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Foreword from the Chair of the “West Cheshire Together” Partnership

I am pleased to present the first self assessment for the West Cheshire area. This document outlines our approach to improving the quality of life for all residents. It also demonstrates how, across the partnership, we are addressing our areas for improvement.

Our area is truly remarkable with a mix of urban and rural communities, industrial towns and market towns, heavy industry and leading edge new technology businesses, dynamic commerce and a strong agricultural and food economy. All of this is set in a rich heritage including our world famous city and wonderful rural landscapes.

We have gone through a recent period of tremendous change, with the establishment of a new Local Authority, Primary Care Trusts and a new Partnership. Our success in meeting the challenges of such change certainly places us in a strong position. Furthermore, all our partners bring an enviable wealth of talent and experience. Our track record of delivering high quality and efficient services that meet the needs of our communities is strong.

We are, however, not complacent. Our objectives are bold and ambitious, but wholly necessary. We know that the high quality of life enjoyed by the majority of residents is not enjoyed by all. There are pockets of disadvantage and deprivation that we need to address. We have an ideal opportunity to have a fresh look at the way we tackle these issues and put in place actions which will make a real difference.

Through partnership working, transparency and determination I’m confident we’ll rise to the challenge – our communities deserve nothing less.

Councillor Mike Jones
Chair of the West Cheshire Together Partnership

Introduction

What this document is for

This is a report outlining how we are addressing the issues affecting residents of West Cheshire. It has been commissioned by the “West Cheshire Together” Partnership (visit our website at XXXXXXXXXXXX for more details of the Partnership and its membership) with the participation of all key local organisations.

This document incorporates a wide range of evidence and has two principal aims:

1. To provide a summary of the issues affecting the area in order to inform future priorities and collective action.
2. To provide an honest assessment of the area in order to inform the external assessment of the locality.

Future Priorities and Collective Action – The Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the key document outlining a shared vision and shared priorities for the area. Its purpose is to enable the local public sector organisations (such as the Council, Police, Fire and Health) to work in partnership with other agencies and local people to discharge its responsibilities for promoting the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area and provide community leadership. It informs the Local Area Agreement and other key strategies and plans for our area. We are fully integrating the development of the SCS with the Local Development Framework Core Strategy through a common vision, a shared evidence base, shared engagement and shared consultation. This will ensure that our priorities are reflected in our approach to shaping our place.

To ensure localism and community needs are reflected, Area Action Plans are being developed. These will be reflected in the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy by December 2009.

This self assessment document will highlight a number of key issues which will be subject to further consultation and analysis between July and October to inform the final SCS and related plans.

Improving Outcomes – The Comprehensive Area Assessment

Comprehensive Area Assessment is the framework by which local areas are assessed on an annual basis by the Audit Commission. It replaces the previous regime of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and considers the collective performance of all local services rather than just the Local Authority. The key driver behind this framework is to improve local outcomes for local residents. By bringing together evidence across different local services, it hopes to be more effective in driving improvement than separate assessments of each sector can be.

The Comprehensive Area Assessment is also designed to be a risk based approach to assessment which is more proportionate than previous performance reviews. External scrutiny will be more focused on areas of underperformance and concern. In addition, rather than relying on external inspections, judgements will be made through ongoing dialogue and the sharing of evidence.

The assessment is structured into two parts; the **organisation assessment** which focuses on individual public sector organisations and the **area assessment** which focuses on how partners work together on shared priorities. The Area Assessment asks local areas to consider the following three key questions:

1. **Are we addressing local needs and the translation of these into local priorities?**
2. **Are the full extent of improvements and outcomes being achieved?**

3. What gaps need to be addressed and does this allow for future improvement planning?

One of the key pieces of evidence to inform the assessment judgement is this document. The following section explains how it has been produced.

Developing a self assessment for Cheshire West and Chester

We have taken a two stage approach towards generating this self assessment. Firstly, an initial self assessment was carried out between March and April 2009 to understand the key 'headline' issues and to identify any gaps in information. This was based on evidence drawn from key partners as well as considering information contained within key documents such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and individual organisational strategies.

The second stage involved carrying out a more robust and comprehensive self assessment between April and early July 2009 and is reflected in this document. The evidence base for this piece of work includes the following:

- Detailed discussions with local partners and thematic partnerships
- Latest performance information from the national indicator set
- Socio economic data relating to local communities
- Key evidence from partnership strategies and delivery plans
- Engagement with Area Partnership Boards to understand issues affecting local communities
- A series of local stakeholder events in June and July 2009 to understand the key issues affecting the area and potential solutions

A group consisting of key local partners has been established to support the development of this document and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is important to note that this process of self evaluation is an on-going process to understand the changing needs of our communities, to reflect their priorities and assess our progress in delivering outcomes against the priorities.

