



# Accessible Southampton Inquiry – The built environment and public spaces: Feedback from Chester & Liverpool



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# Chester

- EU Access City Award winner in 2017 – Submission attached as Appendix 1

## Accessibility of the built environment:

- Historic city with ancient walls – Where full access not possible, principle of least restrictive access is applied
- 15 Changing Places across the Borough
- Access Guide to the City – AccessAble
- New signage strategy
- New Cultural Centre & Chester Northgate Scheme - Accessibility is at the forefront of the design

# Key 'success' factors

Conversations with Rob Jones (Equality & Diversity Manager at Cheshire West & Cheshire Council - CWAC) and Graham Garnett (Inclusive Design Officer at Liverpool City Council, and formerly Senior Access Officer at CWAC):

- Corporate Priority for years – Accessible Chester in Council Plan
- Political Leadership and ownership
- Engagement with Disabled People – Corporate Disability Access Forum (CDAF) key component
- Access Officer – Expertise, influence, corporate resource
- Robust Equality Assessments – Engagement with Disabled People is expected

# Influence on the built environment

- *'The Access Officer, along with CDAF, works with architects/designers to go 'above and beyond' the minimum standards and comply with national & local 'best practice' e.g. British Standard 8300(2009). The Access Officer investigates and responds to all access related complaints received by the Council and works with internal & external partners to implement changes to buildings, facilities and practices.'*

# Liverpool

- Liverpool has 37 Changing Places
- Local Plan – Urban Design Policy - All new developments must meet the highest standards for accessibility not just the minimum standards under building regulations.
- Accessible Housing Standards – M4(1) minimum, M4(2) accessible & adaptable, M4(3) fully accessible – Liverpool’s Accessible Housing Policy says you cannot build M4(1) in the city & 10% new homes to be wheelchair accessible.

# Rationale?

- Moral argument
- Legal argument
- Financial argument
- Average cost to the NHS of a trip or fall where ambulance required - £14,000 – Improving accessibility of the built environment saves the public purse money
- Purple Pound – In 2015 the average amount spent in Chester by Shopmobility customers was £79 per visit. Shopmobility customers alone spent approximately £237,000 annually in Chester.