

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 7

**REPORT TO:**        **EXECUTIVE**  
**DATE :**             **13 MAY 2009**  
**REPORT BY:**      **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**SUBJECT :**         **DRAFT FLINTSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2009 TO 2019 -**  
                                 **UPDATE**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

For Executive to approve and endorse:

- 1.01 The drafted Flintshire Community Strategy 2009 to 2019; and
- 1.02 The proposed consultation arrangements including the full involvement of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The statutory requirement for the development of Community Strategies on a partnership basis for the whole County of Flintshire has been described to Members in the report presented to Executive on 17 February.
- 2.02 The Executive meeting of 17 February endorsed the purpose and structure of the Community Strategy upon which this draft has been developed.
- 2.03 The Local Service Board (LSB) has drafted the Community Strategy which will be used to not only shape the local authority's financial and business planning processes but also those of all its community planning partners.
- 2.04 Using the Community Strategy, the Local Service Board will agree a Local Delivery Agreement (LDA), which will reflect an important set of public service improvements for the partnership to deliver.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 The LSB Strategy Group have now developed a draft Community Strategy for Flintshire 2009 to 2019 that provides vision and priorities for the LSB and the Community Strategy based on the partner issues and local need. A copy of this is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.02 The Community Strategy vision for the whole County has been drafted on a basis of partnership and negotiation to:
- Provide a statement of intent and priorities for the Local Service Board, collectively as a Partnership but also as individual organisations.

- Support and complement the vision and priorities in the other Strategic Partnership Plans.
- Be the foundation for the Community Strategy Action Plan.
- Be used to influence partnership working, build and demonstrate unity amongst Partners.
- Be used as a lobbying tool for funding and influencing purposes.

3.03 The Strategy is subject to final editing prior to consultation with all Elected Members, the public and the wider partner arena. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be specifically involved in looking at the draft Strategy and handling the outcomes of the consultation.

3.04 A detailed plan for consultation on the draft Strategy is being developed in conjunction with our LSB partners. The consultation will be undertaken in collaboration with our LSB partners using existing networks (organisations / groups and virtually via partner websites) supplemented by public consultations.

3.05 The consultation will seek to secure interest, comment and endorsement of the vision and will also be used to develop the Community Strategy Action Plan.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive support and endorse:

4.01 The drafted Flintshire Community Strategy 2009 to 2019; and

4.02 The proposed consultation arrangements including the full involvement of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However the Community Strategy and the work of the LSB may have implications in the future for allocation of resources.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 There are no direct anti poverty implications associated with this report. The Community Strategy seek to minimise the impact of poverty in the community.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report. The Community Strategy will seek to minimise the impact on the environment.

## **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 There are no direct equalities implications associated with this report. The Community Strategy will seek to optimise equality and diversity across all sectors for the benefit of Flintshire.

## **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 There are no direct personnel implications within this report.

## **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Consultation is ongoing with individual partners and the Strategic Partnerships and a partnership consultation plan is being developed.

10.02 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be specifically involved in consultation arrangements as outlined in section 3.03.

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 The Local Service Board Strategy Group has endorsed the approach outlined and led on the development of the vision outlined in this report.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Draft Community Strategy for Flintshire 2009 to 2019.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985** **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

1. Report to Executive: Draft Community Strategy and Local Service Board Mid Year Review - 17th February 2009

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**APPENDIX 1**



**DRAFT  
COMMUNITY STRATEGY  
FOR FLINTSHIRE**

**2009 – 2019**

# **FLINTSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2009 - 2019**

## **(WORKING / ACTING TOGETHER FOR FLINTSHIRE)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Flintshire is a county in the North East of Wales. It borders the Dee Estuary to the north, Cheshire to the east, Wrexham to the south and Denbighshire to the west.

In 2007 the population of Flintshire was 150,500. Over the next 20 years the total dependent population is expected to increase from below 60,000 to almost 72,000 people. According to the Office of National Statistics, life expectancy at birth for males is 73.6 years compared to 78.8 years for females. This is lower than the average for Wales with males living to 75.8 years and females 80.3 years.

There are pockets of deprivation throughout Flintshire in relation to housing, housing, health, community safety, education, skills and training deprivation, income, environment and economic activity rate.

### **COMMUNITY STRATEGY - BACKGROUND**

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on every local authority to prepare a Community Strategy 'for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK'.

In 2008 guidance was provided by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to local authorities for the development of Community Strategies. The guidance states that the Community Strategy should:

- a. Be the overarching long-term strategy for the area and all its population focusing on the outcomes that partners aim to achieve.
- b. Be based on a thorough analysis of needs and priorities and opportunities for addressing them.
- c. Set out a 10 to 15 year vision for the area and informed by, and reflecting the strategic priorities set out in the children and young people's plans, health social care and well-being strategies, community safety, regeneration, local development plans and other major plans and strategies.

- d. A clear, shared and equal commitment from community planning partners to implement the action plan, and proposals for doing so.
- e. Arrangements for monitoring and accounting publicly for the implementation of the action plan, and for periodically reviewing the Community Strategy.
- f. Arrangements for co-ordinating the work and actions of the community planning partners, local service board and the other key thematic partnerships towards delivering their objectives.

The Community Strategy should inform and be informed by:

- o The national priorities of WAG and the UK Government for non-devolved issues;
- o Regional priorities, including those of Spatial Plan partnerships and regional partnerships/boards;
- o Community strategies for neighbouring areas (including, where relevant, areas of England);
- o Plans or strategies for areas, towns, communities or neighbourhoods within the local authority's area, including Communities First Partnerships.

The Community Strategy will be used to not only shape the local authority's financial and business planning processes but also those of all its community planning partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

It will include a high level action plan which sets out how the Strategy will be delivered and will be used to enable the Local Service Board (LSB) to agree a Local Delivery Agreement (LDA), which will reflect an important set of public service improvements for the partnership to deliver.

## **FLINTSHIRE LOCAL SERVICE BOARD (FLSB) - BACKGROUND**

The Flintshire Community Strategy has been developed by the Flintshire Local Service Board (FLSB). All Partners have their own specific roles and responsibilities but we recognise that by working together we can add collective value to the services that we deliver to the people who live, work or visit Flintshire.

The Local Service Board Structure for Flintshire includes:

- a) LSB Executive – responsible for executive planning and action. The first meeting of the Group was held in June 2008 and comprises:
  - o Chief Superintendent North Wales Police

- Flintshire County Council Chief Executive
  - Flintshire County Council Leader
  - Local Health Board Chief Executive
  - Principal, Deeside College
- b) LSB Strategy Group – responsible for governance and priorities. The first meeting of the Group was held in August 2008 and comprises:
- LSB Executive Group Members
  - Director of Community Services, FCC
  - Flintshire Local Voluntary Council
  - National Public Health Service
  - North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
  - North Wales NHS Trust
  - WAG representative

The terms of reference are based on four key principle areas:

1. Effective and trusting partnership relationships as a set of local leaders.
2. Discharging the responsibilities of the LSB - this includes producing a meaningful and fit for purpose Community Strategy.
3. Consistent and effective governance and performance of strategic partnerships, e.g., Community Safety Partnership, Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnership, Children and Young People's Partnership and Regeneration Partnership.
4. Identifying common issues as public bodies/employers.

## **THE BENEFITS OF A COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Strategy adds value to the work of public services and local people through a vision that:

- a. Provides a statement of intent and priorities for the Local Service Board, collectively as a Partnership but also as individual organisations.
- b. Supports and complements the vision and priorities in the other Strategic Partnership Plans.
- c. Is the foundation for the Community Strategy Action Plan.
- d. Is used to influence partnership working, build and demonstrate unity amongst Partners.
- e. Is used as a lobbying tool for funding and influencing purposes.

## **HOW WAS THE FLINTSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY DEVELOPED?**

In 2008, a statistical profile of Flintshire was developed to inform the priorities of the Community Strategy and the work of the other strategic partnerships. It included issues highlighted in the needs assessments produced for the Children and Young Peoples Plan, the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy, and the Community Safety Strategic Plan.

The LSB Strategy Group then agreed that it would hold two workshops to develop a vision and priorities for the LSB and the Community Strategy based on the partner issues and local need including issues highlighted via the Profile.

A vision was developed that Flintshire is a County where there is:

- Economic prosperity
- Health improvement through everything we do
- Learning and skills for life
- Living sustainably
- Safe and supportive communities

## **DELIVERING THE VISION - OUR VALUES**

To support this vision the Partnership will operate within a set of values that run through all of the work we do:

- We will listen to peoples needs
- We will work on behalf of those most in need but will not forget the needs of the wider population
- We will be open, honest and fair in our work and methods
- We will use evidence based practice
- We will be brave in our decisions
- We will value diversity and promote equality of opportunity
- We will work ethically and in a way that will promote sustainability.

In this Strategy we define what the vision means to us in Flintshire. However, there must be key considerations that local partners will take into account through delivering this vision:

a. Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing the world. There are two strands to addressing climate change: tackling its causes by cutting emissions of greenhouse gases and preserving stores of carbon (mitigation); and responding to impacts of unavoidable climate change that is the result of previous emissions (adaptation). Communities in Flintshire can play a role in tackling both these challenges.

b. Equality - The principles of diversity and equality are not about treating every one the same but about recognising and respecting difference and creating a fairer society where all people have an equal chance to contribute and participate.

