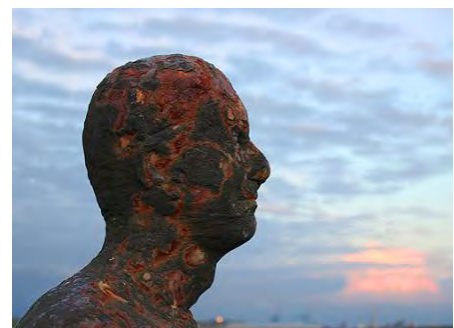




Sefton Council



**Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Sefton
Local Plan**



**SA Report
August 2015**

REVISION SCHEDULE					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	December 2014	SA Report (draft) to accompany the Publication version of the Local Plan	Ian McCluskey Senior Consultant	Anita Copplestone Principal Consultant	Steve Smith Technical Director <i>Policy & Appraisal</i>
2	July 2015	SA Report to accompany the Submission version of the Local Plan	Ian McCluskey Senior Consultant	Ian McCluskey Senior Consultant	Steve Smith Technical Director <i>Policy & Appraisal</i>

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INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the Sefton Local Plan. SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA of the Local Plan is a legal requirement.¹

This SA Report meets the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programme Regulations 2004; and incorporates the requirements of a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

1.1 SA explained

It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.²

The Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that *'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'*.³ The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

The Regulations prescribe the information that must be contained within the report, which for the purposes of SA is known as the 'SA Report'. Essentially, there is a need for the SA Report to answer the following four questions:

1. What's the scope of the SA?

This question must be answered subsequent to a review of the sustainability context and baseline, and consultation with designated environmental authorities.

2. What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?

Preparation of the draft plan must have been informed by at least one earlier plan-making / SA iteration at which point alternatives are assessed.

3. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

i.e. what are the likely significant effects of the Plan and what changes were recommended to avoid or mitigate negative effects and enhance the positives.

4. What happens next (including monitoring)?

These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the Regulations, which present the information to be provided within the report under a list of ten points. Table 1.1 makes the links between the ten Schedule 2 requirements and the four SA questions. **Appendix I** of this SA Report explains the process of 'making the links' in more detail.

2 STRUCTURE OF THIS SA REPORT

The four SA questions are answered in turn across the four subsequent parts of this Report.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require that an SA Report is published for consultation alongside the 'Proposed Submission' Plan document.

² Directive 2001/42/EC

³ Regulation 12(2)

Table 1.1: Questions that must be answered within the SA Report

SA REPORT QUESTION	SUB-QUESTION	CORRESPONDING REQUIREMENT (THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE...)
What's the scope of the SA?	What's the Plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan
	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The relationship of the plan with other relevant plans and programmes – The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level
	What's the sustainability 'baseline' at the current time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment – The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected
	What's the baseline projection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The likely evolution of the current state of the environment without implementation of the plan
	What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Any existing environmental problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance – The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as...
What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of why the alternatives dealt with are 'reasonable') – The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting preferred options / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.
What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The likely significant effects on the environment associated with the draft plan – The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
What happens next (including monitoring)?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring

PART 1: WHAT'S THE SCOPE OF THE SA?

3 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 1)

This is Part 1 of the SA Report, the aim of which is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SA. In particular, and as required by the Regulations⁴, this Chapter answers the series of questions below.

- What's the Plan seeking to achieve?
- What's the sustainability 'context'?
- What's the sustainability 'baseline'?
- What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

Chapter 4 answers the first question by listing the Local Plan objectives. The other three scoping questions are answered in **Chapters 5 - 7**, with each question answered for the following sustainability 'topics':

⁴ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

4 WHAT IS THE PLAN SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

4.1 What is the plan trying to achieve

The Sefton Local Plan sets out the spatial strategy for Sefton Borough, as well as key strategic planning policies for development.

The plan contains details about the quantity of housing and employment growth that should be planned for across the County and where it should be located, including through the allocation of specific strategic sites.

The key objectives of the plan are as follows:

1. To support **urban regeneration** and **priorities for investment** in Sefton.
2. To help meet the **housing needs** of Sefton's changing population for market and affordable housing; homes for families, the elderly, people with other special housing needs and others.
3. To promote **economic growth, tourism** and **jobs creation** and support new and existing businesses.
4. To **meet** the diverse **needs** for homes, jobs, services and facilities, **as close to where they arise as possible**.
5. To help Sefton's **town and local centres** to diversify and thrive
6. To make the most of the value of **the Port** to the local economy and jobs, while making sure that the impact on the environment and local communities is mitigated.
7. To make sure that new developments include the essential **infrastructure, services** and **facilities** that they require.
8. To improve **access to services, facilities and jobs**.
9. To protect and enhance Sefton's **natural and heritage assets**
10. To achieve high quality **design** and a **healthy** environment
11. To respond to the challenge of **climate change**, encouraging best use of **resources and assets**.
12. To work with partners and make the most of Sefton's place within the **Liverpool City Region**.

4.2 What's the plan not trying to achieve?

It is important to emphasise that the plan will be strategic in nature. Even the allocation of sites should be considered a strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues in the knowledge that these can be addressed further down the line (through the planning application process). The strategic nature of the plan is reflected in the scope of the SA.

5 WHAT'S THE SCOPE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL?

5.1 Introduction to scoping

In essence, scoping is the process of gathering information about the area and factors likely to be affected by the Local Plan. This information helps to identify what the key issues are and which of these should be the focus of the SA process. The following information is set out within this chapter, to help to identify the scope of the SA.

5.1.1 *Information about the Plan area*

It is important to provide a general overview of the extent and characteristics of the area that is likely to be affected by the Plan.

5.1.2 *Contextual review / policy framework*

An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing 'context' messages (e.g. issues, objectives or aspirations) set out within relevant published plans, policies, strategies and initiatives (PPSIs) at international, national and local level. Sustainability context messages are important, as they aid the identification of the 'issues and opportunities' that should be a focus of the SA. Assessments should also take account of the cumulative impacts that could arise as a result of other plans and programmes within and beyond the plan period. Section 5.2 sets out a summary of the key messages that have been distilled from a review of relevant PPSIs.

5.1.3 *The current and projected baseline*

Another important step when seeking to establish the 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing the current state for a range of environmental topics. Doing so helps to enable identification of those key environmental topics that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for the appraisal of significant effects.

Just as it is important for the scope of SA to be informed by an understanding of current baseline conditions, it is also necessary to consider how the baseline conditions might 'evolve' in the future under the no plan / business as usual scenario.

5.1.4 *Key Issues*

After establishing the baseline position and policy context, it is possible to identify what the key issues and opportunities are that the Sustainability Appraisal ought to concentrate on. These sustainability issues are listed in section 6.

5.1.5 *The Sustainability Appraisal Framework*

The SA Framework is developed using the Key Issues to ensure that assessments are focused on the pertinent issue. The SA Framework is a critical part of the SA process, consisting of a series of sustainability objectives and guiding criteria which are used as a basis for appraising the effects of the Local Plan (*and any reasonable alternatives*) on the environment, economy and local communities. The SA Framework is presented in section 7.

5.1.6 *Consultation and updates to the scope of the SA*

The Regulations require that: "*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the*

consultation bodies". In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, The Environment Agency and English Heritage.⁵

An initial Scoping Report for the Sefton Core Strategy (as it was known at that time) was published in 2009, which was updated and then published again in December 2012.

The SA scope was reviewed again in October 2014 to ensure that the appraisal of the emerging Local Plan remained focused on the most relevant sustainability issues. Updated information has been presented in this SA report in the following sections. No significant changes to the sustainability issues / SA Framework were identified as part of this review.

5.2 Contextual Review

A number of PPPSIs that were considered relevant to the scope of the Local Plan were reviewed as part of the Scoping Process. The review consisted of assessing each relevant document and extracting the key information with regard to the Local Plan and sustainability. The output of this review is presented in the tables below, which are restructured by broad topic areas relating to different aspects of sustainability.

The list of documents reviewed has purposely been kept to a manageable level and where possible repetition has been avoided by restricting reviews of similar documents with similar messages.

The contextual review has been updated at various stages as the Local Plan has progressed to ensure that the SA takes account of the most up-to-date policy context.

A number of the plans, policies and programmes presented in the tables that follow may appear to be outdated. In most cases, newer documents have been presented that have superseded these older documents. However, these older documents have been retained for completeness to illustrate how the policy context has changed throughout the course of the plan-making and SA process. In most cases however, the key messages have remained the same anyway.

⁵ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because *'by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes'*.

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
General/overarching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development plans must promote sustainable development - SA framework should include objectives relating to all three areas of sustainability [i.e. economic, social and environmental] - Sustainability is an underlying principle of the planning system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002) - The European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) - UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) - Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning (2005) - Localism Act 2011 - National Planning Policy Framework 2012
Climate Change and flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise the risk to people and property from flooding - Seek design measures to reduce flooding - Manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion - Reduce Carbon dioxide emissions - Ensure all development is energy efficient - Development should be located in accessible locations to reduce reliance on cars - Invest in renewable and low carbon technologies - Provide green infrastructure and trees - Utilise the environment, such as management of the land to reduce runoff and harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water. - Become more resilient to climate change and be proactive in planning for adaptation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kyoto Protocol 1997 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2007) - European Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings 2002/91/EC - Flood & Water Management Act (2010) - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Climate Change Act 2008 - Climate Change Adaptation By Design (2007) - The National Adaptation Programme (2013) - Allowable Solutions for Tomorrow's New Homes (2011) - Carbon Compliance: Finding and Recommendations (2011) - Building a Greener Future: Towards Zero Carbon Development (2008) - Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management (2009) - Alt Crossens Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008) - Lower Alt with Crossens Flood Risk Management Strategy - Sefton Surface Water Management Plan - Sefton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2013) - North West River Basin Management Plan (2009)

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise adverse impacts on water quality, the ecology of rivers, and ground water. - Safeguard mineral resources from sterilisation and encourage their efficient and appropriate use. - Prevent or reduce effects on the environment, in particular the pollution of surface water, ground water, soil and air, and on the global environment, as well as any resulting risk to human health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Water Framework Directive (2000) - EU Nitrates Directive (1991) - The Bathing Waters Directive [76/160/EEC] - EU Directive on Environmental Noise - European Air Quality Framework Directive (2008/50/EC) - The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 - The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland and Wales 2007 - Growing Awareness: A Plan for Our Environment (2008) - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - North West River Basin Management Plan (2009)
Waste and less use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote recycling and provide for a sustainable pattern of waste management facilities. - Prevent or reduce the adverse effects of the landfill of waste on the environment. - Promote demand management and efficient use of water resources. - Address implications of scarce water resources Ensure development is energy efficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EC Framework Directive for Waste 1975/442/EEC (as amended) EC Landfill Directive 1999/31/EC - European Waste Framework Directive (2006/12/EC) - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 - Waste Strategy for England and Wales 2007 - The Waste Management Plan for England, 2013
Countryside and Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect and enhance the landscape, including the countryside, coast and other green spaces. - Promote landscape protection, management and planning Conserve and, where possible, enhance the countryside and its resources, including the best and most versatile agricultural land. - Plan for coastal change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (The Ramsar Convention 1971) - European Landscape Convention 2006 - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 - Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) - Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England (2009) - North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2011) - North West River Basin Management Plan (2009) - Sefton Coast Partnership Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP)

