

Shaping the future

Help shape our thinking on the future offer for leisure,
health and wellbeing services in West Cheshire



Cheshire West
and Chester



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Foreword

**Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Wellbeing**

As leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Wellbeing, I am extremely passionate about the role that Brio can play in improving the health and wellbeing of residents across our borough.

During these challenging times, looking after our health and wellbeing is now more important than ever and Brio can play a key role in helping to get more people active and improve our health and wellbeing across the borough.

With significant ongoing pressures on the Council budget and resources, alongside the uncertainty relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to ensure that what we do reflects the priorities of our communities. We also want to make sure that all residents can easily access services provided by Brio Leisure. We aim to take a new approach to how leisure services have traditionally been delivered and this will mean that there are some changes that will take place in your local area.

It is important that you play your part by having your say on our current thinking about how the leisure, health and wellbeing services provided by Brio will be delivered in the future.

We want to create stronger links with partner agencies and local communities through having different organisations and services based at Brio buildings and delivering services in the heart of communities, adding value to much of the fantastic work that already exists in improving the borough's health and wellbeing.

I believe that the new vision for our leisure, health and wellbeing services will help to reduce health inequalities across our borough and make better use of our resources while providing a sustainable platform for Brio to deliver services in communities across Cheshire West and Chester.

Your views are really important, so please take a few minutes to let us know your thoughts on our current thinking. Please speak to your family (including children!), friends and neighbours to encourage them to participate too!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Gittins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shaping the future of leisure, health and wellbeing services in Cheshire West and Chester

1. Introduction

Cheshire West and Chester Council and our local community company Brio Leisure aim for all residents to have access to services to improve the borough's health and wellbeing.

This document sets out a new vision and set of key principles to deliver this vision, ensuring that Brio is best placed to support health and wellbeing improvements for residents and communities across our borough.

We are keen to work closely with residents, groups, clubs and the many customers who currently access Brio facilities to help shape how Brio services will be delivered in the future. We also aim to engage with those groups who currently do not access Brio facilities and services to ensure that they have the opportunity to help shape how these services will be delivered differently in the future.

This document gives some background information to our current thinking around how leisure, health and wellbeing services could be delivered.



2. Background to Brio

Brio is a Community Interest Company, owned by Cheshire West and Chester Council which delivers leisure, health and wellbeing services in west Cheshire on the Council's behalf.

Established in 2011, Brio has become a trusted brand across the borough.

Working in partnership with local agencies and communities, examples of Brio's recent achievements include:

- UK Active Award 2019 – Outstanding Organisation of the Year
- Rated as Top 1000 Inspirational Companies by the London Stock Exchange – 2019
- Featured in the Parliamentary Review Report 2018-19
- Disability Confident Employer
- Working with MacMillan to deliver 2092 hours of volunteering
- Wellbeing services including falls prevention, smoking cessation and weight management (28,900 referrals under wellbeing contracts as at March 2020)
- Generated investment into Winsford Lifestyle Centre and Neston Recreation Centre in excess of £2m, securing £500k Sport England funding contribution
- Partnership with Edsential to deliver the Holiday Hunger programme in 2019
- In 2015 took over the management of two significant new buildings – Ellesmere Port Sports Village and Northwich Memorial Court, the performance of which exceeded business case expectations
- In excess of 175k entertainment visits in 2018/19 across its cultural venues.
- Collaboration with the University of Chester into the analysis of generic social value estimates Brio's contribution of social value to the community at £16m per annum against the UK Active/Data Hub social value toolkit since it was established in 2011.

For further information about current services provided by Brio, please visit:
www.brioleisure.org



3. Vision for leisure, health and wellbeing services

...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.

