

Appendix 4 - Borough-wide summary for Play Strategy

1.0 Overview of Cheshire West and Chester

Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) is one of the most affluent areas in the North West. It covers a large geographic and demographically diverse area and is the fourth largest authority in north west England. The north western part of the borough has particularly strong links with north east Wales and Merseyside which is reflected in levels of cross-commuting. To the east the borough borders Cheshire East and has particularly strong links with the town of Middlewich that is surrounded on three sides by Cheshire West and Chester. There are also links to Warrington, Greater Manchester and Shropshire.

Over 329,000 people live in Cheshire West and Chester, with over 160,000 people working in the borough. The area is characterised by attractive countryside, varied landscapes and diverse settlements ranging from the historic city of Chester to small rural hamlets. Chester, Ellesmere Port and Northwich dominate the northern part of the borough and sit within or adjoining the North Cheshire Green Belt which covers 42 percent of the borough's land area. Three of the larger rural settlements, Neston, Frodsham and Helsby, are also located in the Green Belt in the more urbanised north of the borough.

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies identifies an urban/rural split as follows:

Urban areas

Chester - The city of Chester is the borough's largest settlement with over 81,000 residents and is a key centre for employment, retail, education and tourism as well as being a main transport interchange and gateway, with direct routes to London, Manchester, Merseyside and North Wales. The city is internationally renowned as a historic city with unique heritage assets particularly Roman remains, the City Walls and medieval Rows.

Ellesmere Port - Ellesmere Port is the second largest settlement with over 60,000 residents and the most industrialised part of the borough and was a major centre for manufacturing. The town has suffered a sharp decline in employment and there has been a 50 percent reduction in manufacturing employment leaving a legacy of derelict brownfield sites and some contamination issues. The industrial legacy and the presence of the M53 motorway cutting through the town has led to image and perception problems. However, the area provides a major employment land resource for the borough and has become increasingly successful in attracting new employment opportunities.

Northwich - The town of Northwich and adjoining settlements of Anderton, Barnton, Davenham, Hartford, Lostock Gralam, Lower Marston, Lower Wincham, Rudheath and Weaverham combine to form the third biggest urban area in Cheshire West and Chester. The area has benefited from the stabilisation of former salt mines that had prevented large areas of the town coming forward for redevelopment. In particular, land stabilisation has enabled proposals to come forward that will significantly improve the town centre of Northwich and help enhance the town's role as a major retail and leisure destination.

Winsford - The smallest of the four key urban areas with a population of 30,000, Winsford is nationally renowned for the mining of rock salt. Winsford was expanded as an 'overspill'

town in the 1960s, with new residents arriving from Manchester and Liverpool. More recently, Winsford and the surrounding area has seen new housing development and dedicated employment sites being created in the town, including Winsford Industrial Estate and Woodford Park, which have attracted new industry and business to the area.

Rural area

A third of the borough's residents live in the rural area that runs from Neston in the north, which borders Wirral, to the boundary with Shropshire in the south. The rural area in the south is more sparsely populated and many of the settlements, especially in the north, are effectively dormitory settlements that are dependent on larger towns for employment opportunities. Car use is generally very high and isolation and access to services is an issue for some rural residents. The rural area is generally affluent. Within the rural area there are ten key service centres which provide a good range of facilities and services for surrounding areas.

Locality Areas

Cheshire West and Chester Council provide many local community services within a Locality Area framework. The four locality areas are listed below, and form the geographical areas for part 2 of the study:

- Chester
- Ellesmere Port
- Northwich and Winsford
- Rural

2.0 Child population, deprivation and health profile

'Planning for Play' suggests that prioritisation for play space improvements should be based on an objective assessment to determine where improvements are most needed. The strategy follows this guidance by applying needs criteria to all sites (developed following consultation via four locality area workshops).

This section sets out the child population, deprivation and health profile of the borough, and are factors which have been considered when prioritising play areas for improvement within each of the four locality area frameworks (part 2 of 2).

2.1 Child population

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the child population.

Table 1 Detailed breakdown of child population for Cheshire West and Chester

| Age Range | Number |
|------------------|---------------|
| Age 0-4 | 18,584 |
| Age 5-8 | 18,438 |
| Age 9-14 | 17,486 |
| Age 15-19 | 19,152 |

Table 2 sets out the mid-year 2014 population estimates, and shows that the total child population (under age 19) of Cheshire West and Chester is 74,020 which is 22.46% of the total population of 329, 608.