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and local designated sites; and protected species and species and habitat types identified as priorities for biological conservation - Local Plan will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (The Ramsar Convention)(as amended) - EC Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive) EC Directive 1979/409/EEC (The Birds Directive) - EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Directive 2009/147/EC National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994 and updates) - Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services. - The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature - Natural Environment White Paper (2012) - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) - Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework - North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan - North West River Basin Management Plan (2009)
Economic Development, shopping and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan positively for sustainable economic growth - Secure accessible, efficient and competitive retail provision and support town centres. - Increase work opportunities in rural areas. - Encourage better coordination of the way tourism is managed, developed and promoted. - Promote business support and skills development for Sefton’s economic assets [e.g. those related to the coast, proximity to Liverpool] should be maximized. - Support low carbon, tourism and knowledge sectors. - Develop a ‘Superport’ as a logistics hub of global significance. - Promote access to work, tackle low pay and improve conditions of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Sustainable Development Action Plan, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - Good Practice Guide for Planning and Tourism (2006) - The Northern Way Growth Strategy: Sefton Economic Strategy 2012-2022 - Liverpool City Region Growth Deal (2014) - Liverpool City Region SuperPort Global Freight and Logistics Hub (2014) - Liverpool City Region Spatial Investment Plan (2014-2017)

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance employment opportunities for all. - Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth. - Promote more sustainable patterns of growth including employment. 	
People and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide for an adequate, available and continuous supply of land for development to meet the accommodation needs of current and future residents including Gypsy and Travellers. - Make sure there are enough high quality homes both affordable and market. - Ensure that the environmental implications of demographic change are assessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (2011) - Demographic Change and the Environment, The 29th Report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (2011) - DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2012) - Evaluating requirements for market and affordable housing; Housing Affordability: a fuller picture; Housing requirements and the impact of recent economic and demographic change (National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit, various dates) - Building for Life: Delivering Great Places to Live, CABE (2008) - Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/2015
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give communities more power on decisions which affect them. - Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities - Improve the existing housing stock by making them more energy efficient. - Improve housing quality and design Promote the right mix of housing. - Ensure that everyone has access to education and training Plans should be produced with input from local people and reflect the wider aspirations of communities. - Consider the impacts of policies on rural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (2005) - Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005) Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Designing Sustainable Communities for All (2007) - Lifetime Homes: Quality, Flexibility and Choice Sefton Council Housing Strategy (2009) - Rural Proofing Toolkit, DEFRA (2009) - Planning for Rural Communities (2008) - Marmot Health Inequalities Review – Fair Society, Healthy Lives (2010) - Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/2015

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
Deprivation and Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote urban regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land. - Housing choice should be more diverse in areas of low demand. - Tackle poverty and reduce income inequalities Promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity. - Planning policies should help wider regeneration proposals be realized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Human Rights Act 1998 - Safer Places, the Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004) Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005) - A Vision for Sefton – Sefton’s Community Strategy (2007) - Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2010) - Sefton’s Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership 2009-12 - Sefton’s Safer Communities Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2012-13
Services and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve access to services. - Ensure that everyone has access to shopping, health, community, leisure and sports facilities. - Reduce the need to travel and achieve a switch to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly walking and cycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (2011) - Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2010) - Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/2015
Transport and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the transport infrastructure; - Create a transport system that is accessible and safe to all, including in rural areas. - Develop an integrated transport system. - Take a strategic approach to infrastructure in preparation of plans. - Encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling in preference to the car. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (2011) - Towards a Sustainable Transport System (2007) - Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World (2007) - Manual for Streets (2007) - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Merseyside Cycling Strategy (2005) - Pedestrian Strategy for Merseyside (2006)

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
Heritage and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect the historic environment and cultural heritage Maintain and enhance townscape character Recognise importance of archaeological heritage. - Realise the contribution of the historic environment to the economic, social and cultural life of neighbourhoods Involve local people and groups in protecting the heritage in their local areas. - Explore ways heritage can be used as part of regeneration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage 1992 (Valetta Convention) - European Landscape Convention, 2000 - Planning(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - PPS5 Practice Guide 2010 - The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010 - The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 - Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (2007) - Sefton Cultural Strategy
Health and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve health and well-being, and tackle poverty and health inequalities. - Increase participation in sport and physical activity Ensure that everyone has good access to facilities, including health, community facilities and open space and sports facilities. - Improve quality of life for residents. - Promote activity and reduce social exclusion of older people. - Restrict inappropriate uses [such as heavy industry] next to residential areas. - Protection and enhancement of green infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - Equalities Act 2010 - Marmot Health Inequalities Review – Fair Society, Healthy Lives (2010) - The Public Health Outcomes Framework for England 2013-2016 - Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (2008) - Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity (2008) - Sefton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2010) - Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/2015

Topic	Key messages and objectives	Key documents
Crime and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promote crime prevention and reduction of the fear of crime.- Developments should be located and designed to be safe by reducing potential for accidents, for example from traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)- Freedom of Information Act 2000- Human Rights Act 1998- Safer Places, the Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004)- Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005)- The Respect Action Plan (2006)- Sefton's Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership 2009-12

5.3 The current and future baseline

5.3.1 Introduction

The baseline position set out in the following sections presents a summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report December 2012 and updated where appropriate. It sets out the current and future baseline for Sefton; acknowledging that there are gaps in some areas.

5.3.2 Population

The population of Sefton has decreased markedly over the previous several decades from 300,100 in 1981 to 273,200 in mid-2013, a 9% decrease⁶. In recent years the rate of population loss has slowed and it is projected that it will increase in the future. The population change has been more marked in South Sefton, where some wards have seen population decreases of over 20% and the average decrease for the 6 wards in South Sefton (Linacre, Derby, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell, Ford and St Oswald) is over 13%. This contrasts markedly with wards in North Sefton (Cambridge, Meols, Dukes, Norwood, Kew, Birkdale and Ainsdale) which jointly have seen an increase in their population of almost 4%.

In terms of demographics Sefton has a population that is clearly older than the North West and national average. In 2012 21.6% of Sefton's population is over 65, compared with 17.2% in the North West and 16.9 in England. This is projected to increase in coming years to an estimated 23.5% of over 65s by 2020. Particular parts of Sefton have a higher proportion of older people. In Southport the wards of Dukes and Cambridge respectively have 29.8% and 33.3% of people over 65, while in South Sefton some wards have fewer older people than the national average of 16.4% [Linacre 13.9%, Derby 14.7%, Litherland 14.9% and Netherton & Orrell 15.2%].

Despite the trend of population loss the number of households in Sefton has increased by 8.8% since 1981 [to 2001]. This is a result of a reduction in average household sizes from 2.86 persons per household in 1981 to 2.32 persons in 2011. This downward trend reflects the drive seen nationally towards smaller household sizes and is primarily driven by the increased number of single person households and smaller family units.

The 2011 census showed Sefton has a small number of people from ethnic minorities. 97.4% of the population is white, much higher than the regional and national average.

Table 5.1: Percentage of population by broad ethnic group

	White %	Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups %	Asian/ Asian British %	Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British %	Other ethnic group %
Sefton	97.4	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3
North West	90.2	1.6	6.2	1.4	0.6
England	85.4	2.3	7.8	3.5	1.0

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

5.3.3 Economy

Between July 2013 and June 2014 70.8% of economically active people were in employment. This compares better than the North West as a whole (68.7%) but not Great Britain (72.1%). Unemployment performed worse in Sefton to the other areas over the same period. There were 8.4% of economically active people unemployed in Sefton compared to 9.9% in the North West and 6.8% in Great Britain.

⁶ Nomis Web (2014) Statistics [online] at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157105/report.aspx?#id>. Accessed 16.12.14.

The job types are divided up into Standard Occupational Classification (Soc) groups. Sefton has a greater number of higher classification jobs, such as managers and professionals than the North West average (42.1% to 41.1%). It also has a lower percentage of elementary occupations (11.2% - 11.5%)⁷.

Sefton relies on the service sector and also the tourism industry, particularly in the 'classic resort' of Southport. The number of visitors is on the increase, over 15% since 2003. Other visitor attractions in Sefton include the Sefton coast, Aintree racecourse and the 'golf coast' which generates economic activity.

One of key economic assets in Sefton is the Port of Liverpool at Seaforth. The Port of Liverpool is ranked among Britain's and Northern Europe's major container 19 ports and the Seaforth Container handles nearly 700,000 TEUSs (20ft container units) a year. A second container terminal is planned for development on the River Mersey, adding another 600,000 TEUs of capacity to the port's existing container terminal operations and enabling it to accommodate the new generation of post-Panamax size container ships.

The number of jobs based in Sefton was approximately 87,400 in 2013. A time series of this figure is shown below in table 5.2. The vast majority of these jobs are in the services sector (79,400), with a particularly high over-representation in public administration (41% of all jobs, compared to 28% both regionally and nationally).

Table 5.2: Job numbers in Sefton 2009-2013

Year	Sefton (employee jobs)	North West (employee jobs)	Great Britain (employee jobs)
2009	92,400	3,011,700	26,642,600
2010	91,500	2,980,200	26,581,300
2011	88,000	2,977,300	26,593,500
2012	85,100	2,987,400	26,752,900
2013	87,400	3,028,400	27,176,500

Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

Note: Data excludes farm-based agriculture

The Defra June Census (2010) reported 4,298 ha of agricultural land in Sefton and Liverpool, virtually all of which is in Sefton. This is down from 5,253 ha in 2007, largely due to a change in the way these data have been recorded (from 2010 minor holdings with very little agricultural activity are excluded from these statistics.)

Agriculture contributes £7 to £11 million a year to the total economy in Sefton, accounting for only 0.2-0.3% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) generated by the economy in the Borough. This compares to the contribution of GVA from the agricultural sector at 0.6% for the North West region and -0.7% for England and reflects the urban nature of the borough.

Similarly, employment in agriculture represents a very small percentage of total employment in Sefton in 2010 at 0.2%. Employment in the agricultural sector in Sefton has declined, from 485 full time employees in 1995 to 244 in 2000, and has remained relatively constant since. This is in line with regional and national trends for agricultural employment.

While the absolute contribution of agriculture to the wider Sefton economy is modest, there is also an element of farm diversification activities in Sefton, including leisure and horticulture.

⁷ Nomis Web (2014) Statistics [online] at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157105/report.aspx?#id>. Accessed 16.12.14.

5.3.4 *Local centres*

In terms of Sefton's economic centres, the borough can be broken down into three identifiable geographic zones:

- **North Sefton**, which includes 'England's Classic Resort' of Southport, and is characterised by tourism and retailing activities (which typically pay low wages), niche sectoral strengths in residential care, management consulting, public relations, digital and creative, and wider professional and business services, a strong residential property and quality of life offer, and good educational attainment. However, the area also experiences employment land constraints, energy capacity issues, transient populations, housing affordability issues and weak transport links (east-west).
- **Central Sefton**, which contains places such as Maghull, Crosby and Formby (often acting as dormitories for residents working elsewhere in the Borough and in Liverpool). Central Sefton can be characterised as having the Borough's more resilient district centres but also suffers from housing affordability, accessibility and employment land supply issues.
- **South Sefton**, which includes Bootle, suffers from high levels of deprivation, child poverty and inter-generational worklessness. Educational achievement of residents and life expectancies are also low, combined with a poor quality housing offer. The area is home to strategic employment sites running along the Dunningbridge Road Corridor (although not all land meets potential investors requirements) and the Port of Liverpool, which presents major opportunities arising from the Post Panamax proposals and the potential for wider supply chain/complementary activities.

*Sefton Local Economic Assessment, 2011*⁸

Sefton's rural area is essentially the area covered by the Green Belt, and comprises approximately 51% of the Borough. It contains both the coastal area and more traditional farmed countryside surrounding the main towns and villages.

