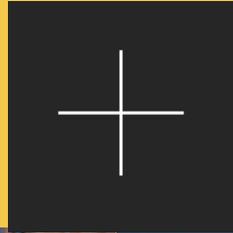


CONSULTATION DRAFT



Cheshire and Warrington:

# Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy

May 2025

# Contents

Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction and context	7
Delivering our vision: Growing.	13
Delivering our vision: Sustainable	22
Delivering our vision: Inclusive and Healthy	27
Delivering our vision: Enabling Infrastructure	34
Tracking progress, delivery and next steps	37

# Foreword

[To be completed at final draft]

# Executive Summary

## Cheshire and Warrington: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy

Cheshire and Warrington's vision is to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive, and fastest-growing place in the UK by 2045. This vision builds upon our region's long-standing economic strengths, with levels of productivity outperforming the whole of the rest of the North West as well as being consistently higher than the national average. With nearly one million residents and over 41,000 businesses across diverse, high-growth sectors - including energy, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing - we are well-positioned to achieve this ambition.

We recognise that amid our strengths there are real challenges that need to be addressed if we are to be successful in achieving the vision. For example, over 22% of our children and young people grow up in poverty, impairing life chances, and there are large differences in life expectancy between the most and least deprived parts of the subregion. Public transport connections can also be poor, especially in rural areas, affecting access to employment and other services. The Strategy acknowledges that to make real progress by 2045, we will need to embrace new and innovative thinking, work differently, and respond to the rapidly changing world around us.

To help us rise to meet these challenges and opportunities, we will work in partnership, building on our strong foundation of collaboration and co-creation across business, public and community sectors. This includes work such as our Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission, our shared evidence base, diverse partnerships, and a commitment to community and business led approaches.

This Strategy sets out how we will achieve our vision, identifying key strategic themes and the transformational opportunities we will exploit.



### Delivering our Vision: Growing

Our ambition is to have the highest rate of economic and productivity growth in the North. To achieve this, we will build on the area's considerable sector strengths, unlock growth from decarbonisation and the transition to clean energy, and create vibrant places where people want to live and work.

This means:

- building on the recent announcement that the Hynet industrial decarbonisation project is ready to start on site, we will exploit the major economic opportunities available to C&W from the world's move to a zero carbon future.
- strengthening the key science and innovation clusters within the Cheshire Science Corridor such as energy and life sciences by creating greater links between them to create an internationally significant innovation eco-system
- supporting our other significant sectors, including manufacturing; business and finance; and logistics and distribution
- ensuring Cheshire and Warrington is a great place to live, work, visit, invest and study
- working with employers, skills providers and others to make sure our workforce can access the training and development they need to get

good, well paid jobs in the industries of the future

### **Delivering our Vision: Sustainable**

Our ambition is to achieve net zero emissions, whilst seizing the resulting economic opportunities. We will enable public, private and community sectors to reduce carbon emissions, change to cleaner sources of energy, and invest in nature, improving quality of life and creating social and economic benefits and resilience. That means:

- supporting Hynet to reduce carbon emissions by 4.5 million tonnes a year to 2030, and 10m tonnes per year after this, and supporting our industrial cluster to reach net zero emissions by 2040
- supporting our rural areas to decarbonise by focussing on the importance of our natural landscape in making C&W an attractive, healthy and climate adapted place to live and work

- supporting our agricultural sector and our world class dairy industry to become a world leader in net zero farming
- supporting all businesses in C&W to decarbonise their operations, ensuring that our workforce has the skills they need to do this
- making sure that new homes in C&W are built to modern efficient low carbon standards and that we encourage, support and increase the energy efficiency of existing homes. In so doing we will also tackle fuel poverty in C&W by ensuring that everyone in rural and urban areas has access to well insulated, warm homes that are cheaper to heat
- building a genuinely circular economy making the best use of our resources
- facing up to the challenges of removing carbon from all forms of transport

### **Delivering our Vision: Inclusive and Healthy**

Our ambition is to connect everyone with opportunities and ensure the economy helps to deliver better health outcomes. We aim to lift all of our communities out of poverty and enable everyone to reach their potential. To achieve this, we will ensure that people from all backgrounds and areas can develop the aspirations, skills, knowledge and connections they need to take advantage of the new opportunities, in partnership with businesses.

This means:

- An economy that works for everyone:- in areas of relative economic deprivation, those with health conditions, other protected characteristics and in rural areas
- Connecting everyone to employment via skills and work readiness, careers education and supported pathways, work with the third sector and DWP, apprenticeships and in-work skills, and support to every young person
- Fair employment for everyone that supports a good quality of life
- Support the development and improvement of our urban and other centres as locations for affordable housing and economic growth, maintaining easy access to green spaces



- Public transport, active travel and digital connectivity to jobs and local services in all areas especially outside urban centres

### **Delivering our Vision: Enabling Infrastructure:**

Our ambition is to build the capacity to deliver growth sustainably and inclusively. To achieve this, we will secure the enabling infrastructure to improve our transport, digital fibre and utility connectivity and resilience, and build diverse and affordable homes where they are needed. This means:

- ensuring we have the right homes in the right places
- working with others to ensure C&W has the strategic transport connections that we need for passengers and freight
- ensuring there is effective transport connectivity within Cheshire and Warrington
- providing the right digital connectivity and addressing gaps
- reinforcing utilities such as electricity grid and water so that they support the delivery of our plans

### **In summary**

This Strategy sets out a bold, ambitious vision for our sub-region which has the potential to transform our economy, promoting and creating the conditions for fast growth delivered by our businesses, reducing inequalities, and improving the lives and fortunes of all of our residents, leaving no-one behind.

We are building on extensive engagement with businesses, local authorities, and community partners and we have collectively set out a number of ambitious goals to enable us to focus on transformational change. With the right partnerships in place we can tackle the challenges facing our places, residents and businesses, and build on the exciting opportunities we have identified to become the most sustainable, inclusive, healthy, and fastest growing economy in the UK by 2045.

# Introduction and context

**Cheshire and Warrington's vision is to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and fastest growing place in the country by 2045.**

Our ambitious vision is built on a strong foundation of consistently having been the most prosperous economy in the North, with productivity levels that outperform the whole of the rest of the North West, and are consistently higher than the national average. The sub-region covers just under 900 square miles, and is home to a population of nearly one million people and over 41,000 businesses across diverse, growing and highly productive sectors including energy, life sciences and manufacturing.

We have a strong, diverse and vibrant business base, high jobs growth and a highly skilled workforce, with knowledge-driven businesses innovating and commercialising new products at the forefront of their sectors. From developing the fuel that powered Concorde to life changing beta-blockers, Cheshire and Warrington has long been at the forefront of research, industrial commercialisation and the manufacture of new products.

Our partnership includes proactive and engaged public, business and community sectors working to implement our vision in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington, all with a shared passion for creating great places for residents and businesses. We have the ambition to work together in new ways and with urgency to strengthen our economy, and to do this whilst leaving no one behind.

The past five years have been characterised by rapid change stemming from a variety of events including the Covid pandemic, extreme weather linked to climate change, the war in Ukraine, Brexit and disruptions to global trade, as well as the increasing global development of Artificial Intelligence and digitisation. Some of the impacts



of these changes include worsening health and economic inactivity, flooding, a tight labour market and additional trade barriers and costs for business, spiking energy prices and a cost-of-living crisis experienced more acutely by our poorest and most disadvantaged communities.

The current government has responded with a range of new policy measures including a transfer of powers and funding from Westminster to help local areas to make decisions locally that will support the economy. Cheshire and Warrington is looking to benefit from this to bring additional powers and funding to our areas to help achieve our vision, and is pursuing this via the government's Priority Programme for Devolution.

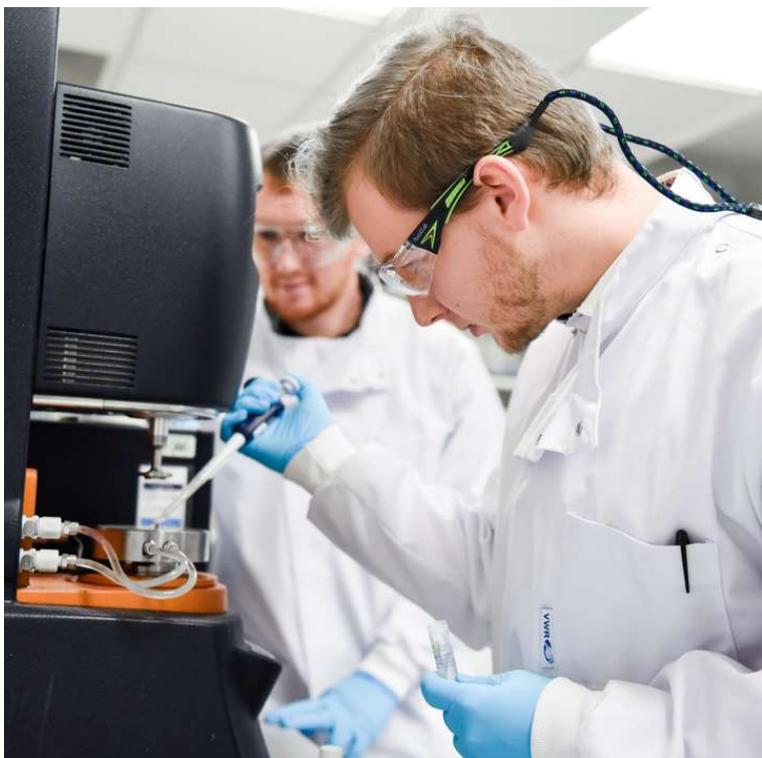
We are clear that in working towards our vision in Cheshire and Warrington, we need to build a future that works for everyone, including our most disadvantaged communities and individuals, whether that is due to poverty, location, ill-health or disability, gender, age, race, or other disadvantage. We also need a focus on natural environment recovery for the benefit of future generations and the ecosystems on which all of us and our economy depends.

## **Collaboration and co-creation**

We recognise that strong partnership working is an enabler to securing the outcomes this Strategy is seeking, and that we will only be successful in this task through enabling others across all sectors to contribute fully.

In developing this Strategy, we have been able to build on a strong foundation of evidence-based collaboration, which has allowed us to understand the nature of our economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the unique needs and ambitions of our varied communities and businesses whether rural or urban.

In 2020 we launched our Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission, a two-year public-private-community sector collaboration which set out an ambitious roadmap for achieving our vision in 2022. Alongside this, we were guided by the evidence base produced to support our Local Industrial Strategy evidence base, and our 2021 Covid Recovery Plan. We updated the Cheshire and Warrington economic strategy evidence base in 2022 and in 2023-2024 we consulted widely on the priorities for this strategy, reaching out to hear the views of young people, communities, individuals, civil society, business sectors and representative



bodies. We acknowledge from this process the need to ensure that as we move forward, our investments and policy decisions need to consider all the elements of the vision – sustainability,

inclusivity, health and economic growth – in an integrated way.