Table 2 Child population (under 19) in Cheshire West and Chester including breakdown by ward

| Area | | Total Children | Total ward | % Population Under 19 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Cheshire West and Chester | | 74,020 | 329,608 | 22.46% |
| Ward Name | Locality | | | |
| Blacon | Chester | 3,597 | 13,626 | 26.40% |
| Boughton | Chester | 800 | 5,444 | 14.70% |
| Chester City | Chester | 544 | 3,853 | 14.12% |
| Chester Villages | Rural Communities | 1,955 | 8,548 | 22.87% |
| Davenham and Moulton | Northwich and Winsford | 3,332 | 13,569 | 24.56% |
| Dodleston and Huntington | Rural Communities | 1,015 | 3,958 | 25.64% |
| Ellesmere Port Town | Ellesmere Port | 2,437 | 9,103 | 26.77% |
| Elton | Rural Communities | 993 | 4,557 | 21.79% |
| Farnon | Rural Communities | 892 | 4,011 | 22.24% |
| Frodsham | Rural Communities | 1,925 | 9,077 | 21.21% |
| Garden Quarter | Chester | 1,136 | 5,318 | 21.36% |
| Gowy | Rural Communities | 860 | 3,924 | 21.92% |
| Grange | Ellesmere Port | 1,265 | 4,649 | 27.21% |
| Great Boughton | Chester | 1,972 | 8,984 | 21.95% |
| Handbridge Park | Chester | 1,680 | 8,840 | 19.00% |
| Hartford and Greenbank | Northwich and Winsford | 1,896 | 8,360 | 22.68% |
| Helsby | Rural Communities | 1,042 | 4,972 | 20.96% |
| Hoole | Chester | 1,918 | 9,359 | 20.49% |
| Kingsley | Rural Communities | 829 | 4,222 | 19.64% |
| Lache | Chester | 1,542 | 5,760 | 26.77% |
| Ledsham and Manor | Ellesmere Port | 1,606 | 7,796 | 20.60% |
| Little Neston and Burton | Rural Communities | 1,562 | 8,485 | 18.41% |
| Malpas | Rural Communities | 799 | 3,975 | 20.10% |
| Marbury | Northwich and Winsford | 2,513 | 12,069 | 20.82% |
| Neston | Rural Communities | 1,014 | 4,329 | 23.42% |
| Netherpool | Ellesmere Port | 812 | 3,287 | 24.70% |
| Newton | Chester | 2,010 | 9,556 | 21.03% |
| Parkgate | Rural Communities | 581 | 3,591 | 16.18% |
| Rossmore | Ellesmere Port | 1,137 | 3,808 | 29.86% |
| Saughall and Mollington | Rural Communities | 905 | 4,463 | 20.28% |
| Shakerley | Northwich and Winsford | 887 | 4,214 | 21.05% |
| St. Paul's | Ellesmere Port | 2,157 | 9,256 | 23.30% |
| Strawberry | Ellesmere Port | 1,087 | 5,086 | 21.37% |
| Sutton | Ellesmere Port | 2,020 | 9,176 | 22.01% |
| Tarporley | Rural Communities | 977 | 4,398 | 22.21% |
| Tarvin and Kelsall | Rural Communities | 1,771 | 8,217 | 21.55% |
| Tattenhall | Rural Communities | 912 | 4,374 | 20.85% |
| Upton | Chester | 2,203 | 8,905 | 24.74% |
| Weaver and Cuddington | Northwich and Winsford | 2,720 | 12,779 | 21.28% |
| Whitby | Ellesmere Port | 1,679 | 8,102 | 20.72% |
| Willaston and Thornton | Rural Communities | 674 | 3,825 | 17.62% |
| Winnington and Castle | Northwich and Winsford | 2,223 | 9,271 | 23.98% |
| Winsford Over and Verdin | Northwich and Winsford | 3,601 | 13,414 | 26.85% |
| Winsford Swanlow and Dene | Northwich and Winsford | 2,070 | 9,012 | 22.97% |
| Winsford Wharton | Northwich and Winsford | 2,495 | 9,765 | 25.55% |
| Witton and Rudheath | Northwich and Winsford | 1,975 | 8,321 | 23.74% |

2.2 Child Health - Excess Weight in reception and year 6 children

Child health and well-being came out of the Locality Area workshops as a key factor for prioritising play areas within Cheshire West and Chester. The statistics provided by the Cheshire West and Chester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (excess weight in reception and year six children - 2013/14 to 2014/15 pooled by ward and compared to England levels) provides one measure of child health, and provides statistics that can be applied to this study.

