



# CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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# CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the Cheshire East Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy for the period 2017 – 2030. The strategy recommendations are drawn from the Indoor Built Facilities Assessment Report, researched and prepared initially between August – December 2016 by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP). The Assessment Report and Strategy have been prepared in accordance with Sport England’s ANOG (Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) guidance and in consultation with Cheshire East Council, Sport England, national governing bodies of sport, local sports clubs and key stakeholders. The Strategy also considers and where possible incorporates the key findings from the Playing Pitch Strategy, researched and prepared between August and December 2016 also by KKP.

Cheshire East has an aspiration, and need, to consider its facilities planning particularly in the context of an aging stock of leisure facilities; future growth needs; changing economic and demographic profile of the area.

The focus of this Strategy is to provide clear direction to all partners so that together they can plan and develop a more modern, efficient and sustainable range of Community based Sport and Leisure facilities that Cheshire East requires. This will ensure residents have the opportunity to be physically active and healthier and where appropriate develop their sporting ambitions within their local community.

The consultant team is grateful to the project management and leadership of Cheshire East Council and the contribution from all other stakeholders to the development of this Strategy.

### **National strategic context summary**

#### ***Sporting Future: A new strategy for an active nation***

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

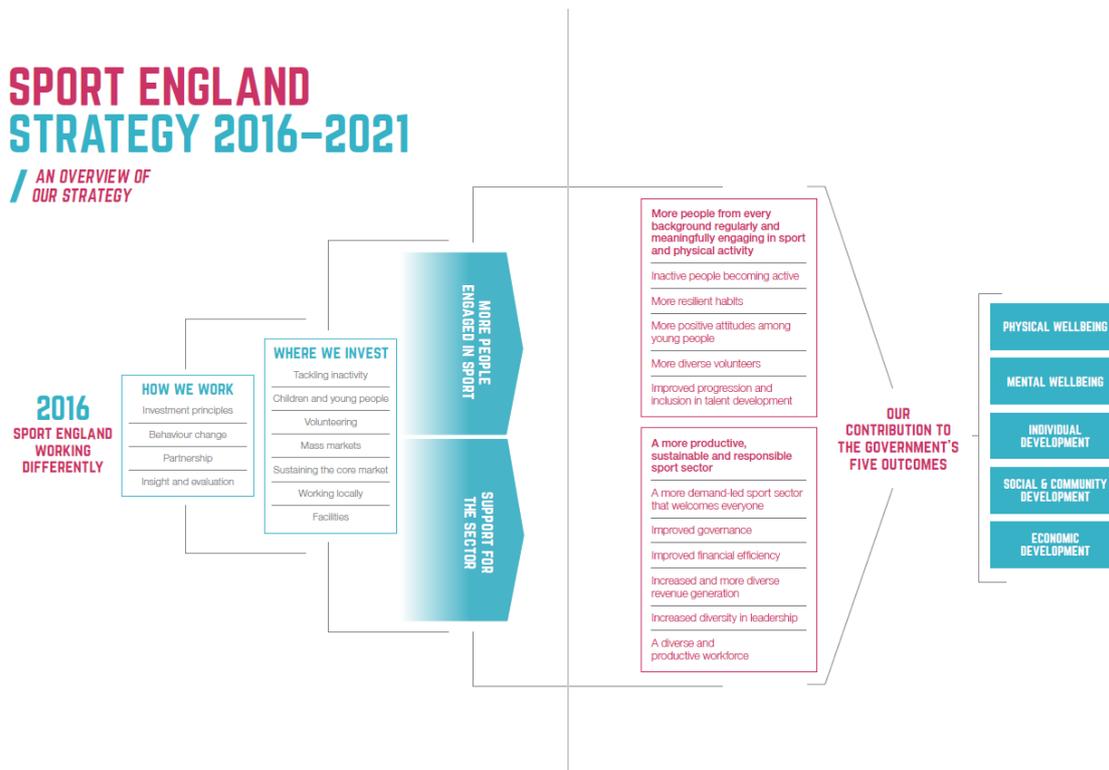
- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising the impact of Major Events.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

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## Sport England: Towards an Active Nation

Sport England’s response to the Government’s strategy was to develop Towards an Active Nation:

Figure 1 Sport England Strategy 2016-2021



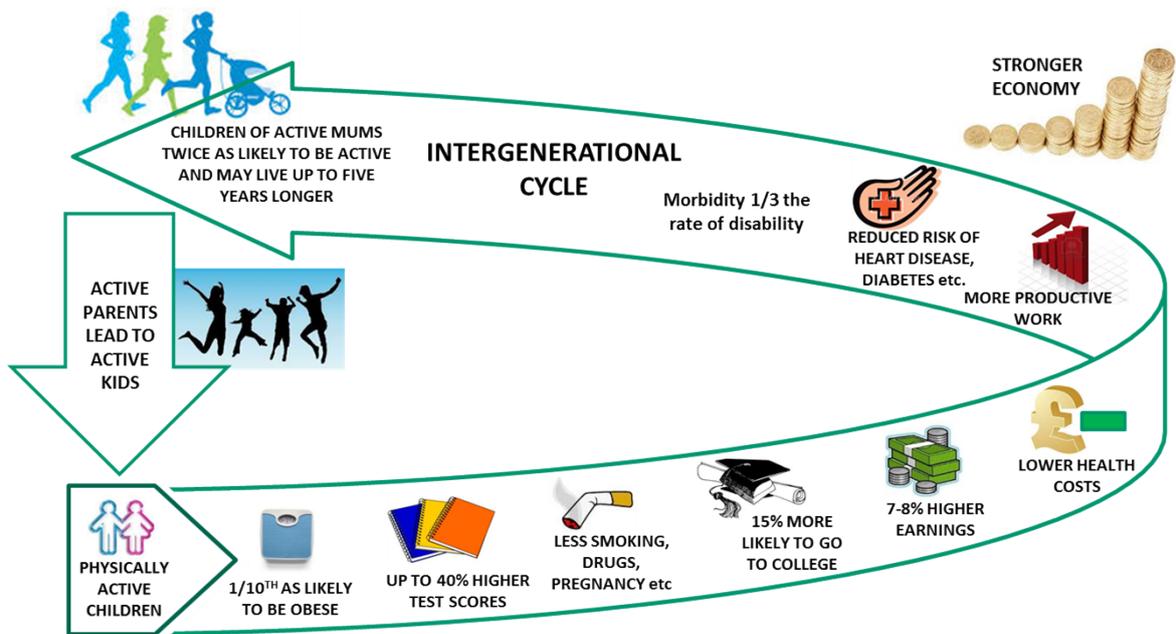
Sport England has identified that it will invest in:

- ⬅ Tackling inactivity
- ⬅ Children and young people
- ⬅ Volunteering – a dual benefit
- ⬅ Taking sport and activity into the mass market
- ⬅ Supporting sport’s core market
- ⬅ Local delivery
- ⬅ Facilities

It is clear that increasing participation in sport and physical activity and the health and wellbeing benefits that this delivers is the key driver for Cheshire East Council and its partners. This is particularly important in the context of getting the inactive to become active and ensuring that interventions are targeted at underrepresented groups. The wider benefits derived from having a more active population are highlighted in the following intergenerational cycle which clearly demonstrates the impact beyond the sports field.

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Figure 2: Intergenerational cycle



Based on 'Designed to move' © Nike Inc.

It is clear that having high quality and appropriate 'places to play sport and be physically active' are an integral part of the mix that delivers health and wellbeing benefits as well as wider economic gains to Cheshire East and as such should be viewed and valued within this context. It is also clear that this links into Sport England's new strategy 'Towards an Active Nation' which sets out the following vision:

*'We want everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. We need a sport sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers'.*

Sport England has identified that its highest priority for investment will be tackling inactivity. In addition to this it will continue to invest in facilities, but that there will be a focus on multi-sport and community hubs which bring together other services such as libraries and doctor's surgeries.

