

FAO: Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Active Design at Active Cheshire

2018



Active Design

ADRA Summary

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Introduction

The Active Design Ready Assessment (ADRA) has been created specifically for the Cheshire and Warrington region through the adaption of pre-existing evaluations from the National Health Service, Maine Rural Health Research Centre, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transport Authority, Healthy Eating and Active Living New Hampshire, and the World Health Organisation.

This document provides a summary to the answers provided within the ADRA as well as the results of the public consultation with some example solutions to some of the highlighted areas of improvement. This document should be returned to the council member who attended the ADRA walkthrough. An oral presentation version of this document will be provided by a member of the Active Design team at the convenience of the town/parish council, which will allow time for questions and further discussion.

If anything within the document is immediately unclear, then please contact the Active Design representative who carried out the ADRA.

Town:	Frodsham
Region of Interest:	Health Centre
Council Member:	Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Active Design Assessor:	D. Ryan
Date:	16.5.18
Touch Point 1:	TBC
Touch Point 2:	TBC
Reassessment Date:	16.5.20

Disclaimer

Active Cheshire excludes to the fullest extent lawfully permitted all liability whatsoever for any loss or damage howsoever arising from reliance on the contents of this report.



Scope

This document is a summary of the Active Design Ready Assessment for the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which Active Cheshire was appointed to undertake. This summary has been produced for the purpose of appraising the accessibility of the client's requested Area of Interest, which was the Health Centre, to help inform how landscape design could facilitate or hinder physical activity in daily life. The information within this document is drawn from discussions with the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a narrowed public consultation, and external resources but is not a comprehensive assessment of Frodsham as a whole.

Methodology

Active Cheshire and the Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group spent an hour discussing the strategies and objectives of the Steering Group on 16th May 2018. Active Cheshire enquired about the demographics, perceptions, and progression of the Neighbourhood Plan within Frodsham. The Steering Group selected an Area of Interest to conduct a walk-through within. The walk-through of the approaches to the Area of Interest was used to highlight facilitators or hindrance to physical activity, which was supported with photo evidence. A small public consultation (21 participants) was held within the Area of interest on 17th May 2018 between 09:00 – 11:00, to gain an understanding of the residents' travel choices to the Area of Interest and their recommended changes to Frodsham to encourage more physical activity. The Information to populate the mapping images within this summary came from OpenStreet Map, 2015 English IMD Explorer, Google Maps, Breezometer, Crash Map, and the Frodsham Air Quality Action Plan Update January 2018.



Understanding the Council's Strategies and Objectives

Frodsham is a small market town with over 900 years of history, famous for the weekly market, which has been running since 1661. The town has a strong and proud community with over 90% of residents feeling satisfied with the area (Cheshire West & Chester Council, Ward Snapshot, 2017). Frodsham has lower levels of deprivation compared to the rest of the Borough but to the north east of the town is one of the more deprived communities within Frodsham. Deprived communities often engage in less physical activity and are at risk of more health complications therefore, it is essential that this community can easily access key service centres (schools, health centres, shops) with sustainable modes of transport (walking, scooting, cycling), as more 'walkable' neighbourhoods have been associated with lower levels of deprivation and improved health (Su et al., 2017, *Land Use Policy*). Frodsham is a generally healthy town with lower levels of obese adults compared to the rest of Cheshire West and Chester and similar levels of self-reported 'very good health' status however, Frodsham does have an older adult community that accounts for over 25% of the population, which is larger than the rest of England (17.9%) (Cheshire West & Chester Council, 2017, Ward Snapshot).

Frodsham already attracts thousands of visitors to its' festivals and attractions, such as the Festival of Walks, Weekly Market, Christmas Festival, the Sandstone Trail, and the Arts Centre. It is important to recognise what makes these events successful and determine how they could be factored into future building developments.

With the recent 'Call for Sites' it is pertinent to acknowledge the term 'Sprawl'. Sprawl is the creation of new housing which pushes communities further away from key service areas. Sprawling towns are often less 'walkable' and therefore, there is a greater likelihood of increased traffic issue. Future housing plans could consider their distance from key service areas whilst also considering the demographic of home owner that they are building for. If there will be large family homes, then there will need to be schools and shops within walking distance. Further details of housing plans will be outlined in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.

