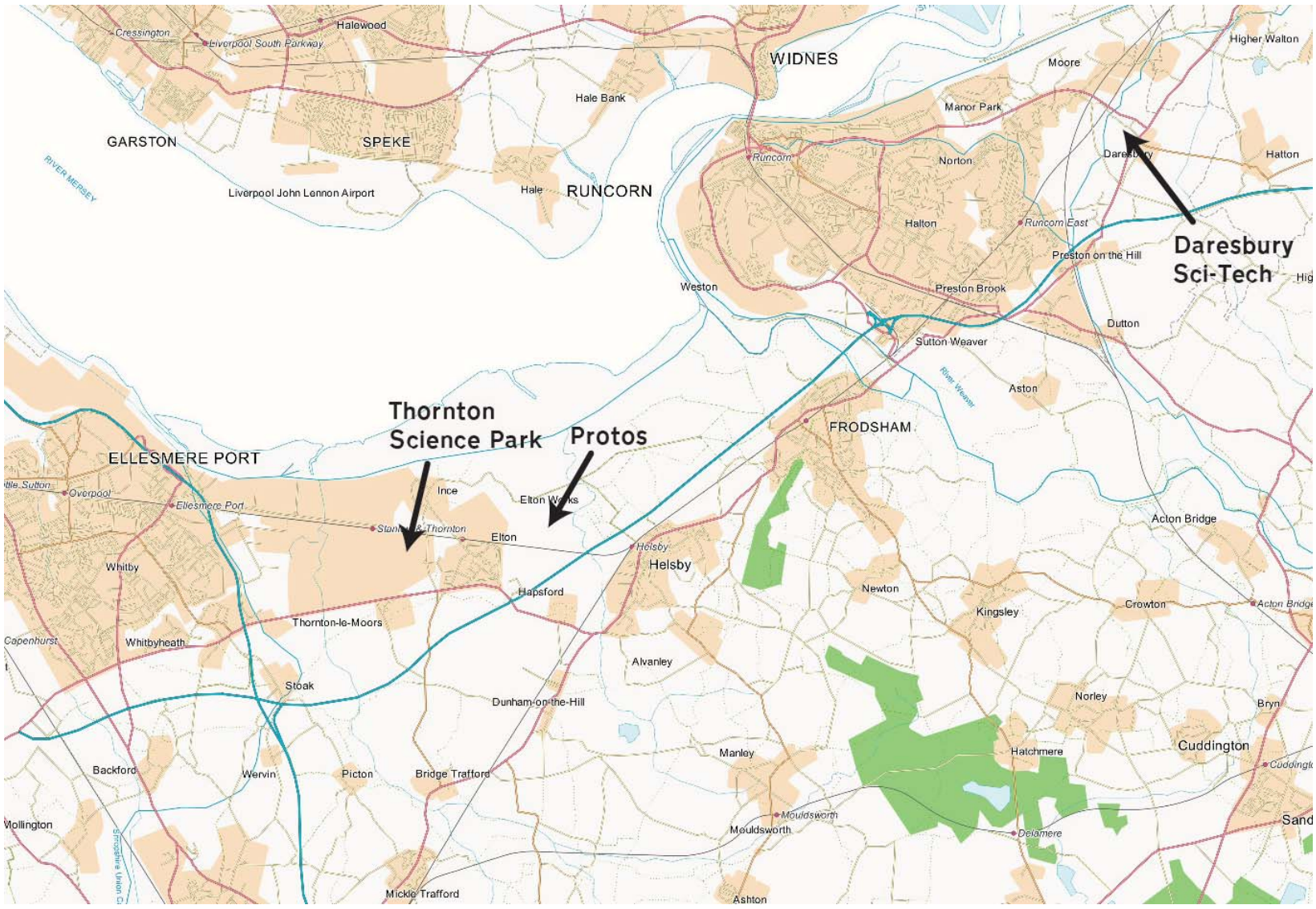
Terms of Reference for Sustrans report into improved cycle connectivity along the A56 corridor joining Ellesmere Port and Chester with Halton.