Table 3 shows that Cheshire West and Chester has significantly higher levels of excess weight in reception children than England, although the North West also has significantly higher levels. Table 4 shows that for year six children there is no significant difference to England, although levels for the North West as a whole are significantly higher than England.

Table 3 Excess weight in reception children

| | | Reception | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | Overweight & Obese Prevalence | Lower 95 | Upper 95 | Statistical significance |
| England | | 22.21% | 22.13% | 22.28% | |
| North West | | 23.24% | 23.04% | 23.45% | Significantly higher than England |
| Cheshire West and Chester Urban Area | | 23.81% | 22.84% | 24.81% | Significantly higher than England |

Table 4 Excess weight in year six children

| | | Year six | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | Overweight & Obese Prevalence | Lower 95 | Upper 95 | Statistical significance |
| England | | 33.38% | 33.29% | 33.47% | |
| North West | | 34.12% | 33.88% | 34.37% | Significantly higher than England |
| Cheshire West and Chester Urban Area | | 33.01% | 31.86% | 34.18% | No significant difference to England |

2.3 Child deprivation factors and rurality

In considering prioritisation of provision it is important to consider children from poorer families who are likely to be most in need of play provision and for whom barriers such as cost and transport are likely to be most significant. In this respect a good tool for analysis is the index of deprivation within the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation: Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI).

It is also important to consider rurality i.e. those areas where it may be more difficult to access play facilities. The geographical barriers to services sub-domain is a good tool for analysis in this respect.

2.3.1 Income deprivation affecting children (IDACI)

The income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) is an index of deprivation used in the United Kingdom. It measures in a local area (called a lower super output area (LSOA), which is a small fixed geographic area encompassing a population of approximately 1,000 people) the proportion of children under the age of 16 that live in families that are income deprived i.e. in receipt of income support, income based jobseeker's allowance or pension credit, or those not in receipt of these benefits but in receipt of Child Tax Credit with an equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) below 60% of the national median before housing costs. The LSOA with a rank of 1 is the most deprived.

The highest levels of child/youth deprivation within the borough are within the Ellesmere Port Locality Area, in parts of the Rural Locality Area (Neston and Elton), parts of the Chester Locality Area (notably Blacon and Lache) and parts of the Northwich and Winsford Locality Area.

Other areas with relatively high levels of deprivation are parts of the rural area (notably parts of Malpas, Gowy, Elton, Frodsham, Little Neston and Burton and Saughall and Mollington). Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford and Chester all have areas of relatively high levels of child/youth deprivation.

2.3.2 Geographical barriers to services

Geographical barriers to services is a sub-domain of the barriers to housing and services domain, which is one of the domains that make up the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It measures physical proximity to essential services and assigns each local area (LSOA) a deprivation score based on the road distance to a GP, shop, primary school and post office. The LSOA with a rank of 1 is the most deprived.

The highest levels of deprivation/geographical barriers to services within the Borough are generally within the rural areas.

2.4 Child population projections

Table 5 shows the projected population of Cheshire West and Chester's children and young people up to 2022 and 2032. The data has been extracted from the Population Forecasts (March 2015) report, produced by the Cheshire West and Chester Strategic Intelligence Team.

The number of children (aged 0 to 15) will increase by 8% between 2012 and 2022, from 58,300 to 62,700 children aged 0-15. The greatest increase will be in those aged 5 to 10. After 2026, numbers of children will start to decline.

Table 5 Forecasts of children

| Age group | Population | | | % Change | |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2012 | 2022 | 2032 | 2012-22 | 2012-32 |
| 0-4 | 18,300 | 18,700 | 17,900 | 2% | -2% |
| 5-10 | 21,200 | 24,200 | 23,200 | 14% | 9% |
| 11-15 | 18,700 | 19,800 | 20,900 | 6% | 12% |
| Total 0-15 | 58,300 | 62,700 | 62,000 | 8% | 6% |

The forecast child population increase will only exacerbate the identified overall shortfalls of play provision identified in the borough (see table 8), in particular in relation to youth facilities (and the high demand for such facilities), unless new provision can be provided.