Our success depends on the success of our neighbours, just as their success depends on ours. We therefore have strong and effective working relationships with those areas including North Wales via the Mersey Dee Alliance, Liverpool City Region, and Greater Manchester to progress shared objectives. This has included, most recently, the ongoing development, alongside colleagues in Manchester and Liverpool, of a Northern Arc growth corridor setting out the strong growth potential of the North West across shared sector priorities such as energy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences and the need for that to be supported by a step change in investment in railway infrastructure.

### **Importance of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector**

The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) Sector plays an essential role alongside and in addition to Local Authorities in supporting those members of our community at local and grassroots level, offering solutions to some of the most challenging issues facing our area and driving community-centred approaches to transform health and well-being and empowerment of local people. We will be working with the sector as key enablers to achieving the targets set out in this strategy. We will also work with the sector to listen to people with lived experience to enable a better understanding of the underlying issues that need to be addressed to inform our planning and delivery.

### **Our themes and transformational opportunities**

This Strategy sets out how we will achieve our vision and will identify those transformational opportunities through to 2045, including:

- **our Growing potential:** the world class science, technology and innovation assets within and beyond the Cheshire Science Corridor including life sciences, and energy/ industrial decarbonisation clusters as well as advanced manufacturing and our broader sector and business opportunities;
- **our Sustainability potential:** including the transformation of our industrial cluster, our rural and agricultural economy, businesses and

organisations and their premises and supply chains, housing, and transport infrastructure via transition to clean energy whilst protecting the environment and improving health;

**Snapshots of our sectors:**

**Manufacturing:**

The highest value sector, with key businesses including Bentley Motors, Bombardier, OSL Rail, Siemens and Waters Corporation in the region.

With strengths across aerospace, automotive, nuclear and medical sectors we are an important centre for advanced manufacturing.

**Life Sciences:**

We have a nationally significant Life Sciences cluster, centred around Alderley Park, a science and tech campus home to over 200 businesses.

Sitting at the intersection of health, professional services and manufacturing, the sector employs and estimated 7,200 and is a key growth opportunity.

**Energy:**

Over 24,000 people are employed in the energy sector in Cheshire and Warrington, with a nationally significant energy cluster and expertise in nuclear and energy systems.

We are leading the way in decarbonising energy intensive industry through our work in HyNet North West.

**Finance and Business:**

Over 70,000 people work in finance and business services, with particularly high growth in finance services in recent years.

Large employers in these sectors include Barclays Technology Centre, M&S Finance and Assurance.

**Logistics and Distribution**

This sector has seen strong employment growth over the last number of years, up to 27,600 jobs in 2020.

With our strategic location between Liverpool and Manchester and strong motorway links to the North's cities we have a growing reputation as a centre for logistics and distribution.

**Visitor Economy**

In 2022 over 50 million people visited Cheshire and Warrington to experience the wide range of attractions, from historic sites to Chester Zoo to Jodrell Bank's deep space radio observatory.

In 2022 the visitor economy was valued at over £3.4 bn, still below pre-Covid levels but showing signs of recovery.

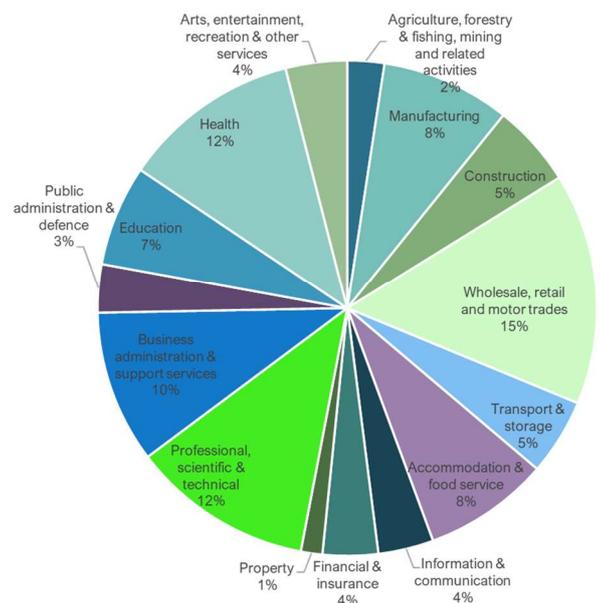
- **our Inclusive and Healthy potential:** unleashing the potential of our residents to upskill and reskill and enter, stay and progress in the workforce as well as addressing the barriers that prevent employers investing in the skills of their workforces, and ensuring appropriate development and connectivity in places that benefit all;
- the underpinning **Enabling Infrastructure** that we need to enable us to achieve our vision, such as housing, digital, utilities, and transport.

It will also set out the targets and milestones we will use to hold ourselves to account and monitor our progress.

## Cheshire and Warrington's economic strengths and opportunities

Cheshire and Warrington (C&W) – Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington – is the most productive region in the North of England with output per worker 10% higher than the national average. With a total GVA of £37.7 bn per annum and GVA per head at £38,517 per annum, this is over 50% higher than Liverpool City Region and 25% higher than Greater Manchester. Our economic output grew faster than the UK average from 2016-2021. In many ways our strong foundation is at odds with the common perception of Cheshire and Warrington as a largely rural area, and dormitory to its larger city region neighbours.

**Employment by Industry (2022)**



### Economic diversity, continuing strong performance of key sectors, and the Cheshire Science Corridor

Part of this strength lies in our economic diversity. The local Industrial Strategy identified three strategic opportunities: Energy, Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing, due to their high productivity, GVA and jobs. There were further sectors, Logistics & Distribution and Finance & Business Services, as well as broader based manufacturing, which have high GVA and jobs. The refreshed data analysis confirms the importance of these sectors in terms of their number of jobs, GVA contribution and specialisms.

The historic presence of salt provided the base feedstock for the productive chemical industry, and the legacy of ICI, much of which is along the River Mersey, Manchester Ship Canal, and the Weaver Gowly Catchment, which in turn fed the development of energy, manufacturing and pharmaceuticals.

Cheshire and Warrington has built upon its industrial legacy, technical expertise and its innovation clusters, developing The Cheshire Science Corridor, which stretches 40 miles across the M56 corridor and beyond between Liverpool and Manchester. The corridor is the largest concentration of private sector science and technology assets in the North of England and its Enterprise Zone is one of the most successful in the country with c.2m square feet of new and refurbished floorspace delivered, 7000 jobs created and 120 new businesses created from 2014 to today. Alongside this, economic output from professional, scientific and technical activities has increased by 62% in the last decade and accounted for £3.5bn of output in 2022.

Our sector development focus is on transformational key sectors and clusters:

### **Energy**

Energy sector productivity in C&W is £270k per head and employs 24,180 people (2022) which builds on clusters of clean energy technologies in Ellesmere Port, Capenhurst and Birchwood.

Centred on the Origin cluster at Ellesmere Port, the subregion has the opportunity to become the first place in the world to implement at scale industrial decarbonisation using hydrogen and carbon capture production, transport and storage infrastructure via the HyNet initiative working with major global players such as Essar Energy Transition (EET), ENI, Encirc, and Innovyn.

We are also the centre of the UK's nuclear industry at Birchwood Park, Warrington, which is a modern large-scale business location, at the forefront of nuclear research and development supporting industrial decarbonisation and clean energy. The sector experienced 16% growth in the last year in Warrington and the national Nuclear Skills Delivery Group (NSDG) forecasts a 49% growth in the sector by 2030. Major global leaders include Amentum (Jacobs), Rolls Royce, Cavendish Nuclear, Nuvia, Sellafield, National Nuclear

Laboratories, along with Urenco in Capenhurst (Cheshire West) which has had a recent government investment of £196m in fuel refining. Our companies work in all areas of nuclear innovation spanning across nuclear new build, decommissioning, and advanced nuclear technologies, including small modular reactor (SMR) development.

### **Life Sciences:**

The sector grew 10% in the last 5 years, and has over 7000 jobs and 235 life sciences companies including Astra Zeneca, Bepak, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waters Corporation, and Advanced Medical Solutions, and a further 120 businesses and 2000 employees in the cluster. Astra Zeneca employs over 4000 at the Hurdsfield pharma manufacturing plant (Macclesfield) and generates c.1% of all UK exports. Alderley Park is the UK's largest Bioscience Campus with an impressive track record of recent business start-up and scale-up, now hosting 250+ companies. The site is also home to the UK Medicines Discovery Catapult (MDC) and the Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance.

Towards the West there is an emerging cluster of animal life sciences which has an estimated 1,000–2,500 employees employed in over 50 firms, forming a vital part of the wider life sciences ecosystem including Dechra Pharmaceuticals in Northwich which is an international specialist veterinary pharmaceuticals business, and a globally significant research intensive cluster at Bolesworth including Cogent, Aviagen and IMT Matcher. It also builds on significant assets like University of Liverpool's Leahurst campus research base and Chester Zoo's global conservation science leadership.

### **Advanced manufacturing**

Advanced Manufacturing is a major part of the subregion's economy with over 36,000 jobs, £3.8bn in GVA, and greatly outperforming the North West in terms of GVA per job (£108k, compared to £93k). This positions the area as a key hub for innovation and manufacturing excellence in the region.

Our area hosts key global companies including Bentley Motors, Stellantis (Vauxhall), Astra Zeneca, EET Fuels (formerly Essar) and Tata

Chemicals as well as a diverse supply chain who supply key aerospace companies in North Wales and the North West (for example Airbus and BAE Systems). As a result, the subregion employs a greater proportion of people in the high-value manufacturing sectors of chemical production, automotive and pharmaceuticals than nationally.

C&W, alongside LCR, Lancashire and North Wales has one of the largest and most diverse automotive clusters in the UK. The sector often relies on extensive international supply chains. The area's strengths in manufacturing and its position between Liverpool and Manchester, close to both airports and with fast national road and rail connections, have also helped develop a strong technical service sector economy. The region employs a higher proportion of people in architecture and engineering than the national average.

### **Emerging digital sectors**

The Science Corridor also includes associated sectors such as digital and technology, including those based at Jodrell Bank's Square Kilometre Array and Sci-Tech Daresbury. We have also seen growth in recent years in the creative and digital sector with particular clusters emerging around Chester in the west and Knutsford / Macclesfield in the east of the sub region. Information and communication has similar levels of productivity to the national average, but has become more productive over time, and supports around 15,000 jobs.

### **Supporting sectors**

Additionally, we have key strengths in financial and business services, logistics and distribution, and the visitor economy. Financial and insurance activities accounted for £3.2bn GVA, and grew 53.2% over the last decade, with over 71k jobs in financial and business services, whilst logistics accounted for £1.47bn, a rise of 52.5% over the last decade, and over 27k jobs, whilst the visitor economy is worth £3.9bn annually to the C&W economy, attracting 56 million day visits and supporting 38,000 jobs. The foundational economy, including health and social care, and retail and hospitality has a significant number of jobs at 177k, though tends to have lower overall salaries and productivity.

