

Title of policy / procedure / function / project / decision:	Cheshire West and Chester Sports Facility Strategy
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Evidence based equality analysis

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

The vision for future provision of sport and leisure in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) is: ‘To deliver accessible, affordable leisure, health and wellbeing services, tailored to each locality to support and improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities’.

Cheshire West and Chester Council would like to see accessible community sport and leisure facilities, places and spaces for swimming, fitness and sports hall sports/activities available for all residents. This includes both formal and informal spaces e.g., community halls.

Facilitating opportunities to be more physically active, more often is important to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities across CW&C, to help people to live longer, happier, healthier lives.

Sustainable, high quality, and accessible facility provision is key to maintaining these opportunities. The Council is required to plan for the investment requirements of its existing facilities, and work in partnership with other providers and stakeholders to address the other priorities identified in the CW&C Sports Facility Strategy (SFS).

The CW&C SFS has been developed by Strategic Leisure Ltd (SLL). Key stakeholders including the Council, Brio, Active Cheshire, and Sport England have contributed towards the content. Much of the evidence base for the Strategy is derived from population data (current and predicted), current provision of facilities, and future demand. Industry specific tools such as the [Facilities Planning Model | Sport England](#) and the [Sports Facility Calculator | Sport England](#) were utilised as they are considered best practice.

In addition, SLL engaged with National Governing Bodies (NGBs), local sports clubs, and Town and Parish Councils to

capture their views on leisure provision across the borough. The responses received are included in the Strategy and help to shape some of the recommendations. This approach is consistent with the approach taken by many other English Local Authorities when drafting their SFS.

The 15 recommendations in the CW&C SFS (see Table 1) are all focused on retaining, enhancing, or providing additional sports facilities in the borough. There are no recommendations to close or restrict access to any existing sports facility provision within CW&C. These recommendations are all based upon trusted data and SLL's engagement with strategic partners, NGBs, sports clubs, and Town and Parish Councils. For these reasons, a boroughwide full public consultation on the recommendations of the CW&C SFS is not required. Instead, the strategy will be launched to help raise awareness across the borough.

Table 1: Cheshire West and Chester Sports Facility Strategy 2025-2030 recommendations

1. Retain provision of existing levels of community accessible and affordable sports halls facilities as a minimum (ENHANCE AND PROTECT) .
2. Consider the need for hall space in Ellesmere Port as part of a modernised physical activity offer for the local area (PROVIDE) .
3. Where appropriate, CW&C Council work with relevant partners to review, revise and implement Community Use Agreements (CUAs) which provide a better balance of pay and play and club use, to address the identified pay and play need for sports hall space (PROTECT) .
4. Progress investment into Northgate Arena to modernise the wetside offer (PROVIDE) .
5. CW&C Council and partners work with relevant education partners to review, revise, and implement CUAs which provide a better balance of pay and play use, at all existing swimming pools on education sites (PROTECT) .
6. CW&C Council to work with the operators of Chester City Baths to help ensure the sustainability of swimming provision at the facility (PROTECT) .
7. CW&C Council works with Brio, Active Cheshire, SEN schools and wider partners to explore access to existing hydrotherapy pools (ENHANCE AND PROTECT) .

8. CW&C Council and its partners facilitate, where possible, increased access to pay and play fitness and studio facilities/space where studio activities can take place e.g., community/village halls, open spaces, and parks, given that levels of affordable commercial fitness provision may change (PROVIDE) .
9. CW&C Council, Brio, Active Cheshire and partners to establish an indoor bowls working group with local clubs to further explore the potential of developing indoor bowling facilities by 2035 (PROVIDE) .
10. CW&C Council and partners explore opportunities to resurface the athletics track at Ellesmere Port Sports Village (ENHANCE AND PROTECT) .
11. The development of additional mountain bike trails and routes is explored with British Cycling, commercial partners managing the forests, and partners involved in the management of open space in the borough (PROVIDE) .
12. Where appropriate, CW&C Council and partners seek to secure CIL/S106 contributions that could contribute towards the development of additional safe walking, running and cycling routes, and where possible improve access to other informal, multipurpose places and spaces where people can be active (PROVIDE AND PROTECT) .
13. CW&C Council and partners to identify the level of capital funding required to address the identified investment needs for sports facilities and investigate the various sources available for capital funding (PROVIDE) .
14. CW&C Council and its partners prioritise investment in the development of high-quality community sports facilities. Increasing available capacity and accessibility to take part in regular physical activity in the local community, contribute to reduced health inequalities, increased participation, and better community cohesion (PROVIDE AND ENHANCE) .
15. There should be on-going monitoring of this Strategy through its implementation aligned with other active strategies. As a minimum, progress should be reviewed and refreshed every five years (PROTECT) .

Lead officer: Paul Francis, Inclusive Leisure Manager, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Stakeholders: Cheshire West & Chester Council, Brio, Active Cheshire, Sport England, National Governing Bodies, CW&C sports clubs, Town and Parish Councils.

