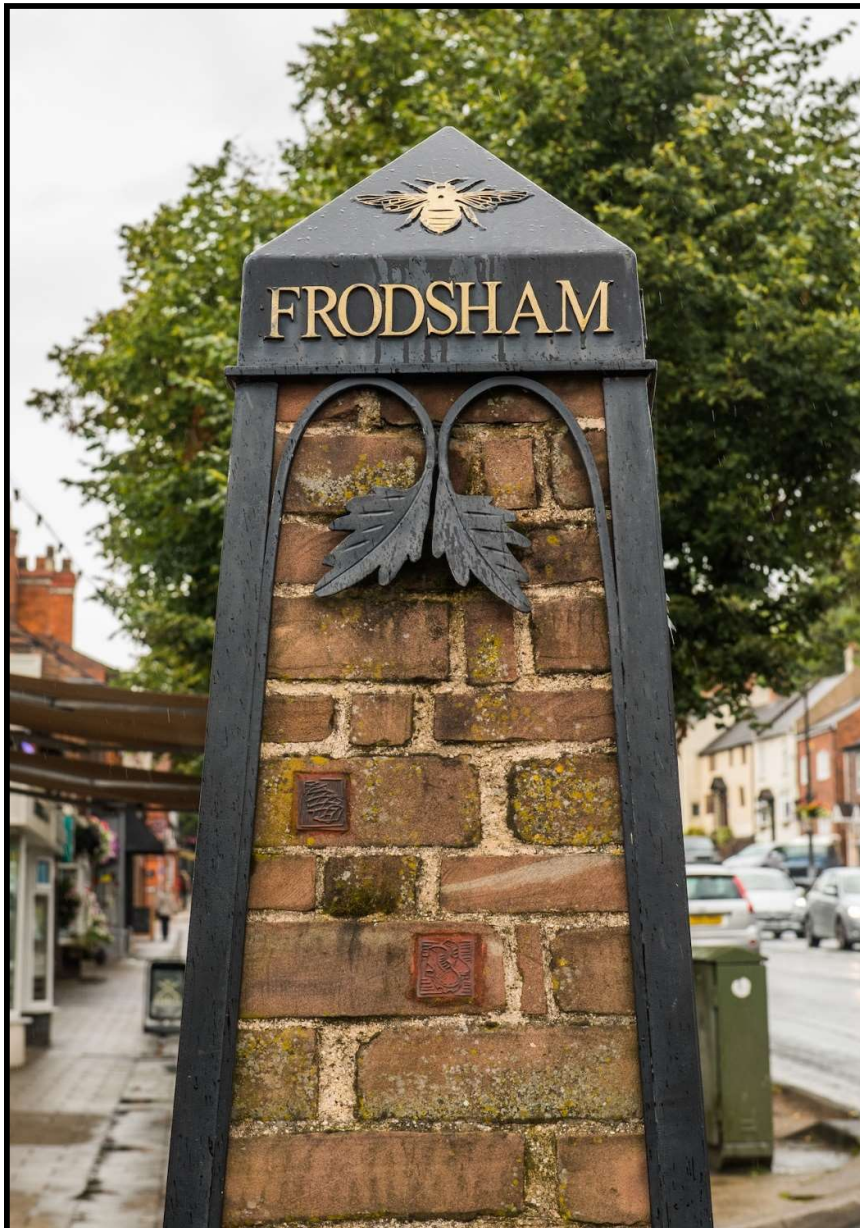


Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Business Survey

April 2018



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Background*

1.1.1 The Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led land use development plan looking forward to 2030. As with most Neighbourhood Plans it is focussed around the needs and aspirations of the resident community. However, unlike smaller settlements that have undertaken a Neighbourhood Plan, a significant contribution to the town is made by the economic activity of business that are based in and around the town.

1.1.2 The Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has sought to obtain the views of the business community on a variety of topics via the issue of a questionnaire; the results of which are presented in this report.

1.2 *Selection of Respondents*

1.2.1 The survey recipients were selected from a 'long list' of all business in Frodsham that were based in premises upon which business rates were being paid. Although that identified over 200 business addresses in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group decided that the survey should be focussed on those business that: a) were not part of national 'chains' or were not locally-based; and, b) were located in the town itself and not in its rural hinterland.

1.2.2 As a result 60 local businesses were identified and contacted to discuss whether they would want to contribute to the survey. Some were visited, others were contacted by telephone or email. 6 businesses declined involvement (10%) and 23 contributed by interview (38%). The remaining 31 (52%) were invited to complete an online survey form; 15 responses to the online survey were received (25%). The survey was featured on the Frodsham Town Council and other businesses that had not been approached directly were also encouraged to submit a response (this may account for some of the 15 online responses).

1.2.3 The 38 responses that have been gathered represent a 63% response rate of those businesses identified as having met the criteria for inclusion.

2. SURVEY DESIGN

2.1 Questions

2.1.1 The questionnaire asked respondents the following 10 questions:

About Your Organisation:

- 1) What type of business do you have?
 - Retail
 - Industrial
 - Office
 - Café/Pub/Restaurant
 - Service
 - Not for profit
 - Other (please specify)
- 2) How many staff, associates or contractors do you have?
- 3) How many of your staff live in Frodsham? If none, where do your staff travel from?

