



communities
of cheshire partnership

**A NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR
CHESHIRE
(November 2007) draft version 1.**

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

The population of Cheshire in 2005 was 679,900, which accounts for 10% of the North West population and approximately 1.3% of the population of England and Wales, making the County Council the 16th largest local authority in England and Wales. Approximately 40% of Cheshire's population live in predominantly rural areas; the other 60% live in mainly urban areas. Cheshire has six district councils in the localities of Ellesmere Port and Neston, Chester, Vale Royal, Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield. Recent forecasts show that the number of people living in Cheshire will continue to increase in the future. Since 1981, our population has grown by 6%. This is similar to the growth experienced in England and Wales. Between 2005 and 2021 the population in Cheshire is forecast to increase by 4%.

The diversity of Cheshire is something to celebrate and provides the reason why so many visitors come to enjoy Cheshire each year. However, the challenge and opportunity to ensure that the success of Cheshire is shared amongst all of its communities is a particularly testing one. It is not possible to seek solutions to complicated, long-term problems with any ease. To improve the quality of life for all our local residents will take time and we must be certain of our priorities.

Therefore, by identifying and tackling the most important issues impacting across the county and those which provide the greatest concern, we can target our joint efforts to concentrate our greatest influence in addressing those issues.

There are a number of key inter-related themes running throughout Cheshire's communities, which are addressed through the work of thematic partnerships, comprised of representatives across the sectors. Those partnerships tackle the issues outside the remit of any individual organisation. The key themes are below:

- **Children and Young People**
- **Healthy communities**
- **Older Adults**
- **Economy**
- **Environment**
- **Culture, Heritage and Sport**
- **Housing**
- **Rural Partnerships**

- **Safer Communities**
- **Stronger Communities**

THE VISION FOR CHESHIRE

Our vision is: *"for Cheshire to be a place where everyone can thrive, at work and at play, at home and in the community, in a safe and healthy environment, take an active part in decisions, and continue to learn and develop through out their lives"*.

This vision is will be achieved when the key issues outlined within the Strategy are delivered successfully. When we achieve our vision for a sustainable Cheshire: it will be a place where we have:

- **Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the county**
- **Addressed the key issues surrounding our ageing population**
- **Delivered priority services to children and young people identified by the Trust:** namely tackling the adverse impact of alcohol on children and their families and improving attainment in children and families from low income backgrounds
- **Improved access and availability to affordable and appropriate housing**
- **Reduced the effects and consequences of excessive alcohol consumption**
- **Reduced re-offending**
- **Improved mental health and well-being**
- **Improved waste management**
- **Reduced the effects of climate change**
- **Reduced worklessness and improved skills**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Context:

Generally, outcomes for the 156,000 children and young people in Cheshire are good. The majority enjoy a good quality of life and academic achievement continues to be very high in comparison with the country as a whole.

However, such a general picture masks the considerable numbers of children and young people for whom outcomes are not so good, whose personal circumstances mean that they are less likely to succeed in life and to achieve the five outcomes set out by the Government for all children and young people, namely to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

Vision:

The CYPSP will have a tighter focus around those things the Partnership can add 'significant collective value'; and target vulnerable children and families who are 'at risk' of poorer outcomes and life chances; and target communities (by place or type) that have higher concentrations of need and vulnerable groups.

Key Outcomes:

- **Tackling the adverse impact of alcohol on children and their families**

There is good evidence that the impact of Alcohol on outcomes for children and their families is significant. Overall Cheshire has disproportionately high levels of alcohol consumption with regional and national comparators, this follows through to higher than comparator admissions to hospital for alcohol related illness and accidents.

The connectivity between offending, violence, anti social behaviour/disorder and alcohol are equally significant. There is a continuing rise in the number of offenders and victims where alcohol is cited as a key factor. For children's social care alcohol is an issue in almost 25% of all open cases and in 55% of incidents where domestic abuse is reported alcohol is 'involved'. Turning the curve on consumption and the negative impact of alcohol are national and local concerns, there are challenges in relation to availability, attitude and management which cut across all public services.

- **Improving attainment in children and families from low income backgrounds**

The majority of children in Cheshire do well at school and leave with the necessary skills and qualifications that enable them to make choices that support achievement of good outcomes in the future. However, beneath the overall aggregate success of Cheshire's Children there is another story of those children from low income backgrounds whose achievement and

attainment is significantly poorer than their peers and as result the choices and life chances they have are greatly reduced –worklessness, low income and poor housing all have associations with poor early attainment.

There are many influencing factors on the pathway from risk to poor outcome but attainment is so contributory to future success and breaking the cycle of underachievement that this has to be a significant local priority. Apparent in both of the above are responses to the issues of increasing pro social behaviour/reducing inappropriate risk taking and responding to the needs of families with multiple risk factors...

