

Cheshire West & Chester Council

ALTOGETHER
better

Summary Council Plan
2011-15

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an ALTOGETHER better place

The following sections explain what each priority means and what we will do to make them happen.

We also outline the specific outcomes we will measure to ensure that we are making a difference.

Introduction

This summary of Cheshire West and Chester's Council Plan highlights our priorities from 2011-2015, outlining how we plan to improve the local area in coming years.

A full version of the **Council Plan: Altogether Better** can be found online at:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

The priorities included in our Council Plan, and summarised in this document, have been informed and identified from a range of information sources, including:

- The priorities identified by local people
- The priorities identified by our partners
- The priorities identified within our current service provision
- The priorities of our communities
- The priorities that we share with neighbouring Local Authorities

- The priorities of our politicians
- The priorities that are set by National Government

This research has created seven cross cutting themes that we recognise as central to improving the local area, and our ambition to make Cheshire West and Chester an altogether better place to:

1. Live
2. Work
3. Feel Safe
4. Realise Potential
5. Enjoy
6. Influence and Contribute
7. Experience Value for Money Services

Beneath these seven themes are 13 key actions that we will take to make Cheshire West and Chester Altogether Better.



An Altogether Better Place to Live

1. Housing that meets the needs of our residents

Making sure that people have access to appropriate housing is central to a strong community, the economic success of the area, and the life expectancy of our residents.

To provide access to this housing, we as a Council are working to:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents
- Increase the supply of market housing to meet future demand
- Improve the quality of social housing, particularly in Ellesmere Port

2. Improved Opportunities for our Older People to live independently:

The demographics of the United Kingdom, and Cheshire West and Chester are changing, and over the next 15 years the population of the area will see a 25% increase in the number of residents over 50, and a 75% increase in those over 85.



To make sure that older residents have better opportunities it is important that we:

- Ensure they can offer their skills, experiences, and energy to their communities
- Increase their opportunity to exercise choice and control over their own lives
- Provide support at an early stage by emphasising the importance of prevention and early help

An Altogether Better Place to Work

3. A dynamic local economy offering real opportunities for all

The economy of Cheshire West and Chester performs well when compared to both the North West and national average.

However, in the current challenging economic climate it is important that we take action to support businesses, jobs, skills, and training in the local area.

Cheshire West and Chester will work towards this goal by:

- Maximising support for new and existing businesses
- Encouraging the development of low carbon and alternative energy employment in the Borough
- Increasing and encouraging employment opportunities within the Borough
- Invest to maintain our roads and pavements
- Reduce carbon emissions from local transport
- Reduce serious injuries and accidents on our roads
- Improved broadband speeds across the local area

4. An excellent transport system which is accessible, safe, well maintained, and sustainable

High quality transport is essential for delivering economic growth, enabling communities and creating a sustainable future.

For these reasons the Council will work to ensure that we have an appropriate transport system in place for the Borough.

To do this we will:

- Ensure that transport links opportunities to areas of need
- Invest to maintain our roads and pavements
- Reduce carbon emissions from local transport
- Reduce serious injuries and accidents on our roads





6. First class services which champion and protect our vulnerable adults, families and children

One of the Council's most important duties is to support, champion and protect our most vulnerable residents in the area.

We are keen to meet this duty by:

- Improving our Safeguarding services for children and young people
- Supporting children in care, and narrowing the gap in outcomes with non-looked after children
- Ensuring that we uphold our duty to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect
- Working closely with other agencies to provide joined-up services delivered in the right places, to the right individuals at the right time.
- Taking a 'Think Family' approach to Safeguarding



An Altogether Better Place to Feel Safe

5: Lower Levels of Anti-Social Behaviour

It is important that residents feel safe in their communities. In order to achieve this we must work with communities to tackle crime and fear of crime, increasing resident's confidence in services.

To create this safer environment, and this feeling of security we will:

- Ensure a visible and active presence in communities
- Tackle the misuse of drugs and alcohol
- Protect Consumers
- Reduce domestic violence and serious violent crime levels
- Minimise re-offending

An Altogether Better Place to Realise Potential

7. Narrow the gap between our most and least advantaged communities

Many residents have a high quality of life and take advantage of the opportunities in the area.

However, there are some communities that experience multiple disadvantages and are amongst the most deprived in the country.