Parking charges are a hot topic of discussion within Frodsham and it will be a difficult challenge to get right. If parking charges were introduced, then an alternative method of travel may need to be introduced to facilitate a change in transport choice and or you may need to carefully target your parking charges to the demographic you are looking to deter the most. The money generated from parking charges could be invested into sustainable modes of transport and therefore, creating a self-driving culture change away from car use.

The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan are looking at Health, Transport, Built Environment, and Visitor Economy. It is important to recognise that these areas are co-dependent and therefore, can influence one-another. If you continue to improve the walkability of Frodsham through the design of the Built Environment then Health could improve, Transport issues, such as traffic, could reduce, and it could increase the attractiveness to the Visiting Economy. It could be suggested that you look at these policy areas as a whole, rather than individually as in reality they will behave as a whole.

Town Mapping

Within a town's landscape, it is suggested that a half mile radius (illustrated by the red circles) is the catchment distance that a member of the public will be willing to walk to a key service area (green area in the centre of each red circle). Within Frodsham, six key service areas were highlighted with red circles: Main Street, The Marshes, Train Station, Castle Park, Health Centre, and Hob Hey Wood (Figure 1). Where these circles overlap, pedestrians are within the catchment range to walk to multiple key services and therefore, are more likely to walk from one key service to another. The average time to walk half a mile is 10 minutes; to maximise the chance of the public reaching the outer perimeters of the red circles (Figure 1) within that time, it is important that walking routes are direct and uninterrupted. Notably, the walking catchment area of Main Street, Train Station, and the Health Centre (partly) fall within the small community that has a higher deprivation index (red filled area). Enhancing the connections between the community in the higher deprivation index and the key service areas is essential as health issues, lower economic status, and lack of private vehicle are more common within this index. Therefore, improving the ease of sustainable travel access could improve the health status and access to jobs. Additionally, the 10-minute walking distance is the recommended time by Public Health England for someone to engage in a continuous brisk walk. If this walk is completed daily, it could reduce the risk of early death by 14%.

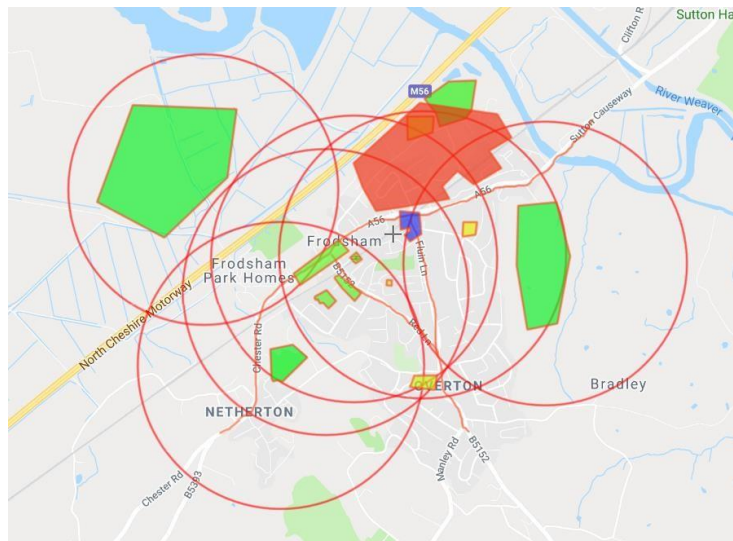


Figure 1. Key service areas (green), walking catchment areas (red circles), schools (yellow squares), high deprivation index communities (red area), major road routes (red lines), high pollution area (blue areas).



Figure 2 outlines the distance and travel time (not considering traffic) from Main Street to the other key service areas by car, bike, and walking. Notably, the walking routes are a shorter distance than the cycling and driving routes due to the pedestrian cut-throughs that are available. During our walk-through it was clear that many of these cut-throughs are local knowledge and therefore, there is a need for these routes to be highlighted to non-local residents and to remind people who may struggle with memory or route planning. Increasing awareness of the routes may lead to more people choosing not to use the car, which could also lead to an economic gain as people tend to spend more time within an area (sticking time) if they are on foot and therefore, may be more likely to spend money in local stores.