Our agricultural economy is important culturally and economically, with almost 2,900 farm holdings covering cereal and crop production, dairy, beef, fowl and other animals, and our dairy industry is one of the largest and most productive in the country.

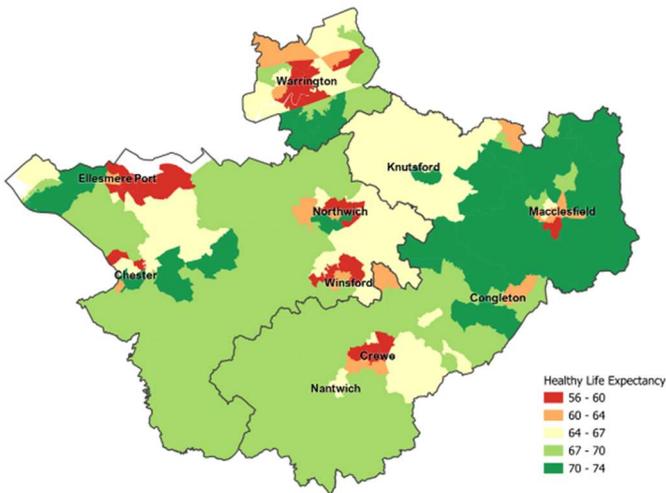
### **Skills and employment**

Our area has seen strong employment and job growth compared to the national average, with high median wages and skills levels when compared to the North of England. We have also seen strong growth in STEM professional jobs and jobs in innovative sectors. There are strong networks of schools, colleges, and other training providers, a University and a health science campus, with access to a further c.15 universities available at commuting distances. The area also benefits from a fantastic network of employers who engage in the skills and education system to improve awareness of jobs and career opportunities.

### **Our challenges**

We have a strong economy in terms of overall economic output and jobs growth, but productivity growth has been lacking in recent years (2011-2022), growing more slowly than both the UK average and most of the North. Alongside this, there has been a corresponding reduction in business research and development levels since 2015. Addressing this productivity trend will be necessary to help boost growth and ensure our less productive sectors can provide more highly skilled and higher paid jobs.

Our labour market is tight, with a shortage of labour with the right skills, affecting the ability of businesses to recruit the workers they need. This is exacerbated by growing levels of ill health and more people who are economically inactive. Of this cohort there are a growing number of people claiming benefits, including people aged 50+ and young people. This trend increased dramatically during the Covid pandemic and has not reduced subsequently, in contrast with trends in other countries.



We have a highly skilled workforce, with around 72% of the working-age population holding level 3 qualifications or higher. However, an aging population and declining proportion of working-age residents has resulted in employers citing challenges around level 3 skills and above. While resident earnings are higher than regional and English averages, workplace earnings lag the national average, suggesting that people are commuting into the area for lower paying jobs. There are also 16.5% of jobs paying below the Real Living Wage, contributing to in-work poverty.

It is clear that not all of our communities have been able to benefit from and access our area's economic success. Within Cheshire and Warrington, there are areas of concentrated but persistent deprivation. In these areas, economic inactivity is high, young people's attainment is lower, and health outcomes are poor. The average male life expectancy at birth differs by 12 years between the most and least deprived communities within our area. There is also a 16 year gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between most and least prosperous communities.

One significant barrier stems from lack of a successful start in life, with child poverty one of the culprits, even among working families, with 22.3% of all children and young people (Cheshire and Merseyside) living in poverty, higher than the national average. Children living in poverty are more likely to die before they reach their first birthday, are more likely to be obese, have asthma and poor mental health.

Transport links within the region can be poor,

making it difficult for some people to access training or employment opportunities, and it can be difficult for businesses located on more dispersed business parks off key transport routes to attract and retain staff. There are fewer jobs accessible within 60 minutes by public transport than the UK average. Many rural communities and even some employment destinations are not served by public transport, and where public transport is available, the frequency and evening provision is limited in all of those areas outside our largest places. Rural areas also experience worse digital connectivity.

There are high levels of carbon emissions and fuel poverty in rural areas due to reliance on private cars and off-grid heating. The industry of Cheshire and Warrington, the reliance on car use, and the age of our houses and business premises mean that the area has a challenge in reducing its carbon footprint. Whilst this is a challenge it does equally present an opportunity for economic growth and employment, as decarbonising industry, improving the energy efficiency of our housing, and rolling out an improved EV network (amongst other measures) will require substantial investment in the near term, generating additional high value economic activity.

These challenges will need to be addressed against the backdrop of a population that is ageing faster than the national average. By 2038, we expect the working-age population to have declined by almost 9,000, while the population over 65 is projected to increase by more than 64,000. The economy of Cheshire and Warrington will need to continue to increase its productivity to address the challenges that this change will bring.

Cheshire and Warrington has real economic strengths and some exceptional economic opportunities ahead of it, but it also needs to address some real challenges if it is to ensure everyone living and working in the region can benefit from them. The following chapters set out more detail around our ambition within each theme and the objectives and targets we will use to deliver and achieve our vision.

# Delivering our vision: Growing.

Our ambition is to have the highest rate of economic and productivity growth in the North. To achieve this, we will build on the area's considerable sector strengths, the Science Corridor, unlock growth from decarbonisation and the transition to clean energy, and create vibrant places where people want to live and work.

This means:

- building on the recent announcement that the Hynet industrial decarbonisation project is ready to start on site, we will exploit the major economic opportunities available to C&W from the world's move to a zero carbon future.
- strengthening the key science and innovation clusters within the Cheshire Science Corridor such as energy, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing, by creating greater links between them to create an internationally significant innovation eco-system.
- support our other significant sectors, including manufacturing; business and finance; and logistics and distribution.
- ensuring Cheshire and Warrington is a great place to live, work, visit, invest and study.
- working with employers and others to make sure our workforce can access the training and development they need to get good, well paid jobs in the industries of the future.

In 2024 the incoming Labour Government set out five decade long missions, including 'kickstarting growth' and establishing Britain as a 'clean energy superpower'. Allied to this, new national planning system and energy infrastructure reforms have been introduced alongside a large increase in local

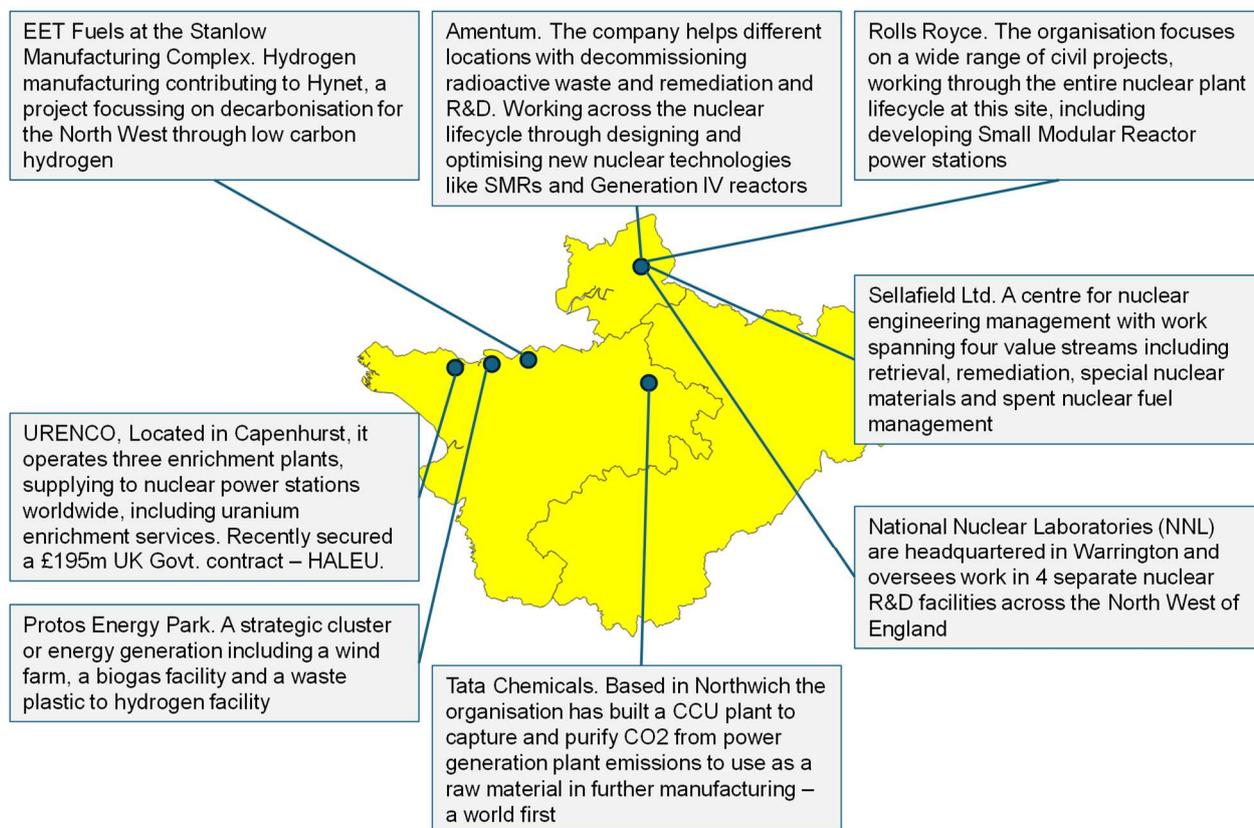


house building targets. The government's industrial strategy, to be launched in June 2025, focuses on eight key sectors including life sciences, advanced manufacturing, clean energy industries, financial services, and business and professional services. Devolved areas and their elected Mayors will also be expected to play a role in delivery, with increased powers and funding on offer which will help to deliver local priority objectives. Cheshire and Warrington has significant assets to contribute to the national approach, including through our world leading sectors and growth opportunities.

## **Transitioning our Industrial Cluster to Clean Energy: a world leading growth opportunity**

The Prime Minister, Chancellor and Energy Secretary were all present in October 2024 at Encirc Glass in Ellesmere Port, announcing a £21.7bn commitment to carbon capture and storage, enabling the HyNet project at Origin, Ellesmere Port, to build the infrastructure to reduce emissions and deliver clean energy at pace and scale, and play a core part in the government's Clean Power and Growth Missions. The delivery of the initiative is now underway, following the signing of the final agreements between the Government and Eni, the multi-national energy

## Examples of Industrial Decarbonisations strengths – Cheshire & Warrington



company which is expected to lead to c.£2bn in supply chain contracts for the Liverpool Bay Carbon Capture and Storage Project.