Cheshire West and Chester – The Place

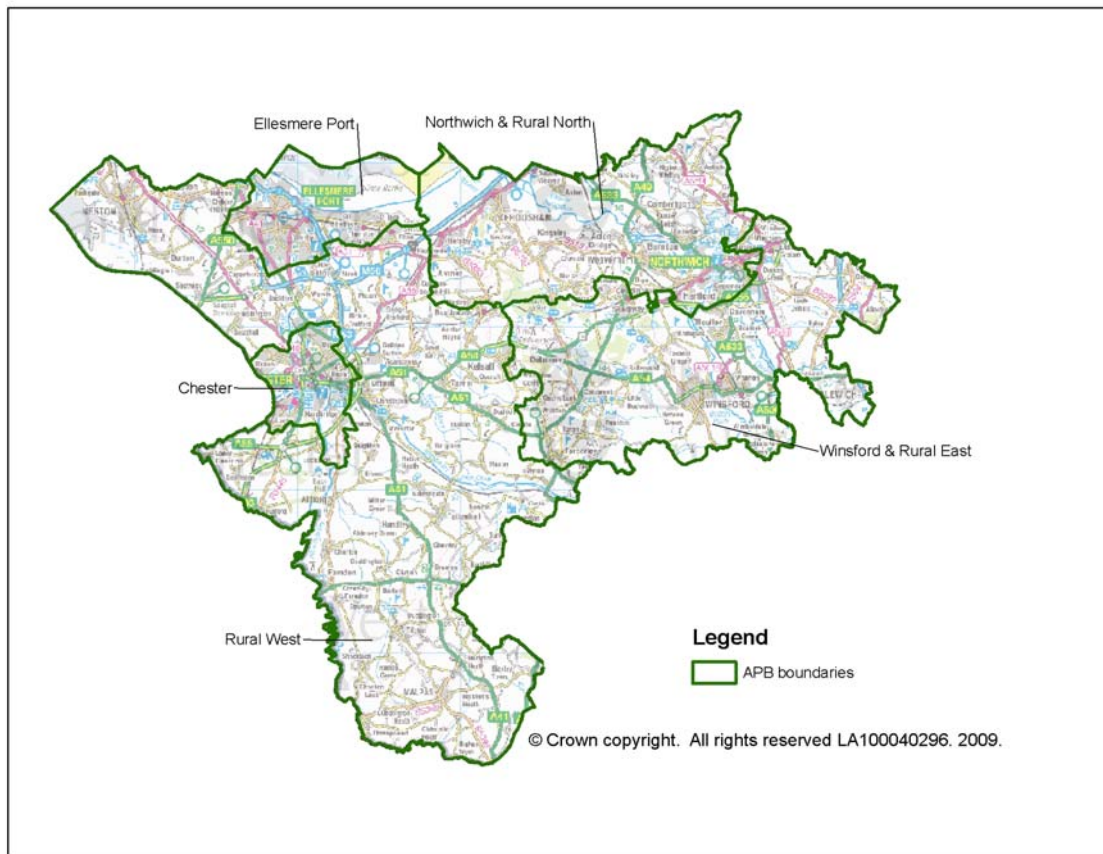
To understand the issues facing the area, you need to understand the place and its diverse communities.

Cheshire West and Chester has a population of 328,100 and an area of 350 square miles. In addition to 'East Cheshire', it is bounded by the Welsh border and the Wirral to the west; the Mersey Valley to the north and to the south by the Shropshire border. It includes the historic city of Chester, the industrial and market towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich, and Winsford, together with Neston, Frodsham, Helsby and Malpas. 32% of the population live in rural wards. In the 2008 Place Survey, the majority of Cheshire West and Chester residents (83.4%) were satisfied with their local area compared to the North West average of 76.9% and the England average of 79.7%. According to the Cheshire Community Survey 2008, 62% of respondents living in Cheshire West and Chester 'liked very much' living in their area with a further 29% saying they 'liked' it. 2% said they disliked living in their area.

The overall quality of life is very good for most residents. However, it is firmly recognised there are places, mainly in urban areas, where some communities experience multiple disadvantages.

Our population is getting older. 17.4% of our population is aged 65 or above (higher than the England average of 16.0%). At the time of writing, our population forecasts are being updated but the most recent forecasts suggest that the number of older people between 65 and 84 years of age will increase by 24% between 2006 and 2016, an additional 11,800 older persons. The number of people aged 85 or over will increase by 32%, an additional 2,200 older persons (a potentially vulnerable group). The number of young people aged 0-15 years of age in Cheshire West and Chester is falling. It has fallen by about 4,000 over the last decade, and is forecast to fall by about 3,800 between 2006 and 2016. Cheshire West and Chester has a relatively small proportion of people from a black or non-white minority ethnic background (about 10,700 people, 3.3% in 2007) however, this has grown from about 4,800 people in 2001. The area is becoming more diverse as we have seen a growing number of international workers and their families, many from Eastern Europe who work in and around the area.

Following consultation with partners and other stakeholders in 2008, the area has recently been divided into five units to ensure a more locally focused approach to service delivery. All partners are configuring their patterns of service delivery against these five units and coordinated their efforts through five Area Partnership Boards. Forward planning of the recent Place Survey by the legacy authorities ensured that the views of residents at an APB level are known. The boundaries of these areas are outlined below:



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Ellesmere Port

The area that Ellesmere Port Area Partnership Board covers is situated on the estuary of the River Mersey at the base of the Wirral peninsula.

The town has an industrial heritage, being dominated by the Shell Petrochemical Refinery at Stanlow and is home to the Vauxhall Motors car factory, the largest employer in Ellesmere Port. There are many smaller industrial outlets in this area.

Retail also plays a significant part in the town's economy most notably with Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet.

Ellesmere Port's original purpose was as a cargo port, with the Manchester Ship canal running alongside the town. The town's canal heritage is reflected with the National Waterways Museum, a major tourist attraction in the region. Indeed the town was built up around the docks.

The area experienced large scale growth and development in the 1960s with the establishment of council housing to accommodate new residents from neighbouring Liverpool.

The area is well connected to major conurbations with easy access to Warrington and Manchester via the M56 and Liverpool via the M53.

Contemporary Ellesmere Port has a main shopping centre, the Port Arcades, as well as its busy market. Attractions outside the centre include the Blue Planet Aquarium, the Coliseum leisure and retail park and Rivacre Valley Local Nature Reserve.

There are a number of challenges in this area including health inequality, low community aspirations, community safety – specifically arson and anti-social behaviour – and relatively high levels of unemployment with a lower skill base.

