



A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR CHESHIRE

Interim Document - May 2008

INTRODUCTION

An interim Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire is being produced in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, which provided County and District Councils with the duty to produce sustainable community strategies. The first Cheshire Community Strategy was published in 2002 by taking an aggregated approach of drawing up the key themes and issues identified at the district level and drawing down national and regional themes and priorities.

We are now required to review the existing Cheshire Community Strategy to set the context for the development of new style Local Area Agreement(s) for 2008 onwards:

“The starting point in negotiating the LAA is through the creation of strong partner relationships and alignment of views around the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). The SCS provides visions, values and aspirations and is rooted in the evidence base and analysis that tells the ‘story of the place’, providing a rationale for the area’s ‘up to 35’ improvement targets.”

“Negotiating New Local Area Agreements” Communities & Local Government (September 2007).

Government guidance refers to how the ‘story of place’ should be articulated through the Sustainable Community Strategy and that this ‘story’ should set out where an area has come from, where it is at and where it wants to be.

Consequently, the development of a new Sustainable Community Strategy is an essential part of the process of ensuring that the new LAA for 2008/9 is ‘fit for purpose’ and sets the context for the priorities Cheshire organisations put forward for inclusion in the new Agreement.

The people of Cheshire currently receive services from a wide range of different organisations, some of which also operate beyond the boundaries of the County, but all have a valuable contribution to make to the delivery of this strategy. These include:

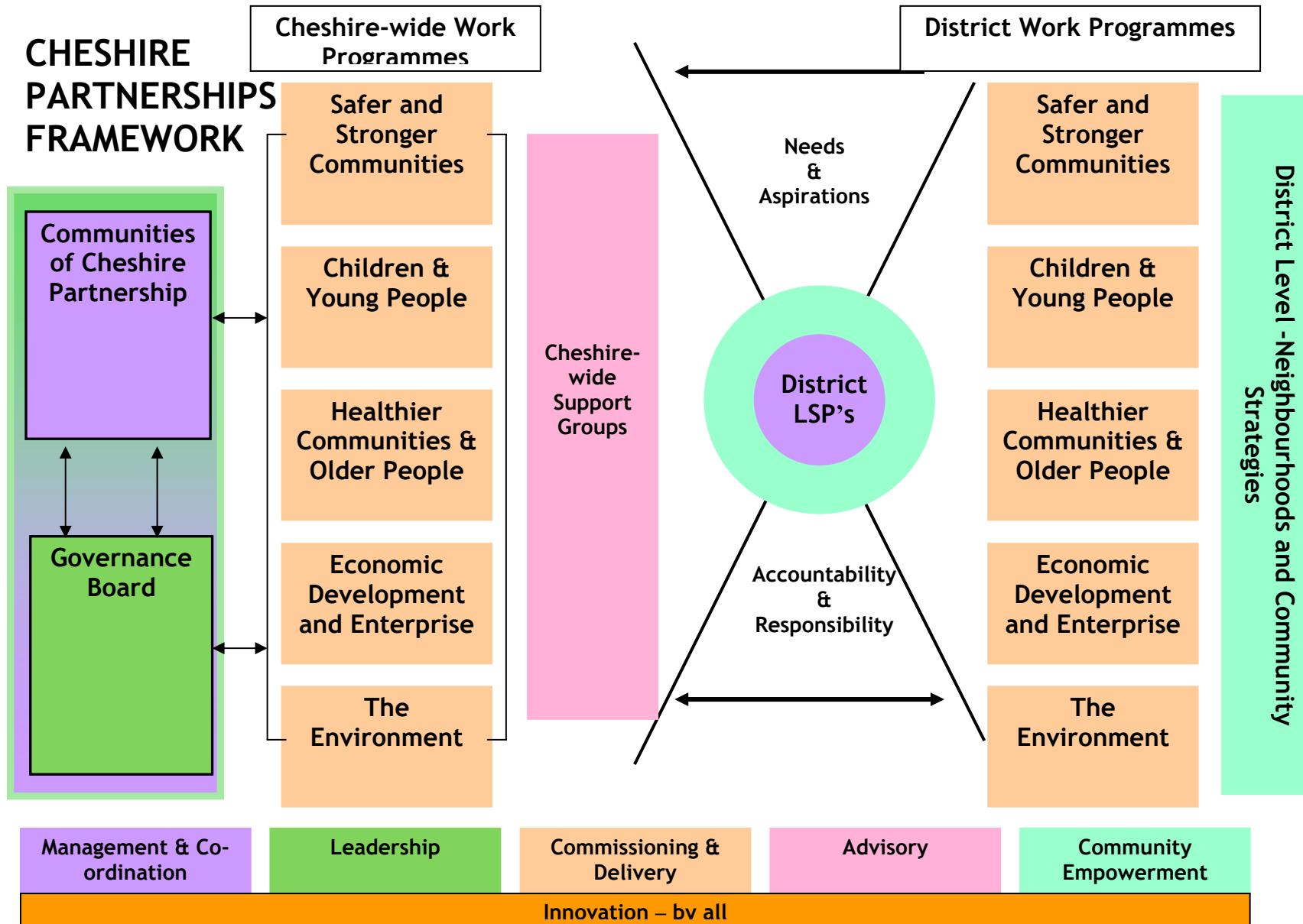
- Cheshire County Council*
- six District Councils*
- over 200 Town and Parish Councils
- Police and Fire Authorities that cover Cheshire, Halton and Warrington
- a Probation Service and Unified Court Service that cover Cheshire, Halton and Warrington
- a Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, Connexions and Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance services that cover Cheshire and Warrington

