

# Cheshire East Local Plan

## Site Allocations and Development Policies Document

### Green Space Strategy Update 2020 [ED 59]

August 2020





<b>1 Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 Background Evidence</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4 Green Space Topic Areas</b>	<b>28</b>
Introduction	28
Open Space	28
Countryside	31
Public Rights of Way	32
Landscape	34
Nature Conservation	36
<b>5 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for the Countryside</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Principal Towns</b>	<b>43</b>
Crewe	43
Macclesfield	45
<b>7 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Key Service Centres</b>	<b>49</b>
Alsager	49
Congleton	50
Handforth	52
Knutsford	54
Middlewich	56
Nantwich	58
Poynton	59
Sandbach	61
Wilmslow	64
<b>8 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Local Service Centres</b>	<b>67</b>
Alderley Edge	70
Audlem	70
Bollington	71
Bunbury	71
Chelford	71
Disley	72



Goostrey .....	72
Haslington .....	73
Holmes Chapel .....	73
Mobberley .....	73
Prestbury .....	74
Shavington .....	74
Wrenbury .....	74
<b>9 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Rural Areas .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>10 Open Space Standards .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Sustainability .....	77
Quantity .....	77
Quality .....	81
Accessibility .....	83
<b>11 Implementation / Funding .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>12 Maintenance of Green Space .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>13 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>93</b>
Recommendations .....	93
Action Plan .....	93
<b>14 Glossary .....</b>	<b>97</b>
 <b>Appendices</b>	
<b>1 Baseline Map .....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>2 Thematic Map .....</b>	<b>103</b>





# 1 Preface

**1.1** Cheshire East Council is rightly proud of the local environment and we are lucky to have inherited a rich legacy of diverse green spaces from previous generations of farsighted benefactors. These forefathers intuitively understood the benefits to society gained from access to beautiful and well maintained green spaces such as parks and gardens, country parks and wildlife areas and these benefits are now proven scientifically, supporting both physical and mental health and well-being. Today this is recognised in all the strategic planning documents published by Cheshire East Council.

**1.2** This Green Space Strategy takes up the broad statements made in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan and seeks to translate the aspirations into reality for the many local communities across Cheshire East to ensure they have access to the green space they need to live rich and fulfilling lives and support a prosperous local economy. It is a vitally important document which aims to co-ordinate green space provision and the various partners involved in this provision so that resources are used effectively at a time when public financial resources are scarce.

**1.3** The document looks at innovative ways of delivering excellent green space so that opportunities are made available for the local and visitor communities to access green space for health and well-being on a continuum from formal urban sites to rural countryside sites, from the Cheshire Plain to the Peak Park fringe.





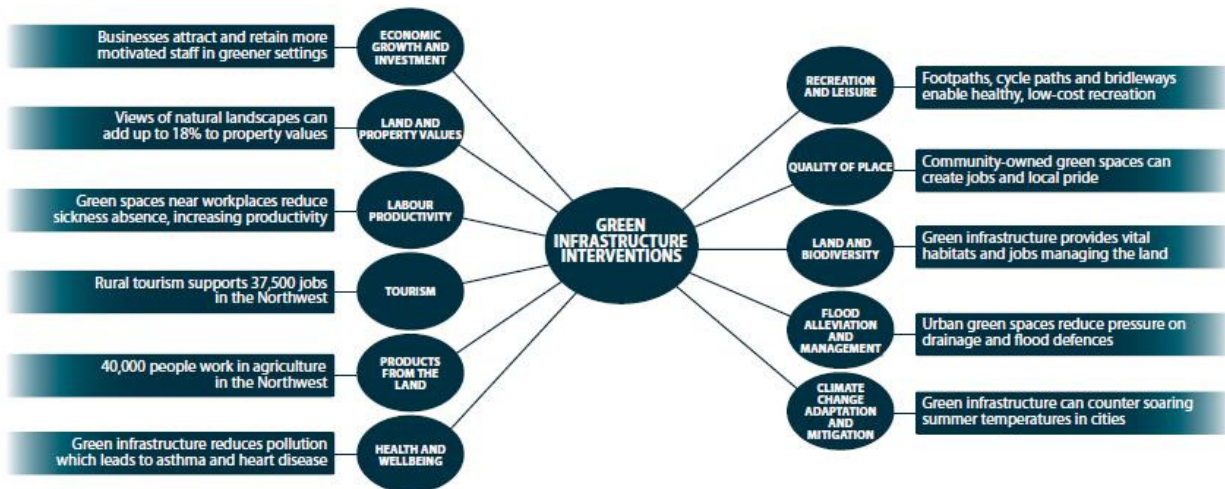
## 2 Introduction

**2.1** Green open spaces or Green Infrastructure provide a range of social, environmental, economic and health benefits. The **National Planning Policy Framework** (February 2019) gives the following definition:

- **Green Infrastructure:** 'A network of multi-functional **green space**, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities'.

**2.2** Numerous studies point to the direct benefits of green space to both physical and mental health and wellbeing. Green spaces have been associated with a decrease in health complaints, blood pressure and cholesterol, improved mental health and reduced stress levels and perceived better general health. The presence of green space also has other benefits: it encourages social contact and integration, provides space for physical activity and play, improves air quality and reduces urban heat island effects. The multi-dimensional benefits of green space are summarised in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Multi-Dimensional Benefits of Green Infrastructure



**2.3** The **National Planning Policy Framework** (February 2019) has at its heart the principle of sustainable development. The environmental objective aims to: "contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy". Two of the main sections in the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), are promoting healthy and safe communities (Section 8) and conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Section 15). One way of looking at all the elements of green infrastructure is to adopt an **Ecosystem Services approach**: An ecosystems approach provides a framework for looking at whole ecosystems in decision making, and for valuing the ecosystem services they provide, to ensure that society can maintain a healthy and resilient natural environment now and for future generations. Ecosystem Services cover 4 broad areas: provisioning services e.g. Food; regulating services e.g. water purification; cultural services e.g. A community garden providing health benefits ; supporting services e.g. soil formation - crucial for food production. All the examples given are interlinked.



**2.4** The provision of new good quality green space and the proactive management of existing green space should leave an important legacy for Cheshire East's communities. This Green Space document brings together all the green space elements of Cheshire East Council (Open Space, The Countryside Ranger Service, Public Rights of Way, Landscape and Biodiversity) to feed into the evidence base work for the Local Plan. Quality of Place is a key theme for Cheshire East Council and our partners. A Green Space Strategy is needed:

- To promote green space across Cheshire East in the creation of sustainable communities;
- To co-ordinate the various partners to make sure that resources are effectively used and benefits are maximised; and
- To make an effective case for investment.

**2.5** Green spaces/green infrastructure cover a variety of green assets from highway trees, garden areas, field ponds and hedgerows to country parks and areas of woodland.

**2.6** A considerable amount of baseline evidence exists that sits behind the Green Space Strategy and so to avoid repetition links to this evidence are included in the Strategy.

**2.7** The **Council's Corporate Plan 2017 - 2020** has 6 strategic outcomes. Outcome number 4 is "Cheshire East Council is a green and sustainable place". Quality of place is a central theme in the corporate plan :"*Quality of Place' is about the quality of our built and natural environment, its interaction with our residents and businesses and the ability of individuals to make a successful life here. It's about ensuring that growth is balanced with quality and that we continue to secure investment in the right areas to continue to make the place special.*"

**2.8** Managing our countryside and green spaces prudently to create a quality environment has an impact on the other Corporate Outcomes such as health benefits, rural skills development, the generation of income through the visitor economy and the creation of strong communities.

**2.9** The following are extracts from the Council's [Sustainable Community Strategy](#), 'Ambition for All', which sets the context for the Green Space Strategy:

***'Cheshire East is a place of diverse towns, rural areas and green spaces***

- We have a diverse mixture of urban and rural areas with approximately 39% of the population living in rural areas and 61% in our towns. We have two major towns in Crewe and Macclesfield and a number of smaller towns including Wilmslow, Congleton, Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager. The unique and diverse character of our towns is seen as a major asset of the area and something which local people highly value.
- 93% of the area is classed as at least 'more rural than urban', while 88% is classified as greenspace. We have a wide variety of green spaces including parts of the Peak District National Park, the Cheshire plain, mosses, meres and heaths. The area has relatively low tree cover at 4%, compared to the national average of 11%. Cheshire East has a large farming community and is a major dairy-producing area. The wide variety of natural landscapes, biodiversity habitats, green spaces and rural areas is seen as one of the





reasons why Cheshire East is such an attractive place to live by local people. There are concerns amongst local people about potential loss of green spaces and other places important for outdoor recreation and natural beauty and biodiversity.'

**2.10** One key part of the [Sustainable Community Strategy](#) vision for 2025 is this aspiration:

***'We will continue to have an outstanding range of historic buildings, leisure facilities, nature conservation habitats, country parks, accessible countryside and green spaces for people to enjoy.'***

**2.11** This Green Space Strategy therefore focuses upon these three strands:

- Meeting needs - both now and in the future
- Quality and future management
- Accessibility

**2.12** These three strands are dealt with in more detail throughout the Strategy.

**2.13** The key aspirations set out in the concluding section (Section 13) in the aims and action plan arise from the various green space elements of Cheshire East Council and their partners. There are a variety of partners involved in the provision and management of green infrastructure ranging from government bodies such as Natural England, landowners such as the National Trust who have considerable areas of land in the north of the Borough down to individual communities who may be managing a local parish field or community garden.

**2.14** The baseline information/background evidence (Section 3) and the five main topic areas (Section 4) produce thematic maps for Cheshire East (Appendix 2) based around the following themes/outcomes and related challenges and opportunities:

- ***River and canal corridors, valleys, cloughs and floodplains***
  - Main rivers: Weaver, Bollin, Dane and Wheelock;
  - Main canals: Macclesfield, Shropshire Union and Trent and Mersey;
  - Challenges: Flooding, water quality;
  - Opportunities: Tourism, recreation, nature conservation.
- ***Cheshire East's 11 main towns and 13 Local Service Centres***
  - Main towns: Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow;
  - Local Service Centres: Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury
  - Challenges: Sustainable growth, climate change (urban heating/cooling; run-off mitigation);
  - Opportunities: Sustainable growth, tourism, recreation, nature conservation, health benefits.
- ***Access to green space and the countryside***



- Access: Public Rights of Way Network, strategic routes for example the Middlewood Way, heritage parks, accessible open space, country parks, open access land, Peak Park fringe;
  - Challenges: access for all, filling in gaps in the network;
  - Opportunities: Tourism, recreation, health benefits, green travel.
- **Nature Conservation**
    - Designated sites: Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves, RIGs, Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs)/Local Wildlife Sites;
    - Network of habitats: Meres and mosses, ancient woodland, lowland heath, upland fringes, watercourses, wild flower meadows, woodland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, ponds and associated copses, parkland and veteran trees;
    - Challenges: damage and loss resulting from development and neglect; water quality; pollution;
    - Opportunities: Filling gaps in the network, recreation, health benefits; and all the above are set within:
  - **Cheshire East's unique landscape**
    - Landscape: Towns and villages, peaks and plains, sandstone ridges, valleys and watercourses, meres and mosses, parkland estates;
    - Challenges: built development, changes in land management, decline of historic landscape structure (hedges, trees, ponds), mineral extraction;
    - Opportunities: Sustainable growth, sustainable farming, tourism, recreation.

**2.15** This is a brief Green Space Vision based upon the themes, outcomes, related challenges and opportunities:

- ***'To deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy which provides for healthy recreation and biodiversity and which continues to provide a range of social, economic and health benefits - above all a Borough that is a beautiful and interesting place to live, work and visit, both now and for future generations.'***
- ***The focus will be on linking the various assets of Cheshire East's unique landscape - its upland fringes, Cheshire Plain, lowland heath, parkland estates, rivers, canals and watercourses, valleys and cloughs, meres and mosses and its distinctive towns and villages.'***





## 3 Background Evidence

**3.1** The following documents all relate to the various aspects of green infrastructure and open space which underpin this Green Space Strategy:

### National Planning Policy Framework

**3.2** The Government's **National Planning Policy Framework** (February 2019) has at its heart the core principle of sustainable development. The main sections of the Framework include promoting healthy and safe communities (section 8) and conserving and enhancing the natural environment (section 15). Paragraphs 96 to 101 deal with open space and recreation, including open space assessments, planning policies, protection of open space and Local Green Space designations. The document states that "access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities". As part of National Planning Policy the **National Planning Policy Guidance** provides additional on-line guidance on a variety of topics dealing with the natural environment.

### Natural Capital Committee

**3.3** The Natural Capital Committee (NCC) is an independent advisory committee. It provides advice to the government on the sustainable use of natural capital - that is, our natural assets including forests, rivers, land, minerals and oceans. The Conservative Manifesto made a clear commitment to delivering a 25 Year Environment Plan. Secretary of State Michael Gove asked the Natural Capital Committee to advise on what the Plan should aim to achieve, focusing on those areas where improvements are most urgent and where the benefits are greatest; how it should seek to do so; and the necessary conditions for success. **The Natural Capital Committee advice on the Government's 25 year Environment Plan** was published in September 2017. The committee advocates the following: "A natural capital approach to the environment brings established economic and accounting methods for public and private assets together with the best natural science understanding." .... "With a natural capital approach, the environment should no longer be regarded as an obstacle to development; rather, a healthy environment is the basis of sustainable economic growth." One of the suggested goals is: "Everyone has access to local greenspace and recreation and can benefit from the physical and mental health benefits it provides. Specific targets should be set, for example, one hectare of local nature reserve per 1000 people, two hectares of natural greenspace within 300 metres of where they live, and a 20 hectare site within two kilometres."

### A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018

**3.4** The Government in its 25 year environmental plan sets out various goals which include clean air, clean and plentiful water, thriving plants and wildlife and enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment. The document contains 6 policy areas which include:

- Using and managing land sustainably
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and well-being





**3.5** One of the aims in the "Connecting people with environment " chapter is the provision of more and better quality green infrastructure (GI) in new developments, upgrading of existing GI and retrofitting of new GI in areas where provision is poor.

**3.6** As part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan the Government intends to make biodiversity net gain mandatory: "to ensure that wildlife isn't compromised in delivering necessary infrastructure and housing, the government will Mandate net gains for biodiversity on new developments in England to deliver an overall increase in biodiversity"<sup>(1)</sup>.

**3.7** The document references other research work regarding the links between GI and health: Evidence Statement on the links between natural environments and human health - University of Exeter and Defra 2017; Urban Green Spaces and health - World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe 2016.

## **The Environment Bill:**

**3.8** The Environment Bill is comprised of two thematic halves. The first provides a legal framework for environmental governance once the UK leaves the EU. The second makes provision for specific improvement of the environment, including measures on waste and resource efficiency, air quality and environmental recall, water, nature and biodiversity, and conservation covenants.

**3.9** The first part of the Bill was published on 19 December 2018. The measures published at that time related only to environmental principles and governance, and placed the government's 25 Year Environment Plan on a statutory footing.

**3.10** The remaining parts of the Bill make provision for a range of environmental improvements. These include:

### *Air Quality*

**3.11** The Bill's air quality provisions include: a requirement that the government make regulations that set a legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in ambient air; a duty for the government's air quality strategy to be reported on annually and reviewed at least every five years; and the power for the government to make regulations for the recall of products (such as vehicles) that do not meet relevant legal emissions standards.

### *Nature and Biodiversity*

**3.12** The Bill introduces a number of requirements relating to biodiversity, including a new general condition to all planning permissions in England (which requires that a biodiversity gain plan must be approved before any development can commence), and an enhancement of the duty of public authorities to conserve biodiversity to further include a duty to "enhance" biodiversity.

**3.13** The Nature and Biodiversity Part of the Environment Bill (Part 6) includes provisions to:

---

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spring-statement-2019-what-you-need-to-know>





- amend section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to strengthen and improve the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with the proper exercise of their functions;
- mandate net gain in biodiversity through the planning system, requiring a 10% increase in biodiversity after development, compared to the level of biodiversity prior to the development taking place, as measured by a metric set out by Defra;
- require the preparation and publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, a tool to direct action for nature, and place an emphasis on supporting local leadership of nature improvement; and
- provide greater enforcement powers to the Forestry Commission to reduce illegal tree felling, and require local authorities to consult local residents prior to the felling of street trees.

## Other Government Initiatives:

**3.14 New Parks Action Group** launched September 2015 to help England's public parks and green spaces meet the needs of communities now and in the future. The new Parks Action Group will include experts from the world of horticulture, leisure, heritage and tourism, and will be tasked with bringing forward proposals to address some of the issues faced by public parks and other green spaces across England. To support them, government is providing £500,000 funding to kick start their work.

**3.15 The Northern Forest Initiative:** The Woodland Trust and The Community Forest Trusts plans have been approved to create an exciting new **Northern Forest** that will comprise of over 50million trees over 25 years and will stretch from Liverpool across to Hull with the M62 as its spine.

**3.16** The project will embrace the major cities of Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Chester and Hull as well as major towns across the north. It will deliver major environmental, social and economic benefits that complement the significant growth, investment and new infrastructure that is planned for the north of England.

**3.17** The Northern Forest will both accelerate the creation of new woodland and support sustainable management of existing woods right across the area. Many more trees, woods and forests will deliver a better environment for all by: improving air quality in our towns and cities; mitigating flood risk in key catchments; supporting the rural economy through tourism, recreation and timber production; connecting people with nature; and helping to deliver improvements to health and wellbeing through welcoming and accessible local green spaces.

## Natural Environment White Paper

**3.18** The Government's **Natural Environment [White Paper](#) - Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature** (June 2011) is a bold and ambitious statement outlining the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years, backed up with practical action to deliver that ambition. One of the main ambitions of the Paper is to strengthen the connections between people and nature. Everyone should have fair access to a good-quality natural environment, to connect with nature and enjoy its benefits. The three key actions within the White Paper are the establishment of **Local Nature Partnerships, Nature Improvement Areas and Biodiversity Offsetting**.



**3.19** Page 8 of the White Paper looks at Ecosystem Services. These are the products of natural systems from which people derive benefits, including goods and services, some of which can be valued economically, and others which have a non-economic value:

- Provisioning services: We obtain products from ecosystems, such as: food - crops, meat and dairy products, fish and honey; water - from rivers and also groundwater; fibre - timber and wool; and fuel - wood and biofuels.
- Regulating services: We benefit from ecosystem processes, such as: pollination - of wild plants and cultivated crops and flowers; water purification - in wetlands and sustainable urban drainage schemes; climate regulation - through local cooling and carbon capture by trees; noise and air pollution reduction - by urban and surrounding vegetation; and flood hazard reduction - by floodplains and sustainable urban drainage.
- Cultural services: We gain non-material benefits from ecosystems, for example: through spiritual or religious enrichment, cultural heritage, recreation or aesthetic experience. Accessible green spaces provide recreation, and enhance health and social cohesion.
- Supporting services: These are ecosystem functions that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, for example: soil formation - for example, in woodlands or in well managed allotments and nutrient cycling - for example, soils breaking down animal waste.

**3.20** All of these roles are underpinned by biodiversity, and the level and stability of ecosystem services generally improve with increasing levels of biodiversity.

### **Natural England: MENE Annual Surveys**

**3.21** The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey is funded by Natural England, with support from Defra and the Forestry Commission.

**3.22** The survey collects information about the ways that people engage with the natural environment such as visiting the countryside, enjoying green spaces in towns and cities, watching wildlife and volunteering to help protect the natural environment.

**3.23** The latest natural England MENE survey<sup>(2)</sup> shows that more people are frequently visiting nature than ever before, an upward trend that holds across different sectors of the population. Public use of parks is on the rise but at a time when pressure on public finances is making it much harder to manage and maintain them.

### **Natural England Corporate Report: Outdoors for All: fair access to a good quality natural environment May 2015**

**3.24** The report provides links to a number of reports regarding access to the outdoors.

**3.25** Natural England's Outdoors for All programme works to improve opportunities for all people in England to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment.

**3.26** The Outdoors for All working group brings together users and providers of services for the diverse population that would otherwise not have access to the countryside.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/738891/Monitorof\\_Engagementwiththe\\_Natural\\_Environment\\_Headline\\_Report\\_March\\_2016to\\_February\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/738891/Monitorof_Engagementwiththe_Natural_Environment_Headline_Report_March_2016to_February_2018.pdf)



## **Natural England: What Nature can do for you 2010 (latest update January 2015)**

**3.27** A practical introduction on how to use an ecosystems approach in policy and decision making.

## **RTPI Guidance: Biodiversity in Planning November 2019**

**3.28** The practice advice note provides an overview of the main obligations and opportunities for planners to promote biodiversity through the four UK planning systems. It aims to equip readers with a solid foundation of knowledge about the main challenges and opportunities relating to biodiversity and provide links to the current national statutory duties and guidance that should be addressed through planning. It offers practical pointers to support the integration of biodiversity into local policy, practice and individual development schemes through a series of good practice examples.

## **Public Health England: Local action on health inequalities: Improving access to green spaces; UCL Institute of Health Equity**

**3.29** The evidence outlined in this review indicates that access to and use of green spaces are associated with a range of positive health outcomes that can help reduce inequalities in health. These include improvements in mental health, length of life, circulatory health, lower BMI scores and greater physical activity levels. Access to good quality, safe and local green spaces can contribute to local and national measures to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy and active lifestyles.

**3.30** Local authorities are well placed to protect, maintain and improve green spaces while understanding the needs within local areas. Public health teams in local areas have a clear role in prioritising, designing and commissioning interventions to improve access to green spaces and in working with local authorities to influence delivery. Interventions that improve access to green spaces are likely to help local areas reduce health inequalities and help level up the social gradient in health

## **Public Health England: Putting Health into Place (Principles 4-8) Design, Deliver and Manage**

**3.31** The document outlines how to design, deliver and manage healthy places by using case studies, checklists and simple explanations which will help professionals working across planning, health and development to come together in partnership to create healthy places. Under Section 12 "Create Compact Neighbourhoods" a number of actions are listed to support the delivery of integrated green infrastructure.

## **Public Health and Landscape: Producing healthy places: Landscape Institute Position Statement**

**3.32** The document introduces five principles for healthy places:

1. Healthy places improve air, water and soil quality, incorporating measures that help us adapt to, and where possible mitigate, climate change



2. Healthy places help overcome health inequalities and can promote healthy lifestyles
3. Healthy places make people feel comfortable and at ease, increasing social interaction and reducing anti-social behaviour, isolation and stress
4. Healthy places optimise opportunities for working, learning and development
5. Healthy places are restorative, uplifting and healing for both physical and mental health conditions

## **Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

**3.33** The JSNA identifies health and social care needs, how well these are being met and opportunities for improvement to inform decision-making. A wide ranging number of topics are covered. Under the heading "Living Well, Working Well" areas such as mental well being and lifestyles choices are addressed. One example of the links to green space is the organisation "Macclesfield Community Garden Centre" that offers support in regard to mental health (Adults Mental Health and Employment Feb 18).

