

**Green Infrastructure Framework for  
North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral**

Appendices - January 2011

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# Baseline and Asset Mapping

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# Policy, Literature and Initiatives Review North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral Green Infrastructure Framework

## **Policy context for Green Infrastructure in North East Wales and Cheshire**

### **Introduction**

As part of the evidence review for the North East Wales and Cheshire Green Infrastructure Framework, a number of key policy documents have been reviewed to establish where policy supports the priorities of this green infrastructure and where in turn the emerging framework can influence policy. A summary of the review follows this introduction and has been arranged into sections as follows:

- Welsh policy – national, regional, local
- English policy - national, regional, local

The policies reviewed as part of this document is not exhaustive and a list of other documents considered will be presented as part of the final framework document.

### **Benefits of Green Infrastructure and Policy Links**

Green infrastructure can help achieve policy objectives across the range of benefits or functions it can provide. The diagrams below illustrate the relationship between policies/strategies (as part of this policy review) and the benefits derived from green infrastructure identified within the North West Development Agency's Economic Value of Green Infrastructure (2008).

***Figure 1.1 Benefits of Green Infrastructure & Welsh Policy Links***

***Figure 1.2 Benefits of Green Infrastructure & English Policy Links***

## **Policy Review**

### **Welsh Policy (National)**

#### **Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 2 (2010)**

PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government and the following chapters provide the most relevance to GI:

##### Chapter 4 – Planning for Sustainability

The chapter focuses on delivering development that addresses climate change and aims to reduce carbon footprints. In the light of these, it considers the most appropriate location for new development. In terms GI it refers to the importance of the green belt and local designations such as green wedges to manage urban form. These designations have very similar functions to GI.

##### Chapter 5 – Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast

The chapter recognises the importance of geology, landform, biodiversity, natural beauty and links to the economy. It sets out the planning system's responsibility for conservation, maintaining biodiversity while not imposing unnecessary constraints on development.

##### Chapter 11 – Tourism, Sport and Recreation

In relation to GI, this chapter highlights the multi functionality of open green space in terms of recreation, climate protection and flood management.

##### Chapter 13 – Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution

In keeping with other flood risk guidance, the emphasis is to move away from flood defence towards a more sustainable approach to flooding; this would include accommodating flooding through managed retreat of coastlines, wash lands and flood plain restoration.

#### **Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008**

The five themes of the spatial plan are:

1. Building sustainable communities
2. Promoting a sustainable economy
3. Valuing the environment
4. Achieving sustainable access
5. Respecting distinctiveness

Particular reference to GI is made within the final 3 themes; under valuing the environment, reference is made to the fact that most of the Welsh population live near the sea or a river. Under climate change some of these populations are at risk of flooding. There are also climate change issues on land use, water resources, biodiversity and wildlife. Each spatial plan area (described below) is supported by environmental working group.

Under achieving sustainable access, the plan strives for equality of access and the use of healthy modes of transport. While under respecting distinctiveness, there is a particular focus in encouraging sustainable design initiatives, working with the Design Commission for Wales and tourism working with Visit Wales to ensure cultural tourism action plans are spatially aligned.

The spatial plan organises the country into 6 geographic areas, with North east Wales – Border and Coast, covering the 3 counties of Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham.

The vision for North east Wales states that:

*'area harnessing economic drivers on both sides of the border ... reducing inequalities ... improving quality of natural and physical assets'*

Most reference to GI is made under the 3<sup>rd</sup> theme from the Wales Spatial Plan, highlighting the natural assets of the River Dee Estuary and the Clywidian Range (AONB), with the following environmental opportunities:

- Protecting and enhancing wildlife and physical assets
- Improving tourism and environmental infrastructure
- Improving infrastructure for recreation

The challenges under this theme are:

- Development located within flood risk areas
- Development constrained by energy supply, utilities, waste and sewage infrastructure
- Isolation of wildlife sites and species
- Resilience to climate change

It highlights the opportunity the Mersey Dee Alliance can bring to cross border working between north east Wales and north west England.

Under the 4<sup>th</sup> theme Respecting Distinctiveness, the area plan strategy highlights the potential for heritage, tourism and leisure, with specific mention of the Heather and Hillforts Partnership scheme for the Clwydian Range and the Unesco World Heritage site at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

### **Environment Strategy for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government**

Vision –

*By 2026, we want to see our distinctive Welsh environment thriving and contributing to the economic and social wellbeing and health of all of the people of Wales.*

The Environment Strategy for Wales has 5 key themes, each of which has a set of desired outcomes many of which GI planning can fully or partially contribute to:

- Addressing climate change
- Sustainable resource use
- Distinctive biodiversity, landscapes and seascapes
- Our local environment
- Environmental hazards

The vision for the environment of Wales defines the environment with the same terminology as used for the green infrastructure, typically that it is our life support system and underpins our economic development.

### **Wales Biodiversity Framework (2010)**

Following WAG's first Environment Strategy for Wales (2006) which highlighted damage to Wales' biodiversity, it aimed to halt this loss by 2010 and is using the framework to promote an more integrated, dynamic and flexible approach to halting the loss of biodiversity.

In terms of priority actions and next steps, these include:

- the wider environment is more favourable to biodiversity through appropriate management, reduced habitat fragmentation and increased extent and interconnectivity of habitats
- a central Biodiversity Register/GIS layer/map showing the important priority habitats and species locations in order to ensure that national data sets are up-to-date and available for use, improve information sharing to enable appropriate action by landowners, spatial planners, government bodies and others.

Green infrastructure networks and planning can mitigate against habitat fragmentation and can use GIS data sets to support a sustainable approach to biodiversity

### **Technical Advisory Note TAN 5 – Nature Conservation & Planning (2009)**

The TAN's are the Welsh equivalent to the English Planning Policy Statements and TAN 5 demonstrates how local planning authorities, developers and key stakeholders in conservation can work together to deliver sustainably and enhance natural heritage. Under nature conservation and the preparation of local development plans (LDP's) the TAN recommends a similar approach to GI frameworks and strategies. It prescribes that LDP's should provide for the conservation, enhancement, sustainable management and where appropriate the restoration of natural habitats including wildlife corridors and other green space, and networks and chains of open space.

### **Technical Advisory Note TAN 12 – Design (2009)**

The advisory note refers to GI implicitly particularly under its sections covering environmental sustainability, context and urban regeneration. Under environmental sustainability, it recommends that development:

- Provides opportunities for wildlife to inhabit the area
- Improves connecting of habitats
- Integrates with open space

Under the section on context, it recommends that settlement patterns respond to the local landscape, through enhanced links to green corridors and consideration of water management, soil protection, natural cooling and habitat connection. While under urban regeneration, it recommends that urban design frameworks integrate established landscape elements, encourage local distinctiveness, create green corridors and enhance nature conservation.

### **Technical Advisory Note TAN 14 - Coastal Planning (1998)**

This TAN considers the principles for coastal planning, together with the physical processes taking place. More specifically it considers sustainable coastal defence and outlines the preparation of shoreline management plans.

**Technical Advisory Note TAN 15 – Development and Flood Risk (2004)**

The primary aim of the TAN is to direct new development away from areas that are at high risk of flooding, while providing a precautionary framework to guide planning decisions. It also articulates a sustainable approach to managing the consequences of flooding where development is justified.

The TAN also highlights the use of non statutory management plans for shorelines and river catchments. The shoreline plans consider a range of options, including managed retreat, while WAG and EA are producing an initiative for catchment area studies that will lead to the production of catchment flood management plans. These will provide a vehicle for considering holistic approaches to flood management at a catchment scale. Any GI strategy should be linked with closely with these management plans.

**Technical Advisory Note TAN 16 - Sport and Recreation (2009)**

This TAN considers the role of the planning system in making provision for sport and recreation. It also considers the links between health, well being, sport and recreation activity and sustainable development. Through open space assessments it considers the quantity, quality and accessibility of facilities for local communities.

## **Regional Policy**

### **The North Wales Outdoor Sector – Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015**

The document recognises that the outdoor sector is more than activity tourism and that it contributes to the economic, social and environmental development of the region. It cuts across many areas of the policy agenda such as:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education
- Sport
- Tourism – economic development and employment
- Culture and heritage

It highlights that there is evidence that increased physical activity contributes to better education, socio-economic regeneration and reduced crime.

Some of the common themes which will help to shape the outdoor sector are:

- Making the most of the natural environment
- Developing more activity tourism
- Making more of coastal activities
- Connecting opportunities through transport policy
- Developing clusters and hubs for development

Clearly there are opportunities for green infrastructure to contribute to these themes.

In terms of its spatial review of North East Wales, it highlights the importance of Wrexham's Ceiriog Valley and Denbighshire's Clwydian Range AONB and Llangollen and the Dee Valley.

### **North Wales Coast Action Plan 2016**

This was designated in 2008 by WAG as a means to tackle the structural problems of the north Wales coast. With an initial contribution of £20 million by WAG the following key actions were set out under the following themes:

- Space for living – tackling poor housing
- Health and well being – providing facilities and services to support a healthy workforce
- Education and skills – generating a better educated workforce
- Community cohesion – development of vibrant, self confident communities
- Environment and transport – creating a well managed environment
- Diverse and sustainable communities – improving the area's image and assisting growth within the private sector

The regeneration of Rhyl and Colwyn Bay is central to the strategy.

### **Managing Flood Risk – River Dee Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008) Environment Agency Wales**

Many of the actions that are needed to reduce the effects and risk of flooding that are highlighted in this plan can be delivered through GI type interventions, whether through influencing design and layout of new development or through changes in land management practices and uses.

**Dee Estuary Strategy (1996)**

The Strategy highlights that estuaries are amongst the most productive natural systems in the world and provide habitat and food for many species of plants and animals. In terms of nature conservation, it has nationally and internationally important wetlands that support vast numbers of waterfowl. The Dee Estuary provide for many activities including navigation, fisheries, effluent disposal, with adjacent land uses such as agriculture, industry, housing and tourism. There are also opportunities for recreation and leisure activities.

The aim of the Strategy is to deliver a mechanism to achieve a correct balance between competing demands within the estuary environment.

**Local Policy**

**Flintshire Tourism Strategy (2008-2013)**

The Strategy highlights the county's key assets; the Dee Estuary and Clwydian AONB and the need to raise awareness of it as a destination. In terms of the limitations of the county it highlights its poorly perceived image and undistinguished gateways as weaknesses that need to be overcome.

The strategy promotes action in the form of 5 strategic themes that includes Flintshire's Product. It again highlights the high quality setting of the Clwydian Range and Dee Estuary as areas for tourism development, while a stronger evidence base of which elements form the county's tourism offer.

The green infrastructure framework will be able to address some of the weakness identified, while providing a stronger evidence base for preparation of the Local Development Plan.

## England

### **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development**

Planning should ...protect and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and conserving the countryside and open spaces that are vital resources for everyone.

Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks.

### **Planning & Climate Change Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1:**

Recognise ...the contribution to be made from existing and new opportunities for open space and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

Provide public and private open space as appropriate so that it offers accessible choice of shade and shelter, recognising the opportunities for flood storage, wildlife and people provided by multifunctional green spaces.

Atmospheric carbon in the form of carbon dioxide is captured and stored in living (trees and other green vegetation) or non-living reservoirs (soil, geological formations, oceans, wood products). Land uses which absorb and store carbon over long periods of time ('carbon sinks') may help to offset carbon dioxide emissions, at least in the short to medium term.

