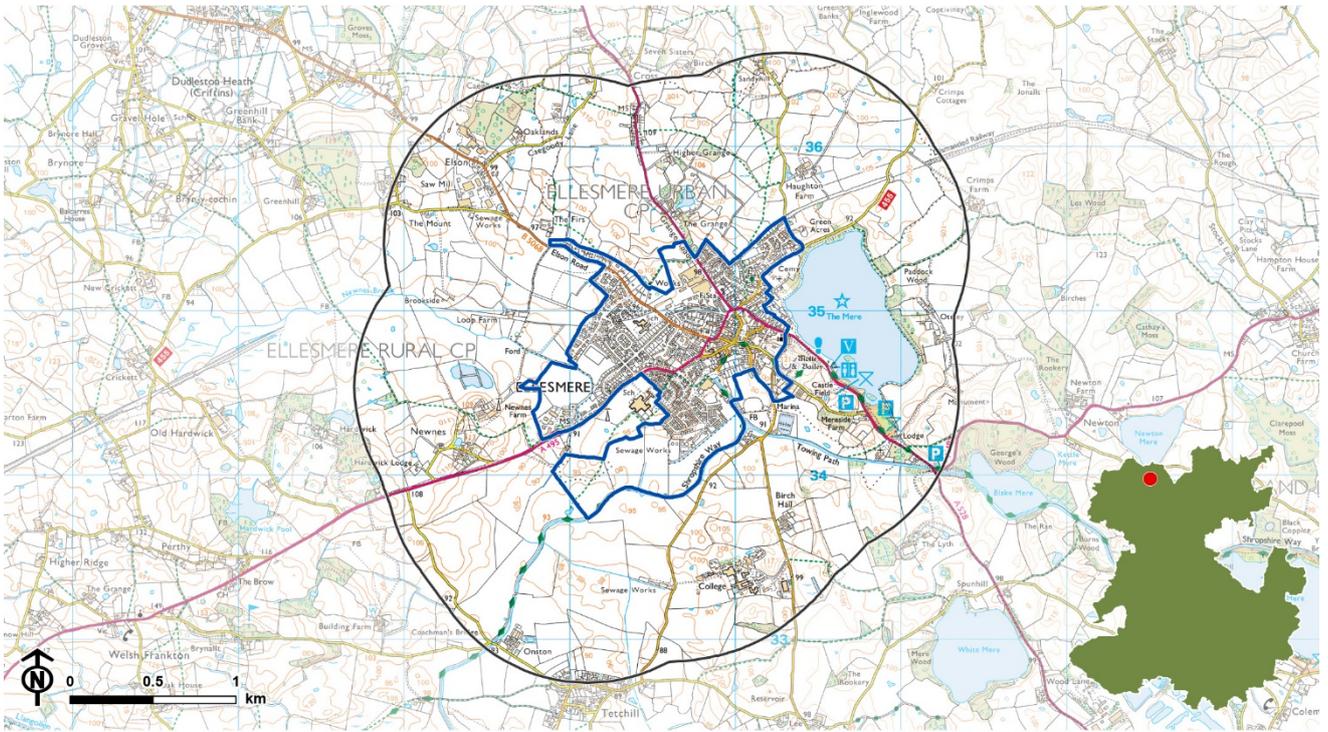


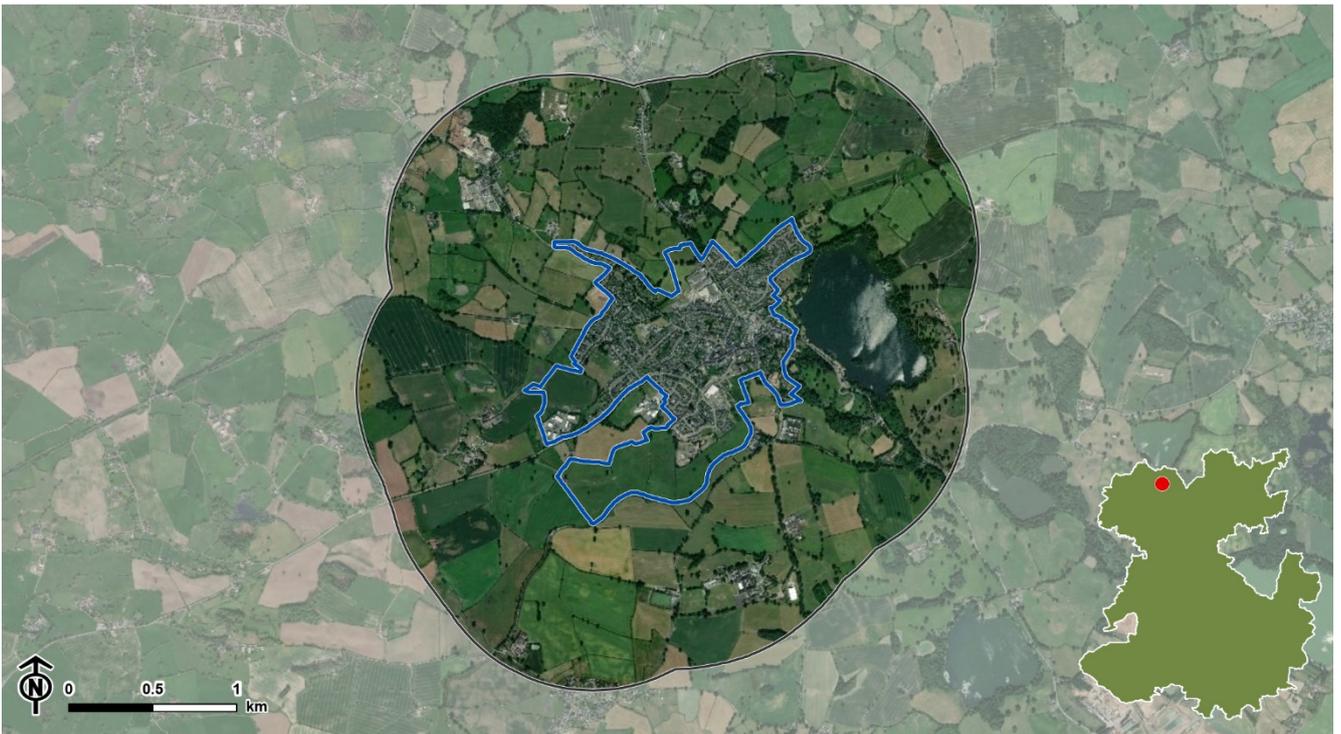
# Key Centre - Ellesmere

## Location



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CB:KC EB:Chamberlain\_K LUC 10924-00\_000\_Location OSbase 05/02/2020 Source: SC, LUC, OS



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## Summary of Settlement Study Area and Location

### Introduction

The Shropshire Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) identifies Ellesmere as a Key Centre. The study area boundary as defined within this Green Infrastructure Strategy is a 1km offset from the settlement limits. The identified study area is approximately 9.3km north west from the Key Centre of Wem and 7km north east from the Principal Centre of Oswestry.

Ellesmere is located in northern Shropshire, 24km north west of Shrewsbury between Oswestry and Whitchurch. The town is named after the large glacial mere it borders. It is one of the largest freshwater lakes in England. The town has a population of just over 4000 people. Ellesmere Town Council area covers 2055ha with a population density of 2.1 people per hectare.

### Development context

Existing development allocations in the town are set out in the SAMDev (2015)<sup>2</sup>, however the Shropshire Local Plan is currently being reviewed. The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) proposes other sites, which are not yet adopted. The sites currently allocated and those being proposed are set out below.