Therefore, high quality and appropriate 'places to play sport and be physically active' are important in delivering increased participation in sport and physical activity which is part of the foundation of improving health and wellbeing among Cheshire East's residents. However, it is not enough just to have the right facilities in the right places, they also need to be programmed and priced appropriately to ensure that activities are appropriate for specific target groups and that cost is not a barrier to access.

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## Local strategic context summary:

### ***Cheshire East Council – Three Year Plan, 2013-16***

The Cheshire East Council Three Year Plan outlines its purpose as aiming ‘to serve the people of Cheshire East through’ three areas, which are:

- ◀ Fulfilling its community leadership role well.
- ◀ Ensuring quality and value in public services.
- ◀ Safeguarding the most vulnerable in society.

Subsequently this is split into the following six outcomes;

- ◀ Local communities are strong and supportive.
- ◀ Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy.
- ◀ People have the life skills and education they need to thrive.
- ◀ Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place.
- ◀ People live well and for longer.
- ◀ Cheshire East is a good place to live and work.

### ***Cheshire East Council – Local Plan Strategy (Proposed Changes Consultation Draft, March 2016)***

The Local Plan Strategy is the first part of the Council’s Local Plan and sets out the overall planning framework for the Borough between 2010 and 2030 including for the provision of at least 36,000 additional homes. The Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation. Draft Main Modifications to the Plan will be published for public consultation early in 2017. Once adopted, it will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Cheshire East and will be the starting point for deciding planning applications. The policies that most specifically relate to playing pitches and leisure and recreation facilities are Policies SC1 (Leisure and Recreation), SC2 (Outdoor Sports Facilities) and Policy SE6 (Green Infrastructure). These policies are set out below. Further detailed policies related to sport and recreation are expected to be added to the Local Plan through its second part – the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD). Work on the SADPD will move forward in 2017. The SADPD will respond, as necessary, to the detailed findings and recommendations of the Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy. Until both the Local Plan Strategy and SADPD are adopted, the ‘saved policies’ relevant to sport and recreation facilities within the local plans prepared by the three predecessor borough councils will also continue to apply.

### ***Policy SC1 – Leisure and Recreation***

In order to provide appropriate leisure and recreational facilities for the communities of Cheshire East, the Council will:

1. Seek to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities, unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements or unless improved alternative provision, of similar or better quality, is to be made.
2. Support and promote the provision of better leisure, community and recreation facilities, where there is a need for such facilities, the proposed facilities are of a type and

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scale appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support the objectives of the Local Plan Strategy. The Council will do this by:

- i) Encouraging facilities that serve the Borough as a whole, and facilities that attract large numbers of people, to be located, where possible, within or adjoining Crewe or Macclesfield town centres.
  - ii) Requiring facilities serving key service centres to be located in or adjacent to their town centre or highly accessible locations.
  - iii) Requiring facilities intended to serve the everyday needs of a community or neighbourhood to be in or adjacent to the centres of local service centres or other settlements.
  - iv) Encouraging the development of shared service centres that combine public services, health and community functions in modern accessible buildings.
3. Supporting proposals for facilities that would not be appropriate to be located in or adjacent to centres, provided they are highly accessible by a choice of transport, do not harm the character, amenity, or biodiversity value of the area, and satisfy a range of other criteria. The proposal is a facility that:
- a. supports a business use;
  - b. is appropriate in an employment area; or
  - c. supports an outdoor sports facility, education or related community / visitor facility; or
  - d. supports the visitor economy and is based on local cultural or existing visitor attractions.
4. Work with agencies, services and businesses responsible for providing facilities to make sure that the needs and demands of communities are met.
5. Make sure that appropriate developments contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved facilities where development will increase demand and / or there is a recognised shortage of local leisure, community and recreation facilities.

### ***Policy SC2 – Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities***

In order to provide appropriate indoor and outdoor sports facilities for the communities of Cheshire East, the Council will

1. Protect existing indoor and outdoor sports facilities, unless:
  - i) They are proven to be surplus to need (as identified in an adopted and up to date needs assessment); or
  - ii) Improved alternative provision (a full quantity and quality replacement to accord with paragraph 74 of the NPPF and Sport England policy) will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users.

In all cases:

- iii) The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the character of the area in general; and
2. Support new indoor and outdoor sports facilities where:
    - i) They are readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.
    - ii) The proposed facilities are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement.
    - iii) Where they are listed in an action plan in any emerging or subsequently adopted Playing Pitch Strategy or Indoor Sports Strategy, subject to the criteria in the policy.

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3. Make sure that major residential developments contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved sports facilities where development will increase demand and/or there is a recognised shortage.

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## **Policy SE 6 Green Infrastructure:**

Cheshire East aims to deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, providing for healthy recreation and biodiversity and continuing to provide a range of social, economic and health benefits. This will be done by:

1. Linking the various assets of Cheshire East's unique landscape – its upland fringes, Cheshire Plain, lowland heath, parkland estates, rivers, canals and watercourses, valleys and cloughs, meres and mosses, trees and woodland and wildlife habitats and its distinctive towns and villages and their urban fringe.
  - i) This network of Green Infrastructure assets should be safeguarded, retained and enhanced through the development of green networks/wedges and corridors.
  - ii) Areas identified as having a shortage or opportunities for the provision of Green Infrastructure should be a particular focus for enhancement.
  - iii) Any development should contribute to the creation of a good quality, integrated and accessible multi-functional network of green spaces.
2. Safeguarding Green Infrastructure assets to make sure that:
  - i) Development does not compromise their integrity or potential value;
  - ii) Developer contributions are secured wherever appropriate in order to improve their quality, use and multi-functionality; and
  - iii) Opportunities to add to the Green Infrastructure network are maximised through partnership working.
3. Working with partners, to support the potential of Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets to contribute to the aims of the wider green infrastructure. The Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets<sup>71</sup> identified in Cheshire East are:
  - i) Weaver, Bollin, Dane and Wheelock river corridors including cloughs and floodplains
  - ii) Macclesfield, Shropshire Union (including the Llangollen and Middlewich branches) and Trent and Mersey canals
  - iii) Meres and Mosses Nature Improvement Area and Local Nature Improvement Areas
  - iv) Heritage town parks and open spaces of historic and cultural importance
  - v) Public Rights of Way, cycle routes and greenways
  - vi) Country Parks and estate parklands
  - vii) Peak Park Fringe
  - viii) The Cloud, Congleton Edge and Mow Cop upland fringe
  - ix) Sandstone Ridge
  - x) The ecological network of habitats identified in Policy SE3
4. Strengthening the contribution that sport and playing fields, open space and recreation facilities make to Cheshire East's Green Infrastructure network by requiring all development to:
  - i) Protect and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities;<sup>72</sup>
  - ii) Encourage multiple use and improvements to their quality;
  - iii) Provide adequate open space (as outlined in Table 13.1);
  - iv) Contribute to the provision of outdoor sports facilities in line with Policy SC2;
  - v) Create or add to the networks of multi-functional Green Infrastructure;
  - vi) Secure new provision to help address identified shortages in existing open space provision, both in quantity, quality and accessibility;
  - vii) Locate open space facilities in appropriate locations, preferably within developments; and

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viii) Promote linkages between new development and surrounding recreational networks, communities and facilities.

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## Neighbourhood Planning in Cheshire East

Neighbourhood planning allows communities, led by their Town and Parish Councils, to shape the development and growth of their local areas. This includes through the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans containing local planning policies that become part of the statutory development plan if supported through a local referendum. They can identify how and where new development should take place including what infrastructure should be provide, where this is aligned with the overall strategic needs and priorities of the wider area.