About why you set your business up

- 4) How long has your business been established?
- 5) Why did you choose Frodsham as your location?
 - I live here
 - Appropriate premises
 - Suitable clientele
 - Other (please specify)
- 6) Are you planning to expand:
 - ... your premises? Please tell us more;
 - ... your staff numbers? By how many?
- 7) Do you have any difficulty getting suitably skilled staff? If yes, please tell us more
- 8) Have you experienced any barriers or constraints when operating your business? If so, please tell us about them

9) What would help your business prosper in the future?

10) Do you have any other comments?

2.1.2 The questions were designed to help gain an understanding of the viability of Frodsham as a business location and explore how the businesses operated. In relation to the emerging Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan, it was intended that the survey results would reveal an insight into: what makes the town an attractive location for businesses; where present and future staff live (or are likely to live); whether the choice of premises/locations within Frodsham meet the businesses' current and planned future needs and aspirations; and, gave respondents an opportunity to discuss other issues that they felt it would be worth raising.

2.1.3 Whilst it is likely that the responses gathered will not necessarily relate directly to the policies that may be included in the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan, it is anticipated that they will help to illustrate the importance of the town for economic activity for residents, both as clients/customers and employees.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

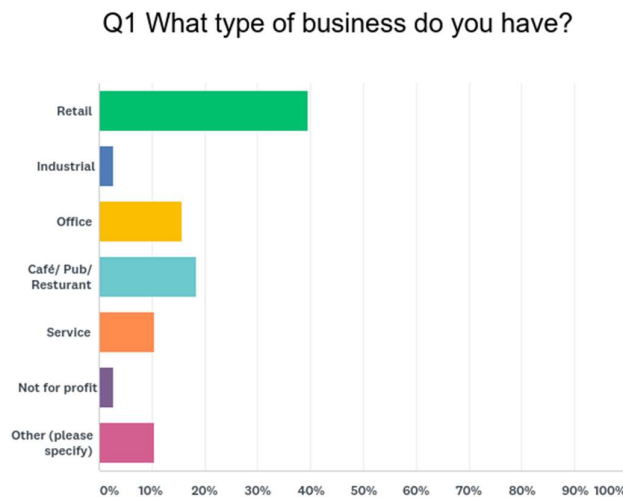
3.1 Question 1

What type of business do you have?

- Retail
- Industrial
- Office
- Café/Pub/Restaurant
- Service
- Not for profit
- Other (please specify)

3.1.1 40% of the respondents were retailers, with 45% split between office (16%), café/pub/restaurant (18%) and service (11%). Industrial (3%) and not for profit (3%) made up the remaining responses that indicated that the categories given were how they would have classified their business activity. The remaining 10% comprised a veterinary practice, an estate agent, a golf course and a human resources/payroll service provider.

Figure 1 – summary of responses to Question 1



3.1.2 Frodsham is a small/medium sized town with a strong retail offer so the dominance of that sector is no great surprise. The remaining split is as would

be expected for a market town given that businesses that were part of national chains had been excluded.

3.2 Question 2

How many staff, associates or contractors do you have?

- 3.2.1 The total number of employees at the businesses surveyed was 509. 70% of the businesses employed less than 10 staff, accounting for one fifth (20%) of the total. Whilst the average number of staff was 14, that is slightly skewed by the four businesses with 50 or more staff employing 180 (35%). Only 7 people were shown as being part-time although, as that question was not specifically asked, there may be more.

3.3 Question 3

How many of your staff live in Frodsham? If none, where do your staff travel from?

- 3.3.1 Of the 509 staff working at the 38 businesses in the town, 209 were specifically identified as living in Frodsham. The second most common location from which people travelled to work in Frodsham was Runcorn (17), with a further 18 persons living in nearby settlements (Preston Brook, Ellesmere Port, Elton, Helsby, Norley). The remainder lived either further afield in Cheshire and adjoining areas (26) and two much farther away (London, Derby) or it was not possible to determine from the survey responses what their 'home' location was (267) except that it was not in Frodsham.
- 3.3.2 The fact that 41% of the staff of the surveyed businesses both lived and worked within Frodsham can be viewed as a positive statistic and may indicate that the town is, or has the potential to be quite sustainable. The results also show that at least 12% do not live in the town (albeit mostly nearby). However, there are 267 (47%) for which there is no indication of where they live other than that it is not in Frodsham. If a similar geographical distribution of locations is assumed, then this would suggest that approximately 343 (67%) live in Frodsham or locally in other settlements and about 158 (31%) live elsewhere in Cheshire and adjacent areas (Manchester, Warrington, North Wales). It's likely that the remaining 2% commute significant distances to the town.

3.4 Question 4

How long has your business been established?

3.4.1 34 respondents replied to the question asking how long their business had been established. Broadly speaking, the results show that many of the businesses have been established in the town for a number of years – 20 out of 34 having been present for 10 years or more. Notably, 12 have existed for 25 years or more. Only 6 were relatively new enterprises less than 5 years old.