It should also be noted that in practice there may well be wards and settlements where the child and teenage population may increase above the forecast levels (for example, in relation to new residential developments).

3.0 Predicted housing growth

The Local Plan (Part One) in Section 3.3.1.2 outlines the projected housing growth for the borough which aims to deliver 22,000 new dwellings with 'the majority of new development to be located within or on the edge of the city of Chester and towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford'.

This would result in the following requirements for new play space based on the quantity standards in table 7, and assuming a population increase of 50,600 people (22,000 x 2.3):

Play Space (Children): **2.53ha**

Play Space (Youth): **1.51ha**

4.0 Audit of play space

4.1 Play space typology

The Open Space Study/Play Strategy has recorded the following:

- **Children’s Play Space** – Areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.
- **Youth Play Space** - informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 19 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and ‘free access’ Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

It is also important to recognise that children and young people will play/“hang out” in almost all publicly accessible “space” ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, “amenity” grassed areas etc. (as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, Multi-use Games Areas etc.). These types of open space provide informal play opportunities and are covered within the CWAC Open Space Study.

4.2 Audit methodology

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current play provision in Cheshire West and Chester, an audit of assets was carried out, this included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by Cheshire West and Chester Council;
- desktop mapping of play areas from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers;

Site visits were undertaken by Ethos at 290 children’s play areas and youth place areas/facilities to assess the existing and potential quality issues.

Sites were visited and a photographic record made of key features, along with a description of the play space/youth facility and recommendations for improvements. An assessment of the quality of the site was undertaken using the following criteria:

- Play Value
- Management and maintenance
- Accessibility
- Safety

Details of the quality scoring/ranking given to each play area/youth facility is detailed within section 5 of the Locality Area Frameworks (part 2 of this report). The quality audit database has been provided to the council as part of the Open Space Study. A summary of the play

spaces (children and youth) included within the quality audit is provided within the Locality Area Frameworks (part 2 of this report).

5.0 Overview of provision of play space across the borough

This section provides an overview of the existing provision (quantity, quality and access) of play space across the borough.

5.1 Provision of play space

Play space for children and youth across the borough have been grouped into three categories of priorities for improvement (high, medium and low), based on the prioritisation process/scoring criteria set out within the Locality Frameworks (part 2 of this report).

Table 6 shows the existing provision of play space across the borough. The second column 'Existing Provision Ha' shows the total amount of open space for each typology in hectares. The third column 'Existing Provision Ha/1000' shows hectares of play space per 1000 of the population (using 2011 census data, population: 329,608).

Table 6 Existing provision of open space across the borough

| Typology | Existing provision (ha) | Existing provision (ha/1000) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Play Space (Children) | 15.89 | 0.05 |
| Play Space (Youth) | 4.89 | 0.01 |

There are a total of 200 children's play areas and 90 youth facilities/play areas within the borough.

5.2 Analysis of quantity provision

This section provides an analysis of the existing quantity of play space within the borough. It uses the quantity standards for play space from the Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study, and summarised in table 7.

Table 7 Quantity standards for play space (from Cheshire west and Chester Open Space Study)

| Typology | Quantity standards (ha/1000 population) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Play Space (Children) | 0.05 |
| Play Space (Youth) | 0.03 |

5.2.1 Current quantity of play space within the borough

The following tables show the existing provision of play space within the borough. Figures are given for the borough and for individual wards.

As can be seen from Table 8, there is an under supply of both children's play space and youth play space across the borough. Table 9 shows how the provision varies within

individual wards. The majority of wards do not meet the quantity standard for youth play space. There are also many wards that fall below the quantity standard for children's play space.

