

# Annual Report

2014 -15



Growing a Strong Warrington

WARRINGTON  
Borough Council



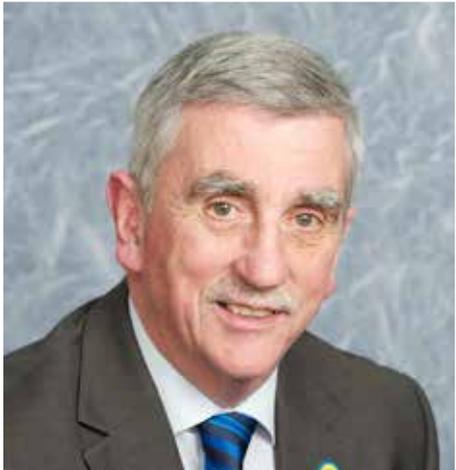
# Growing a Strong Warrington



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# Foreword



**Councillor Terry O'Neill**  
**Council Leader**

In 2012 we set out three pledges to our residents within our Council Strategy. This year we created a new strategy 2015-18, with the ambition to 'Grow a strong Warrington'.

This annual report has reminded me how proud I am of Warrington, our people, businesses, partners and communities. Together we have achieved an enormous amount despite significant and ongoing budget cuts, and whilst we still have more to do, we have a lot to celebrate.

We continue to bring businesses and investment into Warrington, to regenerate the town centre and create new jobs. By working in partnership with other public sector organisations, businesses and the voluntary sector Warrington remains a safe place to live where vulnerable people are supported. And, over the next few years we plan to integrate health and social care services, so that you benefit from the services you need, where and when you need them.

There is still a lot of work to do, and as budget reductions continue there will be some difficult choices, but we are committed to providing a positive and strong future for Warrington, and we look forward to working with you.



**Steven Broomhead**  
**Chief Executive**

This annual report looks back at some of our key achievements over the year in delivering our vision for a thriving Warrington.

Despite saving £44.2 million over the last three years we continue to provide high quality services, and do our best for local residents and businesses. I am very proud of the commitment and innovation that comes from our employees, many of whom also live in the town.

Warrington has a very strong ethos of partnership working across the borough and this has been a key element in the achievements that are reported here. I would like to thank our partners, particularly as I know that they face similar resource issues to the council.

The council will need to save another £48.8 million in the next four years and this will not be easy. Our new Council Strategy 'Growing a Strong Warrington' sets out our intentions to continue working with local people and partners to make Warrington a place where everyone can thrive.

# Warrington Borough Council's Strategy 2012 - 15

*'Putting the People  
of Warrington first -  
enabling them to  
thrive now and in  
the future'*

**We set out three pledges to the people of Warrington:**

*To protect  
the most  
vulnerable*

*To support  
the local  
economy*

*To help  
build strong  
and active  
communities*

**During 2014-15 we have targeted our efforts and resources towards delivering these pledges and this report provides an overview of how we are doing.**

# A Year in Warrington

April  
2014

## 'Mentor Me' achieves national recognition

This project matches volunteer mentors with young people aged 16-19 who are currently not in education, employment or training. The mentors meet weekly with the young people to help them to apply for jobs or places in training or education, or to find placements as volunteers. The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation accorded the 'Mentor Me' project its 'Approved Provider Standard'. The assessor from the Mentoring and Befriending Society commented that "a stand-out for the project is its training and support for volunteers. Young people said that their mentors had helped them with confidence issues, motivation, helping them to focus on their career options." Anyone interested in becoming a mentor can contact the council's Brighter Futures team on 01925 851029 or email [brighterfutures@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:brighterfutures@warrington.gov.uk).



## National Depression Awareness Week

The council supported National Depression Awareness Week aiming to increase understanding of depression and highlight the range of self-help techniques and support services available to residents. Warrington's mental health awareness site [www.happyoksad.org.uk](http://www.happyoksad.org.uk) provides information about local support services plus links to information about depression, self-help techniques and national charities which offer information or support.

May  
2014

## 'Bin the scam mail'

We urged residents to help fight back against scammers as part of Scams Awareness Month.

Warrington and Halton Trading Standards asked people to be on the lookout for websites, letters, doorstep sellers or phone calls with a proposal that sounded too good to be true - because it might very well be a scam. Residents were asked to help catch scammers by dropping any scam mail they received into one of the 'Scam Bins' around the town. The collection provided crucial intelligence to the Trading Standards Service and helped to inform future investigations. [www.warrington.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/tradingstandards)

## Armed Forces Community Support Hub opens

An 18 month project funded jointly between Warrington Council and St Loye's Foundation opened at the Gateway, Sankey Street. The facility provides veterans, serving soldiers and their families with access to a wide range of services to support their health and wellbeing.

