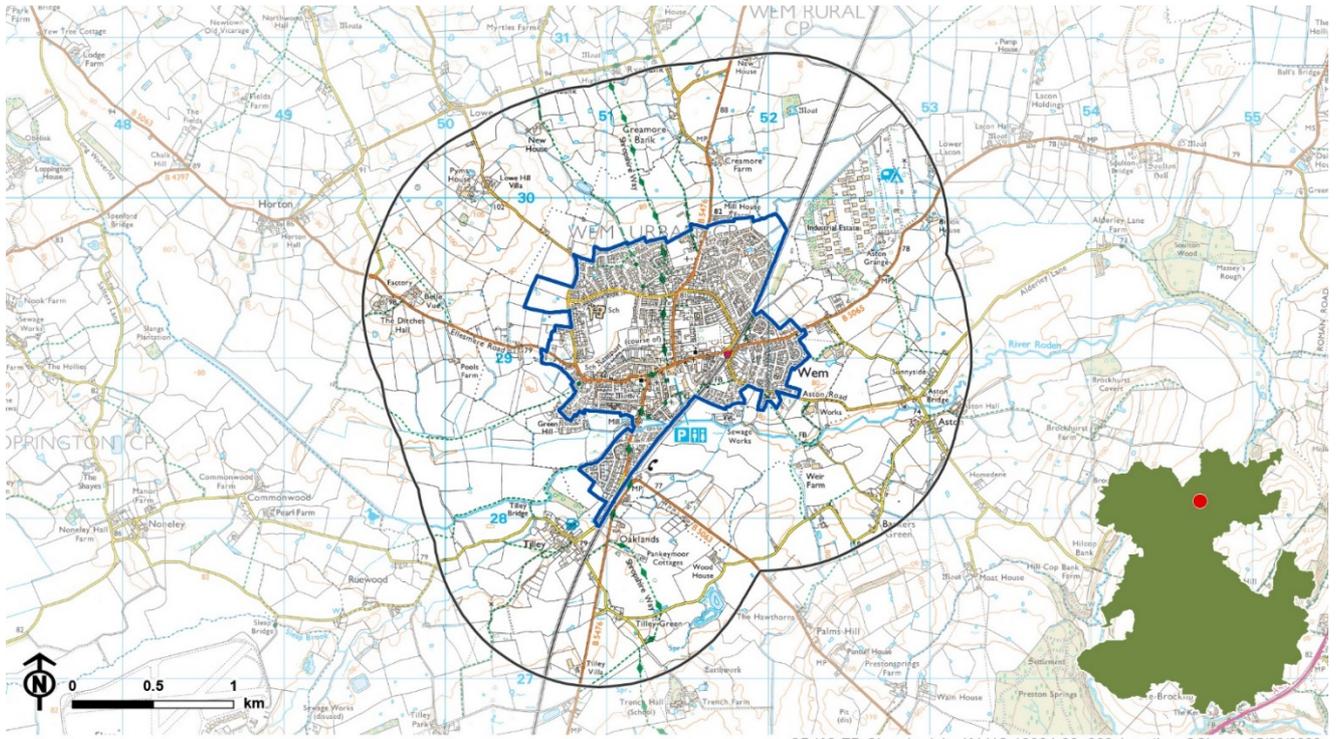


Key Centre – Wem

Location



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CB:KC EB:Chamberlain_K LUC 10924-00_00_Location_OSbase 05/02/2020 Source: SC, LUC, OS



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Summary of Settlement Study Area and Location

Introduction

The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) identifies Wem as a Key Centre. This green Infrastructure Strategy has defined the study area as a 1km buffer around the settlement limits. The identified study area is approximately 11km equidistant from the Key Centre of Ellesmere (to the north west) and the Strategic Site of Clive Barracks (north east).

