

Chester Area Action Plan Project Proposal Form

APB Theme

- Investing in our communities
- Developing a stronger, diverse and sustainable community
- Investing in our neighbourhoods

Priority

- Mitigating against the impacts of climate change
- Tackling poor levels of mental health
- Developing community-based regeneration / neighbourhood management solutions
- Tackling childhood obesity
- Improving the environment by capitalising on our natural assets, enhancing the visitor experience and the quality of the physical environment.

Project Title

The Countess of Chester Community Park

Project Summary Statement

(Set out the key objectives and activities you intend to deliver)

(Maximum 600 characters)

The aim is to create a new 29ha 'Community Country Park' in an area, north of Chester, adjacent to the Countess of Chester Health Park. This bid is seeking support for Phase 1 to develop the project beyond the initial investigative stages which have been successfully carried out

Start Date

7/01/11

End Date

Phase 1 – Project development/fundraising - Jan 11- Dec 11
Phase 2 – Delivery/construction/ongoing fund raising - Jan 2012 – Dec 2013

LEAD and PARTNER DELIVERY ORGANISATIONS

Name of Lead Organisation

Cheshire West and Chester

Contact Name / Position

Michelle Talgam - CWAC Chester Area Manager

Give details of any other organisations that will help to deliver the project and specify their specific roles and responsibilities.

Partner Organisation	Role of Organisation

CWAC	Project lead – Steering Group chair
Mint Green Environment	Day to Day – Project Management (PM)
Groundwork	Funding strategy and fundraising, stakeholder and public consultation
Blacon Community Trust / Sustainable Blacon Ltd	Public engagement and consultation, fundraising
Countess of Chester Foundation Trust	Landowner. Project support/direction, host for project manager
Western Cheshire PCT	Landowner
Cheshire and Wirral NHS Partnership Foundation Trust	Landowner
Homes and Communities Agency	Landowner

PROJECT DETAILS

1. Project aims and objectives

The aim is to create a new 29ha 'Community Country Park' in an area, north of Chester, adjacent to the Countess of Chester Hospital lacking in large-scale public open greenspace and with neighbouring deprived local communities.

The project builds on a legacy from the work already carried out as part of the North West Development Agency's REVIVE programme

As part of recent government budget cuts, NWDA funding to support the development of REVIVE projects has now been withdrawn.

To date NWDA has invested in REVIVE, to provide Stage 1 investigations, ecological assessments, constraints and opportunities information, topographical survey and initial preliminary stakeholder work by Groundwork. The REVIVE Team has worked hard to develop relationships with project partners.

Subsequent funding secured from CWAC's Special Project's team has allowed the investigations and a funding plan to be completed and has provided funding to for specialist support to develop the proposal further (e.g. consultation, design, and ecology).

All landowners (including three PCT's, the Homes and Communities Agency and a private developer) are now keen to support the project and are willing to see their parcels of land integrated into a landscape masterplan that maximises the potential parkland resource.

The project includes a former landfill site and adjacent biodiverse wet meadow, owned by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which when coupled with adjacent parcels of land owned by NHS trusts (Western Cheshire PCT, Wirral and Chester Partnership and the Countess of Chester Foundation) and a parcel of land to be developed and managed Morris Homes, the accessible area of the new 'Community Country Park' could be increased to 29 ha. The project would include the provision of multi user pathways, connection to Public Rights of Ways (PROWs) and cycle routes, improved links to Blacon and hospital facilities, a resource for health and wellbeing initiatives (e.g. trim trails, cycle schemes), enhancement and conservation of ecological interest, open views, improved existing features (e.g. hedge laying and localised tree planting).

The objective would be to develop the project in two main phases:

Phase 1 - 12 months - Jan 11 – Dec 11

Project development and management
 Landowner agreements – access , maintenance , long term management
 Fundraising
 Planning permissions - Car park, parkland
 Consultation – Stakeholder and public
 Community engagement/forum

Phase 2 – 24 months – Jan 12 – Dec 13

Project/contract management - ongoing
 Fundraising - ongoing
 Project delivery – construction, infrastructure and biodiversity improvements, signage, car park etc
 Ongoing community engagement/forum/volunteers etc

The funding requested from the Chester Area Partnership Board would contribute to the ongoing project management of the project which forms a priority for maintaining momentum, delivering the project and continuity.