Rural West

Standing in Malpas looking north, the area of Rural West Area Partnership Board is seen as the expansive flat western third of the Cheshire plain, hemmed in on both sides - by the Welsh border and hills to the west and Shropshire to the east. Merseyside lies beyond the northern border.

This area is flat farmland interspersed with hamlets, villages and small towns, its pastoral landscape supporting one of England's prime dairying areas. It also includes the larger market town of Neston. Its location gives good access to cities, countryside, ports and airports via the road and motorway network and West Coast railway line. Transport routes include the A41 New Chester Road, built on Roman trade routes, and the Shropshire Union Canal (constructed in 1772 and one of the earliest parts of the canal to be built).

Places of interest include Chester Zoo, Mouldsworth Motor Museum, Ness Botanic Gardens, Stretton Watermill, and Beeston Castle.

Access to services is a key local issue with public transport having a role to play and the challenges of providing services in a large rural area. Other key issues include road safety, independent living for older people and vulnerable adults, activities for teenagers and affordable and appropriate housing.

Chester

The geographical region covered by the Chester Area Partnership Board lies upon a meander of the River Dee, bordering and overlooking North Wales.

The city of Chester has significant Roman heritage, and has the largest known amphitheatre and the most complete city walls in Britain. Chester is uniquely home to the Rows – two storey buildings containing shops, with galleried walkways on the upper floor – which run along the four streets that meet at The Cross.

Chester is the main administrative centre for Cheshire West and Chester Council, and also provides a base for private-sector jobs in retail, tourism and financial services. Chester's main private sector employer is Bank of America. The University of Chester was created in 2005, from the college established in 1839. The city has sub-regional significance and is a major centre of employment and leisure.

Outside the city centre are several suburbs, including: Blacon, which contains the largest housing estate in Chester; Handbridge, situated on the South bank of the River Dee and as historic as the centre itself; and Hoole, a popular residential neighbourhood, of mainly Victorian architecture, situated close to the railway station.

Attractions include the Grosvenor Museum, Chester Racecourse, Chester Castle, Grosvenor Park and the Shropshire Union canal, which leads into the River Dee.

Whilst Chester is mainly affluent there are significant pockets of deprivation in Blacon and Lache with both having been in receipt of neighbourhood renewal funding. The economic downturn is also being experienced in Chester with the resilience of the financial and service sector being tested.

Winsford and Rural East

The area of the Winsford and Rural East Area Partnership Board is bordered in the West by the Sandstone ridge and Delamere Forest and by Cheshire East. Winsford is the major town of the area and is home to Fire and Police Headquarters.

This area's heritage is deeply affected, like the Northwich and Rural North Area Partnership Board, by the salt mines and the canal system. The UK's largest rock salt mine is at Winsford, and today salt, or grit, is extracted to be used as a de-icing agent on roads. The most significant geographical features in the area are the flashes, also known as the 'Cheshire Broads'. The flashes were created as a result of the process of salt extraction, and

(vi) The Third Sector

The Third Sector is at the heart of our efforts for engaging and responding to our communities. The sector itself has recently established a Third Sector Assembly to provide a strong, independent voice and to exert greater influence in service development and delivery.

As part of its commitment to the sector and its place at the heart of developing more responsive services, the local authority has provided tangible support through the secondment of a senior manager to work for the Third Sector Assembly on a full time basis. The secondment will ensure the development of an independent Third Sector which is fully integrated and engaged in the Partnership and Area Partnership Boards and a dynamic participant across the partnership framework. The Assembly also aims to build capacity within the sector to take on a more proactive role in service development and delivery within a commissioning environment. A particular emphasis of this work will be supporting small and community based groups to have opportunities to participate in service delivery through 'Consortia' bid activities.

The Compact agreement between the Third Sector and the local public sector has been subject to extensive consultation and is about to 'go live'. It sets out a framework for better working relationships through shared principles, undertakings and actions.

(vii) The Private Sector

In 2001 the sub-regional Cheshire Authorities and the North West Development Agency put in place a Sub-regional Economic Partnership. The purpose of the Cheshire and Warrington Economic Partnership is to work with a range of partners in both the public and private sectors to develop and agree sub-regional priorities for the Regional Economic Strategy and where possible maximise economic opportunities.

The Partnership is one of the main routes for the Authority to develop linkages with the business sector. In addition, regular business events are held where private sector partners are invited to provide a steer to public sector policy development. With the help of major employers the Chambers of Commerce (Cheshire Chambers Enterprises) and small business representation groups, partners are given a unique opportunity to look at cross-sectoral issues.

Further engagement with the business sector is a challenge that we have attempted to take up with the current down-turn in the economy, recognising the urgent need for enterprises to be given access to information and sign-posted to the relevant providers. Businesses have been invited to attend events arranged by partners, to target business advice and assistance at the private sector. These events have been well attended and have proven to be a good way of making contact with the business community.

A greater reliance is placed on the private sector to help deliver many of the regeneration and development projects planned to help deliver the wider environmental sustainability agenda. Both in terms of new housing development (Growth Point) and larger urban regeneration projects such as Chester Renaissance and Northwich Vision we are working collaboratively with developers and development agencies to realise these major projects.

Encouraging inward investment and helping to retain key employers into the area places partners in direct conversation with the private sector; either through potential employers that are considering to re-location to West Cheshire or existing companies seeking assistance to maintain an employment presence. With the high number of financial service companies located in Chester there has recently been a high degree of interaction with this sector. Connecting with the private sector and working in partnership also helps us to target the skills gap, increasing the skills of people working in the area.

