

Middlewich Local Transport Delivery Plan

Introduction

Middlewich is situated on the western edge of Cheshire East close to neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester, and has strong links to areas within it, such as Northwich and Winsford, which is approximately 2km west of Middlewich and linked by the A54. Middlewich also has links to areas within Cheshire East itself such as Holmes Chapel, Crewe, Sandbach and Knutsford.

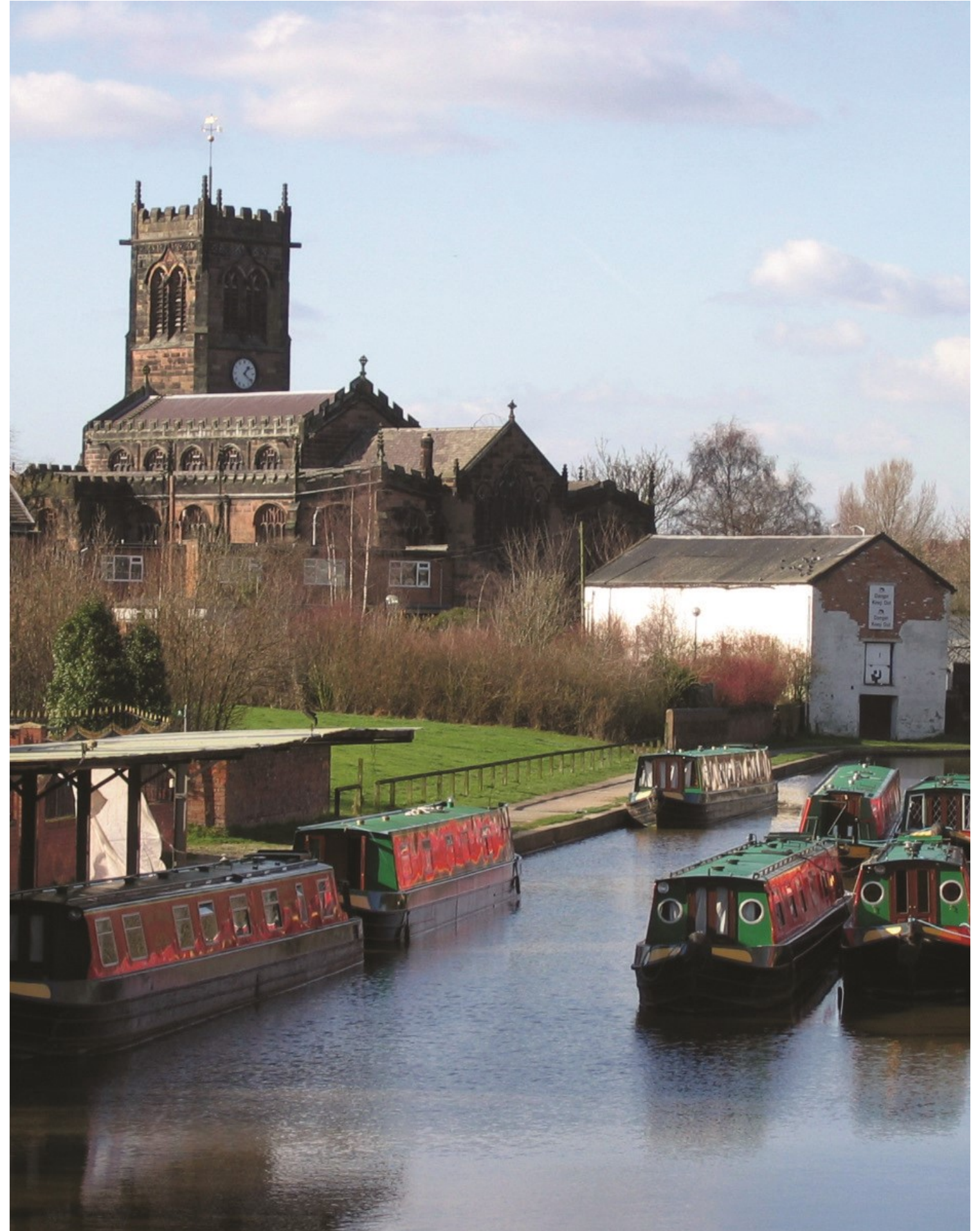
Holmes Chapel is also located approximately 6km east of Middlewich, and to the east of the M6. The A54 is the main route running east to west through Holmes Chapel and rail services connect from Holmes Chapel to wider Cheshire East and Greater Manchester.

There is planned development within the area, including housing and employment sites included within the Local Plan. Ensuring that development sites are connected into existing transport facilities is important so that Middlewich can grow sustainably. Construction of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass is due to start on site in late 2021, and in addition to strengthening the transport network to accommodate new development, will also allow changes to be made within Middlewich, including providing opportunities for more of a focus on walking and cycling.

The following sections give information on:

- Objectives that are proposed to guide how we improve transport in the Middlewich area;
- Details of the existing situation; and
- Transport schemes that may help achieve the objectives set out for Middlewich.

Please note scheme locations as shown on the maps are indicative and subject to further design and planning work.

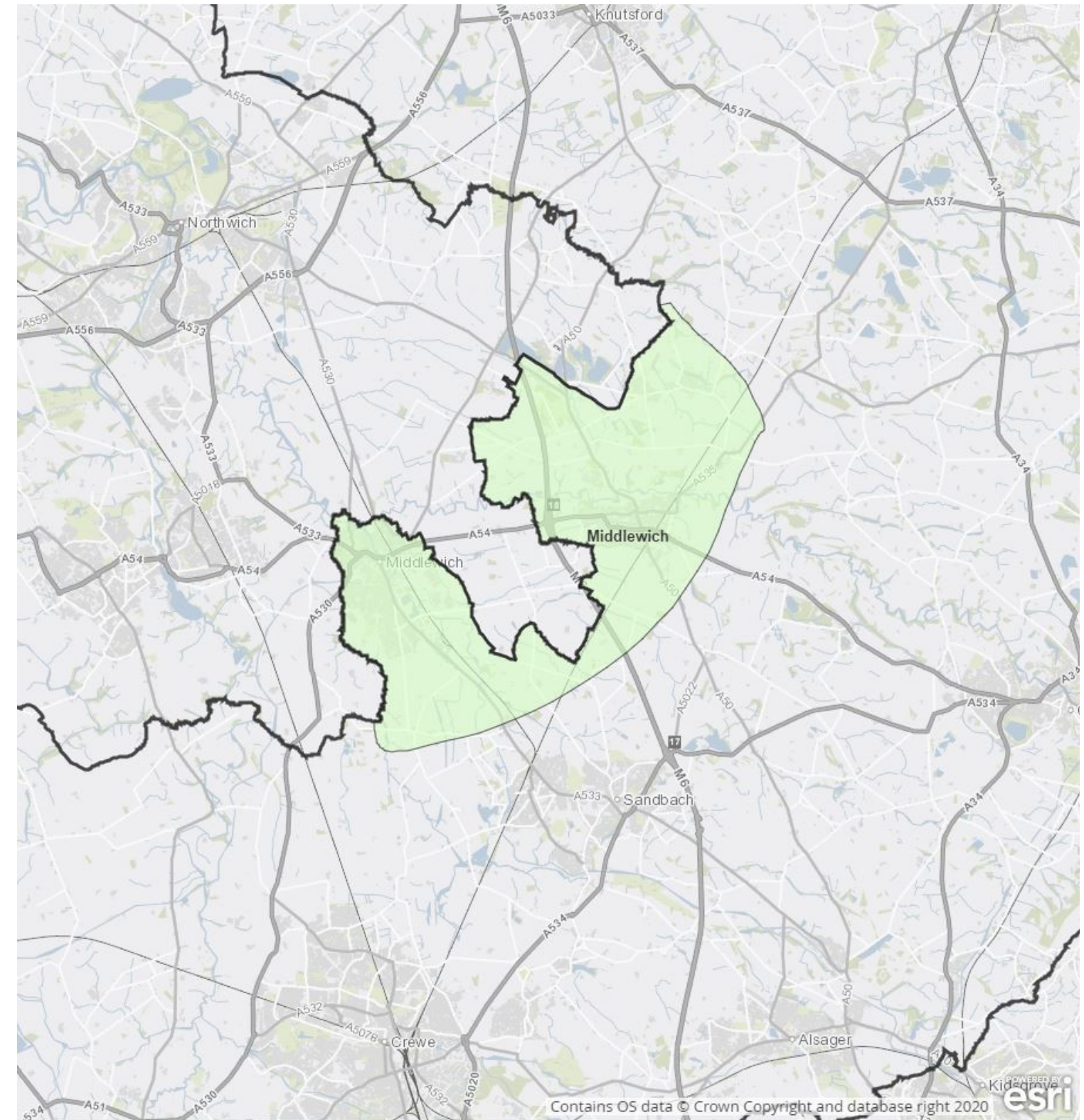


Middlewich Transport Objectives

The following objectives are proposed to improve transport in Middlewich:

1. Improving access along key routes to and from the M6, Middlewich, Holmes Chapel, Sandbach, Crewe, and Winsford and Northwich in Cheshire West and Chester;
2. Supporting access to schools and employment sites such as Midpoint 18 Business Park and Recipharm;
3. Strengthening the transport network to accommodate development sites such as Midpoint 18 expansion, Glebe Farm and other developments included within the Local Plan;
4. Improving access to Holmes Chapel town centre to support the local economy;
5. Improving access to Middlewich town centre to support the economy; and
6. Supporting access from rural communities surrounding Middlewich to key services and employment.