Hynet will make a major contribution to decarbonising the industrial cluster centred in the North of C&W around Ellesmere Port (known as Origin) and which covers 100 square km and consumes approximately 5% of the UK's energy for industrial processes, heat and transport. The Cluster includes some of Cheshire's major manufacturing employers covering oil refining, glass manufacture, nuclear fuel enrichment, chemical production and automotive manufacture. Ellesmere Port, alongside the Mersey Estuary, is a nationally significant industrial hub with 4,500 people employed in manufacturing. The area now has the opportunity to become the first place in the world to implement at scale industrial decarbonisation. This will create world class low carbon infrastructure to safeguard, renew and expand our manufacturing sector, as well as exporting our know-how globally, putting us at the forefront of 'reindustrialising the North'. Building

on this infrastructure, the Strategy aims to increase our share of jobs and GVA in highly productive manufacturing sectors.

HyNet will build the infrastructure to capture and store carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from essential industry and produce, transport and store low carbon hydrogen at salt caverns in Northwich. The national Climate Change Committee outlines that CCUS is a proven technology, which will be a necessity, not an option, to the UK achieving net zero by 2050. The process captures carbon dioxide emissions before they reach the atmosphere, storing them deep beneath the seabed. HyNet's hydrogen store will be used to underpin a resilient and secure electricity network by its use in generating power, especially at periods of peak demand.

HyNet partners include the major worldwide energy company Eni, who will build, own and operate the CO<sub>2</sub> Transportation & Storage network; EET, who is responsible for the new low carbon hydrogen plant; and Encyclis, Viridor and Heidelberg Materials who will build carbon capture



plants at their existing energy from waste and cement facilities. Beyond this, more industrial players from the area will be able to connect to HyNet's infrastructure to decarbonise their own operations.

This is expected to bring further investment opportunities including an imminent £6bn economic opportunity in delivering the HyNet project, and a longer term £30bn pipeline through to 2040 with nuclear sector and renewables development, as well as enabling net zero industry by 2040.

Nuclear and the impact of new small modular reactors also have a key role to play in industrial decarbonisation. The UK nuclear industry, centred on Warrington, is developing small modular reactors for the future, widely expected to be the next generation of nuclear technology facilitating the expansion of safe and secure UK power generation baseload, which will address the power generation intermittency of renewables.

The subregion has led the UK's nuclear industry since the 1950's when The UK Atomic Energy Authority was established in Birchwood, Warrington and the Universities of Liverpool and Manchester jointly operated a small experimental modular reactor. Birchwood now hosts much of the

country's nuclear energy skills base. Employing over 6,000 people, Birchwood is home to over 165 companies, including Sellafield Ltd, the Government's National Nuclear Laboratories, Cavendish Nuclear, Amentum (formerly Jacobs), Nuvia and Rolls Royce. Beyond Birchwood, the government recently committed £196m to a new nuclear fuel facility (HALEU) at Urenco in Capenhurst to be built by 2031.

Associated initiatives in the wider energy cluster also include: Protos Energy Park, which is leading the way on innovative technologies including waste resource recovery and plastics to hydrogen, and has recently acquired the CF Fertilisers site for expansion; the development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels, which includes an MoU between Manchester Airport and the Fulcrum project; and UKGEOS, the Cheshire observatory activity supported by government agencies UK Research and Innovation, National Environment Research Council, and British Geological Survey, to undertake research and innovation in aquifer thermal energy storage and characterisation and advanced monitoring of subsurface processes based at EET's Thornton Science Park.

## Case study

## **Building on our leading science and innovation clusters**

Cheshire and Warrington has an enviable depth and breadth of science, research and innovation assets and expertise. We have identified strategic opportunities to lead the way, which includes building a successful innovation ecosystem anchored on key sites in the Cheshire Science Corridor – including Alderley Park, Birchwood and Ellesmere Port Origin - which are all at the heart of nationally significant clusters and recognised as growth driving sectors in the government's new National Industrial Strategy. There are 25,000 people employed in the broad life sciences, technical services, and scientific research community in Cheshire and Warrington.

From leading global efforts to decarbonise industry at Ellesmere Port, to nuclear energy research expertise at Birchwood Park; to discovery and development of the next generation of medicines and drug treatments at Alderley Park; to the headquarters of the world's largest science experiment, the Square Kilometre Array at Jodrell Bank – our area is at the forefront of new discovery and innovation.

### **Growing our world class life sciences cluster**

Cheshire & Warrington plays a vital role in the Life Science Supercluster, that spans 40 miles across C&W, Liverpool and Manchester, boasting strengths in pharmaceutical manufacturing, advanced research, and innovation. Its prime location, strong connectivity, and competitive business costs enable firms to thrive within the wider North West ecosystem with unparalleled access to c.15 universities, fostering a rich ecosystem for scientific research and technological innovation.

Cheshire & Warrington is a national leader in biomanufacturing, with companies producing vaccines, biologics, and advanced therapies. Major firms like AstraZeneca, Bepak and Waters Corporation drive private sector R&D, innovation, and pharmaceutical production. With major assets like Alderley Park and AstraZeneca's Hurdsfield site, alongside a growing base of biotech firms and skilled talent, the area offers a dynamic environment for investment and collaboration.

R&D underpins Cheshire & Warrington's strengths in life sciences, fostering cutting-edge discoveries, attracting investment, and accelerating the translation of innovation into real-world impact. Digital health programmes such as Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) and secure digital access to integrated health record systems support real-time surveillance, diagnostics, and AI-driven health research. In addition to pharmaceutical and technical R&D excellence, the area is a national leader in animal life sciences, supported by institutions such as the University of Liverpool's Leahurst Campus (the only veterinary school in the North of England) and Chester Zoo and its leadership in conservation science playing a key role in advancing global research on zoonotic disease, wildlife health, and sustainable agriculture. The animal life sciences sub-sector in Cheshire & Warrington includes an estimated 1,000–2,500 employees employed in over 50 firms, forming a vital part of the wider life sciences ecosystem.

Together, these strengths position Cheshire & Warrington as a major force in driving global healthcare innovation and economic growth. Over 7,000 people are employed in high-value life sciences roles across 235 businesses in the area, particularly in biopharma, R&D, diagnostics, and manufacturing. The sector contributes more than £2.1 billion GVA to the local and national economy. Furthermore, these are direct employees and economic output and identification of the wider indirect and supporting periphery of the sector shows a further 2,000 employees and further 120 businesses.

The life sciences sector in Cheshire & Warrington is growing rapidly (almost 10% in the past 5 years), supported by an expanding base of innovative businesses, increased private investment, and strong academic-industry partnerships. It hosts the national Medicines Discovery Catapult (MDC) and Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) which support companies to innovate and grow. AstraZeneca's Hurdsfield pharma manufacturing plant (Macclesfield) is one of the company's largest pharma manufacturing facilities in the world. Other major companies include Thermo Fisher Scientific (Warrington), Waters Corporation (Wilmslow-

Europe's largest mass spectrometry development site), Advanced Medical Solutions (Winsford), and Bepak (Holmes Chapel).

Research and development efforts on disease prevention, diagnostics, and treatment types enhance public health and well-being. As the sector grows and develops, it will provide diverse employment opportunities across various disciplines, including research, manufacturing, and healthcare services.

### **Supporting our other key economic sectors**

Wider manufacturing, financial and professional

faces key challenges particularly around decarbonising and transitioning to clean energy, and well as technology adoption. We will encourage our manufacturing sectors and supply chains to investigate diversification into additional future markets; to adopt new technologies, including digital and AI; to work towards clean energy supply; and to innovate. All of these steps help to increase productivity and competitiveness. We will engage with programmes such as Made Smarter to tailor available support. Increasingly, the tightening of the supply of manufacturing workers will inevitably lead to a need for greater use of automation. In the automotive sector, previous work by the Northern Automotive Alliance and Welsh Automotive Forum highlighted the risk of potential supply chain disruptions post Brexit and identified a series of opportunities centred on regional strengths in light-weighting and control systems which will be key to the next generation of electric and autonomous vehicles.

As the economy moves towards higher productivity and higher concentrations of knowledge-based activity, we expect to see greater levels of specialisation particularly within high value services sector firms that support the local industrial base as well as their national and international clients. These sectors include specialist engineering with companies such as Amentum and AtkinsRealis.

Our financial and business services sector includes locations such as Chester Business Park, and includes big names such as M&S Financial Services, Virgin Money, Barclays Global Technology Centre at Radbroke Hall, as well as Royal London. It covers a range of activities including banking, credit provision, insurance and pension funding, wealth management, legal and accounting, and a range of back office administrative services, and involves many high profile, global brands. Whilst we have some high performing activity, parts of the sector are less productive than in other areas of the UK, and boosting performance here could have a big impact on the economy overall. Ways to do this include via innovation and continuing technology adoption and skills improvements.

Our location in close proximity to two major UK cities and situated on major motorways with

services and logistics and distribution, and the visitor economy, are significant and important sectors within the area's economy, which also play a part in our economic diversity and resilience.

Cheshire and Warrington's manufacturing activity includes a mix of primes and lower tier suppliers. This in turn drives significant export activity and inward investment. Allied with product research, development and commercialisation, manufacturing is fundamental to Cheshire and Warrington's long-term economic success but



excellent transport links, has encouraged high employment and business growth in our logistics and distribution sector in recent years, with particular concentrations in Warrington and Crewe. Much activity has been driven by the development of OMEGA, a £1 billion 575-acre mixed-use development on the site of the former Burtonwood Airbase near the junction of the M6 and M62 motorways. The area has particular specialisms in warehousing and support activities for transport, and postal and courier services. We will continue working with the sector and key stakeholders to assist them to maximise the number of higher-level jobs created and to test and adopt new technologies to increase efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Understanding the needs of our major employers and businesses, including with those via foreign direct investment, will be important to support sector and business development and growth, including attracting local supply chains, and supporting local employment. The use of account management, will be a helpful tool for this. Partnerships with major businesses and employers will also be useful. For example, logistics firm Amazon, which employs 1500 people at its Fulfilment Centre in Warrington, is introducing an Innovation Accelerator training programme to support local SME's to grow and become more productive, and we will encourage other businesses to consider partnering with us in this way.

### **Ensuring C&W is a great place to live, work, visit, invest and study**

The Cheshire and Warrington sub-region is a special place to visit, explore and stay, to enjoy globally renowned visitor attractions, sport and heritage venues including wedding venues, music festivals, filming locations and more.

The visitor economy is a fundamental economic driver for our town centres, rural areas and cultural attractions. Some major businesses and employers include Chester Zoo, Ellesmere Port's Blue Planet Aquarium; Gulliver's World; Warrington Wolves; the National Trust's Lyme Park; Tatton Park; the Sandstone Trail; and the iconic Jodrell Bank Observatory, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Additionally, we know that great culture contributes to great places where people want to

be. There is a need to support cultural infrastructure and invest in associated cultural industries, as well as supporting other places where people come together, including high streets and the retail sector. A thriving cultural sector not only enhances quality of life including in key centres, but it is also a key driver for attracting and retaining skilled workers and can play a strong role in economic inclusion, for example via a range of open access provision, such as that promoted by Storyhouse in Chester which is also a free public library.