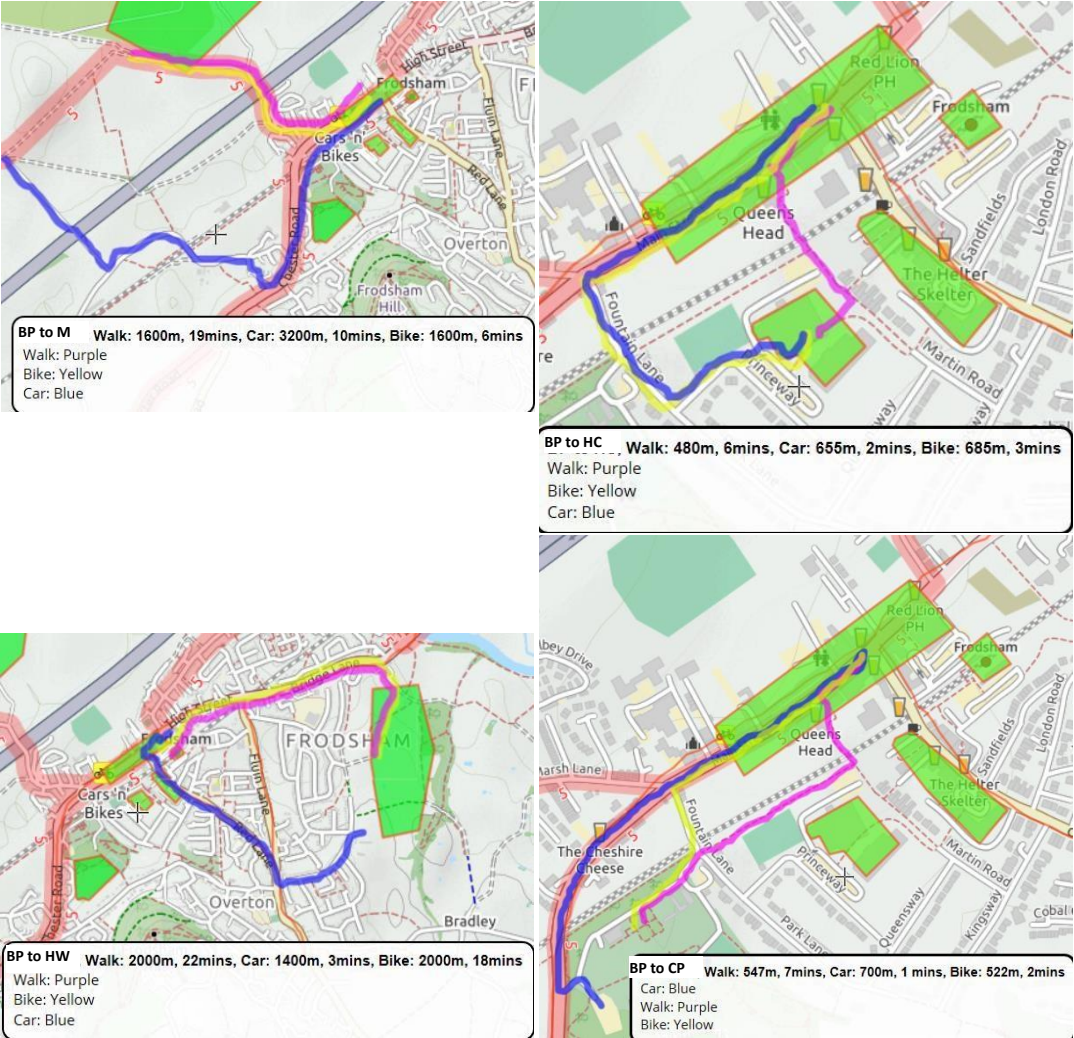


Figure 2. Main transport route distances, times, and transport mode from Main Street (Bears Paw Pub) to key service areas. **BP** – Bears Paw Pub. **M** – Marshes. **HC** – Health Club. **HW** – Hob Hey Wood. **CP** – Castle Park.

