



Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Lichfield District Local Plan

Scoping Report

Lichfield District Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

August 2026

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Lichfield District Council commissioned LUC in June 2024 to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its new Local Plan.

1.2 The original SA Scoping Report was subject to consultation with the three statutory consultees (Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England) for a five-week period from July 2024. That scoping report was produced in line with SA requirements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 under the legacy plan-making system. In May 2026 Lichfield District Council's cabinet made the decision to progress a Local Plan under the new plan-making system established by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The introduction of the new plan making system in 2026 has removed the requirement for Local Plans to be subject to SA but the legal requirement for SEA remains in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (or 'SEA Regulations').

1.3 Therefore, this SEA Scoping Report has been produced to reflect the change in legislation. As the two processes SA and SEA are very similar and to date have been undertaken in a single, integrated process, this report draws on the SA Scoping Report produced in 2024 but has been updated to reflect the shift in emphasis to SEA only. Updates have been made to the policy context (Chapter 2), baseline information (Chapter 3) and key environmental and sustainability issues and their likely evolution without the new Local Plan (Chapter 4) to reflect the latest situation and data available.

1.4 SEA is an assessment process designed to consider and report upon the significant sustainability issues and effects of emerging plans and policies, including their reasonable alternatives. SEA iteratively informs the plan-making process by helping to refine the contents of such documents, so that they maximise the benefits of sustainable development and avoid, or at least minimise, the potential for adverse effects.

1.5 The SEA process comprises a number of stages that need to be undertaken alongside the Local Plan preparation:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope of the environmental assessment.
- Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.

- Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report.
- Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan and the Environmental Report.
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementing the Local Plan.

1.6 Scoping is the first stage in the SEA process. The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the SEA of the new Local Plan and to set out the framework for undertaking the later stages of the SEA.

1.7 This report is in an 'Accessible format', which means it has been formatted to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations (2018), as set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). This means it must have larger font, larger spacing between lines and headings, less information presented in tables, 'alt text' provided for all figures and it is able to be read by screen-reading software.

The Plan area

1.8 Lichfield District is located in the south-east of Staffordshire, and is adjacent to the wider West Midlands urban conurbation (shown in **Figure 1.1**). Apart from the City of Lichfield and town of Burntwood, it is a predominantly rural District covering some 331.3 km². The 2021 Census reported the district as having a population of 106,900 people [\[See reference 1\]](#), with the highest proportion of people between the ages of 50 and 64 [\[See reference 2\]](#).

1.9 Lichfield is bordered by the local authorities of Cannock Chase to the west, Stafford and East Staffordshire to the north, South Derbyshire and North West Leicestershire, to the east, and North Warwickshire, Tamworth, Birmingham and Walsall to the south. More urban areas are located around Lichfield District's western, southern and southeastern boundaries, with more rural areas along the northern and eastern edges of the district.

1.10 The largest settlement in Lichfield District is Lichfield, located in the centre of the district. Burntwood is the second largest settlement that has been formed by more recent growth and is the amalgamation of several smaller settlements. The rural landscape forms the setting for the rural settlements and villages which characterise much of Lichfield's settlements.

1.11 There are areas of high landscape and nature conservation quality within and around the district, in particular the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which supports internationally important heathland. The Cannock Chase SAC covers approximately 20% of the Cannock Chase National Landscape, which is mostly located to the west of Lichfield District, extending slightly into the district itself just north of Burntwood. Sutton Park, a National Nature Reserve, which covers 970 ha, lies to the south of Lichfield District. The district falls within four National Character Areas (Cannock Chase and Cank Wood, Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, Trent Valley Washlands and Mease/Sence Lowlands), and also contains four designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

1.12 Lichfield District has good transport connectivity, particularly to the West Midlands Conurbation, by a range of transport modes. There are four railway stations that serve Lichfield District: Lichfield City, Lichfield Trent Valley, Rugeley Trent Valley and Shenstone within the district. Lichfield District residents are also served by Four Oaks and Blake Street stations outside the district, and parts of the district surrounding Tamworth Borough are within close proximity to both the town's main train station and to Wilnecote station. National Express services also operate in Lichfield District, and the district is well-served by bus stops. Additionally, the A38 and A5 meet in Lichfield and provide direct access to the Midlands motorway network. The M6 Toll runs down the western side of the district and links the M6 with the M42, providing strong road connectivity within the area.

Lichfield Local Plan

1.13 The Council's adopted local plan consists of the local plan strategy document, local plan allocations document and the local plan policies maps. These two documents cover the period up to 2029:

- Local Plan Strategy 2008 – 2029 (2015); and
- Local Plan Allocations 2008 – 2029 (2019).

1.14 Lichfield District Council initially submitted a proposed new Local Plan 2040 for examination in June 2022. However, this was subsequently withdrawn from its examination in October 2023, with the Council commencing preparatory work for a new plan shortly after.

1.15 The Council carried out an Issues and Options consultation in late 2024 as part of work on a Local Plan covering the period to 2043. In May 2026, Lichfield District Council voted to transition to the government's new 30-month plan-making process, as established by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The new Local Plan will cover the period 2026-2046.

1.16 The new Local Plan is called the Lichfield District Local Plan 2046 and will replace the existing Local Plan documents and Policies Map. The Lichfield Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with the approved Local Plan Timetable [See reference 3]. The Local Plan is a district-wide plan that will coordinate the development and growth requirements of the district.

1.17 The Council is at an early stage in the development of the new Local Plan with the notice of intention to commence plan making issued in June 2026. The Local Plan Scoping Consultation is expected to be undertaken between September and October 2026.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.18 The Government introduced a new structured gateway process for the plan-making system under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The Council will prepare their new Local Plan under this new system. Under the new system, plans must be prepared and adopted within 30 months.

1.19 For new Local Plans it is necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), as transposed into law in England by the SEA Regulations [\[See reference 4\]](#) and which remains in force despite the UK exiting the European Union in January 2020.

1.20 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) outlines a number of reforms to the planning system, including the replacement of the current SEA regime with a new requirement for an Environmental Outcomes Report (EOR). Consultation took place in 2023 on the proposals for EORs and the Government published its response in March 2026 along with a roadmap for the introduction of the new system, which is expected to be in place by the end of 2027. The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming regulations, along with information about transition arrangements; however, at present the requirement for SEA remains as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the Local Plan is prepared. The potential change to EORs has been considered as far as possible during the preparation of this report, for example the baseline information has been presented in terms of quantifiable indicators where possible.

1.21 At the time of writing, Government guidance on the new plan-making system continues to refer to the requirement for SEA, noting that "your plan will need to carry out SEA if it meets criteria set out in regulation 5 of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. We expect that all Local Plans will need to carry out SEA."

1.22 Local Plans being prepared under the new system are no longer required to be subject to SA, as was previously required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for Local Plans prepared under the previous system.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.23 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of land-use plans was confirmed by the amendments to The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 [\[See reference 5\]](#). The currently applicable version is The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [\[See reference 6\]](#) (hereafter referred to as the

“Habitats Regulations”). When preparing a land-use plan, the competent authority (in this case Lichfield District Council) is therefore required by law to carry out an HRA. The competent authority can commission consultants to undertake HRA work on its behalf which is then reported to and considered by the competent authority.

1.24 The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of designated nature conservation sites (such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar wetlands) and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. The competent authority will consider the HRA and may only progress the land-use plan if it considers that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or have a significant effect on qualifying habitats or species for which the sites are designated, or if Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) are identified.

1.25 The HRA will be undertaken separately but the findings, once available, will be considered in the SEA where relevant, for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential development locations on biodiversity.

Approach to SEA Scoping

1.26 This Scoping Report sets out the intended scope and level of detail of the SEA of the new Local Plan for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities. It provides the foundations for assessment of the likely effects of constituent parts of the Local Plan, as plan-making progresses.

1.27 This SEA Scoping Report follows key legislation, policy and guidance including:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans, and programmes on the environment i.e. the SEA Directive **[See reference 7]**;
- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232) **[See reference 8]**;

- A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive [See reference 9];
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment [See reference 10];
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal and the Historic Environment [See reference 11];
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal for land use plans [See reference 12];

1.28 New government guidance on the SEA process for the new 30 month Local Plan system is expected soon, and this will be referred to and reflected in any subsequent stages of the SEA as necessary.

Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

1.29 The section below signposts the relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements (the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SEA of the Lichfield Local Plan). This section will be included in the full SEA Report at each stage of the SEA to show how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met throughout the SEA process. Note that the SEA Regulations refer to the 'Environmental report' as the output of the SEA process; in this case we refer to the output as an 'SEA report'.

SEA Regulations' requirements

Environmental report

- Where an environmental assessment is required by any provision of Part 2 of these Regulations, the responsible authority shall prepare, or secure the preparation of, an environmental report in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of this regulation. The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of:
 - implementing the plan or programme; and

- reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme.
- (Regulation 12(1) and (2) and Schedule 2).
 - The full SEA Report produced to accompany the Lichfield Local Plan will constitute the 'environmental report' as well and will be produced at a later stage in the SEA process.
- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.
 - Addressed in Chapter 2 in this SEA Scoping Report.
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.
 - Addressed in Chapters 3 and 4 in this SEA Scoping Report.
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.
 - Addressed in Chapter 3 in this SEA Scoping Report.
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive.
 - Addressed in Chapter 4 in this SEA Scoping Report.
- The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.
 - Addressed in Chapter 2 and Appendix A in this SEA Scoping Report.
- The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as:
 - (a) biodiversity;
 - (b) population;
 - (c) human health;
 - (d) fauna;

- (e) flora;
- (f) soil;
- (g) water;
- (h) air;
- (i) climatic factors;
- (j) material assets;
- (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- (l) landscape; and
- (m) the interrelationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l).

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process. Chapter 5 of this SEA Scoping Report describes the method by which significant effects will be identified.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.
 - Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.
 - Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.
- A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17.
 - Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.
- A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9.
 - Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

Consultation

- When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the environmental report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies.

(Regulation 12(5))

- This SEA Scoping Report will be published for consultation with the three statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England).
- Every draft plan or programme for which an environmental report has been prepared in accordance with regulation 12 and its accompanying report (“the relevant documents”) shall be made available for the purposes of consultation in accordance with the following provisions of this regulation.

As soon as reasonably practical after the preparation of the relevant documents, the responsible authority shall:

- send a copy of those documents to each consultation body;
- take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the preparation of the relevant documents to the attention of the persons who, in the authority’s opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption of the plan or programme concerned, required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Directive (“the public consultees”);
- inform the public consultees of the address (which may include a website) at which a copy of the relevant documents may be viewed, and the period within which, opinions must be sent.

The period referred to in paragraph (2) (d) must be of such length as will ensure that the consultation bodies and the public consultees are given an effective opportunity to express their opinion on the relevant documents.

(Regulation 13 (1), (2), and (3))

- Public consultation on the Lichfield Local Plan and accompanying SEA Reports will take place as the Local Plan develops.
- Where a responsible authority, other than the Secretary of State, is of the opinion that a plan or programme for which it is the responsible authority is likely to have significant effects on the environment of another Member State, it shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after forming that opinion:
 - notify the Secretary of State of its opinion and of the reasons for it; and

- supply the Secretary of State with a copy of the plan or programme concerned, and of the accompanying environmental report.

(Regulation 14 (1))

- Unlikely to be relevant to the Local Plan, as there will be no effects beyond the UK.

Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (relevant extracts of Regulation 16)

- As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme for which an environmental assessment has been carried out under these Regulations, the responsible authority shall:
 - make a copy of the plan or programme and its accompanying environmental report available at its principal office for inspection by the public at all reasonable times and free of charge.

(Regulation 16(1))

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.
- As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme the responsible authority shall inform (i) the consultation bodies; (ii) the persons who, in relation to the plan or programme, were public consultees for the purposes of regulation 13; and (iii) where the responsible authority is not the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State,
 - that the plan or programme has been adopted, and a statement containing the following particulars:
 - how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
 - how the environmental report has been taken into account;
 - how opinions expressed in response to: (i) the invitation in regulation 13(2)(d); (ii) action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;
 - how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;
 - the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and

- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.
- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

Monitoring

- The responsible authority shall monitor the significant effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action.

(Regulation 17(1))

- Requirement will be met after adoption of the new Local Plan.

Structure of the Scoping Report

1.30 This chapter provides a brief introduction to Lichfield District and the new Local Plan, and explains the requirement to undertake SEA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this Scoping Report is structured into the following sections:

- **Chapter 2** describes the relationship between the new Lichfield Local Plan and other relevant national, county, local and neighbourhood plans, and summarises the international and national plans and programmes that are relevant to the Local Plan and the SEA.
- **Chapter 3** sets out the baseline information and is structured around the SEA topics listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. Given the cross-cutting nature of some of the SEA topics, including those relating to population, human health, material assets and climatic factors, the Scoping Report draws out the full range of environmental and sustainability issues facing Lichfield and the Local Plan's influence on them. The topics addressed in Chapter 3 are:
 - Biodiversity (including flora and fauna);
 - Population, health and wellbeing;
 - Air, water and soils;
 - Climatic factors (including climate change mitigation and adaptation);
 - Material assets (interpreted as including geology and mineral resources, waste as a resource, economic assets/growth and transport infrastructure/connections);

- Cultural heritage; and
- Landscape.
- **Chapter 4** identifies the key environmental and sustainability issues in Lichfield District of relevance to the Local Plan and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
- **Chapter 5** then sets out the SEA framework and the proposed method for carrying out the SEA. The key environmental and sustainability issues and opportunities have been reflected in the SEA framework, which the Local Plan will be assessed against.
- **Chapter 6** summarises the consultation questions on the SEA Scoping Report and sets out next steps.
- **Appendix A** presents a summary of the objectives of relevant international, national, sub-regional plans and programmes that are relevant to the Local Plan and the SEA.

Chapter 2

Relevant Plans and Programmes

Introduction

2.1 This chapter addresses Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which requires the SEA Report to provide:

- an outline of the contents and main objectives of the Plan and its relationship with other relevant plans or programmes; and
- the environmental protection objectives established at International, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

2.2 In order to establish a clear scope for the SEA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental objectives (including some social and economic objectives relevant to the SEA topics) contained within international and national policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the Lichfield Local Plan. Given the SEA Regulations requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the Lichfield Local Plan and other relevant plans, policies and programmes.

2.3 This chapter first summarises the relationship of the Lichfield Local Plan to the relevant policies, plans and programmes which should be taken into consideration during preparation of the plan and its SEA. It then summarises the key environmental and sustainability objectives within the international and national plans and programmes as well as some of those at the County level. **Appendix A** provides more detail on the main environmental and sustainability objectives of international, national and plans and programmes which are of most relevance for the Local Plan and the SEA. It also provides a summary of the Neighbourhood Plans within Lichfield District.

2.4 The objectives of these plans and programmes have been taken into account when drafting the SEA framework in **Chapter 5**. An outline of the content and main objectives of the Local Plan will be described in subsequent SEA reports, as this emerges through the plan-making process.

Relationship of Lichfield Local Plan with other relevant plans and programmes

2.5 The Lichfield Local Plan is not prepared in isolation and must be in conformity with a range of international and national plans and programmes.

2.6 Once the new Local Plan is adopted, the development plan for Lichfield will comprise the adopted plan as well as the ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plans within the local authority area. National policy set out in the NPPF, with guidance provided for its application in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), sets the foundation for preparation of the local development plan. The NPPF is also a material consideration for planning decisions.

2.7 Furthermore, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 has introduced the system of strategic planning in England via Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs). These will sit above and help shape Local Plans once adopted. The primary purpose of SDSs will be to guide sustainable growth and address key cross-boundary spatial issues. Lichfield lies within the Stoke and Staffordshire SDS area. A strategic planning board (SPB) for the area will be established to form a partnership of strategic planning authorities so they can work together to produce an SDS. In effect, the new SPB will become the strategic planning authority for the area **[See reference 13]**.

2.8 The development plan for Lichfield is supported by other documents such as the Statement of Community Involvement, Local Plan Timetable, Authority Monitoring Report and Supplementary Planning Documents. Note that under planning reforms set out in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, Supplementary Planning Documents are being phased out and replaced by Supplementary Plans. Supplementary Planning Documents will remain in force until planning authorities adopt a local plan under the new plan making system.

The Implications of Brexit

2.9 As of the end of January 2020 the UK has left the EU. Principally, the UK’s environmental law is derived from EU law or was directly effective EU law. As a result of Brexit, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 converts existing EU law which applied directly in the UK’s legal system (such as EU Regulations and EU Decisions) into UK law and preserves laws made in the UK to implement EU obligations (e.g. the laws which implement EU Directive). This body of law is known as retained EU law and could be subject to future, post-Brexit amendments.

2.10 As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments [See reference 14], the purpose of the Brexit amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the EU. No substantive changes are made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime operates.

2.11 Relevant international plans and policy (including those at the EU level) are transposed into national plans, policy and legislation and these have been considered in this chapter and in **Appendix A**.

International

2.12 At the international level, there is a wide range of plans and programmes which act to inform and shape national level legislation. Planning policy in England at a national and local level (i.e. the NPPF and Local Plan) should be aware of and in conformity with the relevant legislation. The main environmental and sustainability objectives of international plans and programmes which are of most relevance for the Local Plan and the SEA are provided in **Appendix A**.

National

2.13 There is an extensive range of national policies, plans and programmes that are relevant to the Local Plan and the SEA process. A pragmatic and proportionate approach has been taken with regards to the identification of key national policies, plans and programmes, focusing on those that are of most relevance. A summary of the main objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance of relevance to the Local Plan and the SEA is provided below. In addition, the main environmental and sustainability objectives of other national plans and programmes which are of most relevance to the Local Plan and SEA are provided in **Appendix A**.

2.14 It should be noted that the new Local Plan is being prepared in a period of transition towards the new plan-making system that the Government is introducing.

2.15 Recent legislation and policy updates have set out how Local Plans will be prepared and managed differently in the coming years:

- The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act [\[See reference 15\]](#) introduced the statutory framework for many of the planned reforms. Not all plan-making provisions are in force, however, the Act sets the legal basis for the new system.
- The Government response to the Plan-Making Reforms consultation (July–October 2023) was published in February 2025 [\[See reference 16\]](#) as well as the Chief Planner newsletter which sets out advice for plan-makers [\[See reference 17\]](#).
- The Government has also published guidance and resources for local planning authorities (LPAs) preparing a local plan under the new plan-making system [\[See reference 18\]](#).

2.16 The government has said the new system will be “simpler, faster to prepare and more accessible”. The changes include:

- 30-Month Local Plan Timetable: Councils will need to prepare Local Plans within 30 months – roughly half the time most plans currently take.
- This process will include a period of early engagement followed by two rounds of public consultation and three Gateway Assessments. The second and third gateway assessments are led by the Planning Inspectorate where key issues are considered early and to determine whether the plan can proceed to examination.
- Plan examination is expected to occur within the 30 months, ideally lasting no more than six months.

The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

2.17 The NPPF [\[See reference 19\]](#) is the overarching planning framework which provides national planning policy and principles for the planning system in England. The NPPF was originally published in March 2012 and has since been updated and revised several times, with the most recent version published in August 2026.

2.18 The three overarching objectives of the planning system are set out in the NPPF. These should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that net gains are achieved across each of the different objectives:

- “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective – to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and minimising waste and pollution.”

2.19 The NPPF sets out that SDSs will form part of the development plan for each area, along with the Local Plan. Lichfield lies within the Stoke and Staffordshire area for which an SDS will be prepared..

2.20 NPPF Policy PM1: Spatial development strategies sets out the need for spatial development strategies to set a positive vision for future growth and change at a sub-regional scale and provide a clear spatial framework for investment and growth, including for new housing. Their content should be genuinely strategic in nature and allow for more detailed issues to be considered and addressed through other parts of the development plan.

2.21 The new Local Plan must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which states in Policy PM2: Local Plans that ‘Local Plans should set out a positive vision and spatial strategy which supports the delivery of the spatial development strategy for their area, and should set out specific proposals for accommodating development needs and conserving and improving the environment at a local level’.

2.22 Policies PM6 – PM13 set out policies relating to how plans should be prepared and address matters including general principles for plan-making, evidence for plan-making, identifying and assessing land for development and maintaining and demonstrating co-operation between plan-making authorities.

2.23 The updated NPPF now includes a suite of procedural and thematic policies, which are separated into policies for plan-making and policies for decision-making. The policies for plan-making must be taken into account in preparing any part of the development plan.

2.24 Separate Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [\[See reference 20\]](#) provides guidance for how the Government's planning policies for England are expected to be applied. Sitting alongside the NPPF, it provides an online resource that is updated on a regular basis for the benefit of planning practitioners.

2.25 The overarching nature of the NPPF means that its implications for the SEA relate to multiple topics which this report seeks to address. Considering the importance of the NPPF to the English planning system, the relevance of the framework and its implications for the plan-making process and the SEA is considered in more detail below. The SEA topics listed in the SEA Regulations are set out below (some of which have been combined), although consideration of issues often cuts across topics. The summary provided below is not absolutely comprehensive and the NPPF is intended to be read and applied as a whole during plan making.

Biodiversity (including flora and fauna) and landscape

2.26 The NPPF sets out the approach that Local Plans should have in relation to biodiversity and the landscape, particularly through plan-making Policy N1: Improving the natural environment, which states that plans should “set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity in the plan area, and identify other features which require particular consideration in managing development due to their environmental value such as chalk streams.” Plans should also identify opportunities for the “conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries)”.

2.27 The Lichfield Local Plan should seek to maximise any opportunities arising for local economies, communities and health as well as biodiversity. This should include approaches which support enhancing the connectivity of green infrastructure and promoting the achievement of biodiversity net gain. The SEA process should support the identification and maximisation of potential benefits

through the consideration of alternatives and assessment of significant effects, both negative and positive.

2.28 The Local Plan should be supportive of an approach to development which would protect the landscape character of Lichfield District and its surrounds. Where appropriate it should also seek to protect the identity of the built-up areas of the district. The SEA should identify those alternatives which contribute positively to landscape and townscape character.

Population and human health

2.29 In relation to population and human health, healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social integration, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles are supported through the framework.

2.30 Plan-making Policy HC1: Planning for healthy communities states that development plans should “promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places, and the provision, retention and enhancement of appropriate community facilities and public service infrastructure”. Development plans should “set out the facilities and contributions expected from development, including as part of allocations for major development involving the provision of housing”. Additionally, they should “identify wider opportunities to promote good health, prevent ill-health, reduce health inequalities and support social interaction through their spatial strategy and land allocations, including through policies for strengthening town centres, locating development where it will support walking, wheeling and cycling and promoting mixed-use developments”. Through Policy HC2: Local Green Space, the NPPF supports the designation of land as Local Green Space “where this would safeguard green areas of particular value to the local community”.

2.31 The delivery of new housing is considered to support local communities and their wellbeing by meeting housing needs and addressing shortages. Policy HO2: Setting requirement figures for homes states that “Spatial development strategies should establish a housing requirement, and set pitch and plot requirements where a need has been identified, for each local planning authority within the strategy area”. It specifies that these figures should not be retested as part of Local Plan preparation unless there has been a significant change in circumstances which affects the overall requirement and its distribution to each local planning authority area. According to Policy HO3: Providing land for homes, “Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the plan period”.

2.32 The new Lichfield Local Plan can have a significant influence on addressing inequalities, including those relating to health, and will need to consider the appropriate siting of new development, particularly large development sites that are likely to include new service and facility provisions. The Local Plan can ensure that new development is located in areas which can improve accessibility for existing as well as new residents and ensure that future development does not exacerbate existing inequalities. The SEA process can support the identification and refinement of options that can contribute to reducing inequalities and support the development of policy approaches that cumulatively improve the wellbeing of local communities.

2.33 Although Local Plans can no longer require developments to achieve certain levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes, they can promote the Home Quality Mark to support residents in understanding the quality and performance of new build homes and can also set targets for developers to provide for a given percentage of energy used by a new development to come from on-site renewable or low carbon technologies. There are regulations in place that seek to reduce emissions, namely the amended Building Regulations 2010 [See reference 21] and Future Homes and Building Standards from 2025 which require CO2 emissions from new build homes and other buildings, including offices and shops, to be 30% lower than current standards. Further to this, a recent court ruling [See reference 22] clarified that councils can set higher new home energy efficiency standards in Local Plans provided they convince a Planning Inspector that the policies are viable and that the homes can be delivered. Local Plan policies can support the development of renewable energy technologies where appropriate, in line with climate change mitigation strategies and targets. The UK Green Building Council has produced a resource pack which is designed to help local authorities improve the sustainability of new homes. The New Homes Policy Playbook [See reference 23] sets out minimum requirements for sustainability in new homes that local authorities should introduce, as well as proposed stretching requirements should local authorities wish to go further. For non-residential uses BREEAM assessments can be used by local authorities to ensure buildings meet sustainability objectives.

Air, water and soils

2.34 The NPPF states in Policy N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards that “development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest

Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence”. Additionally, plan-making Policy P1: Planning for clean and safe places stipulates that development plans should “consider any wider opportunities to reduce air, water, soil, noise or other forms of pollution, and contribute to compliance with national and local environmental targets and objectives, through the spatial strategy and policies for specific parts of the plan area (such as by identifying opportunities for strategic nature-based solutions”. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account implications for water supply.

2.35 The NPPF encourages the reuse of previously developed land, with Policy L1: Planning for an effective use of land stating that the development plan should “identify ways of accommodating as much as possible of the identified need for development in the area on previously developed land”.

2.36 Policy W1: Planning for energy and water states that the development plan should take into account factors including water supply, drainage and wastewater capacity when considering the location and phasing of growth.

2.37 According to plan-making Policy P1: Planning for clean and safe places, development plans should consider opportunities to contribute to compliance with national and local environmental targets and objectives, through the spatial strategy and policies for specific parts of the plan area (such as by identifying opportunities for strategic nature-based solutions).

2.38 The new Local Plan can seek to ensure the appropriate protection of soil quality, including best and most versatile agricultural land. Further to this, the Local Plan should ensure that new development does not conflict with current mineral operations as well as long-term mineral resource plans. The SEA process should inform the development of the new Local Plan by helping to identify alternatives which would avoid areas of highest soil quality and best and most versatile agricultural land, as well as those which would promote the use of brownfield land.

2.39 The Local Plan presents an opportunity to consider incorporating targets for water efficiency and the level of water consumption and grey water recycling in any new development. The SEA process should seek to identify and address potential negative effects on the water environment, including implications relating to wastewater.

2.40 Growth may increase traffic on the roads which also has implications for air quality, and the new Local Plan and SEA process can seek to minimise effects of this nature through appropriately siting new development, identifying where

mitigation may be needed and requiring the necessary transport provisions and contributions from new development. The Local Plan, as supported by the SEA, should seek to identify opportunities to maximise the potential for alternative modes of transport to the car and reduce the need to travel, therefore reducing emissions, through the consideration of alternatives and assessment of significant effects. This includes potential opportunities that may arise as a result of the delivery of new infrastructure.

Climatic factors (including climate change mitigation and adaptation)

2.41 Climate change mitigation and adaption, energy efficiency and waste minimisation measures for new development including through the promotion of renewable energy schemes are also supported through the NPPF. Plan-making Policy CC1: Planning for climate change stipulates that development plans should take a “proactive approach to mitigating climate change and supporting the transition to net zero, in accordance with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. They should also take a proactive approach to adapting to climate change, taking into account the implications of extreme weather and long-term climate trends including overheating, wildfires, drought, flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes”.

2.42 Policy F1: Assessing flood risk for plan-making requires development plans to “take a risk-based approach when identifying suitable locations for development, taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change”.

2.43 The Local Plan process and SEA can consider the contribution the alternatives make in terms of contribution to climate change mitigation as well as climate change adaptation. The Local Plan and SEA also can ensure that development is sited away from areas of high flood probability and that appropriate water drainage is in place in line with flood risk strategies.