- two Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), three Hospital Trusts plus two Specialist Trusts also operating beyond Cheshire's boundaries and a Strategic Health Authority that also covers the rest of the North West
- a large and diverse Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

** to be replaced from April 2009 with two Unitary Councils covering East Cheshire and Cheshire West & Chester*

In addition, there are a number of key inter-related themes running throughout Cheshire's communities, which are addressed through bodies comprising the Cheshire Partnerships Framework (see diagram below) – a collection of partnerships operating strategically and locally, comprised of representatives across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. These include the Cheshire Governance Board, Communities of Cheshire Partnership, district-based Local Strategic Partnerships and Thematic Partnerships tackling issues related to Children and Young People; Health; Older Adults; the Economy; the Environment; Culture, Heritage and Sport; Housing; Rurality; Community Safety; and Stronger Communities.

This Strategy will outline the key outcomes identified by countywide and district based partnerships and individual organisations and will act as an important bridging document for the two new Unitary Councils to build upon as they and their partners identify their future priorities.



CHESHIRE IN PERSPECTIVE

The County of Cheshire is located in the north-west of England, bordering Wales and the Midlands and between the city regions of Merseyside and Manchester. Its unique culture and identity have been shaped by that location: its early strategic importance on the Welsh border which gave rise to the County's Palatine status; its later role in supplying the agricultural needs - and the green spaces - for the rapidly growing cities on its doorstep; and its pivotal position in the national transport infrastructure, whether historically on the route to Ireland or currently in the rail and motorway network. The County covers 208,000 hectares, divided into six districts (Ellesmere Port and Neston, Chester, Vale Royal, Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield), with an overall population density of 3.2 people per hectare. It is a diverse county. Economic well-being is generally well above the national norm, but there are also significant pockets of deprivation and poverty. Although the County is predominantly rural, it also encompasses a number of urban centres, from Macclesfield in the east to Crewe in the south and Chester and Ellesmere Port in the west.

Cheshire is the "crossroads" of the North West with extensive motorway, trunk road and rail networks accommodating large flows of traffic on a daily basis. The county has higher than average car ownership and use. 81% of households own at least one car and 39% of households own two or more cars. Just under a fifth of households do not possess a car. Car use as a means of travel to work is also higher than average, while journeys by bus, cycle, and foot have decreased and remain below the national average. In line with national trends, there is a noticeable increase in the average distance people are travelling to reach work and key services. There are also significant daily cross-boundary commuter flows between Cheshire and North East Wales, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and the Potteries.

The population of Cheshire in 2006 was 686,300, which accounts for 10% of the North West population and approximately 1.3% of the population of England and Wales. Approximately 40% of Cheshire's population live in predominantly rural areas; the other 60% live in mainly urban areas. Recent forecasts show that the number of people living in Cheshire will continue to increase in the future, reaching between 700,000 and 750,000 by 2026. This is similar growth to that seen over the last 20 years where, since 1986, our population has grown by 7%. This is also similar to the growth experienced in England and Wales. However, there will be significant changes in the age structure of the population, with a drop of about 5% in Cheshire's 0-15s and a rise of about 50% in Cheshire's over 65s between 2006 and 2026. Resulting in one of the most extreme shifts in age structure of any county in England. Clearly these demographic changes will have a significant impact on the way in which services are developed and delivered in future.

Cheshire is home to a wide range of different ethnic groups, although according to the 2005 ONS ethnicity estimates, 97% of the local population is white. The ONS estimates also show around 19,000 minority ethnic residents in Cheshire. There has also been a recent increase in numbers of European Community immigrants in the Crewe and Chester areas.

The geographical size of the County and the economic, social and cultural diversity of communities present a challenge to ensure locally appropriate solutions to similar issues within a clear policy framework.