To achieve this new vision, the Council and Brio will work in partnership to:

- increase the number of people who access activities that improve health and wellbeing
- focus on communities where services would have the biggest impact in improving health and wellbeing
- work with health agencies, including the NHS, to access external funding to deliver services across the borough
- maintain modern, attractive and accessible buildings, ensuring they remain fit for purpose and provide maximum benefits for local people
- enable other partners to be based in Brio buildings alongside the company's leisure health and wellbeing services to maximise occupancy, accessibility and to contribute towards overall running costs
- release buildings from Brio's management that are not fit for purpose and no longer provide the best value for our communities or meet Council objectives
- embed a cost effective, efficient operating model for delivering services
- develop a commercial arm to the business to offset delivery costs and to further raise awareness of the Brio brand
- move away from a service offer which is solely building based
- embrace the use of technology to deliver services in innovative ways and to engage new audiences
- develop an offer which complements private and community offers already in place across the borough.

The Council and Brio aim to develop and implement a different offer for services in west Cheshire which focuses on supporting health and wellbeing improvements for residents and communities.

We recognise that each part of the borough is different and that by tailoring services to each different area we will help support improvements in health and wellbeing more than the traditional universal offer which is currently in operation.

The new vision for the future of leisure, health and wellbeing services moves away from a building-based offer to one which focuses on service delivery, with a range of fit-for-purpose buildings supporting how these services are delivered. The Council and Brio wish to create opportunities to base a range of different services in our buildings so that we can work more closely together and provide better value for money, as well as creating stronger links with communities and the high street.

Cheshire West and Chester Council and Brio recognise the vital role that Brio facilities play in local communities and how they support residents to be active and improve their health and wellbeing. We want to create a new innovative and flexible service, providing stronger links to health and wellbeing services to ensure that our children and young people make the best start in life and achieve their full potential while supporting more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives.

Communities already play an important role in improving health and wellbeing of residents across our borough. The new service offer aims to build on good practice that is already in place within communities that may be provided by different agencies, groups or residents. It aims to avoid duplication and focus on working in partnership to create a more joined up approach to the delivery of leisure, health and wellbeing services across the borough.



4. Why do we need a new way of delivering services?

National Picture

Nationally, the fitness, health and wellbeing industry is changing with more and more local authority providers struggling to operate in an increasingly competitive market. The industry has seen a reduction in growth for Council leisure providers over recent years, but with regular growth from budget gyms. The reducing growth and need to maintain buildings and ensure they are fit for purpose has put further pressure on many operators such as Brio, to deliver services differently.

Budget challenges

The Council is facing significant financial pressures and needs to make substantial savings over coming years to ensure it can continue to provide effective services to residents. This means it is challenging all areas of spend, including its contribution towards the cost of Brio's services. Future support will be prioritised to where it makes the biggest impact on the boroughs health and wellbeing and this requires a review of both the core focus and location of future Brio services. We anticipate that the proposals forming part of the consultation will enable Brio to be in a sustainable financial position.



Links to Public Health

Recognising a wider approach is required to enable more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives and to create stronger links with Public Health, leisure services now sit within the Council's Public Health team. This change provides an enhanced opportunity to support our communities, focus on health and wellbeing improvements and to create effective partnerships and closer working opportunities across health and wellbeing networks.

Changes in the market

There are many new leisure providers in the market such as budget gyms which operate a cheaper pricing policy. This model undercuts Council operators such as Brio, who provide a wider programme of activities such as schools swimming, sports club hires and support for community groups. This has impacted on the ability of Brio to invest in services and buildings, reducing the ability to provide services and support for vulnerable groups without additional financial support.

Operating model

Brio is heavily dependent on income generated from the users of its services, with surpluses provided from the more well-used sites used to subsidise the wider offer. However, reducing levels of income, operating challenges and the impact of COVID-19 highlight that this model is no longer sustainable without re-thinking how services are delivered.

Increasing maintenance needs

Brio currently manages eleven sites across the borough with increasing maintenance needs across the buildings. Despite there being a programme in place to address ongoing maintenance issues, the level of investment required across eleven sites is unsustainable and therefore we need to focus on investing in fewer sites, ensuring that they are attractive and fit for purpose.

Northgate Arena

At its peak, Northgate Arena was a destination venue for the borough, providing 40% of Brio's leisure income overall and bringing more people into the city. Despite best efforts, Northgate Arena has seen a reduction in customers and a decline in income which, in turn, has limited the opportunity to support additional services provided by Brio or invest in the building.

COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the ability of leisure providers to operate across the UK, with lots of uncertainty remaining around the future of leisure operators. These challenges highlight the need to deliver health, leisure and wellbeing services differently. We need to rethink how we do that, and how services can support residents and communities to improve their health and wellbeing.

Given the uncertainty created by the pandemic, its impact on the services Brio deliver, and the future pressures on council finances, it is possible that the changes set out in this document may not be sufficient. If that proves to be the case, Brio and the Council may need to consider further measures affecting services and facilities.

5. Key principles for the future offer of leisure, health and wellbeing services

Local focus

Recognising that our borough is varied and each area has different needs, the new service model for Brio aims to focus on local needs, working closely with partner agencies, community groups and existing activities and/or services to remove duplication and add value.

Hub and spoke model (further details can be found in section 6)

The future health and wellbeing service offer is based on a new hub and spoke model of delivery which maximises the use of existing facilities. Hub sites have been identified by considering location and accessibility, condition of buildings, whether the buildings have benefited from previous investment, numbers of members that currently use facilities, the ability to accommodate more customers and the range of services offered now and potentially in the future.

Hub

The following sites have been identified as **primary hub sites** for leisure, health and wellbeing services provided by Brio:

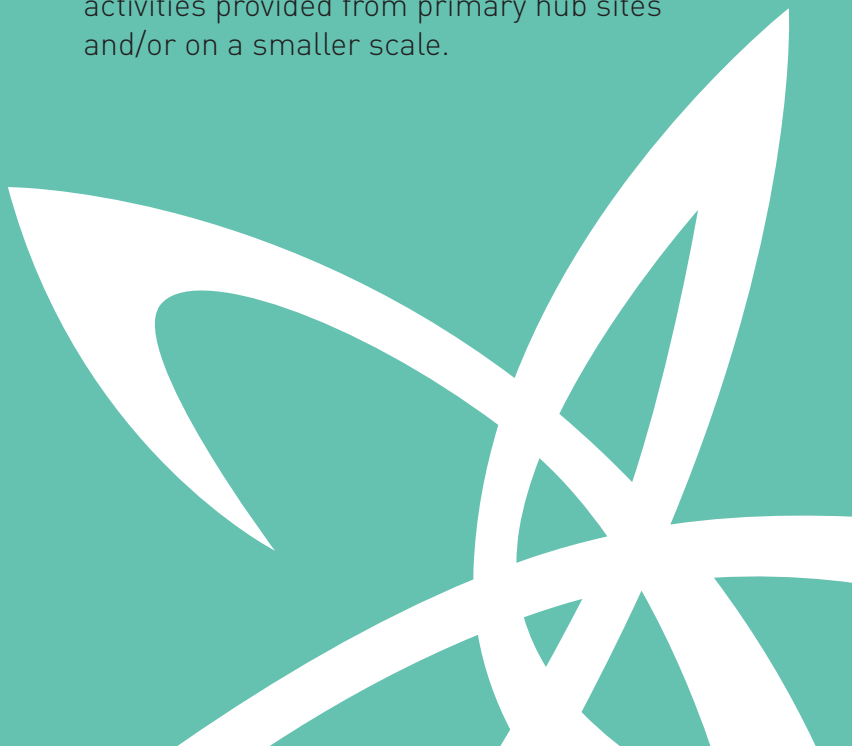
1. Northgate Arena, Chester
2. Ellesmere Port Sports Village
3. Northwich Memorial Court
4. Winsford Lifestyle Centre

A primary hub site offers a full range of activities including activities such as gym, swim, fitness, room hire and cafe.

In addition, three **secondary hub sites** have been identified. These include:

1. Christleton Leisure Centre, Chester
2. Neston Recreation Centre
3. Frodsham/Helsby

A secondary hub site offers some of the activities provided from primary hub sites and/or on a smaller scale.



Spoke

Spoke delivery will offer targeted activities and services in areas where people may be less active and will encourage new customers to access services and support provided by Brio and other agencies.