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)	National Governing Bodies, sports clubs, and Town and Parish Councils were consulted by Strategic Leisure Ltd (SLL). The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of race and ethnicity.		Evidence tells us that people of some races and ethnicities are less likely to be physically active. They are therefore less likely to have been consulted when SLL contacted sports clubs in the borough.

	Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL. Sports clubs should consider the views of all members when responding to SLL.		
Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)		NGBs, sports clubs, and Town and Parish Councils were consulted by SLL. The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of disability. Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL. Sports clubs should consider the views of all members when responding to SLL.	Evidence tells us that residents living with disabilities are less likely to be physically active. They are therefore less likely to have been consulted when SLL contacted sports clubs in the borough. Also, no disability specific sports clubs or groups were consulted by SLL.

		One recommendation in the SFS is to progress investment into Northgate Arena. This project is already underway and includes several elements that will improve accessibility. Examples of improvements include a Pool Pod to aid access to the swimming pool and a Changing Places toilet.	
Sex (male or female)	The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of sex. Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL.	Some NGBs and clubs of sports that are predominantly played by women and girls (e.g. netball and gymnastics) responded to SLL.	Evidence tells us that women and girls are less likely to be physically active when compared with men and boys. They are therefore less likely to have been represented by the various sports clubs who were engaged by SLL.
Gender identity (gender reassignment)	The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of gender identity.		Evidence tells us that residents who have undergone, intend to undergo or are currently undergoing gender reassignment are

	Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL.		less likely to be physically active. They are therefore less likely to have been represented by the various sports clubs who were engaged by SLL.
Religion and belief (including lack of belief)	The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of religion and belief. Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL.		Evidence tells us that residents of some religions and beliefs are less likely to be physically active. They are therefore less likely to have been represented by the various sports clubs who were engaged by SLL.
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and others)	The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of sexual orientation. Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of		Compared to other groups, data on the physical activity levels of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) community - and the sport they play - is less well established. The latest report by Sport England, published in April

	their residents when responding to SLL.		2021, covers data collected from November 2019- November 2020 and shows 70.5% of gay or lesbian people are classed as active - completing 150+ minutes a week of moderate intensity physical activity. The number for bisexual people is 67.5%, compared to 61.8% for heterosexual people and 61.4% for all adults - for people classed as 'other sexual orientation', the figure drops to 49.7%.
Age (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50, younger older people 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs)		The sports clubs and NGBs that responded to SLL do represent a wide range of age groups.	Evidence tells us that older people are less likely to be physically active. They are therefore less likely to have been represented by the various sports clubs who were engaged by SLL.
Care Experienced (all young people and adults who have been in the care of Cheshire	The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members,		

West and Chester Council - for a period of 13 weeks or more - from the age of 14 years. This includes those children/young people for whom the Council currently or have previously held corporate parenting responsibilities)	including those who are care experienced. Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL.		
Carers (people who care for others, informally or formally)	The strategic aims of NGBs should consider all their members, regardless of disability. Town and Parish Councils should consider the views of their residents when responding to SLL.		Evidence tells us that carers are less likely to be physically active. They are therefore less likely to have been represented by the various sports clubs who were engaged by SLL.
Rural communities	The SFS takes a boroughwide approach. Sports Clubs and Town and Parish Councils from across the borough, including those in rural areas, were contacted by SLL.		

Areas of deprivation (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)	The SFS takes a boroughwide approach. Sports Clubs and Town and Parish Councils from across the borough, including areas of deprivation, were contacted by SLL.		Evidence tells us that people who live in more deprived areas may be at increased risk of physical inactivity. They are therefore less likely to have been represented by the various sports clubs who were engaged by SLL.
Human rights (see guidance note for key areas to consider)	It is not felt that there will be any impact upon the human rights of residents.		
Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)		The recommendations in the SFS aim to make sport and physical activity more accessible for residents. There are no recommendations to reduce and sport or physical activity provision.	
Procurement/partnership (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	Should any procurement be required to achieve the SFS recommendations, the Council will ensure that		

	the necessary steps are taken to ensure equality compliance.		
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Evidence (see guidance note for details of what to include here):

[Physical activity - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#)

[Older adults | Sport England](#)

[Gender | Sport England](#)

[LGBTQ+ | Sport England](#)

[carers-and-physical-activity-report.pdf](#)

[Faith groups | Sport England](#)

[Lower socio-economic groups | Sport England](#)

[Disabled people | Sport England](#)

Action plan:

Actions required	Priority	Outcomes required	Officer responsible	Review date
Raise awareness of the CW&C SFS recommendations	High	Launch the CW&C SFS online, to include an Executive Summary	Paul Francis	September 2025

Consider the potential impact of on target groups when actioning the recommendations in the SFS	High	Ensure that Equality Analyses are completed whenever necessary	Paul Francis	2025-2030
Consider a 12-week public consultation when the SFS is renewed	High	Ensure the views of target groups are gained	Paul Francis	2029

Sign off	
Lead officer:	Paul Francis
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Paul Hickson
Moderation and/or Scrutiny	
Date: 8 September 2025	Moderation panel
Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	