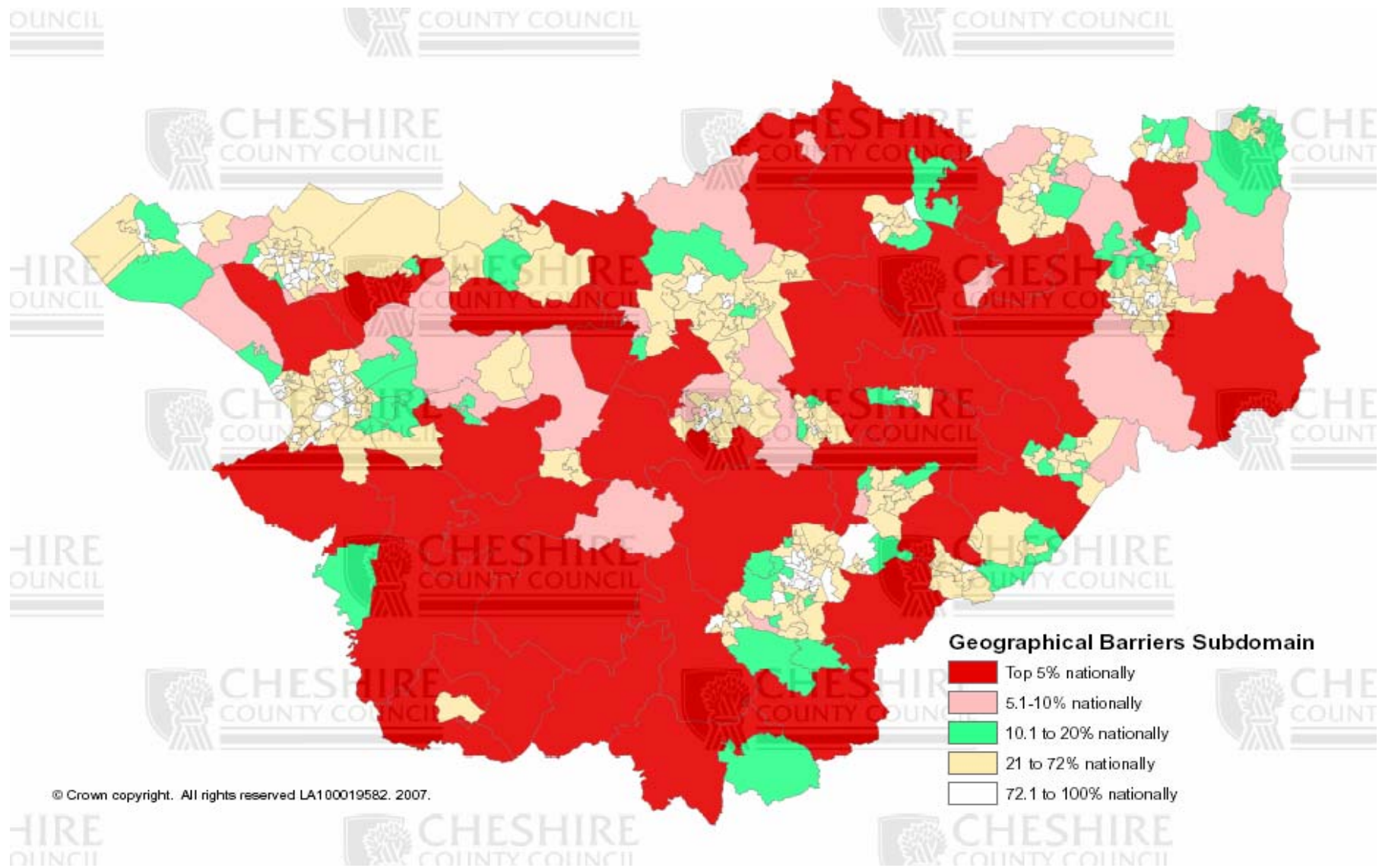
The diversity of Cheshire is something to celebrate and provides the reason why up to 40 million visitors come to enjoy Cheshire each year. However, the challenge and opportunity to ensure that the economic success of Cheshire is shared amongst all of its communities is a particularly testing one. Whilst much of Cheshire is perceived as leafy and prosperous with the vast majority of the local residents enjoying a good quality of life, this perception often masks quite severe pockets of deprivation whose differences are magnified by their proximity to wealthy suburbs.

Cheshire has 44 areas falling within the 20% most deprived areas in England (see below). This compares to 39 in 2004, so our relative position is getting worse. Overall Lache Park (L1) ranked 363 nationally, which makes it the most deprived Cheshire Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LLSOA). The least deprived, ranking in the bottom 60, was Wilmslow Town South West (L2) - (see Map A below). These areas of multiple disadvantage are not limited to urban areas, a number of rural communities also experience significant difficulties, particularly in relation “access to service” measures and therefore, need consideration when the focus of attention is to narrow the gap between our most successful and under-achieving communities. The sub-domain of the IMD which highlights Cheshire’s rural problems includes indicators such as the geographic distance between someone’s home and a local GP surgery or primary school. Cheshire has 35 Super Output Areas (SOAs) ranked in the top 5% English areas in this domain and 62 in the top 10% nationally (see Map B below).

It is not possible to seek solutions to these 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, particularly those where we can tackle root causes rather than symptoms, we can target our joint efforts to best effect.

(Work to identify and agree a shared evidence base (including research, data and community aspiration) for the new two new local authority areas, will be undertaken during the summer (2008), in order to localise the interim strategy for East and West Cheshire).

Map B: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 – Geographical Areas Sub-Domain



THE VISION & PRIORITIES 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 throughout their lives"*.

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

1. reduced inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the county and sectors of the community;
2. addressed the key issues surrounding our ageing population;
3. addressed the priority services for children and young people;
4. improved access to and availability of, affordable and appropriate housing;
5. reduced re-offending;
6. tackled the adverse impact of alcohol;
7. achieved sustainable management of waste resources;
8. been responding to the challenge of climate change;
9. reduced worklessness and improved skills;
10. improved road safety, maintenance and environmental cleanliness and a well maintained and efficient transport network;
11. reduced anti-social behaviour, arson and criminal damage;
12. reducing the risk of industrial and commercial emergencies.

The following sections provide more evidence and detail to support the twelve priority areas for action identified above.

1. REDUCED INEQUALITIES BETWEEN THE MOST DISADVANTAGED AND SUCCESSFUL AREAS OF THE COUNTY AND SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY

Context:

Most indicators point to Cheshire doing well both regionally and nationally, however, there are persistent problems in some areas which disadvantage certain communities against more successful neighbouring areas. Twelve of Cheshire's 442 lower level Super Output Areas (LLSOAs) fall in the top 10% most deprived in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007: Lache Park (L1), South Blacon (L5), West Winsford (L2), Westminster and Central (L4), North Blacon (L3), Blacon (L2), St. Barnabas (L3), West Coppenhall and Grosvenor (L4), East Winsford (L3), Wolverham and Stanlow (L2) and West Coppenhall and Grosvenor (L3), while 44 Cheshire SOAs fall in the top 20% most deprived areas in England. However, within Cheshire, significant disadvantages are also experienced by many residents living in rural communities. A number of rural SOAs score particularly highly where local residents experience additional problems of isolation and access to key services.

