

connected communities



**Connected to
Neighbourhoods**



**Connected to Voluntary,
Community and
Faith Sector
organisations**



**Connected to
decision making**



Connected to Services



Connected to People

Foreword

Local people are rightly proud of Cheshire East. It is a fabulous place to live, work and visit and we want to work with our communities to make it even better and sustain that success into the future. Our residents and communities are our greatest assets, and we all need to work together to make sure we have the right services, in the right places.

We are committed to investing in community work, and believe that by developing our approach to engaging with and supporting community development can ensure we maximise potential, generating wealth, to help all our communities become more enterprising and to enable more deprived areas to lift themselves out of dependence.

We are ambitious about our future, but we must also be realistic about the challenges we face. We are experiencing reducing budgets, and increasing demands on services. A genuinely sustainable future for our communities means ensuring that we live within the limits of the resources available to us. This is a huge challenge and requires new ways of working and a commitment from residents, businesses and services to work together and to be innovative and creative.

Cheshire East has from its start had a strong commitment to developing strong communities, so this strategy focuses on how we can best lead our communities forward to future prosperity, drawing on lessons from a successful past. It demonstrates our strong ambition to provide strong and sustained community leadership. Leadership that will enable wealth creation and self-sustaining community activity as well as allowing us to provide high quality, cost effective services where we are the right people so to do or select the right partner where we are not.

We look forward to working with you, putting a shared deal with communities into action, and welcome your ideas on how we can do more together.



Councillor Rachel Baily

Leader of the Council



Councillor Paul Bates

Portfolio Holder for Communities and Health

Our Destination

We have Connected Communities across Cheshire East, where people and community organisations are embedded within local networks, providing mutual help and support. Connected people and communities strengthen our community assets, reduce social isolation and enable local people to experience greater wellbeing.

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out 5 key Community Outcomes, with the first one being: *Our Local Communities are Strong and Supportive*. Individuals and families are self-reliant and take personal responsibility for their quality of life. Communities are cohesive, with a strong sense of neighbourliness. There is genuine civic pride and mutual respect.

Our Journey

Our Community Development work uses an Asset Based approach to develop strength based community initiatives. It builds social capital, recognising the importance of relationships, by developing local networks and connections, including targeted interventions to build social relationships amongst isolated groups. We also deliver interventions that encourage social connections between people with similar experiences to provide peer support, helping residents to confront and cope with life's challenges, so that they maintain their wellbeing in the face of adversity.

All our communities, social networks, and individuals have assets that can help to create community capital and generate local benefits. We want to unleash the full value of our community capital, unlocking any reserves, to maximise our shared potential, bringing about great social, economic and personal benefits for everyone in Cheshire East.

Our journey looks to increase our support to communities by providing information, infrastructure, networks and skills to help local groups and social enterprise grow, and overcome any hurdles they identify. This will enable our communities to become more enterprising, reducing dependency and enabling more deprived areas to address the inequalities which impact on their lives. We know that a one-size fits all approach will not work, instead we will develop evidence based, community-led interventions, which develop participatory engagement and co-production across our communities.

Our overall aim is that more people will report wellbeing and satisfaction with their lives and where they live. Under each of the 5 key areas, we will also develop key measures to evaluate this work and use Cost Benefit Analysis to evidence potential savings.

Our Deal

Our Deal with Communities recognises that everyone has a part to play and focusses on developing our local networks and supporting residents and community organisations, to maximise opportunities in Cheshire East. We have committed to a series of pledges and in return need residents and communities to play their part too.

