



High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe)

Environmental Statement

Volume 5: Technical appendices

CA5: South Cheshire

Cultural heritage baseline report (CH-001-005)



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Department for Transport

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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the cultural heritage appendices

1.1.1 The cultural heritage Appendices for the South Cheshire community area (CA5) comprise:

- baseline reports (this Appendix);
- a gazetteer of heritage assets (Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-005);
- an impact assessment (Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-005); and
- survey reports, incorporating geophysical survey and remote sensing studies, which are available in the Background Information and Data document¹.

1.1.2 In addition there are two route-wide cultural heritage Appendices:

- a historic landscape character report (Volume 5: Appendix CH-005-000); and
- a geoarchaeology desk study report (Volume 5: Appendix CH-006-000).

1.1.3 Maps referred to throughout the cultural heritage Appendices are contained in the Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book.

1.2 Study area

1.2.1 The South Cheshire area lies partly within Cheshire East and partly within Staffordshire. The area comprises parts of the civil parishes of Crewe, Crewe Green, Weston, Basford, Shavington cum Gresty, Rope, Wistaston, Hough, Wynbunbury, Chorlton, Lea, Walgherton, Doddington, Blakenhall, Checkley cum Wrinehill, and Bridgemere. It also comprises parts of Madeley, Betley, and Balterley.

1.2.2 All non-designated and designated assets within the land required for the Proposed Scheme and within 500m of it have been detailed in this baseline report. In addition, designated heritage assets have been examined within the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV).

1.2.3 All identified assets are listed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-003 Gazetteer of heritage assets and shown in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-01-215b to CH-01-220 and CH-02-208 and CH-02-209 (Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book).

1.3 Data sources

1.3.1 Sources examined as part of this baseline assessment include published secondary sources, cartographic sources, Historic Environment Record (HER) data for non-designated heritage assets and the Historic England national heritage list (NHL) for designated assets. A full list of published sources can be found in Section 8 of this Appendix.

¹ HS2 Ltd (2017), *High Speed Two (HS2) Phase 2a (West Midlands - Crewe), Background Information and Data, Cultural heritage survey reports*, BID-CH-004-005, www.gov.uk/hs2

1.4 Survey undertaken

1.4.1 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process:

- Light detection and ranging (LiDAR) survey of the majority of the land required for the Proposed Scheme and land around it (see BID- CH-004-005 Cultural Heritage Survey Reports);
- a programme of non-intrusive surveys including geophysical prospection, (see BID- CH-004-005); and
- field walkover and targeted field walking, and site reconnaissance field inspections to review the setting of historic assets and the character and form of the historic landscape.

2 Geology, topography and landform

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The solid geology of the study area is dominated by sedimentary deposits of Triassic age (200 - 250 million years). These comprise mudstones, siltstones, sandstones and salt deposits (halites) of the Mercia Mudstone Group; part of the Sherwood Sandstone Group that forms the remainder of the Triassic sequence.
- 2.1.2 The solid geology is overlain by complex superficial deposits formed during the Quaternary period (last 2.5 million years), reflecting the influence of glacial and riverine processes, which may extend over the last 400,000 years. The study area is close to the margins of the last major ice sheet to have affected mainland Britain during the late Devensian (approximately 30,000 – 15,000 years BP²), which largely removed evidence of earlier ice sheets and palaeodrainage. On present evidence the margins of the ice sheet reached a line from Lichfield to Wolverhampton, although the precise limits of the ice sheet are still a matter for debate. As a consequence, although the majority of superficial deposits are likely to be more recent, isolated remnants of earlier glacial and fluvial sediments may be preserved beneath Devensian deposits. The superficial deposits can be divided between four main types; 1) till; 2) glaciofluvial sands and gravels, including river terrace deposits; 3) Holocene alluvium, and 4) peat.
- 2.1.3 During the advance of glaciers, deposits of poorly sorted tills (previously termed boulder clay) were laid down by ice sheets, mostly during the latter stages of the Devensian Ice Age (30,500–13,500 BP) when the Irish ice sheet expanded to cover the area. Till deposits are widespread across the study area, particularly in the northern half of the study area around Crewe and to the south from Chorlton to Checkley, with deposits also to the east of Charlton and Weston.
- 2.1.4 Sands and gravels occur across a significant portion of the study area south of Crewe to the Checkley Brook at Wrinehill with further deposits along the western edge of the study area running north-west from Blakenhall. These were most probably deposited as outwash during the retreat of the ice sheet or as seasonal meltwater at the edge of the Devensian ice sheet. The Tills, along with sands and gravels, form an extensive blanket of superficial sediments, across the study area, that likely date to the late Devensian period.
- 2.1.5 Pleistocene river terrace deposits are indicated by the British Geological Survey (BGS)³ at the southern edge of the study area along the edges of the Holocene alluvium of the Checkley Brook. They represent fluvially deposited sediments (typically sands and gravels) that have been subsequently incised through to form terraces and preserved as evidence of former floodplains along the sides of current and former river valleys. Within river catchments evidence for several terraces deposits representing successive phases of aggradation and incision covering multiple glacial-interglacial

² BP - 'Before Present' is a time scale typically taken to be the number of years prior to 1 January 1950 when radiocarbon dating (carbon-14) became practical, and also to indicate the number of years prior to nuclear testing, which altered the isotope ratios in the atmosphere.

³ Geology of Britain Viewer | British Geological Survey (BGS), <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

cycles. Single terraces, such as those preserved in the study area, likely reflect deposition during the last glacial cycle.

- 2.1.6 Deposits of Holocene alluvium are present where former and extant river and minor tributaries cut across the study area and the route of the Proposed Scheme. The principal deposits of alluvium comprise the Valley Brook, cutting across the south of Crewe, the Basford Brook running south from Crewe past Chorlton, the Englesea Brook (a tributary of the Valley Brook) running south from Crewe along the north-eastern edge of the South Cheshire area to the west of Barthomley, and the Checkley Brook cutting across the southern edge of the study area from Wrinehill to Checkley. There are several areas of more patchy alluvium that relate to minor tributaries, and drainage associated with extant and former lakes within the undulating glacial topography.
- 2.1.7 Peat deposits comprise partially decayed organic matter preserved within waterlogged anaerobic (oxygen-free) conditions. Peat deposits are preserved either interbedded within alluvium or as part of discrete landform deposits such as palaeochannels, palaeolakes or kettle holes (the latter are hollows in fluvioglacial sediments left where a block of ice has subsequently melted). Several peat deposits occur across the study area, particularly north of the A500 Shavington Bypass west of Barthomley where they occur along with lacustrine deposits associated with former lakes. Peat deposits, most likely infilling kettle holes, occur to the immediate north and south of the A500 Shavington Bypass and further south around Wychwood Park, Chorlton and within the floodplain of the Basford Brook west of Betley. An area of peat and lacustrine sediments also extends from Wrinehill around Betley common and north towards the A531 Newcastle Road.
- 2.1.8 The geology of the study area supports a range of slightly acidic base rich loamy and clayey soils along with acid sandy soils of low to moderate fertility, supporting arable and grassland pasture with some woodland. Devensian deposits of fluvioglacial sediments, and in particular discrete deposits of peat preserved within kettle holes and palaeolakes, have significant geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential.
- 2.1.9 The topography of the study area is characterised as low-lying and gently undulating landscape, gently increasing in elevation south to north along the proposed route from 55m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Crewe to gom AOD at Wrinehill. Land-use is mainly pasture. Settlement activity is characterised by small nucleated settlements at Betley, Wybunbury, Weston, Shavington and Basford, as well as dispersed farmsteads and hamlets, whilst to the north of the study area the dominant character is of 19th and 20th century industrial, commercial, and residential activity at Crewe.
- 2.1.10 In summary, the form and historic character of the present-day landscape within the study area is determined primarily by geological processes, particularly during the Quaternary period when successive glaciations scoured and deposited sediment across large parts of the landscape. Both the solid and superficial geologies have heavily influenced post-glacial soil development in the region and therein the vegetative cover and land-use history of the study area.

