

***Non-Technical
Summary for
Strategic
Environmental
Assessment (SEA)
of the Warrington
Draft Local
Transport Plan 4
(LTP4)***

***Environmental
Report***

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Quality information

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction to the Environmental Report

This document is a non-technical summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report. It has been prepared to document the SEA process which has been undertaken to support the preparation of the Warrington Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4).

The Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) sets out Warrington Borough Council's vision and strategy for the long term development of transport solutions in the borough. It will provide the framework for how transport will support the economic, social and environmental development of Warrington over the plan period and will replace the existing local transport plan (LTP3).

The new plan will draw on the wider policies of the council, national transport strategy / policy, and potential sources of funding streams.

The LTP4 will be made available for consultation, accompanied by the Environmental Report (and this Non-Technical Summary) which documents the SEA process.

2. Scoping

2.1 Background

Scoping is the process of gathering information about the Plan area and factors likely to be affected by the Plan. This information helps to identify what the key issues are and which of these should be the focus of the SEA process.

To record this process, a Scoping Report was prepared and consulted upon from July - August, 2018, covering the following key elements:

Providing an outline of the Plan

There is a need to set out the aims and objectives of the Plan to provide the context within which the SEA is being undertaken.

Establishing the current and projected baseline

An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SEA involves reviewing the situation now for a range of environmental issues.

Doing so helps to enable identification of those key environmental issues that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for the appraisal of significant effects.

Just as it is important for the scope of SEA to be informed by an understanding of the current baseline conditions, it is also important to ensure that thought is given to how baseline conditions might 'evolve' in the future under the no plan / business as usual scenario. Doing so helps to identify key sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for appraising significant effects.

Undertaking a contextual review

Another key element of the scoping process is to undertake a review of national, regional and local policies, plans and programmes. The aim of this exercise is to draw out any key issues and environmental protection objectives that ought to be a focus of the SEA.

Establishing key issues

Key issues are drawn from the contextual review and baseline analysis, helping to inform the development of an SEA Framework of objectives and criteria. This provides the methodology for undertaking the environmental assessments.

2.2 Key sustainability issues

Table 2.1 presents a list of the key issues identified through scoping. The issues are grouped under a series of environmental / sustainability themes. For each issue / factor, a 'scoping outcome' is provided.

Essentially, this is a decision as to whether the LTP4 could lead to significant effects on the issue/factor and should therefore be a focus of the SEA.

If it is unlikely that significant effects will occur, then these factors have not been included for further consideration within the SEA.

Table 2.1: Key sustainability issues identified through scoping

SEA Theme	Key issues and scoping outcome
Economy and regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pockets of Deprivation – Deprivation across the borough as a whole is below regional and national averages, but there has been a slight worsening in the overall index of deprivation from 2010-2015. However, there are inequalities across the borough with several communities within the inner areas of Warrington falling into the 10% most deprived areas in England. Access to services and jobs is a key factor that can help to address deprivation in such areas. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA.• Employment needs – The 2016 Economic Development Needs Assessment identifies a need for an additional 276 hectares of employment land. Transport and access will play an important role in ensuring attractive sites come forward for employment use. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA.• Economic Growth – There is a need to continue to promote sustainable economic growth and to support aspirations to transform Warrington from a new town to a 'New City', with corresponding economic growth. There will be a need to support growth with adequate transport infrastructure, with HS2 forming an important catalyst for further growth in the longer term. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA.