We will

- Grant fund community groups
- Listen, be open, honest and friendly
- Encourage communities to support each other

You

- Get involved in your local community
- Have your say and send us feedback
- Support Volunteering

- Build services around you and your community
- Act on information you give us
- Support community groups and networks
- Increase activities in communities

Be active and take care of your health
 Take notice and look out for your community, reporting any concerns
 Connect with people around you
 Keep learning and developing skills

Making the Connections

The Strategy covers 5 key areas:

- **Connected to People**
 - helping people in communities to become more connected to others.
- **Connected to Services**
 – delivering services differently, with more community outreach services.
- **Connected to Neighbourhoods**
 – strengthening networks and partnerships across neighbourhoods, towns and villages.
- **Connected to Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations**
 – developing the VCF sector infrastructure and our links to thematic communities.
- **Connected to decision making**
 – local people influencing decision making, policy and the way we commission services.

Connected to People

Our vision is for Cheshire East to be a warm and friendly place, where people know each other and look out for each other; welcoming all parts of their community and making new people feel at home. Work strands include:

- **Community Connectors**

Community Connectors are a team of volunteers who are known by and know others in their community, with the energy and drive to listen to people and support them to address local issues. They support their community, to access services, social groups, activities, and social opportunities in their local community by recognising, celebrating and harnessing the 'community assets' that already exist. We are piloting Community Connectors in Crewe, from September 2016.



“I’d like to volunteer and use my networks to develop initiatives, which specifically engage Chinese communities.” Helen

- **Community Cohesion**

We are delivering a 12 month Community Cohesion Plan for Crewe, and will be using the learning to inform a Community Cohesion Strategy for Cheshire East from 2017 onwards. We are bringing partners and communities together to ensure that we respect and respond to the differing needs of our communities and encourage and facilitate community cohesion. The Crewe Community Cohesion Plan, includes a range of multi-cultural events and activities to engage with communities, and looks at how we need to work with communities to change services to meet the needs of local people.

“We are looking to make a plan together, so we can fully utilise our skills and actually make a difference in our localities.”
 Loreen, South Cheshire Multicultural Forum

- **Community Navigators**

The Council and partners are investing into a range of initiatives (e.g. Local Area Co-ordinators, Lifelinks, GP Facilitators, Community Agents, Wellbeing Advisers), which aim to help people access services and the help and support they need in their communities. We are developing a joint work programme to maximise the impact of this resource, which informs future joined up commissioning.



“The help support and advice I received from you was invaluable and left feeling encouraged and less isolated.”
Disability Information Bureau – Social Prescribing User

- **Neighbourhood Action**

We are piloting Neighbourhood Action in Crewe with a view to extending it to our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Cheshire East. It includes holding regular meetings, where local residents can raise issues and ideas, and work together with the support of agencies to deliver community-led action plans to address their issues. It engages widely, by holding regular Ward Walks in these neighbourhoods, where Officers, Partners, Members and Residents walk the area to look at issues and talk to other residents to find out their issues and encourage them to get involved.

“The Big Co-op Clean is a chance for members, customers and the community as a whole to come together to improve the local environment for the benefit of everyone – the activity has transformed the play area and it has been great to see the reaction of children, parents and the wider community to the difference that has been made.” Paul, Store Manager.



- **Social Isolation**

We know that the quality and quantity of social relationships affect health behaviours, physical and mental health, and risk of mortality. We are working with communities to develop a wide range of activities that can be shared; bringing people together naturally in a way that is appropriate to their particular needs. Increasing the number of luncheon clubs, IT & Chat, Knit & Natter, Memory Cafes to name just a few of the new services running from community venues across the borough.

“I found it hard to get him through the front door” as he “does not want to do anything” Grev’s wife said. Following a stroke, Grev was diagnosed with dementia and retreated and was no longer connected to the community around him, that he had once loved and enjoyed being a part of. He joined The Memory Café, and now both he and his wife attend regularly.



• **Mentoring**

We support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills and improve their performance and become the person they want to be. Examples include My World, Stronger Women and Twista. Twista is a programme developed locally which is delivered for year 9 teens, offering 1-2-1 mentoring and team sessions addressing anti-social behaviour, safe relationships and being ready for work



“It’s been a fantastic opportunity for myself and the firefighters to get involved in such a brilliant programme, watching young people to develop personally and overcome some fears along the way, so they should be very proud of themselves.” Paul, Station Manager.