2.2 Geoarchaeological characterisation

2.2.1 The following geoarchaeological characterisation zones (GCZ) have been identified within the South Cheshire area (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-006-000 Geoarchaeology desk study report):

- GCZ 36 – comprises primarily till and fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, with a deposit of peat located south-west of Higher Den Farm;
- GCZ 37 – comprises primarily till and fluvio-glacial sands and gravels with organic sediments located to the south-west of Chorlton;
- GCZ 38 – comprises primarily fluvio-glacial sands and gravels with modest deposits of alluvium associated with the Swill and Basford Brook;
- GCZ 39 – comprises primarily fluvio-glacial sands and gravels and alluvium of the Basford Brook;
- GCZ 40 – comprises till deposits located south of Crewe;
- GCZ 41 – comprises alluvium along the course of the Basford Brook and very minor river terrace deposits; and
- GCZ 42 – comprises till deposits.

3 Archaeological and historical record

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section provides a chronological overview of the wider archaeological context of the study area. This is intended to enable the potential for unidentified archaeological remains to be assessed, and their likely location and form to be identified.
- 3.1.2 Descriptions of all identified cultural heritage assets are presented in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-005 and shown in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-01-215b – CH01-200, CH-02-208 and CH-02-209 (Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book).

3.2 Early Prehistory

Palaeolithic 500,000BC – 10,000BC

- 3.2.1 The recent discovery of Lower-Palaeolithic core-and-flake tools at Happisburgh and Pakefield on the east Anglian coast has pushed back the date of the first confirmed early human occupation of what would become Britain to around 700,000 years ago, which places it in Marine Oxygen Isotope Stages (MIS) 17 or 15⁴.
- 3.2.2 The Lower (700,000BC - 150,000BC) and Middle (150,000BC - 40,000BC) Palaeolithic was a period of alternating warm and cold phases and intermittent and perhaps seasonal occupation. During the Upper Palaeolithic (40,000BC - 10,000BC), after the last glacial maximum, further climate warming meant the environment changed from steppe-tundra to birch and pine woodland. It is probably at this time that Britain first saw continuous occupation. Evidence for Palaeolithic hominin⁵ and modern human activity is mainly informed by the presence of stone tools, commonly also by palaeoenvironmental remains and far less commonly by other organic remains such as butchered bones and wooden tools. Erosion has removed much of the Palaeolithic land surfaces and finds are typically sparse and residual. By far the majority of finds from this period derive from fluvial sands and gravels that comprise river terrace deposits.
- 3.2.3 At the end of the last glaciation, (approximately 18,000 years ago), the retreat of the ice sheet resulted in the deposition of tills and sands and gravels in the glacial outwash and created the kettle holes. These subsequently developed into the meres and mosses that are characteristic of the Cheshire Plain. With the possible exception of these kettle holes and palaeolakes (SCH070, SCH088 – SCH098⁶), any evidence of human occupation from this period within the study area appears to have been eroded with the retreat of the ice sheet.
- 3.2.4 There are no recorded assets of the Palaeolithic period within the study area.

⁴ Hunter, J. and Ralston, I. (2009), *The Archaeology of Britain: an introduction from earliest times to the twenty-first century*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 19-20

⁵ Any member of the taxonomical tribe of Hominini (family Hominidae, order Primates) to which *Homo sapiens* and other human species from the *Homo*, *Australopithecus*, *Paranthropus*, and *Ardipithecus* taxa belong.

⁶ Asset reference numbers throughout refer to the Unique Identifier provided for each asset in the gazetteer (Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-005)

Mesolithic 10,000BC – 4,000BC

- 3.2.5 At the end of the last Ice Age, Britain was still connected to the European mainland by the Doggerland land bridge. Rapid change led to the replacement of the late-glacial tundra initially by birch and pine within a still open landscape, and subsequently by much denser mixed deciduous woodland comprising oak, alder, willow, hazel and elm. Environmental evidence suggests that in the West Midlands, this process of succession spanned the period from approximately 9,500/8,500BC to approximately 7,200/7,000⁷. The land bridge also facilitated colonization by red and roe deer, aurochs, boar, elk, wild pig and horse.
- 3.2.6 The material record of the Mesolithic in Britain comprises mostly lithic assemblages, though structural remains and organic remains have been identified. Early Mesolithic (pre 6,500BC) assemblages are typically of broad-blade type, adapted to large-game hunting. After 6,500BC, Late Mesolithic assemblages are of narrow-blade type, suitable for a diverse range of hunting and processing tasks⁸.
- 3.2.7 The earliest evidence of human occupation in Cheshire dates to the Mesolithic period, although most of the evidence for such activity is confined to the Pennine fringes in the eastern part of the county. However, some evidence for activity closer to the study area during the Mesolithic period is attested from surface finds. These include a flint trimming flake, an unworked flint blade, and a black chert trimming flake of Mesolithic date⁹, although there is little direct evidence for the nature of any activity during this period.
- 3.2.8 There are no recorded assets of the Mesolithic period within the study area.

Neolithic 4,000BC – 2,200BC

- 3.2.9 The Neolithic is generally considered to be the transition period when hunter-gatherer society gradually changed to farming and settled communities, with large scale forest clearance occurring over large areas of the British Isles for the farming of domesticated animals including sheep and cattle, and the increasing cultivation of crops such as domesticated wheat, as well as for the construction of communal monuments.
- 3.2.10 There remains much debate at the national level as to the speed of this process, and whether it was the product of acculturation or colonization. However, in the West Midlands the evidence suggests very gradual acculturation, in that woodland persisted down to at least 2,500BC, with little clearance and little cereal cultivation before that date
- 3.2.11 Few sites of this date have yet been identified in Cheshire, although indications of clearance and vegetation changes have been identified in the pollen record¹⁰. Supporting evidence for Neolithic activity is confined to surface finds, most of which consist of isolated flint tools found during field walking. The occasional examples of

⁷ Garwood, P. (2011), The earlier prehistory of the west midlands. In Watts, S. (ed). *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A framework for research*. Oxbow: Oxford

⁸ Garwood (2011), 26.