The following sections set out background information and potential options for improving transport under each objective.



Objective 1

Improving access along key routes to and from the M6, Middlewich, Holmes Chapel, Sandbach, Crewe, and Winsford and Northwich in Cheshire West and Chester.

The Existing Situation

Road Network – The A54, A530 and A533 are the main A roads that run through Middlewich. The A54 links to Holmes Chapel and Winsford, the A533 links to Sandbach and the A530 links to Crewe. The A54 is the main route for east-west movements between Middlewich town centre and the M6. Key locations on the local road network such as A54 Chester Road and A533 Booth Lane both can be congested, particularly during the morning and evening rush hours. Tackling congestion on these routes is important to help the town prosper in the future. The planned Middlewich Eastern Bypass will relieve traffic and congestion along the A533 in Middlewich, addressing some of the local congestion issues.

The A54 is the main route through Holmes Chapel, connecting to Middlewich to the west and Congleton to the east. With improvements coming forward on the route to Congleton and Middlewich, consideration needs to be given to the A54 in Holmes Chapel.

There are two locations within Middlewich that have been identified as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). These are the A54 Chester Road and the A533 Lewin Street. These locations can be congested routes especially during peak periods. Tackling congestion along these routes will contribute towards improving air quality in these areas. Delivery of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass will contribute towards improving the AQMA on Lewin Street as it will direct through traffic away from this road.

Bus connectivity – Bus service 37 connects Middlewich to locations including Crewe, Winsford, Northwich and Sandbach. Service 42 connects both Middlewich and Holmes Chapel to Crewe, Leighton Hospital and Congleton. However, the Coronavirus pandemic is fast changing and is affecting bus services.

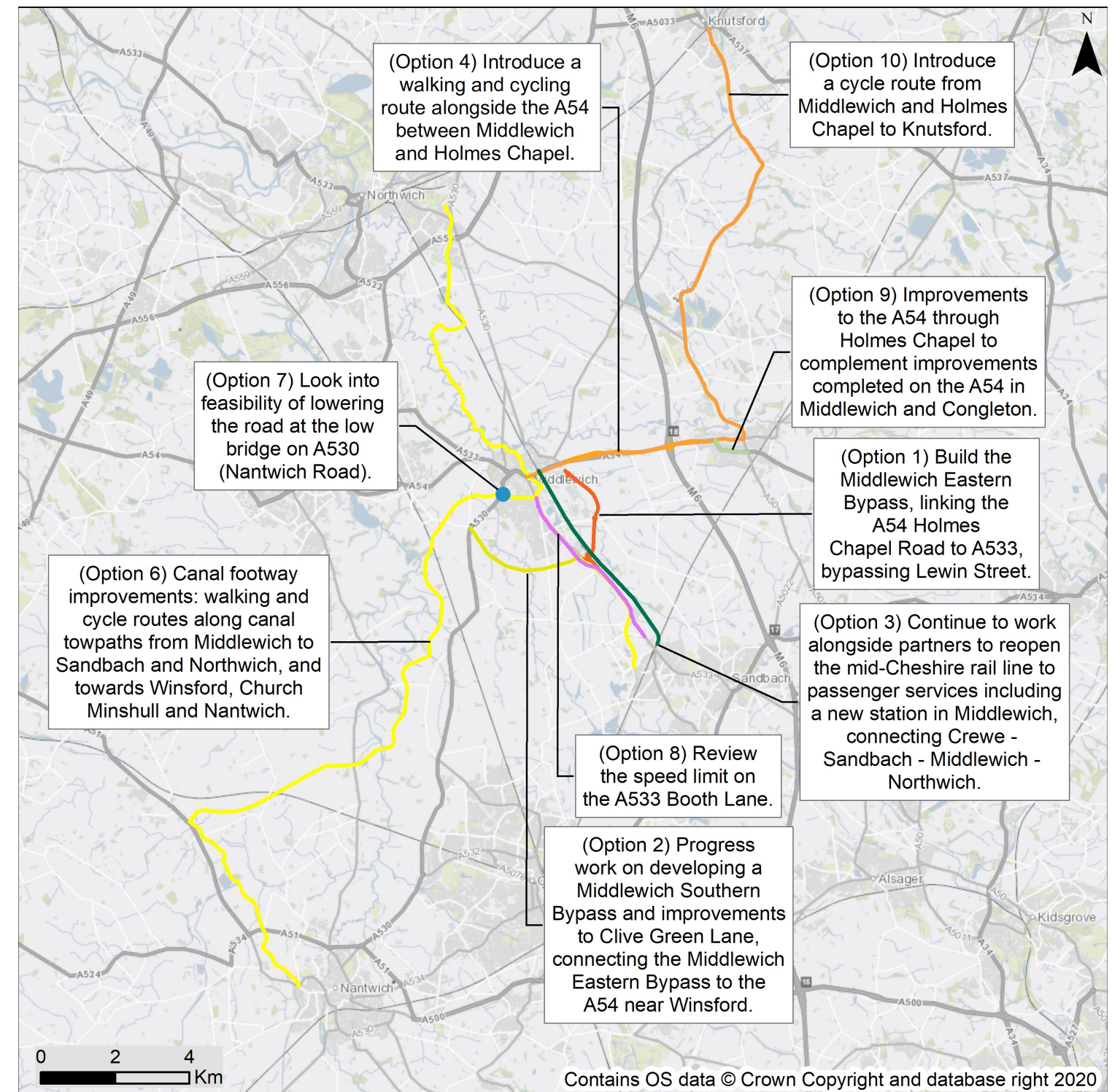
Walking and Cycling – There is an opportunity to develop a cycling network that encourages more trips to be undertaken between towns for leisure and commuting. There is potential for improvements to the Trent and Mersey Canal and routes to locations including Holmes Chapel, Sandbach, Winsford and Knutsford.

Rail – Middlewich currently does not have a railway station. The nearest railway stations within Cheshire East are Holmes Chapel and Sandbach. Holmes Chapel Railway Station has two rail services per hour that connect to Sandbach, Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, Handforth, Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport and Liverpool Lime Street. There is also a rail station nearby in Winsford. Work is currently being undertaken to understand how the Middlewich rail line can be reopened to passengers and a new station provided in Middlewich.



These options aim to improve transport connections along key routes in Middlewich and Holmes Chapel:

1. Build the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, linking the A54 Holmes Chapel Road to A533, bypassing Lewin Street.
2. Progress work on developing a Middlewich Southern Bypass and improvements to Clive Green Lane, connecting the Middlewich Eastern Bypass to the A54 near Winsford.
3. Continue to work alongside partners to reopen the mid-Cheshire rail line to passenger services including a new station in Middlewich, connecting Crewe – Sandbach – Middlewich – Northwich.
4. Introduce a walking and cycling route alongside the A54 between Middlewich and Holmes Chapel.
5. Work with operators and industry partners to improve bus connectivity and passenger services from Middlewich and Holmes Chapel to Crewe, Congleton, Warrington, Knutsford, Sandbach and the Potteries **(not mapped)**.
6. Canal footway improvements: walking and cycle routes along canal towpaths from Middlewich to Sandbach and Northwich, and towards Winsford, Church Minshull and Nantwich.
7. Look into feasibility of lowering the road at the low bridge on A530 (Nantwich Road).
8. Review the speed limit on the A533 Booth Lane.
9. Improvements to the A54 through Holmes Chapel to complement improvements completed on the A54 in Middlewich and Congleton.
10. Introduce a cycle route from Middlewich and Holmes Chapel to Knutsford.
11. Consider feasibility of a Holmes Chapel bypass (location to be determined) **(not mapped)**.