Connected to Services

We are delivering an ambitious programme, known as **Delivering Differently**, which involves local communities in shaping and developing local services, so that they receive the right services, in the right place, at the right times. Delivering Differently puts our communities back in the driving seat, with local people determining what needs to be done and who is best placed to do it in their own community. It builds on existing community assets and supports voluntary, community, and faith organisations to deliver more in their communities and offers support to organisations managing community venues. Alongside supporting communities to provide more local services in their community, we are delivering more early intervention and prevention services through community venues and working with partners to do the same.

Delivering Differently focuses on:

- developing our local networks of buildings and outdoor spaces, from which together we can increase the range of targeted early intervention and prevention services delivered, in places where people need and will access them
- providing opportunities for people to skill up, gain confidence and raise aspirations to get jobs
- increasing the availability of physical activities in community settings
- providing more community activities which promote good mental wellbeing and social interaction
- targeted activities for people who suffer poor mental health
- increasing healthy eating activities and community cafes, luncheon clubs, etc.
- delivering more services in the community which increase independence for older people
- extending community activities and new services which offer support for families
- developing places where community links and activity are harnessed and extended.

The range of services provided will increase, as the programme develops and more communities are involved in the co-design and delivery of local services.

“It is great to see local services working together to benefit the community”. David Rutley, Macclesfield MP.



Our **social franchising model**, which is first and foremost about partnership, offers a range of benefits to its members and puts our local communities first. The aim of the **franchise** is to ensure that community venues have local and effective governance arrangements in place, with quality assurance provided through a validated self-assessment process. That all communities have access to a core offer plus additional services to meet local needs, delivered to high and consistent service standards.



We are demonstrating that this new way of working, taking services to people, will provide better services and save money. Cost Benefit Analysis on just two new services being provided in Macclesfield, show that over 5 years, the falls prevention project will return £2.24; and the alcohol awareness project will return £3.54 for every £1 invested.

Connected to Neighbourhoods

Community work happens at a very local level, in different neighbourhoods, parishes or towns. We are strengthening our local networks and partnerships, ensuring community activity and locally identified needs have clear links into strategic partnerships. The networks and partnerships below are key to our place-based commissioning and provide vital information on local needs, identified through community led plans.

- **Neighbourhood Partnerships**

We facilitate or are active partners in Neighbourhood Partnerships, who bring people together to address the needs of local people and work collaboratively to improve their shared offer. They cover our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which are in the worst 25% nationally (Index of Multiple Deprivation) in terms of overall deprivation and include:

- ❖ Wilmslow - Colshaw Farm and Lacey Green
- ❖ Knutsford - Longridge
- ❖ Congleton - Bromley Farm
- ❖ Alsager – Radway
- ❖ Macclesfield - Hurdsfield Community Group, Moss Rose Partnership, Weston Partnership, FAR UP (Upton Priory)
- ❖ Crewe - North and East, West and South, St Barnabas and Central.



“The estate based partnerships are making a real difference on the estates of Macclesfield. We are working together to address local issues and identify local priorities.” Holly

- **Town and Community Partnerships**

We support and work with Town Partnerships as they are a key part of the Cheshire East Partnership Framework, as they are independent constituted 'can do' groups, which are established and led by the local community. They vary to meet local needs, but their overall purpose is to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area. Town Partnerships are active in:

- ❖ Wilmslow
- ❖ Poynton
- ❖ Congleton
- ❖ Holmes Chapel



- ❖ Middlewich
- ❖ Sandbach
- ❖ Alsager
- ❖ Nantwich

“The 5 Town Partnership Forum is a successful model of ‘Partnership Working’. They hold a common purpose, to enhance the local area by harnessing the support and enthusiasm of local communities. They work with local authorities and other stakeholders to achieve their maximum potential.” Dot, 5 Towns Partnership.