We need to build on our already successful suite of campaigns, awards, networks and partnerships including Destination Cheshire, and Destination Chester, to promote the destination as one of the best places to visit, invest, work and live. As one of a growing number of accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) we must also work with VisitBritain and VisitEngland and neighbouring areas to co-market assets such as our UNESCO world heritage site, significant landscapes and unique heritage assets.

### **Training our workforce for the industries of the future**

We recognise the importance of understanding future skills needs across our key sectors including for the clean energy industrial transition and developing the right skills locally to deliver our ambitions, including working with colleges, universities, primary and secondary schools, other academic institutions and training providers. The recent Cheshire and Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan, led by the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, has been the result of a wide engagement exercise with employers to outline the job roles and skills they require now and in the future. This has built on the strength of Cheshire and Warrington's knowledge of the labour market and ongoing analysis of current job vacancies.

The industries of the future will not always be new jobs; some may evolve from current roles and require retraining and investment in the infrastructure of our colleges and the teaching and training professions. The ongoing success of our growing skills bootcamp programme demonstrates the importance of supporting employers to fill vacancies and upskill their existing workforces

through short, targeted training that guarantees a job interview or progression opportunity at the end of the training.

An example of our plans includes working with industry and regional partners to explore the concept of a Clean Energy Skills Academy to support our residents to access skills, training and jobs in our clean energy industrial cluster, and for the industrial cluster to ensure it has a pipeline of skills to deliver its ambitious plans.

## ACTION AREAS

- **Exploiting the opportunities offered by the world's move to a zero carbon future:** following the HyNet industrial decarbonisation project starting on site, we will build on our area's emerging USP as one of the first at scale decarbonised industrial clusters. This will include promoting hydrogen and carbon capture infrastructure, nuclear R&D, and other technologies such as geothermal, to attract investment and profile, build a decarbonised energy cluster, support a manufacturing renaissance and reindustrialisation, and export skills and knowhow globally. This means working with private sector partners such as Net Zero North West, HyNet and the Northern Nuclear Alliance, to support companies with issues like availability of local skills, development of local supply chains, innovation, land and property, transport, policy and regulation, securing investment, and communication of public benefits.
- **Strengthening our science and innovation clusters to create an internationally significant innovation eco-system:** We will build a successful innovation ecosystem anchored on key sites in the Cheshire Science Corridor – including Alderley Park, Birchwood and Ellesmere Port – which are all at the heart of nationally significant clusters for life sciences and energy. We will ensure our key sectors can continuously develop by building greater linkages around our research, development and commercialisation assets and those in neighbouring areas to create a well-functioning ecosystem which includes more people and businesses, helping to generate new ideas and opportunities. We recognise that our broader network of innovation businesses in the subregion will thrive with more opportunities to work alongside our research institutions and collaborate with other companies, and especially for life sciences, to develop solutions with customers including clinicians, as well as having opportunities to digitise and streamline processes, including making the best use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).  
  
We will support our clean energy cluster to deliver the world's first at-scale decarbonised

industrial cluster, and other linked projects such as Peak Cluster to help deliver greater CO2 storage capacity longer term. We will continue to highlight this opportunity across the UK and with government, setting out the opportunities for development. As the technologies are introduced and refined, we will showcase our subregion and the businesses involved as an international exemplars and link this work to broader export promotion.

- **Strengthen and support our research and innovation assets:** We will work with our institutions and the private sector to devise plans and deliver the support that will enable our growth clusters to be self-sustaining and address barriers to growth and investment, especially for knowledge economy/technology businesses with high growth potential. Four areas of early focus will be the development of business networks, access to finance for entrepreneurs and innovators, attracting inward investment, and higher technical skills to ensure we continue supplying the right skills to support our evolving sector base.
- **Ensure C&W is a great place to live, work, visit, invest and study:** Support our cultural and visitor economies to improve the quality of life and leisure offer within the area, and to help make all parts of C&W places where people aspire to live. This includes supporting sectors such as retail to develop a distinctive and added value offer and improve productivity, as well as increasing business tourism and place marketing. Our cultural and visitor economies will contribute significantly to the achievement of the subregional vision. By 2029 Cheshire will be nationally recognised as an aspirational destination, where visitors can be assured of premium but accessible experiences built on unique heritage, a modern and sustainable approach, cultural facilities, quality businesses, a warm welcome, and its outdoor offer.

We will also market and promote our strengths and points of difference to attract further inward investment opportunities, providing appropriate land and property and associated services, working with neighbouring areas where it makes sense to do so. We will ensure

that Cheshire and Warrington is well positioned for investment, building on initiatives like UKREIF, and ensuring that we proactively package up attractive and cohesive offers to key national and international audiences, as well as responding effectively to enquiries.

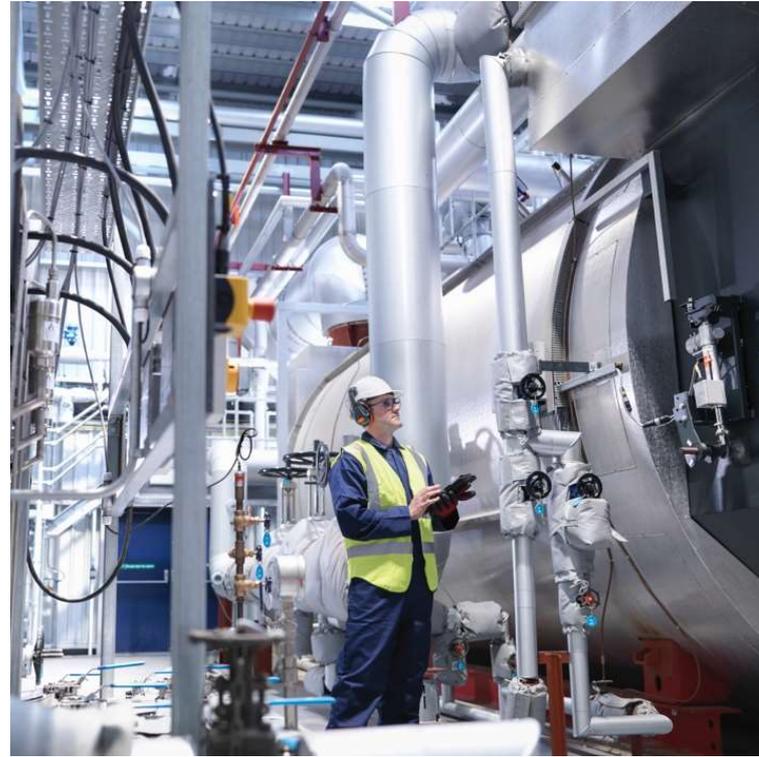
- **Support our other significant sectors like manufacturing, business and finance and logistics and distribution, and provide a range of business support services:** This will build on our Growth Hub, key account management, and related local business support programmes providing business support to start-up businesses, SME's, and foreign-owned companies, supporting employment and skills initiatives, linking businesses into R&D support, offering trade and export support and helping to develop (sustainable) supply chains. We also need to support manufacturers and SME's generally to adopt digital and other technologies to improve efficiency, innovation, and adapt to future digitisation trends. We will also ensure that appropriate business space is available including for the added-value services businesses that support our growth sectors.
- **Future skills, workforce development and lifelong learning:** we will work with employers and providers to plan for the skills and jobs that will arise through our sector development work, ensuring we have a firm focus on future skills including clean energy, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, digital and AI, etc, including making young people and adults aware of the new technologies and job opportunities, including working with those of primary and secondary school age and beyond. The work will include the industrial decarbonisation programme and our housing retrofit programmes, with initial focus on skilled trades and the construction sector building a skills pipeline that includes and expands the number of apprentices and programmes like Bootcamps in the subregion.

# Delivering our vision: Sustainable

**Our ambition is to achieve net zero emissions, whilst seizing the resulting economic opportunities. We will enable public, private and community sectors to reduce carbon emissions, change to cleaner sources of energy, and invest in nature - improving quality of life and creating social and economic benefits and resilience.**

That means:

- supporting Hynet to reduce carbon emissions by 4.5 million tonnes a year by 2030, 10 million



tonnes a year after 2030, and our industrial cluster to reach net zero emissions by 2040 alongside supporting dispersed industry

- supporting our rural areas to decarbonise by focussing on the importance of our natural landscape in making C&W an attractive, healthy and climate adapted place to live and work
- supporting our agricultural sector and our world class dairy industry to become a world leader in net zero farming
- supporting all businesses in C&W to decarbonise their operations, ensuring that our workforce has the skills they need to do this
- making sure that new homes in C&W are built to modern efficient low carbon standards and that we encourage, support and enable the transition of existing homes to low carbon standards. In so doing we will also tackle fuel poverty in C&W by ensuring that everyone in rural and urban areas has access to well insulated, warm homes that are cheaper to heat



- building a genuinely circular economy making the best use of our resources
- facing up to the challenges of removing carbon from all forms of transport

As the wider transition to 'net zero' accelerates, it will also create new opportunities and bring about changes across a wide range of sectors, including industry, transport, agriculture, utilities, manufacturing, construction, and finance. By being proactive about decarbonisation, and building on our existing strengths, Cheshire and Warrington will aim to capitalise on the opportunities that the forthcoming large energy transitions represent for businesses, workers, and residents, and ensure resilience in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Aligned with the Climate Change Act which sets out the goal for the UK to be 'net zero' by 2050, at COP29, in 2024, the Prime Minister called for 81% carbon emissions reduction vs 1990 levels by 2035 and set out a goal of transitioning the national energy system to Clean Power by 2030. Cheshire and Warrington has the ambition to achieve net zero emissions by no later than 2045, and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy has set out an ambition that at least 30% of our land and sea should be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030, a goal also promoted by the Wildlife Trusts and civil society.

To achieve this we will decarbonise energy, heat and transport and introduce specific sector solutions, creating new opportunities for our residents. Cheshire and Warrington will strive to be a demonstrator for how the Government's net zero approach can deliver economic growth through investment and resilience through adaptation.

### **Decarbonising our industrial cluster, generating clean power, and spreading the benefits to our dispersed industry**

The work on industrial decarbonisation which was outlined in our Growing Chapter will take out 17MTonnes of carbon dioxide by 2045. The HyNet programme is a major contributor to this by producing 30TWh of hydrogen by 2030, and reducing emissions by 4.5 million tonnes each year. Whilst this will be huge progress, other parts of industry will also need to set out credible transition and clean power plans. In order to reach

the government's target of Clean Power 2030, there will need to be rapidly increasing deployment

### **Case study**

of solar, wind and battery storage technologies. There are also unique opportunities for energy storage and geothermal because of our special geography and geology, including the salt caverns. In Cheshire and Warrington we are ambitious on clean power and keen to seize the opportunities it will unlock, with a goal to deliver 1GW of new installations across our subregion by 2030 to play our part in achieving this national goal. Many Cheshire and Warrington projects and businesses will contribute to this and will have roles in designing and deploying new and clean energy technologies such as renewables, nuclear, hydrogen, energy efficiency and biofuels.