There is considerable neighbourhood planning activity in the Borough. At the time this report was prepared there were 40 active neighbourhood planning groups. Five plans in Cheshire East had been ‘made’ (Audlem, Brereton, Bunbury, Marton and Sandbach) with Holmes Chapel Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to local referendum in March 2017. It is expected that a further 20 Neighbourhood Development Plans will be completed in 2017.

The Borough Council is very keen to support neighbourhood planning and continues to provide advice and guidance to local groups. This includes understanding the relationship between emerging Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan. It is hoped that this Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy and the Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy will provide useful sources of evidence to support policies and proposals within Neighbourhood Plans. Clearly, planning decisions will have to take proper account of the policies and proposals in both the Local and Neighbourhood Plan, the latter probably adding more locally-specific policy. For example, through their Neighbourhood Plans, local communities may want to recognise the need to protect and enhance specific facilities and/or allocate land for new or improved facilities, where such requirements are justified by appropriate evidence.

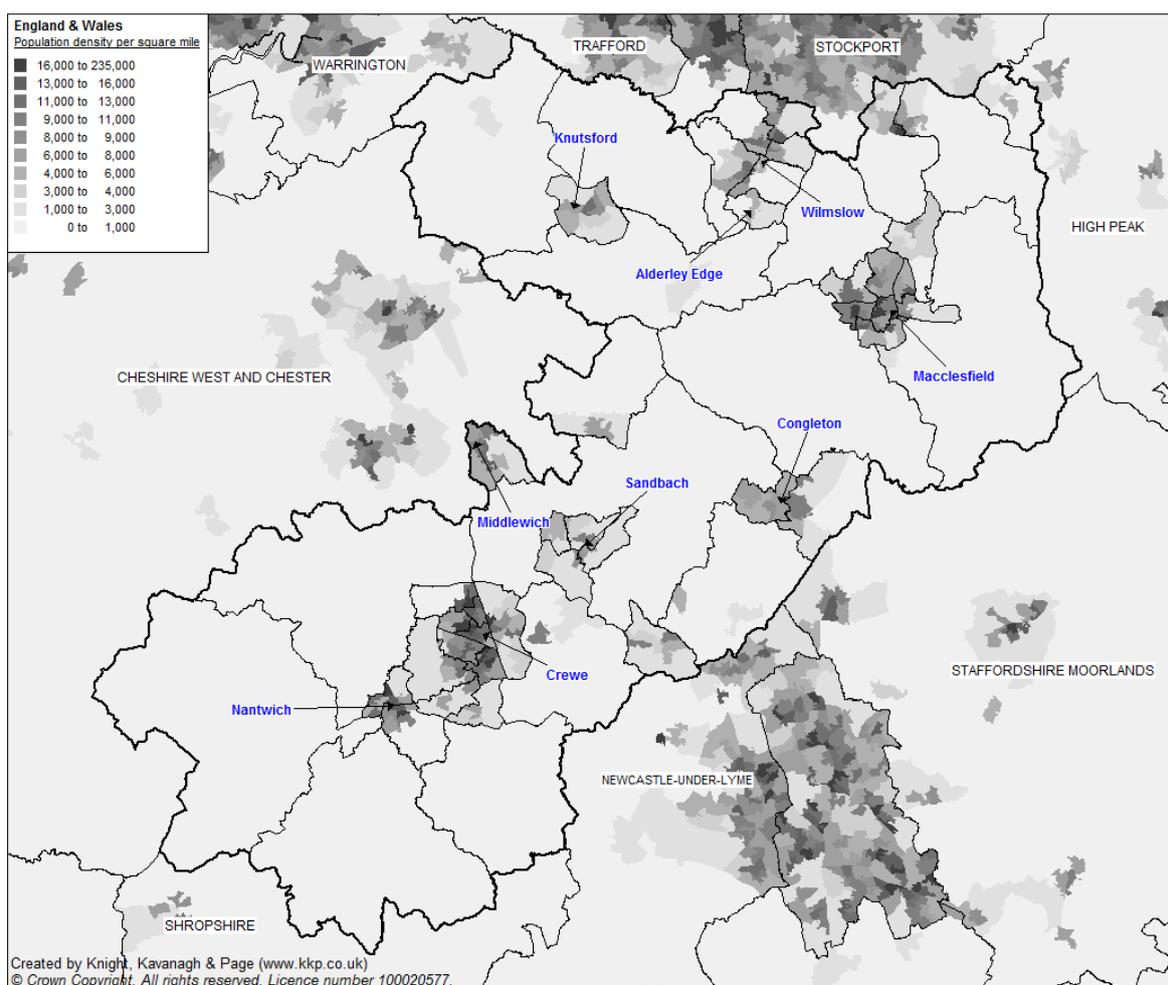
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## ABOUT CHESHIRE EAST

Cheshire East lies within North West England and covers an area of 116,638 hectares. It borders Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester to the west, Greater Manchester to the north, Derbyshire to the east as well as Staffordshire and Shropshire to the south.

Approximately, 40% of the population lives in rural areas with the remainder in the two major towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and smaller towns of Wilmslow, Congleton, Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager.

Figure 3: Population density (2014 MYE): Cheshire East and surrounding districts



Cheshire East is the third largest unitary authority in the North West next to Manchester and Liverpool and is divided into 52 wards. According to the 2011 Census, Cheshire East has a population of 375,392<sup>1</sup> people; of which, ethnic white groups (British, Irish, Other) account for 96.7% of the population (357,940 people), with 3.3% of the population (12,187 people) being in ethnic groups other than white (Asian, Black, Other).

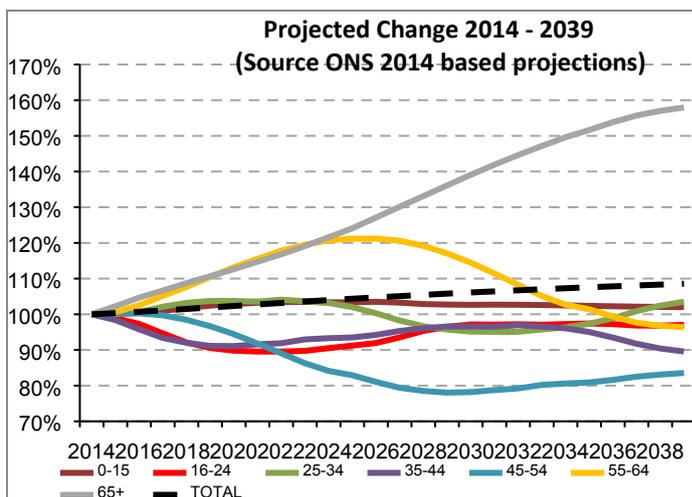
<sup>1</sup> Source: ONS 2015 Mid Year Estimate

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## Age structure and ethnicity

Cheshire East’s population differs from that of the North West region with the main differences being slightly higher proportions of people aged 65-74 (Cheshire East = 11.9%, North West = 10.0%); lower proportions of people aged 20-34 (Cheshire East = 15.1%, North West = 19.9%). Further the ethnic composition varies with 96.7% White, 1.6% Asian and 1.0% Mixed compared to 85.4%, 7.8% and 2.3% nationally.

Figure 4 Projected population change 2014-2039



The projected population changes show that until 2024 the 0-15 years and 25-34 years age groups are in line with the average growth in the Borough, but both taper off at different rates from this point forward. There is constant growth in the over 65 year old age group resulting in a 58% increase by 2038. Initially the 55-64 years age group reflects similar growth (20%) until 2024, but then tapers off significantly to below the current rate by 2038. All other age groups are in decline through until 2038.