Background:

Helsby and Frodsham lack safe cycle connectivity with the areas of employment, education and retail at Halton, Ellesmere Port and Chester.

The Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone has been recently established with a number of assets broadly following the route of NCR5 connecting Ellesmere Port, Ince and Elton. The Corridor encompasses the new Thornton Science Institute at the Stanlow complex and coincides with major industrial development on the Marshes.

To the North East the Daresbury Science institute lacks cycle connectivity through Runcorn to Frodsham and Helsby, as do the employment and education sites at The Heath in Runcorn and surrounds. Helsby High School (between Frodsham and Helsby) is actively forging closer links with surrounding industry and significant development is planned for land at the Helsby Sports and Social Club, both in terms of improved facilities and additional housing.

Frodsham and Helsby have Rail Stations with regular services to Manchester, Chester and beyond, also regular services from Helsby and Frodsham direct to Runcorn, Liverpool Airport and Liverpool are scheduled to re-commence in 2018. Infrequent services operate on a line from Helsby to Ellesmere Port (with stations at Elton and within the Stanlow / Thornton facility) although this line has the potential for services to Hooton and connection to the Wirral Line.

In general NCR5 is used primarily as a recreational leisure route with some limited commuter use evident between Frodsham, Helsby and Halton. Sections across The Marshes are poorly surfaced and are in poor repair, whilst numerous sections of the road network are narrow and have high traffic density with no adequate cycling provision. Cycling is catered for in limited areas on short stretches, although this infrastructure is quite substandard.

Scope of Work:

Although the ideal solution for the A56 and A5117 alignments is seen as a 'best standard' segregated scheme as in the style of the Daresbury Science Park – Warrington cycle way, it's recognised the infrastructure constraints on certain parts of the route do not make this reasonable or practical. Thus components of the routes that might be suitable for upgrading to lower specifications are identified, with Sustrans to provide detail of such appropriate specifications. It is recognized there may be stretches of route where possible upgrades will fail to meet current DfT or Sustrans guidelines; close liaison with the relevant authority will be needed before such schemes are progressed beyond the scoping stage.

In all cases; in addition to specifying possible improvements, Sustrans to (where possible):

- Provide approximate (pro rata) costs
- Supply empirical evidence to support scheme benefits.

Exceptions:

It is recognized that some elements of the route (due to infrastructure constraints) cannot be upgraded to 'cycle friendly' by any reasonable means. These elements are identified below and although they do not form part of the terms for improvement in this report, alternative routes are suggested.

1. Element of the A56 in Helsby from the western end of Robin Hood Lane to Britannia Rd.

2. Element of the A56 in Helsby from Station Ave to Bates Lane.

3. Element of the A56 in Frodsham from Matty's Lane to Marsh Lane

4,5. Element of the A56 in Frodsham from St Luke's Church to Quay Side, across the Frodsham Stone Bridge to the Western end of Mill Lane.