### **Our rural and agricultural economy and nature's recovery**

There will also be changes in our rural economy, requiring innovative approaches to balance economic growth and resilience with

environmental stewardship. Natural capital, farming and the rural economy play a key role in making Cheshire and Warrington an attractive place to live, visit and invest. It is also critical in building our resilience to climate change and as part of long-term sustainable growth. As a largely rural area, Cheshire and Warrington can take a national lead in this field, exporting new processes and ways of working to the world. For example, we are already leading the way on exploring the use of large scale anaerobic digestors to create bioenergy, to help reduce the carbon emissions of farms whilst providing locally produced fertilisers to support nature.

Our agricultural sector will need to incorporate different approaches to farming in response to the changing environment, and the transition to the UK's new Environmental Land Management (ELM) payment system, which is intended to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture while increasing biodiversity and helping to provide the food security that the country requires. We are already working together with partner organisations such as Councils, Estates and Agricultural Banks on a future farming network to bring together expertise and support for farmers on the changes taking place in the agriculture / agri-tech sector in one place, building on recommendations from the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission.

Ensuring the delivery of our Local Nature Recovery Strategy will bring benefits for our environment, so that nature, people and businesses thrive, with the goal to halt and reverse the loss of nature, addressing 'green deserts' and improving biodiversity, achieving full recovery by 2050. Benefits provided by nature include preserving vital 'ecosystem services' such as pollination, which are crucial for effective food production, water and air quality, and for water security, climate adaptation (reducing flood risk and helping with cooling in urban areas) and health across our population. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy aims to put nature's recovery into all decisions and activities and this strategy will support that in an integrated way, ensuring we address this alongside meeting the other aspects of our integrated vision.

Additionally, our area leads the delivery of the



national Trees for Climate programme which engages tens of thousands of people in tree planting, connecting more people with nature, with a large number taking place in deprived areas, and providing a wealth of health and wellbeing impacts.

### **Decarbonising Businesses across Cheshire and Warrington**

We recognise that net zero goes beyond the focus on the decarbonisation of our main industrial cluster to impact all parts of the business base and other organisations including dispersed industrial, commercial, and rural sites. Businesses are likely to face increasingly high energy costs and potentially pressures from customers, investors and other stakeholders to adhere to responsible business standards, across environment, society and governance. Some businesses already invest and innovate to deliver less carbon impact, especially larger enterprises which own their own premises. Our smaller and geographically dispersed industry, and our wider business base, will need to be supported to transition to low carbon energy.

### **Warm Low Carbon Homes for All**

Decarbonising domestic heating systems means that residential properties must incorporate higher insulation standards and move to different

approaches to heating with a greater emphasis on electrification, as well as heat networks which are expected to make up 20% of the heating mix by 2050. C&W's existing housing stock is made up of 440,000 houses, almost all of which will need to improve their energy efficiency and transition to low carbon heating to reduce energy insecurity and enable our net zero goals to be achieved. We also need to work with national government and regional partners to change regulations and incentives so that fewer of the new homes built in C&W over the next few years will need to have their heating systems replaced with clean-energy, secure alternatives. And as part of this change we will also encourage community programmes that will focus on greater micro-generation of renewable energy, local storage and smart systems, for example using solar panels and batteries, to balance demand and supply of power.

### **Reusing and recycling and sustainable supply chains**

If economic growth is to be sustainable, it will be important to ensure that scarce resources are used efficiently within sustainable supply chains and throughout society. For example government will shortly be introducing a deposit return scheme (DPS) in 2025 for plastic and aluminium/steel bottles to support this. Whether re-using different components, recycling different raw materials, extracting rare earth metals or even using waste heat, an aspect of the work undertaken in the subregion will embrace the importance of reuse and recycling, known as the 'circular economy' as one aspect of sustainability.

### **Decarbonising Transport**

Our transport system is currently responsible for nearly a quarter of all our emissions, given the high dependence on petrol and diesel driven private cars, and the area's weak public transport. To make progress here, we will need to both introduce better and more accessible forms of public transport, such as the new fleet of electric buses in Warrington, and to encourage people to shift from using private cars to public transport, walking and cycling, alongside providing better infrastructure to enable more car owners and transport operators to transition to low carbon vehicles, including electric vehicles (EVs). Care will need to be taken to ensure that these changes are

affordable and accessible to all, including promoting second hand-EV schemes, shared car-pools, and consideration of on-demand transport such as new forms of taxis. We will also need to facilitate the decarbonisation of transport infrastructure, including the shift to alternative fuels such as electric, hydrogen or biofuels e.g. for buses, HGVs etc. This will require a strengthening of the electricity grid to enable the shift from fossil fuels to electrification. Our action areas for transport are laid out within the **Enabling Infrastructure** and **Inclusive and Healthy** chapters.

## ACTION AREAS

- **Decarbonising our industrial cluster, generating clean power, and spreading the benefits to our dispersed industry:** working with industry to support their decarbonisation plans, with Origin Ellesmere Port, Net Zero North West, and our industrial estates and business improvement districts, for example. We will explore the local industrial decarbonisation planning approach led by UKRI, and deployment of shared energy infrastructure, which could be introduced on industrial or business parks, for example building on the work led by Groundwork at Winsford Industrial Estate and drawing from the experience of the Deeside Decarbonisation Forum.
- **Support nature's recovery and decarbonise the rural economy:** We will ensure the delivery of local nature recovery strategy targets and develop a broader natural capital investment plan with benefits for residents and nature. Building on our Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission work we will build a future farming network to promote the benefits of new methods within agriculture that reduce emissions, generate clean and secure energy, strengthen food security adapted to the changing climate, and improve biodiversity. This will include supportive initiatives such as Anaerobic Digestion facilities that recycle waste to create clean energy and natural fertiliser.  
  
We will look to take a world lead by removing carbon emissions from the dairy industry and agriculture more broadly, and focus on the importance of natural capital in creating an attractive, healthy and climate adapted sub-region to live, work and visit.
- **Support the decarbonisation of all businesses and organisations across Cheshire and Warrington:** This work will focus on those needing additional advice and support to switch to clean energy technologies. We will initially focus on raising awareness about energy efficiency and

measures to reach net zero and promoting opportunities to businesses who can participate in new and emerging supplier opportunities building on work piloted by the Shared Prosperity Fund and Growth Hub..

- **Decarbonising our existing and new housing stock and addressing fuel poverty:** We understand the need to address energy-inefficient housing in the subregion, which is important for health and the cost of living. This is likely to be a long-term and costly endeavour, but one that brings with it significant benefits and a £10bn market opportunity to 2050. Our role initially will be to build a pipeline of retrofit, heat networks, and energy efficiency requirements, with consideration of financing options and longer-term proposals around distributed energy production, as well as a programme of awareness raising across urban and rural areas.
- **Building sustainable supply chains** (including reusing and recycling): we will build a new part of the economy, focused on reuse and recycling (a 'circular economy'), for example, building on the work at Protos Resource Recovery Park. We will start by exploring the potential for manufacturing to adapt to the circular economy, creating a programme of awareness raising and advice. This work will be particularly important in those areas of resource scarcity including the re-use of rare earth metals.
- **Decarbonise the way people and business goods get around:** introduce better and more accessible forms of public transport, active travel routes especially last mile to destinations, EV infrastructure, and facilitating on demand transport including e.g. car pools and shared taxis, as well as sustainable freight, and ensure sufficient electricity grid availability to support the shift away from fossil fuels towards increased electricity use; this is described in more detail later in this strategy.

# Delivering our vision: Inclusive and Healthy

Our ambition is to connect everyone with opportunities and ensure the economy helps to deliver better health outcomes. We aim to lift all of our communities out of poverty and enable everyone to reach their potential. To achieve this, we will ensure that all people, no matter their background, or circumstances, can develop the aspirations, skills, knowledge and connections they need to take advantage of the new opportunities, in partnership with businesses.

That means:

- An economy that works for everyone:- in areas of relative economic deprivation, those with health conditions, protected characteristics like disability or other disadvantage, and in rural and urban areas
- Connecting everyone to employment via skills and work readiness, careers education and supported pathways, vocational skills, partnership approaches, and support to every young person
- Fair employment for everyone that supports a good quality of life
- Support the development and improvement of our rural, urban and other centres as locations for affordable housing and economic growth, maintaining easy access to green spaces



- Digital, public transport and active travel connectivity to jobs and local services in all areas, especially rural and non urban areas

## **An economy that works for everyone**

We will prioritise our initial work in the communities which suffer the most significant levels of deprivation, as well as other disadvantage with the aim to improve life chances and health outcomes (taking into account rural, urban and deprived areas and protected characteristics such as disability etc). Recognising the importance of a good start in life, and the importance of the next generation to achieving our goals, Cheshire and Warrington partners have signed a joint statement with the aim to eradicate child poverty, and will be developing an action plan to address this. We recognise the focus that this theme's work will require over the long term.

We also recognise that high-quality employment,

linked to skills, can have transformational impacts on people's well-being, income security, and ability to choose good-quality housing, which in turn drives stronger life opportunities and health. We collectively can't address ill health and improve our 16-year gap in healthy life expectancy without addressing these wider determinants of health.

Despite high employment levels in Cheshire and Warrington, accessing work is not always easy. Poor educational experiences, ill health, disabilities, homelessness, transport issues (including affordability), and lack of experience of the workplace, are some factors that create barriers to employment. A key challenge we face is that across the population we see significant differences in educational outcomes, health, wages, and the number of people claiming Universal Credit depending on where people live or due to equality and diversity or other considerations. In some cases, accessing support or gaining core skills may be difficult for those who want to participate but face challenges. Our 'Altogether Fairer' work with the health sector is taking action on these issues, and this strategy supports and amplifies this work.

### **Connecting everyone to employment**

Overall, the availability of skills provision in our area is mixed, with many schools more focused on academic attainment and routes into higher education than on vocational training and apprenticeships, with limited local vocational provision in some areas. In mid-Cheshire, for example, apprentices generally need to travel large distances (including out of the subregion) to undertake their training, placing barriers on employer recruitment and opportunities for young people. People without a car in rural areas have particular challenges with accessing training and employment due to the weak public transport provision, and its lack of affordability. The variability in provision is also a barrier to employees seeking retraining opportunities. If we want to be successful at achieving our objectives we will need to ensure that we develop effective plans to address this. The following subheadings provide more detail on how we will connect people to employment:

#### **Skills and work readiness**

Cheshire and Warrington will build on the very

successful 'Pledge Partnership' programme that enables businesses to work together with educators to provide young persons in Cheshire and Warrington with everything they need to succeed in the world of work. The Partnership, which includes the Careers Hub, is aimed at young people in schools and colleges including those at risk of dropping out (and becoming 'NEET' – those not in education, employment or training). The main focus of these current activities is young people of secondary school age, however much of the information about new technologies and the labour market is relevant to a wider audience, including those with other barriers such as those over 50, mid-career changers, or those with disabilities and health conditions. Initiatives that build on this work will be important. To help young people not become 'NEET', there may need to be a focus on alternative pathways to education outside traditional forms of education, and encouraging workforce experience and access to travel.

