



www.871candwep.co.uk

QUALITY OF PLACE STRATEGY



**Cheshire and
Warrington
Local Enterprise
Partnership**

& DELIVERY PLAN





“

Glasshouse represents the kind of high quality business environment we are delivering in Cheshire & Warrington



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



FIRST CLASS, BEYOND HOURS, THE QUALITY, MINORING, ENT LAM
 01606 612280 871canwlep.co.uk

**871 SQ MILES OF
OPPORTUNITY**

We passionately believe that Cheshire and Warrington is the best place in the UK to 'live, work, invest and relax'. We are a sub-region with a track record of outstanding economic performance, coupled with an outstanding array of urban, semi-urban and rural communities and natural resources.

During the development of this Strategy, 80% of business leaders said that quality of place was an important factor in investment decisions. The LEP recognises this and the need for a clear set of compelling messages, suitable for a range of audiences, that can sell the benefits of locating in Cheshire and Warrington to the wider world.

There are though things that we need to focus on to ensure that the positive messages we share are backed up 'on the ground' so that the reality for potential inward investors and residents matches the vision we promote. We have to invest in order to maintain our position of strength, relative to other places, and create the kinds of places that

meet the needs of current and future residents, businesses, visitors and learners.

The refresh of our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) in July 2017 led to an increased emphasis on the importance of our 'place' offer in retaining and attracting well-qualified, creative and entrepreneurial talent, and in creating the best conditions for business and people to flourish.

Many of the key factors highlighted during our engagement activity whilst preparing this strategy are considered in the other supporting strategies to the SEP: the need for an experienced, engaged and suitably skilled workforce will be addressed through the Skills and Education Strategy; the issues of congestion, public transport provision and road infrastructure raised by business leaders and other stakeholders will be tackled through our Transport Strategy. Similar strategies are in train to address issues raised around housing, energy and digital infrastructure. This Quality of Place Strategy therefore focusses on the other factors including how we: -

- *Articulate our proposition, brand ourselves and sell our offer effectively*
- *Create a great environment for business to flourish and investment to succeed*
- *Strengthen the offer and attraction of our urban and village centres*
- *Enhance our cultural and leisure offer*

In doing so, the Strategy recognises that Cheshire and Warrington is not one homogenous place, but a collection of vibrant, distinctive and interconnected places, each with something different and special to add – something for everyone, where the whole truly is greater than the sum of the parts. The Strategy considers why place matters, how our places measure up and where and how we can do more to enhance and maintain our outstanding place offer.

It also sets out some clear and measurable actions that will bring the Strategy to life in the short to medium term: -

Creating a Branding Proposition – and Spreading the Word.

Those who live, work and learn in Cheshire and Warrington know what an outstanding location it is – many others (including some surprisingly close to home) don't. The LEP has commissioned work to develop a more coherent branding framework and 'value proposition' for the sub-region and in particular for the Cheshire Science Corridor. This will highlight the key sectoral strengths and business clusters in the area.

- *By September 2019 we will finish creating a branding framework and 'value proposition' that can be used to actively promote Cheshire and Warrington as a great place to 'Live, work, invest and relax'. During this period the LEP will also work with key partners to develop an agreed programme of Inward Investment marketing and promotion for the ensuing 18 months.*

Enhancing our cultural and leisure offer

One of the key aspects of high quality places is that they are vibrant, dynamic and have lots 'going on'.

More needs to be done to ensure that the sub-region offers a broad range of events and activities throughout the year, and that there is a mix that provides for a range of age groups and interests, appealing to residents and visitors alike.

- *During 2019 we will work with partners to develop proposals for creation of a programme to enhance our cultural and leisure offer, including sporting activities and promotion of active lifestyles, and examine potential sources of funding to deliver it.*

Creating a great environment for business and talent

The LEP and its local authority partners are determined to make Cheshire and Warrington one of the best locations in the UK to locate and grow a business.

The Government's Industrial Strategy, launched in November 2017, confirmed that funding for Business Growth Hubs would continue beyond April 2018 and the LEP will use this as the opportunity to review how it commissions and coordinates business support activity and how the current arrangements can be adjusted to enable a more effective and proactive service.