Embracing diversity and equality will contribute to equal outcomes for everyone, improving quality of life, enabling individuals to achieve their potential and will contribute to the development of strong, vibrant and cohesive communities.

All the Partners will engage with all sectors of the population, and ensure that all communities are able to participate on an equal basis, by taking account of their different needs and interests and make an important contribution to tackling social disadvantage and ensuring that the needs of the most disadvantaged groups are taken into account.

c. Sustainable Development - The Local Government Act 2000 states that each community strategy must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. Partners must therefore set sustainable development and the integration of social, economic and environmental priorities as a key principle of the community strategy.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Development scheme and the UK's shared framework for sustainable development, 'One Future Different Paths' set out the definition and principles of sustainable development and emphasised the need for coordinated action.

d. The Welsh Language - According to *Iaith Pawb*, the Welsh Assembly Government's national action plan for a bilingual Wales, the aim is to create a 'truly bilingual nation...a country where people can choose to live their lives through the medium of Welsh or English and where the presence of the two languages is a visible and

audible source of pride and strength to us all'. In Flintshire we support these aims and recognise that we have a responsibility and a duty to support the national strategy and to take decisive action to sustain and promote the Welsh language for the benefit of present and future generations.

Many organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors in Flintshire support the Welsh language. The Strategy will further maximise the opportunities to ensure that linguistic regeneration becomes an integral part of community regeneration and that language issues are adequately mainstreamed.

## **ACTING TOGETHER FOR FLINTSHIRE**

We recognise that we need to draw on, invigorate and make the most of the contributions that the public and the public service providers make to communities by developing a sense of place and spirit, of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other.

Everyone can play their part. All the agencies and organisations that provide services in Flintshire from the public, private and voluntary sectors need to pull together to make things happen visibly and in new ways.

### **Communities**

The involvement of local people is central to success of the Strategy, and to wider change and improvements in the longer term.

Through the Community Strategy public sector partners need to tap into the pool of ideas, knowledge, skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm among individuals, groups and communities as a whole which, if realised, can be a real driver for change, for example through volunteering and community activity. However individuals in our communities of all ages need to become more active citizens, getting involved and 'doing their bit'. To enable them to do this, we will need to support people to be creative, inspired, encouraged, empowered, supported and motivated.

It is hoped that the Community Strategy can help to provide an opportunity to put local people at the heart of partnership working and should be grounded in the views and expectations of those people.

In working with citizens it is important that the widest range of people are given opportunities to have their say, and to have their views taken into account on all issues

which affect their lives. As a starting point, we will make use of existing partnership involvement mechanisms that have already been proved to be effective, rather than setting up duplicate processes.

The Local Service Board and the other key partnerships (including Communities First), will consider how community views are going to influence and inform the decision making process; how differences of view are to be aired and resolved within the local strategic partnership; and how decisions are to be explained to communities.

### **Local Authority Councillors**

The success of the community strategy will depend on the sense of ownership it generates within and outside the local authority. In exercising its community leadership responsibility to initiate and facilitate the community strategy, the local authority will draw on the expertise and skills of elected members of the council. Councillors and officers will commit the local authority to take action to deliver the Community Strategy priorities agreed as part of the community strategy action plan. Full Council must adopt the Strategy and the Executive will need to ensure that all councillors are informed of emerging developments and outcomes and have continuing opportunities to contribute to the process.

Non-executive members of scrutiny committees will examine the performance of the Local Service Board to monitor the achievements of the local authority, and other accountable partners such as health authorities, in the activities that they have promised to deliver as part of the community strategy action plan, as well as monitoring progress against long-term outcomes.

### **Community and Town Councils**

As the tier of local government closest to individual communities, community and town councils have the potential to contribute both to the development and delivery of the Community Strategy, helping to ensure citizen understanding and involvement at the very local level.

## **ECONOMY / ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

### **OUR VISION**

Economic prosperity is fundamental to creating well-being in Flintshire. We want Flintshire to be a prosperous County where a strong local economy with a sound knowledge and skills base provides the foundation for success.

We want Flintshire to be a County of innovation and excellence that fulfils its potential for economic development and prosperity at the regional, national and international level. Across the public, private and voluntary sectors, Flintshire will have a strong reputation for high quality and innovative service delivery and collaborative partnership working.

We aim to develop a sustainable, world class, modern economy, based on business enterprise and a highly motivated, well-trained workforce, supported by cutting-edge technology and which maximises the area's physical and human assets.

We will strengthen the rural economy through encouraging diversification and revitalise the County towns by developing them as popular local centres, each with their own distinctive character that complement each other and the wider retail 'offer' across the sub-region.

We will also develop a range of initiatives aimed at a substantial minority of local people who are subject to poverty, disadvantage and hardship. Our most deprived communities will be helped to give them an equal opportunity of enjoying the economic future success of Flintshire.

We recognise that people's economic circumstances are influenced by many factors including education, health, housing, caring responsibilities and their family situation. We will work together in partnership to lead public sector responses to our economic position to support: local organisations especially Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs); skills and retraining; housing market support; infrastructure; and help for individuals and families.

We aim to deliver this vision through a number of key elements:

1. Maintaining a competitive position
2. Employment and skills
3. Sustainable Communities

## **WHERE ARE WE NOW**

### **Employment**

In 2006, Flintshire had the highest employment rate in Wales at 78.5% (compared to 71.1% for Wales). Our main employment sectors are manufacturing and construction, which, including the self-employed account for 32,100 jobs (42% of Flintshire's total). A large number of people are employed by a small number of employers such as Airbus and Toyota. The major employment wards are Broughton North East and Sealand, between them accounting for over 20,000 employees in 2006.

As of 2006, there were 75,100 workplace jobs. Of these, 17,300 (23%) were part-time and 8,400 (11.2%) were self employed. In addition, there were 16,451 unpaid carers.

17% of all children are living in families where no-one works. This ranges from 38% in Shotton to 5% in Bryn y Baal, Mynydd Isa.

Of the 7,885 children living in lone parent households, only 55% live in households where the parent works. The proportions of lone parents in work ranges from 42% in the Flint Castle and Oakenholt to 74% in Kinnerton and Penyffordd.

Since 2004 indications are that there have been a significant number of migrant workers coming to live and/or work in Flintshire, mainly in Flint and Deeside.

### **Travel to Work**

Of the total working Flintshire residents; 45,000 work in Flintshire, 6,000 work in Wrexham, 2,000 work in Denbighshire and 24,000 either work in other local authority areas or outside Wales.

In 2001, 49,000 of the 62,400 households in Flintshire owned a car or van. 68.3% of the total employed drove to work. This was higher than Flintshire's neighbouring districts, North Wales and Wales as a whole. Flintshire has a low proportion of workers using other forms of transport, except for motorcycles, and also fewer people working from home.

### **Home Ownership**

In June 2008, the average price of a house sale was £143,892 which was slightly higher than the average for Wales and below the average for England & Wales.

45,942 households in Flintshire own their own home. This equates to 75.9% of all households in the county and represents one of the highest rates in Wales. This ranges from 44.7% in Flint Castle to 95.9% in Mold South.

There are 7 Electoral Divisions that are in the highest 100 areas in Wales for containing the greatest proportion of households that are 'not owned'. These are Flint Castle (22nd), Higher Shotton (23rd), Holywell Central (34th), Sealand (52nd), Mold West (64th), Saltney Mold Junction (75th) and Connah's Quay Central (77th).

There are 5,860 lone parent households in Flintshire. This equates to 9.7% of all households in the county. There are 4 Electoral Divisions in Flintshire that are in the highest 100 areas in Wales for containing the greatest percentage of households that are 'lone parent' households and they include Higher Shotton (24th), Flint Castle (47th) and Flint Oakenholt (54th) & Greenfield (79th). 52% of lone parents own their own homes. This ranges from 5.2% in Hawarden to 18% in Higher Shotton.

### **Education and Skills**

Flintshire has a lower level of higher education attainment for NVQ Level 4+ (22.8%) than the rest of Wales (24%). Mold South has the highest number of people aged 16 to 74 achieving NVQ 4 or above (34.4%).

Flintshire has relatively few people with no qualifications (13.5% compared to 16.6% for Wales) and has relatively high average earnings (£492 per week compared to £476 per

week for Wales). Flint Castle has the highest amount of people with no qualifications (50.4%).

## **Tourism**

There are approximately 2.6 million tourists per annum, staying around 5 million tourist days in the County and spending around £150 million pounds per annum.

## **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE**

### **1. MAINTAINING A COMPETITIVE POSITION**

Flintshire is widely seen as having a successful and buoyant economy with strong representation in the aerospace, engineering and pharmaceuticals industries. Manufacturing is the largest employment sector in Flintshire, with 35% of all jobs, a much higher level than that for the UK (11%) or Wales (17%). Major employees include Airbus UK, DARA Electronics, Toyota Manufacturing UK and Kingspan.

The Flintshire economy forms part of a wider economic sub-region that stretches across North East Wales and North West England and is covered by the Mersey-Dee Alliance (MDA) – a collaborative partnership between all local authorities and development agencies operating in the area, together with the Welsh Assembly Government.

The future for the Flintshire economy is therefore clearly tied to that of the wider sub-region which, before the current global economic downturn, was described as being “successful, prosperous and largely self contained, with low unemployment, increasing economic activity and rising GDP” (GVA Grimley, originally 2004).

Flintshire will need to maintain its relative competitive position to ensure continued investment by current and future employers.

Key issues are:

- ❖ The current economic downturn.
- ❖ Skills availability – most of our large employers report difficulties in recruitment due to skills shortages. This will intensify as our workforce ages.

- ❖ Access – for people and goods is almost exclusively by road. Social inclusion and carbon reduction objectives require the development of alternatives.
- ❖ Competition from the emerging economies of India and China, together with the expansion of the EU eastwards.
- ❖ Affordable housing shortages – particularly important for attracting and retaining young people.
- ❖ Research and development support and links to Further/Higher Education are needed to ensure development of new technology.
- ❖ SME's – Business start up rates are below Wales and UK levels.
- ❖ Tourism – this sector has potential for future growth; we need to raise Flintshire's profile and further develop its range of attractions, particularly related to its local environment and culture, heritage and leisure potential.

## **2. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS**

It is important that Flintshire has an adequate supply of skilled labour to support the continued development of the key employment sectors in the county. It is also important that we assist those people currently economically inactive, to be able to access job opportunities that have been created within the county. Measured at a County level Flintshire is very prosperous, although this prosperity is distributed unevenly. Flintshire enjoys low levels of unemployment.

A significant proportion of our population are lacking in basic skills. In addition, the county has levels of Higher Education attainment below the rest of Wales. This may reduce the competitiveness of the county in the long-term. We want to identify how the gap in both higher-end and basic skills will be reduced.

Although Flintshire is a prosperous County, a significant numbers of people who are economically inactive in Flintshire, many of whom do not share the prosperity of the county as a result. We will identify how more people can be encouraged and supported into economic activity, and how communities suffering from a concentration of deprivation can be helped to raise their quality of life.

The third sector – community enterprise, social business, cooperatives (e.g. Credit Union, Welsh Border Community Transport) is an under developed sector in the County. The third sector offers a real opportunity to re-engage the economically inactive and to provide services in areas where provision is otherwise limited.

We aim to:

- Reduce economic inactivity by working with partners to provide a range of support programmes to assist and encourage local people into employment.
- Encourage an increase in the skills levels of people living and working in Flintshire by working with partners to provide flexible and learning opportunities.
- Work with employers to facilitate the development of employees and increase the availability and flexibility of opportunities for employment.

We aim to create more, higher value jobs across the County. High value and advanced manufacturing is well represented in Flintshire and has significance beyond this county. For example, Airbus employs over 7,000 people directly, with a further 60,000 in the UK supply chain, about 20,000 of these are in North Wales. This sector has continued to grow and now forms the base for the local economy. Some sectors (aerospace, automotive, paper) are genuinely world-class. We are working with our partners in the MDA to develop an action plan to support these sectors. The priorities are to:

- Recognise the needs of these sectors as a priority.
- Address skill needs and raise the profile of the sector as a career of choice.
- Develop links with higher and further education providers to facilitate technology transfer and research and development.
- Support the development of a 'Centre for Advanced Manufacturing'.
- Promote major infrastructure projects, including enhanced broadband, improved rail and public transport, the development of quality sustainable business parks.

It is expected that the benefits of this action plan will provide a stimulus to all sectors within our economy.

### **3. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

We want Flintshire to be a place where people want to live, work and visit now and in the future. We want it to be a thriving, vibrant and sustainable county that that will improve everyone's quality of life. To achieve this, we will focus attention and co-ordinate efforts to bring about progress that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations as well as succeeding now.

#### **(i) Town Centres**

We want our own centres to be healthy and vibrant with an attractive built environment. Flintshire has seven main town centres, with a range of smaller towns and villages. All of the town centres show signs of relative decline and need to be revitalised. We will work together with the Town Councils to develop Town Action Plans for each of the seven centres and then seek appropriate funding to deliver bespoke programmes of actions.

The aim will be to make the towns popular local centres for surrounding communities and also fulfil their wider potential, giving them each distinctive roles that complement one another and the wider offer across the sub-region.

#### **(ii) Rural Areas**

We want to support and sustain our rural communities, improve their quality of life and maximise the potential of the rural area economically, culturally and environmentally.

Nearly 80% of Flintshire is now defined as 'rural' by the Welsh Assembly Government. In March 2007, the Flintshire Rural Partnership published the 'Flintshire Rural Development Strategy 2007-2013'. This sets out a strategic framework for the Rural Development Programme to:

- Encourage the diversification of the rural economy
- Raise the standard of living and quality of life in rural areas
- Develop holistic and innovative approaches to rural regeneration
- Engage with rural communities

This strategy has now been approved by WAG and has been awarded £3.9million to deliver the programme over the next four years.

**(iii) Community Inclusion**

Regeneration is of crucial importance to socially marginalised communities. Unless these communities share in increased wealth and opportunity, then regeneration will have failed. We have a number of communities which are among the most deprived in Wales. We will give priority to developing healthy, safe and active communities through economic development and community development and by targeting health, education, safety and access issues within our deprived areas.

The five most deprived parts of the county are targeted by the Communities First initiative. This is leading wide-ranging activity designed to help communities develop locally based responses to local problems. Communities First will link these approaches with other Local Authority programmes where possible. We will also look to developing wider social and community enterprise responses where these can deliver socially useful outcomes.

## **ENVIRONMENT / LIVING SUSTAINABLY**

### **OUR VISION**

Our economic prosperity and quality of life are inextricably linked with the nature and quality of our environment.

We want Flintshire and its communities to thrive and prosper in a sustainable manner, where an understanding of the impact of how we interact with our environment is shared with a mutual responsibility to live within acceptable environmental limits.

We will strive to value Flintshire's built and natural environment as assets, to be protected, regenerated and enhanced for their own sake, for the sake of our health and well-being, and for the economic and other opportunities that the environment serves to support.

An urgent and essential focus is to understand and respond to the effects of climate change on our communities, working environments, way of life, and well-being. We must therefore act now to adapt to the unavoidable consequences in relation to issues such as flood risk, land use, water resources, and biodiversity and wildlife.

We will therefore work with our partners and communities to become a low-carbon county as well as reducing our broader ecological footprint, which goes beyond addressing the impact of carbon emissions alone.

Living within environmental limits means that we must strive to use the natural resources of the planet in such a way that the systems which regenerate them are not damaged beyond repair. These systems include our climate, the nitrogen cycle, and our water systems which are all closely inter-connected. This is a delicate relationship however, which is increasingly affected by the way we extract and use energy, the waste we create, how we live, work and move about, and how we use land.

In terms of how we live within, relate to, use, and manage our environment, we must ensure that these limits are assessed and understood in order to guide how we use resources in the future, and live more sustainably.

This responsibility is the same for us all as decision-making authorities, service providers, businesses and employers, communities, and individuals. Together we must think about how we move towards 'one planet living' – where we consume fewer resources and live within the earth's natural capacity – and to explore the decisions and trade-offs which will face us in achieving this.

We aim to deliver this vision by developing our approaches to:

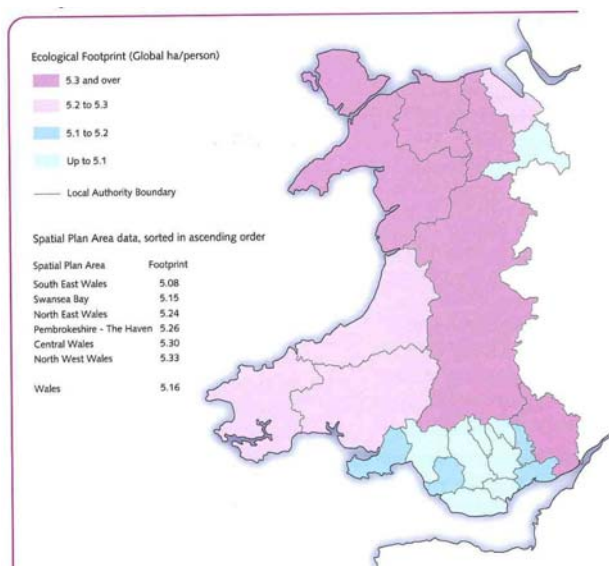
- Responding to climate change
- Building Sustainable Communities
- Valuing our Environment
- Managing energy, resources and infrastructure

## **WHERE ARE WE NOW**

**Responding to Climate Change:** The latest estimates from DEFRA of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by local authority area show that overall in 2006, Flintshire emitted 1.9million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. 58% of this was from industry and commerce, with the remainder split roughly equally between domestic sources, and road travel.

When expressed as a ratio of tonnes per head of population, Flintshire at 12.7 tonnes per capita (tpc), is the highest emitting authority in Wales, and significantly above the Welsh average of 8.4 tpc.

The Welsh Assembly Government recently commissioned work to assess Wales' ecological footprint, which is a broader measure of the implications of climate change than CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This measure essentially demonstrates the number of planet earths that would be needed to sustain our current pattern of living and consumption of resources.



**Flintshire's Ecological Footprint** – Whilst there is some variation across Wales at local authority level, the main message from this is that we require the equivalent of five planet earths, to continue living the way we do, which is not sustainable.

As of April 2008, there were 6,171 properties within the identified flood risk zone where the probability of flooding is 1 event likely in 100 years for fluvial and 1 in 200 for tidal. There are a further 8,759 properties subject to a lesser probability of occurrence of 1 event in 1000 years, but where the event when it happens is more severe.

**Building Sustainable Communities:** The latest WAG household projections for Flintshire show that there will be a demand for x,xxx homes over the next yy years (Z homes/yr).

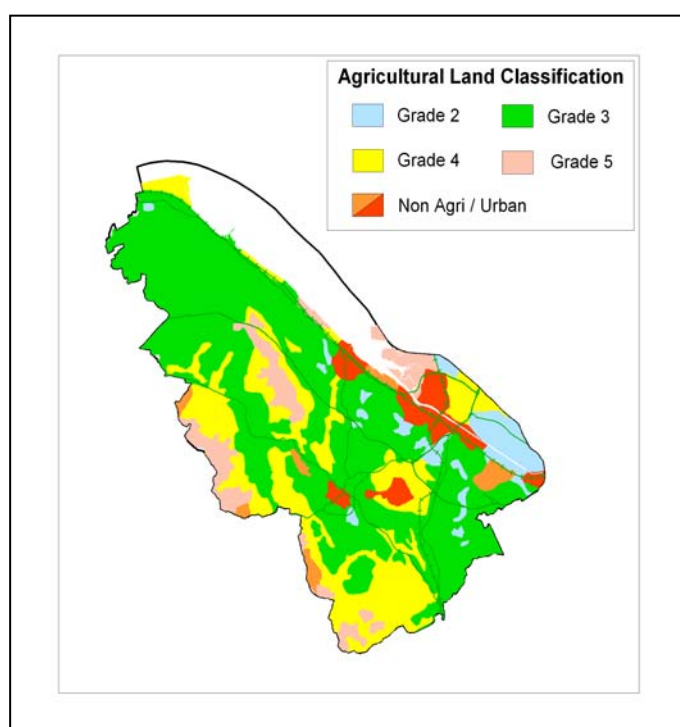
The recent Local Housing Market Assessment indicates that there is a significant need for affordable housing in the County, with X% of all new homes built needing to be affordable.

The Council's open space survey carried out in 2005 Shows that there is in general terms an adequate supply of open/play space provision in Flintshire, this space is not always of the appropriate quality or in the right places.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2008 identifies that 9 areas in Flintshire are in the top 10% most deprived areas in Wales in relation to housing deprivation. These areas comprise.....Check with YT.

There are currently **X,XXX** applicants registered on the Council's housing waiting list. The WIMD 2008 shows that Cilcain, Caerwys and Whitford are amongst the 10% most deprived areas in Wales in relation to access to services.

**Valuing Our Environment:** As well as the Dee Estuary, which is of international importance for its bird species, Flintshire contains numerous habitat types, which are nationally and internationally recognised, such as the mixed ash woodland along the Alyn Valley and the limestone grasslands on Halkyn Mountain.



Flintshire has significant areas of higher quality agricultural land (grades 2 and 3), with the higher grade (2) concentrated in the Sealand basin in the north east of the County.

Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are considered the most important sites in Wales for their natural heritage. SSSIs often support species or habitats that are of international importance. There are 23 SSSIs in Flintshire, and a

further 6 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which include the whole of the Dee Estuary. There are also a total of 308 wildlife sites within Flintshire.

Flintshire has 337 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) which cover 105 woodlands, 63 areas, 372 groups of trees and 1,270 individual trees.

There are around 1,100 listed buildings in Flintshire. There are also 32 conservation areas, and 23 registered historic parks and gardens in the County and many are of national or even international importance.

**Managing Energy, Resources and Infrastructure: **STATS TO FOLLOW****

## **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE**

### **1. RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change is an urgent and compelling issue which places an unavoidable responsibility on society today, to act now to avoid, adapt to and mitigate the predicted future effects of climate change, which will occur if nothing is done.

This means living more sustainably as the impacts and consequences of doing otherwise will:

- Impact on the economy as markets change;
- Question the resilience of our infrastructure (including transport and health) as flooding becomes more prevalent and temperatures rise;
- Affect food resilience as growing conditions change;
- Affect our overall quality of life.

In order that we minimise the contribution that we make to climate change in the future, we need to reconsider how we live, work and move about, reducing the consumption of energy and resources that we need.

The key elements to defining and understanding how we will do this/achieve this, are to:

- Develop an understanding along with our community partners of our carbon footprint and our environment limits, and develop strategies to reduce the impact of the way we serve the community;
- Assess the strategic long term consequences of flooding in order that we adapt our approach to spatial planning and the location of development and infrastructure in the future;
- Define ambitious but achievable targets that define and explain the concept of a low carbon county and how this can be achieved;
- Identify the key interventions necessary to achieve agreed reduction targets;

- Provide advice, guidance and a policy framework to make the community aware of their options and opportunities in relation to energy efficiency and reduction of their carbon emissions, and encourage the take up of these measures;
- We should start with the easy things first, such as energy use, product/service design, employee working/travel patterns, and the impacts of our business/service operations;
- We will develop a sustainability checklist to apply to all new developments;
- To adapt to climate change, we need to minimize the threats from, and impact of, increased coastal erosion, increased flood risk, habitat disturbance, fragmentation and increased pressure on water supply and drainage systems;
- We will use a peer review process to provide ongoing knowledge/training/understanding of our approach to tackling climate change, and how we monitor progress to achieving targets;
- Identify, assess and apply measures to ensure effective adaptation to likely environmental, social and economic effects of climate change.

## **2. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

In order to live more sustainably we must reconsider our approach to the making and shaping of the places in which we live, work and interact. We must strive to make our communities attractive places to live and work, where inequalities between communities are minimised, whilst their individual character and distinctiveness is retained and enhanced.

We must therefore develop strategies for sustainable development and construction that incorporate the need to adapt to climate change alongside the need for a high quality of design of buildings and their relationship to their setting and to the public realm.

An important part of this will be to consider the role that Flintshire's settlements fulfil, for the provision of housing, jobs, services and facilities. This must be judged against an assessment of the community's needs for housing (including affordable homes), jobs, services and facilities, as well as opportunities for recreation, leisure and play.

This must also be judged against the capacity of our settlements to accommodate future growth and development, in terms of flood risk, physical capacity (e.g. drainage, water supply, transport and accessibility), and social capacity (e.g. schools, health care, leisure).

Rural areas cover the majority of the land area in Flintshire. The issues facing rural communities (e.g. housing affordability, economic diversification, access to jobs and services) have particular causes and require particular solutions, but this does not mean that these issues should be dealt with in isolation, and not integrated with other mainstream decision making.

The key challenges in this are:

- To provide quality, energy efficient, affordable homes in a choice of sustainable locations where people want to live;
- To ensure that all new development is sustainable in terms of its design, location, layout, and achieves high standards of energy efficiency;
- We need to identify and maximise opportunities to reuse previously developed land and buildings within towns and urban areas;
- We should consider the regeneration and renewal potential which exists for parts of our towns and particularly our town centres;
- In assessing the community's need for development, services and facilities, we must engage effectively through the Community Planning process, in order to understand local issues, aspirations, and priorities;
- To ensure that through careful and coordinated spatial, land use, and service planning, we maximise and focus public investment and regeneration opportunities on key priorities, which will in turn serve to guide and direct private investment to follow;
- We need to identify the needs of our rural areas and consider how they are met through the development of a sustainable Rural Development Strategy.

### **3. VALUING OUR ENVIRONMENT**

Living sustainably means living within environmental limits. To achieve this we must value and respect the environment, its natural resources and its biodiversity as

fundamental assets for their own sake, and for the contribution they make to our economy and to sustaining our communities and our quality of life.

Over 80% of Flintshire's land area is classified as rural and within this and alongside a rich marine environment is a rich and diverse array of attractive and historic landscapes, productive agricultural land, accessible countryside and sites of local, regional, national and international conservation importance. Whilst there are significant responsibilities attached to the protection of this framework, there are also significant opportunities to enhance the quality of these assets and the role they can play in economic regeneration, health and wellbeing and our overall quality of life.

We will seek to develop a multidisciplinary approach to the identification, management and creation of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is the County's life support system – it is the network of green and blue spaces that lie within and between Flintshire's towns and villages, which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. The green infrastructure approach requires identification and management of a network of green spaces in an integrated way that allows for the provision of wider socio-economic and health benefits while at the same time, contributing to the delivery of biodiversity conservation objectives. Other benefits of green infrastructure include the adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

In relation to the marine environment, Flintshire has a significant length of attractive and sensitive coastline, which has associated with it a challenging combination of management issues. This requires the development of an integrated approach to the development of a strategy concerning the coastal zone, which links together spatial planning on land with that at sea. This will ensure the most effective protection, enhancement and use of the resources.

The key elements to achieving this involve:

- Protecting and enhancing environmental quality by understanding and respecting the character, distinctiveness of species, habitats and landscapes;
- Providing a more integrated approach to delivering a better environment through effective and coordinated land and water management including an improved

relationship of new development to water resources, flood risk and adaptation to the impacts of climate change;

- Taking the opportunity to develop with partners a multifunctional policy framework approach to green infrastructure, improving access to green space which in turn contributes to place making, economic and social regeneration, and health and wellbeing;
- Maintaining and enhancing the tranquility of open countryside and rural areas;
- Preserving, protecting and enhancing the quality and quantity of biodiversity and habitats;
- Ensuring that plans, strategies and proposals which alone or in combination could have a significant affect on the integrity and conservation objectives of sites of international importance for nature conservation, are subject to assessment;
- Developing policy responses to address national environmental and biodiversity issues by considering integrated land use in coastal and marine management, in the context of dynamic habitats and changing landscapes;
- Understanding the environmental capacity of the county to monitor performance and underpin future policy development.

#### **4. MANAGING ENERGY, RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Flintshire's economic competitiveness is important and its growth must be facilitated but demands for housing, workplaces and services to support this growth will need to be met in a more sustainable manner, making the best use of energy and existing infrastructure, and managing resources prudently and efficiently.

Whilst the conservation and enhancement of Flintshire's environmental and cultural assets is of utmost importance, we must also consider the role of the environment when seeking to achieve social and economic objectives and addressing climate change. The environmental economy makes a significant contribution to overall growth, and an integrated approach is required to ensure this can continue in a sustainable manner without causing irreversible harm.

This integrated approach should encompass:

- Water management
- Waste management

- Minerals
- Energy
- Sustainable transport

We must aim to integrate water management with growth and development, respecting the capacity of the water environment to cope with changes in land use, whilst factoring in the risks and uncertainties associated with the extremes of excess winter water and shortage in summer, which will result from climate change. It is critical that we manage the area's demand for water as well as current and future flood risk, to avoid potential damage to property or loss of life.

In relation to waste management, European legislation, government targets, and rising public expectations combine to drive the need for a change in our approach to waste management. Accepting the need to minimize waste production as a first principle, an imperative thereafter is to manage waste more sustainably, providing alternative facilities for reprocessing, recycling, treatment and disposal. We will work in partnership at the regional level and locally, to ensure that a range of appropriate and sustainable facilities are provided, and that waste targets are met and exceeded.

National policies seek to protect mineral reserves whilst at the same time ensuring that an adequate supply is available to meet needs. Flintshire is an important source of hard rock limestone and sand and gravel and we will ensure that the need for these minerals is assessed against current land banked reserves, the potential for secondary aggregates, before allowing development of new or extended mineral sites.

The production, security of supply, and efficient use of energy is essential to our society today, but our approach to energy should be based on moving towards a sustainable energy system, which should focus on reducing energy wastage, reducing demand, and increasing energy efficiency. This means that new development must achieve higher standards of energy efficiency from the outset, and the existing housing stock and industrial base must improve on their current levels of energy efficiency and CO2 emissions.

In relation to sustainable transport infrastructure, development should be located so as to reduce the need to travel especially by car, and to enable people as far as is practicable, to meet their needs locally.

The key elements to achieving this include:

- Work with water companies and the Environment Agency Wales when planning the location and phasing of new development;
- Produce a strategic flood risk assessment for the County to inform future spatial planning options and adaptation strategies to climate change;
- Require new development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and water conservation measures;
- Promote and require the provision of a sustainable waste management infrastructure, facilities and systems for all waste streams, in line with the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle;
- In ensuring the provision of a steady and adequate supply of minerals to meet requirements, we must also ensure that once these sites cease to be worked, they are restored to high environmental sustainability standards.

# **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING / HEALTH IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EVERYTHING WE DO**

## **OUR VISION**

We support the World Health Organisation's definition of 'health' as being 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.

We want Flintshire to be a County in which people are able to achieve the best possible physical and mental health and well-being. We will achieve this through providing accessible and relevant information, high quality services and opportunities for all individuals to live, work and spend their leisure time in ways that enable and encourage them to look after their own health, and that of others.

A healthy Flintshire will mean improved health for all. It will focus action on people whose choices or circumstances put them at increased risk of poor health.

Whilst working to improving the health and well-being of people, we will work to reduce the gap in life expectancy and improve the health status of individuals and communities that are experiencing greater levels of ill health.

Partners will understand and maximise their potential to promote and support health and well-being, and will work to ensure that opportunities to improve both physical and mental health and well-being is at the heart of everything that we do.

We aim to deliver this ambition through a number of key elements:

1. Promoting and Protecting Health and Well-Being
2. Bringing Optimum Health to All
3. Increasing Personal and Organisational Responsibility for Health

## **WHERE ARE WE NOW**

A large number of statistics and indicators are used to monitor and report on health status, behaviour and lifestyles of individuals, and causes of death. The key messages are:

- As elsewhere in the UK, the proportion of older people in the population in Flintshire is increasing. Between 1991 and 2006 the 55 to 59 years age group grew by 4,032 (36%), 85+ years age group grew by 1,088 (39%).
- Average life expectancy is increasing. However this does not mean that everyone is benefiting equally from this. For example, on average, women still live longer than men and life expectancy is reduced for people who have a mental health problem or who live in more deprived communities for example.
- Life expectancy for males in Flintshire is 73.6 years (compared with 75.8 years for Wales); for Flintshire females it is 78.8 years (80.3 for Wales).
- In the 2001 Census, almost 70% of the population of Flintshire self-reported that they had been in 'good health'. Almost 80% of the population in Mold South reported that they were in "good health" compared to less than 60% of the population in Holywell Central and Flint Castle.
- Compared to the Welsh average, population health indicators for Flintshire are often favourable. However when these figures are compared with areas outside of Wales, the results often reveal that there is still much that can be done.
- The diseases causing ill health and premature death in the County are often preventable. However statistics reveal that many people continue to adopt and maintain lifestyle behaviours that put them at increased risk, and that there are inequalities that exist between population groups. For example, according to the Welsh Health Survey, Flintshire residents self-reported the following health related behaviours:

	<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>Wales</b>
• Residents with BMI of 25 or more	53%	54%
• Residents who smoke	26%	27%
• Residents that have usual alcohol consumption above daily guidelines	38%	40%
• Residents that “Binge drink” (defined as drinking eight or more units of alcohol in one session for men, and more than six units in one session for women)	17%	19%
• Residents that meet the recommended consumption of fruit and vegetables (5 portions or more per day)	39%	40%
• Residents that achieve the recommended levels of physical activity	31%	29%

- Furthermore, in line with other parts of Wales, the rate of diagnosed sexually transmitted infections has increased markedly in recent years.
- Using population data and obesity prevalence rates from the National Heart Forum, an estimated 15% of children aged 4 to 11 years in Flintshire are overweight or obese. In addition, only 25% of young people in Flintshire meet the recommended level of physical activity and 25% are inactive.
- Between 2003 and 2004, five year olds in Flintshire had the lowest rate of decayed / missing / filled teeth in Wales. However, this rate is three and a half time worse than the best Primary Care Trust (PCT) area in England.
- In 2006, diseases of the circulatory system were the main cause of mortality in Flintshire, accounting for 34% of all deaths.

- There has been an increase in the proportion of deaths from cancer from 26% of all deaths in 1996 to 33% in 2006. However as the proportion of older people in the population is increasing, and increasing age is a key risk factor for cancer, this increase is not unexpected.

## **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE**

### **1. PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Giving individuals and communities the knowledge and skills they need to make choices that promote and protect their physical and mental health and well-being throughout life is essential.

The provision of information and advice about steps that children, adults and families can take to improve their own health and well-being plays an important part in enabling us to deliver this ambition. We will improve access to and support to understand/make use of quality assured information on a wide range of issues that impact directly or indirectly on health. Examples include:

- Managing personal finances, improving fuel efficiency at home or engaging in opportunities to comment on developments locally and across the county.
- Lifestyle behaviours such as not smoking, being active, eating a balanced diet, and reducing alcohol consumption in line with the recommended guidelines, etc.
- Health protection issues such as immunisation, health screening and infection control.
  - The importance of maintaining a high level of uptake of immunisations to protect against specific diseases cannot be underestimated. Unless 95% coverage is reached there remain a sufficient number of susceptible individuals for an outbreak to occur. The programme of early childhood immunisations, together with boosters and additional vaccines targeted at adolescents and the

opportunity for flu and pneumococcal immunisation in older people and those in particular circumstances, all contribute to protecting the population against diseases that are preventable which can be fatal or leave long-term disability.

- Promoting the uptake of the national screening programmes (including antenatal screening, the newborn hearing programme, breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening) can help to identify potential threats to health at an earlier stage than is otherwise possible. This can increase the range of choices available to the individual, and/or mobilise appropriate services to support them.

We will ensure continued and coordinated access to such resources, with support where appropriate to enable people to understand and act on the information contained.

We will also help individuals and communities increase their skills and confidence to adopt health promoting behaviours (e.g. health literacy, cooking skills etc)

We will support people to eat a balanced, nutritious diet and lead an active lifestyle so that levels of obesity that contribute to many poor health outcomes are reduced. Reducing health damaging behaviours of all types is important, but we also recognise that people's home, work and neighbourhood environments, their educational attainment, financial circumstances, ability to access places and opportunities, and feelings of safety and belonging all have the potential to impact positively or negatively on people's ability to stay well, or likelihood of becoming ill.

We recognise that (despite our efforts to promote good health and well-being) illness, injury and/or disability will affect some Flintshire residents. Our responses as services providers will be to continue to provide timely and effective interventions, at appropriate locations (including within people's own homes where it is possible to do so). We will strive to restore people to their fullest health potential as quickly as possible, ensuring that individual choices about the quality of their life are paramount.

The population in Flintshire is changing. The population is ageing and there are more people living for longer periods of time with chronic health conditions, mental health problems (particularly those associated with ageing) and/or disabilities. The impact and opportunities that this shift will bring must be understood and responded to appropriately.

## **2. INCREASING PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH**

Providing services which promote and support both physical and mental health and well-being is fundamental to our ambition.