5.3.5 *Communities (Deprivation, crime and cohesion)*

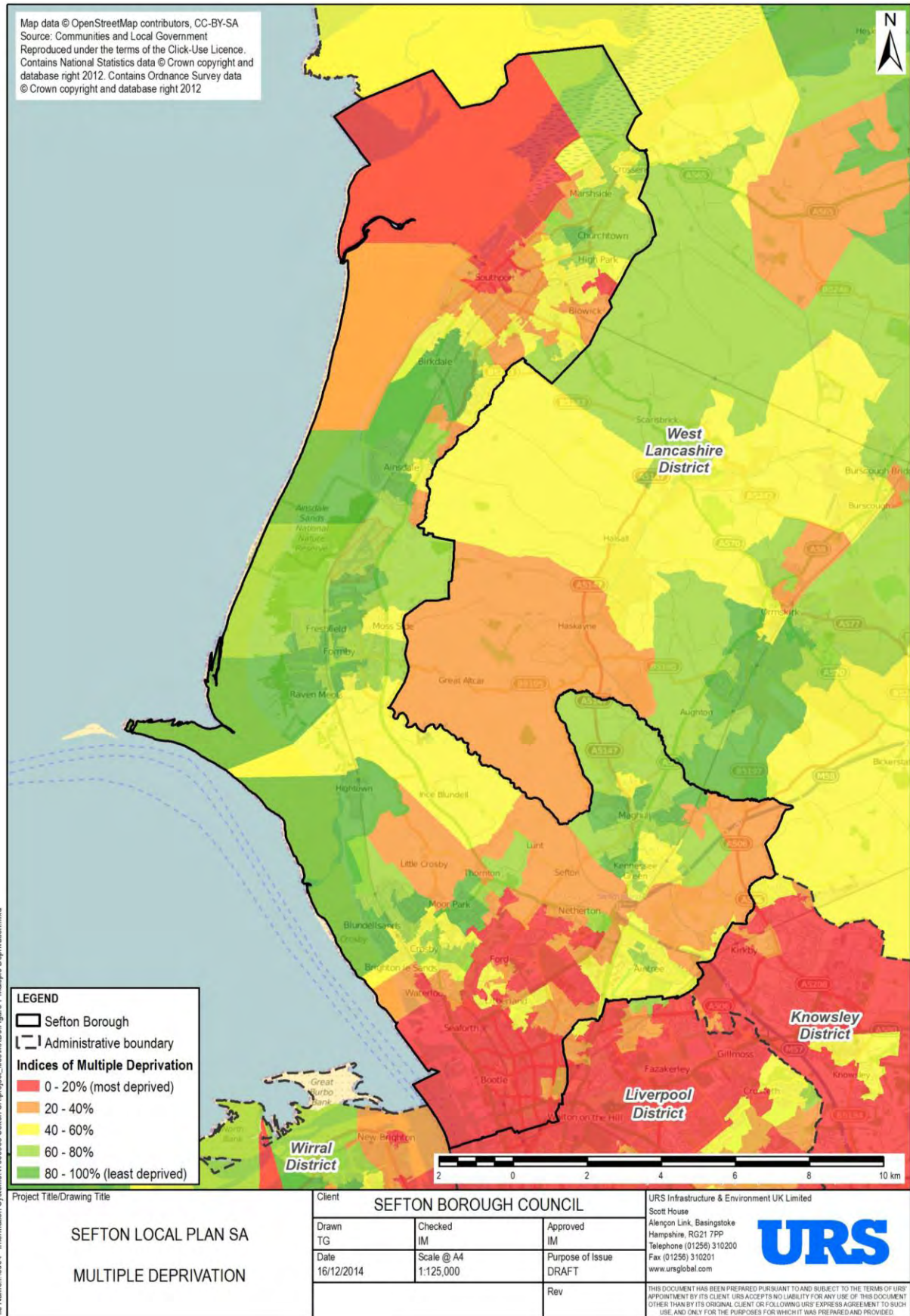
The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation.

In 2013 much of South Sefton is ranked within the 20% most deprived in the country. Linacre ward is entirely made up of areas that are within the 20% most deprived. Other wards, such as Derby, Litherland, Ford, Netherton & Orrell, Church and St Oswald, also show particular clusters of deprivation. Southport also has some small pockets of areas within the 20% most deprived. Conversely there are areas in Sefton that are ranked within the least deprived areas in England, these are primarily based around the central wards of Birkdale, Ainsdale, Harington and Ravenmeols.

In Sefton the overall crime rate, using types of crime comparable with the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) in 2011/12 was 31.0 crimes per thousand people. This compares with 37.7 crimes per thousand people in the North West region, and 38.4 crimes per thousand people in England. In Sefton, the overall crime rate decreased from 35.9 crimes per thousand in 2009/10 to 31.0 in 2011/12.

⁸ Sefton Borough Partnership (2012) [online] at http://www.investsefton.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SES_Economic_Strategy20121.pdf. Accessed 16.12.14.

Figure 5-1: Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2013



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5.3.6 *Housing*

A total of 312 (net) dwellings were constructed during 2013/14, of these 82 were affordable homes. Between 2003/04 to 2013/14, there has been a total net addition to the housing stock of 4255 dwellings. This figure is 1245 short of the target of 5500 (500 per year), which is taken from then now revoked North West Regional Spatial Strategy.

In 2013/14 there were twenty four new build dwellings on six Greenfield sites. Of these, five sites (with a total of six dwellings) were garden sites, and the largest site with 18 dwellings was the former Hugh Baird College site on Church Road in Litherland.

During 2013/14 permission was granted for four additional pitches on the Red Rose Traveller site at Broad Lane, Formby.

Taken from the Sefton Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14, Table 5.3 below shows the net housing over the last 11 years⁹.

Table 5.3: Housing in Sefton 2003-2014

	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Demolitions	-53	-78	-101	-243	-295	-336	-159	-222	-137	-53	-11
Completions	532	465	527	521	859	600	560	489	609	458	323
Net Additional Dwellings	479	387	426	278	564	264	401	267	472	405	312

Source: Sefton AMR (2014)

5.3.7 *Accessibility*

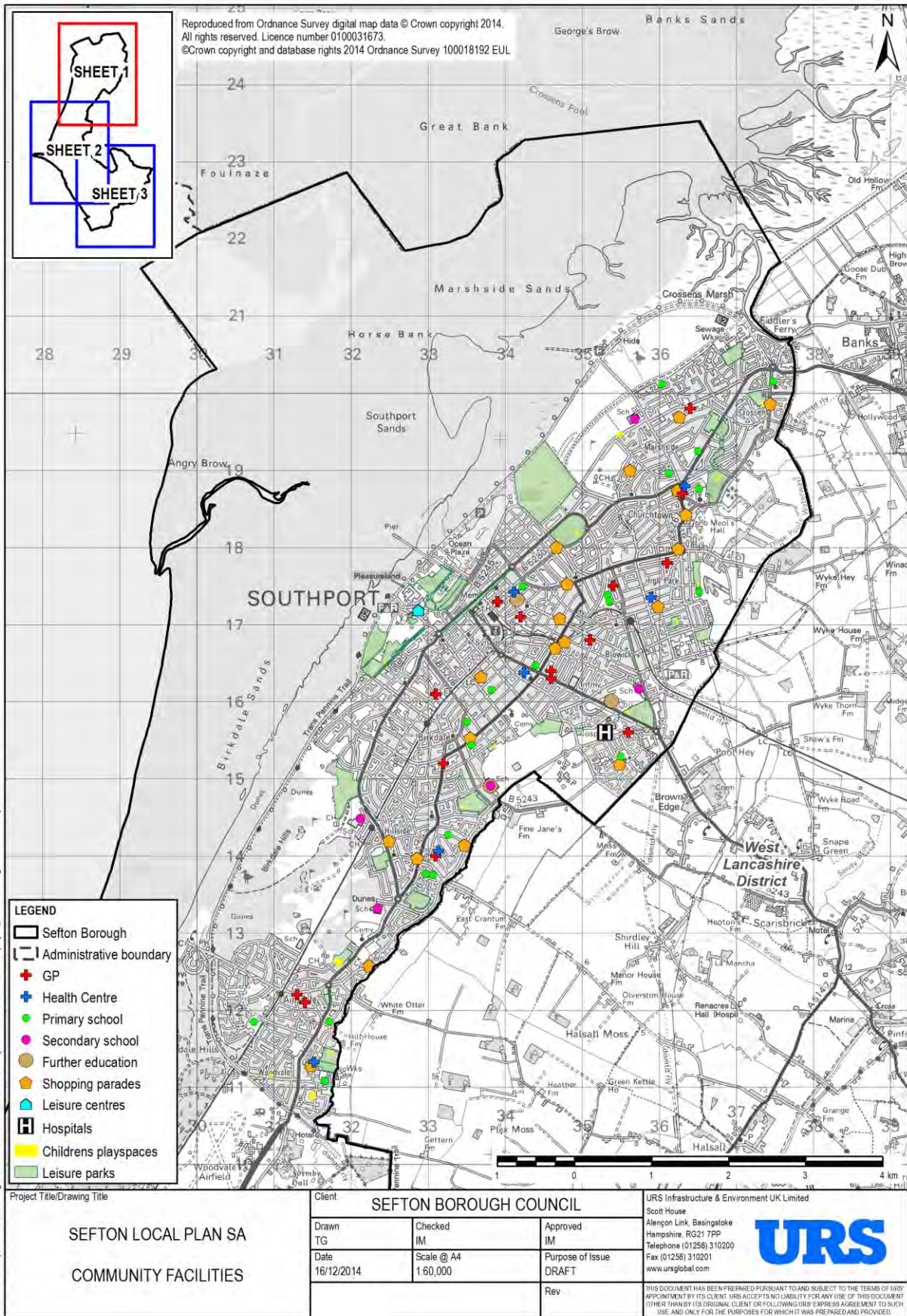
Much of Sefton has excellent public transport links. Much of the urban area, including Bootle, Southport, Maghull and Crosby has good coverage by frequent bus services. Merseyrail runs a frequent rail service between Liverpool and Southport, which include 13 stations in Sefton, and between Liverpool and Ormskirk, including 3 stations in Sefton. However, access to health facilities is poor by public transport, an issue for many people in Sefton, especially at night or weekends.

One 'domain' of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010) looks at barriers to accessing housing and services. This shows that only one small area of Sefton [the rural area around Lydiate] is classed as being in the most 20% deprived, and half of the areas 18 are with the top 10%. The areas that show some signs of deprivation for this domain are the rural areas surrounding Formby and Maghull and south Southport, which is partly indicative of the high cost of housing in these areas, but also shows these areas are more remote and have less public transport.