3.4.2 It appears that the town has been good to the businesses that are based there, with many of them enduring for several decade or more. Given the recent turmoil in the economy in general, and the retail sector in particular, it is reassuring that those that remain active are sufficiently well-established to continue in their present locations.

3.5 Question 5

Why did you choose Frodsham as your location?

- I live here
- Appropriate premises
- Suitable clientele
- Other (please specify)

3.5.1 Most respondents selected multiple reasons for having been located in Frodsham. Of the 34 that chose to complete this part of the survey, the dominant reason given was that there was appropriate premises to conduct businesses (19), the business owner being a resident of Frodsham was a close second (14); 5 respondents gave both reasons. The presence of suitable clientele was given less some weight (8). All other reasons cited (access/location, parking, community, customer base, opportunity and market knowledge) amounted to 12.

3.5.2 These responses seem to indicate that business opportunities for local residents have been facilitated by the availability of suitable premises and clientele, and the characteristics of the town with regard to location and access.

3.6 Question 6

Are you planning to expand:

- ... your premises? Please tell us more;
- ... your staff numbers? By how many?

3.6.1 Of the 32 replies to this question, 25 stated that they were not planning to expand their business premises (although 2 of those said that they had recently done so). One respondent felt unable to expand the business because its location in a listed building was restrictive. The remaining 7 businesses made the following comments regarding their wish to expand their premises:

- *“Would like larger premises, however these are not readily available in Frodsham”*
- *“Potential to do more with the building”*
- *“Would like to secure a unit between 2 - 4 times of what we already have”*

3.6.2 Of the 25 respondents who answered the question relating to staff numbers, 14 had no plans to expand and one responded with “unknown”. Those 10 businesses planning to expand staff numbers had limited or uncertain plans to do so, with 4 respondents intending to increase numbers by 1 (including one part-time post and one ‘Saturday help’ post) and; three intending to employ an additional 1 to 3 additional people. The remaining responses were:

- *“will recruit more staff appropriately as the business grows”*
- *“we cannot confirm for certain at the moment”*
- *“aim to maintain around 50-55”*

3.6.3 These responses suggest a marginal increase of between 1-2% (7 to 11+ staff), possibly a few more.

3.7 Question 7

Do you have any difficulty getting suitably skilled staff? If yes, please tell us more

3.7.1 Nearly half of the 28 responses to Question 7 said that they had no difficulty getting suitably skilled staff. 15 further responses were given, ranging from those whose primary issue is with the unavailability of suitably trained candidates to concerns about the willingness of local people to adopt the right attitude to job-seeking. The following excerpts give a flavour of the responses:

- *“we only employ staff recommended to us or that we already know”*
- *“We can train them on site. it's much more important to employ the 'right' people for the job”*
- *“social and interpersonal skills are key skills”*
- *“customer service/attitude”*
- *“difficult to find staff who are consistently reliable and who maintain their interest in the business”*
- *“skilled/trained staff hard to attract, main draw for skilled staff is Chester”*
- *“We usually take on apprentices and then train them ourselves”*
- *“Nobody wants to go into the Hospitality Industry”*
- *“difficult to compete with the surrounding larger towns and cities”*
- *“skills shortage in catering cannot attract people to Frodsham; most go to Chester”*
- *“people seem to have no ability making even tentative professional enquiries in this town and expect the offers of employment to come flooding in”*

3.7.2 Question 7 elicited a wide range of responses but overall there did not to be a major difficulty with recruitment in the town.

3.8 Question 8

Have you experienced any barriers or constraints when operating your business? If so, please tell us about them.

3.8.1 31 businesses responded to Question 8 but only 4 of them said that they had experienced no barriers or constraints to the operation of their business. Whilst the other 27 responses were fairly varied and included: skills shortages; traffic and parking; unhelpful property landlords; planning

permission; accessing funding and high overheads; and, internet connection speeds and phone service problems.

3.8.2 Specific concerns voiced included:

- *“Parking is poor in Frodsham”*
- *“Lack of easy/affordable/free parking is the number one complaint from our customers”*
- *“main constraint is ensuring sufficient funds are raised”*
- *“Lack of 'destination' or 'halo' shops in Frodsham”*
- *“Access has always been an issue in the centre of the town”*
- *“Listed building, want to expand/air con etc”*
- *“2hr parking restriction”*
- *“rates and rents are very high”*
- *“Traffic, car parking”*
- *“Parking is a nightmare in Frodsham - mostly due to FREE parking for commuters Manchester for work”*
- *“Lack of parking around the shop”*
- *“Too much heavy traffic on Church Street at peak times”*
- *“lack of support from local people”*
- *“parking for customers and deliveries”*
- *“lack of access and parking”*
- *“Parking can be a problem, particularly Thursdays”*
- *“hard to get start-up funds & financial practical help”*
- *“Poor traffic flow in the town and lack of parking”*
- *“Affordable office space hard to find”*
- *“archaic commercial leases and landlords with no understanding of retail in the town”*
- *“planning permission”*

3.8.3 The most frequently cited barrier overall was car parking, with a number of reasons for the problem suggested.

3.9 Question 9

What would help your business prosper in the future?