Our Councils deliver or work with partners to deliver a range of support to economically inactive individuals, including for example, skills and employment/work hubs/work zones for adults, mentoring, Adult Learning courses including Maths and English, supported internships for those with special educational needs, and redundancy help. These are complemented by a range of specialised support such as digital training, training and life skills support for care leavers and those with special educational needs, and support to

### **Case study**

employers for workforce development. There are also health related programmes delivered in consortia with NHS partners such as 'Individual Placement and Support: Drug and Alcohol' and 'Employment Advisers in Talking Therapies'. The Rural England Prosperity Programme has recently enabled a range of support to be tailored for rural areas.

### **Careers education and supported pathways**

Our highly successful labour market information (LMI) work enables us to put strong programmes in place to achieve our inclusion goals, helping people to access employment, education or training to meet their needs and improve their life chances. Local partners gather regular updates and analyses of the labour market, using job posting data and other sources to monitor change. Key data captured includes skills vacancies and business skills shortages.

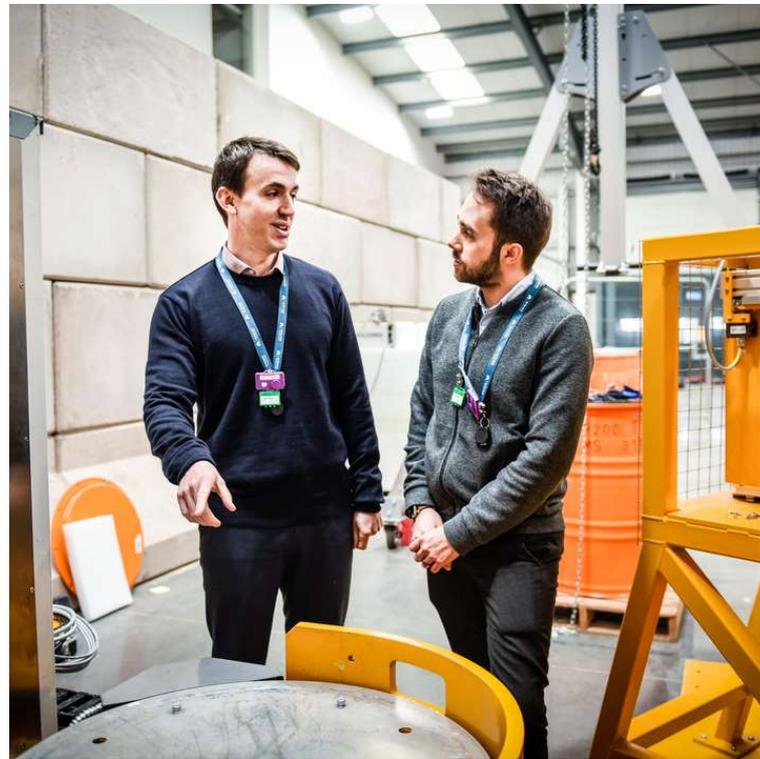
In a fast-changing economy, not only is continued skills development necessary for all age groups in the workforce but there is also a need to inform those seeking to start their working lives of the different types of opportunities available in the area, including onward progression routes, coupled with the availability of viable transport and housing, as these can be significant barriers to getting a job. We will build on our LMI and Jobs Portal which makes information about local jobs and careers available widely.

Supported pathways to employment are important routes for individuals who have been out of work or who experience barriers to work, to access work experience to enable them to get into sustained, productive employment. Examples include the growing emphasis by the Department for Education on the importance of meaningful experiences of the workplace throughout the school curriculum (reinforced by changes in statutory guidance to schools) and the supported internships programme, which has been championed by employers like Siemens in Congleton.

### **Working with our partners in DWP, the health sector, the Third Sector, and employers to tackle barriers to employment, and support for every young person**

We will build on our strong partnership work with DWP and Job Centre Plus, and with the health and

Third Sectors to address barriers to employment and help deliver the 'Get Britain Working' goals. This includes focused attention to address the increasing numbers of economically inactive people, such as those out of work due to long-term sickness and over 50's, young people not in education, employment or training, adults with basic skills, and carers. A key activity to deliver this includes the DWP funded Connect to Work Programme for Cheshire and Warrington, which aims to enable people with disabilities, long-term health conditions or experiencing complex barriers to seek and find sustainable work. Work will also



build on local 'place-based plans' and will include the aim to introduce a new national jobs and careers service, and a Youth Guarantee. More broadly, we want to explore the opportunity to work as a subregion on improving affordable access to childcare.

## **Vocational learning, Apprenticeships and in-work skills development**

Employers have a key role in play in engaging with skills providers to help bridge the gap between what skills employers need and the courses people are taking at local colleges and universities, and in providing more opportunities for people to learn on the job. Employers can use application and interview processes to recruit for merit and potential, tapping into skills bootcamps and apprenticeships as ways to recruit and retain good quality staff.

We need to build on these approaches and strengthen our partnerships with employers to encourage greater levels of investment in work-based skills and training. Our new Institute of Technology, a collaboration between leading employers and local education providers, is a major approach that aims to amplify and provide high quality technical training (including T Levels, Apprenticeships, HNC/Ds, foundation and other degrees etc) to school leavers and adult learners in a variety of growing sectors needed in our economy. Launched in February 2025 and part of a national network, sectors include: construction; computing and digital; engineering and manufacturing; healthcare and life sciences; agriculture and animal science.

We will be continuing the delivery of Skills Bootcamps, a hugely successful programme that connects need and opportunity by providing funded, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, designed to help local employers fill vacancies and develop the necessary skills of their workforce; as well as helping local residents develop the skills required to be industry-ready and find a new job or develop their existing skills to progress further in work. Cheshire and Warrington's funding will increase three-fold to c.£9m in 2025/6 following its strong delivery performance to date.

## **Fair employment for everyone that supports a good quality of life**

Work is underway to introduce a Cheshire and Warrington Fair Employment Charter, which recognises that business has a key role in helping deliver on our inclusive and healthy ambitions, as well as enabling businesses to demonstrate their credentials to job seekers, suppliers, investors and other stakeholders, and ultimately helping them to

attract talent and become more productive. The Charter will ensure that the job opportunities available offer fair employment in terms of employment flexibility, accessibility and recruitment, training and workplace and career progression, equality, diversity, wellbeing, and employee voice, to provide more employees with access to fulfilling and fair work.

## **Support the development and improvement of our key centres as locations for affordable housing and economic growth, maintaining easy access to green spaces**

Another aspect of health and inclusion is the barriers some locations face (including rural areas) to accessing work, housing, leisure, learning, services, and accessible green spaces. Our focus will be on ensuring that our key centres become attractive community hubs, with green spaces, affordable housing and future jobs growth opportunities. We will build on recognised transport hubs of Warrington, Chester and Crewe, as well as looking at the needs of key hub towns such as Macclesfield, Northwich, Middlewich, as well as rural service centres.

## **Ensuring easy access to public transport, active travel and digital connectivity to jobs and local services in all areas, especially outside urban centres**

We will create safe and accessible walking and cycling infrastructure, with good access to green, nature friendly spaces, offering healthy and affordable ways to connect our key centres to transport hubs, both critical enablers to creating attractive places, and providing benefits for mental health and quality of life, especially areas of deprivation that are far less likely to have this. Where digital access or skills are poor this can also be a barrier given that in the post-Covid context a lot more work and services are delivered from home.

## **Summary**

The initiatives transforming the Cheshire and Warrington economy over the next 20 years will only achieve their maximum impact if we can cascade more of their benefits locally. Developing local supply chains, promoting fair employment, ensuring local people are trained to take full advantage of the opportunities, creating inclusive places, and understanding and addressing gaps in

local skills provision will all lead to greater inclusive and healthy outcomes.

## ACTION AREAS

- **An economy that works for everyone:** We will prioritise our initial work in this theme in those areas where communities suffer the most significant levels of deprivation, as well as other disadvantage (including people in rural areas and people with protected characteristics such as disabilities). We aim to significantly reduce deprivation and disadvantage across the subregion and improve life chances and health outcomes. We recognise the focus that this work will require over the long term. We will promote and adopt decision-making tools that build on the SIGC's Inclusivity Assessment and will build on our 'Altogether Fairer' work, shared with the health sector. This will include community wealth building ensuring that local contracts provide employment, training and supply chain opportunities available to local residents and businesses, and consider community based enterprises in the provision of local services.
- **Connect everyone to employment:** we will support people across Cheshire and Warrington who face challenges that make accessing or obtaining employment difficult, focusing on the skills that may be needed but also on health and external barriers. This is likely to be wide-ranging, complementing existing and planned local authority-led provision and, where required, delivering at a hyper-local level. This is likely to include an extensive programme of meaningful experiences of the workplace and pre-employment training and work-ready skills. It will build on the success of skills boot camps that connect people to employers and work closely with partners on specific support which could include building confidence, literacy and numeracy skills, digital skills/access, delivering technical and vocational education pathways.
- **Fair Employment for everyone that supports a good quality of life:** we will work to change and promote better workplace culture in the subregion to ensure workplaces offer fair employment. At the heart of this is the subregion's Fair Employment Charter, a wide-ranging charter that celebrates good practice and supports businesses and organisations in raising standards in fair employment practices

such as employment flexibility, accessibility and recruitment, training, workplace and career progression, equality, diversity, wellbeing, and employee engagement and voice. The next steps will include better signposting to support available for employers to raise standards and to understand where the subregion can invest in programmes and support to deliver more equitable compensation, a more diverse, engaged, and healthier workforce, and help businesses increase productivity and profitability.

- **Support the development and improvement of our urban and other centres as locations for affordable housing and economic growth, maintaining easy access to green spaces:** we will continue to support the development and improvement of the places which offer the greatest concentration of opportunities for housing and economic growth, our three largest transport hubs – Crewe, Chester and Warrington – alongside appropriate, community supported developments in our other smaller town and rural centres. We will create a greater sense of identity and local pride and work to improve access to attractive and nature friendly green spaces within easy reach of all neighbourhoods, with special focus on the most disadvantaged areas. We will ensure that they continue to provide opportunities to live, work, study and enjoy and that these opportunities are accessible to people from all backgrounds across the subregion.
- **Ensuring easy access to public transport, active travel and digital connectivity to jobs and local services in all areas, especially outside urban centres:** We will create safe and accessible walking and cycling infrastructure, with good access to green, nature friendly spaces, offering healthy and affordable ways to connect our key centres to transport hubs, which are critical enablers to creating attractive places, and providing benefits for mental health and quality of life, especially areas of deprivation that are far less likely to have this. Where digital access or skills are poor this can be a barrier to work/access to services, and it will also need to be addressed,

given that in the post-Covid context a lot more work and services are delivered from home.