⁹ Leah, M.D., Wells, C.E., Appleby, C. and Huckerby, E. (1997), *The Wetlands of Cheshire, North West Wetland Survey*, 4, p.127, Lancaster University Archaeology Unit, Cheshire County Council, 127

¹⁰ Leah et al. (1997)

stratified deposits that have been excavated have been found fortuitously on excavations of later sites¹¹. An example of such a tool was a flint dagger recorded as a surface find from the Basford area¹². This tool was notched at the base of the blade, which was fashioned from grey flint, and reflected the form of early metal blades of later Beaker associations. Several single-struck flints were also recovered from the vicinity of Weston Hall during the North West Wetlands Survey of Cheshire in 1997¹³, and a group of five worked flints, including a double-ended scraper, a core, and an unretouched flake of late prehistoric date, have been retrieved from Basford.

3.3 Late Prehistory

Bronze Age 2,600BC – 700BC

- 3.3.1 At the end of the Neolithic, the ceremonial landscapes comprising communal monuments ceased to be augmented and maintained. These were replaced initially by single-phase circular burial mounds, which contained single crouched inhumations with ceramic beakers and occasionally copper daggers and gold ornaments (though rarely in the West Midlands) and which attracted few or no secondary burials. From about 2,200BC, multiphase round barrows were constructed in the West Midlands, which saw iterative structural elaboration and which contained multiple secondary burials. Initially the regional burial rite would appear to have been mixed, but later standardized upon urned and unurned cremation. The earliest barrows would appear to have celebrated individuals, and the later ones, lineages. The pace of round-barrow construction in the West Midlands appears to have increased rapidly from about 1,900BC.
- 3.3.2 Evidence of early Bronze Age culture within Cheshire shows a similar pattern to the Neolithic with most of the evidence for settlement being confined to funerary monuments on the Pennine fringes.
- 3.3.3 It is during the Middle Bronze Age (approximately 1,500BC - 1000BC) through to the late Iron Age (approximately 400BC - AD43) that evidence for agricultural practices and land division becomes more visible in the archaeological record. Settlement becomes more permanent, as single farmsteads incorporating a single family unit. Increasing pressure on the available agricultural land later in the Bronze Age may have been the cause of the construction of defensive earthworks in upland areas to the west and north of Cheshire, such as along the mid-Cheshire Ridge, although the associated agricultural settlements remain elusive¹⁴.
- 3.3.4 Within the study area evidence from this period is limited to surface finds such as an early Bronze Age flat axe from Blakenhall, and a late Bronze Age palstave axe found near Wybunbury.

¹¹ Higham, N.J. (1993), *The origins of Cheshire*, Manchester University Press

¹² Harris, B.E. (ed.) (1987), *A History of the County of Chester: Volume I: Physique, Prehistory, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Domesday*, Victoria County History, 79

¹³ Leah et al. (1997)

¹⁴ Leah et al. (1997)

Iron Age 800BC – AD43

- 3.3.5 During the Iron Age the climate became cooler and wetter, and the period saw an expanding population necessitating the intensification of agricultural practices and the use of marginal land, along with the construction of hillforts in lowland Britain.
- 3.3.6 The area incorporating the study area is believed to have been occupied by the Cornovii¹⁵ and it has been suggested that the various Iron Age enclosures along the mid-Cheshire ridge may be a northwards extension of the Iron Age hillforts above the North Shropshire Plain¹⁶. This activity may, in part, correspond with the palaeoenvironmental record, which shows a general intensification in landscape use across much of the county during the Iron Age. However, with the exception of these enclosures, the evidence for settlement during this period is for the most part limited to chance finds. Evidence from eastern Cheshire includes Iron Age pottery of a type closely associated with the salt industry and demonstrates that salt was being traded during this period and that trackways and routes between Nantwich, Middlewich and Northwich were well established.
- 3.3.7 Chance find in the area include the bog body¹⁷ from Lindow Moss, which has provided invaluable information about the period¹⁸. Whilst there is, as yet, little direct evidence for salt production or for any associated settlements from this period, the brine springs of central and southern Cheshire are known to have been the focus of a well-established Iron Age salt industry¹⁹, and the production of a characteristic type of Iron Age pottery (VCP (Very Coarse Pottery)) has been linked to the salt trade²⁰.
- 3.3.8 Evidence of the Iron Age period within the study area is limited to artefact findspots such as an Iron Age to Roman period terret ring from Doddington.

3.4 Romano-British AD43 – AD410

- 3.4.1 The Romano-British period is well represented within Cheshire, although until recently most research has concentrated upon urban and military sites, with few investigations of rural settlements having been undertaken. Major re-organisation of the country occurred throughout the 1st century BC to 2nd century AD. The Roman legionary fortress of Deva (Chester) was founded by Legion II in approximately AD74 - AD75 to control north Wales and north-west England²¹. Its location provided access to the sea via the estuary of the River Dee. The influence of the fortress, approximately 40km north-west of the study area, was felt throughout much of the country and a range of contemporary sites have been identified.
- 3.4.2 The evolution of the Cheshire salt industry, which is focused in the central and southern parts of the county appears to have been developed by the Roman

¹⁵ Webster, G. (1975), *The Cornovii: Peoples of Roman Britain*, Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd

¹⁶ Leah et al. (1997), 152

¹⁷ Human remains preserved or naturally mummified within acidic and anaerobic conditions such as peat. In some circumstances preservation includes the soft tissues such as skin and organs

¹⁸ Stead, I.M., Bourk, J. and Bothwell, D. (1986), *Lindow Man: The body in the bog*, London: BMP; for further discussion, Turner, R.C. and Scaife, R.G. (1995), *Bog Bodies: New Discoveries and New Perspectives*, London

¹⁹ Morris, E. (1985), *Prehistoric Salt Distributions: two case studies from western Britain*, in: Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, No.32, p.336-79. The Board of Celtic Studies

²⁰ Nevell, M. (2005), Chapter 1, Salt Making in Cheshire: The Iron Age Background, in: *Brine in Britannia: Recent Archaeological work on the Roman Salt Industry in Cheshire*, Council for British Archaeology

²¹ Garner, D. (2007), The Neolithic and Bronze Age Settlement at Oversley Farm, in Watts, S. (ed). *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A framework for research*. Oxbow: Oxford

administration, is of particular interest. The prosperity of Middlewich, for instance, was probably based entirely upon the salt trade²². The discovery of five Roman lead salt-pans at Northwich in August 1864 suggested that salt was being manufactured outside the area of the fort²³. Similarly, Watkin²⁴ reported a brine kiln and briquetage three miles from Middlewich, presumed to be of a Roman date, indicating that the Roman salt industry extended into rural locations some distance from known centres of Roman settlement.