SEA Theme	Key issues and scoping outcome
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population – There are significant changes to the structure of the population anticipated with projections suggesting there will be a 50% increase in the population aged over 65 years by 2036. There is a need to ensure that evidence based interventions which promote healthy ageing and retain independence are prioritised and promoted. This will include consideration of mobility, movement and accessibility. Therefore, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • Fear of Crime and Antisocial behaviour – Household surveys show that fear of crime at night is higher than national figures, and substantially higher in more deprived neighbourhoods. It is important to ensure that people feel safe when travelling, especially if levels of walking and cycling are to be increased. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • Pockets of Health Deprivation – Health deprivation relative to other boroughs has worsened since 2010, with approximately 32% of the local population living in areas which are ranked amongst the most health-deprived in the country. Inner areas of the borough are affected most severely, but there are pockets across other Warrington neighbourhoods that are ranked amongst the 20% most deprived nationally. Tackling deprivation can be influenced by transport and accessibility and therefore this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • Green Infrastructure – Green infrastructure provides multi-functional benefits for health and wellbeing and should be protected and enhanced. • Obesity rates amongst adults are rising and currently exceed the average for England, contributing to actual and forecast increases in a number health conditions. Opportunities to maximise physical activity, active travel and healthy eating should be explored. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • Access to Primary Care: The NHS Strategic Estates Plan has identified that there are areas within the borough that currently have insufficient capacity to accommodate new residents, and will become increasingly more constrained over the plan period with further development. This factor has been scoped-in to the SEA.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of Employment – Travel to work by public transport / walking / cycling figures for Warrington are lower than regional or national average. The use of car is high and the problem is exacerbated by the New Town Development pattern. This factor is therefore scoped-in to the SEA. In the long term, the completion of HS2 could have benefits for employment access to and from a wider catchment area. • There are rising traffic volumes and traffic congestion - The scale and distribution of new development is also likely to contribute to further increases in car usage across the Borough. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • High levels of commuting into and out of the Borough – Patterns of economic growth and housing delivery could potentially help to reduce the amount of commuting in the longer term. This factor is therefore scoped-in to the SEA.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing delivery - There is a pattern of solid housing completions over the last 5 years, with the majority taking place on brownfield land. However, a continued need for housing delivery will mean that greenfield / greenbelt land is likely to be developed on the urban fringes. This will require supporting infrastructure and consideration of patterns of movement. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • Ageing population - To address the impact of an ageing population here is a need to ensure there are sufficient homes that are accessible, adaptable and support care in the community and independent living despite changing requirements caused by age, disability or illness. The LTP4 could potentially have an influence on this factor and it is therefore scoped-in to the SEA.

SEA Theme	Key issues and scoping outcome
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution, air quality and climate change – Two AQMAs are designated within the Borough. One is related to the motorway network; and one is associated with the town centre ring road and link roads. There is a need to improve air quality in these areas in particular, and therefore this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. • Quality of land and waterways in the Borough – There are a large number of potentially contaminated sites within the Borough and a significant length of Warrington's rivers are graded as having poor chemical and biological quality. Transport measures could potentially involve the consideration of water travel and / or walking and cycling along routes alongside water courses. This factor is therefore scoped-in to the SEA. • Soil quality – Warrington contains considerable areas of Agricultural Land classified as Grade 2 and 3a (i.e. Best and Most Versatile). However, the LTP4 is unlikely to lead to a direct loss of such resources, so this topic is scoped-out of the SEA. • Mineral resources – There is a need to protect mineral resources and supporting infrastructure from sterilisation. Transport schemes can have an effect on minerals through a requirement for construction materials. However, the scope of influence that the LTP4 will have on materials choice is limited. This factor is therefore scoped-out of the SEA.
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and enhancement of heritage assets – There is a significant number of historic assets in the Borough & a number of buildings / monuments have been identified as being in vulnerable or deteriorating condition. The LTP4 has the potential to have positive or negative effects upon cultural heritage, and this factor is therefore scoped-in to the SEA. • Historic Environment – In addition to designated assets, there is a range of locally important buildings and features with historic and cultural value. This also includes a number of historic field patterns, areas of archaeological potential and the form of the built environment in settlements, which gives them their sense of place. This factor is therefore scoped-in to the SEA. • Landscape character – There is a need to preserve and enhance the character of Warrington's countryside, whilst recognising the need to release Green Belt land. Though this is an important issue, the LTP4 is unlikely to have a significant effect on landscapes as it does not involve large-scale infrastructure schemes and would not lead to a loss of land in the greenbelt or countryside. The potential for positive effects is also considered to be unlikely. Consequently, this factor is scoped-out of the SEA.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection & Enhancement of Biodiversity and geodiversity Assets – There are significant nature conservation and wider green infrastructure assets in the borough that need to be protected, enhanced and made more resilient. • Water quality and air quality can have a detrimental effect upon certain wildlife habitats and species. • The LTP4 has the potential to have significant effects (either positive or negative), and is therefore scoped-in to the SEA.