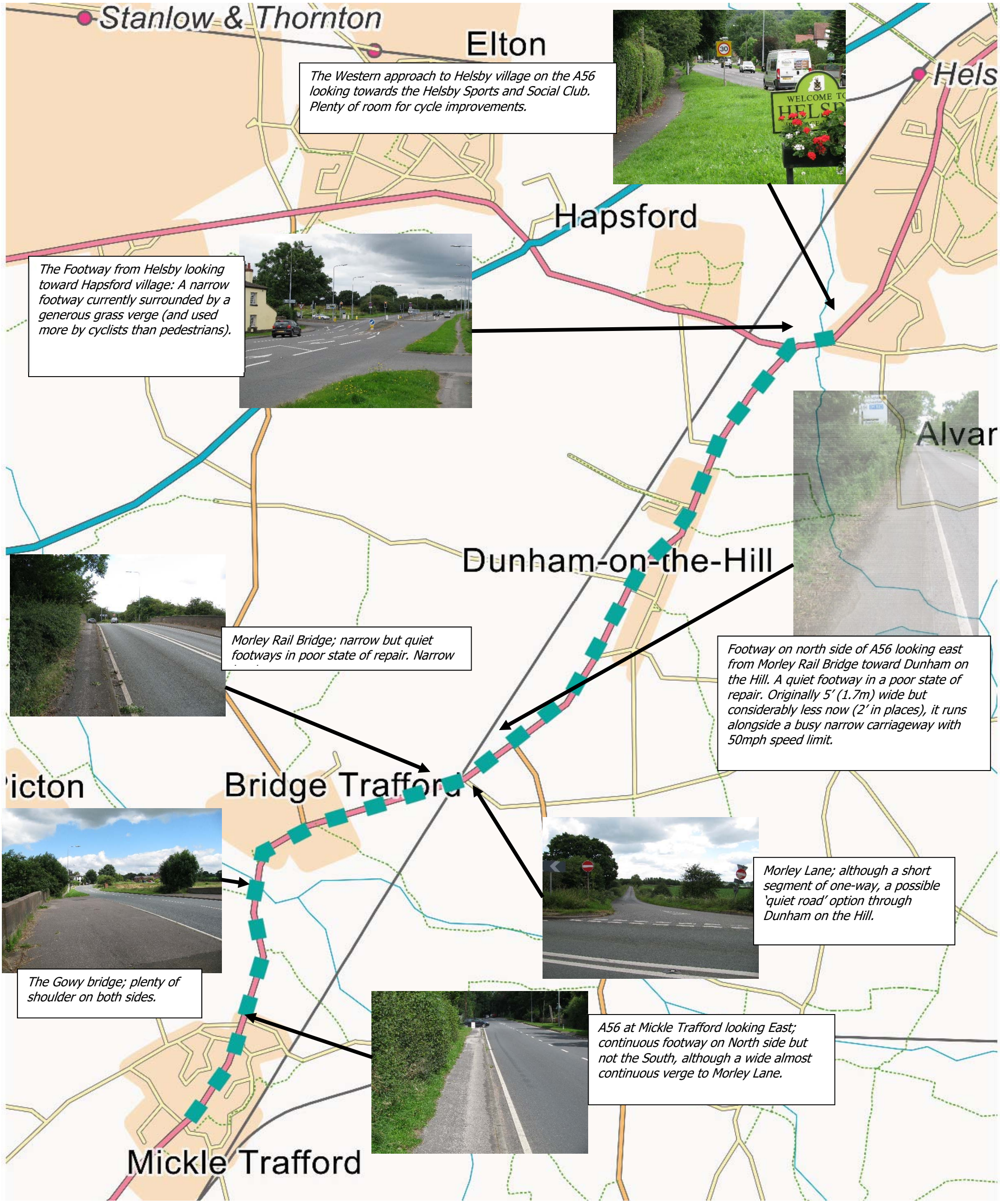
The A56 looking East from St Luke's church and at the bottom of Fluin Lane; narrow carriageways, a busy road and busy footways.

A56 from Dig Lane toward Frodsham. The Castle Park entrance is on the right; narrow footway on the west side only confined by a stone wall.

From Station Ave looking East; Busy narrow lanes and footways (frequently parked on).

The A56 Looking East from Britannia Rd toward Tesco; very busy with narrow footways.

Section 1: Chester Greenway at Mickle Trafford to Helsby Sports and Social Club



The Western approach to Helsby village on the A56 looking towards the Helsby Sports and Social Club. Plenty of room for cycle improvements.

The Footway from Helsby looking toward Hapsford village: A narrow footway currently surrounded by a generous grass verge (and used more by cyclists than pedestrians).

Morley Rail Bridge; narrow but quiet footways in poor state of repair. Narrow

Footway on north side of A56 looking east from Morley Rail Bridge toward Dunham on the Hill. A quiet footway in a poor state of repair. Originally 5' (1.7m) wide but considerably less now (2' in places), it runs alongside a busy narrow carriageway with 50mph speed limit.

Morley Lane; although a short segment of one-way, a possible 'quiet road' option through Dunham on the Hill.

The Gowy bridge; plenty of shoulder on both sides.

A56 at Mickle Trafford looking East; continuous footway on North side but not the South, although a wide almost continuous verge to Morley Lane.