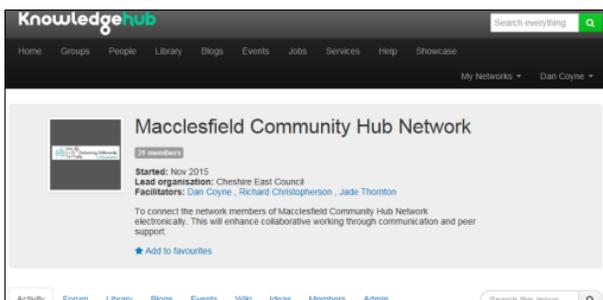
- **Community Networks**

We facilitate community networks, bringing a wide range of community organisations together, which focus on collaborative working and peer networking to share knowledge and skills. Community Networks understand the needs of their communities and are linked into the Area Boards, to represent local needs to ensure partnership work is led by community need, and increases community involvement, to make the best use of our shared resources and community intelligence. They also play a key role in community commissioning, influencing local public service funding.

“As a result of the Community Network, we partner with others to submit funding bids, learning much together and sharing experience with other network member.” David, Lighthouse Centre.

- **Knowledgehub**

We are developing our online support to Community Networks, providing an electronic portal which enables Community Network members to communicate with each other through Knowledgehub. It includes a Forum, which is a communication channel to post threads around particular topics that members want to comment on; a Library where members can access, upload and share documents, such as minutes from their meetings, policies or templates; and Events, allowing organisations to co-ordinate and publicise any events in their area. Knowledgehub is being piloted in Macclesfield.



““This is something that was missing, it allows me to connect with a range of partners and find out the latest information which can benefit my organisation and the people I support”. Maggie, Cheshire Streetwise.

- **Pledges**

Local businesses working together to deliver local Pledges, coming together to provide every young person living, studying or working in their area with the opportunity to develop employability related skills and personal qualities whilst in education and then a choice of a job, training or further education opportunity when they leave. By working together, local businesses are offering young people a better future and opportunities for local businesses and the local economy to grow. Crewe, Macclesfield, Wilmslow, and Knutsford have active Pledges, and Alsager, Congleton and Middlewich will launch theirs soon.



“The Pledge has introduced a range of activities to bring together young people and local schools with local businesses in Crewe to match-up candidates with suitable apprenticeship opportunities.” Christine, QHotels Regional HR Manager

Connected to Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations

We are supporting the development of the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector infrastructure in the borough and developing our links with our thematic communities. We fund services which:

- Provide support to voluntary, community, and faith groups
- Engage and consult with communities of interest and in particular those with protected characteristics
- Promote and develop rising standards within the VCF sector e.g. quality assurance, training and skills development
- Consult with and support VCFS to be commissioning and tendering ready
- Provide information and advice e.g. governance, funding and reporting/evidencing outcomes.
- Improve communication and collaborative approaches
- Deliver campaigns to promote volunteering
- Provide a local portal to advertise volunteering opportunities
- Ensure good practice within organisations for the recruitment, management and involvement of volunteers
- Act as the voice of the VCF sector, providing representation at key boards and meetings
- Develop, promote and maintain a directory of active groups and organisations.

Connected to decision making

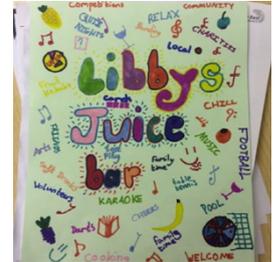
We are committed to ensuring local people can influence decision making and policy and are shaping the way we commission services. Our place based commissioning recognises that community development work is critical to delivering locally tailored services which meet needs and reduces unnecessary demand on public services.