Objective 2

Supporting access to schools and employment sites such as Midpoint 18 Business Park and Recipharm.

The Existing Situation

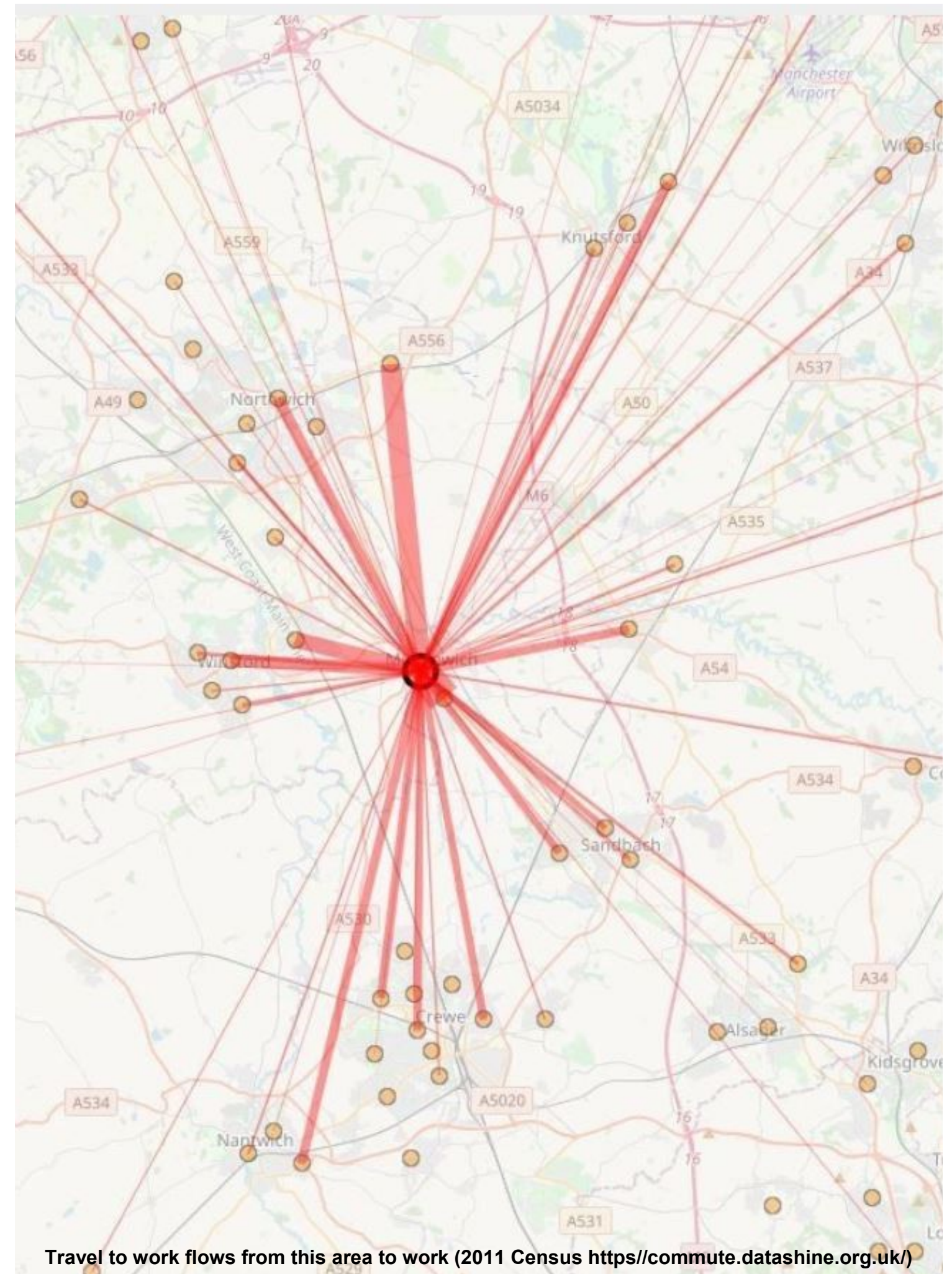
SMOTS – The Council has produced a Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (SMOTS) that encourages more sustainable travel to schools, helping to support a healthier and more active lifestyle for staff, students and parents, whilst also helping tackle congestion and parking issues on local roads. The Council is working with Middlewich High School to improve walking and cycling routes to the school.

Further Education – There are no further education establishments in Middlewich, however there is a Sixth Form at Holmes Chapel. Alternative options for further education are located in Winsford, which can be accessed via bus, and Crewe which is connected by rail and bus services.

Travel to work – Census travel to work data shows that for employment, residents in Middlewich are travelling locally to towns including Winsford, Northwich, Knutsford, Crewe, Nantwich, Holmes Chapel and Sandbach. Employment centres such as Crewe, Winsford and Northwich can be accessed through bus services from Middlewich. The employment development site ‘Midpoint 18’ can be accessed by bus from locations such as Holmes Chapel, Winsford and Sandbach, however the coronavirus pandemic is impacting bus services across the borough.

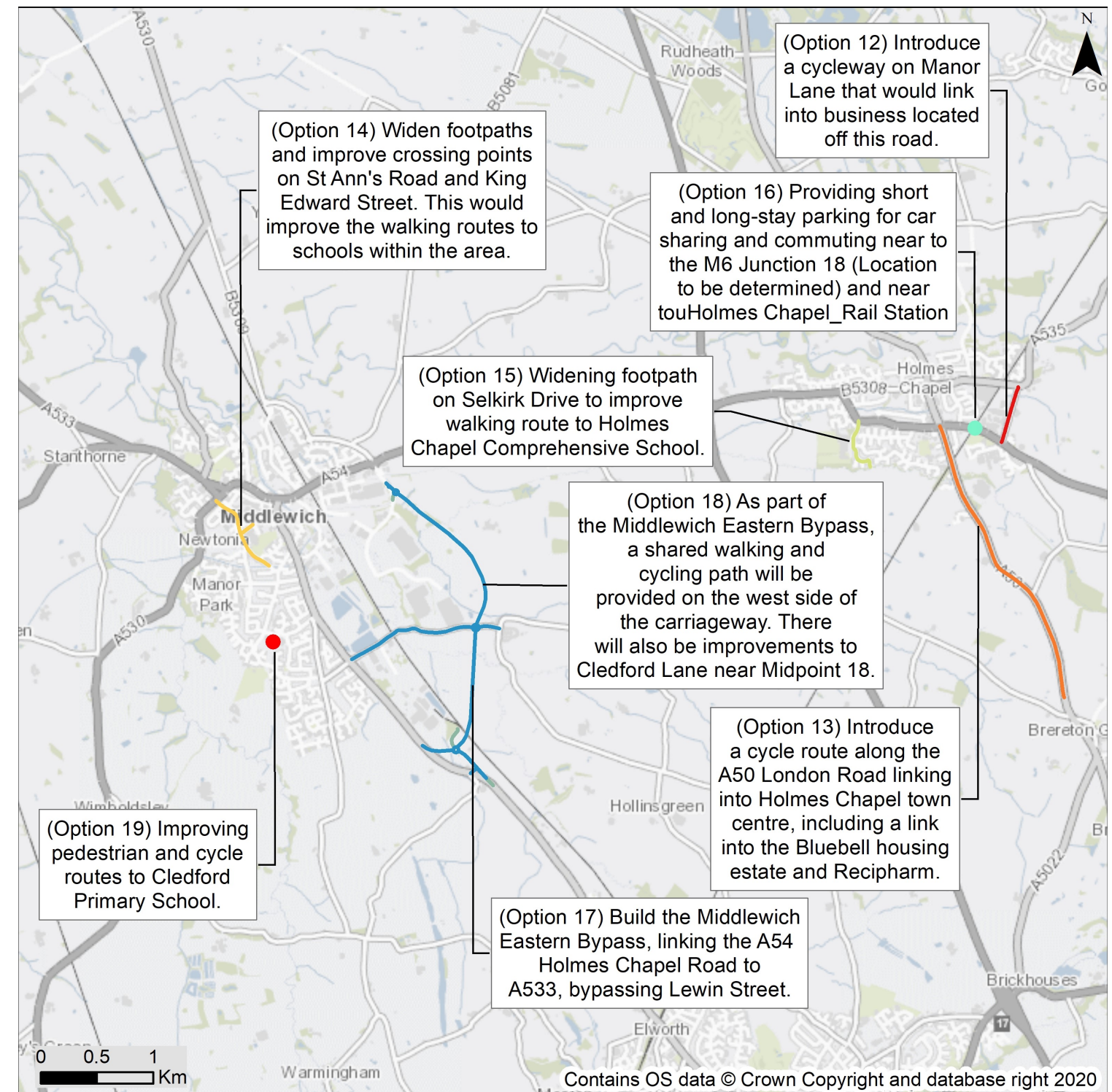
For Holmes Chapel, census travel to work data shows that there is more of a focus on travelling north to locations such as Knutsford, Wilmslow, Alderley Edge and Greater Manchester, with smaller flows to Middlewich, Crewe and Nantwich. All of these locations can be accessed by bus or rail, with the exception of Knutsford.