Sustrans:

- To investigate best solutions and detail specifications for dedicated cycle lane(s)/path(s)from Mickle Trafford to Helsby along the A56 and including cycle access for Hapsford village.

Considerations to include possible 2 way (cycle) use of Morley lane leading into Barrow Lane and village Rd through Dunham on the Hill to rejoin A56 at the Wheatsheaf.

Section 2: Helsby Sports and Social Club to Helsby Station, and via Old Chester Rd to A56 and Helsby High School.

Helsby Station; no provision for cyclists.

The start of the cycle lane to HHS from Helsby (see separate Sustrans report).

Looking to Helsby village centre east along the A56. Some potential for improvement, but not continuous.

Tesco Supermarket; the infrastructure on the A56 ends abruptly after only a few metres…

Small alleyway connecting the vast HSSC car park with Callender Way and Tesco supermarket. The car park awaits redevelopment although offers a cycling alternative.

Sustrans to:

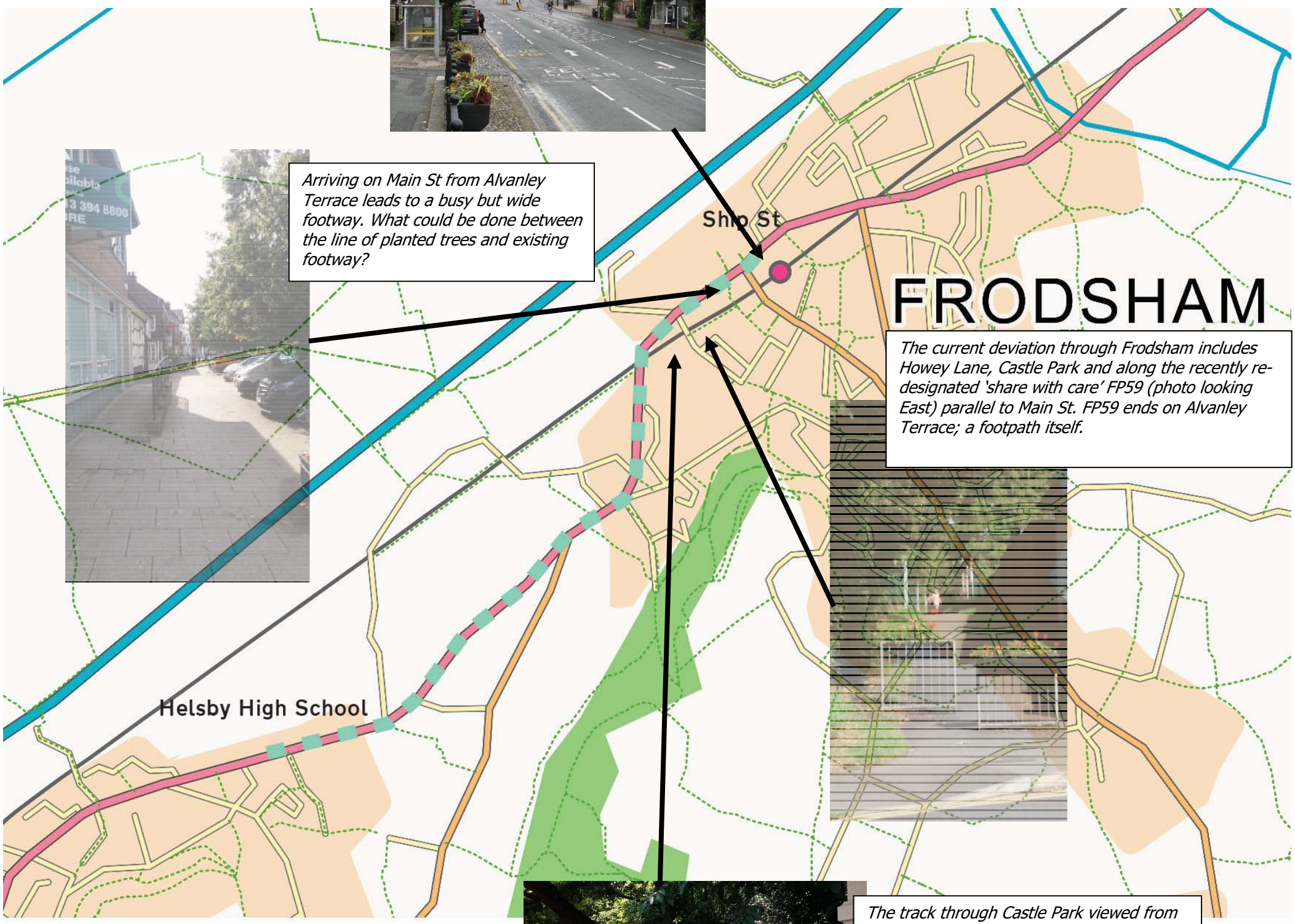
- Identify suitable upgrades to the A56 to connect existing cycle infrastructure at Tesco supermarket with Heslby Station.
- Identify potential improvements to Robin Hood Lane (quick wins) connecting to Old Chester Rd through to junction with A56 and connect with suggested Sustrans improvements (Report 01 Jan 2016) to the A56 route to Helsby High School.