(viii) Engaging under-represented groups

A number of key projects demonstrate our commitment to engaging with vulnerable communities and individuals who are traditionally hard to hear and hard to reach:

- ☑ Victims of domestic abuse are engaged and empowered through a range of mechanisms through advocacy, support and multi-agency interventions. A Survivors Group also informs the development of services and ensures that the views of victims are heard. Outreach services are provided through Children's Centres and other localities.
- ☑ A project was run successfully with Relate, who were specifically commissioned to respond to younger people with physical disabilities and their families experiencing relationship issues. They provided a listening and counselling service to those at a point of crisis or before, and the outcomes were judged to be positive.
- ☑ Access to drug and alcohol treatment, has tripled with excellent support from the user development workers, employed by the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team.
- ☑ Carers: Over the last year the local authority has increased funding to the third sector in order for them to engage with hard to reach carers' particularly hidden carers. We commissioned a piece of research via the Race Equality Council and in partnership with Cheshire Housing Alliance to identify carers within the ethnic minority communities and any unmet needs. This work also included research into the migrant worker population and gypsy and traveller community. The Race Equality Council has held consultation events as well as feedback via a questionnaire. The outcomes of this work will inform the development of an action plan and implementation. We have supported a 'male carer' support group and we have reached young carers through schools and a range of publicity events for child care workers.
- ☑ Small businesses owned by black and minority ethnic communities find it more difficult to access information and support to cope during the current financial downturn. Credit Crunch events have been launched in Chester and Ellesmere Port as a means to engage with minority communities. This project is proving a model of good practice which can be used with other minority communities' businesses similarly disconnected from the mainstream.
- ☑ Funding has been secured for an Equality and Diversity Cheshire Leads Network which aims to develop a coordinated approach to communication and involvement of stakeholders and a sharing of knowledge in the development of Equality Impact Assessments and other equality related documents.

Improving Engagement and Empowerment

Whilst there are numerous examples of good practice; to ensure that the activity described above is coherent, coordinated and fully utilised partnership-based Community Engagement and Empowerment strategy is being produced in 2009. The purpose of the strategy is to:

- ☑ define and promote what we mean by engagement and empowerment
- ☑ demonstrate why we are committed to engaging and empowering our local communities and partner
- ☑ explain how we plan to develop this relationship by providing clear identifiable ways in which citizens, service users and partners can engage with the Partnership to design, develop and deliver services and the ways in which the Partnership will encourage community empowerment

Plans are in place to make the level of empowerment greater through participatory budgets and through community ownership of assets where appropriate.

Sharing Local Intelligence

In addition to views from the community, the partnership utilise a broad range of statistical evidence and intelligence to inform their priorities.

(i) Area Profiles

The Area Partnership Boards have each commissioned an overview document of their area with background socio-economic data and intelligence about the characteristics of the locality.

They cover many issues including health, transport, the economy, education and quality of life. This intelligence allows the partnership to better assess how it needs to focus its efforts.

Each Area Profile includes a section on disaggregated National Indicator and Local Area Agreement Data down to the local level. They also draw in MOSAIC Market segmentation data which provides further information about the nature of our communities.

The Area Profiles are living documents that are available on the internet to enable easy access for all Partners and the public.

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/build_section/community_build/research_and_intelligence/area_profiles.aspx

They also form part of the shared evidence based which is informing the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework.

(ii) Common systems – LiLAC and CO-STAR

Systems are in place to allow partners to share and receive information to inform their plans. Local Information for Local Areas in Cheshire is a searchable database maintained and hosted jointly by the new Cheshire local authorities and accessed by our local partners. The information has been collected from a variety of sources locally and nationally relating to population, social inclusion, employment, health and many other issues.

Co-star is a powerful tool being used to shape community safety interventions across the partnership. It has been used to shape the Safer and Stronger Strategic Assessment and action plans at Area Partnership Board level. The information it provides, such as the geography and incidence of crime, is shaping the allocation of resources such as Community Wardens and CCTV.

(iii) Joint Strategic Needs Evidence Base

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment evidence base provides detailed information from NHS Western Cheshire and the local authority on the main issues affecting people's health and wellbeing with Cheshire West and Chester covering areas such as lifestyle and risk factors, burdens of ill health and disease and services to children and young people. Updates to key information are sent to partners around six times a year to ensure evidence is up-to-date and trends can be analysed.

(iv) DORIC

The **Data Observatory and Research and Information Collaborative** is a major project to create a world class approach to evidence based policy making which will inform commissioning to improve outcomes for people across the sub-region. Over the next two years a comprehensive data observatory will be established which incorporates data from key partners across the sub-region. It will be supported by teams collaborating on research and analysis. A working group of partners from West Cheshire and beyond is currently moving this project forward.

Community Leadership

The role of Councillors is key to enhancing our understanding of community needs and informing our response. A significant element of Councillor time is utilised through their community leadership role. They have a wealth of knowledge about local issues and concerns. This is shared at community forums, area partnership boards, neighbourhood management meetings, surgeries and other public meetings. Members are involved in the development and scrutiny of policy through Policy Development Boards and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Members are now introducing their own websites and weblogs to encourage further engagement with the community.

Priority Setting

Informed by our knowledge of local communities as summarised above the Partnership developed an interim Sustainable Community Strategy identifying our key priorities. This in turn informed the Local Area Agreement negotiated with central government which outlined 34 Key Targets to secure improved outcomes against these priorities. The priorities are

outlined below and details of our specific Local Area Agreement targets are available on the Cheshire West and Chester website at

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

ADULT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the borough and sectors of the community.
- Improving local health and well-being.
- Addressing the key issues surrounding our tackling the adverse impact of alcohol.
- Ageing population.
- Intergenerational work.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and other areas of the borough and sectors of the community.
- Improving local health and well-being, specifically teenage pregnancy and healthy weight.
- Addressing the priority services for children and young people.
- Reducing re-offending.
- Tackling the adverse impact of alcohol.
- Increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training
- Looked after children.
- Intergenerational work.

STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the borough and sectors of the community.
- Reducing re-offending.
- Tackling the adverse impact of alcohol.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour, arson and criminal damage.
- Addressing domestic abuse.
- Community cohesion.
- Equality and diversity – mainstreaming the six statutory duties.

JOBS AND ENTERPRISE

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the borough and sectors of the community.
- Reducing worklessness and improved skills.
- Reducing the risk of industrial and commercial emergencies.
- Culture, tourism and heritage.
- Recession responses.
- Progressing any MAA opportunities around the economy/MDA.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the county and sectors of the community.
- Improving road safety, maintenance and environmental cleanliness and maintaining an efficient transport network.
- Achieving sustainable management of waste resources.
- Responding to the challenge of climate change.
- Addressing housing needs for all sections of the community

These priorities have been linked to individual partner's plans to ensure strategic consistency and the targets have been disaggregated to Area Partnership Board level (and below) to support a more local and targeted approach to improvement. Lead and supporting partners

have been identified to ensure leadership, accountability and deliverability for each of our outcomes. Indicator Delivery Plans have been produced to plan the collective actions to improve performance. A method of 'results-based accountability' has been used during our performance planning process to 'turn the curve' on issues where we want to make a difference.

We recognise, however, that priorities change over time and the degree of consultation and evidence gathering we would like to have carried out to inform our plans could be greater. We are therefore developing a new Sustainable Community Strategy for the area which will be consulted on between July and October 2009. The ten year strategy will be completed in November and will inform the Local Area Agreement refresh process. In addition, our allocation of the Area Based Grant will be aligned to our new priorities from 2010/11 onwards in line with a new Strategic Commissioning Framework.

DRAFT

2. Are the full extent of improvements and outcomes being achieved?

Partners are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for the residents of the area and we have a good track record of delivering high quality and highly-valued public services that make a real difference to the quality of life of local residents. Objectively our performance in delivering these services is now measured by a new suite of national indicators to assess; across the public sector and across the area, exactly what improved outcomes.

We are building on this success and tackling areas for improvement. Overall our achievement against LAA designated targets at the end of 2008/09 shows improvement but it is not where we want it to be.

Total number of indicators:	34
Total number of indicators that can be assessed RAG:	21
% of indicators that are green:	52%
% of indicators that are amber:	5%
% of indicators that are red:	43%










By Thematic Partnership:	☹️	😐	😊	%	%	%
Safer and Stronger Communities:	1	0	4	20	0	80
Health and Wellbeing:	4	1	4	45	10	45
Children and Young People:	1	0	1	50	0	50
Business Enterprise and Culture:	0	0	1	0	0	100
Environmental Sustainability:	3	0	1	75	0	25
Totals:	9	1	11	43	5	52

To some extent this picture obscures our areas of good practice and our LAA targets were chosen as they were long-standing areas for improvement. The targets are also stretching to ensure we make the best possible progress over time. Clearly, all of the data is not available at this stage, due to how and when it is collected, and the overall picture may change. It is also worth emphasising that this is inherited performance and the new partnership is already putting in place actions to support improvement.

The following section provides a more comprehensive picture of each Theme and demonstrates our firm prospects for improvement.

Adult Health and Wellbeing

The LAA position – Performance Summary

National Indicator	Improvement Target 2008/09	Lead Partner	Outturn 2008/09	Performance
NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation	25.4%	Cheshire West & Chester	26.1%	
NI 120 All-age all cause mortality rate (based on Western Cheshire PCT)	Male: 640 Female: 462	NHS Western Cheshire	M: 672.3 F:508.1	
NI 121 Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75 (based on Western Cheshire PCT)	61.88		72.1	
	(a) No. of 4 week smoking quitters who attended NHS Stop Smoking Services: 1,815 (b) Population aged 16+: 93,906 (c) Smoking quitters per 100,000 population aged 16 & over: 936		893	
NI 125 Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/intermediate care	None set		NHS Western Cheshire; Cheshire West & Chester	61.1%
NI 130 Social care clients receiving Self Directed Support (direct payments and individual budgets - adults all ages)	720 people	Cheshire West & Chester	773 people	
NI 135 Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	47%			
NI 141 % of vulnerable people achieving independent living	68%			
NI 142 % of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	98.7%			
NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation	63		27	

All-Age All Cause Mortality rate (NI 120):

According to the latest benchmarking data, there is only information available on this indicator for five comparator Health Trust's, excluding NHS Western Cheshire. On this basis, the best score was 145 (Oxfordshire) and the worst score was 1233 (Cumbria). NHS Western Cheshire's score is reported separately for males and females, as per government requirements. For males, the reported score was 672, against a target of 640. For females, the score was 508 against a target of 462.

Although the reported scores have failed to meet the targets, NHS Western Cheshire have calculated 2008 rates using 2008 data from local files with 2007 population estimates, therefore this is a provisional position. Current guidance specifies "two standard deviations from plan as underachievement, and three standard deviations as fail", i.e. although the

targets have not been met, they are not considered to have 'failed' because they are within an acceptable level of tolerance.

Due to these factors the figure for males is estimated to achieve the planned target, with 95% confidence limits of 633 and 713 and females is estimated to fail the planned target with confidence limits of 462 and 557. The final 2008 position is due to be published December 2009.