- 3.4.3 Recent finds of salt pan fragments from the Shavington area²⁵ not only suggest that rural sites may have played a role in the salt trade, but are also consistent with the existence of Roman salt production in the immediate vicinity. The precise location of the nearest Roman road to the site is uncertain, although it is noted²⁶ that it ran between Crewe Green and Weston, approximately 3km to the east of the site. This road ran due south from the Roman fort at Middlewich, situated approximately 12km north of the northernmost part of the study area. Margary²⁷ also identified a well-established Roman road that proceeded from Middlewich on a south-westward alignment. Definite remains of this road occur at Wood Farm, Worleston, located approximately 4km north-east of the northernmost part of the study area.
- 3.4.4 Finds from the Roman period have been recorded within the study area, including a hoard of twelve silver Denarius found together with two dolphin brooches at Weston, reported in Petch²⁸. The coins were scattered over an area from National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 72856 52427 to NGR SJ 72852 52438, approximately 300m south of the recently constructed roundabout near Heath Farm. Other finds include a cast copper lid of a *vesica* or 'eye' shaped seal-box, a separate copper alloy decorative mount, a gilded disc brooch, and various coins all found near Doddington. Possible evidence of Romano-British settlement within the study area may exist at Heath Farm (SCH079) where geophysical survey has identified a possible enclosure or land division of a type that could be from the late Iron Age, Roman, or Medieval period.

3.5 Early medieval AD410 – AD1066

- 3.5.1 South Cheshire lay within the Mercian Kingdom, which had its centre around the River Trent. The rule of King Offa (AD757 - AD796) led to the creation of defined boundaries particularly to the west between Mercia and the Welsh Kingdoms. There is little information available pertaining to the early medieval period; only six Cheshire place-names are mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the chief source of the general history of the period²⁹. Social, monetary, economic and political organisation from the Roman period broke down during the early medieval period to be replaced by a system of smaller tribal entities that adopted customs derived from Northern Europe and Scandinavia.

²² Higham (1993)

²³ Penny, S. and Shotter, D.C.A (1996), *An inscribed Roman Salt-Pan from Shavington*, Cheshire, *Britannia* 27, 360-365

²⁴ Watkin, W.T. (1886), *Roman Cheshire: A description of Roman Remains in the County of Chester*, printed for the author

²⁵ Penney and Shotter.(1996), 360-6

²⁶ O'Dwyer, S. (1935), *The Roman Roads of Cheshire: An Historical Survey*, Nantwich

²⁷ Margary, I.D. (1957), *Roman Roads in Britain*, 2, London

²⁸ Petch, D.F. (1987), The Roman Period in Harris B.E., *A History of the County of Chester: Victoria History of the Counties of England*, 1. London

²⁹ Sylvester, D. (1971), *A History of Cheshire*, Henley-on-Thames

- 3.5.2 Most of the evidence for post-Roman settlement in this area is based upon studies of place-names, which, in general terms, suggest a mixture of native British and Saxon speakers³⁰, whilst the suffix of –ton in Shavington and Weston suggests that they were probably in existence by the end of the 8th century³¹. The Basford Tithe Map of 1839, moreover, shows that the majority of older field names in Shavington are of likely Anglo-Saxon origin. Basford is recorded in the Domesday Survey as 'Berchesford' and, prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066; it comprised three manors held individually by Owen, Erechaiin and Leofric³². Betley is derived from a Saxon female name, Bette, and 'ley', meaning clearing in the woods. There is also evidence of settlement during this period at Wybunbury, including a scheduled monument and Grade II* listed building (SCH022) that relate to the partly demolished Church of St Chad, which is thought to have been important during the later years of the Mercian Kingdom due to its dedication to St Chad who was Bishop of the Mercians in AD669.

3.6 Medieval AD1066 – AD1540

- 3.6.1 The rural landscape of Cheshire during the medieval period would have been occupied by a series of small nucleated villages surrounded by open fields³³. Whilst there were small scattered settlements in south Cheshire between the Weaver and the Dee, the situation during the late 11th century further east within the study area is uncertain.
- 3.6.2 In the southern portion of the study area, within the current Staffordshire boundary, evidence from the Domesday Book of 1086³⁴ suggests that a small settlement existed at Betley prior to the Norman Conquest, and that at this point the manor was held by Godric and Wulfgeat. By 1086 Betley was held by Wulfin, but little is known about him or his rule. Documentary evidence through papal documents of 1162 suggests that Trentham Priory owned land in the manor. Documentary evidence also suggests that the manor was held by the de Betley family from the early 13th century. The de Audley family were granted the town of Betley between 1226 and 1227. The charter for the town records that Betley was granted and quitclaimed by a Henry de Betley and in 1389 the de Betley family were described as lords of the manor³⁵ although they are not recorded after the end of the medieval period. The mid 15th century Grade II* listed Old Betley Hall and the early 16th century Grade I listed Church of St Margaret (parts of the grouped asset SCH015) were constructed during the latter part of the medieval period and would have been a key focal point for settlement activity within the town.
- 3.6.3 A north south road running through Betley was laid out and led north-west towards the area that became Crewe. The town would have formed a link to the wider economy of this pastoral landscape. To the west of Betley and the east of the route of the Proposed Scheme, Betley Mere (SCH091), is generally assumed to be the 'great mere' referenced in 1272 and 1273 as a location for fishing. Further evidence is

³⁰ Gelling, M. (1992), *West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*, Leicester University Press, 62

³¹ Sylvester (1971), 24

³² Morgan, P. (1978), *The Domesday Survey of Cheshire*, in J. Morris (ed.) *Domesday Book*, 26, Chichester

³³ Sylvester (1971)

³⁴ Morgan (1978)

³⁵ Speake, R. (ed.), (1980), *Betley: a village of contrasts*, University of Keele

provided by a document of 1298 that records one of the inhabitants of Betley being Adam le Peccher (the fisher)³⁶.