We also joined forces with its partners to host a Carers's Conference at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub to celebrate National Carers Week. Attendees were updated on the Carers Strategy and progress on Warrington's dementia friendly initiative. Everyone joined in a workshop about making caring a positive experience and enjoyed activities such as singing drumming and yoga. 114 people attended the conference with this year's theme being 'Building Carer Friendly Communities'. [www.warrington.gov.uk/carers](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/carers)

June  
2014



July  
2014

### Dementia Action Alliance

Services from across Warrington came together to launch the town's Dementia

Action Alliance, to support individuals and families who are dealing with dementia. The event showcased the support available and marked the start of the town's journey to becoming dementia friendly. For information about support available for people with dementia and their families visit [www.warrington.gov.uk/dementia](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/dementia)



### Trading standards seize illegal cigarettes

As a result of information provided by the public, the Trading Standards Institute, Cheshire Police and our Trading Standards service discovered over 15,000 illegal cigarettes and 4.7kg of tobacco. The illicit products were seized with the help of Ozzie, a Black Labrador, and Milo, a Springer Spaniel, provided by Wagtail UK.



The illegal tobacco trade undermines the effectiveness of efforts to reduce smoking. As it is unregulated it makes it easier for children to start smoking. If you have information you would like to share you can report it anonymously using Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or your local trading standards team.

[www.warrington.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/tradingstandards)

August  
2014



September  
2014

### Ask Ollie launched

'Ask Ollie' is a one-stop shop for information about services to support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities. It includes information on all sorts of services including child care, education and accommodation and it also highlights forthcoming activities and events. It can be found at; <https://askollie.warrington.gov.uk/localoffer>

### Hate Crime Awareness Week 11-18 October

Warrington's Hate Crime Partnership reminded residents that hate crime should be reported and that there is lots of help and advice available. Hate crime occurs when someone is targeted because of their race, religion, gender identity sexual orientation or disability. The council, police, schools, colleges and local community groups are all represented on the Hate Crime Partnership, helping to raise awareness at various community events across the borough. The 'Safe Places' scheme to help people with learning disabilities who are feeling vulnerable when out and about became a finalist in the national Local Government Chronicle Awards. [www.warrington.gov.uk/hatecrime](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/hatecrime)

October  
2014

November  
2014

### Carers rights day

Wired adult and young carers service on Sankey Street held an open day to mark Carers Rights Day. They wanted to get the message across that there is advice and information out there for carers. For information about Wired services visit [www.wired.me.uk](http://www.wired.me.uk)



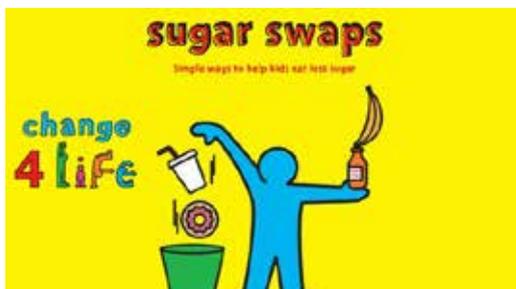
December  
2014

### Stay safe

This year's annual stay safe campaign was targeted at teenagers and young adults to ensure that they don't feel pressured into drinking, and take precautions to be safe if they do drink. Working with colleagues in our youth service and the Youth Advice Shop (YAS), the drug and alcohol action team (DAAT) developed wallet 'reminder' cards and distributed them at key venues across the town. The cards contained Stay Safe messages on the front, with the YAS Christmas opening times on the reverse. Young people who are members of Warrington Youth Service helped to create the key messages. Further information about the Stay Safe campaign can be found at [www.warrington.gov.uk/staysafe](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/staysafe)

### Sugar Swap campaign

The council joined up with Change4Life to encourage parents to take part in a new Sugar Swap campaign. This aimed to help families make easy swaps to cut back on sugar - like swapping sugary drinks to sugar free or simply offering children milk or water.



Change4Life warns that excess sugar leads to excess calories and a build-up of fat inside the body which can lead to being overweight and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Parents who signed up were given a free pack full of ideas on how to cut back on sugar, plus money-off vouchers, swap cards, stickers and recipes and ideas to help make healthier changes. [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

### Great Sankey Sure Start Children's Centre and early years training hub opens

This new one-stop-shop offers health, early education, employability and

January  
2015

February  
2015

volunteering opportunities for families and their children aged 0-5. Sessions already familiar to families in the area such as Chatterbox, Mini Makers, Jumping Jacks and Baby Explorers continued in the spacious centre, and new adult learning sessions such as First Aid are now being delivered. The centre is also available for hire to local community groups.

### National recognition for 20mph roll out

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation North West and the Highways Magazine both commended the council for our 20 mph speed limit project. The initiative was praised because of the approach taken to understand the potential benefits of 20 mph speed limits, the innovative methods used to implement the project and the benefits it had on the community. An initial pilot study was launched in 2009 to see whether a 20mph speed limit could deliver benefits to communities. The study targeted Orford, Park Road and the town centre and over 18 months there was a 1.45mph average reduction in traffic speed and 25% reduction in reported injury traffic collisions. We then rolled out 20mph speed limits across the majority of residential roads. There are now 510 kilometres of road in Warrington with 20 mph speed limits.

### Linking the Locks

A new business support scheme called 'Linking the Locks' was launched. Funding from the Coastal Communities Fund was given to Warrington Borough Council, Halton Council and the Sankey Canal Restoration Society (SCARS). This project is being delivered by Warrington & Co, the council's partnership for growth. The project focuses on the industrial areas, businesses and communities along and adjacent to the Sankey Canal and provides support, advice and guidance across a range of business areas including: apprenticeships, access to grants, finance and training. In addition, the project will support SCARS in developing community projects along the Sankey Canal to improve the local environment and facilities. Funding will also support a replacement bridge to the Riverside Trading Estate at Fiddler's Ferry.