Shorter life expectancy is strongly associated with poverty and disadvantage: Cheshire has 24 district wards with life expectancies among the worst fifth nationally. Age standardised death rates in the under-75s between 2004-06 are over twice as high in the most deprived areas of Cheshire (480 per 100,000), in comparison with the least deprived (220). In 2004-06, the largest proportion (33%) of the gap in under-75s mortality between the most and least deprived parts of Cheshire was caused by circulatory disease (heart disease and strokes). Cancer and respiratory disease accounted for 25% and 14% of the gap. The Cheshire death rate from smoking is relatively low compared to the NW and English averages: smoking kills at least 1,200 people each year.

Over a fifth of Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MLSOA's – up to 11,00 residents) have alcohol attributable death mortality ratios higher than the North West's. Mental ill-health is a major cause of disability and at any one time 20% of the population is experiencing a psychological and/or emotional problem of clinical significance. The CBI has estimated the output lost from time-off due to depression, anxiety and stress is around £4 billion a year. Extrapolated to Cheshire, that figure equates to £47 million lost to the local Cheshire economy. Adding to this figure the cost of unemployment, time of carers and the cost of public services devoted to mental health, the Cheshire figure rises to around £250 million per year lost to the local economy. Of the people now claiming Incapacity Benefit, 40% have mental health problems as their main disability. For Cheshire, this figure equates to at least 4,700 people.

Good accessibility to jobs and key services such as education, training and health is important for everyone but is of particular importance for the most disadvantaged groups (especially where there is limited or no access to a car). Studies have revealed that a number of factors can influence this issue. These include the actual availability and physical accessibility of transport, the cost of this, the provision of employment opportunities or key services in the location that can only be reached by the car, limited travel horizons and perceived safety and security.

Neighbourhood Management

Neighbourhood Management is recognised as an effective way of improving the quality of life and reducing inequalities for residents in more deprived areas. Central Government funded programmes in Blacon and Lache have paved the way for other non-Government funded Neighbourhood Management pilots (in towns in Vale Royal and Crewe and Nantwich) to be adopted as partner agencies seek to address the problems of Cheshire's most disadvantaged wards. Having a clear geographical focus, robust and challenging resident involvement and clear, realistic priority setting will reduce inequalities for the communities most affected by crime, disorder and a range of problematic outcomes in relation to children and young people, older people, public health, the built environment and other relevant local challenges.

Resident involvement in setting these priorities and choosing, managing and reviewing the most effective approaches will be vital to this work. Measuring and improving the ability of residents to challenge and influence the work of key agencies will be a useful indicator of progress. For example, the partnership approach adopted by Blacon Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder brings together residents and agencies and is an effective way of putting residents at the heart of designing and influencing service provision. In Blacon, this work is to be continued from 2009 by a partnership led by Chester & District Housing Trust and Blacon Community Trust. Priorities for the next year include developing a Safer, Greener, Cleaner team: a co-located team of police officers, wardens, and council officers who will provide a powerful and co-ordinated effort to tackle local issues.

The new statutory "duty to involve", due to come into force on 1 April 2009 will require Local Authorities to create both the structures and the skills to enable and promote involvement. Different professional staffing resources will need to support the architecture of local working arrangements and the capacity of individuals and communities to participate in decision making and influencing service design. The role of effective community development practice is essential to building the capacity and skills for involvement.

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is the process of enabling people to shape and choose the services they use on a personal basis, so that they can influence the way those services are delivered and is a key element within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act. Developing and delivering a Community Engagement Strategy and Empowerment Action Plan, will ensure that there is a consistent way of involving residents in setting local priorities. Measuring and improving the ability of residents to challenge and influence the work of key agencies will be a useful indicator of progress.

Community Cohesion

Communities in Cheshire are changing. This new diversity has brought benefits, but it has also brought with it challenges for communities and service providers. Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council has spearheaded local working with the new migrant

communities and has been successful in attracting government funding to ensure that the new communities are integrated into the area. Work will continue to help understand differences in our communities.

Priorities for Action:

- Reduce the risk factors associated with heart disease and strokes.
- Achieve smoking cessation targets and reduce the number of people with cancers.
- Increase well-being programmes in areas of highest disadvantage.
- Improve attainment in children and families from low income backgrounds.
- Reduce the proportion of people who are obese.
- Reduce mental health related unemployment and increase the number of local workplaces signing-up to the Mindful Employers Charter.
- Increase access to sources of support for emotional and psychological difficulties.
- Develop accessibility planning strategies to improve access to jobs and key services.
- Increase the number of residents who say that they can influence decisions in their locality, with specific appropriate targets for key areas.
- More people feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.
- Increase community gardens and allotments for people to grow their own food.
- More people believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.
- Increase the overall/general satisfaction with the local area.
- Increase the number of residents who say that they can influence decisions in their locality, with specific appropriate targets for key areas.
- Increase access to green spaces.

2. ADDRESSED KEY ISSUES SURROUNDING THE AGEING POPULATION

Context:

The number of older people in Cheshire aged 65 or above will increase by at least 50% by 2026. Those aged 85 or over will increase at an even faster rate. The trends seen in Cheshire will also be seen in each of the districts. The number of people of working age (16 to 64 years) in Cheshire will remain relatively constant between 2005 and 2026. However, there will be a shift towards older workers and the existing Cheshire LAA aims to increase the number of people over 50 who are economically active and the employment rate of people at retirement age.

Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of mortality due to injury in people over 75. Around 92% of fractures are caused by a fall and in 90% of those falls, the patient has osteoporosis. Falls account for 20% of all patients in orthopaedic beds

with hip fractures, placing the greatest demand on resources. Over 30% of people aged 65 and 50% over the age of 85 living in the community, will fall in a year in Cheshire. Reducing the number of falls has great benefits in improving the quality of life for older adults and reducing the costs and demand for treatment and care.

Priorities for Action:

- Improve independence, wellbeing and choice for older people, where appropriate and chosen.
- Reduce hospital and institutional care by supporting older people at home and reducing the number of falls.
- Improve housing for older people and tackle fuel poverty.
- Improve economic well-being of older people at retirement age.
- Empower older people to have a greater voice and influence on decisions which affect them.
- Improve the number of older adults retained and successfully retrained to contribute to the local economy.

3. ADDRESSED THE PRIORITY SERVICES FOR 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; and
- achieve economic well-being.

Between 2002 and 2004, there were approximately 42 teenage conceptions per 1,000 young women in England. Although the Cheshire average is below that figure, high conception rates were recorded in Crewe and Nantwich (44), and Ellesmere Port and Neston (39).

This is the second year that Cheshire's Primary Care Trusts have surveyed children's Body Mass Index. 82% of children in reception (aged 4 or 5 years) and year 6 (aged 10 and 11 years), were measured respectively: 8.62% of reception and 16.7% of year 6 were found to be overweight. In western Cheshire, nearly 52% of children in year 6 were surveyed and 18.8% and 14.7% were found to be obese or overweight respectively. Around 85% of children in reception (aged 4 or 5 years) were surveyed and

9.1% and 11.7% were found to be obese or overweight respectively. The number of obese and overweight children increased in year 6 when compared with 2006 data. Present estimates in the current LAA indicate that up to 1 in 4 children may be obese, but remain uncounted.

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 Cheshire households. Up to 63% of boys whose fathers go to prison are eventually convicted themselves, while 61% of children in workless couple households live in poverty. Approximately 60% of children in the lowest reading attainment group at age 10 had parents with low literacy scores

Priorities for Action:

- Tackle child poverty.
- Reduce teenage conceptions.
- Reduce childhood obesity.
- Reduce the number of children exposed to domestic abuse.

4. IMPROVED ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF, AFFORDABLE AND APPROPRIATE HOUSING

Context:

There is an increasing gap between local house prices and the income of local people, which increases pressure on the housing market to provide affordable and accessible housing. In the 2005 Cheshire Quality of Life Survey, over 30% identified more affordable housing in their top 3 priorities for improving quality of life in their area. In autumn 2006, the Cheshire Community Survey found 83% of people agreed that there was a need for more affordable housing developments. Increasingly, planning needs to take account of a range of issues and to ensure development plans consider opportunities to sustain our local biodiversity and landscape.

In 2006, the average price of a house in Cheshire was over 5.8 times the average household income compared to a ratio of 5.0 for the North West region, ranging from 6.9 in Macclesfield district to 4.9 in Ellesmere Port and Neston. The average house price of all properties sold in 2006 was £200,673, this price is 6.9% higher than 2005. Average house prices in Cheshire have risen by 181% since 1995, representing 167% for new properties and 189% for previously owned properties. A West Cheshire New Growth Point can enable growth over five years to produce over 8,000 new homes. The current economic climate may result in an increase in repossessions and reduction in the availability of mortgages for many, increasing pressure on existing local rented accommodation.

The need to provide decent, supported and specialist housing for vulnerable and older adults remains a funding priority. In the year 2003/04, the total number of homeless households and people defined as experiencing homelessness in Cheshire, was recorded as 60 in Congleton, 152 in Chester, 153 in Ellesmere Port and Neston, 194 in Vale Royal, 215 in Macclesfield and 266 in Crewe

and Nantwich. The number of homeless households and people experiencing homelessness totalled 1041, nearly half (491) of this total were housed in temporary accommodation.

Priorities for Action:

- Improve 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.
- Improve the provision of supported and specialist housing for older persons and vulnerable client groups, especially homeless households.
- Sustain regeneration and the provision of decent homes and manage economic impacts on the housing market.

5. REDUCED RE-OFFENDING

Cheshire remains within the top 50% of the safest places in England, with crime rates around three-quarters of the national level in 2006/7. Substantial progress has been made against volume crime in Cheshire, with acquisitive crime, damage offences and violent offences reduced by around 18% against the 03-04 baseline set by the Government. In three consecutive Quality of Life surveys (1995, 2000 and 2005) 'Reduce crime and disorder' has been the number one priority for residents of Cheshire.

However, a relatively low number of repeat offenders (around 130) are responsible for a significant proportion of crimes in Cheshire. Problem drug use is both a public health and social issue that is exacerbated by deprivation or personal problems. In Cheshire the Drug and Alcohol Action Team is responsible for the delivery of the national drug strategy (a new strategy is imminent) locally using centrally allocated funding. Drug treatment is the intervention with the most developed evidence of effectiveness and it is the key intervention to reduce drug related crime. In addition to this, work focussing on repeat victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse has delivered substantial reductions in repeat victimisation and an increase in criminal justice outcomes. Using the principal of focussing on reducing re-offending across the Probation cohort, the offenders subject to Prolific and Priority Offender schemes and the work of Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership will target work on the actual perpetrators and victims of crime in Cheshire.