SEA Theme	Key issues and scoping outcome
Climate Change and resource use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood protection in the borough – Flooding throughout the borough has the potential to disrupt transport networks and access to services. Consequently, this factor is scoped-in to the SEA. <li>• Renewable energy and energy efficiency – There is a need for a more pro-active approach to energy production and usage. An increased use of electric vehicles could put increasing pressure on the electricity grid. However, it is unlikely that the LTP4 can have a significant influence upon energy infrastructure. Therefore, this factor is scoped-out of the SEA. <li>• Amount of waste entering land fill – There are European and National targets for waste reduction and an increase in reuse, recycling and composting. However, the LTP4 is unlikely to have a significant influence upon waste and recycling. Therefore, this factor is scoped-out of the SEA.

2.3 The SEA Framework

The sustainability issues identified through scoping have been used to establish eighteen environmental objectives, which have been grouped under eight ‘SEA themes’ in **Table 2.2** below.

Taken together; the SEA themes, objectives and supporting criteria make-up the ‘SA Framework’, which provides the basis for undertaking appraisals.

Table 2.2: The ‘SEA framework’

SEA Theme	SEA objectives
Economy and regeneration	1. Support the growth of a modern economy which helps to address inequalities and deprivation.
	2. Reduce poverty, deprivation and social exclusion and secure economic inclusion
Health and Wellbeing	3. Improve community safety and reduce the fear of crime and disorder.
	4. Provide, protect or enhance leisure opportunities, recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to the countryside
	5. Ensure good access to health services.
Accessibility	6. Support sustainable patterns of economic growth by; securing improvements to transport networks, ensuring good access to jobs and services, and enabling sustainable modes of travel.
Housing	7. Support sustainable patterns of housing growth.
Natural Resources	8. Protect, manage and improve water quality.
	9. Protect, manage and improve air quality.
Historic environment	10. Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings.
	11. Ensure high quality and sustainable design for transport infrastructure, spaces and the public realm that is appropriate to the locality.
Biodiversity	12. Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity habitats and species.
Climate Change: Flooding and resilience	13. Ensure the Borough is prepared for climate change, particularly the risks of flooding.

3. Appraisal methods

3.1 Appraisal methods

This chapter sets out the methods and assumptions for undertaking the appraisals. The SEA Framework set out in **Table 2.2** is at the heart of the appraisal process and forms the basis for structuring the assessments.

The appraisals identify and evaluate 'likely significant effects' on the baseline / likely future baseline associated with the draft Plan (and any reasonable alternatives), drawing on the sustainability topics and objectives as a methodological framework.

It is important to note that effects have been predicted based upon the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the nature of effects (including magnitude, spatial coverage and duration), the sensitivity of receptors, and the likelihood of effects occurring as far as possible.

The potential for 'cumulative' effects has also been considered. The effect 'characteristics' are described within the appraisal as appropriate under each sustainability theme / objective. A table is also presented for each topic, summarising the predicted effects and their characteristics (i.e. namely whether they are significant or not).