3.9.1 Unsurprisingly, the things that businesses felt would help them to prosper in the future were mostly related to the resolution of the barriers identified by the answers to Question 8.

3.9.2 Landlord Issues:

- *“bigger property but rents too high”*
- *“Larger premises but with the condition that we own them, not rent them”*
- *“More affordable office space”*
- *“Rent too high, difficult relationships”*
- *“Empty shops for too long”*

3.9.3 Parking and Access

- *“Better (free!) parking provision. Better cycling infrastructure”*
- *“Increased footfall; increased parking”*
- *“avoid introducing car parking charges in Frodsham”*
- *“coach parking would be good to increase footfall”*
- *“continue with free parking options”*
- *“Car parking and greater footfall. demolition of old goods shed to increase car parking at the station”*
- *“More parking made available. Better use of available parking places”*
- *“resolve (...) the usual car parking problems”*
- *“2 hrs free parking once charges are enforced”*
- *“More parking spaces. No market on Thursday. Keeping Parking in Frodsham FREE”*

3.9.4 Communications:

- *“Better internet speed and quality”*
- *“Better signage”*

3.9.5 Promotion and Community Support

- *“support from the community through fundraising and volunteering”*
- *“constructive and continuing positive attitude (...) from the local community”*
- *“Promotion of Frodsham as a shopping destination”*
- *“Keeping the image of Frodsham as it used to be”*
- *“Support from local community”*

3.9.6 The answers to Question 9 were amongst the more forthcoming of those given by respondents, and they clearly had strong sentiments about the role of car parking in the town.

3.10 Question 10

Do you have any other comments?

3.10.1 The final question in the survey was an open-ended query that sought to draw out any other relevant views the respondents might have: 13 businesses chose to respond to the question.

3.10.2 The responses included a number of comments about car parking and access, as well as other issues. A selection of them, which captures the type comments made, are set out below:

- *“concerned by the prospect of parking charges for Frodsham”*
- *“We benefit from an above average staff retention and loyalty due to the convenience of our location”*
- *“meetings of the Frodsham business community to discuss local issues would be really useful”*
- *“Land behind Health centre should be for community based use”*
- *“(rail improvements) will help many to access Liverpool”*
- *“People will park in Frodsham to commute to Liverpool”*
- *“Need 4 hours min free parking”*
- *“If (Business Rate Relief) were to change, it would adversely affect my ability to maintain and grow the business”*
- *“Time governed car parks mean customers only hit the shop they require and then go”*

- *“Parking plans should be developed which do not deter the daily shoppers/visitors coming to Frodsham”*
- *“Transportation links are a big plus”*
- *“Parking and availability of car parks needs to be addressed”*
- *“retailers need to work more collaboratively, share rental information and introduce a town-wide click and collect service”*

3.10.3 The impression given is that parking, access and collaboration are key themes for businesses’ continuing to thrive in the town.

4 POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 RETAIL

4.1.1 Economic Activity in Frodsham is skewed towards retail premises with nearly 60% of survey respondees indicating that their business was either a shop or pub/café/restaurant. However, the responses also suggested that there was some potential for additional flexibility in the way those premises were used to enable the existing businesses (and potential new/expanded ones) to operate more effectively. Some of the suggestions were related to matters outside the scope of Neighbourhood Development Plans, such as lease arrangements and collaborative working). However, as a mainstay of the town's economy, it would be appropriate to include a policy or policies in the Draft Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan to indicate that there should be a flexible approach to consideration of planning applications that seek to:

- make alterations to the size, configuration and precise use of individual premises to ensure that they continue to be appropriate for economic use;
- combine retail and residential uses in the same premises ('live-work') to keep the existing retail premises in active use and resist possible pressures to change their use to purely residential;
- combine existing premises that are currently of an unhelpful size and/or configuration for desired future use to create larger units that can meet the need of expanding businesses; and,
- make smaller changes to signage and associated ephemera (that require planning permission) to improve visibility and marketability.

4.2 PARKING

4.2.1 Car parking is signalled as an important issue for Frodsham's economy and has been addressed by Cheshire West and Chester Council as part of its Borough-wide parking strategy (see Appendix 2). Whilst many, if not most, aspects of parking in the town are governed by regulations outside of the land-use planning system there may be policy approaches that can begin to address the perceived issues with the availability of parking spaces in the town. These could include:

- a firm requirement of new/additional/expanded/reconfigured premises and locations for economic activity to make specific (and hopefully

‘managed’) provision for car parking to reflect increased access requirements;

- identification of locations for additional off-road car parking provision that should not be brought forward for other uses; and,
- site-specific provision for rail-users to park for longer periods without compromising the availability of short-stay spaces for those accessing local shops and services.