Accessibility and Convenience of Area of Interest

The Health Centre was selected as an Area of Interest to focus on as it includes multiple services such as the General Practice, Library, and Leisure Centre. Within the 'maximum' walking catchment area (Figure 3 Left, red circle) there are 11 Public Transport Stops, 9 of which fall within the 'reality' walking catchment area (Figure 3 Right, green area). The 'reality' walking catchment area is the maximum distance people can walk from to The Health Centre in 10-minutes due to the street layout. Public Transport is seen as a facilitator of physical activity as it is anticipated that people will walk to and from Public Transport Stops. This could be further encouraged by ensuring 'live' travel information is provided around the town as well as directional signage to key services at the Public Transport Stop. There is an apparent cluster of road traffic collisions involving pedestrians on Main Street, which may act as a walking deterrent due to safety fears. It could be worth looking into the design of this junction to understand why this cluster of incidents exist. Common reasons can be: wide roads, lack of pedestrian islands or crossings, restricted vision, and slow changing pedestrian crossings. The local Crime Prevention Design Advisor, Alison Gabbott, may be able to assist with future design considerations that could impact the level of public safety. Notably, the deprived community within Hawthorne Road, Hayes Crescent, and the A56 does not fall within the 'reality' walking catchment area for the Health Centre. This is concerning as it could mean the residents of the deprived area cannot access the General Practice, Leisure Centre, or Library and therefore, could lead to further levels of deprivation. Pop-up health promotion events within the deprived area could help to reduce the equity and equality gap in this community.

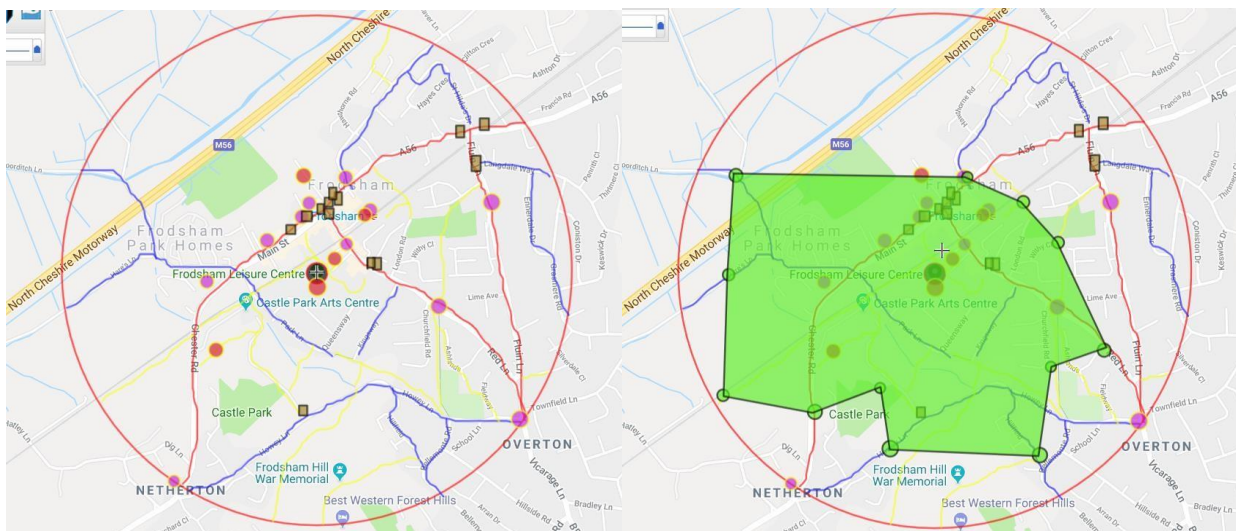


Figure 3 (Left) The **Health Centre (black circle)** was highlighted as an area of interest. The red circle illustrates the 0.5-mile radius catchment area. This 0.5-mile radius from the edge of the circle to The Health Centre would take 10 minutes to walk if the route was a straight line. **Purple circles** – public transport stops. **Red Filled Circles** – car parking. **Orange Squares** – road traffic collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists since 2015. **Red lines** – main artery roads. **Blue lines** – connecting roads. **Yellow lines** – pedestrian pathways. (Right) The **Green Area** is the distance people can walk in 10 minutes, in reality, to The Health Centre (without considering waiting at crossings) due to the structure of the street layout.