Material assets

2.44 The NPPF sets out that in terms of economic growth, the objective of the planning system is to contribute towards building a “strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity”. There is also a requirement for the planning system to identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure. Furthermore, planning policies should address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

2.45 Plan-making Policy E1: Providing the conditions for long-term economic growth stipulates that development plans should “set out a clear economic vision and strategy, which takes a positive, proactive and realistic approach to encouraging sustainable economic growth in both urban and rural areas, having regard to the Industrial Strategy [See reference 24] and any relevant strategic and local strategies for economic development and regeneration”.

2.46 Plan-making Policy TC1: Planning for town centres, sets out how development plans should promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres, including by setting out the hierarchy of centres and areas within them. Plans should allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of main town centre uses needed over the plan period.

2.47 Through plan-making Policy TR1: Vision-led approach to planning for transport, the NPPF states that “sustainable transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that it is reflected in the vision for the plan area and its specific proposals, and forms an integral part of a plan’s strategy for creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places”.

2.48 The new Local Plan should seek to maximise the potential benefits of nearby strategic growth, while at the same time ensuring the vitality and viability of smaller localised economies. Ensuring that services and facilities within the borough’s district and neighbourhood centres are maintained and enhanced is also important and will also provide support for local communities. The SEA process can support the development of the new Local Plan to ensure that its policies are considerate of impacts on the economy in the district. The process can also be used to demonstrate that impacts on the viability of Lichfield’s town centres have been considered and that access to sustainable transport has been taken into account.

Cultural heritage

2.49 Plan-making Policy HE1: Planning for the historic environment in the NPPF states that, plans should “deliver a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment”. This includes through identifying the “heritage assets within the plan area, including those heritage assets at most risk through neglect, decay or other threats”, and setting out “the key issues facing them and identify where these assets can be used to support sustainable development”, as well as taking opportunities, for example through “site allocations, design guides, design codes and masterplans, to draw on the contribution which the historic environment can make to the character and quality of development, and its context”.

2.50 The new Local Plan can offer enhanced protection for designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, including any potential archaeological finds in line with heritage protection and enhancement plans. The SEA has a role to play by identifying which alternatives could provide opportunities to secure the protection and enhancement of assets as well as those which might have significant impacts in terms of their appropriate use and setting.

Other national policies, plans and programmes

2.51 Numerous other policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) at a national level are of relevance to the preparation of the Lichfield Local Plan and the SEA. Unlike the NPPF, most of the documents are focussed on a specific topic area which the SEA will consider. There will be some overlap between the SEA topics covered by these plans and programmes where those documents contain cross-cutting objectives. However, the plans and programmes considered of most relevance to the SEA have been grouped by the topics they most directly seek to address, and the sections below each topic heading summarise the implications of the national PPPs for the Local Plan and the SEA.

2.52 These national plans, policies and programmes are detailed in **Appendix A**. The sections below summarise the implications of these national PPPs for the Local Plan and the SEA.

Biodiversity (including flora and fauna) and landscape

2.53 The key relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Environmental Outcomes Reports: Roadmap to reform (2026)
- Environmental Improvement Plan (2025)
- Green Infrastructure Framework and associated 15 GI Principles (2023)
- Working with Nature (2022)
- Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)
- The Environment Act (2021)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019)
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2019)

- Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2015
- National Pollinator Strategy (2014)
- Biodiversity Offsetting in England Green Paper (2013)
- Defra Right of Way Circular (1/09) (2011)
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2010)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

The Local Plan should be prepared to limit the potential for adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity as well as important landscapes (including those that are designated). It should also help to ensure that ecological features and biodiversity are managed, protected and enhanced and that opportunities for habitat restoration or creation are encouraged. The Local Plan should help to protect and enhance designated and valued landscapes and to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The plan approach should be to protect non-designated landscapes identified as particularly sensitive to development and non-designated habitats which form part of wider ecological network. The Local Plan presents opportunities to promote the achievement of net gains in biodiversity, although it is noted that it is already a national requirement to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain.

The allocation of new sites for development and updated planning policy can also be used to achieve better habitat connectivity through the provision of new green infrastructure and the requirement for biodiversity net gain.

The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, character of landscapes and townscape and green infrastructure.

Population and human health

2.54 The key relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026
- Health Bill (2026)
- The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: Building Circular 01/2026 (2026)
- UK Health Security Agency strategic plan (2026)
- Building for a Healthy Life (2026)
- Fit for the Future: The 10-Year Health Plan for England (2025)
- Planning and Infrastructure Act (2025)
- Renters' Rights Act (2025)
- Healthy Homes - a foundation for healthier and resilient communities (2025)
- Homes England strategic plan 2025 to 2030 (2025)
- Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024)
- Plan for Change (2024)
- Policy Statement on New Towns (2024)
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023)
- Green Infrastructure Framework (2023)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan (2023)
- Health and Care Act 2022
- National Design Guide (2021)
- National Model Design Code (2021)
- Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021)
- Using the Planning System to Promote Healthy Weight Environments (2020) Addendum (2021)
- The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020)

- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? (2013)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Environmental Noise Regulations (2006) (as amended 2018)

Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

The Local Plan needs to consider the requirements for infrastructure as this has the potential to have a significant impact on the environment and it should be prepared to ensure that the population has access to sustainable and low carbon infrastructure and services and facilities that are well adaptable to climate change, and that there is sufficient capacity within them to serve the increased population. This should include healthcare, education and open space.

Local Plans offer the opportunity to maximise the well-being benefits of well-designed local green spaces. The Local Plan should help to ensure that the provision of open space and green infrastructure is of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the plan area. Incorporated in the plan area in an appropriate manner these types of provisions will encourage healthy and active lifestyles, create fairer, safer and more inclusive communities, and improve the sustainable transport network including active travel networks.

The provision of an appropriate level of housing over the plan period will help address issues of disparity in terms of access to decent housing in the plan area. The provision of new housing should be considerate of local needs with regards to housing size, tenure and type, including the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to health and wellbeing, social inclusion and sustainable transport.

Air, water and soils

2.55 The key relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Water White Paper (2026)

Chapter 2 Relevant Plans and Programmes

- Managing Water Abstraction (2026)
- The National Framework for Water Resources 2025: Water for Growth, Nature and a Resilient Future (2025)
- Environmental Improvement Plan (2025)
- National Assessment of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk in England (2025) ('NaFRA 2')
- Drought Response: how it is managed in England (2025)
- Plan for Water: Our Integrated Plan for Delivering Clean and Plentiful Water (2023)
- Air Quality Strategy for England (2023)
- Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)
- National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2022)
- Environment Act 2021
- Environment Agency's Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) guidance (2020)
- Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Flood and Water Regulations 2019
- Clean Air Strategy (2019)
- Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (2018)
- Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (2018)
- Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations (2017)
- UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations (2017)
- Drought Response: Our Framework for England (Environment Agency, 2017)
- Groundwater Protection Policy (2017)
- Environmental Permitting Regulations (2016)
- Air Quality Standards Regulations (2016)
- Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations (2015)
- National Policy Statement for Waste Water (2012)

- Flood and Water Management Act (2010)
- Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (2009)
- Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations (2009)
- Flood Risk Regulations (2009)
- Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2003)
- Environmental Protection Act (1990)

Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plans to promote the efficient use of water and limit all types of pollution including water and air pollution. They should also seek to limit pressure on the wastewater treatment (WwT) infrastructure and water supply. Planning policies should seek to protect higher value soils in the plan area. The allocation of sites for development should take account of areas which are of highest sensitivity in relation to these issues, including Source Protection Zones (SPZs) and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). To limit the potential for air quality issues to be intensified as development is delivered over the plan period, local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plan to factor in the contribution that specific site options can make to achieving modal shift and limiting the need for residents to travel. The Local Plan can also encourage the re-use of brownfield land and protect more valuable agricultural soils and mineral resources from development.

The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to air pollution, water quality, water management, soils and minerals.

Climatic factors (including climate change mitigation and adaptation)

2.56 The key relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- A Well-Adapted UK: The Fourth Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk (CCRA4-IA) (2026)
- Warm Homes Plan (2026)

Chapter 2 Relevant Plans and Programmes

- Seventh Carbon Budget (2025)
- Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan (2025)
- Hydrogen Update to the Market (2025)
- Onshore Wind Strategy (2025)
- Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (2025)
- Environmental Improvement Plan (2025)
- Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A New Era of Clean Electricity (2024)
- The Waste Prevention Programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste (2023)
- Defence Operational Energy Strategy (DOES) (2023)
- Biomass Strategy (2023)
- Net zero government emissions: UK roadmap (2023)
- UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (2022)
- Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022)
- The Environment Act 2021
- The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)
- Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021)
- Waste Management Plan for England (2021)
- The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement (2020)
- The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2020)
- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and The Flood and Water Regulations (2019)
- Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018)
- The Clean Growth Strategy (2017)
- National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (2014)
- Waste (England and Wales) Regulations (2011)
- Climate Change Act (2008)

■ Planning and Energy Act (2008)

Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

The Local Plan should set out policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, while also encouraging development which would help to minimise carbon emissions. Climate change adaptation is closely linked to ensuring the health and wellbeing of residents.

The Local Plan should help to ensure that new development is energy efficient and promotes the use of sustainable construction methods and materials, as well as reduce their carbon emissions. In addition, the Local Plan should seek to allocate development sites in areas where sustainable and active transport patterns can be best achieved and should encourage development to make use of more sustainable sources of energy, potentially through the delivery of renewable energy development. The Local Plan should also ensure that risk from all sources of flooding as a result of climate change is managed effectively, protecting residents' wellbeing, and should ensure that development is resilient to future flooding. This could include the Local Plan setting out approaches to encourage the appropriate use of SuDS to minimise flood risk. The Local Plan should also consider the handling of waste in line with the waste hierarchy.

The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to climate change, sustainable construction and waste management, flooding and sustainable transport.

Material assets

2.57 The key relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport (2026)
- Cycling and walking investment strategy report to Parliament (2026)
- Planning and Infrastructure Act (2025)
- UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy (2025)
- The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025)

- UK Infrastructure Pipeline (2025)
- The Plan for Change (2024)
- Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 (update 2024)
- The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023)
- Future of Transport: Supporting Rural Transport Innovation (2023)
- The Future of Freight Plan (2022)
- National Highways Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2023)
- The Growth Plan (2022)
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021)
- Agriculture Act (2020)

Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

The Local Plan should allocate land to support the projected level of economic growth required over the plan period. Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in Local Plan policies to promote sustainable economic and employment growth to benefit all members of the community and to reduce disparity in the plan area. This should include support for the infrastructure required for the economy to function successfully. Employment sites should be located to enable local people to be able to access the new employment opportunities. Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plan to promote the viability of town centres as well as local centres.

The potential for reducing congestion, limiting the need to travel and associated benefits for air quality and climate change as well as public health should inform the preparation of the policies for the Local Plan and selecting its site allocations. The Local Plan should also encourage walking, cycling and wheeling as alternative modes of transport by providing safe and attractive walking and cycling infrastructure, as well as recognise the multiple benefits they bring in terms of physical and mental health, reducing carbon emissions and reducing air pollution. The selection of site options for development should be informed by the 20-minute neighbourhood concept and the provision of essential services locally to encourage less reliance on cars and encourage walking and cycling, in addition to issues such as the potential for access to new and existing public transport nodes and active transport routes and specific highways capacity issues. The

selection of individual site options should also be informed by their proximity to essential services and facilities, which is likely to reduce the need for residents to regularly travel long distances. There is potential for large site allocations to provide essential services and facilities, in addition to designing in routes for active travel and public transport provision where viable.

The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to green economic growth and employment and the provision of sustainable transport.

Cultural heritage

2.58 The key relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Historic England - Strategic Plan 2026-2031 (2026)
- Heritage Statement (2017)
- Sustainability Appraisal and Strategy Environmental Assessment: Historic England Advice Note 8 (2016)
- Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act (1990)
- Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act (1979)
- Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act (1953)

Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

The potential impact of new development on the historic environment, including local character as well as designated and non-designated heritage assets and their respective settings, should inform the preparation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan should set out a positive strategy for conserving, enhancing and enjoying heritage assets and their settings, including wider historic townscapes and landscapes. The Local Plan can help to realise the wider benefits of historic environment enhancements which include contributions to well-being and addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Particular regard may be given to protecting heritage assets which have been identified as being 'at risk' (both at the national and local levels). Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plans to address these issues and site options should be considered with regard to the potential for related issues.

The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the historic environment and the character of historic landscapes and townscapes.

Sub-National

2.59 Below the national level there are further plans and programmes which are relevant to the Local Plan and the SEA process. These plans and programmes sit mostly at the sub-regional and district level.

- West Midlands Growth Plan
- Reimagining transport in the West Midlands: Local Transport Plan Core Strategy
- West Midlands Five Year Plan 2026-31
- Staffordshire County Council Strategic Direction for 2026-2028
- Good Mental Health In Staffordshire 2023 - 2028
- Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Integrated Care Board: Staffordshire's All Age Carers Strategy 2024-2029
- Staffordshire Local Transport Plan 2026
- Staffordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Staffordshire's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2021 - 2031
- Staffordshire Freight Strategy Plan 2019
- Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) 2022
- Staffordshire Rail Strategy 2016
- Living my Best Life - A Joint Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Staffordshire 2023-2028
- Older peoples Commissioning Strategy 2024
- The Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015-2030)
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Waste Local Plan (2010 to 2026)
- Staffordshire County Council Environmental Strategy 2026
- Staffordshire County Council Environmental Action Plan 2026-2030
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy
- Staffordshire County Council Climate Change Annual Report - 2023/24
- Staffordshire County Council Climate Change - Action Plan 2025-2030
- South Staffordshire Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2024
- Lichfield District 2050 Strategy
- Lichfield District's Enhanced Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Lichfield District Council Air Quality Annual Status Report 2025
- Lichfield District Council Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2025
- Lichfield District Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2025
- Lichfield District Council Five Year Housing Land Supply 2026
- Lichfield District Council Open Space Assessment 2024

Implications for the Local Plan

2.60 The new Local Plan needs to consider the above sub national plans and evidence for the West Midlands and Lichfield District.

2.61 The Local Plan should support the aim to transition towards net zero and adaptation to climate change. The Local Plan should help meet the commitments that Lichfield District Council made to reduce its own emissions following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. This is likely to include through support for renewable and low carbon energy sources and more energy efficient design solutions.

2.62 The Local Plan provides the opportunity to maximise the health benefits of well-designed open spaces and areas for recreation. The Local Plan should help to ensure that the provision of open space and areas of recreation is of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the plan area, encouraging healthy and active lifestyles. The Local Plan should also consider opportunities for biodiversity enhancement within open spaces and across Lichfield District.

2.63 The provision of an appropriate level of housing will help address issues of inequality in relation to housing in the plan area and support economic growth. The delivery of new housing should consider the evidenced needs of the plan area, including the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The new Local Plan should

support economic growth within Lichfield District, including support for the rural economy. It should also respond to the infrastructure requirements of the plan area considering the level of growth to be delivered over the plan period and its distribution.

2.64 The Local Plan should encourage the use sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling and public transport. This includes through the location of development where residents will benefit from shorter journeys to essential services and facilities and the delivery of new infrastructure to enhance and decarbonise transport options within Lichfield District. Transport plans for the West Midlands and Staffordshire authorities have been produced and should be taken into consideration.

Surrounding Development Plans

2.65 Development in Lichfield District will not be delivered in isolation from those areas around it. Given the interconnection between Lichfield District and the surrounding areas there is potential for cross-boundary and in-combination effects where development is proposed through development plans in neighbouring authorities:

- Birmingham City Council
- Cannock Chase District Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council
- Stafford Borough Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- South Derbyshire District Council
- Tamworth Borough Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

2.66 As the SEA progresses, an overview of development set out in each plan will be included (or any new local plans arising after Local Government Reorganisation). Consideration will be given to the extent to which the content of these plans could lead to in-combination effects with the Lichfield Local Plan, for example as a result of any large-scale new development being proposed in close proximity across the borough boundaries. It may also be possible to draw on the SEA of the relevant SDS once that has progressed as well.

Neighbourhood Plans

2.67 Neighbourhood Plans, once adopted, form part of the development plan for a local authority area. There are thirteen 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans within Lichfield District:

- Alrewas Neighbourhood Plan (2018);
- Armitage with Handsacre Neighbourhood Plan (2018);
- Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan (2021);
- Elford Neighbourhood Plan (2019);
- Fradley Neighbourhood Plan (2019);
- Hammerwich Neighbourhood Plan (2021);
- Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan (2018);
- Little Aston Neighbourhood Plan (2016);
- Longdon Neighbourhood Plan (2018);
- Mavesyn Ridware Neighbourhood Plan (2025);
- Shenstone Neighbourhood Plan (2025);
- Stonnall Neighbourhood Plan (2025);
- Whittington and Fisherwick Neighbourhood Plan (2018); and
- Wigginton, Hopwas and Comberford Neighbourhood Plan (2016).

2.68 In addition, five other Neighbourhood Plan areas have been designated. The neighbourhood planning groups in each of these areas are currently working on developing a Neighbourhood Plan:

- Colton Neighbourhood Plan area (designated in 2016);
- Fazeley Neighbourhood Plan area (designated in 2018);
- Kings Bromley Neighbourhood Plan area (designated in 2019);
- Streethay Neighbourhood Plan area (designated in 2014); and
- Wall Neighbourhood Plan area (designated in 2014).

Chapter 3

Baseline Information

3.1 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely sustainability effects of a plan and helps to identify key sustainability issues and means of dealing with them.

3.2 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires information to be provided on:

- the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment;
- the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 2009/147/EC [the 'Birds Directive'] and 92/43/EEC [the 'Habitats Directive'].

3.3 This section presents the relevant baseline information for Lichfield District. Data referred to has been chosen primarily for regularity and consistency of collection, to enable trends in the baseline situation to be established, and also to enable subsequent monitoring of potential sustainability effects.

Biodiversity (including flora and fauna)

3.4 This section sets out the baseline for biodiversity (including flora and fauna) in the plan area. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can help to protect and enhance biodiversity, as it supports resilient ecosystems and healthy places, while also contributing to climate adaptation, landscape quality, water management and people's physical and mental well-being.

3.5 Lichfield District contains many assets protected by local, national, and international designations. The location of designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets in the plan area is presented in **Figure 3.1**.

3.6 There is one international and European statutory nature site within the district. This is the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The River Mease is an important lowland clay river, which provide the conditions

necessary to sustain populations of fish including the spined loach *Cobitis taenia*, and Bullhead *Cottus gobio* [\[See reference 25\]](#).

3.7 The River Mease currently faces significant environmental pressures from ongoing development and housing projects, insufficient wastewater treatment capacity and quality, and diffuse pollution sources. These factors collectively contribute to high phosphate levels in the River Mease SAC, threatening its ecological health and biodiversity. The chemical status exceeds the phosphate target of 0.06mg/l throughout the SAC, although the levels entering the River Mease have started to decline since 2009 [\[See reference 26\]](#).

3.8 Two other SACs are within the vicinity of the Lichfield. These are:

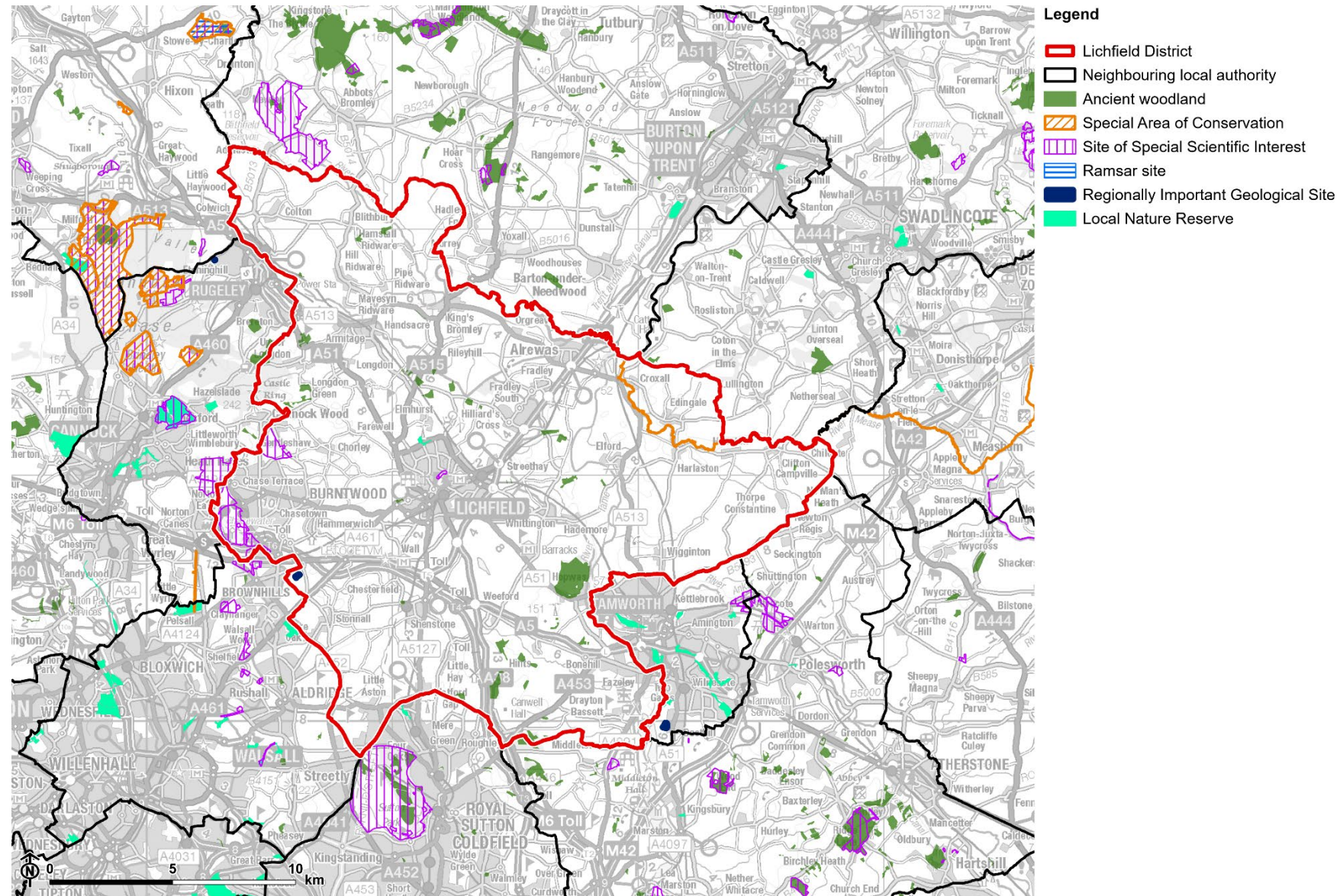
- Cannock Chase SAC – which is located to the north of Lichfield, in Cannock Chase District. The SAC is designated for its European dry heathland and;
- Cannock Extension Canal SAC – which is located to the west of Lichfield, and runs from Pelsall Junction on the Wyrley and Essington Canal, north to Norton Canes Docks. The SAC is designated due to the presence of floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*), a species native to anthropogenic, lowland environments.

3.9 With regard to sites of national importance, there are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which cover 330ha of the district. These are as follows:

- Chasewater and Southern Staffordshire Coalfields SSSI;
- Gentleshaw Common SSSI;
- Stowe Pool and Walkmill Claypit SSSI and;
- River Mease SSSI [\[See reference 27\]](#).

3.10 Table 3.1 summarises the condition of each SSSI, which shows a large proportion of them are currently in unfavourable condition (albeit some are 'unfavourable recovering').

Figure 3.1: Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets



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Table 3.1: Summary of SSSI in Lichfield District [See reference 28]

SSSI Name	Condition	Area (ha)
Chasewater and The Southern Staffordshire Coalfield Heaths SSSI	Favourable – 3.81% Unfavourable – recovering – 48.93% Unfavourable – declining – 47.26%	530.23
Gentleshaw Common SSSI	Unfavourable – recovering – 100.0%	80.47
Stowe Pool and Walk Mill Clay Pit SSSI	Unfavourable – no change – 37.11% Unfavourable – declining – 62.89%	8.40
River Mease SSSI	Unfavourable – no change – 100%	23.03

3.11 There are also 78 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) within Lichfield District, although the total number of sites changes periodically.

3.12 There is currently one Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in Lichfield District. This is Christian Fields Local Nature Reserve, which covers 60,000sqm of natural land in the north of Lichfield District [See reference 29].

3.13 Although exact tree coverage for the Lichfield District is currently unknown, it is understood that in 2024/25, there were five new individual trees with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This compares to nine new TPOs in 2023/24 [See reference 30].

3.14 With regard to geodiversity, the Staffordshire Geodiversity Action Plan [See reference 31], provides a countywide strategy for the conservation of geological diversity and the sustainable use of geological resources. The Action Plan is overseen by a Steering Group which includes Lichfield District Council. The Plan provides a summary of the current Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) locations in Staffordshire. In relation specifically to Lichfield, the district contains one RIGS, Barrack Lane Quarry, which is an example of Triassic sandstone.

3.15 In 2022, Lichfield District Council declared a commitment to nature recovery, providing short and long-term targets to reverse the decline and increase wildlife species, which will be outlined in the 2050 Lichfield District Strategy [See reference 32]. The 2050 Strategy will sit within the national

Nature Recovery Network and underpin all planning, development and land management decisions including the Local Plan. Targets include management of at least 30% of council-owned land for the benefit of wildlife by 2030 (in line with the UK Government's commitments) and achieving a net-gain to biodiversity across all development.

3.16 Additionally, Lichfield District Council actively supports local programs to protect and enhance biologically significant sites within the district. The council is a key stakeholder in the 'Purple Horizons' project, one of five national nature recovery projects launched by Natural England. This project, which began in August 2021 with £200,000 in funding for habitat management and other initiatives, aims to restore and connect fragmented habitats such as heathland, wetland, grassland, and woodland between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park [See reference 33]. The council collaborates with Natural England, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, and other partners to enhance, restore, and create these habitats, facilitating wildlife movement and thriving populations. Additionally, Lichfield District Council participates in the Midlands Heathland Heartland (MHH) program, contributing through Nature Recovery Network mapping and biodiversity offsetting schemes.

3.17 The Lichfield District 2050 Strategy [See reference 34] aims to restore the district by 2050, focusing on reintroducing lowland heathland and associated habitats to connect Cannock Chase to Sutton Park. The strategy includes the establishment of two new nature reserves, several pocket parks, and wildlife ponds. Additionally, the strategy promotes living green spaces on roofs, walls, and bus stops, along with expanding the tree canopy across urban areas with more street trees.

3.18 The draft Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (2026) [See reference 35], sets out priorities for action to support nature recovery in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and identifies locations across these areas to create or improve habitats like woodlands, rivers and meadows. Lichfield District Council is one of the supporting authorities involved in developing the LNRS. The draft LNRS was consulted upon in June and July 2026.

3.19 Lichfield District Council is also an active partner of the Staffordshire Wildlife Sites Partnership which monitor these sites (over a five year period). There are currently 78 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), and Biodiversity Alert Sites (BAS) being monitored within the district [See reference 36]. These include areas of upland oak woodland, wet woodland, lowland meadow, purple

moor-grass and rush pasture reedbeds, lowland heath and upland heath [\[See reference 37\]](#).