- 3.6.4 A number of incised lanes of probably medieval origin cross the landscape roughly east to west from Betley towards Checkley and Wybunbury. These include Checkley Lane (SCH077, see Photomontage LV.01.660 in Volume 5: Appendix LV-001-005 Landscape and visual assessment and photomontages), Den Lane (SCH099), Mill Lane (SCH100), and Waybutt Lane (SCH102). These lanes are indicative of established transport and trade routes between the nucleated settlements within the study area.
- 3.6.5 Near the centre of the study area documentary sources note the name Gonsley Green derives from Godewyneslegh (SCH020, see Photomontage LV.01.563 in Volume 5: Appendix LV-001-005), a medieval village first mentioned in 1311 and subsequently abandoned and lost³⁷. Evidence of the deserted village is recorded as earthworks including house platforms, boundaries and ridge and furrow.
- 3.6.6 Doddington in the west of the study area appears to have continued to be occupied during the medieval period, with the Grade I listed Delves Hall (SCH012) tower house constructed in the late 14th century.
- 3.6.7 During this period to the north of the study area, the area was divided between the townships of Basford and Shavington. These lay within the parish of Wybunbury, which formed part of a group of large Cheshire parishes associated with important ecclesiastical centres³⁸ and which probably also had an administrative function. Wybunbury appears in the Domesday Book as Wimeberie³⁹, and its importance within the study area during the period is reflected in two scheduled monuments that relate to moated sites (SCH022) which were likely constructed between 1250 and 1350 as prestigious residences for the lord of the manor.
- 3.6.8 Basford is first mentioned in the Domesday Book, where it appears as Berchesford, and is recorded as consisting of three manors⁴⁰, probably representing Basford, Hough and Weston. Basford Hall was the seat of the Bromleys, and was a timbered mansion, surrounded by a moat, that was destroyed by fire about 1700 (SCH045). There is also documentary reference to a medieval village located at Basford in the vicinity of the hall⁴¹.
- 3.6.9 It is claimed that Shavington to the north was waste land by the time of the Domesday Book (1086)⁴², suggesting that if earlier settlement was located here it had been abandoned by the late 11th century. However, a possible moat is recorded in this area (SCH046) taking the form of an L-shaped pond depicted on 1840 tithe maps and on later Ordnance Survey maps, and may relate to one of the two manorial sites in the township mentioned by Ormerod⁴³.

³⁶ Wedgwood, J. (1908), *The Inquests on the Staffordshire Estates of the Audleys of A.D. 1273, 1270, 1283, 1299, 1308*, in Collections for a history of Staffordshire volume XI new series, The William Salt Archaeological Society

³⁷ Dodgson, J. McN. (1971), *The Place-Names of Cheshire*, Part 3, Vol. XLVI, English Place-Name Society, University of Nottingham

³⁸ Thacker, A.T. (1987), Anglo-Saxon Cheshire, in C.R. Elrington (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Cheshire*, 1, 237-92, Oxford

³⁹ Morgan (1978)

⁴⁰ Harris (1987)

⁴¹ Dodgson (1971)

⁴² Morgan (1978)

⁴³ Ormerod, G. (1882), *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, vol.III

- 3.6.10 The area surrounding Weston includes evidence of medieval mills, such as Weston Hall Mill (SCHo28), a watermill first recorded in 1433, and Crotia Mill, possibly first mentioned in the 14th century as 'le moleyn de schawe' and variously named on subsequent maps (SCHo81). At Chorlton to the south, a possible moat is recorded based on a tithe map of Chorlton from 1843 (SCHo78).
- 3.6.11 In the Domesday Survey Crewe (Creu) is recorded as part of land granted to the Norman Lord, Richard de Vernon, held before the conquest by Osmaer. There was land for three ploughs and the population included one radman (generally referring to a man who rides a horse); six villeins (manorial agricultural tenants) and two bordars (manorial tenants with fewer rights than villeins). The land was classed as waste, which may indicate that de Vernon considered it to be of little use. By the 12th century, the land had passed to William Malbank (whose name has a variety of spellings). The first 'manor house' for Crewe was built in approximately 1170, in close proximity to where the existing Crewe Hall (SCHo47) now stands.
- 3.6.12 An agricultural economy will have been established during the latter part of this period, and in Wybunbury in the north-west part of the study area, a three field system of ploughing was followed in the 13th century⁴⁴. However, this type of system does not appear to be typical in Cheshire, which seems to have evolved an irregular system in which fields were of different sizes, and were rarely three in number. More usual were the one- or two-field townships⁴⁵.

3.7 Post-medieval AD1540 – AD1901

- 3.7.1 The post-medieval period, and in particular from 1485 to 1714, saw major changes in the development of small manorial estates. Whilst in many respects the pattern of settlement established in the medieval period formed the basis for a continued pattern in the post-medieval, social patterns associated with the rise of the aristocratic elite are further evidenced in the built environment.
- 3.7.2 The great bulk of the population drew at least part of their income from the land during this period⁴⁶, and the area is likely to have retained its rural character until well into the 19th century⁴⁷. Around Betley the open fields within Staffordshire had begun to be enclosed. An estate map of 1727 recorded field names, which may have originated as names of open fields. An area of common land, marked as Pasture on Yates' map of 1775, is still known as Betley Common. It is likely that Common Lane began as a path into open field systems during the medieval period. The piecemeal enclosure process is not visible in the landscape in Betley and this is attributed to agricultural improvement work undertaken by George Tollett in the late 18th and early 19th century.
- 3.7.3 Throughout this period small farmsteads continued to play an important role in the economic and settlement structure of the area, and for the most part those established in the post-medieval period remain today. An exception is the farmstead

⁴⁴ Morgan (1978)

⁴⁵ Sylvester, D. and Nulty, G. (1958), *The historical atlas of Cheshire*, Cheshire Community Council

⁴⁶ Phillips, C.B. and Smith, J.H. (1994), *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540*, London

⁴⁷ Leah et al. (1997)

at Higher Hayward (SCH014), which is no longer present, but earthwork features including boundaries, platforms and an associated sand extraction pit remain.

- 3.7.4 Industry in East Cheshire initially centred on ironworks such as Tip Green forge (SCH003), which is shown on Yates's map of Staffordshire (1775) as lying on the Cheshire side of Checkley Brook at the point where the stream forms the boundary between the two counties of East Cheshire and Staffordshire. It is the earliest recorded Cheshire forge, operating in 1619, and by 1646 was almost certainly a finery⁴⁸. On the southern side of Checkley Brook and close to Tip Green forge a brick kiln is recorded (SCH001), although its origin is unknown.
- 3.7.5 To the north, villages such as Weston and Basford have probably remained largely unaltered in their general layout since the end of the medieval period. The major change to the landscape prior to the Industrial Revolution would have been the enclosure of the medieval open field system, and by the early 19th century, only vestiges of the former open arable fields of the county survived⁴⁹. The fields within the study area are shown as enclosed on 19th century maps and, whilst field boundaries are not shown on Burdett's map of 1777, it is unlikely that an open field system was practised at that time. The process of enclosing that is fencing off an individual's land from that of his neighbours had begun in the medieval centuries. Parliamentary Enclosure in Cheshire began around 1765, although this had minimal impact until the late 18th and early 19th centuries⁵⁰. Hough seems to be related to the re-organisation of privately enclosed Open Field Arable.
- 3.7.6 Commercial peat production, which began in the late 19th century in Cheshire and agricultural improvements⁵¹, effected changes to the wetlands in the region.
- 3.7.7 The present town of 'Crewe' only came into being with the advent of the railways in the 19th century. The manor of Crewe was purchased by Randolph Crewe in the 17th century⁵² and Weston Hall (SCH029) was built in approximately 1677 by Sir John Delves. West of the Basford Brook, Basford Township had also come into the ownership of the Crewe and Delves Broughton families, making them the principal land-owners in this area.
- 3.7.8 The 19th century town spread over the old parishes of Coppenhall, primarily the township of Monks Coppenhall, while the old Crewe township, which was part of Barthomley Parish, is now commonly known as Crewe Green. Development of the area from the mid 19th century onwards was dominated by the expansion of the railway industry, centred on the town of Crewe. This expansion included the construction of the Basford Hall Sorting Sidings (SCH082) across the eastern edge of the site, which resulted in the modification of some field boundaries.
- 3.7.9 The advent of the Grand Junction Railway's Birmingham to Warrington line in 1837 radically altered the lowland landscape and saw the creation of the 'railway town' of Crewe. Four railway lines soon terminated at Crewe and in 1867 a new station