To aid in the communication of findings, the effects of the Plan (and reasonable alternatives) have been illustrated by using the following symbols, which highlight whether effects are significant or not. The nature of uncertain effects have also been identified, for example, an uncertain negative or an uncertain positive effect

++	The policy is likely to have a significant positive effect .
+	The policy is likely to have a minor positive effect .
0	The policy is likely to have a neutral effect .
-	The policy is likely to have a minor negative effect .
--	The policy is likely to have a significant negative effect .
?	There are uncertainties with regards to the predicted effects

3.2 Assumptions

When undertaking the appraisals, the following factors have been considered:

- The effects associated with the Plan should be considered in the context of what would occur in the absence of the Plan (i.e. the projected baseline position). In the absence of a new transport plan for Warrington, there would still be national and local policy, programmes and schemes to consider. Therefore the effects of the LTP4 should be predicted in the context of how the LTP4 is likely to lead to a more positive or negative effects when compared to a less proactive approach.
- Significant effects will only be identified if there is likely to be a tangible change to the projected baseline.
- It is assumed that detailed effects associated with specific transport schemes would be dealt with at the Planning stage through appropriate assessments (which might include EIA). The appraisal of LTP4 is focused on strategic matters.
- Where routine mitigation measures could be implemented to reduce potential negative effects, this will be taken into account in the appraisals.

4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives

4.1 Introduction

A key part of the SA process is to consider whether there are different ways in which the vision and objectives of the Plan can be achieved. In this case, the Plan seeks to achieve a well-connected place with high quality walking, cycling and public transport networks. There is also a need to support economic growth.

There are strategic decisions to make about what form of transport measures to focus efforts and funding towards. In this regard, three reasonable options have been identified as follows:

1. Focus on a mix of sustainable travel (walking, cycling and improvement of existing public transport networks) and traffic management measures.
2. A new mass transit system to be implemented alongside traffic management measures and sustainable travel. For this option, there would be a need for substantial investment in a new transit system, which could mean that there is less (but still some) investment in traffic management and sustainable travel.
3. Sole focus on sustainable modes of travel. This would involve greater investment sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling infrastructure and supporting measures (awareness raising, training, technological improvements to public transport etc.).

4.2 Appraisal findings

Each of the three strategic options has been appraised against the SEA framework and the findings are included in detail within **Appendix B** of the Environmental Report.

The effects are summarised below:

- Option 2 generates the most significant positive effects overall. In particular, this option best supports economic growth and housing development, which are crucial elements of the emerging Local Plan for Warrington. This option is also most positive in terms of improving accessibility for a wider range of communities and achieving improvements in air quality and contributing to climate change mitigation.
- However, this option does have the potential to generate some minor negative effects which would not occur for the other two options. These are related to the potential effects of the physical infrastructure needed to support a mass transit system.
- Whilst Option 3 would have no negative effects upon environmental factors, the positive effects are not significant for any factors. This approach may also not help to support the growth of housing that is required to support the population of Warrington.
- Option 2 does generate significant positive effects for health, wellbeing, air quality and climate change. However, there is a degree of uncertainty. Whilst it does not generate the minor negative effects that Option 2 could create, Option 2 is less positive with regards to accessibility improvements and support for housing and employment growth.

	Option 1: Traffic management and Sustainable travel	Option 2 Traffic management, Sustainable travel + Mass Transit	Option 3. Great focus on Sustainable modes of transport only
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	+	+ - ?	+ ?
Built and natural heritage	+	+	0
Economy and regeneration	+	++	+ ?
Health and Wellbeing	++ ?	++ -	+
Accessibility	+	++	+ ?
Climate Change and Resource Use	++ ?	++ -	+
Natural Resources: Air quality	++ ?	++	+
Natural Resources: Water quality	+ ?	+	+
Natural Resources: Soil and Land	?	- ?	0
Housing	+	++	-

4.3 Rationale for the preferred approach

The Councils preferred approach is broadly reflective of Option 2, in the sense that it involves the inclusion of a broad range of policy measures to deliver the vision and objectives of the Plan. Of particular note is the commitment to the development of a mass transit system and the intention to explore options for its development.