Wem is a small market town located in north Shropshire approximately 12km north of Shrewsbury. The name of the town derives from the Old English word 'Wamm' which refers to the surrounding marshy land located on the northern bank of the River Roden which flows to the south of the town. Wem has a population of just over 6000 and the Town Council area covers 366ha with a population density of 16 people per hectare.

Development context

Existing development allocations in the town are set out in the SAMDev (2015)², 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, 2015³):

- Site WEM003: Land off Pyms Road, Wem. Site provision: 100 dwellings
- Site WEM012: Land at Tilley, Wem. Site provision: 10 dwellings

Existing Employment land allocations (SAMDev Sites, 2015):

- Site ELR031: Land adjacent to Shawbury Road. Provision: 4.0 ha

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

- Site WEM010: Land off Pyms Road, Wem (west). Site Area: 4.2ha. Site capacity: Approx 120 dwellings
- Site WEM025: Land off Trentham Road, Wem (north west). Site Area 1.3ha. Site capacity: Approx 30 dwellings
- Site WEM033: Land off Whitchurch Road, Wem (north). Site Area: 3ha. Site capacity: Approx 60 dwellings.

The Local Plan Review will seek to achieve balanced housing and employment growth in Wem of around 600 dwellings and 6 hectares of employment development between 2016 and 2038. Three preferred housing sites are identified for the town through the Local Plan Review, all located on the northern fringes of the settlement. These are anticipated to deliver around 210 dwellings leaving around 95 dwellings to be delivered on windfall sites within the development boundary. It is anticipated that there is sufficient windfall site capacity to deliver the required 2ha of employment land in edge of settlement locations over the Plan period to 2036.

² Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015

³ Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015



Wem Recreation Ground



The Shropshire Way Long Distance Footpath



Play Area on Isherwoods Way



The Thomas Adams School Playing Field

Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Constraints

Theme	Existing Green Infrastructure Assets / Constraints
<p>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</p> 	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Designated Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no local or national ecological designations within the study area. ■ There are SSSI Impact Risk Zones which run through the study area, associated with Ruewood Pastures SSSI to the west. These zones relate to air pollution and are unlikely to apply to residential developments. <p>Notable and Priority Habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Priority Habitats are sparse within the study area, concentrated on small woodland blocks located adjacent the River Roden, Wem Industrial Estate and the grounds of historic buildings such as the Old Rectory to the west of the study area and groupings of trees in the grounds of Wem castle. ■ Shropshire Environment Network (SEN) Corridors are located within the survey area along the River Roden, arterial roads (B5065) and the railway line. SEN Restoration and Creation areas have been identified adjacent to the railway lane on the eastern fringe of the town and along Public Rights of Way, linking into publicly accessible open space at Wem Recreation Ground and Love Lane Allotments. ■ There are no Local Wildlife Sites within the study area. Ruewood Pastures Reserve is located to the west of Wem approximately 150m outside of the study area boundary. ■ Roadside Natural Verges are located along all arterial roads into Wem with some along the B5066, Love Hill Road and Whitchurch Road in particular, extending into the urban limits of the settlement. <p>Species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a significant Great Crested Newt habitat to the north-west of Wem in ditches and hedge lines adjacent to Lowe Hill Road. Bat records are scattered throughout the study area, linked to the urban centre of Wem as well as outlying farmsteads. Otters have been recorded to the south of the settlement along the River Roden. ■ Flower, plant and invertebrate records are largely linked to the river and road corridors of the study area. <p>Geology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no recorded RIGS within the study area.
<p>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</p> 	<p>Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The landscape surrounding Wem is characterised as Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain⁴. The landscape is further defined within three Landscape Character Types, these being; Principal Settled Farmlands, Settled Pastoral Farmlands and Lowland Moors. The landscape is predominantly flat and open with far-ranging views and is characterised by mixed farming practices in irregular fields which are often bounded by wet drains and ditches as well as hedges³. ■ The rail line and industrial estate exert human influences on an otherwise rural landscape. ■ The land within the study area is predominantly classified as Grade 3 for agriculture with smaller areas of Grade 2 located to the north east/east of the town. Sections of the study area to the west are under Countryside Stewardship schemes. <p>Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are two conservation areas in Wem, one at Tiley to the south of the town and the other