## **Sport England – 10 Active Design Principles 2015**

**3.34** The ten 'Active Design' principles<sup>(3)</sup> published by Sport England and supported by Public Health England comprise an innovative set of design guidelines to support active lifestyles and good health through suitable design and layout.

**3.35** The 10 active design principles are:

- Activity for all
- Walkable communities
- Connected walking and cycling routes
- Co-location of community facilities
- Network of multi-functional open space
- High quality streets and spaces
- Appropriate infrastructure
- Active buildings
- Management, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation
- Activity promotion & local champions.

## **Fields in Trust: Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play; Beyond the Six Acre Standard October 2015**

**3.36** The guidance looks at provision, accessibility and quality. The document contains recommended benchmark guidelines for formal outdoor space, equipped/designated play space and informal outdoor space looking at quantity standards, walking distances and quality guidelines. The document is a very useful background policy tool for example giving guidance on buffers required between open space facilities and residential properties. In terms of other guidelines, the quality guidelines for informal outdoor space suggest the following:

- Parks to be of Green Flag standard
- Appropriately landscaped

---

3 <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-andguidance/active-design/>



- Positive management
- Provision of footpaths
- Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime

## **Green Flag Award: Raising the Standard: The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual**

**3.37** The Manual gives guidance for the Green Flag award but is a useful benchmark for parks and open space management and development.

**3.38** The Manual has the following purposes and aims:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve
- To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers

## **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 Adopted July 2017**

**3.39** The Local Plan Strategy is the centrepiece of the new Cheshire East Local Plan. It sets out the overall vision and planning strategy for development in the borough and contains planning policies to ensure that new development addresses the economic, environmental and social needs of the area. It also identifies strategic sites and strategic locations that will accommodate most of the new development needed.

**3.40** Part of the Vision states:

**3.41** “People will lead healthy and active lifestyles benefiting from improved access to sporting facilities, high quality open spaces, play areas, allotments and the open countryside. A green infrastructure network will have been created, increasing the provision of accessible green spaces, supporting flora, fauna and improving general wellbeing.”

**3.42** Strategic Priority 3 “Protecting and enhancing environmental quality” states (criterion 6): Providing new and maintaining existing high quality and accessible green infrastructure to create networks of greenspace for people, flora and fauna and allow species adaptation and migration.

**3.43** The Local Plan Strategy contains a number of strategic policies that relate to green spaces:

- SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East – criterion 4 relates to infrastructure
- SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles – in particular criteria 1.ii.e; 2.i; and 3.i all refer to green infrastructure
- IN 1 Infrastructure – this includes the provision of green infrastructure
- IN 2 Developer Contributions – this includes green infrastructure
- SC 1 Leisure and Recreation
- SC 2 Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities



- SC 3 Health and Well-being
- SE 1 Design (see Design Guidance entry)
- SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SE 4 The Landscape
- SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and woodland
- SE 6 Green Infrastructure (GI) – the policy describes the green infrastructure network and the main GI assets and addresses safeguarding GI assets, partnership working and GI development requirements; the requirements for the provision of Green Space/Infrastructure for Housing are set out in Table 13.1 - Criterion 4.iii deals with the provision of open space and criterion 4.iv references Policy SC2 (Indoor and outdoor sports requirements).

## Cheshire East Local Plan: Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update July 2016

**3.44** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a supporting document for the Local Plan Strategy.

**3.45** The Baseline Report considered the capacity of the existing infrastructure as of 2011. This Infrastructure Delivery Plan takes account of the updated capacity position as of late 2015 and sets out what additional infrastructure is required to help enable delivery of the development proposals in the Local Plan Strategy. In doing so account is also taken of envisaged future changes in the provision of public services and the need to protect the environment and respond to climate change.

**3.46** The plan includes information regarding walking and cycling schemes and recreation and sporting requirements.

## Cheshire East Local Plan - Local Infrastructure Plan Baseline Report 2011

**3.47** Increasing emphasis has been placed by the Government on the importance of infrastructure planning; national planning policy formally requires Local Authorities to demonstrate sufficient infrastructure exists, or will be provided, to support their strategies for new development as set out in their Local Plans. A [baseline report](#) has been prepared in collaboration with a wide range of agencies involved in the provision, operation and maintenance of infrastructure, which identifies the extent of existing infrastructure in Cheshire East, and any known capacity constraints with the existing infrastructure.

**3.48** Pages 34 - 52 of the Baseline Report provides an overview of Green Infrastructure under these headings:

- *Providers* - The provision of green infrastructure/green space will require a partnership of Local Authorities, statutory and non-statutory agencies, organisations and local interest groups to take forward any green infrastructure strategies or plans.
- *Overview* - of existing assets.
- *Plans and Strategies*
- *Existing infrastructure* - Green Infrastructure Framework Document, Cheshire East Open Space Assessment 2012, Flood Risk Assessments, Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011 -2026
- *Standards* - Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGST), Fields In Trust





- *Future infrastructure*
- *Capacity Issues* - Green Infrastructure Framework Document, Cheshire East Open Space Assessment 2012
- *Sources of Funding*
- *Local Plan Considerations*
- *Conclusion*

## **Green Infrastructure Framework for North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral**

**3.49** Cheshire East Council, in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Local Authorities from North East Wales, developed a strategic Green Infrastructure Framework to inform the Cheshire East Local Plan. This Framework document contains a considerable evidence base and identifies local needs and opportunities. Green infrastructure has been described as an area's life support system. It is a crucial network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lie between and within Cheshire East's towns and villages, which collectively provide multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. Green infrastructure includes habitats, landscapes, waterways, access routes, parks and other assets.

**3.50** The [The Green Infrastructure Framework for North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral](#) provides a guide for Green Infrastructure planning, investment and delivery. It highlights where the existing Green Infrastructure assets are, locates the weaker areas and guides priorities for future investment. A summary of the main elements of the Framework has been included in the Cheshire East Local Plan - Local Infrastructure Plan Baseline Report 2011.

**3.51** The Framework document lists various possible action plans including one for the Crewe area as part of the 'All Change for Crewe' Strategy. A Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe has been produced for Cheshire East Council by TEP (2012).

## **Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe**

**3.52** This document identifies the benefits and opportunities for the implementation of Green Infrastructure within Crewe. The Action Plan Framework focuses on five themes for channeling funding and investment:

- *Urban greening* - integrate green infrastructure within new and existing development;
- *Parklands and Landscapes* - regenerate and develop urban parks and green spaces as places of culture, exercise and social interaction;
- *Improving connectivity* - improve access for local communities to green spaces, places of work and learning;
- *Watercourses* - reinvigorate the blue landscape as a major environmental, recreational, transport and economic asset; and
- *The Countryside* - restoring Crewe's rural green setting.

**3.53** Some of the themes and initiatives contained within the Action Plan can be applied to other settlements in Cheshire East.



## Cheshire East Open Space Assessment 2012 and monitoring and updates 2017, 2018 and 2019

**3.54** This [Open Space Assessment](#) combined existing data sources from previous surveys and carried out a new comprehensive survey of all the sites within the main 24 settlements listed in the Council's Determining the Settlement Hierarchy study. All the sites are contained within a database with corresponding digital mapping. The audit has looked at the following typologies/types of open space: Parks and Gardens, Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces, Green Corridors, Outdoor Sports facilities, amenity green space, provision for children and teenagers, allotments and community gardens, churchyards and cemeteries, country parks and accessible countryside on the urban fringes and civic spaces.

**3.55** Town and Parish Councils were also contacted for information concerning sites in their areas and any open space aspirations; Cheshire East Schools were contacted regarding information on facilities and their use by outside clubs. The Cheshire East Council Green Spaces Team, Sports Development, Countryside and Public Rights of Way teams also provided information for the audit. Summary Reports were prepared for each settlement looking at each typology in turn in relation to quantity, quality, accessibility and biodiversity. The main issues were discussed, shortages identified and recommendations made. These recommendations are included in the 2013 Green Strategy document.

**3.56** During 2017, 2018 and 2019 the underlying database and digital mapping has been reviewed; the database has been updated to reflect the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy; rural parish data plus other monitoring updates have been added plus any sites omitted from the original surveys. This Green Space Strategy (2020) contains updated recommendations for the 24 settlements.

**3.57** The current situation regarding Neighbourhood Plans can be found on the Council's web-site. Neighbourhood Plan work has progressed well across the Borough and the Made Neighbourhood plans contain various policies regarding the provision and protection of green space. New areas of green space will be added to the Council's Open Space layer and the interactive policies map. New housing allocations proposed in the SADPD will also provide new green infrastructure.

### Playing Pitch and Indoor Built Facilities Strategies 2017

**3.58** Cheshire East Council has engaged with Sport England and a range of sports National Governing Bodies about outdoor and indoor sports facilities and what will be required to meet future needs.

**3.59** This has involved collecting information about existing facilities across the borough in terms of the specific sports facilities they offer, their usage and their condition.

**3.60** There are two elements to each strategy – an assessment report and a series of action plans.

- The assessment reports set out up-to-date supply and demand information. They also consider the demands arising from the planned level of growth proposed in the Council's Local Plan Strategy to 2030. The sports National Governing Bodies have been closely involved in completing this work to ensure that this information is as comprehensive and





up to date as possible. Cheshire East sports clubs and schools have also had a full opportunity to input into this work. The involvement of all of these organisations has been very important and is greatly appreciated. This engagement will continue in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Strategies.

- The action plans respond to the issues arising from the assessment reports.

**3.61** The strategies will help to inform Planning and investment decisions by the Council and for a wide range of bodies seeking to provide high quality sports facilities across Cheshire East.

- [Playing pitch strategy assessment report](#)
- [Indoor built facilities assessment](#)
- [Results of consultation](#)
- [Playing pitch strategy](#)
- [Indoor built facilities strategy](#)

## **Playing Pitch and Indoor Built Facilities Strategies 2019**

**3.62** An updated Playing Pitch Strategy has been produced that contains an updated Strategy, Assessment Report and Action Plan. The Playing Pitch Strategy links to Adopted Policy SC2 Indoor and Outdoor Sport and emerging Draft SADPD policy REC3 which deals with the implementation of green space.

**3.63** Regarding the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy, a Progress and Evidence Review document has been produced (February 2019). The documents and progress made have been assessed in line with the monitoring and review process as set out in the Strategy (page 32).

**3.64** A Playing Pitch Strategy Steering group exists with representatives from the National Governing Bodies for sport, the Football Association, Sport England and Cheshire East Council. The steering group meets to monitor progress and provides a forum for updating and exchanging information.

## **Cheshire East Local Football Facilities Plan**

**3.65** The aim nationally is for every Local Authority to have a LFFP in place. The LFFP for Cheshire East identifies opportunities to accurately target investment in football facilities across the local area. The aim is for investment to be targeted towards community facilities. The plan has three areas of focus: 3G pitches, grass pitch improvements and under general recreation – MUGAs. The Playing Pitch Strategy still provides the evidence base but the LFFP identifies some of the priority areas and projects where investment should be directed to.

**3.66** The latest plan is being updated to reflect the current 2019 Playing Pitch Strategy.



## Updated Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report June 2017

**3.67** An updated version of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2012 is now published. This updated Scoping Report was produced to make sure that the social, environmental and economic issues identified are up to date, and will be considered when assessing policy documents.

**3.68** The updated Scoping Report was the subject of public consultation between 27 February and 10th April 2017. Comments were received and, following analysis, necessary changes were incorporated into the published [Cheshire East Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#).

**3.69** A [Consultation Statement](#) has also been produced showing the comments/issues raised on the SA Scoping Report, the Council's response to them, and it identifies any changes made.

**3.70** The Sustainability Appraisal process requires the collection of baseline information focusing on the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the Borough. The baseline data collected for Cheshire East has been classified into nine categories, reflecting key areas for consideration identified in the Strategic Environmental Assessment guidance. These are:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Population and Human Health
- Water and Soil
- Air
- Climatic Factors
- Transport
- Cultural Heritage and Landscape
- Social Inclusiveness
- Economic Development

### Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Report 2012

**3.71** The Sustainability Appraisal process requires the review of relevant policies, plans and programmes. The list of policies, plans and programmes that have been identified as part of this review are identified in Appendix B: Related Plans and Policies of the Scoping Report. Many of these are of relevance to the Green Space Strategy such as national guidance on biodiversity, the water environment, the countryside, cycling, climate change, open space, sport and recreation, flood risk, access to green space, green infrastructure and so on. The sub-regional plans and strategies listed cover green infrastructure, landscape character, community surveys and so on. Relevant local strategies include:

- Ambition for All - The Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy
- Cheshire East Corporate Plan
- Cheshire East Local Transport Plan
- Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan



**3.72** The baseline data collected can be found in Appendix C: Baseline Information. The baseline data was used to develop a portrait of Cheshire East, summarising current and potential future social, environmental and economic conditions within the Borough.

**3.73** Various key issues were also identified as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process including the following:

- 'Green Infrastructure and open spaces are a valuable resource. Although Cheshire East is considered a green area, significant shortages to the quantity and quality of open spaces exist, particularly within urban areas'.
- 'There is a need to provide the infrastructure, services and facilities to sustain the existing and future communities of the Borough'.
- 'There is a need to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of the Borough. In particular those sites and species that are internationally, nationally or locally designated'.
- 'Residents of Cheshire East have a high reliance on private transport. This reliance must change by reducing the need to travel and promoting sustainable forms of transport, especially walking, cycling and public transport'.
- 'The ability to easily access jobs, public transport, services and facilities needs to be increased throughout Cheshire East. This will contribute to the creation of sustainable and more self-contained communities and reduce the need to travel by private vehicle'.

**3.74** There are also other issues raised relating to climate change, air and water quality that all link to green space. Following on from this there are also a series of objectives, some of which relate to green infrastructure/green space.

## **Cheshire East Local Plan - Place Shaping Consultation**

**3.75** The Place Shaping Consultation was an important stage of consultation in drawing up new plans for a number of towns and villages in Cheshire East, looking at:

- How many new homes and jobs are needed and where they should go;
- Protecting and improving important open areas;
- Providing new cycle routes and footpaths;
- Improving town centres and community facilities; and
- How the environment of towns and villages can be improved.

**3.76** Headline results were produced for the main settlements. A common theme across the results was the desire to improve open space and footpaths and cycleways.

## **Local Transport Plan Final Strategy 2011-2024**

**3.77** Following a period of consultation the new [Local Transport Plan 2019 - 2024](#) (LTP) was adopted in October 2019. The new strategy considers all forms of transport over the next 5 years (2019-2024). It is a framework for how transport will support wider policies to improve our economy, protect our environment and make attractive places to live, work and play. The LTP outlines the role transport will play in supporting the long term goals of Cheshire East.



**3.78** Work is progressing on a series of Town Delivery Plans that will focus on how the issues and opportunities identified in the Borough wide LTP Strategy relate to specific areas, setting out schemes and interventions to improve the transport network. The Town Delivery Plans will also consider the surrounding rural areas and smaller settlements which is vital given the importance of the Borough's rural population and economy.

**3.79** The supporting documents include the Council's Cycling Strategy and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

### **Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026**

**3.80** The [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) for Cheshire East has been developed through consultation with members of the public, user groups and Parish and Town Councils. The document covers the period 2011 to 2026. This strategy is integrated into the Local Transport Plan in recognition of walking and cycling as means of travel. Some of the key objectives have been included in the Cheshire East Local Plan - Local Infrastructure Plan Baseline Report 2011. Policy H3 in the Plan seeks to: Protect and enhance our public rights of way and green infrastructure and endeavour to create new links where beneficial for health, safety or access to green spaces.

### **Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment**

**3.81** This assessment provides an up to date classification of the whole of Cheshire's landscape which can be used for making assessments of landscape character for development management and as a basis in the formulation of strategy and policy. Particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, field patterns and human settlement create character. Character makes each part of the landscape distinct and gives each its sense of place. Each character area has its own identity, even though it may share some generic characteristics with other areas. Further work is ongoing to develop a Landscape Strategy and to identify Locally Designated Landscapes.

### **Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Assessment**

**3.82** The project has examined the whole of Cheshire, together with Halton, Warrington and the Wirral. It has produced a picture of the entire landscape, including that which is most recent and for the first time presents a comprehensive view of the sequence of changes that have contributed to the character of the landscape. It tells you where the historic landscape is intact or relatively intact and what the features are.

### **Cheshire Region Biodiversity and Geodiversity Partnerships**

**3.83** Cheshire East participates in two regional partnerships for nature conservation; The Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and the Cheshire Region Local Geodiversity Action Plan (CrLGAP).

- BAPs coordinate and deliver a targeted programme of conservation action for wildlife as part of a national programme - outlining the actions needed to protect the region's



most important and at risk wildlife. The Biodiversity Actions Plans plans can be found at: <https://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/priority-species-and-habitats>

- The CrLGAP works by way of an active partnership with a number of organisations that have an interest in geodiversity. CrLGAP's partners work to conserve geodiversity, promote awareness of the resource and identify ways to enhance it.

## **Cheshire East Borough Design Guide - supplementary planning document May 2017**

**3.84** This residential design guide, targeted primarily toward larger scale housing proposals, aims to improve the quality of new residential development in the Borough. It has been prepared as a constructive means to engage in the design process with developers and communities, supplementing Building for Life 12, the industry design standard for new housing and helping to realise its aims within Cheshire East. In Volume 2 of the Design Guide, section iv contains information on Green Infrastructure and Landscape Design and includes a checklist as guidance as to whether all factors have been taken into account in the design process. The Green Infrastructure and Landscape Design section references the standards in the Green Space Strategy and other important sources of information.

## **National Design Guide October 2019**

**3.85** The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics. The ten characteristics are: Context, Identity, Built form, Movement, Nature, Public Spaces, Uses, Homes and buildings, Resources and Lifespan. The ten characteristics aim to work together to create physical character, a sense of community and aim to address environmental issues around climate.

## **Ecological Network Map 2018**

**3.86** An **Ecological Network Map** has been produced which will be used as a policy tool to protect and enhance biodiversity. This compliments the ecological network map and policy that Chester West and Chester have in Part II of their Local Plan giving therefore complete county coverage.

## **Cheshire Landscape Evidence Studies 2018**

**3.87** The **Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy (2018)** identifies 14 Landscape Character Types; updated descriptions of the various character types has taken place and a landscape strategy/vision has been produced for each landscape Character Type. **Cheshire East Local Landscape Designations Report (2018)** : A Local Landscape Designation Review has been carried out. This review has looked at the whole of the Borough, including the existing local landscape designations in order to identify areas within Cheshire East which have particular value and therefore merit designation. The study aims to provide a better understanding of the special qualities of the landscape in Cheshire East and help to inform robust and meaningful landscape policies in Part II of the plan and support existing policies in Part I.



## Green Space Audit 2018

**3.88** The Mersey Forest Team one of the Council's Partners regarding green space has produced a Green Audit of the Borough – Green Infrastructure assessment of Cheshire East (August 2018) which has four parts:

1. The assessment of green infrastructure in Cheshire East – area and distribution
2. Identifying areas in Cheshire East where green infrastructure management, enhancement and/or creation may be beneficial in tackling issues related to
  - a. Economic growth
  - b. Health
  - c. Flood risk
  - d. Encouraging active travel
  - e. Improving air quality
  - f. Improving ecological networks
3. Putting a value on green infrastructure
4. Resourcing green infrastructure investments – traditional and innovative funds

**3.89** Page 15 of the Audit provides a map of Cheshire East showing the Green Infrastructure Typology across the Borough. A summary table show results for each category. The map therefore shows where different types of green infrastructure can be found in Cheshire East and the table shows the amount in each category. Overall 93% of Cheshire East can be identified as green infrastructure. 68% is agricultural land (74% of the GI). Private gardens, grassland and woodland are the other main green infrastructure types in Cheshire East. In spatial terms, 62% of the non-agricultural green infrastructure in the Borough is north of the River Dane. 17% of the non-agriculture green infrastructure is in the top 20% most affluent wards, with 6% in the least affluent.

## CEC and Partners - Green Infrastructure Plan October 2019

**3.90** The Cheshire East Green Infrastructure Plan 2019 is a road map for a comprehensive and connected Green Infrastructure (GI) to meet the needs of people and nature in the 21st century and to pass on a better environment to the next generation.

**3.91** The Plan can be used by Cheshire East Council, its residents, partners, landowners and developers to develop projects that deliver a net gain in Green Infrastructure. The Plan provides an evidence base and framework for like-minded organisations or individuals who share a vision for excellent green infrastructure. The Plan can be used as a framework for investment and action. The plan highlights some strategic areas for consideration and suggests some approaches to partnership working and the involvement of communities or landowners.

**3.92** The plan looks at the multifunctionality of GI and pinch points. (Pinch Points are identified as areas where a "need" has been identified, for which green infrastructure functionality could provide a solution, but where that functionality is not provided at the moment AND that pinch may prevent planned investment from taking place or reduce its return or likelihood of success or add significant cost to the investment (Appendix 8 GI Audit)). A number of themes have been developed in the plan including urban greening, getting outdoors easily, rivers and valleys, thriving nature and working alongside major infrastructure.





## Significant Trees Information

**3.93** The Green Space Strategy Update 2018, 2019 and this update 2020 look at the challenges regarding tree loss and increasing the tree canopy. Emerging SADPD Policy ENV6 Trees, woodland and hedgerows has the following criterion no.3:

**3.94** *Where the loss of significant trees is unavoidable it must be compensated for on the basis of at least three replacement trees for every tree removed.*

**3.95** Policy SE 5 provides the framework for retaining trees of significant importance and refers to replacement planting where there is loss of trees that make a significant contribution and is unavoidable. One for one replacement requirement does not comply with the 'ecological net gain' as recommended by Natural England and the Revised NPPF (2019) Para 170 (a-f).

**3.96** The reference to significant when referring to trees of amenity value can be found in Planning Policy Guidance Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas:

**3.97** Paragraph: 007 *Orders should be used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a **significant** negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Before authorities make or confirm an Order they should be able to show that protection would bring a reasonable degree of public benefit in the present or future.*

**3.98** Further advice can be found in the Blue Book TPO's and Trees in Conservation Areas (para 3.4 and 3.5): *'it may be expedient to make a TPO if the authority believes that there is a risk of the tree being cut down or pruned in ways which would have a significant impact on the amenity of the area..'*

**3.99** This advice echoes similar advice in 1949 *Memorandum on the Preservation of Trees and Woodlands, 1949, Paras 4 and 5 and 1966 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1966) and DoE Circ 36/78 (paras 40, 41)* (now superseded by PPG) - which emphasises that protected trees in general should only be made to protect trees that are publically visible. This was also considered in *Wilkson Properties v RB Kensington & Chelsea* where the deputy Judge noted that the guidance recommends that the tree or part of it should normally be visible from a public place and that there should be a reasonable degree of public benefit, although a case could be made where a tree or trees could be seen from a number of properties

**3.100** The evidence behind replacement planting and the failure rates of newly established trees in towns and cities has been well researched :

- Gilbertson, P. and Bradshaw, A.D. (1985) Tree survival in cities: the extent and nature of the problem. *Arboricultural Journal* 9, 131–142.
- Gilbertson, P. and Bradshaw, A.D. (1990). The survival of newly planted trees in inner cities. *Arboricultural Journal* 14, 287–309.
- Johnston, M and Rushton, B.S (1999) A survey of urban forestry in Britain. University of Ulster, Ireland.
- Britt, C. and Johnson, M (2008) Trees in Towns II. A new survey of urban trees in England and their condition and management. Department for Communities and Local Government. As reported in:- Fundamentals of tree establishment: a review (Tree People and the Built Environment).