- Children from the 5% most disadvantaged households are more than 50 times more likely to have multiple problems at age 30 than those from the top 50% of Households
- 63% of boys whose fathers go to prison are eventually convicted themselves
- 61% of children in workless couple households live in poverty
- 60% of children in the lowest reading attainment group at age 10 had parents with low literacy scores

We know we are improving when:

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Context:

The general health of Cheshire's population is similar to that of England and Wales. The 2001 census found that 92% of people living in Cheshire were in good or fairly good health and 17% had a limiting long-term illness. There are, however, continuing health inequalities between the least and most deprived wards of the county.

The Cheshire Community Survey 2006 asked about a number of health issues. It found that 16% of Cheshire's population smoke cigarettes, this had decreased from 20% in 2004. According to the General Household Survey 2004-05, nationally 25% of over 16s smoked. The Cheshire Community Survey also found that 15% of men and 12% of women were drinking more than the recommended amount of units in an average week. Nationally the figures were 24% for men and 13% for women. Smoking and drinking are both causes of heart disease. All local authorities within Cheshire have mortality ratios for chronic heart disease that are broadly similar to the England national average (based on pooled data from 2002 to 2004, Health and Social Care Information Centre).

Another important health issue concerns mental illness. The CBI estimates that losses to the local economy through mental illness could be around £47m per year. At May 2006, 40% of people who were claiming incapacity or severe disability allowance benefit had been diagnosed as having mental and behavioural disorders. This was a similar percentage for England and the North West.

Our Vision:

To work with others to achieve sustainable improvement in health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities of health

Key outcomes:

- For the population we will target local areas of health need and deprivation in order to use resources more equitably, enabling individuals and communities to improve their health and well-being.
- For patients and clients we will commission health and well-being services as close to patients' homes as possible, which deliver measurable health and quality outcomes.
- We will all ensure that patients and public are involved in the way we commission services.
- For partners to work collaboratively to deliver shared objectives, so that streamlined services are created and resources are used effectively.
- A patient-led local NHS where patients' choices (not just government targets) drive continuous improvement and the prime focus is on promoting better health and delivering better health care.
- Increase in access to psychological therapies especially focused on people with mental health problems who are out of work or at risk of losing work. To reduce the number of people claiming long term sickness

benefits, and increase in people in employment and reduced periods of time off sick due to mental ill health.

- Strengthen primary mental health care: by increasing the speed of response and satisfaction and reducing referrals to secondary care and better health outcomes for users and carers

We know we are improving when:

OLDER ADULTS

Context:

The number of older people in Cheshire aged 65 or above will increase by more than a third between 2005 and 2021. Those aged 85 or over will increase at an even faster rate (about two-thirds), with an increase from about 14,000 in 2005 to 23,000 in 2021. In contrast to the increasing numbers of older people, the number of children (aged 0 to 15) in Cheshire will continue to fall. In 2001 there were about 133,000 children in Cheshire. By 2005 this had decreased to just over 129,000. From 2005 to 2021 we forecast a further decrease of around 10% and by 2021 there will be just over 115,000 children in Cheshire. This is a total decrease of 13% over the 20 years from 2001 through to 2021. The number of people of working age (16 to 64 years) in Cheshire will remain relatively constant between 2005 and 2021. However, there will be a shift towards older workers. The trends seen in Cheshire will also be seen in each of the districts.

Our Vision:

Older adults in Cheshire will thrive, retain their independence and quality of life, stay healthy and have access to good quality housing, transport, leisure, entertainment, families and friends. There will be sufficient information and provision of services that will ensure we maximise independence, opportunity, health and well-being for older people.

Key outcomes:

- Improve independence, wellbeing and choice for older people, where appropriate and chosen.
- Reducing hospital and institutional care for older people
- Supporting older people at home
- Improving housing for older people
- Improving economic well-being of older people at retirement age
- Improving transport for older people

We know we are improving when:

Older adults in our communities have -

- Improved quality of life
 - *Access to leisure, social activities and life-long learning and to universal, public and commercial services*
 - *Security at home, access to transport and confidence in safety outside the home*
- Making a positive contribution

- *Maintaining involvement in local activities and being involved in policy development and decision-making*
- Increasing choice and control
 - *Through maximum independence and access to information*
 - *Being able to choose and control services and helped to manage risk in personal life*
- Freedom from discrimination and harassment
 - *Equality of access to services*
 - *Not being subject to abuse*
- Economic well-being
 - *Access to income and resources sufficient for a good diet, accommodation and participation in family and community life*
 - *Ability to meet costs arising from specific individual needs*
- Maintaining personal dignity and respect
 - *Keeping clean and comfortable*
 - *Enjoying a clean and orderly environment*
 - *Availability of appropriate personal care*
- Improved health and emotional well-being
 - *Enjoying good physical and mental health (including protection from abuse and exploitation)*
 - *Access to appropriate treatment and support in managing long-term conditions independently*
 - *Opportunities for physical activity*

HOUSING

Context:

Our Vision:

“To enable all of our residents to live in good quality homes of their choice, which are appropriate to their needs, at a price which they can afford and situated in sustainable neighbourhoods.”

Key Outcomes:

- The provision of new affordable housing in urban areas, market towns and sustainable rural areas to support the local economy and the wider economy of the North West.
- The provision of supported and specialist housing for older persons and vulnerable client groups.
- Regeneration and the provision of decent homes.

We know we are improving when:

- Provide xxx* additional units of affordable housing on a year on year basis in urban areas, market towns and rural areas.
- Provide xxx* additional units of Extra Care Housing per year in partnership with Social Services.

- Provide xxx* additional units of specialist and supported housing per year to meet identified unmet need throughout the County.
- Bring all social housing up to the decent homes standard within government timescales.
- Work with private sector owners to bring private properties up to the decent homes standard.
- Work to regenerate failing neighbourhoods.

(* xxx numbers to be determined.)

RURAL PARTNERSHIPS

Context:

There has been a growth in recent years of targeted economic, social and environmental interventions into Cheshire's rural areas. This has involved a great deal of partnership working to ensure the sub-region is recognised as a place where need has to be addressed and where opportunity must also be sustained to secure longer-term growth.

The sub-region is aiming towards greater integration and joined-up delivery, moving away from narrow structures where there is separation of rural delivery and disconnection with policy, particularly at the point of delivery. The sub-region has a clear vision of how it intends to strengthen the linkages between current and emerging programmes that impact on its rural areas by defining the evidence based Investment Priorities.

Vision:

A sub-region that supports opportunity and addresses need in rural areas towards a sustainable environment where people feel socially inclusive and economically prosperous.

Key Outcomes:

- Maximise growth of the rural economy by focusing on opportunity – ensuring a high level of economic performance and long term sustainability.
- Stimulate and promote activity towards an economically & environmentally sustainable farming and food sector.
- Fair access to Services for Rural Communities.
- Join-up the Social Equity Agenda in rural areas, for the wellbeing of rural communities.
- Enhancing the quality of, and promotion of, our rural environmental inheritance.
- Make the countryside more accessible and inclusive for urban and rural communities.
- Increase opportunity and choice for people to live in rural areas.

We know we are improving when:

SAFER COMMUNITIES

Context:

Cheshire remains one of the safest places in the North West, with crime rates around three-quarters of the regional level in 2005/06. There were 61,283 (90 per 1,000 population) recorded crimes in Cheshire in 2005/06, an increase from 56,457 (83 per 1,000 population) in 2004/05. The fear of crime remains a significant concern for local people. The Cheshire Quality of Life Survey 2005 found that 61% were very or fairly worried about being a victim of crime, though this was significantly below levels found in the corresponding 1995 survey. Respondents were most likely to be worried about burglary from their home.

Vision:

Key Outcomes:

- Reduce the proportion of adult offenders who re-offend
- Reduce local volume crime
- Increase RESPECT
- Address drug and alcohol related offending
- Reduce domestic violence
- Respond to large scale and unexpected incidents, such as flooding or terrorist attack by further developing the Local Resilience Forum
- Preventing arson
- Developing a holistic approach to safety on the roads

We know we are improving when:

STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Context:

According to the 2004 Office for National Statistics ethnicity estimates, ethnic minorities account for around 3% of the population in Cheshire (7% in the North West and 10% in England) with significant communities of Polish and Afro-Caribbean people. Relative to the overall population, non-white residents comprise a smaller proportion of older people, a higher proportion of professional/managerial workers and a higher proportion of people educated to degree level. The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population is not evenly distributed, with significant pockets in urban areas such as Crewe, Chester and Wilmslow and also in more rural areas, e.g. Tarvin, and areas north of Knutsford and Crewe. The non-white population is not significantly associated with disadvantaged areas. The proportion of non-white people in Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the top 20% most deprived areas nationally is 1.8% compared to 1.7% for Cheshire.

Vision:

Key Outcomes:

- Develop a more coherent approach to community cohesion and youth development

We know we are improving when:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMNT AND ENTERPRISE

Context:

The county covers 208,000 hectares and is home to economic growth and relative prosperity with chemical, pharmaceutical, vehicle, financial services and IT industries. Local unemployment has been consistently lower than the national average (at April 2006: 1.8% in Cheshire, 2.9% regionally and 2.6% in Great Britain) and, from a national and regional perspective, overall figures show that the county of Cheshire is not an area of deprivation. However, within Cheshire there are still persistent pockets of deprivation. Some 11 of Cheshire's 442 lower level Super Output Areas (SOAs) fall in the top 10% most deprived in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, while 39 Cheshire SOAs fall in the top 20%.

The impact of learning on well-being, whether through the development of skills for economic activity or personal, family and social development and health, is well known, researched and documented. Providing the means for individual and shared learning to take place across the breadth and length of life is an ongoing challenge for Cheshire.

Vision:

By 2014 Cheshire will strengthen its position as a top five performing UK sub-region where everyone can access opportunity in work and will enjoy a high quality of life.

Key Outcomes:

- Develop and maintain learning as an everyday part of community life
- Provide responsive and coherent learning provision that is accessible to all
- Ensure the highest quality of learning embedding a culture of high levels of attainment and personal development

We know we are improving when:

- Communities where learning is part of everyday life for everyone.
- Learning provision which delivers what people need efficiently and effectively.
- High quality learning provision within a culture of continuous improvement

THE ENVIRONMENT

Context:

Climate Change has emerged over the last few years as the most important international agenda items in the environmental arena. Under Climate Change, many linking initiatives are being taken forward by numerous organisations and partners. In Cheshire (with Warrington), the Sustainable Cheshire Forum has established a Climate Change Group to help coordinate the numerous ideas and emerging initiatives linked to Climate Change. The County and Districts Councils are in various stages of dealing with the challenges of climate change through the development of action plans, as well as the implementation of numerous initiatives. In addition, the wider community through Parish Councils, Community Groups and other are getting together at a local level to see how they can '*play their part*' in tackling Climate Change. Over the next few years these groups will need support/ advice/ information and signposting, as well as guidance of funding numerous projects.

Cheshire has a landscape characterised by lowland plains, river valleys, woodlands and mires. The quality of **Cheshire's built and natural environments** help to create a strong sense of local identity. It is important the both our urban and rural environments are protected and enhanced/ improved.

Renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures result in a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. One of the major successful outcomes from the current Local Area Agreement has been achieved by maximising energy efficiency measures such as insulation and efficient heating systems in the domestic housing stock, through a partnership arrangement with the County and Districts Councils and Energy Project Plus. There is a great opportunity to build upon the success and enhance this work over the next five years.

The Cheshire Joint Household **Waste Management** Strategy has four key policies which are: encourage waste reduction, maximise recycling and composting, review the need for energy from waste and improving partnership working. Traffic reduction and promotion of car **transport** alternatives are key areas for Cheshire, following the Quality of Life Priorities survey in 2005, local communities would like to see:

- Improved public transport
- Better road maintenance
- Measures to reduce traffic in town centres
- Introduce more cycle lanes to make it safe for cyclists

Key Outcomes:

- Support community groups tackling Climate Change.
- Support initiatives that improve and enhance Cheshire's urban and rural environments.
- Continue to develop and enhance the energy efficiency programme.
- Continue to support the reduction of waste going to landfill by encouraging reduction, recycling, composting and other initiatives.
- Continue to support the promotion of transport alternatives to the car.

We know we are improving when:

Household waste reductions through recycling and waste minimisation:

- 40% by 2010
- 50% recycling by 2020
- reducing waste growth to 1% by 2020.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SPORT

Vision:

'Cultivate' (the Cultural Consortium for Cheshire and Warrington) exists to increase the contribution made by cultural and creative activity to the economy and the quality of life in Cheshire (and Warrington). In identifying priorities for the sub-region, attention has been paid to the priorities of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Context:

Cultivate will identify and champion strategically significant cultural initiatives in Cheshire (and Warrington), and develop appropriate resources and partnerships to enable cultural enterprise and creative entrepreneurs to flourish. Its aim is to facilitate step change within partnerships, ensuring delivery of the highest quality in a range of strategic "signature" projects, initiatives and programmes. These are currently:

- *Chester Renaissance* – an integrated programme of visitor management and cultural development in historic Chester, including the development of year round Festival activity
- *2012 Legacy: Chester Sports City*– a programme to deliver major new competition and community sports facilities and venues and centres of excellence in sports education
- *Imagine* – creating the best experience in Europe at Chester Zoo
- *Weaver Valley Country Park* – a major regeneration, environmental and tourism corridor through the heart of the sub-region
- *Cheshire's Year of Gardens 2008*, incorporating One Place and the RHS Show at Tatton – gaining maximum value and ensuring the long term legacy from this year long festival which will celebrate the rich heritage of gardens and the green environment .

Cultivate will explore and share new ways of collaborative working to ensure the success of these signature projects, and will identify new priorities when they are seen to be delivering positive cultural and economic outcomes.

Key Outcomes:

- An increase in the number of people whose quality of life and health has been improved as a result of using Cultural or Leisure services/facilities.
- Increased visitor numbers and visitor spend in Cheshire.
- An increased number of children and adults participating in sport and active recreation (contributing in the long term to a reduction in the levels

of obesity amongst the population and enhanced wellbeing of the population).

We know we are improving when:

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