- *The LEP will complete its review and establish new arrangements for the Growth Hub by October 2018.*

We also have many businesses operating in agriculture, food and forestry or who rely on our natural assets for their business. The LEP has engaged with a number of other LEPs and key stakeholders to develop 'Agri-Tech West' as a vehicle for promoting and supporting Agri-Tech and Agri-Food industries.

- *The LEP will continue to support the development and roll out of Agri-Tech West.*





CREATING 'BETTER PLACES'

There is much work already underway or in preparation to improve the quality and diversity of our built and natural environment. Investment in our city and town centres to create well connected, appealing places with an attractive retail, leisure and entertainment offer, and also as places with an increasing residential offer will be essential in successfully delivering our quality of place strategy.

- *The LEP will maintain its support to our local authority partners to further develop and take forward the spatial priorities identified in the SEP. It will also continue to develop the Cheshire Science Corridor proposition as an exemplar of our commitment to creating outstanding business investment locations.*

Housing is an essential component in creating successful places. Having the right mix of housing, in the right places (such as in our town centres and near to good schools) and at an affordable price is important to meet the aspirations of existing communities and the needs of young

people and families moving in to Cheshire and Warrington to live and work. The LEP has an important role in advocating the economic case for housing.

- *The LEP will publish a Housing Strategy by March 2019 which provides a strong narrative in the importance of facilitating delivery of well located, high quality, affordable housing as part of an attractive place offer.*

Much of our sub-region is rural in nature, and through this and other strategies the LEP will include consideration of the economy in rural areas, connectivity, the value of the natural environment and landscape and people's access to it.

The natural environment (and resources such as water, minerals and fisheries) is as important a factor in Quality of Place as the built environment. Our rural landscape is the result of centuries of stewardship by farmers and other landowners and for many people is reason enough to locate here. It is also a powerful tool in encouraging better mental and physical wellbeing amongst residents,

workers and visitors. During 2018/19 the LEP will, in collaboration with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Partnership, review the implications of the Government's new 25-year Environment Plan for the sub-region.

- *By July 2019 the LEP will develop proposals for establishing a Natural Capital Plan for the sub-region.*

Good broadband connectivity is an increasingly important factor for people looking to move home and for new and existing businesses. A survey in 2016 showed that almost 70% of people looking to move home check local broadband speeds before making their choice.¹

- *The LEP, through Connecting Cheshire, will progress the roll-out of enhanced broadband connectivity and support to enhance digital skills to over 1400 SMEs in Cheshire and Warrington by 2020.*

¹ <https://www.cable.co.uk/news/survey-reveals-importance-of-broadband-to-brits-moving-home-700001485/>



“

Housing is an essential component in creating successful places



QUALITY OF PLACE – A VITAL INGREDIENT IN EVERY INVESTMENT AND LIFESTYLE DECISION

“
Good quality environments
can stimulate creativity,
physical activity and
encourage and attract people
to live, work, learn and relax
in a given location

The refreshed Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) places an emphasis on the importance of ‘place’. It’s a recognition that increasingly place, whilst it means different things to different people, matters to all of us. The quality of a place can have significant impacts on our lives and our life choices. Poor quality environments can affect our mental health and physical wellbeing; good quality environments can stimulate creativity, physical activity and encourage and attract people to live, work, learn and relax in a given location.

Increasingly, studies show the importance of a good place ‘offer’ in retaining and attracting the well-qualified, creative and entrepreneurial talent needed to sustain and grow successful economies. One of the strengths of Cheshire and Warrington is the great diversity on offer across the sub-region, from city to village to rural hamlet. It is also, one of our greatest challenges when trying to present a cohesive and coherent front to

the outside world, especially to potential inward investors.

In a world where places are competing with each other to attract that talent, Cheshire and Warrington needs to stand out.

What is Quality of Place?

Quality of Place is potentially a very broad subject area. In headline terms it is the essential ‘ingredients’ which make Cheshire and Warrington the best place to ‘Live, Work, Invest and Relax’.

The ingredients will differ depending on your perspective and personal priorities: what matters to an existing business or potential investor may vary greatly to what matters if you are a resident or visitor or someone thinking about relocating to the area.

In general, Quality of Place is deemed to include: physical environment (built and natural), transport and connectivity links, schools, housing, health

services, cultural and leisure offer.

KPMG’s work for the LEP in 2016 identified that: -

“Quality of Place is a measure that focusses on the connection of environment and place”

It built on the work of renowned academic Richard Florida who suggested that quality of place can be broadly understood through the answers to three questions: -

- *What’s there: the combination of the quality of the built environment coupled with the natural environment.*
- *Who’s there: the diversity of the people living in the area, the interaction of those people and the ability for individuals to ‘fit in’ and make a life there*
- *What’s going on: the vibrancy of the area and culture – are there things for creative people to do and interact with*



“
Quality of Place:
who's there,
what's there and
what's going on



Cabinet Office research in 2009 highlighted that high quality places can contribute to 'achieving positive outcomes' including development of positive behaviours such as walking, cycling, and increased social interaction, and wider social benefits through reduced crime rates, better health, higher levels of social inclusion and increased environmental sustainability.

Evidence from The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) suggests that investment in good design delivers economic benefits through higher property values and lower maintenance costs, but also helps to avoid costs incurred through dealing with dysfunctional buildings and environments.



OUR QUALITY OF PLACE

“ Cheshire and Warrington is a great sub-region; the mix of urban, rural, market town and countryside has the potential to offer something for everyone

The KPMG report for the LEP on 'Growth benefits of maintaining and enhancing quality of place' (2016) concluded that: -

- Cheshire and Warrington has an exceptionally high quality natural environment, coupled with a high quality housing offer (although this does vary across the sub-region).
- The quality of the built environment is mixed but improving.
- The region's transport infrastructure is exceptional, however public transport connections between towns within Cheshire and Warrington is weak.
- Population growth in the 'working age' bracket (16 - 64) is one of the lowest in the UK, however the level of skills and education are extremely high compared to the rest of the UK.
- Diversity in the LEP's population is also significantly less than the UK average.

- There is a strong cultural offer, especially in Chester and many of the towns in Cheshire and Warrington, in particular through independent retail and locally produced food culture.
- There are pockets of strong sporting culture.
- The restaurant and night time economy offer is only strong in small pockets across the sub-region.

Many of these points were re-enforced during the refresh of the SEP and in a survey of Cheshire and Warrington-based Business Leaders in 2017 and a survey of some 1,500 businesses in the area also undertaken in 2017². One of the strongest and most consistent messages coming out of the various stakeholder events was the view that Cheshire and Warrington is a great sub-region; the mix of urban, rural, market town and countryside has the potential to offer something for everyone, and it is a great location to base a business and access markets.

And yet, the data underpinning the SEP, and stakeholder feedback suggests that there are issues which need addressing.

- The sub-region has many significant benefits that make it attractive to inward investors, but it lacks a consistent and coherent narrative and 'brand' when trying to 'sell' those benefits to external audiences.
- With the probable exception of Warrington, we are struggling to create places that attract and retain younger people, especially those in the 20 - 35 age bracket.
- There are challenges around the affordability of housing in many parts of the sub-region and we don't necessarily have enough of the right type and tenure of homes to meet what the market wants.

² Cheshire and Warrington Business Needs Survey (2017), BMG Research

- Whilst not unique to Cheshire and Warrington, the quality of our town centres and high streets is mixed. Whilst many remain vibrant and able to offer a range of big brand names and more independent shops, others are struggling.
- Education provision, whilst better than many areas, remains variable (something confirmed in the latest school league tables release in January 2018).
- Current public transport provision is regarded by many as being poor. This can limit people's access to work opportunities and to key public services and contributes to road congestion. The biggest single issue highlighted in the survey of Business Leaders was transport.
- That congestion, and the lack of public transport alternatives, in itself is viewed by many residents and businesses as one of the downsides of living or working in Cheshire and Warrington.