⁴ The Shropshire Landscape Typology, 2006

	<p>encompassing the majority of the central core of Wem itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wem Castle, located within the settlement boundary, is a Scheduled Monument. It is an example of a castle located to the south west of St.Peter and St.Paul's Church. Another Scheduled Monument is located to the north of the settlement, a moated site located remotely, east of the B5476. ■ A host of listed buildings (Grade II* and II) are located within the centre of the town along the High Street, Market Street, Noble Street and Chapel Street.
<p>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</p> 	<p>Freshwater Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The River Roden passes along the southern part of the settlement and flows from west to east. An un-named tributary dissects Wem to the south, flowing east to west. Wem is located within the catchment of the River Tern. ■ There are several wet ditches and drains which form part of the farming landscape and feed the network of small streams in and around Wem. <p>Flooding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The majority of the town of Wem lies north of the River Roden, almost entirely within Flood Zone 1. Land around the River Roden, including some properties around Roden Grove, Mill Street, Sungrove, Brook Drive and to the east of Wem, parts of Aston Road, lie within Flood Zones 2 and 3 predominantly. ■ An unnamed watercourse flows into Wem in the south to join the River Roden; due to the low topography some properties fall into Flood Zone 2 and 3 of this watercourse, namely Dranwell Lane and Wellgate. ■ The Shropshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment⁵ states that the surface water risk in Wem is mainly from runoff associated with the higher ground of the town and flows towards the River Roden. There are notable large areas of ponding in all events around Thomas Adams School and the fields surrounding it also extending down to Bankhouse Lane and Fothergill Way. ■ There are formal embankment flood defences located on the River Roden within Wem, maintained by the Environment Agency and currently rated in fair to good condition. <p>Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. The entire study area surrounding Wem is located within a NVZ. <p>Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Shropshire Outline Water Cycle Study (2010) details that in relation to SUDs, combined approaches are likely to be suitable although new Waste Water Treatment Works infrastructure will need to be provided prior to development and in agreement with the EA.