In recent years Western Cheshire has been flagged 'red' in the local health profiles for life expectancy, despite life expectancy being relatively high. This is due to a slow rate of change and a 13 year gap between the least and most deprived areas. The PCT has identified closing this gap as one of its main goals. The following initiatives are intended to have a positive effect on life expectancy:

- Staying Healthy for Longer project
- Western Cheshire Health Check
- Alcohol Harm Reduction screening
- Redesigned Stop Smoking services
- Step-by-Step weight management service
- The Target Well-Being programme
- HPV vaccination against cervical cancer; bowel cancer screening
- Reduction in use of sun-beds by children and young people.
- Amplifying the message from the National Change for Life campaign

As much of this work is long term it needs to be recognised that some projects may not yield results for a number of years. In addition to the above, there is a range of related projects currently being undertaken by partner organisations to increase healthy lifestyles.

Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75 (NI 121):

Benchmarking information covers 15 areas for this indicator, including Cheshire West and Chester. The best score is 62 (Bournemouth), the worst score is 120 (Sandwell). The authorities score is 72, placing it on the threshold of quartile 1 / quartile 2, and giving it a rank of 5. The target was 62. Despite this not being achieved, NHS Western Cheshire will 'underachieve', rather than 'fail', this indicator due to standard deviation tolerance levels and confidence limits (this issue is referenced in more detail under NI 120). The final 2008 position is due to be published December 2009.

It must be noted that the assessment of NI121 is not in line with the equivalent Vital Sign (VSB02) as the Vital Sign is assessed using a three year pooled rate. This position will not resolve due to the different calculation methods used by the two targets. Caution needs to be exercised when interpreting single year data due to potential data errors, and anomalies. It would be useful if action could be taken to align the LAA and Vital Signs target to ensure consistent reporting of this target.

Schemes such as Western Cheshire Health Check and other interventions, aim to reduce mortality rates from heart disease, stroke and related diseases by at least 40% in people under 75 by 2014. The partnership are planning for a 50% reduction in the inequalities gap across Western Cheshire. Key actions are:

- The commissioning of an 'industrially scaled and systematically applied' vascular screening programme
- Work with primary care teams to ensure that cardiovascular disease risk registers are accurate
- Commissioning of appropriate lifestyle services

Stopping smoking (NI123):

Benchmarking information is available for 11 local areas for this indicator. The best score is 3102 (Warwickshire), the worst score is 525 (Bournemouth). West Cheshire's score is 893 with a target of 936.

Following a visit from the National Support Team for Tobacco Control in December 2007, the local stop smoking service model was fundamentally revised and a new specification developed which was introduced in April 2008. During the turnaround of the service, activity fell below plan in quarter 1, in subsequent quarters activity increased and was above plan for quarters 2 and 3. However, the shortfall in quarter one was never recovered hence the underachievement of the target for 2008-09. Progress in the service during 2008-09 has been promising and provides assurance that the targets for 2009-10 will be achieved. This target is also related to the work of the Western Cheshire Tobacco Alliance, whereby all partners need to work closely to reduce the acceptability of smoking and thereby reduce the prevalence of smoking in Western Cheshire.

Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/intermediate care (NI 125):

This is new indicator for 2008/09. Our performance against this indicator shows significant room for improvement. The level of performance is reflected in the benchmarking information which places the area in 41st position out of a total of 43 local authorities of all types.

Data collection for the indicator is resource intensive and systems are being improved to ensure that it is measured accurately. The current personalisation of adult social care and the transforming communities programme outlined below are priorities for the Partnership and will be critical in improving this outcome.

Social care clients receiving Self Directed Support (NI 130): The target has been comfortably achieved in this area. In 2008/09 this indicator counted people in receipt of Direct Payments. Against a target of 745 people, the 2008/09 outturn was 773 people. Against the 10 comparators for whom benchmarking information is available, we are ranked 3rd on this indicator.

In 2009/10 the definition has changed to count the number of people in receipt of Self Directed Support, for which there is a lengthy and detailed criteria. This is a very significant change but will reflect our drive to personalise social care, and place far more choice and control in the hands of the service user. From August 2009, personal budgets will 'go live' across the borough and we are confident that we will continue to meet our ambitious targets in 2009/10 and beyond.

Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information (NI 135) The performance against this indicator is very high. Against a target of 45%, the 2008/09 outturn was 50%. This level of performance is reflected in the benchmarking information which places us in 1st (top) position out of a total of 52 local authorities of all types.

Prospects for further improvement are good. There is a review underway to increase the effectiveness of the Carer's Grant and the Carers Strategy that is currently being drafted will ensure we further strengthen the support we offer to carers.

Excellent Practice

The following areas of excellent practice relating to this theme have been identified by the Partnership:

- The World Class Commissioning report recognised NHS Western Cheshire as moving from turnaround to transformation with an ambitious vision underpinned by clear processes structures and working practices.
- Extra Care Housing Strategy: Health and Wellbeing is being promoted by having a wide range of communal facilities to promote "active ageing". These facilities, funded through PFI arrangements, include a health suite for exercise activity, a library and internet facility, craft and activity space as well as a multi purpose "village hall" space.
- Data Sharing and Supporting You Programme: This involves sharing information and assessments on older people between the Fire and Rescue Service and health and social care partners. When conducting fire safety checks, the Fire Service carry out contact assessments with resident over-65. The contact assessment is the first stage of the

Single Assessment Process which is a national initiative to ensure that every over 65 year old is assessed for needs such as mobility aids, meals on wheels, or support with tasks such as shopping or gardening. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, on behalf of the partnership and Age Concern, have a target to complete 5000 contact assessments a year. In Cheshire Age Concern operate a Service Level Agreement for Social Care as intermediary support service and the first stage of assessment through the 'Supporting You' programme. Our partnership work in this area, working with Health and Social Care has seen us as having the first Fire and Rescue Service to share data which is allowing us to surgically target vulnerable clients. Even though a large proportion of those assessed do not need support the objective is to assess everyone over 65. The benefits to those who are vulnerable are significant. One outcome is that since the beginning of the partnership two years ago and as a result of contact assessments older people's benefits have increased by **£4.5 million**. Last year Age Concern processed 2454 requests for support from the Fire Service, ranging from requests for information to specific support requests such as help with financial management and the provision of benefits. From 2454 contact assessments completed 891 clients (36%) received direct action or support from Age Concern as part of their 'Supporting You' programme. As part of the Department of Work and Pensions Link Age programme, a team is coming to look in more detail at our model.