**3.101** Failure rates for amenity tree planting were commonly recorded as 30%, but failure rates of 70% were reached with disturbing regularity during the first growing season.

**3.102** The Council's Environment Strategy endorses the three for one approach for replacement planting regarding the loss of significant trees.

## **Cheshire East Environment Strategy**

**3.103** The Strategy went to Cabinet in September 2019 and considers a number of environmental measures for the Council to pursue. Under protecting and managing the natural environment the Council has the following aim:

**3.104** “We aim to deliver a high quality and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, providing a range of social, environmental, economic and health benefits. We will seek to protect the health of existing ecosystems, encourage the restoration of degraded ecosystems and enhance the biodiversity of the borough. In doing so we will improve people’s health and wellbeing by encouraging people of all ages to use and have access to green spaces.”

**3.105** The Strategy aims to develop a Carbon Reduction Strategy to support the Council’s aim to be carbon neutral by 2025. As part of this there is a planned rolling programme of tree planting across the Borough starting with the planting of 200 standards by ANSA in the Borough’s Parks.

**3.106** The Strategy has recently been consulted upon (finished Oct 13<sup>th</sup> 2019)

## **Baseline Map**

**3.107** In terms of the various assets discussed in the Green Space strategy the following is a list of the various elements that have been mapped to produce the baseline maps for the strategy (Appendix 1):

- Rivers/canals/lakes/meres/ponds
- Meres and mosses (including the Nature Improvement Area)
- Ramsar sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Biological Importance
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland
- Woodland
- Open Space
- Country Parks
- Public Rights of Way
- Open Access Land



Photograph taken by June Cooper





## 4 Green Space Topic Areas

### Introduction

**4.1** The five topic areas in this section broadly equate to the different elements of Cheshire East Council that deal with green space.

**4.2** The Open Space section deals with parks and gardens, areas for sport and recreation, children's play, amenity open space, allotments, churchyards and cemeteries, both public and private, and considers other types of open space such as natural and semi-natural areas, country parks and green corridors within and adjacent settlements. The Strategic Open Space Team (part of ANSA) specifically promote and enhance open spaces, parks and play areas. Cheshire East Council and the Everybody Trust actively promote sport and formal recreation. The Countryside section deals with the Countryside Ranger Service who look after the many countryside sites throughout Cheshire East. The three other topic areas are Public Rights of Way, Landscape and Nature Conservation. There is some overlap between the topic areas.

**4.3** Each topic area is linked to the overarching Sustainable Community Strategy, the key elements of the topic area are discussed and a brief vision is presented for each topic. The core strands of meeting need - quantity, quality and future management and accessibility are included under each topic area. One of the key elements of the provision of a green space network/green infrastructure is the need for connectivity. Individual areas of green space can be connected by public footpaths, greenways or wildlife corridors such as rivers or hedges and trees. Green corridors and safe walking and cycling routes can improve people's accessibility to green space and at the same time create sustainable transport links to other facilities.

**4.4** The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) states that "access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities" (paragraph 96).

**4.5** Natural England has looked at the health benefits of green infrastructure and suggested that access to green spaces can:

- Save lives and improves quality of life;
- Help local authorities with pressing social, health & wellbeing issues;
- Reduce stress, anxiety and depression;
- Enhance social interaction and promote independent living; and
- Help promote and sustain increased physical activity.

### Open Space

**4.6** Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy 'Ambition for All' states the following in relation to achieving it's vision up to 2025:



- 'We will have a wide range of accessible and excellent leisure, sporting and cultural facilities and activities for all people to enjoy'.
- 'We will continue to have an outstanding range of historic buildings, leisure facilities, nature conservation habitats, country parks, accessible countryside and green spaces for people to enjoy'.

**4.7** Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy also has these aims regarding open space/green space under 'encouraging environmentally sustainable living':

- Develop a green infrastructure plan to identify our green assets and how we will safeguard, manage and enhance them, including nature conservation assets, wildlife habitats and corridors, country parks, urban parks and open spaces.
- Help to increase food security by encouraging the use of allotments and other community food schemes.
- Protect our green spaces and develop these as carbon sinks where practical and suitable.

**4.8** There is a wealth of recreational opportunities across the whole of Cheshire East for people to explore from parks and smaller neighbourhood play areas to a variety of open spaces of all sizes including playing fields and sports facilities, allotments and wildlife areas. Cheshire East Council, ANSA and other partners such as Town and Parish Councils look after parks and gardens and public open spaces in many towns and village across the Borough. These parks, large or small, provide many benefits for both local communities and visitors to Cheshire East. They provide the attractive 'green and pleasant' backdrop to our town and village scapes that make the Borough a pleasant place to live and work. These green spaces offer communities opportunities to live active and healthy lifestyles, and they act as places for quiet contemplation and as places where the community can gather together to celebrate or build social cohesion. Parks are special places and Cheshire East wants to develop them to gain maximum benefit for all. The Council's Open Space Assessment has been referred to under the background evidence section and the conclusions have been incorporated/updated under the infrastructure requirement section. Open Space standards covering quantity, quality and accessibility are included in section ten. This information supports Strategic Policy SE6 Green Infrastructure in the Local Plan which sets out the standards in Table 13.1.

**4.9** The provision of quality, well maintained open space and facilities for sports and recreation helps underpin people's quality of life. Such provision is important for residents' social, mental and physical health and well being and to the achievement of sustainable communities. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) discusses how to create opportunities to bring together members of a community who work, live and play within an area. Section 8 of the NPPF looks at promoting social interaction in a safe way and enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. Some open spaces such as village greens, neighbourhood parks and town parks play a central role in community cohesiveness. It is crucial that open space serves people of all ages throughout their lives and offers integration between the generations.

**4.10** The incorporation of blue and green infrastructure, trees and other planting in the creation of open spaces can be effective in helping to combat the negative aspects of climate change. It can provide opportunities for cooling, shading of amenity areas, buildings and



streets and to help to connect habitats. The green infrastructure network often needs to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to minimise and manage surface water runoff. The Council is involved in the preparation of a SuDs Strategy.

**4.11** The [Council's Local Plan Strategy July 2017](#) contains a Vision statement which includes the the following regarding open space: "People will lead healthy and active lifestyles benefiting from improved access to sporting facilities, high quality open spaces, play areas, allotments and the open countryside. A green infrastructure network will have been created, increasing the provision of accessible green spaces, supporting flora, fauna and improving general wellbeing."

**4.12** Quality of Place is central to Cheshire East Council's values and quality of place principles drive policy: "Quality of Place can have significant impacts upon the health of a population, with high quality built environments, urban and green spaces known to contribute to improved mental and physical wellbeing" (extract from Quality of Place Cabinet report).

**4.13** Open spaces and the opportunities they offer are highly valued by the community. The challenges facing open space provision are broad ranging and centre round how to deal with the aspirations and expectations of the communities living in the densely populated residential areas of Cheshire East and also the rural communities. The key challenges to address are:

- To provide an open space network that supports people throughout their lives;
- To meet the particular needs of an ageing population;
- To ensure quality and variety in outdoor open spaces;
- To deal with the open space shortages and refurbish and improve facilities and areas;
- Conserve, enhance and promote open spaces that have a particular cultural and heritage significance such as town parks;
- Improve visual amenity - in that open spaces green a community's environment for communities to live, work and play in
- Improve biodiversity within our green open spaces;
- A need for local facilities to be accessible to provide open space opportunities close at hand;
- Meet the needs of any newly created neighbourhood communities as a result of the sustainable expansion of our towns and villages - to provide the best opportunities for access to green space;
- Recognise the need for consistent, responsive and quality maintenance - 'A well maintained space is a well used open space';
- Improve communication and liaison between the various providers and users of open space and support local communities in their open space projects;
- Recognise the importance of open spaces as tools for improving habitats and nature conservation and therefore take advantage of opportunities for increasing the biodiversity of open spaces.

### **Vision for open spaces**

**4.14** Cheshire East Council would like to achieve:





- *'A network of clean, green, sustainable, attractive, well maintained, safe areas for all ages, for formal and informal recreational activities, more formal outdoor sports or for sitting and relaxing, which are easily accessible and are well designed to avoid conflict and build community cohesion, whilst enhancing our day to day environment'.*

**4.15** To work towards achieving this the Council and it's partners should aim to meet these objectives:

- Address shortages in open space provision in existing housing areas and commercial areas;
- Make sure that new developments provide the required quantity and quality of accessible and varied open space;
- Identify the key cultural, social and heritage open spaces to improve and enhance;
- Improve accessibility and connectivity throughout open space networks;
- Provide and promote open space opportunities for the whole community;
- Provide opportunities for people to grow their own food; and
- Provide opportunities for people to volunteer to support their local parks and green spaces.

## Countryside

**4.16** The following is a quote from Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy:

- ***'Protect and enhance our heritage and countryside***
  - The people of Cheshire East are rightly proud of the range of heritage and countryside assets that make the area a beautiful and interesting place to live. We want to ensure that they are protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of future generations.'

**4.17** Cheshire East Council's Countryside Ranger Service look after many countryside sites throughout Cheshire East. These include two Green Flag standard regionally important Country Parks (Brereton Heath and Teggs Nose), five multi user linear recreation routes, the Bollin Valley Partnership, a 30 mile countryside management partnership that extends from Macclesfield to Partington - following the River Bollin catchment, two sites of Special Scientific Interest and five Local Nature Reserves. The Borough's countryside sites provide areas for healthy recreation, hobbies and pastimes or simple tranquility.

**4.18** The main aim of the Countryside Ranger Service is to develop, enhance and protect the countryside and urban sites within Cheshire East, while encouraging and promoting the proper use of the Council's countryside recreational facilities. About one million people visit these sites each year and over a 1,000 days worth of work are carried out each year by volunteers working with the rangers on these sites.

**4.19** The key service aims of the Countryside Ranger Service are:

- The provision of managed recreational sites
- To implement conservation and habitat management
- To promote community engagement



- To provide Environmental Education and Interpretation
- To promote Health and Well being

**4.20** The Council's Countryside Ranger Service's [web page](#) provides a wealth of information on the variety of Countryside Sites that exist across Cheshire East; from Local Nature Reserves, Riverside Parks, Country Parks, old railway lines that act as important footpaths, bridleways and cycleways and meres, meadows, moors and pastures. The Countryside Ranger Service has an important contribution to make to the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing quality country parks, trails and countryside facilities for all sections of the community to enjoy to develop a prosperous, healthy and educated community.

**4.21** In line with the service aims above the Countryside Ranger service carry out the following tasks:

- Manage the country parks, trails, nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) for the safe use and enjoyment by the community;
- Increase the public's understanding and awareness of the countryside;
- Encourage people to enjoy the countryside whilst being respectful of other people's requirements and values;
- Protect and enhance the physical and natural environment; and
- Comply with the legal responsibilities and countryside management good practice in everything we do.

### **Vision for the Countryside Ranger Service**

- *To provide well managed, quality country parks, trails and countryside facilities for all types of recreational user to value and enjoy and in so doing:*
  - *Improve the social and physical health and well being of the community;*
  - *Protect, develop and improve the biodiversity, habitats and landscape character of Cheshire East;*
  - *Lead by example and encourage good countryside management practice with partners, organisations and individuals; and*
  - *Promote an awareness and understanding of the countryside through active participation and engagement with the community.*

### **Public Rights of Way**

**4.22** Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy states the following in relation to Public Rights of Way and access to the countryside:

- 'our highways, footpaths and cycle ways will be well maintained;
- we will invest in our walking and cycling network, so that active travel becomes an attractive option for many shorter journeys; and,
- we will continue to have an outstanding range of leisure facilities, nature conservation habitats, country parks, accessible countryside and green spaces for people to enjoy'.



**4.23** There are just over 1,950 km of Public Rights of Way in Cheshire East - just under 1800 km of footpaths and nearly 160 km of bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. The Council works closely with both users and landowners to keep the network in good shape for all to enjoy. The Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan assesses the network of rights of way and reaches these conclusions:

- 'There is an extensive network of Public Rights of Way across Cheshire East, which forms the major means of access to the countryside. Provision for walkers across the Borough is generally good, although this does not necessarily mean that routes are where they are most wanted. Provision for horse riders and cyclists remains poor when compared to that for walkers, both for short and long routes. The degree of accessibility to the countryside for those with mobility and visual impairments is largely unknown other than at country park sites, of which there are none in the south of the Borough. Access from individual towns to their surrounding countryside is generally lacking.'
- 'It is clear from this analysis that Public Rights of Way and wider access to the countryside are widely valued by the people of Cheshire East and visitors to the Borough. It is also clear that there are areas of work towards which improvements can be focused to best meet the current and future demands for that access, be it for a leisure, health or transport need, these being:
  - filling in gaps in the network;
  - improving access opportunities for horse riders and cyclists;
  - improving access opportunities for disabled people;
  - provision of information on where people can go;
  - provision of signs and surfacing improvements appropriate to the locality;
  - partnerships with local businesses and the tourism sector;
  - education of users in responsible use of the countryside; and
  - maintenance of the network.'

**4.24** The importance of investing in green infrastructure is highlighted in the [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) with the following proposed initiatives:

**'Initiatives - Public Rights of Way and green infrastructure (Policy H3):**

- *Sustainable access to green spaces:* aim to improve access for all members of society, including disabled people, to and within green infrastructure, including the Public Rights of Way network, town parks, public open space, the Peak District National Park and country parks.
- *Link key services:* seek to improve the routes and green infrastructure that link key services (for example schools, community centres and tourism destinations) by routes and green infrastructure such as canal towpaths. Investments will include improving surfacing and signage, where appropriate, and creating links where gaps exist in the network.
- *Leisure routes for cyclists, horse riders and walkers:* endeavour to create and enhance leisure routes for cyclists, horse riders and walkers on the Public Rights of Way network and highway network.



- *Litter, environmental health, safety and security*: encourage users to reduce litter and will improve environmental health, safety and other security concerns through education and clean-up campaigns.
- *Country parks, town parks and public open space*: ensure adequate maintenance and improvement of land within the Council's ownership that is used for formal and informal public access and recreation, at a local level and sites which are tourism destinations.'

**4.25** The **Rights of Way Improvement Plan Implementation Plan 2015-2019** includes updates on footpath creation, network management tasks, horse and cycle rides and road safety schemes. Suggestions for new or improved access continue to be collated from the public, user groups and other organisations. The following priorities have emerged:

- improving access where current provision is poor;
- improving access in a community where there is a high level of deprivation;
- improving access for disabled people, horse riders and cyclists;
- improving safety of non-motorised users on roads;
- Improving access to services such as shops and schools;
- Improving access to areas of interest such as water bodies or woodland;and,
- Improving access which will bring about a benefit to the visitor economy.

**4.26** Various projects are listed in the Implementation Plan under the various headings of leisure walking, leisure cycling, horse riding, cross cutting projects and transport related.

**4.27** Cheshire East Council also has a **Cycling Strategy** which includes a wide range of actions to achieve the following vision: "To enable more people to cycle safely, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys". The various actions include a cycle proofing toolkit, improving the cycle network and collaboration and partnership working.

## Vision for Rights of Way

- *'The Public Rights of Way network in Cheshire East should be correctly recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, available and easy to use, and free from obstructions, in order to fulfil statutory duties and deliver health and wellbeing, social, economic and environmental benefits'*.

## Landscape

**4.28** The following is a quote from Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy:

- *'We want to protect our many assets such as the beautiful countryside, biodiversity habitats and our historic buildings, for the benefit of future generations.'*

**4.29** The following is an extract from the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)(Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage) which is very applicable to the Borough. Cheshire East's Landscape has:

- *'economic value, providing the setting for economic activity and often becoming a central factor in attracting business and tourism...'*





- social and community value, as an important part of people's lives, contributing to our sense of identity and wellbeing, bringing enjoyment and inspiration...
- environmental value, as a home for wildlife and cultural record of society's use of the land...'

**4.30** It is important to understand the character of the landscape when we consider how it might change – so that any change is for the better. The appreciation of landscape character is essential to inform responsible decision making and is a pre-requisite for the planning of sustainable future landscapes. It is important to provide a quality built and natural environment for the well being of Cheshire East's communities and it's growing business base.

**4.31** The **Cheshire Landscape Character** assessment (see background evidence) provides an up to date classification of the whole of Cheshire's landscape.

**4.32** Many diverse factors can contribute to change in the landscape:

- Changes to agriculture and land management
- Built development
- Infrastructure development
- Mineral extraction and waste disposal
- Recreation and tourism
- Climate change
- Small scale incremental change e.g. Loss of hedgerows and trees

**4.33 Cheshire Landscape Evidence Studies 2018 - Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy and Local Landscape Designation Report** - The Local Character Assessment has been examined; updated descriptions of the various character types has taken place and a *Landscape Strategy/vision* has been produced for each landscape Character Type. The evaluative information on valued features in the various character type areas help to identify what the important elements are to inform responses to change and future management needs of the landscape. Also a *Local Landscape Designation Review* has been carried out. This review has looked at the whole of the Borough, including the existing local landscape designations in order to identify areas within Cheshire East which have particular value and therefore merit designation. The study aims to provide a better understanding of the special qualities of the landscape in Cheshire East and to help inform robust and meaningful landscape policies in Part II of the Cheshire East Local Plan and support existing policies in Part I.

**4.34** A collaborative 'landscape scale' project with the **National Trust** has also been undertaken to help identify key landscape characteristics for a study area in the north of the Borough, and what is special, distinctive and valued about this landscape for local communities and key stakeholders. This informed a number of case studies and delivered a planning report that identified the need for a Green Infrastructure Plan and made recommendations that will contribute to landscape planning. The introduction for the Statement of Significance states:

- "Cheshire East, especially the northern part, has a rich and diverse series of features, which together form a unique landscape. Its character and significance, is defined by the intimate proximity of a range of contrasting elements which reflect the areas natural, designed and built components and its historic land use and infrastructure."



**4.35** Public consultation was carried out as part of the National Trust project. The following were key themes highlighted during the consultation:

- *Views and landscapes* are valued very highly by residents with the dominance of words like 'beautiful', 'green', 'rural' or 'idyllic' featuring. Residents perceive it as a rich mosaic of different landscape character areas and places of special interest and delight.
- *Accessibility of urban and rural places* and the relationship between urban and rural supported by transport links are valued. There is no sense of rural isolation or disconnect from modern life; rather there is a picture of a busy, thriving countryside, populated by people who use it to the full.
- *Sense of insecurity* about how peaceful the area will be in future and potential for loss comes across in the survey responses. Terms like 'vulnerable', 'threatened', 'overcrowded' and 'polluted' feature, illustrating that people see this as a countryside under pressure.

**4.36** Cheshire East is a sparsely wooded Borough with about four per cent woodland cover and it is losing tree species diversity. Many woodlands are not actively managed and the isolation and fragmentation of relic areas of ancient woodland means they are highly susceptible to pressure from surrounding land uses such as agriculture, built development or industry.

**4.37** The large sites required for waste disposal operations and mineral extraction sites can result in the loss of extensive areas of land. Cheshire East possesses mineral resources of local, regional and national importance. Sandstone working takes place in areas located towards the eastern margins; whilst large silica and construction sand extraction takes place in a broad triangular area between Sandbach, Congleton and Chelford. The restoration of mineral extraction or waste disposal sites can provide an opportunity for the creation of new habitats and landscapes. Such sites may provide new opportunities for public access and enjoyment.

**4.38** Plans for the high-speed rail line HS2 will have a profound impact on the landscape of Cheshire East however the Council is supportive of HS2, and believes it reinforces Cheshire East as the best place to live and do business in the North West providing that the right level of connectivity is provided through the Crewe Hub Station. The Council continues to work with the Department of Transport and HS2 Ltd.

## **Vision for landscape**

- *'To protect, improve and enhance Cheshire East's unique landscape through contributing to the planning, designing and managing of development and green space with regard to the balance of green space and built form'.*

## **Nature Conservation**

**4.39** Cheshire East's Sustainable Community Strategy states:

- 'The wide variety of natural landscape, biodiversity habitats, green spaces and rural areas is seen as one of the reasons why Cheshire East is such an attractive place to live by local people. There are concerns amongst local people about potential loss of



green spaces and other places important for outdoor recreation and natural beauty and biodiversity’.

**4.40** Cheshire East has a wealth of sites designated for their nature conservation value, including nine Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance, 33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest - covering almost two per cent of the total land area, over 400 Local Wildlife Sites, 23 Regional Important Geological Sites and numerous statutory and non-statutory nature reserves.

**4.41** The Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) cover Priority Species and Habitats in Cheshire. Working in partnership, conservation actions can be coordinated and delivered to safeguard the future of the Cheshire region's wildlife.

**4.42** The Cheshire Biodiversity Partnership produced a Business and Communications Plan with a number of aims:

- To set out the local framework for biodiversity delivery.
- To set out priorities for delivery within a three year rolling programme.
- To build on the extensive work undertaken through the creation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans, and to accelerate delivery of the most vital projects.
- To create a plan that is focused on delivering priorities and targets at a strategic level.
- To enable the partnership to look ahead, allocate resources, focus on priorities and be ready to act on both problems and opportunities.
- The plans will be a tool for potential investors, managers and stakeholders.
- To create a work programme for the partnership that is manageable and streamlined and which is realistic, measurable and complete.

**4.43** The Cheshire Region Local Geodiversity Action Plan (CrLGAP) breaks down the complex task of conserving geodiversity into small, manageable actions, which underpin several objectives supporting a common aim. The aim of the CrLGAP is to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the well-being of the Cheshire region by safeguarding the geology, geomorphology, soils and landscapes of the area.

**4.44** At the local level there is a rolling programme of updates to the local wildlife site layer. The list of Sites of Biological Importance or Local Wildlife Sites as they are now called is being updated. This work is being carried out by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust who are a key partner in biodiversity delivery.

**4.45** An **Ecological Network Map** has also been produced for Cheshire East by Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC). This network map has used the same methodology as used by CWAC for their ecological mapping so achieving consistency across Cheshire. The ecological mapping involves cross-boundary work as it looks into neighbouring areas. The Ecological Network Map is now shown on the interactive policies map accompanying the Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) and is expressed through the emerging policy ENV1 Ecological Network.