Releasing buildings

Given the limited funding available and the need to provide attractive and fit-for-purpose facilities, there is a need to reduce the number of buildings from which Brio operates. Without releasing some buildings, it would not be possible to sustain the remaining sites and ensure they will continue to provide quality health and wellbeing services to residents across the borough. Where possible the services provided from those buildings that Brio release may be re-provided by another provider, or by Brio at a different local site, but this will not always be possible.

Northgate Arena improvements

Northgate Arena, in Chester, is a key site managed by Brio. It has an ideal city centre location and provides a range of leisure, swim, fitness and sports club services. It is recognised that the building does however require investment to improvement its offer for users.

Due to its age, Northgate Arena is an inefficient building by nature of its design and the building materials used at that time. A refurbishment of Northgate Arena is critical to ensure that the building is able to provide an attractive offer for customers, that it will remain viable and that it will contribute to Brio being competitive in the local market.

Other opportunities

Brio is a trusted brand within the borough and, to increase income and raise further awareness of this brand, a commercial arm of the company will be created. Income generated will provide additional investment into services and buildings managed by Brio.



6. What does hub and spoke mean?

Hub

This new approach ensures there is a core hub building within each local area across the borough. The approach focuses on Ellesmere Port Sports Village, Northwich Memorial Court, Northgate Arena, Chester, and Winsford Lifestyle Centre as key hub sites. These will be supported by secondary hubs at Christleton, Neston and Frodsham/Helsby to ensure there is enough pay and play access to activities across the borough.

Each hub site will continue to offer services such as gym, fitness and swim and create new opportunities to house a range of different services within the buildings. The focus of the hub sites will be leisure, health and wellbeing as its core offer rather than expanding its entertainment offer.

Spoke

The current delivery model does not provide enough opportunities to actively engage residents in the heart of their communities. By working closely with partner agencies and local communities, Brio can develop opportunities to provide a more targeted service for local communities to increase the number of residents accessing services to improve their health and wellbeing.

Working closely with partners and local groups, the spoke model will be delivered in innovative and flexible ways, making best use of existing community facilities and partner networks as well as utilising green spaces and outdoor facilities within identified areas. Spoke models will also use digital opportunities to encourage more local people to access Brio services.

The spoke model will add value to services already provided within communities and will focus on providing opportunities for people to engage in Brio services at a very local level, build positive relationships and encourage access into hub sites.



7. What does this mean for me and my local area?

Below is information about what Brio currently delivers in your area and what impact the new offer will have on Brio services near to you. Please note, it is recognised that implementing the new offer may take several months and be implemented in different stages. While we aim to explore various opportunities for each of the different areas, it may result in a reduction in services that are currently being delivered.

Chester

CURRENT OFFER

- Northgate Arena
- Christleton Sports Complex

FUTURE OFFER

- **Northgate Arena** would remain as a primary hub site and improvements would be made to the building. This will include improvements to swim, gym, fitness and hall spaces as well as welcome and café areas. Opportunities for other health-related services and organisations to base from the building would be explored to provide a better offer for visitors and make the running of the building more cost effective.
- **Christleton Sports Complex** would remain as a secondary hub site to provide wider access to Brio services and to ensure that there is sufficient access to swim provision in the area.
- **Fitness classes** could be delivered in identified areas in Chester using local facilities, green spaces and other options to provide services at a more local level. This could include a fitness class being delivered in the community.



Ellesmere Port

CURRENT OFFER

- Ellesmere Port Sports Village
- Ellesmere Port Civic Hall
- Stanney Oaks Leisure Centre

FUTURE OFFER

- **Ellesmere Port Sports Village** would remain as a primary hub site. Opportunities for other health-related services and organisations to base from the building would be explored to provide a better offer for visitors and make the running of the building more cost effective.
- **Ellesmere Port Civic Hall.** Services from Ellesmere Port Civic Hall would be reviewed and options explored for how this building could best serve the local area.
- **Stanney Oaks Leisure Centre.** Brio would cease providing services from Stanney Oaks Leisure Centre and the building would be handed back to the Council to explore opportunities to re-develop the site. Current users of the building would be supported to access space in other buildings in the Ellesmere Port area, ensuring current activities continue.
- **Community-based activity sessions** could be delivered in identified areas in Ellesmere Port using local facilities, green spaces and other options to provide activities at a more local level. This could include fitness classes being delivered in the local community.