### **Planning Policy Statement 25 – Development and Flood Risk (2006) CLG**

Planning Policy Statement 25 sets out the Government's national policy on development and flood risk. It is intended to guide the development of Regional Spatial Strategies/Regional Plans and Local Development Plans/Local Development Frameworks. There is recognition in this document of the need to consider climate change and changing weather patterns in future planning. The policy sets out that other than traditional fluvial flooding alongside rivers, the impact of development outside of nominal flood zones can impact upon the flood risk experienced by an area, and that this should be considered throughout all stages of planning. In reducing that risk the policy suggests that sustainable development can be delivered through, amongst other measures by:

- reducing flood risk to and from new development through location, layout and design, incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SUDS);
- using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding e.g. surface water management plans; making the most of the benefits of *green infrastructure* for flood storage, conveyance and SUDS; recreating functional floodplain; and setting back defences;

This planning policy statement is support by a best practice guide with several

illustrative case studies showing how restoring the more natural flood plain can in fact reduce risk and how new development can be achieved whilst improving the functionality of the river/stream corridor.

**Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Diversity (2005) ODPM**

This policy replaced PPG9 in 2005 and recognises that biodiversity has a role in rural and urban renaissance by supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment. In addition it sees biodiversity and geological conservation as a key part of sustainable development and that planning should seek to conserve, enhance and extend natural habitat within development. By enhancing green spaces in development through improving biodiversity and creating functioning ecosystems these spaces will be valued by people and contribute to a better quality of life and sense of well being.

This policy requires that Regional Spatial Strategies should;

- i) address regional, sub-regional and cross-boundary issues in relation to habitats, species and geomorphological processes through criteria based policies;
- ii) include policies to conserve and enhance biodiversity at the regional and sub-regional levels and
- iii) include targets for the restoration and re-creation of priority habitats.

The first direction is, in the context of the River Dee, the most important and recognises that where the environment is concerned, cross-border cooperation is necessary for its protection and enhancement. Green infrastructure, by its borderless nature, is an ideal way in which to approach this cooperation. The protection, enhancement and re-creation of habitats in-line with this guidance is also an important part of the green infrastructure approach, in essence GI can deliver these requirements.

In terms of local policies, PPS9 requires that Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and local authorities should identify opportunities for the re-creation and/or restoration priority habitats. Importantly PPS9 emphasises the need to consider networks;

*"..Local authorities should aim to maintain networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats through policies in plans. Such networks should be protected from development, and, where possible, strengthened by or integrated within it. This may be done as part of a wider strategy for the protection and extension of open space and access routes such as canals and rivers, including those within urban areas".(PPS9)*

A strategy for the protection and extension of open space and access routes that help reconnect and enhance habitats is a key objective that underpins green infrastructure planning.

**Planning Policy Guidance PPG17 (2002) ODPM**

This national policy for open space, sport and recreation (PPG17) also highlights the importance of high quality local networks of well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities in supporting an urban renaissance. In addition to this these networks of spaces are equally important in improving quality of life, sense of well being and being a focus for community activities and promoting social inclusion.

*'...Green spaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and by acting as 'green lungs' can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality' (PPG17).*

This recognition that networks of open space can deliver a range of functions such as recreation, social interaction, biodiversity and other environmental functions such as moderating air quality and flooding is an important part of PPG17. This multi functionality of spaces and networks and the ability of the non-built environment to provide economic, societal and environmental benefits is one of the key drivers behind green infrastructure planning.

#### **Making Space for Water (2005) Defra**

This policy document is underpinned by a more holistic approach to flood and coastal erosion, shifting the balance from flood defence to flood risk management. Key aims of the document include reducing the threat to people and their property and delivering the greatest **socio-economic and environmental benefits** through approaches to flood risk management.

The policy established a close link between adaptability to climate change and decisions regarding management of flood risk. More specifically the policy considers rural land use solutions to manage flood risk such as the creation of wetlands and washlands and land management techniques at catchment level.

## **Regional (North West)**

### **The North West Regional Economic Strategy (2006) NWDA**

GI can contribute directly to the improvement of Chester's 'Attack Brand' status through supporting the tourism industry. Equally the need to reduce CO2 emissions is also a function of the green infrastructure in that the provision of travel alternatives that support walking and cycling can effect a reduction in green house gases. Investment in the public realm, green space and environmental quality is also a key part of the Strategy.

### **Rising to the Challenge: the North West Climate Change Action Plan 2007-9 (2006) NWDA**

This action plan recognises that Green infrastructure has an important role in helping to mitigate against the effects of our changing climate. This is mainly through its function of reducing flood risk through soft end use and design and reducing the effects of the urban 'heat island' effect through cooling and shading.

### **West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy (2006) Hyder Consulting for West Cheshire & NE Wales Partners**

Sustainable development a major thread within this document which is consistent with the green infrastructure philosophy. Climate Change, Natural Resource Protection and Sustainable Communities are 3 of 4 priorities in the strategy, each of which can be delivered by the green infrastructure principles. Areas identified as being in need of regeneration such as West Chester, Ellesmere Port, Wrexham can also benefit from a GI strategy/framework.

### **Managing Flood Risk – River Dee Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008) Environment Agency Wales**

Many of the actions that are needed to reduce the effects and risk of flooding that are highlighted in this plan can be delivered through GI type interventions, whether through influencing design and layout of new development or through changes in land management practices and uses.

### **Managing Flood Risk – Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009)**

The purpose of the catchment flood management plan is to understand the scale and risk of flooding in the future and set policies for managing flood risk within the catchment. The plan will inform spatial planning evidence and decision making and will guide the production of delivery based plans such as surface water management.

The document outlines how risk is managed within the catchment, in addition to flood defences, identifying and promoting flood alleviation schemes is considered a priority. In terms of modelling of impact of climate change and future flood risk, the Warrington area is considered to be substantially more at risk than other areas.

### **Managing Flood Risk – Upper Mersey Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009)**

The main area at risk within the study area is within the vicinity of the River Bollin that flows past Bollington, Macclesfield and Prestbury.

## **Managing Flood Risk – Weaver Goway Catchment Flood Management Plan (200?)**

### **Atlantic Gateway**

This framework recognises the economic value of the Manchester and Liverpool City regions and their contribution to the UK economy. It sees the potential for the creation of 250,000 jobs and the building of 400,000 homes by 2030. This growth is considered necessary to balance the UK economy, shifting influence and prosperity away from the contemporary south-east economic area. With this growth come the need to ensure sustainable development and a low-carbon economy. It recognises that green infrastructure enhancement and provision is necessary to support this growth. The Framework considers that strategic green infrastructure should be concentrated in the Liverpool and Manchester City Centres, Salford, Trafford and Wirral Waters with other key economic gateways/strategic sites such as Warrington, Daresbury Business Park and Chester as important. The adapting the Landscape Study is the expression of the environmental mitigation and improvements to land management required to fulfil the Atlantic Gateway's vision.

### **Adapting the Landscape**

This study recognises the historic, cultural and economic connections and interdependencies of the Liverpool and Manchester conurbations and is a parallel report to the Atlantic Gateway Framework. Importantly it explores the need to consider an overall or multifunctional approach to managing the land between these two cities and the settlements within.

The study, correctly, opinions that currently the benefits derived from the land along the Mersey 'Belt' between Liverpool and Manchester are not being maximised because of the fractured nature of the landscape and the pressures upon it. Pressures such as climate change, poor image, recreational need and limited access, ecosystem services and regeneration are amongst the most important for the region and a well planned green infrastructure approach along this corridor will maximise the economic benefits of planned development in this area. Although in its nascent stages potentially this study may become one of the largest landscape scale approaches to green infrastructure in Europe, rivalling Thames Gateway and the Emscher Park, Germany. The MDA/East Cheshire GI Framework will compliment and contribute to this ambitious project

## **Cheshire**

### **West Cheshire Growth Point Programme of Development (2008) Cheshire West & Chester Authorities**

West Cheshire's Growth Point Programme makes direct reference to the need for Green Infrastructure provision within new development, particularly in its role in helping to conserve nature, providing quality of place, creating recreational and leisure opportunities, providing visitor attractions and reducing/preventing flooding. The GI key diagram highlights the Sandstone Ridge, Weaver Valley, Dee Valley and Mersey Waterfront Regional as the key strategic GI components. GI is considered alongside best practice design quoting from the North West Best Practice Design Guide.

The New Growth Point status is not a statutory designation but will need to be confirmed through the planning process, notably the LDF and will be subject to independent testing and examination.

### **West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy (2006) Hyder Consulting for West Cheshire & NE Wales Partners**

Sustainable development a major thread within this document which is consistent with the green infrastructure philosophy. Climate Change, Natural Resource Protection and Sustainable Communities are 3 of 4 priorities in the strategy, each of which can be delivered by the green infrastructure principles. Areas identified as being in need of regeneration such as West Chester, Ellesmere Port, Wrexham can also benefit from a GI strategy/framework.

### **Managing Flood Risk – River Dee Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008) Environment Agency Wales**

Many of the actions that are needed to reduce the effects and risk of flooding that are highlighted in this plan can be delivered through GI type interventions, whether through influencing design and layout of new development or through changes in land management practices and uses.

### **Cheshire Flood Risk Assessment (Sep. 2007)**

Aim of assessment was to guide and inform the spatial planning process & steer any new development to Zone 1 areas - areas of low probability flooding (see PPS 25, Table D.1). It highlights the unique situation arising from mineral and sand and gravel workings as there is more flexibility in the location of these. The document refers to the predicted climate change impact on flooding with an increase of 20% on peak flows (when??) and an increase of 2.5mm/year on tidal levels up to 2025.

It identifies 7 sub catchments to the Weaver/ Gowry catchment, with changes to catchment conditions due to:

- Agriculture practices
- Urban development
- Climate change

Further problems to river courses are identified as:

- Limited channel capacity

- Culvert blockages
- Risk of high tides

Specific areas highlighted as a risk to flooding are:

- River Weaver – Northwich area
- River Gowy – Stanlow

The assessment highlights key areas at risk and these will need to be considered by the sub regional GI framework.

#### **Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) – Consultation Draft Nov 2007**

The assessment provides an overview of Cheshire's landscape and has 3 objectives:

- To encourage a greater awareness of local landscape character
- To help recognise contemporary pressures
- To stimulate debate about the future

The landscape character assessment does not explicitly refer to GI, however, it states the importance of landscape and in a similar way to GI, states that landscape has:

- Economic value in providing a setting for economic activity and a factor in attracting to business and tourism social and environmental value
- Social value in contributing to people's sense of identity and wellbeing
- Environmental value in providing a home for wildlife and a cultural record of society's use of land

The LCA could inform all the priorities of the River Dee Feasibility Study and most notably:

*'Maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness through protection and enhancement of cultural, historic and natural features'*

The description of character types across Cheshire will provide a useful framework for GI descriptions within the framework.

#### **Cheshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2006-11)**

The Plan highlights the role of the PRW network and the multiple functions it supports beyond recreation and leisure, including: supporting physical and mental wellbeing, reducing car dependency and supporting tourism. Its purpose is to identify where the network is performing well and where improvements can be made. More specifically the Plan articulates how it will contribute to the following themes:

- Health and wellbeing
- Sustainable travel
- Social inclusion
- Tourism and leisure

The ROWIP is highly compatible with the objectives of GI and is likely to support the emerging GI framework for the sub region.