**4.46** Key areas to address in terms of biodiversity and policy making are the challenges of enhancing biodiversity as part of sustainable development by filling gaps in the ecological network, seeking net gain in biodiversity (NPPF February 19 paragraph 174) and dealing effectively with the challenges of the mitigation hierarchy (NPPF February 19 paragraph 175).



Integrating development with wild spaces for wildlife and people enhances the quality of place for everyone. The Publication Draft SADPD contains emerging policy ENV2 Ecological Implementation which deals with net gain and the mitigation hierarchy. Further background information covering these issues may be provided in a Nature Conservation SPD or similar document. CEC are exploring the options for producing such a document.

**4.47** The Background Evidence Section of the Green Space Strategy provides detail on the Government's Environment Bill. The Bill introduces a mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain in the planning system, to ensure that new developments enhance biodiversity and create new green spaces for local communities to enjoy. Emerging Policy ENV2 Ecological Implementation covers biodiversity net gain.

### **Vision for nature conservation**

- *'To deliver an enhanced core of designated sites maintained in favourable condition, interlinked by a series of wildlife corridors and stepping stone sites. This network of high quality habitats being delivered to enhance and safeguard nature in the face of climate change for both its intrinsic value and also to improve access to and contact with nature to promote wellbeing and to deliver economic benefits including ecosystem services.'*







## 5 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for the Countryside

### Introduction

**5.1** The Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" has a number of goals including using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently, clean air, clean and plentiful water, thriving plants and wildlife and enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment. The plan also looks at the provision of more and better quality green infrastructure (see Background Evidence for further detail and for details about the Environment Bill).

**5.2** The Government [White Paper](#) - Natural Choice June 2011 sets out the key reforms for protecting and improving our natural environment:

- supporting Local Nature Partnerships, to strengthen local action (paragraphs 2.15–2.26);
- Nature Improvement Areas in response to the recommendations set out in Making Space for Nature, to enhance and reconnect nature on a significant scale (paragraphs 2.27–2.32);
- ecologically coherent planning, retaining the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system (paragraphs 2.33–2.37); and
- piloting biodiversity offsets, to make requirements to reduce the impacts of development on biodiversity simpler and more consistent (paragraphs 2.38–2.42).

### Landscape

**5.3** Following on from the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment and the Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Assessment (see Background Evidence) further work has been done within Cheshire East Council to develop a Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy and a Local Landscape Designations Report. This work has involved identifying landscapes within Cheshire East which have high local value by virtue of the quality of the historic landscape, elevation, slope, tree cover, intactness of hedgerows, features of nature conservation value etc. From this work Locally Designated Landscapes are identified which will be the special varied natural assets of Cheshire East's unique landscape. A Landscape Strategy for the whole of Cheshire East's landscape has also been produced.

### Nature Conservation

**5.4** A Cheshire region **Local Nature Partnership** has been set up. In the Cheshire Region Local Nature Partnership Application the following draft vision, aim and objectives for the local nature partnership was put forward:

- Vision: 'A healthy, connected, productive landscape richer in biodiversity, where the natural environment is embedded in decision making, managed for wildlife, and supports healthier lifestyles and farming, creates attractive places and delivers sustainable economic growth.'



- Aim: 'To be a strategic platform to champion the value, and secure the future, of a healthy functioning natural environment through cross sector working to enable outcomes which provide multiple benefits.'
- Objectives:
  - 'Ensure the natural environment supports and is seen as a driver of sustainable economic growth;
  - Realise the benefits derived by society from nature;
  - More, bigger, better, joined up places for the natural environment'.

**5.5** The Local Nature Partnership work involves producing and agreeing a Business Plan and adding value to the sustainable management of the natural environment by bringing people together and aligning partnerships, groups, resources and priorities and identifying projects at a landscape scale.

**5.6** A Meres and Mosses of the Marches **Nature Improvement Area (NIA)** was approved by Government that extended into the southern part of Cheshire East. The Business Plan for the Nature Improvement Area described the area as:

- 'One of England's most important, but under-recognised suite of wetlands. This glacial landscape is alive with dozens of lakes (meres) peat bogs (mosses), rivers, extensive peat soils and the greatest concentration of ponds in Europe, all set in an intensively farmed landscape.'

**5.7** Part of the NIA area involved a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) which ran for 5 years between 2012 - 2017.

**5.8** The NIA aimed to:

- Bring core areas into favourable condition through active management.
- Improve the overall management of buffers around key sites and develop a network of corridors and stepping stones linking core sites.
- Reduce diffuse pollution through working on nutrient management with farmers.
- Increase public awareness of the range of values within the meres & mosses.
- Ensure lessons learnt are disseminated and applied in the wider area of meres & mosses beyond the NIA.

**5.9 Biodiversity offsetting** has been piloted nationally. Biodiversity Offsetting has been implemented in Cheshire East in connection with a number of consented developments.

**5.10** The following is a definition from the White Paper: Natural Choice:

- 'Definition of 'biodiversity offsets':
  - Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses in a measurable way.
  - Good developments incorporate biodiversity considerations in their design but are still likely to result in some biodiversity loss. One way to compensate for this loss

is by offsetting: the developer secures compensatory habitat expansion or restoration elsewhere.'



## Countryside, urban fringes and villages

**5.11** The greater part of the countryside in Cheshire East can be described as the Cheshire Plain which is a flat/gently undulating landscape with clay and sand with a landscape of ponds, trees and hedgerows roughly 'created' 200 years ago. To the east the land rises to the Peak Fringe and in the south west the plain is bounded by the sandstone ridge (Peckforton Hills). The structure of the Cheshire Plain countryside is a complicated mixture of nodes and linear features:

- Ponds and copses;
- Trees and hedgerows - part of the Cheshire Plain woodland cover is as low as 2%;
- Estate parklands;
- Mosses and Meres; and
- River valleys.

**5.12** This landscape has seen changes in agricultural practices and many of the landscape features are not being renewed. There has been very little tree planting in the last 150 years and in parts of the plain substantial hedgerow removal due to agricultural intensification between the 1940s and 1990s. The landscape structure is declining as hedgerow and free standing trees are lost due to age, weather and agricultural practices. Key areas to address in tree protection and policy making are climate change and maintaining and increasing the canopy cover. One policy tool would be more detailed requirements regarding Tree Preservation Orders and in terms of a tree replacement strategy requiring 2 or 3 replacement trees for any protected tree lost. Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part II) Policy DM45 (Trees, woodland and hedgerows) includes a 2 for 1 policy of replacement; paragraph 16.16 of the explanation to the policy provides their definition of a significant tree. "More from Trees" the Mersey Forest Plan supports this "net gain" approach. The requirement of three replacement trees for every significant tree removed would be a more secure way of ensuring "net gain". A two for one replacement would not result in net gain should one of the replacement trees fail to reach maturity. In the document Fundamentals of tree establishment: a review Forestry Commission - Trees People and the Built Environment (Hirons and Percival 2011) research suggests mortality rates of landscape trees reaches 30% in the first year after planting and in some cases failure rates of up to 70% (Gilbertson and Bradshaw, 1985, 1990), (Johnston and Rushton, 1999; Britt and Johnston, 2008). The full details are in the Background Evidence section.

**5.13** The Northern Forest initiative (see Background Evidence) has a 25 year vision to plant 50 million trees across northern England from Liverpool to Hull.

**5.14** The countryside is a priceless resource and the various countryside recreation sites are the main areas where people can experience nature. To improve the countryside network and to keep a level of conservation value a number of areas can be focused on:

- Meres and Mosses - nature conservation, recreation;
- Parklands - important areas for tree cover and recreation;
- River Valleys - flood storage capacity, flood meadows, corridors through the landscape;



- Cheshire Plain - maintain the hedgerows we have and field corner copses, replace hedgerow trees and retain ponds and so strengthen the fabric of the landscape; and
- Urban Fringes - create an attractive well wooded edge to our towns and villages and provide access to the countryside.

Peak Park Fringe - important area for nature conservation, flood storage capacity and recreation, such as the medium-distance promoted walking route, the Gritstone Trail

**5.15** The [South West Peak Landscape Partnership](#) has 18 projects which include preserving species-rich hay meadows in the area with the Glorious Grasslands project to managing and preventing flooding with Slowing the Flow. The Landscape Partnership comprises parts of Cheshire East Council, and parts of Staffordshire and Derbyshire which lie within the Peak National Park.

**5.16** Our villages are a very important part of the fabric of the countryside. Cheshire East has approximately 100 rural parishes. Many of the parishes are actively pursuing green infrastructure measures through Neighbourhood Plans and involvement in the Local Area Partnerships (see Section 9).







## 6 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Principal Towns

### Crewe

**6.1** The Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe sets out the detailed approach for green infrastructure requirements in the town.

**6.2** As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Crewe stakeholder workshops were asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Green infrastructure - to include improved and new children's play areas; the provision of allotments and community gardens; improvements to existing and the provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes; a programme of enhancements to existing open spaces; the provision of new open spaces, including sports pitches.
- Continuing improvements to Queens Park, through further grant funding and funding from S106/Community Infrastructure Levy, to ensure the continuation of the restoration of this key heritage and recreational asset.
- The delivery of Leighton West Country Park
- Completion of the Connect 2 cycle link between Crewe and Nantwich

**6.3** In term of achievements regarding the above: Queens Park has been upgraded, the Connect 2 Cycle way has been completed and new areas of green space are being achieved through the Local Plan Strategy.

**6.4** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure in the Central Crewe Strategic Location and in the 8 Strategic Sites around Crewe. This new Green Infrastructure varies from ecological mitigation areas at Basford West, neighbourhood park type facilities at Leighton West, to new footpaths and cycle links between existing and new development. A key challenge is linking all the new green infrastructure and creating links between new and existing green infrastructure, the built environment and the surrounding countryside.

**6.5** The emerging **Crewe Hub Area Action Plan** contains a masterplan which shows green infrastructure; policy IC2 looks at primary green routes and ISD5 deals specifically with Green Infrastructure. The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** specifically looks at Crewe and at the various pinch points and associated possible improvements.

**6.6** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sport provision. Key centre sites include King George V Playing Fields, Alexandra Soccer Centre, Cumberland Arena, Sir William Stanier Leisure Centre and Cheshire College South and West .

**6.7** Future demand for football, cricket and 3G pitch provision. Crewe FC wish to acquire their own site on a long term lease. (See Playing Pitch Strategy for detailed requirements)

**6.8** The open space assessment report for Crewe had a number of findings which have been updated below.



- Generally open space provision is poorer in the north-eastern area of Crewe, the central area, the high density residential areas and parts of south western Crewe and there is a specific shortage for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Investigate whether accessibility to the main park facilities of Queens Park, Tipkinder and Valley Park can be improved.
  - Consider the extension of Leighton Community Woodland - unimplemented saved policy RT.13 in the Borough and Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan - *the Strategic Site Leighton West will provide new green spaces (Policy LPS 4)* .
  - Consider improved accessibility to natural green space for north eastern residents/creation of natural municipal green area (*some new green space in the Coppenhall East development*)
  - Maw Green closed tip offers potential nature conservation and recreational opportunities
  - Investigate footpath links to Sandbach Flashes and links to and from Maw Green
  - Consider how to improve access to green corridors to residents in central and north-eastern Crewe - *new development proposed from Broughton Road to Sydney Road will provide some new green links in north-east Crewe.*
  - There is an opportunity to link new developments, such as Leighton West, to existing walking and cycling infrastructure to ensure that active travel is a feasible and attractive option for residents and employees living and/or working in new developments (Local Transport Plan)
  - Investigate the need for additional pitch facilities in Crewe (see Playing Pitch Strategy)
  - Investigate funding mechanisms to improve the quality of outdoor sports and associated facilities.
  - Look at addressing accessibility to outdoor sports facilities for residents in northern and southern Crewe.
  - Investigate the provision of amenity green space in the high density residential areas of Crewe.
  - Try and upgrade poor quality children and teenager sites through a variety of funding mechanisms.
  - Explore the need for additional facilities for older children.
  - Secure appropriate sites to address the shortage of children and teenager facilities in north-eastern and southern parts of Crewe.
  - Investigate the need for additional allotment facilities.
  - Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility to existing cemetery facilities.
  - Investigate the provision of country park and nature reserve provision and facilities alongside the expansion plans for Crewe- opportunities at Maw Green and Leighton West.
  - Investigate the provision of further civic spaces as part of any redevelopment of the town centre.

#### 6.9 Other Green Infrastructure requirements/challenges/opportunities:



- Upgrade Crewe crematorium or find new site and build a new crematorium and new cemetery.
- Continue to improve and enhance Queens Park - Heritage Park.
- HS2 - presents challenges for the landscape and countryside and Crewe itself

## Macclesfield

**6.10** As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Macclesfield stakeholder workshops were asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Environmental improvement scheme to town centre public realm
- Green infrastructure including further provision of allotments
- Improved sports facilities, including new facilities for Macclesfield Town Football Club
- Enhanced community and leisure facilities, including the development of a Leisure and Community Hub
- Enhancement of the River Bollin and Macclesfield canal corridors

**6.11** In terms of achievements regarding the above improvements have been carried out regarding lighting in the town centre, green space enhancement and public art and landscaping along the River Bollin.

**6.12** Macclesfield's green infrastructure framework consists of three main areas from west to east:

**6.13** *Western Macclesfield*: Undulating landscape - hedgrows, trees, ponds, highpoints/view points - important to strengthen landscape edge as a whole on western edge of town (from Leisure Corridor in north-west to new development areas to the west and south).

**6.14** *The Bollin Valley* - local landscape designation covers countryside parts but the river flows through the urban area - important resource including areas such as the Riverside Park

**6.15** *Peak Park Fringe* - local landscape designation covers the countryside parts; Macclesfield Canal important strategic green infrastructure asset.

**6.16** Within the above three areas there are parks and community open spaces; active recreation/sport facilities; blue corridors, pools and reservoirs; wildlife areas; green corridors

**6.17** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure in the Macclesfield urban area (LPS12) and in the 6 Strategic Sites around Macclesfield. This new green infrastructure varies from a neighbourhood Park at Congleton Road (LPS 15), new protected open spaces at Fence Avenue and Gaw End to pedestrian and cycle links and green links to the surrounding areas.

**6.18** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The Plan discusses some of the Town's GI assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening, Getting Outdoors Easily and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.

**6.19** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sports provision.



**6.20** Future demand for football and 3G pitch provision. Football - improve pitch quality, reduce shortfalls and increase future capacity at key sites such as Congleton Road. Need to alleviate overplay at Macclesfield Cricket Club. Hockey - Protect pitches provided by the King's School, Fallibroome Academy and Tytherington High School for continued hockey use. Congleton Road is a Hub site. Key Centre Sites: Fallibroome Academy, Priory Park (Macclesfield RC), Kings School Westminster Road, Kings School Alderley Road, Macclesfield Academy/Macclesfield College, All Hallows Catholic College and Tytherington High School. (See Playing Pitch Strategy for further detail).

**6.21** Macclesfield Leisure Centre is part of a complex of sport and leisure facilities in north-west Macclesfield which comprises Macclesfield Rugby Club, Fallibroome Academy and the Leisure Centre itself.

**6.22** The open space assessment report for Macclesfield had a number of findings which have been updated below:

- Generally open space provision is poorer in central and south-western areas and there are specific shortages for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Investigate whether accessibility to park facilities (West Park, South Park and Victoria Park) can be improved for residents in western and northern parts of Macclesfield.
  - Improve access to natural and semi-natural open space for residents in north-western, western and south-western areas of Macclesfield.
  - Investigate whether access to existing green corridors can be improved for residents in the western areas of Macclesfield through the creation of new green links - *some new green links will be created through the proposed new development.*
  - Much of the proposed development in Macclesfield gives importance to improved accessibility and the integration of green infrastructure and pedestrian/cycle links into plans; an important challenge is to improve links between Macclesfield and surrounding open spaces such as the Peak District (Local Transport Plan refresh consultation document)
  - Address the need for additional pitch facilities in Macclesfield (see Playing Pitch Strategy).
  - Investigate funding mechanisms to improve the quality of outdoor sports provision and associated facilities.
  - Consider how to deliver the proposal in the Macclesfield Local Plan for playing fields and informal recreation at London Road - saved policy RT6 (6) - or at an alternative site - *this area is still an important "green area" adjoining the Peak Park fringe (see further information below).*
  - Increase the provision of amenity green space in the high density residential areas of Macclesfield.
  - Consider how to deliver the proposal in the Macclesfield Local Plan at South Macclesfield for informal recreation and amenity open space - saved policy RT6 (15) - *green infrastructure here will be delivered as part of the Strategic Site LPS13 South Macclesfield Development Area .*
  - Secure appropriate sites to address the shortage in children's play provision in central and south-western parts of Macclesfield and where there is often only one



facility serving a wide area - *some new provision will be provided as part of the Strategic Sites development.*

- Endeavour to upgrade poor quality children's play sites through available funding mechanisms.
- Address the need for additional allotments facilities and facilitate other community food production.
- Protect and maintain important churches and graveyards/cemeteries particularly West Park Cemetery.
- Improve access to countryside facilities for residents in the western half of Macclesfield.

**6.23** Macclesfield Town Football Club is an important local community facility. Improved facilities are discussed as part of LPS 13 South Macclesfield Development Area.

**6.24** Continue to improve and enhance the town's heritage parks and open spaces including West Park, Victoria Park, South Park and Christchurch.

**6.25** Promote green corridors and green infrastructure within Macclesfield:

- Bollin Valley - opportunities to improve the riverside through Macclesfield; river corridor can provide access and links to other green spaces
- Promote Riverside Park, Middlewood Way and Macclesfield Canal
- Swan's Pool area - green finger of land extending from Peak Fringes down to Victoria Park - opportunities to improve links to footpaths and links to other green spaces
- Linking green corridors - Victoria Road/the Villas - Chester Road to Park Lane - Congleton Road linear park
- New green links in the new development proposals to the west and south-west of Macclesfield - link to existing green infrastructure.

**6.26** Improve Macclesfield's links with the Peak Park moorland fringes. The area adjoining London Road (saved policy RT6 (6)) is important in terms of being part of the open area around the River Bollin, Macclesfield Canal and Canal Conservation Area around Sutton Hall. There are a number of important elements to this area:

- Bollin Valley, Canal Conservation Area and Listed Buildings etc Sutton Hall area; cultural artistic links – Charles Tunnicliffe – born and raised Sutton Lane Ends Farm – his landscape paintings and etchings feature views to Teggs Nose and Sutton St James Church plus the local fields; Local Wildlife Site – Macclesfield Canal; views to Peak Park and also views down to the Canal from the Hollins as the canal winds its way through the fields; recreation – Cheshire Ring and Cheshire Cycleway passes through.





Photograph by Lisa Green







## 7 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Key Service Centres

### Alsager

**7.1** As part of the localism town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan Alsager was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Play areas, amenity space and Sports Hub with pitches and changing facilities;
- Improved cycle routes and footpaths; and
- Town centre public realm improvements.

**7.2** Alsager are preparing a **Neighbourhood Plan** and have been through examination (referendum 27th Feb 2020). The Plan contains policies on the protection and enhancement of green spaces and policies seek to increase wildlife through a number of measures including enhancing wildlife corridors and promoting wildlife permeable boundaries between properties. (See CEC web-site for further details)

**7.3** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure as part of the 6 Strategic Sites around Alsager. This varies from the provision of woodland planting at White Moss Quarry (LPS20), creation of a Leisure Hub adjoining Alsager Leisure Centre (LPS 22) to green links being incorporated in new employment areas.

**7.4** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Getting Outdoors Easily, Thriving Nature and Working Alongside major Infrastructure.

**7.5** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sports provision.

**7.6** Alsager is part of the Congleton Analysis area. Future demand exists for football, cricket, rugby union and 3G provision. New outdoor sports provision has been created as part of the development at the former MMU Alsager Campus (LPS 22) - Alsager Sports Hub. The site will also offer a viable alternative to the exported demand expressed by Alsager Town FC as well as the latent demand reported by the Club. The scheme also involves the provision of a full size 3G pitch. Hockey (former Alsager Campus) - the approved scheme involves replacing the existing sand-based AGP with a new sand-based AGP as well as a clubhouse with changing rooms and catering facilities. Alsager Leisure Centre hockey pitch needs resurfacing. New 3G and grass pitches at the former Alsager Campus should address football shortfall. Alsager Cricket Club experiences overplay. Hub site: Alsager Sports Hub (former MMU Alsager Campus). Key Centre site: Alsager Leisure Centre. (See Playing Pitch Strategy for further information).

**7.7** The open space report for Alsager had a number of findings which have been updated below:

- Provision is sparse in several parts of the town for various typologies and there are also some quality issues to be addressed.



- There are no cemeteries in Alsager and a lack of accessible countryside in the urban fringe.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Continue improvements at Milton Park and Northholm Gardens - *creation of sunken garden, new play area (Milton Park) and new planting carried out.*
  - Improve accessibility to natural and semi-natural greenspaces.
  - Continue to improve facilities at Borrow Pit Meadows and the Salt Line and Merelake Way, and access to these facilities.
  - Improve access to Wayside and Cranberry Moss for those less mobile.
  - Improve access to green corridors for the people who live in central and western Alsager
  - Provide additional outdoor sports facilities (see above and Playing Pitch Strategy)
  - Improve green links to open spaces and community facilities, such as Wood Park
  - Undertake maintenance and management improvements to amenity green space areas and children and teenager facilities where required.
  - Undertake biodiversity improvements at all amenity green space sites.
  - Improve accessibility to children and teenager facilities for people who live in the north, west and central areas of the town.
  - Improve accessibility to allotments for those people who live in the north of the town.
  - Investigate cemetery provision for the town

## Congleton

**7.8** As part of the localism town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan Congleton was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Sports pitches, play areas, allotments
- Improved cycle routes and footpaths; and
- Town centre public realm improvements

**7.9** Many of the above issues are now dealt with in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted Local Plan Strategy. Public Realm improvements have been carried out within the town centre. The Town Council and partners such as the RSPB are actively involved in enhancement of the River Dane Corridor and proposals for a new country park.