Frodsham/Helsby

CURRENT OFFER

- **Frodsham Leisure Centre**

FUTURE OFFER

- **Frodsham Leisure Centre** is not fit for purpose . Plans to provide a sustainable health, leisure, wellbeing and library service to the Frodsham/Helsby area would be developed maximising the use of community facilities and external funding opportunities.
- **Community-based activity sessions** could be delivered in identified areas in Frodsham/ Helsby using local facilities, green spaces and other options to provide activities at a more local level. This could include a fitness class being delivered in the community.

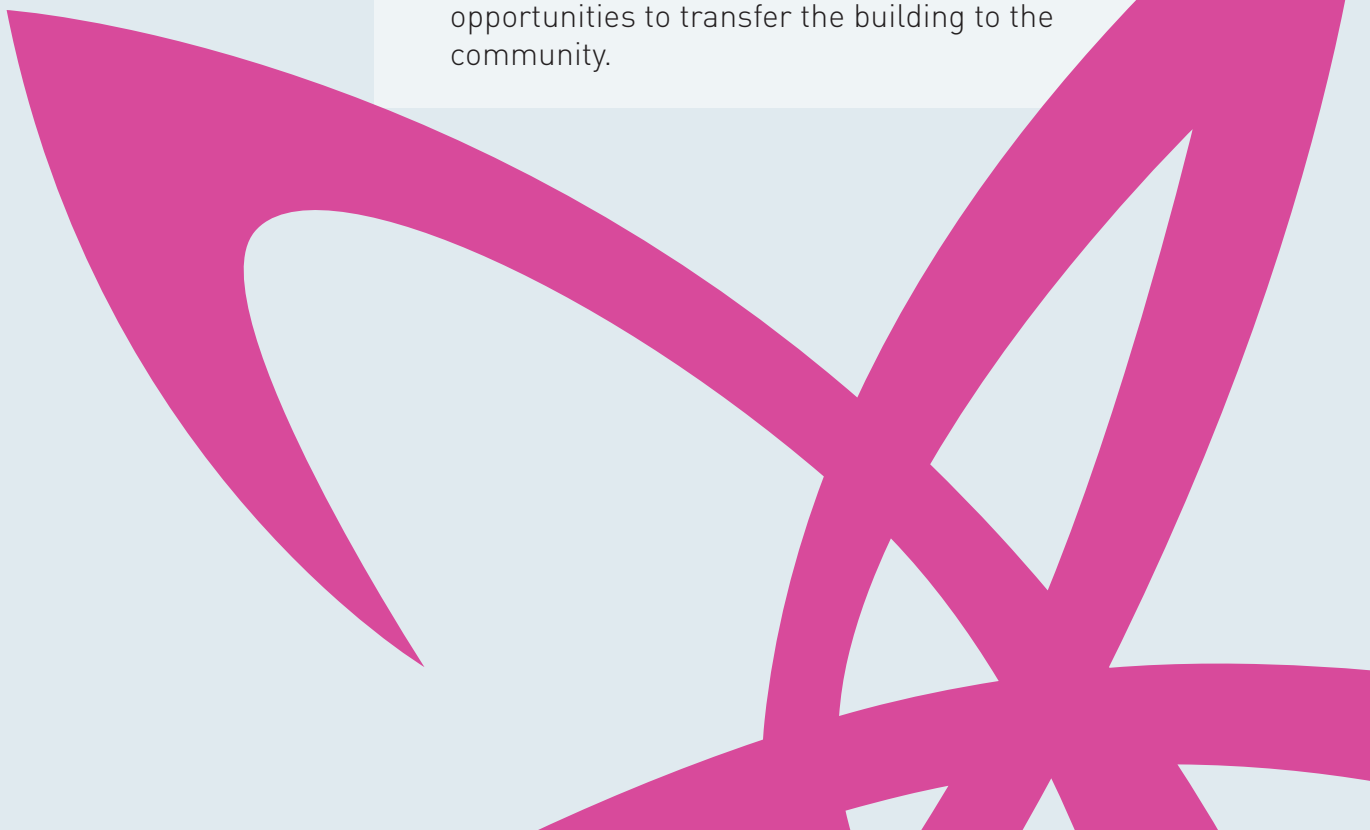
Neston

CURRENT OFFER

- **Neston Recreation Centre**
- **Neston Civic Hall**

FUTURE OFFER

- **Neston Recreation Centre** would remain as a secondary hub site to provide wider access to Brio services and to ensure that there is sufficient access to swim provision in the area.
- **Neston Civic Hall.** Brio would cease providing services from Neston Civic Hall and the building would be handed back to the Council to explore opportunities to transfer the building to the community.





Northwich

CURRENT OFFER

- Northwich Memorial Court
- Rudheath Leisure Centre
- Moss Farm Sports Complex

FUTURE OFFER

- **Northwich Memorial Court** would remain as a primary hub site. Opportunities for other health-related services and organisations to base from the building would be explored to provide a better offer for visitors and to make the running of the building more cost effective.
- **Rudheath Leisure Centre.** Explore opportunities for partnership with Rudheath Senior Academy (part of North West Academies Trust) to secure the future of the site.
- **Moss Farm Sports Complex.** In order to ensure current activity at the site can continue, an opportunity to enable users, clubs and other key stakeholders to take responsibility and management for the site would be agreed.
- **Community-based activity sessions** could be delivered in identified areas in Northwich using local facilities, green spaces and other options to provide activities at a more local level. This could include a fitness class being delivered in the community.

Winsford

CURRENT OFFER

- Winsford Lifestyle Centre

FUTURE OFFER

- **Winsford Lifestyle Centre** would remain as a primary hub site. Opportunities for other health related services and organisations to base from the building would be explored to provide a better offer for visitors and make the running of the building more cost effective.
- **Community-based activity sessions** could be delivered in identified areas in Winsford using local facilities, green spaces and other options to provide activities at a more local level.

8. Next Steps

All feedback received will be used to help shape our current thinking on how Brio will deliver leisure, health and wellbeing services in the future.

Action/Activity

Information and survey launched and circulated widely to gain feedback on how Brio services would be delivered in the future.

When: September/October 2020