In the 2011 Census, travel to work data showed that 1% travel by bus and 2% travel by train within the boundary for this Delivery Plan. When compared with the North West, the figure for bus service use is 7% lower.



These scheme options aim to improve connections by all modes of travel to schools and employment within the Middlewich area:

12. Introduce a cycleway on Manor Lane that would link into business located off this road.
13. Introduce a cycle route along the A50 London Road linking into Holmes Chapel town centre, including a link into the Bluebell housing estate and Recipharm.
14. Widen footpaths and improve crossing points on St Ann's Road and King Edward Street. This would improve the walking routes to schools within the area.
15. Widening footpath on Selkirk Drive to improve walking route to Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School.
16. Providing short and long-stay parking for car sharing and commuting near to the M6 Junction 18 (location to be determined) and near to Holmes Chapel Rail Station.
17. Build the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, linking the A54 linking Holmes Chapel Road to A533, bypassing Lewin Street.
18. As part of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, a shared walking and cycling path will be provided on the west side of the carriageway. There will also be improvements to Cledford Lane near Midpoint 18.
19. Improving pedestrian and cycle routes to Cledford Primary School.



Objective 3

Strengthening the transport network to accommodate development sites such as Midpoint 18 expansion, Glebe Farm and other developments included within the Local Plan.

The Existing Situation

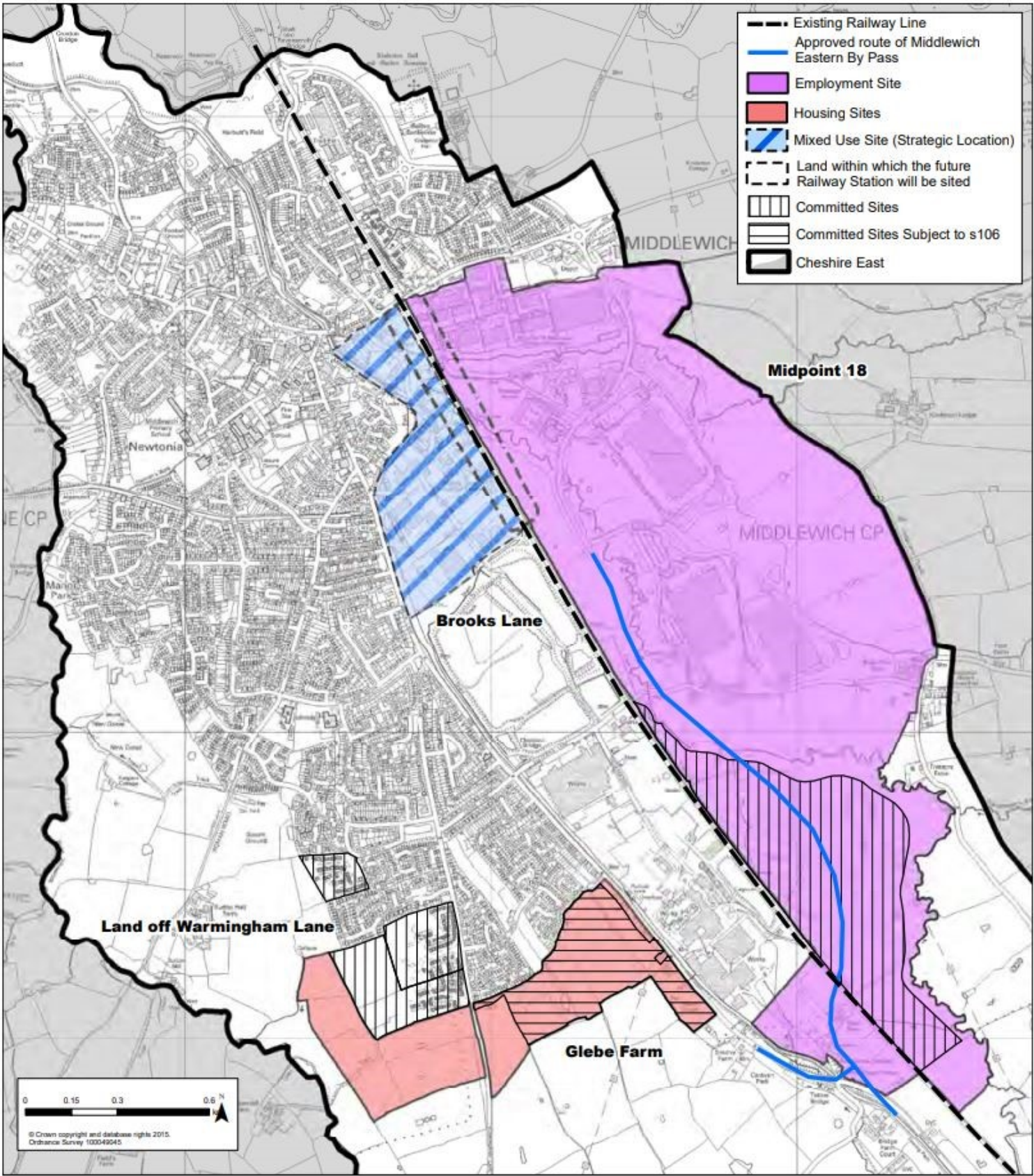
The Cheshire East Local Plan identifies four sites within the Middleswich area which are included on the map opposite. LPS44 also referred to as ‘Midpoint 18’ will include 70 hectares of employment land once complete. LPS42 and LPS43 are two new housing developments and once built will deliver 525 and 200 new homes respectively. Delivery of Middleswich Eastern Bypass will support Local Plan growth within Middleswich. In regard to Holmes Chapel, it is noted that the delivery of Congleton Link Road could impact traffic flows in Holmes Chapel on the A54.

There is also development planned within neighbouring Local Authority Cheshire West and Chester. There is planned development close by in Winsford at Winsford Industrial Estate and the Station Quarter.

In addition, there is a HS2 rolling stock depot planned at Wimboldsley, between Winsford and Middleswich. The Council will work alongside HS2 to minimise impacts from construction traffic within this area.

Development sites are assessed through the planning process to consider interventions that mitigate against the direct impacts of the development and to strengthen the transport network to and from the sites.

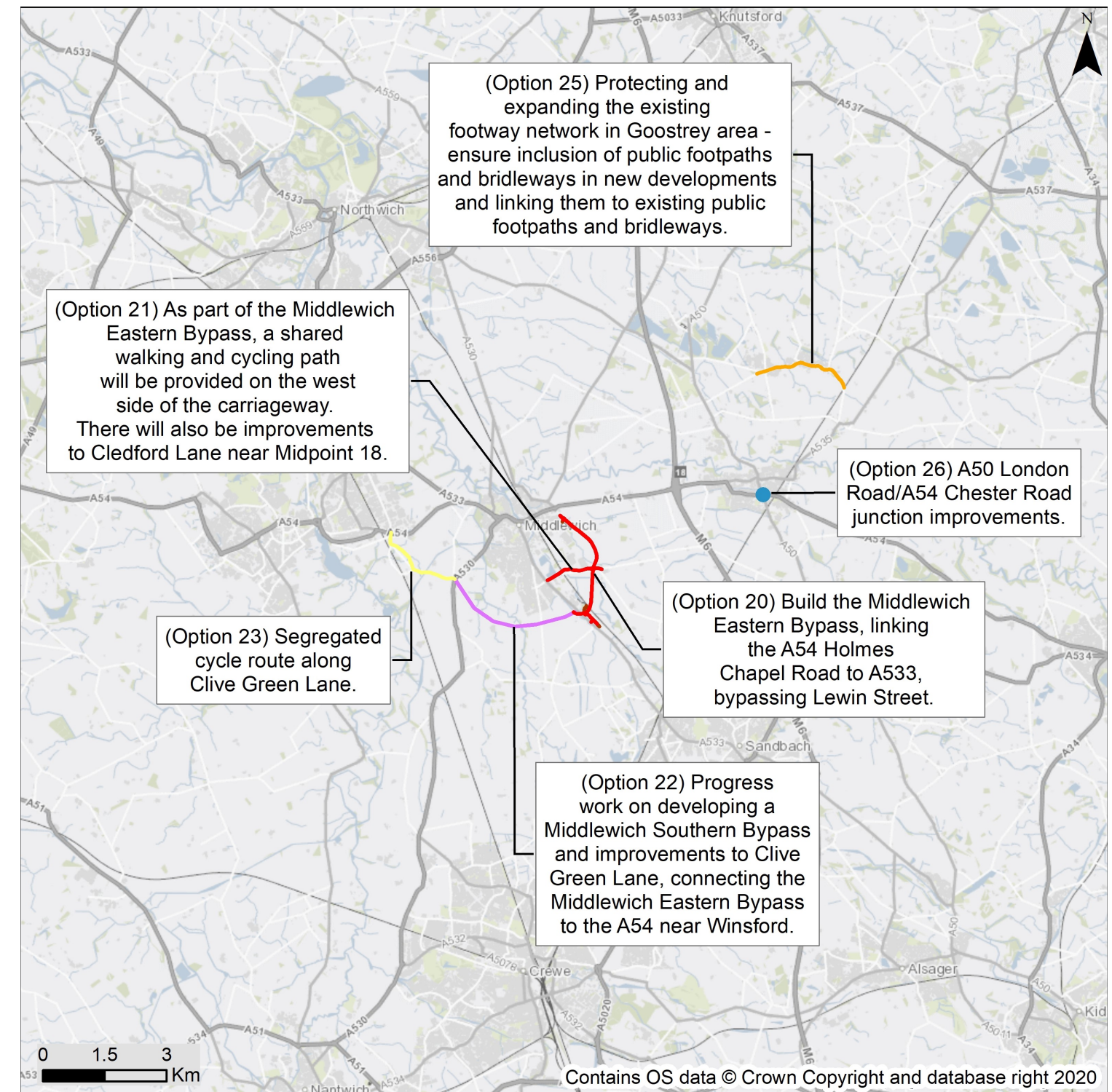
For sites which have already been built, interventions have been agreed as part of the statutory planning process. Through the planning process, options will be considered to strengthen connectivity and secure developer funds for sites that have not yet come forward.



Middleswich Local Plan Sites Map

These options aim to improve access to the Local Plan development sites within Middlewich and ensure that the transport network has capacity to support this growth:

20. Build the Middlewich Eastern Bypass linking the A54 linking Holmes Chapel Road to A533, bypassing Lewin Street.
21. As part of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, a shared walking and cycling path will be provided on the west side of the carriageway. There will also be improvements to Cledford Lane near Midpoint 18.
22. Progress work on developing a Middlewich Southern Bypass and improvements to Clive Green Lane, connecting the Middlewich Eastern Bypass to the A54 near Winsford.
23. Linked to the intervention above, there is a potential to introduce a segregated cycle route along Clive Green Lane.
24. Consider feasibility of a Holmes Chapel bypass (location to be determined) **(not mapped)**.
25. Protecting and expanding the existing footway network in Goostrey area - ensure inclusion of public footpaths and bridleways in new developments and linking them to existing public footpaths and bridleways.
26. A50 London Road/ A54 Chester Road junction improvements.
27. Work alongside HS2 Ltd to minimise impacts from construction traffic in relation to the proposed HS2 depot **(not mapped)**.



Objective 4

Improving access to Holmes Chapel town centre to support the local economy.

The Existing Situation

Road Network – The A54 is the main route through Holmes Chapel connecting to Middlewich to the west and Congleton to the east. With improvements coming forward on the route to Congleton and Middlewich, consideration needs to be given to the A54 in Holmes Chapel. Holmes Chapel is also in close proximity to junction 18 of the M6. The key locations along the road network in Holmes Chapel are the A50 London Road and A54 Chester Road, which can experience congestion in peak times.

Walking and Cycling – There is an opportunity to improve the walking and cycling network in Holmes Chapel that is currently fragmented. Improvements could create better links to the town centre and other destinations such as schools and employment.

Bus – There are two bus services connecting to Holmes Chapel. Service 42 links to several locations such as Crewe, Leighton Hospital, Middlewich and Congleton and Service 319 connects to Sandbach and rural areas such as Goostrey. However, the coronavirus pandemic is fast changing and is affecting bus services across the borough.

Trains – Holmes Chapel railway station has two rail services per hour that connect to Sandbach, Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, Handforth, Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester airport and Liverpool Lime Street. Before the coronavirus pandemic, Office for Rail and Road statistics have seen the number of passengers using Holmes Chapel Railway Station increase over the past six years, the largest increase between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Facilities at Holmes Chapel Station could be improved through improved cycle parking. Holmes Chapel Station is located off the A54, around 0.5km from the town centre, therefore improvements to this route should be considered.

Car parking – There are two Cheshire East owned car parks in Holmes Chapel, London Road car park and Parkway car park, which are both short and long stay and provide 47 parking spaces.



Holmes Chapel railway station [cc-by-sa/2.0](#) - © [Nigel Thompson](#) - [geograph.org.uk/p/3383611](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/3383611)

A number of options have been developed to help to address this objective:

Rail:

28. Work alongside the rail industry for improvements at Holmes Chapel Railway Station, such as improved cycle parking.
29. Improve the walking and cycling route from the station into Holmes Chapel town centre, residential areas and employment areas such as Manor Lane.

Bus:

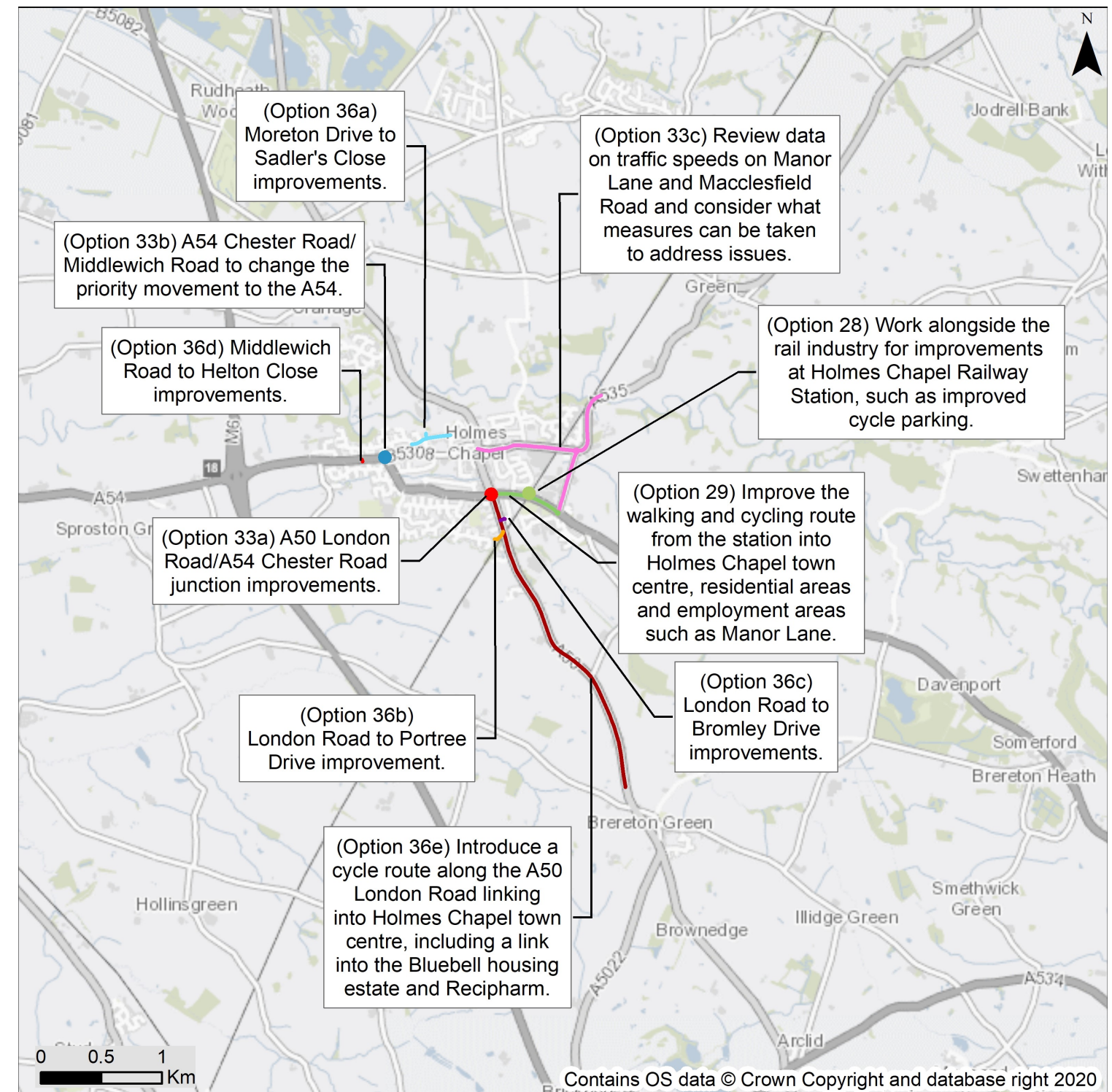
30. Work with operators and industry partners to improve bus connectivity and passenger services from Holmes Chapel to Crewe, Sandbach, Congleton, Warrington, Knutsford and the Potteries **(not mapped)**.

Road:

31. Introduce 20mph speed limits and supporting measures within the town centre **(not mapped)**.
32. Greater enforcement of HGV restrictions and speeding in Holmes Chapel and work with Highways England and Cheshire Constabulary to identify possible alternative routes for abnormal loads, avoiding Holmes Chapel **(not mapped)**.
33. Junction improvements, including pedestrian and cycle improvements, at the following locations:
 - a. A50 London Road/ A54 Chester Road to improve the flow of traffic.
 - b. A54 Chester Road/ Middlewich Road to change the priority movement to the A54.
 - c. Review data on traffic speeds on Manor Lane and Macclesfield Road and consider what measures can be taken to address issues.

Parking:

34. Ensure there is sufficient short stay parking spaces in Holmes Chapel including parking around key services **(not mapped)**.
35. Address parking on grass verges and pavements in Holmes Chapel, should the Department for Transport bring in new regulations and powers for local authorities to tackle inappropriate pavement parking **(not mapped)**.
36. Improve walking and cycling routes at the following locations:
 - a. Moreton Drive to Sadler's Close improvements.
 - b. London Road to Portree Drive improvements.
 - c. London Road to Bromley Drive improvements.

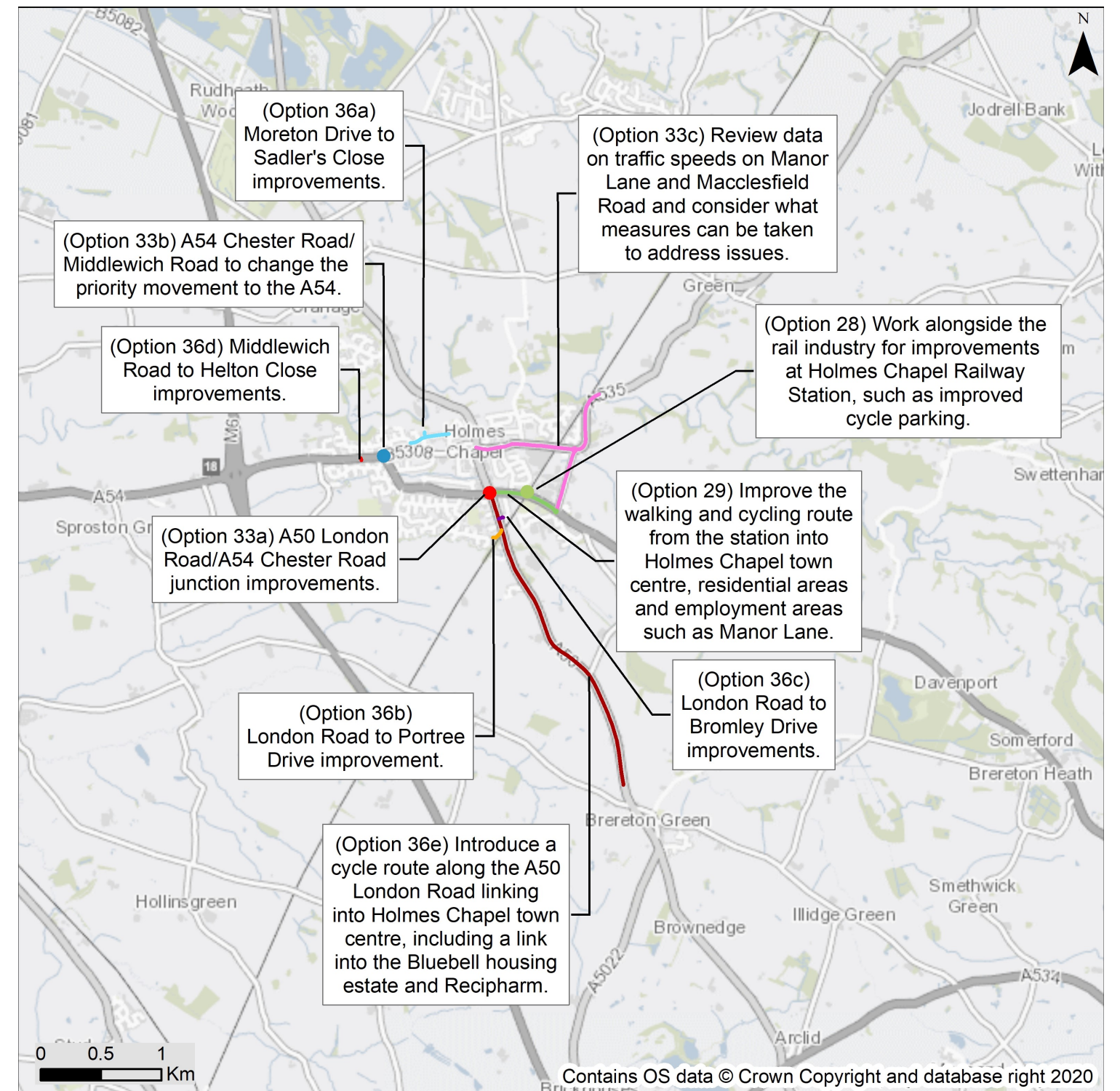


d. Middlewich Road to Helton Close improvements.

e. A50 London Road linking into Holmes Chapel town centre, including a link into the Bluebell housing estate and Recipharm.

37. Removal of bollards and gates where they prevent access for all **(not mapped)**.

38. Safe, secure cycle parking within the town centre **(not mapped)**.



Objective 5

Improving access to Middlewich town centre to support the economy.