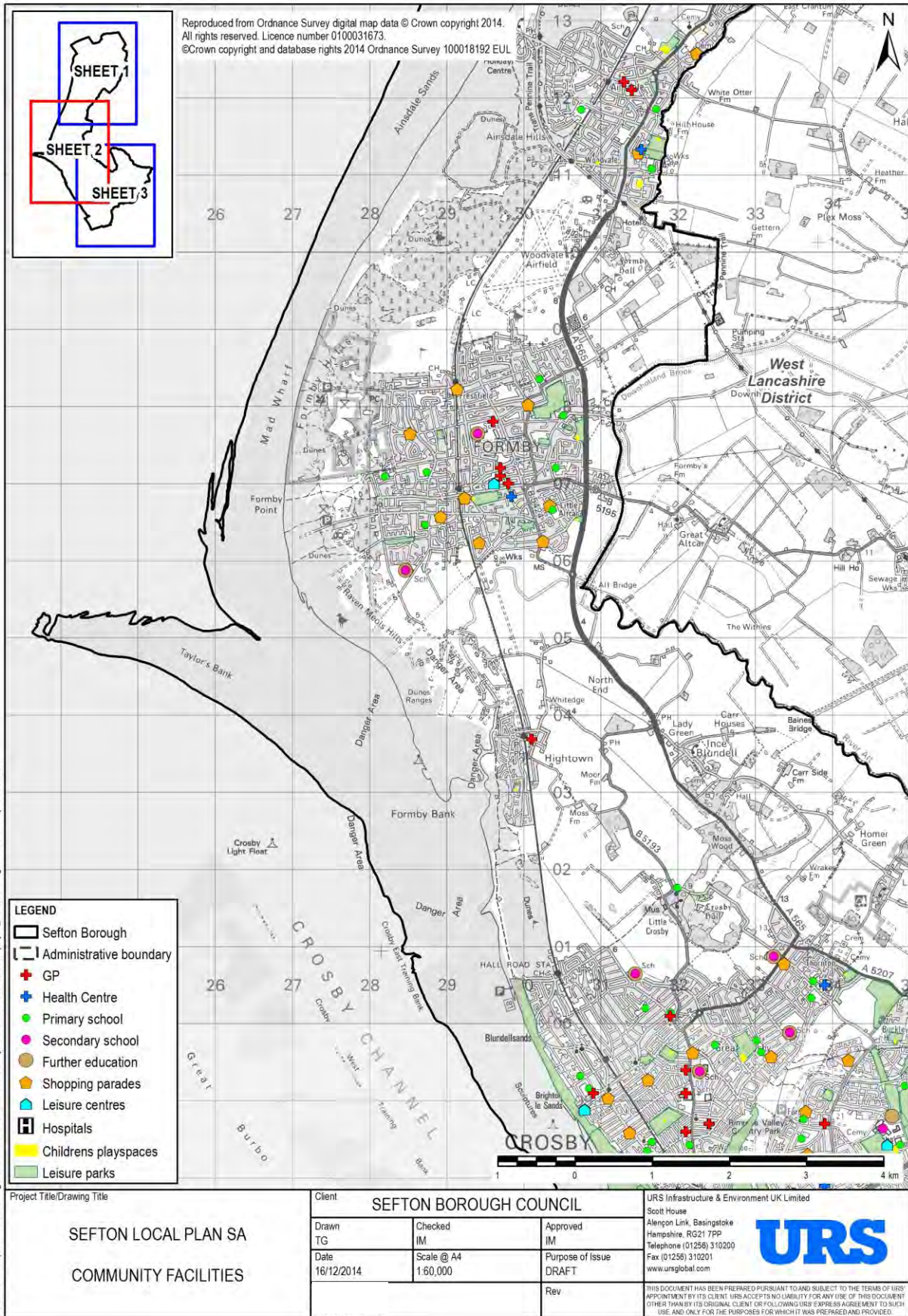
Figure 5.2 below (split into three parts) illustrates that the main urban areas in Sefton are well served by a range of services including primary schools, local shopping parades, GP/health centres. Higher order facilities such as leisure centres are also located at main centres of Southport, Formby and Maghull. Hightown is less well served locally in terms of access to education and shopping parades.

⁹ Sefton Borough Council (2014) Annual Monitoring Report [online] at http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/340112/draft-2013_14-AMR.pdf. Accessed 16.12.14.

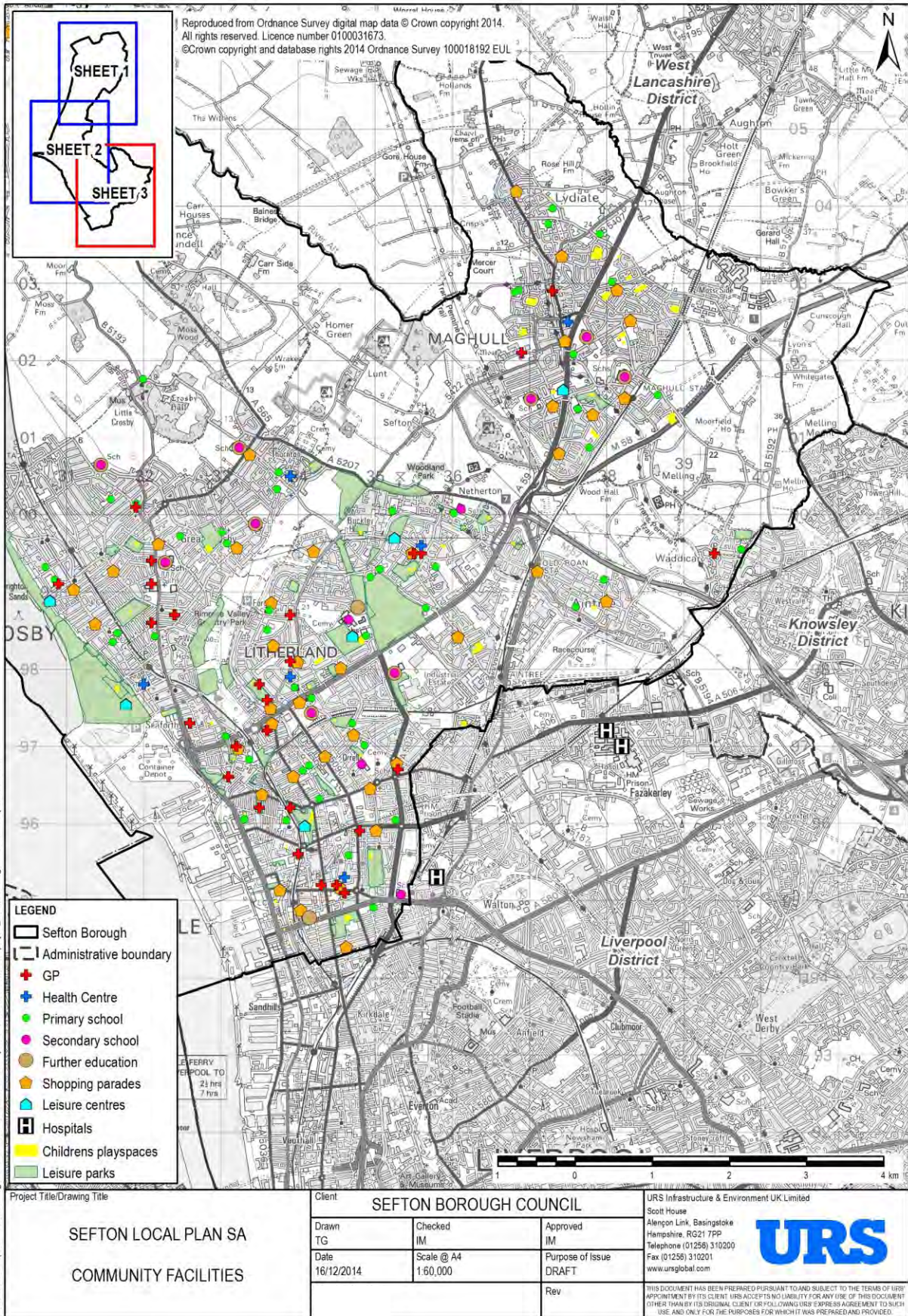
Figure 5-2: Community facilities and services across Sefton



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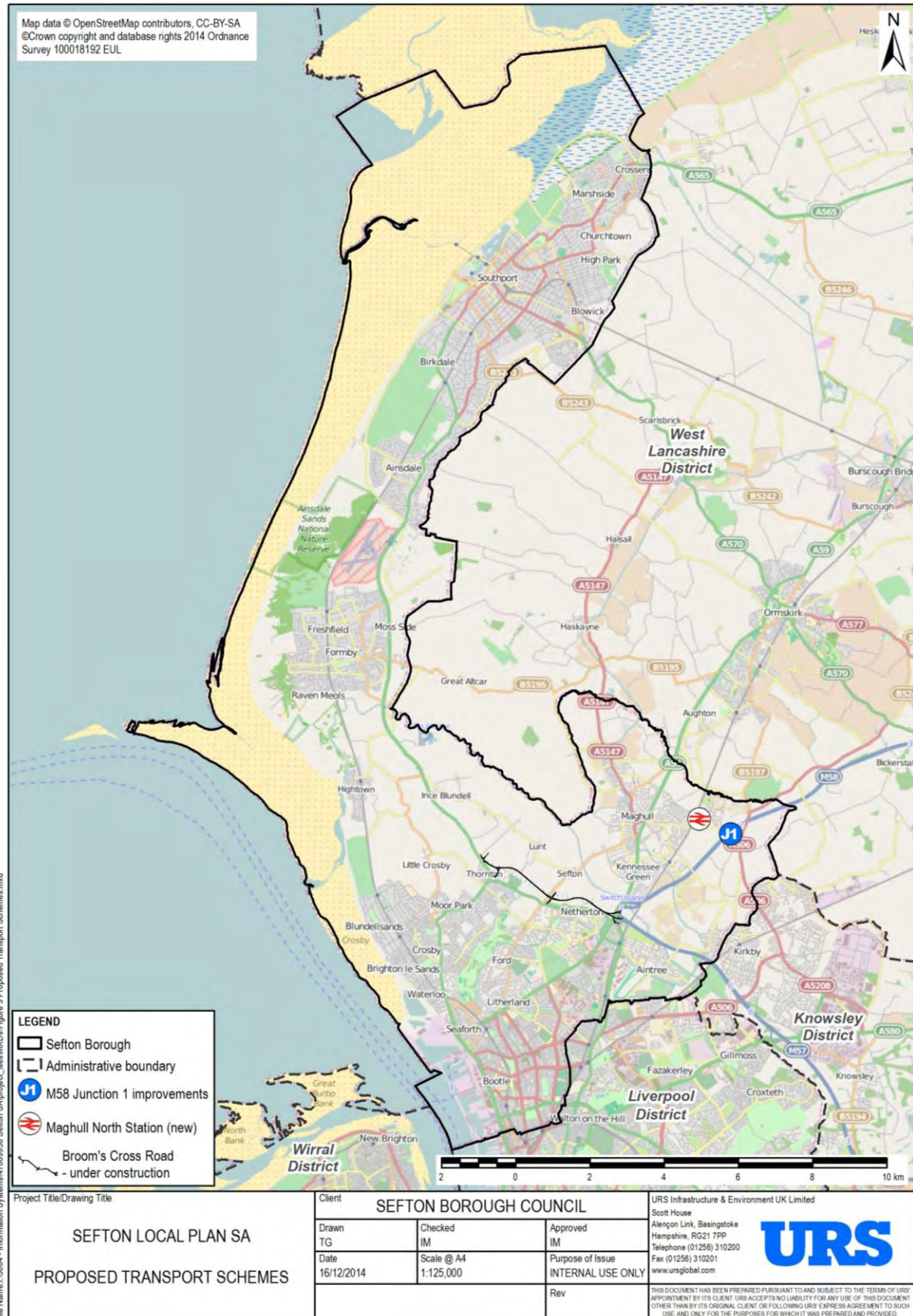
File Name: \\ba-wip-004\400 - Management Services\6004 - Information Systems\7089958 Sefton SA\project_files\WKS\Figure 1 Community Facilities.mxd

Although access to services is generally good, parts of the road network are constrained and suffer from congestion at peak times. Car use is also the dominant mode of transport, with significant numbers of people choosing to commute this way.