Entrance 1 – Castle Park via Fountain Lane

- The exit from Castle Park's drive forces pedestrians to cross the road. This is currently risky as the visibility for the pedestrian is limited, which requires them to edge out into the road to see around the existing building (left image below). Safety concerns are one of the main deterrents for active travel.
- The pedestrian entrance to the Health Centre guides pedestrians to an untarmacked road that they must cross, which also has no drop curbs. Frodsham has a higher than average older adult population who are at a greater fall risk than younger adults and therefore, this uneven surface and curb could lead to a perceived risk of falling and therefore, avoidance of the area (meaning they must walk across the car park) or an avoidance of walking altogether (centre image).
- Bike parking is provided at the Fountain Lane entrance point, which is in view of windows and could therefore, deter theft. These bike racks could be further improved by providing a shelter from rain (centre image).
- The second pedestrian entrance, which provides access for a resident walking down the hill has the required drop curbs, paving for visually impaired, refuge islands for pedestrians, and zebra crossings to prioritise pedestrian movement across the car park. This is encouraging to see and could be a template to consider for any area where pedestrians naturally cross the road (right image).



Entrance 2 – Kydds Wynt

- Directional signs help guide pedestrians and make them aware of surrounding facilities. These signs could be implemented throughout the town by keeping colour schemes consistent (e.g. any signs directing to the Health Centre are blue). The time needed to walk to a key service area can encourage more people to walk if it is located on the sign as people associate easier with time-based information (left image).
- The pedestrian cut-through makes the route significantly shorter than the road route and therefore, could encourage more people to walk from the Town Centre to the Health Centre. However, the lack of drop curbs and unclaimed road means there are uneven surfaces to navigate, which could be difficult for people with mobility issues (centre images).
- The pedestrian cut-through is not visible from the entrance to Kydds Wynt therefore, members of the public may not be aware that the route exists. Short, direct, convenient, and safe routes are a main determinant of walking and therefore, any cut-throughs could be highlighted to members of the public (right image).



Entrance 3 – Main Street

- The presence of signage on Main Street highlights Frodsham's history whilst helping the public find their way around the town. These signs encourage walking by creating a tourist attraction (left image).
- A pedestrian cut-through to the Health Centre is accessible through The Queen's Head courtyard however, this route is not advertised to members of the public (centre image).
- The court-yard creates a social space for members of the public to meet. Social spaces can encourage physical activity and improve mental health by offering an opportunity to interact with friends (centre image).
- Tunnels can be intimidating to members of the public as they are often dark and hidden away. However, the tunnel in Frodsham is short and both entrances are clearly visible, offering members of the public opportunity to check for risks before entering the tunnel (right image).



Public Consultation

Five members of the public consultation lived within a 0.5-mile (10-minute walk) radius of The Health Centre (figure 4), of which, only one member used the car for their journey. Participants listed 'convenience' as their main reason for choosing their mode of transport (8 out of 21 responses), followed by 'no other option' (4 out of 21 responses). Eight of the 21 participants found walking around Frodsham easy however, a further 8 participants listed uneven pavements as an issue due to tripping risks. When participants were asked 'what changes would make active travel a more common travel choice for them?' respondents suggested that the pavements could be improved, traffic calming measures could be installed (e.g. lower speed limits, more pedestrian crossing options, narrower roads), and more public transport options could be available for residents in the 'hilly' areas of Frodsham. The participants were randomly selected members of the public who were within The Health Centre grounds between the hours of 09:00 – 11:00, 17th May 2018. The participants were mainly of an older adult demographic.