The reasons why the Council has adopted this approach are outlined below:

- To have a transformative effect on the town so that the car is not the dominant mode of travel there is a need to deliver improvements to the walking and cycling network. An approach that does not include a strategy for increasing the uptake and experience of walking and cycling is therefore considered to be inappropriate.
- To achieve ambitious targets in the use of public transport networks, there is a need to transform the public transport network. The Council commissioned a study to explore how such improvements could be achieved, and a potential mass transit network has been identified as an appropriate way of achieving this.
- There is also a need to manage demand for private car travel and improve the efficiency and connectivity of networks. An approach that does not involve such measures would make it more difficult to achieve sustainable economic growth. Demand management also works hand-in-hand with measures to improve public transport and active modes of travel.

5. Appraisal of the draft Plan

5.1 Introduction

The effects of the draft Plan policies are summarised in this section for each of the SEA Objectives. An overall summary of the effects is provided for each of the policy groups / chapters within the draft Local Plan followed by a discussion of the effects of the plan considered ‘as a whole’.

Each individual policy is considered within the full SEA Report with an explanation as to why effects are considered to be positive or negative, and minor or significant.

The policy groupings are set out below.

- ATP – Active Travel Policies
- STCP – Smarter Travel Choices Policies
- RS – Road Safety Policies
- PTP – Passenger Transport Policies
- CFP – Cleaner Fuel Policies
- NMP – Network Management Policies
- AMP – Asset Management Policies
- FMP – Freight Management Policies

5.2 Effects of the Plan on SEA Objective 1: Economy and regeneration

The effects of the Plan on the economy are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	+

Overall a **significant positive effect** is predicted as improvements to the transport network are critical to support a modern economy. In particular measures to; reduce car usage, improve accessibility, strengthen and expand public transport network, enable more environmental friendly travel, and freight management will help to transform the way that people and goods are transported. A number of policies also seek to ensure that deprived communities are supported.

5.3 Effects of the Plan on SEA Objective 2: Social inclusion

The effects of the Plan on social inclusion are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STC	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	+	+	0	++	+?	+	+	0

Overall a **significant positive effect** is predicted in relation to SEA Objective 2. This is largely due to the significant effects generated by the passenger transport policies which could help to improve access to transport for disadvantaged groups. Positive effects are also generated from a range of other policies.

5.4 Effects upon SEA Objective 3: Community Safety

The effects of the Plan on community safety are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	++	+	++	+	c	0	0	0

Overall a **significant positive effect** is predicted in relation to SEA Objective 3. This is largely due to the significant effects generated by the active travel policies and road safety policies. The Plan is likely to encourage greater usage of services, which can contribute to improved perceptions of safety with regards to crime. There are also direct measures to improve road safety.

5.5 Effects of the Plan on Objective 4: Recreation

The effects of the Plan on recreation are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0

The overall effect of the Plan with regards to SEA Objective 4 is a **minor positive effect**. This relates to policies which seek to improve active travel and accessibility on public transport. The effects are not predicted to be significant as there is no explicit goal to improve access to green infrastructure. No negative effects are identified as measures to improve the range of transport choices on offer throughout the Borough improves accessibility, which can only be a good thing in terms of accessing open space. Should open space be affected by new transport infrastructure it is more than likely that this would be compensated for through the application of the Warrington Local Plan policies.

5.6 Effects of the Plan Objective 5: Access to healthcare

The effects of the Plan on access to healthcare are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	+	+	0	+	0	+ [?]	+ [?]	+ [?]

The overall effect of the Plan with regards to SEA Objective 5 is a **minor positive effect**. Though there are no specific measures relating to access to health facilities, the plan will lead to a general improvement in accessibility, which would likely include better access to health facilities.

5.7 Effects of the Plan on Objective 6: Accessibility

The effects of the Plan on accessibility are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
<i>Significance of effects</i>	++	++	+	++	+	++	+	++

Unsurprisingly, the Plan is predicted to have **significant positive effects** upon accessibility. There are some key benefits likely to arise:

- Specific community groups should benefit in terms of improved access to services.
- Active modes of travel will be supported and barriers to their use ought to be addressed.
- New development will need to be well served by a range of transport modes and local services.
- There should be a modal shift in the movement of freight from roads to rail and water.
- A reduction in carbon emissions related to technological improvements.