Stretch targets for LPSA 2 Target 7 (increase in reporting, reduction in repeats and increase in criminal justice outcomes) were achieved early due to Cheshire's excellent multi-agency work in securing safety and support for victims and accountability for perpetrators. This has been achieved through implementation of the government SIM model (which stands for: Specialist Domestic Violence Court, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), in which the establishment of Domestic Abuse Family Safety Units in East and West Cheshire has been pivotal. However, Co-ordinated Action on Domestic Abuse (CAADA), who oversee SIM implementation nationally, have indicated that incident reporting remains low and that we should continue our focus on the very highest risk cases to reduce the risk of harm to both adult and child survivors.

Priorities for Action:

- Address crime by reducing the proportion of adult offenders who re-offend, with a focus on the most prolific offenders in Cheshire
- Reduce the number of young offenders entering the criminal justice system.
- The number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment.
- Increase reporting of domestic abuse, reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse and increase criminal justice outcomes, with a focus on increasing the safety of repeat victims of domestic abuse

6. TACKLED THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL**Context:**

In 1998-2001, according to the Health Survey for England, more Cheshire men and women drank more often and above sensible weekly limits compared to the national and regional average. Around 37% of men and 22% of women in Cheshire, drank more than recommended weekly limits, compared to 33% and 17% respectively, nationally. Cheshire men and women also binge drank more than the national average (39% of men and 15% of women in Cheshire compared to 21% and 10% respectively, nationally). A number of the Cheshire districts feature very highly on the North West Public Health Observatory list of areas affected by alcohol related less serious violent offences.

In Cheshire, it is estimated there are approximately 18,750 alcohol dependent drinkers and 110,000 drinking hazardously or harmfully. The loss of life and years spent in ill-health due to alcohol are largely accounted for by mental health, accidents, violence and digestive disorders. Across Cheshire, alcohol-related ill-health shortened life expectancy by between 7.5 and 9.7 months in men and between 3.2 to 7.0 months in women (Cheshire Public Health Report 2007). There are considerable costs related to anti-social behaviour and criminal damage due to excessive effects of alcohol.

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'. Hospital admissions for alcohol specific conditions are above the regional rate per 1,000 population (particularly for females aged under 18).

Priorities for Action:

- Reduce the number of people who engage in hazardous levels of alcohol consumption.
- Restrict access to alcohol by children and young people.
- Reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour, violent crime (including domestic abuse) and damage to property caused by alcohol.

7. ACHIEVED SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WASTE RESOURCES

Context:

Although recycling in Cheshire has increased from 18% in 2002 – 2003 to 36% in 2006 – 2007, Cheshire generates the second highest amount of waste (per capita) in England. In 2006 and 2007, Cheshire produced 401,540 tonnes of household waste (1.4 tonnes per household) and 36% of Cheshire's waste was recycled or composted. The remaining 64% was sent to landfill. Land-filled waste produces large quantities of methane which is a potent greenhouse gas. New legislation sets stringent limits on the amount of waste we can send to landfill and will result in heavy fines if we exceed our limits. At the same time landfill tax will double from £24 per tonne in 2007 to £48 per tonne in 2010. Thus the additional costs, environmental impacts and public perceptions regarding local impacts of waste, ensure that its management remains a key issue.

Priorities for Action:

- Increase recycling and composting to 50% by 2020.
- Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill sites.
- Reduce waste growth to 1% by 2015.

8. RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE**Context:**

By 2080, it is possible that the Northwest will experience an average increase in temperature of 4 or 5°C. In the Northwest, by 2080 we could have 40 - 60% less rain in summer and 15 - 30% more rain in winter, the risks and costs to flooding are particularly relevant to the farming industry and communities living around Cheshire's rivers. Soil quality may suffer as a result of heavy rainfall causing increased erosion. Additionally, as 25% of the UK's chemical industry is based along the Northwest coastline, there will be particular risks in terms of flooding. Sea levels are likely to rise; parts of Cheshire will be affected by just 1m rise in sea level, the Meteorological Office projection for 2050. There is a predicted rise of 14m by 2080 if the polar ice caps continue to melt.

A principal cause of global warming, with consequent changes in our climate, has been the contributory effect of fossil fuels to the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. Fossil fuels are a non-renewable and finite resource, and their reduced availability in future will require a societal transition. . All the districts of Cheshire have higher rates of emissions of CO₂ per capita (ranging from 8.0-15.5 tonnes CO₂ per capita) than the average in the North West region (7.6 tonnes CO₂ per capita). This perhaps is reflected in Cheshire's historic population growth, relative affluence and subsequent higher consumption levels throughout the last century. Seeking alternative and sustainable alternatives to existing dependencies on non-renewable energy sources provide local transport businesses and households with significant and imminent challenges for the 21st century with potential for increases in fuel poverty and food scarcity. Maintenance of our local natural environment and landscape and the

provision of ecosystem services from it will also be challenged by planned growth in local development plans and from the effects of climate change.

Cheshire is already experiencing the effects of climate change: mean temperatures at Manchester Airport for 1988/97 have been 0.45C warmer than the 1961 to 1990 average. This would mean an increase of 2.65C, if that rate of change continued for a century.

Both individuals and organisations involved throughout the Cheshire Partnership Framework need to take a lead in preparing our community for climate change by adapting their services to take account of extreme weather events, as well as by reducing the impacts of their own operations including through more efficient use of transport and alternative forms of energy, reducing waste sent to landfill through re-cycling and home composting and supporting the local production of goods and services within communities. Internationally known examples of local community good practice in climate change activity exist in Cheshire and these exemplars should be replicated widely.