**7.10** Congleton are preparing a **Neighbourhood Plan** and the plan was progressed to the Examination Stage but then withdrawn. Work is on-going on the Plan. (See CEC web-site for progress). Their Draft Plan included the following issues under Green Environment and Heritage:

- Congleton is a town where green spaces and existing landscape features are highly valued and under threat
- Potential threats to areas such as the Dane Valley, Astbury Mere, The Park, Priestly Fields, Macclesfield Canal and the Town Wood and other green spaces which enhance the local landscape



- The incremental erosion of the green areas which are a part of the traditional layout of the town and which sit side by side with the older developed part of the town
- Shortage of allotments
- Threats to the built heritage of the town

#### 7.11 Key Themes from the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- Residents recognise Congleton as a special place regarding its green spaces and green infrastructure. All new developments should add or enhance significantly to the current stock
- Provide linked paths and cycleways to enable easy and safe access to the key facilities within the town

**7.12** Policy SE3 in the draft Neighbourhood Plan sought to protect and enhance the existing network of green spaces. Five new Key Green Space Policy Areas were proposed. These are as follows:

- River Dane Valley and environs (including Town Wood)
- Macclesfield Canal and environs
- Biddulph Valley Way and Environs
- Congleton East rural area (including Timbersbrook Village and Environs)
- Priestly Fields/Howty Brook valley/Loachbrook valley

**7.13** Draft policy SE5 dealt with Wildlife Corridors.

**7.14** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure as part of the 5 Strategic Sites and the North Congleton Masterplan. The proposed Green Infrastructure includes proposals for a network of open spaces for nature conservation and recreation including access to and enhancement to the River Dane corridor, the protection and enhancement of the Village Green at Back Lane and protected open space at Westlow Mere.

**7.15** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening, Getting Outdoors Easily and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.

**7.16** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sports provision.

**7.17** Congleton is part of the Congleton Analysis Area. Future demand for football, cricket, rugby union and 3G provision. Football - overplay at Back Lane ; training demand for one 3G pitch. Rugby - overplay at Back Lane and Congleton Park plus they are poor quality pitches. Cricket - overplay at Congleton Cricket Club. Key Centre Sites: Back Lane, Congleton High School and Eaton Bank Academy.

**7.18** The open space report for Congleton had a number of findings which have been updated below:



- Congleton has a high proportion of natural and semi-natural open space but some of this space is subject to considerable visitor pressure such as Dane-in-Shaw Pasture (part of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest) and Astbury Mere.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Investigate whether accessibility to Congleton Park can be improved.
  - Consider how to support facilities at Astbury Mere.
  - Consider how to deal with conflicting pressures at Dane-In Shaw Pasture - SSSI in part; grazing cattle for management - some conflict with dog walkers; unsurfaced paths.
  - Improve access to green corridors to residents in western Congleton.
  - Regarding green corridors improve links to the town centre and through riverside green spaces along the River Dane and the canal towpath
  - The Biddulph Valley Way, just outside of the town centre to the border with North Staffordshire, offers a multi-user route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and this route has the potential to be expanded to further increase walking and cycling options. This could be through the maintenance of the route, and improved surfacing and access points (Local Transport Plan refresh consultation document)
  - Need to link development in the north to the town centre and other green links - encourage walking and cycling - need for links to town centre and surrounding countryside (see map in Neighbourhood Plan)
  - Consider how to improve accessibility to outdoor sport provision for residents in south-east Congleton - need for green links to facilities.
  - Consider how to deliver the proposal for additional pitches at Back Lane - saved policy DP5 (C1) of the Congleton Local Plan - or at an alternative site - *this is now part of Strategic Site LPS 26 which includes proposals for the enhancement of Back lane Playing Fields and the creation of a new country park.*
  - Consider how to deliver Congleton Rugby Club's requirements in terms of improved pitches, club house and associated facilities.
  - Consider how to improve the quality of general amenity open spaces.
  - Address the need for additional facilities for children and teenagers.
  - Address the need for additional allotment facilities.
  - Investigate how to improve drainage in the southern part of the cemetery.
  - Investigate sustainable funding sources to improve facilities at Astbury Mere.

## Handforth

**7.19** As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Handforth stakeholder panel was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- An environmental improvement scheme at The Paddock / district centre to improve the overall environment and appearance, public areas, street furniture etc;
- Environmental and safety improvements to the pedestrian links between Handforth and the employment areas at Stanley Green and retail area at Handforth Dean; and
- Improved children's play areas.



**7.20** Many of the above issues are now dealt with in the **Neighbourhood Plan** for Handforth. The Handforth Neighbourhood plan was Made on 12th July 2018 and seeks to protect existing open spaces through various policies which seek to designate sites as Local Green Space and other sites as Incidental Open Spaces to ensure their long-term protection. Part of the Vision states: "Handforth will have high quality open spaces and improved access to the surrounding countryside". The Plan's policy for landscape and biodiversity looks at important areas of ecological value and green corridors.

**7.21** The Plan has a description of the main Parks and current issues:

**7.22** "Meriton Road Park opened in 1935 and currently contains multi-user games courts, a children's play area, an outdoor gymnasium, outdoor table tennis tables, an orienteering course and a miniature railway operated by the Handforth Model Engineering Society. The western extremity of the park is a green open space that is in need of improved drainage of surface water into the Dobbin Brook. A pavilion is located at the eastern edge of the park and is in need of refurbishment. This park is used to hold village fairs such as the Mayfest. The community group Friends of Meriton Road Park was formed in 2005 and currently promotes the maintenance and development of the park. Handforth has two additional parks, the Parsonage Park off Station Road and Stanley Hall Park off Spath Lane. Both these parks contain children's' play areas. Stanley Hall Park contains multi-user games courts, a children's' play area, picnic tables and a skateboarding area. It is supported by community groups such as the Spath Lane Residents' Association and the Friends of Stanley Hall Park. These groups have raised substantial sums of money for park improvements. A green open space extends from the northern edge of the park to the A555."

**7.23** "Children's' play areas are also found between Hope and Kenilworth Avenues and at the junction of Henbury Road with Spath Lane. The latter play area is associated with an area of green space to the rear of Oakmere."

**7.24** In the summary of Key Issues the following points re green infrastructure are mentioned:

- The need to achieve good connectivity between the North Cheshire Growth Village (site LPS 33) and Handforth Station.
- Maintaining existing and providing new footpaths and cycleways
- Maintaining a band of greenfield/greenbelt between Handforth and Greater Manchester.
- Maintaining Handforth's beauty spots in the River Dean valley.

**7.25** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes substantial new green infrastructure as part of the North Cheshire Growth Village (LPS 33). This should include green corridors, country-park style open spaces, formal open space and allotments/growing space. The Garden Village at Handforth Supplementary Planning Document 2018 discusses GI under the Section Key Development Requirements - Policy Land uses 6 and Figure 10 shows the GI network plan. The other Strategic Site in Handforth LPS 34 includes a cycle and pedestrian link and suggests focusing green infrastructure around Dobbin Brook.

**7.26** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening, Getting Outdoors Easily and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.





**7.27** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sport provision. New pitches will be provided as part of the LPS Strategic Site LPS 33.

**7.28** Handforth is part of the Wilmslow Analysis Areas. Future demand for football, cricket, hockey and 3G provision. Football - Shortage of two 3G pitches for training in the Wilmslow Analysis Area. St Benedict's School is a Local Site in the PPS. No hub or key centre sites.

**7.29** The open space assessment report for Handforth had a number of findings which have been updated below.

- Generally open space provision is spread evenly across Handforth but there are specific shortages for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Investigate whether access to park facilities (Meriton Road Park) can be improved for residents in south-east Handforth.
  - Consider how to improve access to semi-natural and natural green space for residents in northern Handforth; need for walking routes to River Dean Area and Hall Wood Areas.
  - Investigate whether access to green corridors can be improved for residents in northern and western Handforth.
  - Address the need for pitch facilities in Handforth and review the previous proposal at Dairy House Farm, Handforth (saved policies RT19 and RT6 (2) of the Macclesfield Local Plan) - in the light of the *Strategic Site North Cheshire Growth Village LPS 33*
  - Review/implement the proposal for amenity open space at Hall Road - saved policy RT6 (10) of the Macclesfield Local Plan - *part of area proposed as Local Green Space in Neighbourhood Plan*
  - Secure appropriate sites to address the shortage in children's play provision and improve access to a major facility for residents in south-eastern Handforth.
  - Investigate and address the need for allotment facilities and facilitate other community food production.
  - Protect and enhance the central landmark of St Chad's Church in Handforth.
  - Address the need for access to country park facilities
  - Need for green links to North Cheshire Growth Village and active travel connections to, and across SEMMMS A6MARR.

## Knutsford

**7.30** As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Knutsford stakeholder panel was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Footpaths, pedestrian access and shared surface areas
- Cycle ways and Cycle parking - particularly to new development areas, the town centre, sports facilities, to the existing network and surrounding settlements
- Sports and leisure facilities - to potentially create an area or a town of 'sporting excellence'
- Green Infrastructure





- Access to greenspaces
- Allotments, mini allotments, community gardens and community orchards
- Public realm and pedestrian spaces

**7.31** Many of the above issues are now dealt with in the emerging **Neighbourhood Plan** for Knutsford. The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan was Made on the 14th March 2019. The Plan has the following objective regarding the environment and green infrastructure: "To ensure Knutsford's green and open spaces and landscape setting are retained and enhanced by, but not limited to, preserving views and vistas, safeguarding against pollution and flooding, and protecting the Town's wildlife and biodiversity".

**7.32** The following issues were raised by residents regarding sport and leisure:

- We have great facilities at the Leisure Centre and Egerton Sports Club, these must be protected and enhanced.
- More provision of allotments needed.
- Children's play areas are important and should be protected.
- The Rugby Club needs a building.
- We need more grass pitches.
- More community facilities are needed – particularly for leisure purposes - in particular a new swimming pool.

**7.33** The Plan has policies regarding open space and sport facilities.

**7.34** The following issues were raised by residents regarding the environment and green infrastructure:

- Protect key assets such as The Heath, The Moor, Tatton Park, Toft Woods and high quality open spaces and children's play areas, particularly those in predominantly residential areas.
- Make more of The Heath.
- There's a lack of green infrastructure around the Town.
- Need more wildlife and ecological initiatives.
- More trees should be planted.
- All new housing schemes should remain in harmony with the surrounding local landscape setting.

**7.35** Policies deal with habitat protection and creation, local green spaces, green corridors and historic green spaces.

**7.36** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes green infrastructure as part of the Strategic Sites around Knutsford - North West Knutsford (3 sites), Parkgate and Longridge. The green infrastructure to be provided varies from allotments and community gardens to new wildlife areas.

**7.37** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening, Environments for Business, Getting Outdoors Easily and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.



**7.38** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sports provision. In the Knutsford Analysis area there is future demand for football, 3G and rugby provision. Knutsford RUFC require additional provision possibly provided alongside Knutsford Academy Plans. Egerton Youth Club and Mary Dendy (Great Warford) are key centres. Knutsford Academy (Upper), Knutsford Leisure Centre, Knutsford Sport Club (cricket club) and Manchester Road are all Local Sites.

**7.39** The open space assessment for Knutsford had a number findings which have been updated below.

- Generally open space provision is poorer in the south west and there are specific shortages for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Consider how to improve access to the Moor for residents living on the edge of Knutsford.
  - Consider how to access funding sources for the continued protection and enhancement of Knutsford's natural and semi-natural open spaces.
  - Investigate how to provide green corridors in Knutsford.
  - Address the need for additional pitch facilities in Knutsford.
  - Consider how to improve accessibility to outdoor sports facilities for residents in eastern and southern Knutsford.
  - Increase the provision of amenity green space in the higher density residential areas and endeavour to upgrade poorer quality sites through available funding mechanisms.
  - Address the shortage in children's play provision particularly for residents in the north-west, south-west and south-east of Knutsford.
  - Address the need for additional allotment facilities and facilitate other community food production.
  - Protect and maintain the historic landmarks and associated open spaces.
  - Improve access to countryside facilities for residents in southern and north-eastern Knutsford.

## Middlewich

**7.40** As part of the localism town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan Middlewich was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Green Corridors, Middlewich Lagoons, Canal corridor linear park, allotments, sports pitches, children's play space;
- Enhancement of canal network;
- Town centre public realm improvements; and
- Improved cycle routes and footpaths.

**7.41** Middlewich are in the process of developing a **Neighbourhood Plan** which looks at some of the above issues. Their First Draft Plan March 2018 stated the following in the vision: "By 2030, Middlewich will be a sustainable, vibrant and prosperous town in which people can



enjoy living, working and following leisure pursuits. Community spirit will continue to flourish; heritage and canal network will be enhanced, and the profile and image of the town will be improved."

**7.42** The Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Study noted that numerous walkways and towpaths connect the waterways including the canals and river systems of the River Dane, River Croco, River Wheelock and Sanderson's Brook. Wildlife areas include The Lagoons, Waterside Way, Bullock Meadow, Sycamore Drive, Canal Corridor and Pochin Way. This network is a significant characteristic of Middlewich and offers important opportunities for linking residential development to the town centre, recreational facilities and the open countryside (Draft Plan March 2018). Draft Policy DH5 looked at safeguarding these blue and green routes and encouraged accessibility and improvements.

**7.43** Regarding open spaces Middlewich lacks a large urban park and other significant amenity uses that would allow a variety of uses. The town has the important green corridor of the Trent and Mersey canal and various play areas and allotments. Draft Policy OS1 looked at protecting areas of open and green spaces, improving linkages and seeking enhancements and new provision. Draft Policy W1 dealt with biodiversity.

**7.44** Details around the progress of the Middlewich Neighbourhood Plan can be found on the CEC web-site.

**7.45** The Tourism Plan for Middlewich February 2018 also looked at encouraging walking and cycling, improving linkages and promoting the Trent and Mersey Canal corridor.

**7.46 Middlewich Vision** - an active community group have leisure as one of their three themes to focus on - with the idea of developing open spaces and activities for all to enjoy

**7.47** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes green infrastructure as part of the strategic sites. Green infrastructure proposed includes pedestrian and cycle connections and open spaces for nature conservation and children's play space.

**7.48** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Getting Outdoors Easily and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.

**7.49** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new evidence in terms of outdoor sports provision. Middlewich is part of the Congleton Analysis Area. Future demand for football provision - local shortfalls. Middlewich Leisure Centre is a key site. Middlewich Cricket Club, Sutton Lane and Middlewich Town Football Club are local sites.

**7.50** In terms of local open space requirements the conclusion from the open space assessment is:

- Middlewich has the important green corridor of the Trent and Mersey Canal but lacks a large urban park and other significant amenity areas that would allow a variety of uses.
- The following points are detailed recommendations
  - Consider how to improve facilities at Fountain Fields, Queen Street.



- Consider how to improve access to natural open space for residents in southern Middlewich, such as to the canal corridor.
- Deliver/implement the recreational allocation at Croxton Lane - *closed landfill site - now managed as an informal/nature conservation recreation site (site owned by ANSA managed by CEC Ranger service)*
- Secure the natural green space along Sanderson's Brook - saved policy DP5(M3) as part of the Midpoint 18 employment proposals - *Site LPS 44 includes safeguarding of watercourses and the delivery of significant ecological mitigation areas.*
- Secure Sanderson's Brook as a new green corridor as part of the Midpoint 18 employment proposals - *see above.*
- Address the need for additional outdoor sports provision in Middlewich.
- Address accessibility for residents in central Middlewich to outdoor sports facilities.
- Consider how to improve access to general amenity open space in north-west Middlewich.
- Secure appropriate sites to address the shortage in children's and teenagers' open space provision in north-western Middlewich.
- Endeavour to upgrade poor quality sites through a variety of funding mechanisms.
- Address the need for additional facilities for older children.
- Address the need for additional allotment facilities and facilitate other community food production.
- Consider how to protect and enhance the historic sites of St Michael's and All Angels Church and Middlewich Cemetery.

## Nantwich

**7.51** As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Nantwich stakeholder panel was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- Improvements to the Town Centre public realm. Any works should reflect the historic character of the town and increase the ability for all to safely move through the town
- Provision of cycle routes and footpaths
- Provision of facilities for children and teenagers
- Increased provision and quality of open spaces in the town:
  - Size and quality of the Riverside
  - Improved use of Mill Island
  - Green links along Monk's Lane
  - Sports facilities
  - Children's play space

**7.52** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure as part of the strategic sites. The new green infrastructure includes an extension to the Riverside Park, river corridor enhancements and the provision of more formal open space.



**7.53** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening, Getting Outdoors Easily and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.

**7.54** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information in terms of outdoor sports provision. Nantwich analysis area shows a demand for football, 3G, cricket and rugby union provision. The Barony Sports Complex is a hub site. Brine Leas School, Crewe Vagrants Sports Club, Malbank School and Sixth Form College, Nantwich Town Football Club and Reaseheath College are a key centres. Nantwich Cricket Club and Reaseheath Training Complex are local sites.

**7.55** In terms of local open space requirements the conclusion from the open space assessment is:

- Generally open space provision is poorer in the central and eastern edges of the town and there are specific shortages for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Investigate whether accessibility to the main park facilities at The Barony and Brookfield Park can be improved for residents in western and eastern Nantwich.
  - Consider how to manage the range of habitats along the Riverside Park - Nantwich Riverside Park Masterplan 2007 - and in the Cronkinson Farm estate - *extension of Riverside Park as part of Site LPS 46 Kingsley Fields*.
  - Improve access to green corridors and in particular to the Nantwich Riverside Park for residents in eastern Nantwich.
  - Review and consider how to deliver the unimplemented allocations - saved policy RT.12, land to the west of the River Weaver, to extend the Riverside Park (*public access to River Weaver as part of Site LPS 46*) and saved policy RT.14, land at Nantwich Canal Basin, for tourism and recreational development (*general policy regarding recreation and canals to cover this*).
  - Investigate the need for additional pitch facilities in Nantwich.
  - Address accessibility to pitch facilities for residents in south-east and east Nantwich.
  - Investigate the provision of amenity open space in the high density areas of Nantwich, particularly in central and eastern areas.
  - Address the need for additional facilities for children and teenagers.
  - Consider how to improve accessibility for residents in central, eastern and southern Nantwich to children's play space.
  - Investigate the need for additional allotment facilities - *new allotments proposed as part of Site LPS 46 Kingsley Fields*.
  - Investigate quality issues at Nantwich and Barony Road Cemeteries.

## Poynton

**7.56** As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Poynton stakeholder panel was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:





- Provision and improvement of cycle routes, bridleways and footpaths to Poynton and surrounding areas, for example The Inclines
- Provision and improvement of open space, including accessibility to Poynton Pool and new open space in west Poynton
- Improvement of play areas
- Provision of sports pitches and playing fields
- New cemetery and Garden of Remembrance
- Statutory allotments

**7.57** Poynton have a Made **Neighbourhood Plan** (referendum held October 2019). Many of the above issues are addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan. Their Plan has policies regarding the protection of recreation and green open spaces. Poynton Pool and Poynton Park are highlighted as important green assets. Access to the countryside is another important issue.

**7.58** Nature Conservation is a key issue with the designation of a Poynton wildlife corridor (Policy EGB 10) and the following sites are highlighted under the nature conservation evidence:

- "The sites at Princes Wood, Nelson Pit, Middlewood Way and Norbury Brook are identified as areas for nature study and activity areas of schools and small groups and would support the protection of the wildlife corridors."
- "The sites at Park Pit grasslands and Jacksons Brickworks are suitable areas for walking and studying bird life and bird hides could be introduced".

**7.59** The need for allotments and more playing field provision is also highlighted in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**7.60** Under health and well-being the following aspiration HEWL 3 deals with access to green space:

**7.61** "Poynton will be provided with sufficient safe, accessible, maintained green spaces which can be used by the whole inter-generational community, such as parks containing play equipment for toddlers, children, and young people (e.g. green gym), picnic benches and seating. These can be enjoyed by everyone and will bring about an increase in social cohesion and a sense of community."

**7.62** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure in the 3 strategic housing sites. The green infrastructure varies from amenity open space and children's play space to new pedestrian and cycle links to connect residential areas.

**7.63** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening and Getting Outdoors Easily.

**7.64** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information in relation to outdoor sports provision. Poynton analysis area has future demand for football, 3G and cricket provision. Poynton Sports club and Poynton High School are key sites. Barnaby Road, Deva Close and Mount Vernon are local sites. Poynton Sports Club is in negotiations to re-locate all of its on-site provision (including football pitches), subject to securing planning permission.



**7.65** In terms of local open space requirements the conclusion from the open space assessment is:

- Generally open space provision is poorer in western and some central parts of Poynton and there are specific shortages for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
- Consider how to improve accessibility to Poynton Park for residents in western and southern parts of Poynton.
  - Consider how to improve access to natural and semi-natural green space for residents in western and southern Poynton.
  - Investigate whether access to green corridors can be improved for residents in western and central areas of Poynton.
  - Address the need for additional pitch facilities in Poynton.
  - Investigate funding mechanisms to improve poor quality pitches.
  - Consider how to deliver the proposal for playing fields at London road North - saved policy RT6 (7) - or at an alternative site - (*could be possible relocation site for Poynton Sports Club - see Poynton Settlement Report and site CFS 110 land north of Glastonbury Drive*).
  - Consider how to increase the provision of amenity green space in the higher density areas of Poynton.
  - Address the shortage in children's play provision particularly for residents in parts of northern and central Poynton.
  - Endeavour to upgrade average and poor quality sites through available funding mechanisms.
  - Address the need for allotment facilities and facilitate other community food production.
  - Consider how to protect and enhance the historic landmark of St George's Church and churchyard.
  - Investigate access to countryside facilities for residents in western and southern Poynton, such as across Poynton Relief Road to the Woodford Aerodrome development site
  - Need for active travel connections to, and across SEMMMS A6MARR.

## Sandbach

**7.66** As part of the localism town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan Sandbach was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following was suggested in relation to green space:

- Pedestrian and cyclist crossing of A534 on Wheelock Rail Trail;
- Athletics facilities;
- Improved cycle routes and footpaths; and
- Town centre public realm improvements.



**7.67** Some of the issues above have been dealt with in the **Neighbourhood Plan** for Sandbach. The Sandbach Neighbourhood plan was made on the 12th April 2016. The Town Council has embarked upon a review of their Neighbourhood Plan.

**7.68** In terms of green spaces the following are highlighted in the plan:

- "Parks and open spaces, walkways and footpaths
- Sandbach Park, Elworth Park, Wheelock Playing Fields, several smaller areas of open space containing play equipment, including Newall Avenue, Forge Fields and Mortimer Drive.
- Footpaths/ walkways owned by Cheshire East Council, including - Wheelock Rail Trail and parts of Footpath 56.
- Sandbach Wildlife Corridor
- Several woodland trails linking to a footpaths network.
- Open spaces on housing estates"

**7.69** Under the aims the following statements relate to green infrastructure:

- "Protecting the Countryside: To protect and enhance the open countryside setting of Sandbach including its Areas of Separation, green spaces, canals, amenity land and wildlife areas.
- "Adapting to climate change: To encourage better use of green infrastructure assets such as ponds, swales and wetlands which will not only meet local green space needs but also address existing and/or future surface water/ climate change issues."

**7.70** The Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies regarding protecting the countryside, the landscape character and biodiversity and geodiversity.