Population and human health

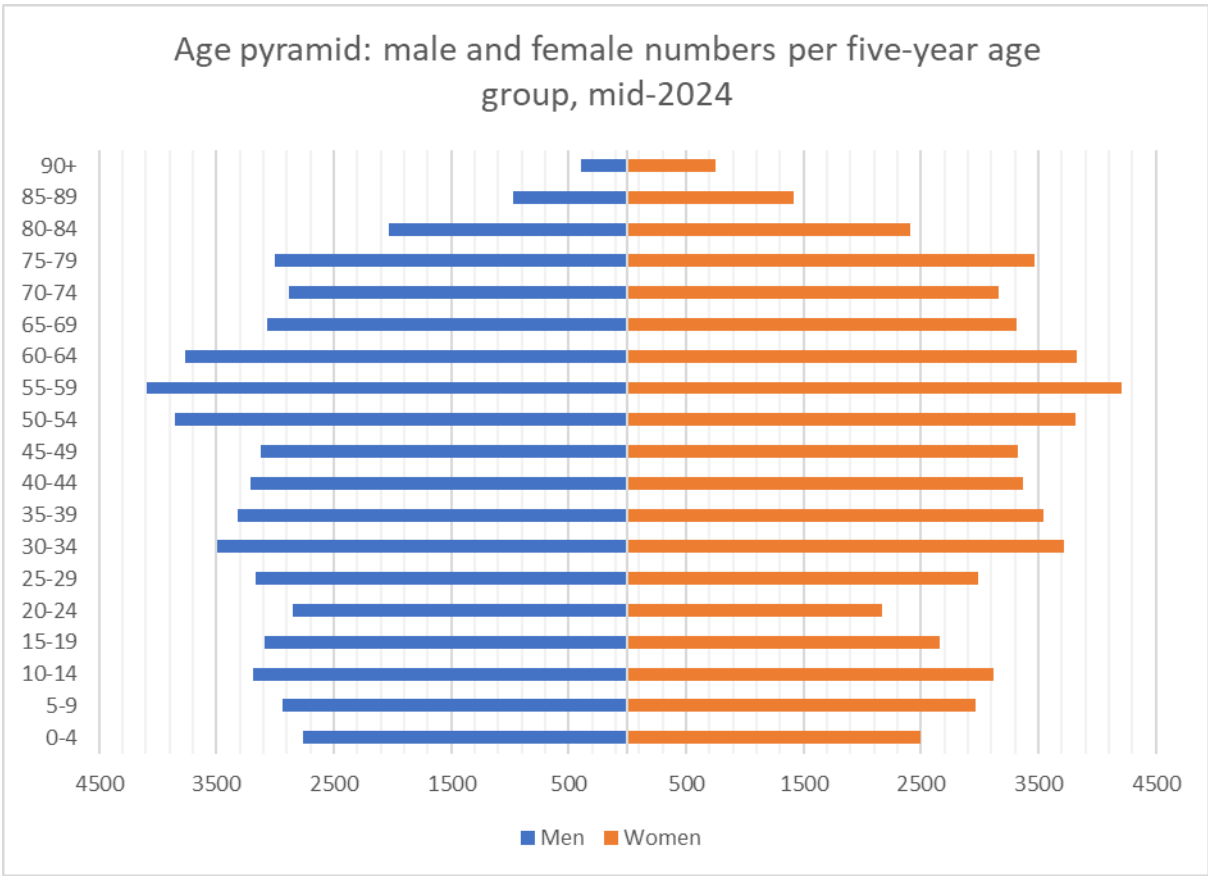
3.20 This section sets out the baseline for the plan area's population, health and well-being. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can deliver sustainable places that support healthy, inclusive communities by ensuring housing, services, open space and access to healthcare keep pace with population change.

Population

3.21 The population of Lichfield District was 106,900 in 2021, reflecting a 5.7% increase from 100,700 in 2011 [\[See reference 38\]](#). This is lower than the overall increase for England (6.6%), and the West Midlands (8.9%). Regionally the largest population increase was in Rugby (14.3%) and the lowest in Herefordshire (2%) [\[See reference 39\]](#). Lichfield has a population density of 338 people per square km [\[See reference 40\]](#). There are around 45,630 households in Lichfield [\[See reference 41\]](#).

3.22 The population of Lichfield is ageing, with the highest proportion of people being between the ages of 50-59 (based on mid-2024 estimates), with a comparatively low amount of young people as illustrated by **Figure 3.2**.

Figure 3.2: Age pyramid for Lichfield (2024) [See reference 42]



3.23 According to the 2021 Census, the largest ethnic group in Lichfield is White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, with 94.8% of residents identifying as such. This represents a 2% decrease from 2011. In 2021, 2.3% of Lichfield residents identified as ‘Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh’, which is a 0.7% increase from 2011. In 2021, 1.9% of Lichfield residents identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, up from 1.0% in 2011. This 0.8% change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area. **Table 3.2** below shows the breakdown of Lichfield’s population by ethnic group.

Table 3.2: Lichfield population by ethnic group (2021) [See reference 43]

Ethnic group	% of population
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	2.3
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.6

Ethnic group	% of population
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1.9
White	94.8
Other ethnic groups	0.4

3.24 In Lichfield, the percentage of households including a couple with dependent children fell from 21.5% in 2011 to 19.5% in 2021. The percentage of households including a couple without children in Lichfield fell from 21.4% to 18.4%, while the percentage of households including a couple with only non-dependent children decreased from 7.8% to 7.4%.

3.25 The population in Lichfield District is spread across 22 wards. Armitage with Handsacre has the highest population of the 22 wards, with 8,016 residents. Whittington & Streethay displays the highest population increase between 2011 and 2021, with an increase of 2,033 people. **Table 3.3** below presents the population change between 2011 and 2021 by ward in Lichfield District. [\[See reference 44\]](#).

Table 3.3: Estimated populations by ward in Lichfield District for 2011 and 2021

Ward	Population in 2011	Population in 2021	Population Change
Armitage with Handsacre	6,498	8,016	1,518
Leomansley	6,819	7,276	457
Whittington & Streethay	5,112	7,145	2,033
Alrewas & Fradley	5,947	6,716	769
Stowe	6,140	6,634	494
Boney Hay & Central	6,481	6,344	-137
Summerfield & All Saints	6,292	6,234	-58

Ward	Population in 2011	Population in 2021	Population Change
St John's	5,824	5,924	100
Chasetown	3,832	4,964	1,132
Little Aston & Stonnall	4,757	4,907	150
Chase Terrace	4,808	4,665	-143
Chadsmead	4,651	4,621	-30
Fazeley	4,530	4,615	85
Highfield	4,636	4,512	-124
Curborough	4,445	4,273	-172
Hammerwich with Wall	4,251	4,200	-51
Boley Park	4,340	3,852	488
Bourne Vale	2,995	3,006	11
Colton & the Ridwares	2,112	2,294	182
Shenstone	2,220	2,195	-25
Longdon	2,026	2,023	-3
Mease Valley	1,938	2,019	81

Housing

3.26 The median house price in Lichfield District in April 2026 was £336,000 [See reference 45]. This is up 3.4% from April 2025 and represents an increase of roughly 73% over the last 10 years [See reference 46]. This price makes homes in Lichfield less affordable compared to the West Midlands, where the median house price is £251,000, and to the wider UK, where the median is £270,000 [See reference 47]. Lichfield's median property price-to-earnings ratio is 7.4, higher than regionally (6.7), though lower than nationally (7.5) [See reference 48].

3.27 In 2021, 12.7% of Lichfield households rented privately, up from 9.5% in 2011. Meanwhile, 13.0% lived in socially rented housing, slightly down from

13.2% in 2011. Homeownership (outright or with a mortgage) fell from 75.6% to 73.3%. Lichfield had the region's joint third lowest percentage of privately rented homes, alongside Staffordshire Moorlands, with only South Staffordshire and Bromsgrove having lower percentages (10.6% each) [\[See reference 49\]](#).

3.28 The Lichfield District Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) [\[See reference 50\]](#) provides evidence on the potential supply of housing across Lichfield District and will form a key component of the evidence base that will inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. The 2015 Local Plan Strategy, as referenced in the SHLAA, aimed to deliver at least 10,030 dwellings between 2008 and 2029, including 1,000 homes for neighbouring authorities Cannock Chase and Tamworth (500 homes each). This resulted in an annual requirement of 478 dwellings, with 430 needed to meet Lichfield District need. However, since the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy, the NPPF introduced a standard method for calculating Local Housing Need (LHN). Based on the revisions to the NPPF in August 2026, the LHN for Lichfield District is calculated at 719 dwellings per annum [\[See reference 51\]](#). This updated figure will need to be considered in relation to the emerging Local Plan.

3.29 There was a decrease in the number of housing completions in Lichfield District in the period 2024/2025 compared to the figure from the previous period (2023/2024) (597 compared to 716 respectively) [\[See reference 52\]](#). With regard to affordable housing, there were 127 gross completions completed during 2024/25. Table 3.4 illustrates the housing completion trends over the past 10 years.

Table 3.4: Five-year housing supply trajectory housing completions (2014 – 2025) [See reference 53\]](#)

Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Past completions (Gross)	231	204	394	577	766	625	556	745	773	736	609
Annual Demolitions & Conversions Away	5	4	72	25	26	44	8	2	17	20	12
Total net dwellings	226	200	322	552	740	581	548	743	756	727	897

Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Total cumulative net dwellings	1,681	1,881	2,203	2,755	3,495	4,076	4,624	5,367	6,123	6,850	7,436

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

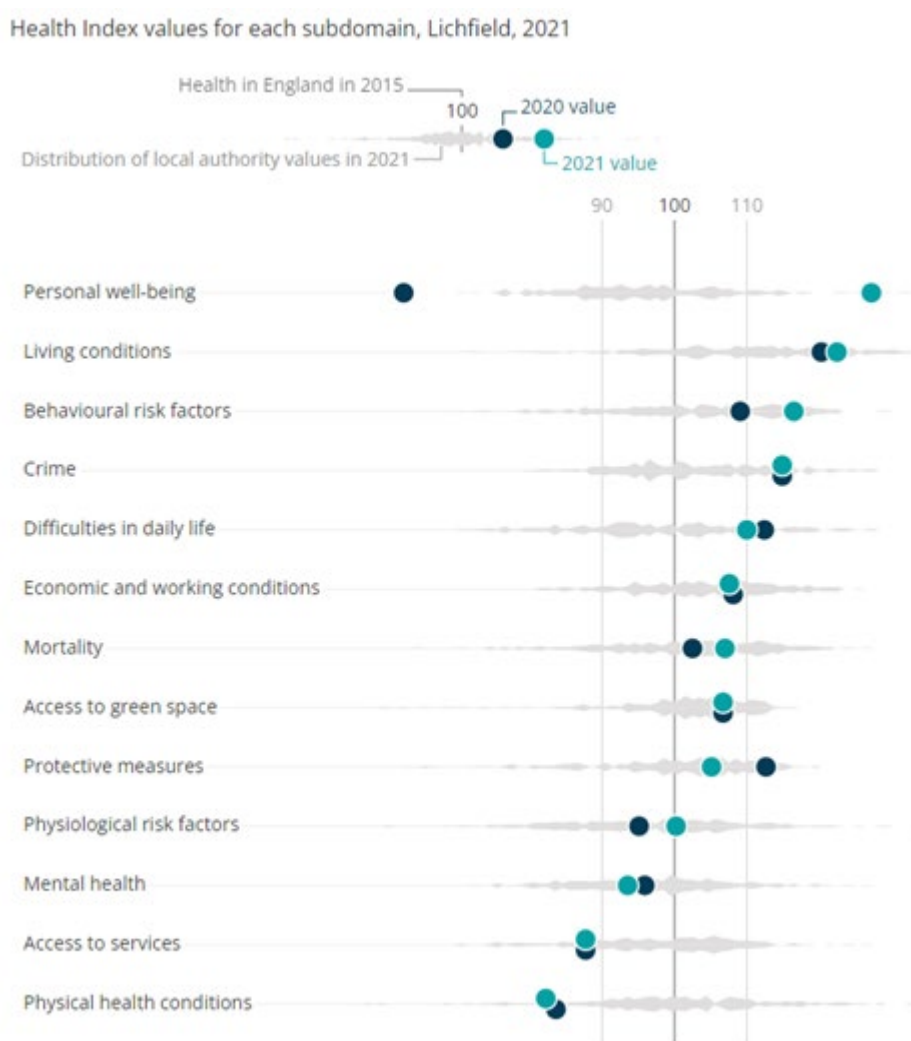
3.30 The 2021 Census reported that 0.07% of the people in Lichfield District described themselves as White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller and White: Roma.

3.31 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Lichfield District was completed in September 2025 to provide information and data regarding the current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the Lichfield Council area between the period 2025-2045 [See reference 54]. The study identified a residential need for seven Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the period 2025-2045. Due to historic low numbers of encampments, no need for transit sites was identified. There was no current or future need for Travelling Showpeople found in Lichfield District as none were identified living in the area.

Health

3.32 The Health Index for England is a measure of the health of the country. It uses a broad definition of health to provide a single value for the health of each local authority area that can be broken down into various measures within three broad domains: health outcomes; health-related behaviours and personal circumstances; and wider drivers of health that relate to the places where people live. Lichfield has an overall Health Index of 113.4 which is up 8.3 points compared with the previous year. Lichfield is ranked roughly in the top 20% of local authority areas in England for health in 2021 [See reference 55]. As presented in **Figure 3.3**, health in Lichfield is strongest for measures relating to the "personal well-being" subdomain, which looks at people's belief that activities in life are worthwhile, feelings of anxiety, happiness, and life satisfaction. Lichfield's worst score is in relation to "physical health conditions".

Figure 3.3: Health Index values for each subdomain in Lichfield (2021)
[See reference 56]



3.33 Based on the 2021 Census, 49.3% of Lichfield residents described their health as "very good", signalling an increase from 47.5% in 2011. Those describing their health as "good" fell from 34.5% to 34.3%. In 2021, 6.6% of Lichfield residents were identified as being "disabled and limited a lot", thereby facing significant restrictions in daily activities and participation due to impairments. This figure decreased from 8.3% in 2011 [See reference 57].

3.34 It should be noted however that the 2021 Census was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced how people perceived and rated their health, affecting how people chose to respond.

3.35 Life expectancy for males in Lichfield District is 80.9, which is higher than both the regional average (78.8) and England average (79.7). Life expectancy

for females in Lichfield District is 84.7 which is higher than both the regional average (82.9) and England average (83.5) [\[See reference 58\]](#).

3.36 Further to this, Lichfield District's mortality for individuals under 75 years old, stemming from all causes in 2023, was 260 per 100,000. This figure is lower than both the regional rate of 367.9 per 100,000 and national rate of 341.6 per 100,000.

3.37 The suicide rate between 2022 and 2024, was 9.9 per 100,000. This figure is lower than both the regional rate of 10.5 per 100,000 and national rate of 10.9 [\[See reference 59\]](#).

Access to services and facilities

3.38 In the Health Index, Lichfield District received a relatively low score of 87.7 compared to other local authorities in the "Access to services" subdomain in 2021. The district scored much higher in the "Access to green spaces" subdomain at 106.7. This is borne out by statistics on the average time taken for Lichfield District residents to reach the nearest key services (employment centres, primary and secondary schools, further education, GPs, hospitals, food stores and town centres) by public transport or on foot. In 2021, the national score for access to services was 100.3, whilst access to green spaces scored 99.9. Lichfield District therefore achieved lower scores than the national average in the 'Access to services' subdomain.

Open space, sports and recreation

3.39 Lichfield District Council's 2024 Open Space Assessment [\[See reference 60\]](#) explored the quality of open spaces in the district. The Assessment notes that the district has 2,882.7 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspaces, providing 27.7 hectares per 1,000 residents. While access to small woodlands (2+ hectares) within 500 meters is limited, residents have significantly better access to larger woodlands (20+ hectares) within 4 kilometres compared to county and national averages.

3.40 The district contains 278 amenity greenspace sites totalling 213.5 hectares, with quality varying significantly across locations. Although the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) recommends 27.9 hectares of equipped children's play space, the district currently offers only 0.13 hectares per 1,000 residents. Despite this shortfall, feedback indicates sufficient play space availability, though accessibility issues exist in certain play spaces in

Lichfield and Burntwood. The quality of play spaces in Lichfield District is generally good, with recent improvements enhancing the range of play opportunities.

Crime

3.41 The absence of a safe and secure place in which to live can have an extremely negative impact on physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

3.42 As of April 2026, Lichfield District's crime rate was 63.0 crimes per 1,000 people, compared to approximately 75.9 per 1,000 across the West Midlands and 72.4 per 1,000 across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This means Lichfield's crime rate was 17% lower than the West Midlands average and 13% lower than the national rate [\[See reference 61\]](#). The overall crime count between July 2025 and June 2026 was 474. The highest recorded crime count for this period was for violence and sexual offences, totalling 217 incidents (45.8%). Other crime categories had significantly lower counts, with vehicle crime recording 45 incidents (9.5%) and anti-social behaviour recording 51 incidents (10.8%) [\[See reference 62\]](#).

Education

3.43 16.6% of Lichfield District's population is comprised of students, which is lower than the regional average of 21.3% and national average of 20.4%.

3.44 There are 33 schools within the district, including five secondary schools or colleges [\[See reference 63\]](#). Staffordshire University also offers a range of courses from its campus based in Lichfield.

3.45 Just over half (50.3%) of Lichfield District's population (aged 16 to 64 years) have Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Level 4 qualifications and above. 71.8% have RQF Level 3 qualifications and above, 90.1% have RQF Level 2 and above and 91.7% have RQF Level 1 and above. In Lichfield, the percentage of people with RQF Level 4 qualifications and above (50.3%) is higher compared to the national (48.6%) and regional (43.8%) averages [\[See reference 64\]](#).

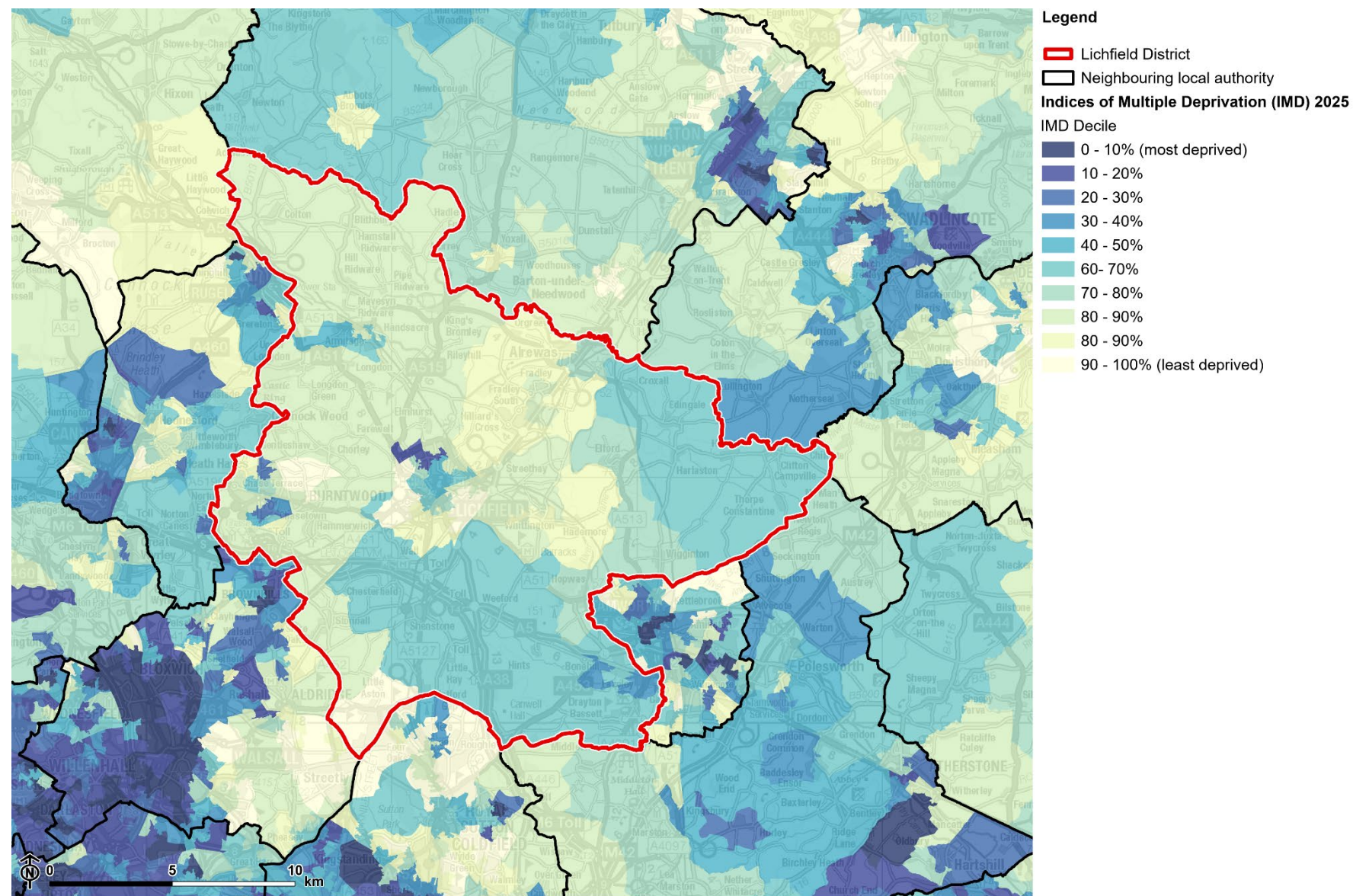
Deprivation

3.46 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) uses Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) to measure deprivation at local authority and county level. The

seven distinct domains of deprivation (Income; Employment; Education and Skills; Health and Disability; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment) which when weighted and combined from the IMD 2025 have been mapped for the district (see **Figure 3.4**).

3.47 The IMD 2025 reveals that Lichfield District is the 241st least deprived local authority area out of 296 local authority areas, therefore being less deprived than 81% of local authority districts. It performs most favourably in relation to the Crime and Living Environment domains (within 80% least deprived) and least favourably in relation to the Health and Disability domain (within 60% least deprived). However, there are pockets of deprivation within Lichfield District. Areas in the wards of Chadsmead and Curborough fall within the IMD's 20% most deprived areas nationally. These areas rank particularly low regarding the categories of the Income, Employment and Education and Skills domains (within 80-90% most deprived). However, these areas fall within the 80% least deprived in relation to the Barriers to Housing and Services and Living Environment domains **[See reference 65]**.

Figure 3.4: Indices of Multiple Deprivation



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Air, water and soils

3.48 This section sets out the baseline for the plan area's air, land and water quality. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can help to ensure good air, soil and water quality, which are essential to environmental and human health, and are influenced by transport, development patterns, climate resilience, biodiversity and the way land is managed.

Air Quality

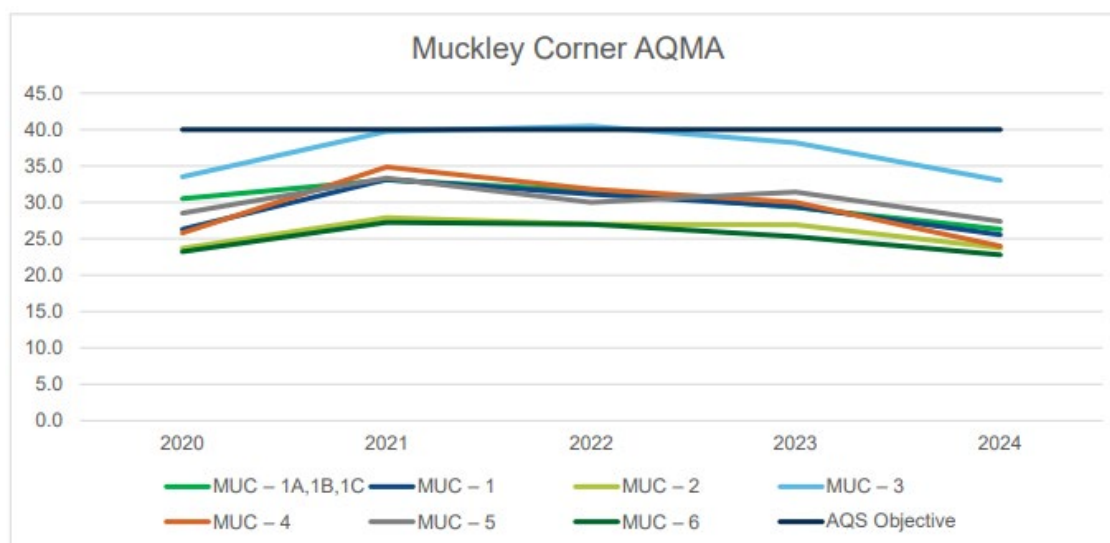
3.49 The most significant source of air pollution is from transport. The main pollutant of concern is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which comes from road traffic emissions and monitoring has been conducted to measure concentrations. There are also 30 NO₂ diffusion tubes placed at locations across the district, from which results of which are collected monthly [\[See reference 66\]](#).

3.50 Lichfield District contains one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) that was declared due to exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective. The AQMA (AQMA 1) was declared in August 2008 and encompasses the A5 Muckley Corner Roundabout (to the southwest of Lichfield), together with fourteen sensitive receptors (mainly residential dwellings) around this junction.

3.51 AQMA No.2 was declared in August 2016, due to exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective at six isolated locations along the A38, from the junction with the A5127 Burton Road on the edge of Lichfield to the district's northern boundary. However, AQMA No.2 was revoked in May 2025, as measured levels there were 10% or more below the NO₂ annual mean exceedance level over the previous five years [\[See reference 67\]](#).

3.52 **Figure 3.5** presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites MUC-1 to MUC-6 associated with AQMA 1 between years 2020 to 2024. There were no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2024 and the general trend of reduction experienced across the sites continues. Site MUC-3 has results consistently higher than others in the AQMA and across Lichfield District's other sites. However, in previous years, site MUC-3's results have been more than 10% below the annual mean objective when adjusted for distance to the nearest receptor. In 2024, this target was achieved without any such adjustment [\[See reference 68\]](#).

Figure 3.5: Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations – Muckley Corner AQMA [See reference 69]



3.53 In an effort to address air quality exceedances in Lichfield District, an Air Quality Action Plan in 2019 was published, which developed actions to improve air quality in the district, and specifically the AQMA's [See reference 70]. These included:

- Increase the volume of through traffic using M6 Toll; which was completed in 2020 and has seen a rise in numbers from 2019 to 2022 [See reference 71];
- Upgrading Trunk A-Roads to Expressways;
- Replacing older vehicles; and
- Education initiatives including website information updates.

3.54 Lichfield District Council is part of the Staffordshire Air Quality Steering Group, which co-ordinates efforts to monitor, manage, and improve air quality across Staffordshire. The group works collaboratively to develop and implement Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs), as well as to conduct annual reviews of air quality. Ongoing work relating to this cross-boundary evidence base includes projects such as Air Aware Staffordshire, which aims to reduce the impact of dirty air on people's health. Related initiatives include setting up travel networks and increasing confidence and awareness of electric vehicle use [See reference 72].

3.55 AQMA's are also present in the neighbouring authorities to Lichfield District:

- Birmingham City Council:
 - Birmingham AQMA – this encompasses the whole city.
- East Staffordshire Borough Council:
 - Burton-Upon-Trent AQMA No.1 – an area of Burton-Upon-Trent along Derby Rd, Derby St, part of Princess Way Roundabout, Horninglow St, Horninglow Rd, Bridge St, Wellington St, part of Borough Rd, part of Wellington St roundabout, part of Waterloo St and part of Byrkley St.
 - Burton-Upon-Trent AQMA No.2 – an area encompassing St Peters Bridge roundabout and part of St Peters St in Stapenhill in Burton-upon-Trent.
- North West Leicestershire District Council:
 - Castle Donington AQMA – an area encompassing the High Street and Bondgate area of Castle Donington. The northern extent of the AQMA has been amended to include the junction of Bondgate with The Spittal and the southern extent shall extend to the Moira Arms.
- Walsall Borough Council:
 - Walsall AQMA – this encompasses the whole Borough.

3.56 It is recognised that air quality does not respect administrative or political boundaries and that there is potential for the occurrence of cross boundary impacts on neighbouring AQMAs. Development in Lichfield District could also impact the AQMAs present in neighbouring authorities as a result of traffic growth, particularly the ones located within close proximity to Lichfield such as the CCDC AQMA 2 in Cannock Chase, which has been designated as a result of NO₂ levels or that are on the key commuting routes

3.57 In 2024, it was estimated that 5.2% of mortality among people aged 30 years and over in Lichfield District was attributable to particulate air pollution [See reference 73]. This was broadly in line with both the regional and England averages (5.3%) [See reference 74].

Water

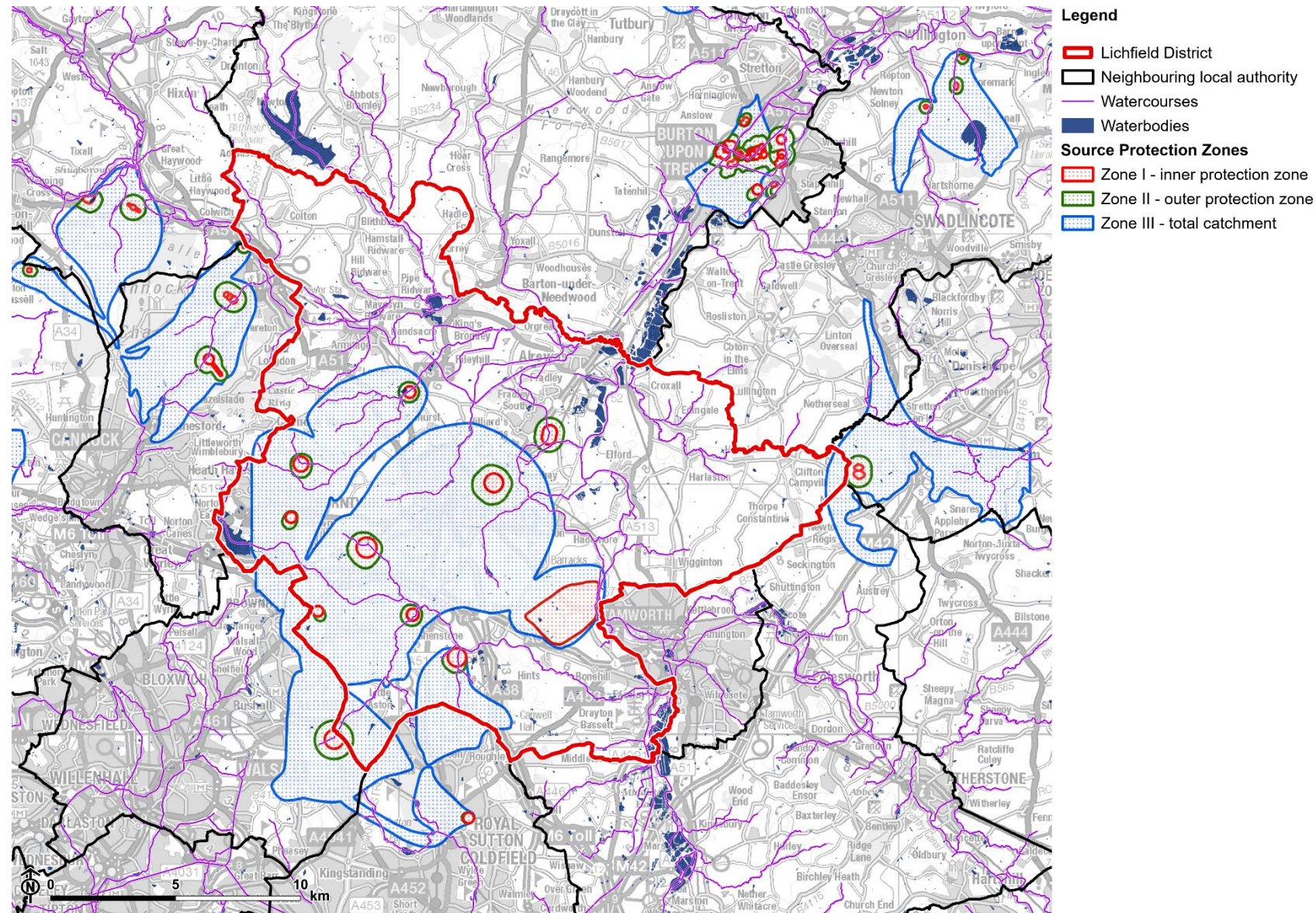
3.58 The main rivers in Lichfield District are the River Tame, River Trent and River Mease. Other watercourses with Lichfield include the Curborough Brook,

Leamonsley Brook, Pyford Brook, Bourne Brook, River Blythe, Mare Brook and Comberford Brook. This is presented in **Figure 3.6**.

3.59 Many of the district's watercourses are suffering from low water quality, with the overall water body quality having decreased in 2019, and all chemical quality conditions having failed in 2019. Under the Water Framework Directive water quality must not deteriorate, and should aim to be of at least 'good' quality [\[See reference 75\]](#).

3.60 Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites, and they provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality by constraining the proximity of an activity that can impact the quality of drinking water. A large area of the southwestern part of Lichfield District falls within SPZ III (Total Catchment), although there is also a small area within SPZ I (Inner Protection Zones), and SPZs II (Outer Protection Zones) also within this part of the district. The Total Catchment Zone refers to the complete area that feeds the water source and may extend across a considerable distance from the source. The Source Protection Zones are shown in **Figure 3.6**. The entirety of Lichfield is located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, which are defined as areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution [\[See reference 76\]](#).

Figure 3.6: Watercourses in Lichfield



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3.61 South Staffs Water provides for Lichfield's water supply and wastewater treatment. South Staffs Water published their revised draft Water Resources Management Plan in 2024. The Plan details how the predicted demands for water will be met over the next 25 years, identifying the main challenges as a growing population, a changing climate and an environmental need. The plan aims to:

- reduce total leakage on our network by 12 MI/day from the 2019/20 performance commitment level of 70.5 MI/day in 2024/25;
- encourage an average of more than 8,000 households a year to switch to a water meter over the lifetime of this WRMP;
- reduce baseline PCC by 1l/p/d by the end of the five year period from 2020 to 2025; and
- explore a bulk supply trade to provide additional resilience to our water supply system.

Flood risk

3.62 There are a number of areas within the district which are at risk of flooding, due to the rivers (River Mease, River Trent, River Tame and River Blithe) which flow through it, as shown in **Figure 3.7**.

3.63 The following areas have been identified through the Lichfield District Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as at risk of surface water flooding **[See reference 77]**:

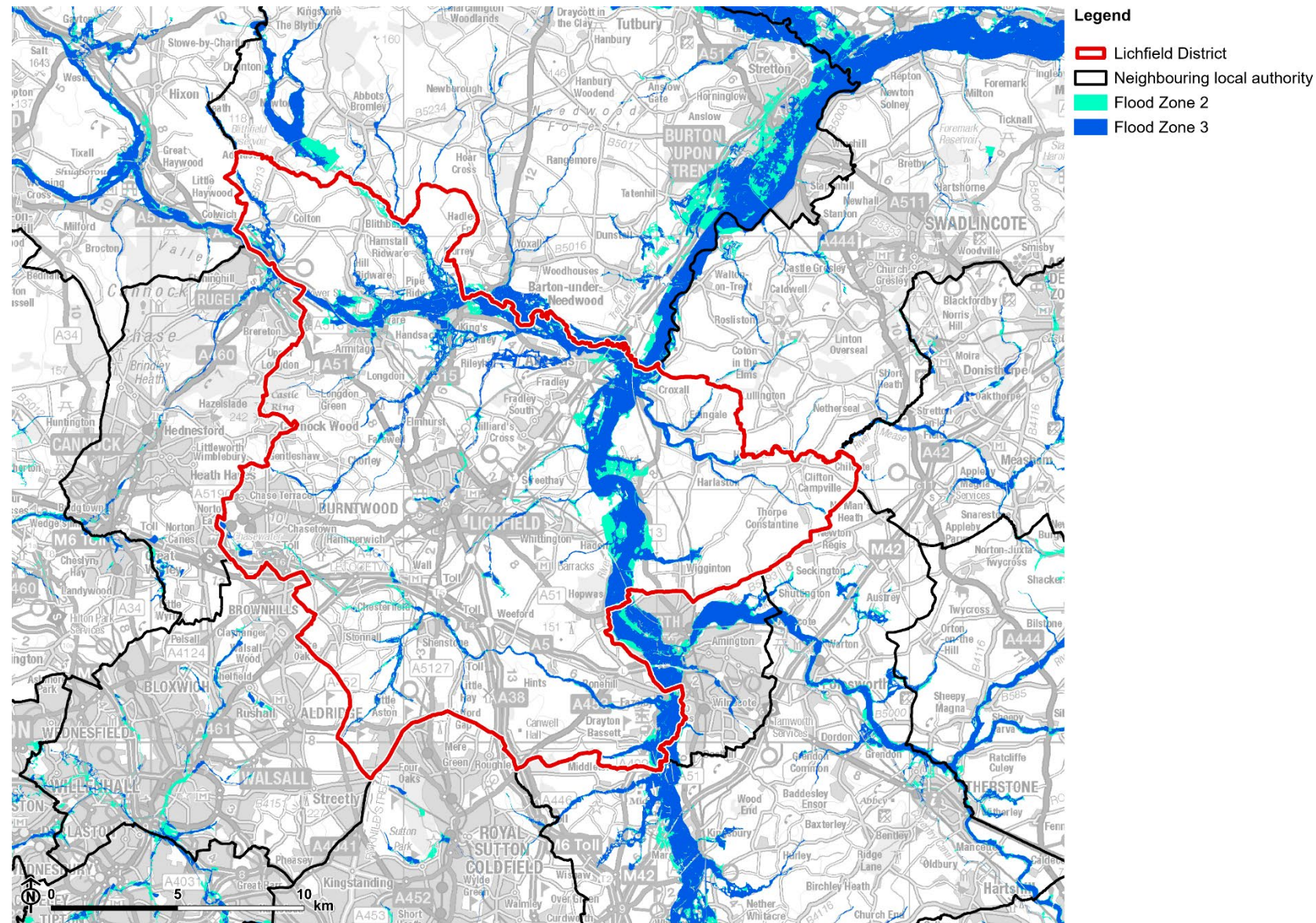
- Lichfield City;
- Armitage;
- Burntwood;
- Longdons;
- Little Aston;
- Mile Oak;
- Fazeley and;
- Whittington.

3.64 Lichfield District has experienced numerous historical surface water flooding events, primarily reported by Local Authority sources. These events are

mostly concentrated in the central part of the district, affecting properties, especially in Burntwood, Lichfield, Armitage/Handsacre, and Alrewas (though Alrewas is more affected by fluvial flooding). Burntwood, Lichfield, and Armitage/Handsacre see high-frequency floods every 1-2 years. Flood risk analysis by the Environment Agency highlighted Burntwood, Lichfield, Edingale, Shenstone, and Little Aston as key areas at risk, with Burntwood and Lichfield ranked 148 and 166 out of 219 in national cluster analysis [\[See reference 78\]](#).

3.65 The 2015 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy identified Lichfield as the urban area at the 4th highest risk of surface water flooding in Staffordshire, with 760 properties at risk [\[See reference 79\]](#). The 2024 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy continues to identify Lichfield as one of the top ten urban communities at risk of flooding in Staffordshire, indicating that flood risk remains a significant issue within the area [\[See reference 80\]](#).

Figure 3.7: Flood Risk



Soil

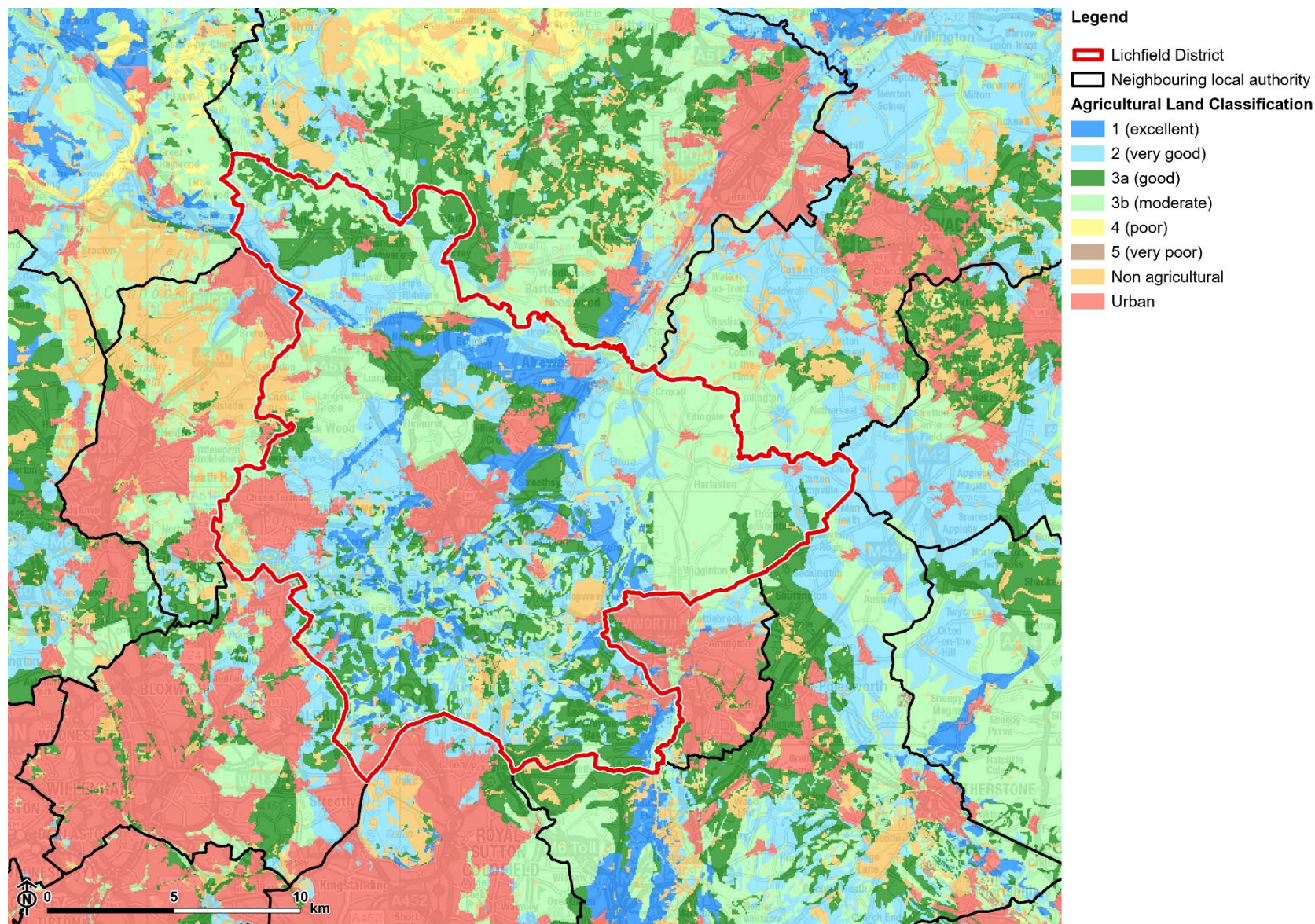
3.66 Soil provides a multitude of important functions and ecosystem services for society, including climate change mitigation (e.g. carbon retention) and adaptation (e.g. reducing flood risk) opportunities, food production and supporting biodiversity. However, soil is very often damaged, compacted and disposed of during construction and urban development.

3.67 The central southern part of Lichfield District sits on Triassic sandstones, which form a major aquifer. The soils here have high leaching potential, meaning they cannot effectively filter out pollutants. This allows pollutants and liquid discharges to quickly move through the soil to the underlying rock layers or shallow groundwater [\[See reference 81\]](#).

3.68 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system [\[See reference 82\]](#) provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations to agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are soil wetness, drought and erosion. These factors, together with interactions between them, form the basis for classifying land use into one of five Grades, where 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5 describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'predominantly in urban use'. Grade 3 can be further separated into grades 3a and 3b, Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered to be the best and most versatile agricultural land.

3.69 The Agricultural Land Classifications of the district are presented in **Figure 3.8** below. Grade 3b agricultural land is largely located to the east of the district, encompassing Harlaston, Edingale, and Croxall. There are small areas of Grade 3a dispersed through Lichfield district, although the largest amounts are concentrated to the northwest, around Ridware and Colton. Additionally, there are large areas of land classified as Grade 2, particularly around Lichfield City, and Burntwood, as well as near the outskirts of the district.

Figure 3.8: Agricultural Land Classification



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Contaminated land

3.70 For a site to meet the definition of contaminated land, a pollutant linkage must be established. A pollutant linkage consists of three parts: a source of contamination in, on or under the ground; a pathway by which the contaminant is causing significant harm or harm (or which presents a significant possibility of such harm being caused); and a receptor of a type specified in the regulations.

3.71 Lichfield District Council is required to maintain a Public Register of Contaminated Land under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. However, there are currently no entries on the Register as there is no contaminated land in the district.

Climatic factors (including climate change mitigation and adaptation)

3.72 This section sets out the baseline for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can help to reduce carbon emissions and promote resilience to climate change, which greatly influence the environment and human health, and are closely linked to transport, renewable energy, development patterns, and the design of development.

3.73 Climate change presents a global risk, with a range of different social, economic and environmental impacts that are likely to be felt within Lichfield District across numerous receptors. A key challenge in protecting the environment is to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change. The consequences include predictions of warmer, drier summers and wetter winters with more severe weather events all year as well resulting in higher sea levels and increased river flooding. A strong reaction is required from planning to ensure appropriate action can be taken to help species and habitats adapt and to enable the agricultural sector to continue to deliver diverse, affordable and good quality produce.

3.74 There has been a general trend towards warmer average temperatures in recent years with the most recent decade (2012–2021) being on average 0.2°C warmer than the 1991–2020 average and 1.0°C warmer than 1961–1990. All the top ten warmest years for the UK in the series from 1884 have occurred this century **[See reference 83]**.

3.75 Heavy rainfall and flooding events have been demonstrated to have increased potential to occur in the UK as the climate has generally become wetter. For example, for the most recent decade (2012–2021) UK summers have been on average 6% wetter than 1991–2020 and 15% wetter than 1961–1990 whilst winters have been 10%/26% wetter [\[See reference 84\]](#).

3.76 With 2022 recorded as the warmest year on record, July and August experienced especially dry months and drought conditions were declared across parts of England and Wales. In total, the rainfall for 2022 was 1,051 mm – this is 90% of the 1991–2020 decade average [\[See reference 85\]](#). England and Wales experienced the warmest spring on record in 2026 [\[See reference 86\]](#).

3.77 The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (2023) highlights that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are predicted to continue into 2030 making it likely that global warming will exceed 1.5°C, which in turn means that GHG emissions will become harder to maintain below 2°C. As a result of this, increased global warming will occur and elicit climate hazards such as increased incidences of heatwaves, droughts, increased global monsoon precipitation, tropical storms, very wet and very dry weather. Our natural land and ocean carbon sinks will become less effective, sea levels will rise, become more acidic and experience deoxygenation amongst other climate events [\[See reference 87\]](#). The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty involving 196 Parties. The overarching goal of this agreement is to limit global warming increasing to 1.5°C by the end of the century. Achieving this goal still requires a lot of action but since 2016 when the agreement was established, low – carbon solutions and new markets for climate resilience have been sparked.

3.78 Lichfield District Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, setting a commitment to becoming net-zero by 2035. In 2021, Lichfield District Council adopted its Organisational Carbon Reduction Plan, which describes the actions the council will take to reduce carbon emissions. It also includes actions relating to Lichfield’s governance, procurement and investment to improve the consideration given to the carbon impact of the decisions made [\[See reference 88\]](#).

Carbon dioxide emissions

3.79 The Government regularly publishes Local Authority, regional and national carbon dioxide emissions statistics. Emissions for Lichfield District between 2005 and 2023 have fallen from 9.0t per capita to 5.1t per capita [\[See reference 89\]](#). Per capita emissions in the plan area within the scope of

influence of the local authority show that emissions generally declined each year, with the exceptions of 2009-2010 and 2020-2021, when emissions increased. This is shown in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5: Carbon dioxide emissions estimates in Lichfield District [See reference 90]

Year	Total Emissions (kt)	Per Capita Emissions (t)
2005	862.1	9.0
2006	874.3	9.0
2007	875.9	8.9
2008	855.5	8.6
2009	783.0	7.8
2010	810.3	8.1
2011	767.4	7.6
2012	792.8	7.8
2013	790.1	7.8
2014	736.3	7.2
2015	717.8	7.0
2016	696.1	6.8
2017	688.2	6.7
2018	675.1	6.5
2019	647.3	6.2
2020	562.2	5.4
2021	623.5	5.8
2022	584.5	5.4
2023	562.2	5.1

3.80 In Lichfield District the main contributor of emissions was from domestic and transport. However, between 2005 and 2023, the levels of emissions from commercial and public sector have dropped significantly for the district, by

66.3% and 66.2% respectively. Emissions from the domestic sector have decreased by 48.8%. This is shown in **Table 3.6**.

Table 3.6: Changes in carbon dioxide emissions by sector for Lichfield District between 2005 and 2023 [See reference 91]

Source of emissions	2005	2023
Industry	84.5	50.9
Commercial	94.3	31.8
Public Sector	35.2	11.9
Domestic	254.5	130.2
Transport	352.3	301.1
Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry	19.9	18.5
Agriculture	21.3	17.7
Grand Total	862.1	562.2

3.81 In relation to neighbouring Local Authorities, Lichfield District demonstrates similar per capita carbon dioxide emissions to South Derbyshire and East Staffordshire, but displays much higher per capita carbon dioxide emissions compared to Cannock Chase, Walsall, Birmingham, and Tamworth, as presented in **Figure 3.9**.

Overall energy consumption

3.82 Table 3.7 below highlights the energy consumption for Lichfield District between 2005 to 2023 by type. With the exception of energy from bioenergy and wastes, the consumption of coal, petroleum, manufactured fuels, gas and electricity fell between 2005 and 2023 [See reference 92].

Table 3.7: Energy Consumption in Lichfield District by Type [See reference 93]

Energy Type	Energy Consumption in Ktoe (2005)	Energy Consumption in Ktoe (2023)
Coal	2.1	0.9
Manufactured Fuels	1.6	1.4
Petroleum	125.9	110.2
Gas	85.5	62.4
Electricity	39.2	35.7
Bioenergy and Wastes	2.3	11.7
Total	256.5	222.4

Renewable energy

3.83 Renewable energy is recognised as an important contributor to reducing reliance on fossil fuels and adapting to climate change.

3.84 Within the West Midlands, there were a total of 126,597 sites that were capable of generating renewable energy across wind, solar, wave, hydro and biomass renewable sources in 2024. This represents 7.4% of all the sites within the UK that generate renewable energy. In 2024, the West Midlands generated a total of 2,374.3 GWh (Gigawatt hours) of renewable energy. This is a 44% increase in renewable energy generation since 2013.

3.85 In 2024, a total of 2,278 photovoltaic panels and 8 onshore wind turbines were installed in Lichfield. This is a sizeable increase on 2014 when 1,053 photovoltaic panels and five onshore wind turbines were installed [See reference 94].

3.86 Lichfield's Organisational Carbon Reduction Plan highlights the importance of renewable energy, stating that the Council will support an increase in utilisation of renewable energies [\[See reference 95\]](#). The plan outlines a goal to transition the current fleet to entirely electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030. Additionally, Lichfield's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Report notes that as of 2020, the area had 9.5 MW of Solar PV and 2 MW of onshore wind power. The report sets a target for meeting 100% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2050 [\[See reference 96\]](#).

3.87 Further to this, seven planning permissions were approved for renewable energy generation installations in 2025 at small and domestic levels, in comparison to eight permissions approved in the previous monitoring year [\[See reference 97\]](#).

3.88 In order to offset carbon emissions, Lichfield initiated the Tiny Forest Programme, planting five forests in January 2022 across Lichfield District. These forests are located at St Michael Road, Mesnes Green, Burntwood Park, Redwood Park, and Eastern Avenue/Curborough Road [\[See reference 98\]](#).

Green Infrastructure

3.89 Green and blue infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural spaces – from parks, woodlands, meadows and street trees to rivers, canals, wetlands and sustainable drainage features – that connect landscapes, people and places. Planned as a network, these elements deliver multiple benefits at once: they support wildlife, make walking and cycling easier and more pleasant, help manage water and urban heat and enhance the distinctiveness and vitality of towns and villages.

3.90 Lichfield's green infrastructure network is an integral part of the district's character and quality of life. The landscape is gently undulating, with open arable fields, hedgerows, woodlands and scattered settlements – reflecting the Trent Valley's broad floodplain and the ancient farmlands around it. Key natural assets include the Cannock Chase National Landscape just over the district boundary, which exerts a strong recreational and ecological influence across the western edge of the District. Locally designated sites such as the River Mease SAC further highlight the district's biodiversity value [\[See reference 99\]](#).

3.91 Lichfield District is important for heathland habitats due to its proximity to notable areas including Cannock Chase SAC/SSSI, Sutton Park SSSI, and the lowland heaths around Highgate Common and Enville in South Staffordshire. The Nature Recovery Network Mapping document [\[See reference 100\]](#)

emphasises the need to enhance green infrastructure, particularly by improving connectivity between sites. By 2050, Lichfield District aims to restore the lowland heathland and associated habitats, which form a connection between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park. Furthermore, heathland management schemes have been secured at Muckley Corner (Wall Butts Common), Pipehill Crossroads (Pipe Hill Heathlands or Pipe Marsh Common) and Ironstone Road heathland. These schemes seek to increase as well as enhance green infrastructure links in relation to heathland across the district.

3.92 Lichfield District also seeks to enhance green infrastructure networks particularly with regard to Chasewater Country Park, a designated SSSI. Previously part of Defra's Environmental Stewardship scheme from 2007 to 2017, the scheme focused on maintaining and enhancing landscape quality and character of the County Park. Building on this foundation, an £18 million investment will be directed towards Cannock Chase and Chasewater Country Parks, as well as the 92-mile Staffordshire Way. Key projects include redeveloping visitor facilities at Marquis Drive to reflect Cannock Chase's National Landscape status, and upgrading the Innovation Centre and south shore area of Chasewater Country Park to improve the facilities for the local community and visitors [\[See reference 101\]](#).

3.93 Published in October 2025, Lichfield District Council's Green Infrastructure Study [\[See reference 102\]](#) maps the District's existing green infrastructure assets, identifies areas of greatest need and sets out where investment will bring the biggest returns for people, nature and place. The study states that it is vital that all new development across Lichfield District makes a meaningful contribution to the green infrastructure network. However, it identifies a number of strategic areas where investment in the green infrastructure network should be prioritised. These are places where investment in green infrastructure can deliver multiple benefits at once - for nature, climate resilience, health, access and placemaking. The study highlights ten priority areas:

- Priority Area 1: River Mease Nature Recovery Corridor
- Priority Area 2: Trent Valley Living Rivers Corridor
- Priority Area 3: Mercian Greenways – District wide blue-green grid
- Priority Area 4: Burntwood 'forest town' and Chasewater Fringe
- Priority Area 5: Lichfield City Green Loops – Waters, Parks and Stations
- Priority Area 6: Resilient Communities Programme – surface water and heat (Lichfield and Burntwood)

- Priority Area 7: 'Sponge' employment parks – Fradley and Burntwood retrofit.
- Priority Area 8: East-west woodland belt – the "Two Forests Link"
- Priority Area 9: Tame Valley blue-green corridor
- Priority Area 10: Tame Valley Southern Gateways – Tamworth Fringe Access & Nature Corridor

Material assets

3.94 This section sets out the baseline for the material assets topic for the plan area. This includes information about its geology and mineral resources, waste (as a resource), economic growth and transport connections. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can encourage the preservation and sustainable use of geological and mineral assets, sustainable waste management processes, appropriate levels of economic growth and modal shift towards public and active modes of transport. Sustainable transport patterns will also need to be considered in the context of improving access to jobs, services and education which would have benefits for health, air quality, climate change and social inclusion.

Geology and minerals

3.95 The Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015 - 2030) [\[See reference 103\]](#) estimates the quantity of minerals across the county, and plans for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates over the coming years to help meet housing and infrastructure needs.

3.96 The assessment identifies that the aggregate supply to the administrative area comprises various minerals, including:

- Aggregate minerals such as sand, gravel, and limestone;
- Industrial minerals, including cement minerals (limestone, clay, shale, and anhydrite) and brick clay;
- Hydrocarbons, specifically methane gas;
- Sandstone, which encompasses building stone and silica sand; and
- Opencast coal.

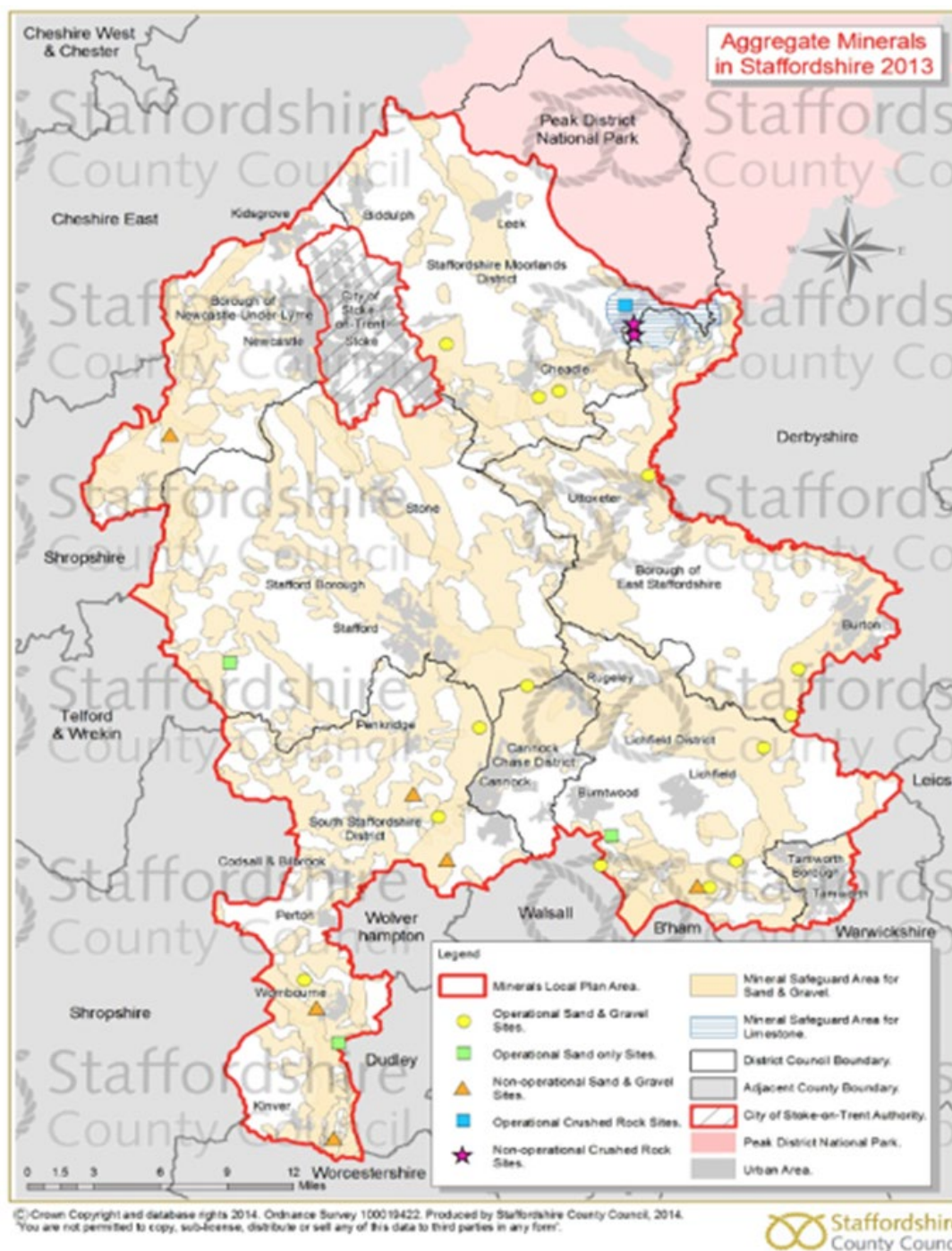
3.97 Figure 3.10 illustrates the distribution of aggregate minerals in Staffordshire. Sand and gravel resources are abundant throughout the county. As of 2013, there were 23 permitted quarries, 17 of which were operational, with five of those in Lichfield (one exclusively producing building sands). Limestone is extracted from a single area in the northeast of the county but not in Lichfield. These aggregate minerals supply both local markets, including Stoke-on-Trent, and external markets, particularly in the West Midlands conurbation. Currently, all aggregates are transported by road, though there is potential to re-use a rail line for crushed rock from the Cauldon Low Quarry.

3.98 In relation to sand and gravel, during the period 2004 to 2013, the average sales of sand and gravel were 5.0 million tonnes per annum, within a range from 3.7 million tonnes to 6.8 million tonnes. Based on this 10-year average figure, current permitted reserves would be depleted by 2026. To maintain the capacity to produce at least 5.0 million tonnes per annum requires additional reserves to be permitted during the next 10 years.

3.99 Limestone reserves used for crushed rock are more than sufficient to meet the anticipated requirements for crushed rock aggregate over the Plan period.

3.100 There are no industrial minerals quarries in Lichfield District (i.e. brick works or clay works).

Figure 3.10: Aggregate minerals in Staffordshire 2013 [See reference 104]



Waste

3.101 Responsibility for the management of municipal waste in Staffordshire is divided between the waste collection authorities and the waste disposal authorities. The duties and responsibilities for each authority are set out within the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Lichfield District Council is a waste

collection authority while Staffordshire County Council is a waste disposal authority.

3.102 The Waste Local Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (2010 - 2026) [See reference 105] stipulates that in relation to landfill and void capacity, there are 21 permitted landfill sites, 10 of which are currently operational. In relation to Lichfield, there are two materials recycling facilities. There are organic waste treatment facilities throughout Staffordshire, although Lichfield currently uses facilities in South Staffordshire (Shareshill) and at Derbyshire (Etwall) [See reference 106].

3.103 In Lichfield District, about 40,122 tonnes of household waste was recorded in 2024/25 – down from 40,546 tonnes in 2023/24. Of this, about 17,379 tonnes were sent for reuse, recycling or composting – meaning the area had a recycling rate of 43.3%. this is a decrease of 3,0% from the previous year, but higher than the national rate of 42.0% [See reference 107].

Economy and Employment

3.104 In February 2023, Lichfield's economy was projected to be the UK's joint fourth-fastest growing location between 2024 and 2026, with an annual average growth rate of 2.4% driven by strong performances in the Retail and Real Estate sectors [See reference 108].

3.105 Between April 2025 and March 2026, 82.6% of the population of Lichfield was economically active. 80.1% of the population was in employment, but the percentage that was unemployment was not reported. The reported figure for those in employment for the West Midlands for the same period was 73.6%, and for Great Britain was 75.5% [See reference 109].

3.106 Lichfield District has a diverse economic profile with several key sectors contributing to local employment. Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles and Human health and social work activities contribute to largest proportion (12.2%) of employee jobs respectively, followed by Transportation and Storage and Manufacturing (9.2% respectively). Manufacturing is also a significant part of the district's economy, comprising 9.2% of employee jobs [See reference 110].

3.107 In 2024, 69.4% of total employees were full-time in Lichfield District, and 30.6% were part-time. Full-time employment is slightly higher than the regional average of 69%, and national average of 69.2%. The proportion of part-time

workers is lower than the regional average of 31.0% and slightly lower than the national average of 30.8%.

3.108 In 2025, gross weekly pay in Lichfield District by place of work was around £663.50, which is much lower than the average for the West Midlands was £734.00, and the national average, £766.60. However, earnings by place of residents were much higher in Lichfield for the same year. In Lichfield the weekly figure was £862.40, compared to £731.00 for the West Midlands and £766.60 for Great Britain [\[See reference 111\]](#). This likely means that a significant number of workers migrate from Lichfield District to higher salaried jobs elsewhere.

3.109 As of 2025, there were 4,885 businesses based in Lichfield. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of businesses decreased by 205, representing a 4% decrease. Significant declines were observed in the Professional, Scientific & Technical (-110 businesses), Transportation & Storage (-80 businesses), and Administrative and Support Services sectors (-65 businesses).

3.110 A variety of programs operate across Lichfield District and Staffordshire to support local businesses and promote sustainable job creation. A Business Support Hub was opened at the District Council House in 2022, offering space and resources for small businesses. Additionally, significant developments and key projects are underway, such as the Burntwood Town Deal, which aims to enhance Burntwood's shopping potential, health services, and transport infrastructure [\[See reference 112\]](#).

3.111 The Lichfield and Tamworth Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) [\[See reference 113\]](#) provides an assessment of housing and employment land needs and requirements in Lichfield and Tamworth and covers the period from 2022 to 2043. The HEDNA identifies a varied range of future employment land needs across Lichfield District.

3.112 For office development, assessments suggest a figure of around 3 ha of office land over the plan period and an industrial land requirement of approximately 125 ha. Analysis of past trends indicates that around 65% of this industrial land need would relate to strategic employment development, equating to around 81 ha. The future ability of Lichfield to accommodate this scale of strategic development is likely to depend on the availability of suitable sites with close access to the strategic road network. This level of strategic need aligns with the recommendations of the West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study (WMSESS) 2024 [\[See reference 114\]](#).

3.113 The remaining local industrial need should be met through sites that can effectively support local business growth, ideally located where there is access to local labour supply and good connectivity to the wider road network.

3.114 In total, this results in an indicative overall employment land need of around 128 ha, comprising 3 ha of office land and 125 ha of industrial land, of which 81 ha is considered strategic in nature.

3.115 The vacancy rates in Lichfield city centre have remained relatively stable over the past nine years, as presented in **Table 3.8**. As of June 2025, the vacancy rate in Lichfield city centre was 6.51% and in Burntwood town centre was 7.58%. This consistency in occupancy rates reflects a certain resilience in the local economy and suggests a steady demand for commercial spaces. However, despite this stability, the current vacancy rate in Lichfield city centre is still a concern. At 6.51%, it indicates a notable portion of unoccupied commercial properties, which can impact the vibrancy and attractiveness of the area for businesses and consumers alike. In contrast, Burntwood Town Centre faces a more pronounced challenge, with a higher vacancy rate of 7.58%, signalling greater economic strain [\[See reference 115\]](#). The 2025 regional vacancy rate for the West Midlands is not available, so a direct comparison between Lichfield City and Burntwood Town with the regional rate cannot be made. The most recently available regional figure (2024), was 6.5%, indicating that Lichfield’s vacancy rate was broadly aligned with regional trends, while Burntwood’s high vacancy rate suggests greater economic strain [\[See reference 116\]](#).

Table 3.8: Lichfield District town centre vacancy rates (2017 – 2025) [\[See reference 117\]](#)

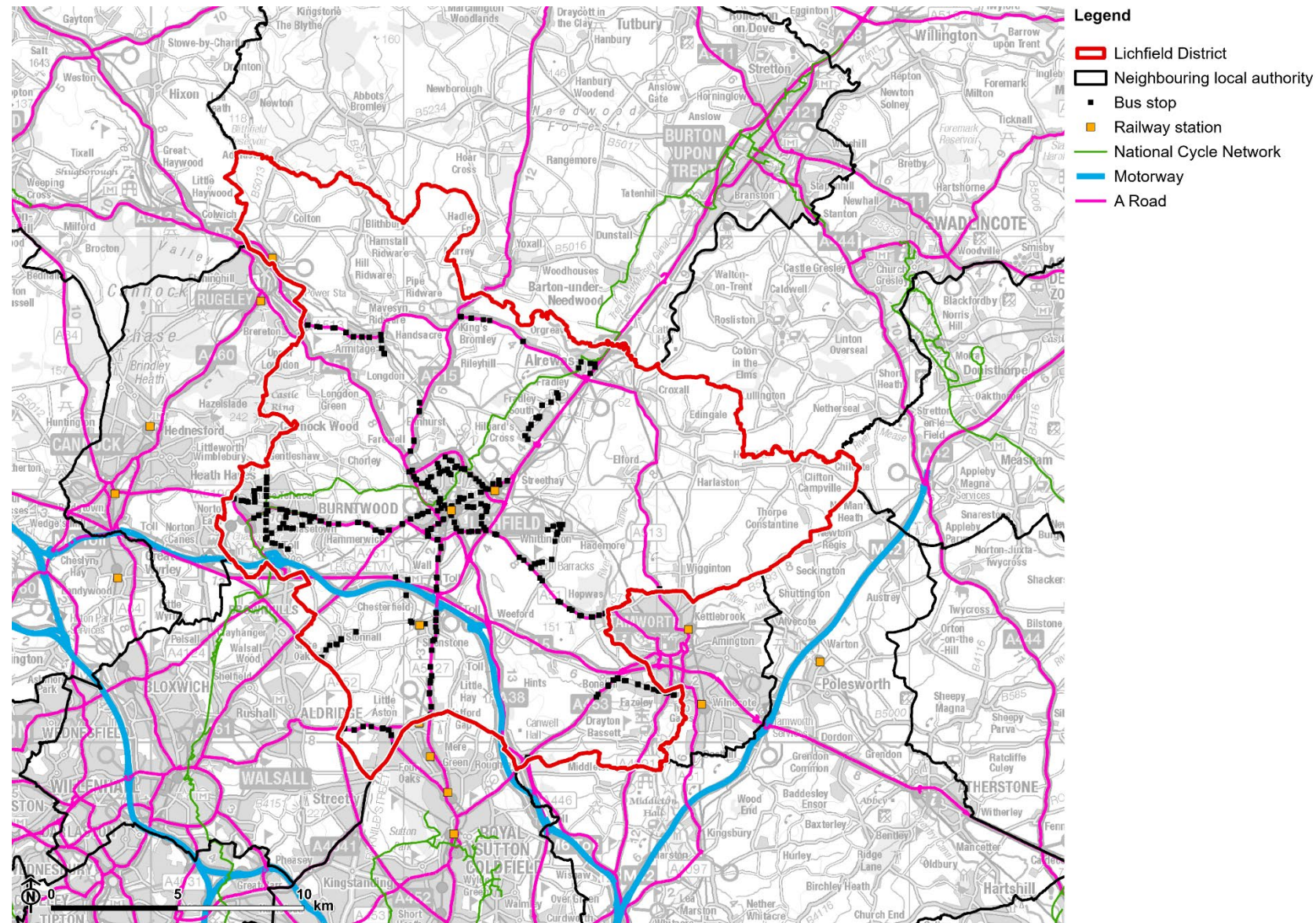
Months	Vacancy Rate (Lichfield City) (%)	Vacancy Rate (Burntwood Town) (%)
July 2017	6.64	9.23
July 2018	5.55	6.06
March 2019	6.21	4.54
January 2020	4.00	2.94
April 2021	8.00	5.00
March 2022	7.00	6.00
July 2023	6.13	10.14
May 2024	6.51	8.45

Months	Vacancy Rate (Lichfield City) (%)	Vacancy Rate (Burntwood Town) (%)
June 2025	5.06	7.58

Transport and Accessibility

3.116 Lichfield District has good connectivity to the national transport network, including the M6 Toll, A38 (T), A5148 (T), and A5 (T) passing through its boundaries, as displayed in **Figure 3.11**. These routes are important on a national scale, enhancing the district's appeal to employers and supporting economic growth in key employment hubs such as Lichfield City, Burntwood, and Fradley. Moreover, these major routes play an important role in connecting the district's outlying communities to essential local services and products available within Lichfield city centre and Burntwood town centre, as well as neighbouring centres like Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth, and Rugeley. Proximity to services and facilities within the district is displayed in **Figure 3.12**.

Figure 3.11: Transport Network

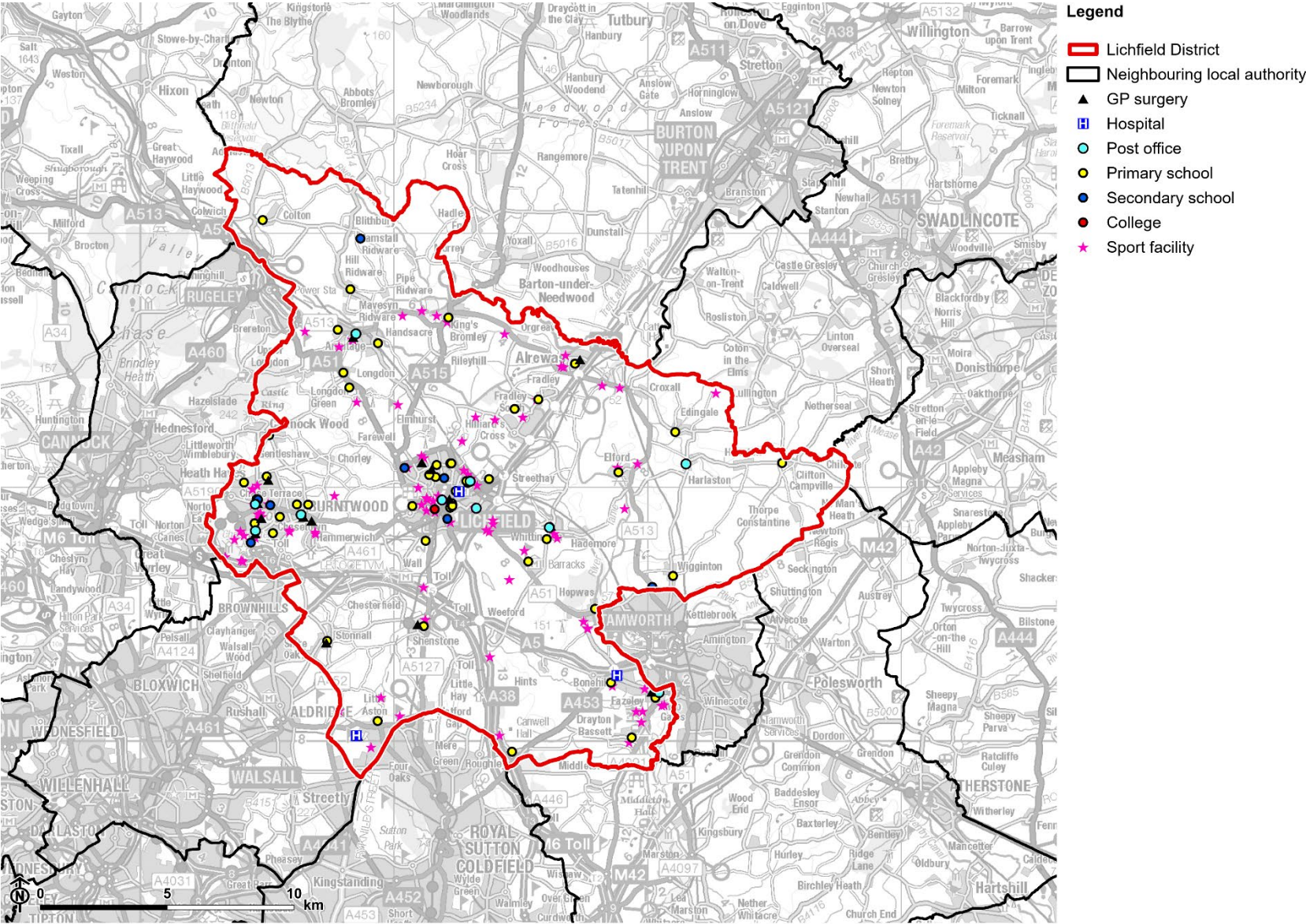


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Figure 3.12: Services and Facilities in Lichfield



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3.117 High Speed 2 (HS2), a government-backed scheme to develop a high-speed rail line between Euston and Birmingham, has been partially cancelled. While Phases 2a and 2b of the project have been cancelled, allowing the government to "reinvest" £36 billion in 'Network North' transport projects, Phase 1 will proceed as planned. This phase includes new stations at Old Oak Common, Birmingham Interchange, and Birmingham Curzon Street, along with a link to the existing West Coast Main Line near Lichfield in Staffordshire [See reference 118]. In May 2026, the Government announced that HS2 will take longer to deliver and cost more than previously set out. The expected cost of delivering HS2 is now in the range of £87.7 to 102.7 billion. The first services are expected to run from Old Oak Common in west London to Birmingham Curzon Street between May 2036 and October 2039. It can now be estimated that the full scheme, including both south to Euston and Handsacre Junction to the north, will open between May 2040 and December 2043 [See reference 119].

3.118 No recent data is available about the breakdown of all journeys made in Lichfield District in terms of the modes used (this was last recorded in the 2011 Census). However, the travel to work data available is considered to be representative of the situation for trips made in the district. The high rate of commuting to work by car, reflects the more rural nature of the district and the dependency of residents in more rural locations on higher order centres for access to jobs and services and facilities.

3.119 Travel to work data taken from the 2021 Census (**Figure 3.13**) indicates that 1.0% of the resident population of Lichfield District travel to work by bus, which is much lower than the national average of 4.3% and regional average of 4.2%. The commuting figures (**Figure 3.14**) show that 27.2% of the resident population choose to work in the district, with many travelling less than 10km, and there has been a noticeable shift towards working from home during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 31.6% of the resident population in employment in Lichfield District working mainly from home, much higher than the regional average of 25.7% [See reference 120].

3.120 However, as shown in **Figure 3.15**, 22.7% of the resident population in Lichfield District travel between 10km and 30km to work, significantly higher than the national average of 14.4%. This indicates that many residents commute longer distances for employment. The district's strong connectivity to neighbouring authorities, as illustrated in **Figure 3.16**, facilitates these longer commutes.

Figure 3.13: Method of travel to workplace in Lichfield District [See reference 121]

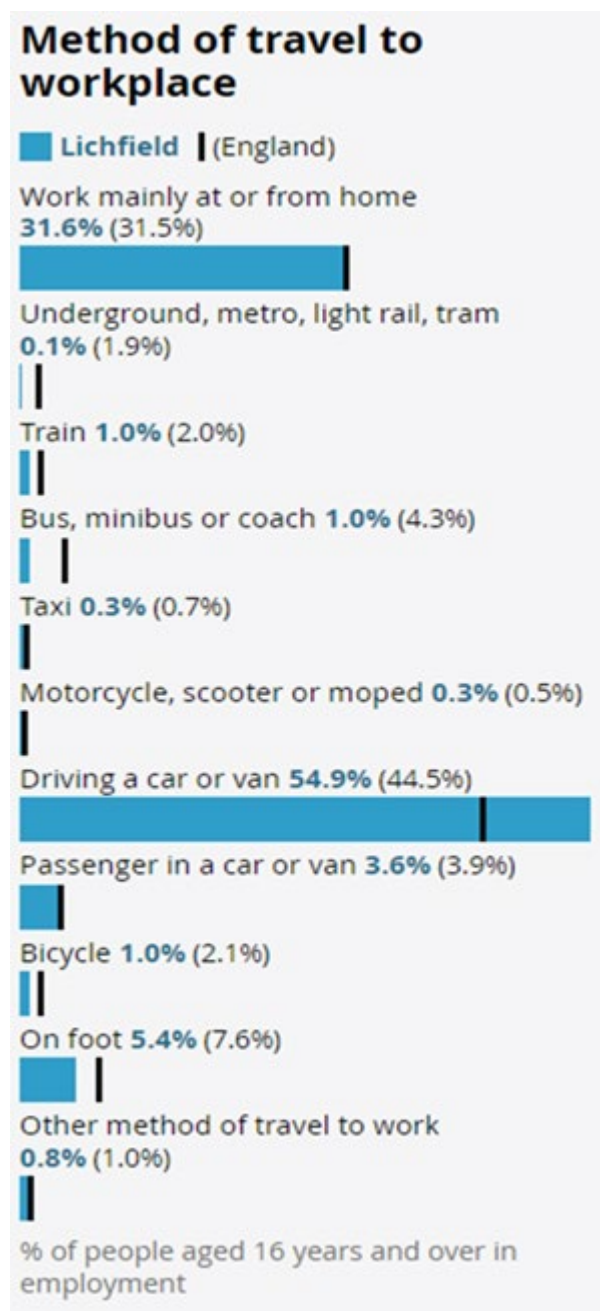
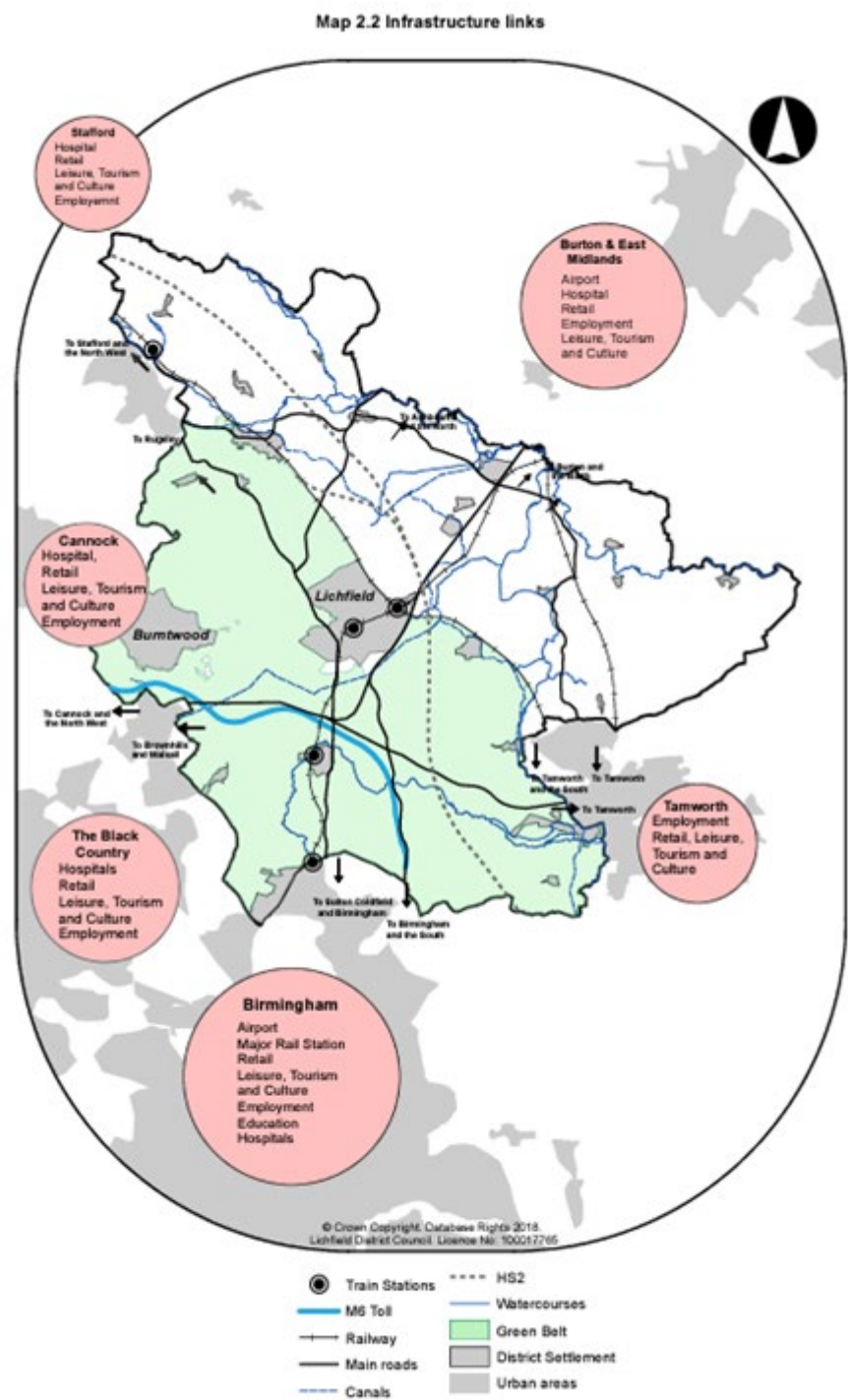


Figure 3.14: Distance travelled to work in Lichfield District [See reference 122]



Figure 3.15: Infrastructure links Lichfield District [See reference 123]



Cultural heritage

3.121 This section sets out the baseline for the plan area's historic environment. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can help to conserve and enhance the historic environment by reinforcing local identity, sense of place and cultural value, in turn contributing to regeneration, tourism, improving deprivation and community well-being.

3.122 Lichfield District has a range of unique assets that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the area. These assets include:

- Conservation Areas
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Listed buildings
- Scheduled Monuments

3.123 Some heritage assets, non-designated heritage assets, archaeological sites, historic buildings, parks, formal gardens or battlefields, are considered to be of national importance. Non-designated heritage assets include a list of local heritage assets that do not meet the strict criteria for national designation but are of local importance.

3.124 Lichfield District contains 767 Listed Buildings, 22 Conservation Areas, 15 Scheduled Monuments and one Registered Park [\[See reference 124\]](#). These are presented in **Figure 3.16**. According to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, the heritage assets listed below are at risk within Lichfield District [\[See reference 125\]](#):

- Church of St John the Baptist
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: D – Slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented.
- Manor House
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: A – Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed.
- Church Tower north of Church of St John

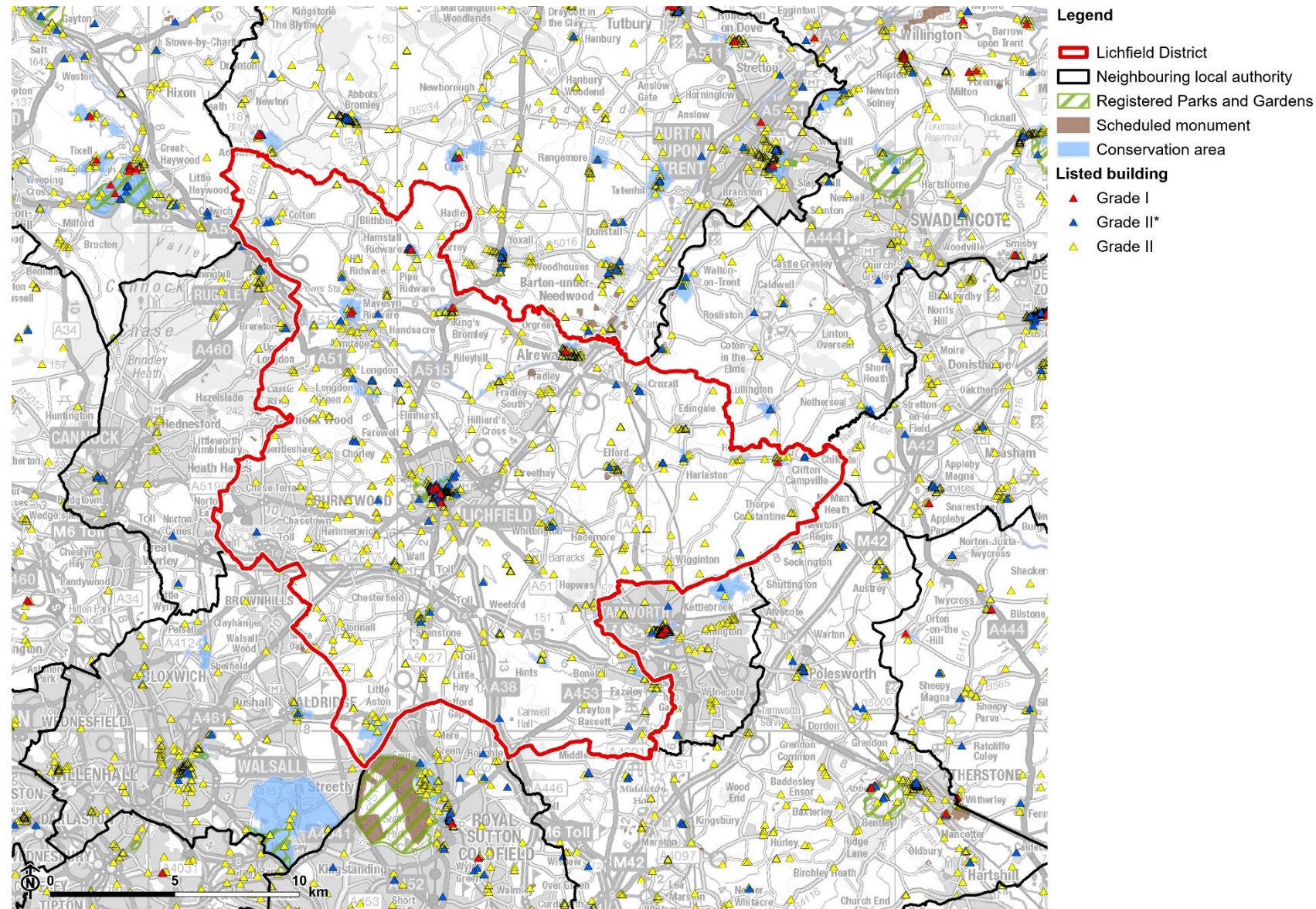
- Type: Conservation Area
- Condition: D – Slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented.
- Engine House at Sandfields Pumping Station
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- Church of St Michael and All Angels
 - Type: Grade I Listed Building
 - Condition: D – Slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented.
- Chetwynd Bridge
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: D – Slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented.
- Armitage URC
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- Stonehouse Cottages
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- Remains of Bellamour Old Hall
 - Type: Grade II* Listed Building
 - Condition: A – Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed.
- 116 to 120 Lichfield Street
 - Type: Conservation Area
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- 122 Lichfield Street

- Type: Conservation Area
- Condition: A – Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed.
- L –shaped out buildings, Bucks Head Farm
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: A – Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed.
- Kings Bromley Manor Garden walls and pavilion,
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: A – Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed.
- Tithe Barn
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: E – Under repair or in fair to good repair, but no user identified; or under threat of vacancy with no obvious new user (applicable only to buildings capable of beneficial use).
- 4 Bore Street
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- Davidson House
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- Seedymill Farmhouse
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.
- Swinfen Hall
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building

- Conditon: D – Slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented.
- The Cottage, 24 Stafford Road
 - Type: Grade II Listed Building
 - Condition: C – Slow decay; no solution agreed.

3.125 The Historic Environment Character Assessment [\[See reference 126\]](#) undertaken for Lichfield identifies 13 Historic Environment Character Areas (HECAs) within the district. The report provides a broad overview of the historic and archaeological dimensions of Lichfield District. The assessment includes a scoring system to evaluate the impact of medium to large scale housing development upon each of the zones. The areas to the west of Lichfield and to the north and west of Alrewas scored quite highly and any development in these zones would need to consider the historic environment. The highest scores for around Burntwood were largely concentrated to the north of the settlement and to the east, particularly around the Edial/Woodhouses area and including Gentleshaw Common and the squatter enclosures on its eastern side. At Tamworth the higher scores were located to the west and north of the town, particularly associated with the small settlements of Statfold and Wigginton. Within Fazeley the area around the Bonehill Mill complex also scored highly, whilst the areas to the west of Fazeley and Bonehill have a relatively low scoring.

Figure 3.16: Heritage Assets



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Landscape

3.126 This section sets out the baseline for the plan area's landscape and townscape. The SEA will consider how the Local Plan can help to protect and enhance high-quality landscapes and townscapes by shaping distinct and attractive places, which can help to enhance biodiversity and climate resilience, improve quality of life, recreation opportunities and the setting of heritage assets.

3.127 Lichfield District covers an area of 331.3 km². The principal centres of population are the city of Lichfield, a cathedral city located in the centre of the district, and Burntwood is a former mining town in the west of the district. The remaining areas are mainly pastoral, heathland, and farmland.

3.128 The landscape of Lichfield District is shaped by underlying variations in geology and the presence of two major river valleys: the River Trent and River Tame. To the north and north-east of the district lies the Trent Valley washlands, and significant levels of quality agricultural land that make up the Mease lowlands. The city of Lichfield is set within an area of rich farmland on good soils with a long and established cultural history. The city lies in a natural bowl containing three different types of landscape, the most extensive being the Ancient Settled Farmlands to the north and west of the city, merging into a more open Village Farmlands landscape to the east and an area of Sandstone Estatelands to the south.

3.129 Along the western edge of the district, including Burntwood, the landscape has been extensively disturbed and worked for coal resulting in a post- industrial setting of restored scrubby heathlands within a Coalfield Farmlands landscape. This area contrasts sharply with the adjoining Cannock Chase National Landscape [See reference 127], and with the ancient woodlands as well as farmland occurring to the south-east of Lichfield [See reference 128]. The National Landscape passes within the district to the north of Burntwood.

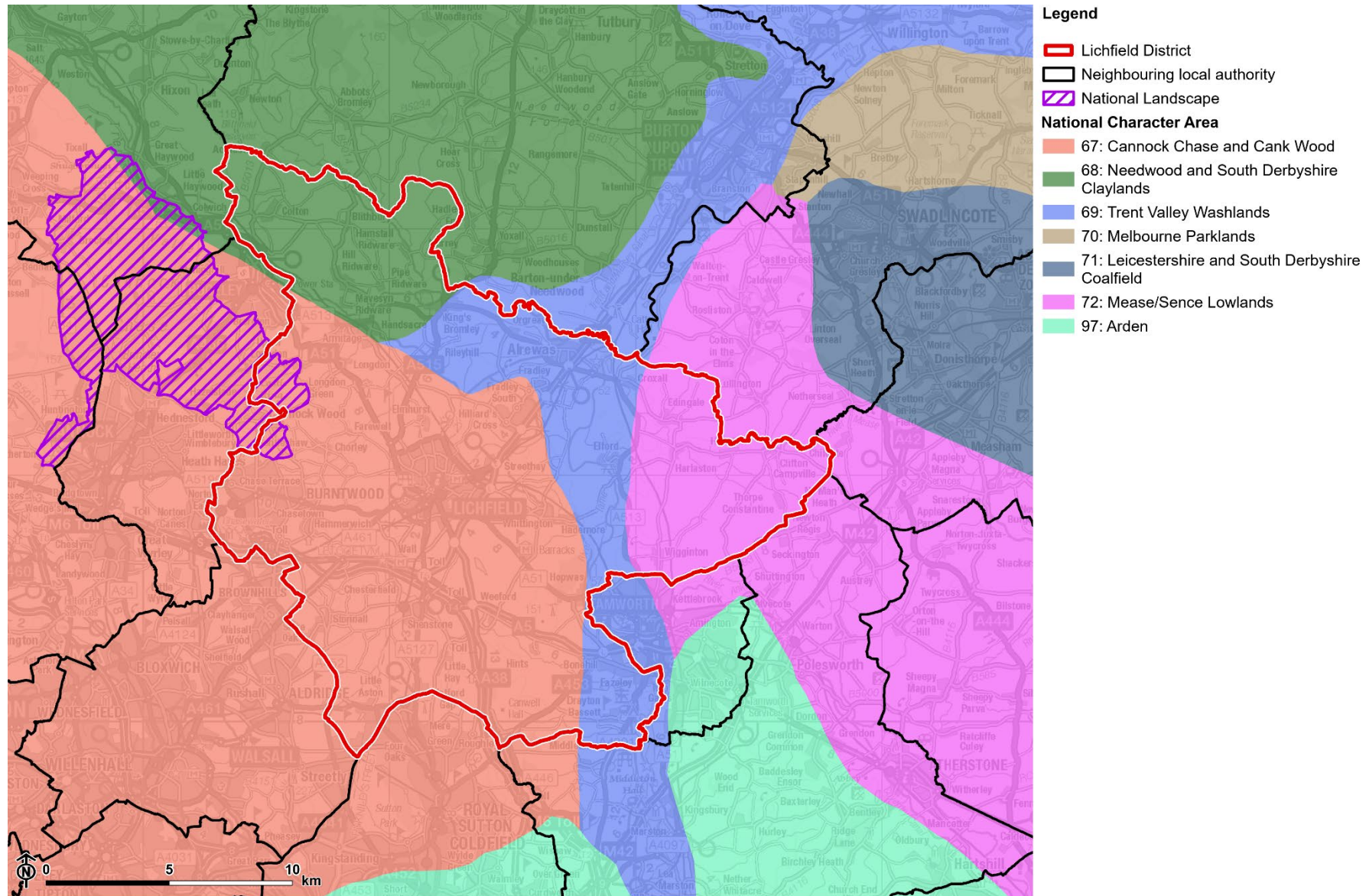
3.130 Lichfield District falls within four National Character Areas (NCAs) [See reference 129], as shown in **Figure 3.17**. These are:

- (67) Cannock Chase and Cank Wood – this NCA principally coincides with the historical hunting forest of Cannock Chase, with major remnants surviving within the Cannock Chase National Landscape.

- (68) Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands – this NCA is predominately a rolling plateau that slopes from the southern edge of the Peak District to the valley of the River Trent in the south-west. Part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and The National Forest are situated on the eastern side of the NCA. To the north and west respectively are found small parts of the Peak District National Park and Cannock Chase National Landscape.
- (69) Trent Valley Washlands – this NCA comprises the river flood plain corridors of the middle reaches of the River Trent's catchment in the heart of England. It is a distinctly narrow, linear and low-lying landscape, often clearly delineated at its edges by higher ground, and it is largely comprised of the flat flood plains and gravel terraces of the rivers.
- (72) Mease/ Sence Lowlands – this NCA comprises a gently rolling agricultural landscape centred around the rivers Mease, Sence and Anker. The NCA contains the River Mease SAC, which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – and has 139 ha of nationally designated SSSI, including the Ashby Canal SSSI.

3.131 The NCA profiles indicate the drivers for change as well as opportunities for environmental improvement. Typical drivers of change include development pressure, noise and light pollution, recreational pressure, changes in farming practices and intensive agriculture, mineral extraction, declines in biodiversity, loss or neglect of historic features, pressure on the water environment, and climate change.

Figure 3.17: Landscape Character

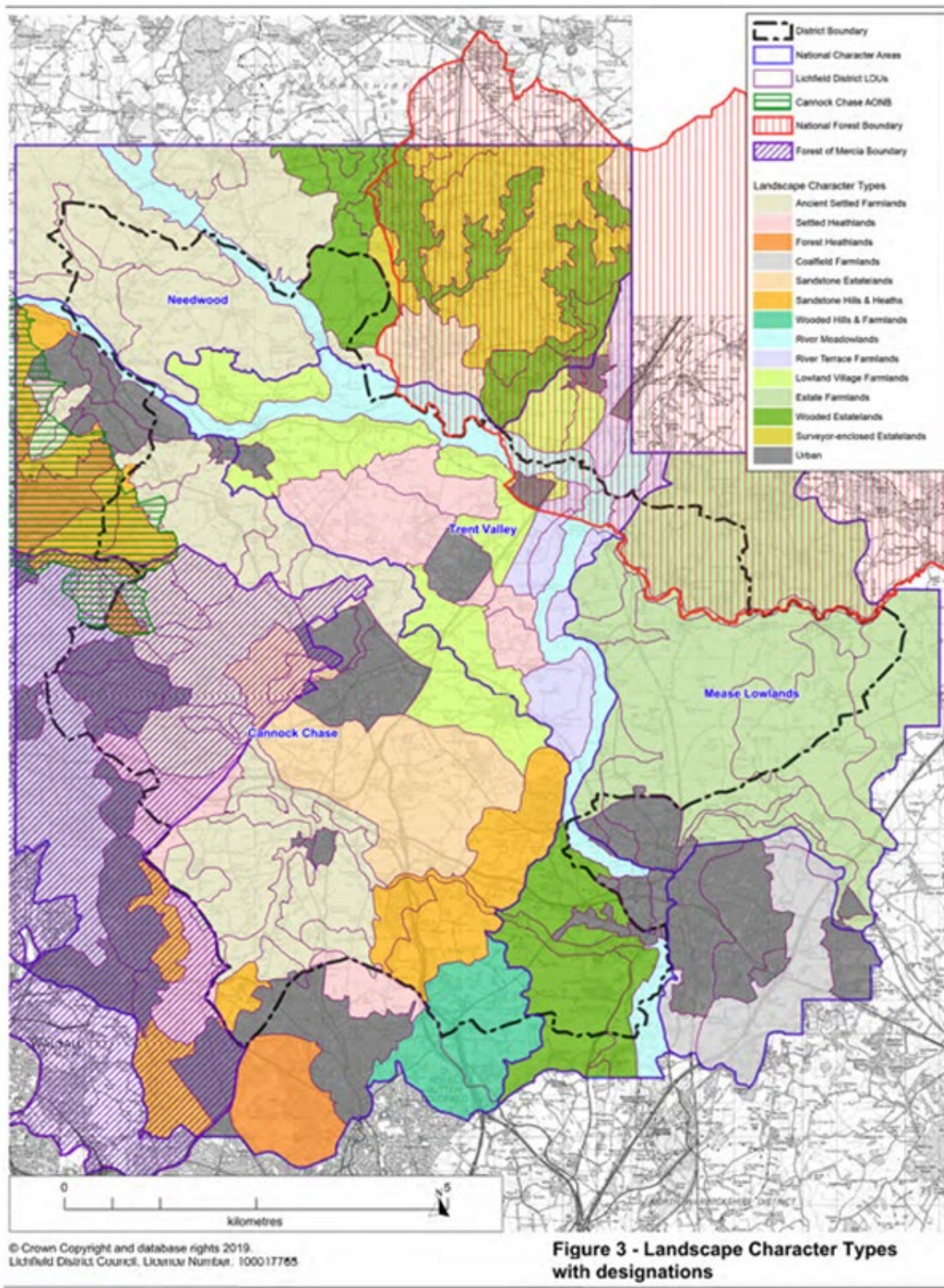


Created by LUC - Figure 3.17: Landscape Character 13/08/2026
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3.132 The Lichfield District Landscape Character Assessment [\[See reference 130\]](#) identifies eight Landscape Character Types within the district, as shown in **Figure 3.18**. The Landscape Character Assessment provides a summary of forces of change for the landscape character of the district. These include:

- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are a particular feature of the ancient settled farmlands around Lichfield. Lack of management of traditional field boundaries, however, or their replacement with wire fences, is often a problem;
- Over abstraction of water from rivers for public use, or agricultural irrigation, can alter river ecology and this can be exacerbated by an increase in pesticides, or run off pollution, which exist at greater concentrations when over abstraction is occurring;
- Extraction industries such as mineral quarrying or sand extraction have a significant impact on landscape and landscape character. The Transforming the Trent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme has been successful in securing funding to conserve and restore land within the Trent and Tame valleys affected by gravel extraction.

Figure 3.18: Landscape Character Types in Lichfield District [See reference 131]



Difficulties and data limitations

3.133 The SEA Regulations, Schedule 2(8) require the Environmental Report to include:

- "...a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information".

3.134 At this stage, given the content and purpose of the SEA Scoping Report, it is considered appropriate to note the following data limitations which were identified as the report was prepared:

- Some data is out of date as it was prepared to support the adopted or withdrawn Local Plan and will be updated as part of the evidence base for the new plan, but is not yet available.
- No recent data was available about the breakdown of all journeys made in Lichfield District in terms of the modes used (this was last recorded in the 2011 Census).
- GIS data was not available on existing services and facilities outside of but close to Lichfield.
- Some information is only available at the county or regional scale.

3.135 Where data limitations have been identified, if relevant updates sources become available at a later stage of the SEA process, they will be used to update the baseline information informing the assessment work.

Chapter 4

Environmental and sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Local Plan

4.1 Analysis of the baseline information in **Chapter 3** has enabled a number of key sustainability issues facing Lichfield District to be identified. Identification of the environmental and sustainability issues and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the new Local Plan is not implemented help to meet Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations which requires information to be provided on:

- "the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment [*baseline information presented in Chapter 3*] and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan" [*summarised in this chapter*]
- "any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan" [*interpreted as 'key sustainability issues' and summarised in this chapter*]

4.2 Environmental and sustainability issues for Lichfield were previously identified through the SA in 2018 for the adopted Local Plan. These issues were considered as a starting point for the SA work undertaken for the new Local Plan up to July 2024. That work involved a full review and update of the issues in light of the updated policy review and baseline information.

4.3 The preparation of this SEA Scoping Report for the new Local Plan has involved a further review of the environmental and sustainability issues to reflect the latest policy context and available baseline information. The current set of key sustainability issues for Lichfield is presented below.

4.4 The requirement of the SEA Regulations for consideration to be given to the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area (i.e. Lichfield District) if the new Local Plan was not to be implemented, is also presented in relation to each of the environmental and sustainability issues.

4.5 In general, the current trends in relation to the various environmental and sustainability issues affecting Lichfield would be more likely to continue without the implementation of the new Local Plan, although the policies in the adopted Lichfield Local Plan would still go some way towards addressing many of the issues. In most cases, the new Local Plan offers opportunities to directly and

Chapter 4 Environmental and sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Local Plan

strongly affect existing trends in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan which reflects the requirements of the NPPF.

4.6 Environmental and sustainability issues in Lichfield are set out below:

- Lichfield District **contains and is in close proximity to a number of both designated and non-designated natural habitats and biodiversity**. This includes those designated for their national (SSSIs and Ancient Woodland) and international importance (one Special Area of Conservation). Not all SSSIs in the district are in favourable condition. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity for new development to come forward at the most appropriate locations in order to avoid detrimental impacts on biodiversity assets, and in some cases enhance biodiversity through retention and creation of greenspaces within developments.
- Lichfield has **an ageing population**, with a higher number of older people, particularly over 50. This can result in **pressure on the capacity of local services and facilities**, such as GP surgeries and hospitals. This is particularly concerning given the district's relatively low score of 87.7 in the 2021 "Access to services" subdomain in relation to the Heath Index, highlighting the difficulty residents face in reaching essential services such as employment centres, schools, healthcare providers, and retail centres via public transport or walking. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to improve access to and increase availability of such services and facilities. Without the new Local Plan there is likely to be an increasing strain on services and facilities which do not meet local demand.
- There is a **need for affordable housing** in Lichfield District because at present, the average price of dwellings is higher than the regional and national average. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of affordable housing as well as support the provision of a more appropriate mix of new homes to meet the needs of a growing population. Without the new Local Plan local house prices in Lichfield District are likely to continue to increase, exacerbating the affordability crisis for residents, especially older people.
- The number of people who have an RQF Level 4 qualification (Degree, Higher Degree, NVQ Level 4-5, Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma) and above is higher than the regional and national average. The new Local Plan presents the opportunity to continue to improve the **accessibility and provision of high-quality education and training facilities** in the district. Without the new Local Plan, educational and training improvements may not be realised.

Chapter 4 Environmental and sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Local Plan

- Although Lichfield District is not generally deprived, **pockets of deprivation** exist across the district, with area in the wards of Chadsmead and Curborough falling within IMD's 20% of most deprived areas nationally. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to reduce the level of deprivation in areas through appropriately planned growth and regeneration. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, deprivation is less likely to be effectively tackled.
- The most significant source of air pollution in the district is from transport. **The main pollutant of concern is NO₂ which comes from road traffic emissions. The district contains one AQMA that was declared due to exceedances of the annual mean NO₂.** Without the new Local Plan it is less likely that air pollution associated with vehicular travel will be suitably addressed. The new Plan provides the opportunity to address this issue by promoting sustainable travel and ensuring that the potential air quality impacts associated with new development are assessed and managed accordingly.
- Many of the district's watercourses are suffering from **low water quality**, with the overall water body quality having decreased in 2019, and all chemical quality conditions having failed in 2019. The River Mease SAC is currently assessed as being in unfavourable condition, due to high phosphate levels, which threaten its ecological health and biodiversity. Without the new Local Plan, water quality is likely to continue declining, further harming ecosystems and biodiversity, and posing significant health risks to the community. The new Plan offers an opportunity to implement targeted measures to improve water quality.
- There are a number of areas within Lichfield District which are at **risk of flooding** (particularly in the north and east of the district). Without the new Local Plan, flood risk will continue to affect the district through increased and higher intensity flooding. The new Plan offers an opportunity to plan strategically to locate new development in areas at lower risk from flooding, therefore reducing the number of properties and economic assets at risk from flooding.
- The majority of the district is **comprised of Grade 3b agricultural land, with large pockets of Grade 2 agricultural land**. Without the new Local Plan, there is a risk that these valuable agricultural lands will be developed, limiting continued agricultural activities and food production. The new Plan offers an opportunity to protect these high-quality agricultural lands from development, ensuring the preservation of land for

Chapter 4 Environmental and sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Local Plan

farming, food production, and maintaining the agricultural heritage of the district.

- Hotter, drier summers are expected as a result of ongoing and **accelerating climate change**, which have the potential for adverse effects on human health and the natural environment. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to update the district's approach to managing the effects of the changing climate and associated weather events, particularly in the design of new buildings, whole developments and green infrastructure. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, this issue is likely to be less well addressed.
- Although Lichfield District has a **higher average recycling rate** than nationally, a growing population could place increased pressure on waste management facilities and there will be a requirement to meet these growing needs. The new Local Plan provides some opportunity to adopt up to date policies seeking to minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling (although this is mostly achieved via the Waste Local Plan). It will also provide an opportunity to deliver adequate space in new developments for waste facilities capable of accommodating recyclable waste.
- Weekly pay by place of work in Lichfield District is much lower than regionally and nationally. However, weekly pay by place of residence in Lichfield District is higher than the regional and national figures. This highlights that a significant number of **workers regularly commute from the district to higher salaried jobs elsewhere**. The new Local Plan provides the opportunity to attract higher-paying employers to the area, by supporting investment and the creation and maintenance of suitable employment areas. This is likely to support improved local job opportunities and increase weekly pay. Without the new Local Plan, these improvements may not occur, and the trend of workers out-commuting for better-paying jobs will likely continue.
- There has been a decline in shopping consumer patterns, with **high vacancy rates present in Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre**. The new Local Plan provides the opportunity to revitalise these commercial areas by encouraging new businesses. Without the new Local Plan, these areas may continue to suffer from high vacancy rates and reduced consumer activity.
- Lichfield District benefits from some public transport provision. However, due to the district being predominantly rural, **many residents are dependent on the private car** to access services, facilities and leisure

Chapter 4 Environmental and sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Local Plan

activities. The new Local Plan presents an opportunity to address the issue of car dependency by promoting sustainable development locations, and prioritising areas that are well-connected by public transport and active travel infrastructure. Without the new Local Plan, development is more likely to come forward at less connected locations and locations where there is limited potential to support improvements for sustainable transport.

- Lichfield District has a number of heritage assets (including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens) with **19 assets on the Heritage at Risk Register**. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to draw on the most up to date evidence to ensure that new development is sited and designed so as to conserve, enhance and encourage enjoyment of the historic environment as well as improve accessibility and interpretation of it. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, the historic environment is less likely to be protected and enhanced and the condition of assets may worsen.
- Lichfield District falls within four National Character Areas (NCAs) and **part of the Cannock Chase National Landscape extends into the northwestern boundary** of the district. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to take into account the most recent landscape-related evidence and to ensure that sensitive landscapes and townscapes are protected and enhanced, with development being located and designed to take account of the variation in character and sensitivity across Lichfield District. Without the new Local Plan, this issue is less likely to be addressed as it is more likely that piecemeal and ad-hoc developments would come forward.

Chapter 5

SEA framework and method

5.1 The development of a set of SEA objectives (known as the SEA framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental and sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.

5.2 The proposed SEA framework for the Local Plan is presented below. The SEA framework comprises a series of SEA objectives against which the environmental and sustainability effects of the Local Plan will be assessed. The assessment of the Local Plan options, policies and site allocations against these SEA objectives will be guided in part by the assessment questions accompanying each objective. The questions included in the framework are not exhaustive, and some may be more relevant to certain elements of the plan than others.

5.3 All of the topics specifically required by the SEA Regulations (set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations) are clearly addressed by the headline SEA objectives, as listed under each SEA objective below.

5.4 The framework set out below was originally presented in the SA Scoping Report prepared by LUC up to July 2024 and subject to consultation with the three statutory consultees and surrounding local authorities in summer 2024. The previous SA framework for the adopted Lichfield Local Plan was used as a starting point to inform the preparation of the July 2024 SA framework, although it was amended and updated to take into account the analysis of international, national and local policy objectives, the baseline information, and the key sustainability issues identified for Lichfield at that time.

5.5 No changes are considered necessary to the framework (now called an SEA framework) in light of the review of the relevant policy context and baseline information undertaken as part of the update work for this SEA Scoping report.

SEA Objective 1: Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities

Assessment questions

- Will it [i.e. the Local Plan option, policy, site allocation] improve accessibility to health care for existing residents (including older residents) and provide additional facilities for new residents?
- Will it support a healthy lifestyle including opportunities for recreational/physical activity?
- Will it provide new accessible green space?
- Will it ensure that there is access to greenspace, countryside, public spaces, rights of way and play areas for people to enjoy / improve public health and encourage healthier lifestyles?
- Is the site within close proximity to key services (e.g. schools, food shop, public transport, health centres etc.)?

Relevant SEA topics

- Human Health

SEA Objective 2: Provide decent, affordable and safe homes for all

Assessment questions

- Will it provide sufficient housing to meet existing and future housing need?
- Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups?
- Will it reduce the number of households waiting for accommodation or accepted as homeless?
- Will it meet the needs of the travelling community and show people?

Relevant SEA topics

- Population

- Human health

SEA Objective 3: Reduce poverty and inequality and promote social inclusion

Assessment questions

- Will it integrate new neighbourhoods with existing neighbourhoods?
- Will it promote diversity?

Relevant SEA topics

- Population

SEA Objective 4: Reduce the need to travel and encourage active travel and sustainable transport

Assessment questions

- Will it promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and reduce dependence on the private car?
- Is the site location well-related to jobs and services to reduce travel distances?
- Does the site location encourage the use of existing sustainable modes of travel?
- Will it help develop walking, cycling rail and bus networks to enable residents access to employment, services and facilities?
- Will it reduce the overall impact on traffic sensitive areas?

Relevant SEA Topics

- Climatic factors
- Air
- Human health

SEA Objective 5: Improve opportunities for prosperity and economic growth

Assessment questions

- Will it encourage higher skilled economic sectors in the district?
- Will it encourage new employment that is consistent with local needs?
- Will it encourage growth of existing businesses?
- Will it encourage small businesses to grow?
- Will it encourage rural diversification?

Relevant SEA topics

- Population
- Material assets

SEA Objective 6: Enhance the vitality and viability of city, town and village centres within the district

Assessment questions

- Will it improve existing facilities within Lichfield City and Burntwood Town Centre?
- Will it protect and enhance the ability of our key rural settlements to meet the day to day needs arising with these settlements and from the wider rural areas they serve?
- Will it support and protect neighbourhood centres serving the local needs of our urban communities?

Relevant SEA topics

- Population
- Human health
- Material assets

SEA Objective 7: Increase participation and improve access to education, training and lifelong learning

Assessment questions

- Will it increase educational attainment amongst young people?
- Will it reduce the number of working age residents who have no, or lower level qualifications?

Relevant SEA topics

- Population
- Material assets

SEA Objective 8: Protect and enhance air quality

Assessment questions

- Will it improve air quality?
- Will it help to achieve the objectives of the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's)?
- Is the site within or directly connected to road that passes through an AQMA?
- Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants?
- Will promote more sustainable transport and reduce the need to travel?
- Will it contain measures which will help to reduce congestion?

Relevant SEA topics

- Air

SEA Objective 9: Protect and enhance soils

Assessment questions

- Will it result in the loss of land that has not previously been developed?
- Will it result in the loss of quality agricultural land?
- Is the site capable of supporting higher density development and/or a mix of uses?
- Does the site allow for the re-use of existing buildings?
- Will it reduce the amount of derelict degraded and underused land within the district?
- Will it ensure contaminated land is remediated where appropriate?

Relevant SEA topics

- Soil

SEA Objective 10: Protect and enhance water resources

Assessment questions

- Will it protect and improve water quality?
- Is the site close to the River Mease SAC and could it have an effect on its water quality?
- Will it ensure there is sufficient waste water treatment capacity to accommodate the new development?
- Will it promote development which would avoid water pollution due to contaminated runoff from development?
- Will it minimise inappropriate development in Source Protection Zones?
- Will the policy/option support the efficient use of water?
- Will it ensure that there is sufficient water resource available to support new development?

Relevant SEA topics

- Water

SEA Objective 11: Reduce and manage flood risk

Assessment questions

- Is the site located outside an area at risk from flooding?
- Will there be an opportunity for flood risk reduction?
- Will it limit the amount of development in areas of high flood risk and areas which may increase flood risk elsewhere, taking into account the impacts of climate change?
- Will it promote the use of SuDS and other flood resilient design?

Relevant SEA topics

- Water
- Climatic features

SEA Objective 12: Minimise waste and increase resource efficiency

Assessment questions

- Will it reduce household and commercial waste?
- Will it maximise the recovery, re-use and recycling of waste?
- Will it reduce the proportion of waste sent to landfill?
- Will it encourage the prudent use of mineral resources?
- Will it safeguard Lichfield's material resources for future use?
- Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources?

Relevant SEA topics

- Material assets

SEA Objective 13: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Assessment questions

- Will it reduce the causes of climate change?
- Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions from domestic, commercial and industrial sources?
- Will it ensure new development is low carbon / carbon neutral?
- Will it promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport and reduce dependence on the private car?
- Will it increase energy efficiency?
- Will it increase the use and development of renewable energy?
- Will it promote the use of nature-based solutions (e.g. woodland creation and peatland restoration) to contribute towards climate change mitigation?

Relevant SEA topics

- Climatic factors

SEA Objective 14: Adapt to climate change

Assessment questions

- Will it ensure new developments and residents are able to withstand extreme weather events (e.g. heatwaves, drought, intense storms)?
- Will it encourage more green infrastructure including street trees, green roofs and walls in urban areas?
- Will it promote the use of nature-based solutions (e.g. wetland restoration) to contribute towards climate change adaptation?
- Will it support the delivery of climate adaptation services through green infrastructure?

Relevant SEA topics

- Climatic features

SEA Objective 15: Maintain, restore, enhance and avoid impacts where possible on biodiversity and geodiversity

Assessment questions

- Will it conserve protected / priority species?
- Will it protect and enhance designated sites of nature conservation and/or geological importance?
- Will it encourage the development of new biodiversity assets and ecological linkages to existing habitats within/alongside development including the delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies?
- Will it provide opportunities for people to access wildlife and open green spaces?

Relevant SEA topics

- Biodiversity
- Geodiversity
- Flora and Fauna

SEA Objective 16: Protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings

Assessment questions

- Will it result in the loss of historic landscape features?
- Will it safeguard sites of archaeological importance (scheduled or unscheduled) and their setting?
- Will it preserve and enhance buildings, structures, conservation areas and their setting and contribute to the district's heritage?
- Will it improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage, historic sites, areas and buildings?
- Will it offer opportunities to bring heritage assets back into active use?
- Does it safeguard historic views and valuable skylines of settlements?

Relevant SEA topics

- Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage

SEA Objective 17: Protect and enhance landscape and townscape character and quality

Assessment questions

- Will it safeguard and enhance the character of sensitive landscapes and local distinctiveness and identity?
- Will it help to further the purposes of the National Character Areas?
- Will it promote sensitive design in development?
- Will it achieve high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm sensitive to the locality?
- Does it value and protect diverse and locally distinctive settlement and townscape character?

Relevant SEA topics

- Landscape

Use of the SEA framework

5.6 The SEA will need to be undertaken in close collaboration with the Lichfield District Council officers responsible for drafting the new Local Plan in order to fully integrate the SEA process with the production of the plan.

5.7 Strategic policies and site allocations, including the reasonable alternative options, will be assessed against the SEA objectives in the SEA framework, with symbols being attributed to each policy or site option to indicate their likely effects on each SEA objective. Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark will be added to the relevant symbol (e.g. +? or -?) and the symbol will be colour coded in line with the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (e.g. green, yellow, orange, etc.).

5.8 The likely effects of options need to be determined and their significance assessed, which inevitably requires a series of judgments to be made. The

assessment will attempt to differentiate between the most significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of the symbols. The dividing line in making a decision about the significance of an effect is often quite small. Where either (++) or (--) will be used to distinguish significant effects from more minor effects (+ or -) this will be because the effect of an option or policy on the SEA objective in question is considered to be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect taking into account other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

5.9 The findings of the SEA will be presented using colour coded symbols showing the likely effect of each option against each of the SEA objectives along with a concise justification for the effect identified. It may be possible to group the assessment of strategic and development management policies by theme. The key to the SEA symbols is shown in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: SEA framework symbols and colour coding

Symbol and colour code	Description
++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
++/--	Mixed significant positive and negative effects likely
+/-	Mixed minor positive and negative effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	Negligible effect likely
?	Uncertain effect

5.10 In relation to the assessment of the site options, detailed sets of site assessment criteria have been developed and will be applied during the next stage of the SA. The criteria will relate specifically to each type of site option (i.e. residential, employment, mixed use etc.). The site assessment criteria will set out clear parameters within which certain SEA effects would be identified, based on factors such as the distance of site options from features such as biodiversity designations, public transport links and areas of high landscape sensitivity. The criteria, where required, may be updated at future stages on the SEA to draw on the most recent evidence sources. The site assessment criteria can be applied through the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data where appropriate.

5.11 In determining the significance of the effects of the options for potential inclusion in the new Local Plan it will be important to bear in mind the relationship of the Local Plan with the other documents in the planning system such as the NPPF and other national policy approaches, and regulatory requirements, as these may provide additional safeguards or mitigation of potentially significant adverse effects.

Reasonable Alternatives

5.12 The SEA must assess not only the preferred options for inclusion in the Local Plan but also ‘reasonable alternatives’ to these options. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to assessment. Part (b) of Regulation 12(2) of the SEA Regulations notes that reasonable alternatives will take into account the objectives of the plan, as well as its geographical scope. Therefore, alternatives that do not meet the objectives of national policy, local objectives or are outside the plan area are unlikely to be reasonable.

5.13 Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the SEA can help to identify where there may be other ‘reasonable alternatives’ to the options being considered for a plan.

5.14 The SEA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified by the SEA for each option, such that it is not possible to rank them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national policy will also be taken into account. Future iterations of the SEA will describe how the assessment of

options has been taken into consideration when developing the new Lichfield Local Plan.

Chapter 6

Consultation and next steps

6.1 In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, and the updated requirement for new Local Plans to only be subject to SEA and no longer SA, the views of the three statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) and neighbouring authorities are being sought again in relation to the scope and level of detail included in this SEA Scoping Report.

6.2 Given the cross-cutting nature of many of the SEA topics, which cover not only environmental but social and economic issues as well, the baseline information and key issues identified have only been subject to relatively minor updates from what was originally presented in the SA Scoping consultation undertaken in summer 2024, and the SEA framework of objectives have not been changed.

6.3 Consultees are requested to consider the following:

- Whether the scope of the SEA is appropriate as set out considering the role of the Lichfield Local Plan to help meet and manage Lichfield's needs.
- Whether there are any additional international or national plans, policies or programmes that are relevant to the SEA that should be included (see **Chapter 2** and **Appendix A**).
- Whether the baseline information provided is robust and comprehensive and provides a suitable baseline for the SEA of the new Local Plan (see **Chapter 3**).
- Whether there are any additional environmental and sustainability issues relevant to the new Local Plan that should be highlighted (see **Chapter 4**).
- Whether the SEA framework (see **Chapter 5**) is appropriate and includes a suitable set of SEA objectives for assessing the effects of the options included within the new Local Plan as well as reasonable alternatives.

6.4 Responses from consultees will be reviewed and appropriate amendments made to the information contained in the Scoping Report, including the baseline information, policy context and SEA framework where necessary. These amendments will be presented in the SEA Report produced during the next stage of the SEA.

6.5 As the Local Plan is drafted, it will be subject to SEA using the SEA method and framework presented in **Chapter 5**. A full SEA Report (incorporating the next stages of the SEA process) will then be produced and made available to other stakeholders and the general public for wider consultation alongside the emerging Local Plan. This will include any amendments to the Scoping work arising from the consultation with statutory bodies on this report.

LUC

August 2026

Appendix A

Review of plans, policies and programmes

International plans and programmes of most relevance for the SEA of the Local Plan

A.1 2022 Convention on Biological Diversity [\[See reference 132\]](#) – COP15 Kunming-Montreal adopted the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030.

A.2 The Glasgow Pact (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021) - Nations adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact [\[See reference 133\]](#). The package of decisions consists of a range of agreed items, including strengthened efforts to build resilience to climate change, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to provide the necessary finance for both. Nations reaffirmed their duty to fulfil the pledge of providing \$100 billion annually from developed to developing countries. And they collectively agreed to work to reduce the gap between existing emission reduction plans and what is required to reduce emissions. They also agreed to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels.

A.3 United Nations Declaration on Forests and Land Use (COP26 Declaration) (2021) [\[See reference 134\]](#): international commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.

A.4 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) [\[See reference 135\]](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

A.5 The United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the ‘Aarhus Convention’) (1998) [\[See reference 136\]](#) establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective.

A.6 The United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Declaration) (2002) [\[See reference 137\]](#) sets a broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

A.7 The United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015) [\[See reference 138\]](#) is an international agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

A.8 The International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) (1976) [\[See reference 139\]](#) is an international agreement with the aim of conserving and managing the use of wetlands and their resources.

A.9 The European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979) [\[See reference 140\]](#) aims to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species).

A.10 The International Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) [\[See reference 141\]](#) is an international commitment to biodiversity conservation through national strategies and action plans.

A.11 The European Habitats Directive (1992) [\[See reference 142\]](#), together with the Birds Directive, sets the standard for nature conservation across the EU and enables all 27 Member States to work together within the same strong legislative framework in order to protect the most vulnerable species and habitat types across their entire natural range within the EU. It also established the Natura 2000 network.

A.12 The European Birds Directive (2009) [\[See reference 143\]](#) requires the maintenance of all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state in the European territory at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements.

A.13 The United Nations Declaration on Forests (New York Declaration) (2014) [\[See reference 144\]](#) sets out international commitment to cut natural forest loss by 2020 and end loss by 2030.

A.14 The Valletta Treaty (1992) **[See reference 145]**, formerly the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revisited), aims to protect the European archaeological heritage “as a source of European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study”.

A.15 The United Nations (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention (1972) **[See reference 146]** promotes co-operation among nations to protect heritage around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations.

A.16 The European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) **[See reference 147]** defines ‘architectural heritage’ and requires that the signatories maintain an inventory of it and take statutory measures to ensure its protection. Conservation policies are also required to be integrated into planning systems and other spheres of government influence as per the text of the convention.

A.17 The European Landscape Convention (2002) **[See reference 148]** promotes landscape protection, management and planning. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape.

National plans and programmes (beyond the NPPF) of most relevance for the SEA of the Local Plan

Biodiversity (including flora and fauna) and landscape

A.18 Environmental Outcomes Reports: Roadmap to reform (2026) **[See reference 149]** outlines a plan to replace the EU-derived Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) systems in England with a streamlined, outcomes-based framework by the end of 2027.

A.19 The Environment Improvement Plan 2025 **[See reference 150]** is a long-term delivery plan made up of five inter-related chapters setting out 10 goals, commitments and actions in relation to the natural environment. The plan sets out how they will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver

each goal for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of the country. The overarching goal of the Plan is achieving “restored nature”, including progress towards the commitment to protect 30% of UK land and sea for nature by 2030, alongside improving the condition and resilience of nature assets.

A.20 Green Infrastructure Framework and associated 15 GI Principles (2023) **[See reference 151]** encourages the ‘15 minute neighbourhood’ concept as part of the new GI standards set out in the framework. Development should be designed to meet the 15 Green Infrastructure Principles. The GI Standards can be used to inform the quality, quantity and type of green infrastructure to be provided.

A.21 Working with nature (2022) **[See reference 152]** discusses the importance of nature in providing ecosystem services and presents recent and historical trends in biodiversity. It outlines some of the main pressures affecting England’s habitats, wildlife and ecosystems: land use; climate change; pollution; invasive non-native species; and hydrological change.

A.22 Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022) **[See reference 153]** sets out a new framework that aims to improve industrial emissions and protect the environment through the introduction of a UK BAT regime. It aims to set up a new structure of governance with a new independent body in the form of Standards Council and the Regulators Group, consisting of government officials and expert regulators from all UK nations. It aims to also establish a new UK Air Quality Governance Group to oversee the work of the Standards Council and the delivery of the requirements under this new framework. It is anticipated that the BATC for the first four industry sectors will be published in the second half of 2023.

A.23 The Environment Act 2021 **[See reference 154]** sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. Biodiversity elements in the Act include:

- Strengthened biodiversity duty. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development.

- Biodiversity net gain to ensure developments deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies to support a Nature Recovery Network.
- Duty upon Local Authorities to consult on street tree felling.
- Strengthen woodland protection enforcement measures.
- Conservation Covenants.
- Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.
- Prohibit larger UK businesses from using commodities associated with wide-scale deforestation.
- Requires regulated businesses to establish a system of due diligence for each regulated commodity used in their supply chain, requires regulated businesses to report on their due diligence, introduces a due diligence enforcement system.

A.24 The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 **[See reference 155]** protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, including birds. The Regulations lay down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species, including how adverse effects on such habitats and species should be avoided, minimised and reported.

A.25 An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2019) **[See reference 156]** assists in informing judgements and decisions concerning the planning and management of change. It helps inform good practice, generates further continued discussion and encourages methods, techniques and skills relating to landscape sensitivity assessment.

A.26 Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2015 **[See reference 157]** are wide-ranging government regulations that can potentially apply to many businesses. The regulations oblige those who create environmental damage, whether by water pollution, adversely affecting protected species or sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), or by land pollution that causes risks to human health, to not only cease the damage, but also to implement a wide variety of remedial measures to restore affected areas.

A.27 National pollinator strategy (2014) [\[See reference 158\]](#) Strategy to protect pollinating insects which support our food production and the diversity of our environment.

A.28 Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper (2013) [\[See reference 159\]](#). Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to compensate for residual losses. The Green Paper sets out a framework for offsetting.

A.29 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011) [\[See reference 160\]](#) guides conservation efforts in England up to 2020 by requiring a national halt to biodiversity loss, supporting healthy ecosystems and establishing ecological networks.

A.30 Defra Right of Way Circular (1/09) (2011) [\[See reference 161\]](#) gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing public rights of way.

A.31 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2010 [\[See reference 162\]](#) is an Act of Parliament to make new provision for public access to the countryside.

A.32 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 [\[See reference 163\]](#) places a duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.

A.33 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) [\[See reference 164\]](#) was enacted primarily to implement the Birds Directive and Bern Convention in Great Britain. The Act received royal assent on 30 October 1981 and was brought into force in incremental steps. It is supplemented by the Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices) Act 1985, which relates to notices served under the 1981 Act. The act contains four parts and 17 schedules, which cover:

- Part 1: Wildlife (includes protection of birds, animals and plants; and measures to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife).
- Part 2: Nature conservation, the countryside and National Parks (including the designation of protected areas).
- Part 3: Public rights of way.
- Part 4: Miscellaneous provisions of the act.

A.34 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 [\[See reference 165\]](#) is an Act of Parliament to make provision for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities' powers for the establishment and

maintenance of nature reserves; to make further provision for the recording, creation, maintenance and improvement of public paths and for securing access to open country.

Population and human health

A.35 English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 **[See reference 166]** which establishes a new framework for devolution of powers to strategic authorities, local authorities, police and crime commissioners, police, fire and crime commissioners, and fire and rescue authorities in England.

A.36 Health Bill (2026) **[See reference 167]** was introduced to the House of Common in May 2026 and seeks to improve patient care. The bill will:

- improve patient safety and experience through a new single patient record, enabling joined-up, proactive care and empowering patients
- put power and resources in the hands of frontline NHS organisations by abolishing NHS England and stripping back national bureaucracy
- clarify the role of local health bodies, giving them real flexibility to design and deliver health services to best meet the needs of their local populations.

A.37 The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: Building Circular 01/2026 (2026) **[See reference 168]** sets out amendments to Building Regulations in England aimed at delivering highly energy-efficient, low-carbon new homes and buildings.

A.38 Building for a Healthy Life (2026) **[See reference 169]** is a Design Code to help people improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods. The code is organised around three headings to help those involved in new developments to think about the qualities of successful places and how these can be best applied to the individual characteristics of a site and its wider context.

A.39 The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) strategic plan 2026 to 2029 (2026) **[See reference 170]** outlines UKHSA's goals and strategic priorities for the 3-year period to protect the nation's health from current and future threats.

A.40 Fit for the Future: The 10-Year Health Plan for England (2025) **[See reference 171]** is a strategic blueprint designed to modernise the NHS. The plan implements three shifts in focus for healthcare delivery: moving care from

hospitals into communities, transitioning from analogue to digital, and focusing on sickness prevention.

A.41 Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 [\[See reference 172\]](#) sets out the Government's plan to support housing and economic growth. The Act aims to speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure, supporting delivery of the government's Plan for Change milestones of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes in England and fast-tracking 150 planning decisions on major economic infrastructure projects by the end of the current Parliament. It will also support delivery of the government's Clean Power 2030 target by ensuring that key clean energy projects are built as quickly as possible.

A.42 Renters' Rights Act 2025 [\[See reference 173\]](#) aims to improve renters' security and rights. The Act delivers the government's manifesto commitment to transform the experience of private renting, including by ending Section 21 'no fault' evictions. The Act will improve the current system for both the 11 million private renters and 2.3 million landlords in England. It will give renters much greater security and stability so they can stay in their homes for longer, build lives in their communities, and avoid the risk of homelessness.

A.43 Healthy Homes - a foundation for healthier and resilient communities (2025) [\[See reference 174\]](#) sets out core specification and good practice guidance to help support the delivery of healthier living environments. The guidance also covers neurodiversity, and the adoption of an 'age-friendly' design approach that supports residents and households to live independently throughout the different stages of their life. Beyond individual wellbeing, Healthy Homes support sustainability and affordability, helping to lower energy costs and reduce carbon emissions.

A.44 Homes England strategic plan 2025 to 2030 (2025) [\[See reference 175\]](#) sets out a vision to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability, and make a more resilient and diverse housing market.

A.45 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) [\[See reference 176\]](#) sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

A.46 Plan for Change (2024) [\[See reference 177\]](#) sets out the Government's milestones for growing the economy as well as delivering an improved NHS, safer streets, opportunities for all, and infrastructure for clean energy.

A.47 Policy Statement on New Towns (2024) [\[See reference 178\]](#) outlines a strategic vision to stimulate economic growth and enhance living standards by constructing 1.5 million new homes during the current parliamentary term. Central to this initiative is the development of large-scale communities, each comprising at least 10,000 homes, through both standalone new towns on greenfield sites and significant urban extensions or regeneration projects. These developments aim to address housing demand, alleviate constraints in existing urban areas, and align with national infrastructure plans.

A.48 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 [\[See reference 179\]](#) sets out the direction for planning and makes provisions to support the levelling-up agenda. It seeks to streamline the planning process whilst attaching greater weight to development plans. It also aims to improve infrastructure delivery with a new levy system, improve alignment between plans to address cross-boundary issues, and will introduce added protection for heritage assets. The Act also states that existing EU-generated systems of SEA, HRA and EIA will eventually be replaced by a simpler process known as 'Environmental Outcomes Reports'.

A.49 The Green Infrastructure Framework (2023) [\[See reference 180\]](#) by Natural England will help increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas. The Green Infrastructure Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. From parks to green roofs, and increased tree cover, the Green Infrastructure Framework will make a significant contribution to nature recovery by embedding nature into new developments. Increasing the extent and connectivity of nature-rich habitats will also help increase wildlife populations, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and ensure our cities are habitable for the future

A.50 Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan (2023) [\[See reference 181\]](#) sets out a new approach to working with local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour across England and Wales. The plan intends to change laws and systems to take a zero-tolerance approach and give the police and other agencies the tools they need to discourage anti-social behaviour.

A.51 Health and Care Act (2022) [\[See reference 182\]](#) aimed at making England's health and social care system less bureaucratic and more integrated, focusing on joined-up services through new bodies called Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). It dismantled some structures from the 2012 Act, removes competition rules, and gives the Health Secretary greater power, while also

introducing new training mandates, such as for learning disability and autism awareness.

A.52 The National Design Guide (2021) [\[See reference 183\]](#) sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

A.53 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021) [\[See reference 184\]](#) sets out the government's new plan for health and social care. It provides an overview of how this plan will tackle the elective backlog in the NHS and put the NHS on a sustainable footing. It sets out details of the plan for adult social care in England, including a cap on social care costs and how financial assistance will work for those without substantial assets. It covers wider support that the government will provide for the social care system, and how the government will improve the integration of health and social care. It explains the government's plan to introduce a new Health and Social Care Levy.

A.54 Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments (2020), Addendum (2021) [\[See reference 185\]](#) provides a framework and starting point for local authorities to clearly set out in local planning guidance how best to achieve healthy weight environments based on local evidence and needs, by focusing on environments that enable healthier eating and help promote more physical activity as the default. The Addendum provides updates on the implications for planning for a healthier food environment, specifically on the hot food takeaways retail uses, and sets out recommended actions in light of changes to the Use Class Order (UCO) in England from 1 September 2020.

A.55 The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020) [\[See reference 186\]](#) sets out the Government's actions to ensure residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong.

A.56 The Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015) [\[See reference 187\]](#) sets out the Government's new nationally described space standard. The standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home.

A.57 The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? (2013) [\[See reference 188\]](#) warns that society is

underprepared for the ageing population. The report states “longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”. The report highlights the under provision of specialist housing for older people and the need to plan for the housing needs of the older population as well as younger people.

A.58 Equality Act (2010) [\[See reference 189\]](#) provides legal protection for people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. Protection is established in relation to on nine "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

A.59 Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (as amended 2018) [\[See reference 190\]](#) apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require Noise Action Plans based on the maps for road and rail noise and noise in large urban areas. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggest ways the relevant authorities can reduce these. Major airports and those which affect large urban areas are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately. The Regulations do not apply to noise from domestic activities such as noise created by neighbours; at workplaces; inside means of transport; or military activities in military areas.

Air, water and soils

A.60 Water White Paper (2026) [\[See reference 191\]](#) aims to overhaul the water regulation and infrastructure system across England and Wales. One of the key reforms proposed by the White Paper is the creation of a new, single water regulator which will take on the water-related functions of Ofwat, the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

A.61 Managing Water Abstraction (2026) [\[See reference 192\]](#) the overarching document for managing water resources in England and Wales and links together the abstraction licensing strategies.

A.62 The National Framework for Water Resources 2025: Water for Growth, Nature and a Resilient Future (2025) [\[See reference 193\]](#) provides a strategic

blueprint for managing England's long-term water needs. It emphasises the twin imperatives of securing resilient water supplies to support housing, energy, food production, economic growth, and a thriving natural environment, while safeguarding ecosystems through sustainable abstraction and nature-based solutions. The Framework projects significant pressures on water resources driven by climate change, population growth, and emerging industrial demands, forecasting a shortfall of up to 5 billion litres per day by 2055. It calls for integrated, multi-sector planning across national, regional, and local levels, combining demand management (such as leakage reduction and efficiency improvements) with development of new infrastructure and environmental enhancements.

A.63 Environmental Improvement Plan (2025) [\[See reference 194\]](#) is a long-term delivery plan setting out 10 goals, commitments and actions in relation to the natural environment. The plan sets out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each goal for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of the country. The overarching goal of the plan is achieving “restored nature”, including progress towards the commitment to protect 30% of UK land and sea for nature by 2030, alongside improving the condition and resilience of nature assets.

A.64 National Assessment of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk ('NaFRA 2') (2025) [\[See reference 195\]](#) provides an assessment of flood and coastal risk in England. The assessment provides detailed maps and data for current and future risks from rivers, the sea, and surface water, incorporating climate change projections and confirms that approximately 6.3 million properties are in areas at risk of flooding from one or a combination of sources (rivers, the sea, and surface water). The total number of properties in areas at risk from surface water is around 4.6 million, representing a 43% increase compared with the previous assessment in 2018. NaFRA 2 also highlights significant increases in properties located in high-risk zones, especially for surface water flooding.

A.65 Drought Response: how it is managed in England (2025) [\[See reference 196\]](#) details how drought affects England and how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects on

people, business and the environment. It aims to ensure consistency in the way we co-ordinate drought management across England. It sets out:

- the impacts of drought in England
- who is involved in planning, managing and responding and how we work together
- the actions we and others take to effectively manage droughts
- how we report on drought and communicate with others
- our role in recovery and learning from drought events

A.66 Plan for Water: Our Integrated Plan for Delivering Clean and Plentiful Water (2023) [\[See reference 197\]](#) sets out actions to transform the management of the water system, deliver cleaner water for nature and people, and secure a plentiful water supply. The plan also sets out measures to address sources of pollution, and boost water supplies through more investment, tighter regulation, and more effective enforcement.