Priorities for Action:

- Adaptation of services to prepare for extreme weather events through Risk Analysis, Emergency Planning etc.
- Reduce emissions of CO2 through improve energy efficiency and more sustainable travel.
- Reduce CO2 emissions per capita across Cheshire.
- Support and build the capacity of local businesses and communities acting against the threats of climate change.
- Support the increase the use of alternative fuel supplies and renewable energy sources to avoid future fuel poverty and food scarcity.
- Ensure new economic growth is innovative and environmentally sustainable.
- Reduce the amount of waste we produce and improve re-use and recycling.
- Increase the use of transport alternatives to the car.

9. REDUCED WORKLESSNESS AND IMPROVE SKILLS

Context:

Cheshire enjoys the benefits of having one of the most sustained and successful economies in the region: GVA (gross value added) has increased against the national average and the rate of employment is high compared to other regional neighbours. The Sub-Regional Economic Strategy includes a target to create 10,000 net new jobs in Cheshire (and Warrington) by 2011. To achieve this target, the long-term unemployed must be helped into employment to share the great success that is part of living and working in Cheshire. Significantly increasing the number of workers in Cheshire with higher skills levels (Level 4 and beyond) remains a priority in order to sustain a high GVA for Cheshire.

Local claimant unemployment has been consistently lower than the national average (at November 2007: 1.5% in Cheshire, 2.4% regionally and 2.1% in Great Britain) and, from a national and regional perspective, overall national figures show that the county of Cheshire is not an area of deprivation. However, within Cheshire there are still persistent pockets of deprivation and low skills attainment persists in Ellesmere Port and Neston and Crewe and Nantwich districts. More recently (November 2007), the claimant unemployment rate in Cheshire is the one of the joint lowest rates of all the counties and unitary authorities in the North West: the county's rate of 1.5% equates to 6,200 people out of a working age population of 417,300. By comparison, there were (May 2007) 22,400 people claiming Incapacity Benefits in Cheshire, equating to 5.4% of the working age population. This comparison is significant in the sense that there are many more people not in work through disability than there are receiving Jobseekers Allowance.

Forecasts from the 'Cheshire & Warrington Econometric Model' suggest that the gap between Cheshire's labour demand (as measured by employment) and labour supply will widen, from 21,700 people in 2005 to 27,500 by 2015 and 35,100 by 2020. Within Cheshire, this means that the demand for labour currently out-strips the local supply of labour. (Factors concerning migrant workers in Cheshire will need to be accounted for). The number of working-age disabled Cheshire residents claiming benefit was 3,730 in May 2007, compared to 3,530 in the previous 12 months and 2,660 in May 2002. This represents a significant upward trend.

This problem of worklessness is, to some extent, due to the loss of manufacturing jobs, particularly in manufacturing-dependent parts of the county. For example, 'Annual Business Inquiry' data suggest that Congleton and Ellesmere Port & Neston districts each saw a net loss of 5,000 manufacturing jobs between 1998 and 2006. In order for new jobs to be created and for Cheshire's economy to be diversified so it is less reliant on traditional manufacturing sectors, it is important to enable new businesses and social enterprises to start up and grow.

The 2006 Annual Population Survey estimated that 69% of Cheshire residents (286,700 of the working age population) were qualified to Level 2 or above. This compares favourably with the North West (63.5%) and English (63.8%) averages. However, a far higher proportion of the economically inactive lack a Level 2 qualification compared to the economically active, therefore there is a very strong correlation between skills and worklessness outcomes. Increasing the numbers of those attaining a Level 2 qualification is essential for progression to Level 3 qualifications, with improved individual income and local economic growth.

Priorities for Action:

- Reduce the number of working-age people with no qualifications and increase the number of adults with Levels 2 and 3 qualifications.
- Increase the number of local employers to sign-up to the 'Skills Pledge'
- Reduce worklessness in Cheshire's most disadvantaged wards by delivering high quality partnership services.

- Increase the number of economically active older adults
- Increase the number of disabled people in employment
- Tackle worklessness in families where there are children.
- Increase the number of new businesses and social enterprises.

10. IMPROVED ROAD SAFETY, MAINTENANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS AND A WELL MAINTAINED AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORT NETWORK

Context:

In 2000, the Government published a safety strategy 'Tomorrow's Roads Safer for Everyone', setting targets to reduce the number of people Killed or seriously injured by 40%, children by 50% and slight casualties by 10%. Cheshire's Local Public Service Agreement further stretched the target for people killed or seriously injured to 44%. Good progress has been achieved over the last two years in reaching these targets through local partnership working, reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and motorways from 607 in 2005, down to 544 in 2006 and down further to 459 in 2007. However, the number of road casualties, 5.6 per 1,000 of the population in Cheshire exceeds the regional and English averages of 5.3 and 4.8 respectively. Detailed analysis of data reveals one of the highest 'at risk' groups across Cheshire to be 36-40 year old male motorcycle or moped riders, as incidents have risen from 11 in 2001 to 29 in 2006. Figures also illustrate a second 'at risk group' of 16-20 year old male drivers, with 110 killed or seriously injured casualties between 2001-2006, against 121 casualties for 21-35 year old male drivers.