Given the broad range of factors that influence an individual's or population's health and well-being, all organisations and agencies need to consider how they can contribute to promoting good physical and mental health and well-being, and reducing harms or risk. We will achieve this by:

- Promoting the importance of the wider determinants of health. This includes raising awareness that people's home, work and neighbourhood environments, their educational attainment, caring commitments, financial circumstances, ability to access places and opportunities, and feelings of safety and belonging all impact on health and well being.
- Raising the profile of the importance of developing 'healthy public policy'. This important component of effective strategies to improve population health can be taken forward by embedding health impact assessment (HIA) considerations into all decision making.
- Supporting and responding to input from customers, clients, patients, families and organisations and groups that represent them. We will embed engagement and involvement of the public in decision making about policy, service developments

and delivery, thereby helping to engender feelings of self efficacy which is a component of mental well-being.

- Supporting the development of strong communities (whether in geographic areas, settings or between people who share common circumstances) so that people can support and learn from one another as this is integral to promoting both mental and physical well-being.
- Leading by example to improve the health of our workforce through effective health promotion. We believe that it is important that we demonstrate our commitment by recognising the impact that we can have on our employees, creating a supportive environment, providing information, and having policies and practices which assist employees to make healthy choices.

Alerting people of the possible consequences of their behaviours and lifestyles on their own and their families' health is important to us. We acknowledge and accept that every person has the right to determine how they live their lives; however where there is actual or potential harm (whether to the individual or to others) arising from such choices, we will endeavour to provide appropriate input to support the adoption of less harmful behaviours.

### **3. BRINGING OPTIMUM HEALTH TO ALL**

Supporting individuals to maintain, regain or improve their optimum level of physical and mental health and well-being is important to us.

We will continue to provide timely and effective interventions, at appropriate locations to people who need health and social care services. We will strive to restore people to their fullest health potential as quickly as possible, ensuring that individual choices about the quality of their life are paramount.

In delivering this ambition, we will ensure particular consideration is given to:

- Providing flexible and responsive support to people who are carers. We recognise and value the importance of carers, both in terms of the direct support they give to the person they are caring for, and as essential components of healthcare and social care provision in the county. We will identify people in a caring role through our assessment processes, and will strive to ensure that carers own needs (whether financial, practical, or emotional) are met through signposting them to appropriate services.
- The impact and opportunities posed by demographic change, including the ageing population. For example, as our older population expands and life expectancy increases, there will be an increasing need to support people's choices, for example, their living arrangements.
- Available evidence about communities which are (or are at risk of) experiencing poorer health, reduced access to services or are otherwise disadvantaged by the current pattern of service delivery (including health care, education, social care, leisure services, housing, transport, etc.) We will take account of this information in making decisions about service development (across all policy areas), and specific interventions and also adapt current practices to promote a more accessible service.
- Ensuring that particular population groups have access to targeted services – for example: outreach healthcare provision (including immunisations) to the traveller community and to those who are homeless; providing appropriate education opportunities for mothers of school age, or coordinating community transport schemes to increase access to all kinds of services (including health treatment, work, education and leisure) to people unable to travel using other means.

We recognise that reducing poverty and its related disadvantage, using both targeted and universally applied approaches is essential to improving the health and well-being

of our communities. We will pursue initiatives to give people a better environment to improve their physical and mental health and well-being by targeting initiatives to maximise income / reduce poverty both on geographical areas of deprivation and on particular population groups. This may include benefits uptake campaigns, debt management advice, learning opportunities and skills building, volunteering and work placement opportunities, and/or area regeneration initiatives.

## **LEARNING / LEARNING & SKILLS FOR LIFE**

### **OUR VISION**

Quality learning, cultural and leisure experiences accessible to all have the potential to enhance and change the quality of life of people in Flintshire. We want Flintshire to be a County in which all people are able to reach their potential throughout their life through access to opportunities where they can learn and develop in line with their needs.

High quality education and training opportunities make a vital contribution to improving the communities of Flintshire. They are a key part of securing social and economic wellbeing. Children and adults learn in many settings, and an environment must be established where individuals, businesses and organisations including the voluntary sector support and promote both informal and formal learning.

We want to ensure that people in Flintshire have a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including gaining essential basic and key skills, vocational skills, personal skills and social / life skills.

We aim to deliver this ambition through a number of key elements:

1. Improving opportunities for children and young people
2. Widening learning opportunities
3. Improving employability and skills

### **WHERE ARE WE NOW**

- In 2005, there were 13.5% of residents of working age with no qualifications - compared to 16.6% for Wales. There are also fewer residents with degree level qualifications in Flintshire (22.8%) than in Wales (24%).
- Mold South has the highest number of people aged 16 to 74 years with qualifications of NVQ4 or above (34.4%), and Flint Castle has the highest amount of people with no qualifications (50.4%).

- In 2008, parts of Shotton Higher, Mold West and Greenfield as well as Flint Castle were in the most deprived 10% for education, skills and training deprivation in Wales. The majority of areas in Flintshire's are in the least deprived 50%.
- The total population of children under 5 in Flintshire was estimated to be 7,298. There was one childcare place for every 6 children aged 0 to 4 years. In Wales in 2006, the figure was just over 1 place for every 13 children.
- Childcare provision varies across the County. In Flint Mount Pleasant, Cornist and Flint Mountain there is no early years provision compared to nearly 48 places for every 100 children in Flint Castle and Oakenholt.
- In 2007, Flintshire pupils received the following expected Key Stage results:
  - Key Stage 1 at Year 2 was 81.6% - higher than the Welsh average of 80.1%.
  - Key Stage 2 at Year 6 was 73.3% - lower than the Welsh average of 74.1%.
  - Key Stage 3 at Year 9 was 62.4% - higher than the Welsh average of 56.7%.
- In 2007, Flintshire is above the Welsh average for exams at age 15 for:
  - the percentage entering GCSEs.
  - the percentage achieving single and multiple passes and good passes at A\* to C.
  - the Core Subject Indicator (good passes in English or Welsh, Maths, and Science).
- Flintshire has one of the lowest absenteeism rates from school out of the 22 local authorities in Wales.
- The total number of registered places in after school clubs in Flintshire was 1,827, which relates to just 9.5 places for every 100 children aged 5 to 14 years.

- 14% of sessional child care settings are Welsh Medium in Flintshire with an additional 8% delivering services bilingually. While English alone is used in only 27% of settings, the majority of services are predominantly English with some use of Welsh.
- A-level results in Flintshire over the past 6 years have shown that although the fraction of pupils achieving at least 2 passes is at or above the Welsh average, the fraction achieving at least 2 passes at grades A to C is lower than the Welsh average.
- In 2003, a survey reported that people who were in fair or poor health were much more likely to have at most entry level literacy (41% in Flintshire compared to 25% for Wales) or at most entry level numeracy (69% in Flintshire compared to 53% for Wales).

## **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE**

### **1. IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

We will ensure that children have a 'flying start' in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development. To do this, we will develop new and support existing local and national initiatives / programmes, as appropriate, based around parenting, education, play and childcare.

The opportunity for all children and young people to be included in such initiatives and programmes will be supported by:

- Providing access to services and information.
- Promoting participation and positive citizenship.
- Promoting Advocacy (representing the views, wishes and needs of children and young people to decision makers).
- Promoting social inclusiveness and cohesion in all that we do.

A positive parenting style has a strong and beneficial impact on children's outcomes and can act as a protective factor against other risks. Agencies will work with families

as a whole to maximise the support that is available to them so that they can reach their full potential.

We want to ensure that the children and young people of Flintshire have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities. We want all children and young people to benefit from their education as students, as citizens and in their future careers by:

- Working in a physical and emotional environment which enhances learning experiences in a variety of different situations both structured and unstructured.
- Experiencing learning which matches their individual needs (academic, emotional, social and cultural).
- Having lifelong learning skills and attitudes integrated into learning activities.

The Foundation Phase is the National Curriculum for three to seven year olds. This represents a major shift in the way that schools will teach young children to ensure that they achieve their full potential. In delivering this Curriculum, we will need to improve: learning environments and leadership; teaching and support staff training; working in partnership with agencies, parents and carers; and improving information that is provided to all.

Play has an important role in experiential learning and can promote positive self esteem, self confidence and a sense of belonging. We recognise that there is a wide range of play provision ranging from informal settings such as play areas, to structured settings such as play groups, and more formal such as Foundation Phase. We will continue to provide and develop opportunities for formal and informal play close to where people live.

We will tackle issues that prevent children and young people from reaching their full potential, for example, where behaviour puts them at risk such as smoking, substance

misuse including prescribed drugs, alcohol misuse, eating disorders and obesity, unsafe sexual practice, mental health problems.

Ensuring that formal education is of high quality and relevant to the world of work is essential. We recognise that a young person's education up to the age of 16 can make a significant contribution to their employability and skill levels. We will continue to improve future job prospects by planning for higher educational attainment.

We will actively encourage participation in further and higher education. Delivering the entitlement of all 14 to 19 year old students to a wide range of vocational and academic curriculum options require new ways of working across the network of providers in the region. Key tasks include:

- Widening the options available for 14 to 19 year olds.
- Reducing unnecessary duplication of provision by increasing levels of collaborative curriculum planning.
- Planning for excellence across all aspects of network provision.

We will ensure that the needs of children and young people who are vulnerable or who have additional needs are identified at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate arrangements can be made for them in the pre-school setting, on entry to school and thereafter. We will support vulnerable individual and groups to improve: their access to services and information; education; health and well being; transition into adult services; inclusion; and, accommodation and housing.