A.67 Air quality strategy for England (2023) [\[See reference 198\]](#) sets out local authorities' powers and responsibilities as well as the actions that Defra expects local authorities to take in support of the governments long-term air quality goals, including new PM2.5 targets.

A.68 Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022) [\[See reference 199\]](#) sets out a new framework that aims to improve industrial emissions and protect the environment through the introduction of a UK BAT regime. It aims to set up a new structure of governance with a new independent body in the form of Standards Council and the Regulators Group, consisting of government officials and expert regulators from all UK nations. It aims to also establish a new UK Air Quality Governance Group to oversee the work of the Standards Council and the delivery of the requirements under this new framework. It is anticipated that the BATC for the first four industry sectors will be published in the second half of 2023.

A.69 The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2022) [\[See reference 200\]](#) sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities. The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are:

- climate resilient places: working with partners to bolster resilience to flooding and coastal change across the nation, both now and in the future in the face of climate change;
- today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate: making the right investment and planning decisions to secure sustainable growth and environmental improvements, as well as infrastructure resilient to flooding and coastal change; and
- a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change: ensuring local people understand their risk to flooding and coastal change and know their responsibilities and how to act.

A.70 The Environment Act 2021 [\[See reference 201\]](#) sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also establishes the Office for Environmental Protection which will act as an impartial and objective body for the protection and improvement of the environment. The Act sets out legislation which covers:

- Resource efficiency, producer responsibility, and the management, enforcement and regulation of waste;
- Local air quality management frameworks and the recall of motor vehicles etc; and
- Plans and proposals for water resources, drainage and sewerage management, storm overflows, water quality and land drainage.

A.71 Land contamination risk management (LCRM) (2020) [\[See reference 202\]](#) guides the assessment, remediation, and validation of contaminated land.

A.72 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 [\[See reference 203\]](#) and The Flood and Water Regulations (2019) [\[See reference 204\]](#) sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

A.73 The Clean Air Strategy 2019 [\[See reference 205\]](#) sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of Government and society to meet these goals. This will be underpinned by new England-wide

powers to control major sources of air pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment, plus new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem. These will support the creation of Clean Air Zones to lower emissions from all sources of air pollution, backed up with clear enforcement mechanisms. The UK has set stringent targets to cut emissions by 2020 and 2030.

A.74 The Environment Agency's Approach for Groundwater Protection (2018) **[See reference 206]** contains position statements which provide information about the Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater. They detail how the Environment Agency delivers government policy for groundwater and adopts a risk-based approach where legislation allows. Many of the approaches set out in the position statements are not statutory but may be included in, or referenced by, statutory guidance and legislation.

A.75 Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (2018) **[See reference 207]** focus on the quality of water for drinking, washing, cooking and food preparation, and for food production. Their purpose is to protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring it is wholesome and clean.

A.76 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 **[See reference 208]** protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater, and outlines the associated river basin management process. These Regulations establish the need to prevent deterioration of waterbodies and to protect, enhance and restore waterbodies with the aim of achieving good ecological and chemical status.

A.77 Drought Response: Our framework for England (2017) **[See reference 209]** tells you how drought affects England and how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects on people, business and the environment. It aims to ensure consistency in the way we co-ordinate drought management across England. It sets out:

- how drought affects different parts of England
- who is involved in managing drought and how we work together
- how we and others take action to manage drought

- how we monitor and measure the impacts of drought to advise senior management and government on the prospects and possible action
- how we report on drought and communicate with others

A.78 Groundwater protection in England (2017) [\[See reference 210\]](#) sets out guidance covering requirements, permissions, risk assessments and controls relating to groundwater.

A.79 The UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations 2017 [\[See reference 211\]](#) sets out the Government's ambition and actions for delivering a better environment and cleaner air, including £1 billion investment in ultra-low emission vehicles, a £290 million National Productivity Investment Fund, a £11 million Air Quality Grant Fund and £255 million Implementation Fund to help Local Authorities to prepare Air Quality Action Plans and improve air quality, an £89 million Green Bus Fund, £1.2 billion Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and £100 million to help improve air quality on the National road network.

A.80 The Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016 [\[See reference 212\]](#) streamline the legislative system for industrial and waste installations into a single permitting structure for those activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment. They set out how to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

A.81 Air Quality Standards Regulations (2016) [\[See reference 213\]](#) set out limits on concentrations of outdoor air pollutants that impact public health, most notably particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). It also sets out the procedure and requirements for the designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

A.82 The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015 [\[See reference 214\]](#) provides for the designation of land as nitrate vulnerable zones and imposes annual limits on the amount of nitrogen from organic manure that may be applied or spread in a holding in a nitrate vulnerable zone. The Regulations also specify the amount of nitrogen to be spread on a crop and how, where and when to spread nitrogen fertiliser, and how it should be stored. It also

establishes closed periods during which the spreading of nitrogen fertiliser is prohibited.

A.83 National Policy Statement For Waste Water (2012) [\[See reference 215\]](#) sets out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. It is to be used by the decision maker as the primary basis for deciding development consent applications for waste water developments that fall within the definition of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) as defined in the Planning Act 2008.

A.84 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 [\[See reference 216\]](#) and The Flood and Water Regulations (2019) [\[See reference 217\]](#) sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

A.85 Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations (2009) [\[See reference 218\]](#) implement in England and Wales Community legislation on pollution of groundwater. They provide rules for the granting by the Environment Agency of a permit under these Regulations, consent under section 91(8) of the Water Resources Act 1991 and (with exceptions) an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations. In addition, the Regulations create an offence of discharge of a hazardous substance or non-hazardous pollutant without a permit, provide for powers of enforcement of the Environment Agency and prescribe penalties for offences committed under these Regulations.

A.86 Flood Risk Regulations 2009 [\[See reference 219\]](#) transposed the EU Floods Directive 2007 into law across England and Wales (with minor elements extending to Scotland). They established a consistent framework for managing flood hazards across a mandatory six-year rolling cycle.

A.87 Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (2009) [\[See reference 220\]](#) sets out how England's soils will be managed sustainably. It highlights those areas which Defra will prioritise and focus attention on tackling degradation threats, including better protection for agricultural soils; protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon; building the resilience of soils to a changing climate; preventing soil pollution; effective soil protection during construction and dealing with contaminated land.

A.88 The Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2003) [\[See reference 221\]](#) protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water discharges and certain industrial sectors, notably domestic and industrial waste water. The regulations require the collection of waste water and specifies how different types of waste water should be treated, disposed and reused.

A.89 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 [\[See reference 222\]](#) makes provision for the improved control of pollution to the air, water and land by regulating the management of waste and the control of emissions. Seeks to ensure that decisions pertaining to the environment are made in an integrated manner, in collaboration with appropriate authorities, non-governmental organisations and other persons.

Climatic factors (including climate change mitigation and adaptation)

A.90 A Well-Adapted UK: The Fourth Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk (CCRA4-IA) (2026) [\[See reference 223\]](#) sets out climate risks, actions, and enablers across 14 key systems including health, land, and the economy. This includes targets in 2050 for excess heat-related mortality to be no greater, and ideally lower, than today's annual average.

A.91 Warm Homes Plan (2026) [\[See reference 224\]](#) sets out the approach to cut bills, with an offer for every household, whether they own their home, rent privately, or live in social housing. It also sets out plans to help upgrade five million homes by 2030, through direct support for those on low incomes and in fuel poverty, grants and innovative low- and zero-interest finance available to all, and new rules to ensure that tenants in both the private and social rented sectors have lower bills and warmer, more comfortable homes.

A.92 The Seventh Carbon Budget report (2025) [\[See reference 225\]](#) provides advice to the UK Government on the level of the Carbon Budget for the period 2038 to 2042. A limit on the UK's greenhouse gas emissions over this five-year period is set as 535 MtCO₂e, including emissions from international aviation and shipping.

A.93 Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan (2025) [See reference 226] is the UK government's strategic initiative, under the Modern Industrial Strategy, to position the nation as a global leader in frontier clean energy technologies by 2035. The plan sets out an ambition to double investment across key clean energy industries, such as wind (onshore, offshore, floating), nuclear fission, fusion, hydrogen, carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS), greenhouse gas removals, and heat pumps, to over £30 billion per year, while continuing to support other vital technologies like solar, long-duration energy storage and bioenergy. It aims to catalyse private sector engagement by deploying targeted public investment, including more than £8.3 billion through Great British Energy and Great British Energy-Nuclear up to 2029 and a Clean Energy Supply Chain Fund, and by reducing barriers to investment, thereby providing industry certainty and encouraging deployment and innovation.

A.94 The Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (2025) [See reference 227] sets out how the government will meet its statutory carbon budgets and secure the benefits of this transition for people and businesses. The plan sets out a package of quantified and unquantified proposals and policies and associated timescales and delivery risks. This includes actions around energy security and lower bills, such as incentivising new clean electricity generating projects in Great Britain. The Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan replaced the Zero Growth Plan 2023 which outlined how the UK will achieve its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (2025) is now the principal statutory document explaining how the UK intends to meet its carbon budgets and net-zero obligations. The current government has also published a new Industrial Strategy (2025) (summarised elsewhere in this appendix) and has been developing a refreshed Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, indicating that the 2021 document is under review.

A.95 The Hydrogen Update to the Market (2025) [See reference 228] provides a detailed overview of the UK's hydrogen policy progress UK's and outlines forthcoming opportunities as part of the government's Clean Energy Superpower and Growth Missions. Significant investment commitments include over £500 million allocated toward developing the first regional hydrogen transport and storage network, aiming for operation by 2031, supported by a forthcoming Hydrogen to Power Business Model in 2026. The report highlights

plans to abolish Climate Change Levy charges on electricity used in hydrogen electrolysis, regulatory and sector development initiatives, including skills and infrastructure planning, and signals the intent to publish a comprehensive UK Hydrogen Strategy in autumn 2025.

A.96 The Onshore Wind Strategy (2025) [\[See reference 229\]](#) presents the country's first dedicated strategy to accelerate onshore wind deployment as a key component of its Clean Power 2030 mission. The strategy sets a target of deploying 27-29 GW of onshore wind capacity across Great Britain by 2030, significantly increasing from existing capacity of over 16 GW, and backed by over 40 actions to tackle barriers such as planning delays, aviation and defence conflicts, grid access, and community engagement. New measures include the creation of an Onshore Wind Council to oversee implementation, potential expansion of the Clean Industry Bonus to support UK-based supply chains, workforce and skills development initiatives, and a programme to repower ageing turbines while smoothing the consenting and survey process for new projects. The strategy also outlines mechanisms to ensure community benefit through up to £70 million annually (£5,000 per MW) in local investment, while projecting creation of up to 45,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030. The overarching aim is to deliver affordable, home-grown renewable energy, reduce reliance on volatile gas markets, and bolster energy security through rapid onshore wind expansion.

A.97 The Environment Improvement Plan 2025 [\[See reference 230\]](#) is a long-term delivery plan setting out 10 goals, commitments and actions in relation to the natural environment. The plan sets out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each goal for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of the country. The overarching goal of the plan is achieving "restored nature", including progress towards the commitment to protect 30% of UK land and sea for nature by 2030, alongside improving the condition and resilience of nature assets.

A.98 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (2024) [\[See reference 231\]](#) sets out a pathway to a clean power system by 2030, outlining what the Government will

do to support and accelerate delivery of the new infrastructure. It seeks to address the following challenges:

- To maintain a secure and affordable energy supply in an increasingly unstable world.
- To create new industries and investments around the country.
- To protect the environment we live in from the most damaging effects of climate change.

A.99 The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (2023) [\[See reference 232\]](#) explains how the government intends to meet its legally-binding climate goals, setting out a package of quantified and unquantified proposals and policies, and associated timescales and delivery risks this also includes:

- wider matters in connection with carbon budgets
- the contribution of these proposals and policies to sustainable development
- the impact the package has on sectors of the economy

A.100 Defence Operational Energy Strategy (DOES) (2023) [\[See reference 233\]](#) sets out how the Ministry of Defence (MOD) will respond to the global energy transition. The aims of the strategy are to adopt a new approach to managing fuel and energy, leading to a cultural shift in how the MOD makes its operational energy decisions. The DOES describes how the MOD will maximise operational advantage through its energy choices. Operational advantage will be achieved through three strategic outcomes:

- Advantage through energy.
- Advantage through coherence.
- Advantage through organisational agility.

A.101 The waste prevention programme for England: Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste (2023) [\[See reference 234\]](#) sets out government's priorities for managing resources and waste, in line with the resources and waste strategy for England.

A.102 The Biomass Strategy (2023) [\[See reference 235\]](#) builds on the 2021 Biomass policy statement and the Powering up Britain strategy which

emphasised the important role that biomass will play in Britain's fully decarbonised power system by 2035, subject to security of supply. It sets out steps government intends to take to strengthen biomass sustainability and the opportunities for the use of sustainable biomass across multiple sectors of the economy in support of achieving the UK's net zero target. The government aims to focus on implementing a cross-sectoral common sustainability framework, which will be subject to consultation. It states it committed to monitoring the levels of biomass supply to ensure the UK can secure necessary levels for increased biomass use across the economy. It has also committed to ensuring that biomass supply – given its risks and uncertainties – is not hindered at any stage; however, biomass demand is expected to increase. The government also aims for a "priority use" of biomass based on guiding principles that address sustainability, air quality, the net-zero and circular economy, and resource efficiency. This encompasses the deployment of bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), the engineered greenhouse-gas removal technology, which captures and stores CO₂ from biomass while producing low-carbon energy.

A.103 Net zero government emissions: UK roadmap (2023) [\[See reference 236\]](#) as part of the Net Zero Government Initiative outlines the journey to central government net zero emissions. It covers the policies and interim targets around government buildings and transport, procurement and skills.

A.104 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 [\[See reference 237\]](#) outlines the UK government and devolved administrations' position on the key climate change risks and opportunities that the UK faces today. The risk assessment considers sixty-one UK-wide climate risks and opportunities cutting across multiple sectors of the economy and prioritises the following eight risk areas for action in the next two years:

- risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species from multiple hazards
- risks to soil health from increased flooding and drought
- risks to natural carbon stores and sequestration from multiple hazards
- risks to crops, livestock and commercial trees from multiple climate hazards
- risks to supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks
- risks to people and the economy from climate-related failure of the power system

- risks to human health, wellbeing and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings
- multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas

A.105 Sustainability and climate change strategy (2022) [See reference 238] is the Department for Education's strategy for sustainability and climate change for the education and children's services systems. The strategy's vision is for the United Kingdom to be the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030. The strategy sets out four strategic aims for England:

- Excellence in education and skills for a changing world,
- Transition to net zero
- Resilience to climate change
- A better environment for future generations

A.106 The Environment Act 2021 [See reference 239] sets statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. The Environment Act will deliver:

- Long-term targets to improve air quality biodiversity, water, and waste reduction and resource efficiency.
- A target on ambient PM2.5 concentrations.
- A target to halt the decline of nature by 2030.
- Environmental Improvement Plans, including interim targets.
- A cycle of environmental monitoring and reporting.
- Environmental Principles embedded in domestic policy making.
- Office for Environmental Protection to uphold environmental law.

A.107 The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (2021) [See reference 240] aims to support existing industry to decarbonise and encourage the growth of new, low carbon industries to protect and create skilled jobs and businesses in the UK encouraging long-term investment in home-grown decarbonisation technology. The strategy builds in the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and sets out the government's vision for building a competitive, greener future for the manufacturing and construction sector and is part of the government's path to net zero by 2050. The strategy aims to reduce

emissions by two-thirds in just 15 years and support up to 80,000 jobs over the next thirty years and includes measures to produce 20 terawatt hours of the UK industry's energy supply from low carbon alternatives by 2030. It also aims to introduce new rules on measuring the energy and carbon performance of the UK's largest commercial and industrial buildings, providing potential savings to businesses of around £2 billion per year in energy costs in 2030 and aiming to reduce annual carbon emissions by over 2 million tonnes - approximately 10% of their current emissions. Other key commitments within the Strategy include:

- The use of carbon pricing to drive changes in industry to focus on emissions in business and investment decisions.
- To establish a policy framework to accelerate the switch from fossil fuels to low carbon alternatives such as hydrogen, electricity, or biomass.
- New product standards, enabling manufacturers to clearly distinguish their products from high carbon competitors.
- To ensure the land planning regime is fit for building low carbon infrastructure.
- Support the skills transition so that the UK workforce benefits from the creation of new green jobs.
- An expectation that at least 3 megatons of CO₂ is captured within industry per year by 2030.
- That by 2050, there will be zero avoidable waste of materials across heavy industries.

A.108 The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021) **[See reference 241]** seek to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, reducing their carbon emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. The Regulations require the adoption of a standard methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance, reported through Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates.

A.109 The Waste Management Plan for England (2021) **[See reference 242]** sets out the measures for England to work towards a zero waste economy.

A.110 The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (2020) **[See reference 243]** amends legislation to enhance waste prevention and management. They require justification for not separating waste for reuse or recycling, limit incineration and landfilling to cases of best environmental outcome and specify requirements for waste management plans. Emphasising

the circular economy, the regulations aim to maximise the value of waste and its treatment efficiency for businesses.

A.111 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement (2020) [See reference 244] sets out the government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk, and in doing so, reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy. The Policy Statement sets out five policy areas which will drive this ambition. These are:

- Upgrading and expanding our national flood defences and infrastructure;
- Managing the flow of water more effectively;
- Harnessing the power of nature to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk and achieve multiple benefits;
- Better preparing our communities; and
- Enabling more resilient places through a catchment-based approach.

A.112 The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England 2020 [See reference 245] sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities. The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Manage the risk to people and their property;
- Facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level – individual, community or Local Authority, river catchment, coastal cell or national; and
- Achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

A.113 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 [See reference 246] and The Flood and Water Regulations 2019 [See reference 247] sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding is managed more effectively. This includes incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

A.114 Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018) [See reference 248] aims to increase resource productivity and eliminate avoidable

waste by 2050. The Strategy sets out key targets which include: a 50% recycling rate for household waste by 2020, a 75% recycling rate for packaging by 2030, 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035 and municipal waste to landfill 10% or less by 2035.

A.115 The Clean Growth Strategy (2017) [\[See reference 249\]](#) sets out the approach of the government to secure growth of the national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The key policies and proposals of the Strategy sit below a number of overarching principles: acceleration of clean growth including through recommendations for private and public investment to meet carbon budgets; providing support to improve business and industry energy efficiency; improving energy efficiency in the housing stock including through low carbon heating; accelerating the shift to low carbon transport; delivering clean, smart, flexible power; enhancing the benefits and value of our natural resources; leading in the public sector to meet emissions targets; and ensure Government leadership to drive clean growth.

A.116 The National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (2014) [\[See reference 250\]](#) identifies key planning objectives, requiring planning Authorities to:

- Help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy;
- Ensure waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns;
- Provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste;
- Help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment; and
- Ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management.

A.117 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) [\[See reference 251\]](#) sets out the ways in which we will tackle climate change by reducing our CO₂ emissions through the generation of a renewable electricity, heat and transport technologies.

A.118 The Climate Change Act 2008 [\[See reference 252\]](#) sets targets for UK greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 100% by 2050, against a 1990 baseline (this was previously 80% but was updated to a net zero target in June 2019).

A.119 The Planning and Energy Act (2008) [\[See reference 253\]](#) enables local planning authorities to set requirements for carbon reduction and renewable energy provision. It should be noted that while the Housing Standards Review proposed to repeal some of these provisions, at the time of writing there have been no amendments to the Planning and Energy Act.

Material assets

A.120 Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport (2026) [\[See reference 254\]](#) outlines eight priorities for creating an integrated transport system that makes greener modes of transport easier and more reliable. They are:

- Simplify payments and information
- Provide safe and dependable journeys
- Make travel accessible and affordable
- Create healthier communities
- Align transport and development
- Champion data and technology
- Empower local leaders
- Optimise decision-making and appraisal

A.121 Cycling and walking investment strategy report to Parliament (2026) [\[See reference 255\]](#) is the third report to Parliament on the progress made towards achieving the vision and objectives set out in the CWIS2 strategy (April 2021 to March 2025).

A.122 UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy (2025) [\[See reference 256\]](#) sets out an integrated plan to transform economic, housing and social infrastructure over the next decade. It commits to at least £725 billion in public investment, supplemented by private financing via carefully targeted public-private partnership models and a new National Wealth Fund. The strategy introduces multiyear capital budgets (initially five-year, reviewed biennially) and establishes the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) to unify planning, improve project delivery, assure major schemes, and coordinate a transparent Infrastructure Pipeline launched in July 2025. It aims to boost growth, align infrastructure with government missions, including housing, clean

energy, public services and net zero, reduce planning delays, build institutional capacity, support supply chains and skills development, and provide stability and clarity to investors.

A.123 The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025) [\[See reference 257\]](#) outlines a 10-year plan to boost business investment and elevate the UK's performance in eight designated growth driving sectors: advanced manufacturing; clean energy industries; creative industries; defence; digital and technologies; financial services; life sciences; and professional and business services. The strategy aims to provide long term stability and certainty to encourage both domestic and international investment, through sector plans, streamlined regulation, enhanced access to finance, including via the National Wealth Fund and British Business Bank, and by accelerating grid connections and infrastructure delivery. It includes regional and place-based initiatives, with targeted support for city regions, industrial clusters and Industrial Strategy Zones to drive inclusive growth across the UK. The strategy is also supported by a robust monitoring framework overseen by a newly established Industrial Strategy Advisory Council, and embeds vocabulary around long-termism, pro-business engagement, competition policy, skills development and innovation.

A.124 The Plan for Change (2024) [\[See reference 258\]](#) outlines the UK Government's framework for long-term policy delivery across five priority areas: economic growth, healthcare, public safety, opportunity, and clean energy. It sets out specific targets within this Parliament, underpinned by aims to ensure economic stability, reform public services, and implement a more mission-focused approach to governance.

A.125 Kickstarting Economic Growth: Milestone: Raising Living Standards in Every Part of the United Kingdom (2024) [\[See reference 259\]](#) identifies economic growth as the number one mission of the Government. The Government seeks to deliver a milestone of higher living standards through economic growth by working in partnership with businesses, ensuring every nation and region realises its full potential, driving innovation, investment and the adoption of technology to seize the opportunities of a future economy, and helping people to get a job, stay at work, and progress in their careers, with good employment opportunities across the country. Rebuilding Britain (2024) [\[See reference 260\]](#) seeks to address the housing crisis by delivering new homes and the critical infrastructure that underpins economic growth. This will

be achieved by reforming the planning system so that it is pro-growth and pro-infrastructure, working in partnership with local leaders, housebuilders and infrastructure developers, and increasing supply and delivery through the biggest boost to social and affordable housing in a generation.

A.126 The Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 [\[See reference 261\]](#) aims to drive competitiveness, increase productivity, reduce carbon emissions, and generate fairer returns across the agricultural industry. The Transition Plan introduces several new schemes to improve the environment, animal health and welfare, and farm resilience and productivity (e.g., grants will be available for sustainable farming practices, creating habitats for nature recovery and making landscape-scale changes such as establishing new woodland and other ecosystem services).

A.127 Future of Transport: supporting rural transport innovation (2023) [\[See reference 262\]](#) shows how innovative and emerging transport technologies could address some of the major challenges in rural communities. It highlights the importance of transport to everyday life rural life and provides guiding carbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge principles for the introduction of new technologies and services.

A.128 National Highways Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2023) [\[See reference 263\]](#) sets out National Highways' vision for the organisation in terms of the role it can play in national prosperity and helping to protect and enhance the environment. It sets out that the organisation will deliver net zero corporate emissions by 2030, maintenance and construction emissions by 2040 and road user emissions by 2050.

A.129 Future of freight plan (2022) [\[See reference 264\]](#) vision is to create a freight and logistics sector that is cost-efficient, reliable resilient, environmentally sustainable and valued by society. It identifies the main challenges, objectives and actions that need to be taken in the following 5 priority areas:

- National Freight Network (NFN)
- Enabling the transition to net zero
- Planning

- People and skills
- Data and technology

A.130 Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021) (Decarbonising Transport Plan (DTP)) [\[See reference 265\]](#) sets out the Government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It follows on from the Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge report published in 2020. The DTP commits the UK to phasing out the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles by 2040, subject to consultation, in addition to phasing out the sale of polluting cars and vans by 2035. The DPT also sets out how the government will improve public transport and increase support for active travel, as well as creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040, and a transition to green shipping.

A.131 Agricultural Act (2020) [\[See reference 266\]](#) provides a range of powers to implement new approaches to farm payments and land management.

Cultural heritage

A.132 Historic England - Strategic Plan 2026-2031 [\[See reference 267\]](#) provides a framework for Historic England's work as an organisation and helps maintain a collective approach to delivering on their long-term vision.

A.133 The Heritage Statement 2017 [\[See reference 268\]](#) sets out how the Government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.

A.134 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Historic England Advice Note 8 (2016) [\[See reference 269\]](#) sets out requirements for the consideration and appraisal of effects on the historic environment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

A.135 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010 [\[See reference 270\]](#) sets out the Government's vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Includes reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government's response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

A.136 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [\[See reference 271\]](#) is an Act of Parliament that changed the laws for granting of planning permission for building works, with a particular focus on listed buildings and conservation areas.

A.137 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 [\[See reference 272\]](#) is a law passed by the UK government to protect the archaeological heritage of England and Wales and Scotland. Under this Act, the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of ancient monuments of national importance, in order to help preserve them. It also creates criminal offences for unauthorised works to, or damage of, these monuments.

A.138 The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 [\[See reference 273\]](#) is an Act of Parliament that makes provision for the compilation of a register of gardens and other land (parks and gardens, and battlefields).

Staffordshire County Council plans

Minerals Local Plan

A.139 The Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015 - 2030) was adopted in February 2017. The Plan stipulates that Staffordshire is rich in mineral resources, has a significant history of quarrying and mining, producing two-thirds of the sand and gravel for the West Midlands and the highest output of clay and shale in England.

A.140 The plan indicates that sand and gravel resources are widely distributed across 23 quarries in Staffordshire. Limestone is worked from a single area in the north-east of the county, and there are three limestone quarries with reserves for aggregate use. These are:

- Caudon Low;

- Wardlow; and
- Wredon and Kevin.

A.141 However, only Cauldon Low is operational.

A.142 The plan ensures a seven-year landbank of sand and gravel and a fifteen-year reserve of limestone and shale for Cauldon Cement Works, and anhydrite and gypsum from Fauld Mine, achieved through existing reserves and new permissions for site extensions.

Waste Local Plan

A.143 The Waste Local Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (2010 - 2026) was adopted by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council in March 2013. The plan stipulates that in relation to landfill and void capacity, there are 21 permitted landfill sites, 10 of which are currently operational. Evidence suggests that currently, based on forecasts for waste produced in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, there is sufficient void capacity over the next 15 years to accommodate the 'secondary' landfill of MSW and C&I waste, and the disposal of CD&E waste to restore mineral sites.

A.144 It was concluded for both the Minerals and Waste Local Plans that they work well, and that there is no immediate need for either plan to be revised. As a result, no programme for the local plans to be revised has been prepared.

Local Transport Plan

A.145 Staffordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) was published in 2025. The LTP includes four strategic objectives:

- Deliver a whole-systems approach to transport and road management that grows the economy.
- Deliver safe, well maintained local roads, footways and cycleways that create a sense of place and healthy communities.
- Improve physical and virtual connectivity, whilst addressing inequalities.
- Improve air quality and protect the natural and built environments.

A.146 There are district integrated transport strategies which cover the eight District and Borough councils. The Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy, published in 2015, covers the period between 2015 – 2029.

A.147 The Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy provides for key strategic infrastructure to be developed by 2029, including the completion of the Lichfield Southern Bypass and transport improvements associated with Lichfield City centre. The Strategy notes that there were particular concerns about safety and congestion on the A5127, levels of car parking in the City centre, proposals for Lichfield City bus station, the local impact of HS2 and the need for the Lichfield Southern Bypass and its impact on local neighbourhoods. As such, the Strategy stipulates that it is a priority to manage peak hour congestion in Lichfield and at junctions with the trunk road network.

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