The Existing Situation

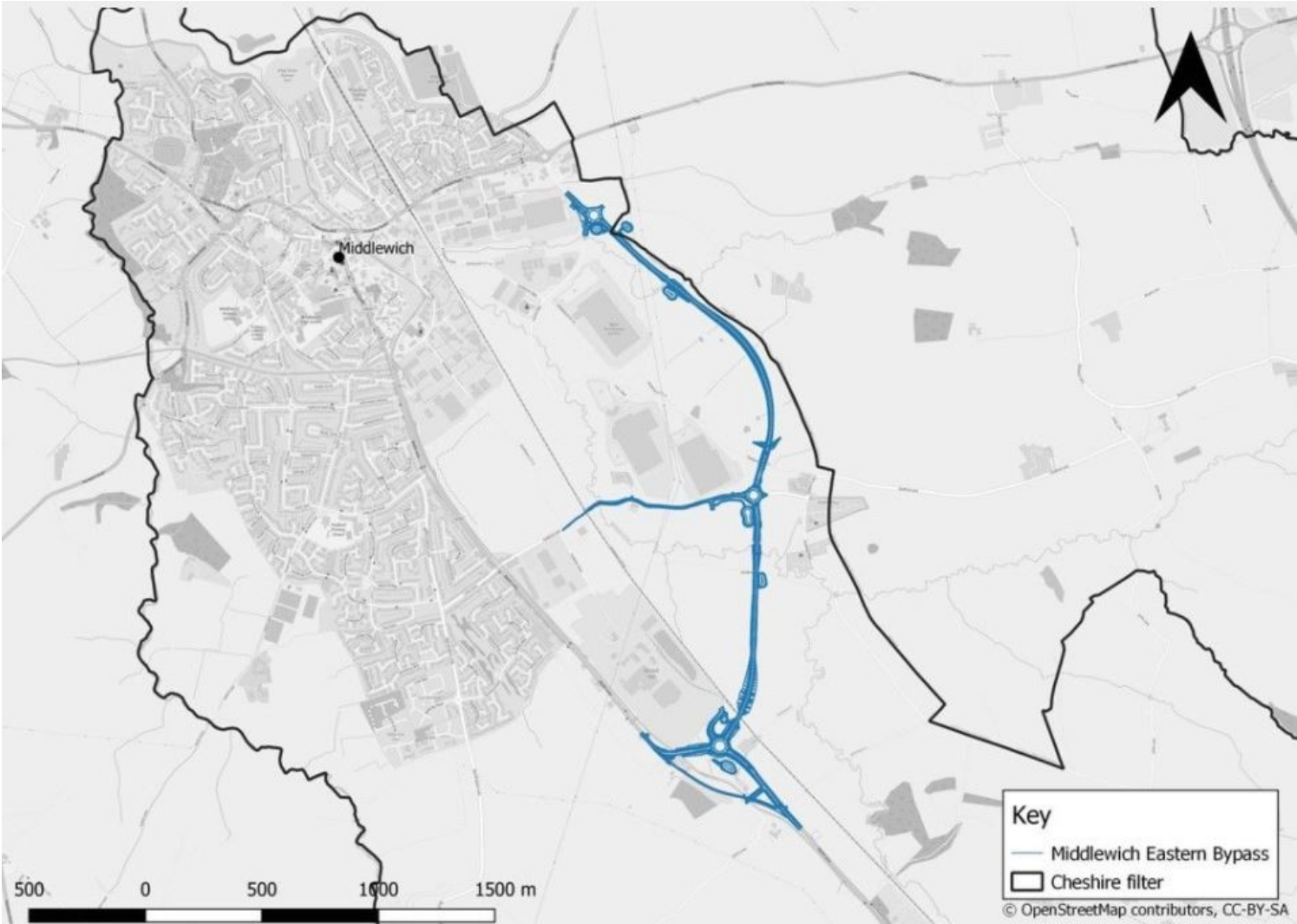
Road Network – Within Middlewich, access to the town centre and crossing roads within the town centre can be challenging. The main roads are the A54 Chester Road and A533 Booth Lane, these are the routes that connect to Sandbach and Winsford. The A54 in particular can be congested for east to west movements and the M6 can also be accessed via the A54 to the east. Delivery of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass should reduce traffic for north/ south movements and presents an opportunity to introduce complementary measures within the town centre to improve the environment, in particular due to reduced traffic flows on the A533 Lewin Street.

Walking and Cycling – There is an opportunity to improve walking routes in the town centre, such as crossing points on St. Michael's Way and Lewin Street. The cycling network is currently fragmented with some sections sharing the carriageway with relatively high levels of traffic. With potential reduced traffic through the centre, there is an opportunity to improve the walking and cycling network to fill missing gaps to create an improved network such as routes along the canal, improvements to the A533 Lewin Street following delivery of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass and improvements to the A54 if a southern bypass is delivered.

Bus – ‘The Bull Ring’ bus interchange is located in the centre of Middlewich, with buses providing links to Holmes Chapel, Crewe, Congleton, Winsford and Northwich. There may be opportunities to improve the facilities at the interchange and provide services to more Cheshire East towns, if there is demand for this in the future. However, throughout the coronavirus pandemic bus services have been impacted across the borough.

Trains – As Middlewich has no train station, the nearest train stations are in Sandbach, Holmes Chapel and Winsford. This prevents those who do not have access to a car to travel by train. Bus services connect close to these stations, however, are relatively infrequent and services do not operate on Sundays. Departure and arrival times are not always coordinated with train services to easily enable onward travel. It would be beneficial to improve bus and walking and cycling links to these rail stations to encourage people to travel by rail. It is an ambition of the Council to open a train station at Middlewich.

Car parking – There are three Cheshire East owned car parks in Middlewich, all three offer both long and short stay with 133 spaces in total. These car parks are Civic Way, Seabank and Southway.



A number of options have been developed to help to address this objective:

Road Network:

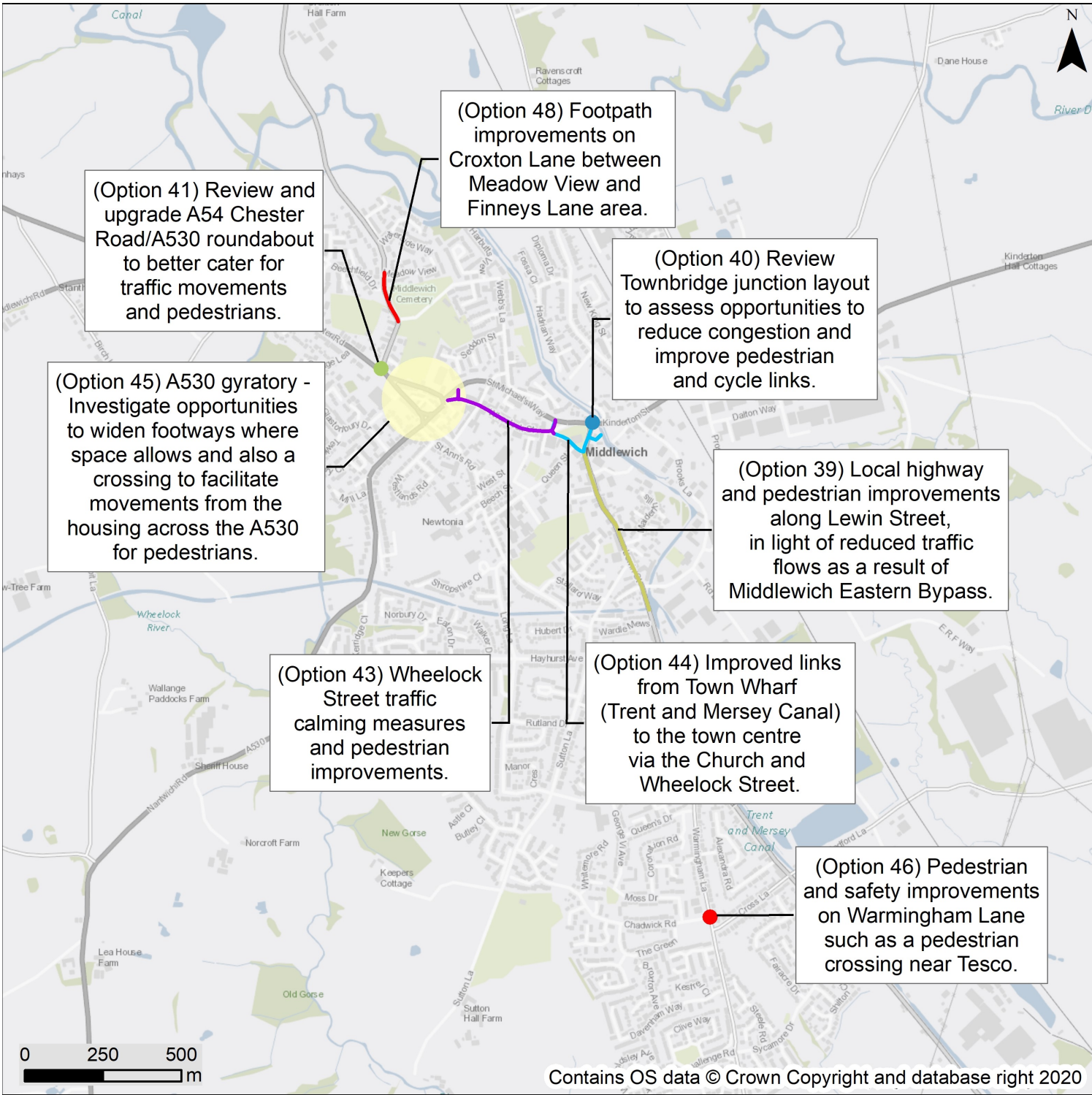
- 39. Local highway and pedestrian improvements along Lewin Street, in light of reduced traffic flows as a result of Middlewich Eastern Bypass.
- 40. Review Townbridge junction layout to assess opportunities to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian and cycle links.
- 41. Review and upgrade A54 Chester Road/ A530 roundabout to better cater for traffic movements and pedestrians.