Though certain elements of the Plan could encourage increased car trips (for example increased parking provision / improvements to road networks), these are offset significantly by the host of positive measures.

5.8 Effects of the Plan on Objective 7: Housing

The effects of the Plan on housing are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
<i>Significance of effects</i>	+	+	+	+	0	++	+	+?

The Plan is predicted to have **significant positive effects** upon housing. Without the measures in place to support economic and housing growth, there would be a danger of the Local Plan Strategy failing. Therefore, the LTP4 and subsequent schemes is of critical importance. Additionally, the Plan seeks to secure sustainable patterns of growth and movement, both of which are important with regards to the delivery of new homes.

5.9 Effects of the Plan on Objective 8: Water quality

The effects of the Plan on water quality are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy Groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	-?

The overall effect of the Plan with regards to SEA Objective 8 is a **mixed**. Broadly speaking, the Plan is likely to have **neutral effects** upon water quality. This is because the majority of policies would not generate a direct link with water quality. Some policies could potentially lead to a reduction in pollutants in surface water run-off by reducing car trips and promoting alternative modes of travel. However, the effects are indirect and uncertain, so unlikely to be significant. **Minor negative effects** are also possible in relation to policies that support an increase in water based freight movements.

5.10 Effects of the Plan on Objective 9: Air quality

The effects of the Plan on air quality are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	+	+	+	+	++?	+	+	+

The overall effect of the Plan with regards to air quality is a **significant positive effect**. This relates to; the strong drive to achieve modal shift to active modes of travel, support and encouragement for the use of public transport, the management of road networks to reduce congestion, and the support for cleaner / low emissions transport.

5.11 Effects of the Plan on Objective 10: Historic Environment

The effects of the Plan on the historic environment are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

None of the Plan policies relate strongly and directly to protection and enhancement of the historic environment. Whilst some measures could lead to slight improvements in the environment (cleaner fuels for example), the magnitude of impacts is very low. Therefore, **neutral effects** are predicted overall. Certain infrastructure schemes may have negative effect, but it is presumed these would be dealt with through a detailed assessment alongside planning (and mitigated accordingly).

5.12 Effects of the Plan on Objective 11: High quality design

The effects of the Plan on high quality design are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	0	0	0	-?	0	0	0	+

The overall effect of the Plan with regards to high quality design, townscape and the public realm is a **neutral effect**. The majority of policies do not directly relate to the character of the townscape and public realm in Warrington. Whilst some policies could encourage positive effects these would be minor, and on the other hand, physical infrastructure measures could potentially have impacts on townscape.

5.14 Effects of the Plan on Objective 12: Biodiversity

The effects of the Plan on biodiversity are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	+?	0	0	0	+	0	0	+?

Broadly speaking, the Plan is predicted to have mostly **neutral effects** with regards to biodiversity. This is because many of the policies are unlikely to involve physical changes to the built environment that would affect wildlife species and habitats. However, there are multiple policies in the plan that would contribute to better air quality that could have **minor positive effects** for specific species and habitats (for example mosses). There are also potential effects that would arise in relation to a mass transit system, but these are uncertain at this stage.

5.15 Effects of the Plan on Objective 13: Climate Change

The effects of the Plan on climate change are summarised for the Plan chapters in the table below.

Policy groups	ATP	STCP	RS	PTP	CFP	NMP	AMP	FMP
Significance of effects	0?	0	0	0	0	0	?	0

The overall effect of the Plan with regards to flooding and resilience to climate change is **neutral**. The policies are not directly related to flood risk or adaptation to climate change.

6. Mitigation and enhancement

6.1 Introduction

The SEA of the draft Warrington Local Transport Plan (4) has been a continual process, in which proposals for mitigation and enhancement have been considered at different stages.