Building on the legacy of REVIVE a project partnership, including a multi disciplinary Steering Group, has been established to take the project forward e.g. secure funding, negotiate access and maintenance agreements and deliver on the ground.

All landowners support the project in principle and are keen to see their parcels of land integrated into a landscape masterplan that maximises the potential parkland resource

The current draft landscape masterplan and the context image plan are attached as an Appendix 1a,b.

2. Intended Project Outcomes.

Please specify Local Area Agreement National Indicator targets (NIs)

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/partnerships/local_area_agreement.aspx

The project would have contributed towards several Designated Improvement Targets for Local Area Agreement **National Indicators** (e.g. NI 56, 141, 8 110, 121, 186) relating to obesity, positive activity, independent living, circulatory disease and carbon reductions

3. Project Action Plan. Set out the specific actions that will be undertaken as part of the project, identifying timescales and responsibility.

Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Stakeholder Consultation	Feb-March 11	Groundwork/MT/PM
Public consultation	April 11	Groundwork/MT/PM
Funding Application	Minimum of 3 (Expressions of Interest/phase 1 applications) submitted by March 31 st .	Groundwork

	Ongoing	
Landowner negotiation	Ongoing	MT/PM
Project documents (communication & configuration plan, project plan, risk and issue documentation etc)	April 11	PM
Memorandum of understanding (landowner access and maintenance)	Before Dec 11	PM/MT
Planning Permission – Car park	By Dec 11	PM/MT
Presentations to PCT boards requesting funding and formal support	April 11	PM/MT

4. Give details of other initiatives, plans and priorities relevant to this Project. This may include:

- **Local Area Agreements**
- **Sustainable Communities Strategy**
- **Involvement with other Board partners**
- **Involvement with other partnerships**
- **Relationship with neighbourhood action plans, parish plans, local strategies etc**

Local, health and well being links

Including pockets of Trust land within the project could provide wide reaching benefits to the public and the Trusts. For example, the creation of one of the **largest public health park** resources in the Northwest, potential **increase in the value of adjacent land and property**^{1,2}, opportunity to locate and promote, existing and new, **health and well being initiatives** to improve physical fitness and mental health, improved **multi user facilities** and pathways, improved accessibility contributing to implementation of **sustainable transport** initiatives and provision of a 'Country Park' within an area of Chester deficient in green space and adjacent to a community ranked within the 10% most **deprived wards** nationally.

Cheshire West and Chester Council:

The site is identified under a number of policy criteria including:

- **Feature of Local Importance (ENV29)**
- **Forming the Green Network – Urban corridors (ENV16 & 26)**

¹ www.activelivingresearch.org accessed 29.6.10

² S Lerner, W Poole. The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space. 1999

- Forming the Green Network – Strategic Open Space (ENV15 & 26)
- Forming the Green Network – Strategic Recreation Corridors (ENV26 & SR14)
- Forming the Green Network – Strategic Wildlife Corridors (ENV30 & 26)

The site is also designated as an **Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)**, a **Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)** and a **Site of Biological interest (SBI)**.

West Cheshire Growth Point – ‘The Growth Point proposals will help tackle West Cheshire’s housing challenges by balancing the need for growth and regeneration, linking areas of opportunity with areas of deprivation, providing homes close to employment sites, bringing derelict land back into use and creating more sustainable forms of development.’ The green space created will be at the heart of existing and potential extensive new developments delivered through the West Cheshire Growth Point Bid, close to the city centre easily accessible to neighbouring communities. The legacy of the landfill operations and the location of the site close to a flood plain limit the sites potential for hard end development hence its current use as low grade/partially derelict farmland.

The site will also contribute to the **Cycle Demonstration Town** status (Cycle Chester) bestowed on the town as the National Cycle Network passes through the site. This provides an opportunity to provide alternative routes around the proposed park.

Other examples of strategic links:

- **Natural England** - A demonstration project for the Health and the Natural Environment programme including potential to trial of a new valuation toolbox for assessing the benefits of Green Infrastructure
- **The Mersey Forest** – working in partnership with seven local authorities, including CWAC, to transform the landscape through woodland planting and the creation of associated habitats to produce long term sustainable benefits for the economy, people and wildlife
- **NHS Forest** - coordinated by the Campaign for Greener Healthcare. The project aims to green the NHS Estates by planting 1 tree per employee - 1.3 million trees within the next 5 years. NHS trusts can ‘twin’ with adjacent sites where the estate lacks capacity to plant sufficient trees.
- **National Cycle Network** – Direct links to the site from the Shropshire Union Canal towpath
- **Forestry Commission** – Health and Wellbeing. Trees, Woodland and Natural Space and contribute to the Regional Forestry Framework.