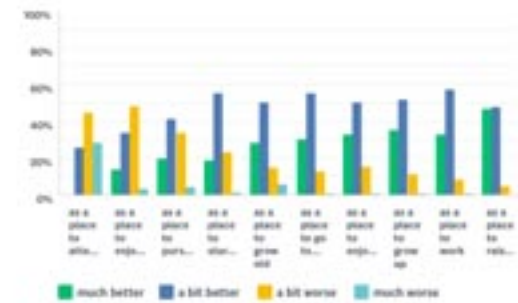


The LEP's own survey of business leaders, undertaken in summer 2017, suggests that Quality of Place is an important factor in inward investment decisions with over 80% of respondents disagreeing with the statement "Quality of Place is overrated as a factor in inward investment decisions". Cheshire and Warrington is perceived to perform better than the rest of the North West on a number of issues including connectivity to London and internationally, schools, built and natural environment and the quality of healthcare.

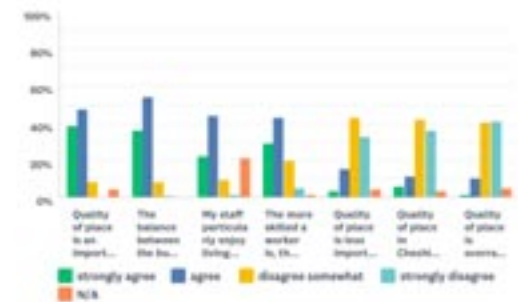
As well as talking to business, the LEP also held workshops with groups of students from the University of Chester, to try and get some perspectives from the 18 – 24 year age group. The outcome from those sessions was both surprising and, to some degree, as expected. The learners we spoke to were a mix of young people born and raised in Cheshire and Warrington, and others from other parts of the UK and wider EU who had chosen Chester as their university of choice.

For many, Chester was seen as a 'safe stepping stone', and a more human-scale option compared to bigger University cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. But the wider sub-region was regarded as presenting restricted options for others as there were seen to be a lack of head office-type functions (so limiting career progression) and also a lack of nightlife or "buzz". One participant remarked that he just saw "Chester – dead space – Manchester". Affordability was also an issue, though here the cost of public transport when compared to cities was cited as a big factor (e.g. travel costs on the Merseyrail network were seen as lower than local rail and bus networks in Cheshire and Warrington).

Q7 Quality of place can mean different things for different audiences. How well do you think Cheshire and Warrington delivers for the following groups relative to the rest of the North West?



Q8 Thinking about quality of place, please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements







The arrival of HS2 will deliver a step change in our connectivity

WHAT ARE OUR PARTNERS DOING?

In recent years there has been an increase in investment in our key town and city centres, often led or underwritten by our local authority partners. Schemes such as Barons Quay in Northwich and Time Square in Warrington are starting to significantly change our town centre offer. The opening of the £37 million 'Storyhouse' in Chester in May 2017 (the largest public building in Chester, ever) has added to the cultural offer, joining long established venues like Crewe Lyceum and the Parr Hall in Warrington.



The LEP and its Local Authority Partners are unlocking significant investment in our key towns

STORYHOUSE



Opened in May 2017, Storyhouse is a multi-award-winning culturally-led regeneration project in the heart of Chester. The £37 million project was primarily funded by Cheshire West and Chester Council, breathing new life into the former Odeon Cinema which had been vacant since it closed in 2007.

Providing some 7,000ft² of internal space, the project includes a cinema, public library, 800-seat theatre, restaurant and two bars. Helping to 'activate' the town centre by day and night, Storyhouse has attracted over 1 million visits during its first 12 months of operation.

Storyhouse has sold over 180,000 tickets to theatre shows and events and had over 250 cinema screenings, and 30,000 cinema tickets bought. Almost 150 community groups from across the borough use Storyhouse as their home. In its first year the library loaned 258,000 books. Children's book loans have increased by 50% since Chester library moved to Storyhouse.

TIME SQUARE



Time Square is a £107 million mixed use development that is being carried out by Warrington Borough Council to revitalise the traditional retail and leisure heart of Warrington's town centre and the Bridge Street area.

When completed in 2019, the scheme will create a new family-friendly shopping, restaurant and leisure experience with a newly developed, contemporary market hall and a state-of-the-art multiplex cinema at its heart.

The scheme has been driven and will be delivered by Warrington & Co. on behalf of Warrington Borough Council with development manager Muse Developments. It will create up to 400 construction jobs and 400 new permanent jobs in the leisure, retail and restaurant sectors when fully completed. Work on the project started in 2016 and is due to complete in 2019.

CREWE HS2 HUB MASTERPLAN



In October 2017, Cheshire East Council launched its draft masterplan for Crewe, preparing the town for the arrival of HS2, and a fully-integrated hub station, in 2027.

Crewe is the largest town in Cheshire East and was built on the back of the Victorian investment in the railways, and the Council and its partners have similarly high ambitions for Crewe and the wider area in the UK's next rail revolution.

The masterplan covers some 120 hectares of land around the proposed hub station and provides a framework to reinvigorate the town centre, create a new commercial hub around the station housing over 350,000 m² of new commercial floorspace and deliver an additional 7,000 new homes by 2043.

The plans include an ambition to make Crewe a "super-connected place" both in terms of transport and world class digital infrastructure, as well as creating a network of green corridors to integrate the station into the town and connect it to the town centre.



WE'VE PUT QUALITY OF PLACE AT THE HEART OF OUR STRATEGY

“
a place is where it is easy to
do business and to locate and
grow a business

The refreshed SEP sets out the high-level vision and aspiration to double the size of the Cheshire and Warrington Economy by 2040. In terms of the role of quality of place in achieving this ambition, the SEP outlines a vision for Cheshire and Warrington as: -

- *A home for and attractive to a well-educated, highly skilled, adaptable workforce*
- *Offering high quality urban and rural places including vibrant town centres and an attractive leisure and retail offer*
- *Providing a balanced, well-functioning housing market to support economic growth*
- *One of the best-connected places in the UK*
- *A place where it is easy to do business and to locate and grow a business*

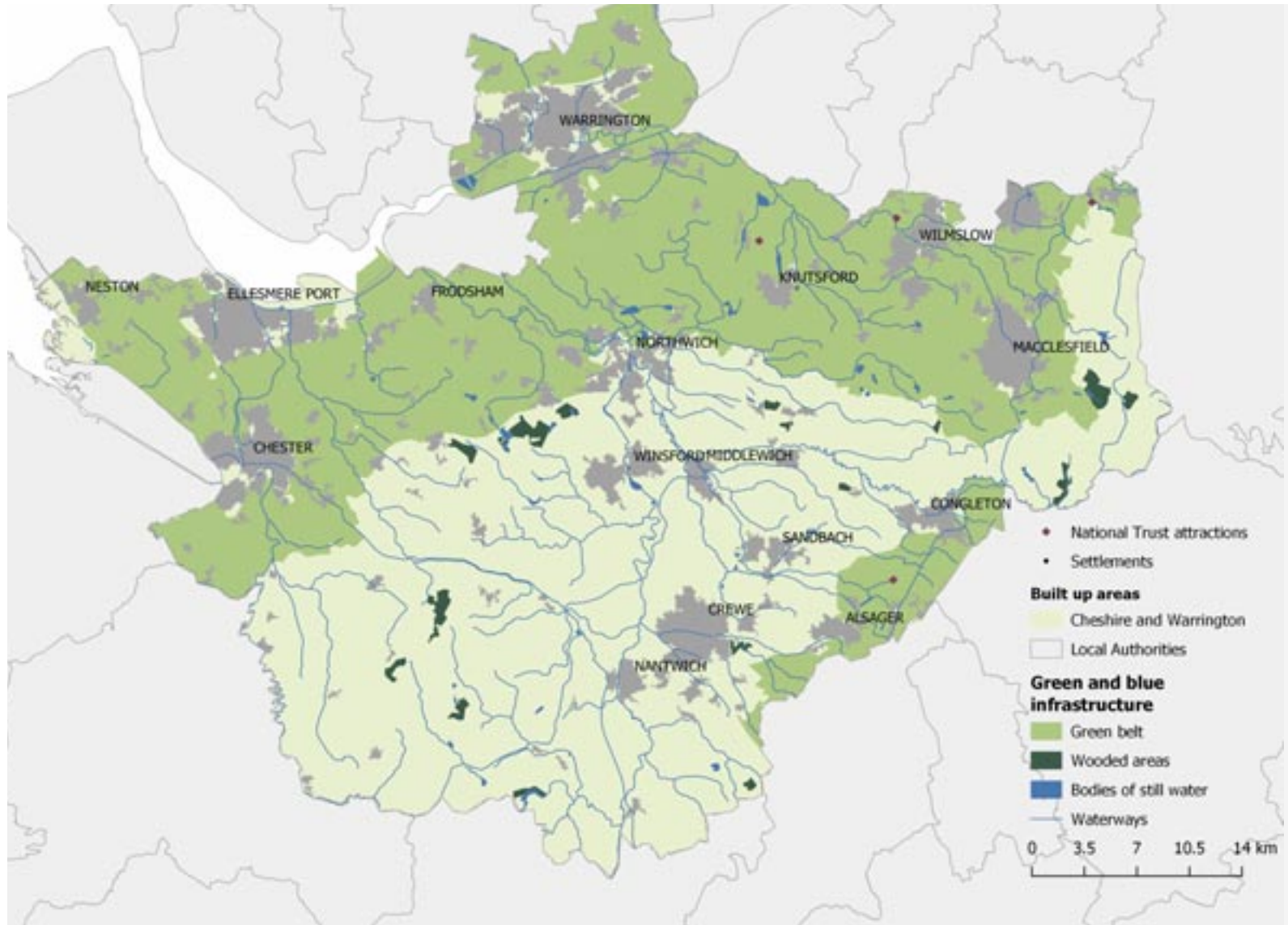
- *An area that has successfully transitioned to a low carbon economy*
- *A place with high quality, affordable public services (including schools and health services)*
- *Somewhere that recognises the economic contribution made by blue / green infrastructure*
- *A sub-region that is attractive to inward investors and new businesses, and which has a clear and compelling set of messages with which to promote the places within it.*