These communities are mostly located in urban areas, but there are also significant pockets of rural deprivation.

Other communities of interests such as residents with disabilities and those from particular ethnic and religious groups may face barriers to opportunities.

In particular the Council would like to work closely with these groups to:

- Identify needs within communities and find solutions
- Raise aspirations within these communities
- Narrow the gap in education attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
- Ensure a fair deal for all of our rural areas
- Tackle discrimination within the area





An Altogether Better Place to Enjoy

9. High quality cultural, sport and recreational opportunities

Having access to high quality cultural and recreational opportunities is important to residents and it also makes a significant contribution to the visitor economy in the area.

We have a good cultural offer, a strong tourist base and a rich heritage but we recognise that more can be done.

In particular:

- Investment into assets such as a theatre and leisure facilities
- Promoting our cultural offer to both our residents and visitors
- Managing our leisure and cultural facilities in a new way to improve their quality and efficiency

10. Healthier and more active lifestyles

Healthy lifestyles are crucial to personal wellbeing and the future health of our communities.

However, we have an unacceptable gap between the health of our most and least deprived communities, and this gap will continue to grow unless things are done differently.

It is important that we work to prevent future ill health and encourage healthier and more active behaviours.

It is vital that we are able to give people the necessary support they need if their health deteriorates, ensuring that resources are used to close the gaps between the health of our communities.



This will be done through:

- Tackling the underlying causes of ill health
- New initiatives to encourage more people to engage in sport and physical activity
- Working closely with our health partners to design quality services which meet local need

11. A sustainable, resilient and attractive environment

Having a pleasant environment is central to both the satisfaction and wellbeing of residents. We want to work to encourage a clean and green environment that our residents value and enjoy.

We recognise that for both environmental and financial reasons we need to live sustainably, with the Council and communities working to reduce our 'carbon footprint', whilst also planning to adapt to the potential impact of climate change.

The Council is working towards this by:

- Lowering carbon emissions from the Council, businesses and communities
- Supporting renewable energy solutions
- Working closely with communities to reduce waste and increase recycling
- Improving the cleanliness of our neighbourhoods



8. Early Help and Support for Children and Families

Giving children and young people the best possible start in life is essential to securing their future.

Evidence shows that focusing on early years prevention rather than addressing symptoms can break cycles of intergenerational underachievement and deprivation while saving money in the long term.

Cheshire West and Chester are keen to engage with these families, empowering them to access and make decisions on the services close to them, whilst also:

- Reducing child poverty
- Improving satisfaction in those being transferred from children's to adult services
- Increasing attainment at the Early Years Foundation Stage

An Altogether Better Place to Influence and Contribute

12. Local people solving local problems:

Local services should be shaped by local communities in order to meet local needs.

We have made strong progress with the 'Our Place' initiative in Ellesmere Port, but the challenge is to now apply the lessons learnt from this pilot across the Borough.

Addressing local issues does not always require the intervention of the Council or other agencies. We know that challenges can be met by communities identifying and solving local issues with our support and help.



To enable Localism in the area it is important that we strengthen relationships with our Town and Parish Councils, work closely with voluntary organisations, engage with our resident associations and empower our elected Members.



To do this, it is important that:

- Local people feel that they can influence local decisions in their community
- That we encourage people to volunteer and participate in community life
- That we provide necessary support to community, resident and volunteer associations
- The we engage and support Town and Parish Councils in the decision making process

An Altogether Better Place to Experience Value For Money Services

13. Efficient and responsive services

The customer is central to everything we do, therefore it is vital that we ensure our services represent value for money and focus on issues that matter to our residents, striving for efficiency and effectiveness.



This sense of value for money must be present within all of our services whether they are being delivered directly by the Council, or in partnership with other organisations.

A range of work will be undertaken to ensure that we:

- Increase resident satisfaction with services
- Increase the number of residents who believe our services represent value for money
- Deal with more customer queries at the first point of contact
- Reduce Council spend in areas that are higher than other Local Authorities

Making it happen

The priorities and themes identified in **Altogether Better** sit at the heart of what Cheshire West and Chester plan to deliver over the coming years.

More detail regarding how we will achieve these aims can be found in the full version of the Council Plan.

We look forward to working with communities and residents to achieve the goals that we have outlined, and make Cheshire West and Chester an Altogether Better place for everyone.

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 a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at **equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

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email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

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