Existing Housing allocations within the town (SAMDev Sites, 2015<sup>3</sup>):

- Site ELL003a: Land south of Ellesmere. Site provision: 250 dwellings

Existing Employment land allocations within the town (SAMDev Sites, 2015):

- Site ELR075: Land off Grange Road. Provision: 3.0 ha
- Site ELR074: Ellesmere Business park, Phase 2. Provision: 6.2ha

Existing Leisure/Tourism allocation (SAMDev Sites, 2015):

- Site ELL003b: Land South of Ellesmere. Provision: 18ha

The Proposed Housing Allocations included within the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) are:

- Sites ELL005, ELL008 & ELL033: Land South of Oswestry Road, Ellesmere. Site Area: 9.5ha. Site capacity: 170 dwellings

The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) proposes to achieve housing and employment growth within Ellesmere through the delivery of around 800 dwellings and around 9 hectares of employment land between 2016 and 2038. The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) seeks to allocate new housing sites sufficient to deliver 170 dwellings. The Local Plan highlights that no further employment land needs to be allocated as requirements have been met. An existing mixed-use allocation is located in the southern boundary of the town south of Lakelands Academy. Existing and protected employment sites are located to the north of the A495 and west of the A528. Existing and proposed housing site allocations are located in the south western section of the town.



The Shropshire Union Canal and Shropshire Way Footpath



Dismantled Railway north of The Mere

<sup>2</sup> Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015

<sup>3</sup> Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015

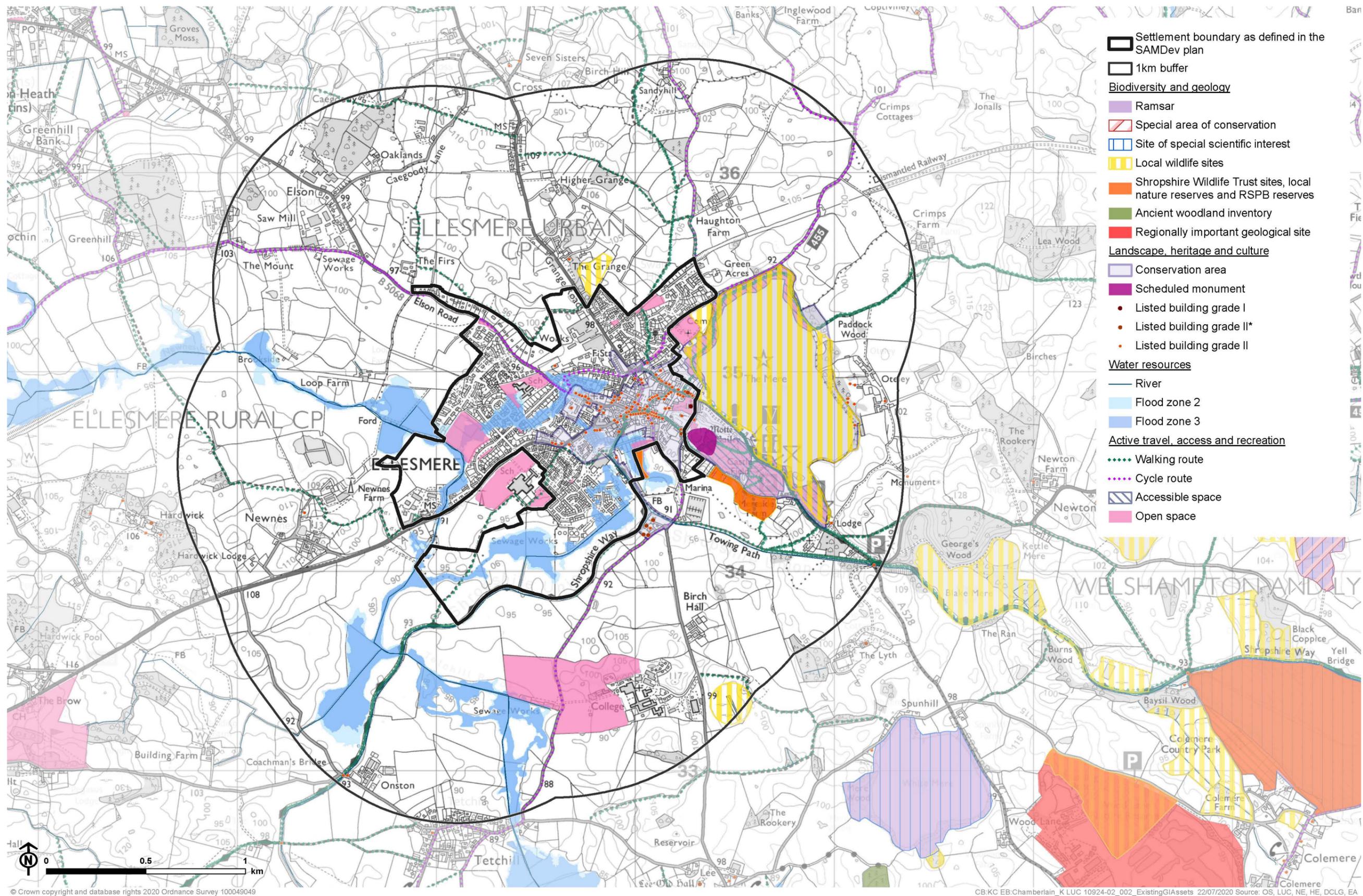


The Mere Country Park



NCN Route 455 west of Elson

## Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Key Constraints



## Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Constraints

Theme	Existing Green Infrastructure Assets / Constraints
<p><b>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</b></p> 	<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p><b>Designated Sites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Mere at Ellesmere, located to the east of the study area, is a designated Country Park. The Mere and its immediate setting demonstrates a rich diversity of natural and cultural heritage, providing valuable habitat for water birds.</li> <li>■ A SSSI Impact Risk Zone, associated with White Mere SSSI approximately 650m south east from the Ellesmere study area boundary, covers the majority of the study area. These are associated with air pollution. The Mere is one of a cluster of meres in the locality and many of these cluster are also designated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notable and Priority Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Priority Habitats in the area are characterised by deciduous woodland blocks clustered around The Mere. Lowland meadows are also located at Castle Field on the border of The Mere. A small section of species rich grassland lies to the north-east of the site.</li> <li>■ A number of Shropshire Environment Network (SEN) Corridors are located within the study area, including along the Newnes Brook (west), Shropshire and Union Canal (south) and The Mere (east). Alongside these identified corridors are a number of northern urban fringe restoration or creation SEN areas, including expansion of green links along the disused railway corridors west of Ellesmere and green wedge creation north of the B5068. Core SEN areas are also located at The Mere and two sections of lowland meadow north-west of The Mere.</li> <li>■ Natural England Habitat Mapping identifies an area of Core habitat on Castle Field, surrounded by network enhancement zone 1 and 2.</li> <li>■ Local Wildlife Sites are noted at the Mere, Ellesmere College south of the settlement and The Grange to the north of Ellesmere (east of the A528).</li> </ul> <p><b>Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Protected amphibians and priority plants and invertebrates are, in general terms, concentrated along the A495 road corridor south of The Mere. These include butterflies, moths, Great Crest Newt and a number of flowering plant species. Recordings of Otter are similarly grouped at the south of The Mere and also along the canal.</li> <li>■ Priority flowering plant species are predominantly found at The Mere and lowland wetland areas south of Ellesmere.</li> <li>■ Rhododendron and False Acacia are non-native invasive species located within proximity of The Mere.</li> <li>■ Please note species records only reflect what was present when the surveyor was on site and may not be exhaustive of the true species and geographic spread within the study area.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are no recorded RIGS within the study area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</b></p>	<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The landscape within the study area surrounding is characterised as the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain<sup>4</sup>. The landscape is further defined within two Landscape Character Types; Principal Timbered Farmlands and Principal Settled Farmlands. The landscape is of a small to medium scale due to filtered views resulting from the pockets of woodland and rolling lowland with</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> The Shropshire Landscape Typology, 2006



occasional steep sided hills.

- Landscape and visual sensitivity surrounding Ellesmere is predominantly assessed as Medium sensitivity to development with some variation to the south around the Shropshire Union Canal where open views provide a higher degree of visual sensitivity.
- Mature vegetated boundaries form strong elements within the landscape.

#### Heritage

- Ellesmere Castle, a Motte and Bailey Castle and a Scheduled Monument (English Heritage) is located within Ellesmere Conservation Area, south of St. Mary's Church. The Conservation Area itself occupies the majority of the east of Ellesmere town and The Mere water body.
- A number of prominent Listed buildings are located within the area, most notably St. Mary's Church (Grade I Listed) and a cluster of Grade II\* Listed dwellings at Beech House associated with the Canal to the south of the town. The rest of the town is home to a high number of Grade II listed buildings, these are clustered around the areas of High Street, Watergate Street, Trimpley Street and Willow Street.
- The Ellesmere Place Plan 2019/20 seeks to encourage the development of the 'Old yard' heritage museum to increase visitor travel from the Mere to the canal in the south and to further connect with the masterplanning of the marina.
- There are two remnant railway routes running through the study area.

### Key Theme 3: Water Resources



#### Freshwater Assets

- The Tetchill Brook and Newnes Brook feed into the Shropshire and Union Canal which flows east – west to the south of Ellesmere. Tetchill Brook starts as an outflow from a large Mere to the south of Ellesmere. The outflow was a Victorian solution to control the levels of the Mere.
- There are several large lakes (Meres) the legacy of the retreating ice age and subsequent melt water surrounding Ellesmere. The Mere to the east of the town is the largest of nine meres and mosses located in this landscape and covers over 48 hectares. It provides recreational as well as habitat value for locals and visitors.

#### Flood Risk

- Ellesmere has a varying topography and lower lying areas of the town are at risk from fluvial flooding. Properties along Beech Grove, Cambria Avenue, Oak Drive, Stanham Drive, Trimpley Street, Brownlow Park, Brownlow Court and Willow Crescent are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the Newnes Brook. Properties along Wharf Road, Scotland Street, Victoria Street, Canal Way and New Wharf Road are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 near the Llangollen Canal and an unnamed watercourse in the south of the town.
- Ellesmere is affected by very small, isolated pockets of ponded surface water flooding risk affecting some roads and properties within the town. The largest areas of ponding in the town are located around Oak Drive, Stanham Drive, Cambria Avenue to the west of the town.
- An infrastructure scheme is included in the Environment Agency's next 6-year programme (2021 onwards) to protect around 70 properties in the town from surface water flooding but needs to be assessed in terms of cost/benefit and partnership funding for delivery. The River Bagley, Mere Culvert, and Newnes Brook are noted as affecting the whole area.

#### Pollution

- Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. The majority of the study area surrounding Ellesmere is located within surface water NVZ with isolated areas in the east surrounding the Meres designated as Eutrophic Water NVZs.

#### Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)

- The Shropshire Outline Water Cycle Study (2010) details that there may be some constraint to development around Tetchill Brook to south and west. In relation to Sustainable Urban Drainage, the area is predominantly suitable for infiltration SUDs, although there are no known watercourses to the north / north east of the settlement to connect storm water runoff.

**Key Theme 4:  
Active Travel,  
Access and  
Recreation**



**Transport context**

- The A528 and the A495 converge in the centre of Ellesmere. These routes connect to Oswestry to the south west and connect Wrexham to the north west with Shrewsbury to the south east creating a busy, car dominated town centre at Ellesmere .

**Active Travel**

**Walking**

- A number of PRoW and Bridleways are located within the study area creating local connectivity particularly to the east and north of Ellesmere.
- There is no circular PRoW route around The Mere.
- The Shropshire Way long distance footpath connects around 200 miles of the Shropshire Hills in the south with the historic towns in the north of the county In the study area, the route diverts through the centre of Ellesmere but predominantly follows the alignment of the Shropshire Union Canal (Llangollen Branch) to the south of the settlement.
- There are a number of local level promoted walking routes including the Meres Meander Walk and the Welshampton Walk which encourage accessible outdoor recreation for the local community as well as visitors.

**Cycling**

- National Cycle Route 455 passes through the centre of Ellesmere , following the route of the B5068 and Swan Hill and connecting Oswestry to the south west and Whitchurch to the north east.
- The route is connected to the north and south with local on-road Shropshire Cycle Routes and these link with the Shropshire Union Canal to the south Wales further north.

**Access and Recreation:**

- Open spaces in and around Ellesmere are dominated by outdoor sports provision linked to educational establishments. There is also a cricket club and football club located on the southern fringe of the settlement.
- Formal parks with green flag status are located adjacent to The Mere with a small area of natural and semi-natural green space located to the south of the town.
- Remaining open space is sparse within the town, linked mainly to amenity green space.

**Key Theme 5:  
Health and  
Wellbeing**



**Health**

**Health Deprivation**

- The IMD relating to health indicates that the southern part of Ellesmere town centre surrounding Lakelands Academy is the most health deprived part of the study area. This is identified as being in the fourth decile (the first decile is the most deprived). The landscape to the south of the town is one of the least health deprived parts of Shropshire.

**Childhood obesity**

- Ellesmere falls within an area which is identified as where approximately 22% of year 6 children are obese.

**Air Quality**

- There are no recorded AQMA within the study area.

**Wellbeing**

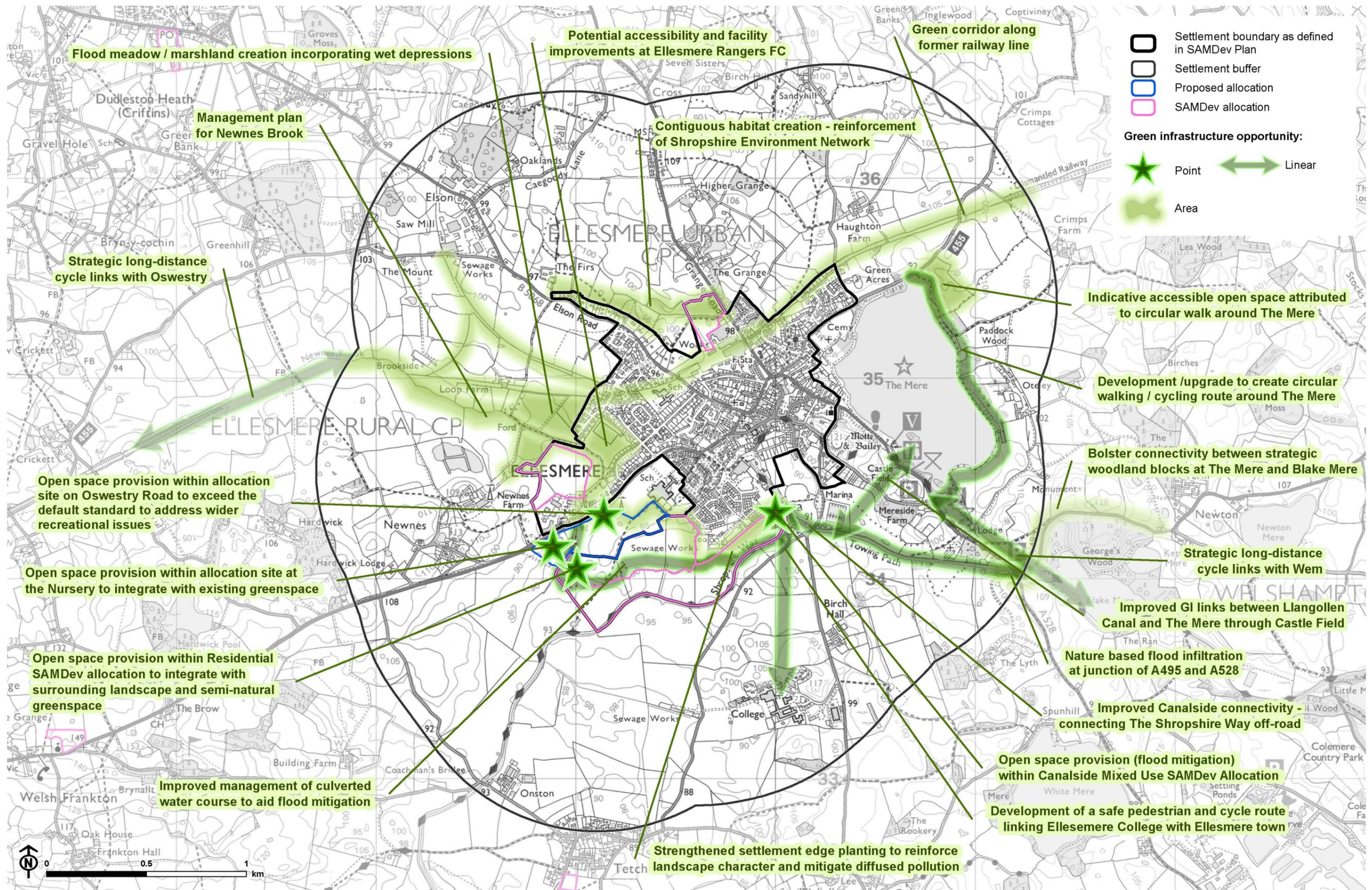
**Accessible Open Space**

- The Open Space Assessment undertaken by LUC to inform this GI Strategy identified the following baseline provision of open space.
  - Accessible Open Space: 0.31ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). Analysis shows that the majority of the town falls within 400m of such provision, however south western edges of the settlement do not.
  - Allotments: 0ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provision for Children and Teenagers: 2 spaces in total. Analysis shows that the southern part of the town is more than 800m from these.</li> <li>■ See the Open Space Assessment appended to the GI Strategy Report for more details.</li> </ul> <p><b>Noise Pollution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is identified road noise 24 hours a day on the A495 from the centre of Ellesmere to Blake Mere and the convergence with the A528.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</b></p> 	<p><b>Tree cover</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tree belts and woodland blocks are predominantly found around The Mere (broadleaved and mixed woodland) and a conifer plantation north of Elson (National Forest Inventory).</li> </ul> <p><b>Flooding Climate Change Allowance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The majority of the existing Flood Zones have been modelled as Higher Central, Central and Upper End with regard to Climate Change Allowance according to The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>5</sup>. These all indicate that flood risk in the town is likely to increase in area, resulting in greater impacts on local communities.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2018

## Green Infrastructure Opportunities



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## Key Green Infrastructure Opportunities