The SEP includes ambitious targets for growth, which inevitably involves new development. Most of this development is contained within the LEP's spatial priorities: Constellation, Mersey Dee Economic Axis and Warrington New City, and will be subject to scrutiny through the local planning process.

However, the LEP can have a role in championing high quality and sustainable design and construction within the sub-region, supporting development that adds value and character to the built environment, and in setting out its plans for a transport network that supports our growth ambitions whilst encouraging increased use of public transport, cycling and walking. This can include advocating that housing development is not talked about in isolation from the social, economic and environmental infrastructure needed to support successful communities. It should always be remembered that as our communities grow as new homes are delivered, the majority of residents in 2040 already live in the sub-region.

Outlining our Ambition

In outlining our ambition and strategy for enhancing Quality of Place in Cheshire and Warrington, it is reasonable to say that we are starting from a position of relative strength. Many of our towns and cities regularly appear in national surveys around 'best places to live' and 'quality of life'. Our strategy aims to ensure that sub-regionally we don't rest on our laurels and that the LEP and its key partners have a clear long-term vision and plan to ensure we continue to maintain that position of relative strength as other places around us 'raise their game'.





DELIVERY PLAN FOR THE NEXT EIGHTEEN MONTHS



there is a great story to tell about Cheshire and Warrington

In setting out our delivery plan for the next 18 months, the LEP will focus on four areas of activity:

- *Articulate our proposition, brand ourselves and sell our offer effectively*
- *Creating a great environment for business to flourish and investment to succeed*
- *Strengthening the offer and attraction of our urban and village centres*
- *Enhancing our cultural and leisure offer*

There is a considerable amount of activity that the LEP and its partners could look to undertake within these four areas over time, but we have identified an initial work programme that we believe is deliverable, will make an early impact and provide benefit to business.

1. Creating a Branding Proposition – and Spreading the Word.

Those who live and work in Cheshire and Warrington know what an outstanding location it is – many others (including some surprisingly close to home) don't. Much of the feedback from business is that there is a great story to tell about Cheshire and Warrington and the places within it, but that as a sub-region we currently don't do that in a consistent, coordinated and effective way, especially to external (international) audiences.