- ☑ The Drug and Alcohol Action Team continues to be considered by national standards to be performing highly.
- ☑ 2008 / 2009 saw the opening of three Independent Living Centres providing a range of services to all ages with some form of disability or sensory impairment and their carers, also to professionals from Social Care and Health. These resource centres are focal points and provide a host of opportunities and services. This includes assessment for equipment, equipment demonstration and retail, training in the use of equipment and other disability training programmes. The locally based centres also offer information advice service plus support. The facilities are resourced to provide members of the public access to Web based information in addition to literature. These facilities are proving to be extremely popular, and they will be fully developed over the next year.
- ☑ The Learning Resource Network is a partnership between the local authorities and the private and voluntary social care employers in Cheshire to develop the social care workforce. It has developed a joint workforce strategy and is addressing three key areas:
 - workforce planning
 - recruitment of the future workforce
 - developing and qualifying the current workforce
- ☑ The target for Direct Payments has been exceeded, especially for older people and the local authority remains national leaders in the field of direct payments for those with mental health issues.
- ☑ Support for Carers: The needs of carers are being enhanced via newly commissioned Urgent Care Centres and crisis response services, plus a range of other carer respite initiatives. A carers 'Menu of Services' has been launched, which offers carers a one stop guide to services in the area. Over the last year we have increased funding to the third sector in order for them to engage with hard to reach carers' particularly hidden carers. We commissioned a piece of research via the Race Equality Council and in partnership with Cheshire Housing Alliance to identify ethnic minority carers and any unmet needs. This work also included research into the migrant worker population and gypsy and traveller community. The Race Equality Council has held consultation events as well as feedback via a questionnaire we await the outcomes of this work to develop an action plan and implementation.
- ☑ Joint Commissioning has been advanced and made a number of shared appointment between the Local Authority and NHS Western Cheshire including the Director of Health and Social Care.

Tackling Areas For Improvement

(i) Health inequalities

Children and Young People

The LAA position – Performance Summary

National Indicator	Improvement Target 2008/09	Lead Partner	Outturn 2008/09	Performance
NI 56 Obesity in primary school age children in Year 6 (based on Western Cheshire PCT)	17.9%	NHS Western Cheshire	17.5%	
NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities	Not set	Connexions (Cheshire West & Chester)	70.2%	No target set - N/A
NI 111 First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (2007/08 baseline of 557 with an overall 6% reduction by 2009/10 target)	Not set	Cheshire Youth Offending Team	Unavailable	Data not available until September 2009 - N/A
NI 112 Under 18 conception rate	Countywide: 32% reduction	Cheshire West & Chester	Unavailable	Data not available until February 2010 - N/A
NI 115 Substance misuse by young people	Not set	Cheshire West & Chester	12.2%	No target set - N/A
NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment and training (NEET)	4.1%	Connexions (Cheshire West & Chester)	5.4%	

The majority of outcomes for children are consistently above the national average. We recognise, however, that more can be done to ensure we narrow the gap in these outcomes between our communities.

Clearly, the picture above is only partial and four out of the six targets cannot be assessed at this time. However, through the use of other information and proxy data the thematic partnership is clear on its performance.

Childhood Obesity (NI 56) – In its health profile for Cheshire West and Chester, the Department of Health stated that “the health of children and young people is generally better than or similar to the England average” and that at 8.1%, Cheshire West and Chester has 15.6% less obese children than the England average and is 50% better than the worst performing authority. 2007/08 performance against NI56 represented an 11.6% improvement on the previous year and a number of initiatives including free swims, walking buses, walking assemblies and the development of a series of cycling activities, as part of Chester’s cycling demonstration town status, are planned to achieve further improvements to this outcome.

Young People’s Participation in Positive Activities (NI 110)– Health profiles indicate that in 2007/08, 91.2% of 5-16 year olds were spending at least 2 hours per week on high quality PE and school sport. This was significantly higher than the England average and some 17.7% higher than the worst performing authority. Benchmarking comparisons show that Cheshire West and Chester’s performance was ranked 34th, 2nd quartile, against the 67 authorities submitting comparable data. Although official data will not be available until the publication of TellUs4 survey results in February 2010, targets to increase participation in areas such as the Youth Parliament, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and the Sport Unlimited programme have been set and are being monitored in-year.

First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (NI 111) – In 2007/08 Cheshire West and Chester had 557 first time entrants to the youth justice system and has targeted a reduction of 28 in 2009/10 and a further 6 in 2010/11, part of a 6% overall target reduction by March 2011. In January 2007 the Chief Inspector of Probation “found an extremely well managed youth offending team” with “performance management a strong feature”. Further inspections of this area of activity are planned for July and August 2009. The authority and its partners are also submitting a bid to the DCSF for a family intervention project that would fund Early Intervention Family Support Workers and contribute to the reduction of first time entrants.

communities, Children's Centres are delivering integrated services which address the needs of children and families through a one-stop shop approach.

- ☑ Excellent work with partners has taken place to prevent young people being involved in crime and re-offending. As a result, re-offending rates in Cheshire fell by 44.5% to 29.1% in 2007/08.

Tackling Areas for Improvement

(i) Narrowing the gap in outcomes

It is recognised that attainment outcomes are relatively high but that there are pockets of disadvantage that need to be addressed overall. Narrowing the gap is a key focus for all partners and drives our actions.