⁴⁸ A finery is a forge where pig iron, an intermediate product of iron processing beginning with iron ore, is refined into wrought iron through removal of carbon

⁴⁹ Sylvester and Nulty (1958)

⁵⁰ Phillips and Smith (1994)

⁵¹ Leah et al. (1997), 215

⁵² Ormerod (1882)

(SCH052) was built, replacing the original structure built in 1846, on land formerly owned by Lord Crewe, with the engineering works following shortly after. Over 500 houses were built by the railway company and the population of the town grew steadily from 5,000 in 1851 to 43,000 in 1901.

- 3.7.10 The rise of a formal retail market in Crewe began in 1842, when four railway lines converged there and the Grand Junction Company established its engine sheds and repair shops⁵³. With the opening of Crewe Works in 1843, Crewe became a boom town. Farmers in Shavington found that men were leaving the land in increasing numbers to find work in Crewe⁵⁴. The evidence obtained from the trade directories indicates that Basford is likely to have experienced a similar phenomenon. Approximately 50 acres of land along the railway line from Shavington to Crewe were bought for increased accommodation for goods traffic.
- 3.7.11 Continued expansion, based largely on the railway industry, led to the designation of Crewe as a borough in 1877⁵⁵.

3.8 Modern AD1901 – present

- 3.8.1 The study area has remained relatively unchanged during the modern period. The major changes include the introduction of the A500 Shavington Bypass running from Blakelow to the east of Weston, intensification of development on the fringes of Weston, Chorlton, and Shavington, and continued urban redevelopment within Crewe.
- 3.8.2 A number of sites relating to the Second World War are located on the fringes of Crewe, including the remains of a prisoner of war camp at Snape Farm where Italian and German prisoners of war were confined, a cold store or buffer depot in railway sidings buildings and emergency food depot at Gresty Lane, a searchlight battery located at Greenbank Farm, a now demolished Royal Observer Corps monitoring post at Shavington (SCH034), and a now demolished heavy anti-aircraft battery at Weston Road (SCH072). Crewe had played a large part in production for the war effort. Diversification from the railway industry was achieved in the 20th century with the arrival of Rolls Royce Aero Engines in 1938 and, after the Second World War, Rolls Royce based its automobile engineering division at Crewe. The Rolls Royce Factory in the town was producing Merlin engines for the Air Ministry.
- 3.8.3 The Grand Junction Railway was officially renamed the West Coast Main Line (WCML) in 1948 following nationalisation of the railways. The line was modernised and electrified in stages from 1959 to 1974. With this came British Rail's 'Inner City' brand, connecting London to Manchester at high-speed. The WCML retains some of the earlier Grand Junction Railway infrastructure including bridges (SCH010, SCH033, and SCH038), junctions (SCH037), embankments and cuttings (SCH032), and sidings (SCH059).
- 3.8.4 The rural landscape in the south of the study area remains largely unchanged, with the exception of minor post-war upgrades to field systems, the closure of a small number

⁵³ Phillips and Smith (1994), 164

⁵⁴ Nulty, G. (1959), *Shavington: The Story of a South Cheshire Village*, Nantwich

⁵⁵ Scholes, R. (2000), *Towns and Villages of Britain: Cheshire*, Wilmslow

of farmsteads, and small scale development or additions to existing settlements. The largest change within the southern part of the study area is the new development of Wychwood Park at Chorlton.

4 Built heritage

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section provides baseline information relating to all built-heritage assets within the land required for the Proposed Scheme; all designated and key non-designated built-heritage assets within 500m of the land required for the Proposed Scheme; and any built-heritage assets that lie between 500m and 2km from the land required for the Proposed Scheme and within the ZTV of the Proposed Scheme, where the Proposed Scheme will have adverse effects of moderate or major significance.
- 4.1.2 Further information on all these assets, plus any designated assets that lie between 500m and 2km of the land required for the Proposed Scheme and within the ZTV, but are not described below, can be found in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-005.
- 4.1.3 All assets are depicted in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-01-215b – CH-01-220 (Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book).

4.2 Built heritage assets within the land required for the Proposed Scheme

1867 Buildings at Crewe Railway Station (SCHo52)

- 4.2.1 Grade II listed pair of railway station platform buildings, flanking walls and arcades of 1867 constructed under the supervision of William Baker and altered in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Originally constructed for the London and North Western Railway, the listed elements of the railway station are one of the best examples of mid 19th century platform architecture designed anywhere on the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) network. The Grand Junction Railway was the first trunk railway in the region, formed in 1833, to connect to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, formed in 1830. The original station, built in 1842, took its name from nearby Crewe Hall, before being rebuilt to the south of Nantwich Road Bridge in 1867 to meet expansion in the rail network.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.2 The 1867 elements of the station provide important information about the railway history of the study area and the development of Crewe. The 1867 buildings have 150 years of continual use as operational infrastructure as part of the Grand Junction Railway (1837), London and North Western Railway (1846), London, Midland and Scottish Railway (1923), British Railways (1948), Railtrack (1994) and Network Rail (2002). The operational nature of the asset as part of the railway is a key feature of its significance.

Railway Emergency Control Centre (SCHo85)

- 4.2.3 A non-designated railway emergency control centre constructed in the 20th century. The building is a concrete Type A1 Divisional Control Room, built as part of the defence systems during the Second World War along the railway infrastructure.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.4 The railway emergency control centre provides important information about the railway history at Crewe during the 20th century, and in particular in understanding the role of railway infrastructure defence systems during the Second World War. The building may be the last surviving example within Cheshire. The operational nature of the asset as part of the railway is a key feature of its significance.