March  
2015



# Delivering our pledges

## Supporting people with dementia

'Living well with Dementia in Warrington' a multi-agency strategy was agreed in 2014. This sets out the vision of Warrington Council and its partners working through the Warrington Dementia Alliance:

*'To enable people with dementia and their carers to continue to live well, to create a community where people know where to go for help and are able to seek help early, have access to care and support and are confident this care is of a high quality. We aim to ensure both public and professionals are well informed and the fear and stigma associated with dementia decreases.'*

One of the aims of the strategy is to establish Warrington as a 'Dementia Friendly Town'. Over 2600 local people have signed up to become 'dementia friends' who will help those with dementia feel supported and included in their community.



## Safeguarding vulnerable adults

A safeguarding concern is when someone knows or suspects that a vulnerable adult may be experiencing or, or is at risk of abuse or neglect. During 2014-15 over 1,200 adult safeguarding concerns were reported, and individuals supported. The more serious concerns are addressed in partnership with other agencies including the Police, Health Services, Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch and the voluntary and private

*To protect  
the most  
vulnerable*

sectors. Our collective aim is to make sure abuse or neglect is stopped, people are kept safe and their legal and human rights are protected. Where people are not able to represent themselves perhaps as a result of mental illness, dementia or a significant learning disability we ensure that they have access to someone that can help represent them. In September 2014 the Local Government Association (LGA) reviewed our safeguarding services and concluded that people were being supported to be safe, and that services were good.

We raised public awareness through events such as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Warrington Pride and Disability Awareness Day, as well as training a wide group of people, from health professionals to nightclub door supervisors.

We regularly ask people who have used adult social care services whether they feel safe. We do this through our statutory adult social care outcomes survey. This year 82% of people reported that they felt safe, which compares very positively with the national picture. We also ask people that have experienced safeguarding for their opinions. High numbers report that they were listened to and feel safer as a result of our help.

For further information about adult safeguarding and how to report concerns visit [www.warrington.gov.uk/safeguarding](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/safeguarding)



### Supporting carers

Carers play a crucial role in supporting friends and family members. To do this, we recognise that they need support too. Carers have a place on the Carers Partnership Board, alongside staff from social care, health and the voluntary sector. They help to shape the carers strategy and develop services for the future.

During 2014/15:

- 417 carers had a leisure card and were able to access Livewire Leisure Services free of charge in order to improve their health and wellbeing.
- 299 carers accessed the Carers Emergency Card Service. This allows carers to record an emergency plan for the person they care for which details actions that may need to be taken should the carer be involved in an emergency.
- Over 1,800 Carers Assessments took place either jointly or individually to determine the support required by carers.

In a survey of carers carried out in 2014/15:

- 80% of respondents said they were extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support and services they had received.
- 91.3% of respondents who had received information or advice in the last 12 months found the information very or quite helpful.

[www.warrington.gov.uk/carers](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/carers)

### Transforming adult social care 'Catalyst choices'

A new social enterprise took its place as a major provider of social care services in Warrington during February 2014. In a partnership with the council's Adult Social Care Services, a staff-led social enterprise

called 'Catalyst Choices' took over delivery of a number of day and residential services for older people and people with disabilities. The creation of this social enterprise protected 317 council jobs along with eight of the council's in-house care and support services, which support more than 600 service users. For more information see [www.catalystchoices.co.uk](http://www.catalystchoices.co.uk)

### Tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Warrington's Safeguarding Children's Board worked with partners across Cheshire and Halton to develop a multi-agency strategy designed to create a no tolerance approach to those who are intent on sexually exploiting children. The three year strategy launched in March 2015 sets out commitment across all of the agencies to a proactive and co-ordinated multi agency approach to CSE.

Following the Rotherham Inquiry, all partners in Warrington reviewed their practice in order to identify any learning. The important role played by the council's Licensing Committee was recognised in relation to the prevention of and disruption to CSE. A manager from the children's safeguarding service now attends the monthly Licensing Action Strategic Group, and has contributed to the review and development of licensing policies for both taxi drivers and licensed premises. Both policies now include clear reference to tackling CSE.

There has been a lot of work to raise awareness of CSE including a Cheshire wide poster and social media campaign. There has also been training for elected members and senior council officers. CSE training is mandatory for all social workers and is available for those who come into contact with children in their daily work. [www.wscb.org.uk](http://www.wscb.org.uk)

### Safeguarding children

Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) is a multi-agency forum which co-ordinates the work of partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Warrington. It has a duty to ensure the effectiveness of all safeguarding activities across the borough.

The service offers preventative and support services to children, young people and their families to enable them to have the best start

in life, realise their potential, and lead fulfilling lives as young adults.

A multi-agency partnership, led by police and supported by regular attendance of children's services representatives, carefully considers children's circumstances. All children who are identified as at possible risk of significant harm are subject to child protection enquiries.

Effective tracking arrangements and partnerships with the Local Family Justice Board swiftly secure legal permanence through the family court. Care proceedings are concluded within 23 to 24 weeks, which is better than the national average of 29 weeks.

Training is a particular strength of the Board, and in 2014-15 2261 participants attended training and workshops, a significant increase on the previous year. Additional training was provided and taken up within organisations. In total WSCB delivered safeguarding children training to 3959 people.

In early 2015 Ofsted undertook an inspection of children's services and their overall judgement was that Warrington Borough Council's services for children in need of help and protection 'required improvement'. An improvement plan has been developed and is being delivered.

### **Looking after children in care**

During 2014-15 the numbers of children in care in Warrington increased from 232 to 305. The main reason for the increased numbers was increased safeguarding activity particularly in respect of the use of care proceedings to safeguard children living with neglect.

All six of Warrington Borough Council's children's homes have received full inspections by Ofsted during the year, from August to December 2014. Three of the

homes were graded as 'Outstanding' and three homes graded 'Good'. Interim inspections took place in March 2015 and each home was graded as 'Improved Effectiveness' which is the highest possible grading.

In early 2015, Ofsted conducted a full inspection of children's services which included the children in care teams, the fostering service and the adoption service, including WWiSH, which is the shared service (with Wigan and St Helens) for the recruitment and assessment of adopters and post-adoption support.

Within the overall judgement, there were three separate elements relating to children in care, namely children in care and achieving permanence; adoption and care leavers, each was graded as 'Good'.

The service has demonstrated good outcomes for care leavers with high proportions of care leavers in suitable accommodation, employment, education or training and all care leavers being in touch with the service.

### **Preventing homelessness**

During 2014-15 the council achieved 809 homelessness preventions which surpassed the annual target of 688. In addition, a further 1169 preventions were achieved through other partners' services. These preventions were achieved using a number of different methods including family mediation/conciliation, the bond scheme, and the sanctuary scheme as well as resolving housing benefit and debt issues. There has been a reduction in homelessness applications and acceptance compared with last year, and there has also been a reduction in the number of nights that households have spent in bed and breakfast accommodation.



### Supporting economic growth

An annual health check of UK cities published by the authoritative 'Centre for Cities', January 2015, highlighted Warrington as the current number one town for employment. Whilst Warrington is not officially classed as a city, the report works on population and we have grown by 7% from the previous year.

Warrington continues to demonstrate a strong performance amongst cities and large towns within the North West with six per cent growth in jobs despite the recession.

Warrington has a steady presence in the top twenty cities for all measured criteria. It was ranked as follows:

- 1st out of 64 cities for the highest percentage of employment per population with 79.8% of its population in employment.
- 4th in terms of private to public sector ratio. This suggests that the jobs market within Warrington is not solely reliant on public sector employment but has a healthy range of private sector employers.
- 13th highest in terms of high level qualifications.
- 12th in terms of business stock and an increase of change of 29 per cent.

The centre for cities report can be found at: [www.centreforcities.org/city/warrington](http://www.centreforcities.org/city/warrington)



*To support  
the local  
economy*

### Regenerating the town

Warrington's £107 million Bridge Street regeneration project is progressing to plan with the demolition underway during 2014-15. The scheme will provide a new public square, market hall, civic offices, multiplex cinema and restaurants which are estimated to provide around 400 new jobs.

The total investment in buildings and infrastructure at the Omega sites is around £242 million with over £19 million worth of contracts being awarded locally. Construction of logistics and manufacturing facilities on Omega are progressing to plan.

A new £8.5 million 'Business Incubator' which will provide start up premises for 100 small businesses is being built at the Stadium Quarter with completion expected in Autumn 2015. There are also plans for a new £10 million University Technical College (UTC) and construction has started on the Stadium Quarter, sponsored by several large Warrington businesses and Manchester Metropolitan University. The University Technical College is planned to open in September 2016.



### Careers for Young People

Our Careers for Young People Service supports young people into education, employment and training. This is measured by looking at the number of young people aged 16 to 19 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). For 2014-15 this was 3.5%, an improvement compared to 3.9% for the previous year and 4.7% nationally. The service works very closely with partners such as Job Centre Plus, Schools, Colleges, Youth Service and Golden Gates Housing Trust. In 2014/15 the participation age was raised. This means young people have to remain in some form of education until the end of the year they turn 17 (extending to 18 years in September 2016). Warrington has consistently been one of the top performing local authorities in the country through the year by ensuring that young people are able to access education, whether that is full time school or college, or are in employment with training such as an apprenticeship.

The proportion of 16 and 17 year olds participating in apprenticeships has increased from 3.6% to 7.5% and in 2015 is significantly better than the North West and National rates of participation.

The service continues to encourage the most vulnerable young people in Warrington to engage in learning or work. They provide general help such as identifying the career opportunities that are right for a young person, as well as job and course searches and applications. More intensive support is also available, such as work tasters or accompanying a young person on the first day of a course to help them feel confident to take on these new challenges. The service also support through email and Facebook, providing a 'quick fix easy access' approach for anyone who prefers to obtain help 'virtually'.

### New Homes

New Homes bonus is a grant paid by the government to local councils for increasing the numbers of homes and their use. An extra payment element is given for providing affordable homes. The New Homes Bonus is paid each year for six years. In December 2014 the government announced that Warrington Borough Council will receive a payment of £4,484,442 for 2015/16 which makes Warrington the sixth highest new homes bonus in the North West. Since the scheme was launched in 2011 the council has received £13,312,888 of funding from this source.