**South Cheshire Sub Regional Study (2008)**

The South Cheshire Sub Regional Study was commissioned by the former Cheshire County Council on behalf of 4NW to investigate the relationship between South Cheshire (the area formerly covered by Crewe & Nantwich Borough and Congleton Borough) and the neighbouring local authorities of Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, North Shropshire and the former Borough of Macclesfield.

The Study was formulated in response to the recognised need in the [North West Regional Spatial Strategy](#) Panel Report for a study to consider these inter-regional relationships.

Objectives:

- identify key economic drivers
- dynamics of housing market
- role of South Cheshire
- effective transport network
- implications for environmental quality on anticipated development

Landscape Character areas

Character Area 61; The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain  
Character Area 62; Cheshire Sandstone Ridge.

Environmental designations

- ecological network of Cheshire (Econet)
- SSSI, SBI, peatlands, heathlands, woodlands, meadows, wetlands
- Ramsar site – Tatton Mere, Bagmere

Environmental constraints:

- Extensive green belt to north of county

The study area is rich in natural environment, with various environmental designations such as Ramsar, SSSI, SAC and SCI's, however this means that development is constrained. Counter to this the presence of these and the Green Belt provide a high quality of life for residents and a major attraction to visitors.

## **Cheshire West & Chester (CWaC)**

### **West Cheshire SCS 2010-2026**

This document sets out a vision for life within West Cheshire in 2026 and sets out commitments to achieve that vision grouped under three main headings. The first two *Living well together* and *Right services, right place, right time* focus on social issues, service delivery and access to good housing for all though make specific reference to the environment under:

- *Engaging with and supporting our communities to take positive action on climate change and sustainable living*

The third heading *Seizing Opportunities*, makes specific reference to West Cheshire's natural resources and focuses on:

- *Valuing and promoting West Cheshire's unique and diverse natural and built environments, and supporting the development of rich cultural opportunities*
- *Adapting built and natural environment to be resilient to climate change*

The strategy outlines mechanisms for delivering the vision and range of commitments under locally based area partnership boards and strategically under the thematic partnerships from the local strategic partnerships.

The GI Framework for North East Wales and Cheshire can clearly shape, guide and inform the delivery of the West Cheshire SCS and the GI action plan for West Cheshire can be supported by the appropriate local area partnership board and thematic partnership.

### **Water Cycle Strategy (draft final May 2010)**

The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the water cycle and its constraints to development across the authority. Further to this to inform the LDF and implications for the site allocation plan. The authority is required to provide over 11,000 homes under the North West Regional Spatial Strategy and in addition is exploring growth options for 2,700, between 2007/8 and 2016/7. Water cycle considers flood risk management, water quality and supply.

The objectives of the study support the final four priorities of the River Dee Feasibility Study and most notably providing a setting for sustainable communities and enhancing biodiversity. The strategy highlights that most growth is planned for Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford and that any constraint on development will be caused by:

- Water resources (groundwater supplies & abstraction)
- Wastewater treatment
- Water quality
- Sewage & flood risk

It also refers to Crewe and Nantwich that are projected to accommodate 8,000 homes between 2003-21.

The key recommendations of the study are to manage the key areas of flood risk identified as Northwich and Ellesmere Port Docks; to promote water efficiency within residential properties and the use of SUDS within all new development; for CWaC to liaise with the water companies and Environment Agency regarding water discharge and the commissioning of a more detailed water cycle strategy.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (June 2008)**

The SFRA provides an evidence base to inform the emerging Local Development Documents (LDDs) of the councils in relation to the allocation of land with respect to all forms of flooding, including flooding from rivers and the sea, flooding from groundwater, land drainage, sewerage and other artificial forms of flooding (i.e. reservoirs and canals etc.).

The assessment highlights the sequential test for locating new development in accordance with flood risk vulnerability classification.

The key recommendations are to:

- Maintain flood defences adjacent to urban development to the 1 in 200 standard
- Stanlow and Ince Marshes are highlighted as high risk and therefore only less vulnerable development types should be permitted at Stanlow and development should not take place at Ince Marshes
- Northwich and Winnington are susceptible to flooding and flood defence measures should be implemented along the River Weaver and River Dane, to enable development within these locations.

### **Weaver Valley Project Development Report**

Building upon the 2007 Weaver Valley Vision, this document identifies a number of projects and initiatives within a framework that relates directly to regional, sub-regional and local policies. The document builds upon some twenty previous documents and lays out a series of spatial interventions across the Weaver Valley. Each of the area's main settlements has a set of projects and actions aligned to the Weaver Valley objectives. All of the projects and initiatives identified within the report are consistent with the multifunctional green infrastructure approach. This report has already identified large landscape scale projects that will deliver a number of benefits across the Weaver Valley and beyond.

### **Weaver and Gowy Catchment Flood Management Plan**

This document sets out the Environment Agency's approach to flood management in the Weaver and Gowy basins. It compartmentalises the catchment into Sub-areas with specific measures for each regarding flooding and the changes needed in the face of our changing climate. The Sub-areas are Congleton, Crewe, Nantwich, Frodsham and Runcorn, Northwich, Stanlow, Winsford and Middlewich. In terms of green infrastructure many of the objectives of the Plan can be achieved through adopting GI as part of a multifunctional landscape. One example in the Plan is the need to store excess rainfall upstream of Northwich reducing flood risk in the town and indeed further downstream. This approach is synergistic with objectives of the Weaver Valley report 'Finding Space for Water-Floodplain Restoration in the Weaver Valley'. Finding Space also recognises the multifunctional nature of floodplain restoration for biodiversity, recreation and carbon sequestration.

### **Weaver Valley Development Project (2007)**

The project sets out a bold vision for the Weaver Valley to improve the quality of life for its residents and increase the prosperity of the area. It articulates a framework through which projects along its length can be designed and delivered; these are focussed around the townships located within the valley. A key plank of the project is the importance of GI and its use to address some of the pinch points to investment. The challenges are identified as:

- Risk of flooding
- Risk of urban heat island effect
- Risk of poor tourism, recreation, cultural & heritage offer
- Risk of poor air quality.

#### **Weaver Valley Finding Space for Water**

This summary report highlights the opportunity for soft flood defence measures within the valley in keeping with Environment Agency's strategic switch in policy from flood defence to flood risk management. It highlights the low overall flood risk across the river catchment, although towns such as Northwich are considered medium flood risks. It alludes to the fact that funding for multi functional GI measures are more likely to come on line to alleviate flooding, rather than specific funding from the EA.

#### **Weaver Valley Water Space Strategy 2008**

This strategy is one of a suite of documents used to promote the economic growth of the Weaver Valley Regional Park and advises on investment and growth within the waterways, these being:

- River Weaver
- River Dane
- Shropshire Union Canal (between Audlem and Barbidge Junction), the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union, the Trent & Mersey Canal (between Sandbach and Runcorn) and the Weaver Navigation

In terms of challenges, it highlights the following:

- Limited visibility, access and facilities associated with the waterways
- Challenges to management and maintenance
- Waterways not recognised as a destination

It highlights the Weaver Navigation as the largest potential for growth.

## **Cheshire East**

### **Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy**

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out how Cheshire will prosper, while improving quality of life through sustainable development over the coming 15 years. The vision for Cheshire East is:

*'a prosperous place where all people can achieve their potential, regardless of where they live. We have beautiful countryside, unique towns with individual character and a wealth of history and culture. The people of Cheshire East live active and healthy lives and get involved in making their communities safe and sustainable places to live.'*

The vision is to be supported by 7 priorities for action of which 2 particularly relate to green infrastructure; these being:

- Create conditions for business growth – with emphasis on making the most of tourism, heritage and natural assets
- Ensure a sustainable future – with an emphasis on sustainable living and protecting and enhancing heritage and countryside

Cleary GI can contribute to both priorities above.

### **The emerging Cheshire East Climate Change Guidance Document:**

The document promotes the achievement of Sustainable Development and through this, a full and appropriate response to climate change. These objectives are to be achieved through the provision of guidance and resources to those involved in the planning, design and construction of new development and refurbishment, alterations and extensions of existing properties.

Within the document it promotes the importance of biodiversity, highlights policies supporting delivery of biodiversity and identifies methods of implementing biodiversity within development in order to achieve maximum benefit.

The document also explains Green Infrastructure and its benefits and discusses how Green Infrastructure can be implemented within new development. The document promotes the use of Green Spaces as a tool for flood risk management.

### **Nature Conservation Strategy (2006) – Macclesfield BC**

This strategy provides saved policies and actions that sit within the Cheshire East LDF. It provides information on the different elements which make up the natural environment of the former Borough of Macclesfield and sets out policies and actions to protect, manage and enhance these resources. Macclesfield's natural assets provide an attractive and stimulating setting for work and play, with social and health benefits contributing much towards the quality of life for local people. It seeks to expand its natural resources through woodland creation, hedge planting and street trees.

### **Crewe Regeneration Plan**

This report identified a number of green infrastructure projects under five broad themes, each of which acknowledged the multifunctional benefits of green

infrastructure. Image, regeneration, the need for more sustainable access options, leisure opportunities and attracting and retaining business were all recognised as key drivers behind green infrastructure interventions in the town. Several strategic green infrastructure measures were identified for the town which could be considered for application within the wider GI sub-regional framework, particularly the strategic access routes along the Weaver. The key strategic 'green' routes are replicated in the Weaver Valley Development Project Report.

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# Introduction to the Public Benefit Recording System Assessment - North East Wales & Cheshire Green Infrastructure Framework

## Public Benefit Recording System Assessment

This document is an introduction to the Public Benefit Recording System Assessment that is being carried out for the North East Wales and Cheshire Green Infrastructure Framework. It is intended to show how the assessment has been conducted and how this research will inform the framework and is work in progress that will be shaped by comments from the project steering group and further investigation before being finalised within the final framework document.

The Public Benefit Recording System Assessment (PBRS) is a strategic decision making tool initially developed by the Forestry Commission, the North West Development Agency and TEP, The Environment Partnership to assist in the prioritisation of derelict land sites for reclamation investment, based upon the sites' potential for investment. PBRS is now widely used to inform green infrastructure planning, strategy and policy development across England.

PBRS has an ethos to identify where the greatest public benefit can be secured through policy/funding intervention – the benefit may be social, economic, environmental or in the spirit of sustainability and the multifunctional nature of green infrastructure, where all three of these elements converge. It is also an approach which builds evidence from a wide range of data sources; using GIS to spatially analyse and map areas of significant need, such as areas of poor health or limited access to green space, and opportunity such as potential access routes or areas with planned development.

It is important to consider that PBRS is an *aid* to strategic planning and investment; the insight that it provides should still always need to be tested and weighed against local knowledge, community needs and values and the presence of existing strategies and initiatives.

The need for a planned, strategic approach to green infrastructure is largely driven by policy requirements and local characteristics and obligations. It is important that we understand these key drivers, so that recommendations can account for and respond to the particular needs and opportunities these present for the MDA/East Cheshire area. Through a review of the key documents and previous research we have identified five key drivers for change;

- Supporting the Visitor Economy
- Providing the Infrastructure for Healthy and Sustainable Communities
- Maintaining Local Distinctiveness
- Adapting and Mitigating Against Climate Change
- Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Natural Networks

These drivers correspond with the spatial priorities identified in the River Dee Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study. The above drivers are only five, whereas the priorities are six, this is simply because the 'Creating the Setting for Urban and Rural Prosperity' priority was considered to be covered by the five drivers identified. By using a series of datasets a spatial analysis has been produced for each of these identified green infrastructure drivers.