Draft versions of each plan policy have been appraised through the SA process, and recommendations have been made for improvements.

Table 6.1 below sets out how the recommendations that have been made and how the SA findings would be affected by subsequent changes to policies. The Council will consider the recommendations of the SA before finalising the Plan following Consultation.

Table 6.1 Mitigation and enhancement measures

SA Recommendations	Implications for the SA findings
The Active Travel policies could be strengthened by identifying what types of active travel infrastructure will be encouraged.	Minor improvements with regards to accessibility and health and wellbeing.
The safer travel policies could perhaps be enhanced by referring to a need for car parks to be designed so that they are safe, and perhaps achieve accreditation to a recognised standard such as 'Park Mark'.	Amendments would be beneficial with regards to health and wellbeing / community safety. However, significant effects would not occur.
It is recommended that the options exploration process for a mass transit system involves an assessment of environmental impacts to help guide a preferred approach.	There are different options for how a mass transit scheme could be delivered. It is when such detail is provided that an informal SEA can add value with regards to the assessment of options.
Ensuring that freight movements on waterways are made in a sustainable manner ought to be promoted as a key principle to ensure that this modal change does not have negative effects.	There would be greater certainty that potential negative effects upon water quality would be avoided and / or mitigated.
The passenger transport policies seek to support an increase in bus uses. To ensure that an increase in buses does not contribute towards worsening air quality, there should be a focus on the use of low emissions vehicles.	This may already be covered through the cleaner fuel policies, but an explicit commitment to the reduction of emissions from all forms of transport (<i>including public transport which can contribute to poor air quality</i>) would help to achieve more positive effects with regards to air quality. The change would not be significant though.
To provide a greater degree of certainty, it is recommended that an additional asset management policy is included that seeks to ensure that assets are managed so that flood risk is managed (for example, through clearing of drains, the use of permeable materials as appropriate), and infrastructure is resilient to potential changes in climate change.	Would achieve positive effects with regards to climate change resilience.

7. Monitoring

7.1 Introduction

At this stage there is a requirement to outline the measures envisaged to monitor the predicted effects of the Plan. In particular, there is a need to focus on the significant effects that are identified. It is important to track predicted effects to ensure that positive effects are actually realised and to identify any unforeseen negative effects that may occur.

Table 7.1 below sets out monitoring measures under each SA topic which are intended to be used to monitor any significant effects and to track the baseline position more generally.

At this stage the monitoring measures have not been finalised, as there is a need to confirm the feasibility of collecting information for the proposed measures. Wherever possible, measures have been drawn from the Local Transport Plan monitoring framework to reduce duplication.

The monitoring measures will be finalised once the Plan is adopted, and will be set out in an SEA Statement in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

Table 7.1: Monitoring the effects of the Plan

Summary of effects	Proposed monitoring measures
<p>Economy and Regeneration: Modern Economy</p> <p>Significant positive effects are predicted as the Plan will help to improve accessibility for a range of communities, continue to support regeneration within Warrington and lead to more sustainable modes of transport that are required for modern economic growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of freight transport by road, rail and water. - Levels of unemployment. - Employment growth by sector.
<p>Economy and Regeneration: Equality and inclusion</p> <p>Overall a significant positive effect is predicted. This is largely due to the significant effects generated by the passenger transport policies which could help to improve access for disadvantaged groups. Positive effects are also generated from a range of other policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walking and cycling routes accessible to deprived communities. - Focus group meetings with community groups with protected characteristics to determine what aspects of active travel could be improved from their perspective.
<p>Health and Wellbeing: Community Safety</p> <p>Overall a significant positive effect is predicted. This is largely due to the significant effects generated by the active travel policies and road safety policies. The Plan is likely to encourage greater usage of services, which can contribute to improved perceptions of safety with regards to crime. There are also direct measures to improve road safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport related crime and anti-social behaviour reported. - Number of road traffic accidents.

