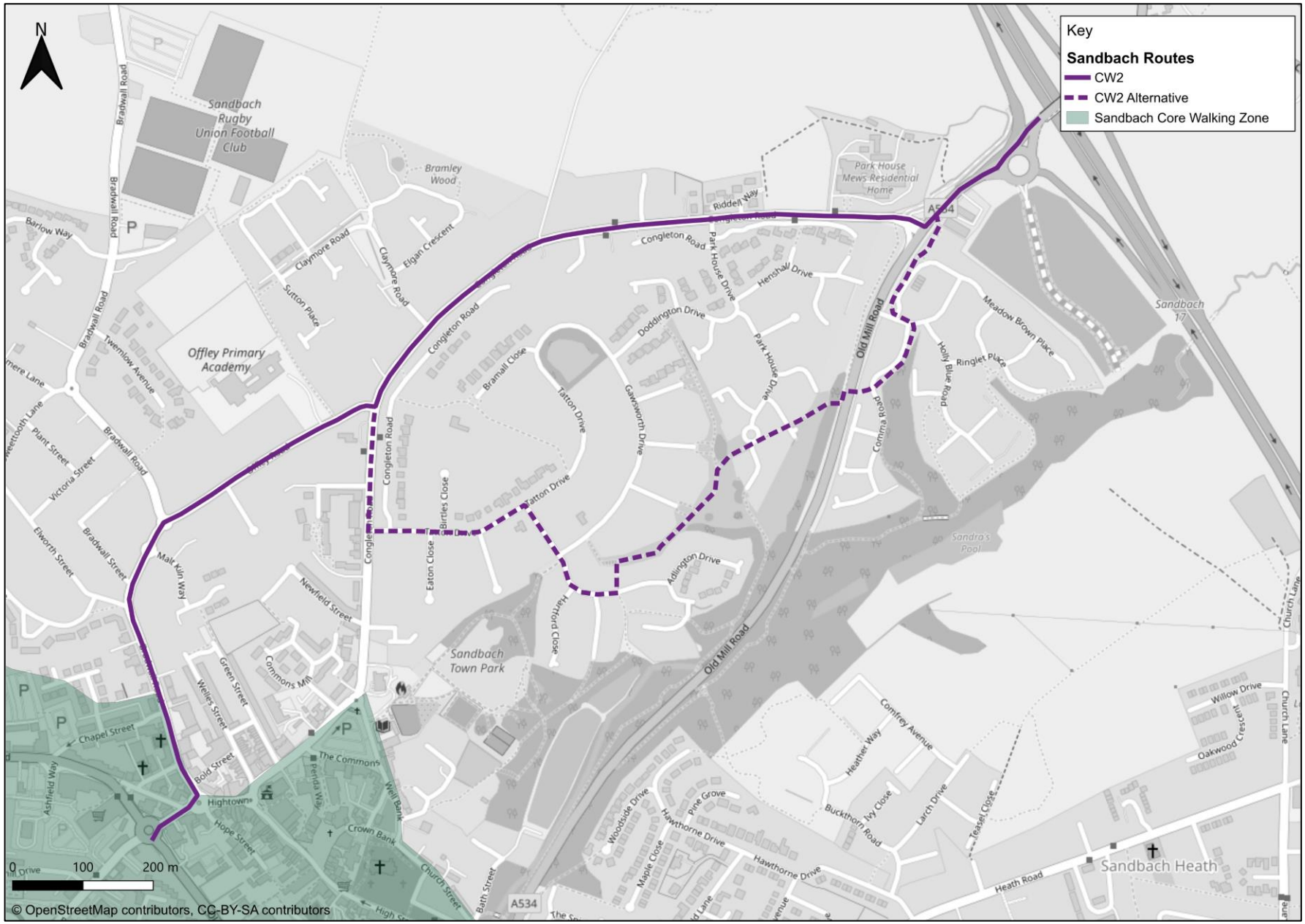


Google Maps: Quiet residential street so a quiet lane approach can be adopted along Heath Road.



Google Maps: Signage needed to warn vehicles of school children crossing Heath Road.

CW2 – Sandbach Town Centre to Congleton Road



Interventions have not been suggested for CW2 because this route was amended following public consultation. Full feasibility and design of routes will be undertaken if and when funding is awarded for specific routes

6. Prioritising Improvements

Sections 4 and 5 have outlined the vision for the future walking and cycling network across Sandbach and potential interventions required to enable this vision. High quality infrastructure and a cohesive network is required to achieve a step change in the levels of people walking and cycling. The full network will need to be delivered to encourage a significant uptake in walking and cycling for everyday journeys. There is a range of funding sources available but there is a limit on the number of schemes which can be taken forward at any one time. This chapter of the report sets out key evidence and rationale to prioritise improvements to the walking and cycling network.

DfT's LCWIP guidance recommends that priority should typically be given to schemes that are likely to have the greatest impact on levels of walking and cycling. To build the local case for future investment, it is important that early improvements evidence the local benefits and show a good return on investment.

Although it is crucial to develop a prioritised programme on investment, it is important to have flexibility with regard to the funding sources available. Some schemes fit the aims of funders better than others and therefore there will be a need to have a degree of flexibility.

In addition to delivering schemes on the ground it will be important to develop more long term and ambitious schemes in parallel, which entail greater levels of feasibility, planning and design. Ensuring that whilst delivering in the short term, a forward programme of investment is developed. For more ambitious and large-scale schemes such as roundabouts and links with segregated cycle tracks, external funding (i.e. funding not possessed by CEC) is likely to be needed. For some external funding sources, there are short timescales for developing bidding documents, and having scheme concepts already developed can enable authorities to submit high quality bids that leverage substantial investment.

It is important to deliver value for money from improvements and build the case for future investment. Investment in walking and cycling routes has been shown to give a high return on investment which is evidenced within a wide range of studies. Walking and cycling provide a broad range of benefits to both the users of the new infrastructure, and the communities the infrastructure is built within.

6.1. Appraisal

In order to determine sequencing and route prioritisation, improvements have been appraised against the following criteria:

- Policy fit;
- Cost scale construction and maintenance;
- Funding and affordability;
- Effectiveness;
- Existing number of cyclists on the route (cycle routes only);
- Design challenges and technical feasibility;
- Acceptability; and
- Land.

Due to the long distances of some routes, they were divided into sections at points where it would be practical to start and end a route. For example, a change from PRoW to a main A road. Table 6-1 shows the scoring matrix and Table 6-2 shows the full appraisal for walking and cycling route improvements, with summary information provided below in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 Objectives Appraisal for Route Improvements

Scheme ID	Route	Total Score	Rank	RAG		
				Design challenges / technical feasibility	Acceptability	Land
W1	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach train station	16	1			
W2	Sandbach Town Centre to Wheelock Rail Trail	13	2			
C1.1	Crewe to Sandbach	20	1			
C1.2	Plant Lane to Sydney Road via rail line	13	5			
C2.1	Sandbach to Moss Lane, end of Wheelock Rail Trail	17	4			
C2.2	End of Wheelock Rail Trail to Middlewich	19	2			
C3.1	Alsager Town Centre to the end of the Salt Line	12	6			
C3.2	The end of the Salt Line to the Wheelock Bypass	11	7			
C3.3	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Heath / St John's Primary School	18	3			

6.2. Recommended Sequencing of Investment

An indicative sequencing of investment has been set out in Table 6-2 below to guide future scheme development and delivery, based on the appraisal in Section 6.1. This sequencing seeks to balance the various evidence outlined above into a practical and evidence led programme. This investment programme has a number of work streams that are recommended to deliver short term improvements and develop more ambitious schemes for future delivery.

For walking, W1 scored the highest and has been identified for delivery in the short-term. W2 has also been identified as short-term as it overlaps with C2.1 which has been identified as short-term for cycling and it would be sensible to deliver these together.

For cycling, C1.1 scores the highest, however this has been identified as medium-term due to challenges including land ownership. C2.2 scores second highest and therefore this has been identified in the short-medium term alongside C2.1 which although scoring slightly lower would make sense to deliver this at a similar time.