The highways in Cheshire provide the infrastructure for the safe and efficient movement of people and freight. Their continued maintenance and improvement are vital for the area's economic success and quality of life for residents. Travel disruption, reduced accessibility and increased congestion continue to be key issues for local residents. The reduction of these is underpinned by the continued quality maintenance of local roads. Improving road safety goes hand in hand with improving the quality of Cheshire's roads and having a clean and safe environment, this is a high priority for local communities. Anecdotal evidence suggests residents desire improvements in local environmental quality in their neighbourhoods, through improvements to the cleanliness of streets in Cheshire and the reduction of environmental crimes (graffiti and fly-posting). In addition, unattractive areas that are littered and suffer from graffiti and fly-posting add to people's perception of dilapidation and for fear of crime and anti-social behaviour be fostered.

Cheshire has some 706 km (437 miles) of Principal Road; 1329 km (826 miles) of classified and 2736 km (1700 miles) of unclassified road. The network has grown by 10% over the last 15 years and usage continues to increase as traffic levels continue to grow. New regulations, legislation and liabilities continue to make increasing demands on resources.

Of the 800 highway bridges (for which the County Council is responsible), 320 are associated with Principal Roads and over 130 have been widened. The majority of these bridges cross watercourses. However, due to the significant rail network in Cheshire, 45 bridges cross railway lines. Three bridges are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 22 are Listed Buildings.

As the Highway Authority, the County Council has a legal duty to maintain and repair the condition of the highways network. This is essential as the network underpins the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Priorities for Action:

- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Cheshire's roads and motorways.
- Reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured on Cheshire's roads and motorways.
- Increase awareness of contributing factors that cause road traffic collisions including speeding, impairment (alcohol), distractions (mobile phones) and the not wearing of seatbelts.
- Ensure that the road network is maintained in a good condition, in order to reduce and prevent road traffic accidents and improve road safety.
- Improve street and environmental cleanliness.
- Maintain Cheshire's highways at a minimum cost;
- Maintain highways so that they provide an efficient system for transportation;
- Maintain the highway in a safe and sound condition, suitable for the use of vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians and all other road users; and
- Ensure that the highway is kept in an acceptable condition environmentally.

11. REDUCED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, ARSON AND CRIMINAL DAMAGE

Context:

The legal definition of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is "causing alarm and distress to someone not of the same household". Anti social behaviour is a major concern of residents of Cheshire, regularly being cited in local authority surveys and community meetings. There are a number of measures of ASB and its impact on society – Police incident records capture public complaints about ASB and nuisance behaviour, wardens monitor the number of calls they receive about ASB, local authorities also carry out annual surveys of public satisfaction and concerns which contain measures on perceptions of ASB and crime.

Measuring and managing ASB in Cheshire using reported incidents, local authority surveys and community consultation has proved successful over the past three years, with a reduction in incidents of ASB across the county and reductions in the perception of ASB as a problem. Using measures such as the number of incidents of ASB reported to the Police and mirroring the Place Survey measures in annual local authority surveys will provide timely information for local strategic assessments and partnership planning.

The monitoring of incidents of ASB, along with arson and criminal damage, is used to direct local interventions to address anti-social behaviour and crimes that affect the fabric of the neighbourhoods of Cheshire. This multi-agency focus has already delivered substantial reductions in ASB, arson and criminal damage. Maintaining this focus through local indicators will ensure that key signal crimes and ASB that impacts on quality of life continue to be driven down.

Across the Cheshire County Council area, criminal damage accounts for approximately 35% of volume crime, this equates to 12,233 crimes committed between April 2006 and March 2007. Between April 2007 and January 2008, 9,723 criminal damage offences have been committed which is 2,500 crimes less compared with the same period the previous year, giving a reduction of 20.5%. The sustained reductions are due to focused activity such as graffiti removal and high visibility patrols in problem locations.

Priorities for Action:

- Reduction in ASB as measured by reported incidents.
- Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem.
- Increase the percentage of people who state that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour issues that matter in their area.
- Work in Community Safety Partnerships to reduce arson.
- Reduce level of youth fire-setting by working with partners in youth organisations.
- Work with waste managers to reduce wheelie bin fires and rubbish fires.
- Increase the number of prosecutions for arson offences.
- Work with commercial sector to reduce arson in commercial property.

12. REDUCING THE RISK OF INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL EMERGENCIES

Context:

Cheshire's unique northern belt has a high concentration of petro-chemical industries and numerous sites that process and transport chemicals across the county. There are 16 'top-tier' Chemical/Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites that employing 6,000 people, of which, one has a potential for a radiation emergency and there are over 500 kilometres of pipelines. These lines contain substances that would result in a Major Accident Hazard if their integrity was compromised, presenting a diverse range of risks both to the public and environment. Chemicals are transported by road and rail and with Cheshire having three motorways (M6, M56 & M53) and several main rail lines providing transport for passengers and commercial activity, civil protection is a major concern. In 2005-6 Cheshire experienced over thirty major/serious incidents including six road traffic collisions involving chemical leaks, three gas leaks involving localised evacuation and two on-site chemical incidents.

Further potential for risk includes busy flight paths, as there are 40 private airstrips and helipads for lighter aircraft across the area and three identified flood plans that could affect residential and commercial premises. Over the past two years, six aircraft incidents and 30 incidents involving people in or near water have been attended. The Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Local Resilience Forum leads local civil protection arrangements ensuring an appropriate level of preparedness and effective multi-agency response.

Priorities for Action:

- Facilitate a series of exercises to validate, train and test against the multi-agency approach and Chemical Radiation Biological & Nuclear plan and verify robust arrangements are in place to manage a mobile cloudburst incident .
- Review impact of regulation changes in relation to COMAH and develop and deliver a programme for major and standard COMAH off-site testing.