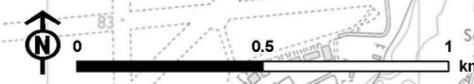
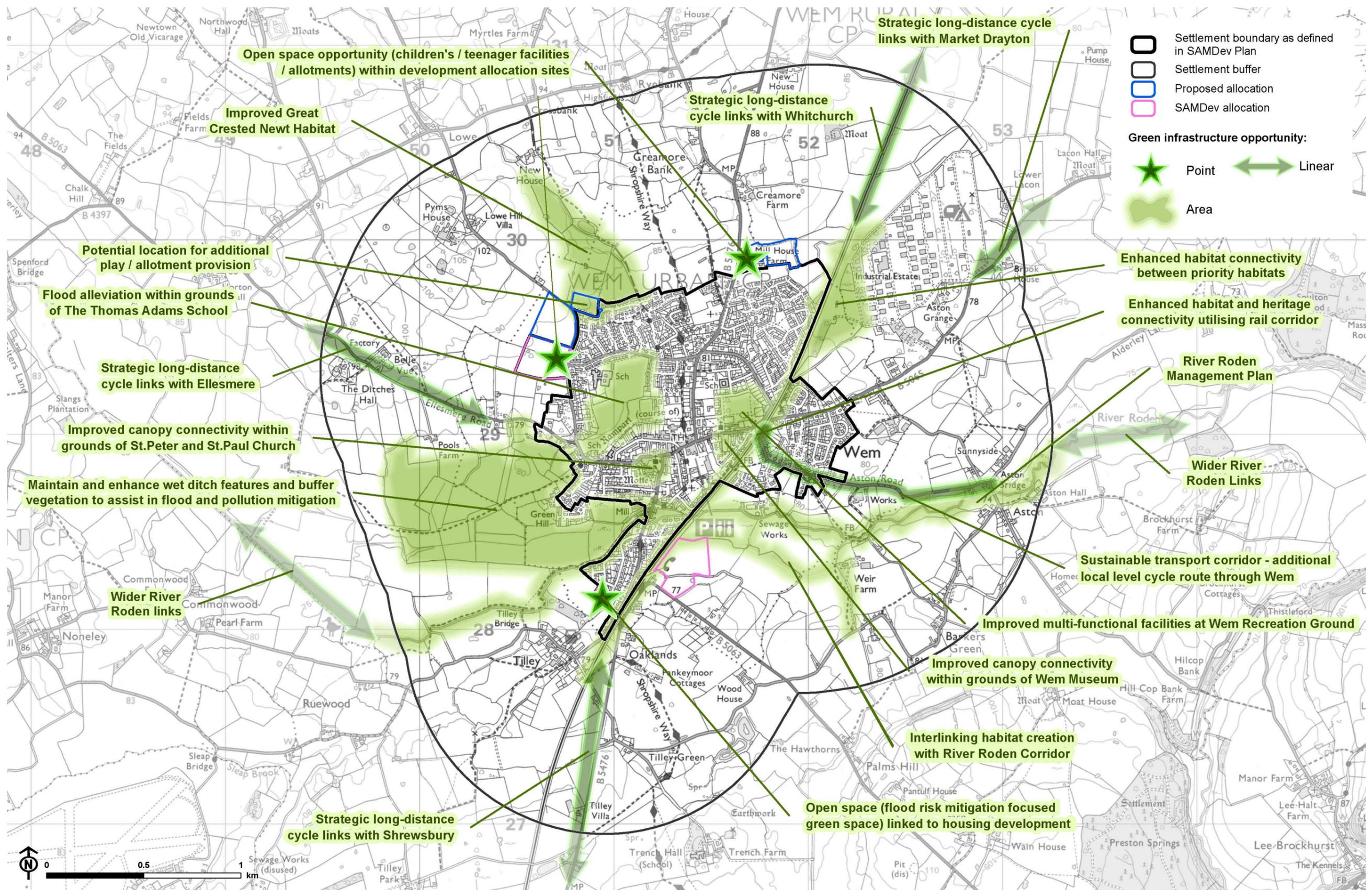
⁵ Shropshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2018

<p>Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation</p> 	<p>Transport context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The B5476 passes through the centre of Wem connecting to Whitchurch in the north and to Shrewsbury in the south. The B5063 runs through the town from the west to the south east and the B5065 enters the town from the north east. ■ Two mainline railways converge in the town connecting Cheshire and Wales with central Shropshire. <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Walking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Public Rights of Way Network (local and national walking routes) is extensive around Wem, providing a number of links from the town into the wider countryside. ■ 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. The route passes through the centre of Wem before splitting with a route traversing south and connecting with eastern Shrewsbury, and a route heading south east along the route of the River Roden. <p>Cycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A number of local Shropshire cycle routes are located within the study area. These are located along Lowe Hill Road, Whitchurch Road and Soulton Road and provide onward connectivity to NCN 455 to the north west and NCN 45 to the east. <p>Access and Recreation</p> <p>Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Open spaces in and around Wem are dominated by outdoor sports provision, including recreation grounds, a football clubs and numerous pitches a cricket club, and school playing fields. ■ There are pockets of natural and semi-natural green space located on the urban fringe of Wem. ■ Remaining open space is largely linked to church and school grounds and cemeteries, the allotments at Love Lane, playing pitches and several small amenity green spaces scattered throughout the town.
<p>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> 	<p>Health</p> <p>Health Deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The IMD relating to health indicates that the central part of the study area, the southern part of the urban core of Wem is more health deprived than the north. The countryside to the north of Wem is located within some of the least health deprived parts of Shropshire. <p>Childhood Obesity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Childhood obesity remains consistent within the study area at around 8.6% for Reception aged children and 18% for Year 6 age group. <p>Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no recorded AQMA within the study area. <p>Wellbeing</p> <p>Accessible Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Open Space Assessment undertaken by LUC to inform this GI Strategy identified the following baseline provision of open space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accessible Open Space: 0.39ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). Analysis shows that the majority of the town falls within 400m of such provision, however the western periphery of the settlement does not. – Allotments: 0.15ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). Analysis shows that the majority of the settlement is within the 1.2km access buffer for provision apart from a small section to the south. – Provision for Children and Teenagers: 9 spaces in total. Analysis shows that the entire