Section 3: Helsby High School to Ship St, Frodsham.

Please Note: Cycling opportunities within Frodsham are the subject of a separate report, however a core route needs identifying to connect to Ship St.

Frodsham High St from Morrison's Supermarket. A wide road with wide footways on both sides. Could it support cycle lanes from Fountain's Lane or The Queen's Head to Ship St?

Arriving on Main St from Alvanley Terrace leads to a busy but wide footway. What could be done between the line of planted trees and existing footway?



The current deviation through Frodsham includes Howey Lane, Castle Park and along the recently re-designated 'share with care' FP59 (photo looking East) parallel to Main St. FP59 ends on Alvanley Terrace; a footpath itself.

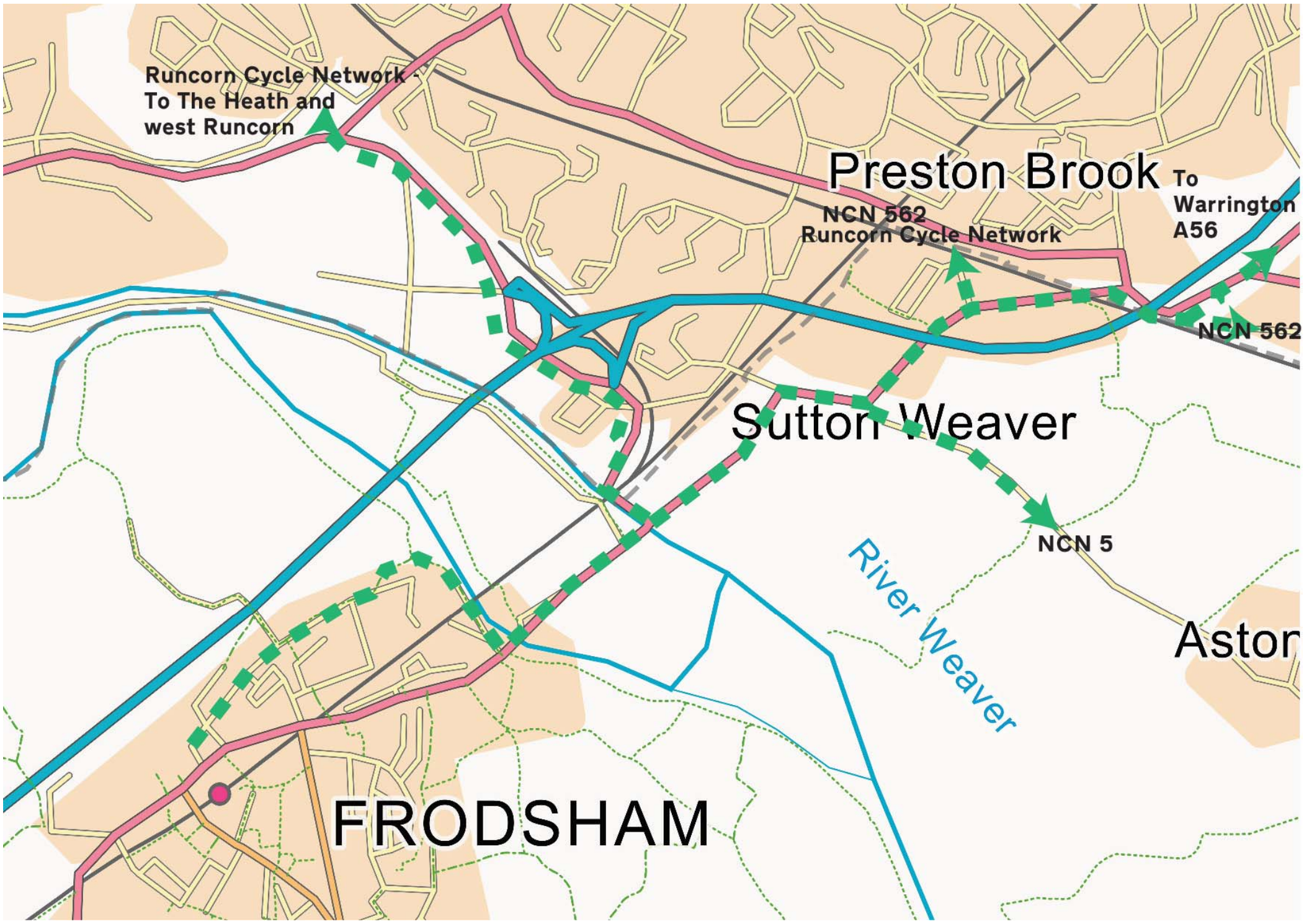
The track through Castle Park viewed from Fountain's Lane.

Sustrans to:

- Identify the optimum solution for cycle access from the Fountain's Lane entrance to Castle Park to Ship St.
- Specify the required upgrades.

Section 4: Ship St to Runcorn Cycle Network and Sutton Weaver via NCR5.

(Refer to A0 Illustrative Report provided by WaSCF)

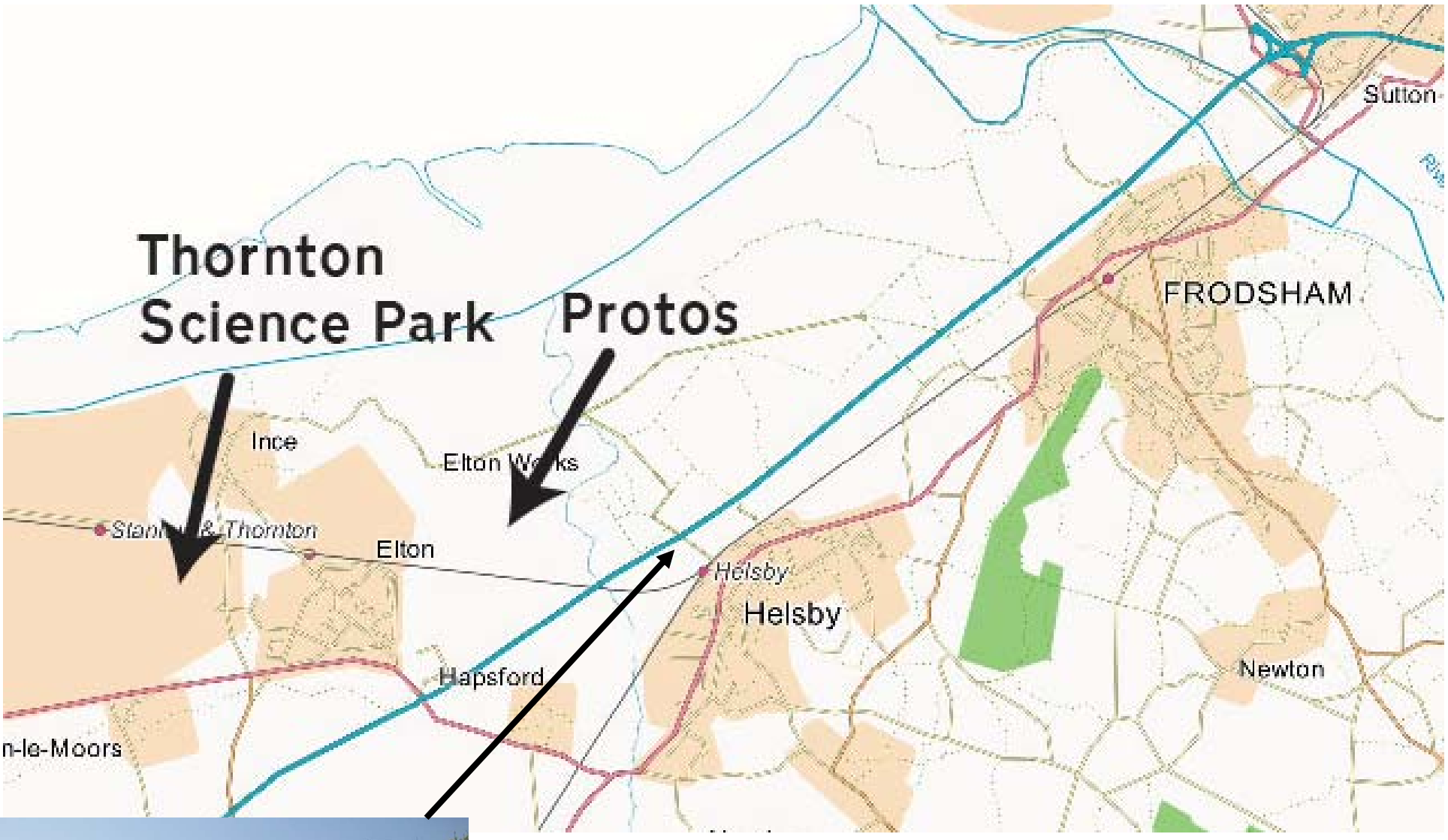


Sustrans to:

- Examine feasibility for dedicated cycle / pedestrian bridge crossing the Weaver Navigation; either at the Runcorn Rowing Club (joining with Cholmondeley Rd) or at the Local Authority Boundary (Ditton Rd) to connect with the Runcorn Cycle Network. Specify approximate costs for the bridge.
- Suitable specifications and pro-rata costs for a cycle lane / kerbed cycleway along Chester Rd from The Swing Bridge into Sutton Weaver
- Specify potential upgrades along Sutton Causeway toward Frodsham to join with Mill Lane, or other alternative with approximate scheme costs.
- A suitable cycle crossing over the River Weaver beside the Frodsham Bridge to connect Mill Lane with Quayside with approximate costs.
- Identify potential improvements (quick wins) for NCR5 along Quayside and Ship St.

Section 5: Quayside to Protos EfW facility via Lordship Lane and Frodsham Marshes.

(Refer to A0 Illustrative report provided by WaSCF)



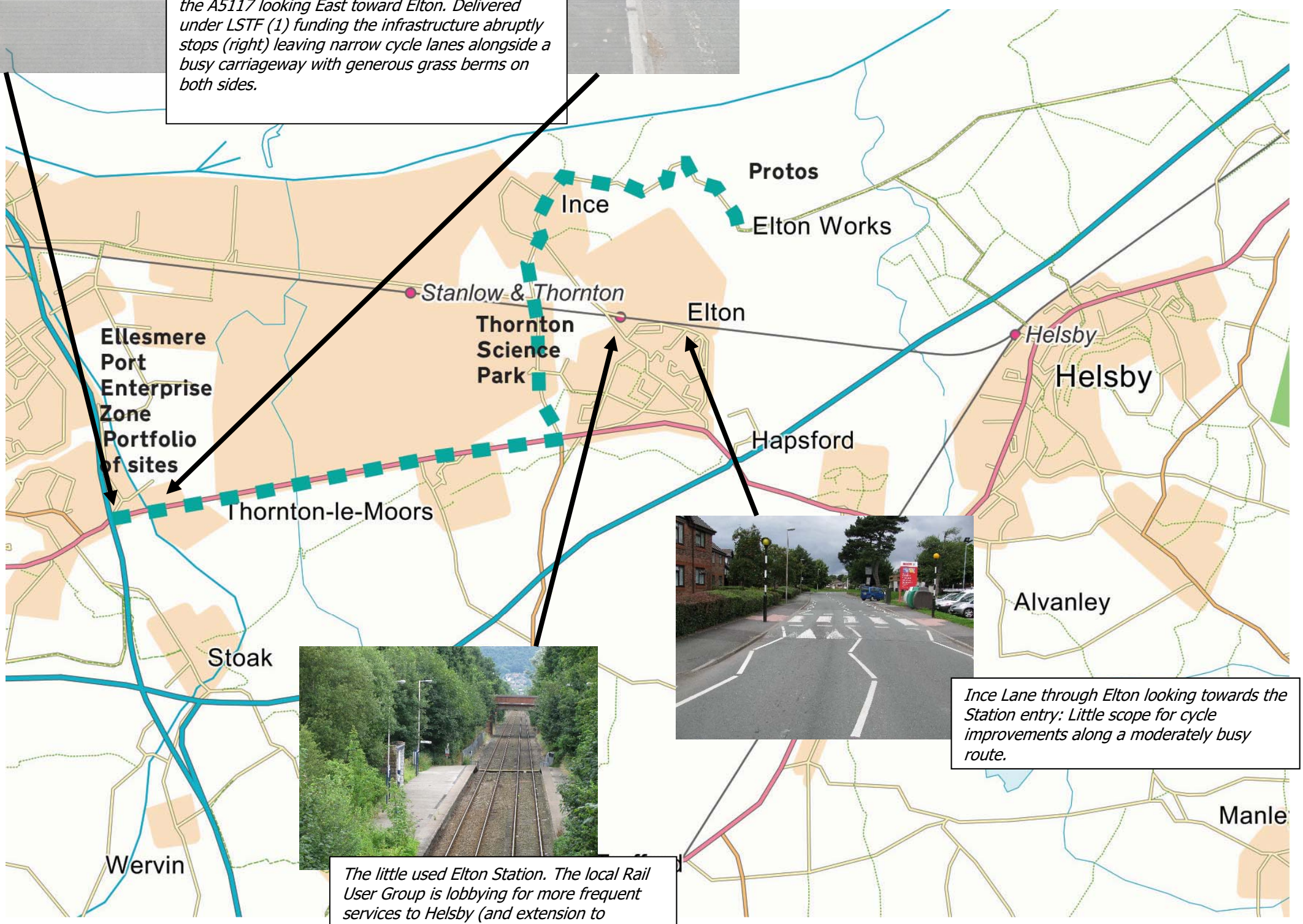
Lower Rake Lane crossing the M56 from Helsby to Rake and Lordship Lanes. Like most connections from Helsby and Frodsham to The Marshes a good surface abruptly ends on the North Side of the motorway.

Sustrans to:

- State specifications of a new cycle track to connect Quayside with Lordship Lane and pro rata costs (excluding land purchase).
- State approximate costs for minor improvements to Moorditch, Lordship and Marsh Lanes (quick wins) to relieve tracks of cycle hazards (pot holes and ruts).
- As above for Rake lane and Straight Length connecting A56 and Helsby with NCR5 on The Marshes.
- Specify Improvements to signage for cyclists using The Marshes between Frodsham and PROTOS with approximate costs (quick wins).

Section 6: A5117 from M53 to Elton and PROTOS EfW facility.

The Share with Care path from Cheshire Oaks on the A5117 looking East toward Elton. Delivered under LSTF (1) funding the infrastructure abruptly stops (right) leaving narrow cycle lanes alongside a busy carriageway with generous grass berms on both sides.



Ince Lane through Elton looking towards the Station entry: Little scope for cycle improvements along a moderately busy route.

The little used Elton Station. The local Rail User Group is lobbying for more frequent services to Helsby (and extension to Hooton).

Sustrans to:

- Determine both specifications and approximate pro rata costs of extending current cycle path along A5117 to junction with Pool lane and across to School Lane (Elton).
- Identify potential cycle improvements to Pool Lane from the A5117 to the junction with Oil Sites road.
- Investigate and cost any 'quick win' improvements to NCR5 from Pool Lane to Marsh Lane and the Protos EfW facility.