- ☑ School Improvement Partners, through the robust and targeted use of data, challenge and support schools to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.
- ☑ Children's Services personnel also work on a locality basis to support vulnerable children and families, for example through Children's Centres. Consultation will be taking place to ensure Children Centre and extended services footprints closely align with the new model of area working. Furthermore, each Children's Centre has carried out a self evaluation to evidence and improve outcomes for children and young people, particularly for those with the greatest needs in deprived areas.
- ☑ National Strategy Consultants work with school leadership teams to improve the attainment and progress of pupils accessing free school meals, and those pupils with Special Educational Needs. Projects include the use of Lead Teachers to disseminate best practice through a locality based approach with Education Improvement Partnerships. The RAG rating from the National Strategy Team is Green.
- ☑ Black and minority ethnic pupils are being given tailored support from the Traveller Education and Minorities Support Team. There were 23 Black pupils in the cohort that sat the Key Stage 2 examinations in 2008. 88% achieved Level 4+ in English and 83% achieved Level 4+ in mathematics. These pupils are performing above the national average and above the all White minority ethnic groups and the Asian minority ethnic groups. The number of Pupils with English as an Additional Language is increasing and additional investment and services have been secured to address this growing need.
- ☑ Key Stage 2 achievement gap – Following a number of interventions, positive progress is being made in closing the gap in outcomes between pupils receiving free school meals and their peers in West Cheshire. For key stage 2 pupils in English the gap between those pupils that received free school meals and those who did not reduced from 29 percentage points in 2007 to 22 percentage points in 2008. For key stage 2 pupils in Maths, in 2008 the gap between those pupils that received free school meals and those who did not reduced by 5 percentage points.
- ☑ Key Stage 4 achievement gap - The number of pupils that receive free school meals at key stage 4 in Cheshire West and Chester is small; in 2008 there were 409 pupils on free school meals compared to 3922 who weren't. Nevertheless it is recognised that the attainment gap between those two sets of pupils is wider than the national figures and is not narrowing. Addressing this issue remains a priority for the partnership and will be a key focus of the Children and Young People Plan.
- ☑ Special Educational Needs - Significant efforts have been made to further improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs. In 07/08, 80% of primary schools achieved excellent (1) or good (2) Ofsted grades for 'how well pupils with learning difficulties make progress.' The work in schools is supported and developed by consultancy support and training provided by the Council's Primary Strategy team. It is recognised that further work is needed to narrow the gap with their peers. Work is ongoing to measure accurately the progress of pupils in this

group. This work will contribute significantly to narrowing the gap, using 'P' scales to demonstrate rates of progress and to challenge where outcomes suggest lowered expectations. Detailed analysis of the data for children who are working significantly below age related expectations commenced in September 2008 for Special Schools. Early evidence suggests a positive impact upon expectations for the progress of these children. School Improvement Partnerships will use this approach across mainstream for the first time in 2009 when a second years progress data will be available.

- ☑ The Inclusion Development Programme will also address the attainment and progress of pupils with Special Educational Needs and the 'Leading on Inclusion' Programme has been introduced effectively through network meetings. As a result Dyslexia training packages have been amended to increase their use and effectiveness. The number of pupils with a statement of special needs for Specific Learning Difficulties has reduced dramatically from 75 in 2005 to 7 in 2008. Many pupils with learning difficulties now have Individual Pupil Funding rather than statements. This enables schools to use resource more flexibly, adapting the learning provision more closely to the learners' needs.
- ☑ Areas with relatively lower attainment outcomes are being supported through plans to establish an Academy in Ellesmere Port and the designation of Blacon High School to Educational Trust status in partnership with West Cheshire College and Liverpool Hope University. The Building Schools for the Future Programme will enable us to improve our learning environments and the Authority is due to make its 'readiness to deliver' submission in September. The Winsford Learning Zone will also put in place a state of the art learning environment and support better attainment outcomes.

(ii) Young People not in education, employment or training. (NEET)

As the Local Area Agreement indicator shows there has been a rise in the NEET group overall. Nationally we have are levels of NEET which are significantly lower than the average. The rise is related to the economic downturn. In 2008-9 there was a 50% reduction in the number of vacancies (jobs with/without training, work based training, part time jobs) for young people. Nevertheless, the prospects for improvement are good:

- ☑ The Borough has an Excellent September Guarantee performance at both 16 (97.2% with offers made) and 17 (76.9%).
- ☑ The construction of Winsford Learning Zone will offer outstanding vocational provision in modern, high quality facilities in a local NEET "hotspot".
- ☑ The Key Stage 4 engagement programme, focussed on those at risk of becoming NEET, has been introduced and next year's programme will be broader, almost doubling in size and will build on success.
- ☑ Positive outcomes have resulted from locality-based European Social Fund NEET projects such as STREET in Ellesmere Port and the Castle Project in Rudheath and the lessons learned will be cascaded across the Borough.
- ☑ Partners are supporting the Prince's Trust programme based at Chester Fire Station which covers the Cheshire West and Cheshire area. The programme is designed to target the most vulnerable young people within our society. The key objective is to support them in making informed decisions that will assist them in finding a future career or training. The framework of the course is structured to support the participant's entry in to employment or training focussing specifically on the NEET client group (young people aged 16 -18 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training). The 12 week programme physically and mentally challenges the participants and enables them to gain an accredited City & Guilds qualification. There are plans to work with 42 young people aged 16 to 25 over the current financial year, aiming to help them gain 6 new qualifications and valuable work experience. The course aims to get 75% of completers into training or employment within three months of completing the programme. Approx 50% of those young people are on out