## Deprivation and ill health

14% of Cheshire East’s population falls within the most deprived 30% nationally. Conversely, however, 55.4% are within the three least deprived groups (nationally this is 30%).

Health deprivation appears to be similarly spread throughout Cheshire East’s communities, when compared to national averages. The IoD<sup>2</sup> points towards slightly higher health deprivation with 19.0% falling in the most deprived (three worst) cohorts based on health measures when a national equivalent would be 30%. Similarly, to the overall measure of deprivation, 45.1% of the population is in the best three cohorts for health.

## Obesity

Whilst the data shows that the obesity levels for Cheshire East are in line with and below that of National and regional levels, there is much to be done to reduce the obesity levels which is costly to the NHS and detrimental to health and wellbeing. A key concern for the area is childhood obesity rates which identify that by year six, over a quarter (28.3%) of children are overweight or obese.

<sup>2</sup> Index of Deprivation 2015 (Department for Communities & Local Government)

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### *Activity levels*

Participation trends from Active People Survey 9 show that over a third (37.0%) of adults participated in at least 1 x 30 minutes' moderate intensity sport per week. Around a quarter (24.8%) are members of a sports club, based on the four weeks prior to the APS. Both of these are above the national average and the regional average rates. In terms of competitive sport, one in nine (11.1%) have taken part during the 12 months prior to APS9. This was slightly below the regional (12.0%) and national (13.3%) averages.

APS10 headline data for KPI 1 showed that Cheshire East residents have in June 2016 been named as the most physically active in the North-West region, according to the annual Active People Survey results. Cheshire East came top of the table which demonstrates that improvements are being made in getting people more active. For people aged 16+ there has been a more than 5.5% rise since 2005 in those taking part in physical activities. This figure now stands at 42.7%.

Currently the most popular sports in Cheshire East are gym sessions, swimming, cycling, athletics and fitness classes. Cheshire East performs above the national and regional averages for the percentages of residents participating in these sports.

### *Housing Allocations in Cheshire East*

The Cheshire East Local Plan is currently being developed and is at its examination stage. The Council is proposing to allocate a number of Strategic Sites for housing. There is an overall housing requirement for at least 36,000 new homes and proposals to achieve 31,400 additional jobs within the Local Plan period (2010-2030).

The Borough's population is projected to grow by around 58,100 people. This is set within the demographic context that Cheshire East will have a 65% increase in the population aged 65+ and a 134% increase in the population aged 85+, over the Plan period.

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## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### General Findings:

Cheshire East recognises the importance of its leisure facility stock to health and well-being and is committed to its retention via the presumption (in Planning Policy) against any net loss of active sport and leisure facilities in the Borough. There is also recognition that the Council and Everybody Sport and Recreation Trust will be operating within a climate of increasing financial constraints and there is a need to develop a strategy to deal with poor quality facilities which by their nature are expensive to operate and costly to maintain.

There is significant housing growth planned for Cheshire East which will increase demand for facilities in key areas as well as provide potential sources of funding (e.g. planning gain) to invest in facilities. The Council and its partners will also need to deal with increasing age related health challenges of the resident population.

There has been investment into “lifestyle” centres (integrated services buildings) in the Borough and there are more planned developments in the area which will further enhance the provision quality of facilities.

The future of Manchester Met (Crewe Campus) is uncertain at this stage and requires clarification. The loss of this facility will have a negative impact on the provision within the area, as it currently provides access to community clubs.

There is an aspiration within some sports in the area to develop specialist facilities (e.g. indoor athletics straight); however, this is likely to be dependent on the strategic need of respective governing bodies of sport and the ability of clubs to raise appropriate funds.

### Sports Halls:

There is a reasonable spread of above average and good quality community accessible sports halls in Cheshire East. Netball, badminton, basketball, indoor cricket, football are the main sports played in sports halls. Some school sports halls are not suitably sized for the main traditional sports (i.e. netball and basketball).

Nearly two thirds (62%) of population live within 20 minute walk time of a 3+ court hall. Just under half of the sports hall stock is rated below average, with changing facilities slightly worse than this. A number of facilities are theoretically full or operating close to capacity.

The strategic programming of sports halls needs to be considered to enable a balanced spread of sports and the use of the best facilities for talented athletes. This is specifically relevant for sports such as netball, basketball and badminton which are often marginalised at the expense of indoor football. There is also a need to address key shortfalls in provision for gymnastics.

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## **Swimming Pools:**

Swimming is a popular activity in Cheshire East; with all of the accessible swimming pools being well used by both the public and a range of aquatic clubs. The area has a relatively good supply of swimming pools with a community accessible pool available in all the main population centres.

The overall quality of pools in the area is a concern, especially in the longer term. The age of the pool stock across Cheshire East averages 39 years. Knutsford and Sandbach are identified as areas with poor quality swimming pools; but there are no plans currently in place to address this.

There are pockets of unmet demand in the rural village areas and also in some of the conurbations, especially Crewe and Macclesfield. In terms of swimming clubs, the potential exists to encourage clubs to amalgamate in order to pool scarce resources (e.g. coaches and volunteers) and to maximise the use of pool water space.

## **Health and fitness**

The health and fitness offer in Cheshire East is relatively good with the majority of the stock rated either good or above average. However, there is concern about the size and scale of the Everybody Sport and Recreation Trust health and fitness offer; which can be directly related to the longer term viability of the organisation within a challenging financial climate and the organisation's ability to reinvest surpluses in physical activity and health related programmes.

Middlewich residents have access to only one below average facility and no others within the 20min walk/ 2 mile boundary. There is concern about the levels of health and fitness provision in Macclesfield and Congleton and in other towns such as Crewe and Nantwich.

## **Indoor Bowls**

There is currently an under supply of indoor bowls in the area and with the population increases it is estimated that by 2037 there will be demand for 32 rinks. This is not considered to be a funding priority for the local authority and there does not appear to be an identified appetite or funding from the bowls community to develop a new indoor bowls facility within the area.

## **Squash**

Cheshire East has a relatively good supply of squash courts with nine sites providing three or more courts. This is significantly more than many other parts of the country where squash courts have been lost to fitness conversions or not replaced within the development of a new facility. The majority of squash facilities in the area are of good or above average quality. There will be a loss of 2 squash courts at Sandbach LC as a result of a health and fitness development.

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### Key findings within the main settlement areas

#### Alsager:

- ◀ There is one six court hall (below average), one four lane 25m pool (above average) three squash courts and two fitness gyms with a combined total of 69 stations in the area.
- ◀ There is planned investment of a gym extension and two new studio spaces to improve the health and fitness offer in Alsager Leisure Centre.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 2,000 new homes in the area which will increase the population by 3,201 people creating additional demand for 1 badminton court and 0.5 of a swimming pool lane.
- ◀ *Key challenge: to improve the quality of the sports hall provision in the area.*

#### Congleton:

- ◀ There is one six court hall and two four court sports halls as well as a six lane 25m pool and 3 squash courts and a total of 150 community use fitness stations.
- ◀ At the time of audit there is a planned redevelopment of the Peter Mason Leisure Centre which will enhance the leisure offer at the site.
- ◀ Potential risks are that the redevelopment of the Peter Mason Leisure Centre may not replace all the activity areas currently available.
- ◀ Congleton is anticipated to have 4,150 new homes which will increase the population by 6,700 people creating additional demand of 2 badminton courts and 1.5 lanes of a swimming pool.
- ◀ *Key Challenge: to retain and enhance the facility mix at Peter Mason Leisure Centre as a priority and to ensure this is financially sustainable in the longer term.*