## **2. WIDENING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Education, training and learning opportunities - such as gaining essential basic and key skills, personal skills and social / life skills – sit alongside cultural and leisure experiences in the wider context of lifelong learning. We understand that all of these have the potential to enhance and change the quality of life of people in Flintshire. In addition, there are lots of ways to learn. We recognise that it is important for us to

understand the learning needs of our communities so that we can focus on supporting them to develop.

We will promote learning in all its forms and the benefits that it can bring to the individual, their family and the wider community. However, there are a number of barriers to learning at all ages such as poor health and disability, conflicting care responsibilities, lack of information, possessing few or no qualifications, inaccessible facilities and transport difficulties, lack of confidence, age discrimination, language, cost, etc. We will continue to identify these obstacles and put measures in place to help remove barriers to learning.

Ensuring that people have access to information and advice to help them to overcome any barriers to learning is essential. We want to encourage people to be confident as learners.

We recognise that there are some people who may be at risk of exclusion and it is these people that are often the hardest to engage. This engagement is essential if service provision is to be properly targeted and appropriate to individuals' needs. The voluntary and community sectors are ideally placed to engage excluded groups and have a significant role in providing both formal and informal learning in a community setting so that we can support them to develop.

Where it is difficult for people to travel, learning opportunities should be provided close to where people live or work. We will maximise the opportunities for developing and supporting schools for the whole community and programmes for learning outside school hours including voluntary leisure, arts and cultural activities.

We will also seek to expand alternative routes to education by increasing opportunities for on-line education, community learning and libraries, and making use of new technologies and innovative approaches to the way that we use existing resources. We will also explore new or different ways for people to learn that promote learning for pleasure.

We will enhance the role of education in family and community life by developing excellence from pre-school provision through the National Curriculum key stages and beyond. This will include the needs of adult returnees and older people as well as the fostering of active links between schools, colleges, communities and other centres of learning. It will also include the promotion of intergenerational learning and community involvement in learning.

Key principles to underpin the work in Flintshire include:

- Recognising that learners' needs are central.
- More collaboration and partnership working.
- There will be a learner entitlement to a wider choice of pathways.
- Buildings that will be fit for purpose and curriculum requirements.
- Changes that lead to improvement (standards, range of choice, participation rates).
- Maximising use of current assets.
- Parity of esteem between vocational and academic pathways.
- Excessive learner travel should be avoided (distance and frequency).
- There will be opportunities to learn in English and/or Welsh and within a faith based setting.
- Agreement on and coordinated publication of all pathways available within Flintshire.

### **3. IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS**

Education and skills are essential for maintaining the economic prosperity of Flintshire. A commitment to lifelong learning will help the county to adapt to changing economic conditions and the changing demand for different occupations and industrial sectors.

Working, whether paid or voluntary, is generally linked with better quality of life, more active lifestyles, improved well-being, a greater sense of social inclusion and better

income. People with low skills levels can be at increased risk of income poverty. Maintaining people's skills whether they are in the workplace or retired can bring benefits not only to the employer but to an individual's mental and physical health. We want people to be able reach their potential and to access more high value jobs.

Helping people to reach their potential is important to us but we realise that learning potential and / or need will differ from person to person. For some it may be about increasing employability, for others it may be to develop vocational skills to do well in workplace or social / life skills.

There are significant numbers of people who are economically inactive in Flintshire and do not share the prosperity of the county as a result. People who are economically inactive already face multiple barriers to engaging with the labour market whether that be through employment, learning or volunteering. The challenge for Flintshire is even greater in providing support and training for those who want to work. We will provide locally based solutions to local needs and to recognise the need for soft skills development, volunteering and the gradual steps towards activity that are required before entering accredited training or mainstream employment.

We aim to:

- Develop locally based approaches to local employment skills needs through regeneration initiatives such as Communities First and other similar programmes.
- Encourage an increase in skill levels within the county and foster a culture of lifelong learning and continuous personal development in partnership with colleges and training providers.
- Work with employers to facilitate the development of employees and increase the availability of opportunities for employment thereby promoting the availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.
- Work with employers to support the transition of young people from school to the world of work.

- As partners, we also aim to be model employers ourselves, facilitating access to appropriate continuing development and training opportunities for staff which will result in staff feeling more valued, which benefits our customers in turn.

We want Flintshire to be a place where secondary schools, further and higher education are closely integrated equipping people with the skills and qualifications they need to secure productive, rewarding and high value employment in a modern economy. We want to be a learning county that is at the forefront of new technology in our schools, homes, local businesses and organisations.

Without appropriate job training, workers' skills can become obsolete. Moreover, in the absence of flexible working arrangements it may be difficult for some people to combine work with their caring responsibilities.

As model employers, we will seek to enable people to reach their potential by:

- Ensuring sufficient high performing staff are recruited, trained and retained.
- Supporting flexible working opportunities that can benefit everyone - employers, employees and their families.
- Designing pay and reward structures that attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce, while achieving value for money and fairness.
- Developing workforce skill and capacity to address both current and future skills needs
- Developing leadership capacity

We will encourage other employers in Flintshire to create the right conditions to encourage people to work and improve peoples working lives through ways of working that recognise equality and diversity, and support investment in workforce development and training – in and out of the workplace, flexible working arrangements, staff involvement, and a 'healthy' and safe workplace.

The proportion of older people in Flintshire is growing. As people get older it is important to enable them to develop their skills so that they can adapt to their changing role, employment or industry demands.

We will develop policies and initiatives to enable the over 50's to continue to work, learn, volunteer and care, making an active contribution for as long as they wish and ensure that they do not live in poverty by providing support to:

- the recruitment and retention of older workers and increase economic activity by improving access to jobs for the over 50s, including the disabled and those who have experienced ill health.
- Enable older employees to re-train and upgrade their skills and, in addition, pass on their skills and experience, in part through intergenerational learning in the workplace.
- The development of flexible working practices to accommodate carers and develop programmes to ensure gradual transitions to retirement.
- Encouraging volunteering programmes involving the over 50s in order to extend the active contribution of older people.

## **SAFEGUARDING / SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES**

### **OUR VISION**

We want Flintshire to be a County where people of all ages and from all backgrounds and abilities feel safe, confident, supported and protected from harm, including abuse and neglect.

We want to reduce the impact that crime and anti-social behaviour can have on the lives of people.

We want to reduce the number and the impact of unintentional injuries in homes, in our communities and neighbourhoods.

We want all people to feel that they are a part of a community in which they can actively participate and can both give and receive help and support, where public services in Flintshire work alongside individuals, families, neighbourhood, voluntary and community groups to support vulnerable people and to tackle the problems and challenges which face them.

We recognise that any individual can be vulnerable at any stage of their life. Vulnerability means that a person may be at greater risk and have less ability to cope with different aspects of their life. It may be based on socio-economic conditions, gender, age, disability (mental and physical), ethnicity, lifestyle or other criteria that influence a person's well being and / or their ability to access resources and development opportunities.

We will achieve this vision by ensuring that public services and local people work effectively together to create:

1. Inclusive communities and neighbourhoods
2. Communities that are safe and protected from harm
3. Supportive communities and neighbourhoods

## WHERE ARE WE NOW

- It can be estimated that around 25% of children in Flintshire living below the official poverty level.
- During 2007 and 2008, there was a 24% (664 crimes) reduction in violent crime.
- In 2007/08, of those who were victims of crime, 60% were aged between 21 and 50 years.
- During 2007 and 2008, 9,579 incidents of anti social behaviour were reported. The highest number of incidents related to rowdy nuisance with 6,480 (67.6%) reports, followed by complaints about pets/animals with 940 incidents and reports of vehicle nuisance with 677 incidents.
- A form of anti social behaviour is deliberate fire setting. During 2007 and 2008, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) attended 1,840 deliberate fires of which 376 (20.4%) were in Flintshire. 015 of the incidents were attacks on items of value such as property and vehicles. 271 were deliberate secondary fires which included refuse, fly tipping, grass / gorse, hedge rows and abandoned vehicles.
- In 2007/08, NWFRS delivered tailored fire safety advice to 4,895 homes in Flintshire in the form of a Home Fire Safety Check.
- During 2007 and 2008, there were 1,538 domestic violence incidents reported. Of these 462 (30%) were recorded as crimes. There were 395 arrests providing a crime to arrest ratio of 85.4%. 33 of the persons arrested were repeat offenders.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of people accessing help in relation to alcohol misuse. There is a recognized link between alcohol misuse, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour.

- Each year, it is estimated that over 6,100 children in Flintshire will attend hospital as a result of an injury. Approximately half of these injuries occur in the home, and are potentially preventable. Similarly, an estimated 6,600 people over the age of 50 will experience a fall each year, with over 1,300 incidents requiring medical attention and approximately 600 fractures.
- In 2004, Flintshire's road traffic collision casualty rate was the second highest in Wales at 560 per 100,000 population. Furthermore, the total number of casualties and collisions on roads in Flintshire has been constant over the last three years and injuries to children as passengers have risen substantially.
- Between 2001 and 2007 there were 579 accidental fires in homes in Flintshire. There were 135 injuries and 8 deaths. Seven main contributory factors associated with this type of fire have been identified that include being alone, fire interaction, not having a smoke detector, age, alcohol use, disability and living in rented accommodation.
- During 2007/08, 141 incidents were dealt with under Flintshire's adult protection procedures.
- In December 2008, 86 children were on Flintshire's Child Protection register.
- There has been a positive increase in the percentage of clients aged 65+ who are supported in the community.
- The 2001 Census recorded 16,451 (11.1% of total population) people in Flintshire that were providing unpaid care. 23% of these Carers provide 50+ hours care per week. These figures relate to known Carers.