PBRS is useful in understanding the needs and opportunities within an area, not all of the drivers are able to provide a spatial overview at both a needs and opportunity level. However where it was seen as productive and achievable needs and opportunity mapping has been produced for each of the drivers.

To produce a PBRS map each driver (derived from the priorities) is assigned a group of spatial datasets which can inform the needs or opportunities for green infrastructure within an area, such as health deprivation, air quality, green space provision, wildlife sites etc (these are listed on each map).

During this assessment it was important to ensure that datasets were consistent across the different local authority and indeed national boundaries. In the case of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Wales 2005 and England 2007) and Health Deprivation the areas of high deprivation in Wales are in comparison with the rest of Wales and in England with the North West, i.e. those areas shown in the 30% most deprived in North East Wales are the 30% most deprived areas in Wales and those in the English part of the study area are the 30% most deprived in the North West of England.

The maps illustrate where different aspects of GI need and opportunity overlap, showing where the greatest benefit can be achieved. To achieve this each data set is attributed a value, thus where there is overlap a higher value occurs, this is displayed by a range of colours, with the darker areas providing an indication of where investment in green Infrastructure can address multiple local and strategic needs and make the most of the opportunities present. These areas should be considered as priorities for investment. The values attributed to each dataset are by no means final and if consultation reveals that some elements should score higher than others there is still flexibility to account for this.

Public Benefit Assessment mapping is displayed in terms of ***Need*** and ***Opportunity*** and uses datasets that can help illustrate those areas of need and opportunity. Not all of the priorities can be displayed in terms of needs or opportunity due to limited availability of data. Below is a description of what is meant by need and opportunity.

#### Need

These are areas where multiple socio/economic/environmental needs have been identified and where green infrastructure intervention can help address those needs. An example could be geographical areas with high levels of health deprivation, where provision of well managed and usable green space can contribute towards increasing levels of exercise. Another example could be areas prone to flooding, where land-use could be aligned for rainfall/run-off storage, reducing flood-risk, providing natural habitats and potentially having a recreational and access function.

Geographical areas highlighted by the PBRS are those that have the highest multiple needs and so are those where maximum public benefit can be realised. Those areas not scoring as high aren't necessarily without need and may still require consideration and investment, areas such as agricultural land within the flood zones could be one example where multiple benefit is less than that within an urban river corridor, but nevertheless still an important part of land management and the wider green infrastructure network.

#### Opportunity

Maps illustrating opportunity are those where there are existing assets such as green spaces or areas of high biodiversity value or perhaps where development maybe planned such as housing/employment allocations. Opportunity implies that these areas could become part of a wider green infrastructure network

through improved access and/or management or perhaps design guidance. Where these areas are adjacent to areas of need improved access and/or management can help address some of those needs.

#### Mapping

This document continues with a presentation and initial interpretation of a series of need and opportunity maps for the framework area. As the area covers six local authorities mapping is strategic in nature and has some limited annotation for clarity. Any examples presented as part of the mapping are used for illustration.

#### Action Plans

Phase Two of this commission will involve the production of six action plans (1 per local authority area) where need and opportunity for green infrastructure will be explored at a local level in more detail.



**Figure 1.1 Tourism**  
Supporting the Visitor Economy

This map illustrates clearly those locations within the study area where green infrastructure supports the visitor economy and where its protection and enhancement can support this important economic element for the study area.

Interpretation of the map suggests that there are several key areas where GI has a role in adding value to the tourism and visitor economy. Table 1.1 list those areas that have been identified at this stage are for illustration purposes and are not exhaustive.

**Table 1.1**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Key Areas Identified from the Public Benefit Assessment</b>
Flintshire	Coastal Path, Holywell and other coastal settlements, Halkyn
Wrexham	Vale of Llangollen/Trevor/Froncysyllte, Wrexham (Afon Clywedog and Afon Arun)
Denbighshire	Gallt/Meliden and Dyserth, Rhyl and Prestatyn, Clwyd Valley
Cheshire West & Chester	City of Chester – River Dee Corridor, Frodsham, Northwich/Anderton
Cheshire East	Macclesfield Forest, Weaver Valley and Waterways, Middlewich – Trent and Mersey Canal
Wirral	Mockbeggar Wharf, Wirral Country Park, New Brighton

Example – Rhyl and Prestatyn

A key area for investment for green infrastructure resource is the North East Wales coast at Rhyl, Prestatyn and Point of Ayr and the area to the south and inland of these two settlements is also a key resource. Making the most of the existing resource and improving access to the wider resource along the Clwyd Valley towards Rhuddlan will be an important aspect of delivering and maintaining the regeneration of Rhyl and widening the visitor interest and potential of this area.

In terms of wider benefit green infrastructure will be vital in helping to mitigate against the negative effects of a changing climate in this area. Through reducing the risk of flooding, reducing the effects of urban heat island and lowering the efficacy of the airborne pollution generated from transport corridors, GI will provide multiple benefits for both local communities and the local economy.

## Figure 1.2 Sustainable Development

### Providing the infrastructure for healthy and sustainable communities-Need

Green infrastructure delivers many aspects of sustainable development; it can reduce the impact of development on communities and on natural environments and resources and provide healthy environments conducive to healthy and productive lifestyles through green space provision and reducing the effects of a changing climate. Understanding the needs of existing and potential communities and neighbourhoods is key in prioritising the types of intervention, funding and actions needed to maximise the benefits GI can provide.

Analysis of Figure 1.2 reveals several concentrations of need across the study area. The greatest need is naturally within the settlements; however the scale at which the PBRs was calculated allows specific areas within settlements to be highlighted as being in need. Table 1.2 illustrates the main areas identified at this stage.

**Table 1.2**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Key Areas Identified from the Public Benefit Assessment</b>
Flintshire	Mold (Pwll-glas), Buckley (Nant-mawr), Holywell (Maes-glas)
Wrexham	Cefn Bychan/Dolydd, Plas Madoc, Llay
Denbighshire	Rhyl Seafront & Vale Park Road area, Prestatyn South, Denbigh (Lenton Pool)
Cheshire West & Chester	Winsford (Connections to Weaver Parkway and Bottom flash), Ellesmere Port (Westminster and Rossmore),
Cheshire East	Macclesfield (River Bollin Corridor), Congleton (Bath Vale, Biddulph Valley Way, River Dane Corridor), Middlewich (Trent and Mersey Canal and Small Brook)
Wirral	Woodchurch, Tranmere north west (north of Devonshire Park), Seacombe

### Example- North and Western Crewe

The north west of Crewe is highlighted as being of particular need; this is because of several factors including deprivation and air quality. Intervention in this area could be the improvement of access to local green spaces and managing those spaces in a way that is appropriate to local needs and aspirations.

In this area green spaces mostly consist of school grounds and wide pathways that connect neighbourhoods. Intervention in this area could involve a programme of making school grounds available for public access and recreation. Furthermore, the improvement of pathways to accommodate greater number of users and signage and interpretation to make these sites and routes more legible and attractive to users, each area identified should be considered within its own context to avoid a broad-brush approach which may or may not consider local needs and aspirations.



### Figure 1.3 Sustainable Communities

#### Providing the infrastructure for healthy and sustainable communities-*Opportunity*

Figure 1.3 demonstrates those areas within the study area that have green infrastructure that is conducive towards maintaining sustainable communities. Areas that provide open space, access routes and climate change mitigation are all assets and resources that need to be protected and where possible enhanced in terms of access, quality and function. In some situations it may be that adjacent neighbourhoods are deficient in GI and due to physical constraints it is not possible to provide additional green or open space within the locality. The imperative here is to provide access and linkages from areas of environmental deprivation to areas of opportunity.

Key opportunities within the study area include recreational routes such as the canal system, coastal strip, public rights of way, including strategic routes such as the Deeside cycle path and natural corridors such as river valleys.

**Table 1.3**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Key Areas Identified from the Public Benefit Assessment</b>
Flintshire	Holywell (Maes-glas), Mostyn, Flint (south east)
Wrexham	Llay, Moss Valley, Trevor (Vale of Llangollen)
Denbighshire	Llangollen, St Asaph, Rhyl (west)
Cheshire West & Chester	City of Chester (River Dee Corridor), Frodsham, Northwich (Weaver Navigation Corridor)
Cheshire East	Wilmslow (Wilmslow Park), Congleton (Biddulph Valley Way), Middlewich (Cledford Bridge)
Wirral	Bidston Hill, Ditton Lane Nature Area, Arrowe Brook

#### Example – Access Networks

The canals and waterways in and around Northwich are a main strategic green infrastructure resource and connect to Winsford and along the Weaver Valley; this is clearly an asset that should be maximised for its benefit. Similarly, the waterways and other sustainable transport networks that pass through Chester also display a high value in supporting sustainable communities, these routes also pass through or close to areas that have a need for improved green infrastructure. The situation in Wrexham is similar with Wrexham's green network providing the resource and links between and through the town's neighbourhoods, although Wrexham's green network is still under development and should continue to be a priority for access and green infrastructure in the area.





#### **Figure 1.4 Local Distinctiveness**

##### Maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness through the protection and enhancement of cultural, historic and natural features

This map illustrates areas of opportunity where there concentrations of heritage elements and landscapes that are considered to be of a high value/quality in terms of their environmental, cultural and historical value. High value landscapes in Wales were taken from the LANDMAP data (historic, cultural and natural aspects-30% highest scoring) produced by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and in Cheshire the Natural Environment Index NEI (30% highest scoring) was chosen as a proxy for landscape quality.

In this aspect of the PBRs assessment several key concentrations are apparent, and indeed several where landscape 'value'/local distinctiveness is less and could be improved upon, particularly around many of the study area's settlements where degraded landscapes are often found within urban fringes.

Local distinctiveness is a passive function of green infrastructure and is hard to attribute a value to and is often subjective. However the cultural history of settlement and land management is written into the landscape and provides a perceived sense of place. Attractive and historic landscapes provide a setting for recreation and relaxation as well as an environmental and educational resource and play a key role in attracting visitors and investment. In contrast, poor landscapes are often ignored, become the focus of fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour and frequently, and understandably, targeted for development in a bid to improve an area's image. Table 1.4 illustrates those areas highlighted through the PBRs.

**Table 1.4**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Key Areas Identified from the Public Benefit Assessment</b>
Flintshire	Top Park/Hawarden Park, Bryn-celyn, Bridge End
Wrexham	Black Brook/Erddig Country Park, Vale of Llangollen, New Brighton
Denbighshire	Llangollen, Craig-y-castell, Pen Rhewl, Rhudllan (Castle Wood)
Cheshire West & Chester	Chester (City Centre Waterfront), Beeston, Marbury Country Park
Cheshire East	Macclesfield Canal Corridor, Tatton Park, Lyme Park
Wirral	Thurstaston Common, Upton/Old, Morton (north of)

### Example- Chester Waterfront

Chester has a large number of visitors who amongst other things come to enjoy and enjoy the City's history. The setting for these assets is a key aspect of their attraction, the water-front, Roman Gardens and Grosvenor Park are key assets and part of the potential River Dee Park. The River Dee Park concept is a network of green spaces, community assets, cultural, historic and natural assets that support both the needs of the community and the City's visitor economy. The continued high quality management of the elements that make up the Park is a sound investment providing a number of different GI functions from reducing the effects of climate change to access and recreation.

### **Figure 1.5 Climate Change**

#### Adapting to and mitigating against the effects of Climate Change *Need*

Climate change will have an effect on many aspects of how the built and natural environment of North East Wales and Cheshire is managed. This could manifest itself in increased temperatures within the urban areas and an increased likelihood of flooding. Figure 1.5 illustrates where green infrastructure intervention can have a positive contribution towards helping to mitigate against these negative effects.

Those areas of need identified are those where there are already issues of flood risk, health deprivation, limited green space, areas with concentrations of particular demographic groups, poor air quality and high levels of sealed surface. Table 1.5 lists those geographic locations that the PBRS has identified as being in need.

**Table 1.5**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Key Areas Identified from the Public Benefit Assessment</b>
Flintshire	Maes-glas, Bagillt, Connah's Quay (High Street)
Wrexham	Llay, Wrexham (Abenbury Road Corridor), Wrexham Maelor Hospital
Denbighshire	Rhyl (west and east), Prestatyn (east), Denbigh
Cheshire West & Chester	Ellesmere Port (Little Stanney), Chester (Sealand Industrial Estate), Northwich (centre)
Cheshire East	Wilmslow (Fulshaw Park, Finney Green), Holmes Chapel (East),
Wirral	Birkenhead (Conway/Cleveland St area, Seacombe, Rock Ferry





### Example

Several areas within Wirral coincide with areas of high health deprivation and high levels of surface sealing, making them vulnerable to the urban heat island effect. Green infrastructure priorities in these areas could be increasing the level of street greening and ensuring that green spaces within those areas are of a high quality and meeting the needs of the communities that use them and where a deficit in provision is identified additional green space should be provided.

### **Figure 1.6 Biodiversity**

#### Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and natural networks *Opportunity*

Figure 1.6 is indicative of the biodiversity interest in the study area. There are clear areas that have a high value in terms of biodiversity such as the Dee and Mersey Estuaries, Peak Uplands, Clwydian Range and upper reaches of the Dee Catchment. Outside of these concentrations the key interest is located along the river valleys of the Clwyd, Dee, Gowy and Weaver. Each of these natural networks pass through settled areas where their contribution to green infrastructure is far greater than just their value to wildlife.

Making the most of these networks and the adjacent environment for communities will be a key aspect of increasing their value and improving their worth as natural wildlife corridors. This is in addition to their potential to reduce the risk of flooding through the management and potentially restructuring of land upstream of settlements.

**Table 1.6**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Key Areas Identified from the Public Benefit Assessment</b>
Flintshire	Coastal Strip (Bagillt), Connah's Quay (Nant Gweptra), Flint (Flint Sands), Mold (Afon Alun Valley), Point of Ayr
Wrexham	River Dee, Erddig Country Park, Eglwyg and Esclusham Mountains, Pentre
Denbighshire	Berwyn, Moel Garegog, Lower Clwyd Valley (Rhuddlan, Bodelwyddyn)
Cheshire West & Chester	Gowy River, River Dee, Delamere and environs
Cheshire East	River Dane Corridor, Goyt Moss (Peak Park), Rostherne Mere
Wirral	Parkgate, Moorside, Bromborough, East Hoyle Bank

There are several settlements where there is limited biodiversity, and therefore access to natural greenspace. However many of these are connected to the river networks and have the potential to increase the provision of natural greenspace. In addition to this more biodiversity-orientated management of existing urban green space can help address deficits in natural greenspace.

### Example – Flintshire Coastal Strip

The Flintshire coast from Connah’s Quay to Point of Ayr is considered a priority area for conservation reflected in its designation as Special Protection Area (SPA). The coast here is rich in wildlife value and the landscape offers a variety of interesting aspects across the Dee Estuary and along the coast.

However, this resource at present is under-used and potentially under-valued by the communities and visitors. Some work, mainly access, has already been undertaken along the coast, such as at Bagillt and Greenfield. Development along the coastal strip and a main transport infrastructure route separates the communities of the coastal strip from Flintshire’s, and indeed North East Wales’ most important areas for biodiversity. Making the connections between the communities of Flintshire and the coast and offering destinations for visitors will be a key function of green infrastructure in the area and help consolidate and enhance the natural value of the coast. This could also be the topic for an action plan within Flintshire.

### Summary of the Need and Opportunity Maps

It is important to remember that whilst opportunity maps show where green infrastructure is concentrated, they also illustrate where deficits also exist, i.e. those areas that display a low score. This is particularly true when we consider the climate change maps from the previous pages, the need map shows urban areas as having the greatest need and in stark contrast the opportunity maps illustrate *some* areas as having few opportunities within the existing GI resource to mitigate against the negative effects of a changing climate.

### Combined Need and Opportunity Maps

The following diagram (figure 1.7) represents the combination of the needs maps, illustrating those areas where the need is greatest. The analysis of this diagram provides a spatial understanding of where green infrastructure funding /intervention can address the greatest levels of need, be this social, economic and environmental need.

This needs map will form the basis of the strategic recommendations within the framework and will inform the areas/themes selected for the Action Plans. At this stage the maps indicate several areas that could form the basis for potential Action Plan areas (but subject to further investigation and steering group comment), they are; Flintshire Coast, Denbighshire Coast and Clwyd Valley, Northwich, Crewe and Nantwich, and Connah’s Quay, Ellesmere Port, Winsford, Macclesfield and Wrexham. The level of detail, locations and geographic extent of the action plans has yet to be decided and will be informed by not only by this Public Benefit Assessment, but also through a review of policy and consultation.

Figure 1.8 is the combination of the opportunity mapping and illustrates those areas where opportunities are located to enhance existing green infrastructure to the benefit of communities and the environment. Green infrastructure functions recognised in this diagram include aspects such as sustainable transport, flood relief, wildlife conservation and access to green space. This information will also add to the evidence base on which the action plan areas, and specifically the actions to be carried out will be located across the framework area.





Public Benefit Assessment System

<b>1. Supporting and enhancing the tourist and visitor economy</b>	
Creates the setting for tourism through enhancing landscapes and identity	<u>Opportunity:</u> Scheduled Monuments (EH & CADW) 100m Buffer Open Access Land Canals 300m Buffer Cycle-paths 300m Buffer Tourism Sites Tourist LDP/UDP Allocations AONB World Heritage Site PROW 50m Buffer Promoted Paths 300m Buffer Registered Parks and Gardens RSPB Reserves LNR NNR
Increases the variety to the visitor/tourism offer through providing new attractions	
Improves access between visitor/tourism assets	
Decreases impact of increased visitor numbers through providing alternative destinations	
<b>2. Providing the setting and infrastructure for healthy and sustainable communities</b>	
Improves health and well being providing opportunities for exercise and recreation and access to nature	<u>Need:</u> Worst 30% Multiple Deprivation Worst 30% Health Deprivation 65 and over top 30% 14 and Under top 30% Density top 30% Combined Poor Air Quality Worst 30% Community Facilities 300m Buffer Sealed Surface New Development Areas Areas not within 300m Green space <u>Opportunity:</u> Open Access Land All Woodland Flood Zones 2 and 3 All Rivers 50m Buffer Local Wildlife Sites Canals 300m Buffer Cycle-paths 300m Buffer Accessible green and open space 300m Buffer PROW 50m Buffer
Reduces the impact of development on natural ecosystem services	
Provides and connects to sustainable transport opportunities for travelling to work, leisure and school	
Improves air quality	
Improves quality of life	
<b>3. Maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness through the protection and enhancement of cultural, historic and natural features</b>	
Creates the setting for heritage features	<u>Opportunity:</u> Scheduled Monuments (EH & CADW) 100m Buffer Open Access Land All Woodland Canals 50m Buffer All Rivers 50m Buffer Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas National Trust Sites
Preserves the continuity and value of historic landscapes	
<b>4. Adapting to and mitigating against the effects of climate change</b>	
Reduces the risk of fluvial flooding	<u>Need:</u> Worst 30% Health Deprivation Flood Zones 2 & 3 50m Buffer 65 and over top 30% 14 and under top 30% PM10 top 30% NO2 top 30% Benzene top 30% Sealed Surface
Reduces urban run-off	

Provide evaporative cooling in urban areas	Urban Areas not within 300m of accessible open space New Development Areas (LDP/UDP Allocations)
Allows percolation and recharging of the aquifer	<u>Opportunity:</u> All Woodland All Rivers 50m Buffer Canals 300m Buffer Cyclepaths 300m Buffer Local Wildlife Sites
Provides natural connective networks essential for biodiversity	Registered Parks and Gardens PROW 50m Buffer Unsealed Surface Accessible Green and Open Space 300m Buffer All water 50m Buffer
<b>5. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and natural networks (including the broader concept of ecosystem services)</b>	
Protects and enhances natural networks	<u>Opportunity:</u> SSSI LNR NNR Important Areas for Birds SAC SPA Ramsar Waterbodies 50m Buffer Environmental Stewardship/Tir Cynal, Tir Gofal Flood Zones 2 and 3 Local Wildlife Sites SBI etc
Connects habitats together allowing movement	All Woodland Rivers 50m Buffer Canals 50m Buffer Priority Habitats
Protects watercourses from flooding and pollutants, organic and non-organic	

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# Stakeholder Consultation

## Stakeholder Consultation Summary –

The consultation for North East Wales and Cheshire green infrastructure (GI) framework was undertaken in four ways:

Firstly, the project steering group included representatives of the following Local Authorities and environmental agencies. The composition of the Steering Group is broad and enabled representation of a breadth of priorities of a local and strategic nature. The list of organisations is outlined below:

- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Cheshire West and Chester
- Cheshire East
- Wirral
- Wrexham
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Mersey Dee Alliance

Secondly a questionnaire was sent out to stakeholders from Cheshire East (see details below)

Thirdly, interviews were held by TEP with members of the Steering Group individually or as part of broader focus groups to explore particular topics of cross-boundary significance, and to understand local priorities. The focus groups included:

- A meeting with planning representatives from the Welsh local authorities, the Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency to establish how the Framework could be most useful for the North east Wales authorities and how it could be linked to their planning policy.
- A meeting with Mersey Forest to ensure the Liverpool City Region GI Framework being produced by the Mersey Forest (draft due in March 2011) in respect of the Wirral local authority area, overlaps effectively with this Framework.
- A meeting with officers from Cheshire West and Chester Council, to discuss how the outputs of the Framework could effectively incorporated into the Council's growth agenda and planning policy

(see details below)

Fourthly, a stakeholder workshop was held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2010. This included a range of environmental and community organisations as well as Local Authority officers from development and countryside management teams. (see details below)

### **Questionnaire to Cheshire East Stakeholders**

This was sent out to stakeholders from Cheshire East as they had not been involved with the previous River Dee Feasibility Study. It was circulated to 30 community and environmental groups, based on contact lists provided by the Steering Group and others known to TEP.

Stakeholders identified within Cheshire East were:

- Officers from Cheshire East Council
- Representation from Environment Agency North West
- Local wildlife and conservation groups

These were sent out during mid June '10 and by August '10, 10 completed questionnaires had been returned. Questionnaires involved a series of questions regarding green infrastructure needs and provision in the area and to what extent a green infrastructure framework could help organisations achieve their objectives. The combined responses are summarised below.

### **Question 1: What is your role within Cheshire East regarding GI provision ?**

(all Cheshire East Council, unless otherwise stated)

Countryside Access Officer – development of the Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2011-2026), including integration into the Local Transport Plan (LPT3)

Countryside Service – management and development of Cheshire East's countryside portfolio including; country parks, linear routes, river valleys, ranger services and countryside management

Leisure and play development service – delivery service across green space provision including in formal and non formal space. Writing open space policy and strategy.

Planning – involvement in the GI evidence base and policy for incorporation into the core strategy and future development plan documents and supplementary planning documents that relate to GI

Climate change officer – responsibility for climate change strategy within Cheshire East

Partnerships team – to deliver 'Ambition for All' (the sustainable community strategy), including the specific priority issue 'Planning for a Sustainable Future'

Environment Agency (North West Region) – to ensure strategies, plans and policies incorporate GI

### **Question 2: What do you think are the key issues regarding green and natural spaces and assets in the framework area ?**

*Capacity building* with politicians in local and central government, local authority officers and the general public about the importance of GI and its ability to

deliver objectives across a wide range of other agendas such as health and economy.

*Multi functionality* of GI was seen as important to enable efficient use of land, where pressure of development could mean that land resources become scarcer. Consideration should also be given for incorporating renewable energy into GI.

*Connectivity* of GI was considered important not only within urban areas but also within rural areas.

Using GI resources to offer *climate change mitigation* was seen as very important, including providing opportunities for people to take up sustainable transport modes.

*Flooding* was seen as an increasing issue and the importance that the framework should refer to the various river and coastal management plans that have been prepared for the area. More locally SUDS would become increasingly important as the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) has removed the right of developers to connect into sewer or water courses without using SUDS, wherever practicable. GI functionality should become more integral with flood management.

### **Question 3:**

**A. Which do you think are the most important GI assets within the Framework area?**

**B. Which do you think are most at risk?**

**C. What do you think the area needs more of and why?**

A. Green linear corridors are of particular importance as their inherent physical form enables them to link a range of GI assets together and the 'whole' is greater than the sum of the parts. Linear corridors also provide linkages from urban areas (more typically with a shortfall of GI) to rural areas.

Public rights of way were seen as 'ready made' connected networks which frequently connect settlements to more natural areas and could support biodiversity corridors.

B. There were a range of responses, several stakeholders cited that parks would be at risk due to funding cuts. Previously developed land (brownfield), with its biodiversity value, was also considered at risk due to development pressure. Isolated GI was considered at risk for not being part of an integrated whole and therefore under pressure of some form of development or modification. More specifically, the quantity of trees and hedgerows was considered to be in decline.

C. There was broad consensus that more green linear corridors are needed to assist in enabling people to adopt more sustainable transport modes and the ability to relieve fragmentation. GI should also be an integral part to new development and should be multi functional, with a particular function in assisting flood management.

**Question 4:**

**What would you think are or should be the green infrastructure priorities for Cheshire East?**

There was broad consensus that GI should be very much part of sustainable development and used to mitigate against climate change. Protecting the uniqueness of Cheshire's existing GI was also seen as important, while the role of publicity to raise awareness of GI assets.

Others stated the importance of incorporating GI within housing, employment and town centre areas at the planning stage.

**Question 5:**

**Do you think a Green Infrastructure Framework and Action Plans for Cheshire East will help you or your organisation achieve its objectives? If so, how?**

Stakeholders considered that the framework would provide an accurate dataset, a useful evidence base for the preparation of the Local Development Framework and prioritisation for action. More specifically the action plan would support the delivery of the objectives of the sustainable community strategy and other key environmental policies and strategies.

**Question 6:**

**How do you think you and/or your organisation can help in developing & delivering green infrastructure in Cheshire East?**

(all Cheshire East Council, unless otherwise stated)

Countryside Access – assistance by collating data, cross referencing the framework with other strategies and working up standards for section 106 agreements and community infrastructure levy agreements

Countryside Service – contribute to the policy and planning and delivery of the GI on the ground

Leisure and play development service – provision of consultation information and feedback from third sector organisations

Planning – statutory role to ensure sustainable development takes place, including the delivery of GI

Climate change section – provision of information on existing and potential GI assets, together with promoting joint working between the public, private and voluntary sectors

Partnerships Business – the GI framework can be included within the delivery planning and reporting of the sustainable community strategy. While the 7 local area partnerships can engage with local groups and communities to deliver small scale projects that contribute to the overall objectives of GI.

Environment Agency – keen to support the GI as it accords with the aims and objectives of the Environment Agency's Corporate Strategy

**Notes from Welsh Planners Focus Group –  
Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June '10 @ The Gaol, Ruthin**

**North East Wales & Cheshire Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework and  
Action Plans.**

**Attendees**

(MP)	Melissa Parsons	Mersey Dee Alliance
(NP)	Nicola Powell	Mersey Dee Alliance
(NT)	Nick Thomas	Countryside Council for Wales
(LL)	Liz Lyon	Welsh Assembly Government
(AL)	Angela Loftus	Denbighshire County Council
(SJ)	Ste James	Flintshire County Council
(RS)	Richard Sumner	Wrexham Borough Council
(EJ)	Emyr Jones	Environment Agency Wales
(TJ)	Tim Johns	The Environment Partnership
(CM)	Chris Marrs	The Environment Partnership

**Aim of focus group**

The main aim of the focus group was to establish how the GI Framework could be most useful for the north east Wales authorities and how it could be linked to their planning policy.

**Update on Local Development Plans (LDP's)**

Wrexham Borough Council

The Deposit Local Development Plan is currently out to 6 week consultation (4<sup>th</sup> June-16<sup>th</sup> July '10)

Denbighshire County Council

Local Development Plan is currently under preparation (need confirmation of status)

Flintshire County Council

Flintshire due to start Local Development Plan process by end 2010

**Including GI within planning policy**

As both Wrexham and Denbighshire are advanced with the preparation of their plans, the most probable means to include GI within planning will be through supplementary planning guidance (SPG).

Whereas for Flintshire, the GI framework could support the evidence base for the preparation of the LDP, with dedicated policies for GI and provide a framework for the further preparation of SPG.

**Countryside Council for Wales**

NT suggested that the selection and scoping of the Action Plans would be of particular interest to CCW

**Environment Agency Wales**

EJ confirmed that the priorities from the River Dee Feasibility Study meet the EA's objectives

**Action Plans (Phase 2 of Framework)**

The Public Benefit (PBRs) Assessment GIS tool will be used to map each priority identified by the River Dee GI Feasibility Study. The mapping will highlight areas of most need and will be useful in determining the scope and geographic location or theme of the action plans. The 6 action plans will be distributed across the study area with the agreement of the project steering group.

**Other key information:****Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site**

Wrexham BC & Denbighshire CC are jointly preparing SPG for the site. These Welsh authorities are also engaging with the neighbouring English authority Shropshire CC.

**Extension of Clwydian Range AONB**

There are proposals to extend the Clwydian Range AONB southwards from Llandegla towards Llangollen.

**Next Welsh Planners Focus Group**

It is the intention to reconvene during early September

Meeting with Mersey Forest 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Attending : Paul Nolan MF  
Tom Butlin MF  
Christopher Marrs TEP  
Tim Johns TEP

This meeting was to discuss the overlap between the Liverpool City Region GI Strategy being produced by the Mersey Forest (draft due in March 2011) and the MDA/East Cheshire Green Infrastructure Framework being produced by TEP The Environment Partnership (draft due end of November 2010).

The issue of overlap is concerned with the Wirral, which is part of the MDA group of authorities and also within the Liverpool City Region.

The Mersey Forest raised concerns that the Wirral would presented with two documents that potentially could propose differing actions and priorities. They felt that this could weaken the argument/case for green infrastructure within policy.

It was agreed that there *was* a synergy between the priorities with the City Region document and the original MDA Feasibility Study and therefore the forthcoming MDA/East Cheshire GI Framework.

Following the discussion it was agreed that priorities for the Wirral within the TEP document would mirror those brought forward in the City Region GI Strategy and would not conflict. This would be achieved through working closely with the authors of the City Region Strategy. It was also agreed that recommendations within the TEP document would be mostly strategic and would tie together the Wirral area with the rest of the MDA/East Cheshire study area, without duplicating or conflicting with the City Region Document.

# NE WALES & CHESHIRE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP AGENDA (27<sup>th</sup> Sept. '10)

Session 1: North East Wales & Cheshire Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework		
10:45	<b>Arrival, Refreshments &amp; GI Quiz</b>	
11:10	<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b>	Presentation: MDA <i>Mike O’Kell</i>
11:15	<b>Purpose of today</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we aim to do and why?</li> <li>• What are the objectives for today ?</li> </ul>	Presentation: TEP <i>Tim Johns</i>
11:20	<b>Aims &amp; Objectives of the Framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Review</li> <li>• Public Benefit Recording System mapping</li> <li>• Spatial Priorities</li> <li>• Opportunities/Challenges</li> <li>• Vision</li> <li>• Case Studies</li> </ul>	Presentation: TEP <i>Chris Marrs/ Tim Johns</i>
11:50	<b>GI to Combat Climate Change – Draft Action Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigation role of GI</li> <li>• Adaptation role of GI</li> </ul>	Presentation: Mersey Forest <i>Dr Susannah Gill</i>
12:10	<b>GROUP SESSION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the analysis &amp; mapping accurate ?</li> <li>• Are the priorities &amp; vision right ?</li> </ul>	
12:45	<b>Lunch and GI Quiz</b>	
Session 2: Delivery Framework & Action Plans		
13:30	<b>Delivery Framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing Policy</li> <li>• Implementation</li> <li>• Action Plans &amp; next steps</li> </ul>	Presentation: TEP <i>Chris Marrs/Francis Hesketh</i>
13:50	<b>GROUP SESSION (arranged by local authority areas)</b> Review of delivery framework & GI issues Discussion on scope & objectives of action plans	
14:30	<b>Open floor questions &amp; answer session</b>	TEP / Panel
14:50	<b>Next steps</b>	TEP/MDA
15:00	<b>Close</b>	

## **North East Wales and Cheshire Green Infrastructure Stakeholder Workshop 27/09/2010**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>
Christine	Hemming	British Waterways	Area Planner, Midlands and Wales
Sarah	Lalieu	British Waterways	Regeneration Manager
Jason	Leach	British Waterways	Senior Regeneration Manager
Samantha	Turner	British Waterways	British Waterways Area Planner
Alistair	Coney	BTCV	Operations Manager Cheshire
Tim	Birtles	Cheshire East	Operations Manager
Daniel	Corden	Cheshire East	Spatial Planning East
Richard	Doran	Cheshire East	Countryside Service Development Manager
Stella	Kemp	Cheshire East	Principal Planning Officer
Ian	Dale	Cheshire East	Principal Conservation Officer
Jan	Gomulski	Cheshire East	Principal Environmental Planning Officer
Annie	Coombs	Cheshire East LAP	Chair the Environment and Quality of Place Group
Phil	Bamford	Cheshire West and Chester Council	LDF Programme Manager
Hazel	Barber	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Green Space Policy Officer
Peter	Bulmer	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Climate Change Project Manager
Karl	Connolly	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Special Manager Special Projects
Alun	Evans	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Principal Biodiversity Officer
Debbie	Fifer	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Principal Planning Officer
Ian	Marshall	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Specialist Environmental Services Manager
Mike	O'Kell	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Natural Environment Manager
Angela	Simpson	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Greenspace Manager
Michelle	Edwards	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Business Support - Registration Desk
Alison	Kelly	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Place Marketing Manager
Linda	Sharp	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Principal Planning Officer
Sarah	Bennett	Cheshire Wildlife Trust	Cheshire Region Biodiversity Manager
Nick	Thomas	Countryside Council for Wales	North Wales Operations Manager for the Countryside Council for Wales.
Ann	Jones	CPRE Cheshire	CPRE Cheshire
Kate	Radford	CWEC	Climate Change Programme Manager
Angela	Loftus	Denbighshire County Council	Policy, Research & information Manager
Howard	Sutcliffe	Denbighshire County Council	AONB & Countryside Officer
Kate	Taylor	Denbighshire County Council	Biodiversity Officer
Adrian	Walls	Denbighshire County Council	MIPROW
Duncan	Revell	EA NW Region	Biodiversity Officer
Chris	Waring	Environment Agency	Planning Liaison
Catherine	Hunt	Environment Agency NW Region	Planning Liaison Officer
Emyr	Jones	Environment Agency Wales	Team Leader, Planning Liaison
Stuart	Body	Flintshire County Council	Forestry Officer
Amanda	Davies	Flintshire County Council	Biodiversity
Nicola	Glover	Flintshire County Council	Flintshire Accessible Natural Greenspaces
Emma	Hancock	Flintshire County Council	Senior Planning Officer
Ste	James	Flintshire County Council	Planning Officer
Paul	Jones	Flintshire County Council	Leisure Services, Education Directorate
Erica	Mackie	Flintshire County Council	Sustainability Development Officer
Andy	Roberts	Flintshire County Council	Head of Planning Policy
Mike	Taylor	Flintshire County Council	Senior Coastal Ranger
Cllr. Caroline	Thomas	Flintshire County Council	Councillor
Tom	Woodall	Flintshire County Council	Head of Countryside Service
Jane	Staley	Groundwork Cheshire	Executive Director
Lindsay	Marsden	Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire	Business Development Officer
Melissa	Parsons	Mersey Dee Alliance	Senior Officer

Nicola	Powell	Mersey Dee Alliance	Programme Officer
Paul	Nolan	Mersey Forest	Project Director
Melissa	Short	Mersey Forest	
Dr Susannah	Gill	Mersey Forest	Green Infrastructure Planning Officer
Chris	Widger	National Trust	Countryside Manager for Cheshire and the Wirral
Martin	Moss	Natural England	NW Green Infrastructure Delivery Leader
Carol	Davenport	RTPI	
Glyn	Evans	Sustrans Cymru	Area Manager, North & Mid Wales
Francis	Hesketh	The Environment Partnership (TEP)	Partner
Tim	Johns	The Environment Partnership (TEP)	Principal Green Infrastructure Consultant
Chris	Marrs	The Environment Partnership (TEP)	Environmental Consultant
Kathryn	Beard	Welsh Assembly Government	Senior Environment Manager
Rob	Oates	Wirral Council	Senior Planning Officer
Robin	Tutchings	Wirral Council	PROW
Diana	Twinnlane	Wirral Society	Wirral Society
Clare	Morgan	Woodland Trust	Woodland Creation Manager N.Wales
Allan	Forrest	Wrexham County Borough Council	European & Rural Regeneration Manager
Cllr. Rodney	Skelland	Wrexham County Borough Council	Regen and Corporate Governance
Richard	Sumner	Wrexham County Borough Council	Planning policy (Landscape)
Karen	Whitney-Lang	Wrexham County Borough Council	Regeneration & Development
Nicola	Corbishley	Wrexham County Borough Council	Planning Policy

# NE WALES & CHESHIRE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP – 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### Morning Group Session:

#### **Priorities, Opportunities & Challenges for Green Infrastructure**

(12.10pm, 35 minutes discussion)

#### **Aim:**

**To comment on the priorities, opportunities & challenges for green infrastructure**

*(Each group will be asked to review & comment on the priorities for 2 of the thematic aims for GI in the framework area*

*Eg. No. 5 – Adapting to & mitigating against the effects of climate change*

*No. 6 – Protecting & enhancing biodiversity & natural networks)*

#### **Materials (*using above example*):**

- 1 printed copy of Biodiversity assets map
- 1 printed copy of Flood risk map
- 1 printed copy of PBRS Climate Change: Need (blue)
- 1 printed copy of PBRS Biodiversity: Opportunity
- 1 printed copy of the priorities map

Ask each member of the group to provide a 10 second introduction of themselves !

Each group should then comment on the identified priorities & opportunities:

- Are the priorities right?
- Should there be any more priorities added?
- Do the priority areas represent the right spatial focus?
- Are there any more opportunities?
- Any useful case studies?
- What are the challenges?

**RECORD COMMENTS ON FLIPCHART & PRIORITIES MAP**

Each facilitator will feed back briefly to TEP after the group session prior to lunch

Notes :

- The purpose of the priority maps is to demonstrate how GI interventions can contribute to the thematic aims. The maps do not represent strategies for each of themes
  - Some of the areas of the map will remain 'white' & will not come under a particular priority. GI works best where its actions are targeted & experience shows that surrounding areas will benefit from targeting resources in this way  
*'a few major actions & one thousand small changes'*
  - The priority maps are strategic, show broad priority areas & are designed to be easily legible. They are not intended to represent detailed assets and information
-

## **Afternoon Group Session:**

### **Delivery Framework & Action Plans**

(1:50pm, 40 minutes discussion)

#### **Aim:**

**To discuss & agree a short list of action plans\* (example action plan overleaf) & get a better understanding of how GI can be delivered on the ground**

*(Each group will represent a local authority area)*

#### **Materials:**

Short list of actions plans per local authority area

1 printed map of local authority area

List of GI delivery areas

There are two parts to this session:

- *Short list of action plans by local authority (this will include spatial, thematic & cross boundary)*

The evidence base, PBRS and advice from the project steering group has enabled the preparation of a short list of action plans.

Ask each member of the group to provide a 10 second introduction of themselves!

Each group should then:

- validate the short list of action plans & advise of any further opportunities
- build consensus towards a preferred action plan
- discuss the delivery mechanism for the preferred action plan
- define roles & responsibilities for the delivery of the action plan

Discussion on the action plans will lead into the second part of the session.

- *Identifying GI delivery areas:*
  - Who is responsible for GI policy – both developing and ‘owning’ this strategy and for GI objectives within other policies. Should there be a GI champion/s, and if so, who?
  - Who will pay for GI interventions – encourage creative thinking, e.g. economic development funds may pay for gateway greening, derelict land regeneration
  - Who will physically deliver GI projects – again, encourage creative thinking, e.g. community action groups, developers, existing landowners (particularly public sector e.g. Forestry Commission)

- Who will be responsible for long term management of GI assets – e.g. adoption by communities (residential or business), government agencies/local authorities

## RECORD COMMENTS ON FLIPCHART & MAPS

Each facilitator will feed back to TEP at the end of the session

### \* Example action plan .....

#### ***Sustainable urban extension within a designated development area to deliver up to 1000 new dwellings***

- Set out vision, aims & objectives for embedding GI within the proposed development;  
*example objectives:*
  - *To investigate opportunities for SUDS*
  - *To investigate opportunities for a strong spatial framework for GI within development*
  - *To use GI as means for providing a distinctive setting for development*
- Identify a partnership to support & deliver the vision, to include local authority departments (including growth point team), utility providers, public bodies (eg. Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, HCA, NWDA (Places Matter) or successor, voluntary groups (eg. Trusts and residents groups)
- Identify steering group
- For each objective, identify outputs, activities & team actions
- Prepare first phase action plan for initial three years of project & outline key dates for completion of actions
- Articulate & put in place a system of monitoring of progress

NE Wales & Cheshire GI Stakeholder Event – 27<sup>th</sup> Sept.  
Group Session Arrangements

Table	Group Session AM <i>Priorities, Opportunities &amp; Challenges for Green Infrastructure</i>	Plans	Group Session PM <i>Delivery Framework &amp; Action Plans</i>	Plans
Red	<p>Creating a Setting for urban &amp; rural economic prosperity</p> <p>Supporting &amp; enhancing the tourist &amp; visitor economy</p>	<p>Baseline/ Asset maps – Tourism; Access &amp; Recreation</p> <p>PBRS – Tourism</p> <p>2 thematic maps</p>	Cheshire East	<p>Short list of action plans</p> <p>Base plan</p>
Yellow	<p>Creating a Setting for urban &amp; rural economic prosperity</p> <p>Supporting &amp; enhancing the tourist &amp; visitor economy</p>	<p>Baseline/ Asset maps – Tourism; Access &amp; Recreation</p> <p>PBRS – Tourism</p> <p>2 thematic maps</p>	Flintshire	As above
Green	<p>Providing a setting &amp; infrastructure for healthy &amp; sustainable communities</p> <p>Maintaining &amp; enhancing local distinctiveness ...</p>	<p>Baseline/ Asset maps – Tourism; Access &amp; Recreation; Health deprivation</p> <p>PBRS – Distinctiveness Sustainable Communities (Opp. &amp; Need)</p> <p>2 thematic maps</p>	Wrexham	As above

Orange	Adapting to & mitigating against the effects of climate change  Protecting & enhancing biodiversity	Baseline/ Asset maps – Climate change; Biodiversity  PBRS – Biodiversity opportunity Climate change need  2 thematic maps	Cheshire West & Chester	Short list of action plans  Base plan
White	As above	As above	Denbighshire	As above
Blue AM	GI to combat climate change		n/a	n/a
Blue PM	n/a	n/a	Wirral	Short list of action plans  Base plan

## RED TABLE – SESSION 1

### Tourism & Visitor

- Priorities - Link to Public Transport/Deprivation/Interchanges
- Additional Priorities need to be considered



Criteria to add new sites

Perhaps it may be best to drop the terminology of Gateway and Hub

- Visitor Priority - Consider that there are local routes as well, so there is a dual function for local and “longer-distance” routes.
- Stress linkages between greenspaces and communities

### Job Creation

- Visitor Economy

How can we stimulate job creation in areas where there is little existing opportunity/asset?

### Case Studies

- Tatton BBQ Visit
- Trails – Food & Beverage

Routes: East – West Routes: Dee is a barrier  
Coastline barrier

Re-use of mineral sites for leisure/recreation

Protect potential connecting routes/links in Planning

## **Business**

Consider the importance of GI planning to link business areas with communities → cycleways/Green Travel Plans raise profile of GI for developers and the importance of environmental quality.

Framework has a role to raise awareness so that local planners can develop bespoke standards for particular standards

Long-term maintenance of GI within development and urban areas:-

- budgets under pressure
- potential for involving community – contracting?

Main emphasis again is the need for link community to greenspaces well.

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

### **CHESHIRE EAST**

Landscape Quality and Coherence throughout CE is important.

Agricultural Management is critical throughout.

Can we identify core areas/networks for GI priority?

The River network is important within CE and elsewhere.

Canal network also important.

River and Canal Network:

- Guidelines for developers
- Guidelines for managers

Sustainable Towns Plan:

- Crewe and Macclesfield
- Other towns
- New development
- Existing urban areas

Macclesfield – links to Bollin.

Parish and Neighbourhood Local Actions all add up – applicable across the whole CE rural area.

The Local Area Partnership (LAP) system is an embryo of how community groups could deliver GI .

LAP support is presently delivered by paid officers. Continue the process of “devaluation” accepting there are some big priorities which need to be delivered.

There are 7 LAPs covering whole of CE.

Remember Warrington.

Engaging Landowners – given probable lack of £- how to target? Use existing networks such as LAPs and clusters of activity along river/canal networks to target landowners where GI activity is going to happen.

### **Cheshire Peak Fringe**

### **Crewe & Nantwich and Macclesfield**

Scope for large multi-functional GI “site” associated with town – e.g. country park.

## 27<sup>th</sup> Sept. WORKSHOP GROUP SESSIONS: Notes

### Green Table

#### Morning Session

##### Attendees:

Ian Dale (CE), Jan Gomulski (CE), Annie Coombs (CE LAP), Alison Kelly (CWaC), Adrian Walls (Denbighshire), Nicola Glover (Flintshire), Paul Jones (Flintshire), Melissa Parsons (MDA), Robin Tutchings (Wirral), Diana Twinnlane (Wirral), Richard Sumner (Wrexham), Liz Lyon (WAG)

##### Priorities for:

- **Providing the setting & infrastructure for healthy & sustainable communities**
- **Maintaining & enhancing local distinctiveness**

##### Key points:

###### Wales

- Broad agreement with priority areas for Wales
- However, area retains too few visitors as they tend pass through the area using the A55 & A5 heading for attractions within western Wales
- Opportunities to further sell the distinctive offer of the wider areas & more specifically the Pontcysyllte WHS, centre of excellence at Llandegla
- Opportunities to use disused railway tracks along the Dee Valley between Bala & Corwen;

###### Wrexham

- Could be perceived in 2 parts – western part upland ... eastern part Dee Valley
- Story to tell of the industrial landscape (lead mining, gravel works)

###### Wirral

- Wirral Way largely connected up from Hooton – Neston – New Brighton – Egremont & a means to experiencing the Wirral's distinctiveness
- Some attendees disagreed with the brown area requiring GI measures to improve distinctiveness & considered linkages across the M53 corridor as good

###### Cheshire

- Need also to consider non natural elements eg. Black & white rails & sign posts
- Non natural elements should be included within thematic priorities & policies
- Weaver Valley boundary non longer relevant

Examples – River Gowey (Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Living Landscape Area), similar projects for Dee, Mersey, Dane & Bollin

- Crewe – GI measures... the priority area should extend around the majority of the town, deprivation should not be underestimated & the image of the town is a problem
- Green area to south of Crewe is inaccurate
- Whereas an area of distinctiveness are the Mosses & Meres near to Audlem
- 
- Biodiversity/distinctiveness of the Dane valley needs to be enhanced (green or brown?)

General comment about flatter landscape (ie. Without topography) ... possibly less legible, nevertheless may have a historic, cultural & ecological story

Also importance of sustainable rural communities ... interventions for smaller places & settlements

## Afternoon Session

### Wrexham – Action Plan & Delivery Mechanisms

#### Attendees:

Chris Waring (EA), Lindsay Marsden (Groundwork), Clare Morgan (Woodland Trust), Allan Forest (Wrexham CBC), Richard Sumner (Wrexham CBC), Karen Whitney-Lang (Wrexham CBC)

#### Validation of action plans

- Wrexham urban fringe
- Llay
- River Dee Corridor – yes, but needs a lead organisation as the river crosses many boundaries & partners to agree their level of involvement

#### Also:

- World Heritage site (confirmed 2009) & extension to AONB (due 2011) – these are just establishing & need support .... GI develop linkages from Wrexham ?
- Industrial heritage to Wrexham & neighbouring towns eg. Colliery sites
- Existing 9 mile long industrial heritage link
- Slag heap at Rhostyllen (adj. A483) to be removed & converted into a country park, landowner has responsibility for this work

#### Flooding of Dee:

- Particularly at Farndon & approach routes to Bangor on Dee
- Seen as both a challenge & opportunity; can cause devastation but also can if managed well can provide beauty to the landscape

TJ commented on apparent lack of footpaths & other linkages, although this didn't seem to be the perception of the group

- Sustainable transport routes already being promoted via country lanes to Wrexham industrial estate

#### Other activities:

- Rivers Trust – for River Dee & River Clwyd, about protecting fisheries & habitats

#### GI Delivery Areas

- LDP in 'deposit' state, however GI could be incorporated into local planning note or SPG
- Design guidance .. standards for GI development
- Woodland Trust delivers a scheme where they pay for trees for sites 1-3 hectares
- Groundwork Wrexham assisting Flints & Wrexham Councils with the delivery of their ROWIP
-

## ORANGE TABLE

### MORNING SESSION – BIO/CLIMATE CHANGE

- Colours
  - maps
  - scale
  - River Villages – v. important
- Trils
  - v. significant – WFD
  - opening rivers & floodplains
- What
  - on maps
  - how is equally important
  - eg linking agri-environment and river management
- Uplands
  - management – multi-functional
  - tourism

1.6 confusing – what does it tell us ecological network would be better/clearer

WAG – Natural Environment Framework

Gap between policy and what is needed.

Peat? Carbon sinks – Meres and mosses.

DUN Land – can its carbon sink role be improved?

Need for a long term plan for GI. Direction of travel rather than detail.  
Changing behaviours to mitigate for climate change

- Transport is key
- Local

Sustainable tourism is a key are to link in.  
Such regional joined up thinking v important.

Other projects e.g. Gowry & Mersey Washlands – as a case study Meres & Mosses.

- HLF
  - Halitats and Hillforts
  - Heather and Hillforts
- Dee Coastal Path

Surface water flooding is different to fluvial flood zones – separate data set ( new set soon).

EA – regional habitat creation map.

## **Challenges**

Developers will only do what they have to – Policy making information accessible e.g. language, presentation/interpretation, communication – who are the audience ?

Getting profile right (politics).  
Its what you do not what you say.

Big Launch needed, e.g.involve WAG, Westminster.

Maybe presentations available on website.

## **AFTERNOON SESSION – CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER**

Northwich – little unclear – what will action plan add to what is already happening.

Chester – promoting use v important overcoming barriers to access.

Existing actions should be separated out.

Plans need to be SMART.

Chester/Ellesmere Port/Canal as one action plan.

Role for neighbourhood plans?  
Identifying local actions.

Defending corridors in LDF.

Where is Gowy corridor ?

Action plan to link Gowy/Ince ?

Include Mouth of Weaver in Weaver Valley.

Sandstone Ridge and action plan.

Chester/Ellesmere Port – economic development – corridor as a priority but housing in Winsford/Northwich is likely to come forward first. (Thematic could cover this?).

Role for GI in solving Ellesmere Port problems.

Can housing in Ellesmere Port provide benefit for Chester.

Delivery

- private sector
- land swap to facilitate
- LDF etc
- Needs strong policy to overcome economics

Design guidance – very useful

Who champions:

- LA
- Land owners (Estates)
- Communities

# North-East Wales and Cheshire Green Infrastructure Framework – Stakeholders Workshop – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2010

## White Table

### Notes of Morning Group Session:

#### 1) Adapting and Mitigating to Climate Change

Generally the group felt that most key areas were covered in GI priorities (apart from carbon sequestration issues). Below are key comments:

Areas that the group were not covered where:

- Role of the peatlands in sequestering carbon – more emphasis could be given to peatland restoration
- Role of woodland planting in carbon capture and flood management – more emphasis should be put on this.
- Role of saltmarsh in flood defence and in carbon capture – more emphasis should be put in managed retreat to restore saltmarshes

Areas that perhaps required more detail:

- Role of Local Authorities in ensuring that SUDS are universally applied – this may come out of the Flood and Water Management Act
- Emphasise opportunities to plant trees in public open space rather than leaving as open grassed areas

Good Examples

- Berwyn/Migneint LIFE project – which has involved much ditch blocking to enhance SAC peatlands – but has potential to increase carbon sequestration and help in flood management
- Wrexham Tree Strategy – encouraging increased street tree planting and maintenance
- Welsh Water SUDS – corporate priority to get surface water out of sewers – the SWAR project
- Morrisison's Store in Saltney – which has been constructed with swales etc

#### 2) Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Natural Networks

The group was a bit less happy with this, issues raised were:

- Access to natural greenspace – the group wondered why some of the towns had this as a priority and others didn't (eg Knutsford)
- Access to natural greenspace – The group wondered whether the Dee and Mersey/Weaver should be the highest priorities for access, particularly as access to the Mersey was difficult
- Access to natural greenspace – the group emphasised that the public should be able to get to these places by walking or public transport
- There was a feeling that some important terrestrial habitat links had been missed – notably the sandstone ridge in Cheshire – this was a key priority of the ECONET project.

Good Examples of Biodiversity Projects Relevant to GI:

- Cheshire ECONET Project
- Regional Forestry Target to increase tree cover by 100% by 2025
- Natural England Wetland vision for Cheshire and Shropshire

### **Afternoon Session: Denbighshire Action Plans**

Group were reasonable happy with the shortlist of options, with the following comments:

- Connection to the Coast and Bodelwyddan should be linked together as one GI project
- Potential to take a very detailed GI approach if new housing development at Bodelwyddan goes ahead (similar to Stamford Brook)
- Vale of Clwyd – group not as convinced about this one as the others. Potential to develop cycling route particularly along old railway and to link in sustainable tourism with local food. Potential for flood alleviation/washlands approach in parts of the Vale. However group did not see this as the highest priority
- River Dee Corridor was felt to be a high priority. Need to improve cycleways and footpaths through this area (potential along canal and old railway). Trying to spread tourism benefits from Llangollen to Corwen and to take advantage of opportunities at Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. Links should also be made upstream to Bala (eg Denbighshire own sections of the old railway from Corwen towards Bala)
- Group felt that there was also a need for GI in the Clocaenog Forest area west of Ruthin and Denbigh. This area is important in terms of upland management (peatlands/reservoirs/forest/windfarms), efforts have been made to develop this area for sustainable tourism – particularly cycling/sailing/walking/wildlife watching, as part of the Hiraethog Project. Efforts should be made to link the Vale of Clwyd with this area through a network of footpaths and cycleways.

Overall the highest priority was felt to be the Coast/Bodelwyddan area – particularly if the Bodelwyddan development goes ahead (planning decision expected around Christmas). SRA money and developers could help develop this GI plan.

The River Dee Corridor was also felt to be a high priority – Community groups and perhaps HLF funding would be important here.

Getting these plans adopted as supplementary planning guidance would be important, and/or into LDPs

## GI notes from 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010

### Blue Table

#### Wirral

1. Coastal action plan: Group felt this was the key to ensure GI is taken forward in the Wirral. However, needs strong coordination, involves a lot of organisations etc and different funding 'sponsors' covering several zones, and should include inland links to sites e.g. Bidston Moss, Birkenhead Park, Wirral Way etc.
2. Mersey Waterfront. Assumed to be the Peel Holdings development, but again needs to link to wider area into Birkenhead Park etc. and not just be new development. However need to ensure GI has a strong presence in this new development.
3. Unclear which area was covered by the Fender and what is the rationale: transport/ gateway etc? Group did agree the Wirral hinterland/ heartland was important in terms of landscape quality and therefore protecting and enhancing GI in this area.

Group concerned that the GI retrofit into existing urban areas on the Wirral may not be covered which explores the opportunities of existing urban greenspace/ vacant land: 'Putting Green into the City'

Group felt that landscape scale plans were needed to link to LDF etc, broad frameworks including ecological etc. Landscape Character Assessment?

What about delivery and design guides: Core Strategy, opportunities to develop GI, develop the network, would need support coordination advice, support to secure funds, delivery partnership, city Region links?

### Summary

Groups agreed to the Coastal plan, recommended that the Mersey Waterfront needs to include linkages to existing sites, clarity needed on the Fender concept.