#### Crewe:

- ◀ There are four x six court halls, four x four court halls and three x three court halls in the town. There are four good pools, each targeting a different market. There are 2 squash courts and a total of 915 fitness stations.
- ◀ There are no indoor sports facilities developments planned at the time of audit in the area.
- ◀ The potential loss of the two x four court sports halls and 50 station fitness gym at Manchester Metropolitan University (Crewe) campus would negatively impact on the availability of provision for the local community.
- ◀ Crewe is planned to have 7,700 new homes which will increase the population by 12,401 creating additional demand for 3.5 badminton courts, and 2.5 lanes of a swimming pool.
- ◀ *Key challenge: to retain the sports halls at the Manchester Metropolitan University (Crewe) campus or to negotiate suitable replacement facilities within an appropriate location within the town.*

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### Handforth:

- ◀ There is one fitness gym (good quality) with 145 community accessible stations.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 2,200 new houses which will increase the population by 3,501 creating a small increase in demand for indoor sports facilities, which is not sufficient to warrant any new sports halls or pools. Handforth is adjacent to Wilmslow and key settlements within the adjoining authority and can potentially be served by core sports facilities within these areas. However, this does not negate the potential need for smaller scale community facilities.
- ◀ *Key challenge: To ensure that the increased demand for sports facilities as a result of the development of new housing in Handforth can be accommodated within strategic development in Wilmslow and/or the adjacent authority. To consider how community facilities within Handforth can accommodate physical activity programmes for localised demand.*

### Knutsford:

- ◀ There is one six court hall, one four court hall and one three court hall. The six and four court halls are rated below average. There is one four lane 25m pool (below average), two squash courts and 71 community accessible fitness stations.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 950 new houses and a population increase of 1,501 people creating additional demand for 0.5 badminton courts, and 0.5 lanes of a swimming pool.
- ◀ *Key challenges: To improve the quality of sports halls and increase the quality and provision of both water space and fitness provision available within the town.*

### Macclesfield:

- ◀ There is one eight court hall, one six court hall, two four court halls, and one three court hall. Only the 3 court hall is rated below average, the others are above average.
- ◀ In terms of swimming pools, there is one 8 lane 25m pool, one 20m 4 lane pool; both of which are community pools and two smaller pools within fitness clubs. There are 23 squash courts and a total of 435 community accessible fitness stations.
- ◀ In general, the quality of facilities in the area is good with no major causes for concern at this stage.
- ◀ There is planned development in the area at the Kings School Macclesfield, which will consist of a new six court sports hall and six lane 25m pool. In addition to this there are plans to redevelop the Club AZ facilities at Alderley Park (although this is slightly outside of the area). Both of these facilities will have community access as well as their core education and employment use respectively.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 4,250 new houses in the area which will increase the local population by circa 6,800 people. The majority of development will be in the south of the town, whereas the majority of the community accessible facilities are located to the north or just outside of the town. New housing growth and increased population will generate additional demand for 2 badminton courts, and 1.5 lanes (swimming pools).
- ◀ *Key challenge: to provide access to community facilities for existing and new residents in the south of the town.*

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### **Middlewich:**

- ◀ There is one six court hall (below average quality) and two below average rated fitness gyms with a combined total of 59 stations. Although Everybody Sport and Recreation Trust manages Middlewich LC as if there is a community use agreement in place; however no formal agreement exists.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 1950 new homes which will increase the population by 3,101 people creating a demand for an additional 1 badminton courts, and 0.5 lanes of a swimming pool.
- ◀ Middlewich is within the catchment area of the Winsford Lifestyle Centre (in Cheshire West) and Sandbach Leisure Centre, both of which are within 10 minute's drive. However, there is still a need to ensure that the quality of Middlewich LC is improved in order to sustain community demand.
- ◀ *Key challenge: future investment should be to improve the quality of the Middlewich Leisure Centre.*

### **Nantwich:**

- ◀ There are two six court halls, and one three court hall all of which are rated below average. There is one public accessible six lane 25m pool and one small commercial pool. An outdoor brine pool is also available on a seasonable basis. There are three squash courts and a combined total of 161 fitness stations available for use. The Council owned health and fitness provision is spread over two sites.
- ◀ There is a planned development of indoor sports facilities at Reaseheath College where a four court sports hall is planned.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 2,050 new homes which will increase the population by 3,301, creating demand for an additional 1 badminton court sports hall and 0.5 lanes of a swimming pool.
- ◀ *Key challenge: Given that the provision of sports halls is limited to educational sites, it is imperative that community use agreements are secured for these sites and that their quality is improved. In order to maximise the impact of and income from health and fitness it would make sense to concentrate provision on a single site, ideally at Nantwich Pool & Fitness Centre.*

### **Poynton:**

- ◀ There is one six court sports hall, a 4 lane 20m pool, one squash court and 50 station fitness suite, all available at Poynton Leisure Centre.
- ◀ It is anticipated there will be 650 new homes which will increase the population by 1,001 people creating demand for an additional 0.5 badminton courts (halls), and 0.5 lanes of a swimming pool. There is currently an under supply of water space in this area as well as the need to improve the quality of the health and fitness offer.
- ◀ *Key challenge: to increase the size of the swimming pool and available water space and to ensure the maximum community use during the day, alongside improving the quality of the health and fitness offer.*

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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### **Sandbach:**

- ◀ There is one six court sports hall a four court hall (both of which are below average quality). There is one 5 lane 25m pool and a 4 lane 22m pool (both of which are below average quality). There are two squash courts and a total of 51 fitness stations available.
- ◀ There are plans to convert the squash provision at Sandbach LC to accommodate increased demand for health and fitness in the area. This will result in the loss of both courts.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 2,750 new homes which will increase the population by 3,401 creating additional demand for a one badminton court sports hall and 1 lane of a swimming pool.
- ◀ *Key challenge: to improve the quality of the sports halls and swimming pools in the area, especially at Sandbach LC, where the investment in health and fitness will highlight this more acutely.*

### **Wilmslow:**

- ◀ There are three four court sports halls. Swimming pool provision is relatively high with one 5 lane 25m pool, a 6 lane 25m pool and three smaller pools located at fitness facilities. There are seven squash courts and a total of 513 fitness stations.
- ◀ In general, the quality of provision appears to be good, other than at Wilmslow LC which is currently below average quality.
- ◀ It is anticipated that there will be 900 new homes which will increase the population by 1,401 creating demand for an additional 0.5 badminton court, and 0.5 swimming pool lanes. Therefore, the currently supply would appear to be adequate for the local demand. However, this also needs to be reviewed within the context of future housing growth in Handforth which is in close proximity to the Wilmslow catchment.
- ◀ *Key challenge: To take account of housing and population growth in both Wilmslow and Handforth and to improve the quality of the facilities currently available at Wilmslow LC.*

# CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

## Emerging opportunities

There is planned to be at least 36,000 new homes by 2030 and the Borough's population is projected to grow by around 58,100 people. Not all of the population growth will be as a result of additional housing, there will also be natural growth as a result of people living longer (hence the increase in percentage of over 65s). However, there will be significant housing growth across all of the key settlement areas, which means that there will be an opportunity to deliver planning gain to invest in new facilities or to contribute to upgrading existing.

*Table 1: - Indicative housing and associated population growth in Cheshire East*

Analysis Area	Number of new homes	Indicative population growth
Alsager	2,000	3,200
Congleton	4,150	6,700
Crewe	7,700	12,400
Handforth	2,200	3,500
Knutsford	950	1,500
Macclesfield	4,250	6,800
Middlewich	1,950	3,100
Nantwich	2,050	3,300
Poynton	650	1,000
Sandbach	2,750	3,400
Wilmslow	900	1,400
Local Service Centres	3,500	5,600
Other Settlements and Rural areas (inc Alderley Park)	2,950	4,700
<b>Cheshire East</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>56,600</b>

In addition to the housing growth there will also be the proposed High Speed Two (HS2) which will connect major cities in Britain. The Government remains supportive of the vision for a Crewe HS2 Hub station (potentially located at the existing Crewe station), and plans to make decisions on additional investment in 2017. The 2016 Command Paper also outlines the confirmed route for HS2 from Crewe to Manchester Airport.

Given the benefits that Crewe Hub would bring to the area the Council is supportive of HS2 and believes it reinforces Cheshire East as the best place to live and do business in the North West. The Council believes that investment in HS2 will consolidate Cheshire East as one of the most connected areas in the UK and will support existing businesses, inward investment and job creation in and around Crewe and the wider sub-region.

Therefore, the opportunity for new investment and a higher profile for Cheshire East is also an opportunity for the sports facility infrastructure to be recognised as a key contributor to the quality of life of residents and part of the decision making for people to relocate to Cheshire East.

# **CESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY**

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# CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

## MODERN LEISURE CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

In order to provide Cheshire East with a reference point of what other local authorities are developing in relation to their sports facilities networks, it is accurate to state that the majority are developing fewer, better quality facilities and are giving greater importance to the location and travel connections to facilities. Furthermore, many are looking to enhance their offer by developing a more ‘commercial’ range of facilities alongside a wider health and wellbeing service providers.

Recent developments of new community leisure facilities throughout the UK have followed three key themes within their design and offering, namely:

- ◀ Core facilities which meet local need and demand for sport and physical activity and enable the operator to deliver a cost effective service with minimal subsidy.
- ◀ Additional activity areas which provide a financial return by addressing a gap in the market or enhancing the core offer.
- ◀ Co-located with other service providers which enhances working relationships across ‘civic’ partners and improves service delivery to the community.

The following table identifies the types of facilities and activity areas included within each and the wider benefits that this delivers for the community.

*Table 2: Modern leisure facility considerations*

<b>Core facilities</b>	<b>Additional activity areas</b>	<b>Co-located services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 lane 25 metre pool</li> <li>• Teaching pool)</li> <li>• Sports hall (size depends on demand and programming)</li> <li>• 80 - 150 station fitness suite</li> <li>• 1x large group fitness studio</li> <li>• 1 x small group fitness studio</li> <li>• Catering hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floodlit 3G pitch</li> <li>• 5-a-side pitches.</li> <li>• Soft play</li> <li>• Spa facilities</li> <li>• Youth play facility (e.g. clip n’ climb, interactive activity zones.</li> <li>• High ropes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of a school campus</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Health centre / GP surgery</li> <li>• Pharmacy</li> <li>• Police office</li> <li>• Council contact point</li> <li>• Meeting rooms</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<p>Enables operators to provide services at minimal subsidy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximising income from health and fitness.</li> <li>• Maximising income from learn to swim.</li> <li>• Offering a range of community based activities.</li> </ul> <p>Enables operators to contribute to the wider physical activity and wellbeing agenda by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering health based programmes within fitness suites &amp; swimming pools</li> <li>• Being a meeting point and social venue for outdoor</li> </ul>	<p>Enables operators to maximise income to underpin the cost of the operation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking a more commercial approach to programming activity areas.</li> <li>• Capturing data on users (e.g. parents) and using this as a way of cross selling core services (e.g. learn to swim).</li> <li>• Providing a return on investment.</li> </ul>	<p>Creation of a leisure and community hub which enables operators to link with other services to contribute to wider physical activity and wellbeing agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering a wider range of services under one roof.</li> <li>• Reaching residents who would not otherwise enter a sports facility.</li> <li>• Offering programmes and interventions for specific client groups with health and other partners.</li> <li>• Cross marketing and sharing of information to</li> </ul>

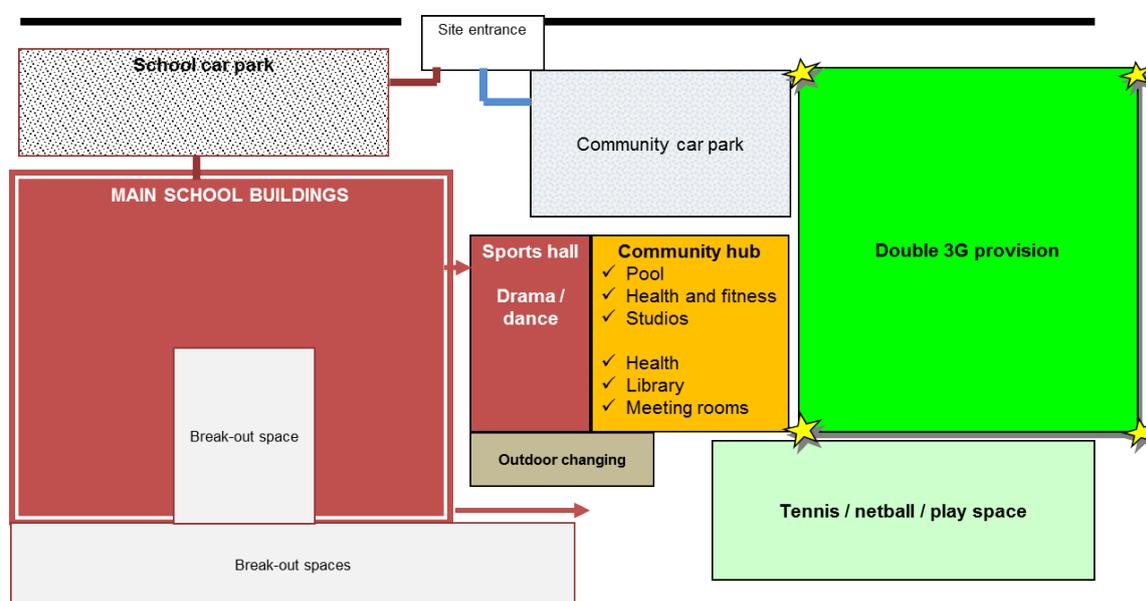
## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

physical activities.		address local needs.
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Where facilities are developed as part of a wider school campus, consideration needs to be given to the layout, access arrangements and overall management of the site for the benefit of the school and community. The layout model below identifies the potential considerations within a co-located community hub on a school site. The main ethos behind this model is that alongside the core requirements for a school, the community hub can be expanded or contracted to meet the needs of the local community and partners.

Therefore, not all hubs will be the same, but the access arrangements for the school and community will be set out and agreed prior to development. As such, serious consideration needs to be given to the potential to develop such a model in Cheshire East and maximise investment in community infrastructure as a result of housing growth and redevelopment of schools.

*Figure 5: Co-located hub site model*



The key features of the above model are as follows:

- ✦ School access is designed in such a way that it addresses safeguarding issues and facilitates community use of facilities when they are not required by the school, thus maximising community use and minimising the revenue burden.
- ✦ The activity areas are designed and operated as community facilities, with the new secondary school and local primary schools priority booking access as required.
- ✦ The building will operate as a stand-alone community health and wellbeing centre, with the school elements incorporated within this to facilitate community access at evenings and weekends.
- ✦ The Library, meeting rooms and health facility will be operated by their specific service areas; but it would be expected that joint working would be implemented to offer combined services and interventions as appropriate (e.g. targeted health promotion activities, etc.).

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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- ◀ In general, these types of facilities are located on or adjacent to arterial routes with good public transport access, significant visibility and presence within the area and seek to maximise the to and from work/education market.

### **Funding to implement the strategy**

The Strategy has not addressed in detail how proposals and recommendations will be funded. It is anticipated that there will be no single funding source; rather a mix of sources and solutions will be required to deliver the vision and ambitions of the strategy. These solutions will include:

- ◀ Further development and implementation of the Cheshire East developer contributions process associated with the development of urban extensions.
- ◀ Use of capital receipts from land disposal, where applicable.
- ◀ Asset rationalisation and use of revenue saving and/or future liabilities to pay back borrowing aligned to capital investment in other sites.
- ◀ Prudential borrowing where an 'invest to save' justification can be made, particularly for longer-term proposals which may be considered in light of the Council's future borrowing strategy.
- ◀ External funding sources aligned to specific facilities and/or sports (e.g. Sport England funding, other charitable grant awards and funding streams).
- ◀ 3rd party borrowing where a suitable, robust business case exists (although this will be more expensive than prudential borrowing).

In general, the majority of new leisure centre developments have been undertaken on the basis of rationalising one or two existing facilities and developing a new larger, better quality facility which is more economical to operate. Furthermore, the new facility mix enables the operator to deliver revenue efficiencies (i.e. operate the facility at zero subsidy or better) which are often used to fund part or all of the capital repayment. A similar approach is undertaken for the refurbishment of existing facilities where increased income offsets the annualised cost of the refurbishment.

It is likely that a combination of the above approaches will be developed for the wide range of projects identified in Cheshire East. This will require a robust approach to business planning to ensure that all investment is financially sound.

# CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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## VISION AND OBJECTIVES

This is Cheshire East Council's vision for sport and leisure provision in the area that builds on the conclusions identified in the Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities Assessment Report. This Strategy sets the vision and objectives for Cheshire East's physical infrastructure for the period 2017 to 2030. It considers all of the area's community sport and leisure assets required to ensure the Council and its partners serve the people of Cheshire East through:

- ◀ *Fulfilling its community leadership role well.*
- ◀ *Ensuring quality and value in public services.*
- ◀ *Safeguarding the most vulnerable in society.*

Cheshire East's vision is:

*To create a network of high quality, accessible and sustainable sport and leisure facilities, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling the inactive to become active and more residents to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and well-being.*

The strategic recommendations have been identified to deliver the above vision over the period 2017 – 2030. They provide strategic direction for Cheshire East Council, its partners and stakeholders which provide facilities and opportunities for residents to pursue sport and recreation as a means to engage in physical activity. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- ◀ Maximise the potential sports facility development opportunities created through Cheshire East's housing and population growth.
- ◀ Where appropriate engage with other services to create multi-agency hubs through the co-location of services.
- ◀ Work with colleagues in Education to ensure that any new schools or improvements to sports facilities in existing schools are accompanied by a community use agreement.
- ◀ Work with selected schools to increase their availability for community use.
- ◀ Enhance the quality of the existing sports facility infrastructure and improve its longer term financial sustainability by ensuring sufficient capital funds are available for improvement and upkeep.
- ◀ To protect key sports facilities which are deemed at risk or closure, either as a result of age or potential development.
- ◀ The retention of the Sports facilities and the community access where there are changes in Education (University)
- ◀ Strategically programme sports and leisure provision to ensure that there is sufficient access for a range of sports to enable growth and increase participation.
- ◀

The above is now considered in more detail to identify the specific rationale and focus for delivering individual objectives.

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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### ***Maximise the potential sports facility development opportunities created through Cheshire East's housing and population growth.***

It is clear that there are real sports facility development opportunities which should be maximised as a result of housing growth within Cheshire East. As such there is a need for the Council to ensure that it develops robust planning policies that set out an approach to securing sport and recreational facilities for the longer term, where appropriate via new housing developments in the area. Guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to develop new provision and/or the enhancement of existing indoor and built facilities.

Section 106 contributions or CIL (the Community Infrastructure Levy) should be used to improve the quality and scope of existing indoor and built facilities to enable increased capacity and use to be accommodated, enhancing the operator's ability to increase participation at relevant centres. Consideration should also be given to applying such funds to improve the quality of school sports facilities, where they enhance and extend the community use of schools.

Cheshire East Council needs to protect the existing supply of sports facilities where they are needed to meet current or future needs. Local plan policies should protect facilities to safeguard their long term use for the community; this should encompass strategically significant facilities as well as access to school sports facilities.

### ***Where appropriate engage with other services to create multi-agency hubs through the co-location of services.***

Through the development of its Lifestyles Centre in Crewe, Cheshire East Council has already demonstrated its ability to deliver multi-agency hubs through the co-location of services. This approach should be considered within other opportunities that may arise within the area. This will be important, especially within new housing areas, where there will not be a need for large scale leisure facility provision, but it will be important that what is developed (e.g. a community facility which is able to accommodate physical activity programmes), is sustainable and 'fits' within the rest of the community offer in the area.

This will be specifically relevant in areas such as Handforth and South Macclesfield where there will be significant housing growth within areas not directly served by an existing leisure facility.

Within south Macclesfield it will be important to ensure that any new community provision is co-located with other relevant services (e.g. new primary school, local shops, etc.) in order that the facility benefits from passing trade and is easily accessible within the new community and outside of the area. There is also an opportunity to develop a complementary facility to Macclesfield LC, including health and fitness suite and group fitness studio alongside any new outdoor provision required within the area. By clustering facilities in this way and by ensuring there is an appropriate management arrangement for the facility there is an opportunity that the offer will be financially viable in the longer term. This does not negate the potential for community involvement in the running of the facility, but it ensures that an appropriately skilled management team drives income generation, complementary programming and financial viability of the facility.

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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Within the new Handforth development, it will be important that the facility is also co-located with other relevant services (e.g. new primary school, local shops, etc.) in order that the facility benefits from passing trade and is easily accessible within the new community and outside of the area. It is unlikely that this facility would sustain any significant fitness offer; but there is a need to ensure that the facility can accommodate smaller scale multi-activities within a new community offer.

***Work with colleagues in Education to ensure that any new schools or improvements to sports facilities in existing schools are accompanied by a community use agreement.***

Cheshire East Council has recently been working with St Johns Wood Community School to get the school to sign up to a community use agreement to enable access to the school sports hall. In addition to this the Council has a number of community use agreements and dual use agreements at other school sports facility sites in the area (e.g. Poynton LC, Knutsford LC, etc.).

A number of educational establishments have identified an aspiration to enhance the range of sports facilities available at the school. These include Reaseheath College (4 court sports hall), Kings School Macclesfield (sports hall and swimming pool), Eaton Bank Academy (4 court sports hall) and Fallibroome Academy (4 court sports hall). These aspirations and potential proposals present Cheshire East with an opportunity to work with respective schools and colleges to ensure that community use is considered within the design and access arrangements for the facilities. Coupled with this, there is an opportunity through the planning system to ensure that schools sign up to a community use agreement and honour this regardless of changes to school governance arrangements.

Within the development of this recommendation, consideration should also be given to working with schools to determine the potential to have community access to facilities throughout the school day. This will require the effective design of facilities to ensure that safeguarding measures are designed in, but that schools can have community access when the timetable allows.

In order to deliver enhanced community use of schools the Council should consider allowing planning gain funds (e.g. CIL, Section 106) to be used to contribute to these. However, a specific requirement of the funding will be that a signed and actioned community use agreement is put into place and regularly monitored.

### *Core findings from Playing Pitch Strategy – 3G pitches*

The playing pitch strategy findings showed that there is a shortfall of five 3G pitches when assessing Cheshire East as a whole or a shortfall of eight when assessing it by analysis area. The PPS findings are:

Shortfall is evident in Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield, Poynton, Sandbach (all one) and Wilmslow (two). The Shortfall in Alsager will be alleviated after the development at MMU and the shortfall in Macclesfield could be alleviated after a development at Priory Park, but only if it is made available for football (it will primarily be for Rugby).

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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The PPS Strategy recommends exploring feasibility at Eaton Bank Academy to alleviate shortfall in Congleton. Likewise at Sandbach Community Football Centre to alleviate the shortfall in Sandbach (has one 3G but could have two).

The PPS also suggests that the sand based AGP at Macclesfield Academy could be converted to 3G to alleviate Macclesfield shortfall as no hockey demand exists.

There is a need to follow the current trends of locating 3G pitches primarily at school sites or alternatively managed sites for example at leisure centres adjacent to schools.

Aligned to the PPS there is a need to invest, and consider the option of co-locating facilities or providing pitches at Poynton High School or in Poynton where a management presence already exists.

In Macclesfield consider how 3G provision might fit with the new housing growth in the area and how it contributes to wider sustainability and any new provision in the area.

Within Congleton where Eaton Bank Academy have already expressed an interest in developing 3G facilities and a want to engage further with the wider community through the use of the school's facilities, consider the opportunities to develop other facilities at Eaton Bank Academy aligned with other facilities in the area as part of the academy development.

In line with the above consider the most appropriate school based locations for pitches in line with the regulations of the FA and ensure that the 3G pitches enhance the offer at the schools.

### ***Work with selected schools to increase their availability for community use.***

Almost all schools in Cheshire East make their sports facilities (mainly sports halls) available for community use. With the recent community use agreement developed in partnership with St John's Wood Community School, this leaves one school which does not provide access to its facilities for community use, namely Alderley Edge School for Girls.

Therefore, there is an opportunity for the Council to work in partnership with the school to facilitate community use of the school's sports facilities.

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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***Enhance the quality of the existing sports facility infrastructure and improve its longer term financial sustainability by ensuring sufficient capital funds are available for improvement and upkeep.***

There is a need for Cheshire East Council to invest in its current sport and leisure infrastructure in order to sustain provision within key communities and to address some of the longer term financial viability challenges with the cost of operating facilities. The key findings within the main settlement areas identifies the challenges that will need to be addressed in relation to the existing sports facility infrastructure. However, there is also a need to consider this with respect to opportunities to increase income from key sites. The key focus for investment within the life of this strategy can be identified as follows:

- ◀ Improve the quality of the sports hall and changing facilities alongside the investment in the gym extension and studio spaces at Alsager LC.
- ◀ Within the redevelopment of Peter Mason LC consideration should be given to the following:
  - ◀ Providing a larger teaching pool alongside replacing the existing 6 lane 25 m pool.
  - ◀ Retaining the current size of sports hall provision at the facility.
  - ◀ Extending the size and scale of the health and fitness offer by providing a larger fitness suite as well as two group fitness studios.
  - ◀ Ensure that consideration is given to providing changing rooms to service the outdoor pitches adjacent to the centre.
  - ◀ Consider the opportunity to provide indoor soft play provision as part of the development.
- ◀ Develop a holistic plan to provide an enhanced community sport and leisure offer in the Knutsford area. This should ideally build on the success of the existing dual use agreement, retain the existing size sports hall for school use and provide the following:
  - ◀ 5 lane 25m pool
  - ◀ Extended health and fitness offer by providing a larger fitness suite as well as two group fitness studios.
- ◀ Develop a holistic plan to maintain the quality of Macclesfield LC and where possible expand the health and fitness offer at the facility. If funding is available to provide a new sports hall at Fallibroome Academy and this has secured community use; there is an opportunity to consider using one of the sports hall spaces to enhance the income generation potential of the facility (e.g. extend the fitness offer and provide a soft play offer).
- ◀ Improve the quality of Middlewich LC with a view to establishing a formal community use agreement for the facility.
- ◀ Centralise the health and fitness offer at a single site in Nantwich (i.e. preferably Nantwich Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre) with a focus on extending the size and scale of the health and fitness offer by providing a larger fitness suite as well as group fitness studio.

## CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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- ◀ Develop a holistic plan to provide an enhanced community sport and leisure offer in the Poynton area. This should ideally build on the success of the existing dual use agreement, retain the existing size sports hall for school use and provide the following:
  - ◀ 5 lane 25m pool
  - ◀ Extended health and fitness offer by providing a larger fitness suite as well as group fitness studio.
- ◀ Develop a holistic plan to provide an enhanced community sport and leisure offer in the Sandbach area. This should ideally be at Sandbach LC and take account of the anticipated life expectancy of facilities available on the Sandbach School site.
- ◀ Develop a holistic plan to maintain the quality of Wilmslow LC and where possible expand the health and fitness offer at the facility.

***To protect key sports facilities which are deemed at risk or closure, either as a result of age or potential development.***

The research findings identified that there is the potential that the Manchester Metropolitan University (Crewe campus) sports centre will be lost as a result of the relocation of the campus. This facility is accessible by the local community and contributes to the current supply of sports halls. Furthermore, given the housing and population growth expected for Crewe as well as the potential wider impacts from HS2 there is a need to retain this facility for community use. Alternatively, the Council should seek to negotiate mitigation from the loss of the facility and invest this in a strategic development in the area.

***Strategically programme sports and leisure provision to ensure that there is sufficient access for a range of sports to enable growth and increase participation.***

Cheshire East has a strong network of sports clubs and users of facilities. As such, there is high demand for spaces (especially sports halls and swimming pools) to play sport and physical activity during peak times. However, the current approach to programming does not appear to accommodate priority sports with all facilities having an aspiration to have a balanced programme of activities. Although this is a valued approach it does not necessarily provide key sports with the opportunity to flourish and grow, thus increasing participation levels in the Borough.

There is a need for the Council and its leisure management operator, Everybody Sport and Recreation to develop a wider approach to programming (e.g. settlement area or geographical cluster) which incorporates not only leisure centre programmes, but also programmes at schools and private sector (e.g. Alderley Park) sites. As such there is a need to consider the best options for particular sports (not the operators or facilities), in order that they can grow and develop.

As an example, netball and badminton clubs have identified challenges with accessing appropriate facilities to train and play fixtures in order to grow participation within their sports. Furthermore, there is an awareness that the Cheshire FA has an aspiration to develop Futsal across the area.

## **CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY**

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Therefore, there is a need for the Council and Everybody Sport and Recreation to engage with specific national governing bodies of sport to identify how growth potential of certain sports can be nurtured and accommodated across the full network of facilities. This requires both organisations to consider how clubs and programmes should be 'pushed and pulled' across all facilities and potentially to accommodate increased use of a single facility.

# CHESHIRE EAST INDOOR BUILT FACILITIES –STRATEGY

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## MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy identifies the investment and actions required to deliver and maintain a high quality built facilities infrastructure for Cheshire East for the period up until 2030.

It is important that the Strategy is a live document and is used in a practical manner to prioritise investment, develop key work programmes and partnerships, guide planning gain investment and ensure that built sports facilities are a vital component which contribute to the quality of life of Cheshire East's residents.

The production of the Strategy should be regarded as the start of the strategic planning process with a requirement for all partners to engage in ongoing dialogue and review in order to ensure that a strategic approach is adopted throughout the life of the strategy.

It will be important for Cheshire East Council and its partners to develop a 3 – 5 year action plan based around the Strategy and for this to be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis. This process should not only be a review against the action plan, it should also identify any potential changes in the supply and demand for facilities across the authority. This is on the basis that the Strategy is as much about how facilities are used as ensuring the infrastructure is of a good quality.

In particular the annual review process should include:

- ◀ A review of annual progress on the recommendations and the 3 – 5 year action plan; taking into account any changes required to the priority of each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others)
- ◀ Lessons learnt throughout the year.
- ◀ New facilities that may need to be taken into account.
- ◀ Any specific changes of use of key sites in the Borough (e.g. sport specific specialisms of sites, changes in availability, etc.).
- ◀ Any specific changes in demand at particular facilities and/or clubs in the area (e.g. reduction or increase in club numbers, new housing growth,
- ◀ New formats of traditional sports that may need to be taken account of.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

The outcome of the review will be to develop a new annual and medium term action plan for indoor and built sports facilities across the Borough.