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Information sessions will take place to provide further information about the details contained within this document. Please see Section 10 for details on how you can join a session.

When: October 2020

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Review feedback from engagement activities and update the proposed model where appropriate.

When: Ongoing

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Finalise proposals on how services will be delivered in the future (future delivery model) for leisure, health and wellbeing, provided by Brio.

When: Ongoing/November 2020

.....

Cheshire West and Chester Council Cabinet meeting

Final proposals for the future offer for leisure, health and wellbeing provided by Brio will be discussed at Cheshire West and Chester Council's Cabinet meeting, scheduled for November 2020. Further details about this meeting can be found at:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

When: November 2020

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9. How will I know my comments and thoughts will make a difference?

We promise to consider all comments that are received and will produce a summary report which will be made available online at: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk shortly after the closing date.



10. How can I get involved?

There are a number of ways in which you can share your thoughts and ideas to help shape the future offer for leisure, health and wellbeing services in the borough including:

- **complete an online survey at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**
- **send an email to: briofutureoffer@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**
- **complete a paper survey: Request a copy of the survey by contacting 01244 478 590 and leaving your name and postal address.**

Information sessions will take place via Microsoft Teams on the following dates:

- **Monday 19 October 2020, 6-7pm**
- **Monday 26 October 2020, 3-4pm**

To book onto one of these sessions and to receive information about how to access them, please contact: briofutureoffer@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

The engagement period will close on 01 November 2020.

What you tell us will help inform our thinking for the future offer for leisure, health and wellbeing services across the borough. While we may not be able to satisfy all requests, we promise that these will be considered as the future delivery model for Brio is finalised.

Who can take part?

Anyone who has an interest and would like to help shape the future offer for leisure, health and wellbeing services in west Cheshire.



For further information about current services provided by Brio, please visit:
www.brioleisure.org.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like information in another format or language, including British Sign Language, please email us at:
equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 8 123 **Textphone:** 18001 01606 275757

email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk