What is green Infrastructure?

“Green infrastructure is a region’s life support system – the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between cities, towns and villages which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits.”

Green Infrastructure North West

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Front Cover Image - Shropshire Union Canal, Backford Gap
The Ellesmere Port and Chester Links Green Infrastructure (GI) Action Plan considers the natural environment within the future plans for two settlements. The Action Plan is timely as Ellesmere Port is looking to broaden its appeal from its traditional manufacturing base, while Chester is looking to develop a longer term vision, and comprehensive strategy for the city. GI has an important part to play in this.

GI is the network of multifunctional greenspaces, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. The Action Plan demonstrates how a comprehensive and connected GI network can deliver many social, economic and environmental benefits focussing particularly on areas of anticipated future development and links between the two settlements.

The Action Plan proposes a number of projects that can help deliver a high quality living environment across the two settlements, support their economic attractiveness and provide benefits for nature. The projects support the recently prepared Ellesmere Port Vision and Strategic Regeneration Framework and Chester One City Plan.

To be successful, the Action Plan now needs a core team to drive GI forward in the coming years. This will be a partnership between local authorities, businesses and voluntary and community groups. The core team will also need a large number of supporters and activists to ensure GI is delivered on the ground.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 This is an action plan for the natural environment (or green infrastructure) for Ellesmere Port and Chester and the links between the two places. It includes actions to enhance the quality of greenspaces, water corridors and countryside.

1.2 Ellesmere Port and Chester are both key economic centres. Ellesmere Port has traditionally had a large manufacturing/industrial base but it is looking to broaden its appeal as a place of choice for businesses, young people and families looking to relocate. Chester’s focus is particularly on financial and service industries while its heritage is also of enormous value, creating a unique sense of place, and underpinning its leisure and tourism economy.

1.3 High quality green infrastructure (GI) is critical to quality of life and economic success for Ellesmere Port and Chester. There are major opportunities for investing in the area’s GI to deliver real economic benefits such as improved tourism, inward investment, sustainable commuting, a healthier workforce; as well as providing a high quality setting for new development and enhanced biodiversity.

1.4 Both places are expected to grow and this Action Plan outlines significant opportunities to support sustainable growth, including:
   - Unlocking economic development potential
   - Addressing health inequalities & creating a high quality of life
   - Underpinning the economy with a healthy & biodiverse landscape fabric
   - Helping to climate-proof both urban and rural landscapes

1.5 The document also demonstrates how investment in GI will help deliver the community priorities in Cheshire West and Chester’s (CWaC’s) Local Plan. The document looks forward for a fifteen year period to 2026, and has an action schedule for the first five years,
The purpose of the GI Action Plan

1.7 The Action Plan seeks to:
   - translate the aspirations of the Cheshire West and Chester Sustainable Community Strategy for a high-quality environment into tangible actions;
   - provide a framework for local organisations already delivering GI to see how and where their activity contributes to wider objectives for environmental enhancement;
   - promote the benefits of GI to a wide audience;
   - inform planning and economic development policy, especially Cheshire West and Chester’s Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
   - enable and inform negotiations between planning authorities and developers (e.g. Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions).

1.8 The document focuses on the Action Schedule (Chapter 4). This means the evidence about the social, environmental and economic context is reported through maps and summary text in chapters 2 and 3. More detailed evidence is available in a technical report accompanying the North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral GI Framework (see 1.10 opposite).

Status of Action Plan

1.9 The Action Plan will be considered by Cheshire West and Chester Council and if endorsed, will feed into the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. Following endorsement, the Action Plan will also be used to assist with development management decisions.

North East Wales, Cheshire & Wirral GI Framework

1.10 The Framework, prepared in 2010, considers the natural environments of North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral and sets out a vision of how healthy natural environments can sustain economic growth and thriving communities. The Framework identified several "Action Plan Areas"; geographically distinct places where concerted investment in creating and enhancing the GI network would bring much public benefit. The Ellesmere Port and Chester GI Links Action Plan links to the Lower River Dee Action Plan (see plan opposite). The Framework identified two types of GI initiative most relevant to Chester and Ellesmere Port:
   - settlement focused initiatives
   - community participation

Method

1.11 The GI Action Plan was prepared during 2012 with support and guidance from officers of Cheshire West and Chester Council, together with locally based stakeholders. Its preparation involved the following steps:
   - agreement of priorities with the Steering Group.
   - mapping existing GI assets.
   - identifying weaknesses in the GI network.
   - review of social and economic strategies for the area.
   - identifying areas where GI can deliver the most benefits.
   - review of current GI initiatives and environmental projects.
   - preparing and mapping a schedule of GI projects and associated delivery partners and funding sources.
Chapter 2 - Evidence Base

Green Infrastructure assets

**Ellesmere Port**

2.1 Ellesmere Port has various GI assets including its frontage with the Mersey Estuary, the River Gowy and the Shropshire Union Canal. The Manchester Ship Canal, although generally inaccessible to the public, is an important waterfront and wildlife corridor.

There are two country parks – Rivacre Valley Country Park in the north and Stanney Woods in the south. Whitby Park is Ellesmere Port’s main civic open space and all three are Local Nature Reserves. A green corridor follows Rivacre Brook.

Beyond these assets, most strategic greenspace provision is in the form of outdoor sports provision with limited public access.

To the south and west, Ellesmere Port is surrounded by the Cheshire countryside.

**Chester**

2.2 In Chester, the River Dee is the city’s key GI asset. The river and low lying land adjacent forms an extensive blue/green corridor through the city. The Shropshire Union Canal also provides a significant corridor north and east from the city centre. Other significant GI assets are Duke’s Drive – a green corridor linking the river with the south of the city, Grosvenor Park, close to the city centre, and the proposed Countess of Chester Country Park.
Links between Ellesmere Port and Chester

2.3 The two settlements are 8 miles apart and separated by countryside that is largely allocated as Green Belt. Much of the land is used for agriculture, with hedgerows, tree groups and ponds providing distinctive character.

Rail link between Hooton and Capenhurst to Chester

2.4 The rail link provides a frequent service (4 per hour), although stations to the west of Ellesmere Port are remote to the town’s population; and there are few green links between the town and the stations, limiting the opportunity for pedestrian / cycle access to the rail network.

Liverpool Road (A41)

2.5 Liverpool Road is a major trunk road and is not conducive to cycle or pedestrian movement in that there are limited facilities, apart from a bridge over the Shropshire Union Canal. However, in visual terms the road corridor provides a generally good quality approach to both settlements.

Shropshire Union Canal

2.6 The Shropshire Union Canal provides a more circuitous route than the road and rail links, from Chester city centre to the docks at Ellesmere Port. It currently offers limited capacity with a towpath width of approximately 1.5 metres, however it provides a pleasant rural environment for boats, cyclists, pedestrians and acts as a wildlife corridor.

Other Multi-user routes

2.7 A multi-user route connects the A41 to Capenhurst Technology Park.
Links outwith the Action Plan area

2.8 These include the Wirral Way, Mickle Trafford to Deeside, River Dee cycle route and the Shropshire Union Canal south of Chester.

Health Deprivation and Greenspace Distribution

2.9 The plan opposite highlights that much of northern and eastern Ellesmere Port contain highly deprived areas compared with the rest of the local authority area. The plan on page 9 highlights that Chester also has some deprivation in Blacon (west), Lache (south), city centre and other smaller pockets to the east.

Health deprivation measures areas with relatively high rates of people who die prematurely, whose quality of life is impaired by poor health or who are disabled across the population. Investment in GI can help improve health through improving access to, and use of existing open spaces.
2.10 The Council’s audit (2010/11) provides a snapshot of the quality, quantity and distribution of open spaces. The audit stresses the importance of quality open space provision in supporting the growth of Ellesmere Port and Chester. The recommendations for Ellesmere Port and Chester are summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of open space</th>
<th>Summary Recommendations</th>
<th>Improve Quality</th>
<th>Improve Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Gardens</td>
<td>Chester - Cathedral Gardens</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port - Grange, Rossmore, Sutton, Manor</td>
<td>Chester - Upton and Blacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; semi-natural</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port - Central &amp; Westminster, Ellesmere Port</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port - Grange, Rossmore, Central &amp; Westminster</td>
<td>Chester - Blacon, Hoole, Newton &amp; Upton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity green space</td>
<td>Chester - Blacon</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port - Central &amp; Westminster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child provision</td>
<td>Chester - Poets Park &amp; King George V, Blacon Grosvenor Park &amp; Water Tower Gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage provision</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port - Whitby Park</td>
<td>Chester - West Blacon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>Chester - West Blacon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor sports facilities</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port – Bowling, Tennis Chester – Tennis, Upton</td>
<td>Chester - Golf – pay &amp; play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>New footpaths, circular routes</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port - Cycle routes to Chester city centre &amp; Ellesmere Port town centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic spaces</td>
<td>Existing quality considered acceptable</td>
<td>No recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Biodiversity**

The Mersey Estuary is an internationally important wetland (SSSI/SPA/Ramsar Site)

2.11 Within Ellesmere Port, the designated Local Nature Reserves are Rivacre Valley Country Park, Whitby Park and Stanney Woods. The sites are all somewhat isolated and would benefit from better connectivity.

2.12 Chester has a greater number of biodiversity designations including the River Dee (SAC, SSSI) and a number of local wildlife sites, including land adjacent the Shropshire Union Canal, Curzon golf course, Earl’s Eye, Caldy Brook, Chester Approach (south) and Upton golf course.
Landscape Character

2.13 The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies the following landscape types in the area:

- West Lowland Plain (WLP5), which covers the majority of land between the two urban areas.
- Rolling Farmland (RF9), covering the south Wirral countryside
- Lowland Estate (LE1), southwest of Chester
- The Dee River Valley, extending into Chester’s urban boundary

2.14 The LCA describes the main issues affecting landscape character and distinctiveness, including;

- decline of management of farm woodlands, coverts, copses and hedgerows
- reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of habitats – including loss of ponds and species-rich hedgerows
- loss of historic field pattern.

2.15 The LCA guidelines thus provide an indication of how investment in green infrastructure between Ellesmere Port and Chester can reinforce landscape character and distinctiveness, something that is important to the visitor economy and attractiveness of the area for family life and inward investment.
Chapter 3 - Policy Context

3.1 This chapter describes several strategies and initiatives which recognise the importance of green infrastructure for sustainability and quality of life in Ellesmere Port and Chester. A map of the these is located on page 16.

The chapter concludes with a "SWOT" analysis, which considers the opportunities and barriers to increasing investment in the area's GI.

'Together we can aim high' (2010-2026)

3.2 ‘Together we can aim high’ is the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for the West Cheshire area and is an expression of CWaC and its partner organisations’ priorities to improve local quality of life and aspirations of its residents. Under Seizing Opportunities the SCS is committed to:

‘Valuing and promoting West Cheshire’s unique and diverse natural and built environment’ and

‘Adapting built and natural environments to be resilient to climate change’


3.3 The Plan sets CWaC’s priorities for the coming 4 years and has been informed by extensive customer surveys within the local authority area. There are 11 thematic priorities, including 3 that promote the area as an altogether a better place to enjoy. These are:

- High quality cultural, sport and recreation opportunities
- Healthier and more active lifestyles
- A sustainable and resilient environment

CWaC has been selected to pilot the ground breaking community budgets Whole Place programme, a new way of delivering public services which aims to improve the quality of services and actively engage customers in their design and delivery.

CWaC’s Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan

3.4 CWaC Council is currently preparing the area’s Local Plan that will shape the future of the borough for the next two decades. The Plan will set out a spatial vision for the area, how this is to be achieved and identify broad locations for change, growth and protection. Alongside the Local Plan, the Council is also preparing its Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP identifies the future infrastructure needs to support the anticipated growth in population and employment. Green infrastructure is one component of this, so it is intended that the actions in this plan will provide evidence for both Local Plan and the IDP.

The Local Plan envisages significant housing growth in this area over the forthcoming decade and sites brought forward will provide opportunity for GI implementation.

Ellesmere Port Vision and Strategic Regeneration Framework (2011-2026)

3.5 This sets out physical and socio-economic priorities for the town over the next 15 years. It is underpinned by three strategic themes and a number of development areas. The three themes are Green Ring, Town Cross and Water Edges. Key diagrams are presented below. The GI Action Plan will contribute to delivering the 3 themes, and further detail is provided in Chapter 4.0.

3.6 The Green Ring concept (opposite) considers linking up strategic areas of greenspace such as Rivacre Country Park, Whitby Park and Stanney Woods.

3.7 The Town Cross concept (opposite) envisages strengthening the role of Stanney Lane, Whitby Road, Sutton Way and Flatt Lane as they meet at the town centre. The 'Cross' at the centre of these routes is reinforced as the
3.8 The Water Edges concept envisages a ribbon of development opportunity along the Shropshire Union Canal, Manchester Ship Canal and Mersey Estuary to maximise the town’s water frontage.
**Chester One City Plan (2012-2027)**

3.9 The One City Plan is a clear strategy that will co-ordinate and drive a programme of investment and development activity into Chester city centre over the next 15 years. The Plan proposes to "effectively use and fully integrate the City’s green and blue infrastructure", with specific measures including:

- Pedestrian and cycle access to the River Dee corridor from the city centre
- Improving the River Dee frontage through the city centre
- Providing better links between the River Dee and the canal network
- Addressing severance to pedestrian and cycle movement caused by the inner ring road and rail infrastructure & promote cross city centre links
- Providing bike hire and cycle routes from Chester’s park and ride schemes
- Improve a connected network between green spaces and waterways

3.10 To avoid duplication, this GI Action Plan focuses on the areas outside the One City Plan strategy area, but it does include actions that link the green infrastructure of the wider Chester hinterland with the city centre.
Stakeholders

3.11 Delivery of cross-boundary green infrastructure relies on organisations (landowners, local authorities, environmental interest groups and built infrastructure providers) working together. This Action Plan identifies such organisations and encourages them to pool their expertise and resources.

Some of the major stakeholders in the area were consulted by telephone to make them aware of the Action Plan and asked whether they felt GI investment could benefit their organisation, whether they have any current relevant initiatives and how they might benefit from GI in the future.

Chester University

3.12 Chester University has 15,000 students with three campuses located at Parkgate Road, the former County Hall and Kingsway in Newton. The university encourages students to use sustainable modes of travel to access the University’s facilities and also promotes a strong volunteer ethic amongst its students including environmental projects.

The Canal and River Trust

3.13 The Canal and River Trust maintains the Shropshire Union Canal, including the section between Chester and Ellesmere Port. It has identified several opportunities for improved access to the towpath and new mooring facilities close to the proposed Countess of Chester Country Park and Chester Zoo.

The Canal and River Trust also highlighted the need to better promote Ellesmere Port dock as a destination and for any new development to better address the canal within Ellesmere Port.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust

3.14 The Cheshire Wildlife Trust has been developing its Living Landscapes project in the Gowy and Mersey Washlands. This has been identified as one of the core long-term wetland landscape areas in the Meres and Mosses Natural Area for achieving Wetland Vision targets. This project takes forward the delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan targets and will establish a landscape scale wetland complex comprising of habitats characteristic of the Meres and Mosses Natural Area.

Chester Zoo

3.15 Chester Zoo is a major attraction with 1.3 million visitors per year and is a significant driver for the local economy. The zoo actively promotes sustainable travel and there is a direct cycle route linking the zoo to the city centre.

The zoo is also considering the promotion of a spring/summertime boat service from the city centre using the Shropshire Union Canal. This would also allow access to the proposed Local Nature Reserve between the zoo and the canal.

Mersey Forest

3.16 The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces across Cheshire and Merseyside. Mersey Forest is a leading environmental regeneration initiative that works in the Ellesmere Port area and is currently promoting Green Streets and Forest Schools projects in the urban area, the Rivacre Valley Country Park and a green infrastructure framework for the Newbridge Road industrial area.
Groundwork Cheshire

3.17 Groundwork is an environmental regeneration charity that works in partnership with local people and local authorities to deliver improvements to the environment. Groundwork Cheshire is involved with a number of projects in Ellesmere Port including food growing projects, and work within Stanneygrange to engage communities with improving the neighbourhood’s greenspaces.

Sustainable Blacon Ltd

3.18 Sustainable Blacon Ltd is a trust set up to promote sustainable living within a deprived neighbourhood of Chester. It works within four key areas: spaces, transport, energy and enterprise. It worked in partnership with Sustrans to promote sustainable travel, including the delivery of a greenway route linking Blacon with Chester and Deeside (North Wales).

Sustrans North West

3.19 Sustrans is a sustainable transport charity helping people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Sustrans North West is based in Crewe and works with Cheshire West and Chester Council in delivering cycle infrastructure.

Capenhurst Technology Park, Ellesmere Port

3.20 The Park accommodates 1000 employees and consultation with some key representatives has revealed that access to the site by the Chester-Liverpool railway line is good from Capenhurst Station, however east-west links to Ellesmere Port are poor and need to be improved.
Case Study - Countess of Chester Country Park

The proposed Countess of Chester Country Park is located between the hospital and the Shropshire Union Canal and the aim is to create a new 29ha ‘Country Park’, on brownfield and under-utilised land transferred to the Land Trust. The park will have a number of character areas, including parkland, woodland, orchards, wildflower meadows, grassland and grazing and be linked by a footpath network. Finchetts Gutter passes through the middle of the park and its course will be re-profiled and managed to alleviate flooding, improve water quality and provide benefits for biodiversity. More strategically the park will connect with the wider public rights of way network and the Shropshire Union Canal and provide valuable greenspace for this area of north Chester.

The Country Park will act as a setting for a range of health and wellbeing initiatives, community volunteering, education and training, environmental improvements and would provide public and multi user access. The Country Park has potential to have a beneficial impact on the 3,000 staff at the hospital and the 450,000 annual patient visits together with the surrounding neighbourhoods of Blacon and Upton.

Consultation has been an important part of the project development and the findings will inform the refinements to the park proposals. A planning application for the whole site was approved during April 2012 (subject to conditions) and subject to funding it is anticipated that the country park will be completed by 2013.

There are longer term opportunities to continue GI provision north of the site, following the course of the canal providing a strategic corridor north towards Chester Zoo and Ellesmere Port, but this would be subject to addressing land ownership and funding issues.
### SWOC Analysis

3.22 The table below summarises the area’s strengths in terms of its existing GI assets and initiatives. It moves on to consider the opportunities and challenges to increasing investment in the area’s GI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Watercourses (Shropshire Union Canal, River Dee, River Gowy), provided connected GI corridors &lt;br&gt; • Rivacre Valley Country Park, Whitby Park, Stanney Woods (Ellesmere Port) - range of Local Wildlife sites &lt;br&gt; • Greenspaces associated with River Dee corridor (Chester)</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port: &lt;br&gt; • Extensive spatial distribution of health deprivation &lt;br&gt; • Wildlife habitat fragmentation &lt;br&gt; Chester: &lt;br&gt; • Several pockets of health deprivation &lt;br&gt; • Shortfall of parks &amp; greenspaces to eastern edge of settlement &lt;br&gt; General: &lt;br&gt; • Declining landscape character of local countryside</td>
<td>• CWaC policy documents promote GI through healthy living &amp; environments &lt;br&gt; • Implement GI type recommendations of Ellesmere Port Vision &amp; Strategic Regeneration Framework &amp; Chester One City Plan (specified within GI maps) &lt;br&gt; • Potential for GI within proposed housing &amp; employment developments &lt;br&gt; • GI to enhance physical linkages between both settlements &lt;br&gt; • GI to support health and well being – access to the countryside</td>
<td>• Promoting GI to landowners &amp; tenants &lt;br&gt; • Fragmented land ownerships cause difficulties in implementing connected GI &lt;br&gt; • Making the case for funding GI and balancing development pressure and environmental needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4 - Ellesmere Port and Chester GI Links Action Plan

Introduction

4.1 Building on Ellesmere Port and Chester’s existing assets and initiatives there are significant GI opportunities for the future. The North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral GI Framework identified various objectives appropriate to Chester, Ellesmere Port and the links between the settlements. This chapter tabulates the actions needed to deliver these objectives, grouped under six headings:

Settlement-focused Initiatives

- Greening the built environment – improvements to the quality of settlements by increasing the quantity and influence of GI. Schedule 1 lists a series of actions under this heading.
- Safe, accessible and healthy natural environments – proposals for the natural environment and greenspaces which improve physical and mental well being. (Schedule 2)
- Urban river and water management – enhancing the biodiversity, recreation and water quality of the area’s rivers and watercourses. (Schedule 3)
- Greening economic centres – proposals for GI which provides high quality working environments and mitigates adverse effects of climate change. (Schedule 4)

Community-focused initiatives

- Enabling community leadership and business participation in the delivery of GI (Schedule 5)
- Supporting green apprenticeships and volunteering (Schedule 6)

The following schedules include:

- objectives
- actions
- geographic locations
- potential funding sources (in summary form, with further details in the appendices)
- lead stakeholders and supporters

The GI Maps illustrate the location of major GI projects included in the schedules. Some of the actions will be subject to further detailed study at a later date.
**Schedule 1 - Greening the Built Environment**

**Rationale**
GI improves the quality of life & place, providing opportunities for sport, leisure & recreation. Greener settlements will attract sustainable development & improve property values through increased resilience to climatic & demographic changes. GI can also be the focus for community activities & interaction.

**Objectives**
- to provide a network of varied, usable & well managed greenspaces meeting the needs of our communities
- to better connect our core biodiversity areas creating strategic corridors
- to make the Ellesmere Port & Chester a more attractive area place to live, work & invest; to better link the two settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create &amp; promote multi-user/cycle routes</td>
<td>* Identify gaps in the existing network * Awareness raising of network &amp; better signposting</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port: 1. Town Cross 2. Green Ring 3. West Port/Ledsham Rd 4. Links between the two settlements Chester: 1. proposed bridge link between Queen’s Park &amp; Huntington</td>
<td>Section 106, CIL, Private businesses Other funding sources</td>
<td>Lead –CWaC Supporting - Sustrans, private businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity corridor linking</td>
<td>* Reverse habitat fragmentation * Highlight connected strategic network * Consider management plan of biodiversity corridors</td>
<td>See Biodiversity Corridor Linking plan</td>
<td>Section 106, CIL Other funding sources</td>
<td>Lead –CWaC Supporting - Natural England, Environment Agency (EA), Mersey Forest, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GI in regeneration</td>
<td>* Ensure that GI is delivered within regeneration initiatives such as Total Place</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port Blacon, Chester</td>
<td>Section 106, CIL, Other funding sources</td>
<td>Lead – CWaC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Schedule 2 - Safe, Healthy & Accessible Natural Environments

### Rationale
Investment in GI can ensure that natural environments provide accessible spaces for improving physical & mental well being

### Objectives
- To make the natural environment more accessible & link to health programmes
- To protect & enhance natural environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link greenspaces to sustainable access network</td>
<td>* create connected routes between greenspaces &amp; where people live &amp; work  * enhance existing/propose new routes through suitable surfacing &amp; signage</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port: 1. Link Rivacre Valley, 2. Rivacre Brook, 3. Whitby Park &amp; Overpool by the proposed Green Loop Chester: 1. Sealand Meadows &amp; proposed Countess of Chester Country Park</td>
<td>Section 106, CIL Other funding sources</td>
<td>Lead – CWaC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create &amp; promote access routes along watercourses to maximise their potential for recreation &amp; revitalisation of the areas fronting these corridors</td>
<td>* establish land ownerships to establish feasibility  * liaise with Environment Agency &amp; landowners to establish opportunities</td>
<td>Ellesmere Port: Stanlow/River Gowy; Chester: 1. Curzon Park, 2. Dukes Drive (Chester Approach), 3. Queen’s Park, 4. Caldy Brook</td>
<td>Lead - CWaC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Schedule 2 - Safe, Healthy & Accessible Natural Environments

**Rationale**
Investment in GI can ensure that natural environments provide accessible spaces for improving physical & mental well being.

**Objectives**
- To make the natural environment more accessible & link to health programmes
- To protect & enhance natural environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect &amp; enhance biodiversity</td>
<td>* work with landowners, Natural England &amp; Wildlife Trusts to develop management plans for Local Wildlife Sites  * with farm environment schemes &amp; dialogue with landowners, increase habitat connectivity between areas of biodiversity value  * on land owned by CWaC, work with partners to enhance management of biodiversity</td>
<td>Core Biodiversity Areas –</td>
<td>Section 106, CIL Other funding sources</td>
<td>Lead – CWaC Natural England, landowners,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote education &amp; interpretation of the benefits of the natural environment</td>
<td>* support venues promoting understanding of natural environment &amp; outreach to schools &amp; community</td>
<td>(see stakeholder consultation &amp; case study)</td>
<td>Section 106, CIL Liverpool University, Chester University</td>
<td>Lead – CWaC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote provision of natural/semi natural greenspace</td>
<td>* continue planning, funding &amp; landowner negotiations to secure implementation</td>
<td>Countess of Chester Country Park (see Chester GI Map)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lead – CWaC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote provision of natural/semi natural greenspace</td>
<td>* continue planning &amp; funding negotiations to secure implementation</td>
<td>Site adjacent canal near Chester Zoo</td>
<td>Big Tree, WREN, Biffa</td>
<td>Lead – Chester Zoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Schedule 3 - Urban river & water management

### Rationale
Improving urban river corridors, watercourses and water management provides more opportunities for wildlife to move through urban areas and recreation and amenity for people. Managing watercourses to assist in flood management.

### Objectives
- To enhance water corridors to improve biodiversity, recreation and water quality.
- To improve the physical structure of watercourses to help manage flood risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Secure buffer zones around watercourses for biodiversity and recreation | * establish land ownerships to establish feasibility  
* liaise with Environment Agency & landowners to establish opportunities | Shropshire Union Canal – from Knolls Bridge (adj. Countess of Chester) to Caughall Bridge (near Chester Zoo) | S106, CIL  
Other funding sources | Lead – CWaC  
Supporting - EA, Cheshire Wildlife Trust |
| Create opportunities for re-profiling canalised watercourses to manage flood risk and improve biodiversity opportunities | * establish land ownerships to establish feasibility  
* liaise with Environment Agency & landowners to establish opportunities | Ellesmere Port  
Mill Brook, River Gowy, Rivacre Brook  
Chester – Finches Gutter | S106, CIL  
Other funding sources | Lead – EA, Cheshire Wildlife Trust |
| Clean up campaigns for watercourses | * work with EA & local community groups | Ellesmere Port  
Rivacre Brook  
Chester  
Finches Gutter (Countess of Chester Country Park site) | S106, CIL  
Other funding sources | Lead – CWaC  
Supporting – Groundwork, Cheshire Wildlife Trust Community & voluntary organisations |
| Protect and enhance ponds | * liaise with landowners to establish opportunities | countryside surrounding Ellesmere Port  
countryside surrounding Chester | S106, CIL  
Other funding sources | Lead - CWaC  
Supporting - Natural England, Cheshire Wildlife Trust |
## Schedule 4 - Greening Economic Centres

### Rationale
Investment in GI within economic centres provides better quality working environments, retains better skilled workforce & mitigates effects of climate change.

### Objectives
- To invest in GI within key locations
- To encourage engagement with businesses to deliver improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Encourage higher quality public realm in economic hubs | * Carry out appraisal of public realm within employment areas  
* Prepare detailed proposals that enhance setting & appearance of the areas, while also providing benefits for biodiversity & managing effects of climate change | Ellesmere Port  
* New Bridge Road area  
* Stanlow | Chester  
* Chester West Employment Area | Section 106, CIL  
Private businesses | Lead – CWaC |
| Identify potential ‘park and ride’ scheme(s) | * Co-ordinate with Chester parking strategy and Chester transport strategy | N/A | Chester  
* Hoole - roundabout | Section 106, CIL | Lead – CWaC |
| Promote positive green uses of vacant land awaiting development or otherwise | * undertake audit of vacant land  
* engage with landowners/tenants | Ellesmere Port  
* Stanlow | To be advised | Lead – CWaC |
### Schedule 5 - Enabling community leadership and business participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Much GI is delivered and sustained by numerous small actions carried out locally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Objectives** | • Engage with communities & businesses to deliver environmental activity  
• Ensure GI is considered in the process of neighbourhood planning |
| **Activities** | **Actions** | **Locations** | **Potential Funding** | **Stakeholders** |
| Business participation in environmental activities | * engage with businesses & develop awareness raising of GI  
* use existing business forums as a vehicle for engagement  
* Improve functionality & amenity of business site landscapes  
* investigate opportunities for business improvement districts | Ellesmere Port  
* New Bridge Road area  
* Stanlow  
* smaller employment areas | Chester  
* Chester West Employment Area  
* smaller employment areas | Private businesses | Lead – CWaC |
| Awareness raising of opportunities for GI | * engage with budget holders from other service areas  
* engage with communities & develop awareness raising of GI | Ellesmere Port & Chester | | Lead - CWaC |
| Prepare neighbourhood plans | * set up neighbourhood forum  
* prepare neighbourhood plan, inc. GI proposals | Ellesmere Port & Chester | Design Council/CABE | Lead – voluntary & community groups  
Support – CWaC |
## Schedule 6 - Supporting green apprenticeships and volunteering

### Rationale
A broader spectrum of skills in delivering GI will lead to more volunteering and will also encourage green businesses.

### Objectives
- Encourage volunteer opportunities
- Support training providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Potential Funding</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Volunteer management of GI | * establish volunteer engagement  
* neighbourhood adoption of open spaces | * Countess of Chester Country Park          | Other funding sources                | Lead – Groundwork Cheshire          |
| Lead – Groundwork Cheshire | *set up Cheshire Environmental Network  
(as Project Dirt, Liverpool)  
www.projectdirtliverpool.com | Ellesmere Port & Chester                      | Other funding sources                  | Lead - voluntary & community groups  
Support – CWaC, Groundwork Cheshire |
| GI Community Training | * contact local environment groups & deliver training  
Neighbourhoods within Ellesmere Port & Chester | Ellesmere Port & Chester                      | Other funding sources                | Lead – tbc                          |
| Community green activities | * promote more friends groups of greenspaces  
* promote more Forest schools | Ellesmere Port & Chester                      | Other funding sources                | Lead – tbc                          |
Green Infrastructure Maps

4.2 The following four maps bring a spatial dimension to the Action Plan and locate existing assets and opportunities for GI investment.

Green Infrastructure Plan – Ellesmere Port (page 29):
- This is closely aligned with the Ellesmere Port Vision and Strategic Regeneration Framework, bringing ‘on the ground’ detail from the strategic proposals.

Ellesmere Port to Chester Linkages (page 30)
- This considers the opportunities for GI (and particularly linkages) between the two settlements

Green Infrastructure Plan – Chester (page 31)
- This considers Chester’s outer area but provides links to the One City Plan.

Biodiversity Network: Ellesmere Port and Chester (page 32)
- This is an indicative biodiversity network - showing the existing green and blue GI corridors that link up core biodiversity areas.

The key to the plans is described below.

Assets
- Railway Line / Railway Stations
- Community Facilities (education, health facilities and district centres)
- Existing Public Rights of Way

Opportunities
- Existing Multi-User/Cycle Routes (Indicates network of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders)
- Greenspaces (Includes all types of greenspace)
- Core Biodiversity Areas (Includes all areas designated for nature conservation i.e. Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Royal Society for Protection of Birds Reserve, Local Wildlife Site)
- Visitor Attractions (Indicates the location of key visitor attractions within the Action Plan area)

Windows on the Water Corridors
These are proposed spaces for pedestrian interest along various water corridors, for viewing the river and wider landscape with seating, interpretation and signs and other treatments to articulate the space. Each Window onto the Waterfront is numbered and cross referenced within the Action Schedule.

Gateways to Greenspace and Multi-User Routes
Indicates gateways to greenspaces and multi-user routes through enhanced pedestrian crossings of adjacent roads, signs and interpretation to raise public awareness and improve way finding. Each Gateway to Greenspace and Multi-User Routes is allocated a letter from the alphabet and cross referenced within the Action Schedule.
• Sustainable Transport Hubs
Existing railway stations where there is opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle access to these facilities.

• Restore Landscape Character
This indicates areas where a landscape priority is to promote and manage woodlands, coverts, copses and hedgerows so that field boundaries are enhanced and connections improved for wildlife. These areas broadly follow the Green Belt designation around both settlements, with the exception of employment areas and health facilities.

• Improvements to Existing Multi-User Routes
This identifies routes that can be improved through better surfacing, signing and landscape enhancements.

• Aspirational Multi-User Routes
This identifies new routes that will provide more sustainable transport options to enable people looking to access local services, employment, tourism.

• Proposed Corridor Greening
This identifies key corridors for improving the perception and image of the Ellesmere Port and Chester through tree planting and other greening measures.

• Improve Functionality of Business Site Landscapes
This identifies areas of land within business sites with potential for GI investment to deliver many benefits.

• Biodiversity Corridor Linking
These are broadly indicated on the plans and indicate opportunities for providing links between core biodiversity areas through GI investment. Measures can typically include enhancements such as tree planting, hedge laying, watercourse enhancement and other land management practices.

• Opportunity Sites for Housing and Employment
There are a number of large sites designated for development and they bring significant opportunities for integrating GI within their layout and design.
A number of strategic green and blue infrastructure corridors have been identified that link core biodiversity areas and are to form the emerging biodiversity network. The network is presented for illustrative purposes.
Next Steps

4.3 Ellesmere Port and Chester are the two largest settlements in Cheshire West and over the next decade, they are likely to sustain significant economic growth and construction of new homes. This inward investment will generate a need for a parallel investment in green infrastructure to maintain sustainable lifestyles and mitigate environmental impacts.

4.4 The Green Infrastructure Action Plan demonstrates how investment in green infrastructure can support this growth and mitigate adverse environmental impacts. The Action Plan identifies the opportunities to create a comprehensive network of green infrastructure assets in and around Chester and Ellesmere Port.

4.5 GI delivers benefits for people and wildlife. It sustains outstanding landscapes, provides places to enjoy attractive landscapes, better routes for walking and cycling, quality settings for buildings and new development and connected wildlife corridors. It can also complement sustainable transport patterns, greenspace provision and employment and tourism initiatives.

4.6 GI can also help reverse the legacy of insensitive development and poor air, water and land quality which blights land values and attractiveness to inward investors and family housing.

Other elements need to be in place to enable successful delivery. These include:

• Policy support for this GI Action Plan in CWaC’s Local Plan and Community Strategy and economic development plans
• Local and national political support

• Funding sources
• Contributions (time and money) from volunteers, businesses and developers

4.7 Much good work is already happening as the stakeholder consultation (reported in chapter 3) shows. Initiatives such as the Countess of Chester Country Park have been successful because of the long-term dedicated work of local Council and trust officers, allied with a willingness by the key landowners to get involved.

4.8 The continuing pressure on public sector finances offers an opportunity for environmentalists in Chester and Ellesmere Port to collaborate with each other, and with businesses, to deliver green infrastructure through the current difficult times.
## Larger Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding source</th>
<th>Name/type of fund (as applicable)</th>
<th>Type of GI to be delivered</th>
<th>Lead applicant for funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development related</td>
<td>Linked to planning conditions</td>
<td>Parks &amp; gardens, Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community infrastructure levy (CIL)</td>
<td></td>
<td>CWaC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biodiversity Offsetting*</td>
<td></td>
<td>CWaC/ 3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local sustainable transport fund (LSTF)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Sustainable transport corridors; walking &amp; cycling infrastructure to local stations; walking &amp; cycling infrastructure to access employment, education &amp; visitor attractions</td>
<td>CWaC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Big Lottery</td>
<td>* Award for All England</td>
<td>Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, amenity green space, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments, country parks, civic space, hospital grounds</td>
<td>CWaC/ 3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Small grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Natural &amp; semi natural green space, country parks, civic space</td>
<td>CWaC/ 3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding source</th>
<th>Name/type of fund (as applicable)</th>
<th>Type of GI to be delivered</th>
<th>Lead applicant for funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Gateway Community Environment Fund</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments</td>
<td>3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op Community Fund</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments</td>
<td>3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biffaward – Landfill communities scheme</td>
<td>* Flagship * Main grants * Small grants</td>
<td>Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments, school grounds</td>
<td>3rd sector organisations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WREN – Landfill communities fund</td>
<td>* Main grants * Small grants</td>
<td>Parks &amp; gardens, Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, amenity green space, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments, country parks, civic space, hospital grounds</td>
<td>3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Big Tree Plant</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Tree planting within: Parks &amp; gardens, Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, amenity green space, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments, country parks, civic space, hospital grounds</td>
<td>3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees for Schools</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Trees</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Tree planting within: Parks &amp; gardens, Natural &amp; semi natural green space, green corridors, outdoor sports, amenity green space, children &amp; teenager provision, allotments, country parks, civic space, hospital grounds</td>
<td>3rd sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Woodland Grant Scheme</td>
<td>* Woodland Planning Grant * Woodland Assessment Grant * Woodland Improvement Grant * Woodland Regeneration Grant * Woodland Management Grant * Woodland Creation Grant</td>
<td>Tree planting to rural/urban edge land</td>
<td>Landowners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Stewardship</td>
<td>* Entry level stewardship * Organic entry level stewardship * Higher level stewardship</td>
<td>Effective environmental land management</td>
<td>Landowners/Farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland Trust</td>
<td>* Jubilee Woods</td>
<td></td>
<td>Landowners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>