Table 6-2 Recommended Sequencing of Investment for Walking and Cycling routes

Scheme ID	Route	Timescale			Rationale and risks for delivery
		Short-term (0-2 years)	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Long-term (5 years+)	
W1	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach train station				• Important connection through the town centre to Sandbach train station
W2	Sandbach Town Centre to Wheelock Rail Trail				• Narrow width over railway bridge • Overlaps with C2.1
C1.1	Crewe to Sandbach				• Behind the hedge solution requiring discussions with the landowner
C1.2	Plant Lane to Sydney Road via rail line				• Interventions parallel to the railway will need input from landowners / Network Rail
C2.1	Sandbach to Moss Lane, end of Wheelock Rail Trail				• Pinch point of the bridge going over the Wheelock Rail Trail s well as narrow access down to the Wheelock Rail Trail • Connection to Elworth

Scheme ID	Route	Timescale			Rationale and risks for delivery
		Short-term (0-2 years)	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Long-term (5 years+)	
C2.2	End of Wheelock Rail Trail to Middlewich				• Connect Elworth to Middlewich • Low bridge along the canal
C3.1	Alsager Town Centre to the end of the Salt Line				• Narrow widths along Sandbach Road presents a challenge
C3.2	The end of the Salt Line to the Wheelock Bypass				• Conversion of footpath to bridleway is needed • Routes along the canal
CW1	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Heath / St John's Primary School				• Challenges with widths • Important connection through the town centre

6.3. Benchmark Costs

A high-level indicative cost has been developed for walking route W1 and cycle route C2.2 using benchmark costs for similar interventions, based on the intervention tables in Section 4.4 and 5.4. W1 scored the highest in the appraisal as set out in Table 6-1. C2.2 scored second in the appraisal, however, as the highest scoring has some deliverability/land challenges and is phased as medium term, C2.2 has been costed.

The costs are in 2025 prices and give an initial idea of the cost, however, are subject to change when more detailed costs are calculated in future based on specific scheme designs. The following assumptions have been applied:

- Preliminaries and traffic management – assumed 45% of cost
- Project / design team fees – 20% of cost and preliminaries
- Risk / contingency – 20% of the cost, preliminaries, and project / design team fees
- Inflation has not been factored in

The indicative costs for the Sandbach routes can be found in Table 6-3 below. The total cost has been rounded to the nearest £5,000.

Table 6-3 Indicative Costs

Summary of Costs	W1	C2.2
Cost based on benchmarking	£675,000	£1,975,000

Summary of Costs	W1	C2.2
Preliminaries & Traffic Management	£303,750	£888,750
Project / Design Team Fees	£195,750	£572,750
Risk / Contingency	£234,900	£687,300
Total Cost	**£1,410,000**	**£4,125,000**

7. Integration and Application

Walking and cycling routes interact with other infrastructure such as highways and the urban realm. Likewise, from a policy perspective, walking and cycling fits within a broader context and policy framework. To achieve a step change in walking and cycling, a wider supportive policy framework is crucial to nudge people and support behaviour change. This chapter outlines how this LCWIP can be integrated in broader policy and ensure delivery cuts across a wide range of future investment programmes.

7.1. Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS)

Encouraging young people to walk and cycle has a wide range of benefits associated with reducing congestion as part of the school run, reducing parking issues in proximity of educational establishments, and crucially helping our children to be healthier and happier. This LCWIP details a number of walking and cycling route improvements in the vicinity of schools and educational sites. As part of the ongoing SMOTS programme these improvements should be considered for funding. Over and above the routes nearby to schools identified within this LCWIP, there may be additional locations where walking routes to schools need to be improved within Sandbach to make them available for school children to use to walk to school.

Additionally, schools should be encouraged to produce School Travel Plans that detail local complimentary access improvements. The production of School Travel Plans also presents an opportunity to roll out supporting measures that provide practical support such as Bikeability cycle training, scooter/cycle storage and promotional measures. For primary schools there is a significant opportunity to increase levels of walking / scooting to school. Cycling to primary schools should also be encouraged where off carriageway provision exists, and major modal shift can be achieved for cycling to secondary schools and colleges.

7.2. Development Management

A crucial early priority for implementation of the LCWIP will be working with developers as part of the planning process to ensure walking and cycling and are delivered to a high quality standard.

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear the importance of sustainable development, noting “transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives”.

Given the scale of development coming forward over the coming years there will be scope for delivery of key schemes and linkages into development sites through the planning process via Section 106 / 278 or within the footprint of development itself. Future developments are at varying stages of the planning process, developments that are at a stage in which there is potential for key routes within the future walking and cycling network to be incorporated into the sites, should be continually identified.

Funding secured from developers to mitigate impacts to the transport generated from new development should fund walking and cycling route improvements

7.3. Funding Submissions

CEC is increasingly benefiting from the Government's move towards consolidated multi-year transport funding settlements, which provide greater certainty over future investment and support a more strategic approach to the planning and delivery of transport improvements across the borough.

In 2025/26, Active Travel England funding was provided through the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF), which combined the former Active Travel Fund and Capability Fund into a single allocation supporting the planning, design and delivery of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, together

with associated engagement, training and behaviour change activities. Cheshire East received a direct CATF allocation as a Local Transport Authority.

The Government has since introduced wider reforms to local transport funding through the Local Transport Grant (LTG), which replaces the former Integrated Transport Block and provides longer-term consolidated funding for local transport improvements. The LTG comprises both capital and resource funding from 2026 to 2027 onwards. This approach gives local authorities greater flexibility to direct investment towards locally identified transport priorities.

As devolution arrangements for Cheshire and Warrington develop, there may be opportunities for transport investment to be coordinated at a sub-regional level through the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority. This could provide additional opportunities to align funding and investment decisions across the area and support a more coordinated approach to transport planning and delivery.

CEC will continue to secure additional funding from a range of external sources, including developer contributions through Section 106 agreements and grants from organisations such as the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and other partners. By complementing core transport funding, these resources can support the earlier delivery of LCWIP priorities, unlock further investment opportunities and enable a wider programme of walking, wheeling and cycling improvements to be delivered across Cheshire East.

7.4. Next Steps

This LCWIP has detailed a review of the existing walking and cycling network in the town of Sandbach, that identifies areas for improvement. On-site observations have informed the suggested interventions and routes that should form the future cycling and walking network in the LCWIP study area. The recommendations create a long-term investment programme that will need sustained investment to deliver a step change in levels of walking and cycling across the Sandbach area.

As such, key recommended next steps include:

- Continual development of the Active Travel rolling programme of investment for current funding streams controlled by CEC;
- Developing scheme designs and feasibility schemes;
- Working with Development Management colleagues to secure improvements through the planning process;
- Engaging Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust (formally Sustrans) regarding funding for improvements to the National Cycle Network and regional cycle network; and
- Preparing bids to other external funding opportunities.

8. Public Consultation

8.1. Background of the consultation

An eight week consultation was undertaken in July and August of 2025 to seek the views of stakeholders, residents and community groups on the draft LCWIP routes.

The consultation was promoted widely, including to:

- Residents of Cheshire East and the public through press releases and social media promotion;
- The Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel;
- Businesses in Cheshire East and in neighbouring authorities;
- Specialist active travel user groups;
- Equality groups;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Elected Members; and
- Neighbouring Authorities.

As part of wider engagement, online focus groups were held to gather further feedback on each of the 7 draft LCWIPs. In total, 749 consultation responses were received (684 survey responses and 65 email responses).

8.2. Walking Route Updates

Table 8-1 goes into detail on the changes made to the routes.

Table 8-1 Sandbach Walking Route Changes

Route	Changes made to the route
Core Walking Zone	No change
W1	No change
W2	Extended to Wheelock along Crewe Road
CW1	Removal of the main section of Heath Road Reroute via Hawthorne Drive, Larch Drive and footpath 14
CW2 – New Additional Route	A new route from Sandbach Town Centre to M6 junction 17 via Bradwell Road, Offley Road and Congleton Road A new alternative route via Congleton Road, Tatton Drive, footpath 11 and Church Lane

8.3. Cycling Route Updates

Table 8-2 goes into detail on the changes made to the routes.

Table 8-2 Sandbach Cycling Route Changes

Route	Changes made to the route
C1	Removal of route along the Wheelock Bypass Re route via Flat Lane, Crewe Road
C2	Removal of the Wheelock Rail Trail Reroute via Hind Heath Road and Station Road New alternative route via Bradwell Road and Wood Lane

Route	Changes made to the route
C3	Removal of the Salt Line and the Trent and Mersey Canal, include as an alternative route Re route via Hassall Road, Alsager Road, Betchton Road
CW1	Removal of the main section of Heath Road Reroute via Hawthorne Drive, Larch Drive and footpath 14
CW2 - New Additional Route	A new route from Sandbach Town Centre to M6 junction 17 via Bradwell Road, Offley Road and Congleton Road A new alternative route via Congleton Road, Tatton Drive, footpath 11 and Church Lane

Appendix A – Appraisal Scoring Matrix

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	0	1	2	3	4	5
Stage 1	**Policy fit (Cheshire East)** *Performance against key policies within the LTP, cycle strategy for example*	Does not meet policy objectives	Marginally meets policy objectives	Moderately meets policy objectives	Majorly meets policy objectives	Significantly meets policy objectives	Fully meets policy objectives
	Costs of construction and maintenance	£££££	????	£££	??	£	No required costs
	Funding / affordability *Analysis based on the likeliness for funding to be available or attracting funding from funding sources*	No match funding or other funding sources available, and unlikely to meet any funding requirements	Match funding or other sources of funding anticipated to be available in the future for application	Match funding or other sources of funding could be applied for	Match funding or other sources of funding likely	Match funding or other sources of funding highly likely	Match funding or other sources of funding guaranteed
	Effectiveness *Estimated populations/employment areas anticipated to benefit from the interventions, likely impact of increasing walking and cycling*	0 residents/employment areas/visitors will benefit/use the route	A very low number (1 to 200) to of residents/employment areas/visitors will benefit/use the route	A low number (200 to 500) of residents/employment areas/visitors will benefit/use the route	A medium number (501 to 1,000) of residents/employment areas/visitors will benefit/use the route	A high number (1,001 to 2,000) of residents/employment areas/visitors will benefit/use the route	A very high number (More than 2,001) of residents/employment areas/visitors will benefit/use the route
	Existing number of cyclists on the route Using the PCT tool, how many individuals currently use the route, 2011 Census	Zero existing users along the route	1 to 20 existing users along the route	21 to 50 existing users along the route	51 to 100 existing users along the route	101 to 200 existing users along the route	More than 200 existing users along the route

		RED	AMBER	GREEN
Stage 2	**Design challenges / Technical Feasibility** *Analysis based on whether the proposed scheme is feasible through a design solution*	Design challenges cannot be resolved	Some design challenges which likely can be resolved	No / minor design challenges
	Acceptability *Professional judgement of whether the proposed route will be accepted by the public and/or politically*	Will not be accepted by the public or politically	Some public and political buy-in, active support from advocacy groups, stakeholders and a number of councillors/local government	Large public and political buy-in, active support for project
	Land *Analysis of whether land is required or is within LHA boundary or is a PRoW or requires 3rd party agreement*	Land required which cannot be purchased	Land required but can be purchased at a moderate or low cost and obtains required support from the land owner (1-19% of route requires land)	Land required is within LHA boundary

Appendix B – Appraisal

Sandbach LCWIP		Stage One						Stage Two				Timescales		
Scheme	Route	Policy fit (Cheshire East)	Costs of construction and maintenance	Funding / affordability	Effectiveness	Existing number of cyclists on the route	TOTAL (max score 25 for cycling, 20 for walking)	Design challenges / technical feasibility	Acceptability	Land	RANK	Short-term (0-2 yrs)	Medium-term (3-5 yrs)	Long-term (5 yrs+)
W1	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach train station	4	4	4	4		16				1			
W2	Sandbach Town Centre to Wheelock Rail Trail	4	3	3	3		13				2			
C1.1	Crewe to Sandbach	4	2	4	5	5	20				1			
C1.2	Plant Lane to Sydney Road via rail line	3	1	3	2	4	13				5			
C2.1	Sandbach to Moss Lane, end of Wheelock Rail Trail	4	3	3	3	4	17				4			
C2.2	End of Wheelock Rail Trail to Middlewich	5	3	4	4	3	19				2			
C3.1	Alsager Town Centre to the end of the Salt Line	3	3	3	2	1	12				6			
C3.2	The end of the Salt Line to the Wheelock Bypass	3	4	2	1	1	11				7			
CW1	Sandbach Town Centre to Sandbach Heath / St John's Primary School	4	2	4	4	4	18				3			