**7.71** The following are key ecological assets:

- A. The M6 motorway to Wheelock Stream Valley between Sandbach and Sandbach Heath
- B. The River Wheelock Valley
- C. Malkins Bank Brook corridor
- D. Abbeyfields ancient woodlands (located to the west of Crewe Road)
- E. Land adjacent to Taxmere
- F. The Malkins Bank to Middlewich Road canal corridor past Ettiley Heath and Elworth
- G. Taxmere local wildlife site
- H. Arclid Brook Valley west local wildlife site
- I. Arclid Brook Valley east local wildlife site
- J. Wheelock disused railway local wildlife site (also known locally as the Wheelock Rail Trail).

**7.72** Sites H and I comprise Sandbach Wildlife corridor. There are also policies regarding footpaths and cycleways, play, recreational and sports facilities.

**7.73** The plan states the need for allotments: "The need for allotments has also been identified during consultations as a further important outdoor recreational activity. Although there is an allotment site in Ettiley Heath, which is well managed and supported, it has no long term security. Following positive local consultation, a new site has been identified and is being actively progressed."



**7.74** In the **Local Plan Strategy** the Capricorn Site LPS 53 looks at the provision of green infrastructure and the protection and enhancement of the wildlife corridor and local wildlife sites.

**7.75** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Thriving Nature and Working Alongside Major Infrastructure.

**7.76** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information in terms of outdoor sports provision. Sandbach is part of the Congleton Analysis area. Future demand for football, 3G, cricket and rugby union provision. Sandbach Community Football Centre is a hub centre - aspirations for a second 3G pitch. Sandbach Rugby Club and Sandbach School (Boys) are key centres. Sandbach Cricket Club, Sandbach High & Sixth Form College (Girls), Elworth Cricket Club and Forge Fields are local sites.

**7.77** In terms of local open space requirements the conclusion from the open space assessment is:

- Significant work has been carried out to enhance natural green spaces and green corridors for example in Dingle Wood, St Mary's Dell, Dingle Meadow and Brook Wood - this has dealt with some of the maintenance and woodland management issues (partnership working between Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group, CEC, ANSA, Sandbach Town Council etc.)
- Provision varies across the town for various typologies
- New development has brought new amenity open space and children's play space
- The provision of new allotments in Sandbach is an on-going project
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Maintain the quality of parks and gardens such as Elworth Park and Sandbach Park
  - Continue to improve access to natural and semi-natural greenspaces.
  - Continue to Improve the pathways and green corridors
  - Continue to improve maintenance at open spaces and amenity areas
  - Provide additional signage and/or information boards where required
  - Continue to investigate the provision of a safe crossing over or under the Wheelock by-pass for users of the Wheelock Rail Trail
  - Provide a link between the Wheelock Rail Trail and the Salt Line.
  - Investigate the need for additional outdoor sports facilities
  - Undertake maintenance and landscaping improvements to those areas assessed as being of lower quality.
  - Investigate and progress enhanced provision of community use at Wheelock Playing Fields.
  - Review play area enhancements to ensure delivery at each site meets local needs
  - Improve accessibility to children and teenager's facilities for people who live in the northern and central areas of Sandbach.



- Undertake maintenance, management and landscaping improvements to those sites assessed as being of poor quality.
- Provision of teenage and toddler facilities to those areas where they are currently lacking.
- Allotment provision in Sandbach to be implemented.

#### 7.78 Other Green Infrastructure requirements:

- Sandbach cemetery will need to expand in the future - expansion land exists adjacent the site

### Wilmslow

7.79 As part of the town strategy work on the Cheshire East Local Plan the Wilmslow stakeholder panel was asked to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs for the plan period. The following were suggested in relation to green space:

- New and improved cycle and pedestrian routes
- Open space provision around the town
- Town centre environmental enhancements for example Bank Square
- Enhanced green links to The Carrs and Wilmslow Park

7.80 The Landscape work carried out by the National Trust (see Background Evidence section) offers opportunities for landscape scale partnership working with the National Trust to the north west of Wilmslow and along the valleys of the River Dean and River Bollin. Development proposed in the Local Plan Strategy will bring partnership, land management and green infrastructure opportunities.

7.81 Wilmslow have a Made **Neighbourhood Plan** (Made 11 November 2019). From their consultation feedback parks and open spaces were highly valued and ease of access to open countryside (particularly the Bollin and Dean Valleys and Lindow Moss) and the varied opportunities for walking, cycling and outdoor leisure (provided by numerous paths, bridleways and byeways) were viewed as major assets. In their first policy document the following areas were covered:

- As part of the *vision* the plan seeks "to promote a healthy community which has excellent access to green and open spaces and sports facilities"
- and "to protect the character of the countryside and to create new opportunities for biodiversity, countryside access and the rural economy".

7.82 The Neighbourhood Plan policy document looked at producing policies to deal with countryside character and access. river valley landscapes, green links, local green spaces, biodiversity and green infrastructure as well as improvements to the public realm. In their Draft Plan green-infrastructure was seen as a cross-cutting theme. The three strategic areas explored in their development of the plan covered sustainable construction, sustainable spaces and sustainable transport. Wilmslow's Landscape Character Areas were examined particularly the Bollin and River Dean areas exploring the landscape opportunities. A key theme regarding green spaces is how the countryside relates to the open spaces in the town: there are three "layers" that interlink - the open countryside, semi-natural areas on the town's





edge (for example open spaces along the River Bollin) and the town 's open spaces. One overall aim was to create a circular route around Wilmslow (a necklace of footpaths around the town). There are various elements in the plan including looking at the countryside around the town in terms of enhancing the character, countryside access, connecting green links and countryside stewardship/partnership working. Other elements include biodiversity, garden space, recreation and leisure and green gateways. The emphasis is on green links starting with green gateways and linking the various tree lined avenues and open spaces. The Plan also proposes a number of local green spaces.

**7.83** The Final Referendum Plan contains natural environment policies and community, leisure and recreation policies based upon the themes discussed above. (See CEC web-site for further details).

**7.84** The **Local Plan Strategy** proposes new green infrastructure as part of the strategic sites. This new infrastructure varies from the provision of new playing fields (site LPS 54 Alderley Road) to informal recreation and management of the River Dean corridor (Site LPS 56 Little Stanneylands). Other provision includes formal open space provision and green links.

**7.85** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The plan discusses some of the Town's assets and looks at GI improvements under the headings of Urban Greening, Getting Outdoors Easily and Thriving Nature.

**7.86** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information in terms of outdoor sports provision. Wilmslow analysis area has future demand for football, 3G, cricket and rugby union provision. Hockey - exported and latent demand identified by Wilmslow Hockey Club. Jim Evison Playing Fields is a hub site. Wilmslow High School and Wilmslow Phoenix Sports Club are key centres. Carnival Field, Lacey Green, Memorial Ground (Wilmslow Rugby Club), Oakwood Farm and Rectory Field (Wilmslow Cricket Club) are local sites.

**7.87** In terms of local open space requirements the conclusion from the open space assessment is:

- Generally open space provision is poorer in the south-west and in some eastern and northern areas of Wilmslow and there are specific shortages for some types of open space as listed.
- The following points are detailed recommendations:
  - Investigate whether accessibility to park facilities (The Carrs, Lacey Green Park) can be improved for residents in the south-west and eastern edges of Wilmslow.
  - Consider how to improve access to natural and semi-natural open space for residents in south-west Wilmslow.
  - Investigate whether access to green corridors can be improved for residents in south-west Wilmslow.
  - Address the need for additional pitch facilities and the provision of additional pitches at Altrincham Road and Land Lane (*Site LPS 54 should partly address this issue*).
  - Consider how to improve access to local pitch facilities for residents in south west and eastern areas of Wilmslow.



- Increase the provision of amenity green space in the higher density residential areas of Wilmslow.
- Address the shortage in children's play provision particularly for residents in western and eastern parts and in south-west Wilmslow.
- Endeavour to upgrade poor quality children's play sites through available funding.
- Address the need for additional allotment facilities and facilitate community food production.
- Protect and maintain important churches and graveyards/cemeteries.
- Improve access to countryside facilities for residents in north-east and south-west
- Need for active travel connections to, and across SEMMMS A6MARR





## 8 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Local Service Centres

8.1 In terms of local open space requirements detailed recommendations for the various communities and Cheshire East Council to consider taken from the open space assessment are : (some updates provided in italics e.g. information from Neighbourhood Plans (NP))

- Parks & Gardens
  - Investigate whether park facilities could be provided in Haslington and Holmes Chapel. (*Holmes Chapel NP - policies for sport and recreation*)
  - Improve park facilities in Disley. (*Neighbourhood Plan includes Local Green Space designations and gives details of recent improvements*)
  - Improve accessibility to the Recreation Ground in Bollington (NP - aspiration to create green link from Lowerhouse to Adlington Road).
  - Enhance Alderley Edge Park.
- Natural & Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces
  - Investigate how to provide improved access to natural open space in the following settlements: Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bunbury, Goostrey, Haslington, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury. (*Goostrey NP - footpath access in the Bongs - bluebell wood and local wildlife site*)
  - Investigate whether there is community support for the retention of the recreational allocation at Hall Hill, Bollington for informal recreation and children's play. Consideration needs to be given as to whether there is any means of implementing the proposed open space at Hall Hill, for example in conjunction with other development on this site. (NP - retention of green fingers Policy EGB.P1)
  - Continue to seek access to Swinerood Wood, Bollington.
  - Pursue a new management regime for Ovenhouse Lane Recreational Area, Bollington.
  - Manage and enhance Millenium Wood, Mudhurst Lane, Disley for environmental and ecological improvements. (NP - protection and enhancement of woodland)
  - Improve access to the River Dane in Holmes Chapel. (*Dane Meadow Project started in 2013 - now complete*)
  - *Community meadow Mobberley - continual improvements*
- Green Corridors
  - Investigate how to improve access to green corridors for residents in Alderley Edge, Bunbury, Goostrey and Mobberley. (*Bunbury NP - footpath policy T1*)
  - *Bollington NP - desire for a footpath along the river valley from Lowerhouse to Adlington Road which would provide a natural link to add to the existing network.*
  - Consider how to assist maintaining the Middlewood Way as a major shared route as part of the National Cycle network.
  - Improve the Bollin Valley Way north of the Bollin Valley Riverside Park. (*Pathway improvements to Prestbury*)
  - Consider how to support the enhancement of other key green corridors such as canals and rivers. (*E.G. Disley NP Peak Forest Canal important local wildlife corridor*)





- Outdoor Sports Facilities
  - Address the need for additional outdoor sports provision.
  - Investigate funding mechanisms to improve quality and associated facilities.
  - Look at addressing accessibility for residents who have limited access to a local pitch facility.
  - Alderley Edge: address the need for additional pitches for Alderley Edge Junior Football Club. (*capacity issues; poor quality changing rooms*)
  - Audlem: investigate how to improve the quality of Audlem Playing Field. (*Improve quality of changing rooms as well*)
  - Bollington: investigate how to implement the existing youth project at the Leisure Centre, which includes the provision of an additional senior and junior pitch with associated land acquisition - including reviewing the existing land allocation RT6 (1). (*Policy IN.CA2 in Neighbourhood Plan - improved recreational facilities for young people*)
  - Chelford: investigate how to implement the existing Chelford Activity Pathway project, which includes improving accessibility and the provision of outdoor sports facilities on land adjacent the village hall. (*Project complete - Multi-use games area adjacent village hall just outside village inset; Private Playing Fields with a MUGA, BMX Track, Table Tennis and benches.*)
  - Disley: investigate how to improve the quality of Arnold Rhodes Playing Field and Newton Playing Field to provide additional pitch facilities. (*NP Arnold Rhodes Local Green Space*)
  - Goostrey: address accessibility for residents in east Goostrey.
  - Haslington: investigate whether an additional junior pitch could be re-instated/provided at Haslington Playing Field, Clay Lane; address accessibility for residents in southern Haslington. (*NP being prepared which will address open space issues*)
  - Holmes Chapel: address the quality of pitches at Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School; investigate how to implement the improvement of playing facilities in Cranage to complement facilities in Holmes Chapel. (*NP Holmes Chapel Community Centre - provision of outdoor sports*)
  - Mobberley: address accessibility for residents in west Mobberley.
  - Prestbury: investigate how to improve the quality of Bollin Grove Playing Field to provide a pitch and promote the site as a Queen Elizabeth II 'Field in Trust' site.
  - Shavington: address accessibility for residents on the eastern and southern edges of the village; investigate how to provide more outdoor facilities within the settlement boundary.
- Amenity Greenspace
  - Investigate the provision of amenity green space in the settlements of Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Haslington and Shavington.
- Provision for Children & Teenagers
  - Address the shortage in children's play provision in the 13 Local Service Centres.
  - Endeavour to upgrade children's play sites through available funding mechanisms especially if additional sites cannot be secured to address the deficit.



- Audlem- the Audlem Parish Plan (2010) considered whether a MUGA could be provided. *(NP - aspiration to improve community facilities)*
- Bollington - investigate how to deliver the existing Youth Project at the Leisure Centre which includes the provision of a MUGA, shelter and 'teen area'. *(Policy IN.CA2 in Neighbourhood Plan)*
- Chelford - investigate how to implement the existing Chelford Activity Pathway project, which includes improving accessibility and the provision of play facilities on land adjacent the village hall. *(See above - project implemented)*
- Mobberley - investigate whether to pursue the unimplemented saved allocation RT6 (17) in the Macclesfield Local Plan, on land south of Town Lane.
- Improve accessibility to children's play sites in the following areas: Alderley Edge - south-east and eastern edge; Audlem - south-west corner of the village; Bollington - west, south-east and east; Bunbury - north-west and north-east; Chelford - north-east edge; Disley - north-west edge plus some residents have busy roads to cross; Goostrey - eastern half of the village; Haslington - southern edge of the village; Holmes Chapel - west and southern edge; Mobberley - eastern half of the village; Prestbury - west, south and east of the village are beyond the walking distance threshold and have busy main roads to negotiate; Shavington - south-west and north-east.
- Allotments, Community Gardens & Urban farms
  - Address the need for additional allotment facilities in Alderley Edge and Bollington including the implementation of new allotments at Harrop Road - site 4BE. *(Allotment waiting list - Leisure Centre Allotments Bollington; desire for more allotments in Neighbourhood Plan)*
  - Consider the need for additional facilities in Disley and in Shavington in a more accessible location.
  - Consider the need for allotment facilities in Audlem, Bunbury, Chelford, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury and Wrenbury where there are currently no allotments.
- Cemeteries & Churchyards
  - Consider how to protect and maintain important churches and graveyards/cemeteries.





## Alderley Edge

**8.2** The open space assessment for Alderley Edge identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres section. Alderley Edge are currently preparing a **Neighbourhood Plan**. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Alderley Edge is part of Wilmslow analysis area. Capacity issues occur at Alderley Edge Cricket Club. Spare capacity at Chorley Hall football pitch. Alderley Edge Hockey Club cannot accommodate all of its future demand on current pitches. The Edge Hockey Centre is a key centre. Local sites include Alderley Edge Cricket Club, Chorley Hall and Upcast Lane (Chorley).

## Audlem

**8.3** The open space assessment for Audlem identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres section. Audlem have made a **Neighbourhood Plan** (12th April 2016). The relatively unspoilt countryside was important for people and the good network of public footpaths. The plan states: "We believe that it is important for all existing green spaces within the village of Audlem as identified by the community to remain as such". Policy D8 identifies important green spaces. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides information regarding outdoor sports. Audlem is part of the Nantwich analysis area. Audlem Cricket Club does not have security of tenure or practice nets. Audlem Cricket Club and Audlem Playing Fields are local sites.



## Bollington

**8.4** The open space assessment for Bollington identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Services Centres section. Bollington have a Made **Neighbourhood Plan** (10th May 2018). The Plan has various policies regarding open space and nature conservation. Open space policies deal with the protection of green spaces and the designation of various Local Green Spaces: LGS1 Bollington Recreation Ground; LGS2 Kerridge Cricket Ground; LGS3 Bollington Cross Youth Project Sports Fields; LGS4 War Memorial Gardens; LGS5 Adlington Road Play Area and LGS6 Coronation Gardens Play Area. Nature conservation policies seek to protect wildlife corridors and habitats. Five areas were identified as local wildlife sites of high value: Tinkers Clough, the Canal, Swanscoe Farm, Sowcar Brook, and Kerridge Hill. Residents appreciated access to the canal, riverbanks, Middlewood Way and surrounding countryside (Questionnaire Q4 1,874, 98.2%). Almost 95% of responses considered that the Recreation Ground should be maintained to Green Flag. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Bollington is part of the Macclesfield analysis area. Football pitches played to capacity - Bollington Cross sites and Bollington Recreation Ground. Bollington Cricket Pitch at the Recreation Ground is overplayed and would benefit from a NTP. Bollington Cross (Atax), Bollington Cross PF, Recreation Ground and Kerridge Cricket Club are local sites.

## Bunbury

**8.5** The open space assessment for Bunbury identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres section. Bunbury have a made **Neighbourhood Plan** (29 March 2016). The Plan wishes to maintain and improve the high quality natural environment. Landscape Policy Env 4 seeks to protect local views and vistas. The Plan identifies a Bunbury wildlife corridor which follows the River Gowy and its tributaries. Policy BIO 1 deals with biodiversity. Policy T1 encourages walking and improvements to footpaths. Green spaces such as Bunbury Cricket Club are included in a community infrastructure policy and formal open space is shown in Appendix A. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Bunbury is in the Nantwich analysis area. Bunbury Cricket Club needs security of tenure. Bunbury Cricket Club and Bunbury PF are local sites.

## Chelford

**8.6** The open space assessment for Chelford identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Services Centres section. Chelford Activity Park adjacent the Village Hall has a MUGA, playground, BMX track and picnic tables and barbecue facilities. There are many active local groups including the Bowling Club and Cricket Club. Chelford has a Made **Neighbourhood Plan** (Made 11th November 2019). In the Residents Survey many people appreciated the countryside and peace and quiet. Additional comments included the need for better play facilities, green spaces, improved leisure facilities and cycle/walking routes. The Natural Environment emerged as an important topic to be covered in the Plan. The Natural Environment section of the Plan looks at biodiversity and landscape. In the Green Infrastructure section of the Plan there are policies on recreational and green spaces and local green spaces. Local Green Spaces are identified under Policy GI 1 Green Space. As Chelford has a limited number of green spaces they are of particular value to the community. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Chelford is



in the Macclesfield analysis area. Chelford CC is without security of tenure as it currently rents its square on a rolling annual basis from a local landowner. The club also has no practice nets and has a standard quality square. Chelford Cricket Club is a local site.

## Disley

**8.7** The open space assessment for Disley identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Services Centres section. Disley have a Made **Neighbourhood Plan** (12th July 2018). Countryside and green space policies cover footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, local green spaces, nature conservation and trees and hedgerows. Community facilities and infrastructure policies cover allotments and play and recreation facilities. Disley see themselves as a gateway to the Peak District. Suggested Local Green Spaces are: LGS1 Village Green and War Memorial; LGS2 St Mary's Church Meadow (Woodland Garden by the Parish Church); LGS3 Bentside / Goat Road Recreation Area; LGS4 Land Behind Scout Hut; LGS5 Disley Dam and adjacent Meadow; LGS6 Arnold Rhodes Playing Fields. Important wildlife areas include "sites at Elmerhurst Wood, Knatholes Wood, the Peak Forest Canal, Lyme Park, Stanley Hall Wood and Upper Waterside Farm. The woodlands in Disley and Newtown are well connected together, and the canal is a highly valued community asset and an important corridor connecting a number of other local wildlife sites together". The plan suggests that part of Barlow Meadow (DW16) be released for elderly persons housing - this element was occupied by a garage/workshop - planning permission has been granted for 10 elderly persons units (17/1362M). The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Disley is in the Poynton analysis area. Disley CC needs improved training provision. Disley Amalgamated Sports Club is a key centre. Newtown Playing Field is a local site.

## Goostrey

**8.8** The open space assessment for Goostrey identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres section. Goostrey have a made **Neighbourhood Plan** (17 August 2017). The plan has a number of policies in the open countryside, environment and heritage section covering "green" issues. Policies cover biodiversity and views and vistas. Footpaths and bridleways are highlighted - Goostrey has a Goostrey Footpaths Group. Policy CF1 deals with Local Green Spaces: "Green spaces and wooded areas in the village settlement are limited and valued by residents. The spaces listed are special to the local community. The Bog Bean is central to the village and is used as a village green for public events such as Christmas celebrations and national commemorative events. The Bongs contains a popular tranquil riverside footpath and bluebell wood and is a area of high priority habitat and a local wildlife site. Racecourse Wood provides one of the few wooded areas adjacent to Goostrey Village and is an attractive residential amenity." In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire . question 12 asked: 'How important is it to you that green spaces should be preserved?', 99% of the responses said this is important. Policy CF2 protects more formal open space such as play areas and playing fields. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides more information regarding outdoor sports. Goostrey is in the Congleton analysis area. Goostrey Playing Fields is a local site with football pitch (11x11) and a small floodlit sand-based AGP.





## Haslington

**8.9** The open space assessment for Haslington identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Services Centres section. Haslington have started work on a **Neighbourhood Plan**. Current issues include plans for new equipment at Gutterscroft play area. Other recreational areas include: Clay Lane Playing Fields, Clay Lane Skate Board Area, Winterley Pool and Easy Access Trail/Walking Trail (accessed from The Dingle/Primrose Avenue). The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Haslington is in Crewe analysis area. Haslington Cricket Club experiences overplay - the installation of a NTP would cater for junior demand. Haslington Cricket Club and Haslington Playing Fields (Clay Lane) are local sites.

## Holmes Chapel

**8.10** The open space assessment for Holmes Chapel identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres section. Holmes Chapel have a made **Neighbourhood Plan** (18th April 2017). One of the key issues identified in the Plan was: "the need to provide and preserve sufficient open space in the Plan area for recreation, sufficient public footpaths and to protect the local environment". The plan contains policies dealing with play and recreational facilities, footpaths and cycleways, open spaces, trees, and water management. The Dane Meadow country park is an important green space to the north of Holmes Chapel. Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre and the Holmes Chapel Community Centre are central recreational facilities (partnership arrangements for both). The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information on outdoor sports. Holmes Chapel is part of the Congleton analysis area. Holmes Chapel Cricket Club - played to capacity; using floodlit disused bowling green at present for training; aspirations for expansion of senior play. Holmes Chapel Rugby Club need improved security of tenure. Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre is a key site. Holmes Chapel Community Centre and Holmes Chapel Cricket Club are local sites.