### Installing Solar Panels

In July 2014 the council's Executive Board approved a £5.25 million capital funded solar panel installation programme in partnership with Golden Gates Housing Trust. It aimed to reduce the energy bills of 1,500 tenants and three sheltered housing schemes. During 2014-15 the council installed solar panels on 623 Golden Gates Housing Trust properties saving around £233 per year for residents and generating an income for the council of over £335,000.

### Early years attainment

Attainment at the end of the early years (reception class, children age 5) is measured by the Good Level of Development (GLD). This is based on children achieving at least 'expected' in the 3 prime areas of communication and language, physical (PE) and personal social and emotional development (PSED) as well as in Literacy and Maths. On this measure, performance at the end of the Early Years in Warrington in 2015 is provisionally 68% an improvement of 8% on the previous year and above the provisional national figure of 66%. This continues the trend of improvement in the proportion of children attaining the GLD in Warrington.

### Key Stage 2

Pupils take national tests called Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) when they are 11 years old. These measure pupils's abilities in English and Maths. Pupils are assessed by the use of external tests for reading and maths, and are assessed by their teachers for writing. The main indicator of performance at KS2 is the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths (combined).

*To help  
build strong  
and active  
communities*

Performance has increased compared to 2014 for reading, writing and maths combined from 83% in 2014 to 84% in 2015. The national percentage in 2014 was 79%. The measure for the higher attaining pupils is the percentage achieving Level 5. Performance in reading, writing and maths (combined) at level 5+ increased from 26.3 to 27.1%. The national percentage in 2014 was 24%.



### GCSE/A Level Performance

The provisional GCSE exam results show a 3% increase on last year compared with the regional and national position which has remained broadly the same. 58.5% of pupils achieved five A\*-C grades (including English and Maths). This is an improvement on last year of 3%, and places Warrington 4th in the region.

Progress in English and maths has also improved. Maths has increased by 6.3% and English by 2.7%. Nationally reports are that the gender gap has narrowed. In Warrington the percentage of boys attaining 5A\*-C has improved by 7.2%, and girls improved by 1.6%, narrowing the gap between boys and girls attainment by 5%.

Initial results show that A-level results have improved on last year, bucking the national trend where there has been a decline in the top grades. 16.6% achieved A\*-A grades, up from 16% last year, and 7.7% achieved 3 A\*-A grades compared with 5.6% last year. There have been significant improvements in results for maths and science subjects. The overall percentage of A\*-E passes is 99.9%, above the national pass rate of 98.1% with 70.7% achieving A\*-C grades, which is in line with last year.

### Supporting children with special educational needs

This year saw the opening of Woolston Learning Village an £8 million state of the art facility catering for children and young people with special educational needs aged from 4 to 18. The facilities have been constructed to meet both the health and educational needs of the students and include a purpose built hydrotherapy pool.

### Healthy Weight for Children

In Warrington the number of children who were overweight or obese has fallen year on year for the past three years but there is still a substantial proportion of children who are overweight. There is a range of help available from the council and its partners to help families to support their children to maintain a healthy weight;

- Babies who are breastfed are more likely to be of a healthy weight and maintain a healthy weight into adulthood.

The council commissions a number of breastfeeding initiatives both in the hospital to support women post-birth to initiate breastfeeding and also in the community to help new mums once they are home to continue to breast feed. Support is also offered at Warrington's three children's centres.

- The school nursing service offers a regular drop-in at schools where weight management and healthy eating advice is provided to students in a confidential setting. Schools are also supported to update their school's whole school food policy, ensuring that the school's curriculum and ethos promotes healthy eating and drinking.
- An example of the after-school activities available are Change 4 Life after-school clubs. Change 4 Life is the national social marketing campaign to promote healthy weight, and aims to prevent people from becoming overweight by encouraging them to 'eat well, move more and live longer'.
- There is an Active Warrington strategy supported by the Active Warrington Partnership that works to develop increased opportunities for children and young people to engage in sport and physical activity both in school and the community. For 2014-15 the partnership engaged 883 children and young people in after school activities and supported the delivery of cycle training to 1,950 pupils.

### Wellbeing Service

The council's Wellbeing Mentors are based in communities across Warrington, supporting individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices. They can support people on a one-to-one basis to make positive lifestyle changes and support and signpost people to access appropriate agencies. In the last year 4313 residents were in contact with the Wellbeing Service.

- 82% clients living in the most deprived wards achieved goals within their wellbeing plans within three months.
- 77% of clients maintained changes after six months.

### Developments in parks, open spaces and sports facilities

The Warrington Gardens programme is delivering substantial improvements to parks across the borough. Improvements to Walton Hall and Gardens have been completed, with the successful opening of a new extension to the Hall and new toilets. The guests' car park near the Hall has been resurfaced and improved, and new safe pathways have been laid to enable disabled people to access the formal gardens. Bank Park has a new accessible pavilion, bowling ground and café and a new sports stand, changing areas and community facilities at Victoria Park will be completed autumn 2015.

### Work of the neighbourhoods team

The neighbourhoods team work with colleagues in health and housing services. They play a key role within local communities, providing practical support to residents, to increase wellbeing across the town. The team delivers lifestyle and wellbeing messages through events, groups and face to face engagement with residents.

The team also supports volunteers to develop and sustain activities for older people including coffee mornings, lunch clubs, film clubs, chair based exercise classes and friendship groups. Many activities are initiated by the teams directly, others are supported by local area funding. All are augmented by an army of volunteers.



### Public health campaigns

The public health team work closely with GP's across Warrington to encourage take up of the NHS Health Check for people aged 40 to 74 years. This is an important preventative tool in the early identification and detection of health risks and diseases and the health check allows the patient and the GP to put appropriate plans in place which will either help to reduce the health risks (e.g. smoking, alcohol consumption, excess weight) to become healthier or to start to manage any conditions identified (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure) through lifestyle and medication.



The Public Health team working closely with key partners (Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), GPs, Livewire, Warrington Wolves) launched a blood pressure campaign 'knowing your numbers' to improve awareness of the health risks associated with high blood pressure. This campaign was supported by access to blood pressure checking through Pharmacies, iVan, Livewire and the NHS Health Checks Programme.

### Health and social care integration

The council and the Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group created a Better Care Fund pooled budget of over £26.5 million to support services to work together more effectively, prevent hospital admissions and get people out of hospital and back home as quickly as possible. An early sign of success is that unplanned admissions to hospital reduced by 3.5% in the final quarter of the year. There are now plans to extend re-ablement services and create an integrated hospital discharge team.

Work was also undertaken during the year to drive forward transformation and integration of Health and Social Care Services. A Transformation Board was set up and a new post of Transformation Manager was created. The Transformation Board is now developing plans for transformation including the creation of GP Collaborative Clusters. The aim of this project is to create new primary care hubs which will deliver co-ordinated care and provide services closer to people's homes. Work has begun in two of the cluster areas to create multi-agency health and social care teams.

### Working with 'Complex' Families

Warrington's complex families service has 'turned around' 77% of the 345 families it has worked with during phase one of the programme. Examples of success include improvements in school attendance and attainment, increased employment and health and reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour. The service has achieved the national targets and will now move to phase two of the project which involves working with over 1,100 families over the next five years.

### Improving Bewsey and Dallam

By working with partners and focussing on the areas that residents say matter to them the council and its partners have been able to bring about significant improvements.

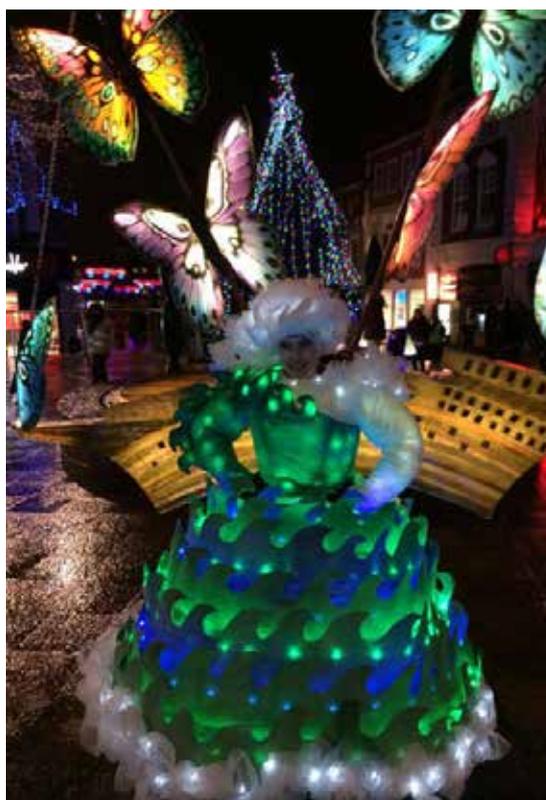
In a survey 51% of residents who responded said that dog fouling was a problem in the area. Concerted action including two anti-dog fouling campaigns and the formation of a residents group who support responsible dog ownership (People and Dogs in Bewsey and Dallam) has resulted in a 60% reduction in reports of dog fouling.

Plans are well underway to build new shops and homes in the once derelict Harrison Square and £76,000 has been raised to make improvements to Bewsey Meadows including fences and paths. Molyneux Triangle, a former eyesore has been turned into a family friendly communal space.

Crime rates are down by 14% and Anti-Social Behaviour down 49% (Dec 2014 -May 2015 compared to previous 6 months).

### Town centre events

A number of high profile town centre events have taken place over the last year. Livewire were commissioned to provide a town centre laser show to compliment the one day Christmas Market event. There was a Medieval Day at Warrington's Market and over 350 children participated in the town's annual Lantern Parade.



Event funding was achieved from existing shared operational budgets and contributions from Time Square regeneration contingency. Marketing generated lots of interest on a regional scale and the Comic Convention event in May was talked about on Chris Evans Breakfast show on BBC Radio 2.