	<p>settlement falls within 800m of such provision,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ See the Open Space Assessment appended to the GI Strategy Report for more details. <p>Noise Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The areas around roads within the Wem study area are not affected by significant road noise levels.
<p>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</p> 	<p>Tree cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The study area is sparsely populated with tree blocks. There are a few broadleaved woodland areas located around Wem Industrial Estate to the east of the town (National Forest Inventory). ■ Individual trees are scattered throughout the urban form of Wem, linked to amenity green spaces and historic estates. <p>Climate change allowance flood risk modelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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 Assessment⁶. These all indicate that flood risk in the town is likely to increase in area, resulting in greater impacts on local communities.

⁶ Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2018

Green Infrastructure Opportunities



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CB:KC EB:Chamberlain_K LUC 10924-02_003_Wem 23/07/2020 Source: OS, LUC

Key Green Infrastructure Opportunities

Theme	Green Infrastructure Opportunities
<p>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The River Roden forms a key habitat corridor. A comprehensive management plan could be developed to bolster connectivity by creating and reinforcing existing interlinking habitats such as hedgerows and wet ditches with existing woodland blocks, thereby creating a more resilient and diverse habitat mosaic. ■ The rail corridor and Wem Industrial Estate could be further linked through native shrub and tree planting, joining sparse patches of priority habitat within Shropshire Environment Network Corridors to create a reinforced habitat network to the east of Wem. ■ The Great Crested Newt habitat near Lowe Hill Road could be strengthened and improved through increased management practice of wet drains and small ponds and reinforcement of cross-linking habitats such as the use of marginal grasses and natural roadside verges to ensure longevity of species in this area. ■ Improvement of canopy coverage between St Peters and St Pauls Church is recommended. Church grounds offer a wealth of biodiversity opportunities, particularly within an urban setting. Bat roosts are a priority species feature in these areas. Canopies can be better linked through appropriate new tree planting and this can also deliver climate change objectives.
<p>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhancement of the landscape character associated with open views within the floodplain area surrounding the River Roden. This could include links to the River Roden management plan with a focus on managing invasive and overgrown species. ■ Tilley Conservation Area and Wem Conservation Area could be physically linked by reinforced planting along the railway line. Further urban greening, including street trees could help reinforce character and provide multi-functional GI benefits. Buffer vegetation would also help mitigate against the human exertion of the rail line on the rural character of the area. ■ The Scheduled Monument to the north of Wem would benefit from improved accessibility from the northern part of the settlement.
<p>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The playing fields at Thomas Adams School provide an opportunity for flood attenuation and / or infiltration to alleviate surface water flooding. The functionality of the playing fields can be maintained with the addition of peripheral swales and / or ditches. ■ Enhancement of the ditch network in the farming landscape west of Wem is recommended to create increased flood attenuation. ■ Reinforcement of buffer vegetation at field boundaries and settlement edge is recommended to help intercept diffused pollution. This intervention would be particularly prevalent to the south and west of Bankhouse Lane and Fothergill Way within the area already identified for ditch enhancement. ■ All developments within flood sensitive areas in and around Wem will be subject to rigorous flood risk assessments and will be required to consider alleviation / attenuation methods. This would be particularly apparent in the SAMDev housing allocation off Roden Grove and the SAMDev employment allocation north of Shawbury Road which are within proximity of the EA Flood Zones.