The LEP has commissioned work to develop a more coherent branding framework and 'value proposition' for the sub-region and in particular for the Cheshire Science Corridor. The 'value propositions' will set out for each of our key sectors an up to date "pitch book" containing the key information that potential inward investors would want to know when considering potential locations for new investments, including detail on specific sectors specialisms and clusters.

- *By September 2019 we will finish creating a branding framework and 'value proposition' that can be used to actively promote Cheshire and Warrington as a great place to 'Live, work, invest and relax'. During this period the LEP will also work with key partners to develop an agreed programme of Inward Investment marketing and promotion for the ensuing 18 months.*



An outstanding location with a great story to tell

2. Enhancing our cultural and leisure offer

One of the key aspects of high quality places is that they are vibrant, dynamic and have lots 'going on'. The LEP recognises that having access to a range of cultural, heritage, sporting and leisure activities can be an important determinant in people's location decisions. Recent developments such as the opening of Storyhouse in Chester, or Warrington's bid to be the UK's capital of culture have done much to enhance the sub-region's cultural offer, building on an established programme including the 'Blue Dot' Festival, RHS Flower Show and Chester International Film Festival. The sub-region has recently secured £300,000 from the Arts Council's 'Cultural Destinations' Fund and been successful in a number of bids for 'Discover England' pilot projects.

Investments in some of our key centres such as Barons Quay in Northwich and Time Square in Warrington, are helping grow our retail and leisure offer.

These developments add to some of the top-class attractions in Cheshire and Warrington including Chester Zoo – the UK's most visited zoo and second most paid-for visitor attraction in the UK

with over 1.9 million visitors a year, Cheshire Oaks (currently undergoing a £40 million expansion), Chester Races, Quarry Bank Mill and Tatton Park, a range of museums, heritage facilities, parks and outdoor attractions.

The Visitor Economy in Cheshire and Warrington is already worth almost £3.4 billion and grew at almost 9% in 2016, employing over 40,000 people and attracting over 62 million visitors (STEAM data, 2016).

The sub-region is increasingly demonstrating its capacity to host major events such as the Rugby League World Cup, Cycling Tour of Britain, Welsh Rally GB, International Horse Trials at Bolesworth and the Cholmondeley Pageant of Power Event.

More needs to be done to ensure that the sub-region offers a broad range of events and activities throughout the year, and that there is a mix that provides for a range of age groups and interests.

- *During 2019 we will work with partners to develop proposals for creation of a programme to enhance our cultural and leisure offer, including sporting activities and promotion of active lifestyles, and examine potential sources of funding to deliver it.*





The Visitor Economy is already worth almost £3.4 billion







3. Creating a great environment for business and talent

Creating a pro-active, supportive business environment centred on a re-purposed Business Growth Hub

The LEP and its local authority partners are determined to make Cheshire and Warrington one of the best locations in the UK to locate and grow a business. Currently inward investment activity and business support activity is undertaken by a range of organisations, which contributes to the perception that the business support landscape is fragmented and not as responsive as it could be.

Our Business Growth Hub was established in April 2015 and has already engaged with over 5,000 SMEs, almost 900 of them face-to-face. In addition to a core diagnostic and signposting function the Growth Hub also provides a framework for a number of European-funded business support projects, aimed mainly at start-ups, SMEs and high growth businesses.

The Government's Industrial Strategy, launched in November 2017, confirmed that funding for Business Growth Hubs would continue beyond April 2018 and the LEP will use this as the opportunity to review how it commissions and coordinates business support activity and how the current arrangements can be adjusted to enable a more effective and proactive service.

- *The LEP completed its review and established new arrangements for the Growth Hub in October 2018.*

We also have many businesses operating in agriculture, food and forestry or who rely on our natural assets for their business. The LEP has engaged with a number of other LEPs and key stakeholders to develop 'Agri-Tech West' as a vehicle for promoting and supporting Agri-Tech and Agri-Food industries.