Summary of effects	Proposed monitoring measures
<p>Health and Wellbeing: Recreation and healthy lifestyles</p> <p>Minor positive effects are predicted as the Plan encourages and facilitates active travel and improved accessibility in general. The effects are not predicted to be significant as there is no explicit goal to improve access to green infrastructure.</p> <p>No negative effects are identified as measures to improve the range of transport choices on offer throughout the Borough improves accessibility, which can only be a good thing in terms of accessing open space.</p>	<p>No significant effects are likely. It may be beneficial to track trends though, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Length of walking and cycling infrastructure secured.
<p>Health and Wellbeing: Access to health care</p> <p>The overall effect of the Plan is a minor positive effect. Though there are no specific measures relating to access to health facilities, the plan will lead to a general improvement in accessibility, which would likely include better access to health facilities.</p> <p>Improving active travel options within the borough should also contribute to improving people's health and lifestyle if more places are accessible through walking and cycling.</p>	<p>No significant effects are likely. It may be beneficial to track trends though, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public transport access to health facilities. - Proximity of residential development to health facilities.
<p>Accessibility</p> <p>Significant positive effects are predicted with regards to accessibility, as the Plan will help to better manage transport networks, encourage and enable active and sustainable modes of travel, and improve access for groups with barriers to travel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel to work trends - Public transport usage. - Frequency and reliability of public transport - Changes in peak level congestion levels
<p>Housing</p> <p>To support sustainable housing growth, there is a need to maintain and enhance the infrastructure that will enable people to move around Warrington effectively and sustainably. The Plan should have positive effects in this respect as it seeks to promote links between residential areas, services and jobs, reduce pressure on the transport networks, and encourage active and sustainable modes of travel.</p> <p>Without such measures, it may be difficult to accommodate increased housing sustainably. Consequently, significant positive effects are predicted.</p>	<p>Distance of new residential development from a range of facilities and public transport services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools - GP - Bus / train stop - Community facilities - Walking and cycling networks.

Summary of effects	Proposed monitoring measures
<p>Natural Resources: Water quality</p> <p>Broadly speaking, the effects of the Plan are predicted to be neutral as they do not relate directly to water quality. Whilst some policies could potentially lead to a reduction in pollutants in surface water run-off, the effects are indirect and uncertain, so unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>Minor negative effects are also possible in relation to policies that support an increase in water based freight movements.</p>	<p>No significant effects are likely. It may be beneficial to track trends though, such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water quality along relevant sections of the Manchester Ship Canal and River Mersey.
<p>Natural Resources: Air quality</p> <p>Overall the Plan is likely to generate significant positive effects upon air quality by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the proportion of trips made by sustainable and active modes of travel; - Managing congestion on road networks; - Supporting technological improvements such as low emissions transport. - Reducing road freight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nitrogen dioxide levels at key monitoring locations. - Particulate matter concentrations at key monitoring locations. - Number of electric charging points installed.
<p>Historic environment: Heritage assets</p> <p>On balance neutral effects upon heritage assets are predicted.</p>	<p>No monitoring measures have been identified.</p>
<p>Historic environment: Townscape</p> <p>On balance, neutral effects are predicted with regards townscape, public realm and high quality design.</p>	<p>No monitoring measures have been identified.</p>
<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Broadly speaking, the Plan is predicted to have mostly neutral effects with regards to biodiversity.</p> <p>However, there are multiple policies in the plan that would contribute to better air quality that could have minor positive effects for specific species and habitats (for example mosses).</p>	<p>No significant effects are likely. It may be beneficial to encourage and monitor the extent to which biodiversity considerations are taken into account in the delivery of new infrastructure though. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of permeable surfaces - The use of SUDs - Number of trees planted alongside new infrastructure
<p>Climate Change: Flooding and resilience</p> <p>On balance, the plan is predicted to have neutral effects with regards to flooding and resilience.</p>	<p>No significant effects are likely. It may be beneficial to track trends though. For example, by monitoring disruption to traffic as a result of flooding (identifying locations and the magnitude of impacts).</p>