Table 8 Existing supply of children's and youth play space across the borough

| Typology | Existing Provision (Ha) | Existing Provision (Ha/1000) | Required Provision (Ha) | Required provision (Ha/1000) | Supply (Ha) | Supply (Ha/1000) | Overall Supply |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| Play Space (Children) | 15.89 | 0.05 | 16.48 | 0.05 | -0.59 | 0.00 | Under supply |
| Play Space (Youth) | 4.89 | 0.01 | 9.89 | 0.03 | -5.00 | -0.02 | Under supply |

Table 9 Existing Supply of children's and youth play space by ward against the CWAC Standard (ha)

| WARD | Play Space (Children) | Play Space (Youth) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Blacon Ward | 0.44 | -0.24 |
| Boughton Ward | -0.01 | -0.16 |
| Chester City Ward | -0.09 | -0.1 |
| Chester Villages Ward | -0.02 | -0.12 |
| Davenham and Moulton Ward | -0.33 | -0.31 |
| Dodleston and Huntington Ward | 0.62 | 0.1 |
| Ellesmere Port Town Ward | -0.15 | 0.02 |
| Elton Ward | 0.16 | -0.11 |
| Farndon Ward | 0.01 | -0.08 |
| Frodsham Ward | -0.15 | -0.04 |
| Garden Quarter Ward | -0.09 | -0.01 |
| Gowy Ward | 0.09 | -0.12 |
| Grange Ward | -0.09 | -0.07 |
| Great Boughton Ward | 0.17 | 0 |
| Handbridge Park Ward | 0.11 | 0.08 |
| Hartford and Greenbank Ward | 0.08 | -0.22 |
| Helsby Ward | -0.16 | -0.13 |
| Hoole Ward | 0 | 0.04 |
| Kingsley Ward | 0.16 | -0.11 |
| Lache Ward | -0.23 | -0.08 |
| Ledsham and Manor Ward | -0.39 | -0.23 |
| Little Neston and Burton Ward | -0.16 | -0.24 |
| Malpas Ward | -0.06 | -0.07 |
| Marbury Ward | 0.29 | -0.18 |
| Neston Ward | 0.04 | 0.01 |
| Netherpool Ward | 0.12 | -0.07 |
| Newton Ward | -0.36 | 0.05 |
| Parkgate Ward | -0.11 | -0.11 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Rossmore Ward | -0.09 | -0.07 |
| Saughall and Mollington Ward | -0.07 | -0.12 |
| Shakerley Ward | 0.4 | -0.13 |
| St Pauls Ward | 0.02 | -0.15 |
| Strawberry Ward | -0.25 | -0.15 |
| Sutton Ward | -0.15 | -0.23 |
| Tarporley Ward | -0.17 | -0.12 |
| Tarvin and Kelsall Ward | -0.15 | -0.2 |
| Tattenhall Ward | -0.17 | -0.04 |
| Upton Ward | -0.21 | -0.24 |
| Weaver and Cuddington Ward | -0.11 | -0.19 |
| Whitby Ward | -0.03 | -0.09 |
| Willaston and Thornton Ward | 0.08 | -0.11 |
| Winnington and Castle Ward | -0.15 | -0.17 |
| Winsford Over and Verdin Ward | 0.18 | 0.07 |
| Winsford Swanlow and Dene Ward | -0.21 | -0.21 |
| Winsford Wharton Ward | 0.45 | -0.08 |
| Witton and Rudheath Ward | 0.31 | -0.16 |

5.3 Analysis of access

Table 10 below shows the access standards for child and youth play space.

Table 10 Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study - Access Standards for children and youth play space

| Typology | Access standard |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Play Space (Children) | 480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time |
| Play Space (Youth) | 600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time |

Detailed analysis of access is provided within the Locality Frameworks (part 2 of this report).

5.4 Analysis of quality

While most play equipment across the borough is well maintained and in fairly good condition, there is a large variation in the quality of play space in terms of size, design quality and play value. A summary of the play spaces (children and youth) included within the quality audit is provided within the Locality Area Frameworks (part 2 of this report).

5.5 Prioritisation of play space and priority sites for improvement

Needs criteria were applied to all sites based on:

- Current quality of sites and their potential for improvement
- Proximity/access to other play areas; and proximity to schools

- Demographics e.g. numbers of children and young people in the area/catchment
- Child health – excess weight/obesity
- Levels of child/youth deprivation
- Geographical barriers to play - rural access

The Locality Area Frameworks provide detail (based on the above criteria) regarding high priority play areas for improvement, sites with medium or low priority for improvement and suggest play spaces with potential for alternative open space use where appropriate.