- ***Budget Setting***

Government funding is going down, whilst demand for services is going up, causing significant pressures on the Council's budget. We will continue to increase and develop the ways in which we explain these financial challenges, listen to the ideas of residents about how best to tackle it, and get people talking with each other about those ideas. This will involve open and meaningful consultation, to reveal public preferences and priorities. We are committed to engaging and listening in a way that enables as many people from all communities to be involved and enables people to express their views to others, so that the Council can effectively gauge the breadth, depth and strength of public opinion and importantly work with communities to find ways to continue delivering quality services.

- **Participatory Budgeting**

We are running a Participatory Budgeting pilot, which directly involves local people in making decisions on spending priorities. It engages residents and community groups, who discuss spending priorities, make spending proposals and vote on them. It also gives them a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process. The critical factor is that local communities make the decisions, they get a better understanding of local spending decisions and and they get more involved local activities, so together we achieve more with less. The pilot in 2016/17 is using £400,000 from the Public Health Lifestyle Area Fund, engaging communities in the commissioning of services to address their health needs.



“Me and my grandad have come up with this idea and we would like to run this juice bar for our local community.” Pupil aged 9, Broken Cross Primary School.

- **Commissioning**

Our community work provides market intelligence, informing the Council and partners about existing services and what support and the outcomes people feel are most important, how these are being achieved at the moment and what services and support is missing.

We are helping to shape the local market by commissioning infrastructure support which ensures voluntary, community and faith sector organisations can access training and support which enables them to bid for contracts. We are keen to develop this approach further, by extending our community development work, supporting new types of organisations or services to develop, and providing one to one support to develop their skills to engage in commissioning opportunities. In addition, we ensure that feedback from local organisations, informs and shapes commissioning specifications issued by the Council.

“Our experience of commissioning at its most effective has been when there is a sense of mutuality between commissioner and provider that goes beyond a concern for process, but sees potential in the experience, reach, and relationships providers have with the harder to reach groups in our community.” YMCA Crewe

- **Community Rights**

The Localism Act created new rights to give local people and groups a greater say about what happens to local buildings and land and also how local services are delivered. Community Rights enable communities to have more of a say over what happens to the local economy, assets and services, and influence over the future development of their area through neighbourhood planning and building for their community. We offer help and support to communities to make the most of these rights and other opportunities.



“There were several reasons why the sites applied for the Asset of Community Value status, this is something that had been strongly encouraged by the national society to protect allotment sites. The benefits that allotments bring to a community and individuals is huge and is worth safeguarding and the ACV status is a huge step to secure the sites for future generations”. Ford Lane and Hulme Street Allotment Association

- **Social Value**

We deliver greater benefits for our communities, through our approach to Social Value. As a Council, we maximise the additional benefit that can be created by delivering, procuring or commissioning goods and services, above and beyond the benefit of merely the goods and services themselves. When we spend money, we do so in a way that achieves as many of the following objectives as possible.

- Promote employment and economic sustainability
- Raise the living standards of local residents
- Promote participation and citizen engagement
- Build the capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector
- Promote equity and fairness
- Promote environmental sustainability.



“As an organisation we take our commitment to the 5% Club very seriously, to the extent that 9% of our employees are either apprentices or graduates. I am delighted we continue to see more young people delivering our service in Cheshire East and I wish them every success in gaining their nationally recognised qualifications.” Mike, Ringway Jacobs.

Routes to Communities

Our deal with local communities focuses on continually developing our 2-way links and relationships. Our strong corporate commitment and approach to community development work, ensures we have ongoing community engagement and develops the co-production of innovative services with communities.

We will continue investing in community work, as working together with communities, is the only way we can deliver effective early intervention and prevention services, raise aspirations and deliver the growth we need. Together we need to effectively take risks, be innovative and creative and seize opportunities. Cheshire East will continue to thrive with our diverse range of communities where there is, active participation, self-reliance, and self-determination which provide resilience to economic and other changes, and where people have the confidence and pride to stand on their own two feet, to compete and to fully participate in community life.