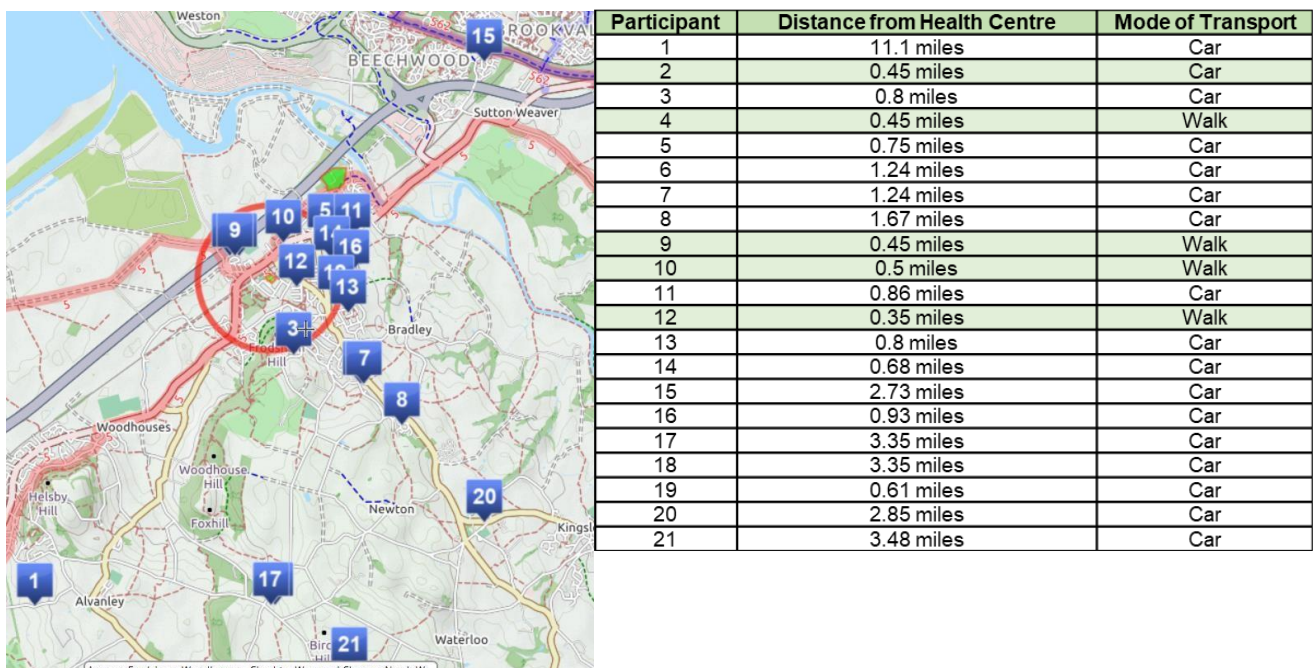


Figure 4 Distance travelled, and mode of transport used by the participants to travel to The Health Centre. **Red circle** – 0.5-mile walking radius of the Health Centre. **Blue numbers** – Participant location that they travelled to the Health Centre from.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Frodsham is a generally healthy community with an ageing population. The town is already a strong advocate of physical activity with the Sandstone Trail and the Festival of Walks. The landscape of Frodsham is hilly and therefore, can be difficult for parts of the community to engage in active travel. The town centre of Frodsham is described as 'very walkable' and this is reflected with the presence of frequent pedestrian cut-throughs that significantly reduce journey distance, compared to the normal road routes. The residents of Frodsham have suggested that the quality of pavements could be improved to increase the likelihood of them walking more often in the town.



Active Design Goals

In preparation for your next meeting with Active Cheshire, please consider three possible goals that you believe will progress physical activity within Frodsham. Below are some suggestions.

- Conduct a larger public consultation to determine the most common walking routes and gain insight into the residents' opinions of the quality of these routes. It would be pertinent to capture a wider age demographic across a wider period, as facilities will be accessed by different demographics at different times of the day. This will allow you to determine what features make the route so popular for different groups and therefore, could implement into future planning requests to ensure it attracts younger people to live in the area. – Medium Timeline
- Conduct a larger walkability assessment in communities where the 'Call for Sites' has identified potential development sites to investigate the current 'walkability' and how further development might impact the 'walkability'. – Short Timeline
- Conduct an audit of infrastructure improvements that could be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy when the Neighbourhood Plan is Adopted. – Long Timeline
- Develop a 'Walking Route to Key Services' map and supporting signage and or guidance for inclusion in future developments that could further advocate the use of active travel and public transport within Frodsham and align with the Local Plan – Medium/Long Timeline



For Completion by Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Short Term Goal:

What Needs to Happen:

How Will It Happen:

When Will It Happen:

Who Will Be Involved:

How Will It Be Measured:

How Can Active Cheshire Help:

Medium Term Goal:

What Needs to Happen:

How Will It Happen:

When Will It Happen:

Who Will Be Involved:

How Will It Be Measured:

How Can Active Cheshire Help:

Long Term Goal:

What Needs to Happen:

How Will It Happen:

When Will It Happen:

Who Will Be Involved:

How Will It Be Measured:

How Can Active Cheshire Help:

Activate your place.

Contact the Active Design Team:

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small steps. **big impact.**