## Mobberley

**8.11** The open space assessment for Mobberley identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres Section. Mobberley do not have a neighbourhood plan but have a very active Parish Council and many residents are interested in green issues. Some of the village projects include the development of a Community Orchard and Community Meadow. Work has now commenced on phase 2 of the improvements to the Community Meadow. A series of interconnecting scrapes, beyond the existing ponds are being excavated to create new areas of year round open water incorporating island features and seasonal pools that will provide wetland habitat in winter for wading birds, whilst offering damp areas in the Summer for marginal plants (Mobberley PC Newsletter Mar18). The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information on outdoor sports. Mobberley is part of the Knutsford analysis area. Mobberley Cricket Club have some spare capacity mid-week and senior expansion plans. The PPS makes the following recommendation: "Ensure Mobberley CC can fulfil its future senior demand aspirations either through fielding teams outside of peak period or through the transfer of play". Mobberley CC is classed as a local site.



## Prestbury

**8.12** The open space assessment for Prestbury identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Service Centres Section. Prestbury do not have a neighbourhood plan but do have an active Parish Council. In the previous Parish Plan there were a number of "green" issues covered such as access to Parrot's Field, land management and path upgrades in the Bollin Valley and tree management. Playground improvements have been carried out and Parrot's Field opened up - 5,000 native bluebell and snowdrop bulbs were planted Autumn 2017 (Prestbury Parish Council Newsletter Autumn 2017). St Peter's church yard has also had improvements and the pathway adjacent. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information on outdoor sports. Prestbury is part of the Macclesfield analysis area. Prestbury Playing Fields is a local site. AFC Prestbury Nomads had raised £95,000 towards creating its own changing facility at Prestbury Playing Fields. Its overall target was £130,000 (PPS Assessment Report 2017). Prestbury Cricket Club is also classed as a local site. The new Kings School project within the Parish will provide new playing fields with a community use agreement.

## Shavington

**8.13** The open space assessment for Shavington identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Services Centres section. Shavington are working on producing a neighbourhood plan. In the previous Parish Plan green issues were highlighted as follows: "The importance of keeping the existing green spaces was emphasized, not only by limiting further housing development but by improving their quality through more flowers and trees, regular hedge and verge maintenance, local walks (with paths maintained) and leaflets / information about the points of interest". In their Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Draft **Neighbourhood Plan** there are a number of Environment and Community Facilities Policies. These policies cover footpaths, trees and hedgerows and open spaces. The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information on outdoor sports. Shavington is part of Crewe analysis area. Regarding hockey provision Shavington Leisure Centre is considered to have spare capacity for an increase in usage on a Saturday and offers a viable option for Crewe Vagrants HC, should the Club be willing to access a secondary venue. That said, the pitch will have to be resurfaced as it is currently unsuitable for hockey use due to its poor quality. Shavington Academy and Shavington Leisure Centre are both Local Sites.

## Wrenbury

**8.14** The open space assessment for Wrenbury identified a number of issues which are discussed in the Local Services Centres section. Wrenbury has a made Neighbourhood Plan (May 2019). The Plan has policies covering landscape, important views and vistas, the natural environment and biodiversity, footpaths and cycleways and local green spaces. Within Wrenbury Parish there is a wide range of flora and fauna in the Parish. 20% of the birds on the RSPB "Red List" are known to feed in the area. Wrenbury Parish is within the designated Meres and Mosses area Landscape Partnership Scheme. Over 2,000 species of flora and fauna have been recorded within 5km of the village centre (Wrenbury NP). Wrenbury is serviced by a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), the most significant of which are probably the Llangollen Canal towpath and the South Cheshire Way. The Cheshire Cycleway





also runs through Wrenbury. The Plan proposes four Local Green Spaces: LGS1 Primary School; LGS2 Wrenbury Recreation Ground; LGS3 Village Green; and LGS4 Cemetery and churchyard.

**8.15** The Neighbourhood Plan has the following summary regarding open space:

- Type 1: Parks and Gardens: Wrenbury has none
- Type 2: Natural & Semi natural urban Green spaces: Wrenbury has none
- Type 3: The Canal is considered a green Corridor
- Type 4: Outdoor sports facilities: Wrenbury has 1.78 ha which is a shortage of 1.2ha (40%), however, the available facilities are considered good or excellent
- Type 5: Amenity Greenspace – The village Green
- Type 6: Provision for Children and teenagers; Wrenbury only has 0.15ha, a shortage of 0.85ha (85%), but what there is, is excellent
- Type : Allotments : Wrenbury has none
- Type 8: Cemeteries & Churchyards:Wrenbury churchyard is full, requires more space
- Type 9: Accessible Countryside - no designated spaces at present, but access to canal towpath for walking only

**8.16** The **Playing Pitch Strategy** provides new information regarding outdoor sports. Wrenbury is part of Nantwich analysis area. Wrenbury Recreation Ground is classed as a local site - football capacity issues; improved changing facilities suggested.



## 9 Green Space / Infrastructure Requirements for Rural Areas

**9.1** With over 100 rural parishes Cheshire East has a variety of rural communities. The majority of these rural communities have parish councils with a few of the smaller ones only having parish meetings such as Agden. In updating the open space evidence for Cheshire East evidence gathering concentrated on capturing the main facilities in rural areas, such as school playing fields, parish playing fields/recreation grounds and play areas, village greens and other outdoor sport facilities. The Green Space Update 2018 Technical Appendices includes a table of the main rural sites by Parish. This was cross-referenced with information from the Playing Pitch Strategy regarding outdoor sports facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan process gives communities opportunities to add detail at a local level regarding green space.

Neighbourhood plans can designate Local Green Spaces and produce policies covering a range of environmental issues such as landscape, biodiversity, footpaths etc. As Made Neighbourhood Plans are part of the Development Plan there is no need to duplicate information. Neighbourhood Plans therefore contain the very detailed "green space" elements such as important verges containing bulbs to proposed wildlife corridors and various "green" aspirational plans. For example Calveley in their Made Neighbourhood Plan (20th December 2018) have the following policy 1.4 Canal-side Masterplan:

- "There is currently no public green space or community amenity in Calveley. There is a long term opportunity to bring into use a piece of open space that is in an attractive setting adjacent to the canal which could strengthen the village identity to the benefit of present and future residents. Whilst this peaceful site could provide many benefits it also has challenges including providing safe pedestrian access across the A51 for the majority of residents. A draft "Mini-Master Plan" has been produced that explores opportunities."



## 10 Open Space Standards

### Sustainability

**10.1** The provision of new green space and/or the enhancement of existing green space needs to be sustainable to leave a lasting legacy. Sustainability in this instance looks at delivering green space/green infrastructure to meet a community's needs now and in perpetuity for future generations. Once a green asset is in place it will need caring for through enhancement and management and it will need to be adaptable for a changing community's needs.

**10.2** Any open space is 'alive' and continually evolving and needs to reflect the current community's needs. Communities need to be fully involved in any plans for their green spaces right from the start and it is key that open spaces are of a sufficient size to allow future flexibility. Sustainability is important to ensure that limited resources are effectively used.

**10.3** For an open space to be sustainable it should be:

- Well located;
- Have good connectivity;
- Provide for a wide range of ages and community needs;
- Of a sufficient size to allow for future adaptability;
- Thoughtfully designed;
- Appropriately resourced;
- Use quality materials with a long life span; and be
- Designed with a clear understanding of and proposal for future maintenance.

### Quantity

#### Introduction

**10.4** The quantity standards are set out in the adopted Local Plan Strategy Policy SE6 Green Infrastructure (Criterion 4iii). These standards reflected the results and evidence of the Open Space Assessments and the need to plan for the expansion of settlements and the additional open space and recreational amenities that will be required for the additional population/local communities to support their health and well-being. In section twelve of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) under 'Achieving Well Designed Places', developments should "optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks".

**10.5** The average amount of open space per 1,000 resident population for the 11 major settlements was about 4.2ha (including all typologies). The open space quantity standards reflected this average. The Site Allocations and Development Policies Document builds upon the Adopted Local Plan Strategy July 2017 and looks at various detailed environment policies covering landscape, ecology, trees and green/open spaces. The following sections provide more information to support the open space policies and related topics. The Council are exploring options for the production of supplementary planning documents covering such matters as ecological net gain and open space commuted payments.



**10.6** The on-site provision, maintenance and management of green space/ infrastructure (open space (play and amenity), allotments/growing space/community gardens, green links (e.g. PROW), biodiversity, sports, recreation and leisure facilities) will be required in accordance with policy requirements and to make the development acceptable in planning terms will often be secured through Section 106. As well as housing developments, significant/major commercial developments create demand for open space facilities e.g, for lunchtime breaks, pedestrian access etc.

**10.7** The definition of what constitutes major development, when considering open space requirements, can be found in the Adopted Local Plan Strategy July 2017 page 393.

**10.8** Adopted Policy SE6 deals with green infrastructure and provides open space standards for new housing. In the Publication Draft SADPD emerging policy REC3 Green Space Implementation builds on this and provides policy guidance regarding non-residential developments and additional guidance regarding outdoor sport provision.

## Children's Play Space

### Standard

0.8ha per 1,000 population - kickabout area, landscaping and equipped play - centrally located or split between different sites (equates to 20m<sup>2</sup> per family dwelling).

**10.9** The figure combines formal and informal play provision. This amount of land could accommodate a children's kickabout area or similar facility and an area of play equipment/formal provision. It may not be possible to create a centrally located facility so a number of smaller sites may need to be created or existing sites improved/upgraded. The emphasis will be on creating a network of varied open spaces for children's play (all ages). The Fields In Trust Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play provide guidelines on minimum buffers required between open space facilities and residential properties.

## Amenity Greenspace

### Standard

0.8ha per 1,000 population - areas of open space for informal recreation (equates to 20m<sup>2</sup> per family dwelling)

**10.10** This particular type of open space for informal recreation required in association with new development will depend on the individual site's requirements, location and existing open spaces for informal recreation in the immediate neighbourhood. It could include important landscape and historic features, wildlife areas, areas for countryside recreation/country parks, general areas for relaxing and enjoyment and areas for visual amenity. Again usually provision will be on site but sometimes commuted payments may be obtained to improve nearby sites



for example at Lindow Moss, Wilmslow access improvements will take place funded by s106 payments. Jackson's Brickworks, Poynton is a wonderful example of a countryside facility created adjoining housing development.

**10.11** Children's play space and amenity green space can be combined to give a figure of 1.6ha per 1,000 population (40m<sup>2</sup> per family dwelling).

## Outdoor Sports Facilities

### Standard

Bench mark figure: 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population - which covers pitches, courts and greens and other miscellaneous facilities (equates to 40m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling) based upon Fields in Trust "Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play" 2015; usually a developer contribution is requested; the figure can be split into playing pitch sports provision (1.2ha)(guided by the Playing Pitch Strategy) and other outdoor sports (0.4ha) equates to 10m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling

**10.12** The figure above provides a benchmark figure as a flexible approach is needed for the provision of outdoor sports facilities. Provision is often provided off-site and in these instances commuted sums in lieu of on-site provision will be required. The Playing Pitch and Indoor Built Facilities Strategies support the policies in the Local Plan and provide guidance on the sports facilities needed for the Borough. Actual provision on the ground is steered by these strategies but the use of a benchmark figure for outdoor sports (1.6ha per 1,000 population; 40m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling) assists developers and the Council in determining in lieu contributions. This figure is also in line with the benchmark standards for outdoor sport contained in the Fields in Trust "Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play" 2015: 1.6ha per 1,000 population for all outdoor sports and 1.2ha per 1,000 population for playing pitch sports. The outdoor sports provision needs to be split into two parts. The playing pitch sports provision (1.2ha) is informed by the needs and issues set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy and through the use of the Sport England Sport Pitch Calculator. The balance of 0.4ha per 1,000 population which relates to other outdoor sports, such as bowls, tennis, athletics and other outdoor sports areas such as games areas, trim trails and jogging tracks, can be quantified with a benchmark figure of 10m<sup>2</sup> per family home. The Council may seek provision on site in the case of larger schemes, or through developer contributions where this will achieve a better outcome in terms of outdoor sports provision whilst still meeting the needs of the development. In the case of smaller schemes, the Council will normally seek a developer contribution towards off site provision.

**10.13** If there is an absence of local facilities in a community and there is a need for a new facility, this will be informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Built Facilities Strategy. Sport England have devised a Playing Pitch calculator to inform requirements. The use of the area of land required would depend upon the neighbourhood where the new development is located. In some areas there may be a shortage of junior football pitches, in other areas there may be demand for other facilities, for example a running track. For some clubs to progress and expand there might be particular needs in a particular location/area. Flexibility allows the development of outdoors sports from grass roots level up to providing





centres of excellence. The results of the Pitch Strategy will influence the requirement for a particular area/site. In terms of outdoor sport provision there may be capacity issues at a local facility and improvements can be made on site; there may be shortages in a particular neighbourhood requiring additional provision; one of the most important issues surrounding school and private facilities is securing community use.

## Allotments/Growing Space/Community Gardens

### Standard

0.2 hectares per 1,000 (equates to 5m<sup>2</sup> per family dwelling)

**10.14** The National Allotment Society standard is 20 standard plots per 1,000 (a standard plot being 250 square metres - this would equate to 0.5ha per 1,000 population). Often though the demand for allotment space has meant that a more manageable plot size for an individual or family to manage is a half plot.

**10.15** The popularity of allotments has increased in recent years, as people choose to grow their own food. Allotment gardening is a leisure pursuit that provides wide-ranging benefits. In addition to the advantages of producing good quality vegetables and flowers, plot holders gain the benefits of healthy exercise, fresh air and social interaction. Allotments also provide leisure facilities for those members of society that are under represented, or may feel excluded from other recreational pursuits.

**10.16** The provision of formal allotments is not the only option though to provide growing space. Many communities are developing community gardens in their neighbourhoods or using areas of open space for a variety of uses including raised beds for growing food or planting fruit trees. In some instances therefore general areas of land should be made available for growing food or for the development of a community garden.

## Green Infrastructure connectivity

### Standard

0.8ha per 1,000 population - green corridors or links to other open spaces (equates to 20m<sup>2</sup> per family dwelling)

**10.17** The need to connect open spaces by the addition of footpath or cycle links or wildlife corridors, or to allow access to adjacent countryside or country parks is a crucial part of creating a usable network of green space. It may be appropriate to pay a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision.



## Parks and Gardens

### Standard

Each community/town should have adequate open space/park provision, with a range of facilities, which serves the wider community and is a focus for recreation, civic and community activities. This relates to settlements with a population of 4,000 and above.

**10.18 Summary of Standards:** The combined standards - children's play space, amenity green space, outdoor sports facilities, allotments and green infrastructure connectivity- would give a total figure of 4.2ha open space per 1,000 population, though in some cases commuted sums may be more appropriate for outdoor sports and green infrastructure connectivity. The requirement per family dwelling would therefore be in the range of 45m<sup>2</sup> (children's play, amenity green space plus allotments) to 105m<sup>2</sup> (children's play, amenity, allotments, outdoor sports and green connectivity) per dwelling in areas with severe shortages in open space. It is likely that the total amount of 105m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling would be required on extensive greenfield and brownfield development sites and the amount required would be influenced by other available evidence at that time.

**10.19 Major Employment and other developments:** As well as housing developments, significant/major commercial developments create demand for open space facilities e.g, for lunchtime breaks, pedestrian access etc. On-site green space in commercial developments such as offices has included jogging trails or a kickabout area for outdoor exercise or the provision of green links to other facilities. Crewe Business Park was designed with various green spaces ranging from ponds and wildlife areas to footpaths and green links.

**10.20 Site Allocations and Development Policies Document:** As part of the Site Selection Methodology, used to examine the allocation of sites in the Borough, a sequential approach is adopted looking at brownfield sites first, then greenfield (including non-green belt and green belt) sites. If any sites involve open space then this is considered as part of the site selection process and open space is to be retained or replaced with a full quantity and quality replacement (equal or better) to accord with paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### Quality

**10.21** One of the main aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) is to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being and allow social interaction whilst encouraging the active and continual use of public areas.

**10.22** The Green Flag award criteria are a nationally accepted quality standard and were used in the quality survey of open spaces for the Cheshire East Open Space Assessments as outlined in the Open Spaces Introductory Report - sections 8 and 9.

**10.23** Natural England's document '[Nature Nearby - Accessible Natural Green Space](#)' states:



**10.24** 'The Green Flag Award has become the nationally accepted quality standard for all types of green space. Quality criteria are applied to green spaces to ensure that they deliver to their potential. This not only provides visitors with an assurance of quality, but can also help to assess whether the right intensity of management is matched to site requirements. For example, areas of high population density could expect larger numbers of people to visit the site, and require higher levels of maintenance. The Green Flag criteria can be used to set the overall quality standard for all parks and green spaces within an area, town, city or region. In summary these include:

- *A welcoming place* – The overall impressions for any member of the community approaching and entering the park or green space should be positive and inviting, regardless of the purpose for which they are visiting.
- *Healthy, safe, and secure* – The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues that arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately.
- *Clean and well maintained* – For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be adequately addressed.
- *Sustainability* – Methods used in maintaining the park or green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practices available according to current knowledge. Management should be aware of the range of techniques available to them, and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed.
- *Conservation and heritage* – Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of natural features, flora and fauna, landscape features, and buildings and structural features.
- *Community involvement* – Management should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community who represent as many park or green space user groups as possible.
- *Marketing* – There should be a marketing strategy in place that promotes the usage of greenspace and natural areas, demonstrating the benefits and explaining how to get to the most significant areas. This will need to be regularly reviewed.
- *Management* – A Green Flag Award application must have a management plan or strategy in place that reflects the aspirations of Local Agenda 21, and clearly and adequately addresses all the above criteria and any other relevant aspects of the park or green space's management. The plan must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed. Financially sound management of the park or green space must also be demonstrated.'

**10.25** **Cheshire East's Design Guide 2017 Volume 2: Residential Guidance - Creating Quality** contains a section on Green Infrastructure and Landscape Design. The section looks at green and blue infrastructure and how to achieve "quality" green space. The section on Quality of Life states: "Creating places of high quality provides individuals with a sense of belonging to a community". Achieving quality through good design is the overarching theme.

**10.26** The Government's **National Design Guide October 2019** looks at creating well-designed places. Two of the ten characteristics discussed to achieve good design are public spaces and nature.



## Accessibility

**10.27** The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) states that "patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places".

**10.28** Regarding accessibility and ease of movement for all individuals, major barriers such as busy main roads to cross and physical barriers such as railways need to be considered. Safe crossings of major barriers are required. Members of a community expect to access facilities within their immediate neighbourhood and this is supported by accessibility standards such as 5-10 minutes walking distance for children's play facilities.

**10.29** **Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)** set out in '[Nature Nearby - Accessible Natural Green Space](#)' provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live. These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have:

- an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home
- one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

**10.30** **The Woodland Trust Woodland [Access Standards](#)** are based on a similar principle of accessibility to the Natural England ANGSt:

- No person should live more than 500 metres from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2 hectares in size.
- There should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20 hectares within 4 kilometres (8 kilometre round-trip) of people's homes.

**10.31** **The Green Infrastructure Framework for North East wales, Cheshire and Wirral** under the section 'safe, healthy and accessible natural environments' suggests the following standard:

- All residents should live within 10 minutes walk (300m) of a safe, attractive and accessible green space; and
- Green spaces should be multifunctional with an emphasis on community activity and biodiversity.

**10.32** **Cheshire East Open Space Assessment:** The following standards were used in compiling the summary reports:

Table 10.1 Accessibility Standards

Typology		Standard
1	Parks and Gardens	Each park should be accessible with a travel distance of about 15 to 30 minutes walking (1 to 2km) or by sustainable travel methods



Typology		Standard
2 , 3, 5 and 8	Natural and semi-natural spaces, green space and amenity areas	Ideally 5 to 10 minutes walking distance
4	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Local facilities – 15 to 20 minutes walking distance (1km) or 20 minutes drive time if it is a strategic site used for regular club events/fixtures.
6	Children’s Play	5 to 10 minutes walking distance
7	Allotments	15 to 20 minutes walking distance (1km)

**10.33** In the **Adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2017** Policy SD2 Sustainable Development Principles contains a table regarding accessibility standards. Table 9.1 provides a guide to the appropriate distances for access to services and amenities. The distances are considered appropriate for the region and have been used for the purposes of informing the Sustainability Appraisal and the accessibility of proposed developments. The section on Open Space has the following standards:

- Amenity Open Space 500m
- Children's Playground 500m
- Outdoor Sports 500m
- Public Park and Village Green 1km

**10.34** The Government's 25 Year Environmental Plan discusses a cross Government project led by Natural England that will review and update existing standards for green infrastructure.









## 11 Implementation / Funding

**11.1** One of the key factors influencing future requirements for open space is future development of land and buildings, in particular in relation to the provision of new housing. Green space is best provided in close proximity to homes. As more houses are built, additional open space, landscaping and recreational amenities will be required for the additional population/local communities to support their health and well being. These open spaces should be provided as a consequence of developer provision or developer contribution by way of Section 106 agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy. The location of such land/facilities therefore may be wholly dependent on the location of future developments. Maintenance costs will also have to be included in developer contributions.

**11.2** The overarching reasoning and justification for requiring planning obligations, to secure appropriate forms of development which are supported by the necessary on- and off-site infrastructure requirements, are set out in policy IN 2 of the Adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. Criterion 1 of IN 2 mentions green infrastructure and Criterion 2 ii and 2 iii deal with capital costs and ongoing revenue such as maintenance.

**11.3** The requirements for the provision of Green Space/ Infrastructure for Housing are set out in Table 13.1 in Policy SE6 in the Adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. Criterion 4 iii of SE6 deals with the provision of open space and criterion 4 iv references Policy SC2 (indoor and outdoor sports requirements).

**11.4** The Open Space Standards discussed in Section 10 show the open space requirement per home and also show the equivalent figure in hectares (per 1,000 population) that is used to assess the amount of open space in a particular neighbourhood/community. The requirement per family dwelling would therefore range from 40m<sup>2</sup> per home comprising children's play and amenity green space – to 65m<sup>2</sup> per home comprising children's play, amenity, allotments and green connectivity plus a developer contribution for outdoor sports. It is likely that the total amount of 65m<sup>2</sup> per home (plus developer contributions for outdoor sports or actual provision) would be required on major greenfield and brownfield development sites, though the amount required would be influenced by other available evidence at that time. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to secure provision off-site, for example, where it links better with existing recreation/sports provision.

**11.5** Improvements to existing parks and public open spaces can increase their carrying capacity and so qualitative improvements funded from developer contributions and other external funding sources can be an important part of meeting open space needs.

**11.6** The implementation and funding of new development often involves a three-tiered approach to infrastructure provision, in this case green space/infrastructure provision:

- *Site related infrastructure* - negotiated and provided on site - for example local open space and landscaping; footway and cycleway provision; environmental improvements and/or enhancements; garden areas and sustainable urban drainage systems;



- *Neighbourhood infrastructure* - pooled contributions to the local neighbourhood/community - for example play areas, sports facilities, open space and publicly accessible green space managed for biodiversity; and
- *Strategic infrastructure* - pooled contributions authority wide - for example - strategic open space (contribution to a town or country park); green infrastructure (missing link to a right of way).