4.3 OTHER MATTERS

4.3.1 Various respondents raised other matters that have the potential to be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan:

- **Internet/broadband** – to function as an effective business/retail location it was felt that there was a need to ensure that online access in the town was of the right quality. This might be addressed by a policy that indicated that planning applications for communications infrastructure might be considered favourably where they could be demonstrated to add to the economic viability of the town’s current and future businesses.
- **Availability of staff** – in relation to whether or not the existing state of the local housing market was a constraint in the recruitment and retention of locally-based staff in Frodsham, it was not possible to draw clear conclusions from the business survey: some employers seemed to have difficulty in recruiting from the available pool of locally resident workers, rather than the housing market (and therefore availability of lower cost housing) having a negative effect on the labour market. It would be difficult to make a strong argument for intervention on housing matters as a result of the results of this business survey. Such considerations would more readily be addressed when reviewing the recently completed Housing Needs Report.
- **Office Space** – comment was made that office premises were hard to find in Frodsham. It is uncertain whether this requires a policy response in the Neighbourhood Plan and the concern expressed may have been related more to issues with the way in which such locations are marketed and the associated costs of leasing. However, if a policy response is needed then thought should be given to protecting existing office premises from change to other uses (where planning permission would be required). As with retail premises; there is potential for the designation of locations for live-work locations and/or a policy that overtly encourages such provision.

- **Cycling** – the responses to the survey show that many of the current businesses in the town value and need their local customer base. As such there is an appreciation that cycling can play a role in allowing those clients and customers to access business premises and that there is a need to enhance the infrastructure for cycling. A policy response to this perception can be developed that identifies important future routes for cycling and protects those routes from development that might prevent their future implementation. It may also be possible to identify opportunities for other infrastructure such as secure cycle parking etc., that can be given broad encouragement in the Neighbourhood Plan.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Business Survey has helped to identify a large number of issues that the locally-based businesses in the town consider to of importance to the establishment, operation and future development of their operations. However, many of these fall outside the remit of Neighbourhood Plan Policy and may well have to be addressed by other policy and practical approaches. Notwithstanding the limited impact that the Neighbourhood Plan can have on those businesses there are measures (as set out in section 4, above) that can be considered for inclusion to begin to help create a good environment for economic activity.

Strategic Economic Context (1)

This section analyses economic development strategies relevant to Frodsham and includes commuting pattern data for Cheshire West and Chester, which helps set the context for where the population is travelling to and from for work.

West Cheshire Rural Growth Strategy

This strategy supports the delivery of at least 2,785 (up to 2030) new homes of the right type in rural locations, with a particular emphasis on affordable housing, family housing, housing for older people and high quality housing in the rural area and market towns. Underpinning this is the need to attract and retain a skilled workforce that will support businesses in the rural area. **Development of new housing should support the growth and economic well-being of the Market Towns:** - Neston, Frodsham, Tarporley and Malpas as well as the rural villages.

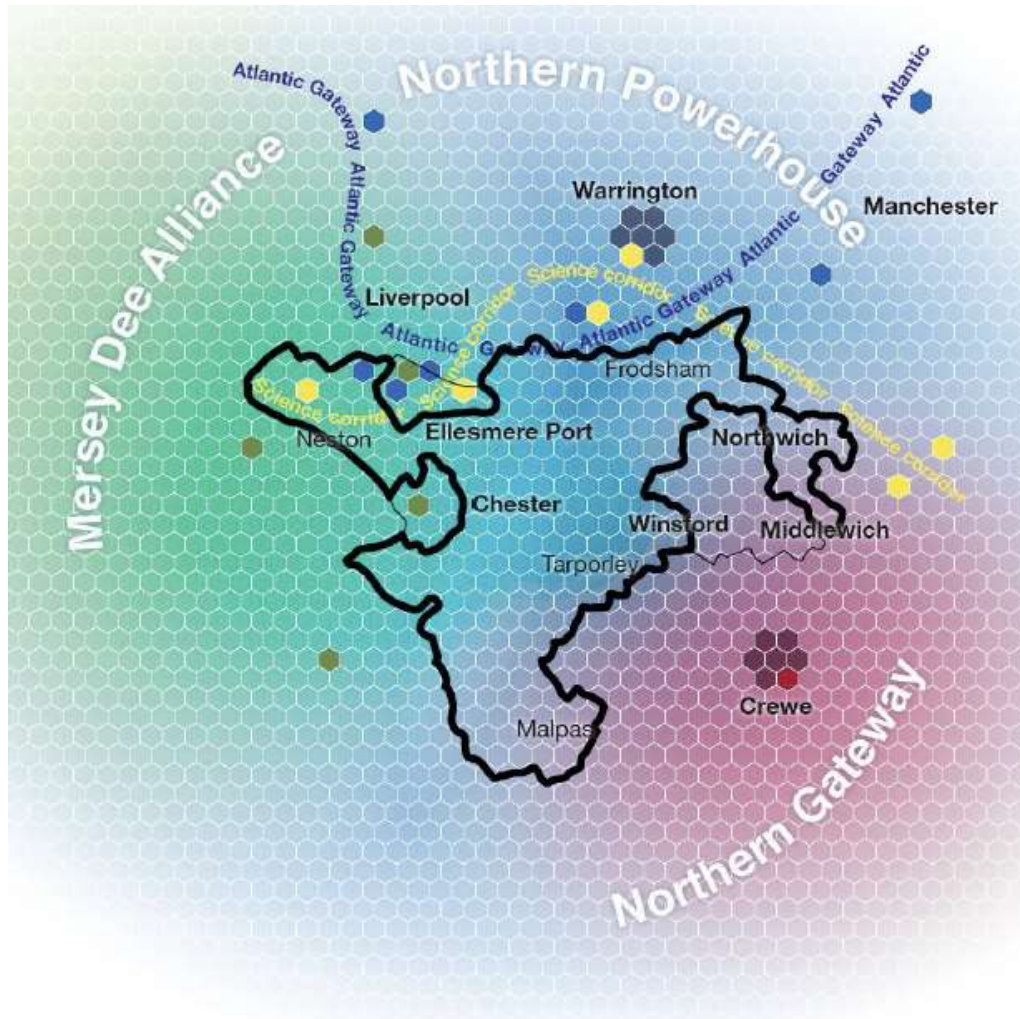
The West Cheshire Rural Growth Strategy also identified sub-regional spatial economic priorities for the rural area and market towns of West Cheshire:

- **Mersey Dee Economic Axis** – a zone of innovation and advanced manufacturing straddling **North East Wales, Wirral and West Cheshire** aiming to deliver 54,000 new jobs and **41,000 new homes by 2040**.
- **Cheshire Science Corridor** – a corridor of interconnected centres of scientific excellence across Cheshire and Warrington.
- **Atlantic Gateway** – the world trade, logistics, business and innovation corridor stretches from Deeside to Merseyside and through Cheshire and Warrington to Manchester.
- **Crewe High Growth City and HS2 Hub** – a major development and connectivity hub with accelerated growth potential for houses and jobs.
- **Northern Gateway Development Zone** – the major growth and investment opportunity that connects the Northern Powerhouse and the Midland Engine aiming to deliver **100,000 new homes** and 120,000 new jobs by 2040.

Warrington New City – a continued focus for employment growth and new housing. Warrington’s connectivity will be reinforced in the future as it sits at the intersection of HS2/West Coast mainline and HS3 (TransNorth Rail) aiming to deliver **26,000 new homes** and 55,000 new jobs.



Map 4: West Cheshire Rural Area and Market Towns Spatial Relationships



Rural



Atlantic Gateway Ports

Liverpool Wirral Bridgewater Ince Warrington Salford



Mersey Dee Alliance - Key Employment Sites

Wirral Waters Ellesmere Port Chester CBQ Northern Gateway Deeside Wrexham IE



Cheshire Science Corridor

Capenhurst Thornton Sci-Tech Birchwood Jodrell Bank Bio-hub



HS2 Hub



Cheshire West
and Chester

Strategic Economic Context (2)

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan

*“The Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) aims to increase annual Gross Value Added (GVA) by at least £11.1 billion to some £30 billion, grow the resident population by 100,000, **develop 70,000 new homes** to meet the current and future population's needs and create at least 30,000 jobs with a key focus on manufacturing and exports by 2030. The LEP area has important connections to the economic hubs of Liverpool and Manchester, and the SEP acknowledges that it is a net importer of labour.”*

Cheshire & Warrington LEP – Economic Baseline Study – Nov 2016

Extract from the study:

- *Almost 70% of LEP residents, work inside the LEP.*
- *Over half of all daily movements (inflows and outflows) take place within Cheshire and Warrington (C&W).”*

Source: Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Census 2011 and Ordnance Survey data

Charts 1, 2 and 3 on the right show that there is a net inflow of young people (aged 16-24 and 25-34) into Cheshire West, therefore it is serving as an economic magnet and drawing young people in.

The highest net inflows of young people are coming from Flintshire, Wirral, Wrexham, Halton and Liverpool.

West Cheshire Economic Growth Strategy – 2013-2018

This strategy states that West Cheshire will create: 5,000 new jobs, a minimum of **7,300 new homes** and; £500m worth of private sector investment. The CWaC Growth Strategy Strategic Objective for Housing is to have the right type of housing in place to support growth. Between April 2013 and March 2017 4,958 dwellings had been completed therefore, **2,342 further dwellings need to be completed by March 2018 to meet this target.**



Supporting Our Rural Communities

Housing Needs Report for Frodsham (Parish), © CCA, CWAC 2017.

Chart 1: Cheshire West & Chester Commuting Patterns by Age Group

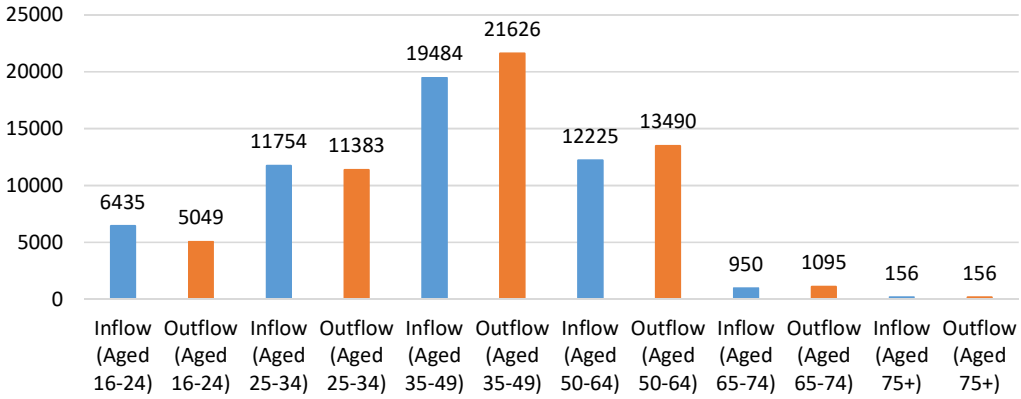


Chart 2: Cheshire West & Chester Commuting Patterns by Area (Aged 16-24)

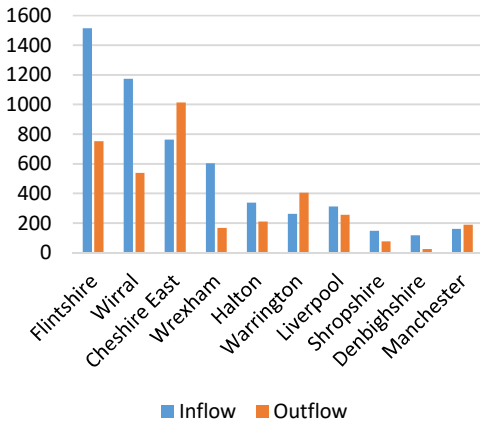
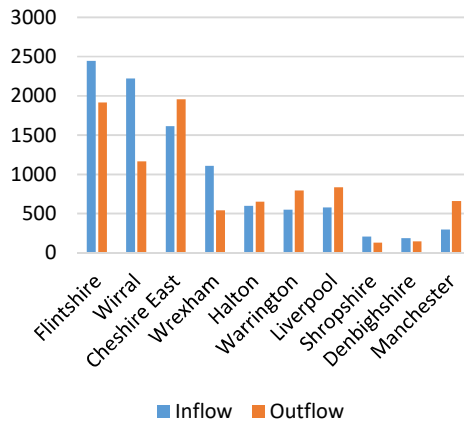


Chart 3: Cheshire West & Chester Commuting Patterns by Area (Aged 25-34)



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/wu02uk/chart> ONS, Census WU02UK Location of usual residence and place of work by age

Strategic Economic Context (3) – Halton Curve Rail Infrastructure Improvements

The new Halton Curve rail infrastructure improvements are likely to have a significant impact on Frodsham’s housing need.

At the time of writing this report (Oct 2017) it is difficult to accurately predict the impact on Frodsham. However, the extract from the 2015 business case below and the article on the right, suggest that the new direct train services to Liverpool City Region and Liverpool John Lennon Airport from Frodsham will mean it is more accessible and therefore more desirable. The latter could put pressure on house prices in Frodsham, making it less affordable.

There will also be charges for traffic using the new bridge, which may have an impact on businesses and commuters. Therefore, it is too early (in Oct 2017) to predict how this will affect the local housing market and housing need in Frodsham.

Halton Curve Outline Business Case 2015

*“The purpose of the scheme is to allow train services to run direct from Liverpool Lime Street and Liverpool John Lennon Airport to **Frodsham/Helsby** and onwards to Chester and North Wales in both directions – there is currently a requirement to interchange at Chester and Liverpool Lime Street or Crewe for such trips.”*

*Issues identified with public transport services: Indirect services from **Frodsham/Helsby** to Liverpool City Region and Liverpool John Lennon Airport mean **longer journey times on public transport compared to the car.***

*44% of trips to Liverpool City Centre from the urban area of Chester are made by rail. The rail mode share to Liverpool City Centre is considerably lower from areas that are not served by a direct service, such as **Frodsham and Helsby** (18%), North Wales (21%), and Wrexham (13%);”*

Source: <http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/Halton%20Curve%20OBC%20-%20Final%20Version%20May%202015%20-%20Redacted%20-%20For%20posting.pdf>



Supporting Our Rural Communities

Housing Needs Report for Frodsham (Parish), © CCA, CWAC 2017.

Article: The Halton Curve – Small piece of track, big rail ambitions

“Cllr Liam Robinson, chair of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Transport Committee and of Merseytravel, explains the importance of bringing the Halton Curve back into full use.

The ‘Halton Curve’ may only be 1.5 miles long, but bringing this small section of line that links the Chester/Warrington Line and the Liverpool/Crewe Line at Frodsham Junction back into full use is crucial to the rail ambitions of the LCR, Cheshire and North Wales.

With currently only one scheduled service a week operating during the summer, upgrades to track and signalling on the curve by Network Rail will, from December 2018, enable a new hourly service in both directions between Liverpool and Chester, serving Liverpool Lime Street, Liverpool South Parkway (for Liverpool John Lennon Airport), Runcorn, Frodsham and Helsby. Cross-border links will remain the end goal, however, with services extended into North Wales to be considered as part of the forthcoming Wales and Borders franchise.