- Since 2004 indications are that there have been a significant number of migrant workers coming to live and/or work in Flintshire, mainly in Flint and Deeside.
- It is estimated that aside from English and Welsh there are over 30 different languages spoken in Flintshire.
- Flintshire has the highest recorded number of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments in North Wales. Between 2006 and 2007, there were 46 unauthorised encampments.
- In 2003, there were over a 1,000 voluntary and community groups in Flintshire comprising 18,000 volunteers and trustees, 2,500 staff and with an annual income of £15 million. The groups vary greatly in size and purpose with the majority being small local groups run entirely by volunteers, however, a significant number are larger organisations, operating across the county, employing staff, and involving volunteers, some are branches of national charities. Voluntary and community groups involve thousands of people every week. They provide a wide range of services and activities which enhance the social, cultural and economic life of the community. These include, support for children, families and young people, arts activities, environmental projects, health and social care services, advice and advocacy, training, support for people with disabilities, sports, leisure and recreation activities.

## **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE**

### **1. INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS**

We want Flintshire to be a County built on fairness and respect, where people feel confident in all aspects of their diversity regardless of age, disability, gender, language, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

We will ensure that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities and know their rights and responsibilities.

Community Cohesion lies at the heart of a strong, vibrant and safe community and is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. People valuing each other and playing an active part in the community will mean that:

- More people will be clear about how they are expected to behave, will take responsibility for their own and their children's behaviours and will respect others and their neighbourhood.
- More people will be able to choose how they get involved and feel they have a voice in their community.
- Newly arrived and established communities will be able to communicate, share experiences and information to maximise their contribution to and experience of life in Flintshire.

We will map our communities to enable us to understand:

- The people who make up our communities;
- Where they live;
- What their needs are;
- What their perceptions are about their local community;
- How these communities are changing;
- What issues and activities may be impacting, both negatively and positively, on their community life, and;
- How communities engage and communicate with each other and identify areas of concern and opportunity.

This in turn will enable public service providers, voluntary and community groups in Flintshire to prioritise their services in line with local needs.

## **2. COMMUNITIES THAT ARE SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM**

We want to improve people's quality of life by helping them to feel safe, protected from harm and more at ease in their homes, neighbourhoods and in public areas across the County.

Harm can be either intended or unintended. We will work in partnership to positively address factors that can affect:

- Unintentional injuries occurring in and around the home or care environment.
- Unintentional injuries to older people arising from a fall.
- Unintentional injuries to people on the roads (pedestrians, passengers, cyclists and drivers / riders of motor vehicles).

Although the communities of Flintshire will be encouraged to take part in ensuring their own safety, we will listen to the needs of our communities and engage with hard to reach and diverse groups. At the same time we will focus on safety issues that partners identify through the use of local information and identify vulnerable people and premises through effective partnership working and community education.

We will support people including victims of crime and the vulnerable, to make their home environment a safe place for their family to live and grow. This will include addressing issues of safe play including toy safety in the home and in childcare facilities, fire prevention, unintentional injuries, and domestic abuse.

We will aim to increase early identification and intervention with victims of domestic violence by utilizing all points of contact with front line professionals. We will build on existing capacity to provide effective advice and support to victims of domestic violence. We will improve the response to domestic violence by supporting victims through the criminal justice system and to manage perpetration to reduce risk.

We will seek to understand the impact of substance misuse in the family by understanding the root causes and by supporting families to stay together. We will aim to reduce the harm to individuals caused by substance misuse particularly

children and young people, families and the wider community. We will improve the availability of education and treatment services and give particular priority to issues relating to alcohol. We are focused on tackling the availability of illegal drugs and the inappropriate availability of alcohol and other substances.

We will take action to address and positively manage factors commonly associated with crime and anti-social behaviour that impact upon how safe a person feels in their community. More people will consider the County to be a safe place as fear of crime will be reduced, including tackling issues that people perceive as threatening and destructive including racial abuse and hate crime.

We will help to distinguish between people's perception of crime and how safe they feel by engaging public figures, elected members and the media to help communicate the facts about community safety and to help reduce peoples fear. We will also utilize modern technology such as mobile telephones and the internet to inform and educate our communities. This will help to ensure that people have the knowledge and understanding to address issues that affect them in relation to crime and safety.

All offenders and ex-offenders will, where possible and appropriate, receive every opportunity to rehabilitate themselves. However the needs of the victims are paramount and this remains at the heart of our ambition.

We will work together to protect and support children and adults who need safeguarding because of risk of neglect, abuse and other forms of harm. We will support the wide range of professionals in agencies who work in this sensitive and challenging area.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children is everyone's priority. We want our communities to feel that they have responsibility for not just their own safety but also the safety of vulnerable people. We will help to ensure that communities have the knowledge and understanding to address such issues and take action when needed.

In 2007, a consultation by the Children & Young People's Partnership with young people highlighted the following; sports centres are considered too expensive to attend on a regular basis, youth clubs did not open enough in evenings and not at all during school holidays and were not all of a suitable building standard, dancing venues were not provided, parks were not challenging/fun enough and were poorly lit at night and there was poor knowledge of clubs and activities available.

We recognise that sport and leisure has an important role to play in preventing anti-social behaviour amongst children and adults. Sport and leisure can generate commitment and pride, removes social barriers, can provide a focus for peoples' lives, and helps promote team work, a sense of belonging, social responsibility and healthy lifestyles. We will engage with people to provide appropriate opportunities for all for sport and leisure activities at school, in the home, the workplace, open spaces and leisure facilities. We will also work with communities to improve their understanding of anti-social behaviour and how to respond to it.

We will empower children at school and adults in the workplace not to feel threatened or bullied by putting mechanisms in place to respond accordingly and effectively.

We will work together to deliver a safer travel network that promotes the use of a safe and accessible public transport system. This will also include considering local measures to promote road safety and therefore reduce fatal accidents and accidents resulting in injuries.

### **3. SUPPORTIVE PLACES**

Flintshire is a safe place to live with opportunities for people to participate in many aspects of community life. However, there are some communities where individuals and families may struggle to find support and where services and facilities are difficult to access. There are over 1,000 voluntary and community groups operating in the county covering a wide range of activities and services, including: playgroups

and youth groups, sports and arts groups, social groups and self-help groups, environmental and conservation groups. The majority are small local groups, managed and run by volunteers. Together with public services they play a key role in supporting people and ensuring that they feel safe and included.

We want Flintshire to have safe homes, families, communities and neighbourhoods. We will support families to stay together where it is possible. We will enable people to take a lead in the improvement of their safety through education, proactive prevention, intervention and support and by providing a framework where effective communication can occur.

To provide supportive places to live, vulnerable people will be effectively safeguarded – including children, young people, older people, people with mental health problems or learning and physical difficulties and victims of domestic violence.

We will work in partnership to:

- Identify and protect those vulnerable members of the community that need advice and support.
- Use legislation to improve the sharing of information between partners to protect vulnerable people.
- Consider the needs of the vulnerable and the impact of their economic circumstances which may compromise safety, for example, the threat of 'cold calling'.
- Provide advice to our communities, for example, to reduce fuel poverty in Flintshire.
- We will enable more people to live independently for longer where it is their choice.

We will support parents and carers to make the best choices for their children to enable them to live their lives in safety. Parents are the single most important factor in a child's well-being, achievement and future prospects. We recognise that there are times in the life of all parents when they need some extra support, information and advice. We will improve support for all parents and carers, to improve life

opportunities for all children by actively encouraging parents to use parenting services to gain information and advice. This includes signposting, awareness raising, provision of information, advice and support, improving networking and building of relationships with other parents, and linkages between parents, schools and the wider community.

Safe, well-maintained and attractive public spaces have a critical role in creating pride in the places where we live which, in turn, is essential to building community cohesion and successful communities. That is why we are committed to action to make public spaces cleaner, safer, greener places that create a good impression, enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhoods and the perception of our areas.

Local events provide a great way for communities to come together and encourage people to get involved in local activities. We will support local communities in local events. For example, we will support community effort in tackling climate change by demonstrating how communities can take action to adopt low carbon lifestyles.

Some people already act as good neighbours but in many of our communities there are still people who need support. As communities change some people can feel that they have been left isolated within their own community. We will encourage people to support each other and be active within their own communities by promoting the concept of a 'good neighbour' to help in times of need and to provide a safety net to young and old. We will also provide access to information, help and support to people should they need it to help to reduce any feelings of isolation and exclusion experienced.

We will provide more accessible and open information to enable people to make more informed choices about the services that they access. This will include using modern technology such as the internet to provide up-to-date local information and exploring new and innovative approaches to sharing information both with citizens and with third parties. We will try to ensure all our communities can enjoy the benefits of the internet and other methods of communication.

We recognise the value of the diversity of organisations in the community and voluntary sectors that provide a voice for under represented groups, in campaigning for change, in creating strong, active and connected communities, in promoting enterprising solutions to social and environmental challenges and in transforming the design and delivery of public services. We will further develop effective, on-going engagement with the third sector and actively encourage volunteering.