Theme	Green Infrastructure Opportunities
<p><b>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Shropshire Environmental Network and Natural England Habitat Network within the study area should be managed to ensure that they are enhanced in order to support wildlife populations. In particular this includes The Mere, Shropshire Union Canal, Newnes Brook, Tetchill Brook and Castle Field. These should be managed to ensure that they continue to support their functionality through enhanced local connectivity.</li> <li>■ Securing enhanced management and functionality of the Mere as a strategic habitat within Ellesmere is recommended. This should consider reinforcing the priority woodland habitat and lowland meadows and linking these ecosystems to Wildlife sites south of the town, to form multi-functional contiguous habitats will create a more resilient Country Park. Enhancement at The Mere should be considered also for the alleviation of future pressures on the cluster of Meres in the wider area, which are within easy walking distance from Ellesmere. Many of these cluster meres are designated as SSSI, SAC and Ramsar sites and are sensitive to recreational pressure and road traffic impact arising from development. New developments should review the potential impacts on these sensitive habitats and provide attractive alternative areas for recreation to help reduce recreational pressure.</li> <li>■ A management plan to tackle invasive species and to restore protected and priority species in the Newnes Brook should be developed and implanted.</li> <li>■ The Llangollen Canal is a strategic natural feature within the Ellesmere townscape and wider Shropshire. Planting to link this GI asset with The Mere through Castle Field is recommended, reflecting the Natural England habitat mapping objectives.</li> <li>■ There are a number of sites to the north of Ellesmere which have been identified for restoration / creation in the Shropshire Environment Network mapping. These include the heritage railway lines which are discussed in more depth within Theme 2, and Ellesmere Rangers FC facilities discussed in Theme 4. In addition, there is a further area identified for potential enhancement to the north of Elson Road. These are supported / recommended.</li> <li>■ The opportunity to link existing woodland blocks with the two green road corridors of the A528 and the B5068 to create a more contiguous habitat should be investigated.</li> <li>■ Enhancement of roadside verges, especially north and north-west of Ellesmere to form linked network with The Mere and associated woodland and the wider area is recommended.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The arable landscape south of the Llangollen Canal offers the potential for reinforced landscape character through woodland block reinforcement, whilst maintaining the open views across the floodplain landscape.</li> <li>■ The remnant railway lines offer a unique opportunity to create links to the industrial heritage of this area. Whilst access provision along these routes may be complex, the potential to utilise these routes as green, planted corridors, connecting through the urban fabric of Ellesmere and creating links into the surrounding countryside should be investigated.</li> <li>■ The Llangollen Canal is a strategic heritage feature within the Ellesmere townscape and wider Shropshire. Planting to link this GI asset with The Mere through Castle Field is recommended, reflecting the Natural England habitat mapping objectives. This site includes a scheduled monument, so any planting should seek to enhance the setting of this.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of the management of historic watercourse modification such as the culverted watercourse parallel to the canal in order to reduce localised flood risk is recommended.</li> <li>■ The landscape surrounding the A495 / A528 junction offers potential for flood alleviation, adjacent the Llangollen Canal. Interventions could consider appropriate nature-based solutions to flood infiltration including appropriate tree planting.</li> <li>■ Creation of flood meadows or washlands within EA Flood Zones adjacent Newnes Brook on the western fringe of Ellesmere is recommended. Such features could incorporate wet depressions within the adjacent landscape to create natural areas of attenuation alongside enhanced habitat creation.</li> <li>■ Reinforcement of buffer vegetation at settlement edge can help infiltrate diffused pollution and is recommended. This intervention would be particularly prevalent to the south of Ellesmere..</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ellesmere offers a unique opportunity to enhance the pedestrian and cycle networks for leisure and tourism, particularly connected to the waterways, such as the Llangollen Canal, The Mere and the Newnes Brook.</li> <li>■ The existing northern towpath alongside the canal could be upgraded to provide improved connectivity to The Mere. This could be promoted as a local level cycle route to further improve connectivity onto NCN 455 from the south.</li> <li>■ Multi-user access onto local level PRow routes through the replacement of stiles with gates and inclusion of new or replacement directional signs to improve usability should be considered.</li> <li>■ A circular walk around The Mere, including accessible open space, would offer enhanced local recreational value as well as improved access to a key GI asset. Such a route would also link NCN 455 with the Shropshire Way via Paddock Wood and Oteley and could provide a local health walk option.</li> <li>■ Development of a safe pedestrian / cycle route connecting Ellesmere College with Ellesmere (Ellesmere Place Plan 2019 / 2020) is recommended.</li> <li>■ Cycle corridors connecting Ellesmere with the neighbouring settlements of Oswestry and Wem utilising existing National and Local Cycle Networks and off-road connectivity wherever possible would be a strategic opportunity.</li> <li>■ Canalside enhancements are a key opportunity. The development of the canalside along with wharf / marina developments and links with the sculpture initiative and Telfords Yard (Ellesmere Place Plan 2015 / 2016) is recommended. There is potential to expand the sculpture initiative along the existing sculpture trail to foster stronger links between the canal and The Mere.</li> <li>■ Improvements to the infrastructure of The Shropshire Way long distance footpath could enhance local community use as well as improving cross-county usability.</li> <li>■ There is opportunity to improve facilities at Ellesmere Rangers FC, as identified within the Ellesmere Place Plan 2015 / 2016).</li> <li>■ Provision of recreational facilities for children and teenagers and provision of allotments within proposed allocation and SAMDev allocation sites will be a key priority. The Local Plan Review, 2018 stresses that open space requirements must exceed default standards to address recreation issues in the allocation site south of Oswestry Road. The allocation site at the Nursery on Oswestry Road has specific site guidelines according to the Local Plan Review. This includes open spaces which link to existing green spaces in the surrounding area, with the intention of creating a circular walk. Provision of an appropriate woodland buffer (minimum 10m) to Newnes Brook to create an environmental corridor is also a recommendation as is the de-culverting of Newnes Brook. Retention and enhancement of existing tree cover and buffer planting adjacent the A495.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proposed allocation and SAMDev allocation sites are located within the most health deprived parts of the study area. Open spaces should be provided in these, including children's play and / or allotments to help address health related disparities. The Local Plan Review Consultation on Preferred Sites, 2018 states that open space requirements relating to the larger allocation development sites must exceed the default standards to address recreational issues within Ellesmere.</li> <li>■ There are strategic areas where accessible semi-natural green space could be improved or created to address existing deficiencies in access. New provision could be provided along the Llangollen Canal, as part of the Mixed Use SAMDev allocation site development. Existing natural and semi-natural greenspace could be improved and extended to the south of The Mere.</li> <li>■ Buffer planting on the northern side of the A528 would reduce perceptions of road noise for recreational users in the countryside south of The Mere.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tree belts and woodland blocks around The Mere and Blake Mere could be better linked via roadside buffer vegetation. This would help create a more climate resilient tree network.</li> <li>■ Sustainable travel with specific links to tourism is a key consideration within Ellesmere – refer to Theme 4.</li> <li>■ All new planting should provide climate resilient species.</li> <li>■ Flooding is predominantly linked to surface water ponding in isolated areas throughout Ellesmere. There is opportunity to include for infiltration SUDs within developments to mitigate this type of flood risk.</li> </ul>