Sefton Borough has a number of transport issues, with reasonably high levels of commuting in many areas, a high level of car usage and significant levels of net out-commuting to other settlements in the Liverpool City region. Whilst the Switch Island capacity and road infrastructure improvements [including the new Brooms Cross Road] will help to reduce congestion on all of its approaches, localised pinch points in the road network have been identified elsewhere. These include strategic links in Bootle (as it provides the main access routes into Liverpool); the A565 through Crosby; and the junction of the A565 and A570 in Southport Centre. Access to the port is also an issue

A number of transport schemes are likely to be brought forward during the plan period which could help to alleviate these. **Figure 5.3** illustrates where known schemes are being implemented.

Figure 5-3: Proposed Transport Schemes



5.3.8 Health and wellbeing

Overall people in Sefton have good health and improving levels of health. The 2011 life expectancy at birth for males in Sefton (77.4 years) is equal to that for North West (77.4 years). The life expectancy at birth for females in Sefton (82.8 years) is greater than that for North West (81.5 years). Life expectancy in deprived wards is 11.6 years lower for men and 10.4 years for women than in the most affluent areas of Sefton (Linacre, lowest and Ainsdale, highest). The highest life expectancy in Sefton is generally in the Maghull, Formby and Southport areas. The life expectancy in Sefton is shown in Table 5.4 below¹⁰.

Table 5.4: Life expectancy at birth

	2006–08		2007–09		2008–10		2009–11	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sefton	77.0	81.6	77.3	81.7	77.2	82.1	77.4	82.8
N. West	76.4	80.6	76.6	80.8	77.0	81.1	77.4	81.5
England	77.9	82.0	78.2	82.3	78.5	82.5	78.9	82.9

Source: *Neighbourhood Statistics, Office for National Statistics*

As reported in 'Sefton's Health 2013'¹¹, more than 20,000 people in Sefton (9.5% of adults) reported three or four unhealthy behaviours in 2010 (*smoking, excessive alcohol use, poor diet and low levels of physical activity*). Rates varied considerably across the borough.

Results from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) (2011/12) showed that obesity levels in children in Reception (aged 4- 5) and Year 6 (aged 10-11) dropped compared to the previous year (10.4% to 9.6% for year R and 20.7% to 19.8% for year 6). However, the proportion of overweight children increased for year R (14.2% to 15.4%) and stabilised in year 6 at 15%. These figures are higher than the England averages.

Overall mental wellbeing is higher in Sefton in comparison to Merseyside and the North West. Almost 15% of adults report low levels of mental wellbeing and 21% report high levels¹¹.

5.3.9 Climate Change and resource use

One of the main causes of climate change is the huge increase in the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. In Sefton the amount of CO₂ emitted equated to 5 tonnes per person in 2011. Since 2009 there has been a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 0.2 tonnes per head for Sefton.

In 2011 the average consumption of ordinary domestic electricity for Sefton was 3,757 kWh per meter point, higher than North West (3,740 kWh per meter point). Since 2009 there has been a reduction in domestic electricity usage of 60 kWh per meter point in Sefton, compared with a regional decrease of 28 kWh per meter point.

In 2011 average consumption of domestic gas for Sefton was 14,730 kWh per meter point, which was higher than North West (14,226 kWh per meter point). Since 2009 there has been a reduction in domestic gas usage of 1,519 kWh per meter point in Sefton, compared with a regional decrease of 1,392 kWh per meter point¹².

One of the most noticeable consequences of climate change is the increased instances and threat of flooding.

¹⁰ ONS (2013) Demography [online] available at:

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?m=0&s=1373450973322&enc=1&page=analysisandguidance/analysisarticles/local-authority-profiles.htm&njs=true&nsck=false&nssvg=false&nswid=1276>. Accessed 16.12.14.

¹¹ Sefton Borough Council (2013) Sefton's Health 2013 [online] at http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/176015/sefton_phar_lowest_res.pdf. Accessed 16.12.14.

¹² ONS (2013) Environment [online] available at:

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?m=0&s=1373450973322&enc=1&page=analysisandguidance/analysisarticles/local-authority-profiles.htm&njs=true&nsck=false&nssvg=false&nswid=1276>. Accessed 16.12.14.

5.3.10 *Flooding*

The March 2013 Sefton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies the principal source of flood risk across the borough of Sefton, based on the spatial extent of all flood risk datasets, is surface water flooding. It also identifies parts of Sefton are also at risk from fluvial and tidal sources, from groundwater flooding and from failure of canal and reservoir infrastructure.

Surface water flooding affects significant areas of Sefton and, as a result of the low-lying topography of the borough, there are areas in which the extent of flooding is large and the number of properties affected is significant. This is compounded in some locations by the influence on flooding by infrastructure such railway lines, roads and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

Sewer flooding is also considered to be a significant issue across the borough that is closely linked with surface water flooding. It is generally caused by sewer systems that have insufficient capacity to cope with severe rainfall events.


Fluvial (river) flood risk (as illustrated in figure 5.4) is notable in a number of areas, from both main rivers and ordinary watercourses. Based on the risk to people and property, areas around Formby, Thornton, parts of Maghull and the northern fringes of Aintree are the principal areas of river flood risk within Sefton. More rural areas at risk of fluvial flooding include areas to the east of Southport and Formby, around the River Alt from north of Ince Blundell (including North End) through to the western fringes of Maghull and north of Netherton and Aintree; and to the north and east of Maghull. A number of these river flood risk areas, particularly in Formby, Thornton and Maghull, heavily influence flood risk from other sources, such as surface water. Climate change will increase the risk in all locations, and from many sources¹³.

¹³ Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (2013) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [online] at <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/210905/Sefton-SFRA-FINAL-v43-Mar2013-ExecSummary.pdf>. Accessed 16.12.14.

Figure 5-4: Flood Zones



File Name: c:\15004 - Information Systems\471695956 Sefton SA\project_files\MXD\Figure 2 Flood Zone.mxd

Project Title/Drawing Title		Client		URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited	
SEFTON LOCAL PLAN SA		SEFTON BOROUGH COUNCIL		Scott House Alengon Link, Basingstoke Hampshire, RG21 7PP Telephone (01256) 310200 Fax (01256) 310201 www.ursglobal.com	
FLOOD ZONES		Drawn	Checked	Approved	
		TG	IM	IM	
		Date	Scale @ A4	Purpose of Issue	
		16/12/2014	1:125,000	DRAFT	<small>THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF URS APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. URS ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING URS EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE, AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.</small>
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5.3.11 *Environmental Quality*

Many stretches of Sefton's rivers are classified as poor or bad in terms of biology, i.e. they are only home to a limited number of species that are tolerant or very tolerant to pollution. Sefton's rivers are generally graded between C to E in terms of chemistry and many have high levels of nitrates and phosphates.

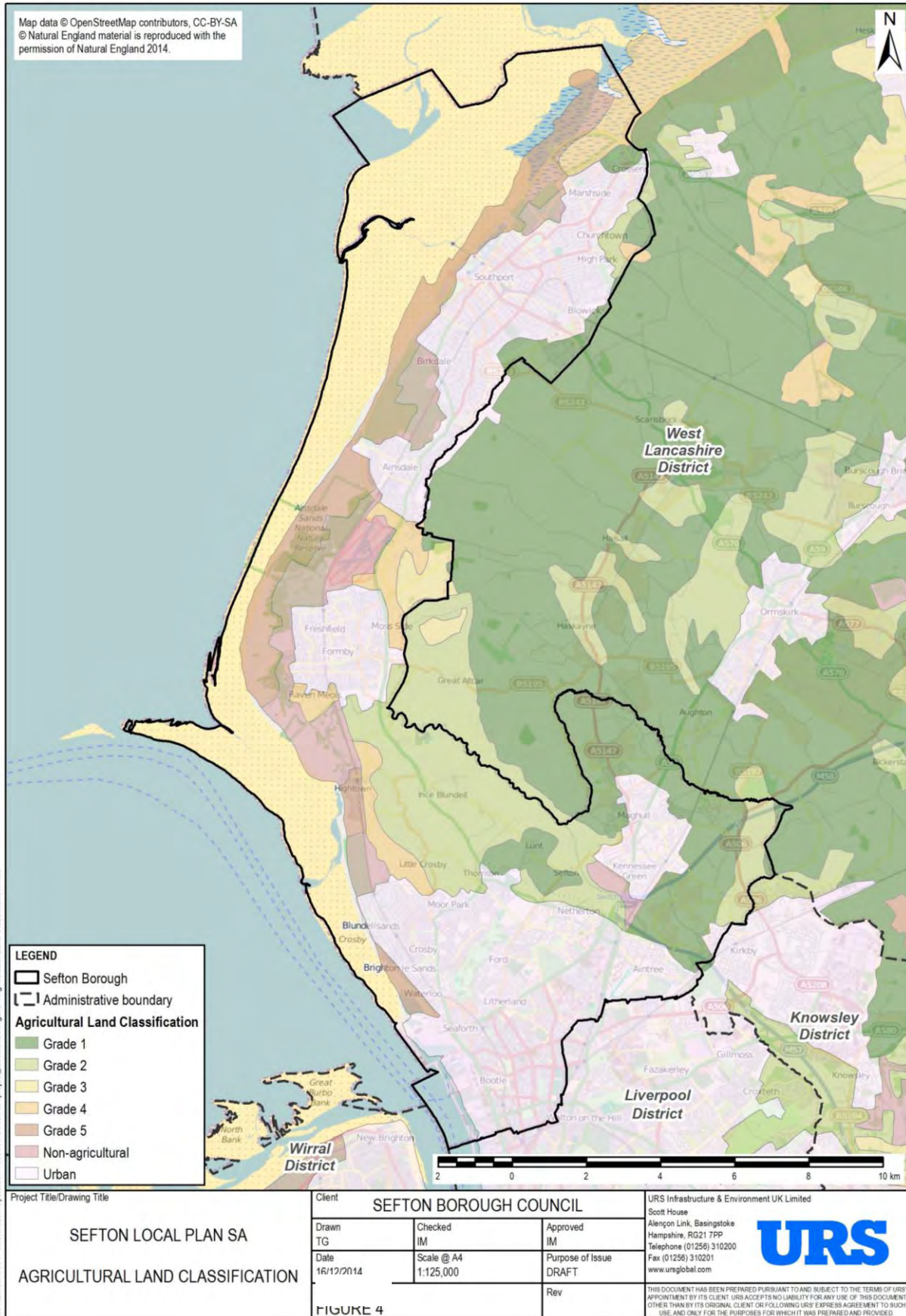
Parts of Sefton have a legacy of heavy industry and many sites are known to have issues with contamination. It is difficult to know the extent of contamination on particular sites unless site investigations are carried out, however Sefton has 8589 sites that require further inspection for potential contamination. Of these 1074 sites are potentially high risk.

Soils of grade 1, 2 and 3a are collectively known as best and most versatile agricultural land. As illustrated on figure 5.5, about 30% of the Borough's area (roughly 60% of the rural area) comprises Grade 1 – 3a agricultural land. This includes most of the land to the east of Southport, Formby and Crosby, and much of the agricultural land in Sefton's eastern parishes around Maghull, Aintree and Waddicar.

Figure 5.5 presents the national agricultural land classification for the Borough. Whilst this is broadly accurate, it is important to note that more detailed local level classification work has been undertaken for specific parcels of land, which has led to the re-classification of some agricultural land. In particular, areas of land adjacent to the settlement edge that have potential for development have been reclassified from Grade 1 to Grade 2 or 3. This suggests that there are fewer constraints in some areas than suggested by the national classification. Further detail on agricultural land in Sefton can be found in the Agricultural Land Study.