Den Lane Bridge and sidings (SCHo10)

- 4.2.5 A non-designated road bridge built over the Grand Junction Railway and associated rail sidings. The asset is thought to have originally been built between 1830 and 1850, although the degree to which the bridge retains its original structure is unknown.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.6 The asset provides information relating to the Grand Junction Railway and subsequent rail development, and likely facilitated the realignment of the original Den Lane. The operational nature of the asset as part of the railway is a key feature of its significance.

Railway heritage near Basford Hall and Casey Lane

- 4.2.7 Various non-designated elements of railway heritage near Basford Hall that relate to the Grand Junction Railway are retained within the current WCML. These include embankments and cuttings south of Casey Bridge (SCHo32), Casey Bridge (SCHo33), the Basford Hall Junction (SCHo37), and Basford Hall Bridge on Weston Lane (SCHo38). These assets are thought to have been constructed sometime between 1830 and 1850, although the degree to which they retain their original structure, materials or form is unknown.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the assets

- 4.2.8 The assets provide information relating to the Grand Junction Railway and subsequent rail development, and are also important in understanding the impact the original GJR had on the adjacent Basford Hall. The operational nature of the assets as part of the railway is a key feature of their significance.

4.3 Designated and key non-designated built heritage assets within 500m of the land required for the Proposed Scheme**Basford Bridge Cottage (SCHo30)**

- 4.3.1 A Grade II listed small two storey timber framed house with brick infill and rendered brick, dating to the 17th century with 19th century alterations. The house has a two cell plan, probably originally baffle entry, and two 19th century lean-to on the west and rear. The building is in a dilapidated condition, with a corrugated iron roof and being supported by scaffolding. The Newcastle Road overbridge abuts the front of the building.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.2 The building has some relationship with the later period Basford Farmhouse on the opposite side of the road to the south, and with smaller contemporaneous settlements to the west at Hough and the east at Weston. The fields to the east of the

asset are also positive elements of its setting. However, the later additions of the GJR/WCML nearby to the west of the building, hardstanding and milking buildings to the rear, and particularly the adjacent modern A500 Newcastle Road and Newcastle Road overbridge, which significantly impose on the setting of the asset, are elements that detract from the ability to appreciate the historical context and architectural merits of the building.

Shavington Lodge (SCHo43)

- 4.3.3 A Grade II listed two storey farmhouse built in the early 19th century with Red Flemish bond brick with a slate roof. Located within a farm complex on the southern side of Weston Lane.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.4 The significance of the building relates to its rural context and historic relationship with the surrounding agrarian landscape, its location within a farm complex, and its relationship with Weston Lane and the settlements at Basford and Shavington. The A500 Shavington Bypass to the north is visually screened from direct views by embankments and vegetation. However, background traffic noise is noticeable and detracts somewhat from the historic setting of the lodge.

Shavington Hall (SCHo44)

- 4.3.5 A Grade II listed two storey small country house built in 1877 for the Earl of Shrewsbury in the Tudor Revival style. Constructed in Light Bowden brick with sandstone dressings, and red brick to rear elevations, with tall brick chimneys and Welsh slated roof with crested clay ridges. Located at the end of a manorial access way to the north of Weston Lane.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.6 The significance of the building relates to its rural context and historic relationship with the surrounding agrarian landscape, its landscaped elements including the access way, and its relationship with Weston Lane and the settlements at Basford and Shavington. The A500 Shavington Bypass to the north is visually screened from direct views by embankments and vegetation. However, background traffic noise is noticeable and detracts somewhat from the historic setting of the building.

4.4 Key built heritage assets within 2km of the land required for the Proposed Scheme, where this also falls within the ZTV

- 4.4.1 The criterion for inclusion within this section is that the Proposed Scheme is assessed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-005 Cultural heritage impact assessment table as having a major or moderate adverse effect upon a designated asset that lies between 500m and 2km of the land required for the Proposed Scheme and also lies within the ZTV of the Proposed Scheme. Descriptions of all designated assets within this area can be found in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-005.
- 4.4.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the above-defined area upon which the Proposed Scheme will have adverse effects of moderate or major significance.

5 Historic landscape

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A process of historic landscape assessment has been carried out, identifying Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCA) along the route of the Proposed Scheme. HLCA are based on historic landscape characterisation undertaken by Staffordshire County Council and Cheshire County Council and through consultation with these authorities and Historic England. HLCA have been defined where the historic landscape has a broadly distinct area of homogeneity. Descriptions of individual HLCA are presented in Volume 5: Appendix CH-005-000 Historic landscape character report.

5.1.2 HLCA identified within the South Cheshire area comprise:

- HLCA 17: Betley;
- HLCA 18: Hough to Checkley Hall; and
- HLCA 19: Crewe.

5.2 Parks and gardens

5.2.1 Several manorial estates fall within the South Cheshire area, including landscaped parks and gardens at Doddington and at Crewe Hall.

Doddington Hall Park

5.2.2 Doddington Hall Park comprises an 18th century park designed by Lancelot Brown. The park includes group of designated assets including the 18th century Grade I listed Doddington Hall and the Grade I listed Delves Hall; a late 14th century tower house thought to have been constructed after the purchase of the manor. The estate also includes five Grade II listed buildings; a late 18th century boathouse, stableblock, stable building and paddock wall, gates, piers and walls and the 19th century Church of St John. Landscape elements within the park include areas of woodland and ponds. The wider setting of the park comprises rural, agricultural land with small areas of woodland.

Crewe Hall Park

5.2.3 Crewe Hall Park comprises a late 18th century park designed by Lancelot Brown. Formal gardens within the park were designed by W. A. Nesfield in the 19th century. The focus of the park is the Grade I listed Crewe Hall; a 17th century Jacobean house built for Sir Randolph Crewe. The hall was extended in the late 18th century and altered in the early Victorian period. A further fifteen listed buildings are present within the park including the Grade II* listed 17th century former stables and Grade II listed lodges, cottages and farm buildings. The park is now bordered by modern development to the west and north- west and by the Grand Junction Railway to the south. Land to the north and east comprises agricultural land and a golf course.

6 Archaeological risk mapping

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The archaeological character of the route has been broken down into a series of Archaeological Character Areas (ACA) and Archaeological Sub-Zones (ASZ). These are described below and depicted in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-03-215b – CH-03-220.