6. Explain how the Project will be managed.

The Project will be managed by tailoring the principles of PRINCE 2 as appropriate. Project Management Team to include:

- Michelle Talgam (executive/senior supplier)
- Kevin Eccles (Senior User)
- Helen Rawlinson (Project Manager)
- Beth Brockett (Team Manager - funding and consultation)

Additional project board includes representatives from Chester and Wirral partnership Trust, Western Cheshire PCT, Environment Agency, CWAC – Greenspaces, CWAC - Specialist

7. Explain how the project will be financed?

Total Project Cost	£400 – 700k
Funding secured to date	<p>£40k – CWAC Special Projects (completion of site investigation, funding strategy and 3x application, Consultation, PM (1 month equivalent))</p> <p>£30k approx – Funded through REVIVE pre project expenditure to deliver ecological surveys, Stage 1 Site Investigation/desktop survey and topographical survey plus significant staff time between 2008 and December 2010.</p>
Funding required	£9927

Please detail sources of funding that you intend to apply for:

Sources of Funding	Amount sought £700k+
Countess of Chester Foundation Trust	£2400 tbc in Feb 11 - Project Management in kind PM hosting (2 days/wk) and 1 day per month time from Head of Development
Western Cheshire PCT	£2400 tbc
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	£2400 tbc
Jubilee Peoples Millions	£50k
WREN	Up to £250k
Queen Elizabeth Challenge fund	£5-25k
Biffaward	£50k
Big Lottery	£40-500k
Environment Agency	Min £50k
Appendix : additional funding options attached	

Please include any other information relevant to the financing of this projects here e.g. contributions in kind, phasing etc

Phase 1 –Project development and fundraising (12 months)

Approximately £30k has already been spent on the project, funded through REVIVE's pre project expenditure budget to deliver ecological surveys, Stage 1 Site Investigation/desktop survey and topographical survey plus significant staff time between 2008 and December 2010.

CWAC Special Projects have contributed a further £40k post REVIVE to allow completion of site investigations, funding strategy development (plus 3x applications), stakeholder and public consultation, specialist landscape architect and ecologist support and potentially project Management (1 month equivalent)

A key priority is to secure the project team

- Project Management - £28,800 (£600/week x 48)
- Fundraising - Extension to the remaining resource (£10k approx) may be required should revenue not be available within funding applications.

At the end of Phase 1 land owner agreements, planning permission and funding and should be sufficient to begin phased delivery, from 2012.

Additional Inkind contributions:

- PM hosting (2 days/wk) and 1 day per month time from Head of Development at the Countess of Chester Hospital Foundation Trust (equivalent to £4500)
- CWAC partnership and area working service will be contributing in kind time from the Chester Area Manager and Community Engagement Officer (equivalent to £4,300)
- Steering Group participants – Quarterly meetings
- Environment Agency – Water Quality baseline monitoring at Finchetts Gutter

Phase 2 – delivery/construction

Phase 2 will be subject to timing and success of funding e.g. Big Lottery may take 6-12 months to secure other funding such as the Environment Agency grant may be available for spend within next financial year

TARGETS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8. Set out project baselines and targets for March 2010

Output/Baseline Measure	Position April 2010	Target position March 2011
Stakeholder consultation	n/a	Consultation completed and evaluation reported
Current site user information	n/a	Baseline user survey completed
Ecological survey, Stage 1 site investigation, topographical survey	Completed within the REVIVE programme	Possible further floral assessment of wet meadow
Intrusive site investigation/Human Health Risk Assessment	Commission as part of CWAC Special Project funding contribution	Report completed Dec 2010. Outcome showed that no further Remediation of the site would be required based on the desired end use (community parkland)
Water Quality Assessment by the Environment Agency	n/a	Survey completed and reported
Options appraisal/access feasibility statement for car parking	n/a	Travel/access statement completed. Discuss draft planning application and requirements further with Highways and DC

Funding applications submitted	n/a	3 preliminary submissions (minimum)