Walking and Cycling:

- 42. Safe, secure cycle parking within the town centre (not mapped).
- 43. Wheelock Street traffic calming measures and pedestrian improvements.
- 44. Improved links from Town Wharf (Trent and Mersey Canal) to the town centre via the Church and Wheelock Street.
- 45. A530 gyratory - Investigate opportunities to widen footways where space allows and also a crossing to facilitate movements from the housing across the A530 for pedestrians.
- 46. Pedestrian and safety improvements on Warmingham Lane such as a pedestrian crossing near Tesco.
- 47. Improvements to the town centre environment including streets and public space (not mapped).
- 48. Footpath improvements on Croxton Lane between Meadow View and Finneys Lane area.

Parking:

- 49. Increased parking around key services within Middlewich (not mapped).
- 50. Improvements to existing parking facilities in Middlewich and increased parking provision (not mapped).



Objective 6

Supporting access from rural communities surrounding Middlewich to key services and employment.

The Existing Situation

For people living in rural areas access to services, employment and leisure opportunities can be challenging. The Council has produced a Rural Action Plan that builds upon previous work to support people in rural areas of the borough and this Delivery Plan will identify specific transport improvements that can be made.

Rural settlements within the Middlewich Delivery Plan area include:

- Goostrey;
- Cranage; and
- Twemlow Green.

Supported and commercial bus services – Buses within Cheshire East are separated into either supported bus services which are subsidised by the Council and operated on our behalf or commercial bus services which are run by private operators who have full control over how, where and when bus services are run. The number of people using bus services in Cheshire East has fallen over the years and this is placing pressure on the viability of commercial bus services.

In recent years the Council has had to make cost savings from its supported bus budget to help meet the Council's challenging budget targets. This plan will identify areas in which bus services could be improved should future funding be available and other options such as FlexiLink (demand responsive transport) and community transport. Bus service 319 links to Sandbach and Holmes Chapel from rural areas such as Goostrey, Cranage and Twemlow Green.

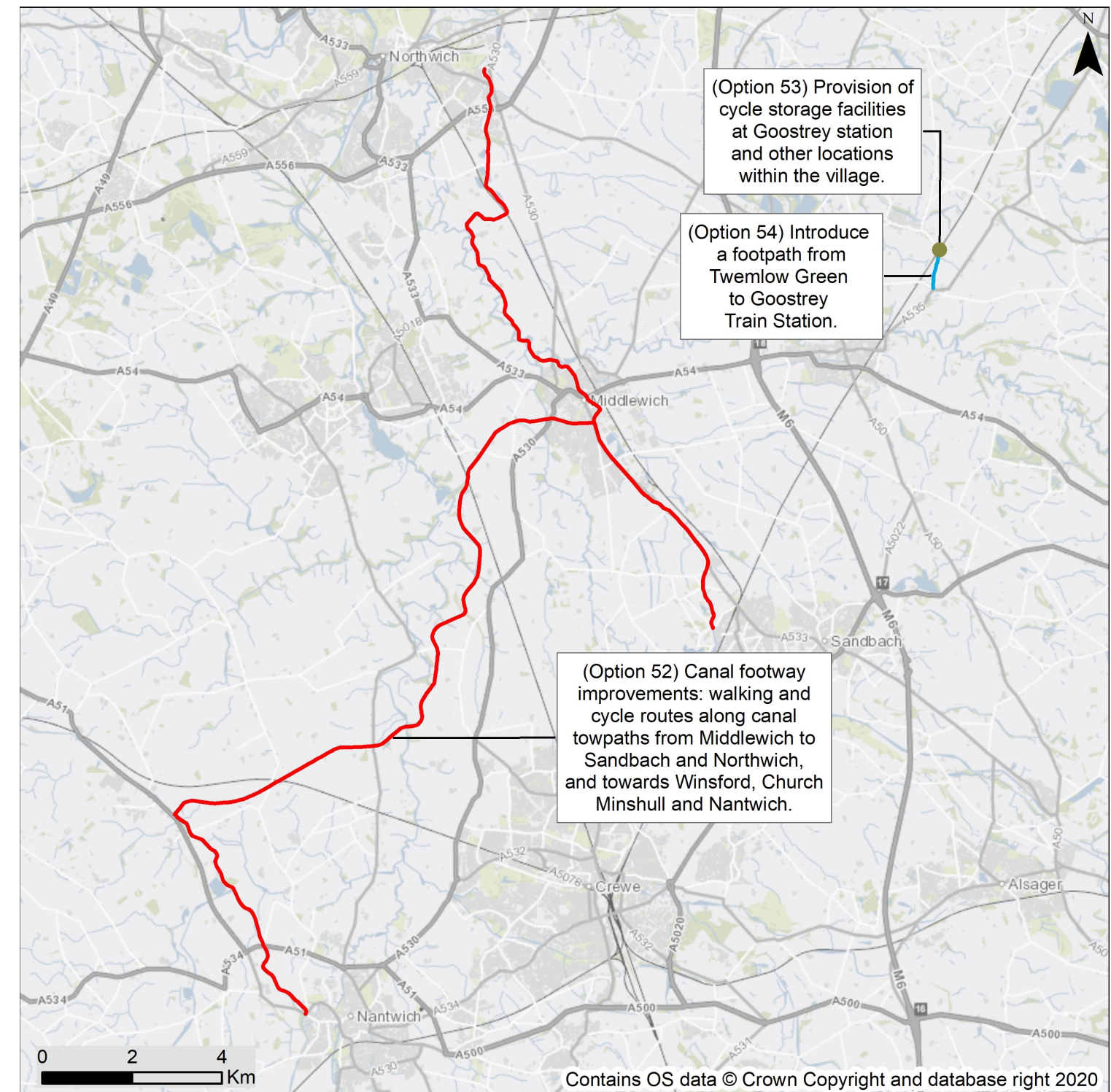
Flexilink – Where bus services are not the best solution, demand responsive services such as the Council's 'Flexilink' can fill the gap. The 'FlexiLink' service currently operates on weekdays to provide travel for those who live beyond the reach of any other public transport. Maximising the availability and usage of this service where feasible can help to connect rural areas to services they require.

Community Transport – The Council can support local transport groups to develop community-led initiatives which improve access to essential services such as healthcare, retail and leisure. Community-led solutions can be tailored to local needs and can be particularly effective in rural areas to maintain access for people who need it.



These options aim to improve connections to employment and services for those living in rural areas:

- 51. Review of surfaces and signage along footpaths surrounding Holmes Chapel **(not mapped)**.
- 52. Canal footway improvements: walking and cycle routes along canal towpaths from Middlewich to Sandbach and Northwich, and towards Winsford, Church Minshull and Nantwich.
- 53. Provision of cycle storage facilities at Goostrey station and other locations within the village.
- 54. Introduce a footpath from Twemlow Green to Goostrey Train Station.
- 55. Protecting and expanding the existing footway network in Goostrey area - ensure inclusion of public footpaths and bridleways in new developments and linking them to existing public footpaths and bridleways **(not mapped)**.
- 56. Limiting the street lighting impact in Goostrey - it is a parish objective to keep dark skies over Goostrey Parish **(not mapped)**.
- 57. Review feasibility of providing a Cheshire East Council operated car park serving the area between the railway station, primary school and Main Road in Goostrey **(not mapped)**.
- 58. Reduce speed limits and introduce traffic calming at locations within Twemlow Green **(not mapped)**.
- 59. Extend Flexilink service across weekends and evenings **(not mapped)**.



Let us know your views

We want your views on this draft plan to ensure the right objectives and options are identified. Once this consultation has concluded feedback will be reviewed and schemes will be prioritised to shape the final Local Transport Delivery Plan for each area of the borough.

Please submit your feedback by January 31st 2021. You can let us know what you think by:

- Completing the short online survey [here](#) and selecting the 'Middlewich' tab along the top of the webpage. If you require a paper copy of the survey, please contact Customer Services on 0300 123 55 00; or
- Emailing ltip@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

If you are struggling to access the plan details/ online survey, you can obtain a paper version of this Plan from your local library or by calling Customer Services on 0300 123 55 00. If you require a paper version for another town (not the local area that you live within), please also call Customer Services on 0300 123 55 00.