### Tackling domestic abuse

Warrington Domestic Abuse Partnership (WDAP) is committed to tackling domestic abuse and reducing its effects on victims, their children and the wider community. An important area of their work has been raising awareness of all forms of domestic abuse and ensuring that support is available to those affected. In November 2014 WDAP promoted the 'White Ribbon Campaign' which saw local men and women wearing white ribbons to show they are taking a stand against domestic abuse. This was supported by young people who also raised awareness by taking posters into their schools and colleges.



A major programme of training for staff in over 50 agencies included a new course for practitioners working with young people affected by abuse in their intimate relationships. A Young Persons' Advocate is now supporting those aged 12 - 17 years who are being hurt by their partners or who are affected by domestic abuse in their families. Promoting equality and healthy relationships is an important part of the role.

This year has also seen several new initiatives. An Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate has supported medical staff at Warrington Hospital to recognise the signs of abuse and make sure that they know how to respond so that patients get the help they need quickly. This can reduce the need for long-term mental health services and substance misuse services, and prevent other consequences of domestic abuse.

We have also developed a new 'Parental Factors' training course to support practitioners working with people affected by domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse. In April 2014 a voluntary community-based programme commenced for those who wish to change their abusive behaviour.

As a result of our campaigns residents are becoming more confident in coming forward to deal with abuse. Referrals to Refuge Independent Domestic Abuse Service increased from 712 in 2012/13 to 1034 in 2014/15. Weekend support was introduced for victims in October 2014 and satisfaction rates for the service have increased.

An Outreach Service provided support to individuals and group work. It also focussed on people who may experience additional barriers to seeking help; those from minority communities, disabled victims, older victims, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. 81% of those exiting the Outreach Service in 2014/15 felt safer.

Some victims have to flee from their homes to escape abuse. 148 women and their children were accommodated in Warrington Women's Aid refuge accommodation but others have been able to remain in their homes thanks to increased security provided by the Sanctuary Scheme.

The positive impact of all the support residents receive can be seen in the decreased rate of repeat referrals from 26% during 2013/14 to 19% during 2014/15.

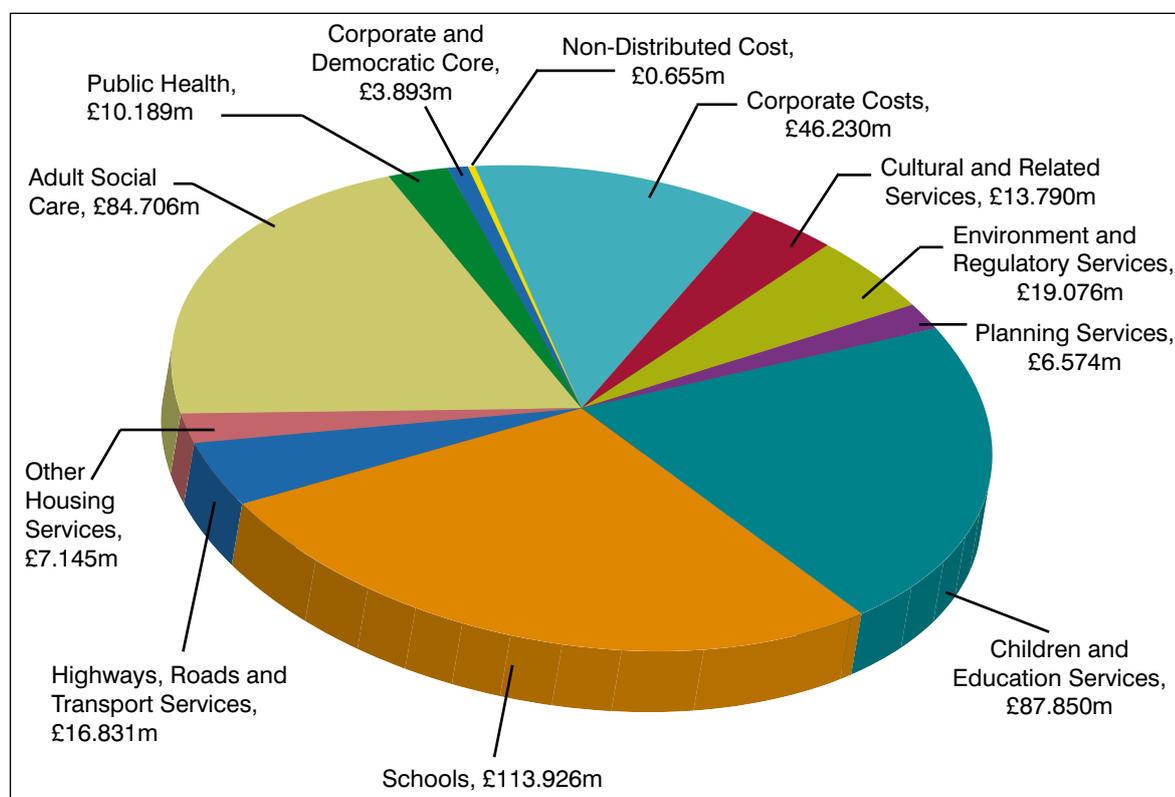
# Resources

## Revenue budget and spending 2014-15

Like all Local Authorities Warrington has faced unprecedented cuts. Due to the drop in government funding and rising costs we had to deliver over £16 million of savings in 2014/15. Although this has given Warrington council a number of financial pressures we have managed to deliver our services with a small underspend, while still providing the services expected by the residents of Warrington.