An assessment of the agricultural land quality and the rural economy has recently been undertaken to inform the Local Plan. Agriculture in Sefton is not typical of north west or of England due to the predominance of productive lowland soils and proximity to urban areas which traditionally provided a market for fresh produce. Farming is characterised by arable cropping (cereals, oilseeds and potatoes) and horticulture (fruit and vegetables) based on the availability of good quality soils, with limited livestock production. Specialisation of production and less reliance on local markets has reduced the number of horticultural units. However, they still represent a higher proportion of cropped land compared to North West and England.

Figure 5-5: Agricultural Land Classification



5.3.12 *Landscape*

Sefton is a coastal borough with an extensive countryside for a metropolitan borough - about 51% of the area of the Borough – all of which lies within the Merseyside green belt. The Sefton Coast lies between the estuaries of the Mersey and Ribble in north-west England and is an important visitor destination with popular bathing beaches, open countryside, and the seaside resort of Southport.

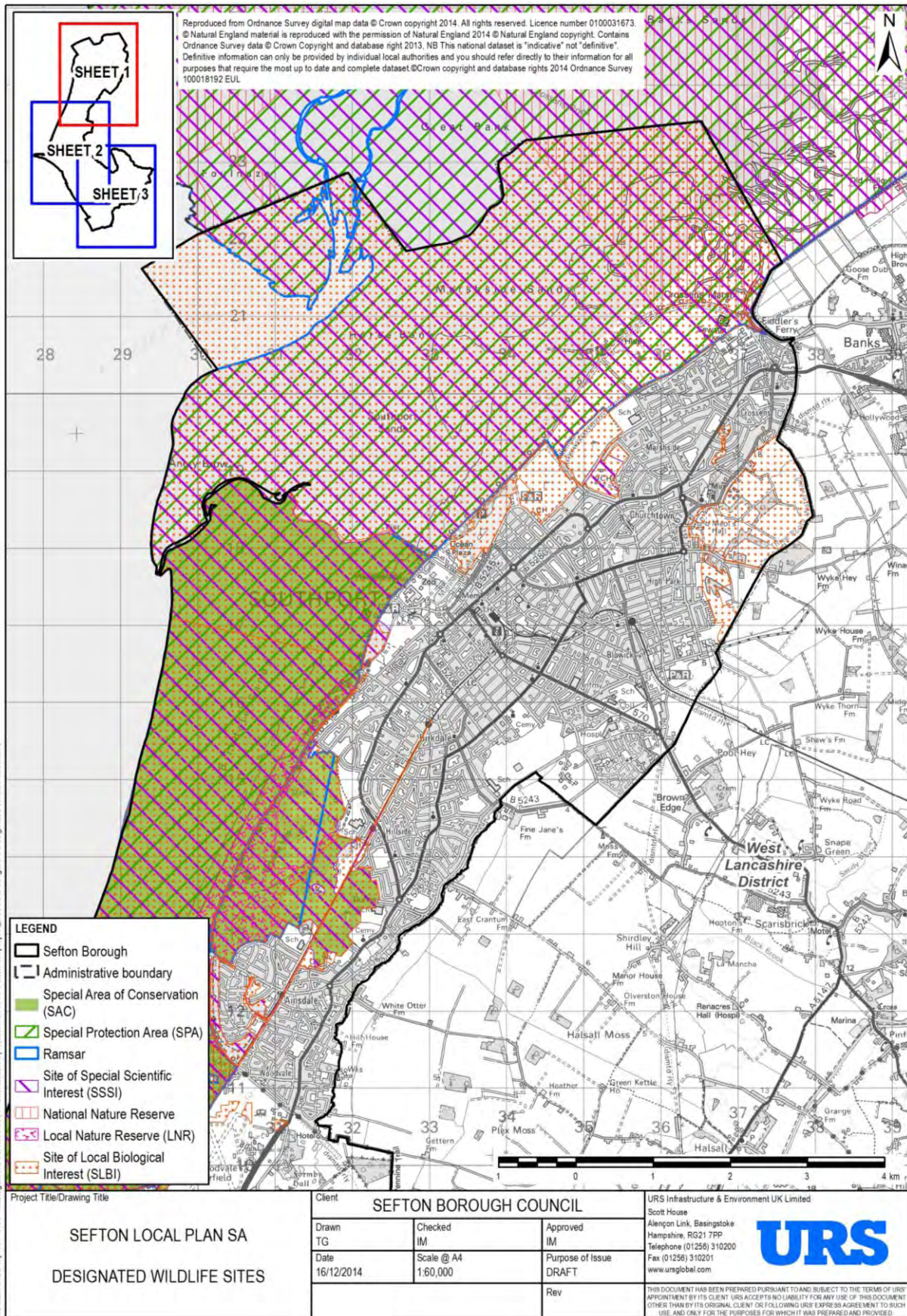
5.3.13 *Biodiversity*

Within Sefton there are 56 Sites of Local Biological Interest (also known as Local Wildlife Sites) and 12 Local Geological Sites. Local Wildlife Sites have been designated by the Council due to the presence of important species and habitats. Several of the rare species of fauna and flora found within Sefton are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

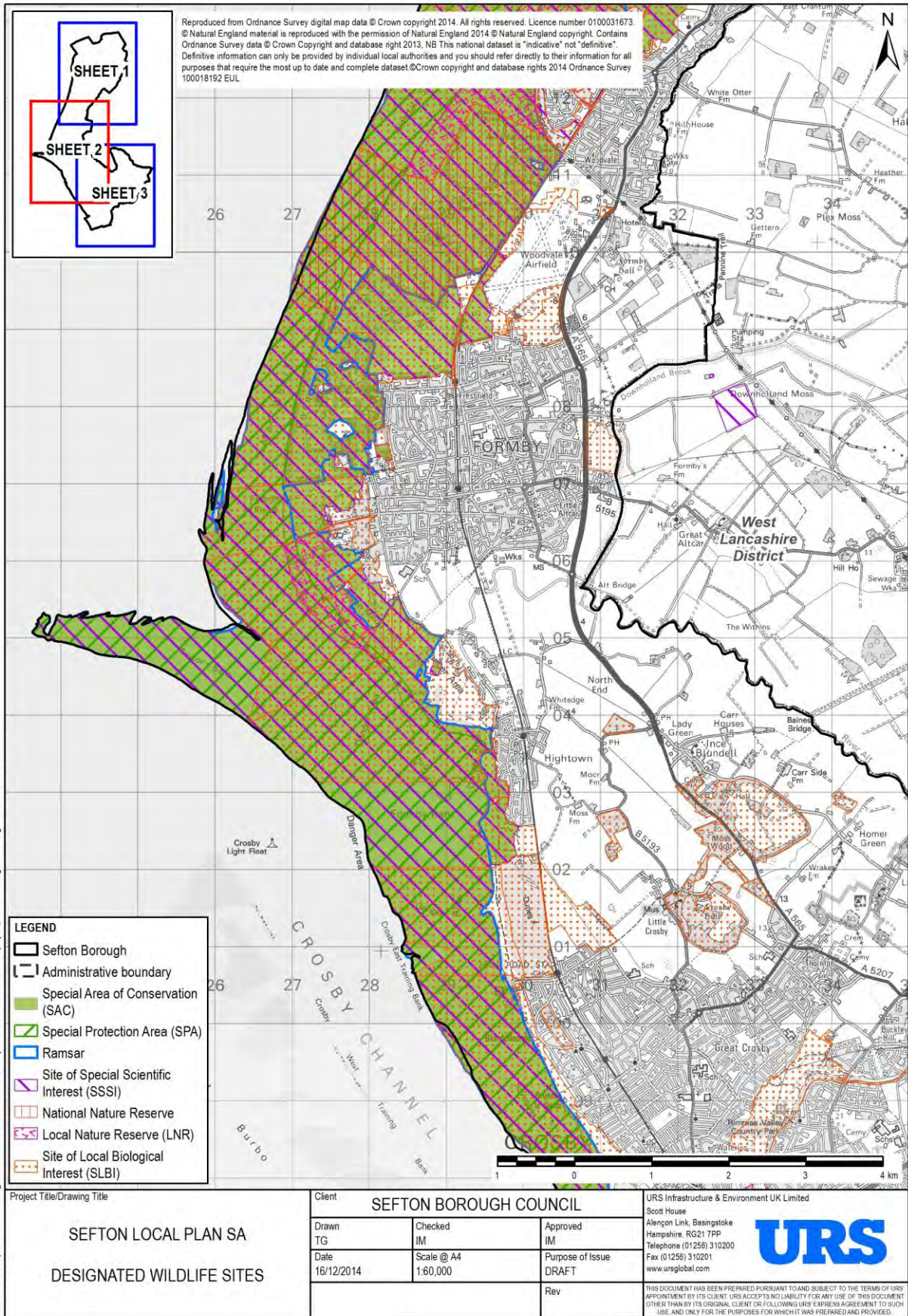
Sefton's strategic ecological assets include all the international & national designations and a number of strategically important habitats that include the watercourses such as the River Alt, Downholland Brook, Three Pools Waterway, Fine Jane's Brook and Back Drain and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

Sefton's Coastal habitats are dominated by internationally important sand dune systems and salt marsh. There are also areas of Dune Heath, Dune Slacks and Grasslands. As well as these typical coastal habitats Sefton Coast has large areas of coniferous plantations. These habitats are covered by International, National & Local designations, which include; Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), National Nature Reserve (NNR), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and are home to large numbers of protected species, such as Natterjack Toads, Sand Lizards, Red Squirrels and internationally important numbers of wintering birds. These coastal 26 habitats cover approximately 7978 ha, and are of strategic importance within the Ecological Framework.