Summary of key opportunities						
Potential to strengthen settlement edge planting south of Ellesmere to reinforce landscape character and help mitigate diffused pollution.	✓	✓	✓			✓
Flood Meadow creation in agricultural land within Newnes Brook corridor	✓	✓	✓			✓
Implementation of a management plan for Newnes Brook	✓	✓	✓			✓
Development of a safe pedestrian and cycle route linking Ellesmere College with Ellesmere Town				✓	✓	✓
Strategic long-distance cycle links with Whitchurch and Wem should be explored				✓	✓	✓
Open space provision within the proposed allocation site on Oswestry Road to exceed the default standards to address wider recreational issues within Ellesmere -children's / teenager facilities and / or allotments integrated with existing open space and semi-natural greenspace	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Open space provision within the proposed Allocation site at the Nursery - flood alleviation, including potential de-culverting of Newnes Brook, integration with existing open space, buffer planting along the A495 and creation of a circular walk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Open space provision within SAMDev allocation north of the Canal – integration with surrounding landscape and semi-natural greenspace	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Improved habitat links between the Canal and The Mere through Castle Field	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Potential accessibility and facility improvements at Ellesmere Rangers FC				✓	✓	
Improved Canalside connectivity – creating a new off-road link between parts of the Shropshire Way Long Distance Footpath				✓	✓	✓
Bolster connectivity between strategic woodland blocks along A495	✓	✓	✓			✓
Nature based flood infiltration at junction of A495 and A528	✓	✓	✓			✓
Development /upgrade to create circular walking / cycling route around The Mere				✓	✓	✓
Improved management of culverted water course to aid flood mitigation			✓			✓
Creation / improvement of existing green corridor along former railway line with urban greening interventions throughout the urban form of Ellesmere	✓	✓				✓