***It’s expected that the new services will take 170,000 car journeys off the road, will generate 250,000 new trips and boost the economy by £100m.** It also supports Liverpool John Lennon Airport’s growth ambitions, opening up a much wider catchment for national and international leisure and business travel. Opportunities should not be limited by boundaries, especially as ‘travel to work’ areas don’t mirror local authorities or city regions. Transport and infrastructure should enhance opportunities, not be the reason they are curtailed.*

When I think of the benefits of the Curve, I’m thinking of the dad in Frodsham, a die-hard Everton fan who will be able to take his son or daughter, hassle-free, to watch a game; the teenager in South Liverpool who can now access a wealth of manufacturing job opportunities in Deeside; and the family from Wrexham, whose holidays can start on-board the train to Liverpool South Parkway for John Lennon Airport.

*Economic and cultural links between the LCR and North Wales are strong, but we know transport links are poor. **Currently, one in five job interviews or offers in the North Wales or Mersey Dee area are turned down as a result of poor travel connections.** There is also untapped potential when it comes to linking two expanding visitor economies – benefits worth £6bn.”*

Source: <http://www.railtechnologymagazine.com/Comment/the-halton-curve-small-piece-of-track-big-rail-ambitions>



APPENDIX 2 – CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER PARKING STRATEGY

Cheshire West and Chester Council has commissioned a 15-year parking strategy that is designed to better manage parking demand and improve facilities. Part of that process has resulted in an action plan and impact assessment for Helsby and Frodsham that was produced for the Council by specialist transport consultants, Mott MacDonald, who were commissioned by the Council to undertake a borough-wide parking study.

The primary aim of the study was to carry out a review of all parking-related matters in Cheshire West and Chester to identify options and recommend actions, ensuring they were consistent with the Council's other strategies and policies. The study also took into account future developments and regeneration proposals.

The Parking Strategy was subject to widespread public consultation. After the consultation the recommendations were adopted by the Council, subject to pre-implementation action plans being prepared for each centre.

Section 4 of the action plan and assessment includes the following conclusions:

“4 Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps

4.1 Findings

From the analysis undertaken in this Action Plan for Frodsham and Helsby with respect to the Cheshire West and Chester Parking Strategy, it is concluded that the predicted impacts of the strategy will be largely positive for each town centre and that, where potentially negative, can be resolved through appropriate monitoring and mitigation. The impact assessment results are summarised as follows:

4.1.1 Economic Impacts

Based on a review of the rationale behind the measures proposed by the Parking Strategy for Frodsham and Helsby, which is to positively impact the economies of Frodsham and Helsby, and a favourable comparison of the proposed average parking tariff level against the towns' level of economic vitality, it is concluded that the proposed parking measures will not have a negative economic impact on the town, and should instead generate positive effects.

4.1.2 Social and Environmental Impacts

The primary impacts are due to the potential for displaced demand from existing off and on-street parking locations as a result of the changes to tariffs. Because car parking provision in Frodsham and Helsby is to change from no restrictions to having some control method (maximum stay lengths and/or tariffs), it is inevitable that there will be some displacement of parking from one location to another.

In most cases this will serve to redistribute parking to ensure that it occurs in the most appropriate locations for the specific user groups. However, monitoring of surrounding residential streets will be needed to determine whether further restrictions, such as the introduction of residential parking zones, are required to address parking displacement impacts.

4.1.3 Equality Analysis

The equality analysis has awarded the scheme a 'Low Impact' score and recommends a process of continuous monitoring with outcomes to be reviewed in three years.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on an extensive data collection and stakeholder consultation exercise, a Strategy Report was produced in 2016 which contained time-bound strategy recommendations for Frodsham and Helsby. These include:

- Develop a joint strategy between Frodsham and Helsby to support long and short stay parking zones, manage demand and generate revenue for enhancement
- Implement a programme of car park quality review/improvement, including better compliance with standards associated with the provision of disabled bays
- Designate short and long stay parking provision to support local economy and cater for leisure/retail users

These are proposed in order to meet the following aims:

1. To create greater user differentiation between car park types on a weekday and Saturday
2. To better manage demand at limited car parking facilities and allocate the most appropriate parking locations to the most appropriate user groups.

It is considered that the recommendations on tariffs and quality will achieve these aims without significant negative impact under the headings described above. As such the recommendations are upheld following this analysis.

4.3 Next Steps

Following the publication of this Action Plan for Frodsham and Helsby, the following programme of measures is recommended:

- Commencement of implementation of Car Park Improvement Programme: March 2018 – June 2018
- TRO process for changes to tariffs/introduction of tariffs/length of stay restrictions: March 2018 – June 2018
- Introduction of changes to tariffs/introduction of tariffs/length of stay restrictions: March 2018 – June 2018”

The emerging proposals for parking management are described in the full action plan at:

https://cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-and-performance/council-plans-and-strategies/documents/20180202_helsbyfrodsham_parkingplan.pdf