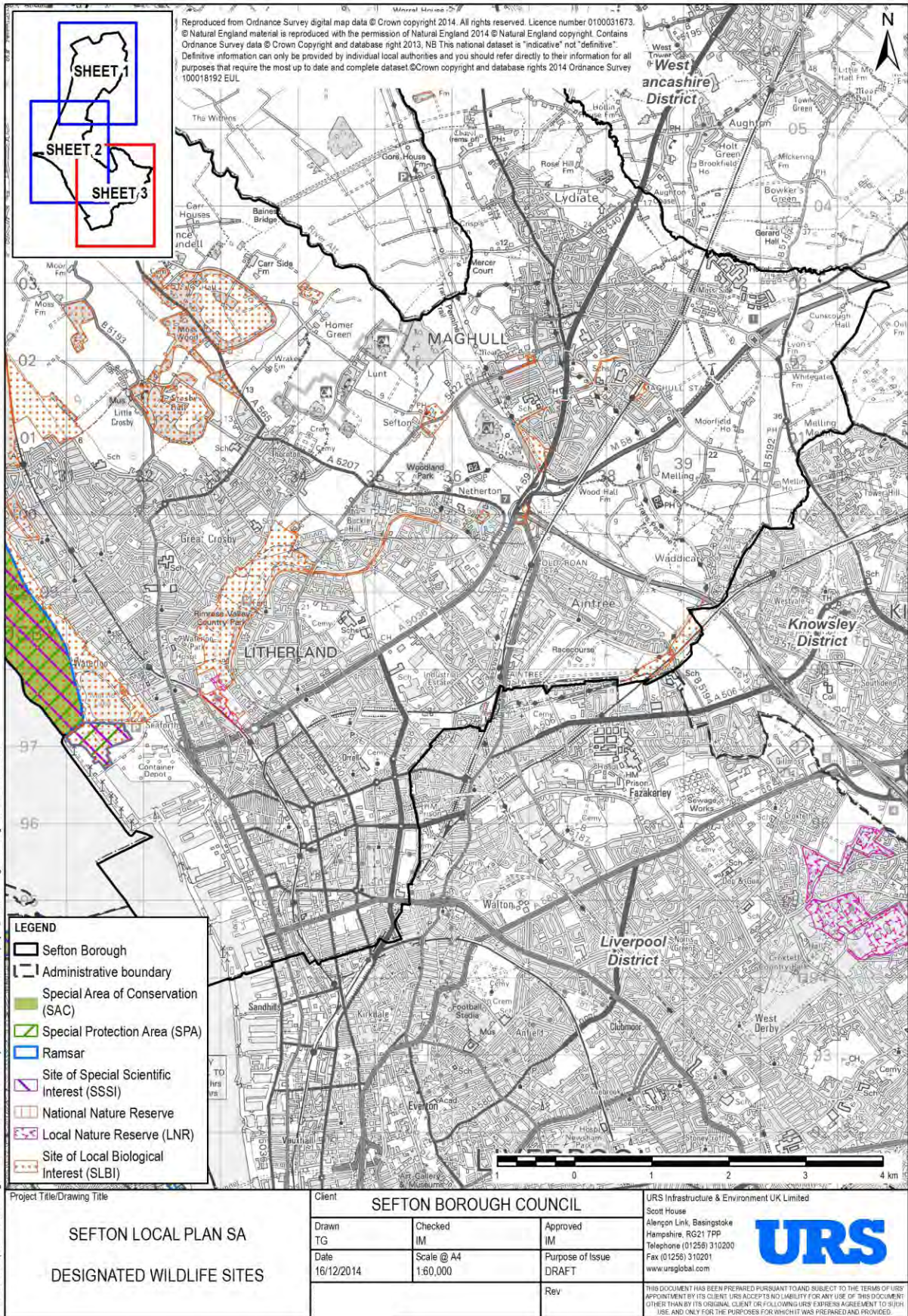
Figure 5-6: Designated Wildlife Sites



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5.3.14 *Culture and Heritage*

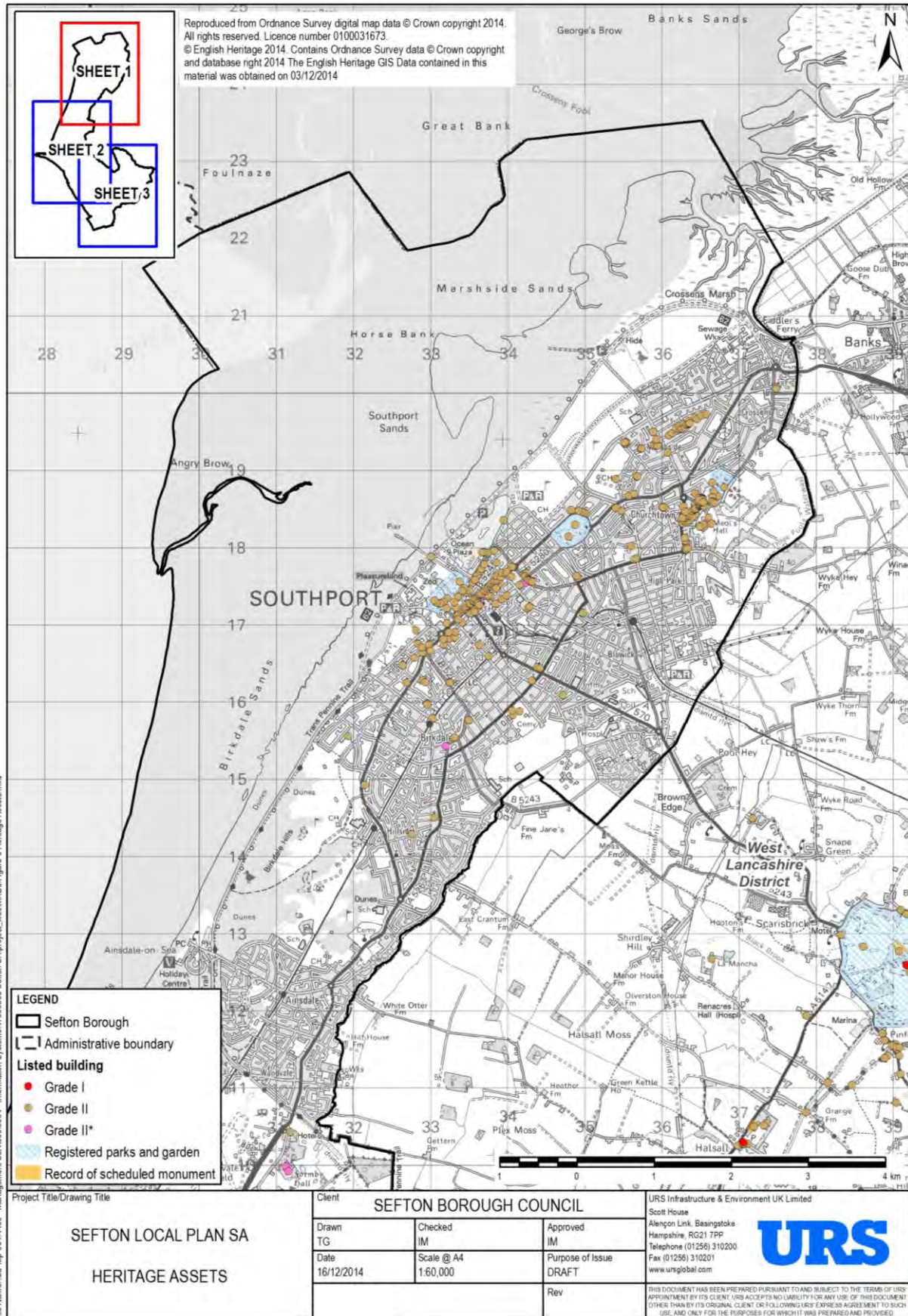
Sefton's designated heritage comprises the following asset types:

- Schedule Ancient Monuments;
- Conservation Areas;
- Historic Parks and Gardens; and
- Listed Buildings.

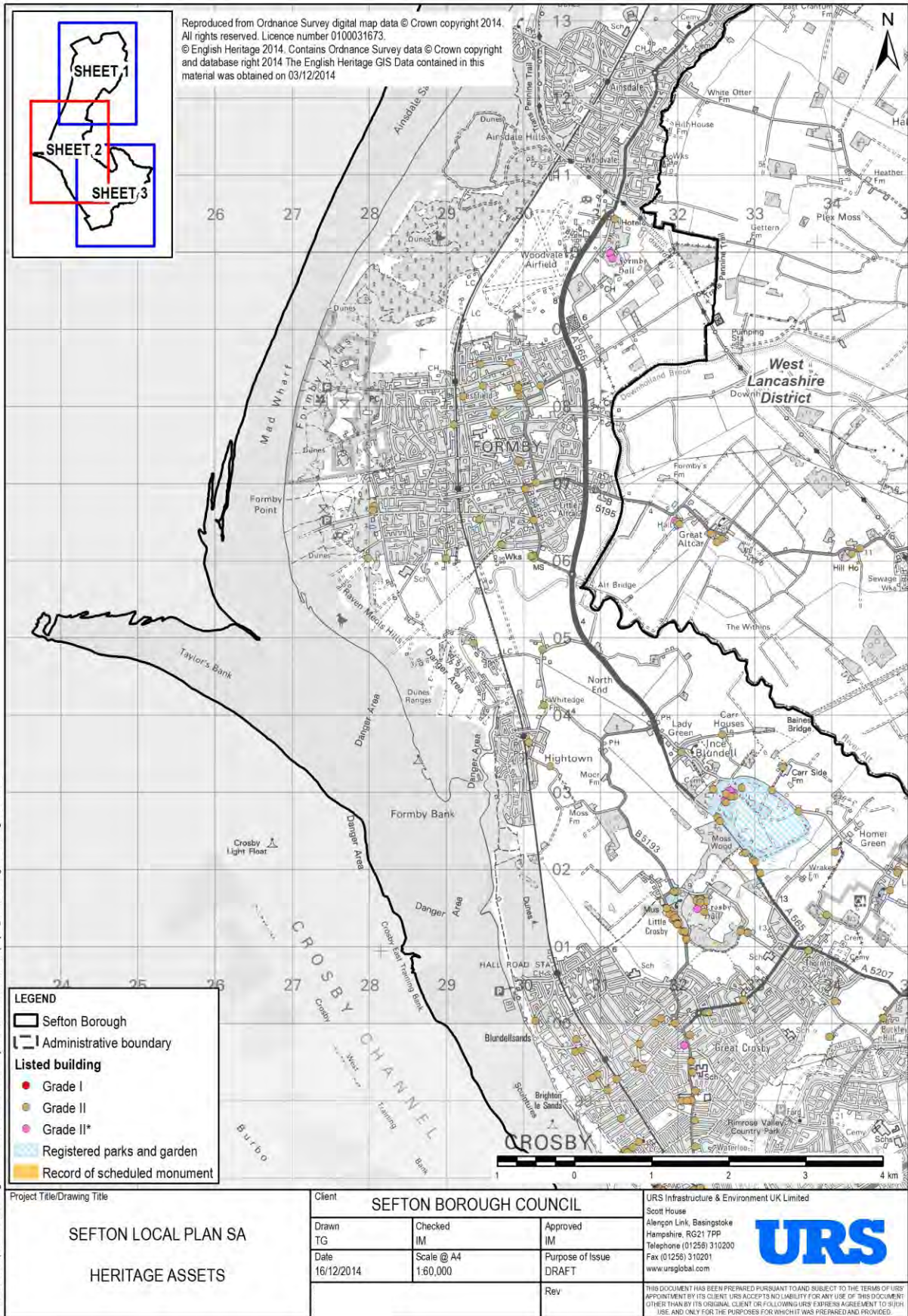
Scheduled Ancient Monuments are sites of outstanding national importance that are worthy of protection. The word "monument" covers the whole range of archaeological sites. Scheduled monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground. There are over 200 "classes" of monuments on the schedule nationally and these range from prehistoric standing stones and burial mounds, through the many types of medieval site - castles, monasteries, abandoned farmsteads and villages - to the more recent results of human activity, such as collieries and wartime pillboxes.

The designated heritage assets in Sefton are shown in Figure 5.7. (split into 3 maps). This includes Grade I, II and II* listed buildings along with the Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Ancients Monuments.