<p>Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improvements to part of The Shropshire Way long distance footpath and Aston Road in the south of Wem to include for local level cycle infrastructure would create an additional sustainable travel corridor are recommended. This route could be further supported with green infrastructure including street trees and urban greening. ■ Cycle corridors connecting Wem with the neighbouring settlements of Ellesmere, Whitchurch, Market Drayton and Shrewsbury utilising existing National and Local Cycle Networks and off-road connectivity wherever possible would be a strategic opportunity. ■ Improvement of existing footpath infrastructure through access enhancements (removal of stiles and replacement with multi-access kissing gates) should be investigated. ■ Particular emphasis should be placed on connecting new development with the existing PRoW network and in particular The Shropshire Way long distance footpath which plays a key role in recreational provision within Wem. ■ Whilst the Open Space Assessment undertaken by LUC to support this Green Infrastructure Strategy does not indicate a deficit in semi-natural green space, allotments or children’s play, new development should seek to incorporate open space on site wherever possible. Where developers are not able to make provision on site, there should be contribution to off-site play or allotment facilities to meet local need. ■ Wem Recreation Ground is a significant local facility. The improvement of multi-functional GI interventions could be incorporated within the framework of the existing park. This could include local food production such as community orchards or improved play facilities including natural play. ■ There is potential to improve existing sport and recreational facilities at Wem Cricket Club. ■ As highlighted during the town council consultation, there are management issues relating to some of the publicly accessible open spaces including Isherwoods Way, Orchard Way Play Area, Wimott Meadow and Fothergill Way. Standardisation of management and maintenance practice is recommended to ensure high-quality open space provision is continued.
<p>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is opportunity to increase access to open space in and around Wem Town Centre. Within the centre, existing sites such as Wem Recreation Ground will play a key role in providing high-quality accessible greenspace. ■ The Wem Place Plan (2019/20) discusses the opportunities for allotments and children's play. Development sites including the proposed allocation and SAMDev sites on the northern fringe of the town will play a key role in providing such facilities.
<p>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reinforcement and connection between tree blocks will create a more climate resilient green infrastructure. Urban greening within Wem is a key opportunity, particularly within publicly accessible spaces such as St.Peter and St.Paul Church, the grounds of The Thomas Adams School, Wem Recreation Ground and Whitchurch Road Cemetery. ■ Flood resilience should be applied to all developments within Wem and particularly within Flood Zones 2 and 3. ■ All new planting should provide climate resilient species.

Summary of key opportunities						
Sustainable transport corridor through Wem town centre				✓	✓	✓
River Roden Management Plan and practical interventions	✓	✓	✓			✓
Open space provision attributed to new development allocations south of Wem – multi-functional flood risk mitigation and accessible semi-natural green space	✓	✓	✓			✓
Wet ditch habitat managed and enhanced west of Wem and north of the River Roden	✓	✓	✓			✓
Strategic long-distance cycle links with Ellesmere, Whitchurch, Market Drayton and Shrewsbury should be explored				✓	✓	✓
Open space provision within proposed allocation sites to north or Wem (Children's / Teenager facilities and / or allotments)				✓	✓	✓
Flood Alleviation within grounds of The Thomas Adams School	✓		✓			✓
Improved canopy connectivity within grounds of St.Peter and St.Paul Church – bat roost	✓	✓				✓
Improved canopy connectivity within grounds of Wem Museum – bat roost	✓	✓				✓
Improved multi-functional facilities at Wem Recreation Ground	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Interlinking habitat creation within River Roden Corridor – reinforcing existing woodland blocks and grassland habitats	✓	✓	✓			✓
Enhanced habitat and heritage connectivity utilising rail corridor	✓	✓				✓
Reinforced habitat between priority habitats along rail corridor and nearby industrial estate	✓	✓				✓
Improved Great Crested Newt habitat north of Wem with links to natural roadside verges and reinforcement of landscape character including wet ditches	✓	✓	✓			✓