- *The LEP will continue to support the development and roll out of Agri-Tech West [needs a specific action from Francis]*



Launch of Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone



“
As a place there is
so much on offer



“ the natural environment is as important a factor in Quality of Place as the built environment

4. Creating 'better places'

As highlighted earlier in this strategy we start from a position of relative strength. This strategy has to be supported by actions which maintain and enhance this position. Already, through Local Growth Fund (LGF), Growing Places Fund (GPF) and European Structure Funds (including LEADER) the LEP and its partners have funded a range of projects aimed at enhancing our quality of place.

LEP Transport Strategy

Transport and congestion were probably the issues raised most during our conversations with stakeholders during the refresh of the SEP and the development of this Quality of Place Strategy. The LEP's Transport Strategy published in Autumn 2018 sets out a comprehensive programme of investment to tackle the main areas of congestion across our local and strategic road network, and improving the public transport offer in Cheshire and Warrington (including preparing for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail) and public transport.

The LEP will also support proposals for better sustainable transport.

- The LEP has undertaken public consultation on its draft Transport Strategy during Summer 2018 and published the signed-off version in November 2018.

Understanding the economic benefit of the natural environment

The natural environment (and resources such as water, minerals and fisheries) is as important a factor in Quality of Place as the built environment. This was reinforced by Government in its commitment to the Rio+20 principles (agreed at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development) and more recently in the Industrial Strategy White Paper and Defra's 25-year Environment Plan. Our rural landscape is the result of centuries of stewardship by farmers and other landowners and for many people is reason enough to locate here. It is also a powerful tool in encouraging better mental and physical wellbeing amongst residents, workers and visitors

The LEP, along with the sub-region's constituent local authorities, are members of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Partnership (one of 47 LNPs across England, established by Defra in 2013).

During 2019/20 the LEP will, in collaboration with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Partnership, review the implications of the Government's new 25-year Environment Plan for the sub-region.

- This will include developing proposals by September 2019 for establishing a Natural Capital Plan for the sub-region.

³ <https://www.cable.co.uk/news/survey-reveals-importance-of-broadband-to-brits-moving-home-700001485/>

Connecting Cheshire

Good broadband connectivity is an increasingly important factor for people looking to move home and for new and existing businesses. A survey in 2016 showed that almost 70% of people looking to move home check local broadband speeds before making their choice.³

To date, the Connecting Cheshire project has reached more than 97,000 premises with faster speeds and has switched-on more than 600 new roadside fibre broadband cabinets. The project has also been successful in driving take-up of the faster speeds by homes and businesses and will soon reach 50 per cent, one of the highest in the country.

- *The LEP, through Connecting Cheshire, will progress the roll-out of enhanced broadband connectivity and support to enhance digital skills to over 1400 SMEs in Cheshire and Warrington by 2020.*

The LEP will maintain its support to our local authority partners to further develop and take forward the spatial priorities identified in the SEP. It will also continue to develop the Cheshire Science Corridor proposition as an exemplar of our commitment to creating outstanding business investment locations.

Housing is an essential component in creating successful places. Having the right mix of housing, in the right places (such as in our town centres and near to good schools) and at an affordable price is important to meet the aspirations of existing communities and the needs of young people and families moving in to Cheshire and Warrington to live and work. The LEP has an important role in advocating the economic case for housing.

- *The LEP will publish a Housing Strategy by March 2019 which provides a strong narrative in the importance of facilitating delivery of well located, high quality, affordable housing as part of an attractive place offer.*

Measuring Impact, Evaluation and Review

Measures of success will be developed in conjunction with key delivery partners.

Evaluation and Review

Monitoring and evaluation protocols will be agreed with the LEP's Strategy and Performance and Investment Committees. The Plan will be kept under regular review to ensure that it remains current and properly aligned to national priorities and local needs.

Governance

The action plan will be overseen by the LEP's Strategy Committee, which reports to the main LEP Board.





Our rural landscape is a powerful tool in encouraging better mental and physical wellbeing amongst residents, workers and visitors





FIRST FLOOR, WYVERN HOUSE, THE DRUMBER, WINSFORD, CW7 1AH

☎ 01606 812280 🌐 871candwep.co.uk

**871 SQ MILES OF
OPPORTUNITY**