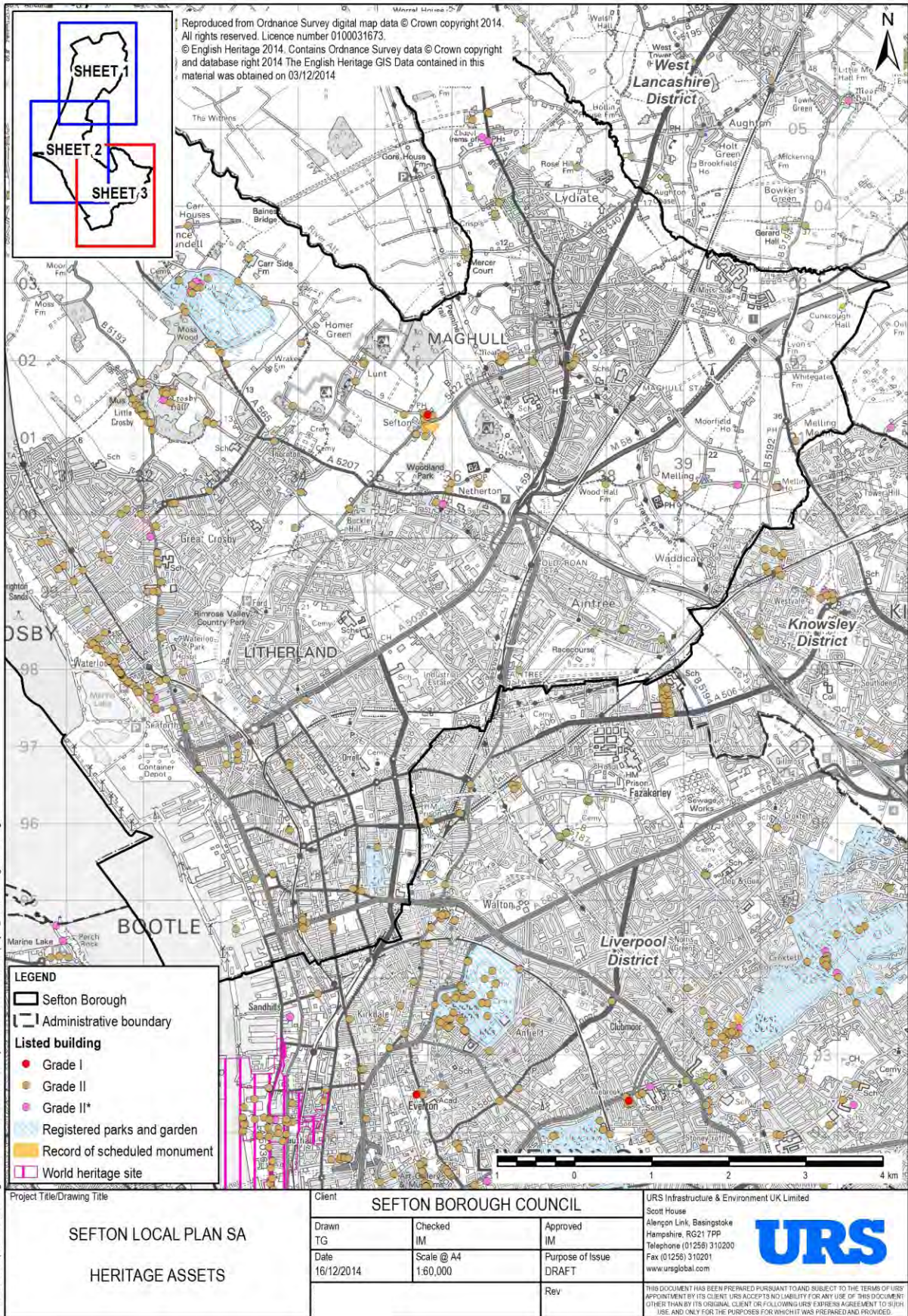
Figure 5-7: Designated Heritage Assets



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6 WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE A FOCUS OF THE APPRAISAL?

6.1 Introduction

Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline information, a range of sustainability issues were identified that should be a focus of SA. The issues were set out in the Scoping Report update (December 2012). Although the baseline position and contextual review have been updated, the issues have remained fundamentally the same. Consultation responses on the emerging Local Plan have also confirmed that the issues are those important to local residents.

These sustainability issues are listed in Table 6.1 below, presented under the broad themes that have also been used to structure the SA Framework.

Table 6-1: Sustainability themes and key issues

Theme	Sustainability Issues
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High levels of unemployment in Sefton, particularly in wards in South Sefton and amongst younger people. Lack of suitable skills and a need to match skills to jobs. – Over reliance on the public sector for jobs making Sefton susceptible to cuts in public sector spending. Fewer jobs per population than many other areas. Lack of land for employment development.
Local centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Many of Sefton's local and district centres are currently struggling with high vacancy rates and a poor range of services and shops.
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are inequalities between many parts of Sefton, with many areas, particularly in south Sefton, identified as areas of deprivation. Many areas are in need of regeneration, in terms of the physical environment but also social and economical too. – Crime and the fear of crime are major obstacles in the regeneration of local neighbourhoods. Crime in some wards is much higher than in others. – There is a lot of scope to improve the way people engage with the plan making process and become more involved with the decision making process overall.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a high affordable housing need in many parts of the borough. Many areas of Sefton have a lack of choice in the variety of homes, in terms of size, tenure and quality.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are some areas, communities and groups of people that have restricted access to services and facilities. Sefton's population has decreased over the past 30 to 40 years, resulting in many services being closed or put under pressure. Sefton has an older population than many other parts of the region putting pressure on services. Despite good public transport links, many people still choose to travel by car for commuting. This adds to congestion on many of Sefton's roads.

Theme	Sustainability Issues
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are inequalities in health [including mental health] between different parts of the borough. Sefton has high levels of obesity and many people lead inactive lifestyles.
Climate Change and resource use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Climate change action should be taken at the local level. Although carbon dioxide emissions have been decreasing in recent years, more work is needed to meet the government’s commitments. – The perception with many residents is that infrastructure provision has not kept up with past development and that this has caused problems with drains, roads, power supply etc. Many types of existing infrastructure are at capacity, need upgrading and would struggle with additional development. – The amount of waste recycled in Sefton has increased significantly in recent years. However, Councils must continue to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. Energy use has decreased in recent times and should continue to do so in the future.
Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Large areas of Sefton are at risk from flooding. Surface water flooding is also an issue in many parts of Sefton.
Environmental quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Many parts of Sefton’s countryside is considered grade best and most versatile agricultural land. – There is legacy of heavy industry in Sefton with many areas having suspected high levels of contamination. There are a number of Air Quality Management Areas in Sefton. The water quality of Sefton’s rivers needs improving. – Planning should encourage effective use of land by using land that has been previously developed. There are high levels of vacant homes in some areas.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sefton has large areas of coast and countryside that provide many benefits. Many of these sites are under pressure from development and increased visitor numbers.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sefton has many areas with biodiversity and habitat value.
Culture and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sefton has many heritage assets. Local heritage and culture help give people a sense of pride in their neighbourhood, helps to define the unique character of distinctive places and can play a big role in regenerating an area. In some instances there is a lack of information on the location and importance of our heritage assets. – Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

7 THE SA FRAMEWORK

The SA framework is used to predict and evaluate the social, economic and environmental effects of proposed options and policies being considered. It is important that the assessment process is practical and manageable.

Drawing on the review of the sustainability context (Chapter 5) and baseline (Chapter 4), a range of sustainability issues were identified that should be a focus of SA (Chapter 6), ensuring it remains focused. These issues were used as a basis for establishing a series of sustainability objectives and subsidiary questions (*to aid the assessment process*) that together make up the Sustainability Appraisal Framework. To add further structure and aid in presenting the findings succinctly, the SA Objectives have been grouped into 12 Sustainability Topics as detailed in **Table 7.1**.

The SA Framework has also been tested to ensure that it covers the relevant factors and issues that would be covered by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The Council consulted with Local Health Partners to ensure that the SA also met the requirements of a high level HIA. It is important to note that whilst the SA Framework only contains one specific objective on 'health', that health and wellbeing has been considered as a cross-cutting issue that is relevant to a number of sustainability topics.

Table 7-1: The SA Framework

Sustainability Themes	SA Objectives	Supporting questions
Economy	1. Encourage economic growth and investment 2. Reduce unemployment and skills 5. Provide the required infrastructure to support growth.	Will the plan provide sufficient land for business development? Will the plan Support Seftons key employment sector (ports and tourism)? Will the plan help to diversify the local economy? Will the plan help to encourage investment within Sefton? Will the plan help to reduce the number of people out of work? Will the plan improve access to education and training? Will the plan help to retail and improve employment opportunities? Will the plan help match skills to Employment opportunities?
Local centres	3. Support the Rural Economy 4. Maintain vibrant town, local and village centres.	Will the plan protect farming and other established rural businesses? Will the plan help to diversify the rural economy Will the plan help rural residents to access employment? Will the plan prioritise retail, leisure or office development in and around existing town and local centres? Will the plan result in a significant loss of best and most versatile agricultural land? Will the plan encourage more people to use existing centres? Will the plan make centres more attractive to businesses, including shops, leisure and offices?
Communities	6. Reduce inequalities and social deprivation 7. Reduce crime and improve safety 11. Strengthen communities and help people to be involved in decision making.	Will the plan help to improve the conditions and prospects of people living in the most deprived areas? Will the plan help to support the regeneration priorities of the Council and its' partners? Will the plan help to reduce inequalities according to ethnicity, gender, age and other groups? Will the plan help to reduce crime and the fear of crime? Will the plan help to protect personal safety and reduce accidents? Will the plan help create and strengthen local communities that are diverse and stable? Will the plan encourage people to get involved in local decisions and become more active in their communities?

Sustainability Themes	SA Objectives	Supporting questions
Housing	8. Meet Sefton's diverse housing needs	<p>Will the plan help to meet Sefton's housing needs?</p> <p>Will the plan help to meet Sefton's affordable and specialist housing need?</p> <p>Will the plan provide a diverse choice of housing?</p>
Accessibility	9. Provide better access to services and facilities, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport.	<p>Will the plan promote a wider range of local services and facilities?</p> <p>Will the plan increase accessibility to existing services and facilities?</p> <p>Will the plan encourage use of sustainable travel?</p> <p>Will the plan improve links between areas?</p>
Health and wellbeing	<p>10. Provide environments that improve health and social care.</p> <p>20. Provide a quality living environment.</p>	<p>Will the plan provide and protect areas that can be used for formal and informal recreation?</p> <p>Will the plan provide for environments that would help the mental health and wellbeing of residents?</p> <p>Will the plan ensure high levels of design?</p> <p>Will the plan help to create places where people choose to work and do business?</p> <p>Will the plan help to create attractive local neighbourhoods?</p> <p>Will the plan help to foster a sense of civic pride and identity?</p>
Climate Change and resource use	<p>12. Mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>15. Reduce waste and the use of natural resources</p>	<p>Will the plan help to reduce carbon emissions?</p> <p>Will the plan reduce car use?</p> <p>Will the plan promote energy efficiency?</p> <p>Will the plan promote renewable energy production?</p> <p>Will the plan promote an increase in trees, open space and other green infrastructure?</p> <p>Will the plan reduce the amount of natural resources used (energy, water, minerals)?</p> <p>Will the plan help reduce waste and promote recycling?</p>
Flooding	13. Reduce the risk from flooding	<p>Will the plan reduce the risk from flooding to existing homes and businesses?</p> <p>Will the plan ensure new development is built in areas with low flood risk?</p> <p>Will the plan help reduce surface water flooding?</p>
Environmental quality	<p>14. Reduce pollution</p> <p>17. Bring back into use derelict and underused land and buildings.</p>	<p>Will the plan help reduce air pollution?</p> <p>Will the plan help reduce water pollution?</p> <p>Will the plan help reduce soil pollution?</p> <p>Will the plan help reduce noise pollution?</p> <p>Will the plan help reduce light pollution?</p> <p>Will the plan help bring back into use previously developed land?</p> <p>Will the plan help bring back into use vacant buildings?</p> <p>Will the plan encourage the remediation of contaminated land?</p>
Landscape	16. Protect Sefton's valued landscape, coast and countryside	<p>Will the plan help to protect and enhance areas valued for its landscape, including Sefton's coast and countryside?</p> <p>Will the plan restrict inappropriate development in areas valued for its landscape (including areas of coastal change)?</p>
Biodiversity	18. Protect and enhance biodiversity	<p>Will the plan help protect and enhance existing areas of biodiversity value?</p> <p>Will the plan create new areas of biodiversity value?</p>

Sustainability Themes	SA Objectives	Supporting questions
Culture and Heritage	19. Protect and enhance Sefton's culture and heritage	Will the plan preserve or enhance Sefton's cultural and heritage assets? Does the plan provide sufficient opportunity and encouragement for regeneration activity and improvements to cultural heritage?