6.2 Archaeological character areas

ACA7: Cheshire South

- 6.2.1 This ACA extends along the route of the Proposed Scheme from the northern end of the Madeley valley as far as Crewe. This is an area of gently undulating farmland, characterised by widespread deposits of glacial sand, gravel and clay. These reflect the fact that this area lay at the edge of the Devensian ice sheet during the last glacial maximum, between 20,000 and 30,000 years ago. The deposits largely comprise outwash deposits formed by meltwater as the ice sheet retreated. This has resulted in the formation of numerous lakes and pools, some of which have subsequently filled with sediment and often are manifested as mosses/marshes. Where ice wedges became embedded in the landscape and subsequently melted they have formed 'kettle holes', which typically are waterlogged and often contain organic sediments. These have high potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental material.
- 6.2.2 The result of this geological context has been the creation of a fairly flat landscape, with streams meandering across the landscape from south-east to north-west. Checkley Brook runs to the west of the route of the Proposed Scheme while Basford Brook runs parallel and to the east of the WCML, before crossing the railway line just south of Crewe. Both brooks drain into the River Weaver to the west of Crewe.
- 6.2.3 There is limited evidence for prehistoric archaeology in this ACA, although its well-watered character suggests that it would have been a rich environment for Mesolithic cultures. Similarly there is little evidence for Roman settlement east of Nantwich. The well-watered, free-draining soils of the area attracted a scatter of early medieval villages at sites such as Basford and Betley. Late medieval settlement contraction has left significant traces of medieval settlement in the landscape. The most important change in the post-medieval landscape has been the development of the railways, with the construction of the Grand Junction Railway in 1837. The creation of an important railway junction at Crewe led to the development of the town on what was previously a green field site.
- 6.2.4 Excluding these railway developments, the landscape of the ACA remains relatively little changed since post-medieval enclosure. Exceptions to this are areas which have seen extensive gravel extraction; often leading, more recently, to extensive commercial and residential development.

6.3 Archaeological sub-zones

ASZ64: Wrinehill Till

- 6.3.1 The risk zone is located in a gently rolling to relatively flat, open rural land with the Checkley Brook and River Lea to the south. Archaeological evidence dates to the medieval to post-medieval period and indicates occupation and utilisation of the landscape related to farming. Kettle holes of palaeoenvironmental potential are also present.

ASZ65: Chorlton fluvioglacial

- 6.3.2 The risk zone is located in relatively flat, open rural land that includes the WCML and parts of the Wychwood Park development at Chorlton. Parts of the Basford Brook and Swill Brook are also within the area. Archaeological evidence dates to the medieval to post-medieval period and indicates occupation and utilisation of the landscape related to farming. Kettle holes of palaeoenvironmental potential are also present.

ASZ66: Basford Till

- 6.3.3 The risk zone is located in a relatively flat, open rural landscape that includes the A500 Alsager Road, WCML, and Basford Hall sorting sidings. Archaeological evidence dates to the medieval and post-medieval periods, indicates occupation and utilisation of the landscape related to farming.

ASZ67: Gresty Brook

- 6.3.4 The risk zone is located in a strip of land occupied primarily by railway infrastructure, with Gresty Brook to the west and Basford Brook to the east. No heritage assets have been identified within the ASZ. Archaeological remains are likely to have been partially or totally removed during construction of the Grand Junction Rail.

ASZ68: Crewe

- 6.3.5 The risk zone comprises the modern town of Crewe; open country until the mid 19th century. The ASZ has potential for late post-medieval industrial sites relating to extraction, railways, and medieval buried features.

7 Analysis and research potential

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 A good general understanding of the character and significance of the archaeology within the study area can be reached using desk based sources and taking into account additional factors such as topography, geology, historic character and distribution of known archaeological finds, sites and assets.

7.2 Research potential and priorities

- 7.2.1 An Archaeological Research Framework for the West Midlands⁵⁶ provides an introduction to key research themes in the region by period. Reflecting the potential of the land required for the Proposed Scheme in the South Cheshire area, and drawing on the general themes identified in the published research framework, the following questions could provide a focus for further investigation carried out in this study area in terms of period based and multi-period based research.

General

- 7.2.2 Does the paucity of pre-Roman archaeology reflect an absence of permanent human settlement within the Cheshire Plain, or is this a reflection of preservation or recording bias? Can statistical modelling across the HS2 route contribute to answering this?
- 7.2.3 Are salt deposits being exploited within the study area and from which periods?
- 7.2.4 What is the archaeological, geoarchaeological, and palaeoenvironmental research potential of the peat deposits, and the river terrace deposits and alluvium associated with the Checkley Brook and Basford Brook?
- 7.2.5 What is the chronostratigraphic framework of the study area and how does this impact upon the preservation and visibility of the cultural and environmental record?
- 7.2.6 How has the natural landscape evolved during the Quaternary period and how has this affected and presented opportunities for human communities?

Early and later prehistory

- 7.2.7 To what degree can palaeoenvironmental data, particularly anticipated waterlogged deposits within kettle holes and palaeolakes, contribute to a greater understanding of the prevailing environmental conditions?
- 7.2.8 To what degree did the presence of low-lying land and meres and mosses influence the location of settlement and landscape utilisation?
- 7.2.9 Can the presence of the halite/salt deposits be identified as an influencing factor on the location of settlement and landscape utilisation?
- 7.2.10 To what degree can palaeoenvironmental data, particularly anticipated within river terrace deposits, contribute to a greater understanding of the prevailing environmental conditions or anthropogenic environmental change?

⁵⁶ Watt, S., ed (2011), *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: a framework for research*. Oxford: Oxbow Books

- 7.2.11 Can the study of Roman period finds within the landscape context contribute to predictive modelling in relation to settlement activity and transport networks?

Early medieval

- 7.2.12 To what degree did later development of smaller settlements named in the Domesday survey remove evidence from the early medieval period?

Medieval

- 7.2.13 To what extent do enclosed fields follow medieval field boundaries, and can this be used to help predict the location of medieval settlement activity?
- 7.2.14 Can the location and nature of the Godewyneslegh DMV (SCHo20) and Basford Hall DMV (SCHo45) be confirmed?
- 7.2.15 Can the arrangement of manorial estates and lesser estates contribute to our understanding of the arrangement of this landscape?
- 7.2.16 What is the date and scale of widespread woodland clearance in the region?

Post-medieval

- 7.2.17 What is the inter-relationship between arable, pastureland, woodland and waste in the post-medieval period following enclosure? What is the relationship between this and the creation of dispersed farmsteads as communal land becomes parcelled out privately?
- 7.2.18 Can the arrangement of manorial estates and parkland contribute to our understanding of the arrangement of this landscape?
- 7.2.19 To what extent did railway developments contribute to the layout and phasing of the development of Crewe?

Modern

- 7.2.20 To what extent did the arrival of the Grand Junction railway influence or change the arrangement of the landscape?
- 7.2.21 To what extent did the expansion of the mineral extractive industry influence or change the arrangement of the landscape?
- 7.2.22 To what extent is the role of railway in national defence during the Second World War understood in the study area?

8 References

8.1 General references

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8.2 Cartographic resources

- Crewe tithe map 1802.
- Basford Tithe Map of 1839 (CRO/EDT 41/2).
- Map of parish of Betley, Fowler 1833.
- Historic country series 1875 1:10, 500.

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