# Delivering our vision: Enabling Infrastructure

Our ambition is to build the capacity to deliver growth sustainably and inclusively. To achieve this, we will improve our transport, digital fibre and utility connectivity and resilience, and build diverse and affordable homes where they are needed.

This means:

- ensuring we have the right homes in the right places
- working with others to ensure C&W has the strategic transport connections that it needs for passengers and freight
- ensuring there is effective transport connectivity within Cheshire and Warrington
- providing the right digital connectivity and addressing gaps
- reinforcing utilities such as electricity grid and water so that they support the delivery of our plans

To ensure that people can live and work and businesses can invest and grow in Cheshire and Warrington, the infrastructure to support this must be in place, covering housing, energy, utilities, digital services, and transport as well as an effective spatial planning system that supports sustainable and inclusive growth.

## The right homes in the right places

We will adopt a more targeted approach to new housing development in line with our vision and strategy, including homes that work for younger people, homes for those with specific needs, and new homes in key urban and rural centres and hubs, with affordability a key priority. This will support continued sustainable and inclusive economic growth through the creation of a better



supply of smaller and more bespoke homes to rent and buy, freeing up family homes, and homes which are well connected to our employment opportunities, that can help to rebalance our town and key centres, diversifying uses and creating footfall.

## Strategic transport

Cheshire and Warrington has strong national and international connectivity, good rail links, four major motorways, and good access to Liverpool and Manchester airports, and a number of ports and Freeports for shipping. Our thriving logistics sector is built on this connectivity, which supports our strong manufacturing sector.

Transport is an essential enabler to support a growing economy and thriving society, and we need to develop this infrastructure in a sustainable and inclusive way. There is a need to tackle the commuting road journeys, support sustainable growth and the needs of our future development sites. We will continue to work with neighbouring areas via the Liverpool to Manchester Railway Board Transport for the North, the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Highways England to secure continued investment in the strategic road and rail network that connects us to the rest of the UK and beyond, especially to London, Manchester, Birmingham, the Port of Liverpool and Manchester

and Liverpool Airports.

### **Transport connectivity within the area**

However, internal public transport connectivity is fragmented, with high car dependency across the varied geography of the subregion. Within the non-urban areas of Cheshire and Warrington, rail services are limited, with many routes only running every hour, and many locations have no access to rail. In these areas, bus services are also limited, and where they are available, they often do not run into the evenings. Many important employment locations in Cheshire and Warrington are not connected by any public transport.

In terms of private car use, the infrastructure to support EVs is improving but remains limited outside of towns. There are almost no fast charging (50KW and above) stations along the major trunk roads of the area. Improved transport provision and linking new and existing residential developments to employment sites, including for our Science Corridor and future growth sectors, are essential to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure greater employment opportunities for everyone in our communities, including those in rural areas.

### **Case study**

### **Digital connectivity**

In addition to transport infrastructure, there is a need for modern digital infrastructure to be installed as fibre and mobile connections are essential for businesses and residents. The UK government has set a target of achieving 100% gigabit broadband coverage by 2030, and in our area Digital Cheshire is leading on its delivery. Our intention is to bridge inequalities in access and to support business activity across the whole of the area, especially in rural areas which are still challenged by the quality and extensiveness of provision. This principle applies to a range of community and business functions including schools, households and innovative SME's, particularly given trends towards flexible working and digitisation of society more generally. Ensuring rural communities' benefit from digital infrastructure at a similar pace as urban areas will unlock economic opportunities for all.

### **Ensuring we have the utilities reinforcement we need to deliver our plans**

Further infrastructure investment is also needed to reinforce utility provision as electrification of transport and heat increases and the energy transition and greater 'micro-generation' creates demands for local electricity grid connections, carbon capture and hydrogen networks. To deliver this successfully we will need to double electricity supply by 2040 and therefore transmission and storage infrastructure will need to align and support this.

We also need to ensure adequate supply of water of good quality for a variety of uses including for our emerging green hydrogen industry and new housing and development sites. We will investigate the potential of nature-based solutions such as planting upstream of rivers, to help ensure water stays upstream and prevents flooding, as well as preventing pollution and silting.

## ACTION AREAS

- **The right homes in the right places:** We will work to ensure that people have access to an appropriate choice of diverse, affordable and warm homes within vibrant, inclusive, sustainable and healthy places with access to outdoor green spaces. This includes having a ladder of accommodation across the subregion, in places that people want to live, with a diverse and affordable offer in terms of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet the requirements of all budgets, ages and stages of life. This does not always mean new homes; we will need to look equally at repurposed buildings and land, especially brownfield opportunities.
- **Ensure Cheshire and Warrington can access the strategic transport networks that it needs for passengers and freight:** We will influence investment in national and international connectivity, with a particular focus on strengthening rail links/hubs. Our focus will include passenger and freight connectivity, replacing the capacity and connectivity lost by HS2 cancellation, Northern Powerhouse Rail / Liverpool to Manchester Railway, and a reliable strategic road network, including greater network reliability, and service frequency. We will seek to maximise the economic benefits and national market opportunities afforded by the strategic road network passing through the subregion and the network's links to international ports and airports just outside our borders.
- **Transport connectivity within the area:** We will work to improve the frequency and service duration of our local public transport, focusing on connectivity from hubs to key towns and employment locations. We will prioritise investment in our key spatial areas and rail hubs, especially to and from our key growth sites. We will address the barriers some locations face (especially rural areas) to accessing work, housing, leisure, learning and services, where digital infrastructure can also play a role. This will mean focusing on improving buses and the local rail network, alongside creating the infrastructure for electric vehicles, walking and cycling. We will also explore the role of 'on demand' transport such as how new forms of taxis and private hire can be utilised to meet demands in areas not served by public transport.
- **Digital connectivity:** We will work to address the uneven access to digital connectivity, which is currently an issue for people and businesses in parts of the subregion especially some rural areas. We will ensure universal access to essential digital skills and progress towards ever greater levels of tech-enabled infrastructure development. This vital infrastructure provision can help deliver tech-based improvements to almost every aspect of the strategy, whether health and social care, transport provision, energy management or new learning and employment opportunities. Data Centres should be supported with the electricity infrastructure they require, which can also provide waste heat for heat networks.
- **Utilities:** We will work with business and utility providers to push to reinforce the essential utility infrastructure necessary to enable decarbonisation and growth, including within our transport system, and the development of new housing sites. Greater electrification will require substantial electricity grid reinforcement, and delivery of enhanced energy generation, transmission, and storage infrastructure including hydrogen and carbon pipelines. Water utilities in the subregion need to be supported in capturing the increased surface water levels in a changing climate and ensuring enough good quality water is available for increasing domestic, industrial, and commercial demands including for hydrogen development.

# Tracking progress, delivery and next steps

In this section we set out the outcomes and milestones we will use to hold ourselves to account and monitor our progress towards delivering our vision and objectives for each theme. We also set out what our next steps are in ensuring that this document meets the expectations of our stakeholders, and gives confidence in the adoption of our shared plans and priorities.

By undertaking the actions set out in this document, by 2045 Cheshire and Warrington will have achieved the following:

Outcome	Progress measure
<b>Growing Economy:</b>	
Cheshire and Warrington will be the fastest growing economy in the north of England by 2045.	GVA & GVA by hour worked
CandW to have highest rate of productivity growth in the north of England by 2045	Productivity – GVA per hour worked National Skills Levels (NVQ equivalent) 3 & 4+ R&D expenditure
Productivity to be growing and at least as fast as Northern average by 2035	Productivity – GVA per hour worked National Skills Levels (NVQ equivalent) 3 & 4+ R&D expenditure
Share of GVA and number of jobs in manufacturing to be growing by 2045	GVA by industry Employment by industry Clean energy jobs
First investments in net zero manufacturing by companies new to CandW by 2030	FDI & inward investment Clean energy jobs
Establish Cheshire and Warrington as a leader in responsible AI and digital adoption by 2035	% of businesses using AI or advanced digital tools (from business surveys/ ONS data)
<b>Sustainable:</b>	
Cheshire and Warrington will reduce carbon emissions by 81% by 2035 and 100% by 2045 (compared to 1990 levels), meeting net zero emissions and seizing the resulting economic opportunities	CO2 emissions GVA by industry Clean energy jobs Investments into low carbon technology projects

Deliver 1GW of Clean Power by 2030	GW of clean energy generated in C&W
30% of our land and sea to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030	Biodiversity Extent, quality and location of natural habitats
Achieve EPC rating of C for all housing stock by 2035	EPC Rating/SAP Rating MCS Certified workforce
<b>Inclusive and Healthy:</b>	
Connect everyone with opportunities and ensure economy helps deliver better health outcomes  Life and healthy life expectancies improving and above national average by 2045 in all parts of CandW	Healthy life expectancy by area Life expectancy by area Workplace wages by area Average incomes / Real Living Wage by area KS2 & KS4 attainment by Free School Meals by area
No communities in CandW in bottom 20% of total IMD measures by 2045	Index of Multiple Deprivation by area
No child in Cheshire and Warrington living in poverty	Household income by area Child poverty statistics
No young person not in education, training or employment (NEET)	Employment, unemployment and economic activity/inactivity by reason and age group Apprenticeships
No household in fuel poverty	Fuel poverty levels by area
Better economic conditions leading to reduction in crime	Crime rates by area
All workplaces to offer fair employment	Uptake of fair employment standards by area (as defined in Fair Employment Charter)
<b>Enabling Infrastructure:</b>	
Improving public transport and fibre connectivity to all communities by 2045	Transport connectivity by area Full fibre and 5G coverage by area
Electricity grid upgrade results in no projects being restricted by capacity of grid access by 2045	Grid capacity UK Power Networks Open Data
All trunk roads provide access to fast EV charging points every 10 miles by 2045	EV charging infrastructure statistics

We recognise that these proposed outcomes are ambitious and will require a long-term focus. We

will track changes at least annually, in line with the headline indicators which are drawn mainly from data which is published annually (the exception being employment rates which are updated quarterly), to allow us to take stock of what has changed and where we need to target resource.

## **Delivery and next steps**

This Strategy sets out a bold, ambitious vision for our sub-region which has the potential to transform our economy for the better, promoting fast growth, reducing inequalities, and improving the lives of our residents, and the fortunes of our businesses.

This plan has set out a number of action areas for the next 20 years. These are not exhaustive, and we expect that, as we work together these will also evolve. Many of our proposals can be delivered locally however, others will need a partnership with Government, supported with powers, funding or other flexibilities. We are in the process of developing a delivery plan which will set out our deliverables over the next 5-10 years.

This document represents the culmination of extensive engagement and evidence gathering. We welcome comments and suggestions for where we can collectively focus. With the right partnerships in place we can tackle the challenges facing our places, residents and businesses, and build on the exciting opportunities we have identified. We hope that you will join us on the next 20 years of the Cheshire and Warrington economic journey to create the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive, and growing economy in the UK by 2045.