Directorate	Revised Budget £m	Actual Spend £m	Variance £m	Variance %
Resources & Strategic Commissioning	10.079	9.682	(0.397)	(3.9)
Families and Wellbeing	93.624	93.626	0.002	0.0
Economic Regeneration, Growth and Environment	22.538	23.034	0.496	2.2
Corporate & Cross Cutting	12.937	12.641	(0.296)	(2.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>139.178</b>	<b>138.983</b>	<b>(0.195)</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>

## Where the 2014-15 revenue budget was spent



## Capital budget and spending 2014-15

2014/15 Capital Programme	Revised Budget £m	Actual Spend £m	Variance £m	Spent
Resources & Strategic Commissioning	16.218	14.311	(1.907)	88%
Families & Wellbeing	4.401	2.934	(1.467)	67%
Economic Regeneration, Growth and Environment	27.317	22.848	(4.469)	84%
<b>2014/15 Capital Programme (excluding Invest to Save)</b>	<b>47.936</b>	<b>40.093</b>	<b>(7.843)</b>	<b>84%</b>
Invest to Save Programme	69.492	51.254	(18.238)	74%
<b>2014/15 Invest to Save Programme</b>	<b>69.492</b>	<b>51.254</b>	<b>(18.238)</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Total 2014/15 Capital Programme</b>	<b>117.428</b>	<b>91.347</b>	<b>(26.081)</b>	<b>78%</b>

### Outcome Based Budgeting

We identified the need for change in the way our budget is set in the summer of 2014. At this point the Council had delivered £50 million of savings over previous financial years and had continued to deliver effectively to its customers and citizens. The challenges of reduced resources and increasing demand were set to continue into the foreseeable future and the existing approach could no longer provide sustainability. Like many public sector organisations we reviewed our approach to financial planning and priority setting and a new approach - Outcome Based Budgeting was developed. Outcome Based Budgeting is an internationally accepted public sector approach to budget setting and will enable the Council to address elements of the service challenge process that could no longer be sustained.

The overall ambition is that within four years the Council will have developed a sustainable budget. To achieve this, commissioning, budget and change processes will need to become ongoing systematic programmes of activity that run throughout the year(s). It is recognised that there will always be the need to set an annual budget and medium term financial plan at certain points in the year but there will be an ongoing focus on achieving priority outcomes within the available resources.

### Developing our Staff

The Council launched a new Workforce Talent and Skills Strategy, which will see us continue our commitment to the recruitment and development of apprentices, launch our first Graduate Development scheme, and work on other talent management initiatives.

We continued to invest in workforce development with a number of staff successfully completing the sub regional Collaborative Leadership programme, further development of our own in-house Commercial Skills programme, and the creation of an internal coaching network being amongst the highlights.

Sickness at the council reduced for the second year in a row, from 14.1 days in 2013 to 12.7 days in 2015 meaning that sickness absence overall has reduced by 10% in the last 2 years.

A number of changes to staff terms and conditions were agreed with the Trade Unions, covering changes to car allowances, business travel payments, call-out payments, and overtime, following votes from staff to accept these changes.

## Agile Working / Office Accommodation

The council has made a commitment to work much more efficiently in order to be able to deliver our services with fewer resources, not just now but to be sustainable in the future. Working smarter needs to be at the heart of this commitment and will help us to be more efficient and a better place to work, where people:

- Focus on outcomes not process
- Are empowered by technology
- Work flexibly and cost-effectively
- Collaborate more effectively with other teams, departments and partners
- Maximise productivity and innovation and reduce our environmental impact

Our planned move to new office accommodation as part of the Bridge Street Quarter development gives us a good target to work to, but we are not waiting until then to get started. We are modernising our working practices now and will reap the benefits of new ways of working well before our physical move.

We have already introduced significant changes in our technology - for example, we now have a high proportion of laptops, secure shared printers and improved telephony. There is plenty more to do - the way we use these hasn't yet fundamentally changed the way we work. We now need to make the physical and behavioural changes to take advantage of this new way of working. We're looking at how we can take this further, and make the most of the technology we now have access to. We're calling this increased flexibility and personal responsibility 'Agile working'.



# Warrington Council Strategy 2015-18: 'Growing a Strong Warrington'

In order to continue the focus on improving life for Warrington's residents the council has developed a new Strategy for 2015 onwards. 'Growing a Strong Warrington' sets out our vision:



***'We will work together with our residents, businesses and partners to make Warrington a place where everyone can thrive'***

The strategy sets out four pledges which will be used as a basis for making future decisions;

- Protect the most vulnerable
- Grow a strong economy
- Build strong, active and resilient communities
- Create a place to be proud of

The strategy also sets out the ways in which we will deliver the strategy by:

- Doing more together - Working collaboratively with partners, local businesses and residents
- Putting residents and customers at the heart of everything we do
- Using our resources wisely - being clear about the outcomes we want to achieve and allocating our resources in ways that best support this.



**Protect the most vulnerable**



**Grow a strong economy**



**Build strong, active and resilient communities**



**Create a place to be proud of**

# Growing a Strong Warrington



# Annual Report

2014 -15