**11.7** The following is a list of possible projects where future funding could be sought apart from the individual requirements for the towns listed in sections 6, 7 and 8:

- Meres and Mosses Nature Improvement Area
- Dane Valley - flood risk alleviation; Dane Valley wildlife corridor
- Heritage town parks and open spaces of historic and cultural importance
- Bollin Valley
- Canal Corridors
- Weaver Valley
- Landscape Scale Partnership Initiatives

**11.8** The **CEC Green Infrastructure Plan 2019** contains updated information and discusses pinch points and GI opportunities. The Plan highlights the need for effective management planning, delivery mechanisms and funding to ensure that the existing resource or original investment in new infrastructure realise the intended benefits. Stakeholders in Cheshire East have a good track record in raising funds for GI and already have innovative mechanisms of using their land and corporate resources to improve the environment. The Plan provides a framework for further consideration of the priorities and mechanisms for taking this forward, including suggestions about the need to develop a blended-finance approach.

**11.9** Funding for green infrastructure can often be provided by external partners with some small percentage of Cheshire East Council expenditure required as match funding. Local projects involving a number of partners can expand community involvement in green space provision/use. Some sources of funding are listed below:

- Infrastructure Levy
- Section 106
- Lottery funding
- Landfill Tax
- Aggregates Levy
- Health Funding
- Direct Payment for Outputs
- Agri-Environment Grant Schemes
- Local Nature Partnership
- Biodiversity Offsetting
- Stewardship
- Sponsorship
- s278 (Highways) agreements
- New homes bonus Community Fund





## 12 Maintenance of Green Space

**12.1** Quality, well managed Green Infrastructure improves the environment and helps attract further investment. The success of a site or an open space often depends on sensitive and quality management. Much of our green space is managed by private landowners, for example farmland and waterways. Responsibilities for maintenance may change over time.

### New Development

**12.2** The funding for and creation of Green Infrastructure on a development site will be paid for by the developer. This will be secured by the use of S106 Agreements or, in some cases, the Community Infrastructure Levy. The future maintenance of Green Infrastructure is very important, to make sure that it is able to fulfil its function and that it continues to have a positive impact on the locality. The laying out and initial maintenance and management of open space, green infrastructure, sports, recreation and leisure facilities is the responsibility of the developer. The future maintenance of green space is very important, to make sure that it is able to fulfil its function and continue to have a positive impact on the locality. Satisfactory arrangements will need to be put in place for the long term management and maintenance of these areas in perpetuity.

**12.3** Usually all Green Infrastructure will be transferred by the developer to a "management company", the Council or other suitable organisation. Consideration of the most appropriate option will be made on a site by site basis, through discussion with the Council. All future maintenance will be carried out by this organisation and the developer will make sure that they are provided with adequate funding. Control mechanisms need to be agreed and established to safeguard the green space for the community and its users. There are various options available for the maintenance of green space but in terms of achieving additions to the network and safeguarding key sections for the community and its users there will be instances where the transfer of a piece of green space to the Council together with a minimum 20 year commuted sum may be the optimum way/solution. Areas of Green Space that have strategic significance may include a missing link in a strategic green network along a river corridor, green space with important nature conservation value or community playing fields. Where the site will provide or include some Biodiversity Net Gain under Local Plan Strategy Policy SE3 (and emerging SADPD policy ENV 2) a 25 years commuted sum may be more appropriate.

**12.4** Securing the long term future of newly created or enhanced habitats is vital to achieving a net gain for biodiversity. Therefore developers will be expected to secure the long term maintenance and management of any on-site or off-site habitat creation or enhancement works to ensure created habitats are allowed sufficient time to both achieve their target value and to ensure they are maintained into the future. Therefore, development proposals must include a commitment to implement management for a minimum period of 25 years which would be secured through a condition or planning obligation. A longer time period may be necessary where the newly created/enhanced habitats are of a type with particularly long establishment periods or are of particularly high nature conservation significance. As habitats subject to longer management are likely to achieve higher target condition, the length of time proposed as part of a management plan will be considered in the net gain calculation. The





Council encourages developers to seek to engage a recognised conservation body in the delivery of long term habitat creation proposals. The implementation of off-site habitat creation proposals will be secured by means of a section 106 agreement.

**12.5** There are various options regarding maintenance of green space. The appropriate options are:

- Cheshire East Council
- Charitable-status Management Trust for example Wildlife Trust
- Co-operatives and partnerships
- Community Development Trust
- Private management company/trust
- Voluntary organisations
- Parish and Town Councils

### **Examples of Maintenance by other Organisations**

**12.6** One example of a quality, well maintained open space is Weston Playing Field in the settlement of Weston which is situated in Weston and Basford Parish. This well used community open space is owned by Fields in Trust but managed by the Trustees of Weston Playing Field with paths, off road cycle track, wild flower meadow, equipped play for the younger age groups and caters for informal recreation and children's play.

**12.7** Another example of various bodies being involved in the provision and maintenance of green space is Wrenbury Recreation Ground: Wrenbury Recreation Ground Trust is a registered charity established for 'the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants'. The facilities include an enclosed children's playground, multi use games area, tennis courts, bowling green and football pitches. The multi-use games area (MUGA) was funded by the Borough Council and WREN. The Recreation Ground is home to:

- Wrenbury Bowls Club (Crown Green Bowls)
- Wrenbury Tennis Club
- Wrenbury Football Club

**12.8** Wrenbury cum Frith Parish Council owns and maintains the children's play equipment and pays for grass cutting in these areas.

### **Maintenance Schedules**

**12.9** Public open space maintenance schedules contain both the generic daily, weekly and monthly maintenance operations such as grass cutting and litter picking and also the one off items that will be required as necessary throughout the life of the facility, for example painting a fence in year 7/8 or replacement play equipment after 12-15 years.

**12.10** The maintenance schedule drawn up for a development should be site specific and based upon the agreed detailed scheme. The schedule needs to be submitted and agreed at the detailed planning stage for all on-site provision not transferred to the Council.



**12.11** Where any proposed on site open space is to be transferred to the council, a schedule will be drawn up by the council and will be used to calculate the costs of the commuted sum for maintenance over the 20 year period of the commuted sum.

**12.12** Where the site to be transferred forms part of an existing countryside facility or is for a new countryside site or an element of a wider open space site, the calculation of the commuted sum will be site specific and based on the countryside management requirements. Countryside management is undertaken by the council's countryside ranger service who carry out a wide range of specialised tasks in response to the specific needs of a site, including for example, habitat management plans, creation and management of woodlands, grasslands, ponds and rivers, cattle and stock management, community engagement, education, events and access, use and promotion of traditional skills. The commuted sum will be based upon the resources required for the countryside ranger service to deliver the site specific countryside management over the commuted sum period. Where sites are of particular or strategic ecological potential / value and the establishment period is longer, the commuted sum period will be 25 years.

**12.13** Maintenance periods do vary across the country. For example Warwick Council have specified a 20 year period as follows:

- Calculation of commuted sum for maintenance of open space provided on-site, where the land is to be adopted by the council. Arrangements will need to be made for the maintenance and management of any public open space to be provided. This will normally involve the payment of a commuted sum to the District Council. This will involve a site-specific calculation of the annual maintenance costs over an appropriate period taking into account the various components that make up the open space.

**12.14** Denbighshire County Council have a 25 year period and Harborough District Council specify 30 years ( an increase from 15 years). Stockport MBC are advocating 25 years.





## 13 Conclusion

### Recommendations

**13.1** This Green Space Strategy is a 'living' document that will require updating as more evidence emerges and more projects are envisaged. It is an important tool to promote green space across Cheshire East to create sustainable communities. It can help co-ordinate the various sections of Cheshire East Council involved in green space and partners and the community, to ensure that resources are effectively used and further investment in green space is obtained to implement the Vision:

- ***'To deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, which provides for healthy recreation and biodiversity and which continues to provide a range of social, economic and health benefits - above all a Borough that is a beautiful and interesting place to live, work and visit both now and for future generations.'***
- ***The focus will be on linking the various assets of Cheshire East's unique landscape - its upland fringes, Cheshire plain, lowland heath, parkland estates, rivers, canals and watercourses, valleys and cloughs, meres and mosses and its distinctive towns and villages.'***

**13.2** The following are recommendations to implement the Vision:

- Increase awareness of the value and importance of green space;
- Explore education opportunities in schools and colleges;
- Promote partnership working to protect, enhance and increase the Borough's green infrastructure/green space network;
- Make sure that everyone has access to different types of green space;
- Agree and adopt minimum standards for the different types of green space in regard to quantity, quality and accessibility;
- Make sure that the provision of new green space or the improvement of existing green space in association with new development meets agreed new local standards and secures adequate funds for maintenance;
- Work towards filling the gaps in the Borough's green spaces network;
- Look at the green space requirements of individual neighbourhoods;
- Look at rural access issues such as lack of access to the surrounding countryside; and
- Explore how to achieve a 'feel-safe' environment, particular in remote areas.

### Action Plan

**13.3** As mentioned above the Green Space Strategy is a living document and changes have occurred since the 2013, 2018 and 2019 versions. This 2020 update still provides supporting evidence for the Adopted Local Plan Strategy (LPS) but also supports the policies in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) and other supporting documents. The following list updates actions in the 2013, 2018 and 2019 Strategies and provides new actions that reflect on-going work.



Table 13.1 Action Plan

Action	Update	Partners
Production of a strategic core policy on green space/green infrastructure and detailed Development Management policies on open space provision and nature conservation.	Policy SE6 in the Adopted LPS; further policies in SADPD. There are further Environment and Recreation policies in the Draft SADPD. Options being explored around the production of an Ecological Net Gain SPD	CEC & ANSA
Preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations - there is a need for Cheshire East standards on open space provision and detailed schedules regarding quantity, quality and accessibility.	Policy SE6 provides standards; further implementation policies in SADPD; need for SPD on open space commuted payments	CEC & ANSA
Preparation of schedules for the Community Infrastructure Levy.	CIL being progressed; examination Autumn 2018. The Community Infrastructure Levy has been adopted and is being implemented.	CEC
Production of a Cheshire East Landscape Strategy to identify locally designated landscapes for example the Bollin Valley and the Peak Park fringe.	Cheshire Local Landscape Character Assessment and Local Landscape Designations Report completed 2018	
Assist the implementation of the work of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in the development of a strategy and the preparation of plans at a local level for bio-diversity - local ecological networks.	Work of LNP on-going; On-going work on possible SPD on Ecological Net Gain	CEC and LNP members
Plan for involvement in the Meres and Mosses Nature Improvement Area	Initial project completed	
Prepare a tree and woodland strategy	Detailed policy on trees and hedgerows and woodland in SADPD	CEC
Produce a Public Open Space Strategy. The Strategy will seek to promote green space, contribute to the creation of sustainable communities, co-ordinate the various partners, identify the needs of our community now and in the future and seek to address deficiencies in quantity, quality and accessibility.	Green Space Strategy updates plus GI plan prepared October 2019 - see below	CEC & ANSA
Green Infrastructure Audit at strategic level-mapping of "green layers"	New GI Audit being carried out by Mersey Forest for CEC. Audit completed August 2018.	CEC & Mersey Forest
Produce a Parks Strategy	Municipal Parks Strategy produced April 2016	





Action	Update	Partners
Produce and implement a playing pitch strategy.	Playing Pitch Strategy produced 2017; updated Playing Pitch Strategy 2019	
Implement the Green Infrastructure Action plan for Crewe.	Local Plan Strategic Sites reference GI plan for Crewe; Crewe Hub Area Action Plan also being developed	
Prepare outline green space strategies for the other ten towns to set the context for new development - showing strategic green space corridors, potential cycle routes, areas where there are severe shortages of green space and areas where there is lack of access to surrounding countryside. Some work has been started in the preparation of the town strategies for example in Middlewich where green infrastructure opportunities have been highlighted.	More detailed policies in SADPD; Neighbourhood Plans have progressed "green" issues	CEC & Town and Parish Councils
Continue to update the infrastructure requirements for the individual settlements listed in the Green Space Strategy as more evidence emerges particularly regarding population projections, town strategy consultations and proposed strategic development sites.	On-going	CEC & ANSA
Update the Open Space Assessments as new projects are completed or as new information is received.	Database of sites updated; Policies Map in SADPD will show areas of open space; work on-going; the interactive policies map shows areas of green space	CEC & ANSA
<b>Green Infrastructure Plan</b> - a plan for Cheshire East providing GI context and taking into account collaboration and partnerships; a GI plan that Cheshire East Council and others can utilise in support of both policy and delivery of projects. Plan to adopt a Natural Capital approach; This plan is a partnership plan being produced by TEP and builds upon the current available green evidence. This GI Plan will articulate priority areas for GI intervention and investment. It will be prepared to support Cheshire East Council and its partners in the delivery of strategic and local GI. The plan will be a dynamic "live" document that can be monitored and updated.	Green Infrastructure Plan completed October 2019	CEC and partners and TEP
Partnership work -To continue to work with partners, such as the National Trust, Peak National Park, Environment Agency, DEFRA, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and other organisations as appropriate to develop and improve the green infrastructure opportunities throughout the Borough	On-going	CEC & partners



Action	Update	Partners
Plan for an updated or new crematorium facility and cemetery to serve the southern half of Cheshire East and examine how to meet the funeral needs of an expanding and ageing population.	Cemetery provision policy in SADPD	CEC & Orbitas



## 14 Glossary

<b>Biodiversity Study</b>	A Study on the whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.
<b>Biodiversity Offsetting</b>	Compensatory habitat expansion or creation off site to offset any biodiversity loss in a development.
<b>Conservation Area</b>	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	This zone comprises land assessed as having between a one in 100 and one in 1000 annual probability of river flooding.
<b>Flood Zone 3</b>	This zone comprises land assessed as having a one in 100 or greater yearly probability of river flooding.
<b>Green Apple Award</b>	This is an international campaign to recognise reward and promote environment best practice and is for anything that benefits or improves the environment.
<b>Green Belt</b>	<p>A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims to keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped. The purposes of the Green Belt is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas</li><li>• prevent neighbouring towns from merging</li><li>• safeguard the countryside from encroachment</li><li>• preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</li><li>• assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land</li></ul> <p>Green Belts are defined in a Local Planning Authority's Development Plan.</p>
<b>Green Flag award</b>	A scheme that recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the country.
<b>Green Gap</b>	<p>Within these areas approval will not be given for the construction of new buildings or the change of use of existing buildings or land that would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Result in erosion of the physical gaps between built-up areas; or</li><li>• Adversely affect the visual character of the landscape.</li></ul> <p>Exceptions to this will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that no suitable alternative location is available.</p>



## **Green Infrastructure**

**A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities (NPPF definition)**

**National Planning Policy Guidance (see under Open Space for what GI can include)**

### **Why is green infrastructure important?**

Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services.

Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

- Key Service Centre** Towns with a range of employment, retail, education opportunities and services, with good public transport.
- Listed Building** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Buildings are graded I, II\* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures - for example wells within its curtilage.
- Local Area Partnerships** These bring together the key agencies within localities to ensure engagement with communities, provide empowerment opportunities and improve service delivery through the development of robust, evidence based Area Delivery Plans.
- Local Nature Partnership** This is a partnership of key agencies involved in the delivery of a healthy natural environment.
- Local Nature Reserve** Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by Local Authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.
- Local Plan** An old-style Development Plan prepared by District and other Local Planning Authorities. These plans will continue to operate for a time after the commencement of the new Development Plan system, by virtue of specific transitional provisions.
- Local Service Centre** Smaller centres with a limited range of employment, retail and education opportunities and services, with a lower level of access to public transport.



<b>Management Plan</b>	A plan for the detailed, sometimes day-to-day management or conservation of important areas, including nature conservation, archaeology, or historic sites, in order to maintain and enhance those special features or qualities.
<b>Multi-Use Games Area</b>	An enclosed area, using a synthetic grass or hard surface for playing sports, for example five-a-side soccer or netball.
<b>National Cycle Network</b>	Spanning the United Kingdom, the Network's 12,600 miles of walking and cycling routes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• scenic traffic-free paths</li><li>• quiet roads and lanes</li><li>• signed on-road routes</li><li>• themed long-distance routes</li></ul>
<b>Nature Conservation Priority Area</b>	An area close to the built up area and given selective management; their nature conservation value could be enhanced.
<b>Nature Improvement Area</b>	An area recognised at a national landscape level consisting of unique habitats that need linking, enhancing and restoring on a strategic level based around the "Making Space for Nature" idea of "more, bigger, better and joined".
<b>Open Space</b>	<p>Open space is defined in the NPPF as: "All open space of public value including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as visual amenity".</p> <p>National Planning Policy Guidance: Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 37-002-20140306:</p> <p>"Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure."</p> <p>National Planning Policy Guidance: Green infrastructure can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies. References to green infrastructure in this guidance also apply to different types of blue infrastructure where appropriate.</p> <p>Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 8-004-20190721</p> <p>Revision date: 21 07 2019</p>





**Park and Garden of Historic Interest** A garden or park of special historic interest, graded I (highest quality), II\* or II. These are designated by English Heritage.

**Previous Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17): Typologies**

- **Type 1: Parks and Gardens**, including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
- **Type 2: Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces**, including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands - for example downlands, commons and meadows - wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas - for example cliffs, quarries and pits;
- **Type 3: Green Corridors**, including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way;
- **Type 4: Outdoor Sports Facilities** - with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned, including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas;
- **Type 5: Amenity Greenspace** - most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas, including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens;
- **Type 6: Provision for Children and Teenagers**, including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas - for example 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters;
- **Type 7: Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms;**
- **Type 8: Cemeteries and Churchyards;**
- **Type 9: Accessible Countryside in Urban Fringe Areas;** and
- **Type 10: Civic Spaces**, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.

**Primary (Main) Typology** The main use or function of a site.

**Public Right of Way** A highway (Public Footpath, Public Bridleway, restricted Byway or Byway Open to All Traffic) over which the public have a right of access along the route.

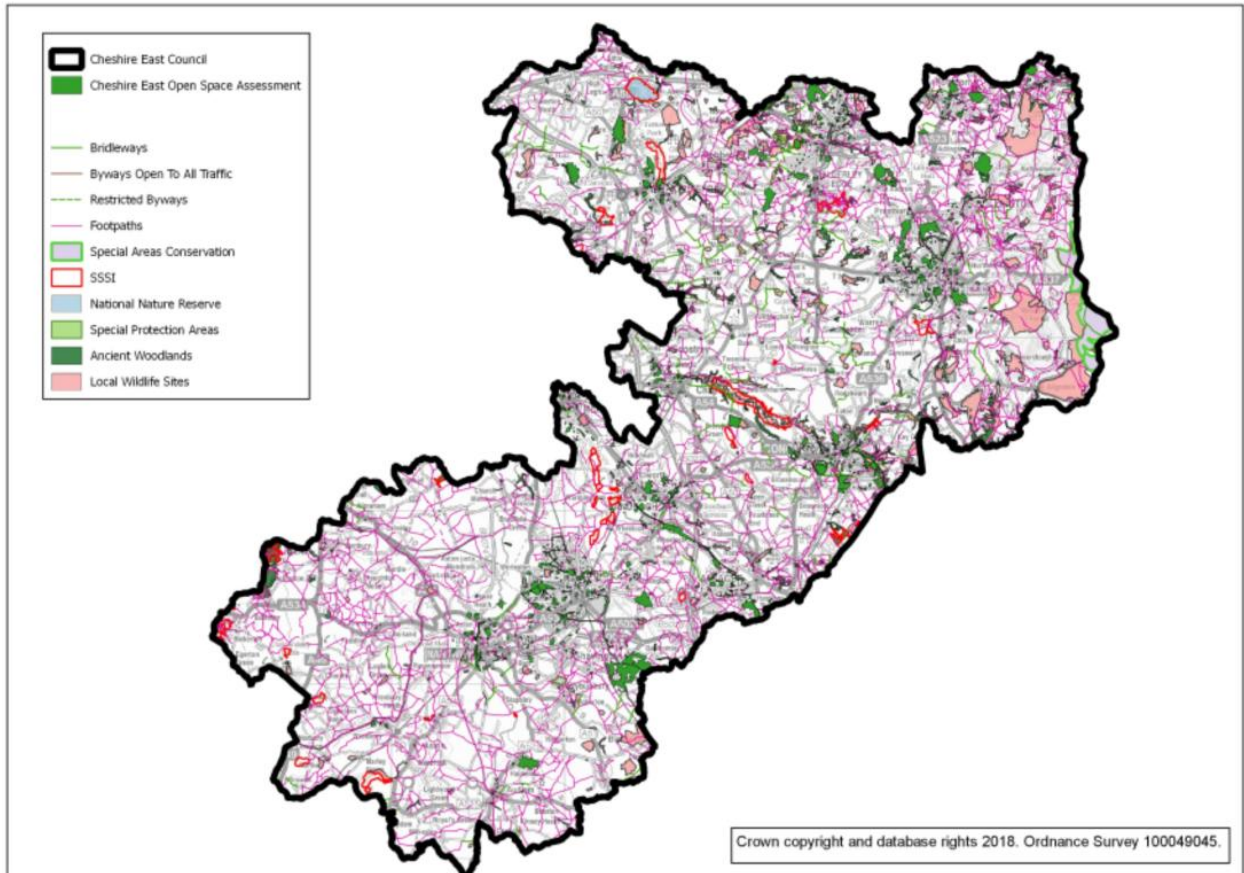
**Ramsar Sites** Sites designated under the European Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats.



<b>Regionally Important Geological Site (RIG)</b>	A non-statutory regionally important geological or geo-morphological site - relating to rocks, the Earth's structure and landform.
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, which enjoy greater protection against inappropriate development through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
<b>Secondary Typology</b>	The secondary use or function of a site.
<b>Section 106 Agreement</b>	A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a Planning Authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, which make sure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.
<b>Site of Biological Importance/Local Wildlife Site</b>	Locally important sites of nature conservation adopted by Local Authorities for planning purposes.
<b>Site of Special Scientific Interest</b>	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features - plants, animals, and natural features relating to the Earth's structure.
<b>Strategic site</b>	A key open space that often serves the whole community or several communities rather than just the immediate neighbourhood, for example a town or country park, wildflower meadow or green link
<b>Sustrans</b>	A United Kingdom charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more every day journeys.
<b>Vista</b>	A distant view.
<b>Waste Recycling Environment (WREN)</b>	An organisation that awards grants for community heritage projects.
<b>Wildlife Corridor</b>	Strips of land - for example, along a hedgerow - conserved and managed for wildlife, usually linking more extensive wildlife habitats.



## Appendix 1: Baseline Map



# Appendix 2: Thematic Map

